

# COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION Network News



Number 1 February 1993

## WELCOME TO THE NETWORK

Welcome to the first edition of the newsletter published by the Countryside Recreation Network. The publication of the newsletter is designed to:

- help individuals and agencies to keep abreast of new initiatives in research into countryside recreation matters;
- encourage communication and co-operative work among those working in this field;
- encourage greater interest in the work of CRN itself.

We believe that CRN will be a flourishing successor body to CRRAG (Countryside Recreation Research Advisory Group) and will contribute to development and new thinking in the area of countryside recreation research. As such any points which you may want to raise about the work of CRN or indeed about the newsletter will be very welcome.

As the importance of the countryside resource increases, so we hope that CRN through its seminars, workshops, annual Countryside Recreation Conference, and now this Newsletter will be able more effectively to contribute to future discussions and appropriate sustainable development. The success and value of the newsletter will depend on the number and quality of its contributions. Individuals are encouraged to use these pages to debate, advise and inform.

*Derek Casey*  
CRN Chairman

## CRN — 25 Years in the Making

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

The Chairman of the Network is Derek Casey, Director of National Services at the Sports Council. At present there are 22 member agencies and three observers drawn from the national statutory organisations, local authority associations and research councils, but the network served extends well beyond these organisations to professionals, academics and



Derek Casey, CRN Chairman

people generally interested in countryside recreation. The day to day management of the Network is the responsibility of Robert Wood, Network Manager, who is based in the Department of City and Regional Planning, University of Wales, College of Cardiff.

### **Countryside**

Our interpretation includes almost all the space out of doors in the UK, although there will usually be pragmatic limits set on the vertical dimensions! Sometimes the focus is as wide as

*continued on page 2*

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1993 Conference Preview
- Wales Tourist Board: *Tourism 2000*
- Northern Ireland Access Review
- Forests, Woodlands and People's Preferences
- Attitudes to People Visiting Woodlands
- Scottish Natural Heritage's Access Review
- Scottish Sports Council Database and Planning
- 1992 Conference Report

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

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the environment, at other times we are concerned with specific areas or sites in the countryside. The definition includes the commonly accepted areas of open land, coastline, water and also open spaces on the edge, and within, our towns and cities.

#### *Recreation*

In the broad sense, any activities pursued by people in the countryside or which have an impact on the countryside. This involves informal and sporting activities undertaken from home, on a day trip or on a holiday—the focus of interest of the network is at the interface of recreation and the countryside.

#### *Network*

National agencies, local authority associations, research councils and individuals sharing a common interest in countryside recreation and in frequent contact through a variety of mechanisms, thereby exchanging information to develop best policy and practice in countryside recreation.

We expect a great deal from this countryside of ours—a source of food and timber, a home and way of life, a network for leisure journeys whether on land or water, a local resource for recreation, the setting for some of our best loved natural and cultural heritage and a national asset in promoting tourism. Recreation is a big player in all of this—bringing people into contact with their countryside, providing opportunities to enjoy and cherish it. Representing each of these interests there is a national agency.

Over the last 25 years representatives from the most far-sighted of these agencies have been meeting and sharing information about their recreation research programmes. They have been looking for opportunities to work together and seeking to publicise the results. The Countryside Recreation Research Advisory Group (CRRAG) achieved a great deal over this period - holding memorable annual conferences, workshops and publishing a register of the recreation research programmes of the member agencies. CRRAG proved to be remarkably resilient, outliving many of the agencies which met around the table over those years. Before the contract was due to expire the group reviewed operations and agreed a modest package of evolutionary

change. The contract to provide the secretariat for the next five year period has been won by the Department of City and Regional Planning, University of Wales, College of Cardiff. The change in name to Countryside Recreation Network reflects the increasing interest in extending the benefits of improved communication rather more widely.

The aim of the Network is to assist the work of the agencies concerned with countryside and related recreation by

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

The foundations for this year's activities were laid at a meeting of the agencies held last November in Northern Ireland. During this meeting agencies swapped details of their countryside and related recreation research plans and discussed possible areas of joint work. The future development of the Network, the programme for the coming year and the newsletter were considered. Much of this is concerned with what topics will be discussed amongst the agencies. Of wider interest are the events such as workshops and the annual Countryside Recreation



Richard Broadhurst, CRN  
Vice-Chairman

Conference and the publication of a countryside recreation research directory.

One way you can be aware of all the benefits is through the Countryside Recreation Network News. During the first year of publication individuals will be able to join a free mailing list. Interested? Contact the Network Manager, Robert Wood at the Department of City and Regional Planning, University of Wales, College of Cardiff, PO Box 906, Cardiff CF1 3YN or telephone him on 0222 874970.

What will the Network look like in 2018? Answers on a postcard to Robert also!

Richard Broadhurst, CRN Vice-Chairman

### ***Integrated Countryside Practice***

The co-incidence in Wales of both a new agency for countryside issues and the early prospect of local government reform makes it a propitious time to review the nature and extent of official countryside services.

One of the first studies which the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) has carried out in this field has looked at several examples of countryside recreation management, such as an integrated countryside service and a commissioners management group. The consultants—Peter Scott and Helen Holdaway—have highlighted several features of good practice. Their findings are due to be published to raise awareness of the opportunities for integrating rural conservation and recreation with economic and social objectives.

