

# Countryside Recreation



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*Exchanging and Spreading Information to develop best Policy  
and Practice in Countryside Recreation*



## I N S I D E

- Devolution
- Rural Policy
- Heritage Awareness
- Green Transport
- News Section
- Training and Events Diary

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If you would like to have a flier or advert distributed with Countryside Recreation, which goes to 3000 individuals working in the fields of recreation, tourism and leisure, please contact the Network Manager for details. A modest fee is charged to cover the increased cost of including the flier with the mail-out.



### Countryside Recreation Network

CRN is a network which:

- covers the UK and the Republic of Ireland
- gives easy access to information on countryside and related recreation matters
- reaches organisations and individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- networks thousands of interested people

The Network helps the work of agencies and individuals in three areas:

#### **Research:**

to encourage co-operation between members in identifying and promoting the need for research related to countryside recreation, to encourage joint ventures in undertaking research, and to disseminate information about members' recreation programmes.

#### **Liaison:**

to promote information exchange relating to countryside recreation, and to foster general debate about relevant trends and issues.

#### **Good Practice:**

to spread information to develop best practice through training and professional development in provision for and management of countryside recreation.

**Chair:** John Thomson, Director of Strategy and Operations (West), Scottish Natural Heritage

**Vice-chair:** Eileen MacKeever, Head of Recreation and Navigation, Environment Agency

**Countryside Recreation** is free and is published four times a year. We welcome articles and letters from all readers. The copy date for the next issue is **11th February 2000.**

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**Editors:** Jo Hughes & Kevin Bishop

## Editorial

A new era of democratic devolution is unfolding in the UK. 'New Labour' has overseen a radical programme of constitutional reform which includes a Parliament for Scotland; Assemblies for Wales, Northern Ireland and London; eight Regional Development Agencies for the English regions; reform of the House of Lords and the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. This edition of *Countryside Recreation* reviews the implications of devolution for countryside recreation and wider environmental policy.

John Mackay explains the workings of the Scottish Parliament and discusses potential impacts on countryside and recreation legislation and policies. Kevin Bishop and Andrew Flynn examine the operation of the National Assembly for Wales and its unique legislative requirement to prepare and publish a sustainable development scheme outlining how it proposes, in the exercise of its functions, to promote sustainable development. What is clear from these two papers is that devolution is a force for diversity. As these new country 'governments' find their feet we are likely to be faced with more distinct policy differences between the constituent parts of the UK.

Rural issues have also been high on the political agenda, with consultations on a new Rural White Paper and the future of farming. The article by Neil Ward reviews the direction of rural policy under 'New Labour'. Dr. Ward was seconded to the Performance and Innovation Unit of the Cabinet Office to work on the research and policy analysis leading to the recently published report "Rural Economies" (Cabinet Office, 1999). His paper outlines the challenges the Government must face during the development of its promised Rural White Paper. (*Cabinet Office (1999) Rural Economies, Stationery Office, London.*)

During 1999 two organisations from the Republic of Ireland - the Heritage Council and Coillte Teoranta (Irish Forestry Service) - joined the Countryside Recreation Network. To mark this, Michael Starrett, Chief Executive of the Heritage Council, provides details on the work of the Council. His paper also reviews the findings of a research project into 'heritage awareness' in the Republic of Ireland and the implications of the findings for the future work of the Council.

Finally, as a follow on from the Summer edition of *Countryside Recreation*, that focused on transport issues, John Hobby (Public Transport Officer for the National Trust) provides an update on some of the Trust's public transport initiatives.

Whilst 1999 saw many changes, the new Millennium is likely to bring many more. Most notable for countryside recreation is the promised Countryside Bill (covering England and Wales) which will deliver the Government's commitment to legislate for a right of access to open countryside in England and Wales. The coalition administration in Scotland are also committed to introducing a Bill on access to the Scottish countryside. CRN will be holding a conference on Access - focusing on the provisions of the Countryside Bill and related policy developments in other parts of the UK - in Spring 2000.

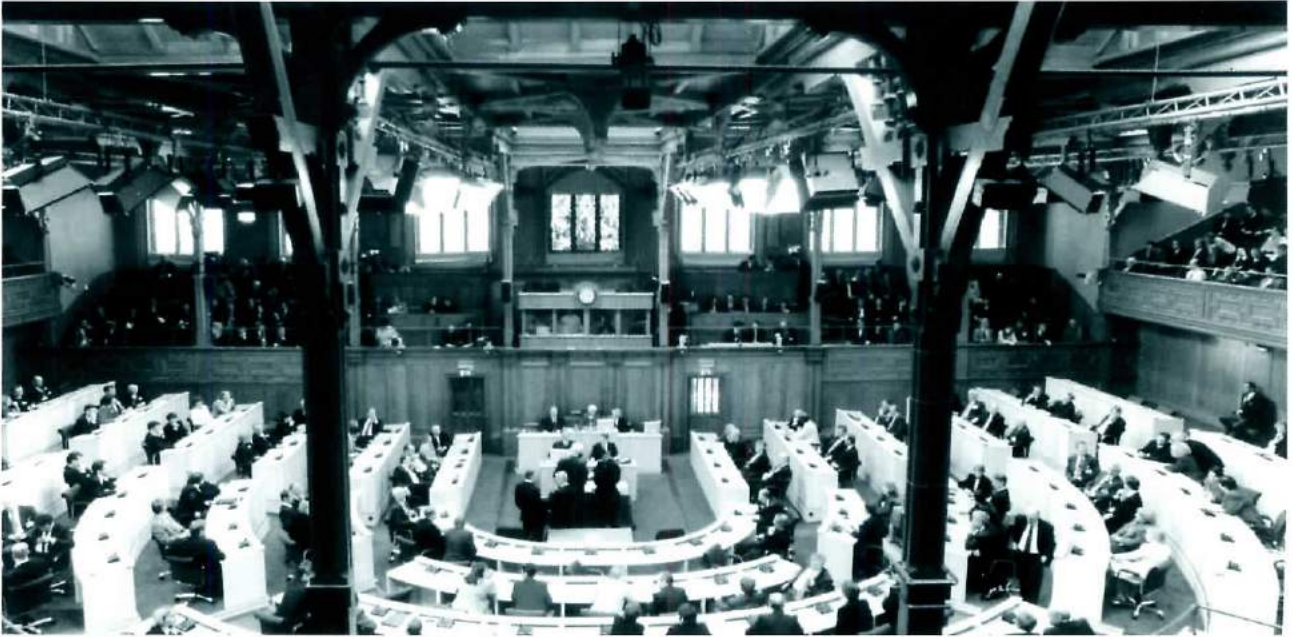
The themes for the next two issues of 'Countryside Recreation' will be 'Future Trends' (deadline for submission of material is 18th February) and 'Sustainable Tourism and Tourism Strategies' (deadline is 22nd May). If you would like to submit articles on any of these themes or on any other topics, please contact us at the CRN.

2000 will also see a change in staff at the CRN. I am leaving the Network at the end of December and Emma Barrett will replace me as Network Manager. Emma is currently employed by the Sensory Trust - a charity that works to improve access for the disabled. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to wish you all well in your work for the future.

**Jo Hughes, Network Manager**

## *How is the Scottish Parliament Faring?*

*John Mackay, Scottish Natural Heritage*



*Chamber of the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Parliament Corporate Body, 1999*

Devolution is with us in Scotland, and already questions are being asked about how well the new Parliament is working. Readers may want an answer to the narrower question of how well is it serving countryside, recreation and conservation matters? The answer to all these questions must be that it is simply too early to make any fair assessment - indeed we are only seven months away from the first Scottish Parliamentary elections. So this account can only describe the prospects and potential of our new form of domestic government. Inevitably, the press are giving the new Parliament a hard time, either probing at what is happening or at what is not happening, and there is hence a tendency to find fault even before the venture has got properly started.

Certainly, there has been much effort to create a new parliamentary structure which would serve distinctively Scottish needs, drawing experience from regional assemblies and other devolved systems elsewhere in Europe. The detailed procedures for the Parliament's operations were forged by a Consultative Steering Group following four broad principles of: sharing the

power; accountability; operating in ways which are accessible, open and responsive, and participative; and a commitment to equal opportunities. Certainly the proportional voting system produced an outcome which met the first principle of sharing the power, and power sharing continues into the strong all-purpose subject committees which will drive much of the Parliament's business. And the fourth principle has been well met by the membership having the third best gender balance of all Europe's parliaments - at the first try.

The second and third principles of accountability, and openness and accessibility in operation are mainly addressed through the various ways in which the Parliament will function. The strong committee system is part of this and there is a high commitment to IT.

The Parliament also aims to operate in a pragmatic and business-like way with normal business hours, led by a powerful Presiding Officer, and with the requirement that the First Minister has to have the Parliament's approval for his ministerial team.

The legislative process differs from Westminster, because this is a single chamber parliament. This brings obligations to have other means of wider scrutiny of legislation, and this will mainly be resolved through a requirement for pre-legislation consultation and debate about Bills before they enter the Parliament. Another innovation is that the legislative session matches the parliamentary session of four years, so that no Bill can fall at the end of any one year. Already the Parliament has announced its first tranche of legislation. This can be added to, not just by the Executive, but also by the Committees and by individual members, who can also initiate legislation. The proposal for a Bill on fox hunting was initiated by an individual member.

