Today's Thinking for Tomorrow's Countryside

Recent advances in countryside recreation management

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Countryside Recreation Network

A UK-wide Network, CRN gives easy access to information and people concerned with countryside and related recreation matters. 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.

CRN is committed to exchanging and spreading information to develop best policy and practice in countryside recreation.

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Welcome & Introduction

Richard Broadhurst
Chair, Countryside Recreation Network & Senior Adviser,
Recreation, Access and Community, Forestry Commission

Welcome...to the Network! The Countryside Recreation Network is a UK wide Network of the principal agencies (31 at the last count) involved in countryside and related recreation matters. We take a very broad view of what constitutes countryside – 'environment' really; and a correspondingly wide definition of recreation. What is sheer fun and pleasure to some will be education and learning to others, and of course it can be all these things. As a Network we are committed to exchanging and spreading information to develop best policy and practice in countryside recreation. This conference plays a part in spreading the word. We have certainly amassed a good deal of the latest and brightest thinking in relation to countryside and related recreation matters. We will spread this thinking through this meeting and through the publication of the conference report. Working through meetings – of CRN agency reps, open workshops and conferences – is a major way of encouraging the spread and the birth of good ideas. We augment this way of working by exchanging information through publications – conference and workshop reports, the UK Day Visits Survey report, Research Directory and of course the Countryside Recreation Network News. In keeping with the conference theme we are developing use of electronic means of communication, including the establishment of home pages on the Internet [http://sosig.ac.uk/crn/]. We have to continually reassess what the major issues are and how our tomorrows are likely to present challenges for us to overcome and opportunities for us to seize. Armed with the thinking reflected between these covers we should be better prepared. But to keep in date (and to keep everybody else up to date), keep networking and making use of CRN; whether through publications – paper or electronic, and through meetings, workshops and conferences or by lifting the phone.

Today's Thinking

Ian Mercer
Chief Executive
Countryside Council for Wales

Three sets of influences seem to me to be most important in conditioning today's thinking about tomorrow's countryside:

- past experience and traditions,
- popular culture (as expressed in socio-political life),
- a few visionaries/space pundits.

Past Experience and Tradition

British people's attitudes to the countryside are fundamental, conservative and steeped in tradition. This suggests that any enduring changes will be slow to develop. We have a very nostalgic attitude to our countryside and frequently use shock tactics to defend 'romantic' images of it (CF Peter Kennard's "The Haywain", Constable (1821), Cruise Missiles USA (1983)).

Our most 'prized' countryside today is a product of mid-eighteenth century thinking about what was sublime, beautiful and picturesque in landscape. Shusterman, in his essay on 18th century aesthetics, describes that thinking as "the collective tyranny of educated burghers" (Shusterman, 1993). The burghers' motives were to make money. They did so by first buying into and then marketing a product "A Dream of England" – a countryside managed in a particular way for the sensory pleasure of tourists.

That dream captured the popular imagination. Since the second world war gaining access to our countryside has become a reality for more and more people. However, for most of us any ambition to own a 'place in the country' might be satisfied by a time-share (at best) or a miniature estate on Snowdon for £20!

The celebration of the centenary of the National Trust this year is testament to the skill of the 'traditionalists' in sustaining popular interest in a particular type of countryside. Although well organised politically, do the 'traditionalists' command a clout which is disproportionate to their numbers? Carolyn Harrison in her typology of countryside users has called this group the 'aesthetes'. They go back a long way. Their thinking is enshrined in legislation which conditions the way the countryside is planned and managed. Legal rights (e.g. PRoW) and customs will be staunchly defended by this group. This makes it difficult to instigate change quickly. However it has also ensured a continuum of tradition and custom, which for many, epitomises the English countryside.

Popular Culture

Popular culture is characteristically short-lived yet with mass appeal. Public interest in the countryside in recent years has been popularised through TV and, to a lesser extent, radio. Wildlife programmes such as *Life on Earth* have been among the most popular television series of the last decade making household names of their 'star' presenters, e.g. David Bellamy and David Attenborough. In recent years the focus of 'popular' interest in environmental matters has shifted away from the countryside (locally) to a greater concern and interest in global issues such as nuclear waste, the ozone layer and global warming. A survey of politician's views published in Country Life (25.v.95) revealed that conventional wisdom about party allegiances to traditional countryside issues were changing. Labour MPs, recognising that the rural vote – a fifth of the population – could swing the next election are now out to woo newcomers to the countryside. The Tories are also now far less interested in defending traditional country pursuits such as shooting and hunting in the wake of high profile campaigns against such activities.

There remain some problematic issues on which the parties are divided and which could prove to be the Achilles heel in marginal rural constituencies. Top of the list is public access. 74% of Tories were of the view that the level of public access to the countryside, in the form of footpaths, is about right. 81% of Labour MPs however believe there should be more public access. A 'Right to Roam' has been promised – the Minister of Agriculture responded that it would be a 'Right to Ruin' replacing co-operation in the countryside with conflict.

With an estimated 300 people a week moving out of towns, the countryside is set to become the stage for more political debate in future years. Rural white papers for England, Scotland and latterly Wales are testament to that effect.

Despite this awakened political interest in the countryside in recent months, there remains some doubt that it will lead to the fundamental commitment to a more biodiverse and sustainable environment. Not many of the rank and file of either of the main parties shows much interest in wildlife conservation as an issue. Public sympathy with environmental conservation appears equally benign, given people's apparent reluctance to give up their private motor vehicles in favour of public transport.

Today's political thinking is fraught with pitfalls. The fact that the views of country people are as varied as those in towns suggest that many issues will be fudged and policies ephemeral. Do anti-road protesters really outnumber the villagers desperate for a bypass? Do voting animal welfarists really outnumber farmers? Do they even outnumber field sportsmen?

Visionaries and Pundits

In years to come we may hopefully reflect on Schumacher's seminal work *Small is Beautiful* as the milestone which heralded the fifth wave to break over our countryside. The advantages of city living that seduced our

ancestors to shift from the countryside is fast fading. Counter-urbanisation is the norm throughout most of Western Europe and North America.

We need a new way of looking (literally and figuratively) at rural society if we are to perceive the changes already in train. The equation, the countryside = farming = food production is no longer relevant since Britain is no longer entirely, or even predominantly, an agrarian society. The equation was an oversimplification in the 1950s and 60s yet it has continued to help to define the purpose of a number of different groups – and functions – including, until very recently, our development planning policy. In his *Vision of the Countryside* [1] (1990) Professor Howard Newby concluded that "most elements of strategic planning are to all intents and purposes a dead letter".

Planning policies, it has been suggested, have if anything exacerbated the degree of social polarisation. Idyllic sentiment in public perception which sees the countryside in terms of landscapes and wildlife habitats, but rarely as a set of working communities, serves only to widen the degree of social polarisation evident throughout rural Britain. It is for this reason that today's thinking is shifting to support the case for contracting out to private landowners and farmers, certain public goods – environmental services and the provision of rural amenity – which cannot reasonably be expected to be produced in the public sector and for which no effective markets presently exist.

This is where our Welsh contribution to 'Today's Thinking' is relevant.

We published *Threshold 21* in January 1993[2]. In this, our perceptions relevant to today's discussion were:

- **landscape conservation**

  Completion of the designation strategy for landscape while reviewing the refinement and simplification of the whole protection suite; convergence of agri-environment support systems and experiment to that end; pursuit of protected status for the whole coast; and set about the protection of historic landscapes.

- **wildlife conservation**

  Reviewing the SSSI catalogue; NNRs place in it; capability to cope with it; deadline for securing management of all sites; deal with the overlap of designations, partly through delegation of management; reapply 'Area' to 'Special Scientific' and change 'Interest' to 'Importance'; vastly increase LNR family.

- **recreation**

  Obligations for landscape quality, remedying damage and to the peaceable enjoyment of the local environment by its residents; reduction of conflict within recreation; separation of the highway network

[1] Paper to RSA conference 1990, *A Brief for the Countryside in the 21st Century*

denied to motorised vehicles in administrative and budgetary terms; parliamentary time limit for the achievement of a % area cover of upland access with enclaves in time and space; simplification of legal modification of path network; enable extension of horse riding opportunity; seek creation of national Access Authority; define the network of optimum access – Wales Optimum Comprehensive Access Network (WOCAN) and publish it all by 1999.

There were more propositions about environmental education; partnerships; elimination of administration, executive and regulatory duplication in the countryside; re-organising the Welsh Office; experimenting with the whole caboodle in the space where the Cambrian Mountains National Park was proposed and the Cambrian Mountains ESA now is, and where three very large SSSIs currently sit - Plimlimon, Henydd and Mynnydd Mallaen.

Many of these propositions are being pushed – some have been completed. Others were misinterpreted by a vociferous few of the 200 consultees, and to that extent throttled at birth – notably those about access.

But look at Tir Cymen. There is no doubt that a Tir Cymen formula (closely paralleled already by the latest ESA formulae) – and in neither a TC area nor in an ESA may a farmer benefit from any other agri-environment support – could absorb all other agri-environment schemes AND all other management and access agreement systems. It is already shown to be cheaper to administer than any other. Given the appropriate area/staff relationships, those staff already in place could run an extending scheme eventually throughout Wales. If Snowdonia NP can do it then any local authority can, provided it either recruits the extra skills or does a deal with someone who has them not too far away.

All this to illustrate that we must invest more, <u>not</u> less, resources in rural communities to deliver the sustainable countryside we need. We must have faith in the ability and goodwill of communities to deliver these environmental goods. We must <u>encourage</u> them to do so, <u>not</u> enlist more rigorous local controls (as advocated in CPRE's report *Challenges and Conflicts in the English Countryside: Leisure Landscapes*).

The plethora of countryside designations (and their attendant checks, controls and subsidies) have done little to halt the gradual decline in environmental quality (landscape and biodiversity) in post war Britain. They have often proved divisive by encouraging NIMBYism and militating against new initiatives which all too often have been strangled at birth by conventional planning policy and entrenched local attitudes.

There must be economic purposes in the countryside for those (primarily) who live in it. Information technology provides wonderful opportunities for the diversification of employment opportunity in rural areas. More and more people with the opportunity to use IT to conduct their business at home are choosing to do so. They are adopting simpler lifestyles which are more sustainable on the mind, body and purse! Further

[2] *Threshold 21*, Countryside Commission, 1993

developments in IT and local energy production will give individuals more choice in where they live – counter urbanisation seems set to continue. The prospect of more people living in the countryside is not as daunting as it might seem (to CPRE for instance). Take Meirioneth, for example – one of the most scenic and diverse districts in Wales had 36,000 people living in it in 1831 and only 26,000 in 1981, yet it was most certainly more ecologically and visually diverse a century ago than it is today. The reason for this is that people then lived far more frugally and in harmony with their surroundings, they were more dependent on the land for their livelihoods and managed it more carefully and in more varied ways thereby sustaining more wildlife and people. We need to encourage more people back into our countryside. Those who return to the 'land' must be conceived of as environmental managers. This demands that conservation agencies come out of their bunkers and amalgamate their efforts to provide a devolved structure of conservation policy relating as closely as possible to those who use and manage land.

This scenario must surely be the vision of today's countryside managers for tomorrow's countryside.

Tomorrow's Countryside

Terry Robinson
Head of Recreation & Access
Countryside Commission

As an enrichment to life, the future of the countryside may be more clearly predicted in terms of people's expectations rather than the condition of the land itself. Though people often resort to and enjoy the countryside in groups, they relate to it on an individual and personal basis. Their feelings and values for the countryside are often held with great conviction and passion. So social issues are central to this presentation rather than geographical ones.

Predictions for the future

Development and society

The richer population predicted will want higher standards in their quality of life. One expression of that will be greater and more diverse demands on the countryside, both for its development and for leisure activities. A greater division between the style of life of those who have plenty of disposable money and those who have to watch every penny will be exemplified in a division between those in regular work and those not. The increased proportion of the population who are middle-aged or elderly may be expected to value the countryside for its quiet enjoyment. It is hard to predict whether they will necessarily demand easier forms of access but we can anticipate a greater contrast between the life patterns of those in different age brackets. We may expect a continuing enrichment in the ethnic and cultural mix of the population. The perceived boundary between town and country will continue to alter.

Development pressures will continue, including greater demand for houses, shops and roads. Many people aspire to a home in the countryside and this will go on feeding the migration of people to live there. Such pressure will continue to be focussed on the great crescent of development in the South East of England, stretching from East Anglia down to the mid-point of the South Coast. There may even be an in intensification in the perceived divide between the North of Britain and the South-East.

Economic growth will deliver higher expectations of environmental standards and greater willingness to pay for them. At the same time, technological developments, including those won through the continuing revolution in information technology will deliver the means to make development itself more in harmony with the natural

environment. Taken together these will force us to revise our concepts of what activity is acceptable in the countryside.

Professor Philip Lowe postulates a division into four different socially defined categories of countryside[1] :

- **the preserved countryside**
  where the middle class can impose a strong preservation-based ethic to the local environment;

- **the contested countryside**
  where family farmers and development interests tend to be in the ascendent against those of the 'new breed' who wish things not to change;

- **the paternalistic countryside**
  dominated by large estates and farms and shaped by the requirements and decisions of these large landowners;

- **the clientelistic countryside**
  which is much more remote and where state subsidies are instrumental in keeping some form of status quo.

The future for leisure

Our leisure expectations will change, the differentiation between work and leisure will alter and the way we enjoy leisure will continue to evolve. In a notoriously fickle area like leisure, it is imprudent to predict the next craze but we might hazard some possible trends: continuation in the current trend for growth in active recreational pursuits in the countryside; more activities which seek exclusive use of areas and less sharing, e.g. golf; and in line with this, people seeking greater privacy.

People will grow more pre-occupied with their health, which will become a stronger reason for the demand for active recreation in the countryside.

Pressures on the countryside

We will need to attend to different threats to the countryside. Agriculture may become less of an issue for sustainability; a more active economy may well make other industries more threatening; the whole issue of

[1] Derived from Philip Lowe's work for the Countryside Commission's new corporate strategy in 1995.

transport and mobility, especially personal mobility will be prominent; traffic growth is predicted to go up before it goes down and that the growth will be higher in rural areas;

What our predictions foretell

Survivors in this developing scene will be those who can innovate and move with the times.

The stability of former decades will not return either for rural communities or for those who work on the land. A shrinking agricultural workforce, compensated to some extent by the growth of specialist contractors will continue to be a feature. In this circumstance, there will be a growing role for volunteers or part-time workers to take on more of the tasks associated with maintaining the fabric of the countryside landscape.

The role of government and the commercial sector and expectations of who does what will have to go on evolving.

Possible changes in the political context may well see the regional dimension of policy and programmes growing, a move away from centralisation and a growth in local determinism and freedom of action for local government. In the first place this will be seen as a move towards devolution but the underlying ethos may well make bigger inroads into our expectations of government. The continuing trend for government to mature in its role as an enabler and depart from its role as a direct provider will continue.

The relations of this Country with Europe will have to be resolved at some stage: in its train will come an alteration in our relationship with the rest of the World. Should the resolution of our relationship with the rest of Europe result in closer ties, we may expect the European Union to extend its influence on the countryside beyond purely that exercised through the Common Agricultural Policy. Ever hopeful, we may wish to predict that there will be new sources of funds for us to tap.

It is hard to predict what climate change will take place and what it will cause in the countryside. Current predictions are well documented, with a warmer and wetter environment growing more Mediterranean-type crops with greater environmental and pest hazards and irksome wildlife features, such as insect populations that may well act as disincentives to enjoyment of the countryside. The heat itself may well be something which gradually grows in intensity to make current ways of enjoying the countryside more difficult.

The overall effect of these changes will be that people will seek more and more choice, although this may, in turn lead to its own backlash against too much choice.

What people want

Repeated surveys of what people seek from the countryside give us constant demonstrations that people look to the countryside as a source of peace, solace, open air, relief from tension and a place where they can perceive and enjoy beauty on their own terms. We value the effect of being in open, natural surroundings in terms of the respite it gives us to the strain of living in a competitive goal-orientated society. We look to the countryside to counter our worry, to soothe our disappointment and to remind us of the sense of 'basic' proportion that reconciles us to life's frustrations and to the inescapable fact that each one of us has one day to die.

Coming from an urban-based society, we value it as a place different from where most of us live, in towns and cities. A trip to the country or a reminder of its existence gives us contact with another way of life and provides us with experience different from our own. In a society where the acceleration in the rate of change over the last 100-150 years has been astounding and change itself is now the one thing we can surely predict, is it any wonder that we turn to the countryside in the hope that it will deliver some mainstay of stability, a link with our forbears and their apparent stability ? In the absence of just about anything else that we can rely on as a ground base of unchanging true value, should we be surprised that we look to the countryside to act as an anchor both for our ability to appreciate ourselves and each other ?

We look to the countryside for the rhythms it plays to us; through the seasons, the tides, change in weather patterns and through the slow pace of change that Man brings about on it. We also enjoy and treasure the enormous variety to be found in the countryside. An important key to the attractiveness of the British countryside lies in its lack of homogeneity. It is not bland and there is delight in local distinctiveness, in local idiosyncrasies and the sure expectation that a few miles down the road or even a short distance down the footpath, the whole scene is going to change.

The space available to us in the countryside means we can, in relative safety walk long distances, organise large group games or other physical activity, ride bikes and horses and operate sophisticated equipment like hang-gliders or four-wheel drive vehicles, none of which are practical or attractive in more confined circumstances. We all feel, probably with plenty of justification, a deep-seated need for healthy exercise in the open air that is most readily available to us in the open countryside. Because it embodies qualities that help people drop their guard and put aside their anxieties and attitudes, the countryside is associated for many of us with qualities that help us to relax. It has connotations of affability, even rural jollity, that make it an important place to engage in informal social activity.

Finally we have to recognise the complex relationship through which a high quality landscape clearly does deliver higher quality of some types of enjoyment, experiences that are cherished by many people. For this reason, we devote special care to areas of countryside with special types of landform and landscape, rich wildlife and picturesque settlement and farming patterns. But we have to recognise, as a counter-balance to this, that all the countryside has a role as a place of enjoyment. We must continue to attend to recreation everywhere in the

countryside, not just in the areas of high landscape quality. Just about every bit of the countryside is special to somebody.

The sum of all this is that we must expect to manage the countryside for its own sake and its own distinctiveness. Seeking to preserve this variety should lead us towards an approach which gives as much involvement as possible to communities and interest groups and letting them have a share and a say in the management of the countryside.

In order to provide for these needs we have to manage the countryside so that it remains:

- beautiful
- accessible
- ecologically healthy
- diverse
- economically thriving
- populated

Threats to the countryside

The most obvious threats are:

1. The loss of local and regional diversity both of natural and man-made features in the countryside, caused by more system building, more bulk manufacture and bulk buying and more reliance on stock solutions to common problems, all leading to:

   - suburbanisation of the countryside;

   - fossilisation of the landscape;

   - lack of sensitivity;

2. A growing disconnection between a largely urban population and the countryside;

3. A perception that strengthening the rural economy will necessarily be at the expense of environmental concerns; until the interdependence of development and environment is properly understood, we must expect there to be continued calls for the relaxation of controls in development in the countryside from those who want to enhance the rural economy;

4. A concern that countryside recreation itself threatens the qualities of the countryside;

5. The erosion of ready access to the countryside and with it pressure for commercialisation of the countryside looking to establish access on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Opportunities for the countryside

The important opportunities we need to attend to are:

- a population more aware of environmental issues, although not always necessarily more informed about the countryside;

- growing awareness of and sympathy for environmental, if not always countryside issues;

- widespread support for the importance of local community involvement;

- a continuing commitment from Government to the environment through campaigns such as those emanating from the Rio Conference on sustainability;

- the linking of environmental and economic concerns through the concept of sustainable development including, in the particular area of leisure, the greening of tourism;

- a growing awareness in the rural population of the benefits of diversification, e.g. with farming families involved in a range of enterprises;

- the realisation of the importance of environmental quality in attracting economic prosperity. An important manifestation of this will be the environmental dividend delivered when prosperous businesses are attracted into well cared-for areas and add to local prosperity;

- a growing interest in the efficiency of market mechanisms to secure conservation action, for instance, through environmental incentives and through the encouragement of local products of high quality.

Nine big issues

Issue 1: The Sustainable Principle

We must espouse and promote leisure activity in the countryside that can be provided so as to ensure the continued biodiversity and scenic quality of the countryside, at local as well as national level. Recreation activities and leisure enterprises need to fit in comfortably with the wide spectrum of other commercial and leisure activity in the countryside, such as farming and forestry.

We must also ensure that leisure and recreation activities in the countryside maintain the capability to sustain themselves. An example is the work to ensure the whole rights of way network is kept in good heart.

Issue 2: Enjoying Open Spaces

For many people, enjoyment of the countryside means an ability to wander in open spaces. With relaxation and recuperation highly valued aspects of the countryside, people need to feel a confidence to explore the countryside beyond the rights of way network, as has been traditional in many tracts of countryside. It may, however become more difficult as the stake of other users of the countryside, farmers, sportsmen, golfers or proprietors of extensive tourist facilities grows. Exploration of the scope for improving the confidence with which people can enjoy access to unenclosed and other types of country may lead, if appropriate and acceptable to:

- greater clarity of people's freedoms and responsibilities
- legislation, if necessary;
- establishment of a body of 'parish wardens' or other agents to manage such access;
- elements in land management support schemes.

As the activities of commerce, roads and the utilities make stronger claims to exclusive use of the countryside, we must address changing attitudes and the need to accommodate as broad a field of interest as possible. We should aim to ensure the countryside can be enjoyed to the full without derogating the interests of anyone who has a reasonable stake. Activities must be planned and managed in a way that does not detract from sustainable management of the countryside. This must include enhanced expertise in managing potentially competing recreational activities to fit in with each other without conflict. Managers of the countryside, most of whom themselves love and enjoy the place have to grasp the nettle of whether they are prepared to lead unpopular campaigns to reduce consumption of resources.

Issue 3: Controlling Transport and Travel; Making Local Provision

Our latest estimates are that those going into the countryside for quiet enjoyment, such as walking or picnicking account for something like 7% of the total of countryside traffic. More intensive leisure activities and tourism activity do, however generate traffic in greater amounts. Also, a notable proportion of visitors to the countryside derive their enjoyment from driving around it in the car: for some it is the only way they can enjoy it. We shall have to persevere with measures to expand the use of country railways and other public transport and shuttle services and to introduce road traffic management, despite disappointments and setbacks. But these measures will not be sustainable or worthwhile unless they themselves are part of a much higher and mightier exercise to tackle traffic in our society overall. In the absence of this, traffic management solely in relation to leisure in the countryside will amount to no more than a rather futile exercise in self denial.

For many reasons, there is growing interest in moving the focus to opportunities to enjoy the countryside close to where people live. Encouraging local pride, community involvement, reduction of travel, protection of open space all bear on this. It will, however remain important to maintain policies about recreation and access in more remote areas. People will still want to go to them.

Issue 4: Sharing the Benefits of Visitors

Recreation and tourism in the countryside will continue to grow and can be welcomed, so long as the resources are there properly to manage them. We must find ways for the rural population at large to cash in on the economic benefits that visitors bring. Broadening the constituency in this way is, in itself justified purely on grounds of greater equity but will also help to sustain visitation to the countryside because the benefits will be better shared. There is scope for continued innovation, including:

- drawing a broader range of recreation providers, especially private operators into the provision of countryside recreation;

- schemes either voluntary or through some kind of 'tourist tax' to re-circulate a proportion of tourism income into the local economy;

- focussing on local products and local experiences as part of a visitor's experience; for instance, providing local goods for sale and high quality interpretation of a locality. These could all, in their own way help to enhance visitor income.

Issue 5: Funding

We need to look for additional sources of funding. Government over the coming 10 years has little prospect of being able to make available greatly increased funding for the programmes those managing the countryside

regard as important. We must, therefore be assiduous in devising realistic bids for government funds. Alongside this, we must become much more adept and informed operators of other funding systems, such as those attached to the European Union, the National Lottery and commercial sponsorship.

Issue 6: The Balance Between Managing and Planning the Countryside

We must keep under review the balance of reliance between, on the one hand, static mechanisms to control and govern development and use of the countryside, such as the planning system and the statutory framework of controls and laws and, on the other hand, more flexible means, probably more attuned to local delivery. We have developed the use of local deals and concordats and locally based management schemes using people on the ground able to disperse public money in small amounts. Decisions to resolve differing interests are often best made locally and we should trade on this. The countryside itself is dynamic and the attitudes of those with an interest in it unpredictable. Human-based approaches to taking countryside decisions must have a place alongside the more structural mechanisms.

Issue 7: Being Professional

We must adopt a level of professionalism in the way we manage countryside recreation similar to that now standard in other fields of leisure. The quality of planning and provision of facilities and of customer care in some private leisure companies and tourism enterprises now set very high standards. In few cases is this matched in the countryside: the tradition is to adopt a rather amateur approach, characterised by visitors sometimes made to feel they are imposing on the time of the manager, who has more important wildlife to attend to or has important jobs to be doing propping up the landscape. There are links that can be made with other branches of the leisure profession and we need urgently to build on them.

Issue 8: Attracting the Distant and Timid

We have to consider whether to continue with efforts concentrated on a substantial portion of the population, many of them city-bound and hard up against urban deprivation and low quality of life. If the countryside is of value, there is some imperative to see that those in need of peace, access to open space and reduction of stress have a realistic opportunity to enjoy this. This does not mean that we have to corral people into the countryside 'for their own good': plenty do not go to the countryside out of choice.

We have one particular contemporary problem, namely the fear of crime, especially personal attack, a fear especially evident among children and women. People in their middle and late years are remarkably consistent when given an open choice in remembering their ability to enjoy the countryside in freedom of fear. In only two generations, it appears that we now have a substantial proportion of people who are frightened to go out into the countryside on their own. The fear of personal attack by another person and of injury to children from the

increased traffic have to be counted as significant obstacles to the ability of people to explore the countryside. People now in their maturing years remember the countryside as one of the most important areas in which they started to grow up in an unthreatening environment. If we have lost this, we have lost something very precious indeed.

Issue 9: Education

In all this is to work we have also to ensure that efforts continue to educate people about the countryside so that they can understand how it works and be effective protagonists for its future. People who know and understand the countryside well will be more effective defenders of it but will also be well-equipped to enjoy it to the full.

Landscapes for Tomorrow: An experiment in participatory, issue-based interpretation

Christopher Wood
Information Services Officer
Yorkshire Dales National Park

Countryside interpretation in the UK tends to be a static and passive exercise. The emphasis has been on explaining features or events, rather than addressing issues. Displays are fixed and the visiting public are expected to read and absorb. What they think and how they react to the images and messages provided, particularly if choices are involved, remains largely unexplored.

This study, set in the protected landscape of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, sought to produce a participatory exercise in landscape interpretation where images of possible landscape futures, based on informed opinion, were presented to the viewing public. The aim was to generate interest, understanding and concern over landscape choices for tomorrow. The study consisted of three phases. The first involved extensive interviews with policy managers and practitioners as to how they visualised possible changes in land management over the next twenty years as a result of plausible policy measures. The second phase consisted of a trial exhibition which was evaluated by means of a questionnaire. The final phase comprised a revised exhibition where most of the lessons learnt from the trial phase were put into effect. That phase too was evaluated by means of a questionnaire.

The travelling exhibitions of autumn 1989 and high summer 1990 were visited by nearly 15,000 people. The exhibitions contained visual displays of how landscapes in the Yorkshire Dales had altered in the past, together with pictorial images of seven possible future landscapes. Based upon the same view of a fictitious dale, the landscape showed how the countryside might look according to different, but equally plausible, changes in agriculture, and regional economic and landscape planning policy over the next generation. The paintings were created from interviews conducted with policy managers and local farmers and landowners, and were endorsed by consultees as reasonable representations of possible future conditions. In addition, the exhibitions consisted of a professionally made video, providing a more dynamic representation of landscape change, plus a large floor game where participants could "travel" through a sequence of landscape decision points to build up their own preferred image.

The aims of the research were to assess the extent to which an innovative package of interpretative experiences could stimulate the public to travel along a pathway that embraced four objectives:

1. to develop understanding by informing;
2. to increase awareness by linking information to individual feelings about future landscapes;
3. to generate concern for the protection, enhancement and recreation of Dales landscapes;
4. to stimulate a desire to become involved in landscape planning.

The project was exploratory only, designed solely to test techniques and approaches. It was not created as a deliberate exercise in participatory planning.

The manufacture of the interpretative presentation was completed in August 1989. It was then tested at eleven different venues in the Dales between late August and early December, that year. One important aim was to find out what visitors to the exhibition felt about the interpretative experience, particularly whether or not the exhibit met its design aims. The evaluation consisted of self-completion and interviewee-completed versions of the questionnaire, with 152 completed questionnaires being suitable for analysis. This trial stage showed that the broad aims of the research were met. Even though 50% claimed to be very concerned for the future of the Dales landscape, over 53.4% felt that they had become even more concerned as a result of visiting the exhibition, and half felt that the exhibition had "very much" met its aims of creating understanding and stimulating awareness.

The trial phase showed up a number of problems in both the design and content of the exhibition and the evaluation methodology. It was necessary to ensure that a randomly selected sample recorded their views to an interviewer. This was required to guarantee both a fully completed questionnaire and a representative sample. Whilst the 1989 exhibition was not designed to solicit preferred landscape choices, the public were eager to voice an opinion. It was agreed that in any future phase the public would be allowed a vote, but in order to do so, it would be necessary to avoid bias by neutralising the language and the titles of the landscape paintings. Furthermore, it was regarded as desirable to place some indication of costs to the public and private purse arising from each of the landscape options. The exhibition was therefore carefully revised for the 1990 field tour.

A total of 352 interviews were completed during the second tour which visited seven different villages. There is evidence of some self-selection by exhibition visitors in the survey, seemingly because only those genuinely interested will come to an exhibition of this sort. The results from the second tour revealed that 65% visited the exhibition purely because they were passing by at the time, and another 24% were attracted by a poster or roadside sign. Few came to a particular village intentionally to see the exhibit. Though the sample of visitors was heavily skewed towards the ABC grouping (63%), this is not atypical for the national park visiting sample (56% from previous visitor surveys).

The results from this second survey were even more encouraging. Over two out of five (44%) felt the exhibition met its aims "a lot" and nearly half felt it had done so "a very reasonable amount" (47%). Over three-fifths thought it was very thought-provoking and interesting. On the four central themes of awareness, understanding, concern and commitment, the effect of the exhibition was startling. Table 1 sums up the results.

Table 1: Influence of exhibition on participants

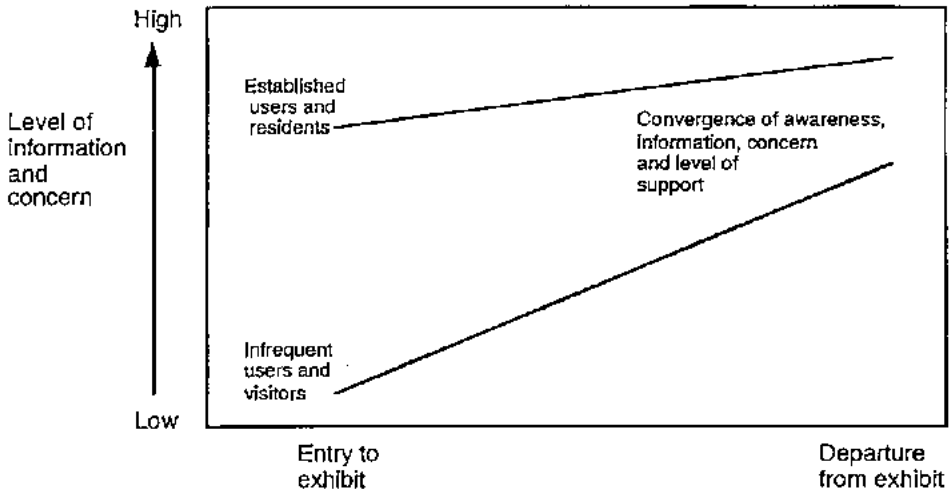
	a lot		a reasonable amount		a little		not at all	
	before	after	before	after	before	after	before	after
Awareness	16.1	58.7	29.7	36.8	37.0	3.2	18.3	1.6
Understanding	10.2	51.7	28.0	40.9	41.2	6.1	20.5	1.1
Concern	35.2	62.1	27.0	27.0	23.5	2.9	9.0	1.4
Desire to influence outcome	23.4	49.2	24.6	36.4	26.1	12.1	25.8	2.0

The research showed that imaging landscape futures or, indeed, offering and explaining options on any countryside management issue, is a powerful use of interpretative method. The experiment demonstrated that good presentation can create a convergence in the public understanding of an issue. While awareness and concern of all participants to the exhibition appear to have been heightened, as would be expected, those formerly less aware and concerned were influenced more significantly than those, such as local residents, who already had a high level of awareness and concern. Thus, not only was a new plateau of awareness and concern achieved, but the gap between the formerly knowledgeable and less knowledgeable was significantly reduced. The greatest achievement of the experiment was that many participants felt that the experience of the exhibition now made them better equipped, confident and motivated to influence future planning/management decisions concerning Dales landscapes of the twenty first century.