With public resources at a premium, attention will be focused on well-informed rolling programmes of countryside work based on collaborative countryside strategies. Advice by Dr Susan Walker (now at the Centre for Leisure Research) and her former colleagues at ASH Consultancy Group on matching public demand to resources will contribute to this process. Conscious of its status as a country agency, CCW has also sought international good practice in recreation management in a commissioned report by Prof. Terry Stevens, Swansea Institute of Higher Education.

David Eagar  
Countryside Council for Wales

# CUSTOMER CARE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

University of Nottingham, September 29th to October 1st

In recent years customer service and quality management have become important issues for both the manufacturing and service sectors. As customers have become more knowledgeable, their expectations regarding products and services have increased. Managers recognise that improved quality and customer service lead to gains in competitive advantage, by providing a means for differentiating a company from its competitors. The public sector has been relatively slow in taking up some of these approaches. However, considerable impetus to do so has resulted from the introduction of the Citizen's Charter and criteria of performance measurement.

Customer care is often seen as being a simple public relations exercise, whereby staff are encouraged to 'be nice' to customers. Increasingly though, it is being realised that the product provided and the management processes and procedures used to deliver the product are key components of providing a service to customers. Therefore quality management has implications for all people and organisations providing products or services for the public.

This conference is intended to look at the issues involved and how they relate to customer expectations in a countryside recreation context. The objectives of the Conference are to:

- review the characteristics of customers in the countryside and their expectations;
- review the need for customer care and quality management programmes in a countryside context;
- consider how such programmes can be undertaken; and
- investigate how performance can be measured and monitored.



A canal ranger directs walkers

Plenary sessions will look at the theory of customer care and quality management, while the core of the conference will consist of a series of Workshops led by practitioners with experience in implementing schemes in different countryside environments.



Picnic tables, Rudyard Lake, Staffs.

These will include:

- controlled-access facilities, such as private farm or estate attractions;
- open-access managed sites, such as country parks, forests or canals;
- sites at which access has to be controlled, such as Nature Reserves or SSSIs;
- general open-access recreation, such as in open land or public rights of way; and
- enabling schemes, such as the Wales Tourist Board 'Welcome Host scheme.'

Each Workshop will review the relevance of customer care and quality management in the context of the different activities involved and will consider some of the following topics, which may need to be incorporated into quality management schemes:

- researching customer needs;
- objective setting;
- components of a quality management plan;
- creating the organisational environment;
- the role of staff training;
- the implications of external requirements (eg. the Citizen's Charter and BS 5750); and
- success criteria and performance monitoring.

In the plenary sessions there will also be an opportunity for feedback from countryside user groups to review how well organisations are meeting visitor needs.

We are sure the Conference, now an annual event for almost 25 years, will contain something of interest to all types of organisations with an interest in countryside recreation, including private and voluntary recreation providers, local authority staff, countryside agency staff and representatives of user groups. A detailed Conference Programme and Booking Form will be available in May from the CRN Manager.

Glenn Millar, British Waterways

# TOURISM 2000: A STRATEGY FOR WALES

The Wales Tourist Board is preparing a new strategy to take tourism in Wales into the next century. Changing economic circumstances have reinforced the role of tourism as a key source of income and employment for communities in Wales. Concurrently there has grown a greater awareness of the need to conserve and enhance the environment in all its forms. The purpose of *Tourism 2000* will be to guide the way in which the industry is developed and marketed throughout the period leading up to the millennium. It will build on the foundations laid by the existing development strategy which is due to expire this year.

*Tourism 2000* is due to be completed in Autumn 1993. As a first stage, the Board has issued a series of consultative papers dealing with some of the key themes covered within the strategy. Of particular interest to CRN News readers is *Tourism and the Environment - A Paper for Discussion*.

This independent report, prepared by Dr. Richard Denman, is intended to help focus debate rather than to set out an agreed way forward. It suggests that tourism policies for the environment should recognise a two-way relationship with positive and negative impacts on

either side. In effect, the broad strategy should be to reduce the problems and take up the opportunities (see box below).

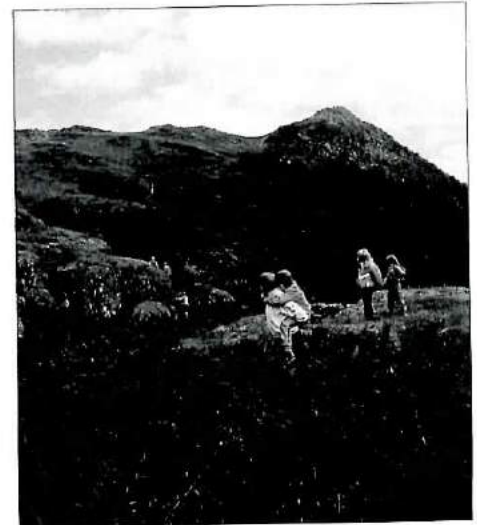
In support of this strategy six principles for sustainable tourism in Wales are advocated. These have been drawn up specifically with regard to the natural and built environment.