The Scotland Act 1998 establishes the basis of the Scottish Parliament and its relationship with Whitehall. It defines what matters are reserved - those that are outside the competence of the Scottish Parliament - and this is quite a long list. There is no listing of devolved matters in the Act: if a matter is not reserved then it is assumed to be devolved. However the division of responsibilities is not straightforward, because there are areas of joint interest, especially where a UK dimension arises, say, over European matters. To take an example, agriculture is not listed as a reserved matter, but the reality is that our close engagement with the EC agricultural policy implies that there is not much space for divergent policy lines. But there is space for the devolved assemblies to implement UK policies in their own distinctive way. This has to be done in ways which are consistent and effective, because the Scottish Parliament will be delivering the UK Government's commitments.

There has been a good deal of debate south of the Border which almost implies that Scotland is about to cast its moorings and move-off in a wholly independent manner: this is far from the truth. The reality is that the broad areas which are now covered by the Scottish Parliament were, in the main, handled through the Scottish Office in pre-devolution times, and usually had their own separate Scottish legislation, debated at Westminster. For many themes

the policy line will continue to be in accord across the Border and, while practice may differ in some areas of Government action, in many others it would not be sensible to have anything other than a common approach. Thus, transport may be largely devolved, but Scotland can hardly make a move towards driving on the other side of the road.

Relationships between the UK Government and the devolved administrations are governed by a Memorandum of Understanding, along with a number of supplementary agreements or Concordats between the relevant Departments, which provide the basis of ongoing liaison over policy and procedures. For bigger issues, where there is a UK policy lead, there is a Cabinet Committee to adjudicate. There is also a joint Ministerial Committee which reviews those non-devolved matters which impinge on the devolved administrations, as well as keeping an eye on co-ordination and review of any disputes.

The breadth of the Parliament's affairs is indicated by a list of the main subject committees. These are: Enterprise & Life-Long Learning; Transport & Environment; Justice; Local Government; Europe; Home Affairs and Rural Affairs. There are other committees for matters such as audit and procedures. The first tranche of legislation is also quite functional, although some of it is quite highly charged in its political content: for example land tenure issues, including feudal reform and access to the countryside. National Parks have a place in the first round of legislation and other matters for early legislation include legal reform, transport, planning and education.

Here lies a first great benefit of the Scottish Parliament, which is the ability to have a much larger legislative programme than in the past. At Westminster, the Scottish Office would do well to get one or two Bills in the congested parliamentary session. All of a sudden, we now have the ability to move forward legislation more speedily than before. And - to answer the question about how well does it suit recreation and conservation - we have Bills for Access and National

Parks coming early in the programme and a Wildlife Bill will follow, but not this year.

So what are the main issues for a non departmental public body such as Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) in the new system of governance. A first question to ask is "how environmentally friendly will the new Parliament be?" Again it is too early to answer that question, but there is a powerful committee dealing with environmental matters (and transport) and, as noted, there is the intention to legislate on Access, National Parks and Wildlife.

SNH has already appeared at a briefing session for the Transport & Environment Committee to give a presentation about our work and also on the topic of National Parks. This was a friendly occasion on which we met some lively and astute politicians, including one who has a National Nature Reserve on his land, with a good knowledge of our business. SNH reports to Sarah Boyack, the Minister for Transport & the Environment (a Town & Country planner by profession), but we also expect to work with other committees and Ministers. For example, it is probable that the Access legislation will be taken as part of the Land Reform Bill and be led by the Deputy First Minister, Jim Wallace, through the Justice Committee. Obviously we will also have some engagement with the Rural Affairs Committee and its Minister, Ross Finnie. So it is likely that SNH will be able to engage quite widely across the Parliamentary system.

Our relationships with the Parliament and the Scottish Executive (the retitled Scottish Office) are evolving in interesting ways. On the one hand, SNH has been working very closely with the Executive in the preparation of legislation for Access and National Parks. Indeed two major review exercises conducted on these subjects throughout 1998 were undertaken by SNH to meet Government's needs in preparing for legislation. However, we have yet to find out how SNH will engage with the parliamentary process, and what the ground-rules will be for advising on and working with Bills once they are in Parliament. Though it is important to note that we have been able to get

much closer into this process than would ever have been possible through the Westminster system.

SNH has had to create its own systems for linking into the Parliament, with dedicated staff and a growing involvement in response to Members of the Scottish Parliament's questions and committee inquiries. Already the Environment Committee has decided that it wants to review the matter of telecommunication masts as a planning issue. With a three-week turnaround we have had to prepare our evidence and for an appearance in front of the committee - another example of close engagement with the action. It is of interest that the committees appear to want to hear evidence from middle managers and officers who are dealing directly with the issues rather than the most senior officials, and that is a good opportunity for these public servants.

Finally, it is inevitable that there will be more scrutiny over our affairs and over the resources which are allocated to recreation and conservation. That scrutiny will come in various ways. First of all, from oversight of the budgetary process by the Parliament, which has a number of opportunities to review the Executive's proposed allocations for the coming financial year. Although, those who want to shift resources have to identify the budgets from which savings have to be made, if increases are proposed. SNH expects to find itself reporting annually to the Transport & Environment Committee. This we await, but this has to be seen as a challenge that we have to accept as part of the being closer to the political process.

So if a first-term report were to be prepared, it would have to record that the new system has much potential yet to be delivered. It is likely to be a demanding process on the public bodies in Scotland; but it is also an opportunity and a challenge, which we should welcome if we want our business to play a full part of the mainstream of the political process.

*John Mackay is the National Strategy Officer for Scottish Natural Heritage and can be contacted at 2 Anderson Place, Edinburgh, EH6 5NP.*

# *The National Assembly for Wales*

*Kevin Bishop and Andrew Flynn, Cardiff University*



*Computer generated photomontage of the proposed building for the National Assembly for Wales,  
Hayes Davidson/John Maclean, 1999*

In the referendum of 18th September 1997, the people of Wales narrowly voted in favour of the Government's proposals for devolution as set out in the White Paper "A Voice for Wales". The Government of Wales Act 1998 - which received Royal Assent on July 31st - implemented those proposals and established the National Assembly for Wales (NAW). Formal transfer of powers took place on 1st July 1999.

The NAW represents a constitutional innovation. Section 1 of the Government of Wales Act 1998

states that it is a body corporate exercising functions on behalf of the Crown. As far as legislative power is concerned, this is through the exercise by the Assembly of delegated powers. Unlike the Scottish Parliament or the Northern Ireland Assembly, the NAW does not have primary legislative powers. Many have assumed that this lack of primary legislative power will mean that the Assembly is a talking shop and that law in Wales will not differ greatly from that in England. As outlined below, this is a simplistic assumption that ignores the extensive powers now delegated by primary legislation.

### **The Assembly**

The original concept of the Assembly, which was based on a local authority committee model, was amended, during the passage of the Government of Wales Bill through Parliament, to something more akin to a Cabinet model. Political leadership in the Assembly is provided by the First Secretary (in effect the Prime Minister for Wales) who has the power to appoint the other Assembly Secretaries and to attach portfolios. The First Secretary chairs a Cabinet-style Executive Committee consisting of eight Assembly Secretaries. The cabinet style system was preferred to the local authority committee structure as it was perceived to be more capable of rapid and accountable decision-making (Morgan, 1998).

The work of the Assembly Secretaries is 'balanced' by a series of Subject Committees (whose remit is governed by the portfolios of the relevant Assembly Secretaries). Members of these Committees are elected by the 60 Assembly Members and are drawn from all political parties in accordance with party balance within the Assembly as a whole. The subject committees include, as a member, the relevant Assembly Secretary (thus the Agriculture and Rural Development Secretary sits on the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee). The committees are multi-functional or have very broad remits because, with just 60 Assembly Members, there are not enough Members to realistically staff single subject committees for the 18 policy fields transferred to the Assembly. Thus, due to their structure and composition the Assembly Subject Committees have the potential to pioneer a more innovative mode of policy-making that is both consensual and avoids the traditional departmentalism that often characterises Whitehall policy development.

In addition to the statutory Subject Committees there are two cross-cutting programme committees to ensure a strategic approach to equal opportunities and Europe. The National Assembly Advisory Group (established by the Secretary of State for Wales to advise on the structure and operation of the

Assembly) did originally propose a third programme committee to consider issues pertaining to sustainable development but this idea was dropped in their final report.

The Assembly also has four Regional Committees with an advisory rather than executive role. These committees are an attempt to address the deep regional divisions within Wales: North and South; East and West.

### **A More Collaborative Form of Government and Governance?**

The Government of Wales Act 1998 requires the Assembly to develop 'schemes' for promoting and sustaining a dialogue with other organisations, principally with local government, the voluntary sector and the business community. The voluntary sector scheme will indicate how the Assembly will promote, fund and liaise with voluntary and community sector organisations, including members of Wales Wildlife and Countryside Link. Thus the requirement to produce a voluntary sector scheme provides such groups with direct access to the highest level of governance in Wales and should serve to ensure that Assembly Members see them as essential partners in the development and implementation of policy.

### **A Sustainable Wales?**

The NAW is unique amongst all levels of modern government in the UK in that it is legally required under section 121(1) of the Government of Wales Act 1998 to make a scheme setting out how it proposes, in the exercise of its functions, to promote sustainable development. There are two key elements of section 121. The first is the statutorily binding nature of the obligation and the fact that the Assembly cannot delegate this function (the scheme has to be approved by the Assembly in plenary session). The second is the inclusive and open nature of the process of producing and maintaining the scheme - a point emphasised in the Act and subsequent ministerial statements.



