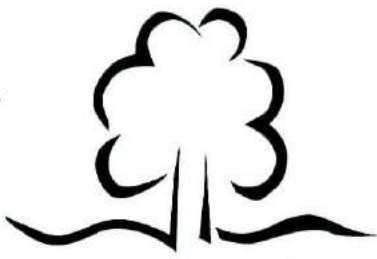


C O U N T R Y S I D E R E C R E A T I O N N e t w o r k N e w s



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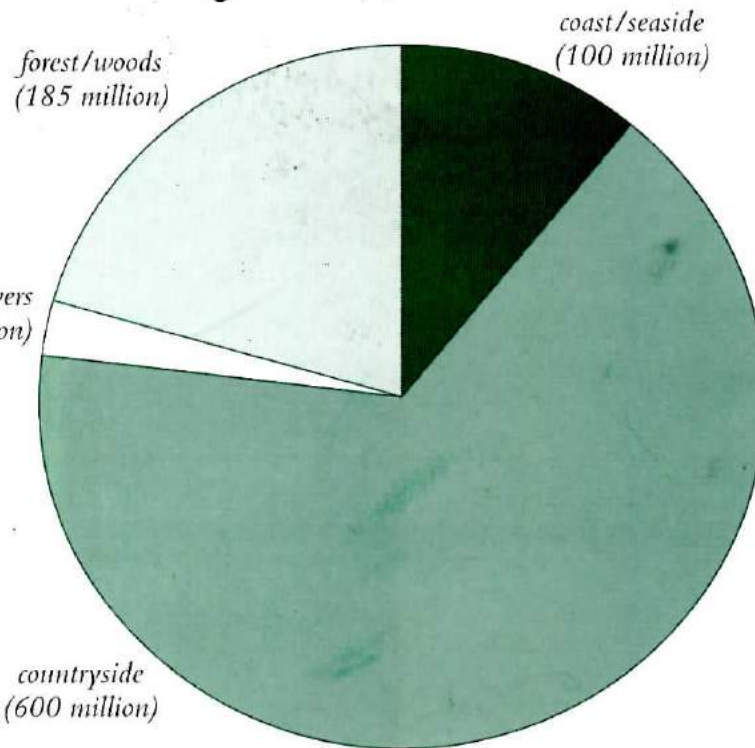
1993 UK Day Visits Survey

Some 2,200 million day visits were made in 1993, over 900 million of these to the countryside. The results of the 1993 UK Day Visits Survey substantiate and extend the findings of the 1992 Survey. For example the destinations of respondents remained broadly similar, the countryside being the focus for over one third of visits and the seaside/coast around 5-8%. The characteristics of those likely to make day visits are confirmed; generally they are:

- in the younger age groups;
- in full time employment;
- in the A B C1 social classes; and
- have access to a car.

However, in the light of the larger survey, spending patterns have been revised, the average spend per visit falling from £13 to £7.50 and the total value of the visits only increasing by only 15% (from £13,000 to £15,000 million) despite the doubling of day visits recorded.

The limited role of public transport in undertaking day visits is prominent, with less than 1 in 20 trips made using public transport, although there is considerable variation in this general trend: visits to forests/woods were least likely to be car-based (31% of visits were by car and 60% were on foot), perhaps confirming the importance of local opportunities for countryside recreation.



Day Trips to the Countryside 1993

The figures on journey times help to explain this with the *average* distance travelled was 15 miles, this varying with the type of location—from 11 miles for forest/woodland and 17 miles for the countryside to 30 miles for canals/rivers and 34 miles for the coast/seaside.

Recreation traditionally covers a broad range of activity though walking and rambling remains predominant in the wider countryside (36%), in forests and woodlands (73%), canals and rivers (30%) and at the seaside/coast (25%). Other active sports and recreational activities accounted for some 6-8% of activities.

A substantial number of visits were of a solitary nature, 33% in the countryside, 45% in forests/woods, 25% at canals/rivers and 17% at the seaside coast.

The full results are on pages 7 to 12.

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- *Customer Care in the Countryside*
- *1993 UK Day Visits Survey*
- *Sustainable Development*
- *Countryside Access in Northern Ireland*

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

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COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION NETWORK

CRN is a UK-wide network of the agencies concerned with countryside and related recreation matters—exchanging and spreading information to develop best policy and practice in countryside recreation.

Membership is drawn from the national statutory organisations,

the local authority associations and the research councils. The Network served extends to include the clients and customers of the member agencies. The Network aims to assist the working of the agencies concerned with countryside and related recreation research by:

1. identifying and helping to meet the needs of CRN members for advice, information and research;
2. promoting co-operation between member agencies in formulating and executing research on countryside and related recreation issues;
3. encouraging and assisting the dissemination of the results of countryside research and best practice amongst the agencies and clients of the agencies.

CRN News is produced three times a year and welcomes submissions of articles and letters from all its readers. The deadline for items for the June 1994 edition is 6 May. The Newsletter, along with an annual Research Directory detailing research completed by CRN member agencies, is available free. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please contact:

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A Call for Debate...

I would like to applaud Anne Sansom's thoughts expressed in the October issue of CRN News, putting the case for increased resources for educating visitors to the countryside about farming. Most urban dwellers have lost all family ties with the country side and its ways, and many seem to have the idea that 'countryside' is some sort of public open space like an urban park. This misconception is understandable in situations such as National Parks and AONBs where the designation may appear to confer some sort of public ownership where this is not the case.

The sort of problems mentioned in the article are all too common and seem to be the result of total ignorance as to what is acceptable behaviour on farmland. It seems possible

...and Contributions

One of the aims of CRN is the dissemination of information to a wide audience. The past three editions of the Newsletter have contained a variety of articles in the main emanating from the statutory agencies who have interests in countryside recreation. This, however, is only a fraction of the work which must be going on nationally and it is with this in mind that you are invited to contribute to the Newsletter through articles and letters drawing attention to projects undertaken in your area or by

that the negative media coverage of modern public's attitude to farmers and their property, whether the farmer is of the 'prarie farming' type or not. Many of the most beautiful parts of the country owe their character to the farming systems practised there; of course there are many problems and imperfections associated with current practices but this is no reason to tolerate damage and disrespect to farm property.

I hope that ways and means of improving the situation will be a theme for further discussion among those involved in promoting countryside recreation.

*Marian J Hardlug
Farm Conservation Consultant
Wartling, E. Sussex*

your organisation, perhaps as a local authority, voluntary or community group or academic. It is a chance to publicise your work, let others who receive the Newsletter (over 3,500 directly with many more readers) know what you are doing, how they might benefit and how they might get involved. The Network is here to help publicise and disseminate information about best practice in countryside recreation. Please contact me at the address above if you have any suitable material for publication, including diary dates for relevant conferences and courses.

Time to Water the Grassroots

I hope Thomas Huxley's questioning of Value for Money (VFM) studies (June 1993 issue of CRN News) has started a debate which CRN will encourage. Like motherhood and apple pie, VFM is one of those things we all agree with, in principle anyway. But in practice we have our doubts. In the quest for greater efficiency are we really asking the right questions of the right people?

In essence Tom argued that VFM studies focused on the wrong criteria—economic returns rather than sustainability; assessed value on the basis of the trivia we can measure rather than the things that we treasure but can't; and it may not be cost-effective in themselves as effort, which could be devoted to more practical work, is diverted into VFM studies.

VFM studies can be diversionary if they concentrate solely on greater efficiency (improving the way we do things) and if they distract us from raising questions of effectiveness (ensuring we do the right things). I would therefore add to Tom's list of concerns (criteria, measurement and cost) and suggest that VFM studies tend to be narrowly focused and democratic. Such studies tend to be centralised administrative and accountancy exercises, internal to organisations and officials, yet they have broad implications both for the environment and for the quality of life for many people. They may be thought to be largely technical in content but they are profoundly political in nature.

The important considerations are about our stake in our environment. They are about sustainability (and we have to bring that esoteric debate down to earth) and about devolving power and increasing accountability. We now know that environmental interests are the longer-term interests which get scant consideration. We should know that to persuade people to act responsibly, when their interests are affected, they have to be involved or represented in the negotiations and not presented with decisions which have been made for short-term expediency and handed down to them from a distant place.

To me it isn't enough to say that these tasks are fraught with difficulty and leave it at that, nor to hide behind the market mechanism as the only way of reaching just about every public decision, when it fails to address the issues of who loses and who benefits. I admit to being influenced by two recent experiences in the USA. One was trying to find out more about how the "limits of acceptable change" approach to planning works in practice. The second was attending a US Forest Service workshop on the "hard-to-define-values" of outdoor recreation. Both illustrate a typically purposeful American approach which is easy to criticise but at least both exercises are honest

attempts to address intrinsically difficult issues. The first attempts to involve the affected people in managing the wilderness they all care about. Its failings are common to many other attempts at rational planning, monitoring or public involvement. The second still has a long way to go in defining and measuring the difficult to measure. But at least public servants in the USA are seeking to recognise and articulate the wide range of cultural and ethnic values of that continent and to incorporate them in a new land management ethic for the federal agencies. They realise that they have to combine quantitative and qualitative social research methods with more direct forms of expression.