The project not only achieved its aims, it also reinforced the theory that fun interpretation can be educative and revealing. In the space of 40 minutes, participants received a profoundly rich sequence of messages and perspectives that would not have occurred with a passive graphic display. Admittedly the staying power of the experience may be limited, but the study does suggest that there is a genuine interest in landscape futures amongst an articulate minority in Britain, and that techniques such as this can be used to stimulate, to inform and to excite a sense of political participation in environmental futures. There is no reason in principle why this approach could not integrate more fully with attempts to explore the management options facing any countryside issue, or land use choice. Figure 2 shows how the research pushed back the boundaries of interpretative method, while Figure 3 illustrates the possible ways forward for resource management agencies, such as the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It should be possible to apply this approach to a great variety of themes, such as the layout of new, multi-purpose woodlands, windfarms and restoration schemes for derelict

land and used quarries. The whole process could be made even more exciting for the public with the use of modern multi-media, interactive video and GIS technology.

Figure 1 : The Convergence Thesis



Information

- Those slightly informed prior to visiting exhibits became more informed *
- Those more informed by the exhibits were more stimulated by it **
- Those more informed by the exhibits were more worried about landscape futures **
- Those slightly concerned prior to visiting the exhibits were more informed **

Concern

- Those slightly concerned prior to visiting the exhibits were more concerned by it ***
- Those slightly worried prior to visiting the exhibits were more worried by it ***

* 90% significance **95% significance ***99% significance

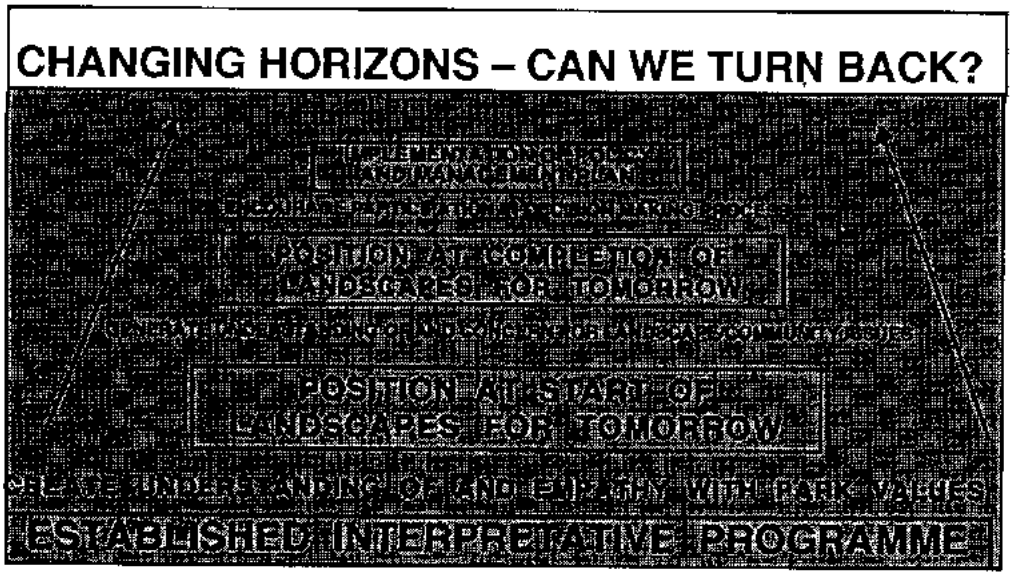
The convergence thesis is based on discovery that participants who by their own admission, were not so aware or concerned about the future of Dales landscapes, seemed to "move" along a pathway towards greater awareness and concern much more in relative terms than those who entered the exhibition substantially more aware and involved. This suggests that the exhibition was a deeply enriching and educational experience for participants who entered as curious and left alarmed.

The Landscapes for Tomorrow project began with modest expectations. Its success reveals that a well-designed interpretative approach can develop a sense of self-confidence in planners and participants alike, and that with specialist interpreters to hand, it is possible to extend and reinforce the socialisation aspects of choice-making.

The future of our environment is for all of us collectively to determine. Methods such as this must surely play their part.

Figure 2: The Landscapes for Tomorrow project has demonstrated an unrealised potential for the interpretative tool in resource management.

The true success of the project will be whether or not resource managers and planners will adopt the ideas introduced by this research and create an effective link between what the public wants and policy deliverance



Notes:

1. The research was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, and undertaken by the University of East Anglia, ESRC and the National Park Authority.

2. This paper represents a summary of the full Project Report, prepared by Prof. Tim O'Riordan of the University of East Anglia, Dr Chris Wood and Ann Shadrake of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. The report is available at a cost of £10 (incl. postage) from the Yorkshire Dales National Park, Hebden Road, Grassington, Nr. Skipton, N. Yorkshire BD23 5LB.

Achieving Sustainability in the Countryside: Social, Economic and Environmental

Roger Levett and Joan Bennett
Consultants, CAG

Few people would dispute that social, economic and environmental sustainability are all laudable objectives for the countryside, but many would contend that there is an inevitable conflict between the three objectives. In contrast, advocates of sustainable development maintain that all three objectives can be achieved. This is because sustainable development substitutes quality of life for traditional economic measures of welfare.

What does the policy goal of sustainability mean for the way we think about economic policy, for what we think economic development and progress are, and how we work towards them?

A popular definition of sustainable development is:

"Improving the quality of life within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems"

A lot of environmental attention, rightly, is on the 'carrying capacity' part of this. We will concentrate on the 'quality of life' part.

Local Agenda 21 and local government literature on sustainability say very emphatically that quality of life is not the same thing as standard of living. Growth does not necessarily mean more welfare. This implies that economic activity and growth should not be ends of policy in themselves, but only means to the end of quality of life. We should never assume that economic development is good – instead we should always ask whether, as a contingent fact, a particular development is going to make us better off.

The Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW), calculated in 1994 by Tim Jackson and Nick Marks, illustrates this. ISEW tries to make GNP closer to a measure of welfare by:

- Adding things GNP excludes: e.g. housework, services from roads;

- Subtracting things GNP includes: e.g. commuting, 'defensive' health and pollution control expenditure, car accidents, environmental damage and resource loss;

- Correcting for unequal distribution. (£1M brings less extra welfare to Lord Hanson than it would to 1000 homeless people.)

A total of 19 corrections are made to GNP. Nobody claims ISEW is complete or definitive. But most people find it nearer their idea of welfare than GNP.

ISEW rose (roughly with GNP) until the mid 1970s. Since then ISEW has dropped while GNP continues to rise. By 1990, ISEW was barely higher than in 1950, although GNP had more than doubled.

This leads to several points relevant to rural recreation. Human well-being has social, cultural, moral and spiritual dimensions as well as material. Development worthy of the name must seek to support all of these, not some at the expense of others.

Access to countryside for all sorts of activities and purposes is an important part of human well-being. We need to find ways of delivering this quality of life benefit without undermining / stultifying other aspects of sustainability.

CAG are currently helping the Countryside Commission tackle this as part of our sustainability appraisal of their strategy. We must emphasise that this is 'work in progress', and we are only going to tell you about our appraisal methodology, not about the Commission's strategy, because that is still in development.

First we try to crystallise some simple sustainability objectives in the context of the Commission's activities. These are used as a first 'sift' of the strategy – we ask whether each element will tend to support or conflict with each of these objectives. These are:

1. Reduce use of finite energy and other resources especially those nearing exhaustion.
2. Reduce emissions of non-degradable wastes, especially where appropriate containment capacity is exhausted (or nearly so).
3. Keep the impact of economic and social activities within environmental carrying capacities at all spatial scales.
4. Substitute use of renewable resources for non-renewable resources.

5. Maximise biological diversity at all spatial scales.
6. Avoid irreversible loss or damage to countryside assets which are naturally, aesthetically or culturally significant to current generations or may be for future ones.
7. Enhance the aesthetic and cultural quality and diversity of the countryside.
8. Increase people's opportunities to enjoy the countryside through a diversity of recreational pursuits.
9. Improve the quality of life by meeting peoples needs for amenities and services.
10. Encourage activities which provide rural people with a diversity of dignified and meaningful roles in economic and social life.
11. Maximise participation in decisions about, and implementation of, management of the countryside.
12. Improve opportunities for disadvantaged groups to meet their spectrum of needs, relative to more advantaged groups.

Each proposal in the draft strategy is assessed against the above criteria. Then for areas of potential conflict between these, we develop integrative sustainability objectives – more complex objectives that try to say how we can reconcile the simple ones.

Some examples relevant to recreation are:

Environmental 'carrying capacity' – too many visitors may damage the physical environment. Also recreational 'carrying capacity' – too many visitors may undermine the qualities they came for.

Part of management of rural recreation must therefore be reducing the need for people to go into the countryside, i.e. providing facilities closer to home. Another must be to reduce the environmental and quality impact of visitors.

So far most attention has been given to reducing the damaging impact of too many visitors, rather than reducing the visitors. An example of the former is the Peak Tourism Partnership Project.

The **Peak Tourism Partnership Project** is based in the Hope valley, straddling three villages in the Peak District mid-way between the conurbations of Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire. The project is one of several national pilot projects in response to the recommendations of the 1991 Government Task Force report *Maintaining the Balance.*

The valley faces two severe environmental pressures: visitor pressure especially at peak periods, predominantly by day trippers in cars, and heavy recreational use which causes erosion and damage to environmentally sensitive areas. The environmental pressures have lead to economic pressures. Much of the local tourist industry has been suffering a decline in income in recent years. This has been caused by both the recession and visitors becoming weary of the level of congestion in the valley.

A working group was established to oversee the preparation of a visitor management plan. The working group consists of representatives from the local community, the parish, district and county councils, local tourism businesses, user groups such as the Ramblers Association, the NFU and other public agencies which operate in the area. The plan sets out a strategy for, among other things: improved railway services into the area; traffic calming; park and ride schemes; promotion of more 'robust' areas for recreation uses; improving footpath maintenance and signing; raising income from visitors for conservation and visitor management projects.

We also need to rethink the kind of access provision:

- Making it easy for people who do not really want or need to go into the countryside is a mistake: keep its distinctiveness for those who actually want it.

- Equity of access for different groups is important. So do not ration by car ownership but by willingness to plan and take time.

Standard economic measures of rural economic activity are at best irrelevant and often positively misleading. For example:

- Money spent by visitors does not necessarily measure benefits. Indeed high levels of spend may indicate people doing things in the countryside that they could do just as well in town (and with less resource use), or damage (e.g. buying and using environmentally damaging equipment).

- Visitor numbers may be inversely proportional to the value of the experience. Thousands of people making a quick stop in the car park by some natural attraction may mean virtually nothing to them, but spoil it for the few who could have really appreciated it.

We need different ways to measure economic success. This means not relying on market (monetary) valuations of success. How do we know if what is happening in the countryside is improving quality of life (of residents and visitors)? The only way to find out is to ask them what matters to them.

CAG have recently been advising the Thames Region of the National Rivers Authority on possible performance measures. The NRA is under a duty to demonstrate value for money. Among other things, it has tried to identify measures which reflect improved public access to rivers and improved planting, landscaping and public facilities that have been achieved as planning gain from developments alongside rivers. However, the NRA has relied on expenditure on the enhancements as a measure of the value of the gains. This tells us nothing of the real value to local residents of gaining access to the river and the chance to take an evening stroll in a pleasant environment. The community's valuation of say, improved access, will depend on the number of people living locally, their access to other open space, the quality of the river at that point, etc. All of which will be unrelated to the cost of the works.

The danger for the NRA (or any other public body engaged in developing recreational facilities) is that expenditure based measures might indicate that the value of the benefits accruing from their work are outweighed by the costs, suggesting that their efforts are not worthwhile. We strongly recommend that any public body concerned with promoting public recreational facilities and wishing to demonstrate value for money, should monitor outcomes. Mostly these outcomes should be recorded in physical and quality of life terms.

Monetary values are generally to be avoided because there is no market and therefore no automatic monetary value for most environmental goods, e.g. provision of habitats, visual improvements, access to the river. Various techniques, usually based on asking a sample of individuals to place a value on an environmental good, have been developed to apply a monetary valuation. These can be criticised on the grounds that:

- The valuation of a 'public good' can not be measured by aggregating individual benefits.

- Individuals are not given the opportunity to deliberate with others on the consequences of their valuation.

- Intergenerational equity (i.e. giving people in the future the chance to enjoy at least the same quality environment as ourselves, and the basis of the concept of sustainable development) may be ignored by individual valuations, but is still a desirable public goal.

- The distribution of income is likely to have a significant impact on the results. (Equity within generations.)

- Most environmental goods are not substitutable for man-made or other environmental goods, e.g. a landscaped fish pond in the local park is no substitute for fish in the river, which itself is not a substitute for improvements in the visual appearance of the river. Therefore to reduce these different goods to a common monetary value is incorrect.

- Critical thresholds are ignored, e.g. individuals may be unaware that breaking a wildlife corridor for a few hundred yards could destroy the entire corridor.

The first step is therefore to involve those affected (e.g. local residents, other users, local firms and landowners) in a process of defining the parameters for measuring success and appraising performance.

But what about jobs? Recreation is often presented as the last hope of rural employment. Yes; but the relationships are more complex. Tourism and recreation jobs are only so important because productive rural jobs have declined because of mechanisation of farming etc., and rural service jobs have declined because so much of the custom (for shops, schools, post offices, banks) now drives to handy urban fringe sites. This is a

vicious circle: mechanisation and mobility. The rural population polarises into the rich car owners who have the best of all worlds at the expense of high fuel use and contributing to the unliveability of cities (and the next wave of migration out) and a new rural poor, whose livelihood and access to amenities are both under threat.

Reducing mobility and reducing the need for mobility come together.

This is a macro level problem. But what are the ways rural recreation should respond, i.e. how can you plan now to safeguard your own future activities?

It will be wise for the economic sustainability of rural recreation (in the narrow sense of safeguarding jobs) to anticipate the sorts of changes which environmental sustainability will dictate. Some concrete examples are:

Avoid investing in car access facilities: they will be white elephants, as well as damaging what you are seeking to preserve. Instead go for public transport and cycle access. In particular, look for rail corridors running from population centres and rural areas, and tap into them. (The Peak Tourism Partnership Project is trying to do just this.) The National Cycle Route Network has just received a boost of £42M Millennium Commission funding. The money will be used to survey and specify routes: they will go where other partners are prepared to contribute – so if you want to be part of the biggest shift in travel patterns since the motorways, goad your local authorities etc. into working with Sustrans.

Then think what slower, gentler, more thoughtful visitors want when they are there.

New Roles for Rangers?

Yvonne Hosker
Trainer
Training & Advice Service

This presentation consists of three main parts:

- Personal observations, opinions, experiences and anecdotes.
- Exploring issues around the roles of rangers from 1968 to 1995.
- A look ahead to trends and new opportunities.

In researching for this session I have spoken to many old friends, colleagues and key players in the ranger world. I have been looking for patterns, trends and neat comparisons and, to be honest, found very few hard and fast facts of the kind that make for strong conference speeches! Yet, I have been reminded of the enthusiasm, dedication and innovation of rangers and their approach to work.

Is there a difference in the type of person who works as a ranger?

A move from ex-army men who told people off, to social worker types? Rangers have always been people who work long hours for low pay and recognition because of a love of the job. Their qualifications may have changed eg. 60% of rangers in Scotland now have a degree.

How has their job changed?

From litter pickers to community workers? Some rangers are still basically estate workers whilst others have always concentrated on educational/interpretative work. So the variety has always been there. There is now a larger number of types of organisation that employ rangers. Was it only local authorities, National Parks and the National Trust in 1968?

Do we still need rangers?

Don't project officers, area managers, community liaison officers, local involvement officers, volunteer organisers, guided walks leaders, interpretative officers and so on do what rangers used to do? Of course, some do, but the strength of most rangers is that they fulfil most of the roles above.

Scotland v. England and Wales?

So what is the difference now between north and south of the border? At one time Scottish rangers would have said that they were part of a national service with a unified training programme and similar roles. Now there seems to be a move for England, Wales and Scotland to become more similar in the variety of roles that rangers have.

What does the future hold for rangering?

- A change in the client groups that rangers work with – equal access policies and all that.
- Positive use of performance indicators and output related funding.
- Computers are here to stay on rangers' desks.
- SVQs/NVQs could be good when applied at levels 3 and 4.
- At last rangers are starting to make it to senior positions in key organisations.
- A time to celebrate both the differences and strengths in ranger work.

Brave New World – Or What?

Robin Grove-White
Director, Centre for the Study of Environmental Change
Lancaster University

This has been a most interesting conference, full of good things. It has provided insights on a host of management issues and initiatives.

However, I am not a recreation manager. My background is in the politics of environment and the politics of environmental research. If there is one reality the conference has underlined for me, it is this: that, while leisure in the countryside is truly an issue whose time has come in Britain, we have yet to absorb the full implications of that fact, or to find ways of talking about it politically and socially in a way that does justice to its full contemporary significance.

I want to explore this contention a little – perhaps from an unfamiliar angle -- to suggest why it may be that, despite the unbounded significance for the population at large of what's at stake in what we currently call leisure or recreation issues, those issues are still misunderstood and undervalued politically and socially, and why it's now urgent that we should address them. Because unless we, the people who 'think' about or 'do' these things, get a more ambitious grip on them, it's hard to see how the full potential of leisure activity is going to be unlocked, and in particular how the inevitable associated problems and tensions (some of which Tony Robinson and others have referred to) are going to be addressed adequately. And it will be hard also for people like yourselves to get the scope and resources for initiating, which you know are necessary. So I'm focusing today on politics, rather than on management.

First, let me say where I'm coming from in these developments. The Research Centre of which I'm Director is a new type of entity within a university – seeking to explore in a number of arenas the depth and significance of environmental issues for modern cultures and politics with a view to advancing things ultimately in policy terms. We in the Centre are largely social scientists doing research, some of it pure research, some of it more applied, with bodies as different as the European Environment Agency, the Hadley Centre on Climate Change Research, DOE, the Cabinet Office, Lancashire County Council, Greenpeace and WWF. This work has brought us slap bang up against the need to try to understand some of the cultural transformations now affecting Britain and other western countries. Such transformations are, I think, highly relevant for understanding what's happening today in the leisure domain. Picture what I'm saying as embellishment of the picture of the possible future for leisure by Terry Robinson yesterday.

I'd just like to make three quick 'sociological' observations arising from this research. In the first place, it's now widely acknowledged amongst social scientists that over the past 2 or 3 decades people have been weakening their identification with institutions from which they formally took much of their sense of social identity – like political parties, churches, trade unions, even class identities. There is lots of survey evidence and literature on these trends. So we are all tending to float freer of these former associations, for better or worse. Society is more pluralised, more fragmented – and arguably part of the problem with Britain's current politics is that it hasn't caught up with the implications of these changing realities.

Second, such processes got a boost in the 1980s – given a particular twist by Conservative philosophy. A new individualism was consolidated. We'll all have our own views about the merits of this. There have been winners and losers. The associated cultural changes have tended to accelerate the processes of what we might call people's 'self–invention'. Some analysts refer to this as the growth of the significance of 'lifestyle' (though I dislike the term) – the idea that we build our sense of ourselves through all sorts of specific choices affecting how we choose to live – our clothes, how we live at home, the TV we watch, the music we like, what foods we eat – and crucially how we spend our time, particularly our disposable time.

You may say this isn't new. But the point is (think of your parents or grandparents), in the past , more of these choices were made for us, by custom, by inheritance, by social process, and by identification with class or job or religious affiliation.

And this leads to the third point. Over the past 20 or 30 years, as part of all this, as our personal identification with established institutions has weakened, so, at the margins (but increasingly), people have been coming together in new informal networks or associations. An obvious example: it's no coincidence that as environmentalism grew in the 1970s and 1980s, socialism of old kinds was declining. They were not interchangeable – but 'new social movements', like environmentalism are in part a creation of new shared arenas in which social action is seen as possible. My own experience in the environmental NGO movement of the 1970s had this element very strongly. It helps explain the striking growth in NGOs over the past 2 or 3 decades.

And how does this relate to leisure? In this way, I think. What people do with their time is increasingly a reflection of who they feel they are. What we call 'leisure time' is actually one of the key disposable resources in their lives, and frequently significant therefore in the meanings they give or find in their lives.

This echoes what Terry Robinson said yesterday about the passions unlocked by people's different commitments to the countryside and their 'leisure' use of it. More and more people are bound together in and identify with NGOs, or with informal recreational bodies, to protect the meanings and values we find in the countryside. And they do this because it matters. But increasingly the fact is, the meanings and values people find in the countryside are now immensely varied – and indeed may conflict one with another. Think of the differences between the isolated mountaineer or the group of motorcyclists on a green lane, or the very local historian, or

teams of canoeists, or groups of travellers at some roisterous rave, worshipping the rising sun. They're all engaged in collective activities of very different kinds in the countryside,with deep personal significance for their lives.

So I think what we're seeing, as a result of all these cultural and social changes that sociologists and political commentators are noticing, are significant and perhaps positive developments for many individuals and groups in late industrial society.

And the important implication of all this for the concerns of this conference is that the old idea of leisure and recreation as somehow a residual, as the trivial use of spare time ('what's your hobby?'), may no longer be adequate now. Of course, we are all day trippers from time to time. But beyond that, what happens in non-work time is a more significant source of meaning in people's lives in a time when we are more and more different from one another, but are sharing these differences with others who share them. And this reality has not yet found adequate expression in public policy.

I want to consider a couple of illustrative examples in a moment – particularly Glastonbury Festival. But first, let me say a word about the serious challenge that these new configurations are presenting to official agencies of the kind represented here and to NGOs, and indeed to the public domain generally.

If, as I'm saying, leisure and recreation issues have a mounting new significance for people and society, how well is that fact being reflected in the day to day makeup of the policy community?

Up till now, not well at all. It's striking that, despite their importance, recreation and leisure issues as they bear on the countryside remain the poor relations within public bodies and debates. I see this in the Forestry Commission, despite immense creative good work on the ground, and the crucial political significance of public recreational use for the Forestry Commission of their estate. The Commission's internal organisation is only now beginning to catch up with this significance (principally: no statutory duty, just ?). We're moving to address this: indeed I and colleagues present, confidently expect the Forestry Commission to consolidate its position as a leader in the field shortly. But it's striking that even there, for years, recreation has been the poor relation. The same is true, I'm afraid, of the Countryside Commission, who do have statutory duties in this field, but who struggle constantly to give such issues the full recognition they demand against rival internal policy priorities.

In my view, this is reinforced by the fact that the Commission like many others is hobbled by a historically dominant countryside recreation doctrine: that countryside recreation has to fit in and around the edges of other rural land uses (a residual again). Carolyn Harrison's splendid book, Countryside Recreation in a Changing Society, has shown convincingly how this diminished view of countryside recreation has been influenced by the result of the power of landowners (and CLA) – stronger under some governments than under others.

And if even the Forestry Commission and Countryside Commission have difficulty in according leisure its true social significance, the Sports Council, English Nature, the English Tourist Board and others have even more severe problems. Even National Park Authorities face internal conflicts on such matters.

The problem is compounded, in my view, by the fact that most of the NGOs in this sphere don't really have their eye on the ball I've described. Britain is well served by its countryside conservation bodies – RSPB, CPRE, the Wildlife Trusts, FOE – but there are only the Ramblers, Open Spaces Society and Youth Hostels Association (I'll mention the National Trust in a moment), in the recreational area. I have immense respect for their work. But they too, like the statutory agencies, have priorities and a body language developed on perhaps rather narrow and specialised lines from a previous era, when leisure needs really were seen as marginal and residual. (Think of the determined and even exclusive 'rights of way' focus of the RA...). The consequent lack of a concerted overarching NGO presence on leisure concerns overall means that there's little appropriate pressure on the agencies or on central government to treat such issues as more central to <u>everyone's</u> interests.

One NGO which has begun to get to grips with what's at stake in this wider sense is the National Trust, as you can see in its splendid new consultation paper 'Linking People and Place'.

Now it's vital that the Countryside Recreation Network, and the agencies who constitute it, should talk more with NGOs in this domain. But, to be candid, we must face the reality that no single NGO is currently doing the job that needs doing at national level. Indeed up till now, there's actually been something of a gap, where there should be energetic grass roots leadership of public debate on this overall issue. The recent report of the Select Committee on the Environment is welcome and significant, but in my view largely in giving reassurance to concerns about the potential *physical* damage of leisure developments. So it's a welcome but still negative development in political terms...

Now. Does any of this matter to individuals engaged in the many excellent discussions at this conference's workshops? Emphatically yes. Let me cite two reasons, one immediate, one more far-reaching. First, as you know, there's currently a great efflorescence of requirements for different non-work recreational issues of the countryside. As Terry Robinson and CPRE's 'Leisure Landscapes' report made clear, these are likely to intensify over the next decade. People are also becoming increasingly discriminating in their expectations. It may be the case, as the Select Committee has concluded, that the physical pressures of leisure expansion can be accommodated – though we can expect that CPRE and other influential bodies will certainly challenge that in particular cases. But what is certainly true is that the potential for conflict between leisure uses is growing, as they multiply. I thought Terry and Ian Mercer too sanguine about this. There are conflicts for example between:

- different water issues (fishermen and canoeists);
- noisy and quiet uses;
- different forms of access;
- nature conservation bodies and public access priorities;
- different interpretations of historically significant places – for instance Stonehenge;
- different senses of 'the local' amongst rural residents. And so on.

To manage such conflicts and unlock imagination of the right kind for solutions will require ever-increasing subtlety and mutual understanding. But this will be at precisely a time when different groups' distinctive sectoral requirements are more and more important to them. In these circumstances, if public bodies -- and you as professionals – aren't operating with an appropriate rich model of what's at stake – i.e. if there's still an assumption that recreation is overwhelmingly marginal and additional to the main purpose of people's lives (rather than central to them) – you won't get the resources or authority that are going to be needed.

Let me touch on an example of how such neglect works - the Glastonbury Festival (and considerable number of similar events and raves around the countryside). I went to Glastonbury this year – one of 100,000 people. It may be significant that official (Select Committee, Countryside Commission) descriptions of countryside leisure tend not to include a mention of events of this kind. The dog that doesn't bark. If they were included, they might be put into some category like 'concert'.

But events like Glastonbury are not simply concerts. That model won't capture what's going on here. In my view they are manifestations of organic cultural change now going on in Britain, of great significance – tribal gatherings or festivals, like massive medieval fairs, in which the music is only one dimension. The numbers of such occasions – and of other odd 'cultural' uses of the countryside – are burgeoning, outside the official vocabularies of recreation and leisure – uses which, although boisterous and noisy, could not happen outside the spaciousness and silence of the countryside.

Because of prevailing disidentification with politics – and perhaps prejudices reflected in the Criminal Justice Act – those perspectives on 'leisure' tend to be outside official discourses. But what's at stake here are priorities of a mounting proportion of the population (frequently young) – whose countryside leisure preferences sit unconvincingly within the established inherited vocabularies. It is these vocabularies that need urgently to change – and they'll only do so if people like us raise our sights, and promote and press for the acceptance of a richer account of the significance of 'recreation' than is currently dominant.

Now, of course, in our times, change is happening frequently, despite public agencies rather than because of them. The wonderful success of Sustrans is a recent testimony to the speed of transformation that independent energies can stimulate – with all sorts of social and cultural reverberations likely in time. It's vital to think ever-more-ambitiously in ways which break with conventional thinking – and that too needs to become part of official thinking.

There are things CRN's members can and should do:

- CRN should develop a much stronger sense of its own homogeneity and common interests;

- Individual CRN member bodies could generate new research and publish debates, aimed at developing a stronger public sense of the issues, and at beginning to change attitudes within Government, the agencies and NGOs;

- Landowning and managing bodies like the Forestry Commission and National Trust can act innovatively and with better social intelligence, in response to requirements emerging from 'new' groups and sectors.

This is an exciting and promising time, precisely because things are so fluid. In lots of different ways, what I've been saying could be seen as part of the necessary move towards Sustainable Development. Our country is groping to reinvent itself. How people spend their non-work time, their 'leisure' separately and together -- and the values they express as they do so – is, in important ways, a part of this process.

I'm grateful for this conference and for the existence of CRN, because I think the things you are doing are an indispensable part of that process. I look forward to working with you in future.

WORKSHOPS

Funding Alternatives to the Private Car

David Holding, University of Northumbria
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Introduction

This paper examines actions that have been taken to encourage the use of public transport as an alternative to cars within National Parks in England and Wales. It is argued that such actions are often ineffective, which is explained by an absence of clear objectives, targets and measurement of performance. It concludes that the continued growth expected in car use demands greater attention to public transport solutions but equally that specific targets must be set, and shown to be achieved, to justify the public expenditure needed to produce a behavioural change.

The Use of Cars in National Parks

Among the environmental problems facing tourism is that of the use of cars by almost all visitors to areas of scenic attractiveness, typified in England and Wales by National Parks. The popularity of the car raises all the major issues of sustainability – atmospheric pollution, depletion of energy reserves and demands on land use – but also causes problems of traffic congestion and possible loss of the very attractiveness which brings visitors in the first place. Other scenic areas, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, may experience similar pressures, but not normally to the same degree. Areas lacking National Park (NP) status also tend to have less independence and access to resources to tackle the problems.

The current and future difficulties posed by car usage are shown in the Department of Transport's traffic forecasts (1989) and research based on those figures conducted for the Countryside Commission by Stokes, Goodwin and Kenny (1992). It was argued that car traffic could be expected to increase more in the countryside than in urban areas and that growth might reach 267% of current levels by the year 2025. This reflects an increase in demand for leisure travel, as both available leisure time and disposable income slowly increase. On a local level, the Yorkshire Dales National Park (1993) noted increases in car traffic varying between 15% and 59% over the five year period to 1991. The Commission's predictions were then applied to a current figure of 599 cars parked at Malham on an August Bank Holiday to show that, if those predictions were realised, the figure would reach 1,600 by 2025. The increase in car ownership has made it more difficult for public transport to operate profitably and the latter's availability has declined, reinforcing the trend towards car use. Additionally, road access has improved with the construction of motorways and improvement of other trunk roads, making a day

trip from the major conurbations easily realised. Since such travel also tends to be highly peaked, both local roads and parking facilities can have extreme difficulty in coping with demand when these peaks occur.

The Objectives of National Parks and Their Relationship to Transport

National Parks were given a number of purposes under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Alongside a duty to preserve the natural beauty of their areas was a further obligation to "promote their enjoyment by the public" (s5.1). The conflict between these purposes becomes apparent when a decision has to be made whether the natural beauty of a location should be sacrificed for improvement of roads or parking facilities in order to meet a clearly existing demand for access by car, with the objective of promoting enjoyment.

The Environment Act 1995 rephrases the purposes of the Parks, with the effect that not only the National Park Authorities (NPAs), but in particular the highways authorities within whose areas the parks lie, will be bound to give priority to the status quo. It may no longer be possible for highway planners to "improve" roads within the Parks on the basis that it is necessary to improve access, etc. It is clear that to plan for road and parking provision to meet demand continuing to increase at the levels indicated would be prohibitively expensive (particularly since the demand is highly peaked), contrary to developing policies on sustainability and contrary to the statutory duty to conserve natural beauty. The Countryside Commission (1993) committed itself to "working to diminish the proportion of countryside recreation trips made by car".

Support for Public Transport in National Parks

Increasing the proportion of visitors who either arrive by public transport or use it for local movement within the area has proved difficult. The closure of roads and other "traffic management" solutions raise problems of enforcement and political acceptability. Visitors may favour greater public transport availability and use in principle, but from the perspective that it will remove the traffic problems they face and enable them to continue using their own cars.

Most National Park Authorities have funded public transport services in an attempt to encourage their use. The Countryside Commission (1991) estimated that funding of public transport by National Parks was running at £122,000 annually. The author recently obtained the following responses from NPAs, who were asked to state their spending on public transport operation and publicity in the current year (see Table 1). Public transport in scenic areas is not only funded by National Park Authorities. Other bodies supporting leisure-oriented services (in many cases outside the National Parks) are the Countryside Commission (£70,473 in 1993/4), county councils and the Rural Transport Development Fund. County Councils tend to prioritise the funding of unremunerative bus services (described by the Transport Act 1985 as "socially necessary services") according to the journey purpose of users. Thus transport to school, the provision of which is a statutory duty, is the first

priority, followed typically by work, shopping and lastly leisure journeys. A sliding scale of maximum subsidies per passenger may be used, for example £2 per passenger for work journeys, £1 for shopping trips and 50p for leisure. This can be simpler to operate than it appears, since the time of a journey largely determines its clientele; a service at 07:30 can be assumed to carry its passengers to work while one at 20:30 almost certainly performs a leisure function.

Table 1. Expenditure on Public Transport by National Park Authorities

Authority	Expenditure (£000s)	
	Operation	Publicity
Peak District	63.0	14.0
North Yorkshire Moors	11.5	8.6
Yorkshire Dales	-----	-----
Pembrokeshire Coast	6.0	nil
Dartmoor	1.7	3.0
Snowdonia	3.1	3.1
Northumberland	3.0	1.5
Exmoor	1.6	1.0
Norfolk Broads	2.5	nil
Brecon Beacons	No reply	
Lake District	See note 2	

Note 1. These figures are in most cases for 1993/4 but in some cases a bid figure for 1994/5 is shown where substantial change was proposed.