The Assembly have agreed a set of principles to guide the production of the sustainable development scheme and, at the time of writing, were in the process of finalising the consultation version of the scheme. It is clear from the passage of the Government of Wales Bill and the debate that has surrounded devolution that section 121 has the potential to significantly alter the political and policy landscape of Wales.

There appears to be some confusion as to what constitutes a sustainable development scheme. Should the scheme be the precursor to a Welsh sustainable development strategy and then perhaps an action plan or should the scheme be a stand-alone document that influences a range of subject strategies/plans (e.g. ones for health, economic development etc.)? The Assembly seems to be considering the first option whilst the theme of integration and joined-up Government suggests that the later might be more effective. Also, the requirement for annual reports (contained in Section 121) seems to suggest something that is more target driven and free-standing.

Whilst Section 121 represents an opportunity for Wales to pioneer the transition to sustainable development there remain real concerns about the political commitment to and understanding of this concept. The 'economic imperative' - the need to foster economic development - runs deep through Welsh politics and there is a risk that Assembly Members will focus on supposed quick fixes rather than the 'hard choices' that a switch towards sustainable forms of development will require.

### **New Welsh Policy Networks?**

The establishment of the Assembly has accentuated the move towards a system of 'Welsh policy networks'. Traditionally, Wales has been viewed almost as a region of England with Welsh public agencies and environmental groups having to influence and lobby both the former Welsh Office and Whitehall departments. In terms of countryside conservation and recreation, the process of

establishing distinctly 'Welsh' policy networks, was given particular impetus by the establishment of the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) in 1991. With its integrated remit and Wales only area of operation, CCW was a powerful force for distinctly Welsh policies in the sphere of countryside conservation and recreation. The establishment of CCW led to the formation of Wales Wildlife and Countryside Link. It also led certain environmental groups to establish a presence in Wales or to strengthen their 'regional offices'.

With the coming of the Assembly the process of 'regional' devolution has been given added impetus. We are seeing more environmental non-government organisations (NGOs) establish or strengthen their Welsh office. For example, the Council for National Parks have appointed a Campaigns Officer for Wales and the World-Wide Fund for Nature are strengthening their presence in Wales. We are also seeing the appointment of an 'army' of 'Assembly Liaison Officers' (or the like) whose role is to appraise their organisation of the day-to-day operation of the Assembly, to develop contacts with Assembly Members and, in certain cases, actively lobby for particular policy goals. Both CCW and the Environment Agency Wales have appointed Assembly Liaison Officers and several of the environmental NGOs have made similar appointments (e.g. RSPB and the National Trust).

### **Welsh Policies and Laws?**

The fact that the Assembly will have neither fiscal nor primary legislative powers does not mean that it is necessarily a 'glorified county council' as some have described it. The Assembly controls a budget of some £7 billion and will be able to shape its own expenditure priorities and commitments. Already the three National Park Authorities in Wales have had to present their case for funding to the Assembly's Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee.

It is easy to assume that, because the Assembly has no primary legislative powers, the law in Wales will not differ greatly from that in England. It is

impossible to make this assumption. Secondary legislation (which is within the Assembly's remit) - statutory instruments and the like - is an important aspect of law making and policy formulation (especially in terms of environmental policy). For example, the Assembly could over time seek to radically alter the operation of the planning system in Wales through amendments to the General Development Order, Use Classes Order etc. It may be that we witness a new form of law making in Whitehall that is less prescriptive and more concerned with the establishment of general principles and goals, leaving the decision on mechanisms to achieve the goals to the Assembly.

The key importance of the Assembly lies in its immediate ability to influence policy in Wales and to develop new ideas not only in relation to the eighteen devolved areas of responsibility but wherever the Assembly chooses to "consider and make representations about any matter affecting Wales" (Government of Wales Act 1998, Section 33).

### Conclusions

It would be foolhardy to focus only on the formal legal powers of the National Assembly for Wales, as these hide the real significance of the Assembly which is a focus on distinctly Welsh policies for Welsh issues.

The Assembly has the potential to usher in a new era for Welsh politics and policy-making: one that is based more on collaboration and integration rather than command and control. A new framework has been established but it is still too early to understand how this body will assert itself in dealing with the wide variety of matters devolved to it. However, even at this stage it is clear that the Assembly:

- has led to an increased presence of environmental NGOs within Wales and improved capacity for these groups to influence policy; and
- that rural issues (notably the crisis in agriculture) has dominated the first few months of the Assembly's existence.

### References:

Morgan, K. (1998) "Towards Democratic Devolution: The Challenge of the Welsh Assembly", *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, New Series, Vol. 5, pp. 182-202.

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# *Reviewing Rural Policy: New Labour and the Countryside*

*Neil Ward, University of Newcastle upon Tyne*



Photo: Kevin Bishop

## *Rural Britain*

### **Rural Policy in a Changing World**

The Labour Party's 1997 Election Manifesto did not have much to say about rural policy per se. This may not be particularly surprising given the ambitious nature of some of the other policy priorities for the incoming Government. In any case, wider policy issues such as macro-economic regulation, health and social policy, land development and taxation, have a far greater influence upon the welfare of people in rural areas than that package of measures conventionally understood as 'rural policy'.

There has, however, been increasing recognition in Whitehall of the need for a review and rethinking of both the strategic objectives for rural policy and the implications of other policies and trends upon rural

areas. This recognition is the result of two sets of factors. First, since 1997, 'events' have thrown up an array of contentious rural issues in national popular and political debate. Perhaps most controversial of these has been the response to the Private Members Bill to ban hunting with hounds. But strong feelings have also been expressed about the economic difficulties facing the farming industry, forecasts of future housing needs, and the drawn out saga of the ban on beef exports. Often seemingly disparate issues get bundled together under the banner of a 'rural crisis' with equally disparate calls for 'something' to be done. The degree of consensus and common ground within the countryside agenda can sometimes appear tightly constrained, posing a real challenge for government. Indeed, what they see as

a lack of coherent strategy and of political leadership has prompted the Council for the Protection of Rural England recently to complain to a Commons Select Committee that the Government "has appeared to lack confidence when dealing with rural issues" (CPRE, 1999).

A second set of factors has been a series of wider policy-reforms with an important bearing on questions of rural governance - namely the EU Agenda 2000 reforms, a public spending review, and devolution. The Berlin Summit in March 1999 saw the agreement of a package of reforms to the Structural Funds and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that set a new European framework for agricultural and rural development. Particularly significant has been the introduction of a new 'second pillar' to the CAP - the Rural Development Regulation - that over time could assist the evolution of a sectoral, agricultural policy into a territorial, integrated rural policy.

At the same time as these European discussions began, the UK Government instigated its Comprehensive Spending Review (HM Treasury, 1998). The Review was to be "truly comprehensive", embracing all items of public expenditure; focussed on the long term, and looking at the shape of public spending "to the end of the century and beyond". The Review examined the countryside spending programmes of both the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) under a single 'Countryside Review', with a particular concern to improve the 'joined-upness' of rural programmes. It resulted in a new innovation, a commitment to produce a joint Public Service Agreement on policy objectives by the two Departments.

Finally, the birth of the new devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales have profoundly altered the political and administrative terrain upon which rural policy is formulated and implemented. Agriculture

and rural development are now devolved matters that have rapidly attained high profiles in Scottish and Welsh politics. Devolution will bring new forms of decision-making in implementing EU reforms and the new CAP. In England too the devolution agenda has brought 'spin off' institutional reforms to rural governance. Sweeping the Rural Development Commission's (RDC's) programmes into the new Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) raised the question of what to do with the RDC's national functions. This in turn prompted the creation of the Countryside Agency with its new and integrated approach to landscape protection and conservation and the socio-economic development of rural areas.

### Reviewing Rural Policy

Claims about the countryside being at some sort of 'crossroads' have peppered public debates about rural policy for over twenty years. But given the policy developments sketched out above, such claims have rarely held more purchase than in the two years that straddle the Millennium. There seems to be no end to the amount of reviewing, rethinking and consultation going on.

Most numerous have been the consultation documents produced by MAFF on the future strategy for UK agriculture. First MAFF consulted on its approach to the final leg of the Agenda 2000 negotiations (MAFF, 1999a). This exercise served, in part, as the quid pro quo for the Government's second emergency financial aid package to the agricultural sector in November 1998. Further consultation documents have followed on how to implement the new discretionary elements of the reformed CAP, particularly the new support scheme for hill farmers and the Rural Development Regulation (MAFF, 1999b, 1999c).

A further review exercise has been the study of the objectives for rural economies in England conducted by the new Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) in the Cabinet Office. The PIU is a cross-cutting unit - modelled on the Social Exclusion Unit, but also on

the Central Policy Review Staff established by Edward Heath in the early 1970s - charged with examining issues of a cross-cutting, inter-Departmental nature or those that raise strategic and longer-term challenges for Government. As such it is in the vanguard of the modernising government and 'joined-up' policy-making agendas.

Both these exercises will inform the production of a new Rural White Paper for England which is due in 2000. There was a 53 year gap between the last two rural white papers - the Scott Committee report on land utilisation in rural areas in 1942 (Minister of Works and Planning, 1942) and the Tories' picturesque blueprint for rural England in 1995 (Department of the Environment, 1995). It is perhaps a reflection of the pace of change in the socio-economic and political context for rural areas and rural policy that the gap between the 1995 White Paper and the next one will only be five years.