My contention is that how we revitalise democracy in Britain and how we involve more people in decisions that directly affect them will be one of the burning political issues for the next few years. In Britain, we need a more open discussion about what kinds of countryside we want in the future. As planning technique, neither of the current catch phrases—"desired future conditions" or "limits of acceptable change"—are likely to be directly transferable from the USA to Britain but behind those phrases lie serious principles that we should understand. These types of exercises might help us to look forward rather than to look back and they have been constructed to address the issue of who decides the future of the countryside.

CRN and its member agencies will have to respond to the challenge of how these broader range of values can be represented in the equation. If we rely on science and experts alone, we run the risk of missing the values we can't measure. If we rely solely on public participation, we only hear from organised interests. We need to combine both social science and public participation and we need to develop better methods of decision making. We already have a working model in countryside management projects, which in their various forms don't change the world but they do help to build better relationships and get people to work together. We need to adapt this approach to large scale problems.

CRN inherited from CRRAG a lively conference and workshops and an inter-agency research liaison committee. No doubt these will continue. But if CRN is to be a genuine network, it has to reach the parts that CRRAG didn't reach, the wider constituency of researchers and practitioners in non-government as well as government organisations. Not only reach these parts but involve them. In short, CRN will have to practice what it preaches—it will have to become more of a grass roots organisation than CRRAG ever was.

Roger Sidaway, Research & Policy Consultant

Room for Improvement?

In response to the articles describing opportunities for sport and recreation in the Community Forests and National Forest in the October edition of the Newsletter, access opportunities are, however, likely to be limited, given the dogged persistence of the Countryside Commission and the Community and National Forest teams that access must not be compulsory but merely permissive, provided through management agreements.

We have plenty of evidence that landowners and occupiers in the areas covered by the proposed Community Forests and the National Forest are anti-access—indeed the official survey of the public rights of way in the National Forest has shown that nearly half of them cannot be found without a map and that many of them are illegally blocked,

cropped and ploughed. If the owners and occupiers cannot obey the highway law, they are unlikely to volunteer new access.

The Open Spaces Society is advocating that provision of public access should be a condition of any planting grants in the Community and National Forests, that such access should be permanent and definitive rather than permissive, and that grant should be withdrawn if it is found that any paths on the recipient's land are not in good order as required by law.

If the Community Forests and National Forest are to live up to their names, the public must be able to enjoy them.

*Kate Ashbrook
General Secretary
Open Spaces Society*

The National Forest Responds

To paraphrase Kate Ashbrook, if the Community and National Forests are to live up to their names they must be created in the first place. This means persuading the owners of the land to participate in this great venture.

The lack of private farmland planting, countywide, demonstrates how little inclination there is to convert productive agricultural land to woodland. To succeed, both these exciting new forest initiatives must achieve such a conversion in substantial measure.

To further dampen any nascent enthusiasm to participate that might be kindled by dint of hard work and well-attuned incentives, by imposition of deterring conditions and regulations would be folly.

Farmers and landowners are wary, and in some cases even hostile to providing new access over their land and certainly if that is to be what they term "uncontrolled" access. We are nevertheless confident that within a satisfactory agreement and without a gun at their heads, landowners will be persuaded to negotiate new access provision by means of paths and sites.

Preliminary analysis of the responses to the public consultation on The National Forest Strategy indicates support for its approach to access. The message is clear that there is an expectation of widespread and improved public access in the Forest. It is equally clear that this must be fairly achieved not demanded in a manner that threatens the creation of the very resource upon which it depends.

*Susan Bell
Director, National Forest Development
Team*

Sustainable Development

English Nature has articulated some of the practical issues surrounding sustainable development and its relationship to nature conservation in a recent position statement. Nature conservation arguably lies at the centre of the debate surrounding sustainability, for its success reflects environmental health, and as such is a useful measure of progress towards sustainable development. Achieving environmental sustainability demands that environmental considerations are built into all levels of policy formulation, development and land use planning, using defined environmental limits that set the parameters within which real needs and realistic wants can attempt to be satisfied. English Nature's policy is therefore to:

- Seek to establish limits on human impacts, based on environmental carrying capacity.
- Promote demand management so as to keep development within carrying capacity.

- Seek to establish clear objectives for the next 5, 10 and 20 years which reduce and ultimately eliminate environmentally unsustainable activities. These should be substituted, where necessary, with alternative, sustainable approaches.
- Promote resource pricing which reflects environmental costs and incorporates the 'polluter pays' principle.
- Promote natural resource accounting which monitors, informs and adjusts the impact of human activity on the environment and makes explicit the full environmental costs and benefits.
- Promote strategic environmental assessment as a means to deliver sustainable development and a framework for strengthened environmental impact assessment of projects.

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- Seek environmental appraisal of all policies, plans and programmes at international, national, regional and local levels.
- Promote a precautionary approach which minimises risk in the event of uncertainty over potential environmental impacts.
- Promote public information on environmental issues (eg. through state of the environment reports, environmental audit and eco-labelling) so as to help people to make choices which favour the environment.
- Oppose development and land use which adversely and irreversibly affects critical natural capital and encourage, in tandem with development, the maintenance and enhancement of natural features to ensure an increasing level of net natural assets.
- Target the maintenance and enhancement of natural assets within the Natural Areas framework.
- Promote the need of everyone to have an improved quality of life through access to the nature conservation resource

Towards Sustainable Development

Balancing the improvement of the quality of our lives without undermining the quality of our natural environment has become the guiding light for the 1990s and beyond as awareness of environmental degradation has developed. Yet exactly how this might be achieved is problematic. Sustainable development has inevitably become the concern of resource managers and policy makers such as the CRN agency members and has prompted the production of a joint statement on the subject by three of the agencies—the Countryside Council for Wales, English Nature and Scottish Natural Heritage. The statement welcomes the forthcoming publication of the Government's Strategy for Sustainable Development and is evidence of the commitment of the agencies to work more closely together. The Strategy will set out how the UK plans to implement Agenda 21, the programme for sustainable development agreed at the Rio Earth Summit.

The joint statement commends the government to develop a number of key themes within the strategy. These are:

1. **The Need for Commitment** and a readiness to "take bold decisions putting long-term policies into action" is emphasised, and as such the Strategy should:

- set out the UK's objectives, programme and targets for action to deliver a long term perspective;
- aim actively to provide guidance on how we can all act, in our everyday lives, to contribute to a more sustainable future.

2. **Influence Decision-makers** through:

- showing how progress in meeting objectives will be measured;
- identifying important decision-makers and how they can contribute.

3. **Identify Priorities** by:

- a) *Accounting for Environmental Costs and Benefits* through:

- initiating the development of a range of measures which make environmental costs and benefits visible in economic affairs;
- emphasising the importance of accounting for non-material needs which cannot be easily costed in monetary terms.

b) *Integrating Environmental Considerations into Decision-making Processes* through the introduction of 'strategic' environmental assessment of policies and programmes and projects.

c) *Use Economic Instruments and Regulation* by:

- identifying standards;
- exploring appropriate instruments to help meet these;
- recognising the importance of complementary measures such as regulation and public information.

d) *Re-evaluate Transport Policies and Practices* involving:

- reducing traffic levels through a mixture of management and control measures;
- imposing tighter emission standards;
- harmonising transport modes;
- the provision of alternatives to the car through development planning and financial measures.

e) *Seeking Agricultural Policy Reform*

f) *Developing a Clear Energy Policy*

g) *Minimising Waste* through the rigorous application of the polluter pays' principle.

3. **Develop Mechanisms for Sustainable Development**, principally through:

- a) *Town and Country Planning* (refining its role for example); and
 b) *Managing the Demand for Natural Resources*.

Active Recreation in the Countryside

The move away from the developer-led system of land use to a planning-led approach is being widely recognised and accepted.

Agencies such as the Countryside Commission and English Nature have been quick to provide advice on strategic planning matters, and have emphasised the need to reconcile a number of potentially competing demands on land. They argue for environmentally-led policies which address the concept of sustainable development, and in which local communities have a stake.

The Sports Council itself has not been slow to recognise the implications of such an approach. In its policy document "A Countryside for Sport" it too has argued for a strategic planning approach which integrates as far as possible the interests of conservation with those of countryside activities.

It recognises the need to sustain the quality of the natural resource in which many recreational activities take place, and has actively sought partnerships with the Countryside Commission and English Nature as well as other agencies, owners and voluntary organisations.

Despite calls for a more active public role in planning processes there is a lack of knowledge about such processes, so in October the Sports Council in partnership

with Losehill Hall attempted to bring such issues to the attention of a wider audience of countryside professionals with a one day workshop: "Active Recreation in the Countryside".

