

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



Volume 3 Number 1 February 1995

ISSN 0968-459X



This issue:

- *A Brush with the Land: art in the countryside*
- *Parks for Life: Europe's special places*
- *Transport: the Royal Commission*
- *1995 subscription and reader survey*

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

- Secretariat provided by:
Department of City &
Regional Planning,
University of Wales
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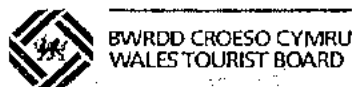
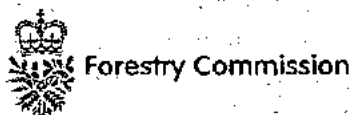
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Contents

Editorial	3
Grizedale re-visited Sheila Hourahane reviews the increasing popularity of art in the countryside	4
Notes of an artist—the experiences of a sculptor in residence Simon Fenoulhet and Amanda Randall describe how sculpture can help solve problems of access and other conflicts	6
Poetry and Place—local distinctiveness, the complicated and the ordinary Sue Clifford argues for a greater understanding of the importance of identity and detail	8
A Sense of Place Mike Wild looks at imagery and celebration in our culture	10
Engineers of the Imagination Sue Gill gives an overview of the work of Welfare State International	12
Along the tracks Alison Scott describes Sustrans' cycle route sculptures	14
Canals Alive!—art for the waterways Vanessa Wiggins reviews British Waterways' approach	16
The Royal Commission sets a new agenda! Colin Speakman considers the new report on Transport	18
Europe's Special Places: "Parks for Life" Professor Adrian Phillips outlines a new European initiative	20
Countryside recreation training and events	22
Subscription form	23
Reader survey	24

Cover: Andy Frost working in Grizedale Forest, the venue for the CRN workshop in May (see p.11)

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of CRN sponsoring agencies.



COUNTRYSIDE
RECREATION
NETWORK

A UK-wide Network, CRN gives easy access to information and people concerned with countryside and related recreation matters. The Network reaches a variety of organisations and individuals in the statutory, private and voluntary sectors. The Network is usually reached through the CRN manager, but there are several thousand other people in the Network.

The Network helps the work of agencies and individuals by:

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

Chair:

Richard Broadhurst
Forestry Commission

Vice-Chair:

Glenn Millar
British Waterways

CRN News is produced three times a year and welcomes submissions of articles and letters from all its readers. The deadline for items for the June 1995 issue is 2 May. For more information or for subscription, please contact:

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Editorial

Art is about inspiration. The countryside, full of culture and community, magic and sense of place, inspires the artist and the visitor. The artist leaves behind a work and the visitor, enriched or enraged, takes away a memory and a meaning, for a short while or for a lifetime. Art is also about communicating. It can stimulate and generate activity—social, environmental and economic. Increasingly people are rediscovering the great potential the Arts have to build new bridges and reach out into new audiences and communities concerned about their countryside.

Environmental art is not just about commissioning sculptures along a cycle route (for those places lucky enough to have them!); it is about redesigning the ubiquitous steel cycle barriers 50 yards further along. By integrating art and local distinctiveness into the design process maybe we can lose the 'off the peg' uniformity which currently pervades our environment. From cycle barriers to 'stile kits', the countryside is losing its identity; but by using local materials, resources and creativity we can enhance the experience of a trip to the countryside.

Environmental art also involves the community. It has a meaning for local people, especially when they participate in the process.

"A Brush with the Land" is the title of CRN's two day workshop in May which will explore many forms of art in the countryside; from storytelling and sculpture, to music and theatre. It will give the opportunity not just to learn about, but also to join in with, a variety of ways to interpret and enjoy the countryside.

The articles in this issue provide a taste of what is happening now, and what could happen in the future. Perhaps we will see more artists working in teams alongside other professional disciplines; perhaps we are already seeing a trend towards employing artworkers in the community. So here is a selection of ideas and views, different approaches and examples, to inspire you.....

Also included in this issue is a reader survey—we hope you will use this to make your views known so that we can better tailor CRN News to fit your professional needs and interests. The results will be published in the June issue.

Access will be the theme of the next CRN News; a growing issue in many sports and recreation activities. An exciting agenda for the CRN "Sport and Recreation" workshop will address access issues and the many problems of management. Your news, views and articles on access will be most welcome; publication deadline is the 2 May.

Grizedale re-visited

Sheila Hourahane, CAE Heuad (community, arts, environment) reviews the increasing popularity of art in the countryside.

I went back to Grizedale Forest in 1993, more than ten years after my first visit. I was conscious of a *change* there; a change which I regard as crucial. The sculpture project, which had been one of the first in Britain to introduce the idea of artists working in a countryside environment, had not only expanded but had been given a different character. Sculpture trails were marked out and marketed, instead of being incidental to the use of the Forest for recreational walking and happened upon accidentally. Sculptures, which I had been assured were to be allowed to gradually break down and 'return to nature', were being repaired and sustained. It may be a slight thing, but it seems to be symptomatic of the shifts which have been taking place in the use of art work in the countryside in recent years. The escalation in numbers of countryside trails which wind their way through woodlands, across country parks and forests and along cycle tracks, is increasingly rivalled by their accompanying sculpture trails. Is there an issue that for some visitors to these sites it is the sculpture which makes the place particular and memorable, rather than the 'natural' features of the landscape? Do we need to look at the responsibility that artists now have for intervention in the countryside, especially that aspect to do with public access, interpretation and community involvement?

I take Artists Newsletter, a magazine which is generally recognised as providing an information network for artists in Britain. Every issue has advertisements for artists who can respond to environmental projects and, in fact, the term 'environmental artist' is now an accepted professional description and there is post-graduate training in this discipline. A typical advertisement for such work might be similar to that published in March 1994 for the Kirklees Way in West Yorkshire, asking for "...an artist to undertake the development of a site-specific marker for this stretch of the Way. The Waymarker will take its inspiration from the culture and heritage of the locality and the artist will be expected to work from a local studio and involve local people in the development and implementation of the work." Four of the main elements to be found in environmental art projects are identifiable in this brief, namely, interpretation; community involvement; usefulness and celebration. In the same issue of Artists Newsletter there was a report on the ACER event, held in November 1993 and which "...used artwork to raise

awareness of the plight of Sydenham Hill Woods..." Ten artists worked for two days on 'site-specific' work which called attention to the threat to the Woods and to the "...education, recreation and conservation work taking place there." Artists are lending their skills to the politics of the countryside, the work of protest and awareness raising. Artists are frequently being involved in environmental regeneration, both urban and countryside, working with organisations such as the Groundwork Trust and they are often asked to take on tasks which may be significant for the future understanding of a particular landscape. For example, the Thornden Country Park View Point Seats project recently offered artists an "...opportunity to work within, furnish and interpret an estate landscape of exceptional historic interest."

This may be the point at which a period of re-assessment should take place amongst those involved with such work, from both the art world and that of countryside management. Artists now need to have a wide range of skills and a knowledge of countryside issues and practice to enable them to operate effectively and sensitively. Countryside professionals at all levels are more frequently being asked to work with artists and to understand the reasons for employing them and also the ideas behind individual projects. How often are the two professions brought together in a training situation to help to develop these collaborations and to learn to appreciate the other's work? Post-graduate training for environmental artists tends to take place in association with landscape architects or professional designers, not in association with the people that they are likely to work with on the ground. Conferences and seminars also tend to pull together the policy making, planning and funding professionals, rather than those who will be responsible for the daily running of a site, the maintenance of art works as part of its fabric and relations with the public.

Where do proposals for environmental art projects usually begin? How often do they come from the ground up, from within a community or from the local countryside manager? Is it more likely that they are initiated in discussions between art agencies and the amenity or public relations officers of the relevant countryside organisation or owner of the site? These questions need to be addressed, as does that of the actual effectiveness of projects of this

kind. Artists and the work that they produce have clearly won a place in the context of countryside interpretation, environmental education and awareness raising, but this is still not generally recognised and there is a danger that the art works might be marginalised in some way by those responsible for a site. The business of interpretation is to find the most effective and appropriate way to communicate an awareness of the qualities and importance of a site. This includes ways which challenge the public and encourage them to look and think for themselves. Good art works of all kinds can do this, from the subtle collection and re-arranging of natural objects in the manner of Andy Goldsworthy, through interactive works such as those of Welfare State International to the many artists who carve and model figurative and narrative sculptures. Opportunities may also be missed at the level of providing sympathetic and attractive site furniture when managers simply order the standard seats, picnic tables, signing, walling and fencing. All these are things that an artist can design and often make at no more and possibly less cost than standard equipment.

What then is the message? Surely it is this: Hold on everybody—art organisations, countryside agencies, owners of sites, artists and local communities. Let us start to look critically at the environmental art projects that have been accomplished and ask what they have achieved for that particular site. Let us fully accept the role that all the arts can have in the development of a countryside site, but clarify the relationship between the site and its art work. Why are people visiting that place and what should be their memory of it? Let us, above all, be aware of the lack of real knowledge and understanding that exists in both professions about what the other is doing and find ways for co-ordinated training that will improve that knowledge.