Like that of their predecessors, the Government's Rural White Paper has been accompanied by an extensive consultation exercise, including a series of regional consultation meetings attended by Ministers. Arguably, it is a result of the ambitious scale of this consultation exercise that the anticipated date of publication of the White Paper has drifted further into the future than was originally envisaged. In launching the new Countryside Agency on June 28th 1999, the Deputy Prime Minister promised the White Paper 'in the next twelve months'.

Other sources of fresh thinking have also emerged in recent months, including the report of the Urban Task Force headed by Lord Rogers (Urban Task Force, 1999) and the Rural Audit report commissioned by the rural grouping of Labour MPs. (Rural Group of Labour MPs, 1999). Together, these various initiatives, be they departmental, inter-departmental, or non-departmental, would suggest that there is no shortage of thinking and reviewing going on. Of course, the key challenge will be the extent to which a Rural White Paper can draw together various lines

of analysis and forge a policy 'route map' that can command as widespread a consensus as possible. This would be no mean feat in a policy area that has come to be characterised by highly charged and polarised views about the future of the countryside. It is to some of the dilemmas and fault lines faced in preparing the Rural White Paper that we now turn.

### **Dilemmas and Challenges**

Presumably, as the year comes to a close there must be filing cabinets, or even whole offices, in the Whitehall village that now bulge with the formal written responses to the various consultation exercise that have been set in train. Where in this morass of competing visions about the future of the countryside are the main dilemmas to be reconciled? For reasons of space, I will dwell on just three - managing change in agriculture, the role of rural areas in the regional agenda, and what we might call the 'vision thing'.

Farm income and census statistics highlight that we live in unprecedented times of restructuring. Some 18,000 jobs were shed from the UK sector in 1998/99 - more than in the previous five years combined. Although the exchange rate has been the most significant driver in farming's declining economic fortunes, the operation of the CAP still remains the key policy instrument for managing agricultural change. The Agenda 2000 agreement now provides historically unprecedented discretion to individual Member States on how to implement key aspects of the new CAP. No longer can it be claimed that the CAP is wholly determined in Brussels. How best to utilise the beef national envelope, whether to modulate up to a fifth of the £1.7 billion of annual compensation payments to farmers in order to expand agri-environment programmes, and how to prioritise spending under the new Rural Development Regulation are all decisions for Member States. Agricultural change can be either left to a combination of market pressures and future world trade reforms, or can be actively managed in the light of a future vision of what type of farming sector we would like to see. One model is

of a sector that is, in some senses at least, 'competitive' in international food commodity markets. Another is of a multifunctional agriculture that produces 'joint-products' including basic commodities, specialist quality foods, and locally and regionally distinctive 'countrysides'.

This last point raises the question of the relationship between rural and agricultural policy and the emerging regional agendas in the UK. Scotland and Wales already have their new Ministers and Committees for Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the development of distinctive policy agendas. In England, the drawing up of regional economic strategies by the new RDAs has required that the role of rural areas in the English regions be considered. Of importance here are questions of the role rural areas, environments and economies play in the competitive advantage and quality of life of each region. Regional debates and discussions also usefully help to blur the absurd divide between 'town' and 'country' that is so often invoked in public and political debate. This is quite a paradox at a time when so many of the pressing challenges of the day require a better understanding of the relationships, and a more constructive dialogue, between people who live in urban and rural areas. Questions of motoring and mobility, the location of new housing development, consumer confidence in farming methods, and the economic exploitation of tourism and recreation as a means of rural development – all these bind town and country together, and bring regions to the fore as a territorial unit of analysis.

Finally comes the 'vision thing'. The Prime Minister's party conference speech has set many works a-wonking after it was interpreted as setting out the new battle lines of our political age. The pitting of the 'forces of progress and modernisation' against the 'forces of conservatism' has prompted a range of NGOs and interest groups to seek to articulate their own positions and agendas in relation to this rhetorical divide. For example, environmentalists have been quick to examine how the environment might 'fit in' with the Government's agenda. Michael Jacobs

of the Fabian Society has recently complained that "on the environment New Labour doesn't seem to know what it thinks" and has sought to recast a green agenda in terms of a need for 'environmental modernisation' (Jacobs 1999).

Will a similar recasting be likely, or even possible, when it comes to the countryside? Where does 'conservation' fit in to the progress-conservatism dualism (for only the two last letters distinguish conservation from conservatism)? How can a forward-looking, progressive agenda for the development of rural areas, economies and environments be forged that chimes with the over-arching objectives and political philosophy of the Blair Government? We should begin to have some answers to these questions by July 2000.

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# *The Heritage Council and Heritage Awareness in Ireland*

*Michael Starrett, Chief Executive, Heritage Council*



Photo: Heritage Council

*Connemara Landscape*

## **Introduction**

The first task of this paper is to lay to rest a few misconceptions. Heritage is often presented in a negative way:

- Something abstract which gets in the way.
- Something which is annoying and blocks progress.
- Something which we feel forced to take on board but which in reality we'd rather be without.
- Something which is the preserve of so -called 'experts'.
- Something which the vast majority of people do not see as relevant to their day to day life.

Part of this view of heritage is undoubtedly due to the very narrow way in which heritage has tended to be defined. It is also partly due to the very compartmentalised way in which heritage has been presented to date by those agencies with a responsibility for its management.

This paper aims to present a case for moving away from the described view of heritage. It is very important to say at the outset that, if that view is to be changed, a more integrated and open approach to the way in which agencies operate is required. The approach has to be an integrated one. To help, it is necessary to explain a little about the Heritage Council and its functions.

## **The Heritage Council**

The Council was established in 1995 as an independent semi-state body, under the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. It was established under new legislation, the Heritage Act 1995. This gave the Council the statutory responsibility to:

- propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage.

The Act also gave the Council a clear responsibility to:

- promote pride in the national heritage;
- facilitate the appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage;
- co-operate with other bodies in the promotion of its functions; and
- promote the co-ordination of all activities relating to its functions.

It is the latter two points which are of particular relevance to the point made earlier concerning an integrated approach being the only one which will work. The inclusion of these functions under the Act ensure that not only must the Heritage Council work in close partnership with others to achieve its objectives for the national heritage but they also place an obligation, (or at least an interest) on agencies which impact on the functions of Council to work with Council.

Just how far reaching the effect of this approach can (or indeed will) be is highlighted by the definition of the national heritage which is contained in the Heritage Act. National Heritage is defined as including: monuments, archaeological object, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora and fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage gardens and parks and inland waterways.

The Council is based in Rothe House, Kilkenny, currently has 12 full time staff and an annual budget of just over IR£5m. Approximately 15% of this budget is provided by the exchequer to core fund administrative costs. The remaining funding is provided through the Irish national lottery fund. The Council provides a substantial amount of grant support for individual and community based heritage projects through its various grant schemes and has also recently published a series of policy papers on a range of heritage issues. These have been submitted to the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, Ms Síle de Valera, T.D.

The Council has established 3 key themes to guide all its activities up to the year 2000. These are:

1. Collecting data
2. Promoting pride in Ireland's heritage
3. Proposing policy and providing advice

Further information on the Heritage Council can be found at their website [www.heritagecouncil.ie](http://www.heritagecouncil.ie).

### **Heritage Awareness Research**

As part of the key theme of collecting data, research was carried out with the primary objective of establishing a baseline of heritage awareness in Ireland and to provide a clear indication of the current level of understanding of Heritage and related issues amongst the general public.

More specifically the research was required to provide feedback on the following:

- Awareness and understanding of heritage
- Main issues in relation to heritage
- Importance of heritage in Ireland
- Awareness of parties responsible for heritage at a national and local level
- Attitudes to current means of protecting heritage
- Sources of information on heritage
- Incidence of involvement in heritage conservation

The research involved both a qualitative and quantitative phase. The qualitative phase involved ten group discussions conducted amongst a cross-section of the population. The quantitative phase involved interviews conducted in respondents' homes. 1400 interviews were held across 70 sampling points spread nation-wide. Fieldwork was conducted during December 1998 and January 1999.

### **Findings**

The main findings considered in this paper are presented under the following headings:

- Awareness and understanding of heritage
- Interest and importance of heritage issues
- Awareness of organisations with responsibility for heritage
- Attitude to heritage issues



### Awareness and understanding of heritage

When asked unprompted what they understood heritage to be, over 80% of people responded with words such as old places, castles, and the past. This contrasts with 5% who mentioned our language and only 3% who consider the environment, trees and nature as part of our heritage. This is confirmed in prompted responses to describe what is included as part of our heritage. Over 86% consider castles to 'definitely' be heritage, 51% consider country houses, only 39% consider landscapes as definitely part of heritage and 28% our wildlife habitats.

### Interest and importance of heritage

The qualitative survey showed very strikingly that the level of interest and level of knowledge in heritage was highest amongst rural 'empty-nesters' in the 50 plus age group and schoolboys in the 12-14 age group. Urban dwellers in the 25-45 age group scored lowest in both interest and knowledge. The quantitative survey showed rather strikingly that 57% of respondents were at least fairly interested in wildlife while only 46% were interested in architectural heritage. This contrasts with the earlier findings regarding what is considered as heritage. The quantitative survey goes on to show that men, older people and social class ABC1 are most interested in heritage and that the lowest interest overall is in Dublin. Dublin is again the lowest when respondents are asked to consider how important it is to protect our heritage. Only 41% consider it as very important compared to 54% in Connacht and Ulster.