### 1. A two-way relationship

The fundamental interrelationship between tourism and the environment must be recognised; this is a two-way relationship. The maintenance of the quality of the Welsh environment is essential for the current and future success of tourism in Wales; it is what people come to enjoy. The income and awareness generated by tourism can do much to assist the conservation of the Welsh environment.

### 2. Visitor management

Visitor pressure causes problems in some specific locations and through particular activities, where the capacity of the infrastructure or the fragility of the environment cannot sustain the pressure. Sometimes this can be addressed simply



Looking NE from Capel Curig, Snowdonia

by increasing the capacity, but this is often inappropriate or damaging to the environment. A range of measures may need to be adopted to manage or reduce the pressure, through agreement, control, information, or promoting alternative times, locations or means of transport. Joint action should be encouraged both before and after problems occur.

### 3. Environmental improvement

Poor quality environments are unpleasant and hazardous for both residents and tourists, and can prevent visitors from coming, staying or coming back. Measures should be taken to improve or maintain the visual appearance and atmosphere of places which people visit and to reduce pollution there. This is also an issue of image: false impressions of poor environments should be corrected.

### 4. Sensitive development

The development of tourism enterprises and facilities can greatly benefit the economy but also have an impact on the environment. New development should respect and be appropriate to the environment in which it is located, and if possible enhance it. Policies should be flexible and decisions well-informed to ensure that good quality developments are able to proceed in the right locations as opportunities arise.

### 5. Responsible operation

Tourism plays its own part in increasing the level of pollution and the depletion of

## Tourism and the Environment: Problems & Opportunities

	Problems	Opportunities
Tourism affecting the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>intrusive development</li> <li>congestion</li> <li>disturbance and physical damage</li> <li>pollution and resource consumption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>commercial returns for the preservation of the built and natural heritage</li> <li>new uses for redundant buildings</li> <li>increased awareness of and support for conservation</li> </ul>
The environment affecting tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>off-putting, drab environments</li> <li>hazards from pollution</li> <li>intrusive development by other industries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fine scenery and heritage as a primary motivator and for use in marketing</li> <li>new (eco) tourism based on environmental appreciation</li> </ul>

non-renewable resources. It is doubly appropriate that the industry should become more environmentally responsible, as it depends on environmental quality. Measures should be taken to encourage ecologically sound practice in tourism enterprises and means of travel. There can be marketing advantages in this as consumers themselves become more responsible.

#### 6. Conservation through tourism

There are many ways in which tourism can help to sustain conservation: through investment, visitor spending, increasing public appreciation and awareness, and supporting conservation through donations or sponsorship; this should be encouraged. Increased consumer interest in the environment can bring new opportunities for sensitive tourism in many areas, through attractions, events, interpretation and creative marketing. Such opportunities should be encouraged and assisted where viable and beneficial to the environment and local economy.

The Report puts forward a number of questions for discussion, which are closely linked to the six principles set out above. It should be noted that these principles only relate to environmental issues. Sustainable tourism can be taken to cover issues to do with the local economy, communities, language and culture, which are addressed in other consultative papers.

For further information on this or any other papers in the series, please contact:

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## NORTHERN IRELAND ACCESS STUDY

The Environment Service of the Department of Environment (NI) in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland, have just appointed Peter Scott Planning Services of Edinburgh to undertake a major study of access for walking in the Province.

In the ten years since the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983, the response of the twenty-six District Councils who form the Province's only tier of local government and who were empowered by that order has been, to say the least, mixed. Some Councils have yet to act on any of the Order's provisions despite the potential for considerable grant-aid from the Environment Service.

One criticism of the Northern Ireland legislation is that it is largely based on the English model in terms of its preoccupation with rights of way, reflecting a landscape and countryside very different to Northern Ireland in terms of heritage, traditions, land ownership and settlement patterns. Few rights of way are openly acknowledged in the Province and generally low levels of footpath use have allowed most landowners and users to tolerate each other.

Many potential conflicts are also avoided by virtue of the good provision of 'formalised' informal recreation in the Province's Forest Parks, Country Parks and numerous National Trust properties, all of which are readily accessible to interested members of a relatively low density population.

To date, politicians and councillors have seen no votes in access, rather the contrary. However, the prospect of potential earnings through "green tourism" has kindled an interest from the Province's myriad of land-owners. Thus in an attempt to address issues (such as liability and sustainability) so far avoided, and to tailor practice, marketing and perhaps future legislative changes specifically to the Province, the three sponsoring bodies have joined forces to appoint Peter Scott and his team of Roy Hickey, Steve Green, Judith Annet and Alan Kilgore.

As part of the feedback process, Environment Service and their advisory body—the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside—intend to host a conference in November this year to which all relevant bodies and organisations will be invited. It is intended that a final report will be produced by Easter 1994.