*The author is currently collecting material on environmental art projects of all kinds with a view to a publication. She would be grateful for documentation on any projects in which readers have been involved and can be contacted at : CAE Heuad, Llanfachreth, Dolgellau, Gwynedd LL40 2EH.
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Countryside Recreation Network 1995 Conference Call for Papers

Recent advances in countryside management is the theme chosen for the CRN Conference for 1995. The Conference will take place on 19-20 September.

Papers are now invited from those with a professional, practical or academic interest in one of the following three themes. These themes, associated with the management of the countryside for recreational purposes, are:

- Information technology
- Products, processes and practices
- People management

Those with an interest in presenting a paper or providing information about their work in the form of a poster are invited to send an abstract (maximum 500 words) of their proposal to the CRN secretariat to arrive before 21 March.

The programme for the Conference will be confirmed in May 1995. The proceedings of the Conference including all papers and posters presented will be published by CRN in 1996.



Countryside Recreation Network

Notes of an artist

—the experiences of a sculptor in residence

Simon Fenoulhet, Cwaith Cymru (Artworks Wales) and Amanda Randall, sculptor, describe how problems of access and other conflicts can be solved.

Cywaith Cymru has been pioneering the role of artists in the public realm since its inception in 1982, seeking out opportunities for creative interventions in both the rural and built environment. Over the years we have built up a number of successful partnerships, with local authorities, Government agencies and others involved in the way our landscapes are developing.

In recent years we have worked closely with Forest Enterprise in South Wales to develop arts projects which encourage a wider use of their resources. The first project was a sculpture trail by Mike Fairfax in the Garw Valley which helped to launch a new Forest Park. The second was a more complex project, with artist Debbie Jones based in Cwm Carn School, close to the long established Forest Drive. This resulted in a number of activities and events, including live music, story telling, drawing on a hillside 100m wide as well as individual works by the artist herself.

Our latest project is an access trail at Fforest Fawr (pronounced 'Var') just north of Cardiff where the forestry staff have come up with a very positive solution to the conflicting demands of user groups. An area of the woodland has been set aside for visitors with different levels of mobility to allow them to use the paths without competing for space with cyclists and horse riders. Amanda Randall was appointed as artist in residence last October to help devise features for the trail which would add some creative flair while tackling many practical problems. What follows is an account of her experiences...

As I write this article, eight weeks into a fourteen week residency, the impression I have of the project so far is that collaborations between people have been as important as my own artistic input.

My brief has been to work on the development of a forest access trail with graded access for people with disabilities, creating various features including a barrier to prevent horse riders using the trail, seats and resting places, sign and waymarkers. Vandalism is a persistent problem in Fforest Fawr, so all my constructions needed to be very sturdy, and the older children from the local primary school have been involved in the creative process. With only fourteen weeks and a £300 materials budget, this was quite a challenging agenda!

I have moved to Wales from my usual home in Kent for the duration of the project, and am based at the forest headquarters of the Caeprhilly Mountain Countryside Service. The first few weeks were necessarily something of a 'crash course' in the culture and local history of the area. I documented the forest and potential sites with maps, sketches and photo-collages; read books and pamphlets on local history; visited museums and, most importantly, talked to as many



Construction work is being completed with the help of the Treforest Environmental Initiative Group

people as possible.

One of my first tasks was to visit the local primary school and give a slide show of my previous work, explaining my methods to the staff and children, and telling them my plans for the forest trail. On another day the children visited the forest and walked the trail with me. Then, back at the school, they made models for sculptures and features using clay and twigs. The same process was undertaken by Forest Enterprise Rangers, members of the Caerphilly Mountain Countryside Service, and the Taff Ely Access Group, the disabled people who had helped to plan the trail. Some excellent and imaginative designs were produced. Walking the trail with Pam and Eric, two blind people with their guide dogs, was particularly useful to me. This experience, together with the models they made during the practical session at the countryside centre, gave me a much clearer idea of the kind of features that might be useful for them, more than any amount of reading of manuals could have done.

After this consultation period I made drawings of the sculptures and features I wanted to construct and presented them to Forest Enterprise and Access Group members. Between us we decided on any alterations that were needed. The whole of the consultation and design process took about five weeks.

The designs I have produced reflect the industrial history and landscape of this area—referring to Iron Age, Roman and Industrial Revolution building techniques—while the materials I have used—timber, steel and stone—are all produced or found in this area, and are available for free (or nearly free!). Some of the structures are quite architectural, for example, the large 'entrance' archway/horse barrier, but others use animal imagery, such as the 'Fox and Crows' sculpture at a viewpoint/picnic area, and a carved 'Running Fox' seat/waymarker. The animals are all featured in murals illustrating Aesop's fables at nearby Castell Coch, a Victorian folly built by William Burgess for Lord Bute. Many visitors to the trail come to the forest after visiting the castle. All of the designs were derived from ideas produced by participants in the



The crows of Aesop's fables inspired the sculpture at this viewpoint

consultation workshops.

While much of the practical work on the sculptures, like building stone 'walls' and carving, I carry out by myself, a good deal of the heavy construction work and moving of materials requires help both with people power and equipment. The construction work we have done so far would not have been possible without the Treforest Environmental Initiative, a group of adults with learning difficulties who specialise in landscaping and countryside work. They provided people and tools for moving materials and setting up timber stockade. Forest Enterprise and Caerphilly Mountain Countryside Rangers provided invaluable assistance with diggers, tractors, trucks and chainsaws. Forestry contractors felled large trees for me and delivered the logs to various sites, and a local engineering firm cut out some steel motifs that I needed. All of this takes a good deal of time to organise, especially making arrangements with countryside staff who already have many pressing demands on their time, but the advantage of this way of working is that as more people get involved, local interest in the project grows. I plan to capitalise on this by arranging carving workshops for all of the groups mentioned so that they can decorate simple benches, and also by involving the school children in some

simple construction work.

Many of the construction techniques involved have been new to all of us, and have sometimes involved a few false starts! I have enjoyed learning about new skills such as technical roadway construction, walling and fencing. I have also enjoyed involvement in the diverse issues which are drawn together in such a project: forestry, conservation and countryside management, Welsh politics and culture, and disability issues. So far, even if sometimes rather cold and wet, this has certainly been an enriching and involving project!

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Poetry and Place— local distinctiveness, the complicated and the ordinary.

Few will have failed to have come across the work of Common Ground and their success in enriching our experience of the environment; Sue Clifford describes their approach.

Common Ground has been developing an idea which links people and locality, culture and nature. Local distinctiveness is about what makes your place different from those around it, and about what makes it special to you. New development and landscaping in many areas has tended to reduce the variegation and suppress the personality of places.

Local distinctiveness is about anywhere. It may begin with diversity, but it must also be about identity, detail, patina and meaning. Importantly it focuses on locality, not the region. It is about the accumulations and assemblages, about accommodation and change, constant dynamism, not about compartmentalisation and simple preservation of the status quo. It includes the invisible as well as the physical: symbols, festivals, legends may be as important as hedgerows, hills and houses.

Unless a place has meaning to the people who inhabit it and use it, it is unlikely to be well cared for. Little things (detail) and clues to previous lives and landscapes (patina) may be the very things which breathe significance into the streets or fields. Try to define these things for others or at a grand scale and the point is lost.

Discussion about values is much harder than arguing about numbers, monetary costs, economic indicators; it is so difficult that it has been pushed to the margins of much professional endeavour. This does not mean it is not important. Much of the best in our lives is intangible, unquantifiable, difficult to express.

Poetry, in its widest sense, can help us to appreciate the richness of nature and culture as they interweave around us. Poetry can help us to deal with paradox, see 'the universe in a grain of sand', express our subjectivity, locate ourselves in the world of emotions. Poetry can help us to see the simple together with the complex, enable us to catch sight of many layers of meaning. Poetry can slow us down, make us move at the level of our deeper understanding.

The arts and crafts in all forms, from storytelling to sculpture, music to mime, festival to photography can help us to notice the ordinary, to make sense of the complicated, to communicate and build interest in our concerns.

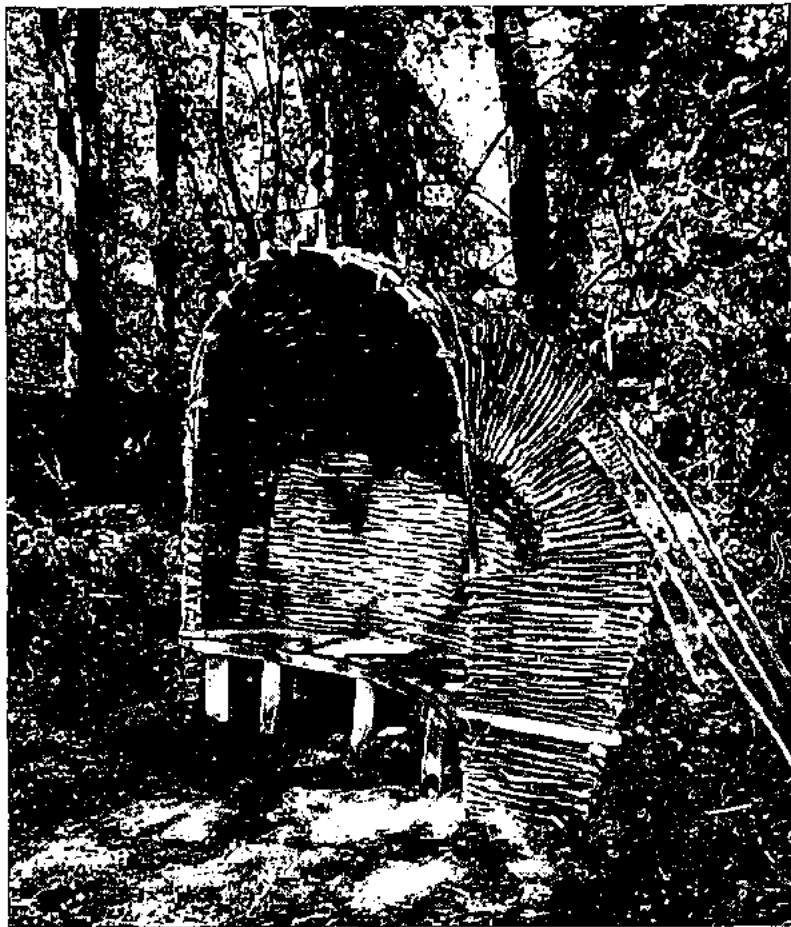
Two examples must suffice, both are about culture, one is about the arts.