### Awareness of organisations with responsibility for heritage

Unprompted responses to the question "What organisations are responsible for heritage?" illustrates the lack of clarity in the public mind as to what agency (if any) is responsible for heritage. Responses showed a range of views with NGOs at 12%, government departments at 10%, the Heritage

Council at 8%, local authorities at 7% and Bord Failte at 2%.

Prompted responses to the question "how familiar are you with the organisations involvement in heritage?" further emphasises this lack of clarity with only 20% being at least fairly familiar with the role of government departments, 20% fairly familiar with the role of the Heritage Council, 23% with the role of the local authorities and 17% with the role of the NGOs. Of the 20% familiar with the role of the Heritage Council those in the 50 plus age group were dominant (38%) whilst the 15-24 age group made up only 16%. The areas where people are least aware of the role of the Heritage Council are Dublin (21%) and Connacht and Ulster (12%).

### Attitudes to heritage issue

Attitudes to heritage amongst the general public are fairly consistent.

- 83% are proud of their heritage
- 68% would like more information
- 59% consider heritage is too tourist focused
- 42% are too busy themselves to become involved and as a result don't get involved
- Only 7% of respondents consider themselves actively involved with heritage at a local level

However 76% feel that heritage is everyone's responsibility and 91% feel it should be protected. The other 9% are "don't knows" i.e. no-one stated that heritage should not be protected. However only 41% feel that tax payers money should be used for protection of heritage.

### Recommendations

The research points to a series of recommendations which are noted in Box 1 below. These recommendations are aimed at the Heritage Council itself and also at those organisations and agencies which to date have had responsibility for Ireland's national heritage. Their acceptance and implementation will derive major benefit for our heritage.

### Conclusion

This research provides interesting findings which need further detailed analysis. However one analysis is that, to a very large extent, people in Ireland (the community at large) have been dis-enfranchised from their heritage. Not only is there a lack of clarity regarding where responsibility for our heritage lies but people themselves, whilst feeling that the responsibility should be a shared one, do not feel in a position to do anything about it. There is also a need to heighten awareness amongst the general public of the true significance of our natural heritage. People don't see the environment as part of their heritage, and as a result don't feel attached to it.

Whilst expressing an interest in it they are unaware of the need for their involvement to safeguard the natural heritage for future generations.

The onus to change this lies with agencies and the communities they serve alike. Centralisation of responsibility has only served our heritage (in the widest sense) well in parts. Changing attitudes towards our heritage and promoting pride in, and appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage across a wider spectrum of society, represents a major challenge for the Heritage Council.

#### Box 1: Key recommendations arising from the research

1. Encourage participation / involvement
  - Fund local events and community projects relating to heritage.
  - Promote the setting up and maintenance of heritage and historical societies
  - Fund/issue grants for local projects of deserving nature
  - Lobby heritage at a local level - encourage setting up and funding of heritage societies
2. Endorse/sponsor local heritage societies to encourage County Councils into adopting a heritage policy
3. Appoint specialist heritage officers/advisors to each County Council
4. Increase heritage funding, especially to the Heritage Council
5. Incorporate heritage within the curriculum stage in primary and secondary schools
6. Clarify the precise roles of each heritage organisation, through the production and distribution of information leaflets and TV/advertising campaigns
7. Enforce measures to protect heritage

*Copies of the full report on the Heritage Awareness study can be obtained directly from the Heritage Council.*

*Michael Starrett is the Chief Executive of the Heritage Council and can be contacted at:*

*The Heritage Council,  
Kilkenny, Ireland.*

*Tel: 00 353 5670 777*

*Fax: 00 353 5670 788*

# Green Transport

*John Hobby, National Trust*

In the Summer 1999 edition of this magazine we mentioned the National Trust's "green flagship", Prior Park. Tens of thousands of green visitors have used the frequent buses from near Bath's railway station. The story, however, goes back more than seven years when I began my green crusade to provide improved bus links for carfree visitors to our historic houses. Brian James of First Western National kindly agreed to re-route the 55 bus via Lanhydrock; and similar arrangements followed for all the Cornish National Trust (NT) properties.

In partnership with English Heritage, the Trust advertises carfree days out in Cornwall. As well as our pictures and green offers in the timetables, we have posters – on green paper – inside the First Western National buses. Last summer in partnership with Cornwall County Council we also had vinyl adverts on the back of the vehicles.

Our colleagues at First Great Western ran a 2 for 1 promotion for Lanhydrock; and Wales & West promoted over a dozen NT properties in its Rail Rover leaflets. The carfree map of Devon and Cornwall, produced by the Rail Partnership at Plymouth University, lists the major NT houses and gardens which are accessible by public transport. "Green rewards" are offered to visitors with valid bus & rail tickets. It is not just rail and bus passengers who are welcome as carfree visitors. Cycle racks have appeared at many properties and the Trust has worked closely with Sustrans on safe cycle routes. At Petworth and Winchester City Mill the two-wheeled visitor may enter free.

Waterborne visitors are catered for in the Lake District, using the award-winning steam yacht Gondola, launched originally in 1859 and renovated to opulent Victorian splendour by the Trust. An electric river bus from Guildford to Dapdune Wharf operates on the River Wey. From Calstock Quay a 12 seater ferry runs to Cotehele Quay, just a brief uphill walk from the Trust's fifteenth century historic house.

Electric trams feature in the Trust's promotion of Dunham Massey in Cheshire. A fully accessible Omni shuttle bus from Altrincham Interchange provides green access from Greater Manchester to this Georgian mansion set in large parkland. The vehicles, in NT livery, are driven by Trust volunteers and have carried over 3,000 carfree visitors each season. The Countryside Agency and Manchester Airport have generously supported these services which are integrated into the county's bus timetables.

In your travels by rail you must have seen our poster campaigns. First North Western publicised the Dunham shuttle; Wales & West carried posters for our Long Mynd Shuttle bus from Church Stretton station; Connex inundated the South East with posters for the Chartwell Explorer, The Tunbridge Wells Heritage Hopper and Surrey Hills buses. Indeed a Class 319 Connex Emu carries the nameplate "Surrey Hills". There are combined green day out tickets available from staffed Connex stations. Trust members can purchase "travel only" tickets; non-members buy the rail/bus/admission tickets from London stations at prices starting at £13. The success of these Kent promotions is attributable to David Greenwood at Kent County Council and the staff at Tunbridge Wells District Council.

Green Awards have been given to several carfree ventures, including the Chartwell Explorer and the Tunbridge Wells Heritage Hopper. Lest you think that green is boring, don't forget that 27,000 cars at Norden Park & Ride delivered tens of thousands of visitors to Corfe and Swanage by steamtrain! This venture also won a tourism award. Corfe Castle is five minutes from Corfe station and there has been a combination travel/entrance ticket for several years. Are we converting green visitors? How do we know? Regular surveys are conducted by Westminster University and Colin Speakman from Transport for Leisure has also produced various reports. Profiles have been carried out by wardens and county staff.



Photo: John Hobby

#### *Cotehele Ferry at Calstock Quay*

The Cotswold link X55 carried 15,000 passengers in 1999 and Japanese visitors obviously valued this daily service between Bath and Stratford, calling at Hidcote and Dyrham Park. Was this because the Trust and Gloucester County Council had direct links between their websites?

Can there be any more green excellence in store? You bet! The Trust's own X56 low floor Optare Solo will run from Bath to Dyrham from April 2000 and then operate a shuttle service on the Dyrham estate. There will be no cars at the house. The bus takes wheelchairs, naturally. Are the vehicles squeaky clean? The X55 and X56 use low sulphur diesel and have Euro 2 engines. You could try the kleenex test on the exhaust pipes!

How can you find out more? How to use these products? What about phone numbers, operating dates, prices? Why not write to me, with four first class stamps, to request your copy of Green Transport News? Any comments or eulogies also to me at the address below!

Virtually all the above carfree days are turn up and go but the "posh days" in Derbyshire require pre-booking. These heritage days from St Pancras to Chesterfield for a 1948 Bedford OB bus to Hardwick proved an absolute sell out from April to October. Book early in 2000!

We have merely skimmed the surface of the green transport initiatives in the Trust. We should have told you of the Lakeland shuttle and guided tours; the tours of Somerset from Dunster; the multitude of buses from Okehampton station which include the famous bike bus and 1950s heritage bus to Castle Drogo. Take a look at the Trust's handbook for 2000 or send for Green Transport News.

*Copies of Green Transport News can be obtained by sending four first class stamps to the National Trust at P.O. Box 39, Bromley, Kent.*

*John Hobby is the National Trust's Public Transport Co-ordinator and can be contacted at the National Trust, 36 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AS.*

## ***Book Review***

### ***A Right to Roam by Marion Shoard***

Oxford University Press, Oxford. ISBN:0-19-288016-0

Here is a book for walkers whose feet have, in many senses, barely touched the ground since the last election given the roller-coaster twists and turns of the Government policy and media hyperbole. This passionate guide contains a wealth of information for historians and social scientists too. Marion Shoard has ridden the crest of the 'right to roam' wave in her comprehensive coverage of the story so far, complete with an assuredly upbeat concluding call to arms.

