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Countryside Recreation goes out to 2500 individuals working in the field of countryside recreation, tourism and leisure. If you would like to have a flier or advert distributed with the journal, please contact the Network Manager for further details and pricing policy.



Countryside Recreation Network

Countryside Recreation Network (CRN)

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

Chair: Geoff Hughes

Vice-chair: Jo Burgon, The National Trust

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Visit CRN on the Internet!
See our home page at:

www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk

Countryside Recreation Editorial Policy

Countryside Recreation is the journal of the Countryside Recreation Network. The purpose of the journal is to act as an exchange for sharing information, ideas and practical solutions that promotes best policy and practice in countryside recreation across the UK and Ireland. *Countryside Recreation* is free and is published three times a year. We welcome articles and letters from all readers.

The editorial policy for the journal is to provide a platform for a fair and honest discussion on issues relating countryside recreation.

Articles will be accepted from anyone from the Network organisations and other organisations and individuals who wish to share their knowledge, research findings, practical experiences or promote policies and strategies in the provision and management of access, recreation, sport and active tourism.

The Journal is not a lobbying or campaigning platform. We will not accept articles that are defamatory and potentially libellous. Rights of reply will be offered when organisations' actions are brought into question.

The Response section is used to enable comments to be made on specific articles. Articles offered for this section may be edited for length.

The journal is managed by the CRN Network Manager and guided by an editorial panel made up of representatives from organisations in the Network. The editorial panel and CRN Network Manager reserve the right to reject articles; and curtail discussion on specific subjects if the panel feel that the issues have been appropriately and satisfactorily dealt with. We will always discuss with authors the reason for rejecting articles.

The CRN Network Manager will commission articles related to the specific themes that are part of each journal. We will also accept articles on a range of subjects for each issue but they must be related to the business of the Network members' remits.

The Summer journal will be based on the theme of 'Active Tourism'

If you would like to submit an article or a news item for consideration by the Editorial Board, please email the document in word format to the Network Manager m.bull@shu.ac.uk.

Please note the following submission deadline dates:

Articles for editorial board consideration to be submitted by 12th May 2006

Commissioned articles to be submitted by 31st May 2006.

News items to be submitted by 12th June 2006.

Chair of Editorial Panel: Jo Burgon, The National Trust

Editorial

Jo Burgon, The National Trust

An Update on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)

Pam Whaley, Marine and Coastal Policy Team, Defra



Torquay Harbour

The United Kingdom's coastline is a dynamic physical environment and is one of, if not the most diverse in Europe. It is an area of vital economic, natural and cultural importance, but is also faced with a number of pressures and complexities. There is no universal definition of the coastal zone; and no single, overarching framework or lead body responsible for managing it. As a result, a fragmented system of management has evolved, within which it can be hard to deal effectively with competing interests or conflicts.

The Marine Stewardship Report, *Safeguarding Our Seas*¹ set out the UK Government and Devolved Administrations' desire to develop "a new, shared vision for the future of our coastal areas". *Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)* is a way of bringing together all those involved in coastal stewardship. It is a continuous process of integrating and harmonising the policy and management of

different activities to achieve the effective and long-term sustainable development of the coastal and marine environment.

In England for example, Local Authorities have the leading responsibility for coastal management on land, whilst at sea, the responsibility mainly falls to central government departments, who have traditionally followed a sectoral approach to management. This has, in some cases proven inadequate with some coastal areas suffering various degrees environmental degradation.

ICZM is often taken forward in England by local and regional coastal and estuary partnerships which have evolved across the country to establish practical arrangements for joining up the management of coastal areas and reducing conflict, by bringing stakeholders together to agree action plans on

specific coastal issues.

ICZM is based on a broad set of key principles, which include working with natural processes, reflecting local circumstances, and adopting a long term sustainable approach. However the roots of the ICZM process stem in part from work undertaken by the European Commission in the 1990s. The Commission funded 35 demonstration (7 of which took place in the UK) to look at different environmental and social issues faced by Europe's coastal zones such as habitat destruction, economic decline and social deprivation. The experiences from these programs provided the basis for a *Recommendation on Integrated Coastal Zone Management*, which was adopted in 2002².

The *Recommendation* asked all Member States to conduct a national stocktaking of coastal legislation, institutions and stakeholders and produce national strategies for implementing ICZM, based on the outcome of those stocktakes. Defra and the devolved administrations commissioned a project to complete this stocktake and the final report '*ICZM in the UK: A Stocktake*' was published in April 2004. Work to develop strategies is now being taken forward separately within each of the four administrations in the UK. Defra is currently preparing a draft ICZM strategy for England, which will set out our aims and objectives for achieving greater consistency in the implementation of an integrated approach around the English coastline. This will be available shortly for consultation and discussion.

The UK Government has also committed to a Marine Bill which will provide a new framework for making informed and integrated decisions for the marine environment. The principles of ICZM will also be applied throughout the elements of the Marine Bill to ensure that any new proposals integrate effectively with any systems which are already in place on land. The ultimate goal is to see the principles of ICZM firmly embedded into all aspects of policy and decision making in the marine and coastal environment.

Further details on marine and coastal policy may be obtained from the Defra website www.defra.gov.uk.

References

¹ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2002) '*Safeguarding Our Seas. A strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Development of Marine Environment*', Defra, 2002, pp5-6

² Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, 30 May 2002, (2002/413/EC)

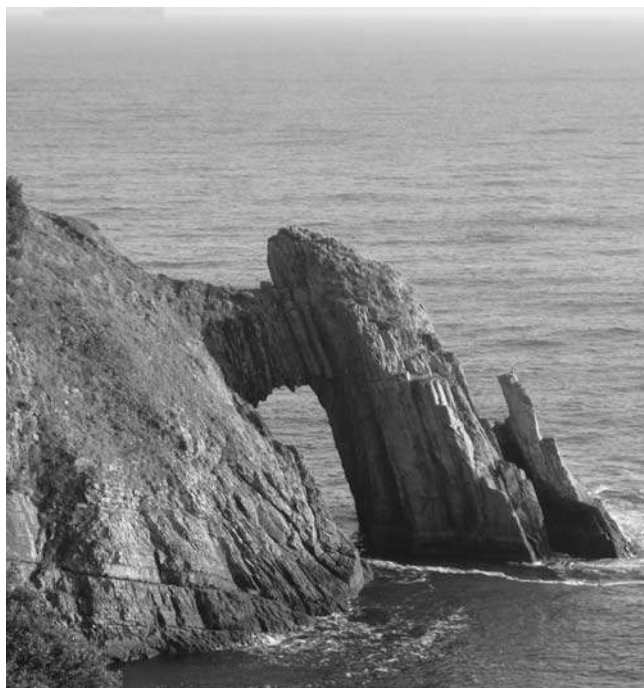
³ Atkins (2004) '*ICZM in the UK: A Stocktake. Final Report.*'

Photographic References

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London Bridge, Torquay

Coastal Access - what it means to recreation

Charlotte Edward, Policy Officer, Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR)



Beaulieu Private Beach – Beaulieu, Hampshire

Background

The CCPR (Central Council of Physical Recreation) is the independent voice for sport and recreation in the UK. It represents 270 national organisations, including 170 UK and English national governing bodies of sport.

This article has been written in consultation with the members of the CCPR and primarily the CCPR Outdoor Pursuits Division. Whilst researching this article, it became clear that there are diverse views on coastal access within the membership of the CCPR. This article attempts to represent those views; however it should be noted that some CCPR members may have additional views.

CCPR and its member organisations support the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs strategy that *“everyone should have good*

opportunities to enjoy the natural environment”.

CCPR welcomes with reservations the proposed project which Natural England will begin, once it is established, to improve access to coastal land in England, for the purpose of creating an onward journey on foot. However a number of CCPR membership organisations are concerned that increased access on foot, could equate to access for other forms of sport and recreation being reduced.

The current situation

The beaches and coastal areas throughout the UK are well used for informal recreation, as well as formal / organised recreation for a range of different activities, which include horse riding, walking, motor sport and climbing. Some such as those around and in Morecambe Bay already have rights of access for ‘air and exercise’ and recreation as well as pedestrian

access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as common land and others are controlled by Town councils for public recreation.

The horse riding community, for instance, ride on many beaches at present, observing local bye-laws in busy areas, for example not riding between the hours of 10am and 6pm during peak summer months.

The Ramblers Association estimates that one in ten walking trips is on the coast, which amounts to over 200 million trips a year. However there are numerous places where access is unclear or even prohibited; and there is no statutory right of access for walkers to most coastal areas in England and Wales. In contrast, the Land Reform (Scotland) Act confirmed the merits of using existing common law by taking responsible access as defined in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Even in England and Wales it should be emphasised that responsible access to the traditional climbing areas on the coast, such as Craig Gogarth on Holyhead Island, Anglesey, offering the finest sea-cliff climbing in Britain, is open, free and very extensive.



Walkers on Calshot Spit, Solent, Hampshire

The following two examples, of the current situation where access for walkers is a problem have been provided by the Ramblers Association:

It is at present impossible to walk the Wash Path between King's Lynn and Hunstanton in Norfolk, without going far inland and crossing the busy A149

twice. There is no public access at all from the Point at Lynn to Snettisham Beach.

In Telscombe, Sussex, Southern Water have blocked off Footpath 12a which runs along the top of the cliff. Local Ramblers Association members reported this in April 2005 and East Sussex County Council say this is not a priority and have taken no action to date. It is thought it has been blocked for years.

Both of these examples would benefit from the proposal to improve coastal access if implemented using a non-linear method.

The International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA-UK) note that currently provision for rural access along the coast for cyclists is limited to less than 50km of bridleways. 16km of byway is below the high tide mark in Morecambe Bay and inaccessible without a guide, and a further 10km in Devon. The remainder is highly fragmented, in small 1-2km stretches. A similar situation occurs in Wales, where over half the available 18km of coastal bridleway can be found in Gower Peninsular.

Weston Beach Race is an example of coastal areas and beaches being used as a venue for motor sports. Weston Beach Race is a motor cycle event, which is organised by the Auto-Cycle Union. The event takes place annually, with approximately 1,500 competitors and 60,000 spectators, which injects around £2 million into the local economy over one weekend.

Demand for opening up coastal access

A number of CCPR members believe that improved coastal access would be very beneficial to the development of their sport and recreation. The British Mountaineering Council (BMC), for example, believes that access to the coast is absolutely essential for recreational climbing and for the technical development of climbing, as coastal crags are a vital venue and facility for the development of the sport.

The Ramblers' Association National Walking survey 2005 suggests that increased public access to the

coast has widespread public appeal and support; 81% of respondents supported the extension of a legal right of access to coastal areas.

CCPR strongly believes that coastal access needs to be beneficial for a range of users and that such access should be free of charge and inclusive. CCPR also believes that one of the key principles is that it is developed in such a way that is flexible to accommodate coastline change, for example erosion. From a user's perspective, CCPR strongly believes that any new access arrangements should be clear and apparent to all user groups, with suitable but not excessive signage where necessary. Furthermore, CCPR believes that in order for new coastal access to be used by participants, it needs to be supported by adequate access to the area and suitable supporting facilities.

Concerns about opening up coastal areas for access on foot

Organisers of a number of sport and recreational activities which currently have access to coastal areas and beaches are concerned that a statutory right of access on foot could result in other activities losing any existing access agreements. For example, The British Motorcyclists' Federation do not support the opening up of coastal areas for access on foot because they believe that existing motorsport events such as the one mentioned previously will be prevented from taking place or will involve a range of new complications once access on foot is established. Furthermore the Auto-Cycle Union are concerned that these complications will lead to additional risk management which addresses the stewarding and marshalling of those who have a right to be there.

The Royal Automobile Club Motor Sports Association's (MSA) view is that while they do not wish to stand in the way of access for walkers, they are concerned that granting a right for walkers may impact and/or prevent activities and events which have been granted access by an agreement, if the right for walkers has more power than any existing agreements for other activities.