In a crowded programme the workshop aimed to raise awareness about government policy matters; to identify various factors influencing the planning process; to illustrate a variety of management issues based on case studies; and to consider a particular example of integrated planning from regional to site level—the Taw/Torridge Estuary Plan in Devon.

In addition, a panel session responded to questions prepared by the audience prior to the workshop. The variety of questioning reflected the audience's own breadth of concern. Issues included the role of communities in determining provision, environmental assessment for major recreational development in the countryside, mechanisms for funding community projects, business sponsorship, the development of partnership approaches, and the need to take Sports Council policy on sustainability seriously.

There is a need to provide a forum for discussion of the above issues between planners, community interests, the voluntary sector, governing bodies and countryside managers, and Losehill Hall in partnership with the Sports Council/Losehill will continue to run similar opportunities for debate in the future.

*Charlie Falzon
Training Associate, Losehill Hall*

A number of themes emerged that are of direct relevance to policy makers and resource managers and can help inform the current debate over the planning and use of the countryside:

- Is planning based on perceptions of the countryside which are historically out of date with reality? It has been accused of applying 18th Century values to a 20th Century resource.
- There is a need to be aware of the planning system eg. the importance of PPGNs in guiding what could be decided.
- There is a need to be aware of the entire planning framework, not just one part of it, in order to know the context and legitimacy of one's own demands.
- The value of strategic planning emphasised in PPGN 17 could be undermined by the move towards unitary authorities. The extent to which planning is a political activity is not appreciated by the majority of countryside professionals and users.
- There is more to effective management than via planning alone. Partnerships are extremely important, and much work goes on outside the formal planning system. This can happen at every level from strategy to on-site implementation.
- Active recreation is by far the minority pastime for recreational users of the countryside. How legitimate are the demands for active recreation compared to the majority of other users of the countryside?
- Communities share interests and concerns as well as geographical location. In speaking for communities of both kinds, organisations must be certain of whom they represent.
- Widespread consultation takes time, but is necessary. It should be seen as an investment in the future, not a necessary evil.
- Active recreation which supports local economies is generally seen as a good thing. Public enjoyment in this context should rank in importance with food or timber production—but how to cost it? And how to cost nature conservation and landscape value? Should these things be costed in financial terms?
- The concept of sustainable use is unresolved. Wear and tear may be inevitable—we should focus on levels of unacceptability. What is acceptable change? What is the starting point? Is sport seen as a form of "development"? Is that why it is seen to some to conflict with nature conservation?
- Discussion about conservation/recreation conflicts is beginning to be seen as somewhat passe—no longer a problem to be managed, but an opportunity for all to participate in creative thinking and management. Zoning in time as well as in space is still seen as the major tool in addressing any competing demands for resources.

THE 1993 DAY VISITS SURVEY (UKDVS)

Introduction

The results from the 1993 Day Visits Survey are now becoming available and this article summarises the main findings from the second survey. The survey continues to be sponsored by a wide range of CRN agencies (the Countryside Commission, the Countryside Council for Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish and Wales Tourist Boards, the Forestry Commission and British Waterways) and the Department of National Heritage. Once again, it was undertaken by Survey Research Associates and the sponsors acknowledge the contribution that SRA has made to developing the survey in its early stages.

The Aims and Scope of the 1993 Survey

As in 1992, the survey was designed to provide estimates of participation in day visits by the adult population and the scale and value of visits. The basic aims and scope of the survey remained the same but, building on the experience of the first year, a number of changes were made to the questionnaire's content and structure, the fieldwork procedures and the way in which the data are being analysed.

The elements which stayed the same included:

- the survey focuses on leisure day visits from home but also collects information about one-off business trips and day visits made from holiday bases;
- a list of 16 activities is used to define leisure day visits (Figure 1);
- information is collected about visits made in the last 2 weeks and the most recent visit in the last year; and
- information is collected about visits to:
 - towns and cities,
 - the countryside,
 - the seaside and coast,
 - forests and woodlands, and
 - canals and navigable rivers.

The key changes made were:

- information is now collected about all day visits, regardless of the length of time people spend on their trips— in 1992 the focus was on visits of 3 hours or more;
- more information is collected about visits made in the last 2 weeks—this provides a better basis for estimating the value of visits and makes information about visits to forests and woodlands and canals and navigable rivers more readily available;
- people are asked how often they make day visits during the summer and winter (i.e. the frequency of visits is recorded)—

Figure 1: Definition of leisure day visits

The 1993 Day Visits Survey recorded information about all round trips or outings made in Great Britain, i.e. in England, Wales, and Scotland, and for the following activities:

1. To go for a walk, hill walk or ramble (including walking the dog but not walking to work or to the shops)
2. To go cycling or mountain biking
3. To go swimming - at a swimming pool or leisure centre
4. To play sport indoors at a sports centre, leisure centre or club
5. To take part in sport or active pursuits in the countryside (ie not at a particular facility - eg fishing, sailing, horse riding)
6. To play other sports outdoors at a sports centre, sports ground, stadium or club
7. To watch sport (not on TV)
8. To pursue a hobby or special interest (eg bird watching, photography, field or nature studies)
9. To play informal sport/children's games or sunbathe/relax outdoors (eg kicking a ball about, frisbee, sit around or in the car)
10. To go to a leisure attraction or place of interest (eg theme park, visitor or heritage centre, museum or art gallery, a nature reserve/trail, zoo or wildlife park, historic or stately home, castle or ancient monument, cathedral or ancient church, a fairground, fete, carnival or show)
11. For entertainment (eg cinema, theatre, concert, ballet, opera, dance or disco, bingo, casino)
12. To go shopping (eg gift/souvenir shopping, antique fair, "flea market" but not regular weekly shopping or for everyday household items)
13. To eat or drink out at a cafe, restaurant, wine bar or pub
14. To go for a drive, sightseeing and/or picnic, or to go pleasure boating
15. To go to the beach/sunbathing/paddling/swimming in the sea
16. To visit friends or relatives in their home (ie not going out with friends/relatives)

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this information is not only interesting in its own right but also enables a more comprehensive analysis of the data about "most recent" visits; and

- the period over which the people selected for interview could be contacted has been extended (from 2 to 4 weeks) and in some areas up to six calls were allowed at each address (rather than four) - both of these measures were aimed at improving the response rate to the survey.

The other key change in 1993 was that the Northern Ireland agencies were not among the survey's sponsors and so the information presented here is for Great Britain and not the whole of the UK.

Survey Design

The survey consists of household interviews with individuals of 15 years and over who are selected at random. In 1993 interviews took place continuously from mid April to the end of October and were evenly distributed across days of the week.

Initially, individuals are asked to provide information about all day visits from home in the last 2 weeks. A follow-up section then asks about the most recent visit within an extended recall period (up to 1 year) in order to obtain more information about visits made relatively infrequently (for example, visits to the seaside/coast, to forests/woodlands, and canals). The next two sections of the questionnaire ask about business and holiday visits within a 2-week recall period. The final section then asks people whether they visit forests/woodlands and canals/ivers for non-leisure purposes (for example, daily dog walking or in order to get to/from a particular place) and, if so, how often they make visits of this kind.

In 1993 the response rate was 66.5% (this was an improvement on the 60% response rate achieved in 1992 and the changes made to the fieldwork procedures in 1993 were clearly beneficial). Throughout Great Britain, over 3,000 interviews were completed: 1,594 in England, 867 in Wales, and 836 in Scotland. These interviews yielded information about over 8,500 leisure day visits.

The data have been weighted (taking into account age, sex, social class, country and region of residence) to be representative of the total population of Great Britain aged 15 and over (i.e. 44.49 million people).

So far, the results from the survey have been analyzed in two main ways:

- based on the total number of respondents (i.e. a base figure of 3,297 people); and
- based on the total number of day visits reported for the 2-week recall period (the base figure for leisure visits from home is 8,611 visits).

Two further sets of tables will be available shortly:

- one for the most recent visits in the last year; and
- one for day visits made from holiday bases.

The base for the figures reported here is shown on each table and figure (base figures reported are for the unweighted data). All of the visits referred to here relate to the adult population aged 15 and over and the focus is on leisure day visits from home.

As with all sample surveys, the figures reported here are subject to sampling error and the range of error associated with key statistics from the survey is shown at the end of this article.