The text's lack of definitive boundaries allows the reader the right to roam unchallenged throughout its 400 or so pages, with unfettered access to sensitive areas like landowners claims for compensation, concerns over public liability and guardianship of nature conservation. In this respect, Ms Shoard's only concession appears to be that horse-riders, cyclists and dog-owners should be excluded from the proposed legislation and their cause dealt with elsewhere. Indeed, the book suggests that "dog-owners who want to unleash their pets in the countryside" might instead have their needs met by public acquisition of land for dog use or perhaps by paying for the use of private land. "Stiff penalties should be imposed on anyone abusing the right to walk by trying to turn it into something more disruptive".

Chapters on the "Roots of exclusion" and "Forbidden kingdom" lucidly chart the erosion of public rights from the early ages, paying tribute to the land-owning lobby's more recent skilful use of the media, through the portrayal of the plight of the 'typical small farmer'. Later chapters dealing with the modern (post 1949) provision of access even have room for an honourable mention of "the Country Code's unexplained prohibitions" building to a (not completely watertight) discourse on how the right to roam can work in practice. Perhaps the one gap in this otherwise fine book is that it does not consider how the people of England and Wales will culturally adjust to the proposed right with the new responsibilities that it will undoubtedly bring.

*Reviewed by Martyn Evans, Countryside Council for Wales.*

#### **WORKING TOGETHER REPORT**

The RSPB, the Countryside Agency and Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education have produced a new report 'Working Together - a Rural Vision for a New Millennium', which highlights successful rural projects across England and Europe. The report provides an insight into how innovative community-led rural initiatives, with sufficient government or European funding and support, can provide a boost for wildlife, people and jobs.

*The report is available from the RSPB Policy Research Department, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL. Tel: 01767 680551*

#### **COUNTRYSIDE BENEFITS FROM DEVELOPERS CONTRIBUTIONS**

This report, prepared by Oxford Brookes University, comprises a national analysis of countryside benefits from development. It details how such measures as access to countryside are being successfully provided in conjunction with a range of development schemes across the country. Details of over 40 recent examples of planning obligations are given.

*The report is available from Cassandra Blake, Research and Publications Secretary, School of Planning, Oxford Brookes University, Gypsy Lane, Oxford OX3 0BP. Tel: 01865 483491  
Fax: 01865 484081*

## News Releases

### **COUNTRYSIDE AMENITY AND CONSERVATION BILL**

In the Queen's speech on the 17th November, the Government announced plans to introduce a Countryside Amenity and Conservation Bill into Parliament early in 2000. The Bill will cover:

#### **Improved access to the open countryside**

People will have a new statutory right of access to mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land. These categories of land account for some four million acres or about 10% of England & Wales. The new right will be coupled with clear responsibilities and restrictions to respect the rights of landowners and managers. The Government has also received and is considering recommendations by the Countryside Agency and Forestry Commission on extending access to other types of open countryside - woods, coastal land, and watersides.

#### **Modernising rights of way.**

Existing rights of way will be improved to reflect modern day needs. In July DETR launched its consultation document "Improving Rights of Way in England and Wales". The consultation period closed on 15 October 1999. The responses received are currently being assessed.

#### **Strengthening the protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest.**

Measures to prevent damage will be reinforced through tougher penalties. In its Manifesto, the Government indicated its intention to examine the protection of SSSIs and in September 1998, it issued a consultation document "Sites of Special Interest (SSSI) - Better Protection and Management" setting out various options. The Government's response to this was set out in "A Framework for Action", published in August 1999.

#### **Extra powers for the prosecution of wildlife criminals.**

The Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime's

(PAW), a multi-agency body which includes the Police, HM Customs and Excise, and other government and voluntary bodies with an active interest in combating wildlife crime, published recommendations for changes to strengthen wildlife protection for consultation in 1997. The majority of the recommendations gained the Government's support and it is expected that many of the proposals will be taken forward in this Bill.

*Further details of PAW and its activities can be found at <http://www.wildlife-countryside.detr.gov.uk>*

The Countryside Legislation Division (working closely with European Wildlife Division) is responsible for co-ordinating and implementing this legislation. For further details:

*Access to open countryside - Countryside Legislation Division 1, DETR Zone 3/E5, Eland House Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU. Tel: 0171 890 3981 Fax: 0171 890 4591*

*e-mail: [access@detr.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:access@detr.gsi.gov.uk)*

*Improving rights of way - Countryside Legislation Division 2, DETR, Room 16/12 Tollgate House, Houlton Street, Bristol BS2 9DJ. Tel: 0117 987 8427 Fax: 0117 987 8250*

*e-mail: [rightsofway\\_consult@detr.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:rightsofway_consult@detr.gsi.gov.uk)*

*Wildlife protection & SSSIs - European Wildlife Division 2, DETR, Room 9/22 Tollgate House, Houlton Street, Bristol BS2 9DJ. Tel: 0117 987 6170 Fax: 0117 987 8119*

*e-mail: [sssis@detr.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sssis@detr.gsi.gov.uk)*

### **ACCESS TO WOODS, COASTAL AREAS AND WATERSIDES**

The Countryside Agency has advised the Government that plans for improved access to 'open' countryside should also include more access to woods, coastal areas and watersides, but it recommends a different approach for each type of land.

The legislation should:

- create a new statutory right of access to foreshore and associated coastal land like beaches, dunes and coastal marshes - but not to cliff faces;
- enable landowners to grant permanent new access rights over their own land - and encourage this by directing the Forestry Commission to grant such rights over the woods in its control, and other land-owning Government departments to follow suit;
- enable much more vigorous, targeted creation of rights of way along stretches of waterside such as river banks and lake shores; and
- put public access to canal towpaths on a secure and permanent footing for the future.

The Forestry Commission have advised the Government on access to woodlands and their main recommendations are:

- the creation of a new power (dedication) to enable landowners to grant access rights to their woods; and
- the introduction of new incentives to encourage landowners to provide access to woodlands. These would be targeted to favour priority areas where there is high local demand for access but a shortage of opportunities.

The Forestry Commissioners themselves manage almost 220,000 hectares (530,00 acres) of woodland in England. To safeguard and extend access to the woodland in their care the Commissioners propose:

- targeting the purchase of existing lease-hold woodlands to areas where there is a high demand for access and recreation, and through buying land to create new woodlands;
- enhancement of the access and recreation facilities in the Commission's existing woodlands; and
- applying the new power of dedication to all freehold Forestry Commission woodland.

The Commissioners also recommend better public access links between woodlands and other land, including the targeted use of measures such as the creation of new rights of way. The National and Local Access Forums, which the Government is establishing, would help to identify the priorities for increasing access to woodlands.

*Full copies of the Commissioners' advice and recommendations on increasing access to England's woodlands are available on the Commission's website: [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)*

The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) has informed the National Assembly for Wales that, in its view, there should not be a statutory right of open access to coasts, woodlands and watersides (which includes lakes and rivers) due in part to the sensitive wildlife habitats found there, particularly along river banks, sea cliffs and in sand dunes. CCW's recommendations aim to improve access to these areas by voluntary means. CCW believes that a particularly cautious approach should be taken to river banks which are vital wildlife corridors often surrounded by acres of improved agricultural land. Sand dunes can also be extremely fragile and vulnerable - even a moderate amount of walking can cause serious damage to them. It is recognised that watersides, woods and coasts are very popular for recreation, but there are examples of effective voluntary agreements to provide access to these areas in Wales. The Wye Valley Walk is a 112 mile route, mainly along the bank of the Wye. It is made possible through linking public paths with paths created through voluntary agreements with local landowners. It is now a very popular regional route. CCW will also be working with relevant organisations and recreational groups to improve and manage access to these areas for other activities like canoeing and mountaineering.

*For further details, contact Gareth Roberts, Head of Recreation, Access and European Affairs, at CCW Head Office, Plas Penrhos, Ffordd Penrhos, Bangor, Gwynedd. LL57 2LQ.*

## **MAPPING OF OPEN COUNTRY**

Pilot maps of open country prepared in consultation with landowners and members of the Wales Access Forum have been produced by CCW for four areas in Wales. Draft maps of 'open country', prepared by consultants appointed by CCW, were sent to more than 300 local people for comment over the summer

and were followed by site meetings. The responses received during this consultation and further public meetings held throughout November will help CCW develop a more objective way of mapping open countryside throughout Wales.

If the Assembly agrees CCW's method for mapping open country and provides funding, CCW will start work, as requested by the Government, on mapping all open country in Wales. Drawing on the experience of creating the pilot maps, the national programme for mapping open country will:

- use CCW's habitat surveys to define the core areas of mountain, moor, heath and down in Wales;
- depend on wide consultation with local landowners, walkers and other interested people;
- ensure that defining the areas on the ground is done in a simple and unobtrusive way; and
- be shown on 1:25,000 maps.

The pilot maps of open country can be inspected at CCW's headquarters in Bangor and all Area Offices - in Bangor, Mold, Aberystwyth, Llandrindod Wells and Cardiff.

The Countryside Agency has appointed a consultant to look at existing data sets and to develop mapping methodologies which make optimum use of these data sets. A Mapping Advisory Group has also been established to advise on technical aspects of mapping. Test areas have been selected to look at the utility of these existing data sets. The Countryside Agency will also be working closely with the Ordnance Survey to develop how the information can be presented in future OS maps.