Orchards: Centuries of careful work has seen us grow in Britain 6,000 varieties of eating and cooking apples, hundreds more of cider apples, as well as hundreds of

pears, plums, gages, cherries, damsons, nuts this is biodiversity. Some, like the many perry pears of Gloucestershire, adhere so strongly to place they will only grow within a few miles radius of where they originated.

An orchard is not simply a few old trees, it embraces fruit varieties, wild life, songs, recipes, cider/perry/cherry brandy, hard but social work, festive gatherings, the look of the landscape—all particular to that locality. It is the focus of wisdom gathered over generations about pruning and grafting, dabbling and discerning about aspect and slope, soil and season, variety and use. This is local distinctiveness. Once lost the cultural landscape is diminished by many dimensions at one blow.

Consider then the potential of the Community Orchard: a place run by and for local people, in city, in suburb or in village. A place for festive gatherings, communal food growing, quiet contemplation, playing, wildlife



*Mick Petts' Curved Settle is found in Tyrrel's Wood, Norfolk
Photo: Dick Todd
Commissioned by Eastern Arts, Common Ground and the
Woodland Trust*

watching, animal grazing, exchanging knowledge, extending skills, building responsibility, growing trees. Here community action can play host to biodiversity and sustainability, driven by local distinctiveness (Agenda 21).

The Alphabet Parishes: in a unique collaboration 26 parishes in North Devon have each commissioned a plaque to celebrate their centenary. Taking a feature of local importance they have used every letter of the alphabet, Sheepwash for example has used S for striplands, to mark the importance of a group of strip fields which persist in their landscape. The plaques are being placed discreetly in the villages, and a special passport is being made which describes the place and its chosen emblem. Passports containing all 26 will be for sale to local people and visitors in the pub, post office or shop, where you will be also able to have your passport stamped.

The plaques have been made in Barnstaple by Harry Juniper, one of the few makers of sgraffito ware. This is particular to North Devon, it is a form of 'peasant pottery', with affinities to that found in corners of the Mediterranean, Northern France, the Low Countries and around Chesapeake Bay, Virginia (the possible latter links being through the Huguenots).

This project has encouraged people to reflect on their cultural landscape, the identity of their own place, the differences and the links near and far. It celebrates and draws attention to the particularity of sgraffito ware and its makers. On all these levels it reinforces local distinctiveness, and gives tourists a way of exploring each village and North Devon 'guided' by local people. The project has been orchestrated by North Devon Local Distinctiveness Officer Danny Hughes, based at the Beaford Arts

Centre.

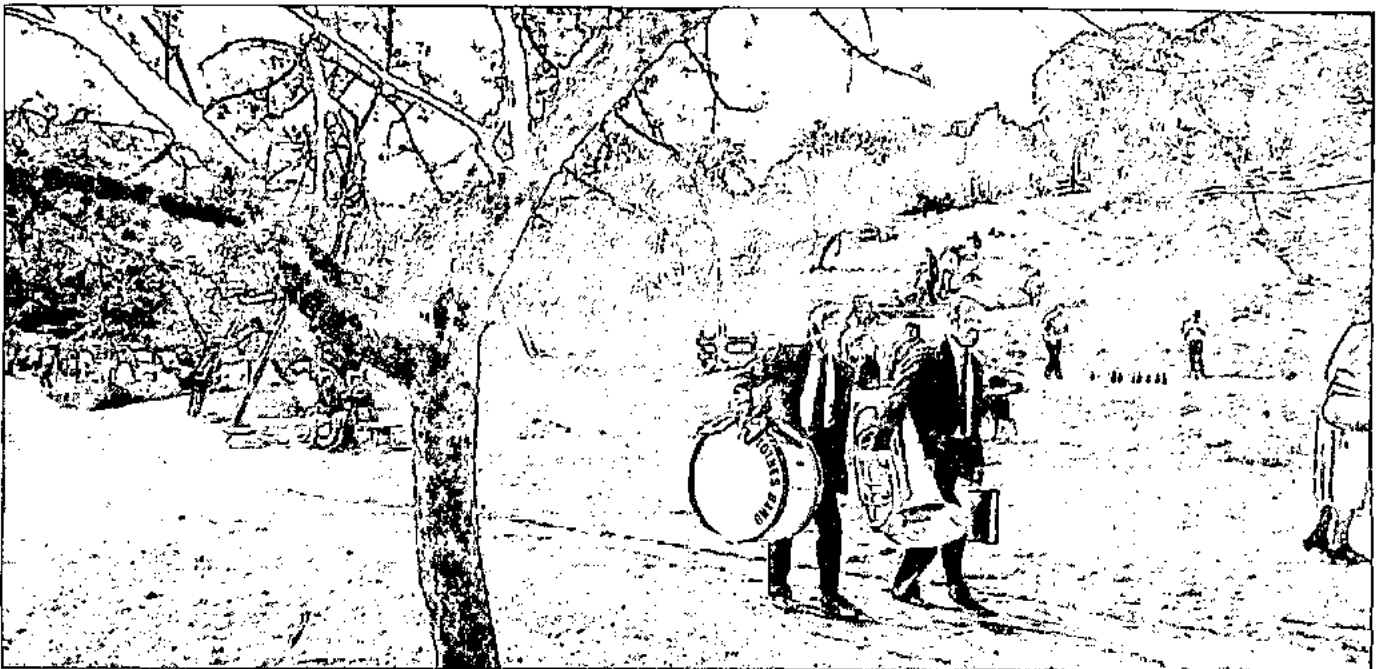
Common Ground has leaned across boundaries, worked through symbolism and the poetic, sometimes working with the arts. We are trying to heighten people's own awareness of the importance of meaning in the things about them, and seek deeper ways of exploring and helping people to express the value of the everyday. Differentiating the ordinary demands close observation, cherishing the locally abundant, creating circumstances for professional expertise and local wisdom to inform each other. A care for local distinctiveness could help us to reinvigorate our sense of domestic attachment, to re-weave the local world.

Bibliography

- Local Distinctiveness: place, particularity and identity, conference papers, Angela King and Sue Clifford Eds, Common Ground 1993 £6.20 incl p&p*
Celebrating Local Distinctiveness, Common Ground for Rural Action 1994 £2.20 incl p&p
Common Ground Rules for Local Distinctiveness, 1992 A2 colour broadsheet £4.50 incl p&p
The Apple Broadcast, Common Ground 1994 £2.00 incl p&p

Common Ground is currently seeking collaborators for a new project called Field Days and working towards national and regional exhibitions of Parish Maps; please write to us if you are interested in working with us.

COMMON GROUND, Seven Dials Warehouse, 44, Earlham Street, London WC2H 9LA



Environmental art can encompass many different activities; celebrations at Lusleigh Community Orchard, Devon

Photo: James Ravitious for Common Ground

A Sense of Place

Mike Wild is Principal Lecturer in the School of Leisure & Food Management, Sheffield Hallam University, President of Sheffield Wildlife Trust and Chair of South Yorkshire Folk Arts Network. Mike is also a musician who works on community environmental projects.



"The Green Man" has for centuries played an important part in our myths and culture. This is one of many found at Southwell Cathedral.

People have always celebrated where they live. By marker stones, carvings, significant trees and wells, they have defined their territory, given meaning to the apparent chaos of nature and retained links with their ancestors. During seasonal festivals they have given thanks for survival and the bounty of the natural world. Processions and performances have drawn communities together at crucial times of the year and created a sense of oneness with others and the green world. This unity was powerfully expressed by the masons and woodcarvers who created their personal images of the "Green Man" in so many of our mediaeval cathedrals. He both exhales and ingests green leaves and represents, in an archetypal fashion creation, dependence and potential destruction and sometimes has in fact three faces. He burgeoned at a time when Europe's great forests were being cut down to create the agricultural economy. This must have been, for people steeped in a northern tradition of forest lore, including the artists who both revered and carved the oak to the greater glory of the creator, a period of grave concern for the environment. It must have been akin to that now felt by so many people about the destruction of the rainforests and just as it was for Chekhov when he wrote in Uncle Vanya, "The forests are literally groaning under the axe, millions of trees are being destroyed, the homes of animals and birds are being laid waste, the rivers are getting shallow and drying up."