Further information can be obtained from:

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Environment Service,  
DoE (NI),  
Calvert House,  
23 Castle Place,  
Belfast  
BT1 1FY  
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# FORESTS, WOODLANDS AND PEOPLE'S PREFERENCES

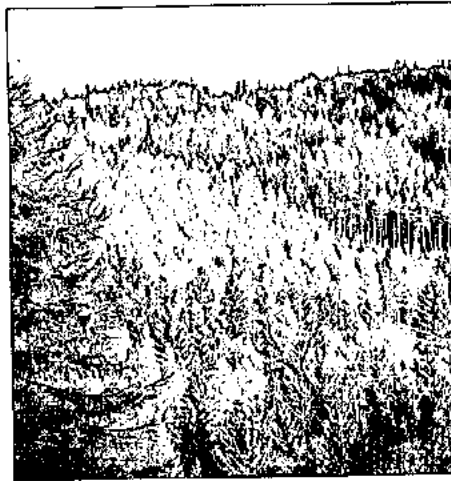
This is the title of a report to be published shortly by the Forestry Commission on behalf of the sponsors of a research project undertaken by a team led by well-known psychologist Professor Terence Lee of St Andrews University. The research was in a number of ways innovative and the results have relevance for many who are involved in planning and designing a countryside for recreation.

The aim of the research project was to reveal people's attitudes and preferences for forests and woodlands in the landscape - as components of the landscape and as places to explore and enjoy.

Its most innovative feature was that, unlike almost all previous studies, it did not assume that landscape evaluation is based on an indivisible 'scenic quality'. Instead it measured preferences for walking, wildlife, tourism, picnicking and other dimensions.

In developing the shape of the brief and in responding to the tendered research proposal the co-sponsors—the Countryside Commission, the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Commission for Scotland (now Scottish Natural Heritage)—sought to ensure that the programme was comprehensive and drew strength from a full consideration of the qualitative as well as quantitative aspects of people's preferences. Choices had to be made when considering precisely whose preferences should be investigated. Should the study be representative of Great Britain or should it explore the range of differences between the views of people in a number of different areas? The co-sponsors plumped for the latter but as the study unfolded it became clear that the characteristics of the sample were such that the results are likely to hold good for the population as a whole.

What kind of forests and woodlands do people like to look at in the landscape? What kind of forests and woodlands do visitors enjoy being in? Who visits anyway? Why do they visit? Do all the people have the same views? Do people in the SE of England have similar views to those who live in the Scottish Borders? Do people in the uplands feel differently about things compared to people in the



Diversity is highly valued

lowlands? What effect does age, sex and socio-economic grouping have on preferences? Is the expert or professional view held by the landscape architect or forest designer different to that of the population at large? These were some of the questions posed by the research.

The most ambitious aim was to explore the relationship between people's preferences and the methodology employed by the landscape architects. If the relationships could be established then the results of the research could be used to take account of people's preferences directly and applied in the design of the forests and woodlands of tomorrow.

### Methodology

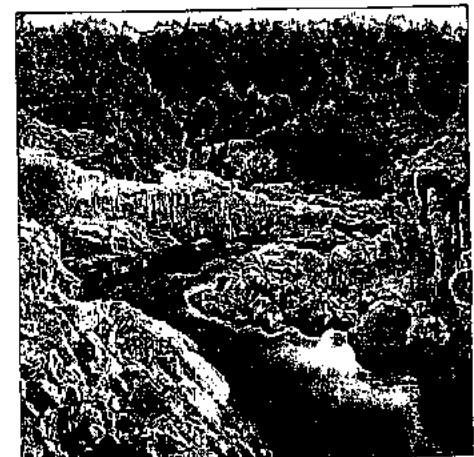
The project used a range of investigative techniques. During the early stages of the project the research team refined through discussion with the co-sponsors the issues which required investigation. To help this process two expert seminars were held in Edinburgh and in London. The experts were recruited from a wide range of organisations concerned with forestry and land management, conservation, recreation and tourism and representatives of local government associations. To avoid undue 'professional' bias this was also supported by the Focus Group Study—four discussion groups held in Dundee, Denholm in the Scottish Borders, Ipswich and Southampton. All this preliminary work informed the design of the structure and content of the surveys.

A household survey consisting of 799 interviews was conducted with interviews spread through E Scotland (Dundee and Fife area), NE England (Tyneside), N Wales and SE England (Guildford - Reading corridor). The survey provided a general picture of forest recreation probing preferences and attitudes of those who visit forests and the countryside. In addition respondents were asked to rank ten photographs of landscapes in order of preference for scenic quality.

The Landscape Architects Study involved seven forest landscape architects making assessments of the physical attributes of 20 distant and 20 close landscapes on a scale of one to five. The attributes assessed were: scale, shape, broadleaved/conifer, overall diversity, species diversity, age diversity, colour diversity, spacing/density, human intrusion and Genius loci (the spirit of the place or its strength of character). The results of this study were used to examine the relationship between physical attributes and preferences.

The Forest Visitor Survey involved the researchers in conducting 1,500 interviews, principally in three Forest Visitor Centres: the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park Centre, Aberfoyle; the Grizedale Forest Park Centre, the Lake District; and the Wyre Forest Centre, Herefordshire.

Visitors browsing in the centres were invited to take part. There was no pressure of time and the response rate was



Scenery and presence of water are important attributes

generally between 95% and 100%. Each visitor was provided with a 'rating board'. Using the rating board visitors would adjust a set of ten photographs along a scale with values of one (poor) to 20 (excellent) for each of seven functions for which the suitability of the forest was being judged; these were:

- 'Getting away from it all'
- Sport and recreation
- Timber production
- Picnicking
- Walking
- Wildlife
- Tourism

A total of 62,326 assessments were made in this way.