The horse riding sector are also concerned that opening up coastal areas and beaches for access on foot could result in less access for riding and mountain bike activities. Especially as horse-riders consider the value of beaches as a horse-riding venue vital. In addition, IMBA suggests that mountain bike users are currently disadvantaged by current access provision to the coast, and urge that any new policy should seek to remedy this situation.

CCPR therefore urges Natural England to consider existing and potential access agreements for all other sports and recreational activities that will not directly benefit under the opening up of coastal areas for access on foot. CCPR members would like to suggest that a safeguard for existing activities is provided, with flexibility so that events and activities can move around from time to time to accommodate changes to beaches the environment and demography.

Options for developing coastal access

CCPR acknowledges that as yet, no decision had been taken on how to achieve changes to access to the coast, but does have opinions on the current three options which are possible.

a) Mapping or description under section 3 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

A number of CCPR member organisations appear to favour this option, as extending access to beaches and coastal areas under section 3 of CROW will give the general public clarity and certainty regarding access rights on foot. However, CCPR members acknowledge that this will not clarify existing rights of access, or arrangements for events held by license. BMC support this option as it would allow permanent access, which BMC consider to be very important. In addition, members are concerned about the costs of a mapping process. The mapping for the access land under the CROW Act 2000, escalated into millions of pounds, which well exceeded the original budget. A number of CCPR member organisations would therefore favour a description process as this may result in less expenditure, and the money saved could be invested into facilities needed to cater for increased

coastal access such as well maintained access points, that include parking areas.

CCPR strongly believes that there are a number of lessons to be learnt from mapping access land under CROW Act 2000, before the extension to coastal access takes place. CCPR recommends that in consultation with stakeholders Natural England should gain a good understanding of these key lessons.

b) Improvements to the Rights of Way network using Rights of Way legislation

Certain CCPR members, which include the BMC and Ramblers Association, would favour area access, rather than improvements to the Rights of Way network to create a linear path around the coast. The BMC and the Ramblers believe that area access would appear far less problematic and would not be subject to the problems of erosion that a coastal path may be faced with.

Organisations who rely on higher rights than footpaths tend towards the view that improvements to the Rights of Way network are likely to be helpful to more people than merely increasing access on foot.

c) Voluntary / permissive agreements with landowners

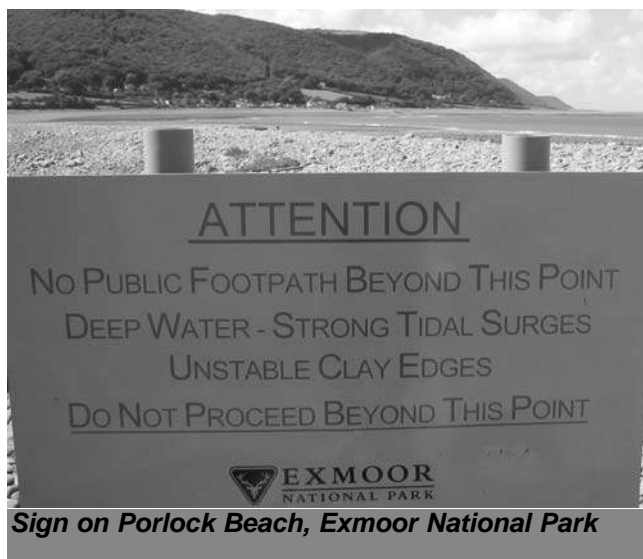
As a comparison to other forms of sport and recreation activities, an example of where voluntary agreements have been very difficult and time consuming to negotiate is through the pilot projects of the Environment Agency's Canoe Access Project. The British Canoe Union, believes that voluntary agreements of this kind are not the most suitable way to progress access to inland waterways and are therefore seeking primary legislation for canoe access.

The Ramblers' Association believes this approach to be undesirable because history has shown that voluntary agreements are both difficult to achieve and unlikely to secure permanent access.

A number of the motorsport organisations operate in the remit of voluntary agreements, such as Weston

Beach Race and these organisations would not wish to see any statutory access for recreation on foot impact upon these voluntary agreements.

CCPR is aware that a consultation on coastal access will take place in October 2006, CCPR and its member organisations look forward to being involved in this consultation. CCPR would also recommend that the National Countryside Access Forum, the National Access Forum for Wales, and Local Access forums are used as key consultation routes.



What coastal access will mean for recreation that takes place on foot

CCPR strongly supports the view that if the Government is to achieve its target of increasing physical activity participation by 1% year on year, then all forms of sport and recreation need to increase their participation rates. CCPR believes that opening up coastal areas for access on foot, will assist/increase the participation rates for walking and climbing and could also help increase participation rates of other sports and recreational activities.

CCPR also believes that improved coastal access could have significant health benefits. Research undertaken by the University of Essex (March 2003) highlights that "*Green exercise (physical activity whilst being exposed to nature) is likely to have important public and environmental health consequences... Increasing the support for and access to a wide range*

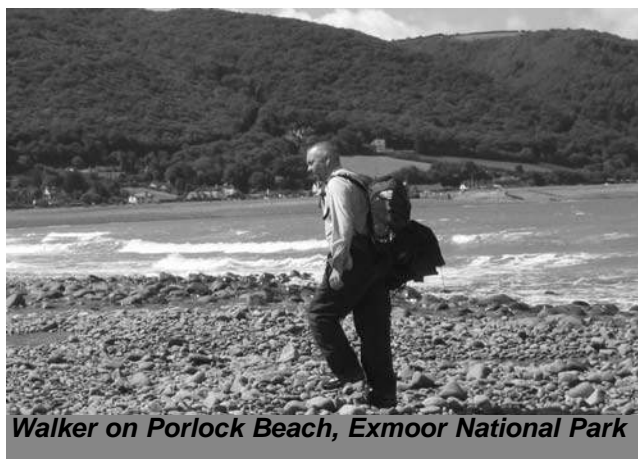
of green exercise activities for all sectors of society will produce substantial public health benefits". CCPR believes that improving coastal access, is one way on contributing to this agenda.

In addition, the economic benefits to local coastal regions as a result of increased coastal access could be potentially lucrative. In 2003, the Countryside Agency announced that the South West Coastal Path generated about £300 million a year to the South West economy, which is enough to support more than 7,500 jobs. Although this is a fixed linear path of 630 miles of coastline, CCPR believes that statutory access to beaches and coastal regions could increase local spend from users which would help increase local revenues.

CCPR is aware that as a result of increased access to coastal regions, conservation interests will need to be taken into account. CCPR champions the Best of Both Worlds project that English Nature, the Countryside Agency and CCPR are undertaking which helps to increase the opportunities for outdoor sports and recreation, and at the same time commit to protecting the sensitive environments in which outdoor pursuits take place. CCPR strongly believes that all coastal access for recreational users needs to take place in harmony with conservation interests and strongly believes that the Best of Both Worlds projects should be used as a model for achieving harmony between recreation and conservation interests.

Conclusions

CCPR understands that there is a wide range of views on the proposal to develop coastal areas and beaches for recreation on foot. However, CCPR believes that there are a wide range of benefits for opening up access to coastal areas and beaches. CCPR is aware that many other recreational activities are concerned that opening up coastal areas and beaches for access on foot could result in less access for such activities. CCPR therefore urges Natural England to take into account existing and future access for other forms of sport and recreation when establishing coastal access for recreation on foot.



Walker on Porlock Beach, Exmoor National Park

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The Ramblers Association (2005), 'Walking Survey 2005' www.ramblers.org.uk

Photographic References

"Beaulieu Private Beach, Beaulieu, Hampshire" credited to the Ramblers' Association

"Walkers on Calshot Spit, Solent, Hampshire" credited to Dave Tilbury

"Sign on Porlock Beach, Exmoor National Park" credited to the Ramblers' Association

"Walker on Porlock Beach, Exmoor National Park" credited to the Ramblers' Association

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The Marine Environment: How do we increase the public's understanding?

Lissa Goodwin, Bycatch/Fisheries Officer, Marine Connection



Divers on a Seasearch training Course

Introduction

In January 2005, 85 delegates from 73 organisations, including public bodies, NGOs, museums, universities and research institutes came together to discuss the public understanding of the marine environment. The conference, initiated and organised by The Wildlife Trusts' South East Marine Programme as part of a project entitled Conserving Marine Sand and Gravel Biotopes in South East England, was funded by English Nature, through Defra's (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, and The Wildlife Trusts.

The initial need for the meeting arose during 2003, when at a conference run by the Coastal Management for Sustainability (CMS) entitled '*Conserving Biodiversity in the Marine Environment*', delegates were invited to identify critical issues for discussion in focus groups. Public awareness emerged as one of the most strongly supported issues. Greater co-ordination, co-operation and sharing of expertise and resources between education providers were amongst the recommendations. So rather than simply present a forum for networking and sharing ideas, the intention was to meet other representatives and to work in groups to explore ideas and opportunities for

increasing public understanding of the marine environment. Public awareness was considered at all levels, from the local to the national level, and from the general public to schools, businesses and Government audiences.

Prior to meeting, delegates were invited to submit written responses identifying the potential benefits of greater public understanding of the marine environment. These responses highlighted a broad range of potential benefits. Amongst these, the most commonly cited were a more widespread acceptance of personal responsibility for the state of the marine environment, increased pressure on politicians and decision makers to manage the marine environment sustainably and, simply, better managed seas. Quotes included:

"Feelings of wonder, awe, inspiration"

"Reduce 'out of sight, out of mind' syndrome"

"Greater pride in natural resources (fish, oil, seaweed etc.)"

"..an empathy for the marine environment, a willingness to understand the issues affecting it, its

possible fragility, our dependence on it and the need to conserve it...and hopefully an active willingness to make the personal choices and actions to help conserve it..."

"...greater understanding will lead to informed choice when making all sorts of decisions, from what fish I should buy to which political party should I vote for!"

Over the course of the day several short presentations were given which highlighted current work and new initiatives in the field of marine awareness. Delegates were then invited to form small working groups within which to further discuss and develop ideas. A number of key elements were identified and discussed in each of the separate groups, including:

- Co-ordination between education providers
- Audiences
- Messages
- Education, schools and teachers
- Influencing decision makers
- Public participation
- Building ownership and responsibility
- The media

At the end of the day delegates were invited to join a small working group in order to sort through, prioritise and take the lead on the action points arising from the discussions. This group met in June where a number of leaders were identified and actions prioritised. The group is due to meet again in the coming weeks to follow up on those actions and continue the collaborative approach to increasing the public understanding of the marine environment which was initiated at the conference.

Coordination between education providers

Despite the obvious benefits of saving both time and resources, education providers do not often share resources or collaborate on ideas. There are several possible reasons for this, ranging from perceived competition to having a different key message or target audience. Sometimes regional differences may occur which prevent large scale co-ordination.

These obstacles however, are not insurmountable and any degree of sharing of ideas and resources is helpful. For example, materials might be adapted for new uses (rather than copied outright), and generic messages might be supplemented at the local level with more specific ones. Formal agreements between the collaborators (similar to those developed by the National Biodiversity Network for data sharing) can help build confidence. In addition to the obvious benefits, cooperation and partnership can facilitate engagement with the media, open doors to funders and influence decision makers.

It was suggested that the first steps towards better coordination could include the establishment of an education providers' network (or adaptation of an existing network), the development of a web portal to signpost education initiatives and regular conferences. Providers could also ally themselves with influential bodies such as the Council for Environmental Education (www.cee.org.uk) and National Association for Field Studies Officers (www.nafso.org.uk).

Audiences

From child to adult, coast to inland, industry to government, all walks of life were considered, with the primary aim being the need to identify the target audience and approach it accordingly. It was recognised that some would be easily engaged, whilst others such as those inland, away from the sea, would present more of a challenge.

Delegates expressed the need to identify and target the audiences that will have the greatest influence in the short term. These include opinion formers, senior decision makers and the marine industries. In the longer term, young people were seen as the priority. Adults however may be reached through their children, and there is a need for an attractive 'consumer package' for children, in order to take advantage of this effect.

A variety of awareness tools and approaches were discussed as a means of reaching different audiences. General principles that were highlighted included: the

need to engage people's interest early in life and sustain it in the long term; the need to bring the marine environment to people, wherever they are; and that there is not a single, uniform approach that will suit all circumstances.