Note 2. In the Lake District a Traffic Management Project commenced early in 1993 with joint funding from the National Park Authority, Cumbria Tourist Board, Cumbria County Council and the Countryside Commission.

The low priority often given to leisure journeys by counties is a further rationale for the involvement, where appropriate, of National Parks and others. While liaison between interested bodies often takes place and some projects are jointly funded, each applies its own criteria for funding and there appears to be no standard code of practice to identify projects for funding that will meet such criteria and the wider objectives. Moreover, a number of these projects have failed to attract acceptable numbers of passengers and have been abandoned, an early example being reported by Greening and Slater (1981). The Edwards Report (1991) was the result of a wide-ranging examination of NP functions initiated by the Countryside Commission. Edwards examined the issue of traffic management and commented in Section 5.5:

> "National Parks have been no more imaginatively dealt with in traffic management terms than has the countryside at large (p 50)....experimental bus routes have been supported, additional journeys have been underwritten on existing routes, and assistance has been given with marketing. However, the results, in the main, have been disappointing." (p 51)

Edwards nonetheless recommended that traffic and transport strategy should be a priority for National Parks. This encouragement, the expression of similar views by pressure groups such as the Council for the Protection for Rural England (1992), and the increasing problems of congestion being experienced, have brought a climate sympathetic to increased spending in some Parks. The danger is that if clear objectives are not set and no system of "good practice" established, not only will more public funds be injected into operations that fail, but those failures will lead to a general conclusion that public transport has no part to play in the traffic strategies of scenic areas. On the other hand, success in developing the role of public transport may assist in helping the Parks' image with residents, who often view them as restrictive. Since any additional services would also be available for residents, and operating costs do not generally increase with the number of passengers carried on a vehicle, visitor usage can establish a base revenue which ensures continuing viability for others.

It is concluded, therefore, that the issue is not only the financial sums being allocated to funding public transport solutions (although wide disparities between areas do exist without apparent explanation), but the objectives being set and the criteria by which schemes are selected. Next, therefore, targets that might be set, and criteria that might be applied to ensure that funding of leisure-oriented public transport achieves its objectives, are examined.

Current Assessment Practice

As noted above, no standard criteria exist by which funding proposals can be assessed, nor generally are specific measures of success or failure set by which projects can be judged retrospectively. Moreover, any public transport developments may be unrelated to overall traffic strategy. The Yorkshire Dales National Park admitted that "The road Public Transport initiatives promoted in the National Park have been largely ad hoc and unrelated to an integrated transport strategy." (1993)

Here it is important to recognise that the wider strategies of planning bodies may vary according to their perception of the existing problem. National Parks must resolve the conflict between the duties mentioned earlier to conserve or to promote enjoyment, and decide whether the objective is to maximise access or to give priority to conservation by persuading current visitors to use public transport rather than car. In making such a decision the concept of environmental capacity is useful, as recommended by, for example, the World Tourism Organisation (1993) and the Countryside Commission (1993). If an authority feels that an area has reached its limit in terms of people, policies that will attract greater numbers are inappropriate and the logical target is existing car users. If, on the other hand, environmental capacity has only been reached in the number of cars

that can be accepted, it is appropriate to aim for future growth in visitor numbers to be carried on public transport. A further problem is that if a public transport initiative did succeed in persuading car users to change their mode of access, and if we assume traffic congestion does act as some deterrent to aspiring motorist visitors, the initiative would "succeed" only in freeing road space which previously deterred visitors would then occupy. In turn, already overcrowded destinations might experience an increase in the total number of their visitors. Again, the Yorkshire Dales NP (1993) resolved that "Conservation of natural beauty should take precedence over promoting public enjoyment where conflict exists between these two aims and... present peak demand should not be catered for where environmental capacity is exceeded."

The criteria used by NPAs and others to judge success and priorities are normally either numerical, ie the number of passengers carried, or financial, i.e. the amount of subsidy required per passenger or the proportion of operating costs that is recovered in fares; practice in the Peak Park is an example of this. However, there is nothing in these rankings which gives us any indication as to how the initial decision to subsidise or not is made, nor is there any attempt to measure customers' perceptions of the quality of the service provided. It tells us nothing about a scheme's success in achieving behavioural objectives -- whether these be attracting non-car owners or diverting car owners to public transport. Nonetheless, it should be repeated that this is a better attempt than most.

The next section will discuss the appropriateness of such approaches. However, prioritising is subject to the initial allocation of funding for specific purposes, which is dependent on policy decisions and budgets. Once a figure has been agreed, officers must decide how it is to be used, possibly distinguishing between continuation of existing operations and the introduction of new. While numerical and financial criteria may be a useful tool for prioritising existing activities, they cannot be applied to the evaluation of something untried (although they could, and arguably should, be set in advance for the later judging of success).

When considering new projects an element of "hunch" or trial and error appears common. Officers may be aware of a particular problem requiring a solution or feel that an experiment of a particular kind is worth trying; in some cases a consultant's report may have made a recommendation that is taken up. This in itself is not criticised; officers must be presumed to have professional expertise enabling them to make sound decisions, and it can be argued that public bodies should have reasonable sums available for such experimentation. However, clear criteria and the benefit of past experience remain important, particularly if authorities are to be proactive rather than merely reactive. Sometimes it appears that support of public transport is urged as little more than a token of commitment and a statement of "green" policies, which does not allow for informed decision-making on applications that will attract custom and have the desired effect on car traffic. A report by Transport for Leisure (1992) for the North York Moors NP argued that public transport support should be "a starting point for a major programme of re-education of the general public towards the acceptance of policies for traffic and transport in National Parks which are genuinely sustainable". It is argued here that operating infrequent services

(typical of rural areas), which are poorly targeted and patronised, would do nothing to "re-educate" committed car users and amount to no more than high cost tokenism.

The Audit Commission – Objectives, Efficiency and Effectiveness

In reports examining other types of publicly funded activity, the Audit Commission set targets of "efficiency" which attempted to be measures of quantities and throughput, and "effectiveness" which attempted to measure quality of provision. This is a useful distinction in the circumstances we are considering. Closing a road, banning private car usage on that road and herding visitors onto an old, dirty and smelly bus may well produce a reasonable "efficiency" measure in that in the short term, there would be a substantial throughput. However, because of the element of compulsion it is reasonable to suspect that the users of that transport would not be greatly enamoured with it and indeed might not repeat either the particular journey or even the entire visit to that rural location. This would have a future economic effect on the local rural community. In short, the "effectiveness" measure here would be likely to be very low. Public transport of the sort described above will be perceived as inferior to use of a private car which offers convenience, comfort and privacy. The quality of public transport needs to be addressed such that using it is regarded as a better alternative than using the private car. The quality perceived by visitors could be measured by simple devices such as standard post purchase customer monitoring techniques or even a well constructed short visitor survey. Alternatively, quality could be measured according to the visitors' level of customer loyalty as shown by repeat visits (or lack of them).

The weaknesses that arise from an absence of clear targets in current practice can be observed by taking as an example a long-running initiative in the Snowdonia National Park, the "Snowdon Sherpa", which has been supported by the NPA and Gwynedd County Council.

The "Sherpa" in 1977 had the following stated objectives:

1. "To reduce the need for visitors to bring cars into the area...
2. To attempt to change the pattern of visitor use of the Snowdon massif...
3. To develop a strategy towards the provision and management of car parking facilities... (This related particularly to problems arising from a car park in a sensitive area which regularly became overcrowded, while other car parks in less sensitive areas had spare capacity; these would be linked by a Park and Ride bus service.)
4. To increase the public's choice and opportunities for recreation in the Snowdon area...
5. To provide an improved public transport service for local communities."

(Gwynedd CC/Countryside Commission/Snowdonia National Park 1977)

Over the years the bus service has been developed and extended to incorporate existing "conventional" services, so encouraging through travel by bus from resort areas as opposed to Park and Ride, while fares have been set so as to make the cost of using it for "park and ride" attractive for families by comparison with car park charges in resort areas.

In its first year, when Countryside Commission support was given, survey work was carried out to identify awareness of and attitudes to the service, but this has not been repeated. In its early years a number of academic papers were presented (see for example Mulligan (1979)) but again such detailed analysis has not been maintained. Information on numbers using the bus services is used in the planning process, but no other means is available to judge the effect of the Sherpa's availability on the modal split. The NPA concluded (1987), "As a visitor service, Sherpa has proved popular, but as a traffic management tool to encourage motorists to travel around the area by bus instead of car, its success has been limited."

A further criticism of the Sherpa is that as its network has expanded and the range of journey purposes it seeks to meet have increased, so targeting of particular markets has been diluted. In particular it is difficult to meet the Park and Ride objective when the service frequency is never greater than half-hourly and unreliability can result from traffic delays elsewhere in the system.

The weakness of the Sherpa project, therefore, is not that it has been unrelated to any wider policy objective, but that no specific target was set, nor has follow-up work been carried out to monitor progress towards that objective, and it is therefore impossible to identify the results that public sector investment has brought. Currently concern exists that recent improvements to the A55 trunk road along the North Wales coast will attract much greater numbers of day trip motorists than hitherto, who will converge on the inadequate road and parking infrastructure of Snowdonia. The ad hoc nature of the Sherpa's development and the absence of recent market research data mean that no clear strategy involving it can be used to tackle the problem.

Visitor Perceptions

Previous research by Eaton (1993) addresses the question of what should be built into public transport schemes in national parks to design them round the visitors' needs and wants.

Because they regard their leisure time as limited and therefore precious, visitors indicate a willingness to respond to public transport when it is perceived as a leisure activity in its own right. This is consistent with forecasts such as those by Leisure Consultants (1993), who predict that there will be a relative increase in pressure on leisure time over the coming years. Vehicles such as trains (especially steam-hauled such as the North Yorkshire Moors Railway) or open-top buses can offer these leisure features. However, the research also indicated a requirement about the perceived reliability of public transport. The single biggest influence on visitors in favour of public transport would be if the services run on time, regularly, and according to simple timetables. Trains have a particular usefulness in terms of traffic management since they have a carrying capacity far in excess of buses (and, even more, minibuses). Research also shows that they are perceived as being more reliable, presumably because they have their own exclusive track and are not therefore subject to traffic jams caused by other users. There is a need to impress those visitors who consistently said that "services arriving on time" would be the single biggest influence on their propensity to use public transport. Follow up

interviews suggested that visitors did not construe time spent looking for a car parking space as "waiting time"! These conclusions give us an increasingly clear idea about visitor expectations of their day out or holiday in national parks, particularly when taken together with surveys such as that carried out by the North York Moors (1994) and by consultants' research such as that of Countryside Recreation Network (1993).

Of course, consuming public transport as a leisure activity in its own right is not by itself the solution to traffic congestion problems; such problems will ultimately be solved only by a behavioural and attitudinal change on the behalf of visitors. What is described is one way of starting to effect such change.

Realistic Objectives and Targets for Public Transport Programmes

If projects are not to be failures in terms of effect on total travel patterns and are to achieve more than being statements of policy, they must achieve significant changes in visitor behaviour through modal choice and meet specific targets. In the light of increases that have been predicted in the numbers of cars expected to make leisure trips to the countryside over the next 25 years (Countryside Commission (1992)) it may not be reasonable to expect any reduction in overall car numbers, but it may be appropriate to set a target of "no increase". Such an objective should concentrate the minds of planners on the measures necessary to achieve such an objective, and may help in securing the co-operation of local residents, who frequently resist change (see for example Lake District Traffic Review (1992)). In the case of particular locations already suffering acute problems, it might be appropriate to set targets of, say, a reduction of 5–15% in vehicle numbers, to be achieved by actions of a higher cost / more intensive nature, eg park and ride allied to traffic restrictions.

The numbers of cars passing or parked at key points during a day in peak season will be considerable. For example, the average daily number of vehicles passing Waterhead, south of Ambleside in the Lake District, in August 1991 was 18,720 (Lake District Traffic Review 1992). The review assumes 17,784 of these to have been cars, the rest coaches and heavy goods vehicles. We may assume each car to carry 2.4 people (Eaton 1993). On this basis, a reduction of 5% in car numbers would require 2,100 people daily to transfer to public transport.

Against figures such as this, projects which result in minibuses carrying passengers in single figures per trip will not make a noticeable contribution towards the target, and are likely to incur disproportionate administrative costs in being set up. In distinctive locations such as popular upland valleys, small-scale operations can alleviate traffic problems by removing marginal car traffic (North York Moors National Park Committee 1994), but in general, for success in achieving transfer, activity on a much larger scale is necessary. It follows that where it is feasible to use rail or water transport, with their much larger capacities, then there is at least the potential to achieve the transfer required to meet objectives.

Conclusions

It appears that effective policies do not currently exist to meet the practical consequences of predicted increases in car travel in the countryside (ie congestion), still less to meet sustainability objectives. This paper has considered the approach of national parks to the encouragement of public transport and concluded that, to date, little has been achieved in influencing the choice of mode for such journeys, nor have objectives generally been set by which the effectiveness of public transport might be measured. It seems that alongside financial criteria of success or failure (which must have a role whether or not public funding is involved) the appropriate objectives are those relating to modal split and the extent to which that split is modified by motorists transferring to or new traffic adopting public transport.

It should be possible to set objectives on both a regional/strategic and local basis and, against those objectives, to design appropriate public transport actions with clear targets. The key feature of such design is that it must be built around its users rather than its operators or financiers. Such actions might, as now, be in the form of additional operations on a long or short-distance basis, promotional activity or a combination of these. To achieve the targets it might well in extreme cases be necessary to implement traffic restrictions and promote an integrated traffic strategy as part of a "green" programme. It is likely that, to achieve the targets, the scale of public transport activity and restrictions would need to be much larger than has hitherto been the case; but against this, while reasonable time should be allowed for changes in behaviour to develop (perhaps rolling three year cycles with progressive targets over the period), there should be no reluctance to modify or abandon parts of the programme that are clearly not achieving objectives. Financial and numerical targets would be used here as indicators.

Resistance to public transport projects is sometimes experienced (see for example Lake District Traffic Review 1992) from local interests who believe that motorist visitors will seek an alternative destination rather than use public transport and that local business will be damaged. It must be remembered that realistic objectives for national parks would not seek significant reduction in car traffic from most of the sensitive areas concerned. Objectives may therefore be achievable through higher parking charges closest to the most sensitive areas and/or systems of road tolls and pricing. Advantage can be taken of the very reluctance of motorists to change their means of transport; the Environment Act 1995 may widen NPAs' opportunities to introduce such systems and apply the resulting income to public transport alternatives. Where local resistance extends to these projects on grounds of "motorist mobility" it is necessary to demonstrate a widespread and integrated strategy so that, while supply and demand factors are recognised, one location cannot be seen as disadvantaged compared to others.

There will also be locations where radical measures such as road closures or "access only" orders are necessary to conserve environments which are seriously at risk. Here opposition can again be expected. However, in towns, pedestrianisation has often been carried out in the face of strong resistance from motorist and trade interests but once established, has led to criticism that it was not implemented ten years earlier. Initial resistance is sometimes overcome by the device of traffic "experiments" which are in practice accepted and then confirmed.

Where a problem in a national park demands drastic action the same approach could be tried and similar results may be experienced. It is hoped that once clear objectives are accepted by a community, the means necessary to achieve these objectives, such as tolling and traffic restrictions, would also be accepted.

The clear priority given to conservation in the Environment Bill may indicate that the time for a sea change in attitudes and policies has come. For this reason too, the parks, with independent authorities and planning powers more clearly defined than before, must grasp the nettle of influencing visitors' choices regarding access. However, results will not be achieved unless strong, proactive and crusading management leads the way. Such management will be armed with clear objectives, knowledge of the methods necessary to achieve those objectives and the evidence from surveys of visitor behaviour and attitudes. Much further research work remains to be done to clarify those attitudes and identify the enterprising projects that will induce a change in behaviour.

"Travelling Light" – Rural Sustainable Transport Policies for the 1990s and 2000s

Andy Gale
Countryside Commission

Synopsis

The government has begun a new national debate on transport policies. The CRN conference is well timed to reflect on these issues. The Countryside Commission has for some time been developing policies on the countryside conservation and leisure aspects of rural traffic management and proposes to present some preliminary conclusions to government this autumn. These are still early days for final policy solutions, as countryside traffic problems remain significantly under-researched compared with urban issues. This paper nevertheless reviews the innovative Commission transport research of the last three years and presents five key policy issues for action by central and local government, and others, on countryside protection and use.

Introduction

Between February and April 1995, the former Secretary of State for Transport, Dr Brian Mawhinney, gave a series of six public speeches on future transport policy. In June 1995, the speeches were published as a discussion document seeking public and institutional views on the way ahead for transport policy and its interaction with economic and environmental policies. The new Secretary of State, Sir George Young, is taking the process forward. A government report on the outcome, possibly a Transport Green Paper, is expected in early 1996.

Dr Mawhinney clearly stated that there are no simple or simplistic solutions to transport problems. He asked for views on future policy direction which had precision in thinking and policy formulation, based on three themes:

- Is the present balance right between promotion of economic growth, protection of the environment and support for personal choice?

- If the balance needs to be shifted (for example, towards greater environmental protection or towards enhancing competitiveness by reducing road congestion), what measures need to be taken and how will they achieve their stated objectives?

- Are we prepared to accept the wider consequences (for the environment, for personal choice, for industrial competitiveness, jobs and the economy as a whole) of any such measures?

These themes have come from twenty questions distilled by DoT from the speeches and set out in a DoT consultation document *The Way Ahead* (June 1995). Direct answers to each question are not sought. Instead, the document expects responses which reflect the twenty questions to show particularly how agreed "consensus" solutions can be reached to transport problems on which interest groups have been polarised for some years.

The place of countryside transport issues needs to be established in the debate from the beginning. Recent major reviews of transport policy such as *The 18th Report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution*, have failed specifically to examine the countryside. Through our work with local authorities and other partners, including for example the National Trust and motoring organisations, the Commission is aware of substantial support for its pioneering of countryside protection in transport policy development. The new national debate is an opportunity for countryside interests to formalise their concerns in a new relationship with DoT in national policy making.

The Commission's Transport Interest

The Countryside Commission's interest in transport is, as summarised in its 1992 Position Statement, *Road Traffic and the Countryside* (CCP 387), to reduce countryside road traffic impacts because research had shown "that the countryside can neither afford nor accommodate the Department of Transport's predicted growth in road traffic". The stated problems were countryside urbanisation, damage from road construction, incongruous roadside features, traffic noise and smell, and congestion at popular recreation sites. This document followed the seminal report from the ESRC Transport Studies Unit at Oxford University (*The New Realism*, 1991), which demonstrated that for the next century traffic demand management would have to replace road building as the main means of sustaining efficient transportation systems in Britain.

Nine action points to cope with the rural problems identified by the Commission were listed in CCP 387:

- Improved public awareness of countryside traffic impacts.
- Better integrated land use and transportation planning.
- Fuller environmental assessment of roads development.
- Revised town and country development planning processes.
- Road pricing to manage traffic demand.
- New locally accessible recreation facilities (eg pocket parks).
- New open country walking, riding and cycling provision.
- Traffic demonstration schemes to apply demand management techniques.
- Improved design of rural roads and their ancillary development.

The Commission is pursuing action points through a mixture of research, experimentation and investigation. These are, however, at different stages of development. Unlike urban traffic and transport issues, widespread countryside problems are a relatively new professional concern. The Commission is therefore working innovatively with several local highway authority partners backing them in demonstrating practical measures aimed at preventing countryside despoliation from relentless car-traffic growth. But it will be some time before a complete picture of publicly and professionally acceptable policy change for sustainable rural transport demand management can be drawn.

The issues which can currently be drawn to attention are given below. They are a suite of strategic-level measures primarily aimed at reducing the growth and impacts of car-dependency. They state that the balance in transport between personal freedom, economic growth and environmental protection is wrong and unsustainable; and that rebalancing policy changes can help to avoid losses of countryside character and quality which car-dependency promises, while still providing for economic development and individual choice.

"The Way Ahead"

The following five policy issues are substantially drawn from the Countryside Commission's three experimental traffic management demonstration initiatives running between 1993 and 1996 in Cumbria (the Lake District), Surrey and Devon (Dartmoor). The initiatives are widely known in media and professional circles. A publication on the early findings will be issued this autumn.

Issue A. Rural Traffic Demand Management Strategies

The lesson from the three traffic experiments is that individual traffic calming schemes for towns and villages are unlikely to work without clear direction from an overarching rural traffic strategy for a whole district, county or national park. Local populations resist unilateral and unequal treatment. Also, isolated schemes just tend to transfer problems elsewhere. This conclusion is confirmed by the recent House of Commons Environment Committee Report *The Environmental Impact of Leisure Activities*, which appeals for additional county-wide traffic initiatives linked to social and economic developments in rural areas.

Government recognition of this approach could lead to national planning policy guidance (PPG) being amended specifically to require the preparation by planning authorities of appropriate rural traffic strategies as a component of structure and local plans.

Further, central government could discuss with local authorities how staff resources and training can be dedicated to this demanding rural traffic task in support of its undertaking in the *UK Sustainable Development Report* (Jan 1994, Cmd 2426) to provide a national transport policy "framework" for environmental protection.

Without such training and resources, local government is unlikely to be able to install sustainable, rural transport strategies.

Issue B. Rural Transport Funding

Beyond government funded trunk road or motorway building and other major infrastructure developments, rural transport spending is controlled by annual Department of Transport approval of local authority Transport Policies and Programmes (TPPs). The TPP system has always given priority to urban activity. The Commission's three traffic management initiatives clearly show the need for new resources to allow local authorities to undertake agreed rural traffic developments, including anti-pollution measures, public transport improvement and cycling provision.

The Department of Transport should be advised to give a greater share of annual TPP spending approvals to rural schemes. The redistribution would not be major. Rural packages emerging from local authority work are measured in six figure sums, not seven. The benefits of such rural traffic programmes would be to match county traffic strategies with the more common ability to install cycling schemes, speed limit reductions, improved bus routing, new travel information systems and improved park and ride facilities.

Issue C. Countryside Road Design

The Department of Transport produces full design guidance on trunk roads and motorways but none for other roads. The Commission has recently filled this gap for rural areas with its publication *Roads in The Countryside* (CCP 459). It has received wide approval, including that of government ministers. The extensive welcome from local authorities for its contents, which illustrate the countryside conservation benefits of sensitive design features in road improvements and road furniture without excessive additional costs, brings with it a demand for professional training and education. The Commission's demand management experiments have shown how anxious local communities are about over-urbanised design for transport improvements, even where they are part of county-wide traffic strategies.

The government should be urged to provide advice and guidance through PPGs and other instruments to influence the adoption by local highway authorities of higher countryside design standards. Resources should be allocated for practical design measures in TPPs. Work should also be undertaken in government and institutional programmes for detailed training provision on improved rural design.

Issue D. Countryside Cycling

There is universal recognition that cycling is a less polluting and healthier means of countryside visiting and recreation. Some 20 million bicycles are owned in Britain. However, few are used and the growing trend is towards the very localised use of cycles brought to the countryside by car. The Commission's recreational

research and its work with the cycling body Sustrans show that traffic dangers inhibit greater use, both in reaching countryside from urban areas and in riding on rural lanes. The Commission has taken steps to support the government-approved Sustrans 6,000 mile national cycle network, predominantly designed for urban areas and to link major towns, to ensure its effectiveness in rural areas. We also hope that the government will be able to endorse Commission proposals for associated wider measures to prepare minor country roads for safer cycle use, supported by practical facilities such as repair and safe accommodation provision.

The Commission welcomes the government's support of the Sustrans national cycling network through millennium funding and urge their support of rural cycling provision within area-wide strategies through the TPP process.

Issue E. Public Participation

There is indisputable evidence from the local village projects begun under the Commission's traffic management initiatives that ordinary public consultation methods (leaflets, public meetings) fail to win public ownership and support of countryside traffic schemes. This problem also applies to campaigns such as "Travelwise". The Commission's local authority partners and other bodies such as the Rural Development Commission and CPRE agree that new methods are urgently needed to enable wider community participation in the initial objective setting for local traffic schemes, their subsequent management and in behavioural change. Particular problems have arisen from poor design standards and inflexible traffic regulations, as well as lack of clear explanation of traffic demand management opportunities for countryside communities and visitors.

The Commission is now in the early stages of developing proposals for pilot schemes for new participation measures in selected locations in Surrey and Cumbria. They would include both professional consultancy support for processes through which communities can agree objectives for traffic calming, and the introduction of associated community economic improvements to cope with less passing car trade. The potential for joint working on this has been discussed and provisionally agreed with the RDC.

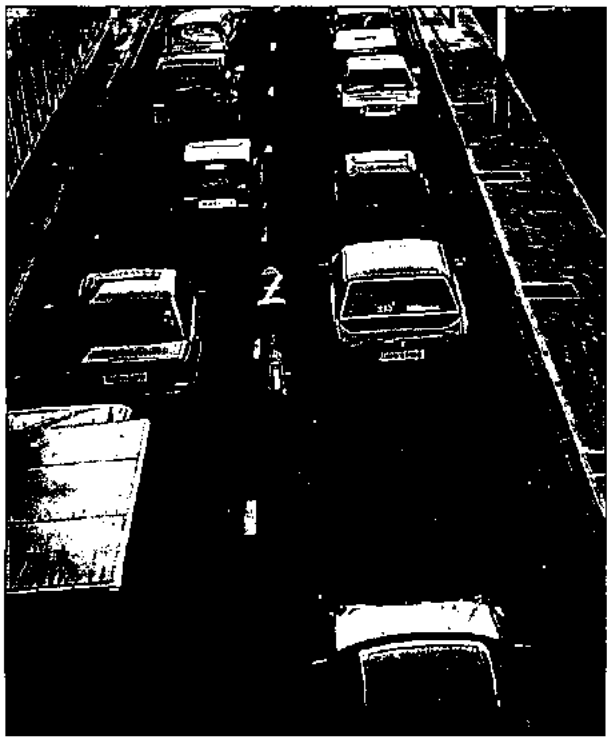
Conclusion

The five issues noted above contain policy proposals which have firm support from the Countryside Commission, its working partners and others. The clear policy principles they represent will provide, if adopted, a sound initial basis for the planning, financing and implementation of road-traffic restraint based on "user friendly" demand management to help sustain the living countryside and improve its recreational use.

Sustrans and the National Cycle Network

Philip Insall

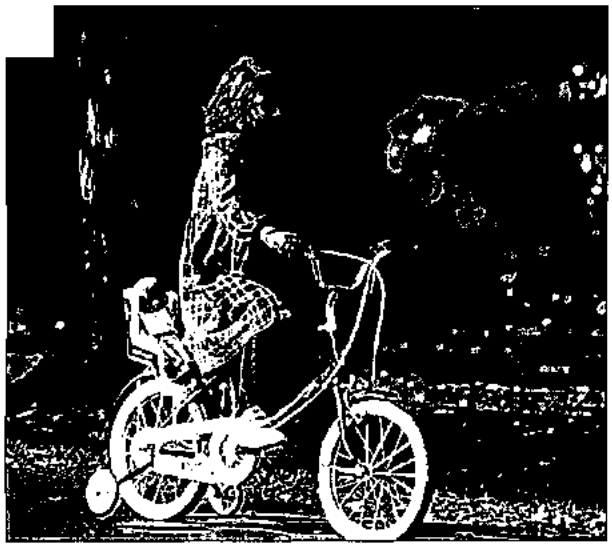
Sustrans



The asthma epidemic of June 1994 caused "a rush of extra patients equivalent to a plane crash near every hospital over a wide area of southern and central England" *

Health professionals believe it resulted from a combination of traffic fumes and unusual weather conditions.

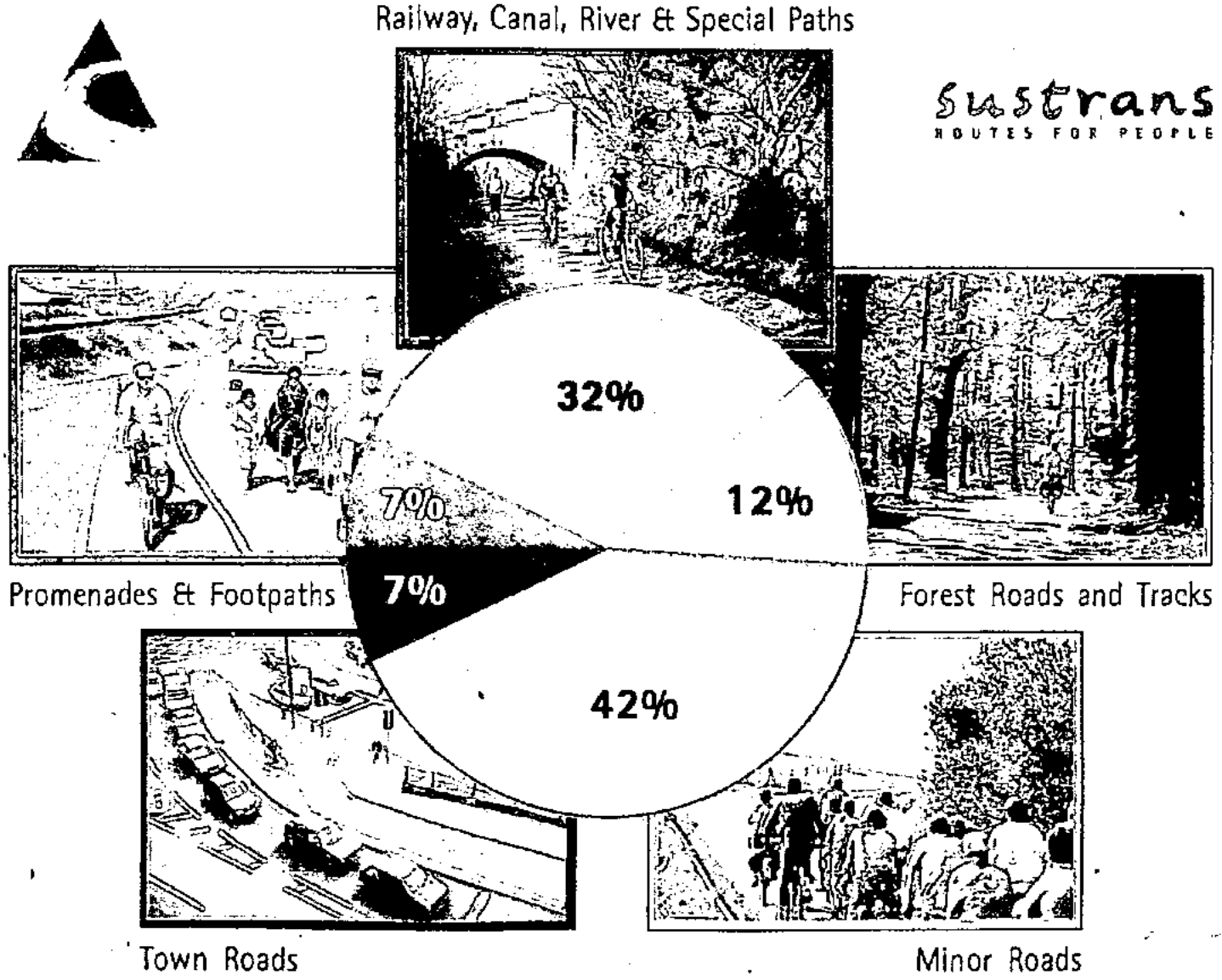
* Dr Martyn Partridge, Chief Medical Adviser to the National Asthma Campaign



Most children do own a bike, but few use them. Only a quarter of junior-age children are allowed to cycle outside their own homes. Four times as many juniors are now chauffeured to school in England as in Germany.