The fact that our countryside did survive and became the one we seek to protect and enhance today must also offer some hope. We are still debating the impact on biodiversity of

changing a climax forest to the mosaic of habitats that are our present-day natural areas but we need to link together all habitats and human communities in an integrated way for a diverse and sustainable future. Environmental problems are caused by social, economic and political actions and dramatic changes in values and behaviour are going to be needed and not merely technical fixes. Art taps into dreams and dreams can become reality if we dream with our eyes open. In my own city, Sheffield, we are working to create the Five Weirs walk by the river Don in the industrial heart of the Lower Don Valley. The next phase will take in Salmon Pastures where fish were caught until 1860 and to which we confidently expect they will return by the millennium. Until that time we have dreamed a symbolic salmon which might be expressed in many ways including one of Sheffield stainless steel to keep the dream alive.

In many cultures still, today, if the links with natural communities are fractured, serious damage is done to the human spirit. As Aldo Leopold wrote "land is a community not a commodity" and we divorce ourselves from the earth at our peril. On the other hand the maintenance of continuity, if slavishly followed, can threaten survival as change is also necessary in the face of environmental and social pressures. If we have lost our way and followed the wrong path then to continue is folly. It is the function of the artist to sing new song lines or paint new routes back to older roots.

It would be easy to become dismal in the face of environmental degradation and the world is still getting worse ecologically. However at the local level many successes have been achieved as a

result of positive action and practical involvement by ordinary people. I am convinced that this is because they have had, or are presented with, visions of how things could and should be rather than a catalogue of horrors. Of course we need science to reveal the facts of our situation and to document the state of the environment. Last October's issue of CRN News showed the great power of Geographical Information Systems and imaging in this work. Human beings are, however, complex and in the struggle to change hearts and minds we are moving into a future where we will need to exercise a "fuzzy logic" that works in the realm of the senses and emotions as well as of rational thought and so we need other kinds of imaging as well. The World Wide Web, CD-Rom and virtual reality will make the transmission of, and interaction with, such images a powerful experience in education and interpretation. Stories, artefacts and performances can often bring home environmental messages very forcefully and in a positive and communal sense that offers hope rather than despair. Such despair merely blocks action for change. Engagement with crafts can also draw in even the most unlikely person. To see people engrossed and enthralled by a bodger on a pole lathe turning useful products from coppicewood and seeing them itching to have a go brings home the deep need we have to interact with natural products and create something human from them. Ironically it is that good urge that has been unwisely managed to create the environmental problems we now face. To paraphrase both Bacon and Schumacher, if we engage in a battle with nature and win, we all lose!

It can be argued that a key role of the artist is to challenge the "realities", show alternatives and celebrate beauty. This can be disturbing for others but may be essential if society is to move on and adapt to change. The Poet Laureate, Ted Hughes, points out that any scientific argument about damage to the environment can be beaten by those with more money to marshall their own evidence and arguments, and that what actually changes hearts and minds is the use of effective images. A musician friend of mine, Pete Coe, told me of a photograph by a youngster doing a school arts project that showed an eroded limestone angel on Lincoln Cathedral gazing sadly towards one of the Trent Valley power stations that was creating the acid rain that is dissolving her. I immediately felt tears in my own eyes, such is the power of an image!

There is much debate about the role of artists and community workers in this process of using arts and crafts in the environment. They may create public art, "works of art", for their clients, they may "work with art" and be an artist in the community helping people to articulate their own aspirations and feelings or they may be community artists who see their main function as that of facilitator to help people "work at art" and do the creating themselves so that art becomes a process and not just a product as it is for most people who increasingly "consume" rather than produce art. The actual way that artists work in the environment is in fact a mixture of all these approaches. Some artists will always work as individuals to work out their internal discourse and the products may then challenge people to see the world in new ways or to enrich the environment in which they live. At a conference I chaired for Yorkshire & Humberside Arts on People, Art & Place, quite a few artists were clearly disturbed at the notion that they might be seen simply as vehicles for community empowerment and participation and would wish to

maintain their autonomy and put their personal vision into practice in their own way. That is what most artists are moved and trained to do, usually as an individual. There was, however, general agreement that joint working between local people, artists, community workers and countryside staff was highly productive and exciting and a good way to generate enthusiasm and achieve funding, to create sustainable networks and partnerships. Compartmentalism is the enemy of ecological thought and action, and stops us from seeing the wood for the trees.

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A Brush with the Land

Art in the Countryside

16-17 May 1995

Grizedale Forest Park

CRN's two day workshop will explore a variety of art forms which can all contribute towards interpreting and enjoying the countryside more fully. With the help of Andy Frost and others we will look at sculpture, theatre, storytelling and community participation as well as organisational aspects such as choosing sites and finding sponsorship. The emphasis throughout the two days will be on participation!

*For more information please contact
Catherine Etchell on 01222 874 970*



**Countryside Recreation Network
in association with CEI**

Engineers of the Imagination

From its South Lakeland base Welfare State International has achieved an international reputation for innovative events using theatre, dance, music, visual arts, design and construction, carnival and pyrotechnics. Sue Gill describes their work.



"Exposing the hidden beck....and other treasures"

Artist: Anna Curtis

Welfare State International is a registered educational charity which has been based in Ulverston since 1979. These "Engineers of the Imagination" are a team of skilled artists, musicians, performers, writers and inventors—experts in those arts where audiences take part in significant celebrations.

Their base is The Old National School, which has seen many changes over the last two or three years. It is developing into an artists' centre, with studios, workshops, some accommoda-

tion and a core training programme. Set in the heart of a small market town, a garden is being created around it, that draws on the history of the land itself; something that truly belongs to South Cumbria, starting with the choice and use of local materials. It will not reach maturity for some years, but it is already being used. Landscaped into a gentle spiral, the turfed banks surround a fire where people can eat, sing and listen to stories. The garden will never be finished; it is a shelter for

creativity. WSI sees it as an integral part of their centre where people can research and find ways of creating new events and celebrations.

The Town Beck, which flows under the centre of Ulverston down to Morecambe Bay, crosses the property. The old culvert was opened up, revealing a beautiful curved water course lined with limestone sets, much to the delight of the National Rivers Authority, who normally have to deal with people wishing to cover up flowing water. A curved bridge

made by sculptor Roger Bloomfield, now spans the beck leading to the garden.

On the north side is an immense hazel screen Caroline Menis made using hazel from the local coppice woodlands with figurative images of a heron leaping out of the beck and a shooting star. Opposite is a pergola made by Martin Brockman using peeled oak, fast developing into the Hanging Gardens of Ulverston! The boundary is an unusual curved wall of local stone designed by Hannah Fox, with 'windows' to enable passers-by to enjoy the garden.

The garden, funded by Northern Arts and designated a sculpture park by South Lakeland District Council, brings together arts and the environment, offering an educational resource for colleges and conversation groups. Recent activities as part of the residential education and training programme have included baking rosemary bread in the outdoor oven, firing kilns with clay sculptures inside, lantern making, drumming, outdoor performances, fire sculptures, mosaic stepping stones, archways, decorations and the creation of sound sculptures powered by the

flowing water.

Plans for Northern Arts Year of Visual Arts 1996 are well advanced, towards the construction on site of an architectural fantasy and folly; a sculptural tower containing a space for secular ceremonies, an internet cafe and an observatory, a true demonstration of ground-up devising by these artists. They feel that the life of a place and what it means to us depends, not simply on its physical form but on what we do and experience there. John Fox, artistic director for WSI sums it up when he says "Our job is to stretch perception, to take people on journeys and reveal resonances which are extraordinary".

Having recently demolished two unsightly workshops, the Engineers of the Imagination are ready to start work on the creation of a custom-built cruck barn/workshop which will also serve as a shadow theatre. Researching South Cumbria vernacular architecture, the construction will use traditional oak timbers from the Graythwaite Estate for the major frames. The local planners are welcoming this new initiative and work starts early March, with an 8-week schedule, supervised by Chris Coates and Peter Wilshaw, both experienced in other Welfare State projects in the North West. As part of their core programme of education and training, Welfare State is offering this opportunity as a series of practical self-build courses during March and April. But there's much more than the physical outdoor work. Good on-site meals and great company are guaranteed, and an enriching after-work programme of lectures, videos, events and visits.

WSI publish hand-books of secular ceremonies and celebrations and run training courses for industry, artists and everybody who is concerned with putting art into a context. We undertake entire commissions providing all the skills required—but are equally happy to offer advice to help you manage your own event.