A forthcoming technical report will detail the full statistical analysis; for the present, some brief findings:

- diversity (of age, species, form, shape and colour) is highly valued;
- scenery, presence of wildlife and water are seen as major attributes of forests and woodlands;
- some one in five (19%) of forest and woodland visitors walk to and make frequent use of their forests and woodlands—so frequent that they may account for more visits than are car borne;
- respondents ranked the different functions of forestry and woodland management in this order:
  - conservation;
  - scenery;
  - recreation; and
  - timber production;
- the public does not appear to share the strong aversion to conifers shown by some environmentalists;
- feelings of personal vulnerability in forests are strong and widespread—and not only among women.

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## Attitudes to People Visiting Woodlands

'More enjoyment from more forests and woodland for more people — for visitors, for owners, for managers.'

Simply put, that is the recreation aim of the Forestry Authority. How can we achieve it? Planting woodland close to where people live will dramatically increase the opportunities in the long term. This, though, takes time. On the other hand there is already something like 5,000 square miles of national woodland managed by the Forestry Commission, in which the visitor is welcome on foot wherever such a welcome can be extended in harmony with other management objectives and legitimate rights. Much of this woodland is in areas relatively remote from where people live, with notable exceptions such as the New Forest and the Forest of Dean. There are also many woodlands in the care of other public agencies, local authorities and voluntary organisations—for example, Epping Forest and the Ashdown Forest. We could provide better information about these existing opportunities. However, recent improvements in information flow have not always been matched by improved quality of information.

As a nation, there is much to be gained from enabling more access to existing woodlands. A great deal of the UK's woodland is privately owned, the majority being smaller, older and more diverse woodlands. Already there are many owners who make their woodlands accessible to visitors. To gain an insight into what owners and managers think about people visiting their woodlands, the Forestry Authority sponsored a pilot study into the attitudes of owners and managers towards people visiting woodlands, in an area around Oxford. The project was undertaken by Chris Dibben, then a post graduate student in the Psychology Department of Surrey University, under the direction of Dr David Uzzell. Oxford was chosen as it includes a representative selection of different kinds of ownership and management pattern—some large private estates, some institutional holdings and some traditional farms complete with woodlands. Within the study area there are also some pockets where the increasing population might lead to an increase in the demand for access to woodland.

The project obtained the views of more than 100 owners and managers within a ten mile radius of Oxford. Most woodland managers thought that visitors would cause problems and sometimes damage, either deliberate or unintentional. The response of managers suggested that attitudes differed greatly and that there were distinct groups. Some (20%) had a very strong emotional attachment to their woodland while another group had a more economic focus. A proportion (25%) were willing to offer access in return for some kind of grant, although in some cases the grant had to be extremely high. The study revealed some very interesting differences between managers and concluded with two principal recommendations:

- that there is a need to counteract the fears that some owners and managers have about some aspects of access; and
- that those considering any access schemes should tailor such schemes to take account of the different attitudes prevailing. For some managers the crucial factor will be the scope any scheme has to provide a high level of control over access.

The Forestry Commission have for many years operated an open access policy and have found that 'visitors are good for forestry'. The results seem to imply that the Forestry Authority needs to draw more on this experience in the advice it gives to managers. In the meantime consideration is being given to repeating the study in different parts of Britain to increase our understanding of the attitudes of this very important group in the countryside—the people who look after our woodlands.

*Richard Broadhurst*

# SCOTTISH ACCESS REVIEW

On its creation in April 1992, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) inherited a major review of access to Scotland's countryside begun by one of its predecessor bodies, the Countryside Commission for Scotland. Up to then, the Commission had undertaken a large amount of research into various access recreation topics and discussed a number of issues with an advisory group comprising organisations with a central interest in access to the countryside. Several research reports are due to be published early in 1993 to help inform debate on access issues (see below).

SNH has progressed this review and published a consultation paper—*Enjoying The Outdoors. A Consultation Paper on Access to the Countryside for its Enjoyment and Understanding*—on 14 January 1993. The paper considers a wide range of issues, including the effects of recreation on the natural heritage and land management, and the effectiveness of current access arrangements. The paper concludes with a number of questions for the future to help stimulate a wide and constructive debate on access. Comments are invited from a wide audience and particularly from local community, land management and access groups.

From the studies already completed, and the responses to the consultation paper, SNH intends to develop policies and programmes on access and recreation within its broad remit, which includes the conservation of the natural heritage and



Climbing—Craigie Barns



Walking in the Borders

the development of a sustainable approach. SNH also hopes to act at a local level with a wide range of partners.

In the first half of 1993, SNH intends to make a number of access review studies more widely available. These will include:

- *Countryside Access in Europe*—a review of access arrangements in Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland by Peter Scott Planning Services and several sub-consultants. The study considered access traditions, legislation, management, strengths and weaknesses.
- *Footpaths and Access in Scotland's Countryside*—a study of footpaths and access issues in eight small study areas throughout Scotland, undertaken by Peter Scott Planning Services.
- *The Law of Access and Water-Based Recreation*—prepared by Brodies WS, this study reviewed the law of access to and on water and assessed how the law is applied in practice.
- *Review of Rights of Way Procedures*—this review of procedures for rights of

way and other access arrangements was undertaken by Professor Rowanson of the University of Aberdeen.