NATIONAL cycle network
Sustrans
ROUTES FOR PEOPLE
THE MILLENNIUM COMMISSION
A MILLENNIUM PROJECT
SUPPORTED BY FUNDS FROM THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
Routes to be created with Millennium Funding towards construction
Routes with Millennium funds for land and negotiations
Other National Routes
Irish Sea
North Sea
English Channel
Durham – Sunderland: 106
Newcastle – Sunderland: 108
Durham – Consett: 701a
Consett – Scotswood: 701b
Schematic arrangement of route numbering
Trans Pennine Trail is comprised of Legs 609, 656, 657, 651, 652, 653, 654 and part of 605.
Examples of Signing:
Legs 101 to 109 will be Route 1.
Legs 661 to 668 will be Route 86.
Inverness
Elgin
Banff
Aviemore
Aberdeen
Fort William
Pitlochry
Montrose
Dundee
Callander
Perth
St Andrews
Kingdom-of-Fife Cycleways
Dumbarton
Greenock
Airdrie
Dunfermline
Edinburgh
Paisley
Glasgow
Bathgate
Berwick-upon-Tweed
Irvine
Ayr
Ballycastle
Londonderry
Ballymena
Larne
Newtownstewart
Omagh
Belfast
Enniskillen
Portadown
Lisburn
Armagh
Newry
Downpatrick
Stranraer
Dumfries
Gretna
Tynemouth
Newcastle
Consett
Sunderland
Carlisle
Penrith
Workington
Whitehaven
Durham
Hartlepool
Middlesbrough
Keswick
Kendal
Scarborough
Morecambe
Lancaster
Harrogate
Beverley
Hornsea
Blackpool
Preston
Leeds
York
Selby
Hull
Southport
Blackburn
Manchester
Holyhead
Colwyn Bay
Liverpool
Runcorn
Sheffield
Barnsley
Caernarfon
Bangor
Queensferry
Worksop
Lincoln
Chirk
Porthmadog
Ffestiniog
Burton-on-Trent
Stoke
Derby
Newark
Barmouth
Dolgellau
Shrewsbury
Stafford
Nottingham
Boston
Machynlleth
Telford
Wolverhampton
Lichfield
Leicester
Peterborough
Wisbech
Norwich
Great Yarmouth
Birmingham
Rhayader
Builth Wells
Hay-on-Wye
Rugby
March
Ely
Lowestoft
Fishguard
Glasbury
Stratford
Northampton
Cambridge
Bury St Edmunds
Carmarthen
Brecon
Abergavenny
Banbury
Milton Keynes
Ipswich
Felixstowe
Llanelli
Swansea
Merthyr
Cheltenham
Hertford
Ware
Harwich
Pontypridd
Gloucester
Chelmsford
Chepstow
Oxford
St Albans
Harlow
Colchester
Cardiff
Bristol
Trowbridge
Slough
London
Southend
Bath
Reading
Sheerness
Ilfracombe
Newport
Wells
Devizes
Ramsgate
Barnstaple
Frome
Winchester
Haslemere
Deal
Taunton
Salisbury
Alton
Guildford
Rochester
Dover
Torrington
Tiverton
Southampton
E Grinstead
Okehampton
Exeter
Dorchester
Chichester
Hythe
Padstow
Exmouth
Eastbourne
Bodmin
Weymouth
Brighton
Hastings
Plymouth
Totnes
Bournemouth
Portsmouth
Newhaven
Truro
Penzance
22.10.96
Delta/PaS/Penny/Mac/NCN

National Cycle Network: Breakdown of Route Types



Greenways: Environmentally sensitive recreational travel. A demonstration project.

Rob Owen

Countryside Council for Wales

Background

The increase in both the number and use of cars over the last 30 years has already had significant impact on the countryside, with significant repercussions for the environment. Many parts of rural Wales already suffer from severe congestion and inconvenience as a result of heavy recreational traffic at peak periods. This situation is likely to get worse with government forecasts suggesting a tripling of car numbers in rural areas by the year 2025 (Countryside Commission, 1992).

At the same time, communities are becoming aware of the benefits that increased levels of tourism can bring to the economy of rural Wales. Market trends show that tourism is currently responsible, directly or indirectly, for about 9% of all jobs in Wales and generating £1.3 billion per annum. The numbers of visitors to Wales is set to increase. In "Tourism 2000" the Wales Tourist Board has identified ambitious targets to increase the number of UK visitors by 1.5% per year and overseas visitors by 6% bringing the annual count up to 10.4 million. This strategy will ensure additional employment throughout Wales bringing economic benefits to rural communities and businesses.

It is recognised by both the Wales Tourist Board and the Countryside Council for Wales that this growth must be controlled and sustainable. It is vital to encourage tourism development which is sympathetic to the environment and its communities. The Countryside Council for Wales believes that it is necessary to consider the problem of increasing recreational traffic by taking an holistic approach incorporating a number of measures such as: traffic management; park and ride schemes; traffic calming; the promotion of bus and rail services; with countryside interpretation integral to this network, and, most importantly, to take into consideration the views and needs of local people. In order to demonstrate how to achieve such an ambitious strategy a pilot scheme was needed to bring together local authorities, national agencies, transport operators and local communities, which could then be established as a model of good practice for rural Wales.

The Countryside Council for Wales identified South Pembrokeshire as an ideal area for a demonstration project. It would be managed by the locally based rural initiative, the South Pembrokeshire Partnership

for Action with Rural Communities (SPARC). The innovative SPARC model of integrated rural development provided all the expertise necessary, and the Countryside Council for Wales felt that the pioneering work carried out in countryside access, way-marking and interpretation was a vital component of the demonstration project.

A Partnership Approach

The South Pembrokeshire Greenways project was launched in May 1994. This proactive project demonstrates how an integrated approach can successfully address issues concerning rural Wales; in this case the problem of increasing traffic congestion. The project is co-ordinated by SPARC and funded by the Countryside Council for Wales, the Welsh Development Agency, Dyfed County Council and South Pembrokeshire District Council. SPARC has also secured, through Dyfed Country Council, European funding from the ATLANTIS Programme. Greenways is also supported by the Wales Tourist Board, British Rail and the local bus companies, Jones of Login and Silcox Coaches.

Objectives

At an early stage it was necessary for the partners to agree clear objectives. These were as follows:

- To encourage those staying visitors who travelled to South Pembrokeshire by car to minimize their use of the car whilst in the area.
- To improve access to local centres of employment, leisure and other facilities for people without private cars.
- To encourage day visitors to travel to the area by public transport whenever feasible or at least to use environmentally friendly transport within South Pembrokeshire.
- To encourage local residents with cars to use public transport whenever possible.

Programme of Action

A three year programme has been agreed to integrate the efforts of these organisations and to provide a successful demonstration scheme. A Greenways project officer, based with SPARC, provides the day to day co-ordination and is responsible for identifying projects and carrying out work on the ground which ensures that suitable recreation opportunities are accessible using local train and bus services.

In 1994, a special Greenways bus service was introduced, linked to rail services. This provided local people and visitors with easy access to the South Pembrokeshire coast and countryside. The experimental service created a unique opportunity for linear walks along the more remote parts of the Pembrokeshire

Coast Path and assured return transport to local towns and railway stations. During 1994, local bus timetables were being adapted to include convenient stops for walkers, entailing services taking detours to coastal car parks and beauty spots.

The other successes of Greenways during its first 12 months can be summarised as follows:

- The production of a Greenways Information Pack providing walkers with easy-to-use timetables and information on the walks accessible by public transport.
- The distribution of information packs and promotion of Greenways throughout West and South Wales.
- The development of three circular, themed, way-marked walks linked to local bus and train services which are described in a series of leaflets – *The Miners Walk*, *The Ritec Walk* and *The All Saints Walk*.
- The identification and way-making of over 200 miles of cycling routes (both off and on-road) and the production of two full-colour cycling guides.
- The production of information panels at rural railway stations on the South Pembrokeshire line.

Monitoring Procedures

During the summer of 1995 a student from the University of Lampeter was employed to undertake a series of monitoring surveys. Data was collected on the following:

- train use;
- bus use;
- footpath use;
- off and on road cycle route use;
- changes in traffic flows and volume;
- patterns of car parking;
- distribution of marketing;
- public attitudes to infrastructure improvements, marketing etc;
- views of local residents and business;
- economic effects on local business.

It is too early to say whether or not the objectives of the scheme are being met. Early indications hint that, as one would suspect, the current use of public transport as a means of accessing footpaths and cycle routes is minimal, but there is considerable potential for expansion. Success will depend partly on getting the infrastructure right, but mostly on a long-term awareness campaign.

Future Projects

This will involve the further development of the cycling and walking networks throughout South Pembrokeshire; the greater involvement of private operators to promote a service for walkers and cyclists to access South Pembrokeshire from South Wales; the development of interpretative / information panels at bus stops; the promotion of a programme of guided walks accessible by rail and the production of a series of "Walk and Ride" leaflets. The marketing of Greenways is also of great importance and a strategy to encourage media coverage has been developed.

Summary and Discussion Points

It is too early to say whether or not the Greenways initiative will be viewed as a success. As in many such projects finance needs to be secured on an annual basis and often the energy needed to keep the project going deflects from getting the work done. There are a number of questions which need to be addressed:

- Are the objectives realistic?
- What degree of modal switch is needed to constitute a success?
- How can local partnerships be made to work?
- What other examples are there of similar initiatives in the UK and abroad?
- How can the lessons and experiences of different projects be shared?
- How will the lessons from all such initiatives play a part in bringing about wider change?

The underlying philosophy of this innovative approach is, both to recreational visitor and to user, an easily accessible "Green" network which integrates public transport with walking and cycling. The question is, can the Greenways project make a significant contribution towards establishing a model for, and environmentally sensitive approach to, recreational transport, allowing tourism, conservation and the interests of local communities to exist in harmony?

The prevention of further congestion in the face of increasing use of cars can be deemed an indication of success. However, it may be difficult to convince council members that public money needs to be spent on a long term basis just to stop the situation from getting any worse. A common theme to emerge is the commitment, both in terms of time and money needed, to make such initiatives work. A three year experiment isn't really long enough, especially if the necessary finance has to be negotiated each year.

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2. Wales Tourist Board (1994) *Tourism 2000, a Strategy for Wales.*
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4. CRN (1994) *A Drive in the Country.* Proceedings of a workshop held at Aston Business School.

Recommissioning the 'MV Swift': Creative Traffic Management in the Lake District National Park

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Coventry Business School, Coventry University

Introduction

This paper is concerned with the recommissioning of the MV Swift. The vessel, originally built in 1900 and powered by steam, has lain idle since virtual abandonment by British Rail round about 1980. There are cheaper alternatives for the current operators than to restore the MV Swift. The total likely restoration cost for a capacity of 450 is close to £1m. The cost of a brand new customised craft with a capacity of 250 would be less than half of this, at around £350 – £400,000. Capital assistance with the costs of restoration may come from grant awarding bodies such as the Maritime Trust, or alternatively an organisation such as Cumbria TEC which would perceive the restoration as a job creation measure. There will be no ongoing subsidy available once the MV Swift starts operations.

The major purpose of this research is to assess the likelihood of profitable operation of the Swift should it be recommissioned. This involves forecasts of demand for the service it could provide on Windermere and design features likely to make it appeal to day-trippers and holidaymakers in the area. This would be both as a leisure activity in its own right and as a form of transport between Lakeside and Bowness. The latter will be emphasised within this paper: it should be borne in mind that, in effect, what would be on offer here is a Park and Ride facility in all but name.

Key areas to be covered include those of service design, timetabling and promotion. A strong marketing role is emphasised. The contribution of such an operation to traffic management in and around Bowness on Windermere, the most heavily congested of Lake District towns is emphasised.

The Lake District

The Lake District is Britain's premier national park, lying within the County of Cumbria. It has international fame not only for its landscape and scenery, but also for its literary associations. Wordsworth and Coleridge lived here and drew inspiration from its landscape. Beatrix Potters' "Peter Rabbit" books, translated across the world, are largely based on the geography of the area. The opportunities for many outdoor activities are formidable. However, the area is in fact very compact; from the north to the south of

the park is approximately 70 kilometres, from west to east approximately 50 kilometres. Access to the area is by traffic routes which themselves are constrained by the very mountains and valleys which the visitors of course come to see. The Lake District attracts more holidaymakers than any other national park, both from the UK and from overseas and this figure is forecast to grow. There were an estimated 20 million visitor days in 1991 (Countryside Commission 1991).

The Use of Cars in National Parks

Among the environmental problems facing national parks is that of the use of cars. The popularity of the car raises issues of pollution and demands on land use – but also causes problems of traffic congestion and possible loss of the very attractiveness which brings visitors in the first place. Parking and traffic in the "honey pot" areas of Keswick, Grasmere and (particularly!) Bowness has resulted in a traffic management initiative funded by concerned parties including the Countryside Commission and the National Park Authority.

Recently, the Edwards Report (1991) was the result of a wide-ranging examination of NP functions initiated by the Countryside Commission. Edwards examined the issue of traffic management and commented in Section 5.5: "National Parks have been no more imaginatively dealt with in traffic management terms than has the countryside at large.....the results, in the main, have been disappointing." (p 50/1).

Indeed, continuing "disappointments" with public transport initiatives may lead to a general conclusion that public transport has no part to play in the traffic strategies of scenic areas.

But these will be important. The current and future difficulties posed by car usage are shown in the Department of Transport's traffic forecasts (1989) and research based on those figures conducted for the Countryside Commission by Stokes, Goodwin and Kenny (1992). It was argued that car traffic could be expected to increase more in the countryside than in urban areas and that growth might reach 267% of current levels by the year 2025. This reflects an increase in demand for leisure travel, as both available leisure time and disposable income slowly increase. At a micro level, the Yorkshire Dales National Park (1993) applied the Commission's predictions to a current figure of 599 cars parked at Malham on an August Bank Holiday. If those predictions were realised, the figure might reach 1,599 by 2025. In the Lake District, research by the author indicates that 74% of day visitors to the Windermere area approach the area from the M6, with consequent concentrations in Bowness and at Waterhead, Ambleside. A 267% increase in traffic levels on this concentrated corridor would have exaggerated effects.

The Edwardian Era and Beyond

But it was not always thus. In Edwardian times, there were two approaches to Bowness on Windermere. One was by the LNWR to Windermere (village) and then by coach and horse two miles to Bowness on Windermere (lake). The other was by the Furness railway via Ulverston to Lakeside station, at the southern tip of Windermere (lake) and then by steamer to Bowness. These were competing routes. The Furness railway route offered a leisurely approach to Bowness across England's biggest lake, with splendid views towards the high fells. The LNWR route was, in practice, quicker (the rail link to Windermere is still intact and is nowadays "shadowed" by the A591 trunk road).In 1900, MV Swift was ordered by the Furness Railway Company. She was 158 feet in length and assembled at Lakeside. At launch, her passenger capacity was a huge 781– but this was well before the Health and Safety Act!

But times change. The branch from Ulverston to Lakeside closed during the Beeching era. Although part of the branch still exists as a steam railway it is dismembered and performs only a leisure function rather than offering a form of transport. The MV Swift, then owned by British Rail, was converted to steam in 1957 and she was lain up in 1981. The old goods yard is now an under utilised 400 vehicle car park. Visitors still arrive at Lakeside along the A590 to travel on ships. Nowadays, though, they arrive mainly by car (81%, Eaton 1993) and ride on vessels which, though maintained safely and to a good standard, have technology and engines on board which are a little dated and do not always match the operators' requirements.

Hence the importance of MV Swift. She is now owned by the Windermere Iron Steamboat Company (WISCO), who propose a total refit and restoration of engines, decks and superstructure. The total likely restoration cost for a capacity of 450 is close to £1m. The cost of a brand new customised craft with a capacity of 250 would be around £350 – £400,000.

So much for costs. Revenues involve forecasts of demand for the service the MV Swift could provide between Lakeside and Bowness – effectively servicing the old Furness railway route, except that these days visitors will arrive largely by car rather than by train. How could this be designed to appeal to day-trippers and holidaymakers in the area? The service would be both a leisure activity in its own right and a form of transport between Lakeside and Bowness, in effect, a Park and Ride facility in all but name.

Even in its earliest days the MV Swift was used both as a form of transport and as a form of leisure by different visitors.

"Mr Alfred Aslett, the secretary and general manager of the Furness Railway, has instituted a system of splendid tours to various interesting parts of the Lake District and these have not only proved very popular, but have been the means of opening up the Lake District and its beauties to hundreds of thousands of tourists."

(1909 Furness Railway Guide)

The Service and Alternatives

WISCO operates the largest craft in the Lake District, referred to as steamers or ships which indeed they are. Facilities on board include loos, a bar and a cafe. Some passengers feel more secure on larger craft and therefore WISCO might claim to have a product of some quality. Windermere is also the longest lake, so the company can offer the longest trip in terms of miles and hours. Indeed, a full round trip is timetabled at a shade over three hours, therefore offering a service which can take up an entire afternoon if desired.

The MV Swift would have a high specification which may include on-board phones, facilities for the disabled, children and babies. In addition, modern engines would be more efficient and could reduce travelling time.

Little comment has been made thus far about the contribution that WISCO services make to visitor management around Windermere. The Lake District traffic management initiative is, of course, keen to reduce (or even stabilise!) traffic flows in the National Park. To put it bluntly, this means either less visitors or visitors changing, at least in part, their mode of transport. If we assume that total visitor numbers are not going to drop (and there is considerable evidence to the contrary) then the second tactic needs to be pursued. The services can contribute to visitor management in three ways.

Firstly, holidaymakers who have already arrived in the area by private car could then travel round the district by public transport.

Secondly there will be usage of the steamers by passengers who do not use a private car. They would arrive at Lakeside/Bowness by bus and/or train: do remember that the 1949 Act has an obligation for national parks to "promote their enjoyment by the public" (s5.1). This includes that 30% of the population without access to their own car!

Finally, the Park and Ride function. The key advantage here is that of capacity. Other initiatives taken in the area have suggested the use of minibuses which, on typical load factors, may carry only half a dozen passengers. Thus, only two cars are replaced by one minibus: hardly a congestion gain.

The proposed capacity of 450 for the MV Swift would, if operating on a load factor of 50%, replace some 56 cars each and every sailing: cars which could be at Lakeside rather than at Bowness. This is based on an average party size of 4.03 (Eaton 1993). If we assume seven return trips per day, this is a total of 392 cars. Now, since the average daily number of cars approaching Bowness in August 1994 was 8650 (CCC 1995: 1994 figure) then this might reduce traffic flows by 4.5%: a significant amount.

Attracting the Customers

So how do we attract passengers for the first time – and make them want to come again?

Firstly, convenience. The Association of County Councils (1994) reported recently on "seamless" public transport. This concluded that timing and ease of connections were important so that the passengers could perceive their journey to be hassle free. Quite simply, if this is not the case, they will not repeat the journey. Water craft do have an advantage over trains and buses here. If buses or trains are late passengers start to be concerned that they won't come at all. At least with a boat you can see it is coming from a distance, so the uncertainty and insecurity is taken away.

Despite this, previous research has indicated that people will not wait long for public transport however attractive. Out of a choice of sixteen suggestions for changes to public transport in the Lake District, "services arriving on time" was rated the single most important feature which would influence visitors to use public transport more. To reinforce this, "things to do while wating for arrivals" was only fifteenth (Eaton 1993). Visitors regard waiting time as dead time in a way that they do not regard looking for a car parking space as dead time. This may be illogical, but it is how visitors act in practice. As a result, very simple and frequent timetabling would need to operate. Ideally, steamers could leave Lakeside on the hour and half past the hour and then return from Bowness on the hour and half past the hour.

This would generate a timetable so simple that visitors could carry it round in their heads rather than in their pockets. Current timings, however, schedule Bowness to Lakeside at 35/40 minutes. Hence the importance of MV Swift, since there is now the technical possibility of installing bow thrusters during recommission to cut turning and docking time. This may get the journey time down to below half an hour – say 29 minutes each way, which would be impossible on the existing vessels. This would give a return time of less than an hour which would be psychologically important as well as important for ease of timetabling.

Pricing for Different Markets

There is no doubt that visitors are prepared to pay more for leisure than they are for transport. This can be seen locally between Bowness and Ambleside where visitors pay a premium fare to go on the top deck of

an open top bus: to travel on the regular service bus with only a marginally different route costs rather less. However, how does WISCO know who uses their steamers for leisure and who uses them for Park and Ride? The answer is, it doesn't. This limits price discrimination to a degree, but product discrimination tactics can be used. The most obvious of these relates to car parking. A party of two adults and three children arriving in Bowness via Lakeside would pay, on 1995 fares, £13.75. The same group's maximum parking charge at Bowness for six hours a day would be £3.50. Hence it may be worth WISCO giving that party, if it embarks at Lakeside, the incentive of free parking advertised as "Save £3.50 on Bowness parking prices". The effect of this would be to "reduce" the fare by the same £3.50 to £10.25 (or perhaps even £9.99?). Lakeside also has the advantage of a supervised car park – a feature commented on favourably in past research.

Pricing for those who use the steamers for part of their journey is also important. Here the key factor is the total price for train/bus and water travel. The company already operates combined ticketing within Cumbria with Regional Railways and Stagecoach, but may also wish to look beyond the county boundary.

In summary then what does a WISCO passenger get in return for his/her money? The following are the main product benefits:

1. Transport between Lakeside/Bowness/Ambleside.
2. A cruise on Windermere.
3. The security and safety of larger vessels.
4. Views of scenery which cannot be got from any other form of transport.
5. A photographic opportunity.
6. A regular timetabled service.
7. The opportunity to purchase combined transport packages.
8. At Lakeside, associated car parking.
9. The expertise and guidance of staff.
10. Associated products such as guidebooks, refreshments etc.

On and Off Site Promotion

There is little doubt that currently the best form of promotion is for visitors who are already in Bowness to see the ships on Windermere and then to decide to use them. This is rather less effective for that group who are still a distance from the lake: the group we are trying to attract from the M6 away from Bowness to Lakeside for obvious reasons. However, since we are trying to attract users from the M6 to Lakeside, then promotion should start on the motorway itself. As such, leafleting at appropriate service stations on the M6 on Sundays and at other peak times may well be worthwhile.

The other form of motorway promotion is brown tourist signing on the M6 itself. This gives early notice to the visitor which means that they would then be looking out in advance for signposts later on the A590.

There is an important psychological aspect here: visitors may be less likely to follow brown signs on just a couple of hundred yards notice, but may be more inclined to do so when given a few miles – and therefore a few minutes – notice.

The second feature of motorway signing is of course that it may in itself effect the desired diversion of visitors to Lakeside from Bowness.

This idea of "advance promotion" should not be underestimated. It is unlikely that many visitors will change their intended travel plans on the spur of the moment (ie between a brown tourist sign and its following junction a few hundred yards and perhaps twenty seconds later). However, if they are looking for that sign because they have been alerted by other brown signs, by leaflets, by information picked up in Manchester or Birmingham before they even set out, then they may well already be minded to travel to Lakeside a fair time and distance ahead. It is accepted, of course, that these sorts of issues are more important considerations for customers who are day visitors than those on holiday within the Lake District.

Usage and Capacity

The table applies Department of Transport forecasts made in 1988 to actual counts of traffic on the A590 and A591 approach roads to Lakeside, and to steamer passenger numbers. Overall there is a pattern of inconsistent but moderate growth in WISCO numbers. The key factor which emerges, though, is that growth on the A590 and A591 is almost exactly in line with the DoT forcasts. The 1994 index indices of 119.1 and 118.0 sit fairly happily in the middle of the low and high forecast of 114.7 and 123.2 respectively. The assumption which we could now make, therefore, is that traffic growth on the A590 and A591 combined will continue to rise up to the year 2000 at a rate consistent with a middle forecast from the National Road Traffic Forecasts (NRTF). This would give us the following indices:

FORECAST/ACTUAL CAR AND WISCO TRAFFIC GROWTH INDICES (1988 = 100)				
YEAR	WISCO	NRTF (Mid)	A590	A591
1994	110.6	119	119.1	118.0
2000		134.5	134.6	133.4
2000 (1994 = 100)		113.0	113.1	112.1

Sources: NRTF (DoT) 1988, CCC (1995). Note: Figures are exclusive of heavy goods vehicles and PSVs.

This would indicate a projected growth of 13.1% in car traffic along the A590 between 1994 and the year 2000.

Next, we can try to work out how many extra customers WISCO is likely to get as a result of this extra traffic.

Earlier research by the author asked as one of its questions - "Did you plan to travel with us before you set out today?" The Lakeside segment of the sample indicated 83% who had planned to visit in advance with only 17% who had not. This percentage converts into 135 passengers per day. Taking the average party size of 4.03 derived from that research it can be calculated that "unplanned" cars which WISCO pulls off the A590 by existing signposting number a total of only 35 per day. This is 0.59% of annual daily traffic flow of 5915 in 1994. However, if we assume that the same percentage of summer traffic could also be pulled off the A591 by improved signposting (for instance on the M6), then this will attract 51 cars (and hence 206 passengers) per day.

Conclusions

So where does all this leave us?

If those visitors heading from the M6 to Bowness could be diverted by way of signposting to Lakeside in the same proportion as passengers are currently attracted from the A590 by signposting, then this would generate an extra 266 passengers per day on the Lakeside to Bowness leg. Over the 1994 summer season, this would have represented an increase in passenger numbers between May and September of 34.1%.

So what are the dangers in this forecast? Firstly, the weather. Leisure demand is notoriously affected by good weather, leading to short term peaks in demand and capacity constraints.

The second caveat to this forecast, of course, is that it is a lot further from the A591 to Lakeside than from the A590 to Lakeside. Nonetheless this sort of diversion is crucial to the economic operation of a recommissioned MV Swift. The diversion is also key to the planning board's objectives for visitor management in the area. This sort of enterprise should contribute measurably to those objectives, by encouraging private car users to "abandon" their cars on the boundary of the National Park. There are also the prospects for job creation and permanent employment in the area as a result of this project.

Finally, however, the passenger. Much of this research has been concerned with attracting passengers to Lakeside for the first time. Whether those passengers come again, and whether they recommend WISCO services to their friends will depend on the experience that they have during the day. It may well be that

interchange times and provision of facilities both at Lakeside and Bowness need some improvement: any necessary new facilities should be developed at the same time as the Swift is recommissioned. However, if this can be done, there will be enhanced enjoyment for visitors who will be more likely to repeat their visit.

Still to be addressed is the capital required and the Company is now seeking support from the Rural Development Commission and possible EU Objective 5B funding. A bid for Lottery funding is also a possibility.

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Hand-held Computers and Terminals for Asset Management

Glenn Millar, British Waterways
Anne Glover, Pennine Way Coordination Project

British Waterways Asset Management

What Is an Asset?

In this context an asset is considered to be "infrastructure required for the functioning of the business". It excludes 'people assets'.

For inland waterways, these assets include:-

- structures required for maintaining the integrity of navigation, such as locks, bridges, tunnels, aqueducts, etc.
- buildings – canalside buildings in the ownership of BW, such as warehouses, lock keepers cottages, etc.
- infrastructure and facilities required by visitors, such as sanitary stations, boat moorings, towpaths, etc.

What Is Asset Management?

Asset management is a key component of strategic and business planning. It involves the gathering of information about the current condition and future potential of assets, so that informed decisions can be made regarding their future management, in relation to funds available.

The asset management process is driven by a series of obligations which must be met. These include:

1. statutory requirements, e.g. listed buildings/structures
2. public safety and liability
3. defined levels of service for users

Points 1 & 2 set basic minimum standards that must be achieved. Point 3 sets standards to meet 'customer charter' obligations.

Public Safety & Statutory Obligations

A system was required to be used quickly and simply by local staff to enable a relative assessment of the major structural assets to be made and from this determine:-

- a priority list for more detailed examination
- an estimate of maintenance budget requirements

Hand-held computer terminals were considered the best option for this, to facilitate the collection of data in the field. They eliminate the need for double entry of data, thus reducing cost and the potential for error.

Characteristics of System

1) Hardware – Use of hand–held loggers

AMS DataSafe three terminals were used. These have the following characteristics:-

- C-based
- Robust
- The downside is the capital cost of the units (c£1,000). However, they are likely to have a longer life than cheaper, less robust terminals.

2) Software

Specifically written in 'C' for the Asset Management process.

3) Data Collection

i) Descriptions of structures and distances between them are put on the terminal for the waterway length to be surveyed (*Annex 1*). This data is held on Regional AS400 computers for waterway management purposes.

ii) The surveyor then travels the length of the waterway to be surveyed. Questions are asked about each structure as encountered (*Annex 2*). These are in a 'Yes/No' format.

4) Data analysis

After collection the data is downloaded to a PC back at the office, for analysis (currently using Paradox database software).

i) 'Service impairment< rankings are used for analysis – each "Yes" answer is given a score. The summation of the scores shows the relative impairment of the structure; the higher the score, the greater the priority for further investigation and action to remedy the defects (*Annex 3*).

ii) Standard replacement and maintenance cost estimates for the different structures can then be applied to give a quick and consistent estimate of the total funding required for the assets surveyed.

iii) Impairment scores & cost estimates and assumptions can be changed to suit local conditions & requirements.

'Customer Care' Obligations

Work is currently in progress to extend the system to cover 'Customer Care' obligations. The system is intended to cover the Quality Control element of this process.

'Caring for Britain's Waterways' sets out BW's obligations towards users. Under this initiative, Waterway Standards have been set for each canal or river to cover these customer-related elements. These Standards are set as a result of user feedback, which determines the level of maintenance and provision of facilities on specific lengths of canal.

The proposed system will be:-

1) Based on description and distance data downloaded from Regional AS400s, as for the Asset Management System.

2) Question-based. However, it will accommodate more than just 'Yes - No' questions. (Example questions for bridges are set out below.)

3) Capable of dealing with questions related to the length being walked (or boated) as well as site-based facilities or structures.

Data collected will be downloaded to PC in the office, to assess what work needs to be done to ensure that standards are being met. It will be simple enough to be used by surveyors with minimum training. Therefore, it could be used by user groups to verify Standards. This is a unique opportunity to involve customers in the quality control process.

Example Questions for Bridges

1 Is the bridge clearly numbered/named?

2 Is convenient public access available?

3 Is ramped access for the disabled provided?

4 Is the access signed in accordance with BW cycling policy?

5 Is there public access (from roads/footpaths, etc.) at the bridge?

6 If Y,

- (a) Is ramped access for the disabled provided?
- (b) Is the access signed in accordance with BW cycling policy?
- (c) Is there car parking available?
  If Y, for approximately how many cars?

7 Is the bridge movable?

8 If Y,

- (a) Are clear operating instructions provided?
- (b) Is signing provided for the safety of users/public?
- (c) Is there a landing upstream of the bridge?
  If Y,
  - (a) Is it clearly visible from an approaching craft?
  - (b) Has the landing area a level surface?
  - (c) Has it a hard edge?
  - (d) Are mooring bollards available?
  - (e) How many boats (typical for waterway) does the landing cater for?
  - (f) Does water depth allow mooring alongside for typical boats?
  - (g) If N, does depth allow mooring within two feet of landing edge?
- (d) Is there a landing downstream of the bridge?
  If Y,
  - (a) Is it clearly visible from an approaching craft?
  - (b) Has the landing area a level surface?
  - (c) Has it a hard edge?
  - (d) Are mooring bollards available?
  - (e) How many boats (typical for waterway) does the landing cater for?
  - (f) Does water depth allow mooring alongside for typical boats?
  - (g) If N, does depth allow mooring within two feet of landing edge?

Pennine Way Asset Management

Introduction

The Pennine Way is 502km [314miles] in total, including loops. It runs between Edale in Derbyshire and Kirk Yetholm in the Scottish borders taking in Northern England's finest moorland scenery and major scenic attractions.

The Pennine Way Coordination Project was set up in 1989 to complete the first full condition survey and report on the results. At that time the scale of the erosion problem had not been quantified. The restoration project was based on the priorities identified in the condition survey. A subsequent condition survey was completed in 1994.

Why Survey?

A survey is essential to assess the state of the access network. It can be used to record conditions for erosion control and also to provide information for legal definitive map work. The Countryside Commission's Milestones approach requires a survey in order to set realistic targets and measure progress.

A survey is the first stage in rational planned management.

A Planned Approach to Management

1. Condition Survey
2. Data Analysis and Collation
3. Management Strategies and Quality Standards
4. Management Action Programmes
5. Budget Management
6. Database Update and Management Audits

What kind of information is collected for path management?

The field survey has the following objectives in information collection:

- to locate and accurately record the nature and condition of natural and manmade surfaces on a definitive route and on any deviations from it;
- to record the location and nature of any obstructions to the definitive route;

- to record the provision and nature of the countryside furniture and assess its condition;
- to record any deviations and misalignments of the PRoW;
- to facilitate the identification of a number of permanent sites, characteristic of problem and benchmark sites, which will form a baseline for monitoring future change.

What kind of information is useful for path management?

The Pennine Way condition survey records information on the condition of the path surface, countryside furniture and navigation aids present, and the physical properties of the terrain. 44 fields of data are collected for each item. For the path surface these include the worn and bare width of the path, the slope, soil type, terrain, cause of damage, etc. All details which affect the condition of the path or influence management decisions are recorded.

Management Databases and Systematic Maintenance

The condition survey produces a database of information about each item. Each record is allocated a unique reference number which is then used for all databases relating to that item.

In addition to the descriptive survey database, additional management databases can be produced detailing maintenance requirements, budget predictions, and any management works undertaken. The development of management databases allows systematic maintenance regimes to be established.

Recording the Data

The survey information is referenced to base maps and is stored on computer in a database format. Photographs are taken of all items which require urgent attention and surfaces above a set impact threshold. Notes can be made to supplement the data, these are typed directly into the hand-held computer and are included in the database.

Each section of path and item of countryside furniture has a unique reference number which can be devised to be compatible with any other system already in use, for example the LINKS system.

Using Computers

The main benefit of using computers is in significantly speeding up the collation of survey data and in reporting the survey results.

Use of the Psion 3a on the Pennine Way Condition Survey

Inputting data – data is entered directly into the Psion via the keyboard in response to a series of prompts from the program.

Storing data – the data is stored on a removable solid-state disk. This provides a flexible and safe data storage system which is protected against data loss in the event of power failure.

Downloading – for the Pennine Way survey downloading was carried out weekly. This was to prevent excessive data loss in the event of the Psion being stolen or severely damaged. The data is transferred in text format directly from the Psion into an IBM compatible PC. A laptop was used for the 1994 survey as the surveyors did not return to base for several weeks at a time. The transferred data can be handled using any standard software package capable of importing text files. A COMMS package is required to link the Psion to the PC to enable the data to be exported.