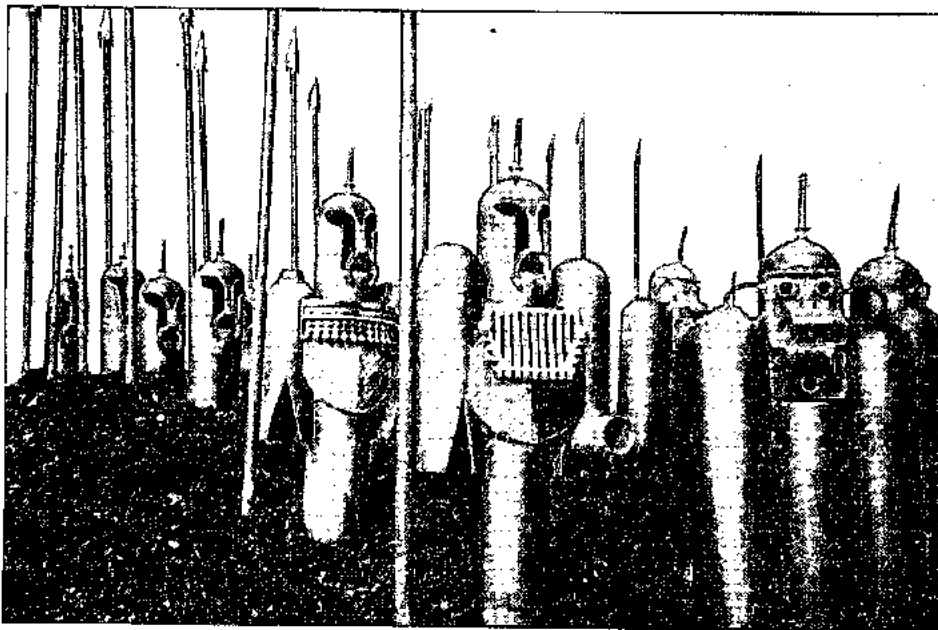
*WSI can be contacted at
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*This pergola forms part of the WSI sculpture garden
Artist: Martin Brockman
Photo: David Haley*

Along the tracks

From redundant railway lines and derelict land, Sustrans has built hundreds of miles of cycle paths. Today, as bicycles out-sell cars, these linear routes provide practical benefits not only as a healthy mode of transport, but also for recreation and wildlife, linking urban areas to the countryside. Alison Scott, Sculptor Coordinator for Sustrans describes some of their projects.¹



The "XVII legion" marches alongside the Glasgow to Greenock path

Artist: David Kemp

Our intention is to complete five thousand miles of cycle path into the next millennium. We are in negotiation with many different organisations and individuals over land ownership and other issues connected with building the routes. Persuasion is important not only in helping landowners to understand the value of non-trafficked routes for pedestrians and cyclists but also to help them realise the invaluable role artists and makers can play as problem solvers within this whole process of building a 'travelling landscape'.

Sculptures, seats and drinking fountains help to make a public space more friendly. They punctuate the length of the journey, provide memorable landmarks and meeting places and foster public care and responsibility for the path and its surroundings.

Incorporating the skills, experience and creative thought processes of artists and makers in crafting features for our paths means that we are also constantly

trying to redefine and challenge the perceived notion of a drinking fountain, an access point onto the paths, a chicane or other structures. A drinking fountain does not have to be elaborate and victorian in design, it can also be a stone sculpture. 'Gaius Sentius' for example, by Gordon Young, is a very popular half way stopping point on the Bristol to Bath path², providing somewhere to rest or picnic - on the stone benches, somewhere to get fresh drinking water and somewhere to contemplate the view or even test your latin! Watch out for the inscription on the back of one of the benches, it provides a clue to the title of the work!

Artists and makers are natural lateral thinkers and they will add a dimension to our thoughts about any of these features that has previously not been considered. On occasions, designers will come up with solutions which are less expensive than those illustrated in the standard catalogues used by landscape architects

and other environmental curators. Some designers have ways for example, of converting a log to provide sections for a bench which does not result in so much waste as in the commercially produced seats. I have even come across a designer who has said that the more challenge there is in a design brief, the less he will charge for it because of the increased editorial coverage that new solutions and technology attract! The use of found materials, attractive to the creative imaginations of artists, also help to keep production costs down.

A new political and philosophical agenda is emerging in the nineties and it is one which is increasingly concerned with the individual's 'place' in their environment. Originally carved or crafted gates, seats, drinking fountains and sculptures are ways for individuals to make their mark, to mark their place and articulate why they are drawn to a place. These works can contain the messages associated with the historical, mythological or industrial associations of a site. This is what makes a place special.

Our programme of commissioned works from artists and makers continues apace; as soon as a cyclepath is approved for construction, the art element is built into the plans although the design fees and production costs of the works are funded through business sponsorship, help and services in kind, grants from arts bodies, foundations and trusts.

Mileposts were first featured on the York to Selby path in 1985 where a series of mounds and lookout points were constructed from scrap railway materials. Much of our sculpture has made use of available materials and recycled them so that they metamorphose into something previously unimaginable; spoil heaps became Andy Goldsworthy's earthworks; gas bottles and transformers were used for David Kemp's figures (XVII Legion on the Glasgow to Greenock path), bridge masonry was used by Richard Harris

(Kyo Undercurrent on the Consett to Sunderland path); old pipework and railway sleepers have been recycled into seats (Sleeper Seats by Jim Partridge and Liz Walmsley on the Bristol to Bath path³).

Some of our more recent work includes Steve Geliot's twelve seats carved from windblown oak for the Cuckoo Trail through Hailsham in Sussex. George Cutts welded nine pieces for the 'Big Blue Pipe' series through York (York to Osbaldwick), where Andy Hazell has also cast a series of quirky embellishments for the street lighting which are as interesting by day as by night. On the Consett to Sunderland path in County Durham, work is well advanced on Tony Cragg's stainless steel survey instruments based on the Theodolite and Level which were once used to map out the Victorian industrial landscape which formerly dominated the site. Earthworks have been put in place ready for David Mach's 'Head of Steam' based on the Silver Jubilee locomotive which once sped along the route. Nearly fifty pieces have been installed on our Whitehaven to Ennerdale section on the west coast of Cumbria. This has been developed through our partnership with West

Cumbria Groundwork Trust. Other work recently produced by them has included 'Phoenix Arising' - bridge parapets at Cleator Moor by Alan Dawson, welded steel signposts by Richard Farrington (based on drawings by local school children) and cast iron bollards by David Mayne.

Currently we are working on producing a kilometre of earthworks by Mark Merer at Workington (Cumbria) and we have permission to develop a sculpture garden using the theme of 'famous travellers on a site where once stood the busy Mangotsfield Railway Station closed in 1966, in Kingswood, Avon. Also in Avon, we are currently collaborating with Avon County Council on a series of works for the pedestrian/cycleway adjacent to the next stretch of Ring Road from Shortwood to Warmley on the outskirts of Bristol with a 600 metre earthwork (using spoil from building the road) by Lorna Green, landscaping for a roundabout, incorporating designs for four underbridges by Jane Kelly and designs for two further underbridges on Siston Common by Sebastien Boyesen. We are working on the second phase of works for this route and these will include, seats,

stiles, access points and signposts. This project will be completed in the latter part of 1996 or early 1997, so there is sometime to wait to see the outcome of these artists' interventions.

For Richard Long, the artist, the walk or journey is the artform, therefore everyone who walks, runs or cycles our paths (or short sections of them) is creating their own artwork!

'A walk is just one more layer, a mark laid upon the thousands of other layers of human and geographic history on the surface of the land'.

The idea that sculpture is an integral part of creating an attractive and popular travelling landscape has now become well recognised with similar ideas occurring on trails and paths across the country. Sustrans hopes that the public will demand more creative and imaginative detailing in their own daily surroundings as they come to appreciate their value as part of the quality and pattern of their own daily lives.

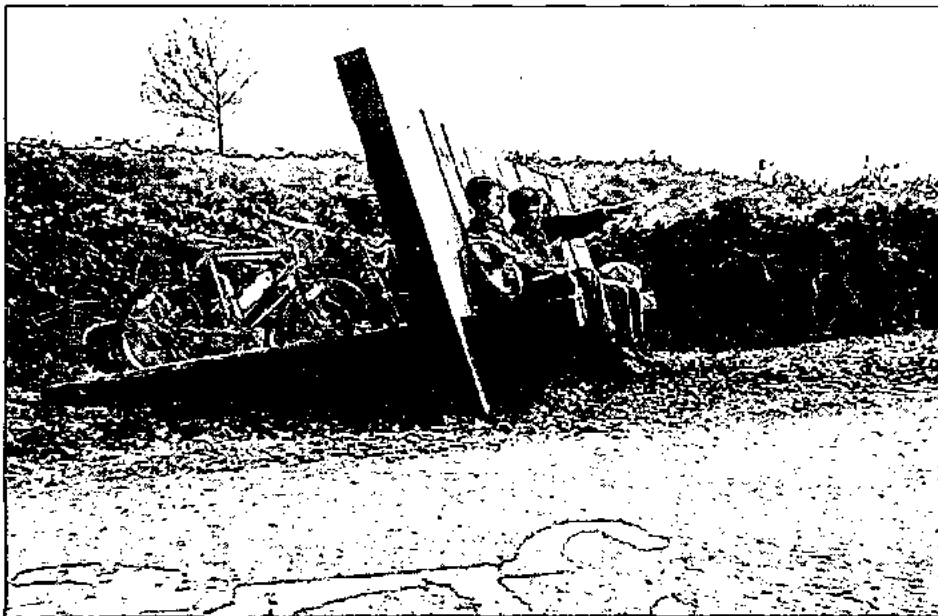
1. *'Along the Tracks' is the title of a programme about Sustrans' art projects broadcast in January 1994 as one of four 'Putting Art in its Place' series produced by the Arts Council of England and Channel 4.*

2. *'Gaius Sentius' was the name of one of the roman legionnaires who was thought to have been responsible for building the roman road adjacent to this sculpture.*

3. *The Bristol Bath Path is one of the most popular of our paths with some one million journeys recorded in one year.*

• Sustrans publish a guide called "Making Ways for the Bicycle", essential reading for those involved in planning or designing cycling facilities. Sustrans can be contacted at 35 King St, Bristol BS1 4DZ

• Sustrans are inaugurating the 1000 mile Inverness to Dover National Cycle Route with a 29 day cyclic ride, and you can be part of it. To join the ride for a day, a week or 1000 miles contact Isobel Stoddart at 11 The Cortlandt, George St, Hailsham, E. Sussex BN27 1AE



Old railway sleepers give a convenient rest along the Bristol to Bath cycle route, itself along an old railway line.