The following study was published in 1992:

- *The Economics of Countryside Areas in Scotland*—published by the Scottish Agricultural College, Aberdeen, priced £15.

If you are interested in any of these publications, or wish for more information on the Access Review, please contact:

Richard Davison,  
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Scottish Natural Heritage,  
2/5 Anderson Place,  
Edinburgh,  
EH6 5NP  
Tel: 031 554 9797

Over the coming months, SNH hopes to keep people informed of progress in developing policies and programmes on access through a number of channels. One of these will be the CRN Newsletter, so please keep your eyes open!

Richard Davison  
Scottish Natural Heritage



# COUNTRYSIDE SPORTS IN SCOTLAND

The Scottish Sports Council has recently received the reports for two separate, but linked studies, into countryside sports. The main objectives of these studies were to provide data on which to base Council responses to a range of policy and planning issues; and an improved method for planning for countryside sports.

## Background

In 1989 the Council published *Sport 2000*, the national strategy for the development of sport in Scotland. This includes a detailed planning scenario for increased provision of built facilities for sport to the end of the century, based primarily on two elements:

- a substantial database covering most built facilities for sport throughout the country; and
- a facilities planning model which uses the database, surveys of use of facilities and Census data in order to prescribe desired levels of provision.

*Sport 2000* recognised that there was no database, nor an equivalent planning model, for countryside sports; thus no estimates of the required provision were possible.

The two projects to develop a countryside database and to seek to extend the model to countryside sports were commissioned in order to meet this gap as part of the programme of revision and updating of *Sport 2000*.

## Countryside Sports Database

Most countryside sports and physical recreations were included in the data collection including activities in the air, on land and on water.

Golf courses and pitches, often located in rural areas, were already incorporated into the existing facilities database. Major exclusions were walking and mountaineering, on the grounds that patterns of participation in these activities are generally not site-specific. Incorporating, for example, the long-distance footpaths and the Munros into the database would give a very partial picture and was not therefore undertaken.

The database is structured on the basis of sites, although a 'site' may mean an entire loch, stretch of angling river or a mountain-biking trail. Basic information gathered for all these sites comprises details of location, grid reference, ownership/management and activity/ies undertaken there. Additional information gathered where possible includes: facilities at the site (eg. slipway); type of use (competition, training or recreation); season of use; details of contact for access and access issues (eg. limited to club members).

The initial preparation of the database has now been completed and it contains 3,100 sites which provide (because of some multiple-use) 3,400 sports locations. The database will now join the regular programme of revision and updating which is underway for the database of built facilities.

A report has been submitted to the Council by the Consultant who prepared the database and will form a handbook to guide future work on its development. As such, it is not intended to publish the report but photocopies can be made available to interested CRN members.

## Countryside Sports Planning

The Council commissioned the Centre for Leisure Research to explore the feasibility of extending the Council's facilities planning model to include countryside resources for sport. As the study required the gathering of a significant amount of data on demand for participation and issues would have to be addressed on a sport by sport basis, the study was limited to five countryside sports: game and coarse angling, inland canoeing, dinghy sailing, horse-riding and motorcycle scrambling.

The study addresses the need for a greater understanding of the nature and supply (quantity, quality, sustainability, capacity for multi-use) and the relationship between supply and demand (organised, unorganised, seasonality, accessibility, catchment areas). The main objective of the study is to provide a practical approach, or approaches, to planning for countryside sport, focusing primarily on the potential for applying some form of facilities planning model. The Council is currently considering the draft report from

the consultants.

Initial conclusions suggest that it is at least theoretically possible to apply a form of the model to certain countryside sports—those which have structural elements analogous to built facilities. Inland canoeing, flat water angling and dinghy sailing are dependent on facility-type factors such as car parking spaces, permits or storage space. Hence they have structural characteristics analogous to built facilities compared to 'demand-oriented' activities such as horse-riding and scrambling which use more generalised, diffuse and widely available resources.

The provisional implications are that activities which are not constrained at locations by some form of facilities-related factor will have to be addressed for planning purposes through methods other than the model. Even those activities which appear in principle to be amenable to the application of the model would require substantial efforts in terms of calibration and data gathering before it could be applied with any confidence.

These issues are currently being discussed with the Consultant and a report and conclusions will be published later this year. Any CRN member interested in contributing to this debate would be most welcome to do so, and should request a copy of the draft report.

For further information please contact:

Jon P Best  
Research Officer  
The Scottish Sports Council  
South Gyle  
Edinburgh  
EH12 9DQ  
Tel: 031 317 7200

Hilary Campbell, SSC

## Environmentally Sensitive Transportation and Visitor Management Policy for Rural Areas

The CCW has commissioned two research projects to examine the problems associated with the impact on the rural environment of an increasing number of private cars.