The value of working with the marine industries was also explored. Invest in Fish, a project which addresses the whole seafood supply chain from fishermen to supermarkets and restaurants, was cited as an example of good practice. Tourism, ecotourism and watersports industries are also potential partners in marine awareness initiatives. Moreover, there may be the opportunity to make links with the business sector through the Corporate and Social Responsibility agenda. The range of tools available is very wide, including public events (perhaps linked to World Oceans Day, Low Tide Day or Marine Week), walks, talks, displays, visitor centres, site-based interpretation, hands-on activities, school visits to the coast, outreach into schools, printed publications, films and web-based materials, and marine and coastal reserves (either statutory or voluntary).

It is important to widen involvement by breaking down misconceptions and barriers. Different approaches will work for different audiences, and providers may need to link with an audience's existing interest (e.g. maritime history).

Messages

So what message are we trying to get across to the public?

The underlying purpose and goals of marine education have to be considered, together with the sorts of messages associated with these goals. Raising awareness of the marine environment in general, including wildlife and marine resources, may involve a different approach from raising awareness of specific issues. A focussed approach on one particular issue may be valuable, but in the wider public domain may appear too politically focused. This is where developing consistent, common messages at a national level could be very effective in combination

with more specific messages at a local level.

One of the key messages is the relevance of the marine environment to our everyday lives, irrespective of where we live. This message can be promoted in a variety of ways, including links with careers and employment, health, economics and sustainability, to generate a sense of personal ownership and responsibility. The use of visual images and analogies can be very important in providing a "take home" message.

Messages are about making a difference, whether supporting ecotourism or taking part in beach cleans. Positive messages can be promoted about the marine environment, highlighting the diversity, colour and interest of the UK's marine life. The seas should be presented as a living, working environment that makes a positive contribution to all of our lives.

Influencing decision makers

Senior decision makers - including politicians, government marine planning bodies, local authorities and the marine industries are critical to improving public understanding of the marine environment, both through their direct influence and by accessing funding. Marine industries should also be encouraged to be more open about the impacts of their products and activities on the marine environment.

Education providers conversely need to develop convincing arguments about the value of marine resources. The environmental NGOs have a role as independent lobbyists, and should work together to be more effective, providing a powerful collaborative approach (for example through Wildlife and Countryside Link – www.wcl.org.uk).

The EU Marine Strategy, UK Marine Bill, EU Water Framework Directive, EU Integrated Coastal Zone Management Recommendation, EU Habitats Directive, Corporate Social Responsibility are important drivers for making a difference. It is also important to engage the private sector and incentive schemes and levies (e.g. Aggregates Levy; proposed

Maritime and Coastguard Agency green shipping awards) can be effective ways.

The difficulty for many however, can be in securing funds for marine education, it is especially difficult to fund longer term initiatives and staff on the ground. The statutory agencies also need more capacity and resources to address the marine environment. Marine education should be prioritised, with influence applied to government to supply additional funding.

Formal education, teachers and schools

As identified earlier one of the primary sources in the long term of influencing the public understanding of the marine environment is to target the young. In order to do this one of the key areas to focus on are teachers and schools. At present the only marine element of primary education is taught should the teacher have a personal interest and chose to incorporate it into lessons. At secondary the curriculum is even more limiting, with little marine content. One of the potential areas within which it could be taught is through citizenship, once again developing and encouraging a sense of ownership and personal responsibility. Art, literature and science may also be used to further understanding of the marine environment. It was noted that in the medium term providers should attempt to influence the curriculum, however the ongoing move towards pupil-led learning (i.e. children choosing what they want to study) may also provide an opportunity for greater marine education.



Children enjoying a marine awareness activity at an education centre

Additional problems have arisen through the number of cost, health and safety issues which arise through field visits. It was suggested that marine education providers could support teachers in a number of ways, for example through providing risk assessment advice and offering staff and volunteers to assist on field trips. Links between local and coastal schools could also be developed and promoted.

The importance of contacts and good communication was highlighted, for example with the Department for Education and Skills, curriculum bodies, funders, the education press, local education authorities and individual teachers and schools. It was highlighted that a useful tool would be an online educational resource centre, where teachers could readily access marine information and teaching aids.

After-school nature clubs (e.g. school Wildlife Watch groups) should be accessible and affordable, and should seek to involve parents. Youth clubs and brownie/scout packs could also be targeted, to involve all ages. At secondary school, programmes can be developed whereby 14-19 year old students take one day out per week to do a diploma and/or work experience. However, in most cases, marine education would fall within a wider environmental brief rather than being the exclusive focus of clubs and programmes. The task is to get marine incorporated into these activities!

Public participation

Public understanding can lead to greater participation in practical projects and decision making. Conversely, public participation can lead to increased understanding. Thus, in the context of public understanding, participation can be seen as both a tool and an outcome. It is important to engage with people in their own environment.

The involvement of volunteers in awareness events, surveys, training and practical projects also provides two-way benefits, building the confidence and awareness of participants while bringing in new ideas and enthusiasm for the organisers. Through

participation, the positive aspects of the marine environment may be emphasised along with the need for action (lifestyle changes etc.). There is room for a variety of approaches, but coordination and sharing of resources between providers would be worthwhile.

Building ownership and responsibility

Mere understanding of the marine environment is not enough. Rather, it is vital that people are encouraged to care about and accept personal responsibility for it. A sense of ownership and pride will help overcome the "out of sight, out of mind" syndrome. It is recognised that personal responsibility will mean different things to different people, and that there are regional differences in the current level of ownership and pride. More consistent information is required to help people make choices, for example when buying sea food or participating in watersports.

The sorts of messages that can be used to promote ownership and responsibility include positive, celebratory messages, emphasis of our island status, and linking the marine environment to all of our lives. Education providers need to gather information about what people care about, their concerns, and the socio-economic context, in order to use this as a foundation. It is also important that people see that their voice makes a difference.

Media

TV, radio and press coverage were identified as key means of raising public awareness of the marine environment. It was recognised that marine stories are always in competition with other major issues, but that developing a strong relationship with the media can increase the chances of success. Good press releases and powerful or attractive images also aid success, and involving children always seems to help. While it pays to plan for predictable 'press hits' in advance (e.g. dead dolphins on beaches every winter), being responsive to new opportunities (e.g. mass jellyfish strandings) is also important. Networking and coordination between organisations can increase efficiency and effectiveness. Good

spokespeople are required at the local and national levels.

Contacts and communication are central to media success. This works two ways – knowing who to contact in the media, and the media knowing who to contact amongst marine organisations. Information could be collated centrally to assist with both of these aspects. Attempts should be made to engage media interest with a strong story, clear message, accessible information and good images.

Conclusion

The conference was a success in that it brought together marine delegates from a wide variety of backgrounds. The establishment of the working group has enabled a forum through which many of the ideas discussed above will be taken forward in a collaborative manner. It is hoped that this initial event and future conferences will permit marine providers to develop and enhance the public understanding of the marine environment to the benefit of all. Should you wish to view the full conference report, it can be downloaded from www.wildlifetrusts.org

Photographic References

"Divers on a Seasearch training course"- credited to Lisa Browning.

"Children enjoying a marine awareness activity at an education centre" - credited to Gillie Hayball.

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Why Did it Take Three Years to Open a Simple Public Pathway to a California Beach - A case study in Malibu, California, USA

Linda Locklin, Coastal Access Program Manager, California Coastal Commission



Historic land use pattern has created miles of residential development, backed by the Coast Highway. Lack of Public Pathways between the homes means that the beach is relatively empty except by beachfront residents.

Introduction

The Southern California beaches are world renowned due to the success of the Hollywood movie industry. These lovely sandy beaches and rocky coves have set the scene for many a romantic comedy as well as television shows like Baywatch. The impression we get from watching these films is that everyone in California lives a carefree and happy lifestyle and that it is warm and sunny year round. It appears that there is an endless supply of beaches, which provide open-air playgrounds for all to enjoy and to frolic in the waves.

Reality is, however, somewhat different. While the beaches are legally open for all to enjoy, the residential land use pattern created over 50 years ago makes getting access to the beach an indomitable task at times. When the Los Angeles area started to urbanize and home sites were platted out, public access between the homes (e.g. from the Coast Highway to the ocean) was not provided for. Now that the neighborhoods have virtually built out, the result is a solid wall of residential development along many of these beaches. These homes block the view of the beach from the visitor driving along the Coast Highway. Unless you know better, you have no idea

that just 150 yards seaward of the Highway is a long wide sandy beach ready to enjoy. Instead all you see is a solid wall of big imposing houses, which stretch from property line to property line, for mile after mile.

Every once in a while, however, as you drive along the 27 miles of the exclusive City of Malibu coastline, you occasionally glimpse the ocean. These view opportunities happen at the few public beach parks scattered along the Highway. At these vantage points, you can pull off the Highway, enjoy a view of the ocean, and join the tourists having some fun. As you stand on the beach and look up and down the coast, you see the endless line of expensive homes, whose back yards are the sandy beach. These beachfront homeowners are generally very happy that the public is confined to having their 'fun in the sun' at these public beach parks; the long walk from the beach parks means that the beaches in front of the houses are practically empty. For those lucky few homeowners, they simply step out their back door, walk down a few steps and they are on their very own "private" beach. Without the crowds associated with public beach park facilities, they can enjoy a wonderful day at the beach. A recent newspaper article expressed a beachfront property owner's thoughts about the public's use of the beaches: *"The issue of public versus private beach land has swept up and down Malibu's coast. I don't like to go out on the beach during the weekends anymore because of the public's attitude of entitlement."* (Malibu Times, July 2004).

Beach Access Laws in California

What are the laws governing beach access in the United States? Each State adopts its own rules and in the State of California the public has the legal right to use the shoreline from the water inland to the Mean High Tide Line. This Mean High Tide Line moves every day with the changing tide, and often includes the dry sand as well as the wet sand. The California Constitution was adopted in 1850 and guarantees all citizens the right to use these State Tidelands. However, it was not until 1972 that additional laws were passed to provide new legal tools to allow the State to require Public Pathways over intervening

private land in order to provide for a Public Pathway from the Coast Highway to the beach. This legal responsibility was mandated to the California Coastal Commission, a State agency responsible for overseeing all building permits along the 1100-mile long California coast. Since the law was enacted in 1972, the Commission has issued thousands of building permits and has required dozens of Access Easements between houses.

Case Study: Carbon Beach, City of Malibu, Los Angeles County

The case example is Carbon Beach, a one and a half mile long beach in the City of Malibu, just 30 minutes from the highly urbanized City of Los Angeles metropolis. The beach is backed by over 200 private residential homes, owners of which can simply stroll out their back patio and enjoy a day at the beach. Until last year, the only way the public could get a peak at Carbon Beach, other than by boat, was to walk down the single Public Pathway, located at the far end of the beach. Typically most tourists tend to congregate near the Public Pathway, leaving the majority of the beach empty, that is except for beachfront homeowners.

22 Years to open a second Public Pathway to Carbon Beach

In 1983 when one of the Carbon Beach property owners applied to expand their residential complex, the Commission approved the expansion but included a condition that required the property owner to legally grant a 10 ft. wide Easement along the side of the property, to allow for future construction of a Public Pathway from the Coast Highway to the beach. The State process requires the property owner to offer an 'Easement for the future Pathway'; once that paperwork is filed, it is up to the government to partner with the local government or NGO who can take the next steps of accepting liability, physically construct the Pathway improvements, open and operate the Pathway every day and make all necessary repairs. For a variety of reasons, lack of funding is the most common problem, these steps can take a number of years. Thus there is usually a long time lag from when

the property owner offers the Easement to the State and when the Public Pathway is opened.

Due to diminishing budgets and insufficient staff levels, most government agencies are reluctant to take on any new responsibilities regardless of how important the Pathway is. In this case, the State turned to a NGO in 2002 to take over the responsibilities to construct and open the Public Pathway. As soon as the paperwork transfer had been completed, the NGO, Access for All, contacted the landowner to let them know that the Pathway was opening soon. Given the level terrain from the Coast Highway to the beach, it was relatively simple procedure to open the Public Pathway. It was not necessary to construct stairs or fences, as the area was comprised of level sand and it was already fenced along the edges. Ready to go for public use!