Computer Hardware

- Psion 3a with 256K RAM.
- Qwerty keyboard with 127mm–45mm screen. Reasonably robust but not waterproof, must be used in a polythene bag in wet conditions. Hinges are a weak point but have not caused any major problems.

Costs

- £210 per unit plus £50 for the COMMS link and £50 for the solid-state disks (128K RAM).
- Very easy to use.
- "Cheap and disposable"

Software

Written specifically for use on the Pennine Way but can easily be adapted for use on other trails – currently being used in Scotland and Sussex.

Adapting the methodology

Additional fields of data can be collected, for example details of work required can easily be added in to the methodology. Codings can be altered in the field if required.

Exploring the Internet

Nicky Ferguson
University of Bristol

The Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG)

The rapid expansion of the Internet and global networked information resources is making it increasingly difficult for users to navigate through the networks and find useful materials.

The Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG) is supported by the HEFCE's Electronic Libraries Programme (eLib) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and allows social science researchers and practitioners easily to discover and access relevant high-quality networked resources worldwide.

SOSIG project staff are committed to improving the accessibility of relevant, quality information and encouraging new networked information providers as well as providing training and training materials specifically tailored for subject specialists in both paper and on-line form.

The Internet

There are three main facilities available on the Internet: electronic mail (e-mail), file transfer and interactive access. This article gives a brief description of each of the big three and introduces some of the services available through SOSIG and other network resources which may be of interest to social scientists and practitioners.

Destination unknown?

Once the preserve of university computer experts, the concept, language and reality of a global network -- the Internet -- are fast gaining a place in intellectual, political and urban culture. Whilst heavyweight newspaper and journal articles proclaim and ponder on the network revolution, Cybercafes are opening in major cities to provide the devoted and the curious with the means to surf the net for a few pounds an hour. Not wishing to miss the bus on the Information Superhighway, politicians at home and abroad interlard their speeches with network jargon and sing the Internet's praises as the vehicle for improved communication worldwide.

Behind all the hype lies the undeniable fact that valuable networked resources are becoming more accessible. Many social scientists know colleagues here or abroad who use the Internet, and most have encountered e-mail, but the networks can offer much more. Time zones and distance are no object in the sharing of computing and information resources. In fact the huge number of resources available (library catalogues, discussion groups, on-line texts, bulletin boards, file archives, etc) presents the would-be Internet user with a problem – navigation. The thrill of gaining access to the Internet soon wears off: the choice of destinations is vast, the possible routes confusing. Even if you do manage to find your way through the maze, what looked like a promising destination can often turn out to be a dead end or sidetrack, or to have vanished like a lost city leaving no forwarding address. The sheer size and continually changing nature of the Internet mean that no printed guide can hope to offer comprehensive coverage. So how do you find your way to sites of interest and avoid wrong turnings and rubbish dumps? Information Gateways like SOSIG can help in providing an up to date and well-maintained starting point with directions and guides to many other resources and a safe haven to return to if you get lost.

This article, then, is an attempt at a rough guide to the Internet, touching on the main stepping stones of connection and electronic mail, explaining some of the terms and concentrating on how to get the best use from the Internet once you're there.

What is the Internet?

Networks which connect one computer to another have existed for many years, all with the same basic aims of sharing resources and improving communication. Some networks are limited on a local basis, linking computers in an office or a company. Other nets are spread more widely, linking a group of academic, commercial or government institutions within a country. In the United States, many of the networks were linked together by a super network which came to be known as the Internet. This has grown out of all recognition, taking on a life of its own and allowing the linking of computer networks worldwide. It supports electronic mail and discussion groups, databases, archives, interactive services and information retrieval tools, including the World Wide Web (WWW). It is growing exponentially and if it were to continue at the present rate, some time in the next decade there would be more nodes (computers with a link to the Internet) than people in the world. No-one owns or runs the Internet and no-one can predict with any certainty what its growth and advancement will mean in practice – there is no shortage, however, of crystal ball-gazers wanting to try! Many Internet users in academic organisations need no crystal ball to identify the advantages already available.

Why use the networks?

International computer networks provide a cheap and effective vehicle for collaboration, communication and research. Long distances and differences in time zone do not matter. It is easy to share resources amongst a group of researchers and make results available quickly and simultaneously to as many people

as you want. Once you get used to navigating the Internet you will find you have access to a huge variety of resources, including the expertise of many other network users, the power of many computers and programs and stored information from millions of sources.

Getting connected

From a university ..... If you are working in a higher education institution you should have easy access to a network as all UK universities are connected to JANET, the UK Joint Academic NETwork. Recently JANET has been connecting many universities directly to the Internet. Just how you connect from your office machine varies, so "how you start" instructions aren't provided here. Ask your local computing services department or, better still, find someone who already knows the ropes and who is willing to spare some time to share that knowledge with you. All costs are currently met by institutions and the research councils so you will not incur charges for using the Internet (but you may need to buy an add-on such as an ethernet card for your machine).

From home ..... If you are connected with a higher education institution and you work at home then you should talk to your computer services staff about connecting to the institution via a modem, using your home telephone. Most will allow this and, once you have made the initial connection, you should be able to get out onto the Internet at only the cost of the local phone call to the institution.

Using the Internet

Talking to the world – E-mail and more

E-mail allows you to exchange messages worldwide and is used increasingly for collaboration, research and dissemination of papers because of its speed and flexibility. It allows quick question and answer sessions and rapid revisions and corrections to documents, and the recipient does not need to be in (as for phone calls) and you can choose when to read and reply to your e-mail, to cut down on interruptions.

To use e-mail you need access to a mail system and to a computer connected to the Internet. Mail systems vary in both look and facilities offered, but most allow you to send, receive, forward, reply to and store messages. Some also let you attach text and graphics files to your messages. E-mail addresses are usually quoted worldwide as a mail-name plus a site name, separated by the @ symbol eg lesly.huxley@bris.ac.uk (Internet format). You may encounter old-style UK site names eg lesly.huxley@uk.ac.bris which are no longer accepted by some systems. If you have problems with these, transpose them to the Internet format above. Mailing someone for the first time can be a problem unless you already know the address. Mail systems usually allow you to see (and sometimes save) the address of the sender of a message and some limited directory services are available, but often the best way to find out is still by phone call or letter.

Discussion lists (mailing lists) allow a group of people with similar interests to discuss issues and share ideas using only a few simple e-mail commands. You can easily keep in touch with a group of geographically disparate colleagues; your one message can be circulated to the group and replies or comments seen by everyone in a matter of minutes. Messages are archived for future reference and some systems also allow files to be stored and retrieved by list members.

MAILBASE is the UK discussion list system based at the University of Newcastle with many thousand subscribers (you do not pay) and several hundred lists. Each list is narrowly targeted to make sure you only receive messages of interest. To join a list you send a specific message to the machine (or sometimes the person) that runs the list (NOT the list itself). Messages sent to the list are distributed to all the list members.

To find out how to use MAILBASE send the following one-word e-mail message:

help

to: mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk

This will introduce you to the conventions used in joining (subscribing to) lists and a way of finding out which lists are available. Many discussion lists of interest to social scientists are also accessible from the Social Science Information Gateway (see overleaf).

File transfer – ftp

Copies of anything that can be stored as a file on a computer (word processed documents, databases, graphics, programs, etc) can be transferred over the networks from one computer to another. File transfer over the Internet is known as FTP (File Transfer Protocol). Many sites have set up repositories of files which are freely available: these are known as FTP archives. The process of transfer from these is called Anonymous FTP because you do not need a username and password to use them. Some systems may ask you for your e-mail address as password but you will not need to be registered on the remote system as you might if you were transferring files to another computer.

Descriptions of and connections to FTP archives related to the social sciences are available from SOSIG.

Interactive access to the Internet

Also known as telnet, after the program used in the process, interactive access is the operation by which you make a connection between the machine on your desk and another computer anywhere in the world (a remote host) and then use it as if it were your own. Many thousands of computers freely allow public access in this way: you can read news items, bulletin boards, search through on-line library catalogues (OPACs) and data archives, browse through articles and even books and ask the remote computer to e-mail

them to you. As a point of etiquette it is worth remembering that most services on the Internet are made available by volunteers. Many, particularly in the USA, are very busy during their working day, so please try to use US-based services in the morning, before their day starts. You will find access times are much improved and you get fewer system busy messages.

To make a telnet call or connection you need to know the address of the computer you want to connect to. Internet addresses can be quoted as a number (Internet Protocol – IP– address) or, in most cases, a name (Domain Name Server – DNS) which is easier to remember. To make a telnet connection to Edinburgh University's OPAC you would type:

telnet geac.ed.ac.uk or telnet 129.215.38.8

Information tools – Gopher's main attraction is that once you are logged on to one Gopher service you can access any other in the world without having to remember unfriendly network addresses or use different interfaces (Gophers only link to other Gophers). Gopher services can be accessed via telnet, a Gopher client (software) or from within a www browser (see below).

WWW (also known as W3) is a sophisticated tool allowing access to many worldwide services – including Gopher and FTP archives – with the added attraction of being able to display graphics on-line to those using clients or browsers such as Netscape or Mosaic. A text-only browser, Lynx, is also available. If you do not have a browser you can access Lynx from various sites via telnet. Material prepared specifically for the www uses addresses in the following format: http://www.bris.ac.uk/ and allows you to make hyperlinks to all kinds of resources anywhere in the world in any order you want. You can also become hopelessly lost, forgetting where you started from or where an interesting resource was located.

Information Gateways can help by bringing together links to useful and relevant resources to aid navigation and make some sense of the apparent chaos of the networks. The NISS Gateway provides links to UK universities' Campus Wide Information Servers (CWIS) and OPACs as well as more general services of interest.

telnet niss.ac.uk
or http://www.niss.ac.uk/education/hesites/

Several general academic and subject-based gateways are now available via telnet or www, including the Social Science Information Gateway.

The Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG)

SOSIG points to hundreds of resources (eg discussion lists, data archives, journals and databases) under 19 main subject headings ranging from anthropology to statistics as well as many other services of general social science interest. A comprehensive collection of UK resources is offered as well as a worldwide selection. SOSIG caters for both experienced and new network users: brief descriptions allow you to assess whether the resource will really be of use before connecting with short-cut buttons available to allow regular users to bypass the description. Resources are listed under subject headings and a simple on-line form allows keyword searching of headings, titles and other information.

You can access SOSIG via telnet or a www client as follows:

telnet sosig.ac.uk (login: sosig)
http://sosig.ac.uk/

A latest additions heading allows you to browse recently added resources under the subject headings that interest you. If you need help with using the resources outlined in this article or you have any suggestions or comments please contact:

sosig-info@bris.ac.uk

SOSIG Project
Centre for Computing in the Social Sciences
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tel: 0117 928 8443/ fax: 0117 928 8473

General Social Science Resources Available from SOSIG

BIDS – Bath Information and Data Services provides access (to subscribing institutions) to the Social Science Citation Index (amongst others) where you may search for citations quoted in articles from several thousand journals published from 1981 onwards.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education (ERIC/ChESS) monitors issues about the teaching and learning of the social sciences and provides a list of publications and digests. Links to other ERIC services and related sites for social studies education.

ESRC Data Archive at the University of Essex houses the largest UK collection of accessible computer-readable data in the social sciences (about 4500 datasets) with information about its service, links to its catalogue BIRON and other social science information services.

HM Treasury Service has the full text of publications, including press releases, ministers' speeches, minutes of the Chancellor's monthly monetary meetings, reports of the Panel of Independent Forecasters and details of Treasury running costs.

IBSS ONLINE is a database containing the bibliographic details of journal articles, book reviews, books in the social sciences (sociology, politics, economics and anthropology) with over 560,000 records (registration required).

MIDAS – Manchester Information Datasets and Associated Services provides on-line access to a number of large social science datasets and a range of specialist support services (registration required).

RAPID – ESRC Research Activities and Publications Information Database gives information on grant awards and all resulting publications in a wide variety of media. Searching is possible by a variety of criteria.

SIByl – Software Information Bank of iec ProGAMMA contains information on software programs for the social and behavioural sciences. It provides a library of descriptions of over 400 (special purpose) software applications.

A sampler of some of the latest additions to SOSIG under the subject headings:

- Anthropology – the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology.
- Demography – Institute of Demography, Austrian Academy of Sciences; Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division of the US Census Bureau.
- Development Studies – Bibliography on Social and Economic Development.
- Economics – Institute for Business and Professional Ethics; Journal of Economic Education www service.
- Education – The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED); Department for Education; The British Council.

Ethnology -- European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations (ERCOMER).

- Feminism – Feminist Mailing Lists.
- Geography – The Peters Projection Map; Project Geosim.
- Government – Department for Education Public Policy Network www Archive.
- International Relations – DiploNet.
- Military Science – The War and Peace Foundation.
- Philosophy – Bertrand Russell Archive; The Library of Living Philosophers.
- Politics – US Institute of Peace, All Things Political.
- Psychology – Psych Web; Psychology Departments in Britain and Ireland.
- Social Welfare/Relief – Deaf World Web; Institute of Gerontology.
- Statistics – MEDISTAT; Multilevel Models Project.

Keep in touch with Internet initiatives, conference and workshop details of relevance to social scientists as well as what's new on SOSIG, by subscribing (free) to SOSIG's mailing list. Send the following message:

subscribe sosig firstname lastname
to: mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk
(substituting firstname/lastname with your names).

Access Management for the Millennium

Tony Philpin
Pennine Way Co-ordination Project

Thesis

My aim is to establish the need for a planned approach to informal recreation & access management and suggest a possible model, based on my experiences over the last 6–7 years on the Pennine Way.

My central premise is that we have no systematic, consistent means of informal recreational access planning or management in the UK. This is, undoubtedly, a desirable objective which should occupy a high priority.

On the Pennine Way, we are moving towards a process which links planning and management. This resource management approach includes:

1. Provision of a resource inventory;
2. Establishment of use levels and patterns of demand;
3. Management of assets.

Information technology and management is a central feature of this approach. In practice it is the only way to handle the volume of information required.

Analysis

Why is informal recreation policy, planning and consequent management frequently so speculative and ad hoc?

[A question clearly of the same order of magnitude as the meaning of life, the Universe and everything – but without the same glib answer]

Lack of information on informal recreation

Nigel Curry's reviews of structure plan policies shows that of 80 structure plans in 1985 only 5 had undertaken survey work. The problem was acknowledged but by 1992 only 11 of 54 plans referred to survey bases. This lack of information even exists in the more focussed Access Strategies forced on unwilling PROW and Countryside Services by the Countryside Commission in the late 1980s. A speculative strategy not soundly based on empirical data is travelling in hope without a map – or a Definitive Map.

Lack of information on recreation supply and assets

How many highway authorities have objective, accurate information on the size of the PROW network, their responsibilities for maintenance of assets, or legal problems? In the twelve years since I first became involved in PROW management I have been constantly amazed at how anyone can contemplate purposeful management without knowing what it is they are managing. The analogy of Kevin Keegan watching his team perform with a paper bag over his head and basing decisions on selection and playing tactics as a result of the crowd reactions at St. James's Park comes to mind. All that is required is a simple resource inventory.

Lack of a strategic planning system for recreational access

Structure Plans and UDPs are map based. The problem is that it is difficult to overlay informal recreation opportunities on land use maps in a systematic fashion. In the UK recreation is integrated into a multiple land use situation where recreation is often not the primary land use although it is a principal land use. Recreation opportunities and supply cannot be easily mapped and hence quantified to inform strategic planning.

"There is a tendency for management to be technique oriented and not to consider problems on a strategic scale" Sidaway 1994

There has been much work on identifying areas of landscape interest and character and in describing and assessing these. However, the subjective and descriptive information which results often fails to pass the 'so what' test in terms of management usefulness. I think that many recreation and access managers hold this view of the potential of the 'New Map of England' exercise.
Interesting does not necessarily mean useful.

Impact on policy of exaggerated problems and conflicts caused by recreational access

There are perennial and unresolved conflicts between recreational access, conservation interests and proprietorial interests. These are frequently philosophical and hence ingrained.

For example, the progressive reinforcement of the concept of ownership (conferring, as it does, rights of exclusive possession), does not sit easily with the notion of Public Rights of Way. This constraint is something we all have to work within.

In my experience, both ecological and archaeological conservationists occasionally have a similar attitude of exclusivity and personal ownership, intellectual if not proprietorial, and privately if not publicly.

As a result, policy has frequently taken the view that recreation is subservient to almost all other land use interests. Nigel Curry suggests that policies for countryside recreation have been preoccupied with fears of the recreation explosion and the rights of the landowner and have been unduly restrictive as a result. He identifies three types of access policy – Promotional, Facilitating, and Controlling, and concludes that the latter dominates in many areas – sometimes even within the relevant agencies.

In practice, exclusionist proprietorial interests have allied themselves to exclusionist conservation interests against informal recreation. This is a no win situation for recreation, and the respective lobbies know that. That proprietorial interests may use the precautionary principle to protect private recreation (i.e. grouse shooting) but invoke the principle against public recreation (i.e. walking) has always struck me as less than convincing.

There is no doubt in my mind that the "cause célèbre" presented by Pennine Way erosion problems in the late 80s was used against the movement for open access to commons. We have had an explicit policy of non-promotion and, in practice, a sort of policy of non-facilitation for England's first and best known National Trail for as long as I have been involved in its management, and probably a lot longer. Is this a satisfactory state of affairs?

However, there does seem to be a curiously wide consensus in favour of non-promotion. A recent discussion paper on marketing and promotion of the Pennine Way drew forth a considerable number of comments reflecting the 'control' ethos that pervades access management. Not surprising by itself, but...the sources of many of those comments were user groups, including the Ramblers and British Mountaineering Council (BMC), and managers in national parks where the legislative duty is ostensibly for provision of opportunities.

There is a disturbing trend to use the concept of carrying capacities as an apologia for control. The title of the 1995 CEI training event "How many more can we take?" presupposes the control philosophy for the huddled masses, unless it is very tongue in cheek. The fundamental flaw is the failure to understand that carrying capacity is a concept not a number.

"Carrying capacity is a relative term, not an absolute number to be discovered by managers and researchers. Its range depends on specific objectives established for an area". Hendee.

"Carrying capacity can be increased or decreased by management actions; it is not an inherent, fixed value of the land. It can be diminished by unregulated overuse or enhanced by thoughtful management". Stankey & McCool.

This presumes that the thought is to provide rather than restrict recreational opportunities. Wagar who 'invented' the carrying capacity concept for recreation, later suggested its abandonment because of the widespread misunderstanding and misapplication of the concept.

For the Pennine Way, we have full 1989 and 1994 condition surveys. From these we can conclude that simple relationships between intensity and impacts do not exist. Levels of use have remained static. Yet there is an enormous range of types and levels of dynamic change identifiable in the last five years.

The standard American definition of "carrying capacity" is -- the use an area can tolerate without unacceptable change. Unacceptable to whom?

As carrying capacities are therefore the product of value judgements the question then becomes whose value judgements and to what agenda do they subscribe?

Fragmented and ad hoc management structures

John Hendee notes for US wilderness management:
"Without management plans derived from an orderly planning process, wilderness management may be no more than a series of uncoordinated reactions to immediate problems". Cole Wagar & Kuss

Sounds familiar? Curry asserts:
"the fragmented nature of the organisational structure for countryside recreation has inhibited the development and implementation of comprehensive policies and plans".

This is music to my ears for I too, am a fragmentation victim. A quick head count of those with an interest in the management of the Pennine Way, would support that view. Bear in mind the Trail is 300 miles long.

1 SNH

3 Countryside Commission Regions

1	Countryside Commission HQ
3	National Parks
1	A.O.N.B.
1	World Heritage Site
3	National Nature Reserves
4	English Nature local offices
4	National Trust estates
1	Forestry Authority
1	British Waterways
1	Regional Council
5	County Councils
5	Metropolitan Borough Councils

Total 34 (and this excludes user groups)

In 1993 at the peak of the restoration initiative there were over one hundred people involved with the day to day management of the trail. Not much chance of shared objectives, outlook, consistency of approach and standards there. It is a well known fact that as soon as you have more than two managers together the prospect of agreement on a course of action is inversely proportional to their number!

However, we all agree that it is not our fault when something goes wrong. Fragmentation encourages passing the buck and this is unhealthy.

Synthesis

All of this represented the setting for the Pennine Way Coordination Project in 1989, and still does to some extent in 1995.

The short term 'reactive project' and/or 'initiative driven' approach of the Commission (from the New Agricultural Landscape days of the 1970s) undoubtedly contributed to a lack of integration. There are many reasonable and sensible justifications for a piecemeal approach – many problems are piecemeal. But the absence of a strategic framework encourages reactive and ad hoc management.

Since Recreation 2000 there has been a much more measured approach. The obvious fact was that the PROW network was neglected, and it was going to cost money to solve its problems. However, the scale and nature of the problems was not known – nor were the cost implications. And – lo – 'Milestones' was born. This exercise, involving an asset/resource appraisal and prioritisation and targeting of resources,

represents the first stage of commitment to a resource management approach. This is a very significant step forward.

Link this with the potential of the Department of the Environment "Countryside Information System" and the prospect of better informed management appears.

In Scotland the same process is underway, with the research base established over the last few years and the strategic policy making in progress.

A resource management approach is a process... a way of thinking ..... a systematic way of identifying and addressing management issues. And that is the approach to which I wish to address the rest of this talk. The whole "sustainability" thing fits it like a glove -- by definition.

"If the future emphasis of management is to identify and manage the characteristic qualities of an area including the recreational experiences that it may offer, and the role of the manager is to integrate all aspects of land use, then managers are likely to require information on site conditions, species diversity, and the social environment. The implications for research of these terms of reference are that research programmes should not necessarily be all embracing but...will need to be integrated within a framework of theory and/or have a clear contribution to integrated management." [Roger Sidaway, Recreation & the Natural Heritage 1994]

A framework for integrated management does exist. Recreation Opportunities Spectrum (ROS) is potentially an extremely useful tool to provide the framework and strategic dimension in conjunction with other aspects of resource appraisal. It gives a context for management. It is a supply model, conceptually simple, and demonstrably useful for assisting real management decision making.

In America, Australia and New Zealand ROS has primarily been developed and used for wilderness planning. Strategic wild land management planning is an area which would be extremely useful in the UK context. However, the value of ROS for recreation planning and management in an number of settings has also been recognised.

The potential uses of ROS might include:

1. Recreation strategies
2. Integrated management strategies

3. National Trail or access corridors
4. Management plans
5. Formal planning – Development control, Structure/UDP and local plans

The naming of ROS classes varies internationally. In the UK almost all land has some human modification. "Wilderness", with its implication of a pristine unmodified state, is substituted with "Wild land" which does not have the same connotations.

UK ROS Classes

Wild land

Semi-wild land

Open Country Walk in

Open Country Drive in

Rural

Urban Fringe

Urban

Criteria for ROS Categories

That ROS is an integrated system is indicated by the differing criteria:

1. Remoteness & indicators of remoteness

- Distance from roads and motorised access
- Key landscape features
- Presence & prominence of modern technological developments
- Elements of recreational access
- Level of service access for land management

2. Size of area

- Size in hectares

3. Boundaries

- Topography
- Land use

4. **Land Use & Management**

- Primary land uses
- Intensity of land uses/management
- Indicators of human use and/or occupancy

5. **Recreation use**

- Recreation uses/experiences
- Levels of use
- Formal activities

6. **Recreation management**

- Access management
- Formal recreation facilities

Stages In Development Of A Resource Management Approach

The strength of any system is in the process, the way of organising thoughts and justification of the decision making.

1. Identify resource components through resource inventory [including any gaps in knowledge]. Delimit ROS boundaries for planning purposes.
2. Set overall management goals and quality standards. Relate objectives for activities, settings, facilities & experiences to the overall goals;
3. Identify and locate resource management issues and human concerns;
4. Relate inventory to overall goals and issues;
5. Identify where actions are required, assess options for action and appraise impacts;
6. Formulate programmes to achieve actions and quality standards -- at appropriate scales, N.T. route, regional, local etc (Use LAC if appropriate)

For a trail like the Pennine Way the trail resource can be defined in terms of:

- the access network and its condition,
- landscapes [physical and cultural/historical]
- habitats [range and quality]
- human activities and impacts.

This is very much an integrated definition of the resource.

These give rise to three strands of planning management:

1. **Recreation supply & resource appraisal**

   A full resource inventory is essential to the development of a resource management approach. That the Department of the Environment have commissioned the CIS suggests to me that positive steps are being taken to facilitate better resource appraisal. I would hope that recreation datasets will be incorporated into this system in future. On the Pennine Way all information is collected on hand held computers and transferred to databases. In 1995 databasing is installed in a GIS. The survey methodology includes baseline environmental and ecological information as well as surface condition. A ROS mapping exercise has been trialled over 2500 sq.km. and is being analysed. The project also has a simple environmental impact checklist for comparing alternative realignments – a useful tool in cases of contention. In Wales, CCW are digitising the entire Rights of Way network on to GIS which will enable analyses of PROW density, relating that to countryside access and conservation hotspots. This will provide an enormous analytic capability to feed into recreation planning. Peter Scott has used the PROW density per km grid square as a comparative index in his work for SNH. I would love to see the Countryside Commission travelling that route and a PROW dataset on the CIS. With ROS the PROW density map is a very valuable management tool, though not without its limitations.

2. **Recreation demand – evaluation & management**

   On the Pennine Way there is a network of people counters and an annual user survey undertaken of 3–500 questionnaires. We have found that surveys inputted directly into handheld computers have a very short gap between survey and reporting. The user surveys between 1989 and 1995 are guiding and informing the forthcoming Pennine Way Management and Marketing Strategy.

3. **Asset management**

Recent advances in information technology make a relatively simple system possible. A number of authorities are following the Milestones route ... Isle of Wight and Gloucestershire have database information on their PROW network and Hampshire, Nottinghamshire, Cornwall, etc., are developing GIS [though for legal PROW rather than asset management]. BW has an asset management system and Taylor Woodrow has pioneered the asset management of highway features – street lighting, sewers etc., using portable pen tablet GIS. With the estimated percentage of administrative and clerical costs for total Highway Authority budgets at 50% in 1992, I.T. has to be the way froward.

Money Matters

It costs about £5–15 per kilometre to collect comprehensive baseline survey data so an authority with 3000km will have to find around £50,000 to be on the safe side. Survey rates are 5–8km per day on average so a baseline survey should take two survey teams 8–14 months. Add up to twelve months for reporting and within two years a solid and useful asset management tool may be available.

One or two persons ROS surveying in the field can map up to 500 km^2. per day. When the technique is refined for the UK setting and portable GIS capability is explored, the potential will be improved and unit costs fall.

People counters can be bought for as little as £90. State of the art technology currently costs about £800 per unit but the price is about to fall rapidly.

A handheld computer costs £250. This is usable for condition and user surveys. For user surveys – at £2–3 per response, the cost of collecting user information by hand held computer is not beyond the reach of most managers. A rolling programme of basic user surveys need not cost more than £1500–2000 per annum and the data allows trends to be established and user friendly access strategies to be developed.

The CIS can be accessed for as little as £2500 and the datasets held therein become increasingly useful for strategic planning.

Conclusion

The Pennine Way is 500km. The route covers 88 1:10,000 maps. Its corridor covers a nominal area in excess of 100,000 square kilometres. This is not too far removed from the size of areas many PROW managers have to cope with. The scale of operations to establish a resource inventory and management database need not be prohibitively expensive and is becoming easier.

'Milestones' requires the thought processes of resource management to be followed through. The links are all there – they simply need the connections to be made. And information systems are there too. The technology exists to collect and handle the large volumes of data required for resource management, and we are all a little less frightened of the computer than we were. Five years ago we were all 386 virgins; now we are all Pentium Pro-fessionals. I.T. is getting cheaper and more reliable.

My prediction is that most managers will rely on information technology including GIS for most of their work within ten years and many within 5 years.

Tomorrow's countryside managers will not automatically think of RAM just as something to do with sheep...

The impetus provided by 'Milestones' is an important element, although I do not think the general PROW survey methodology of 1988 is sufficiently detailed for asset management.

The means, methodology and planning tools are there to develop fully integrated recreational access management within the financial means of many managers. The will to use them and expertise to apply them are questions the agencies forming CRN might care to address.
I leave you with an aphorism attributed to Bill Gates

"If you are doing what you're doing now
in five years time...you're doing it wrong"!

Contingent Valuation: The economic benefits of countryside improvements

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Introduction

Arrangements to enhance recreational opportunities in the countryside are presently implemented in an ad hoc manner. Although there are local strategic plans which deal with countryside recreation (for example Grampian Regional Council, 1995), these plans do not attempt to value the benefits from alternative types of recreational investments. In an era when the public sector is coming under increased financial scrutiny, there is an increasing need to incorporate economic analysis to the allocation of resources for recreational improvements in the countryside. The present research uses the contingent valuation method (CVM) to quantify the benefits to society from alternative recreational strategies and hence assist policy-makers to target those improvements which generate high levels of economic benefit. This paper examines whether CVM can be successfully used in the evaluation of the benefits arising from countryside improvements, and whether the findings can usefully aid the design of more efficient countryside policies.

The Need to Design More Efficient Countryside Policies

The provision of countryside recreation opportunities is addressed by a large number of public and voluntary sector organisations and private providers. The public sector organisations involved in countryside recreation include government departments (MAFF, DoE and their Scottish equivalents SOAFD and SOED), agencies (Scottish Natural Heritage, Area Tourist Boards and the Sports Council) and local authorities. This fragmentation of responsibilities for countryside recreation suggests that there may be a lack of a coherent strategy for countryside recreation. If this is the case, then it may be appropriate to determine which types of countryside improvements generate high levels of economic benefit to society, and thus identify those improvements which policy should target.

Methodology

There are a number of techniques available which could potentially be used to estimate the economic benefits of countryside improvements. These techniques include the travel cost method (TCM), contingent valuation method (CVM) and hedonic pricing (HP). A number of studies have compared the merits of

these approaches with respect to valuing outdoor recreation (McConnell, 1985; Young and Allen, 1986; Loomis et al, 1986; Forester, 1989). The findings of these studies suggest that the CVM method may be the most appropriate technique to use. This is supported by a number of other recent studies which have successfully used the CVM method to value recreational goods (Beard et al, 1994; Benson and Willis, 1991; Cobbing and Slee, 1993; Bishop, 1992).

CVM is a survey-based approach to the valuation of non-market goods and services. A CVM survey asks respondents how much they would be willing to pay (WTP), or accept in compensation, for a hypothetical change in an environmental amenity. Respondents may be asked to provide this value (open-ended CVM) or they may be asked whether or not they accept a value that is presented to them (referendum CVM). The validity of the responses may then be tested by relating WTP responses to the respondents' socio-economic characteristics.

The present study uses CVM to elicit the economic benefits to society of a number of recreational improvements to the countryside. The types of countryside improvements evaluated in this study (listed in Table 1 below) include those improvements which are predominantly undertaken by the public sector.

Table 1. Description of the countryside improvement scenarios evaluated in the CVM study.

Recreational Improvement Scenarios	Description of Improvement
Path maintenance	Repair the surface of paths and the soil and plants next to the path.
Upgrading of paths	The use of steps, wooden board-walks, seats and signs to upgrade paths where appropriate.
Creation of short paths	Creation of short distance circular paths in popular recreation areas.
Creation of long paths	Creation of long distance routes which link popular areas together.
Provision of basic facilities	Provision of more car parks, bins, seats, information boards and sign posting where appropriate.
Provision of other facilities	Provision of more toilets, picnic areas, children's play areas and visitor centres where appropriate.

The CVM survey was posted to 1400 Grampian residents. The survey asked respondents to answer a number of questions relating to the following topics:

- The recreational behaviour of respondents.
- The respondent's perceptions of countryside problems and improvements.
- The respondent's maximum WTP for the recreational improvements.
- The respondent's allocation of each £1.00 of their WTP bid between six countryside locations.
- Socio-economic characteristics of the respondent.

The CVM survey used an open-ended WTP format with annual increases in Council Tax as the payment vehicle.

Response to the CVM survey

Of the 1400 questionnaires sent out, 748 (53%) were returned fully completed. An examination of the returned (usable) questionnaires indicated that respondents may be split into three categories relating to the response to the WTP questions in the survey: positive bids; zero bids and protest bids (Table 2). The positive bids are those in which the respondent stated that he would be prepared to contribute towards countryside improvements. In this survey, 33% of respondents stated positive bids. Zero bids (accounting for 48% of returned questionnaires) included those respondents who were not prepared to contribute towards countryside improvements. The main reason for giving zero bids was that the respondents either could not afford to pay for improvements (61% of zero bids), did not participate in outdoor recreation (22%) or that they did not consider that countryside improvements were required (12%). Protest bids (18% of returned questionnaires) included those respondents who rejected the payment vehicle, ie they did not want to pay more Council Tax. A follow-up survey of a sample of the non-respondents suggested that their responses to the WTP questions would have been similar to the responses of the returned questionnaires.

Table 2. Distribution of Response Type to the CVM survey

	Percentage of usable questionnaires
Usable questionnaires	100
Positive Bids	33.3
Zero Bids	47.9
Protest Bids	18.1

Who benefits from countryside improvements?