*Transport for Leisure* looked specifically at the question of safety on Welsh roads. Detailed recommendations were put forward to improve safety conditions for walkers, cyclists and horseriders. It was also suggested that demonstration schemes should be developed to test some of the ideas. The Swansea Institute of Higher Education developed detailed proposals for possible demonstration schemes on the Gower Peninsula and in the South Pembrokeshire area. A fully integrated approach is advocated involving public transport, traffic management, traffic calming, developing networks of walking, cycling and horseriding routes and countryside interpretation. A policy paper has been adopted by the Council and plans are currently being made to test some of the ideas.

## Path Standards and Networks

Two pieces of commissioned research and policy development point the way towards a new path hierarchy in Wales.

Cobham Resource Consultants undertook a major review of path policies, held focus groups and conducted a public informed survey. The results indicated a majority of the walking public favouring a popular standard of path eg. kissing gates rather than styles and guaranteed reasonably dry underfoot, even in wet weather.

A hierarchy suggests itself of: popular, disabled, basic and challenging types of path. A National Trail, for example, could have lengths at all four standards. Which rights of way and permissive routes should be developed at each of these standards can be decided by community and voluntary groups, assisted by local authorities and the Countryside Council.

Dr Roger Bray and Geoffrey Sinclair are collaborating to develop and test a participative process for devising networks of routes throughout Wales. In practice this will build on the Wales rights of way condition survey that is getting underway.

David Eagar  
CCW, Bangor

## Day Trips in Northern Ireland

Results of the first comprehensive survey of leisure day trips in Northern Ireland have just been published. The 37 million trips in the year 1990/91 generated expenditure of over £300 million. Walking and rambling trips, together, were the most popular type of trips, making up one in every six trips. The Survey was jointly commissioned by the Department of the Environment (NI), Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Sports Council for Northern Ireland and is published by HMSO priced £4.95.

## Recreation and Woodlands

English Nature has commissioned Penny Anderson Associates to carry out a literature review of the effects of recreation on woodland soils, vegetation and fauna. The report considers much of the published work on the British, American and Scandinavian experience. Copies of the report are available from English Nature's library in Peterborough through interlibrary loan. The opinions expressed represent those of the contractor and not necessarily those of English Nature.

Anderson P and Radford E (1992) *A Review of the Effects of Recreation on Woodland Soils, Vegetation and Fauna*. A report for English Nature. Contract Number F2-19-10.

## Foot Work

English Nature and the Countryside Commission have produced a joint statement about public access to the countryside for quiet enjoyment on foot. The statement, entitled "Enjoying our Natural Heritage" will be reviewed in the light of experience and further research.

Details from: English Nature,  
Peterborough

Tel: 0733 340345

## Sport and the European Community

The complex bureaucratic machinery of the EC can be a daunting prospect, especially for small, perhaps inexperienced groups wishing to further their interests. Simply attempting to discover the whos, whats, wheres and hows can discourage even the most assiduous lobbyist. The International Affairs Unit of the Sports Council has recognised the need for a compact and user-friendly guide to the bureaucratic minefield; *Brussels in Focus—EC Access for Sport* is the result.

The introduction clearly lays out the publication's intentions:

"Our aim is to provide a context to the EC and a guide to its structure, to explain the main implications of Europe for sports organisations and to describe ways in which sport might make use of Community schemes."

Thus this is very much a practical guide, leading the reader to key contacts and outlining ways in which their particular objectives might be achieved.

Sports Council (1993) *Brussels in Focus - EC Access for Sport*  
ISBN 1872158 110  
Price £10

Available from the Sports Council,  
16 Upper Woburn Place,  
London  
WC1H 0QP

# OFF THE BEATEN TRACK: Access to Open Land in the UK

Access to open land in the UK is a highly emotive issue that reaches right to the heart of the British system of property rights. An intensely political subject, the conference provided a wider perspective, drawing on European experience, the role of the planning system, opportunities and constraints for landowners and focusing on access to different types of landscape.

Sue Glyptis illustrated the breadth and complexity of the subject in a scene-setting paper. Contrary to public images, open country, in legal terms, is not necessarily open or large-scale. Despite the conclusion of the Hobhouse Committee that the public should have a right of access over all suitable land, under the 1949 Act the public only have a legal right of access to open country that is covered by access agreements.

It is this general lack of a legal right of access that lies at the heart of the access debate. As Sue Glyptis, using the words of Tom Stephenson, reminded us, that "...some of the finest scenery in the country can only be enjoyed by trespassers."

Sue Glyptis also noted that the arguments concerning access rights were further complicated by the issue of access to whom. Different user groups have different requirements and varying resources: some can purchase or lease land for exclusive use.

Peter Scott, a countryside planning and management consultant, provided an insight into access rights, traditions and mechanisms in eight European countries, highlighting issues relating to open country.

The 'countryside for all' approach to countryside access that exists in Norway and Sweden has long been the envy of access groups in the UK. For example, the Ramblers Association hold an ideological attachment to this approach, advocating the establishment in law of a basic 'freedom to roam', which is then prescribed by exception, rather than vice versa. He noted the benefits of the strategic approach to access planning adopted in the Netherlands, France and Denmark.



The West Highland Way

The second day of the conference was devoted to case study workshops that focused on improving and securing access to lowland countryside, woodlands, moorland and water.