However, the property owner was not receptive to the opening of the Public Pathway. Given that he is one of the richest men in the world, a record and medial mogul named David Geffen, he had the financial

means to put up legal roadblocks to delay the opening of the Pathway. Because of these roadblocks effectively prevented the public from using most of Carbon Beach as guaranteed by State law, Gary Trudeau the creator of the comic strip "Doonesbury", poked fun at Mr. Geffen for 20 weeks in September-October of 2002. Because the comic strip is printed internationally, news of the Public Pathway debate became an international news story. When the Pathway had still not been opened two years later, again due to legal roadblocks, Doonesbury revisited the situation with another seven weeks of comic strip fun in June-July of 2004.

After three years of legal battles, the property owner relented and allowed the Public Pathway to be opened. In May 2005 the gates were opened, and due to the dozens of national and international news stories that had been written about this legal battle, many Los Angelinos were anxious to walk down the new Pathway and see what Carbon Beach looked like. In just a few weeks, up to 500 people per day were walking down the Pathway!



Before the Public Pathway was opened, Carbon Beach was virtually empty of any beach-goers.



After the Public Pathway is opened hundred of visitors enjoy Carbon Beach

Conclusion

California State law clearly requires that public access for all citizens to and along the beach be maximized; the tools to implement this mandate are codified in the law. While these laws are strong, they are always subject to objection, particularly by the filing of private landowner lawsuits. Therefore, the State must maintain a vigilance to ensure that the laws are implemented and that they protect public access rights to the beaches of California. In this case, the State battled for three years and finally won the right for all citizens to use this new Public Pathway.

*Further Information on the Coastal Access Programme can be obtained from the website:
<http://www.coastal.ca.gov/access/acndx.html>*

Photographic References

All photographs are credited to the California Coastal Records Project

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Coastal Access - What Do Walkers Really Want?

Andrew McCloy



Photograph by Bruce Cutts, Countryside Agency

With a growing focus on the creation of new access rights to the coastline, what exists in the way of coastal walking at present, and what sort of practical access is desirable or necessary to ensure a meaningful walk by the sea in the future?

Background

(a) Popularity of coastal walking

The coastline of England & Wales stretches to 4,400km/2,733 miles and is tremendously varied, including a wide variety of scenery. It's a hugely important recreational resource – certainly more popular, in terms of numbers of visitors, than the newly-created access land across the mountains and moors, and for most a walk by the sea is uppermost. Indeed, it's been estimated that more people go on

walking holidays along the coast than on beach holidays.

(b) Coastal trails and waymarked routes

Fascinating hierarchy of existing long distance coastal trails and waymarked ways in England and Wales: international (e.g. E9 'European Coast Path' from Plymouth to Dover, and 'Nortrail', a walking route around the coast of countries bordering the North Sea, including England); National Trails such as SW Coast Path and Norfolk Coast Path; regional routes, e.g. Cumbria and Lancashire Coastal Ways, Glamorgan Heritage Coast Path, Durham Coast Path, Bournemouth Coast Path, etc.

Short, local routes, sometimes waymarked or via self-guided leaflets, are developed and promoted locally. These are often thematic – coastal wildlife, marine

geology, etc. – and centred on the likes of nature reserves, country parks, National Trust land, etc (eg Seven Sisters Country Park, The Lizard, Orford Ness).

(c) Economic benefit of walking to coastal communities

Figures from a recent SW Coast Path survey reveal that the 1,014km/630-mile route generates £300million a year for the economy of the region, supporting over 7,500 jobs. Almost 1/3 of all visitors to the SW go solely to walk the SWCP, while local residents take 23 million walks along the route annually. In 1996/7, the Pembrokeshire Coast Path was found to support 567 local jobs, or one job for every 500m of its 299km/186-mile length.

Issues

Despite the proliferation of trails and the general popularity of walking by the sea, the legal right of access on foot to England's shore is frequently unclear, often misunderstood, and in places prohibited altogether (cf situation in Scotland).

Away from the well-maintained coastal paths, access to the coast is threatened by the likes of economic development, military use and obstructive landowners. Conservation (especially re birds) is often cited as an obstacle to greater coastal access, but there is no inherent conflict between responsible recreation on foot and wildlife management, and local restrictions at key sites and times would be little different than the seasonal restrictions introduced to new access land under CROW. Elsewhere, erosion (especially on the east coast) is a factor in local access to the shore, and here the idea of a coastal strip or zone of access may be one solution to guaranteeing long-term access.

Key points

- The right of access on foot to the coast must be made clear and unambiguous
- Access must be meaningful and logical, providing realistic walking opportunities that

aim to provide a quality coastal experience

- Opportunities to strengthen links to existing rights of way near the coast should be sought at every opportunity, allowing the network to be upgraded to form clear and inviting circular and longer routes
- Access to the coast from urban fringes and built-up communities is very important, and will help to encourage the take-up of physical exercise and raise general awareness of threats from unsuitable development
- Opportunities must be taken to create easier access to the coast for less mobile users
- A careful balance should be struck over conservation issues, with Environmental Impact Assessments and appropriate consultation before local restrictions (e.g. surrounding breeding birds) are agreed
- One specific aim should be to fill in the 'missing links' in the network of coastal long-distance trails

*Andrew McCloy is a former information officer of the Ramblers' Association, author of two books on exploring the coast on foot – *Coastwalk: Walking the Coast of England & Wales* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1997), *Coastal Walks Around Britain* (New Holland, 2005) – and presently a freelance access consultant and Chair of the Peak District Local Access Forum.*

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Coastal Access Information Sheet

The Countryside Agency

In December 2004 the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) produced a Five Year Strategy which emphasised that “*everyone should have good opportunities to enjoy the natural environment*”. As a result of this and to further people’s enjoyment of the outdoors, Defra is now looking to improve access to coastal land in England, with an overall aim of creating an onward journey on foot.

The three Natural England confederation partners, The Countryside Agency’s Landscape, Access and Recreation division, English Nature and the Rural Development Service are working together to undertake research into which access option can best deliver:

- secure access along the length of the English coastline, accepting that this may be subject to some exceptions, whilst considering erosion, growth and realignment;
 - a more accessible coastline, by creating physical routes to access the coast and by encouraging more people to enjoy the coast;
- and
- improvements for coastal wildlife and the landscape, as well as encouraging people to enjoy and understand this environment.

As yet no decision has been taken on how to achieve better access to the coast but among the options being investigated are:

- mapping or description under section 3 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;
- improvements to the Rights of Way (ROW) network using ROW legislation; and

- voluntary/permissive agreements with landowners

The confederation partners are currently working on an information gathering and research exercise. Key aspects of this work, which will be undertaken in consultation with interested parties and organisations, are:

- collecting data on a national basis to gain a comprehensive picture of the natural and developed coast and existing access provision
- gaining an understanding of how coastal access works in other UK and European countries and what might be learnt from these other countries;
- indepth investigation, testing and costing of the access options on a series of ‘trial sites’, selected to reflect the diversity of the English coast; and
- assessing current usage, non-usage and demand for coastal access on both a national and ‘trial site’ level.

The confederation will report to Defra on the findings in 2006. The results from this investigative phase will inform a public consultation on the options for improving coastal access. Defra are aiming to issue the public consultation document in October 2006.

Further information will become available through the places to go section of the website at:
www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Don't Forget the Swimmers

Jean Perraton, Environmental Consultant/Writer

***'We had no toys, no books and we didn't play cricket or football.
But all the boys and young men swam naked
in the river in summer time.
It was our biggest happiness.'***

Leonard Thompson, farm worker in Suffolk¹

Leonard Thompson was recalling his boyhood days at the beginning of the 20th century, but swimming in rivers remained popular until the 1970s. Now we have so many other ways to fill our leisure hours. But, despite competing attractions and heated indoor pools, there are still those for whom the greatest summer pleasure is to swim in natural waters.

In England and Wales we can swim freely in the sea but, unlike many other European countries, opportunities to swim in a nearby lake or river are becoming increasingly limited. The Environment Agency, the Health and Safety Executive and ROSPA frown upon such swimming, and local authorities often ban swimming in lakes in their country parks. The popularity of the few lakes where swimmers are welcome (such as Keynes Country Park in the Cotswold Water Park and the ponds on Hampstead Heath) and the anger and frustration displayed when swimming is banned (as at Black Park in Buckinghamshire and Hatchmere Lake in Cheshire) show that some people remain passionately attached to this healthy and environmentally friendly activity.

The problem stems partly from an exaggerated perception of the risks of swimming. More than 400 people in the UK drown accidentally each year but not all were swimming – most of the victims were doing other things and, often, drinking alcohol. Since we do not know how many people swim in inland waters we

cannot compare the risks with those of other water-based activities, but data on leisure activities from General Household Survey suggest that swimming in open waters (the sea and inland waters) is much less risky than sub-aqua – which is often allowed in lakes and reservoirs where swimming is not. And, despite alarming warnings of Weil's disease, the health risks of swimming in untreated water are low.

The main problem lies in the ownership of land and water, the duty of care that landowners owe to people who come onto their land, and the way safety watchdogs interpret this duty. We have a right to swim in most tidal waters but no general right to swim in non-tidal rivers and lakes. The owners of the bank own half the river-bed (or lake-bed) giving them rights to use the water including, usually, the exclusive right to fish. The concern of landowners and anglers to protect fishing appears to be an increasing constraint upon swimming in lakes and rivers.

Landowners also fear that litigation could follow any neglect of their duty of care. Two recent decisions relating to the Occupiers' Liability Acts, however, show that RoSPA has misinterpreted this legislation. The civil law does not require landowners to prohibit swimming where there are no unusual hazards (beyond the inherent danger of swimming). In Lord Hoffman's words: *'it will be extremely rare for an occupier of land to be under a duty to prevent people*

*from taking risks which are inherent in activities they freely choose to undertake on the land*³

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, which imposes a duty on landowners towards visitors to their premises, is also a constraint. The HSE advises site operators either to provide lifeguards or to ban swimming in the waters they control. Until recently it seemed that those who ignored HSE advice risked criminal prosecution, but comments in the High Court by Mr Justice Stanley Burnton suggest that the HSE now needs to take into account the clarification of the civil law.³

It is time, therefore, for the HSE to revise its guidelines and for site managers to reassess their attitude to swimming in waters they control. However, if people are to enjoy swimming in the wider countryside they need to gain a legal right to do so. The CROW Act explicitly did not create a right to use the waters within the new access areas. A simple amendment to this act to allow swimming in waters within the access areas, and to paddle canoes along the rivers that run through them, would extend our freedom to enjoy, in low-impact ways, some of our finest countryside. But, in parts of lowland England, especially the arable lands of eastern England, the CROW Act brings little change. People here have fewer opportunities to enjoy the countryside close to their homes, the gentle lowland landscapes that many prefer to the mountains and moors, and often few places to swim.



Family fun at Keynes Country Park

Scotland has shown that a more radical extension of access to land and water is possible. South of the border, we need to campaign for the right to walk over more of our lowland countryside and to enjoy, in environmentally friendly ways, the lakes and rivers within it. Dangerous places such as canal locks, and sensitive wildlife habitats, could be excluded, and the new rights should be accompanied by limitations on landowners' liability for accidents. We could then paddle, swim and canoe in most of the lakes and rivers of England and Wales, accepting the risks of doing so.

This is some way off. In the meantime, will those of you working in countryside recreation – researchers, policy makers and land managers – remember the swimmers?

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Photographic References

Family fun at Keynes Country Park -photo credited to Jean Perraton

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Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics

Hugh Westacott, Director of Guided Walks and Walking Tours



Thick mud near a stile where it is often dry

Introduction

This article examines the condition of rights of way in England, based on the practical experiences of one lifelong walker, and compares them with the official statistics published by the Countryside Agency, the Audit Commission and the claims made by some user-groups. These observations pertain only to walkers and do not take into account the needs of other users.