The Results

The results from the 1993 survey show that during April to October:

- Over 2,200 million day visits made in Great Britain. Of these, around:
 - 2,000 million were leisure day visits from home;
 - 145 million were day visits made from holiday bases; and
 - 52 million were one-off business trips from home.
- Based on a 2-week recall period, the proportion of people making visits was:
 - 76% had made at least one leisure day visit from home - the average number of visits per person was 3.6;
 - 11% had made at least one visit from a holiday base - the average number of visits per person was 0.3; and
 - 4% had made at least one business visit - the average number of visits per person was less than 0.5.
- The majority of leisure day visits from home were in England and were to towns or cities (Table 1 and Figure 2 overleaf). Within Great Britain over the period April to October, over 1,300 million visits were made to towns and cities, over 600 million were made to the countryside, and over 100 million were made to the seaside. Over 210 million leisure day visits were to forests/woodlands and around 41 million to canals/navigable rivers—most of these visits were to places in the countryside but a proportion were to woodland or canals in towns and cities or on the coast (11% of visits to forests/woods were to places in a town/city and 1% were to places on the coast, while the corresponding figures for canal/river visits are 42% and 3%).
- Based on a 2-week recall period, the proportion of people visiting the different locations was:
 - 64% had visited a town or city;
 - 37% had visited the countryside;
 - 12% had visited the seaside or coast;
 - 13% had visited a forest or wood; and
 - 5% had visited a canal or navigable river.
- Extending the recall period to one year increases the participation figures, although the accuracy of people's recall over this period is questionable. Looking back over a year:
 - 80% had visited a town or city;
 - 59% had visited the countryside;
 - 41% had visited the seaside or coast;
 - 34% had visited a wood or forest; and
 - 18% had visited a canal or navigable river.
- Comparing the personal and social characteristics of those people who make visits and those who don't (Table 2), the results confirm the findings of the 1992 survey that people are more likely to make leisure day visits if they are:
 - in the younger age groups,
 - in full-time employment,
 - in the ABC1 social classes, and
 - have access to a car.

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Table 1: Location of day visits from home by country

	England		Scotland		Wales		Great Britain	
	Visits	%	Visits	%	Visits	%	Visits	%
Town/city	1156	63	126	79	37	57	1319	64
Countryside	591	32	23	14	23	35	637	31
Seaside/coast	90	5	11	7	5	8	105	5
All visits	1837	100	159	100	65	100	2062	100
Base figure: N =	4775		2137		1699		8611	

Note: Figures for visits are rounded to the nearest million

The figures relate to the country in which visits originated and all except a small percentage of visits took place in the country of origin.

Base: All leisure day visits from home, April to October 1993: weighted and grossed.

Table 2: Leisure day visits from home by age, sex, working status, social class, household type, and car ownership

	People making visits	People making no visits	All respondents
	Percentage of people (15+)		
Age (years)			
15-24	21	8	17
25-64	65	55	63
65+	14	36	20
Sex			
Male	49	43	48
Female	51	57	52
Working status			
In employment	56	38	51
Unemployed	8	9	9
Retired	15	37	21
Housewife - non-working	13	16	14
Student/at school	8	1	6
Social class			
AB	19	12	17
C1	28	17	26
C2	26	21	25
DE	28	50	33
Household type			
Children in household	34	20	30
No children in household	66	80	70
Car ownership			
Car in household	80	59	75
No car	20	42	25
Base figure: N =	2338	959	3297

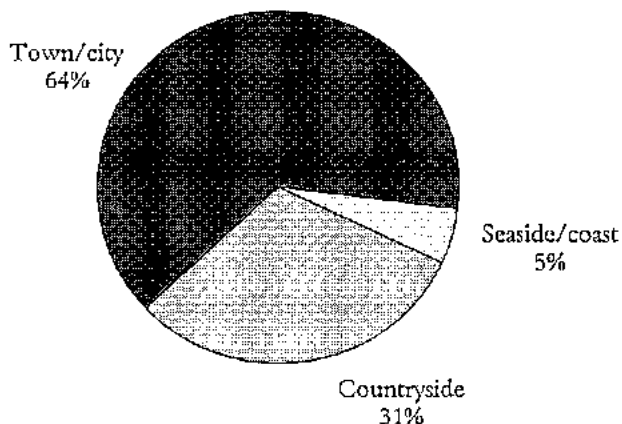
Note: Figures for people making a visit are based on a 2-week recall period
Where percentages do not sum to 100, this is due to the figures being rounded.

Base: All GB respondents: weighted and grossed.

1993 UK Day Visits Survey

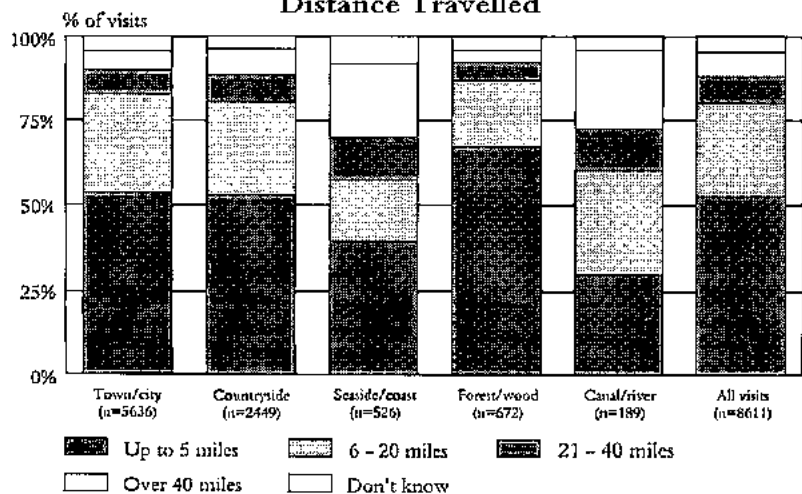
- The average distance travelled on leisure day visits from home was 15 miles, but this varied with the type of location visited (Figure 3):
 - on town/city visits the average distance travelled was 13 miles;
 - on countryside visits the average distance travelled was 17 miles;
 - on seaside/coast visits the average distance travelled was 37 miles; and
 - on forest/woodland visits the average distance travelled was 11 miles; and
 - on canal/navigable river visits the average distance travelled was 30 miles.
- Most leisure day visits were made by car or van (just over 5 out of 10 visits) or on foot (3 out of 10). Other modes of transport were used on only a small proportion of visits (1 in 20 or less). Visits to the seaside/coast were most likely to be made by car (64% of visits), while visits to forests/woods were least likely to be car-based (31% of visits were by car and 60% were on foot).

Figure 2
Location of day visits in G.B



Base figure: N=8611 (GB)
Base: All day visits from home
April - Oct 1993: weighted and grossed

Figure 3
Distance Travelled



Base: All GB day visits from home
April - Oct: weighted and grossed

- On average, visits lasted for just over 3 hours from start to finish. Visits to the seaside/coast and canals/ivers tended to be longer than those to other destinations (around 4.5 hours), while those to forests/woods were the shortest (on average just over 2 hours - although this average masks considerable variation in the length of visits and 10% of visits to forests/woods were over 4 hours). Visits to the countryside lasted just over 3 hours and those to towns and cities were almost 3.5 hours long.

- More visits were made on weekdays (62% of all visits) than weekend days, but the two weekend days attract a disproportionate number of visits. Weekends are particularly popular for visits to the countryside, the coast and canals/ivers (Figure 4).

- The main activities undertaken on leisure day visits from home were going out for a meal and/or drink (376 million visits - 18% of the total), walking or rambling (363 million - 18% of the total) and visits to friends and relatives' homes (301 million visits - 15% of all visits) - Figure 5. Again, the popularity of activities varies with the location (Table 3).

- Most leisure day visits are made by adults but, as might be expected, the seaside is more popular with families (Table 4). Most people go on leisure day visits in the company of others, but people visiting forests/woods are more likely than people going to other destinations to be on their own and this is reflected in the average group size (Table 4).

- An estimated £15,000 million was spent on leisure day visits from home during April to October. Spending took place on 6 out of 10 visits and, on average, £12 was spent per visit (figures are rounded to the nearest fifty pence - the average is £7.50 if visits with no expenditure are included). On average, £13 was spent on visits to towns/cities, £14 on visits to the coast/seaside, £8.50 on visits to the countryside, £5.50 on visits to forests/woods and £9.50 on visits to canals/ivers (these figures exclude those people who didn't spend anything during their visit).

The 1992 and 1993 Surveys Compared

The 1993 survey recorded substantially more visits than the survey carried out in 1992 - over 2,200 million compared with 1,300 million. Comparing the characteristics of visits from the two surveys reveals that most of this increase is due to the 3 hour time limit no longer being applied; most of the additional trips recorded are under 3 hours and the average duration of trips decreased from 5 hours to just over 3 hours.

Comparing some of the other features of visits indicates that these additional visits recorded are:

- shorter - the average distance travelled fell from 28 to 15 miles; and
- more likely to be made on foot - the proportion of car-based visits fell from 7 out of 10 to just over 5 out of 10 and walking/rambling went from being the eighth to the second most popular activity.