*Further details can be obtained from the National Access Forum section of the Countryside Agency's website at [www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk).*

#### **FIRST STEPS TO CREATE NEW NATIONAL PARKS**

On the 29th September, the first steps towards designation of the New Forest and the South Downs as National Parks were announced by the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott. The proposed two new

National Parks would bring the number of National Parks in England and Wales to 12 (or 13 if you include the Broads Authority). The total area being considered for designation amounts to almost 2,000 sq km. National Park status would ensure protection of natural beauty, wildlife and the area's cultural heritage.

The Countryside Agency have been asked to consider designating a New Forest National Park and, in consultation with local authorities, a National Park in the South Downs. There is also an intention to do more to conserve and enhance the very varied collection of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which are equal in terms of landscape significance to the National Parks. Details of a new series of measures is expected to be provided on this in the near future.

*Further details can be found on the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions website: [www.detr.gov.uk](http://www.detr.gov.uk).*

#### **HERITAGE POLICY**

The Arts Minister Alan Howarth has announced that the Government is to take a fresh look at aspects of current policies relating to the historic environment. DCMS in conjunction with the DETR, will start work next year which will focus on, among other issues, the relationship between heritage and tourism and the way in which the different bodies in the sector work together. The minister has also reaffirmed the Government's "strong commitment to the nation's built heritage" and its determination to work for its preservation and enhancement. The first stage of this assessment will be carried out by English Heritage who will consult the other principal bodies in the sector as well as local government, developers and others with an interest. English Heritage will report to the DCMS and the DETR who expect to publish a statement before the end of 2000 setting out their vision for heritage and future plans.



## NEW REPORT UNDERLINES IMPORTANCE OF THRIVING RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Government should consider modernising the policy framework on rural issues to support its vision of thriving communities, according to a new report by the Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) of the Cabinet Office.

The PIU report, 'Rural Economies', is a discussion document and suggests that the Government should consider policy changes which would help to promote a rural England with enterprising economies, a sustainable agriculture, an enhanced environment and thriving communities. These include:

**An enterprising countryside** - by reducing the regulatory burden on business, improving the skills base and infrastructure in rural areas and raising the standard of advice and support services available to business. The PIU also recommended improving the support for tourism and recreation sectors;

**Encouraging sustainable agriculture** - helping farmers to adapt and diversify their businesses to generate sustainable commercial advantage. This could be done through a package of measures to promote enterprise, switch support to farmers to invest in schemes which enhance the environment, and a focus on new and emerging markets, such as that for organic food;

**Protection of the environment** - the PIU suggests introducing a new system which protects land of high environmental value from inappropriate development and stronger, more transparent mechanisms to limit and compensate for any damage caused by development in the rural environment. It also suggests improved access to the countryside for people from both rural and urban areas, and better management of traffic at the local level; and

**Promoting thriving communities** - by improving the access to public and private services in rural

areas. Public bodies could be encouraged to pool resources and make greater use of mobile provision, and to use technology to overcome problems of distance and sparsity. Services to address social and economic problems could be targeted more effectively.

The PIU suggest the Government considers a new commitment to market towns, which recognises their social and economic importance.

On the 7th December, the Agriculture Minister, Nick Brown also set out the Government's 'New Direction for Agriculture', which embraces many of the PIU's ideas.

*Copies of the report (ISBN 0-11-702673-5) are available from The Stationary Office, Tel:0870 600 5522 Fax:0870 600 5533. It will also be published on the World Wide Web at: [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/innovation](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/innovation). Responses to the PIU's report, to be fed into the Rural White Paper, should be sent by 11 February 2000 to: The Rural White Paper Team, DETR, Zone 3/A5, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London, SW1A 2AS.*

*Further details on the Nick Brown's announcement on "New Direction for Agriculture" can be found on the MAFF website: [www.maff.gov.uk](http://www.maff.gov.uk).*

## LOCAL HERITAGE INITIATIVE

Nationwide Building Society has joined forces with the Countryside Agency and the Heritage Lottery Fund to boost its new Local Heritage Initiative to help people care for their local landscape, landmarks and traditions. Funding from the Nationwide will help to enable communities throughout the country to get advice and information, as well as access to small grants. The Countryside Agency initiative is designed to provide cost-effective grants to encourage communities to take practical action to care for their local heritage. The three main components to the Local Heritage Initiative are for communities to assess their local heritage, carry out community-led action, and gain support for local organisations to ensure

the sustainability of heritage action. Projects can cover all aspects of heritage from lime kilns to local histories, wildlife sites to walls and way marks.

*Full details of the grant scheme and application details will be available on the Countryside Agency websites [www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk) and [www.lhi.org.uk](http://www.lhi.org.uk) following the launch of the national scheme at the end of January 2000.*

#### **NORTHERN IRELAND COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS AND ACTIVITIES NETWORK**

Tuesday 14th September saw the launch of the 'NI Countryside Access and Activities Network'. This new Network's role is to help co-ordinate the strategic development and management of countryside recreation in Northern Ireland and was established as a result of the publication of Northern Ireland's first Countryside Recreation Strategy in November 1998.

As an umbrella organisation, the Network seeks to bring together all those groups and bodies which have an interest in, or involvement with, countryside recreation. This includes participants in countryside recreation activities, local and central government organisations, farmers and landowners, environmental and community organisations and outdoor education and youth organisations.

The Network aims to:

- jointly represent countryside sports and recreation interests;
- promote good practice and responsible participation in countryside sports;
- promote good practice and joint initiatives in the provision, marketing and management of countryside activities;
- promote agreement and reconcile conflicts between users;
- prepare and publish appropriate publications; and
- secure funding for joint initiatives.

*Further details on the Network can be obtained from the Countryside Access and Activities Officer, House of Sport, Upper Malone Road, Belfast BT9 5LA. Tel: 01232 383863*

*e-mail: [caro-lynnne.ferris@sportscouncil-ni.org.uk](mailto:caro-lynnne.ferris@sportscouncil-ni.org.uk).*

#### **GREEN SPACES AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

The New Opportunities Fund first environmental initiative, Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities, is now open for applications. The aim of this fund is to help communities to understand, improve and care for their natural and living environment. Projects may include the creation, acquisition and improvement of green spaces and sustainable community schemes.

*For further details, contact the NOF on*

*Tel: 0845 0000 120 or visit their website at [www.nof.org.uk](http://www.nof.org.uk).*

#### **ANGLING AND WILDLIFE**

The Environment Agency has produced a new leaflet "Angling and Wildlife – Golden Rules" to ensure that our canals, riverbank and lakes are kept sparkling with diverse and healthy wildlife.

*A copy of the leaflet can be obtained free of charge by contacting your local Environment Agency office on Tel:0645 333111.*

#### **BT MILLENNIUM MILES**

The nation-wide BT Millennium Miles project is a new initiative launched by the Fieldfare Trust that is designed to identify and record at least 2000 miles of countryside suitable for access by people with a disability. The resulting database, which should be completed by the end of 2001, will be available in a form that can be easily used by individuals and organisations.

*For further information, please contact Phil Chambers at the Fieldfare Trust, 67A The Wicker, Sheffield, S3 8HT. Tel:0114 2701668*

*e-mail: [fieldfare@btinternet.com](mailto:fieldfare@btinternet.com)*

## **NORTH AMERICA/UK COUNTRYSIDE EXCHANGE 2000**

The Countryside Exchange is an established programme, supported by several central agencies, that aims to bring together rural and urban fringe communities facing economic, social and environmental change with international teams of experienced professionals. The exchange process involves intensive, week-long studies by teams of specifically chosen professionals working to a brief set by the host community. The results are presented to the community through both a public presentation of the teams findings and a report, which local people can use to move forward.

*If you are interested in developing a case study for the 2000 Exchange, please contact John Chapman or Phil Dagnall, CEI Associates, Progress Centre, Charlton Place, Adwick Green, Manchester M12 6HS .*

*Tel: 0161 274 3337 Fax: 0161 274 4911*

*e-mail: [cei@cei-associates.org](mailto:cei@cei-associates.org)*

## **TOURISM RESEARCH WEBSITE**

Looking for research on UK tourism? The Tourism Research Liaison Group of the UK has set up an official website, which can be found at [www.staruk.org.uk](http://www.staruk.org.uk). It provides details of statistics and market research on tourism in the UK, tourism research publications and information about the English Tourist Board library.

## **RESEARCH DIRECTORY**

If you would like to obtain a copy of the *CRN Research Directory 1998: Research Completed by CRN Agencies 1997/98* - then please contact CRN. A web-based research directory will be developed by CRN in 2000.

### **NOTE**

*If you would like details of new initiatives, publications or consultation documents to be included in the News Section of the next edition of Countryside Recreation, please send details to the Network Manager by the 25 February 2000.*

# Countryside Recreation and Training Events

## CRN TRAINING EVENTS FOR 2000

Provisional timings for CRN workshops for 2000 are listed below. Please contact the CRN for further details.