I am in my mid-seventies and own a business leading Americans and Canadians resident in London on walking holidays and day walks in the countryside. I also lead walking tours for an American travel company and have completed Wainwright's Coast to Coast Walk 38 times. I walk about 2,500 km a year in areas ranging from the Lake District to Cornwall.

On my website is a list of 70 walks located in twelve counties within a 90-minute train journey of London. Most of them are approximately 15 km long and were

planned from maps so that only a few follow popular routes. Not once, when reconnoitring the itineraries, did I have to alter my route because the paths were difficult to find or use. When leading my walkers, we encountered one ploughed field, one riverside path flooded after heavy rain, a holloway blocked by snowdrifts, and one path obstructed by ripe oilseed rape that had fallen across the path during a recent violent storm.

Last summer I backpacked 120 km from London to Littlehampton. I went astray once, for 100 metres, due to faulty map-reading, and I encountered one broken stile and one misleading notice. The ROWs were in such good condition that I averaged 40 km a day through small fields and woods on paths that I had not walked before.

Thus, in following more than 1,100 km of Rights of Ways (ROWs), I encountered three significant problems or one every 366 km. If the acts of God

(flooding, snowdrifts and storm damage) are included, the average is still only one problem in every 183 km.

Rights of Way Background

I became involved in practical rights of way work in 1969 when I moved to North Buckinghamshire and found that most ROWs were unusable. Paths were ploughed and obstructed by crops, stiles were missing and gates were locked. Twice I was confronted by an aggressive farmer carrying a shotgun; I was abused following polite requests to remove obstructions; I was sprayed with mud by a farmer driving his tractor dangerously close to me; and I received hate-mail. Once, when addressing the local National Farmers' Union (NFU), pleading the case for ROWs, I was heckled, jeered, slow-hand clapped, and booed. I have helped build bridges and stiles, cleared vegetation, and felled trees from a 2 km-long 'Road Use Public Path' (RUPP).

How things have improved! In the 1970s, it was impossible for even a determined walker armed with toggle-loppers and wire-cutters to proceed more than a few hundred metres in the parishes of Whitchurch and Creslow. None of the paths in Adstock and Great Horwood were ever restored nor were headland paths left undisturbed. On my return after 25 years, I found most rights of way signposted and waymarked, the field furniture in good condition (except for one broken stile and two gates that were locked but easily climbed), and almost all paths restored after ploughing.

The Conflicting Claims

A figure often quoted by the Ramblers' Association, based on information contained in *The Rights of Way Condition Survey 2000*¹, is that a walker is likely to meet a serious obstacle every 2 km. The discrepancy between statements quoting official sources and my experience has led me to examine the statistics.

Information about the condition of ROWs in England is contained in *The Rights of Way Condition Survey 2000* and *The Best Value Performance Indicators*

(BVPI) 178. The two sources are not directly comparable because different methodologies were used but the former is particularly illuminating because it gives statistics on the types of problems encountered together with a commentary on the findings. It also makes it clear that a ROW which fails one of the survey's tests for ease of use, does not necessarily mean that it is difficult to use.

The Findings of the Rights of Way Condition Survey 2000

This was commissioned by the Countryside Agency to assess the progress made by the Milestones Initiative to ensure that all rights of way were '*...easy to find; easy to follow; easy to use.*'² It should be noted that '*The national target figures reported in this document referred to the legal line of the path. However, in practice, not all obstructions to the legal line had a significant effect on use. Therefore surveyors also took into account users making minor deviations from the legal line when assessing the overall effect of path problems. This indicated that in practice all users found more than three quarters of the path resource to be 'usable'...*' (The figure quoted for walkers is 89%.)³

Another passage states: '*The general finding was that most paths were easy to follow, with only a small fraction classified as impossible to follow... At a national level, only 4% of paths were impossible to follow.*'⁴

The survey also found that 95% of all crossings (i.e. stiles, gates bridges and steps) were usable⁵ but only 67% of ROWs that joined a road were signposted.⁶

Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 178

These statistics have been published annually since 2001 by the Audit Commission but as they merely give the percentage of the total length of ROWs that were 'easy to use' in each highway authority, they make intelligent deductions impossible.

Instructions to surveyors are set out in *The Methodology Standard for the Sample-Based*

Collection of Rights of Way Field Data, which are intended to standardize survey methods to make comparisons between highway authorities more reliable. They include the following:

to assume ‘...that the route is being used by a user or users, consistent with the status of the path, who are suitably attired and equipped with a 1:25,000 map but without a compass.’⁷

and to ‘... have regard to all users on bridleways and byways and to consider whether the condition of the path is fit for purpose for all legitimate public users.’⁸

to ‘...confine themselves to the legal line of the path and ignore any unofficial diversions...’⁹

Comment: Many paths depicted on the *Definitive Map* start and finish at the correct place but show a route that has never been used. Examples in the Lake District include the ROW that runs south from Watendlath in Borrowdale which was shown on the *Outdoor Leisure Map* as running through Dock Tarn, and the ROWs near the summits of Scafell Pike and St. Sunday Crag. Some ROWs on Dartmoor appear to have been drawn with a ruler. A black dotted line on Ordnance Survey maps shown adjacent to ROWs in upland areas usually indicates the route actually used and suggests that the *Definitive Map* was not compiled accurately. A 1993 survey of the 837-km ROW network on the Isle of Wight identified 232 routes where the line on the ground differed from that shown on the *Definitive Map*.¹⁰

BVPI Tests that would ‘Fail’ a Right of Way

Paths would automatically fail the ‘ease of use’ test for the following reasons (the numbers refer to those used on the Standard Survey Form):

1.1 Signpost/waymarker (road)

‘...signposts/waymarkers must be in place, show correct status, be properly aligned and clearly visible.’

Comment: It is a legal requirement for ROWs to be signposted from roads,¹¹ but since the user is assumed to be carrying a 1:25,000 map this fault only

makes the path slightly less easy to find.

1.2 Waymark/other signpost along path

‘A waymark is required when a path changes status or where the route of the path is not clear from the map’⁷

Comment: This does not require ROWs to be waymarked at every crossing, as is sometimes implied, but usually refers to situations where the path is not visible and changes direction other than at a field boundary.

1.4-1.7 Steps/revetment, bridges, stiles and gates

‘...where immediate repair or replacement is required.’¹²

Comment: The Rights of Way Condition Survey 2000, found that 95% of all crossings were usable.⁵

2 Obstructions - point

Comment: These include barriers such as wall/fence/hedge/other barrier, illegal/misleading signs and buildings many of which are serious enough obstacles to deter walkers and require firm action by highway authorities.

4.1 Crossfield not reinstated

Comment: This is a legal requirement but paths surveyed during the statutory period allowed for reinstatement of the surface¹³ could be failed. A ROW can fail this ‘ease of use’ test and still comply with the law.

4.3 Surfaced path out of repair

Comment: This condition is unlikely to affect walkers adversely.

4.4 Flooded/Muddy/Boggy/Rutted

Comment: Some of these conditions may be temporary and caused by the weather. Paths surveyed after heavy rain could fail the ‘ease of use’ test but pass when dry for it is the natural condition of lowland paths to be muddy and upland paths to be boggy. Cattle may be moved to another field on the day following a survey that had passed a path as ‘easy to use’, but if it lies on the route to the milking parlour, it will soon be churned up. Similar situations obtain in woodland where forestry vehicles can temporarily

damage path surfaces.

5 Obstructions - linear (other)

Comment: These include physical obstructions, cropping etc. which are universally acknowledged to be serious obstacles and which require firm action by highway authorities.

Inferences to be Drawn from the Surveys

Missing signposts and departures from the route shown on the *Definitive Map* seem to be two major reasons for ROWs to fail the BVPI 'ease of use test' although neither of these categories necessarily makes a path difficult to use.

The statistics suggest, and walkers confirm, that ploughing and cropping are major problems. Unfortunately, in *The Condition of Rights of Way 2000* survey they are classified under the general heading of 'Obstructions per 10 km' which also includes out of repair crossings, but as the survey states that 95% of crossings are 'usable', it is probably a reasonable inference.

Personal Observations and Conclusions

I conclude, based on 60 years of experience (and a member of the Ramblers' Association for more than thirty years), and by studying the statistics, that the rights of way network from the perspective of walkers is in fairly good shape. I believe that some of the claims made by user-groups are exaggerated. For example, a circular letter from the Chairman of the Ramblers' Association headed '*The state of many English footpaths is a national disgrace*' claimed that '*...more than 30% of Buckinghamshire's paths are below standard.*' This claim, based on the strict criteria of the BVPI tests, contrasts significantly with the *The Condition of Rights of Way 2000* survey which found that 93% of the county's path network to be 'satisfactory or usable' by walkers¹⁴. In a private letter the Chairman told me that, in Surrey, '*...one in seven paths...are officially recognized as not easy to use*'. Yet *The Condition of Rights of Way 2000* survey found that 97% of its paths were 'satisfactory or usable'¹⁵.

My offer to contribute £10 to RA funds for every problem on any 16-km route in Surrey that would deter a typical walker was not taken up.

It is unlikely that the tests used in the BVPI statistics will result in complete compliance because:

- i) It will take years for problems associated with the *Definitive Map* to be resolved.
- ii) There will always be a number of ROWs beset with near-intractable legal problems.
- iii) The standards required for path surfaces are unrealistic; paths are, by their very nature, sometimes muddy and awkward to use.
- iv) There will always be a handful of deranged farmers and landowners who will do their best to deter walkers.

Rights of way officers expect brickbats (I have hurled a few) but they have a difficult job and are pitifully under-resourced. Walkers should be aware that without their dedication, urged on with the practical assistance of user-groups, the condition of the ROW network would not have improved so remarkably over recent years.

I am appalled by the huge resources in both time and money consumed in the compilation of the BVPI statistics which must seriously hamper the practical work of improving ROWs.

The Way Forward

The law must be vigorously enforced by highway authorities. The latest weapon in their armoury is the Good Agricultural and Environmental regulations of the Common Agricultural Single Payment Scheme¹⁶ which requires recipients to conform to all ROW legislation. Highway authorities should routinely circulate farmers and landowners reminding them of their responsibilities and pointing out the consequences if they fail to comply.

It should be recognized that there are two types of walker - strollers (dog-walkers and those who enjoy a

short constitutional) and purposeful walkers (those who are making a journey). ROWs within a kilometre or so of settlements and rural car parks should receive special treatment including the installation of kissing gates and the elimination of muddy areas to satisfy the needs of strollers and those with impaired mobility. Purposeful walkers should expect to find ROWs unobstructed but be prepared to cope with minor surface problems.

If the BVPI 178 statistics are considered to be necessary they should be published in an expanded version to enable meaningful conclusions to be drawn from them.

References

- ¹The Rights of Way Condition Survey 2000, The Countryside Agency, [n.d.]. p10
- ² Ibid. p7
- ³ Ibid. p9
- ⁴ Ibid. p20
- ⁵ Ibid. pp22-3
- ⁶ Ibid. p18
- ⁷ The Methodology Standard for the Sample-Based Collection of Rights of Way Field Data p9 para 8.3
- ⁸ Ibid p4 para 5.6
- ⁹ Ibid. p5 para 6.6
- ¹⁰ Institute of Rights of Way Officers, Managing the Record

<http://beta.zelica.net/www.iprow.co.uk/index.cfm?do=gpg&itemID=55> summarizing a paper delivered by Tim Slade to a seminar on the Countryside Commission's Milestones initiative.