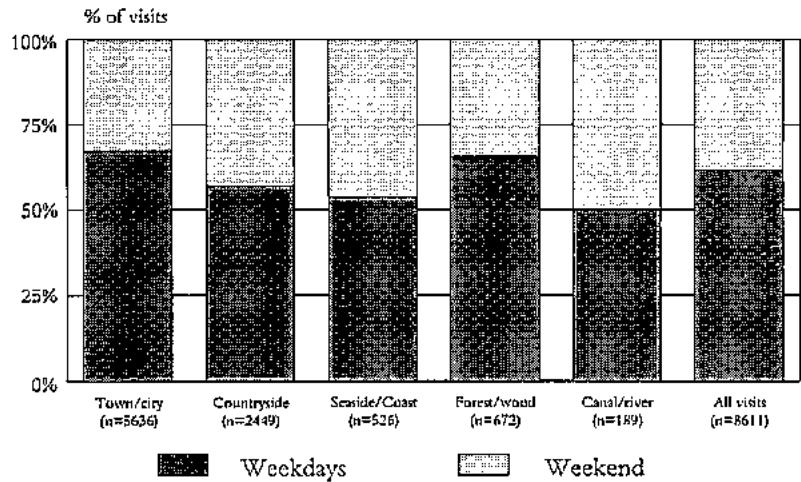
However, while the number of visits recorded increased substantially, this is not reflected in an increase in the value of visits - the proportion of leisure day visits involving spending fell from 7 out of 10 to 6 out of 10 and the average spend per visit fell from £13 to £7.50. Overall, the number of leisure day visits recorded doubled, but the value of these visits only increased by 15% - from £13,000 to £15,000 million.

Without a time limit, the proportion of the population making leisure day visits increased but the characteristics of those taking visits remained much the same. The proportion of visits to the three main destinations also was largely unchanged (the 1992 survey found that 63% of visits were to towns/cities, 29% to the countryside and 8% to the seaside/coast—the corresponding figures for 1993 are 64%, 31% and 5%).

The 1994 Survey and Beyond

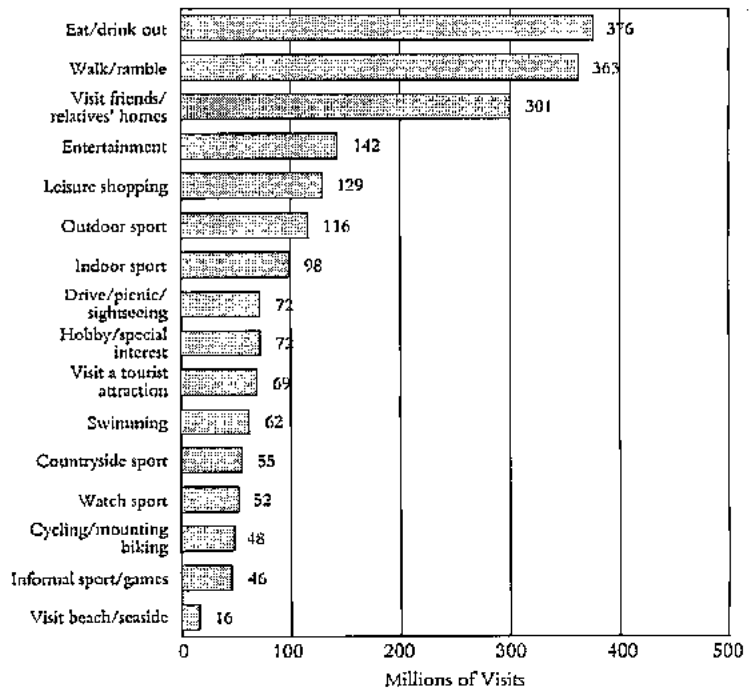
The 1993 survey completes the development phase of the Day Visits Survey and the sponsors have now commissioned a full-year survey which began in January 1994. A further survey is scheduled for 1996 and the sponsors hope that this is the start of a biennial survey.

Figure 4
Day of the week visits made



Base: All GB day visits from home
April - Oct 1993;
weighted and grossed

Figure 5
Main activity undertaken



Base figure: N=8611 (GD)
Base: All day visits from home
April - Oct 1993; weighted and grossed

The '94 survey again covers Great Britain and is being undertaken by Social and Community Planning Research. The only key change to the 1993 survey is the introduction of Computer Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI) which means that the data are now recorded directly onto lap-top computers.

The sponsors also have commissioned a full report of the 1993 survey. This will be published in the next few months, so watch this space for further details.

Sue Walker

Centre for Leisure Research

Margins of error associated with the data

The data from UKDVS are derived from a sample survey and so are subject to margins of error associated with sampling. The table below provides an indication of the complex standard errors associated with key statistics for the UK and Scotland at the 95% level of confidence. Smaller sub-sets of the data, for example for individual destinations (e.g. town/city, countryside) are subject to wider limits of confidence.

	Survey estimate	Margin of error +/-
Participation in leisure day visits from home by the adult population 15+ years (2-week recall)	76%	2.8%
Average number of visits per person	3.6	0.31
Number of visits - April to September	2060 million	180 million

Table 3: Five most popular activities by location

Town/city	Countryside	Seaside
1. Eat/drink out (23%)	1. Walk/ramble (36%)	1. Walk/ramble (25%)
2. Visit to friends/relatives' homes (17%)	2. Eat/drink out (11%)	2. Drive/sightseeing (15%)
3. For entertainment (9%)	3. Visit to friends/relatives' homes (10%)	3. Visit to beach/sea (14%)
4. Leisure shopping (9%)	4.= Outdoor sport (6%)	4. Visit to friends/relatives' homes (10%)
5. Walking (8%)	4.= Visit a leisure attraction (6%)	5. For entertainment (7%)

Forest/woodland	Canal/river
1. Walk/ramble (73%)	1. Walk/ramble (30%)
2. Drive/sightseeing (5%)	2. Sightseeing/pleasure boating (13%)
3. Cycling (4%)	3. Countryside sport (4%)
4. Countryside sport (4%)	4. Pursuing a hobby (8%)
5. Visit to friends/relatives' homes (4%)	5. Visit to friends/relatives' homes (8%)

Figures in parenthesis show the percentage of total visits.

Table 4: Party Composition

	Town/city	Countryside	Seaside/coast	Forest/woodland	Canal/river	All leisure visits
	Percentage of visits					
Adult party	52	45	49	33	43	50
Adults with children	17	22	32	21	25	19
Unaccompanied visit	30	33	17	45	25	30
Organised party	1	1	2	<1	6	1
AVERAGE PARTY SIZE (Parties of 5 or less)	2.2	2.1	2.6	1.9	2.3	2.2
Base figure: N =	5636	2449	526	672	189	8611

Base: All leisure day visits from home, April to October 1993: weighted and grossed.

Customer Care in the Countryside

A practical review of techniques to meet customer needs and expectations in countryside recreation

“Customer care in the countryside is not achievable by a simple adoption of palatable, easy-to-apply schemes which are palliatives not solutions” (Professor Terry Stevens)

This is the essence of a challenge for countryside resource managers in dealing with users of the countryside. Users have needs and expectations that deserve to be satisfied and the owners of countryside resources demand and deserve certain standards of behaviour. There is a trend in manufacturing and service industry towards recognising the customer as a discerning entity, one who is increasingly knowledgeable, has higher and higher expectations about the ‘product’ and demands value for money. It is well recognised that improved quality and service standards leads to gains in competitive advantage, helping to differentiate a product or service from its competitors. The public sector has traditionally been shy to adopt some of these underlying principles and attempt to apply them to services which have never been measured as such. The introduction of the Citizen’s Charter, and notions of criteria of performance measurement and value for money, have prompted the adoption of approaches which attempt to translate some of the theory into practice.

Yet, as the quote by Terry Stevens demonstrates, there can be no readily applied formula; customer care is not a simple public relations exercise where staff are encouraged to ‘be nice’ to customers—rather, it involves the recognition of the role of quality management in delivering a “product”. The 1993 Countryside Recreation Conference was designed to address this issue.

The Conference drew together academics and practitioners to distil elements of the theory and practice of customer care in an attempt to better understand the problems facing managers of countryside resources and attempt to suggest solutions not palliatives. Papers recounting experience from Britain (Center Parcs) and Europe opened the Conference and demonstrated why customer care matters and what can be achieved by bothering to care. In the words of Frans Schouten: **“visitors come anyway, so why bother?”** Indeed visitors might well come anyway, but in these days of performance measurement, scant regard to visitors will fail to maximise the use of the resource, whether it be for the individual businessman, public body or community at large. In addition, it forces managers to recognise and appreciate the quality and nature of their resource as part of the

appraisal process. The need to challenge the visitor was emphasised by Frans Schouten, providing a **“sense of discovery, actuating a willingness to undergo new experiences and information”**. The ability of Center Parcs to provide this sense of discovery—and keep providing it—is central to the company’s ability to attract back 60% of their visitors within 12 months.