Artists: Jim Partridge, Liz Walmsley

Canals Alive!

— art for the waterways

Vanessa Wiggins, British Waterways

The canal network altered the face of Britain, when it was built two centuries ago as a countrywide transport system. Imposed on a landscape accustomed only to a slow evolution, canals brought radical changes. They were the means of transportation for bricks and other bulk goods that would feed the growth of towns and cities. But the 'cut' itself grew out of the landscape, its great flights of locks, aqueducts, tunnels and bridges subtly altering vistas, hillsides and villages.

This former transport highway is now an historic legacy, used by millions each year for recreation and leisure time. British Waterways is charged with the role of conserving and improving our canals as a national asset. In 1993, BW launched its biggest ever national public awareness campaign—Canals 200, celebrating the bicentenary of the canal network—which attracted over

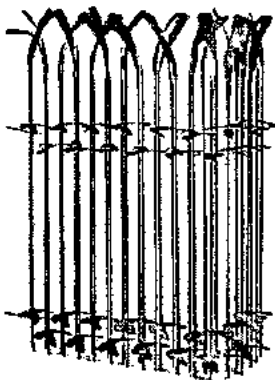
one million people to canalside events.

Continuing this theme, BW has just announced Canals Alive!, a new campaign to capture the spirit of the waterways. This will feature the unique arts, traditions and culture which are linked with our canals. During events, exhibitions, festivals and open days, the emphasis will be on demonstrations, action and participation, plus books, performing arts, recorded memories.

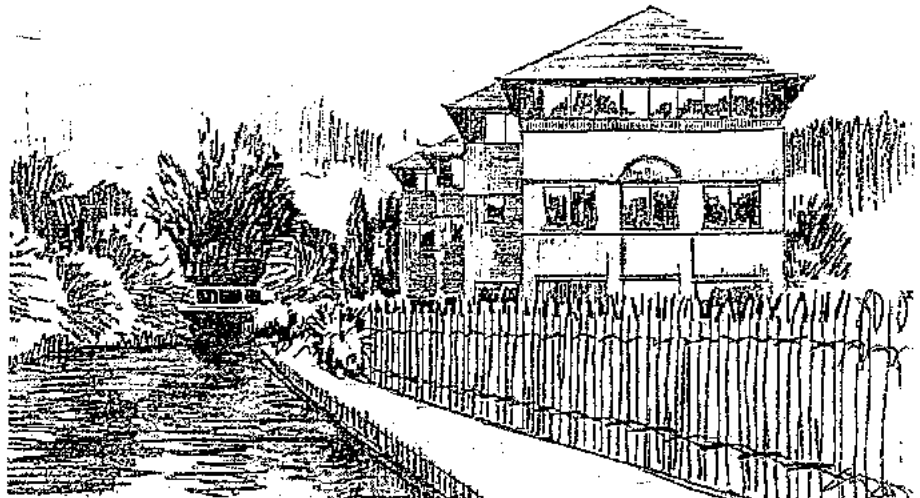
Art will be a major strand of Canals Alive! and a number of initiatives are already underway. But introducing art to the part-natural, part-artificial environment of the inland waterways must be managed carefully to be successful. BW is particularly concerned that inappropriate art or sculpture should not be imposed onto canals and so destroy the sensitive balance of the historic waterway fabric. This, undoubtedly, is a guide-

The Banbury Corridor Study looks at use of artworks in the regeneration of waterways through the Banbury district.

ARTS & LANDSCAPE



The value of integrating the work of artists and craftspeople in the landscape enhancement projects is now nationally recognised. Projects such as the regeneration of Cardiff Bay and the Birmingham City Convention Centre have achieved national acclaim. Artists and craftspeople could be included as part of a carefully constructed programme of environmental projects, and would collaborate and work alongside architects, planners, landscape architects and developers. The use of discreet artworks which draw upon Banbury's rich heritage will enhance and develop the identity of the canal and engender a strong sense of community pride, purpose and value. Specific works could include fencing and railings; improvements to bridges; interesting paving details; and changes of level; signposting and interpretation; and 'landmarks' which could be encouraged at one or two key sites on the canal. The idea of an artwork built into the lock chamber - revealed as the water level changes, or vice versa - could even be worth consideration.



A canalside policy for arts and landscape could be applied to specific sites or developments. Illustrated is a possible example, showing how an artists work could be adapted for exciting, yet functional, waterside projects - skilfully designed railings with a waterside theme of bollustrues and flights of ducks. An appropriate use would have been beside the recently built offices at Trasway Bridge, helping to formalise their boundary and screen car parking from the canal.

line that should apply to all public art—in the countryside and elsewhere.

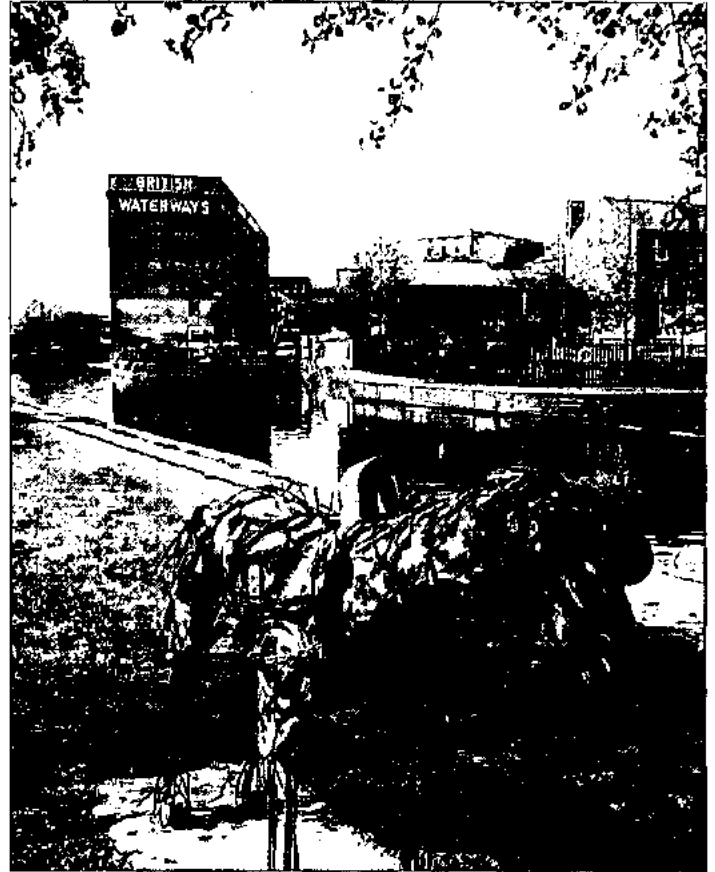
Past experience has shown the value of working in partnerships with local authorities and arts groups, and the local communities. A commemorative artwork to celebrate the Oxford Canal's bicentenary arose out of a joint BW/Oxford City Council public competition, while in Nottingham a recent temporary sculpture trail included a canalside boat horse constructed from metal.

More than just sculpture, art can encompass more subtle details, such as paving, seating, fencing and other necessary furnishings. Working with Coventry City Council, BW is developing a 5-year joint public arts strategy for the Coventry Canal that will consider all these issues, aiming to involve schools, colleges and professional artists.

Canals Alive! initiatives already underway include a series of sculptures along the rural Oxford Canal around Banbury, jointly with Cherwell District Council. Full consultation is taking place with the artists, selected through a public competition, and the trail will open this summer. The Bridgwater & Taunton Canal joins the River Parrett at the dramatic setting of Albert Street Cutting, at Bridgwater in Somerset. This fine location is providing inspiration for a sculpture, which will also tie in with plans for a countryside/sculpture trail along the River Parrett.

This is a small beginning for a growing realisation of the importance and value of sensitive and appropriate public art which, used in the right setting, can bring a new and dynamic dimension to understanding the countryside. For the future, BW hopes to develop more initiatives to integrate art into the backcloth of our waterways, working in particular with local communities. We will be developing exciting opportunities for artworks in ephemeral materials, and particularly look forward to ideas for wind and water sculptures on our canals.

Indeed, the 2,000-mile canal network is in many ways itself one great 'sculpture'. Hewn directly from the landscape, the 200-year old buildings and structures built in the local vernacular and of local materials are part of a cohesive whole with the landscape and natural environment. If this can inspire public art along our canals then we believe this will greatly add to public understanding and sympathy for the waterways by literally capturing their spirit.



The old bargees' horses which used to ply the Nottingham Canal were clearly the inspiration for this temporary sculpture near Nottingham city centre

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The Royal Commission sets a new agenda!

Colin Speakman, Transport for Leisure Ltd.

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution Report on Transport and the Environment, published at the end of October (Cm 2647) is perhaps the most significant document to emerge in the UK to highlight how the occupants of these islands—as in other parts of the developed West—are destroying their environment and their health for the short term convenience and illusory gains of personal, motorised transport.