¹¹ Countryside Act 1968s 27 (2)

¹² The Methodology Standard for the Sample-Based Collection of Rights of Way Field Data p10 para 8.6

¹³ Highways Act 1980 s 134 (3)

¹⁴ The Condition of Rights of Way Survey 2000 p31

¹⁵ Ibid p31

¹⁶ Common Agricultural Policy Single Payment and Support Schemes (Cross-compliance) (England) Regulations 2005

Photographic References

All photographs credited to Hugh Westacott

Contact details

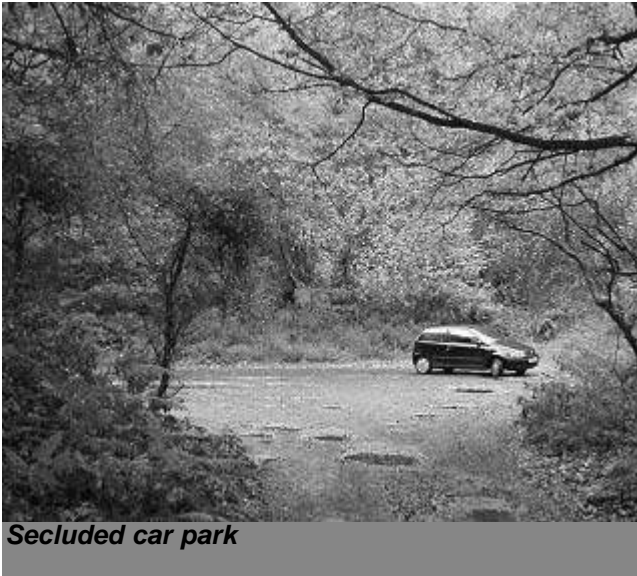
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A locked gate on a 'Byway Open to All Traffic' (BOAT) which would not obstruct walkers

Beyond Lover's Lane

Dr Richard Byrne, Harper Adams University College



Secluded car park



Controlled car park

Introduction

Public Sex Environments (PSEs) are not a new occurrence, places where individuals meet and engage in sexual acts have been part of the urban fabric for hundreds of years and to a greater or lesser extent have been tolerated by society. However, in recent years it has been noted that the location of such activity has moved from the urban to the rural and in particular to recreational areas such as country parks, nature reserves, utility owned recreation sites and heritage sites. This translocation brings with it a new set of challenges and issues for the land manager.

The Changing Geography of PSEs

Traditionally, PSEs have been considered areas where gay men have frequented for 'cottaging' or 'cruising' activities. However, over the last 5 years there has been a growth in both the number of heterosexual PSEs being established.

The PSEs currently being established are being done

so to meet the needs of three identifiable groups. The first are exhibitionists who use the site in order to be watched performing sex acts, the second may be loosely termed 'swingers', who meet for sexual contacts with other individuals. Finally there are the voyeurs (Pikers) who either watch overtly or observe in more voyeuristic style from the margins, sometimes joining in the sex act. It is difficult to readily classify the users as many assume different roles at varying times within the PSE. Collectively they are termed 'doggers' and engaged in the practice of '*dogging*'¹ a cocktail of voyeurism and outdoor sex, typified by multiple partners and a high thrill threshold derived from the location and the act itself. The origins of dogging are unclear, however, it is generally considered that it developed from voyeur activities around 'lover's lanes' and where prostitutes take their clients.

The doggers preferred locations are car parks in country parks and other managed areas such as reservoir sites, nature reserves and forest parks, as these are easily identifiable from maps and are generally signposted allowing pre-arranged meetings to take place easily. Country Parks also provide a

degree of discretion as they may indeed be used for 'walking the dog'.

Doggers and country park PSE users come from a wide background. What is clear is that men far outnumber women and that there is potential within these PSEs for a level of coercion and exploitation of women. This is an area of great concern given the high risk sexual activity taking place and anecdotal evidence suggesting that women have been drugged and forced into such activities. Even amongst women who willingly take part in the activity there is much anecdotal evidence that they sometimes become the object of unwanted attention leading to acts which at least could be classed as assault and at worst rape.

The problems with PSEs are extensive. In addition to any unlawful activity, often relating to indecent behaviour type offences and members of the public being wrongly approached by PSE users. The PSEs users themselves are often vulnerable to criminals and typically are victims of assault, harassment and robbery, users also leave themselves open to blackmail.

Whilst most PSE activity occurs during darkness, it is not unknown for daytime activity to occur. At its lowest nuisance level it involves extra vehicle activity, erosion and general disturbance to vegetation and wildlife. The aftermath of 'meetings' is probably one of the most serious consequences with discarded condoms, lubricants and items of clothing littering the site. Dealing with these activities can in turn place pressure on staff managing the site.

Tackling PSE environments

Managing PSEs with the aim of controlling and eliminating the use of a site has been an on-going problem for many years. Recent press interest and celebrity expose have increased the pressure on sites with the growth and increased curiosity in the activity. The most common controls methods have been the introduction of barriers, installation of lighting and increasing police patrols. Barrier controls are normally employed from a period of sunset to sunrise. However,

surveys of English country parks work undertaken in 2003 indicated that barrier control has little effect on anti-social behaviour and PSE activity in particular. Indeed, the presence of controls appears to simply move the problems from night-time into the day, when there is more chance of PSE activity conflicting with 'normal' use of the site.

Through survey and interview work, barrier control has also been noted to have a further impact in the dissemination of PSE sites. Due to the IT reliance of contemporary PSE users it is very easy to communicate that a site is no longer operational. It has been noted from the surveys that in cases where barrier control and also increased police activity has been employed (again PSE users note this on websites and internet groups) new sites have been established within a few weeks. The general characteristic of these new sites is that (as previously noted) they are further away from urban areas, and they do not tend to be typical PSEs e.g. a country park but are more likely to be woodland, reservoir sites, historic sites and nature reserves. In short the pressure on the environment is pushed often from a single to multiple sources. This was observed in Shropshire in the period of Summer 2003-2004 where barrier control and increased police presence was observed on two close to town centre PSE sites, with the result that at least 5 rural PSEs were subsequently established. Whilst increased police presence undoubtedly has an impact on PSE and other anti-social behaviour it is often difficult to maintain the presence given the pressures on police services particularly in rural areas.

The option of introducing illumination does not appear to have a positive reduction effect on activities. As with barrier entry the survey is clear that there is no discernible difference between the two. Indeed, some PSE users see illumination as a positive factor. CCTV is seen to have little effect due to its inflexibility in a country park environment. Where employed it tends to be used as a security device on a compound or buildings and lacks the monitoring capability of urban CCTV networks. As a deterrent in its current format it lacks any real impact and its potential for employment

across a wide recreational environment apart from cost factors is technically limited. Target removal, particularly in the removal of public toilets is a response, which often fails to influence the problem and is resultant of a misconception of PSEs being a wholly homosexual issue. Such closures do little to influence heterosexual PSE use and more likely to reduce general public usage of the site to the wider detriment of the recreational area. Indeed within Shropshire closure of toilets at a famous local landmark has limited the use of the site for cruising and cottaging activities, but the area is now known as a heterosexual PSE. In general the two groups do not like to occupy the same territory.

Of some success in limiting activity on a site are changes to site design and the management of vegetation. Both however, come at a cost. The former is expensive the latter impacts on the habitat and landscape. As a result major site changes such as altering road layouts, car park shape and access are rarely undertaken. Cutting vegetation back from the car park succeeds in deterring most voyeurs and can increase the feeling of safety for visitors in general. However, it is unclear whether it is a real deterrent to PSE activity.

Conclusions

Rangers, police officers, health workers and the visiting general public accept there is a need to adopt some form of strategy to either combat or 'manage – out' PSEs. It is commonly accepted that PSE activity can never be thoroughly legislated against or legislation enforced, however the issues can and should be controlled. At present country park PSEs and similar areas are ignored by many authorities and as such are becoming informal and unmanaged areas of sexual activity or conversely are subject to reactive management which simply moves the problem elsewhere. Once established in this manner it is difficult to change the nature of use and a spiral of degradation of the site can soon follow. At a time when countryside management services are under increased financial and resource pressure the stigmatisation of sites is undesirable as the resultant

outcome will be a loss of resource for wider public enjoyment and benefit.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the police officers, country park rangers and 'doggers' who contributed to this study.

References

¹*The term dogging has a number of origins. Initially it was taken to come from to dog – to pursue (as in a voyeuristic act) however, latterly it is more closely linked to the expression 'walking the dog' and excuse an individual might use to explain their presence in an area late at night. It is commonly used to describe outdoor exhibitionism, voyeurism and sexual activities in motor vehicles.*

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Woodland erosion

Delivering a Countryside for Health and Wellbeing Conference 2006

Countryside Access and Activities Network, Northern Ireland



The conference held on the 26th of January in Carlingford, Co Louth was a great success. Over 85 people attended the two-day event which was organised by the Countryside Access and Activities Network for Northern Ireland and the Countryside Recreation Network.

The conference examined the results of the most recent research undertaken in the field of countryside recreation and health and wellbeing, the benefits and costs, how much activity is already underway, case studies of best practice from across the UK and Ireland, lessons to be learnt from current projects and initiatives and consideration of the most effective way forward for partnership working.

Éamon Ó Cuív, Uas. T.D., Minister for Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs for Ireland opened the conference. In his opening speech, the minister commented, *"I see the development of countryside recreation as an area that can help address both the improvement of our health and wellbeing and the development of sustainable rural communities. We're lucky that Ireland is blessed with some of the finest unspoilt countryside and scenery in Europe, as well as spell-binding coastal and mountain terrain and historical and archaeological wealth around which fascinating recreational activities can be developed."*

Speakers at the conference included a wide range of speakers from both the UK and Ireland: Health benefits of physical activity, Dr Marie Murphy, School of Life Sciences, University of Ulster; Creating supportive environments for health, Dr. Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive, Health Promotion Agency of Northern Ireland; The countryside as a resource for public health and well-being: findings of the Countryside Recreation Network research study, Jo Peacock, University of Essex; Health and National Parks, Sean Prendergast, Peak District National Park; The value of greenspace within urban environments for health and well-being, Deryck Irving, Greenspace, Scotland; The economic benefits of accessible green spaces for physical and mental health: findings of a recent research study, Marcus Sangster, Forestry Commission; Physical activity and mental well-being. A personal health check! Dr. Ken Addley, Director of the Occupational Health Service of the Northern Ireland Civil Service; The second day of the conference included 4 case studies from the UK and Ireland.

Dawson Stelfox, MBE, Chair of Countryside Access and Activities Network for Northern Ireland presided over day one of the conference while Jerry O'Dwyer, Chair of National Waymarked Ways Committee of the Irish Sports Council presided on Day Two. Dr. Olive Brown led the final discussions and concluded the two day event.

The conference was extremely timely as increasingly the potential of the countryside to contribute to health and wellbeing is being recognised, as are the economic benefits. For further information on the conference or any of the presentations, please contact the network on info@countrysiderecreation.com

The research report commissioned by the Countryside Recreation Network 'A Countryside for Health and Wellbeing - the physical and mental benefits of green exercise' is available to order from the Countryside Recreation Network priced £20. Please email crn@shu.ac.uk to order your copy.

NEWS

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS UPDATE

In June 2005, Doug Kennedy and Ken Taylor presented a paper at the CRN conference *A Question of Respect*. They described plans for the development of the "Best of Both Worlds" (BoBW) website. The aim of the BoBW website is to promote the idea that recreation and nature conservation are not mutually exclusive and to set out good practice in how the two, often opposing, interests can be brought together to mutual benefit. This may involve situations where a local club is trying to gain access to a prohibited site or resisting attempts to have existing access restricted.

Consensus building relies on some simple principles and a few straightforward steps:

Step 1: Assessing the situation

- identify the position and name of the land and/or water over which recreation is desired
- analyse the current situation at the site
 - land/water management
 - nature conservation/landscape interest
 - existing recreational use
- know where each party stands legally

Step 2: Preparation

- establish objectives which include the best outcome and least best outcome
- find out about who to deal with
- do research:
 - establish the facts of the case history
 - understand the findings of relevant scientific research on the impacts
 - collect objective data on usage of the site
- think about sharing not competing.

Step 3: Meeting and opening communications

- talk to everyone that is interested, from all sides
- make sure dealings are with the right person and deal with them courteously
- be open and honest in all dealings

- hold some meetings on site

Step 4: Getting down to business

- start on a positive/encouraging note
- explore each other's objectives
- list all the subjects/issues to be discussed
- don't be fazed by 'shows of strength'
- distinguish between conflicts of belief and conflicts of interest.