The complexity of the “customer” demands an understanding of who they are, what they want, why they want it, when they want it, where they want it and what they would like to see changed. Sue Walker of the Centre for Leisure Research, using data from the 1990 National Countryside Recreation Survey and the 1992 UK Day Visits Survey, provided delegates with a profile of customer characteristics and expectations. A number of broad conclusions were drawn:

- a complex mix of practical and personal factors determine visits, though access to transport is a key constraint;
- around 60% of visits are made by only 10% of the population;
- just over half the visits are made at the weekend and a third on Sunday;
- most visits half a round trip of only around 30 miles;
- one third of visits involve active sport and recreation, as is visiting friends and relatives and eating and drinking combined;
- purpose built facilities and activities are not the main attraction—scenery, peace and quiet and convenience are more important;
- dislikes centre on the toilets, litter and the weather and car parking, toilets, refreshments facilities, information and footpaths are usually requested to be improved;
- more subtle changes are taking place in terms of a growing interest in active sports and recreation, much of this on an independent basis rather than through clubs and societies and a growing concern about the environment. In short people are more discerning and keen to get “off the beaten track”.

Understanding visitor characteristics is of course only one side of the equation; how resource managers ‘sell’ their product is equally important, and this is where quality becomes central. Exactly how important is it, indeed what is it? How do we know when we are getting it? Francis Buttle of the Manchester Business School expertly led delegates through the complexities of the theories

underlying quality management. In a production management context, quality can be readily defined, and it is "management's role to manage customer expectations of quality and to design the organisation and its outputs so that these expectations are met or exceeded to the delight of the customer". Service quality, however, is rather more difficult to define, a widely respected attempt being made by the SERVQUAL model which identifies five central factors—reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles—as the keys to securing service quality from the *customers' perspective*: the gap between expected and perceived service performance. SERVQUAL's five constituent elements are illustrated below. The attention paid to these elements will determine how readily the gap between expected and perceived performance is closed. The field is vastly more labyrinthine than can be reported here. For example, Dr Buttle went on to examine concepts of blueprinting, benchmarking, internal marketing, complaints management, unconditional service guarantees and empowerment. An understanding of these elements is central to attempting to produce a documented quality assurance, now commonly done through BS5750, a standard increasingly demanded of service providers.

Whilst service providers can readily impose standards of quality on their customers, is it really what the customers want? A question and answer session between delegates (predominantly service providers) and representatives from four user

groups—the Ramblers' Association, the Black Environment Network, the Inland Waterways Association and the British Mountain Bike Federation—attempted to shed some light upon the gap between perception and reality.

Naturally the animated discussion ranged over a wide brief, but the dichotomy between the user-led approach and the management-led agenda was a prominent theme. Education and information were seen as vital for both user (or customer) and resource manager; indeed the terminology was felt to create barriers—'customer' perhaps implies payment opening up a whole new area of debate, and how far can users be neatly categorised? Judy Ling Wong of the Black Environment Network commented that "if people could be encouraged to go out into the countryside, to understand and learn about it, then they could also contribute to its care". This also contributes to the users setting the agenda for the managers by being able to articulate their needs wants and aspirations. Change, it was pointed out by Alan Mattingly of the Ramblers' Association, is rooted in developing confidence, almost changing a cultural outlook, and this has to be approached over a long time scale; the key is to develop a deeply ingrained culture of responsible behaviour in the countryside. Education and information are vital in terms of the new countryside sports; Colin Palmer of the BMBF cited the problems associated with mountain biking in this regard. Jeremy Worth of the Countryside Commission warned against implying that users come to the countryside on the terms of the

resource managers—people have rights under the law. The problems associated with characterising the user of the countryside was highlighted; they are not an amorphous mass who all demand toilets, firm paths and somewhere to eat, but have differing demands and expectations according to which user group they might said to belong; herein lies yet further problems of definition. Nevertheless, user groups stand at the interface of countryside users and resource managers and play a vital role in educating and informing both parties.

Educating and informing resource managers came out a strong theme in the question and answer session. This aspect was tackled by Gerry Carver of L & R Leisure plc who emphasised that "customer care starts at the top, not with front line staff. The 'have a nice day' approach has no place in quality service and customer care". Managers, he suggested, must be aware of the need to:

- know the marketplace;
- understand the visitors;
- achieve teamwork;
- ensure good technical and personal skills;
- establish efficient systems;
- provide excellent service;
- make continuous improvements;
- work within the community.

In short these elements are about developing desire, designing an efficient programme and ensuring its effective delivery. Exactly how these elements are approached in practice was the theme of the series of workshops attended by delegates. These considered differing experience at paid access sites, open-access managed sites, environmental sites and footpaths and rights of way.

Developing the links between service delivery and customer needs and satisfaction demands some sort of measurement. Tony Bovaird of Aston Business School tackled the thorny topic of making the connection between customer care, service quality

SERVQUAL's Components

Reliability	<i>Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately</i>
Responsiveness	<i>Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service</i>
Assurance	<i>Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence</i>
Empathy	<i>Caring, individualised attention the fun provides its customers</i>
Tangibles	<i>Physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel</i>

and performance, emphasizing the inherent irrationality of how quality is perceived, and the difficulties of attempting to apply systematic, scientific methodology. 'Quality', he argued, has a host of potential meanings—an attribute, a specification, a fitness for purpose, meeting/exceeding customer expectations, for example—and which is used is a matter of choice, emphasizing the role of quality, where applied to people, as often a matter closely related to individual circumstances and resources for example. Assessing the achievement of customer care it was suggested, involves a three fold approach—assessing organisational excellence, assessing service quality and assessing how successful the communities are in which we work.

Central to success is the effectiveness of the service system—how well is the overall set of services actually helping our chosen set of target groups? Measuring this is the challenge, however, and four approaches might be adopted:

- a checklist of inputs and processes;
- adequacy of QA system—cross checking and problem solving processes;
- performance indicators (outputs, outcome and user feedback);
- critical success factors (a mixture of the above).

The key, however, is selectivity in performance measurement, identifying critical success factors and "doing as little of it as you can afford, or more optimistically put, as much as you can afford".

Professor Terry Stevens, Swansea Institute of Higher Education, presented the closing paper which centred on the apparent increase in concern for customers amongst providers of countryside recreational services and facilities—how far is it a genuine strategic response or a short term knee jerk reaction? Some possible underlying reasons are shown below.

POSITIVE STIMULANTS	NEGATIVE STIMULANTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing consumer awareness and higher expectations of standards and service • Greater competition for leisure time • Developing wider markets for countryside recreation • Efficiency and effectiveness indicators • Business-like approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land owners need consumer support • Increasing pressure to make countryside pay • Peer group and policy pressure • Legal and political regulations • Shift of emphasis from recreation to tourism

Yet, paradoxically, there are a range of factors likely to constrain the development of customer care in the countryside—trends such as resource constraints, the consumer, not the customer being seen as important, and countryside recreation remaining a diffuse and imprecise experience, compounded by fragmented management. Equally, there is a danger that resource managers are approaching the issue from the wrong angle. Increased use of the countryside has coincided (perhaps provoked) the debate over carrying capacities and sustainability, giving customer care a completely new perspective. Professor Stevens suggested that to date attention has been placed on customer care in the context of first, the countryside as a commodity and second, the contact with the

consumer at the point of consumption. The onus is on the resource manager. Perhaps the responsibility for shaping the experience, Professor Stevens asked, should be placed upon the user: "why not empower the recreationalist and involve the various user groups to plan, design, even manage the facilities and services?" The issue to be addressed in the future is that of "confronting the question of securing a collective voice for an individualistic experience" and recognising that "customer care in the countryside is a marketing issue with marketing solutions".

In closing the Conference, Derek Casey highlighted three themes which had become strongly apparent over the three days. The first is the sheer difficulty in defining customers, customer care and how it should be properly exercised—it is not only about systems but also style, ambience and atmosphere. He reminded delegates of Quentin Crisp's definition of charisma: "trying to get people to do what they do not want to do, without using logic"; there is perhaps no clear logic in the practice of customer care. Second, is the importance of commitment from the top down. And third is the importance of clear communication between the customers and the providers and indeed good communication between individuals and agencies: public, private and voluntary. The Conference and the work of the Countryside Recreation Network we hope help this process.

The full proceedings of the Conference, price £14.00 (inc P & P), are available from the CRN Manager, Dept. of City & Regional Planning, UWCC, PO Box 906, Cardiff CF1 3YN. Please make cheques payable to University of Wales College of Cardiff.

Public Rights of Way in Wales

There are 36,000 km of public rights of way (PRoW) in Wales. The Countryside Council for Wales, which has responsibility to encourage public access to the countryside, believes that this network of PRoW provides the single most important means by which the public can enjoy the countryside. Unfortunately, the PRoW network overall is in a bad state. It was estimated in 1990 for example, that persons embarking to walk on public footpaths in Wales had, on average, only a 25% chance of successfully completing their journey. The Countryside Council has set itself a target of getting a network of public rights of way fully open and accessible by 1995. Local authorities and landowners are being encouraged to help meet this target.