Speaking on access to lowland countryside, Fiona Reynolds, Director of the CPRF, adopted a wide and provocative perspective that encompassed the long term environmental agenda and issues of sustainability. She emphasised the importance of access to good quality countryside immediately adjacent to urban areas if society at large was to be successful in the pursuit of sustainable patterns of countryside recreation. It was her opinion that giving people confidence in the countryside and a sense of emotional (if not literal) ownership is the best way of building respect for and love of the countryside.

Anthony Clifton-Brown, Savills PLC, considered the issue of access to woodland and stated his belief that public access to woodlands as of right would not serve the long term interests of the public or the country. He argued that the co-operation and goodwill of farmers and woodland owners would be lost if a right to roam were granted. Rejecting the compulsory approach, he reviewed market force options, the role of the voluntary agreements, the concept of woodland access grants, the potential role of the planning system and set-aside payments in achieving greater access to

woodlands.

Sue Walker provided yet another dimension to the conference by examining access to water. Her talk covered key trends in water recreation, some of the issues associated with access to water and mechanisms for securing and improving access to water. In examining mechanisms for securing access and reducing conflict, she reviewed the role of seven policy tools: zoning; control; creation of new water space; pricing; legislation and negotiation. In conclusion, she emphasised the importance of negotiation.

Alan Inder, Principal Planning Officer, Hampshire County Council, outlined the role of the planning system in providing, enhancing and securing access to the countryside emphasising the need to:

- ensure that access needs and opportunities are taken into account at all levels of planning;
- make full use of the statutory planning process of development plans and development control;
- identify needs and opportunities that cannot be dealt with by the statutory planning system and develop other, informal approaches to problem solving; and,
- ensure that access proposals are realistic and capable of implementation.

In drawing the conference to a close, Adrian Phillips, Professor of Environmental and Countryside Planning at the University of Wales, Cardiff and environmental consultant, produced a ten point action programme:

1. Clarify Payment for Access
2. Review Policy Initiatives
3. Carry Out Moorland Demonstrations
4. Explore Conservation/Access Interface
5. Explore Use of Planning Mechanisms at Local Scale
6. Develop Access Forums
7. Publicise European Experience
8. Legislate on Dogs
9. Examine Occupier's Liability Issue
10. Raise the Political Profile of Access

The continually developing debate surrounding access to open land is, in simple terms, a power struggle between those with property rights who wish the position to remain as it is and existing and potential users who want access to some or all open country placed on a legal footing, with a clearer definition of what constitutes responsible access and reasonable controls.

Whilst the prospects of securing a legal freedom to roam over open country would at first appear distant, the changes in European and UK agricultural policy do give grounds for qualified optimism. With farming and landowning interests voicing similar concerns as those of conservation groups regarding the future management of agricultural landscapes there appears grounds for a fruitful coalition. With the Government committed

to cost effective reform of agricultural support mechanisms, farmers and landowners require public support if they are to secure new sources of environmental management funding to replace the old support structures. Such public support could be achieved in relation to open country by mutual agreement on legislation giving the public limited rights of access. Such access will allow people to enjoy these areas at first hand and should, in turn, generate more public support for continued environmentally friendly agricultural support systems

The full conference report can be purchased from the Countryside Recreation Network, priced £10 inclusive of post and packaging. Please send payment with order, making cheques payable to University of Wales College of Cardiff.

*Dr Kevin Bishop*  
*Lecturer in Countryside Planning*  
*University of Wales College of Cardiff*

## Harmony in the Hills?

The debate over access to open country has recently been brought once again to the fore with the publication of a Ramblers Association discussion document: *Harmony in the Hills* — proposals for harmonising walkers' freedom of access with wildlife conservation, sheep farming and game management, on the mountains, moors, heaths and downland of England and Wales. The document is published as part of the contribution by the Ramblers Association to the deliberations of Countryside Commission on achieving consensus on the question of access to open country. Views are sought on 'What sort of land?', 'Behaviour', 'Suspension of access', 'Wardens' and 'Compensation'.

The Ramblers Association,  
1/5 Wandsworth Road,  
London  
SW8 2XX  
Tel: 071 582 6878

## Diary

### *A Seed in Time*

An International Conference on Urban and Community Forestry to be held by the Forestry Commission.

August 31st to September 2nd 1993, Manchester Town Hall.  
Contact: John Cummings, Environment Branch, Forestry Authority, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT  
031 334 0303 ext. 2487

### UWCC Short Courses

*Tourism — The New Challenges* (3,8,9 June 1993, Perthcavil).

*Bridging the Divide — bringing together nature conservation and countryside enjoyment* (early 1994, Cardiff).

Contact: Dee Gilmore, Dept. of City & Regional Planning, UWCC, PO Box 906, Cardiff CF1 3YN  
Tel: 0222 874956

## Countryside Recreation Network News

Network News is to be published in February, June and October. The editor welcomes your letters, comments, suggestions and articles for publication. Deadline for next edition 1 May 1993.

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This edition edited and published by Robert Wood with the invaluable assistance of the editorial panel:

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Richard Broadhurst — Forestry Commission  
Jeremy Worth — Countryside Commission

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