Step 5: Confronting conflict

- conflict sometimes cannot be avoided in achieving a long-lasting solution
- look for areas of agreement as well as disagreement
- look for ways in which all can gain
- keep debates constructive and adjourn if they become destructive

Step 6: Reaching consensus

- adopt a 'Can do' philosophy – be positive and flexible
- only promise what you can deliver
- ask for more time if needed
- watch out for signs of agreement and build on them
- when agreement is in sight, don't let it get away allow for others to be consulted if necessary be clear who is expected to do what, and when to put the agreement into effect
 - where necessary, make provision for the future of the agreement

This approach has some notable successes to its name, and the website provides case studies from a range of different activities and habitats.

The website is expected to go 'live' in mid-March, and will be launched at the Outdoor Show at the NEC, Birmingham. A version of the site in Welsh will be available soon after. The website address will be www.bobw.org.uk. It will be well worth a visit

COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS AND ACTIVITIES NETWORK (CAAN) FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

CAAN LAUNCH OF OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Director of the network, Dr Caro-lyne Ferris, presented the operational plan for the next three years at Hillsborough Castle on 14th February 2006. Over 70 people attended the launch primarily made up of close partners, interested parties and funders of CAAN. Lord Dubs, former Minister for the Environment, was the keynote speaker and spoke of his delight at CAAN's achievements,

"I was delighted to launch the original strategy back in 1999 and I believed in it passionately. Since then, the network has had a tremendous impact on opening up the countryside in Northern Ireland."

Lord Dubs went on to comment *"Northern Ireland has so much to offer and these exciting times with enormous potential. I have the greatest confidence that Caro-lyne and her team will deliver this challenging plan."*

Other speakers included Tom McGrath OBE, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Professor Eric Saunders OBE, Chairman of the Sports Council for Northern Ireland, and they both commended the commitment and achievements of the network over the last 3 years, and pledged their support for the operational plan going forward.

The Operational Plan 2006-2009 details CAAN's key areas of work and the intended outcomes. Below is an outline of the nine key areas:

1. Liaison - to facilitate the exchange of information among all interested parties resulting in greater co-operation and partnership working in the delivery of sustainable countryside recreation based programmes across Northern Ireland.

2. Facilities planning - to facilitate a wide range of organisations including local and central government organisations, protected area management bodies, governing bodies of sport, local clubs and community groups in their planning of new recreational facilities ensuring that the wider issues surrounding countryside recreation development are considered.

3. Planned development - to deliver on the ground a

suite of countryside recreation facilities, geographically spread across Northern Ireland, resourced and supported in a strategic way.

4. Facility management - to encourage the management of countryside recreation facilities in a way that provides a high quality and consistent experience for all users.

5. Policy and research - to develop an on-going programme of research which can help determine the future policies and programmes undertaken by ourselves and our wider membership.

6. Education awareness - to ensure that participants in countryside recreation understand and appreciate the special qualities of the Northern Ireland countryside, demonstrating appropriate conduct, consistent with good practice in their activities and consistent with the management practices of landowners and managers.

7. Training - to disseminate information and develop best practice through training and professional development in the provision and management of countryside recreation.

8. Information - to raise public and consumer awareness of countryside recreation opportunities across Northern Ireland and to ensure that information required to facilitate participation in any activity is easily accessible, accurate and up to date.

9. Communication - to raise the industry's awareness of countryside recreation through effective communication mediums ensuring that all information necessary to help it capitalise upon market opportunities is easily accessible, accurate and up to date.

In concluding the event the Network's chair, Dawson Stelfox, OBE, stressed the importance of public land being made accessible for a whole range of countryside recreation activities and stressed the significant contribution that the countryside of Northern Ireland makes to the health and well being of the nation, rural regeneration and activity tourism.

To view the Review of the Operational Plan 2002-2005 and the Operational Plan 2006-2009, please visit: www.countrysidecreation.com.

For further information, contact the network on info@countrysidecreation.com

COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

NEW LEAFLET ON A BURNING ISSUE - CALL FOR HELP TO REDUCE FIRES IN 2006

'Help us prevent countryside fires' – that's the message in a new leaflet that will be sent to landowners in Wales over the coming weeks.'

Countryside fires reduced significantly in 2004 and 2005 thanks to the planned and careful approach of landowners. The Welsh Forum for the Control of Countryside Fires, producers of this leaflet, hopes this trend will continue into 2006.

Mike McCabe, Countryside Council for Wales Conservation Adviser said: *"Controlled heather and grass burning is an important traditional management practice in the countryside. It encourages young, nutritious heather to grow, providing a continuous and rich supply of plants for livestock, moorland birds and other wildlife."*

"The leaflet, to be sent to more than 9,000 landowners and occupiers of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and farms in the Tir Gofal scheme, offers advice on how to plan and carry out controlled burning in a safe and effective way."

Some of the top tips in the leaflet include:

- Inform the Fire Service before the burn;
- Plan the burning – to take place between 1 November and 15 April in the uplands; and between 1 October and 31 March in the lowlands;
- Seek consent from CCW on land that is a Site of Special Scientific Interest;
- Always check that the area is not being used by breeding birds before you burn;
- Plan a system of firebreaks to protect properties, roads and areas important to wildlife;
- Peat fires may burn for several months and should be avoided.

The leaflet gives practical advice on what should be done on the day of a planned burn, and outlines what the law says on the matter. It gives useful contacts for more information and advice.

The Welsh Forum for the Control of Countryside Fires includes the Countryside Council for Wales, Fire Services, Police Services, National Parks and

commoners' representatives.

Copies of the leaflet are available free of charge from CCW's enquiry team on 0845 1306 229. For further information, please contact Meinir Wigley, CCW press officer, on 07720 428644, or Mike McCabe on 01248 385409.

FOREST RESEARCH

TREES AND WOODLANDS: NATURE'S HEALTH SERVICE

This new publication, endorsed by Sir Liam Donaldson the Chief Medical Officer for England, brings together recent research that describes the physical, psychological and social well-being benefits to be gained from using woodlands. It also outlines a range of case studies of recent projects being run by the Forestry Commission in collaboration with a wide range of partners. These projects include:

- The West Midlands woodland and health project
- The Chopwell Wood health project
- Cannock Chase route to health project
- Forest of Dean Life Cycle project

The projects all focus on improving people's health and well-being and information on results from the evaluation of these projects is also provided.

A hard copy of the publication is available from Liz O'Brien. Email: liz.o'brien@forestry.gsi.gov.uk or alternatively it is also available for download at: <http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/infd-5zbbg5>

HERITAGE COUNCIL

INTEGRATING POLICIES FOR IRELAND'S INLAND WATERWAYS

A new policy paper on Ireland's inland has been recently launched by the Heritage Council which focuses on the integrated management of Ireland's waterways heritage. Waterways heritage ranges from individual sites of natural and industrial heritage to archaeological sites within the corridor and underwater, biodiversity, water quality, etc. All these aspects of heritage require care and consideration in addition to ensuring the protection and enhancement of whole. The experience and knowledge gained from

the four waterway corridor studies carried out since 2002 have informed many of the policies. Because of this the policy paper advocates the continuation of these studies along the waterways network, and their monitoring and review.

The overall aim is: *The inland waterways and their corridors should be managed in an integrated broad-based way, conserving their built and archaeological heritage features, and protecting their landscape and biodiversity. Recognising that the inland waterways are a unique part of our heritage, but which today are fulfilling a new role not envisaged for them originally, we aim to enhance the enjoyment and appreciation of them as living heritage both for this generation and for future generations.*

The main recommendations are summarised as follows:

1. Inland waterways are an integral part of Ireland's transport and industrial heritage, and are themselves made up of different aspects of heritage. The conservation and enhancement of this heritage is vital to the long-term attraction of Ireland's waterways. Resources should be dedicated to this. Notwithstanding the establishment of Waterways Ireland, the multiplicity of government departments and agencies that have some role in the management of the waterways resource leads to a lack of co-ordination and integration in relation to heritage issues.

2. A strategic approach to waterways is needed to ensure that their integrity is not compromised, and that enjoyment of them is increased. Efforts should be redoubled to promote this strategic approach to waterways management. This should involve government departments and agencies with an interest in all inland waterways, navigable and disused.

3. The Waterway Corridor Studies model, championed by the Heritage Council, presents one way of addressing the need for sustainable management. Experience from studies completed to date shows that partnership between Waterways Ireland, local authorities, and the Heritage Council is an effective way of ensuring better co-ordination and integrated management.

4. Communication with, and participation in management planning by, recreational users of the

inland waterways should be increased as should awareness-raising activities and interpretation of waterways heritage.

5. Funding is allocated to Waterways Ireland by the Dept of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs for inland waterways under its remit; monies for infrastructural projects are provided from the National Development Plan. Individual local authorities allocate to waterways projects out of their own annual budgets. Levels of funding should be maintained.

6. It is the responsibility of the local authorities to ensure that disused and derelict waterways not under the remit of Waterways Ireland are protected.

7. The long-term future expansion and development of the network requires consideration, in particular from a heritage perspective, and recommendations on this are made in sections 12, 13 and 14 of the document.

WATERWAY CORRIDOR STUDIES

Since 2002, the Heritage Council has co-ordinated 4 waterway corridor studies in partnership with relevant local authorities and Waterways Ireland. The areas covered include the Royal Canal from Thomastown Co Westmeath to Clondara, the Grand Canal from Ballycommon Co Offaly to Shannon Harbour and the River Shannon from Meelick Co Galway to Lough Allen and Lough Key. At the moment, the fifth study is in progress, which is completing the coverage of the Shannon from Meelick down to Limerick City.

The purpose of a corridor study is to identify ways to manage the waterways corridor environment to the benefit of all. In particular the process of the study should improve understanding of an area, which should ensure retention of the distinctiveness of a place, while allowing for the sustainable development and evolution of use for the future.

This involves a multi-disciplinary team covering ecology, archaeology, landscape, planning, socio-economics and rural economy examining the study area in detail, and consulting in depth with stakeholders. Policies are then drawn up for a range of geographic areas and topics within the corridor.

The studies are supported by the local authorities in whose area the navigations pass. The policies from the corridor studies are incorporated into local area

plans, and county development plans where relevant. Waterways Ireland is also heavily involved in the studies, and in the study on the lower Shannon, Shannon Development is a partner too.

Three of the studies have won awards from the Landscape Institute:

2002 Grand Canal from Ballycommon to Shannon Harbour; The Shannon from Shannonbridge to Meelick.

2004 Roosky to Lanesborough and down the Royal Canal from Tarmonbarry to Thomastown, Co Westmeath, and the Longford Branch of the Royal Canal.

2004 Lanesborough to Shannonbridge, including all of Lough Ree. (contact the Heritage Council for details);

The studies are available from the Heritage Council and are available on Heritage Council web site www.heritagecouncil.ie

MOORS FOR THE FUTURE PARTNERSHIP

FROM BLACK TO GREEN

The Moors for the Future partnership is about to commence restoration works on one of the highest hills of the Dark Peak in the Peak District National Park, the summit of Black Hill. Ramblers can expect to see benefits as this notorious peat bog, famous as one of the toughest stages on the Pennine Way National Trail, is restored to moorland vegetation. The land is owned by United Utilities and Yorkshire Water, as part of the water catchments serving Yorkshire and the North-West, both key members of the partnership.

Yorkshire Water catchment and recreation manager Miles Foulger says:

"After monitoring Black Hill, it is clear that nature needs a helping hand to recover. By working together we have been able to develop, agree and deliver a joint project that meets the need of our farming tenant, the water companies and the National Park. However it will be several years before we see the benefits for landscape, wildlife and water."

Restoration work to revegetate the moor will begin initially on approximately 46 hectares around the trig point, currently a morass of wet, soggy peat. The area is especially vulnerable to the smallest changes in pollution, use and damage, and has suffered over

many years due to acid rain deposition derived from the combustion of fossil fuels during the Industrial Revolution.