Statutory responsibility for PRoW resides with the Highway Authorities. In Wales these are the eight County Councils. Their statutory duties include requirements to:

- maintain PRoW so that they are "reasonably passable for the ordinary traffic of the neighbourhood";
- "assert and protect" the public's right to use and enjoy PRoW;
- prevent PRoW being stopped-up or illegally ploughed or disturbed;
- signpost paths where they leave the metalled highway and place signs along the way where they are necessary for the benefit of persons unfamiliar with the locality;
- keep the definitive map for the area under continuous review.

In addition they have a wide range of discretionary powers. These include:

- making orders to create, divert or extinguish paths;
- carrying out improvements;
- providing publicity and information about paths.

District councils have no duties as such but can take over the responsibility for maintenance and other functions with or without the agreement of the county councils.

Community councils have a wide range of powers which they may choose to exercise. These include:

- undertaking the maintenance of footpaths and bridleways;
- prosecuting anyone who wilfully blocks the highway;
- carrying out signposting and waymarking on behalf of the highway authority;
- creating new public paths with the agreement of the landowner.

Farmers and others over whose land PRoW cross must do nothing to prevent or intimidate the public from exercising their right of passage. This includes keeping PRoW free from obstructions, refraining from putting up misleading notices and not threatening the public in any way.

Definitive Public Rights of Way Maps and Statements

There is a requirement on Highway Authorities to prepare and keep up to date a definitive record of all rights of way in their area. The record should comprise a definitive map at a scale of not less than 1:25,000 and an accompanying statement.

Much work has been done in recent years to ensure that these records are complete and as accurate as possible but the low priority attached to this work in the past, combined with the requirement to map areas hitherto excluded, presents the counties and their successors with a considerable challenge.

The Maintenance of PRoW

The maintenance of the surface of public rights of way is nearly always the responsibility of the highway authority. Farmers and landowners' responsibilities are mainly confined to trimming back overhanging vegetation. Stiles and gates are the responsibility of the landowner and 25% of the cost of maintaining stiles and gates is recoverable from the highway authority.

The Countryside Council's Target for PRoW

CCW has set itself a target of getting a network of PRoW into good order by 1995. By this it means to ensure that these paths are legally defined, properly maintained and appropriately signposted by this date.

Priority attention is being given to those paths which:

- are national trails such as the Offa's Dyke Path;
- form part of strategic recreational networks of local highway and planning authorities;
- are considered particularly important in meeting the social and recreational needs of local communities.

The Council has invited the active support and participation of local authorities, landowners and the public to help its target. The Countryside Council for Wales has called on landowners and county councils, the principal managers of the public path network, together with those who use it, to work more closely to enhance and strengthen this resource.

Key features of the Council's priorities for action on PRoW work in 1992/3 have been to

- obtain from all the public and major private sector landmanagers a commitment that all their PRoW will be in good order by the end of the year;
- identify the scale and nature of the investment in PRoW by highway authorities in Wales;
- embark on a national survey of all PRoW in Wales;
- launch special initiatives targeted at local communities which seek to encourage participation in the survey, and the maintenance, management and publicity given to

- local paths;
- research people's preferences for walks and rides and to target grant aid more closely to meet these needs;
- establish closer dialogue between those with interests in the PRoW network in Wales.

Priorities for the Council's Rights of Way work in 1994/5 are to:

- establish targets for public rights of way on a county by county basis;
- provide assistance, in the form of advice and grant aid, to help local authorities, community councils and volunteer groups meet these targets;

- encourage farmers and landowners and user groups to take a greater interest in the future management and development of the rights of way network in Wales.

Further information on the Survey can be obtained from:

*Freepost—Rights of Way Survey
Countryside Council for Wales
Plas Penrhos
Ffordd Penrhos
Bangor
Gwynedd
LL57 2BR*

Surveying the Public Rights of Way Network Progress in Dyfed

In early 1992 the Dyfed Area Council of the Ramblers' Association (RA) decided that one of the most valuable contributions that the Association could make locally in furthering the protection and enhancement of the PRoW network in the County would be to conduct a comprehensive survey of the current state of all Public Rights of Way (PRoW).

Agreement was reached with the County Council for their support in principle and the provision of administrative backup. However, the announcement by the CCW of their Wales-wide survey before the Dyfed survey commenced held up work until after the completion of a pilot survey and agreement from CCW that the RA/DCC should carry out the work. The Ramblers' Association has therefore taken on responsibility for organising surveys in all those community council areas where the local community council chose not to conduct the survey itself. All community councils were circulated with information regarding what was planned and some 40% expressed positive interest in the scheme. Less than 1% expressed disapproval.

Local organisation of the survey has been delegated to a group organiser from each of the seven



Ramblers' Association groups in Dyfed. Survey work has started in all the RA group areas, although progress has varied from one to another. The RA Area Council initially made its decision to undertake the survey from within its own resources, somewhat as an act of faith, but moneys have subsequently become available through CCW to meet the basic costs of organisation and carrying out the survey work.

Of some 200 community council areas in Dyfed, surveys have been completed, or are nearing completion, in 23 and work is going ahead in a further 35. In some community

council areas the surveys are being conducted by RA members and other local volunteers, whilst in others the community council is taking responsibility with support and advice from the RA group organiser. In such a large and predominantly rural county with much remote and difficult terrain, the importance of recruiting a strong force of enthusiastic volunteers remains vital if Dyfed's approximately 5,000 PRoW are all to be surveyed by CCW's target date of 1995.

There have been at least two valuable spin-offs from the survey so far: some volunteers have been inspired into reclamation work on hitherto obstructed paths and regular walkers are discovering satisfactory new routes which they might not otherwise have considered. Equally important is the fact that local communities are being reminded of the value of their PRoW network, and the particular significance it has in a county which is economically so dependent upon its visitors.

*Norman Vessey
PRoW Survey Organiser
The Ramblers' Association
Dyfed Area Council
Tel. 0994 419241*

NRA Recreation Strategy

“Reconciling Future Recreational Demand and Pressure on the Water Environment within a Framework of Sustainable Use”

This is the key message of National Rivers Authority's new Recreation Strategy. The Strategy is one of a series that address the issues under the NRA's remit—water quality, water resources, flood defence, fisheries, conservation, navigation and research & development.

Part of the NRA's remit is to “develop the amenity and recreation potential of inland and coastal waters and associated lands” but equally have regard to balancing these uses against environmental pressures. Thus the estimated participants in sport and recreation (see table 1) are affected by problems such as excessive water abstraction, pollution and land use change, along with changing attitudes towards conservation for example.

Table 1 Key Recreation Statistics

Estimated number of people participating in watersports: 6,800,000/year

Estimated number of canoeists: 800,000/year

Estimated number of recreational walkers: 20,000,000/year

Approximate number of angling licences sold: 1,000,000/year

Projected increases in leisure time and participation in watersports and outdoor leisure pursuits demands effective planning and management through:

- the maintenance, development and improvement of the recreational use of over 1,000 sites across England and Wales owned and managed by the NRA;
- taking account of recreation in proposals relating to any NRA function;
- promoting the use of water and associated land for recreation purposes.

Practically, this involves:

- (1) Assessing and monitoring through a sound understanding of the supply and demand for water-related recreation and the impact of those activities upon the environment. This will influence the targeting and use of resources, specifically in relation to:
 - the recreational use of NRA sites;
 - the type of new or improved facilities;
 - the catchment management planning process;

- the prioritisation of activities that the NRA will promote;
 - the identification of sites of national and regional significance.
- (2) The control of NRA recreation sites through direct management, involving voluntary groups and contractors to manage sites to NRA specifications and the establishment of Joint Management Committees allowing user input.
 - (3) The promotion and provision of facilities for recreation use (such as for canoeists, anglers and walkers and boats) in the course of other NRA activities.
 - (4) The nurturing of collaborative activity between the NRA and other bodies, such as the Sports Council, Countryside Commission and National Parks Authorities, responsible for sport and recreation in order to promote the use of water and associated land for recreational purposes. This might involve:
 - assisting in the production of appropriate recreation strategies;
 - take account of development plans produced by governing bodies, as a guide to demand and how this might best be satisfied;
 - produce information on the availability of facilities;
 - encourage safe recreational use;
 - respond to and attempt to influence the local planning policies where these impinge upon the water environment;
 - maintain a dialogue with other providers of water and waterside recreation.

Participation in countryside recreation in general, and water-related recreation in particular, is an increasingly popular use of leisure time. However, participation trends in watersports are supply led and changes in the quantity, quality and diversity of facilities influence local demand. The NRA, through its ownership of resources and control of resources, thus holds a central role in managing demand. However, a range of other factors, of which all organisations involved in planning and managing for sport and recreation in the countryside have to take note, are relevant. Among these are:

- demographic changes;
- standard of living and affluence;
- leisure time;
- lifestyle changes;
- environmental awareness;
- congestion and saturation;
- development issues and planning policies.