So far, the debate about Transport and its impact on the Environment has been most eloquently pursued by, amongst others, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Transport 2000, and, increasingly, the Councils for the Protection of Rural England and Rural Wales. Thus it has been relatively easy for the motoring lobbies—which until recently included the Government—to label as partisan even the most stringently researched documents that suggested that over-reliance on the car and road transport was a serious threat to the environment. Pro-car apologists have been able to present rising car ownership and usage in both town and countryside as an iron law of human behaviour against which argument is both futile and unrealistic.

The Royal Commission's deliberations can't be dismissed quite as easily. For one thing they include a number of top scientists, men and women of the highest academic and professional calibre, including those with extensive experience in industry, agriculture, medicine; people who are, to use current jargon, stakeholders in the establishment. The report they have produced, far from being filled with the soporific clichés of most official documents, is written in clear, concise prose, with a series of authoritative chapters dealing with key transport issues in a holistic way; the growth of personal mobility, the effects of vehicle emissions on human health and the environment, noise, accidents and the demand for road buildings materials, and the special problems of air transport. The report goes on to suggest a series of pragmatic, perfectly achievable solutions to the problems described—changes of policy required by local and national Governments, in the economic framework for transport, in vehicle technology, in land use planning, in policies for freight transport, local travel, long-distance transport, and critically, the political and institutional framework for transport



Tourist traffic, shown here in Castleton in the Peak National Park, is a major source of pollution

which control its development. 110 key recommendations follow to achieve what the Commission defines as “an environmentally sustainable transport system”.

The report avoids seeing problems in black and white terms but presents evidence in a cautious and balanced way. For example whilst most environmentalists link the alarming epidemic of child asthma to vehicle emissions, (traffic growth and asthma show parallel increases), the Commission authors hesitate to take a definite view, and if anything err on the cautious side. This makes their eventual conclusion that there is, nevertheless, sufficient reason for serious concern worthy of drastic curbs on potentially dangerous emissions, even more compelling.

The report does not contain any simplistic instant solutions. The authors accept that the car is here to stay. People aren't just going to give up their cars, or

motoring, overnight. But it is perfectly possible to achieve major environmental and social gains by having clear targets for the reduction of car use. To increase the present percentage of journeys made by other modes apart from the private car (walking, cycling, public transport) from the present level of a mere 12% to 20% by the year 2005 would make a massive difference in terms of quality of life, whilst a further 10% increase to 30% by 2025 would make an even greater difference and is achievable. It would, however, be a long way from the increasingly discredited Department of Transport vision of a totally motorised Britain, with increasingly congested Los Angeles-style freeways in a polluted and dying landscape—a far cry from the familiar images of empty roads and unpolluted countryside constantly perpetuated in the motor industry's deliberately misleading press advertising and television commercials.

What has this to do with recreation in the countryside? The report identifies recent fundamental changes in lifestyle (2.17) as being central to the problem, with a majority of the British population enjoying what might be called car-centered lifestyles. The car has, for many people, what the Commission describes (2.26) as its own "deep and powerful symbolic meanings" reflecting personal freedom and choice. Whilst this offers many advantages in terms of access to facilities, there is also a serious downside, including problems of obesity and heart disease from lack of exercise, (now affecting even children), and stress. There is also loss of opportunity to those without access to a car, as increasingly a car becomes essential for many of the requirements of modern living, such as access to leisure facilities, including shopping in out-of-town centres and enjoying the countryside. Nor are we able to evade the environmental costs which permit our new lifestyles including ever increasing urban and rural congestion, visual intrusion, noise, air pollution related disease, constant fear and risk of accidents, and massive road building which damages both landscape and wildlife habitats. We tolerate such degradation because car dependency has de-sensitised people to the loss of environmental quality that traffic pollution has caused.

The changes that have taken place as a result of the growth of car usage have developed a dynamism of their own, resulting in car-dependent land use patterns. But as the Report suggests, the self-perpetuating and exponential growth of car culture heralds its own destruction as environmental limits are reached— "if our lifestyles are not sustainable they will have to be modified sooner or later" (2.27).

Most countryside recreation in Britain is now car related. Typical Countryside Commission surveys show that something like 85% of all countryside recreation trips are based around the car. Trains, buses, coaches, cycles and walking share the remaining 15%.

Countryside recreation trips are not evenly distributed, but are highly concentrated in areas like the Lake District and Peak District on Sunday afternoons in summer where congestion and the visual and noise pollution of motor traffic can totally dominate the

environment.

Close to where I live, the Department of Transport plan to drive a five lane highway across scenically superb moorland and woodland, part of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, wiping out miles of public footpaths, destroying wildlife habitats. Yet a prime reason for the new road, according to the Department, is to allow weekend motorists to reach the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District National Parks even more rapidly.

Access to the countryside for recreation is central to the car culture. A drive to the country and even a walk from the car forms part of the unsustainable car-based lifestyles so accurately described by the Royal Commission.

Countryside managers who only provide for car users by developing visitor centres away from bus or train routes, who provide guided walks or self guided walking programmes only accessible to motorists, are actively perpetuating this car culture. Too often it is assumed that people choose to use their cars when in fact any real choice has been effectively denied them.

There is another, more rational way forward. The Report makes a number of key recommendations, using the stick of fiscal and restrictive measures—higher tax on fuel, traffic restraint, road pricing—and the carrot of better and more

affordable public transport. The latter is a wry point given the catastrophic loss of consumer confidence caused by bus deregulation and the impending impact of rail privatisation.

But in perhaps a seminal paragraph (6.43) the Commission suggests what is most needed in the decade ahead:

"Changes in lifestyle have an important role to play in creating a sustainable transport system for the UK. They need to embrace, not only a greater resort to walking and cycling, but far-reaching changes in the way people perceive and use other modes of transport. New lifestyles cannot be imposed by governments. It is not likely that they could be bought about solely by education or persuasion, or by other promotional measures, on a sufficient scale to resolve the basic dilemmas of present transport policies. Greener lifestyles will have to be spread over a period of time. They will have more appeal to people at certain periods of their lives, and may be taken up more readily in some areas of the country than in others. Their eventual success will depend on the action taken by central and local government to provide frameworks within which individual choices can be exercised in an environmentally responsible way."

These "frameworks for choice" are fundamental in helping to achieve more sustainable lifestyles.

Countryside agencies and managers



A choice to travel without a car is provided in the Snowdonia National Park by the Snowdon Sherpa bus

have a central role to play. Non-car access to the countryside needs to be developed not as "poor law" provision for those too unfortunate or feckless to get their own wheels, but as a more civilised, socially and environmentally responsible and rewarding way of accessing the countryside in ways which do not threaten the environmental capital in their stewardship. Countryside managers need to work in partnership with public transport authorities and train and bus operators to develop new opportunities to reach the countryside without a car. Cycleways and walking routes need to be developed, accessible from public transport, not just as an alternative to the car but as a better way of experiencing and responding to the countryside than motoring through it. Countryside close to where people live, including traditional Victorian Town Parks, Green Belt and urban fringe areas, re-natured industrial areas, mostly already served by good local public transport, or accessible on foot or by bike, need to be

given new significance and promoted as an alternative to over-used, motorway-served National Parks.

The countryside is a major educational force within our society. Through an understanding and experience of nature, of wildlife and unspoiled, cultural landscapes, we begin to understand in microcosm what is happening to the planet as a whole. So with transport. The development and availability of non-motoring modes to allow us to reach and experience the countryside can help create exactly those frameworks of choice the Royal Commission seek, and which will also relate to other transport needs. Freedom not to own and use a car is equally as important as the right to own a car but is essential to enable people to follow lifestyles which are not dependent on ever increasing consumption and pollution of the earth's dwindling natural resources.

Europe's Special Places: "Parks for Life"

Professor Adrian Phillips, Department of City and Regional Planning, Cardiff; and Chair of IUCN's Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA).

During the last few months of 1994, a major report on the future of Europe's protected areas—its national parks, nature reserves, protected landscapes and so forth—was launched, in many languages and in many countries. Under the title, *Parks for Life: Action for Protected Areas in Europe*¹, this was the outcome of a partnership between several international bodies: led by IUCN—The World Conservation Union—through its Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA), but involving also the Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Bird Life International.

Europe presents a challenge to international co-operation in the field of conservation. With 35 countries, many languages, cultures and traditions, meaningful collaboration is difficult. However, compared to many other parts of the world, it is a wealthy region; human population numbers are relatively stable (indeed in some countries they are falling); much of Europe has a surplus capacity in food production; public awareness of environmental issues is generally high; and there is a climate of international collaboration.

Parks for Life aims to seize these opportunities, but also to address the reality of protected area conservation in Europe:

- although Europe has many protected areas (up to 20,000 by one estimate), there are big differences from one country to another. Less than 1% of Ireland is protected, and 2% of Greece; but

nearly a third of Denmark;

- globally over 40% of the area under protection is in Category II of the IUCN categorisation, ie. protected areas managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation. But in Europe these account for 10%, with over two-thirds in Category V, ie. protected areas managed mainly for landscape protection and recreation. (Our national parks, of course, are in Category V);

- protection of the marine environment generally lags behind that on land; the situation is worst in the north east Atlantic and the North Sea;

- over 10 million hectares—an area larger than Hungary—has been added to protected areas since 1982, but many large areas rich in landscape and biodiversity are still not protected, especially in Eastern and Central Europe;

- most protected areas in Europe are subject to threats: agriculture, pollution, industry and tourism endanger parks and reserves in every country;

- in many countries, especially in Southern Europe, the management of protected areas is poor; and

- everywhere there is scope to increase local support and public participation.