This research found that only 33% of the original sample gave positive WTP bids for countryside improvements. This suggests that only a proportion of Grampian residents would benefit from such improvements. Analysis of the characteristics of these positive bidders suggests that they tend to be

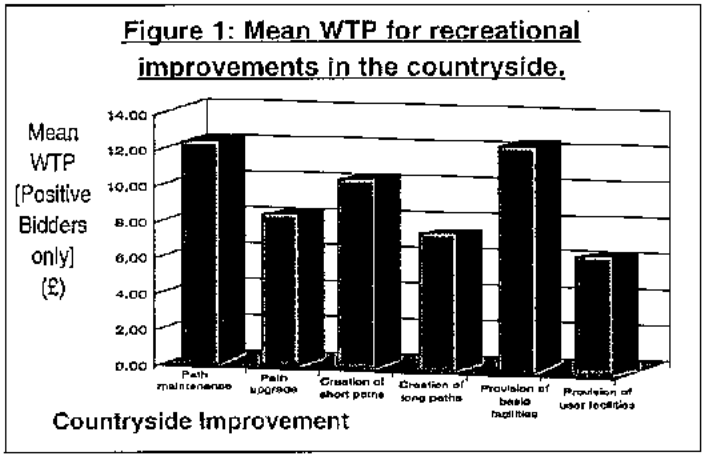
actively involved in countryside recreation and also tend to be in the higher income groups. Those respondents who were less likely to benefit from countryside improvements, ie those who gave zero WTP bids, included the low income groups, and the elderly and disabled.

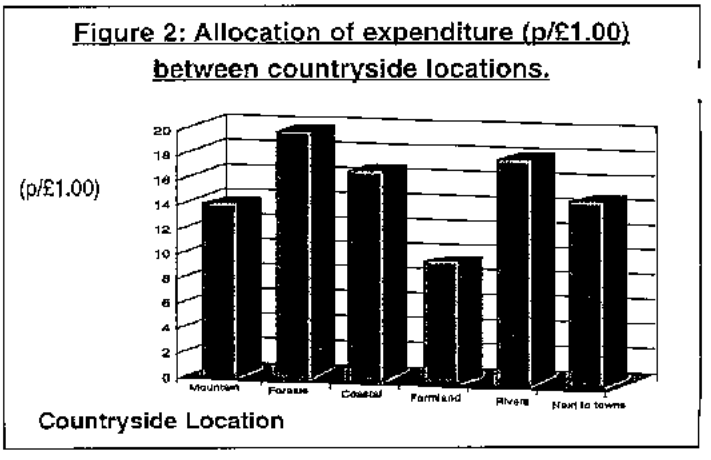
Public preferences for countryside improvements

The total value of the specified recreational improvements to Grampian residents was estimated to be £2.24m per year or £11.19 per resident per year. The total expenditure on recreational improvements in the Grampian countryside for the year 1994–95 was estimated to be in the region of £586,000. These figures suggest a high rate of return on additional public expenditure on outdoor recreation.

The distribution of WTP bids between the different types of recreational improvements is shown in Figure 1. These results suggest that the provision of basic facilities (mean WTP of £12.94 per positive bidder) and path maintenance (£12.25) would generate the greatest level of economic benefit to society.

Respondents were also asked to allocate each £1.00 of their WTP bids between six types of countryside locations. The findings suggest that most of the expenditure on improvements should be targeted to forests and areas next to rivers (Figure 2).





Conclusions

This research has shown that CVM can be successfully used to elicit the economic benefits generated from recreational improvements to the countryside. The findings give clear indications of public preferences for countryside improvements. This information may be incorporated into countryside policies, enabling policy-makers to target resources more efficiently. The CVM survey also estimated the total economic benefit to society attained from countryside policies by aggregating individual WTP to the regional level. A comparison of these benefits with current expenditure suggests that additional investments in recreational improvements are financially worthwhile. However, since it is difficult to validate the level of WTP bids, caution should be exercised when using these absolute benefit values.

The research also highlighted the fact that only one third of the respondents were willing to pay for countryside improvements and that these respondents predominantly were in the higher income groups. These findings have important implications to public sector provision of countryside improvements as they suggest that public sector provision may result in a poor distribution of resources from all members of society (through the payment of taxes) to the wealthier middle classes who directly benefit from countryside improvements. This fact may suggest that the nature of funding for countryside recreation may need revision to a system based more on the user-pays principle.

Although the current research has shown that CVM may be used to quantify the benefits of countryside improvements within Grampian region, there may be limitations associated with the use of these findings for the development of comprehensive countryside policies. Firstly, the current research only determined the preferences of Grampian residents and not visitors to the area. A comprehensive recreational policy for the Grampian region would (presumably) require the preferences of visitors to be taken into account. Second, it is suggested that the findings from this research may not be transferable to other regions due to differences in the characteristics of the countryside between areas. For example, in the present study, Grampian residents did not indicate preferences for recreational improvements on farmland, presumably due to the abundance of other, more scenic, areas within the region. If the same study was carried out elsewhere, such as the South of England, there may be more support for increased recreational opportunities on farmland due to the lack of other types of countryside suitable for informal recreation.

Finally, it should be stressed that economic judgements are only one part of the decision-making process and that policy decisions relating to public sector provision of countryside recreation opportunities also need to consider a number of other decision criteria, including social and distributional factors. This study, therefore, does not suggest that economic criteria should be used as the sole basis of policy decisions, but stresses that economic criteria can make an important contribution to decisions relating to the allocation of public resources. A contribution which seems set to become of increased importance in the future.

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Managing Change in Countryside Recreation

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"The future is not inevitable. You can influence it if you know what you want it to be." Charles Handy

Riding the Waves of Change?

Whilst change is inevitable we can influence its outcomes. We are not in a state of chaos but in an emerging system or paradigm that is threatening established structures. We will need new thought processes and organisational systems for coping as the old order changes, gradually merges or is dramatically replaced by the new. The whole evolution of nature and human societies follows these cyclical patterns and the challenge is to maintain continuity but also to accommodate and benefit from change. We are moving into a post-industrial state which will demand new management systems rather than "business as usual" with some fine tuning and technical fixes. Change is being forced upon us which is often necessary and to be welcomed. We suggest that the adoption of the principles of sustainable development is a valuable way forward even though the principles are still problematic. If we look at the Brundtland definition of sustainable development: "Development that meets the needs of the present generation without depriving future generations of the ability to meet their needs..." we must ask what is need or development and are we talking about equity between the present global generation and if so what will we sacrifice in the process?

Since the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, sustainable development has been accepted as a guiding principle by many groups and agencies working in the countryside. The UK Strategy has been influential in focussing attention on global and local Agenda 21. The model shown in Figure 1a was adopted by the UN and is helpful in showing the holistic nature of this elusive and still debatable concept. The debate created has generated as much heat as illumination but that is the nature of a "Big Idea".

Sustainability must take account of the elements identified in Figure 1a and the recreation manager will have a difficult act, along with other managers, in juggling the "E-Balls" of equity, environment and economics that are implicit in its attainment. Currently we seem to be juggling badly and dropping the "P-Balls" of pollution, poverty and prejudice which are the elements of unsustainability (Figure 1b). The change of values and practice that will have to take place to achieve sustainable development are enormous

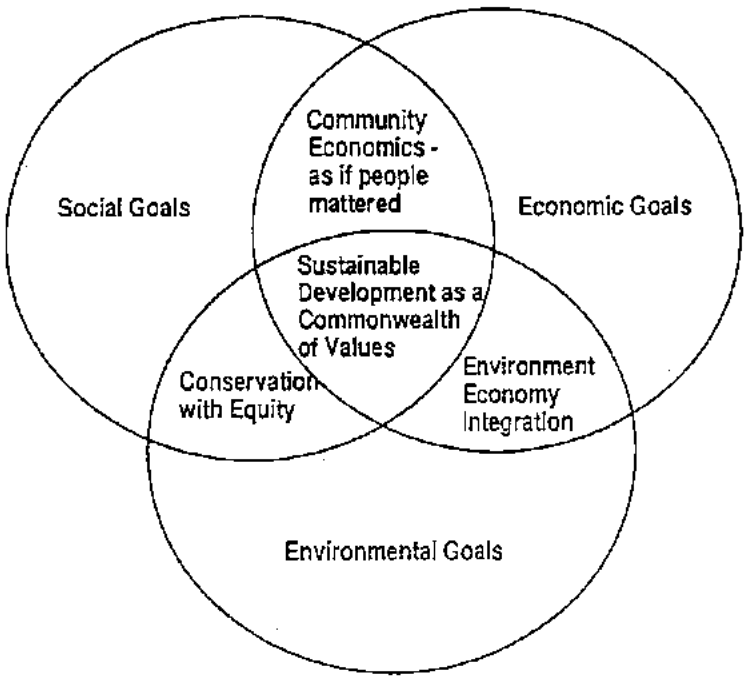
and we will have to adjust in both a reactive manner to changes already taking place and also proactively to try to steer things and not merely to try to ride these waves of change as "passengers".

The other big idea is "Communitarianism" adopted from the United States but taken on board by Tony Blair and John Major in different ways, both demanding responsibility by ordinary people for the place where they live. The big difference will be the allocation of resources and the decentralisation of power. The next UN Habitat II Conference will address the ideas of participatory governance and we are hearing the rhetoric about empowerment, partnership and local democracy and responsibility. This is in contradistinction to the "Quango State" and the actual reduction of local power and decision making, despite the notion of "subsidiarity" and "additionality" inherent in the EU agenda. One member of the voluntary sector described the reality as "Here's a black bag, pick up the litter – it's community involvement!". How many of us have accepted the philosophy of getting "more for less" from volunteers and unemployed people without the handing over of power, true participation or a real share in decision making?

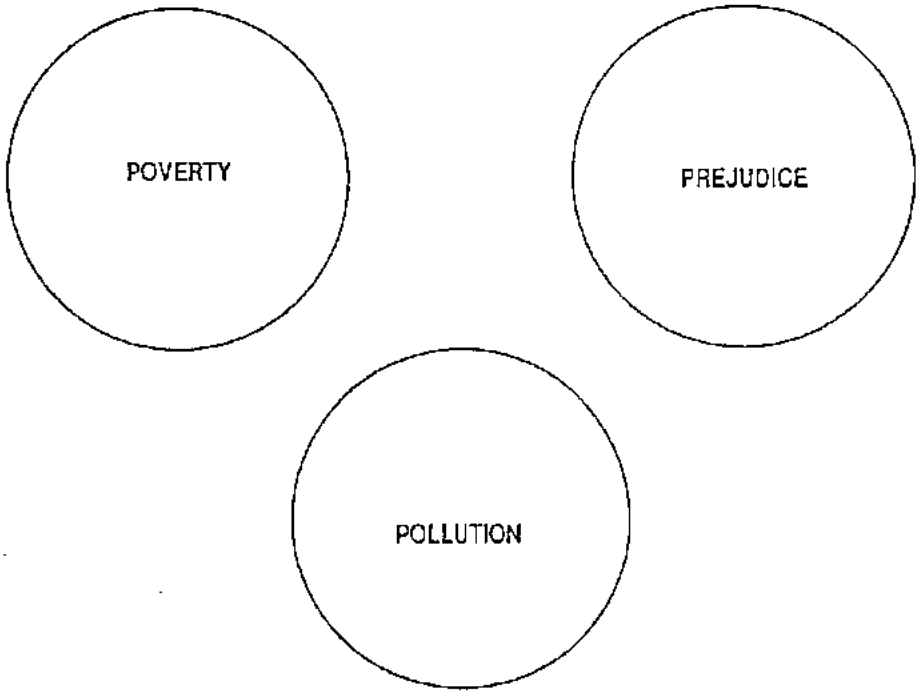
An integrated approach to managing the countryside will be essential in the future and all the evidence is that corporate, cross-boundary partnerships will be necessary if elements are not to fall through the net. The new Environment Agency is one such approach to a holistic style and the process is being mirrored in local authorities, government agencies and funding programmes and reflected in academic and training programmes which are interdisciplinary and issues based.

Constant Change – Crisis or Opportunity?

The landscape of Britain has always been subject to constant change. Asked what he thought as he created erosion in the Peak District, a mountain biker riposted as he took off again, "Isn't that how the Peak District got here?" Since the last Ice Age finished some 13,000 years ago the frozen rock surface has thawed out, developed mature soils and ecosystems, and gone through a separation from the continent of Europe. Waves of climatic and human activity have brought about ecological, cultural and economic changes to give us the palimpsest that is the mosaic of wild, productive and amenity habitats we seem eager to protect and enhance in the interest of sustainability and the maintenance of an arena for outdoor recreation (see Figure 2). The Rural White Paper addresses issues of what will constitute sustainable local rural economies and communities. In actual fact rurality has largely disappeared and England and Wales is a "megalopolis" in which rurality and wilderness are an illusion. The regeneration oftowns and cities is being accompanied by the protection, enhancement and more recently the creation of urban greenspace which is now being described as "countryside", while economic and residential developments are increasing rapidly in the urban fringe and the wider countryside. This "greening" of the urban landscape coupled with the "counter-urbanisation" process is leading to the "greying" of the countryside. Not all can work on the Internet from a small cottage; other jobs are demanded and commuters will still take over "rural" homes



1a. SUSTAINABILITY



1b. UNSUSTAINABILITY

and may in fact keep some villages alive whilst others are reduced to weekend status. All these trends are generating new arenas in which recreation and tourism will play a greater part and the manager will need the skills of dealing with a multiplicity of cultural perceptions, pressures, opportunities and demands in an integrated fashion.

In the past rural communities were always engaged in some form of industry. Is a field of oilseed rape inherently better than a well integrated small town with high quality landscapes, rich in wildlife and productive without subsidy? Past economic activities changed the landscape, maintained human communities and created conditions for colonisation by ecological communities which we now value, designate as SSSIs, etc and seek to protect, often at great expense of professional and voluntary time, energy and money. A more sensible approach may be based on Countryside Stewardship or, if new market demand would allow, extensive production that incidentally or deliberately fosters an appropriate and strategic biodiversity, whilst yielding a sustainable or renewable return. All the relevant government agencies are looking to the future landscape and to what will constitute "natural areas" or "local distinctiveness" and this must involve a many faceted and robust living community. The French describe this totality as patrimonie and people pay money to experience the landscape, food and culture. (Aldo Leopold , the American ecologist and philosopher, writing in the 1920s described land as "a community not a commodity".) How or where does Britain pursue and support such an integrated identity and what, if any, are the barriers?

Countryside recreation demands changes all the time and, though there appear to be indications that participation is levelling off in terms of numbers of visits, new technologies and marketing can create a much higher pressure per visitor head. Perhaps virtual reality, countryside on the doorstep, and indoor and outdoor simulations of the "real thing" will take some pressure off but the policy commitment is to widen access and to make greater provision. Privatisation of utilities and farm diversification may increase the marketing of new or varied forms of recreation and increase pressure on the changing countryside. Quiet enjoyment is not what a lot of people want when they roar out of town in their 4x4. We are already having to "demarket" some areas whilst continuing to market others. What are the issues, and techniques open to us?

Preservation or Conservation?

Many of our most valued and best loved landscapes and habitats are the result of economic activity in the past that took materials and biomass out of those landscapes and created a mosaic of natural and human features, some of which are quite fragile because of the nature of soil, climate and early seral status. Unless they are worked traditionally or in new ways we will have to expend large amounts of energy and money to maintain them in the face of natural seral change in the succession that leads generally in Britain to some form of high forest. Already we see the gradual "tumble down" to scrub and woodland without

any intervention by official schemes or agencies. Fire, grazing and even visitor pressure can be useful management tools but shouldn't we adopt productive processes that are more labour intensive, create jobs and give us the incidental landscape benefits? We are moving into a post-industrial era in the agricultural economy just as we are in the manufacturing economy and the implications for landscape and recreation are immense and far-reaching. This will entail mixed use development in both town and country and distinctions are becoming blurred. Zoning is beginning to break down and multiple use is increasing. The green belt is everywhere under threat but is that such a problem if we manage things better? It can be argued that Britain's countryside is already suburbanised. We may have to change our perceptions again as to what constitutes an attractive landscape. What was Britain like when it was densely forested, or farmed on the open field system or before the enclosure walls and hedges? Didn't people feel the same affection for their environment or was it just a place to live and work?

Until the landscape is one big biodiversity park it can be argued that we still need nature reserves as reservations in a hostile landscape which act as reservoirs for the recolonisation of the wider countryside as we come to our senses in the farmed and productive landscape. Hunting may in fact become more acceptable rather than culling when some species increase their range and numbers. Deer and badgers are becoming a problem in some places. Reintroduction of species is also a reality and new species are coming in as the climate changes or people genetically engineer, breed or introduce them. There are some who maintain that any attempt to protect habitats and species is, in any case, a waste of time if we do not address the bigger issues. If our peat landscapes oxidise or burn away in hotter summers and Holderness falls into the sea, are we using our energies and money wisely in protecting relatively small sites? Are we fiddling while Rome burns?

The Challenge

Pressures of privatisation, competitive tendering, reduced public funding and changing leisure patterns and consumer demand will compound the challenge to managers concerning the patterns, products and processes of countryside recreation and conservation. The focus will be as much on people as customers and stakeholders and on the economics of rural and urban countryside as on the management of landscapes and natural communities which has tended to be the emphasis of many in the countryside profession to date. This mirrors the change in urban leisure management where there has been a shift from maintenance of parks and leisure centres which were facility-driven to a more client-led approach. Under current circumstances only clients with resources and awareness are the major beneficiaries. It is ironic that leisure is one of the few areas in social policy where the poor subsidise the rich! Urban dwellers are expected to pay for access to the rural environment and its quality and will continue to demand the right to use it. Will we gain the freedom to roam or will we be kept on the straight and narrow but well surfaced and waymarked path? Is freedom to roam incompatible with wildlife and landscape protection?

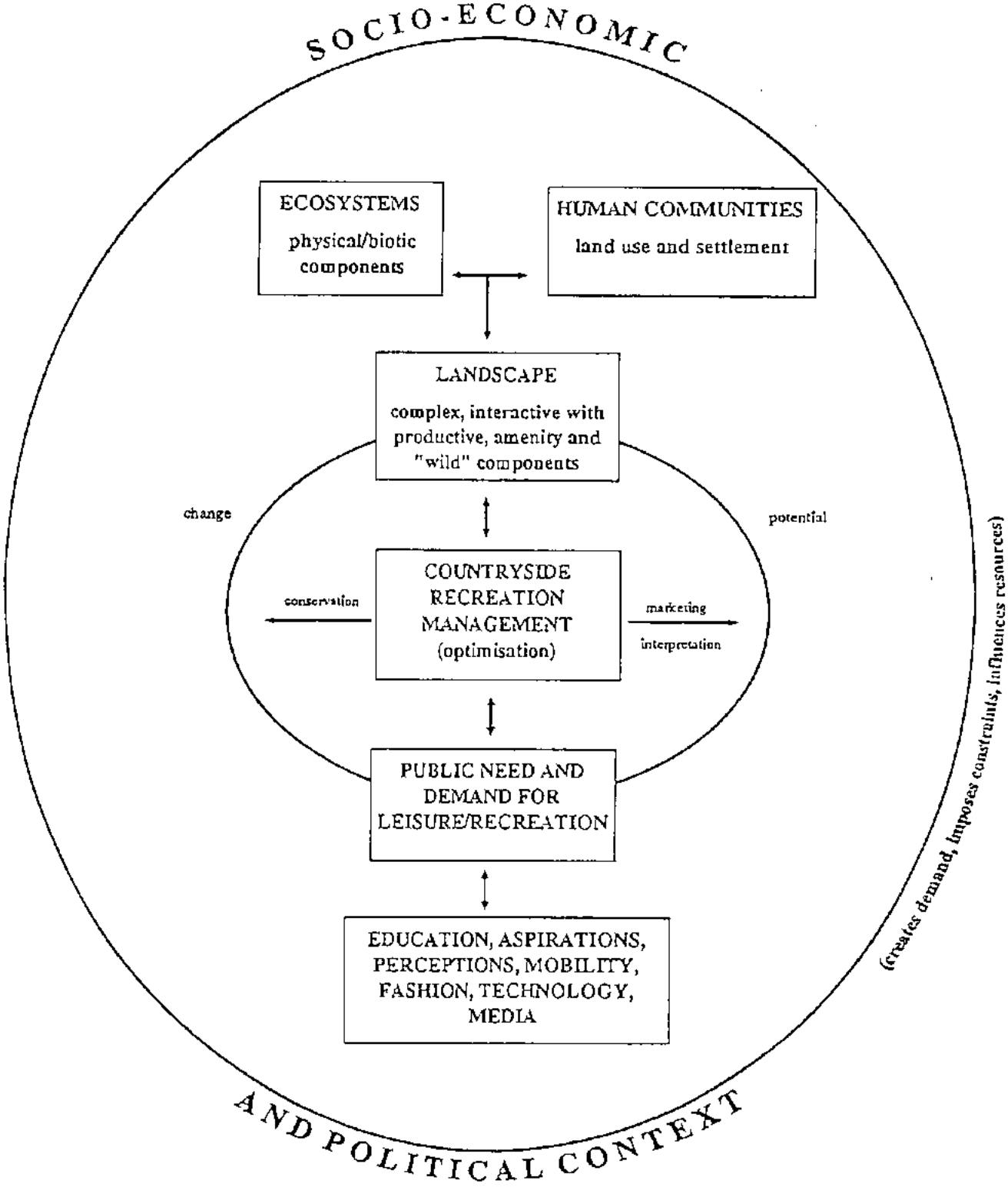


Figure 2 THE COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION SYSTEM - PATTERNS AND PROCESSES

The Balancing Act – Juggling the "E Balls"

Despite the conclusions in the report of the Commons Select Committee that there is little evidence that the countryside is being damaged by tourism and leisure activities, which is the view of the CPRE and the Countryside Commission, there are many initiatives to balance demand and the pressure it brings. The various sports, recreation and conservation agencies in Britain have all explored the concept of "Limits of Acceptable Change" (carrying capacity). This involves asking "when is enough enough?" and must consider both ecological effects, the visitor's individual experience and the local community's economic and social perceptions and needs. It is possible to engineer or design in some solutions and it could be argued that the Center Parcs model of high visitor throughput to maximise profit, coupled with strong landscaping and the recognition of, and provision for, differing visitor needs is a good model to explore. It may be that we cannot all expect the right in future to reach the state of fulfilment and self actualisation in our leisure activities that Maslow described at the top of his pyramid. There are already situations where only those who can pay can visit restricted areas or where those in the know can obtain permission where there are limits on access. On the other hand there are many areas where multiple use would generate many new opportunities. In the Peak District very few of the reservoirs are used for diverse recreation although technologically we can drink water that has been well used as Yorkshire Water's applications this summer showed. How many pairs of kidneys does river water extracted for drinking go through?

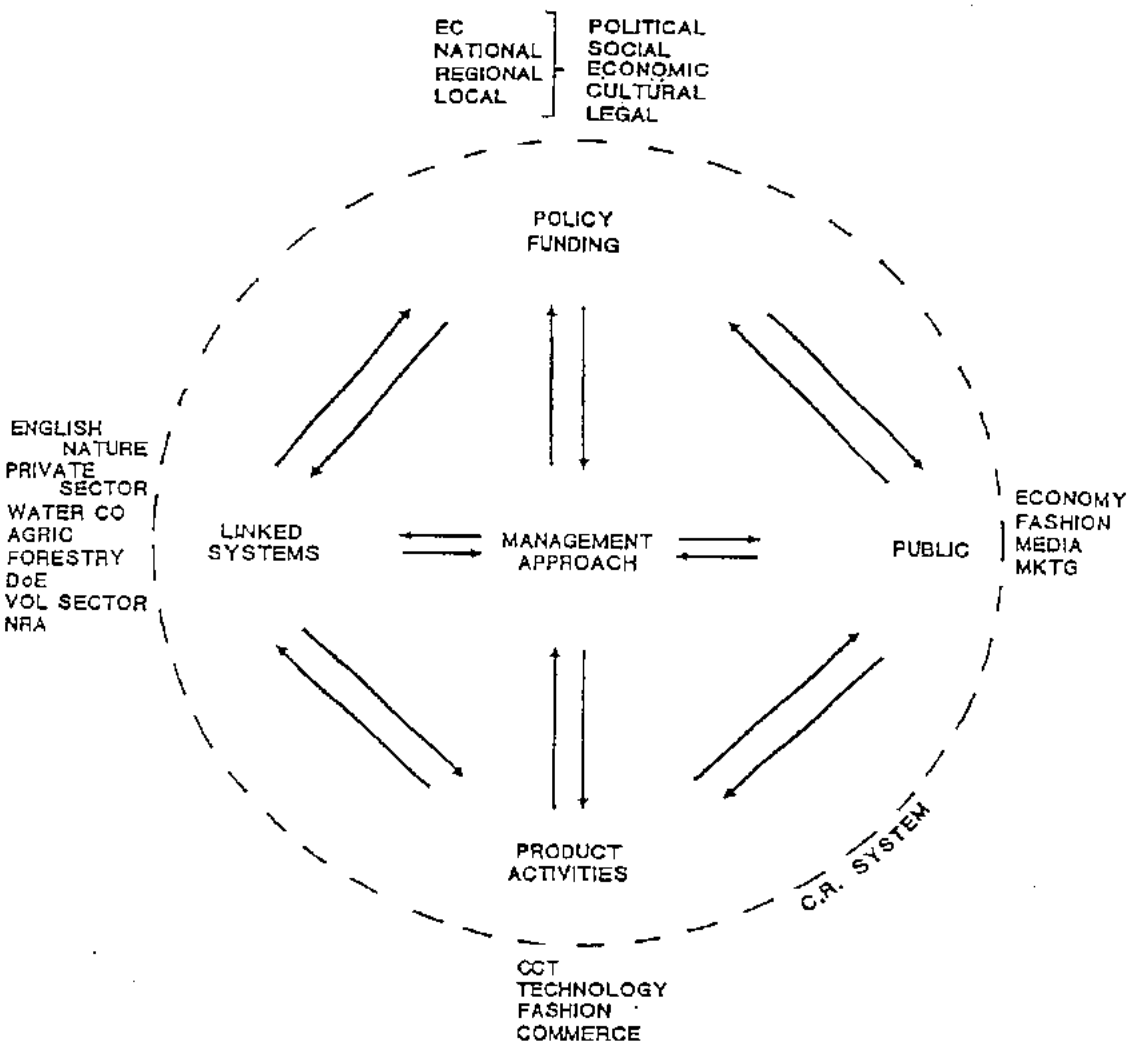
Figure 3 is another model of the countryside recreation management system which may be useful in considering how it reacts with other systems and the need for them all to be reconciled. In his recent book *The Empty Raincoat*, Charles Handy says that the trick in management is to move off the sigmoid growth curve of the old system just as it goes into a downturn and to get on the next growth curve. This is obviously in the context of the market economy but we are all operating in a real or, in the case of many in the countryside field, a quasi-market place where government or a quango is provider and purchaser. Sustainable development was originally predicated on lower economic growth but the UK government interpretation assumes increased but regulated activity. Even in a steady state economy there would have to be a great deal of redistribution and regeneration to compensate for past damage.

Summary of Main Discussion Points

A wide range of issues were raised and developed in the Workshop.

It must be said that a number of participants said they felt powerless to influence change, not just as individuals but as "leisure professionals". Some participants felt they were members of a "Cinderella" profession which had relatively little influence. A substantial proportion of the discussion was spent on the role of communities acting in partnership with professionals to shape a sustainable future for the countryside. Environmental education used in its widest sense, was felt to be crucial in developing a

sustainable future. The model of the countryside recreation system (Figure 2) attracted considerable discussion. It was generally accepted as encapsulating the countryside recreation system but some delegates thought that countryside communities rather than countryside managers ought to be at the centre of the model. The overriding concern of delegates was the need to build consensus on matters of environmental concern, to bring widely divergent interests together to address the environmental future, and to replace short-termism with the longer view.



- Subject to push/pull
- Take a 'pressure point' and apply force – what is 'knock on'?
- How do other systems impinge on manager, policy, public, product?

Figure 3 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION SYSTEM AND OTHER SYSTEMS

Visitors and Residents in the Erne Lakeland, Northern Ireland: An Integrated Management Approach

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University of Ulster

Introduction

Expansion of outdoor recreation and tourism within the Erne Lakeland, Co. Fermanagh has been continuous since the early 1960s. This paper examines the relationship between the outdoor recreational activity patterns of both visitors and residents in the Lakeland area with the key socio-economic characteristics investigated, and comparisons made with other similar wetland resources. The opinions of visitors and residents towards the recreation and tourism management of the resource have also been examined illustrating the need for both a sustainable and integrated management approach.

Recreation and tourism within the natural environment have grown in popularity in recent years, and wetland resources such as the Erne Lakeland are beginning to experience dramatic increases in usage and development. The outdoor recreation and tourism industry has responded to these increasing pressures by focusing their attentions upon "eco-tourism" and "sustainable development", which are the new buzz-words of resource planning and management in the 1990s. One of the basic principles in resource planning is the concept that exhaustible resources must be developed in a manner whereby exhaustion, ruination, or environmental deterioration can be prevented (Jaakson, 1970). Northern Ireland has not yet experienced the pressures of outdoor recreation and tourism that other areas in Britain have, and so the Northern Ireland Tourist Board see this point in time as a valuable opportunity to develop and implement sustainable tourism measures before significant problems arise, rather than after they have occurred when it could become more difficult and costly (N. Ireland Tourist Board, 1993). This follows the general direction of government policy towards promoting tourism as sustainable development which reconciles the need for economic growth and conservation of the environment (DoE, 1995).

Published literature regarding visitor countryside recreational patterns in Northern Ireland is limited. Annual comprehensive cruiser hire reports for Lough Erne are published by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, whilst the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland has commissioned surveys of visitors within the Erne Lakeland in connection with the Northern Ireland Sports Council and the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland.

Information regarding lake recreation usage patterns is a vital component of wetland resource planning and management. Quantitative data on the needs and values of lake users can only come from direct measurement within a sample of the user community (Butler and Redfield, 1991). Information such as this is useful for determining visitor recreational activity patterns, visitor site preferences within the resource area, plus the users' environmental perception of the resource alongside the socio-economic characteristics. However the development of a sustainable and integrated approach to countryside recreation management requires a wider range of information than is presently provided by visitor surveys, such as ecosystem data and economic planning data. This paper, which is based upon the results of a survey of visitor and resident activity patterns, and opinions regarding management and conservation issues was undertaken at Lough Erne in 1993, and is designed as a contribution to this expanding field of countryside recreation.

The Erne Lakeland

The Erne Lakeland is mainly located within the county of Fermanagh in the west of the province. It possesses an exceptional range of features, both environmental and physical which are of general and specific appeal to visitors, and of which the prime focus is Lough Erne (L & R Leisure, 1989). Lough Erne comprises some 150km^2 of navigable waterway, and a catchment area which occupies some 4,375km^2, or 5.2% of the land area of Ireland as a whole (Brady, Shipman and Martin, vol.2 1979). The navigable waterway is split between the wide open expanse of Lower Lough Erne, and the Upper Lough, which consists of a narrower river-like section set amidst a drumlin landscape. Upper and Lower Lough Erne are joined via an Inter-Lough channel which runs through the county's principal town of Enniskillen. A small number of the islands on Lough Erne are still inhabited, whilst most have been designated for conservation purposes or are of historical value.

The Lough is host to a diverse range of activities which include: agriculture, commercial fishing, conservation, forestry, hydro-electric power, industry, planning, recreation and tourism. Although there exists a wide range of conflicting activities, agriculture, recreation and tourism remain the three most important industries within the county's economy. Two major tourism features in Fermanagh are cruising and angling, of which the hire-cruising market generates one third of the district's overseas tourism revenue and is an integral part of Fermanagh's image (L and R Leisure, 1989).

Development around Lower Lough Erne has been on-going since the establishment of a successful cruiser hire industry in the early 1960s, but Upper Lough Erne has tended to remain relatively undeveloped. This situation is changing with the reopening of the Shannon-Erne Waterway creating the longest navigable inland waterway in Europe, and hence the attraction of much recreation and tourism development. The scheme involved a £30m investment by the British and Irish Governments and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI). In 1991, over 2200 craft were registered by the Department of Agriculture for N.Ireland on Lough Erne. With possibly 4,000 unregistered boats, some 6,000 craft may have been available to use the

Lough at that time. There were 109 boats for hire on Lough Erne in 1994, generating over £2.4m revenue (DoE, 1995). The local council hopes to see further development of this product through supporting the reopening of the Ulster Canal which would link Lough Erne to Lough Neagh. Although development is on the increase within the Erne Lakeland, many parts of the Lough and its shores have been designated for conservation purposes by various agencies, such as the RSPB's Reserve at Castle Cauldwell and the Ulster Wildlife Trust's Reserves on Isle Namanfin and Tonregee Island.

The Survey

With economic and time constraints placed upon the interviewer, a total of six hundred questionnaire surveys were undertaken. These were divided equally between the two survey groups of visitors and local residents. The following two sections of this paper will examine the visitor characteristics, recreational activity patterns, socio-economic characteristics, and the opinions of visitors and residents on local recreation management and conservation issues.