The full document is available from:
National Rivers Authority, Head Office, Waterside Drive, Aztec West, Almondsbury, Bristol BS12 4UD.
Tel: 0454 624400

Ways and Means

Conference Opens Debate on Access to Northern Ireland Countryside

More and more people are no longer content to view the countryside from a car window, according to DoE Environment Service Director, Mr James Kerr.

Opening a major two-day conference, "Ways and Means", on access to the Northern Ireland countryside held on 11-12 November 1993 in Newcastle, County Down, Mr Kerr went on to tell more than 220 delegates that a local study on access to the countryside is to be published soon.

The delegates represented the farming community, outdoor pursuit organisations, district councils, rural development projects and community groups.

Mr Kerr said: "the new study will evaluate present access arrangements and include recommendations on how to develop activities such as walking, cycling and riding as tourist attractions."

Also under scrutiny is the working of the Access to the Countryside Order which has now been in operation for 10 years.

"The public want to visit places of interest whether it is an historic monument or an area of outstanding natural beauty," said Mr Kerr. "There is a growing demand for a less formal, more casual association with the countryside and its wildlife.

"I believe an increasing number of people are simply not content to view the countryside from a car window. They want to see, to feel, to experience, to savour."

Mr Kerr highlighted the current trend for more countryside based recreation but warned that this was likely to cause problems.

"Better access to the countryside will require a basic level of infrastructure and more access opportunities as well as a heightened sense of responsibility for the care of the countryside among the general public," said Mr Kerr.

Mr Kerr admitted that more needed to be done to improve access to the countryside and explained that the 1983 Order placed responsibility for asserting rights of way or creating new paths on district councils.



Pictured at the DoE Environment Service "Ways and Means" Conference are left to right: Ross Millar (DoE); Louise Brown (NI Tourist Board); Richard Broadhurst (Chairman, CRN); Professor Palmer Newbold (Chairman, Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside in Northern Ireland).

"Many regard this responsibility as a poison chalice. There are few votes and many problems in access," said Mr Kerr.

However he pointed out that an increasing number of Councils now employ countryside officers and the DoE Environment Service offer grants to District Councils to help create and maintain access to the countryside.

"But the number of access schemes coming to fruition each year is not encouraging," he said.

Mr Kerr said he recognised the legitimate concerns which the farming community have with regard to access.

"It has to be recognised that the land is the farmer's factory and it is only natural that farmers will wish to be reassured that access will not affect their ability to earn their livelihood from the land.

"Problems such as liability for damage to persons and property, transmission of animal disease from one farm to another and dog worrying have to be acknowledged and solutions sought. Other legitimate problems concern litter, vandalism, and the intrusion of privacy," said Mr Kerr.

Sport, Recreation & the Welsh Countryside: a Good Practice Guide

The third phase of a collaborative project between the Sports Council for Wales (SCW) and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) is now complete. The first two phases involved the establishment of a "natural facilities database", summarised as a digest in 1991, and an assessment of the relationship between sport and recreation sites in Wales and those with some degree of protected area status. The results of this investigation were published in 1992. The third phase of the report was undertaken in the recognition that sport and conservation may have a sensitive relationship. For the most part sport and recreation co-exist happily with other countryside interests and in those few cases where there is a conflict, divergent demands can usually be reconciled to the satisfaction of all parties through a process of co-operation, goodwill and accommodation.

On behalf of CCW and SCW, the Rural Surveys Research Unit at Aberystwyth undertook a study of the ways in which sport and recreation were managed at a range of sites across Wales. The Report presents a series of nine in-depth case studies and draws on them to develop the "good practice" principles of recreation management and conservation demands in the countryside.

The digitisation of the database into a GIS format, described by Rob Owen of CCW in the October 1993 issue of CRN News, completes the fourth phase.

The Report will be launched in early May at the Welsh Institute of Sport at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff. At the time of the launch the GIS database will be put through its paces in a demonstration of its capabilities. For further information contact Rob Owen, Senior Recreation Officer at CCW on 0248 370444 or Stuart Smith, Policy Research Officer at SCW on 0222 397671.

Stuart Smith, SCW

The CRN National Workshop 13-15 September 1994, York University

Communities and their Countryside: Helping local communities to help themselves and others enjoy countryside opportunities

The expansion of community action in the countryside has been a notable feature of the past decade and recreation is an important aspect of this development. There are many reasons for involving communities in creating and managing countryside recreation. They range from agencies wanting centrally defined services delivered more effectively and cheaply by "community contractors", through agencies having a desire for local communities to take a greater interest in their environment in whatever way they think valuable, to agencies which have community development as their prime concern, with countryside recreation simply one of its manifestations. The potential for misunderstanding, confusion and disappointment on the part of communities and agencies is as great as the potential for successful partnerships. The CRN National Workshop is a timely attempt to examine these themes and help delegates to:

- understand the many ways in which local communities are involved in countryside recreation, why this is happening, and its implications for delegates' own organisations, through presentations on a wide variety of initiatives;

- explore the practical ways this involvement can be fostered and supported at a local and national level in delegates' own organisations, through discussion with practitioners;
- develop an agenda for further advice and research on this topic by the CRN agencies.

The National Workshop will have a heavily practical focus giving delegates the chance to engage with those who have practical experience to share in this area and the policy makers who are launching an increasingly varied and positive range of initiatives.

The detailed programme will be enclosed with the June issue of the Newsletter. The full cost of the Conference will be £250, but using the forms enclosed with this Newsletter or contacting the CRN Manager (address and telephone number on page 2), you can obtain a substantial discount on this price. Registration does not constitute a firm booking.

Rotherham Hosts Bike Conference

The use of motorbikes in the countryside has become a major issue on many sites throughout the country in recent years. The legitimate desire of riders to enjoy the challenge of riding their machines over rough and difficult terrain can often conflict with other countryside users.

The Department of Amenities and Recreation's Countryside Service at Rotherham Borough Council, in conjunction with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, is holding a one day conference on March 10th aimed at drawing together the interests of riders, land managers and others. The aim is to highlight the best approaches to the issue.

Putting the case for motorcyclists will be Alan Kind of the Land Access Rights Association (LARA), which promotes recreational use of off-road motorised vehicles. Other contributions will come from the Sports Council, Police, Probation Service and Rights of Way Officers. Issues addressed will include provision, control, safety and training.

John Rotherham, Principal Countryside Management Officer, said: "in the past, the problem has either been ignored, or conflict has arisen. We cannot let that continue. The object of this conference is to get the balance right, discover best practices, and share them with those responsible for managing the countryside."

The Conference, entitled "Motorcycling in the Countryside—Fact and Fiction" will be held at the Bailey Suite, Rotherham. For further details, including booking forms, and full programme, contact Rick Green, Countryside Services, Recreation Offices, Rotherham Borough Council, Grove Road, Rotherham S60 1ER Tel. 0709 382121 ext. 2021

Accessing the Countryside

The Rural Geography Study Group of the Institute of British Geographers is organising a conference at Hugh Stewart Hall, University of Nottingham in September 1994 on the theme of new research on public access to the countryside. The aim of the conference is to allow active researchers in the field of public access to the countryside to discuss their research with an audience of academics and professionals.

Those wishing to present a paper at the conference should send a title and abstract to Dr Charles Watkins, Dept. of Geography, University of Nottingham as soon as possible. The deadline for submissions will be 31 May 1994.

Titles already submitted include:
Recreation and Access: policy directions for the late 1990s—Professor Nigel Curry
Hikers and Hullabaloo: landscape, citizenship and the grounds of access in inter-war Britain—Dr David Matless
Conflict and co-operation over ethnic minority access to the countryside: the Black Environment Network and the Countryside Commission—Phil Kinsman
Educated Access: interpreting Forestry Commission Forest Park Guides—Dr George Revill & Dr Charles Watkins
Game Conservation and Public Access: conflict or consensus—Graham Cox, Julia Hallett, Charles Watkins & Michael Winter
 For further information please contact Charles Watkins (0602 515439) or Susanne Seymour (0602 515730) at the Dept. of Geography, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD.

You are invited to submit similar details for publication by 6 May

Countryside Recreation Network News

If you do not receive CRN News personally and would like to, please fill in your name and address below and return to: CRN, Dept. of City & Regional Planning, UWCC, PO Box 906, Cardiff CF1 3YN

Name:

Address:

Visitors to the Countryside

Developing and promoting walking and cycling routes for recreation and tourism.
 14th - 16th March, Losehill Hall

Of benefit to anyone working in the planning, management and marketing of tourism and the countryside, and who wishes to generate revenue in rural and urban fringe areas while at the same time supporting services to local residents.
 Fee: £170 (inc. Countryside Commission subsidy)

Details:

Sue Davies/Lyn Horan 0433 620373