In dealing with these challenges, Parks for Life adopts as its aim: *to create an adequate, effective and well-managed network of protected areas in Europe*. The plan is drawn up around four broad themes:

1. Placing Europe's protected areas in their wider context:

- European protected areas should be integrated with *regional planning*; policies for sectors such as *agriculture, forestry and tourism* should be environmentally benign.
- protected areas should normally include, or be surrounded by, *support zones* where land is managed to contribute to conservation.

2. Addressing priorities at the European, sub-regional and national levels:

- protected areas should form an interconnected *network*, with corridors and stepping stones between them. Samples of all ecosystems should be included.
- the network should include most *large remaining areas* of semi-natural and natural ecosystems, managed to conserve or restore nature, with natural succession as the dominant process; an increase in such highly protected areas of about 50% is needed.
- other areas, usually large, should be managed to protect *unique landscape qualities*—this requires stronger protection and better management in many protected landscapes.
- the network should include one or more viable populations of *species threatened* on a European scale.
- more *marine protected areas* should be set up and properly managed, especially - in the NE Atlantic.
- in Eastern and Central Europe, there should be *no net loss* in the extent of protected areas following land privatization.
- some *countries* (the plan specifically identifies Scotland and Ireland among others) need special attention because of weaknesses in their protected areas systems.

3. Strengthening the planning and management of Europe's protected areas

- there should be effective *laws* to underpin the establishment and management of protected area types.
- Governments should develop strong *institutions* to plan and manage protected areas, and provide adequate funds.
- each protected area should have a *management plan*.
- within large protected areas, *zoning* should be used, reconciling land uses such as farming and tourism with conservation of nature and landscape.
- the professional status of *protected areas staff* should be raised. Good training should be available to all.

4. Creating the climate for success:

- protected area agencies should work more closely with *local communities*, drawing too on the support of other sectors.
- the *public* should be helped to see their protected areas as a vital part of each nation's sustainable development.
- Governments should *co-operate* to ensure the success of protected areas at national and European scales.

Parks for Life does not provide a top-down blueprint of what should happen where, identifying particular places which need



EC support for a restoration programme may relieve the threat of pollution to this lake in Prespa National Park, Greece.

special attention. Instead it makes *recommendations* for action at the national level, it *endorses* important initiatives already underway which will strengthen the role of protected areas, and it proposes 30 *priority projects* calling for international leadership. Through CNPPA, IUCN is already moving ahead to plan the implementation of these recommendations.

What does all this mean for us in the countryside and recreation business in Britain? The central messages are these:

- there needs to be a serious effort to address the many the recommendations within the UK. To this end, discussions are under way between government agencies and NGOs on setting up a Parks for Life national forum;
- the plan should be used to guide our relations with other countries in the field of protected areas. This is relevant not only to the Government, but also agencies and NGOs;
- agencies and NGOs should review the 30 priority projects to see how they could contribute (examples of projects where a UK input would be valuable include: a programme to raise the standards of land use planning in relation to protected areas; a programme of study visits for protected areas staff from Eastern Europe to Western Europe; and a feasibility study for a possible European treaty for the protection of rural landscapes).

Increasingly the future of our protected areas is being shaped at the international level (with the Habitats Directive and the Biodiversity Convention for example). Parks for Life has implications for many of those engaged in the management of our national parks, AONBs, nature reserves etc., and serves as another reminder of how we live in an increasingly inter-related world.

Reference:

1. IUCN, 1994 Parks for Life: Action for Protected Areas in Europe ISBN 2-8317-0230-5. IUCN (Available from IUCN Publications, 219 Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, CB3 0DL, £10)

Countryside Recreation Training & Events

National Grounds Maintenance Forum

A workshop for clients and contractors
ILAM
8-10 March, Manchester

A Way with Words

Writing effectively for your visitors
CEI/Losehill Hall
8-10 March, Derbyshire

Let's Get Physical

Interpreting landscape and earth science
CEI/Losehill Hall
13-14 March, Derbyshire

Helping Schools to use their Grounds for Environmental Education

How to make contact with and assist schools to use their grounds as an outdoor classroom
Environmental Trainers Network
15 March, Durham

Coaching Skills

Skills for the effective management and development of staff and/or volunteers
Environmental Trainers Network
29 March, Sheffield

Burry Inlet and Loughor Estuary Symposium

Issues and problems common to many coastal areas throughout Europe
BI&LE Liaison Group
29-30 March

Storytelling

CEI, Scotland
30 March-1 April, Inverurie

Design and Graphics for Interpretation

CEI, Scotland
3-5 April, Edinburgh

Drystone Walling for Countryside Staff

Construction, preservation and role in the environment
Plas Tan y Bwlch
3-7 April, Gwynedd

New Approaches to Safety and Liability in the Countryside

Taking responsibility for public safety?
CRN
Date to be confirmed, Edinburgh

Sport and Recreation in the Countryside

Best practice: resolving conflicts and reviewing latest management techniques
CRN
27 April, Birmingham

Large Scale Events in the Lake District

The relationship between outdoor events (non-motorised) and the environment in which they occur
Adventure and Environmental Awareness Group/Friends of the Lake District
29 April, Cumbria

Tree Care and Management

Protection and management, including urban and semi-urban trees.
Plas Tan y Bwlch
2-5 May, Gwynedd

Planning and Designing Interpretive Exhibits

CEI
10-12 May, Cheshire

An Introduction to Bird Census Techniques

Guidance for those who are interested but inexperienced
Preston Montford (with the British Trust for Ornithology)
12-14 May, Shrewsbury

Coastal Zone Habitat Management

Integrating conservation and recreational management
Plas Tan y Bwlch
15-19 May, Gwynedd

A Brush with the Land

Exploring many forms of art in the countryside; sculpture, storytelling, music and theatre.
CRN
16-17 May, Grizedale, Cumbria

Guided Walks Workshop 1: Introduction/Refresher

17-18 May

Guided Walks Workshop 2: Advanced

18-19 May

(Can be combined)

Plas Tan y Bwlch, Gwynedd

Arts and the Environment

CEI/Welfare State International
7-9 June, Cumbria

GIS and Access to the countryside

CRN
8 June, Milton Keynes

Funding and Europe

An up-to-date examination of funding available and for which projects
CRN
21-22 June, Draperstown, N. Ireland

Visitors to the Countryside

Developing and promoting walking and cycling routes for recreation and tourism
CEI/Losehill Hall
21-23 June, Derbyshire

Weekend in the Woods

Hands-on courses including charcoal burning, coracle making, music from the wood, snigging and more
Hay Bridge

Losehill Hall—01433 620373

Plas Tan y Bwlch—01766 85324/85334

CEI (Centre for Environmental Interpretation)—0161 247 1067

CEI, Scotland—0131 6508017

Hay Bridge Nature Reserve—01229 861412

ILAM—01491 874222

BI&LE Liaison Group—01792 302711

Friends of the Lake District—01539 720788

Preston Montford—01743 850380

Environmental Trainers

Network—0121 358 2155

CRN NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION 1995

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If you have not re-subscribed, this is your opportunity! Subscription to CRN News is free and we will be more than happy to continue sending your copy. However, after this issue, CRN News will be sent out only to those who have re-subscribed. Please fold this form and return to the address below. If you wish your survey form overleaf to remain anonymous please photocopy this form and return separately. We will keep you on our mailing list and will also send you details of our workshops and conferences. Please tick here if you do not wish to receive these

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Reader Survey

Win a free place on a CRN workshop! Just spare a few moments to fill in this simple survey. All returned forms will be entered in a draw to win a choice of free attendance at any 1995 one-day CRN workshop or a free copy of every 1995 CRN publication. The survey will help us to improve CRN News and the results will be published next issue. Tear off the form, fold and send to the address on the reverse of this page. Thanks for your help.

Please tick the boxes:

1. How would you describe your interest(s) in countryside recreation?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Active participation | <input type="checkbox"/> Research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation/environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Consultancy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Countryside management | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | Other (please specify) _____ |

2. How much of CRN News do you normally read? (Assuming that those who bin it straight away have not read this far!)

- Flick through for one or two articles of interest
 Less than half CRN News
 Most of CRN News

3. What sort of article do you/would you find of interest?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sport/recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Countryside management | <input type="checkbox"/> Diary of training and events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> News of research | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature reviews |
| <input type="checkbox"/> News of others' projects | Other (please specify) _____ |

4. Do you find the articles

- Too detailed
 A good mix
 Too superficial

5. How has CRN helped your work/interests? Through

- Reading CRN News
 Following up contacts in CRN News
 Attending workshops/conferences
 Reading CRN publications
 Obtaining information directly from the Network Manager

6. For which sort of organisation do you work?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local authority | <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary organisation, Trust or Charity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private practice | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government department or agency | Other (please specify) _____ |

7. What things about CRN News do you think are particularly poor or particularly good?

particularly poor

particularly good