Visitor-Resident Characteristics

The visitor profile shows a dominance of Northern Ireland visitors within the Erne Lakeland, similar to the results found in the *Erne Lakeland Recreation and Tourism Study* (D.o.E, 1993). There were also a considerable number of visitors from the Republic of Ireland and Europe, plus a small percentage of UK and Australian visitors. Lough Erne is a well established tourist location in respect of two particular activity markets which are motor-cruising and angling. These two activities in particular have been targeted at the German/European tourist trade for some years now, and hence the area attracts a considerable number of European visitors.

The two main reasons given for visiting the Erne Lakeland were to generally view the scenery, and to participate in a particular activity, the percentages being 58% and 27% respectively. Of the 81 visitors participating in a particular activity 89% of those were taking part in motor-cruising, an activity which Lough Erne is widely renowned for, whilst small numbers were visiting to participate in angling, water-skiing and sailboarding.

Northern Ireland residents accounted for the majority of both day trips and tourists (those staying at least one night) in this survey, whilst the majority of UK, European and Republic of Ireland visitors were also staying at least one night in the Erne Lakeland area.

The age profile of the two groups interviewed points to a predominance of the 25--59 age group within the Erne Lakeland, accounting for over 75% of visitors and local residents. The age profile of visitors found in this study reflects the findings of surveys of other wetland areas (Centre for Leisure Research, 1993;

University of Limerick, 1991; and Stirling District Council, 1989). Visitors tended to be divided amongst the professional, intermediate, skilled non-manual/manual and partly skilled social classes, with the largest majority of visitors belonging to the skilled manual class, accounting for 27% of the survey group. In comparison, a considerable percentage of residents were also categorised in the skilled manual class, accounting for 40% of this group. As the main source of the economy is agriculture, this helps to explain why such a large percentage of residents were categorised as skilled manual.

Visitor-Resident recreational activity patterns

Data was collected regarding awareness of recreational activities, recreational participation, and activities thought by respondents to potentially damage the environment in some way. Results illustrated a high awareness by both groups of the recreational activities that take place on Lough Erne, with exception, in the case of visitors, to localised activities such as boat tours, scrambling and wildfowling. Activity awareness was in the majority of cases slightly higher amongst the resident population due to their familiarity with the area under study.

figure 1. Visitor – resident differences in participation in activity categories

Category	% of Visitors	% of Residents	Chi-Square
Motorised water-based activities	17	10	22.45 *
Non-motorised water-based activities	12	9	6.51 *
Land-based passive activities	38	43	13.36 *
Land-based active activities	33	37	26.94 *

* Significant at 0.05 level

Source : Lough Erne Visitor-Resident survey 1993

Visitor awareness of the potential damage that could be caused to the environment by both water and land-based recreational activities was very low with the exception of motorised water-based activities such as motor-cruising, water-skiing, jet-skiing and speed boating/power-boating. Residents also portrayed a low awareness of the potential damage that could be caused to the environment by the various recreational activities, again with the exception of the motorised water-based activities.

All recreational activities were assigned to particular categories for analysis purposes. These categories include motorised water-based activities, non-motorised water based activities, land-based passive activities and active land-based activities. Significant differences were found between visitor and resident recreational participation in the four activity categories (figure 1). No significant differences were found to exist in relation to visitor-resident recreational activity participation and age, educational attainment or occupational classification.

Management of Lough Erne

The Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Environment for N.Ireland act as the two main management authorities within the Erne Lakeland. The bed and soil of Lough Erne is owned by the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland and managed by their Watercourse Management Division. Both the DoA (NI), and DoE (NI) consist of a number of divisions which manage certain aspects of Lough Erne and its shores. Besides the two main government departments, there are also approximately twenty five independent organisations which manage their own particular interests within the area. As a result management of Lough Erne is fragmented.

A two tier Lough Erne management structure was set up in 1991, comprised of a Lough Erne Management Committee and a Lough Erne Management Advisory Consultative Group. The aim of this non-statutory structure was to co-ordinate the management of Fermanagh's greatest natural asset to the long term advantage of all users. The Management Committee consists of thirteen representatives from government departments and bodies such as Fermanagh District Council and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board with executive functions in respect of the Erne system. The Advisory Consultative group is a combination of representatives from local sporting interests, commercial interests, conservation groups, sports governing bodies, council representatives and also some government agency representatives. The structure is one in which the Advisory Consultative Group submits recommendations to the Management Liaison Committee for consideration and action where appropriate.

In terms of conservation issues the Erne Lakeland has been proposed for some time as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), amidst much opposition from the agricultural community, whilst the West Fermanagh and Erne Lakeland Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) was designated in 1993. Earlier this year Lough Erne was proposed as an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) under the EU Habitats Directive, making Upper Lough Erne the largest ASSI in the country. The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland hope that this will be extended to include Lower Lough Erne in the near future.

Visitor-resident reactions to management and conservation issues

Both visitors and residents were asked about their opinions on Lough Erne management and conservation issues. Visitors and residents were found to be unanimously opposed to the implementation of restrictions on recreational activities on Lough Erne. Both groups were presented with a set of recreation management actions, and asked whether any of them required implementation on Lough Erne. These included zoning (in both time and space), imposing strict speed limits on the Lough, restricting the Lough to certain types of recreation only, and restricting recreation during wildlife breeding seasons. The management strategy finding most support was the implementation of strict speed limits on Lough Erne, with 59% of visitors and 49% of residents stating this as a required action. Over 55% of visitors thought that a restriction should be imposed upon recreational activities during wildlife breeding seasons. Although this action was suggested by a considerable percentage of visitors, the wildlife breeding season does not in most cases coincide with the tourist season, and hence recreational participation is minimal with the exception of some recreational activity by local residents.

Lough Erne and its shores have numerous areas designated for the abundance of indigenous flora and fauna found there. Less than 45% of visitors and residents interviewed were aware of any designated conservation areas within the Erne Lakeland area. As the area has been proposed as an AONB for some time, both survey groups were questioned on their awareness of this proposed designation. Results showed that only 30% of visitors and 52.7% of residents were aware of this fact, whilst over 75% of both groups stated that the proposed designation would not affect them in any way. Less than 5% of both visitors and residents thought they would be affected by the AONB. Reasons given as to how the proposal would affect either group included restrictions on speed-based recreational activities, restrictions on all recreation in general, tightening of planning control, and changes in agricultural practice. Assuming designation goes ahead, some of those interviewed stated that more tourists would be attracted to the area. Over 95% of both survey groups agreed that the local farming community and other local residents should be fully consulted by agencies concerned when proposing to designate an area for conservation purposes. Although some of these actions may be taken into consideration as part of an AONB, results generally showed a low awareness of what an AONB is and what the aim of the designation is.

Conclusion/Discussion

As the popularity of tourism and recreation in the natural environment has increased in recent years, and indeed within the Erne Lakeland, the area is seen to have the potential to expand dramatically in future (N.Ireland Tourist Board, 1989). The need for a sustainable and integrated approach to management within the Lakeland has become a matter of urgency, if this wetland resource is not destined to become over-used in the future. This has occurred at other lakeland resources within the UK. The fragmented nature of Lough Erne management authorities, both government and independent, requires further examination, and the establishment of a statutory management body replacing the current non-statutory arrangement may

become essential. This would allow all aspects of this resource to be managed by one authority, but must ensure adequate representation by the local community, agricultural, tourist and recreational interests.

A new factor which now comes into the equation is the effect that the cessation of terrorist violence in the province as a whole is going to have upon the Northern Ireland tourism industry. Recent data has shown that tourism has the almost unique ability to demonstrate immediate returns from the cessation of violence and the past few months in the province provide an excellent case study in favour of the argument that support for tourism can show an immediacy of return not achievable by other sectors. Sustaining the initial positive momentum is the main challenge for Lough Erne and Northern Ireland tourism in general. Curiosity value, as parts of Eastern Europe have found out, will only attract visitors for one visit (English Tourist Board, 1995).

County Fermanagh is predominantly rural and remains relatively underdeveloped in economic terms. Agriculture, recreation and tourism are the main sources of its economy. To ensure that the revenue obtained from recreation/tourism sources continues to benefit the county in the future, any development within this industry must not only be sustainable, but also integrated to benefit the local community by providing additional employment. Within the Northern Ireland context a sustainable approach involves easing pressure on traditional visitor destinations in the east and the north and spreading the benefits of tourism to the south and west (N.Ireland Tourist Board, 1995), which includes tourism within Fermanagh. This point further illustrates the need for a sustainable and integrated approach to management of Lough Erne.

At present many factors represent a conflict of interest between conservation and development within the area. There is a requirement for a balance between the two interests as conservation of the landscapes, flora and fauna is the reason visitors come to the area, whereas tourism development is important to the local community and its economy.

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Sustainable Access – The Tir Cymen Model

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Countryside Council for Wales

Tir Cymen has no direct equivalent in English, but translates roughly as a "well-crafted landscape".

Introduction

Tir Cymen is a whole farm agri-environmental scheme which supports farmers to do work which enhances a range of elements within the Welsh landscape. The scheme was launched experimentally in three areas of Wales in 1992 and is managed by the Countryside Council for Wales on behalf of the Welsh Office. The three pilot areas are Dinefwr in Dyfed, Meirionnydd in Gwynedd and Swansea. The scheme was introduced as a market-based approach to the management of the farmland of Wales. The Countryside Council believes that in much the same way as farmers are paid for their normal agricultural practice, they should also be rewarded for using their skills and resources to look after landscape and wildlife. Tir Cymen aims to demonstrate that through this approach, environmental management may be integrated with agricultural production on ordinary farms.

Tir Cymen Access

The scheme offers farmers annual payments in return for the positive management of their land for the benefit of wildlife, landscape, archaeology and geology, and for providing opportunities for quiet enjoyment of the countryside. It is a condition of Tir Cymen management payments that all public rights of way are free from obstruction and available to the public. In addition, the provision of new linear access routes for walking, horse riding and for disabled people is an optional part of Tir Cymen agreements. Acceptance of new paths is subject to satisfying "usefulness" criteria such as linkages to the public rights of way system, providing access to a viewpoint or other feature of interest, or providing an access route to an upland area. Approximately 36km of new permissive access is provided by such means.

Moorland, heathland and unimproved upland grassland areas are made available to the public for quiet enjoyment on foot, also as a condition of the Tir Cymen management prescriptions. Currently this provides approximately 21,941ha of access opportunity. Mapped details of Tir Cymen area access opportunity and new permissive routes are published and made available to interested organizations and for reference at local libraries.

Can Access Be Sustainable?

To answer this question, sustainability needs first to be defined. For the purposes of this presentation, I offer two for delegates to consider. They are:

> "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" *Our Common Future: the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*, or the "Brundtland definition".

- "Living off the interest and not the capital"

It is too early to tell whether Tir Cymen is indeed a model for sustainability, but there are many features of the access elements within the scheme that suggest the approach is right. These include:

- area access is gained through cross-compliance, or as an incidental benefit of the management payments ie it is not directly paid for;
- payments for linear permissive routes are positive;
- the polarization between users and landowners is reduced;
- the whole farm approach ensures that access compliments other objectives;
- there are benefits to the local economy, through the use of local materials and labour;
- linear access routes are cost-effective in that payments are made to the "man on the spot"; and
- linear routes are paid for only if they are useful and new. Strategically this helps with the development of networks of public rights of way by providing previously unobtainable links with other routes and access to open areas.

Disadvantages

Because area access is gained through compliance and not directly paid for, there is no compulsion for farmers to positively manage those areas for access. Also, as these areas are based on the vegetation classification of the land, they are made available regardless of their suitability for access.

The fact that the provision of linear permissive routes is optional is an important principle of the scheme. However, the disadvantage of this is that a farmer can refuse to provide linear permissive access to an upland area otherwise available to the public by reason of its vegetational classification. This technical anomaly is being investigated as part of the ongoing monitoring of the scheme. A further possible difficulty is the time differential of farms entering the scheme and the problem this may cause in mapping access opportunities as ten year Tir Cymen agreements come to an end.

The Future

The continuation of the Common Agricultural Policy and other EU legislation means that agri-environmental schemes like Tir Cymen are likely to become more influential as providers of planned and managed opportunities for access. As the pressure grows for public investment to yield public goods, more such opportunities will be provided as a by-product of publicly subsidised agricultural activity. This, it can be argued, helps sustain rural communities in a positive way, and one which avoids having to legislate for a "right to roam".

A recent report by the Department of Agriculture suggested that production-related agricultural subsidies will decline. Greater pressure on resources may mean that measures to provide access opportunities will need to be targetted and flexible enough to meet changing leisure demands. The Countryside Council has proposed that the provision of opportunities for enjoyment and increased understanding should be regarded as one of the goals of a nature conservation policy. Furthermore, the achievement of the goal of sustainability depends on developing conservation and enjoyment together.

Tourism, Environment and the Shannon-Erne Waterway

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Abstract

The reopening of the Shannon-Erne Waterway in June 1994 provided an important new tourism resource in a part of North-West Ireland that lacks a strong economic base. First year cruise traffic flows were encouraging from a development perspective, and the peace initiatives of 1994 give reason to expect a pattern of rising demand. However, the foundation of the cruising industry is the tranquil, unspoiled natural environment from which the expansion of traffic and accompanying facilities and structures could easily detract. Seeking a balance between satisfying the needs of the visitors without degrading the essential atmosphere, scenery and wildlife that underlie the demand, is clearly fundamental to any future progress. This paper is based on a visitor survey conducted during the summer of 1994, pertaining to the visitor response to the cruising experience and to the natural environment. Their demands for additional facilities are analysed in the context of their appreciation of environmental pressures and problems, and areas of potential conflict between the two are identified. The generally sympathetic response to environmental issues, and the relatively few requirements specified, lead to the conclusion that the region has every chance in succeeding in achieving the elusive combination of both the sustainability of tourism and the improvement of economic conditions, provided that any developments initiated are carefully monitored.

Introduction

The counties of Cavan, Fermanagh and Leitrim straddle the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (Fig. 1). They lie on the northwestern periphery not only of the island of Ireland, but of Europe as a whole. The location reinforces an economic disadvantage based upon a weak agricultural economy of small livestock farms eking a livelihood from poor, wet soils. The traditional rural landscape which developed around the meadowland, hills, lowland bogs, lakes and rivers possesses a tourism potential. However, the combination of relative isolation from the main points of entry into Ireland and the sensitive security situation surrounding the Northern Ireland border over the 25 years to 1994 have seriously compromised realisation of that potential, so that arrival numbers have fallen far short of counties on the west and east coasts.

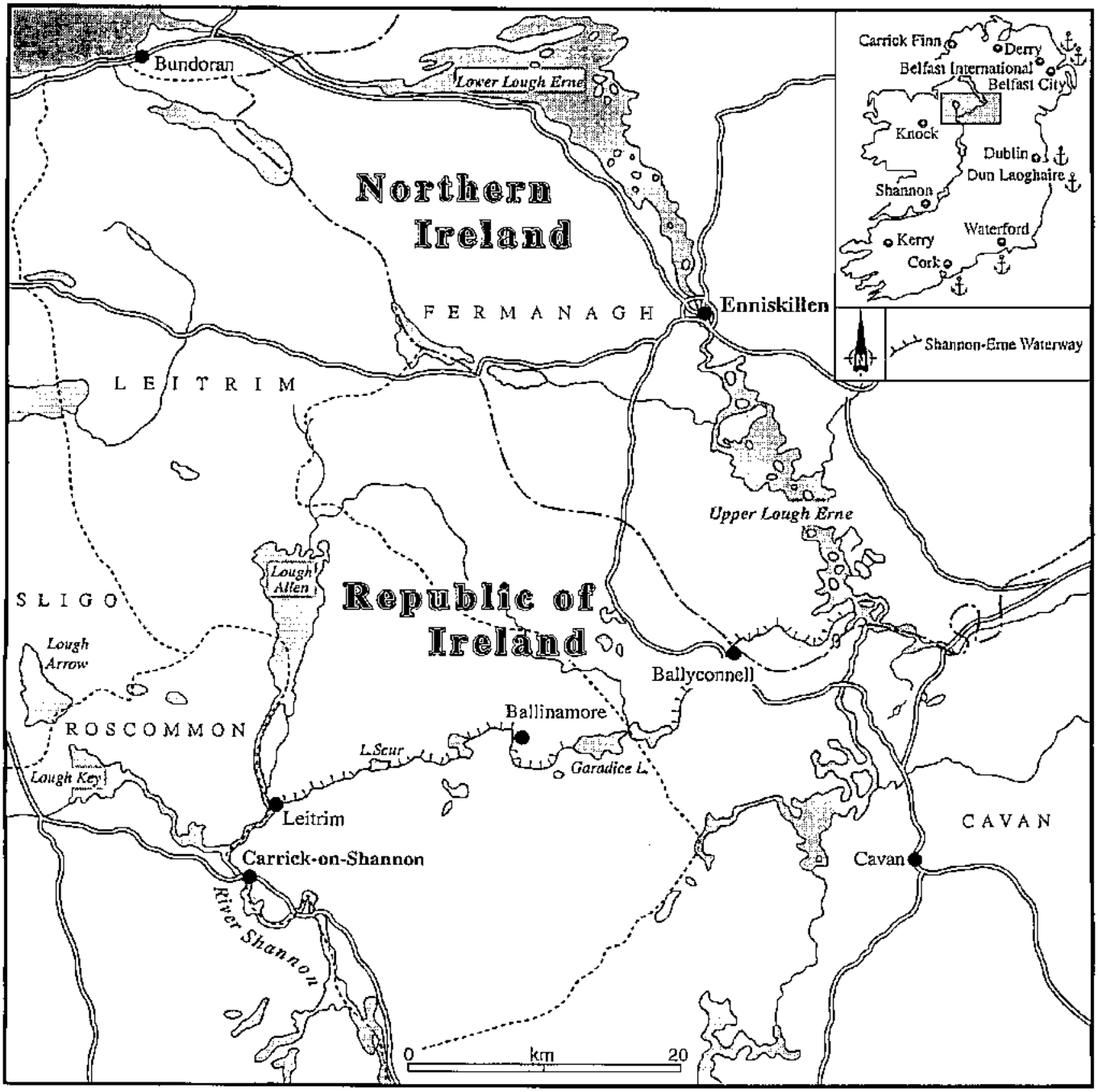


Figure 1. Lough Erne and the Shannon-Erne Waterway

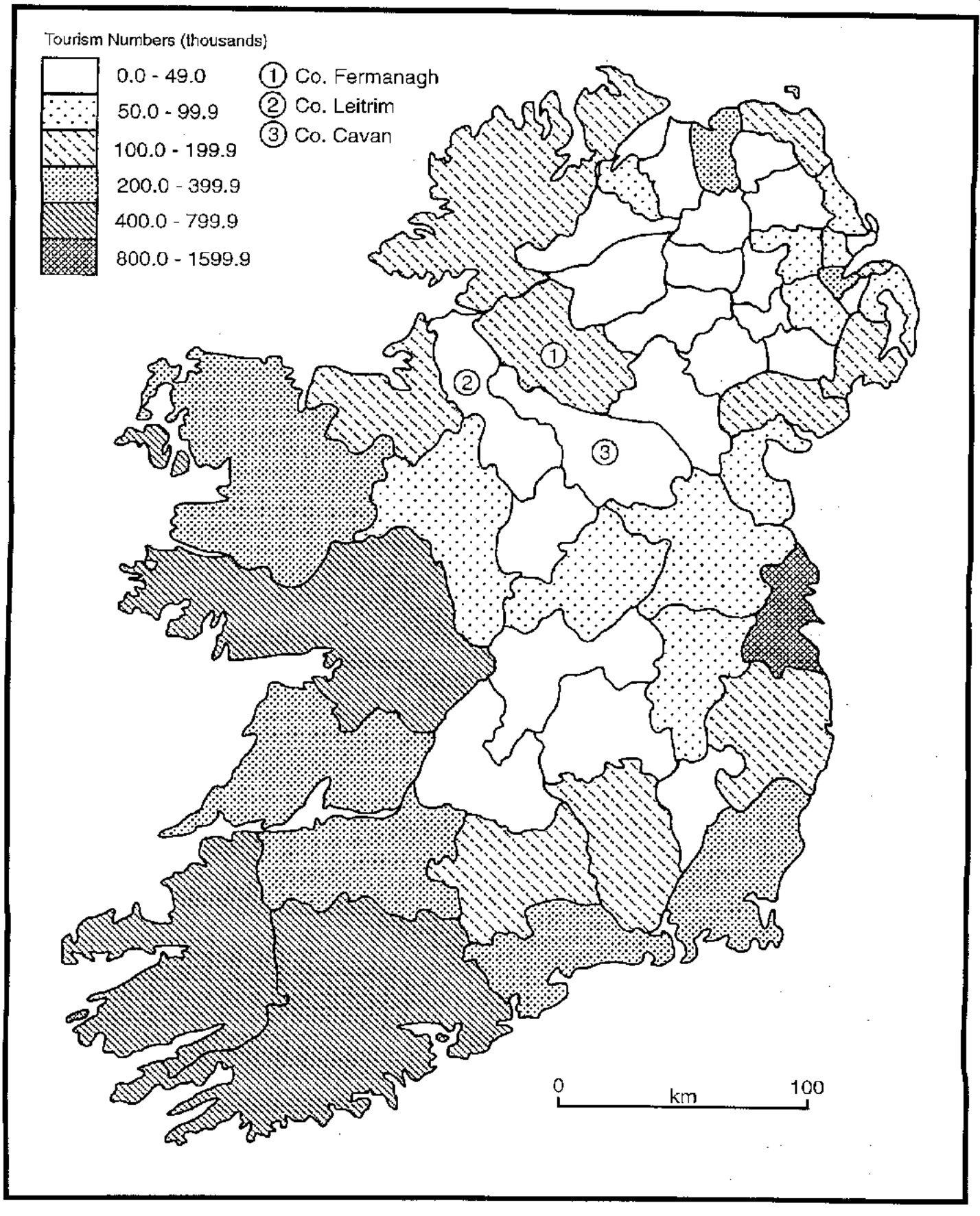


Figure 2. Distribution of Tourists to Ireland, 1993

However, the combination in 1994 of the reopening of the Shannon-Erne Waterway in April and the peace initiatives begun in September may well herald a rapid escalation of tourism activity, particularly in the one area of tourism – that of cruising – in which the region holds a comparative advantage. Prior to the opening of the Waterway, cruising was divided between the principal centres of the River Shannon and Upper and Lower Lough Erne roughly in the ratio of four to one. Interest in cruising as a holiday activity has been expanding rapidly in recent years, and now that physical access between the two prime cruising resources of the island is open, the possibilities for its development are considerably enhanced.

Clearly, however, any expansion of cruising brings potential problems to its long-term viability. The foundation of the cruising industry in the area is the tranquil, unspoiled natural environment from which the expansion of boating, along with its bankside facilities and structures could easily detract. Thus, seeking a balance between satisfying the service needs of the visitors without degrading the essential atmosphere, scenery and wildlife that underlie the demand, is clearly fundamental to any future progress. Fortunately, the lack of urbanisation in the area, and the presently limited extent of cruising in the North-West compared with the resources available, have not detracted from the high quality of the natural environment. As such it provides a strong basis for development, and one which has every chance of succeeding in achieving the elusive combination of both sustainability of tourism and improvement of economic conditions.

It is in the context of the management of the balance between the economically valuable cruising activity and the particularly sensitive canal environment, that this paper examines the reopened Shannon-Erne Waterway. It is based largely on a study of cruise visitors in the first summer of operation, and examines their use of the Waterway and related activities, the attractions it presents to them, as well as their reactions to the environment of the region, and their perceptions of environmental problems. Various management issues may then be identified arising from the views and opinions expressed by these visitors.

The Visitors

The data derive from a sample of 362 cruise visitors to the Erne system and Shannon-Erne Waterway between June and September 1994. Visitors not using the Waterway were included in the sample in order to obtain reasons for non-use. In practice, the majority of cruise visitors (63 per cent) had sailed the Waterway section or were intending to do so at the time of interview.

Problems of language ensure that the response pattern to the questionnaire favoured English-speaking countries, but despite this, the largest single element in the survey is from mainland Europe. This is consistent with Irish cruising statistics, both north and south of the border, where the affluence of Germany, Switzerland and Austria combined with the strength of their currencies favours participation. Few visitors from Great Britain are apparent, which is typical of recent years. Although this may reflect

less interest in this type of vacation compared with some Continentals, the presence of competitive resources in Great Britain (in the Scottish and English Lakes, the Broads, and the English canal system), as well as some understandable trepidation over visiting the border area, are also likely to play a large part.

There also seems to be greater resistance among the Northern Irish to use the Waterway, which could again be partly due to the security situation. However, equally, if not more importantly for that group is their tendency to take part in shorter trips booked at short notice and probably when weather conditions seem favourable.

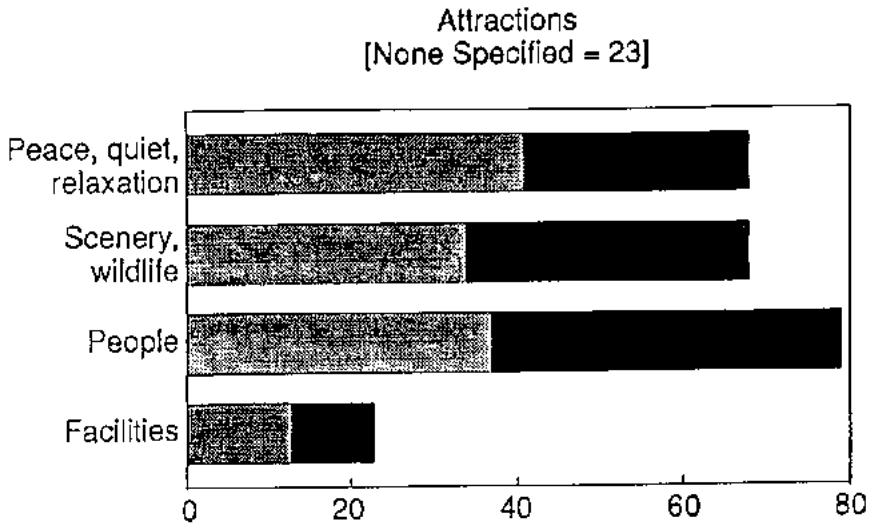
Attractions of the Waterway and Its Environs

Those who took advantage of the Waterway did so very much out of curiosity or interest in the new facility. Once again, this represents a reaction to the tremendous publicity in the holiday media and the European quality papers.

Beyond the Waterway a number of general attractions drew people to the region (Figure. 5). Broadly speaking, the attractions specified are very much the typical ones of Irish tourism in general, exaggerated perhaps by the advantages of the waterways in taking people away from congested areas to scenic rural regions, where wildlife is to be found in abundance, and where the atmosphere is one of peace, quiet, and tranquillity. These are all clearly vital qualities to be kept in the forefront of tourist and development planners' minds when considering the management of the environment for the benefit of a sustainable tourism product. The natural attractions are supported by the warmth and friendliness of the local population, all helping to consolidate the rural idyll in the experience of the visitor. The man-made facilities are much less in evidence as attractions, largely reflecting the limited economic development in the area and the concomitant restricted availability of holiday entertainment and other diversions for the visitor.

Not all comments were positive, although a high proportion (82 per cent of the Waterway users) failed to specify any particular drawback to the holiday. Of those that did, the weather was singled out for comment more than any other factor. 1994 might be described as a typical Irish summer with bright intervals and showers prevailing in fairly fresh conditions. Extended periods of calm, sunny high pressure conditions were absent thus prompting the remarks, although the small numbers commenting adversely may reflect the low expectations of visitors even from those of Continental origins. The latter were proportionately more concerned over the standard of their cruisers with occasional complaints about the speed of the boats and, rather more seriously, the standard of cleanliness and preparedness of some vessels. This would hardly be conducive to repeat business particularly in an industry where boat hire costs over £700 per week for a standard 6-berth boat in the peak season. A further 12 persons (5 per cent of the Waterway users) also

Fig. 5. Attractions and drawbacks of the northwest waterways.



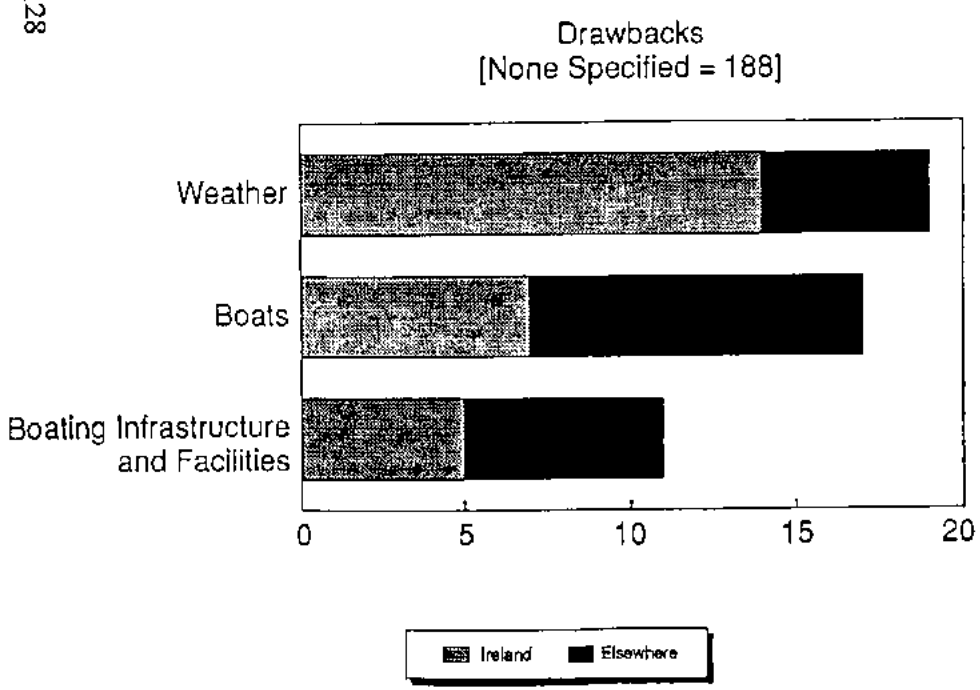


Fig. 3. Constraints on use of Waterway

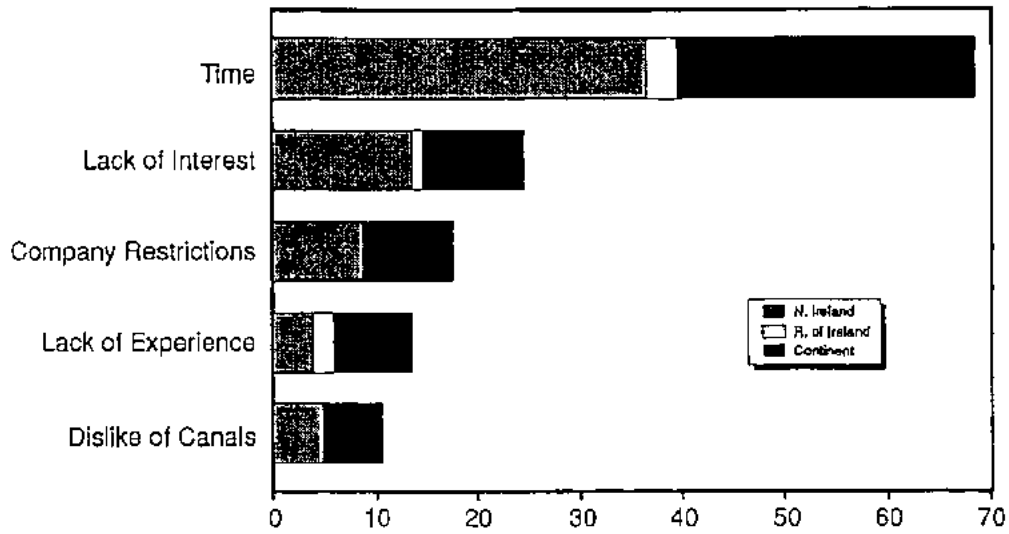
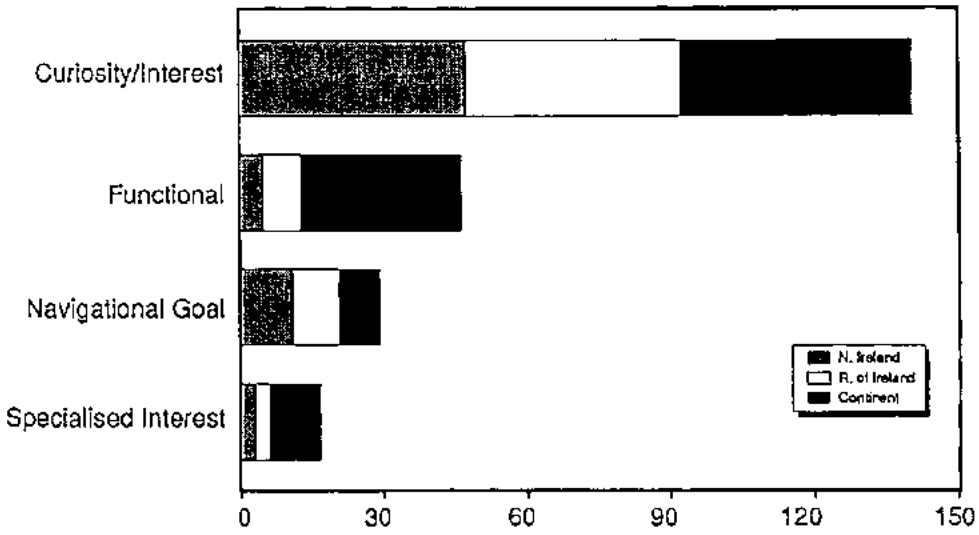


Fig. 4. Attractions of Waterway



remarked upon some inadequacies of the boating infrastructure and associated facilities with, again, the Continentals being rather more in evidence. The main problem here concerned insufficient moorings which could provide a dilemma for managers of cruising development in the area. A substantial expansion in moorings, or the inappropriate siting of additional moorings, would inevitably reduce the aesthetic charm of the area, so that considerable care needs to be exercised in balancing the need for development of this type with the preservation of the environment that draws in the visitors in the first instance. Overall, though, the pressures for development of this kind are not notably great, and some help is being given through new mooring construction in the urban centres, particularly Ballinamore.