Sustainable Tourism and Tourism Strategies	March 2000
Access	April 2000
Sustainable Transport	September 2000
Sport in the Countryside Around Towns	November 2000

### January 2000

12 – 14 January

**Access for All – Footpath**

**Assessment**

**and Management**

(Price Davies Associates/Glamorgan Wildlife Trust)

South Wales, Bridgend

Cost: £150

17 – 19 January

**Project Management**

(Losehill Hall)

Cost: £405

17 – 21 January

**Interpretation**

(Losehill Hall)

Cost: £499 Subsidised: £249.50

18 January

**Public Participation for Environmental Managers**

(School of Biological Sciences, University of Bristol)

Long Ashton Research Station

Cost: £70

19 January

**Raising Funds from Companies and Trusts**

(Environmental Trainers Network)

Milton Keynes

Cost: £101 Subsidised: £50.74

24 – 28 January

**Practical Application of Countryside Law**

(Plas Tan y Bwlch)

Cost: £404 Subsidised: £242

25 January

**A Sense of Place – the Role of the Arts in Community Environmental Projects**

(Bishops Wood Centre)

Worcestershire

Cost: £52.50

25 January

**Intensive Fundraising Training Day**

(Yorkshire Dales Millenium Trust)

Leeds

Cost: £75 plus VAT

26 January

**Access for All – Footpath**

**Construction**

(Price Davies Associates/Glamorgan Wildlife Trust)

South Wales, Bridgend

Cost: £60

31 January – 3 February

**A Way with Words**

(Plas Tan y Bwlch)

Cost: £441 Subsidised: £331

### February 2000

1 February

**Taking Environmental Youth Work Further**

(Environmental Trainers Network)

Worcester

Cost: £90 + VAT

2 February

**Getting Local People Active and Involved**

(Environmental Trainers Network)

Manchester

Cost: £101.80 + VAT

Subsidised: £50.90 + VAT

2 February

**Community Needs Analysis – Working with Communities**

(Price Davies Associates/Glamorgan Wildlife Trust)

South Wales, Bridgend

Cost: £50

2 – 4 February

**Working with Communities – Tools and Techniques**

(Losehill Hall)

Cost: £405

3 February

**Environmental Grants Workshop - Meet the Fund Managers**

(Environmental Trainers Network)

London

Cost: £104.58 + VAT Subsidised:

£52.29 + VAT

4 February

**Access for All – Footpath Design**

(Price Davies Associates/Glamorgan Wildlife Trust)

South Wales, Bridgend

Cost: £60

4 – 6 February

**Touching Winter**

(Creeping Toad)

Derbyshire

Cost: £75

7 – 9 February

**People and Places - Examining Local Distinctiveness**

(Losehill Hall)

Cost: £405 Subsidised: £202.50

7 – 12 February

**Disabled Access to the Countryside – Putting the Case for Integration**

(Churchtown OEC)

Cornwall

Cost: £ 250

9 February

**Working with Communities – Producing a Green Plan**

(Price Davies Associates/Glamorgan Wildlife Trust)

South Wales, Bridgend

Cost: £50

9 February

**Health Initiatives in Sustainable Leisure**

(Environmental Trainers Network)

Birmingham

Cost: £103.36 + VAT Subsidised:

£51.68 + VAT

**11 February**  
**Access for All Footpath Assessment**  
 (Price Davies Associates/Glamorgan Wildlife Trust)  
 South Wales, Bridgend  
 Cost: £60

**14 February**  
**Supporting Community Groups to Plan and Deliver Environmental Projects**  
 (Environmental Trainers Network)  
 Manchester  
 Cost: £107.50+VAT  
 Subsidised:£53.75 + VAT

**14 – 15 February**  
**Cashing in? Generating income from the users of countryside sites**  
 (Losehill Hall)  
 Cost: £260 Subsidised: £130

**February 15**  
**Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Responsibilities for Countryside staff**  
 (School of Biological Sciences, University of Bristol)  
 Bristol  
 Cost: £70

**16 February**  
**Strategies for Sustainable Leisure**  
 (Environmental Trainers Network)  
 Sheffield  
 Cost: £101.48 + VAT Subsidised: £50.74 + VAT

**23 – 25 February**  
**Project Managing Large Funding Programs**  
 (Yvonne Hosker Training and Advice Service)  
 Manchester  
 Cost: £300 Subsidised: £150

**24 February**  
**Involving Children in Environmental Activities**  
 (Environmental Trainers Network)  
 Leeds  
 Cost: £107.14 + VAT Subsidised: £53.57 + VAT

**24 February (plus 9 March and 23 March)**  
**Leading and Managing Conservation Projects**  
 (Environmental Trainers Network)  
 London  
 Cost: £90 + VAT  
 Subsidised: £240 + VAT

**28 February – 3 March**  
**Landscape Conservation and Management: the Historical Dimension**  
 (Plas Tan Y Bwlch)  
 Cost: £435 Subsidised:£217.50

### March 2000

**1 March**  
**Improve your Fund Raising Skills**  
 (Environmental Trainers Network)  
 Birmingham  
 Cost: 110.72 + VAT  
 Subsidised: £55.36 + VAT

**1 March**  
**Public Rights of Way - "Once a highway, always a highway"**  
 (Rights of Way Law Review)  
 Wolfson College, Oxford  
 Cost: £160 + VAT

**1 – 3 March**  
**Fund Raising for Local Authorities and Other Agencies**  
 (Losehill Hall)  
 Cost: £405 Subsidised:£202.50

**6 – 8 March**  
**Developing Community Strategies**  
 (Losehill Hall)  
 Cost: £405 Subsidised: £207.50

**13 – 15 March**  
**Public Rights of Way Law for Community Representatives and Voluntary Groups**  
 (Plas Tan Y Bwlch)  
 Cost: £250 Subsidised: £125

**23rd March**  
**Erosion Control on Archaeological Earthworks and Recreational Paths**  
 (Countryside Agency - North East Regional Office)  
 Hexham  
 Cost: £90 Subsidised: £45

**27 – 28 March**  
**Access for All**  
 (Losehill Hall)  
 Cost: £370 Subsidised: £185

**27 – 31 March**  
**Education in the Countryside**  
 (Losehill Hall)  
 Cost: £499 Subsidised:£249.50

### April 2000

**10 – 12 April**  
**Surveying and Map Interpretation Skills**  
 (Losehill Hall)  
 Cost: £454 Subsidised: £227

**10 – 12 April**  
**Site Management Planning**  
 (Losehill Hall)  
 Cost: £509 Subsidised: £254.50

**17-19 April**  
**Guided Walks**  
 (Plas Tan y Bwlch)  
 Cost:£366 Subsidised: £274.50

### Contact details for training/events organisers

Birkbeck College  
 Tel: 0171 631 6654

Bishops Wood Centre  
 Tel: 01299 250513

Churchtown Outdoor Education Centre  
 Tel: 01208 872148

Countryside Agency - North East Regional Office  
 Tel: 0191 232 8252

Creeping Toad  
 Tel: 0161 226 8127

Danywenallt Study Centre  
 Tel: 01874 676677

Environment Trainers Network  
 Tel: 0121 358 2155  
 www.btcv.org.uk

The Fieldfare Trust  
 Tel: 0114 2701668

Field Studies Council  
 Tel: (Head Office) 01743 850 674  
 www.field-studies-council.org

Harper Adams University College  
 Tel: 01952 815 281

Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM)  
 ILAM Services Events Team  
 Tel: 01491 874 854

ILAM Training Ltd  
Tel: 01291 626 322  
www.ilam.co.uk

Kindrogan Field Centre  
Tel: 01250 881 286  
www.econet.org.uk/kindrogan

Losehill Hall  
Tel: 01433 620 373

Low Bank Outdoor Education Centre  
Tel: 01539 441 314

Plas Tan y Bwlch  
Tel: 01766 590 324/590 334

Price Davies Associates  
Tel: 01656 724100

Rights of Way Law Review  
Tel: 01249 740273

School of Biological Sciences  
University of Bristol  
Tel: 0117 928 9035

Yorkshire Dales Millenium Trust  
Tel: 015242 51002  
www.ydmt.org

Yvonne Hosker Training  
Tel: 0161 432 5951

**CRN is keeping advance information of training events, conferences and workshops, in order to act as a clearing house for those who are planning events and wish to avoid clashes. A listing in these pages is free. If your organisation has event details please forward them to CRN.**

# Countryside Recreation Network Publications List

	Price(incl.postage)	Tick
<b>CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS</b>		
Communities in their Countryside (1994)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Today's Thinking for Tomorrow's Countryside (1995)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Access for All a Reality (1997)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the Honeypot Overflowing?(1998)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS</b>		
Environmental Economics, Sustainable Management and the Countryside (1994)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Drive in the Country? – Examining the Problems of Recreational Travel (1994)	£7	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sport in the Countryside (1995)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIS & Access to the Countryside (1995)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playing Safe? Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside(1995)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Brush with the Land – Art in the Countryside I (1995)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Brush with the Land – Art in the Countryside II (1996)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consensus in the Countryside I – Reaching Shared agreement in policy, planning and management (1996)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consensus in the Countryside II (1996)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do Visitor Survey's Count? – Making use of Surveys for Countryside Recreation (1996)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to Water - Sharing Access on Reservoirs and Rivers (1997)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIS & Countryside Management – Theory and Application (1997)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Ends Meet (1997)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sponsorship (1998)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Just Walking the Dog(1999)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using Local Distinctiveness as an Economic Development Tool (1999)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>CRN Research Directory</b> <i>An annual directory of the research work carried out by the CRN agencies during the year</i>		
Research Directory 1998	£5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Directory 1997	£5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Directory 1996	£2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research Directory 1995	£2	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>In future the Research Directory will be available as a searchable database on the CRN Website.</i>		
UK Day Visits Survey 1994 (1996)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
UK Day Visits Survey 1993 (1995)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please photocopy this page and send it with an official order or a cheque made payable to 'University of Wales Cardiff' at the following address: Countryside Recreation Network, Department of City & Regional Planning, Cardiff University, Glamorgan Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, CF10 3WA.