The first stage of the project will be the spreading of 163 tonnes of heather brash, cut from areas of moorland on the Peak District National Park Authority's (PDNPA) Eastern Edges estate. The cut heather will be spread to a depth of only a centimetre or so and acts as a protective blanket to the peat, helping to prevent further erosion and as a source of seed. The revegetation work is in fact completing a process begun in 2000 to repair trampling damage, reduce sheep grazing and reverse the effects of acid rain and fire damage.

Moors for the Future Conservation Works Manager, Matt Buckler. *"We are delighted to be able to work on such a high profile site with such a long history of damage. It is our aim that the walkers on the Pennine Way in 2050 look back on their passage through the Derbyshire moorlands with wonder rather than the current horror."*

This is one of many large scale, restoration projects the Moors for the Future partnership is undertaking. By working to reverse erosion and regenerate vegetation we should see long term improvements in the peat and water courses of the area, which is home to rare plants and wildlife. Blanket bog like that on Black Hill is one of the world's rarest habitats.

The project also supports moorland research and awareness raising work.

For details on the research, conference reports, restoration work and more, see the project's web site <http://www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk>. or alternatively contact Carol Parsons, Information Officer, Moors For The Future Partnership, Castleton Visitor Centre, Buxton Road, Castleton, Derbyshire, S33 8WP. Tel/Fax: 01433 621656

THE NATURAL ENGLAND PARTNERSHIP

NEXT STAGE OF COASTAL ACCESS RESEARCH BEGINS NATURAL ENGLAND PARTNERS CHOOSE STUDY AREAS

Work to improve people's access to the English coast moved on to the next phase today (Tuesday 21 February) with the announcement of the four study

areas chosen to make up the fact-finding stage of the project.

After initial studies, carried out by the Countryside Agency, the Natural England* partners have now selected four further study areas to cover different types of coastline: areas with good or poor access provision; different levels of tourism; and proximity to large population areas. Work will take place in these areas during March and April this year:

Suffolk Coast: Lowestoft to Cattawade on the River Stour ;
 Southern Cumbrian Coast and Morecambe Bay: Whitehaven to Fleetwood;
 County Durham and Hartlepool Coast: Seaham to the River Tees, south of Hartlepool;
 North Devon, Exmoor and West Somerset Coast: Instow near Barnstaple to the River Parrett, south of Burnham on Sea.

Ros Love, of the Countryside Agency, said: "We want to improve opportunities for people to appreciate and enjoy more of England's 4000 kms of coastline. Our fact finding work will help us create proposals for improving access while helping our diverse coastal wildlife thrive and protecting the sensitive landscape of our coastline".

The Countryside Agency will report to Defra on the outcome of this work in May, in preparation for the launch of a public consultation in October 2006.

More information is available via the 'Coasts' section on www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

RED ROSE FOREST AND GREATER MANCHESTER AGAINST CRIME

SCRAMBLING TO SUCCESS - THE PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS TO ILLEGAL OFF-ROAD MOTORCYCLING IN GREATER MANCHESTER

The Off-Road discussion rolls on in Countryside Recreation. Just too late for the Summer 2005 edition is one of the most comprehensive reports in the UK into this area. Focusing on Greater Manchester, the full 74 page report examines the current state of affairs and the comes up with a range of recommendations.

The starting point of this project came from investment

in environmental regenerations programmes being put at risk. Not just the physical damage to sites but legitimate site users not taking advantage of the new infrastructure and facilities due to the actual and perceived fear coming from off-road motorcyclist. With the Forestry Commission just about to embark on the multi million pound Newlands Programme funded by the North West Development Agency they stumped up the finance with others to get this piece of work off the ground. With enforcement likely to play a key role, the issue was looked at a constabulary level and the conurbation wide Crime Reduction Partnership, Greater Manchester Against Crime, became the focus for driving this work forward. We were surprised how many organisations thought this to be a priority issue. Youth Offending Teams, Environmental Health, Trading Standards as well as Greater Manchester Police and greenspace managers all considered that this had been neglected far too long.

The overall conclusion is that the old fashioned approach of just relying on enforcement or ever stronger fences and barriers is not the answer. To deal with this problem effectively and not just shift it onto another site, a range of tools need to be brought to bear at both a sub-regional and local level.

A copy of the full report and a summary document are available to download from www.redroseforest.co.uk/publications.html

For further information about this project please contact Ellen Hawkins on 0161 872 1660.

VISITOR SAFETY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE GROUP

NEW GUIDANCE FOR VISITOR SAFETY

Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside ~ principles and practice

This essential publication has been revised to include recent important court judgements. These help to define your responsibilities when people choose risky activities in the countryside. They clarify what is reasonable maintenance on woodland paths and confirm the importance of proper risk assessment for children's outdoor adventure activities.

"This is an excellent and very useful publication which

demystifies the issue. A copy has been acquired for each ranger base around the County.” Cheshire County Council

To order your copy of the book (priced £13.75 plus £2.25 post and packing) please contact the Countryside Recreation Network by email crn@shu.ac.uk.

COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION NETWORK SEMINAR

VOLUNTEERING - STRATEGIES AND PRACTICE FOR ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS IN COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION AND MANAGEMENT

Wednesday 28 June 2006
The Priory Rooms, Birmingham
Delegate fee £125

TARGET AUDIENCE

The workshop is intended for countryside managers including local authorities, rangers, government agencies and conservationists who wish to understand issues in developing and promoting volunteering. It will explore strategic and practical questions, illustrated with a range of examples of good practice.

BACKGROUND

Volunteering is an important and growing element in the delivery of public services in the UK. Britain's unique tradition of volunteering based on amateur, part-time participation is becoming professionalised. It is increasingly influenced by business and corporate practice and is seen by Government as a means of encouraging active citizenship.

The Home Office Citizenship Survey, published in May 2002, found that in the last 12 months, 39% of people surveyed had volunteered formally at least once. This is equivalent to approximately 16.5 million people in England and Wales. In the same time period, 26% of people had volunteered formally at least once a month, equivalent to 11.2 million people in England and Wales. The mean number of hours of formal volunteering undertaken by people who volunteered formally in the last 12 months was 110.5 hours. Volunteers came from all parts of society and included significant numbers of young adults.

For countryside managers Volunteering is not just a means of getting tasks done. Volunteers learn about the countryside from first-hand experience. They are likely to become champions for the natural world and are able to take part in informed debate and discussion about the countryside and outdoor recreation.

Individuals who volunteer can benefit personally in many ways including the acquisition of new skills and experiences, improved physical and mental fitness and new friendships and social contacts.

Volunteering can also be a means of engaging broader communities and is promoted by volunteering organisations as a fundamental part of democracy.

However, tapping into the opportunities from volunteering requires a professional approach. How do you get started? What are the risks? What does a strategy for volunteering look like? What types of work are best suited for volunteering? What are the costs and what facilities and support are expected of host organisations?

SEMINAR AIMS

- To provide an overview of the importance of volunteering, its contribution to personal and community life and the benefits and pitfalls of engaging with volunteers.
- To share experiences of organisations involved in developing and implementing strategies for volunteering.
- To learn from organisations and practitioners who have in-depth practical experience of working with volunteers and:
- To introduce delegates to the 'infrastructure' of volunteering – the organisations that represent volunteers, set standards and advise volunteers and hosting organisations.

For further information on the event and a booking form please contact:

Katherine Powell, Network Assistant, Countryside Recreation Network, Sheffield Hallam University, Unit 7, Sheffield Science Park, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 2LX

Tel: 0114 225 4653 or Fax: 0114 225 4038

Email: k.j.powell@shu.ac.uk or alternatively you can book online via the events section on the website www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk

Countryside Recreation and Training Events

APRIL 2006

24-28 April 2006

Interpretation

(Losehill Hall)

Cost: £641 (£585 Voluntary Organisations)

25 April 2006

Urban Parks (Developing Education and Community Use)

(Environmental Trainers Network)

Venue: Birmingham

Cost: £105/£155 + VAT

25-27 April 2006

Planning and Design for Visitor Access

(Losehill Hall)

Cost: £500 (£457 Voluntary Organisations)

MAY 2006

4 May 2006

Getting the Message Across

(Scottish Natural Heritage)

Venue: Battleby

Cost: Free

15-19 May 2006

Foundation Ranger Training

(Losehill Hall)

Cost: £636 (£580 Voluntary Organisations)

17 May 2006

The Media and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code

(Scottish Natural Heritage)

Venue: Battleby

Cost: Free

16-17 May 2006

Enabling Safe Outdoor Play and Education

(Losehill Hall)

Cost: £418 (£382 Voluntary Organisations)

18 May 2006

Working with Schools on Sustainable Development Educaition

(Environmental Trainers Network)

Venue: Manchester

Cost: £105/£155 + VAT

23-24 May 2006

Develop the Trainer in you

(Environmental Trainers Network)

Venue: York

Cost: £170/£250 + VAT

JUNE 2006

6 June 2006

Approaches to Selecting Species and Planting of Locally Native Woodland

(Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management)

Cost: £100 (£50 members of IEEM)

7-8 June 2006

Essential Facilitation Skills

(Losehill Hall)

Cost: £404 (£369 Voluntary Organisations)

28 June 2006

Volunteering - Strategies and Practice for Engaging Volunteers in Countryside Recreation and Management

(Countryside Recreation Network)

Venue: Birmingham

Cost: £125

Contact details for training/events organisers

Environmental Trainers Network

Tel: 0121 358 2155

www.btcv.org/etn/

Field Studies Council

Tel: 01743 852100

www.field-studies-council.org

Institute of Public Rights of Way (IPROW)

Tel: 01439 788093

www.iprow.co.uk

Losehill Hall

Tel: 01433 620 373

www.losehill-training.org.uk

Plas Tan y Bwlch

Tel: 0871 8714004

www.eryri-npa.co.uk/ptyb_base/e_800.html

Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

Tel: 01962 868626

www.ieem.org.uk/Workshops.htm

BTCV Training

Tel: 01491 821600

www.btcv.org

Countryside Recreation Network Publications List

	Price (incl.postage)	Tick
REPORTS		
A Countryside for Health and Wellbeing: The Physical and Mental Health Benefits of Green Exercise	£20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Exclusion in Countryside Leisure in the United Kingdom - the role of the countryside in addressing social exclusion (2001)	£10	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS		
Removing Barriers; Creating Opportunities: Social Inclusion in the Countryside (2001)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing the Challenge of Access (2000)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the Honeypot Overflowing? (1998)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Access for All a Reality (1997)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Today s Thinking for Tomorrow s Countryside (1995)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communities in their Countryside (1994)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS		
Demonstrating the Economic Value of Countryside Recreation II (2006)	£12	
Reasonable Access? (2005)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Question of Respect; Conservation and Countryside Recreation (2005)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivering a Countryside for Health and Wellbeing (2005)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Safety in the Countryside (2005)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
'And Your Evidence Is?' Evaluation Frameworks (2004)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Information and Wayfinding Needs (2004)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrating the Economic Value of Countryside Recreation (2004)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessible Greenspace (2003)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Country Parks II (2003)(Country Parks I & II can be purchased together for £20)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Country Parks I(2003)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Rights of Way Improvement Plans (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funding for Social Projects (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opening Up Access In and Around Towns (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Payback Schemes (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Access Forums (2001)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundraising and the Lottery (2001)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are We Getting There? Delivering Sustainable Transport in the Countryside (2000)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Breaking New Ground in Sustainable Tourism (2000)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using Local Distinctiveness as an Economic Development Tool (1999)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Just Walking the Dog (1999)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sponsorship (1998)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Ends Meet (1997)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIS & Countryside Management - Theory and Application (1997)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to Water - Sharing Access on Reservoirs and Rivers (1997)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do Visitor Surveys Count? - Making use of Surveys of Countryside Recreation (1996)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consensus in the Countryside I - Reaching Shared agreement in policy, planning and management (1996)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Brush with the Land - Art in the Countryside II (1996)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Brush with the Land - Art in the Countryside I (1995)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playing Safe? Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside (1995)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
GIS & Access to the Countryside (1995)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sport in the Countryside (1995)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Drive in the Country? - Examining the Problems of Recreational Travel (1994)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental Economics, Sustainable Management and the Countryside (1994)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>

Title _____ First Name _____ Surname _____

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