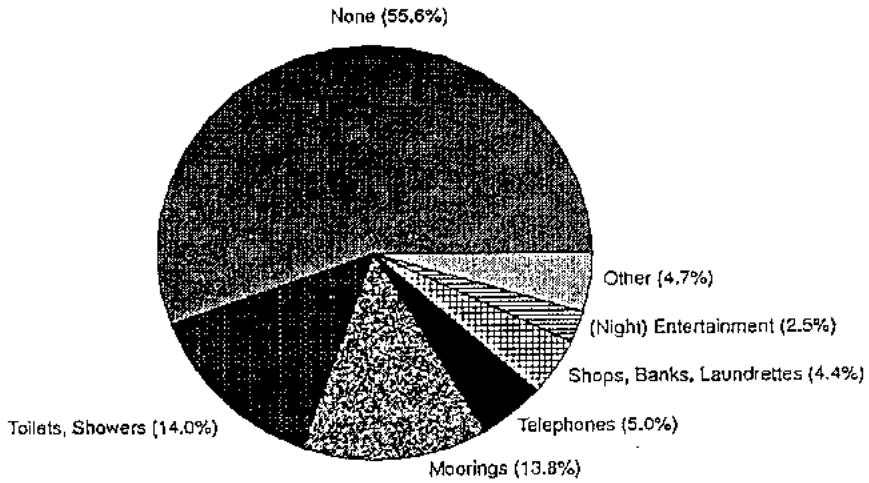
All in all, drawbacks are outnumbered by the attractions in the ratio of 1:10. Nevertheless, despite the high levels of satisfaction, some additional facility requirements apart from moorings were specified by the visitors (Figure 6). Items such as showers and toilets are vital given the limited and cramped provisions on board. Mention of this need, however, reflects more the inadequacy of provision on the Erne system section rather than on the Waterway, as attractively built and fully equipped facilities have been located at all major mooring points on the Shannon-Erne, even if the operation of the equipment was not altogether smooth in the first year.

Participation rates in various sporting and other physical activities show some variation between groups of visitors (Figure 8). The most popular activities are walking, rambling or hiking, often associated with the historic monuments which abound in the region. The environmental impact of such is minimal, whereas some potential for conflict both between activities, and between certain activities and the environment, occur with many of the water-based sports. Even fishing has been the cause of some concern with reports that significant quantities of coarse fish are being removed and allowed to die rather than being returned to the water by inexperienced anglers. Otherwise, the main problem is jet-skiing and speed-boating. These activities do not involve many of the cruise visitors, and then mostly those of local origin. Moreover, they tend not to take place in the confined stretches of the river or canal sections of the Waterway. However, this is a potential problem for bank erosion, wildlife disturbance and general noise pollution if allowed to develop indiscriminately, and accordingly must be considered in any management plan for the region.

Environmental Quality

As was indicated above, an obvious but no less essential part of the cruising experience is the natural physical environment which acts either as a backdrop to activities associated directly with sailing the cruiser, or as a context in which the associated recreational activities of fishing, walking and other water-based pursuits take place. Thus, the quality and diversity of the physical environment is crucial to the enjoyment of the recreational experience.

Fig. 6. Facilities required on the waterways of northwest Ireland.



Figures in parentheses refer to the percentage of persons specifying each facility requirement

Fig. 7. Local Services Used

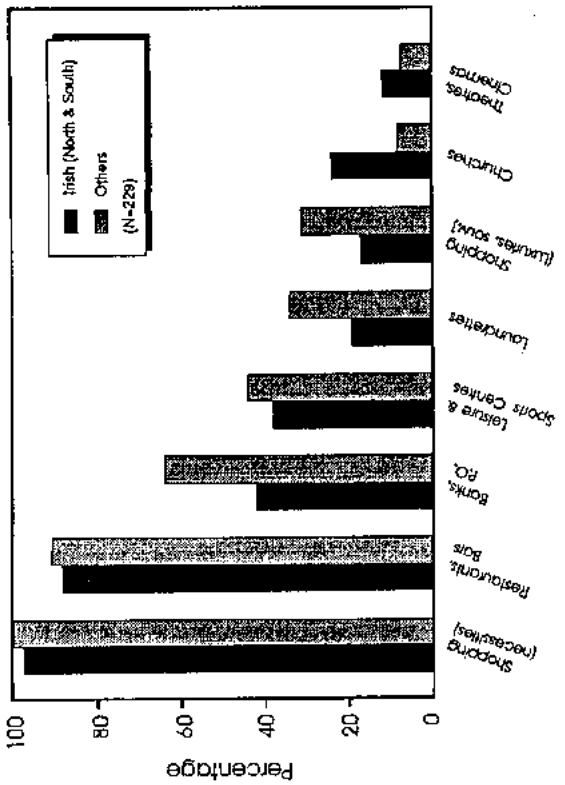
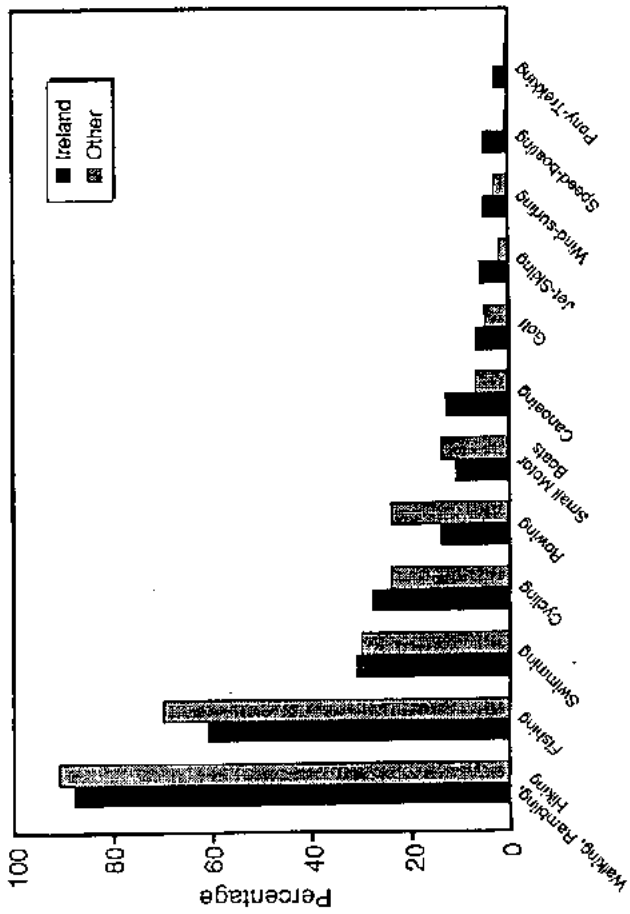


Fig. 8. Sports/physical activity participation rates.



The waterways of North-West Ireland are characterised by relatively unspoilt and varied countryside. Lower and Upper Lough Erne (Figure 1) in particular offer a variety of lakeland scenery with many shoreline types and wetland habitats, but this variety extends to places such as Garadice Lough and Lough Scur on the Shannon-Erne Waterway. In addition, the Waterway itself is not uniform, but includes a still water section, a river section and numerous loughs dotted along its length. There are also attractive villages and towns such as Leitrim, Ballinamore, and Keshcarrigan on the route, and the important regional centres of Carrick on Shannon and Enniskillen where many cruises originate are close by.

A key element of this study was the establishment of opinions on the environmental conditions of the Waterway, as well as the role that the physical environment plays in the recreational experience. First, interviewees were asked to record their opinions of the physical environment using a semantic differential test employing a series of paired adjectives scaled from 0 to 10. As can be seen from Figure 9 all factors scored highly averaging above 7, with all except two averaging above 8.

One factor that scored a mean of below 8 is concerned with perceptions of water conditions, and particularly the degree of pollution judged to be present. This result is interesting because, while it is known that there are problems of eutrophication in the region's water bodies, such problems are generally localised and short-lived. Rather, the result seems at least in part to be a response to the actual colour of the water rather than any detailed knowledge of the amount of pollution extant. This is supported by work carried out in New Zealand by Smith and Davis-Colley (1992) who concluded that recreationists' preference is for water of clarity of greater than one metre depth visibility, and of a blue green colour. It is therefore highly likely that the peaty brown colour of the water is affecting the evaluation of pollution levels.

From the range of response to each pair of objectives, it is obvious that some individuals hold widely differing views from the norm about the quality of the physical environment, but it is also clear that those who do subscribe to such divergent views are in the minority since they do not significantly depress the mean scores. The vast majority of those interviewed were in agreement over the high standard of the environment in all its aspects.

This is not to say that no problems exist in the use of the Waterway for recreational purposes at the present time, or may become more prevalent as cruising expands. In that connection, the survey tried to identify further issues of potential importance to cruising development by recording the seriousness of any

Fig. 9. Visitors Reactions to Environment

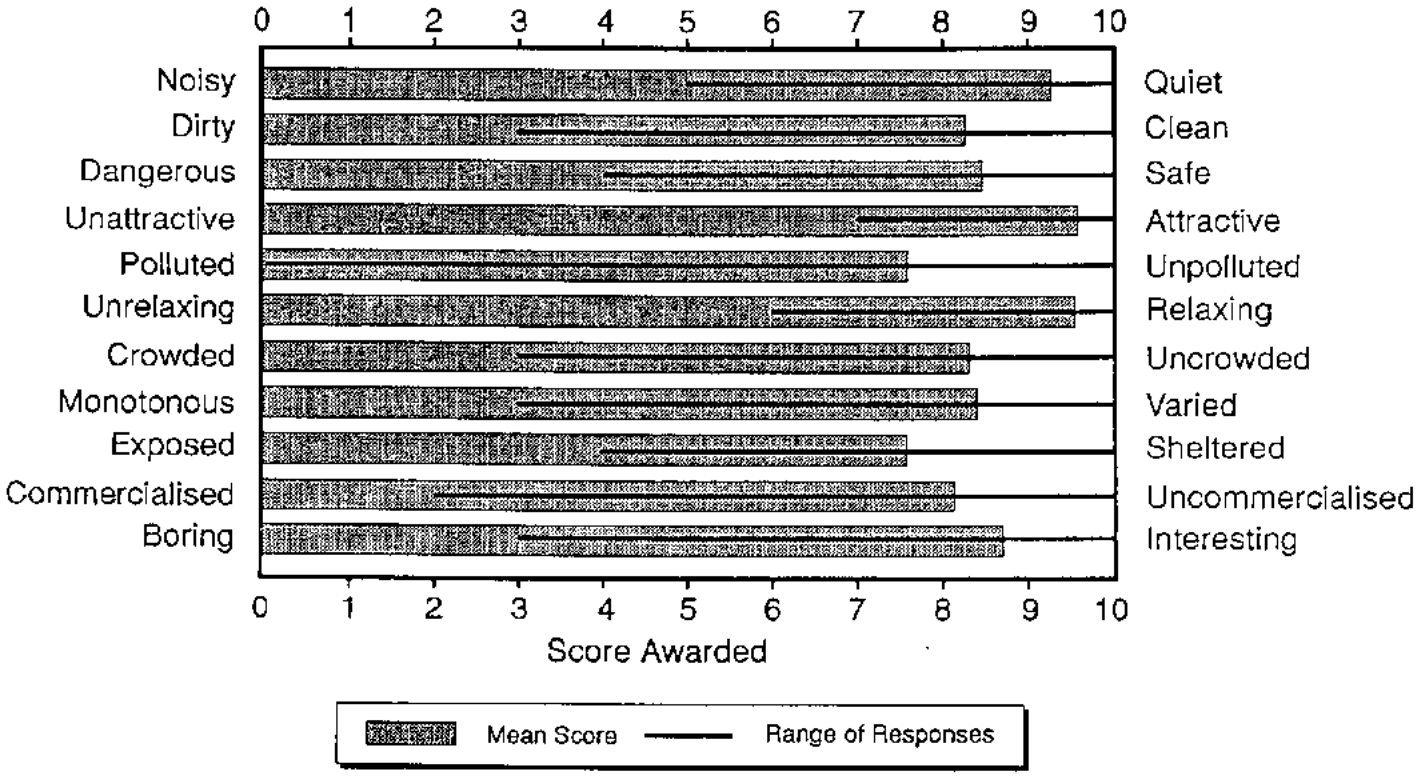
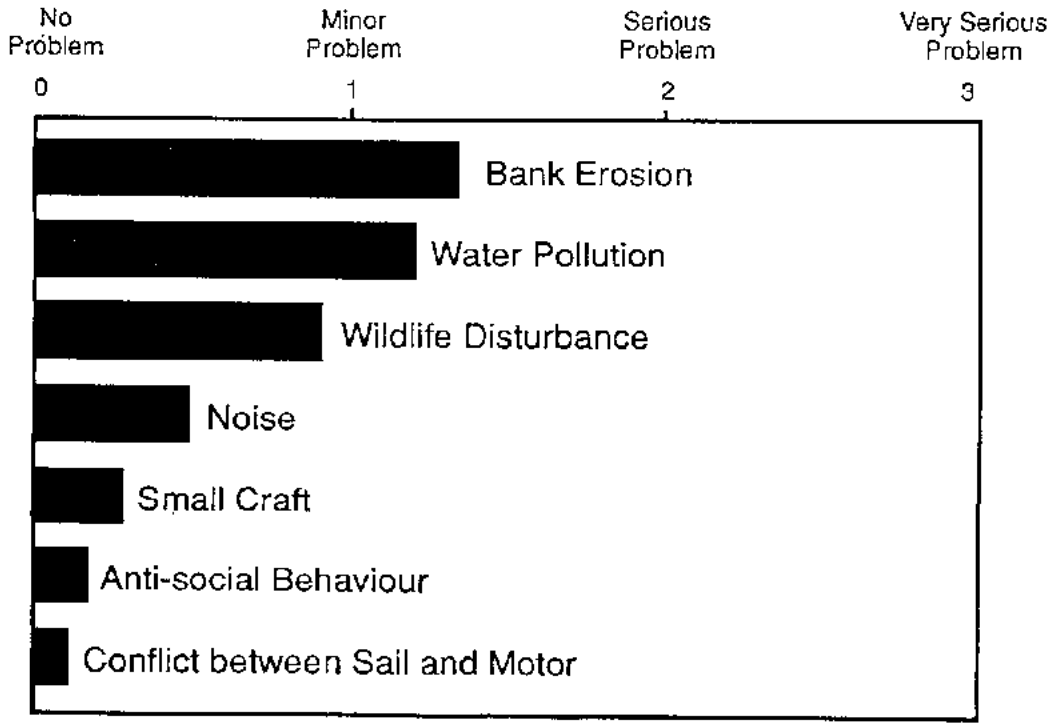


Fig.10. Seriousness of Recreation & Conservation Problems



recreational and conservation problems that might have been observed. This was achieved through the specification of a series of problems that have arisen in the use of other waterways such as the English canals and the Broads, and applying them to the Shannon-Erne link (Figure 10).

It is clear that people were overwhelmingly convinced that there were no serious problems manifested in the environment from the use of this Waterway for recreation and tourism. The only minor problems that were identified were bank erosion, water pollution and, to an even smaller extent, wildlife disturbance. Concerns over the behaviour of other users, and conflicts between various forms of recreational use, were almost non-existent. However, in contrast to perceptions, there *was* clear evidence of bank erosion after the first season of use on some sections of the canal notably in unconsolidated sediments around Ballinamore and some of the locks. Efforts were made during the construction phase to minimise the potential for bank erosion through the emplacement of rock armour around vulnerable points. However, minimisation of further erosion damage will depend on the ongoing programme of maintenance works by the Office of Public Works and the Department of Agriculture (NI) and, in particular, the enforcement of speed limits on the canal.

To assess the general levels of awareness of the environment and its sensitivity, interviewees were asked about special designations, the need for protection and restriction, and specific locations where additional restrictions should be imposed (Table 1). Again, there was little indication that the majority of the users were aware of the intricacies of the physical environment through which they were cruising, and few were aware of the need for protection or the potential for damage that activities could cause. Only those with a specialist interest in, for example, bird watching could recommend areas requiring designation, but most attention was focused on Lough Erne rather than the Waterway. The majority of those interviewed offered the opinion that no protection or restriction on activities was required.

Table 1. Levels of Awareness of Designated Areas and Need for Protection

Proportion of users aware of designated areas 39% Proportion of users suggesting protection or restriction needed 38%		
	% of Lough Erne Users	% of Waterway Users
Everywhere	19	9
Islands	5	n/a
Wildlife Locations	1	*
Other	1	1

Note: * Less than 1%.

Conclusion

The survey clearly established that the vast majority of users value the environment of the Shannon-Erne Waterway and the surrounding region very highly. The broad opinion is that the area offers attractive, peaceful and relatively unspoilt conditions in which to relax. However, although generally appreciative of environmental conditions, most users lack detailed knowledge of the waterway system, and this leads the majority to suggest that no conflicts exist and that environmental disruption is minimal. Pressures exist for a rapid development of the cruising industry not only in Northern Ireland, but also south of the border in the Republic of Ireland, where there is a much higher level of use of the River Shannon for cruising. The peace process has further implications for development since this will mean visitors in greater number coming to Northern Ireland from the Republic, as well as increases in overseas visitors, especially German and Swiss tourists, well known for their high disposable incomes. This trend is already well established after just one year's absence of violence.

With such a high quality, relatively unspoilt and uncrowded environment, opportunities exist to develop a type of green tourism that relies heavily upon the natural surroundings. However, the dilemma held in common with the exploitation of other recreational resources, is that any development of the physical environment of the Shannon-Erne Waterway has to be carefully managed in order to retain those features that the users value highly, and yet it must provide facilities and opportunities that enhance the user's experience.

From an economic development perspective, Fermanagh, Cavan and Leitrim all have a weak economic base and are reliant upon tourism to complement agriculture. There is, therefore, a need to encourage the expansion of the tourist industry in these remote rural parts of the island of Ireland. However there is also the need to clearly recognise that tourism can be unstable and cyclical, and that overdependence on this fickle aspect of the economy should not be encouraged. The overriding concern, if there is to be an expansion of the cruising industry, dependent as it will be on continued access to the first-rate natural conditions of the Shannon-Erne Waterway, is to get the management of this resource right at this early stage of its development. This will require detailed and integrated planning from both economic and environmental perspectives, with new institutions and enhanced cross-border cooperation.

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Getaway Girls and Wild Outdoor Women: Encouraging women and girls into outdoor pursuits

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Introduction

The Sports Council's remit has been to encourage Sport for All through participation in one of over a hundred forms of sport - one of the greatest ranges of choice in the world. This has always included outdoor activities, but this was more explicitly recognised in its 1987 Strategy Review and the consequent report *A Countryside for Sport* (Sports Council 1993). This paper arises from a wider range of 22 case studies of good practice in promoting and managing outdoor sport in a sustainable way in partnership with other agencies in Yorkshire and Humberside (Glyptis, Collins and Randolph, 1995). These were undertaken as part of a strategy for countryside and water recreation in the region (YHCSR 1995).

Women in Outdoor Sport and Recreation

Participation in outdoor activities did not grow much in the 1980s: from 1977 to 1986 it stayed at 21–22% of the population when walking over 2 miles was included, and at 10–11% when it was not; frequencies of taking part grew by about 10%, which helped the growth of specialist centres. There is also evidence of continued increases in the number of participants most committed to frequent and regular activity, membership of affiliated clubs and groups (CLR 1991), and many anecdotes of growth in the interest of young people in adventure activities, and of adventure/ sports tourism (Collins and Jackson, 1996).

The Sports Council has always given priority to promoting women's participation. Since 1993 this has been part of a wider policy to move towards equity of opportunity for all, but neither its strategic guide (Sports Council 1993A) nor the Women's Sport Foundation's booklet on good management practice make specific mention of outdoor activities (WSF 1990). The Council endorsed the hope of Lord Hunt's report that all young people would have the opportunity to take part in such activities by 1995.

We are a long way from achieving this, and three factors currently militate against the continued development of opportunities for young people to learn and practice such skills:

- in the Dearing review of the National Curriculum (SCAA,1994) the removal of outdoor activities from Key Stage 1 and their downgrading to a choice alongside swimming and athletics "at points during" Key Stage 2;
- the reduction in numbers of outdoor activity centres run by LEAs – 22% nationwide (Taverner 1994), a picture echoed in Yorkshire and Humberside; and
- the limited size of the sports development staff dedicated to serving girls and women (ten for children and four for women out of 167 in the region (Glyptis, Collins and Randolph 1995B)).

Women's participation in outdoor sport actually declined between 1977 and 1986 by 2.6% (4.3% including walking) (Gratton and Tice, 1994). By 1990 the General Household Survey indicated that 13% of women took part once a month or more often in outdoor sports excluding walking, and by 1993 this was down to 12% (Mathieson 1993, Foster et al 1995). Why this should have happened is not clear. Possible causes could be shortage of time, as more women work and care for children; lack of transport; dislike of getting cold, wet and muddy, as one does in Britain for most of the year; switching to warm and companionable exercise in fitness centres and classes; lack of confidence in tackling adventurous/dangerous pursuits; and self-images which exclude such possibilities (eg Bayley-Jones, 1993). Table 1 shows the subordinate position of women (and people with disabilities and from ethnic groups) in some of the Region's outdoor pursuits.

Table 1. Women, Juniors and Ethnic Minorities in Countryside and Water Recreation in Yorkshire and Humberside

% of members Activity	Women	Juniors	Ethnic Minorities
LAND SPORTS			
Horse riding	80	13	few
Orienteering	30	30	<1
Long distance walking			few
Car driving	2		<5
Motorcycling	5		few
Land yachting	15	<1	0
WATER SPORTS			
Canoeing	31	17	
Coarse fishing	10		<5
Inland cruising	30–40	10	<5
Rowing		19	
Sailing	30		
Water skiing		43	
AIR SPORTS			
Hang-gliding, paragliding	5	6	5
Model flying	17	10	
Parachuting	5–10	<1	

Source: Glyptis, Collins and Randolph 1994A

The Case Studies

Two case studies of schemes aimed particularly at women came to light when Glyptis and colleagues trawled for examples of good practice – "Getaway Girls" in Leeds and "Wild Outdoor Women" in Kirklees (Glyptis, Collins and Randolph 1995A) – see panels.

Both ...

- are based in metropolitan boroughs;
- seek to give outdoor opportunities to young women, both enabled and disabled, white and from ethnic groups;
- were started by youth, community and sports workers who saw a need;
- are expected to run autonomously, although receiving core support from the borough council, and need constant ingenuity to gain grants and sponsorship;
- seek to develop training to grow their own leaders and give others confidence to operate in what is a strange if not alien environment for many of these women;
- sought to meet the special needs of people who are disabled and from ethnic minorities who had never considered outdoor activities as a practical option;
- serve and probably can only serve modest numbers, if they are to retain their vital friendliness and personal support.

Getaway Girls is somewhat larger and more ambitious, travels farther afield, and has a broader training programme. Wild Outdoor Women, on the other hand, has seen the need in a place like Huddersfield, to involve girls as well as women.

Conclusions

There are, undoubtedly, many other such schemes, and many good outdoor activity centres running similar programmes for young people of both sexes in the remote countryside, in town or on the edge of town (eg Glyptis and Robinson 1992). The two illustrated here show the need for many more such programmes to bring the joy, achievement, confidence and self-esteem to women who had never thought they could abseil, climb, canoe, sail a dinghy or a tall ship (GAG 1991). And why not? Corporations believe doses of such activities can improve their executives' morale, teamwork, and capacity. Aburdene and Naisbitt (1993, p131) suggested, perhaps fancifully for the UK at least, that sport "might be women's new route to corporate leadership". The widespread benefit is a personal, physical, emotional and spiritual one.

Sadly, the British educational and sporting/recreational systems and interests are once again pointing in different directions. Since school is once more ordered to give priority to the skills for earning a living rather than fulfilling a life, the trends mentioned above push far away the day when Hunt's vision will

come to pass, despite the fact that there will be another 800,000 children in society by 2010. Yet the Department of Education extols the benefits of outdoor activities (HMI 1990). The government's White Paper *Sport: Raising the Game* (DNH 1995) focusses on team games, performance and excellence. It does not see the health benefits of sport and exercise as anything to do with national sports policy, and leaves them to local authorities to work out, with the presumption that the latter's reduced resources will be adequate for this mammoth task (Collins 1995).

This is a long way from the purposes of the Council of Europe's 1992 charter for "Sport for All" to which the government subscribe. Until the will to organise and invest to move towards those goals returns, it is vital that local schemes like Getaway Girls and Wild Outdoor Women promote countryside sport for women and light candles of hope for sports equity, which means "equality of access, recognising inequalities, and taking steps to redress them" (YHCSR 1994, p49).

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ENCOURAGING GIRLS AND WOMEN INTO OUTDOOR PURSUITS: GETAWAY GIRLS, LEEDS

Aim: to involve young women, including those from ethnic minorities and those with disabilities, in outdoor pursuits.

Partners:

Leeds City – Leisure and Youth/Education, Urban Programme, Princes Trust, and Wade's Trust (totalling £5,000 in year 1), Rank Trust, Sports Council and others (totalling £10,000 in year 2).

The project:

Starting in 1986 with rambling/ cycling/ rock scrambling weekends for inner city 5–12s, including Asian girls, and training for some female leaders; in 1988–89 programmes widened to include climbing, caving, water sports, week long courses, some specially for disabled women, and to training in basic OP, for BETA certificates (general and in canoeing) using facilities as far afield as Kielder Water.

Management:

Project leader based at a community centre; steering group; depends on a small band of committed professionals and volunteers for leaders of trips and events.

LESSONS

- There is a substantial potential demand, but leaders/development staff have to go into the community to release it, as women are reticent about their ability to do such sports.
- It is a real struggle to find a funding package for a secure and developing programme.
- After a while there is a demand for leadership and skills training, sometimes requiring women-only courses.

CREATING A CLUB FROM A LEISURE SERVICES WOMEN'S PROGRAMME: WILD OUTDOOR WOMEN, KIRKLEES

Aim: To introduce women (18 years and over) to opportunities for outdoor activities.

Partners:

Kirklees MBC Leisure Services, Sports Council grant (£500), Yorkshire Water sponsorship (£100). Obtained Sports Aid Foundation grant (£2000) in 1994 for equipment.

The project:

In 1990 the Leisure Services Department ran 6/7 outdoor activity days targeting women of all ages. Sponsorship from Yorkshire Water provided finance for child care facilities. Two years later, each of the 100 women who had attended one or more of the activity days was contacted to see if they desired an outdoor activities club for women. The positive response resulted in the formation of WOW which now has 30 members who take part in various outdoor activities, such as long walks and canoeing. It runs BETA courses, and is seeking to set up a junior (under 16s) group, the Wowettes.

Management:

One SDO ran the activity days in the first year; they were then absorbed into the Department's sports development programme. Initially WOW was set up by the SDO, whose services have subsequently been withdrawn (as Leisure Department policy). The club members now organise their own events, on an informal basis, usually once a month. A £10 membership fee is payable, and activities are paid for at cost. The club, as yet, does not have any instructors, but some women are interested in taking leadership awards.

LESSONS

- Initiatives deserve pursuing.
- Even with continued support, it is desirable to form new clubs where joining existing clubs is not practical.

Community Forests

Gary Charlton
Great North Forest

Summary

This paper examines the management of people in the countryside in and around towns via a resume of selected community forest mechanisms. It highlights the current debate regarding urban parks and green spaces and suggests that the community forest initiative offers an integrating framework between urban and urban fringe countryside.

Introduction

Community forests cover large areas, spreading around and into a number of major towns and cities. These forests will not be continuous plantings of trees. Instead, they will be a rich mosaic of landscapes and land uses including farmland, villages and leisure enterprises, nature areas, water and public open space. They will create well wooded landscapes for wildlife and education, together with new opportunities for a wide range of recreational facilities, all on the doorstep of hundreds of thousands of people.

The guiding principles for the "Forests for the Community" programme are founded in the need to diversify the countryside for conservation, forestry, environmentally friendly agriculture, sport, recreation and the arts. This has been crystallised into a single aim:

- To develop multipurpose forests which will create better environments for people to use, cherish and enjoy.

The Present Position

All twelve community forests now have government approved Forest Plans and have officially moved from an initial planning phase to one of co-ordinating and facilitating implementation. Performance and monitoring procedures have been established and all the Community Forest Plans have undergone rigorous cost/benefit analysis. The forest projects have business plans which complement the Forest Plans which are to be reviewed at the turn of the century.

The aims and objectives of the community forest programme are long term – thirty to forty years and beyond. Much has been achieved already especially in terms of establishing, building and maintaining

partnerships for the future. Although there has recently been some criticism of the programme (*Landscape Design* 242, July/August 1995), particularly in terms of other areas of countryside management losing out to the benefit of the community forest programme and of low levels of planting on private land, this is essentially missing the point. Many project teams may acknowledge a degree of understanding for such thoughts. However, to change attitudes takes time -- one way of doing this is to highlight examples of good practice in the early days which will guide forest development in the future. Whilst trees and tree planting "sets the scene" for community forest programmes and are obviously very important, the initiative offers a much broader vision and strategy for the future. Community forests are plan led following wide consultation and represent an integrated approach to the planning and management of the landscape around many of our major towns and cities. Their main concern is not solely focused on landscape enhancement but on positively addressing the issues surrounding landscape change.

To sum up, community forests:

- Provide an integrated plan which addresses cross-organisational and administrative boundary issues developing a culture of partnership. Whilst trees set the scene, Forest Plans are multi-objective and may include strategies on landscape, agriculture, nature conservation, informal recreation, sport and recreation, community involvement, art and culture, development etc.

- Provide a unifying focus in areas of often fragmented landownership. A long term framework is provided for the planning and management of the countryside in and around towns.

Supporting Policies

The Countryside Commission's Corporate Plan (CCP 477, 1995), which is taken from their existing strategy *Caring for the Countryside* (1991), supports the implementation of the community forest programme in a number of sections. Within the *Countryside Around Towns* section the Commission aims to "... develop a clear set of policies for the countryside around towns [and to] extend the opportunities available to the urban population for quiet recreational enjoyment ...".

It goes on to state as a key issue, the inclusion of changes "... in land use patterns and the management of open space [and assessing] the leisure needs of people living in towns and cities and their perception of the countryside on their doorstep".

As far as community forests are concerned, Chapter 7 states that each area will act as a "...focal point ... to target existing policies and initiatives, such as Parish Paths Partnership, countryside management projects, land acquisitions, recreation site development, community and voluntary action".

This is an important point – bringing together lots of other programmes under one strategic umbrella.

The Commission's consultation document *Quality of Countryside: Quality of Life* (CCP 470, 1995) under *Sustainable Development* has as an objective to "... secure well planned, well managed, and accessible countryside within and around towns".

It aims to demonstrate how "... Community Forests can provide a framework for environmental planning and management to create the countryside of the future ..." and that this could act as a unifying focus for urban/urban fringe linkages throughout the country. It is important that the community forest vision provides a central rationale whilst policy is very much translated to action on the ground. A key area for the Commission to consider will be its future involvement in urban areas. From the points above it seems that the Commission is likely to favour a continuation of its "osmosis" process – it will allow and support appropriate strategies to ebb and flow between urban/countryside areas. Community forests provide a focus in the countryside around towns whilst allowing urban linkages to be explicitly stated, planned and developed.

Bridging the Gap – Gateways, Greenways and Linkages

The focus so far has concentrated on visions, concepts and strategies, but what is actually happening on the ground? Most, if not all, aspects of community forest development rely on the "management of people" in one form or another. Communities are at the centre of all community forest planning and implementation. Most of the communities who will benefit from the long term development of the forest areas are located in or on the edge of urban areas. How are the community forests focusing on the countryside in and around towns whilst including urban communities? Apart from direct community liaison, two examples where community forests aim to link people to their local countryside are reviewed. These are gateways and greenways which both physically and psychologically make the countryside available to people.

Gateways

Community forest gateways are site specific areas (already existing, planned and areas of opportunity) which offer people a safe, managed, convenient, identifiable landscape. Some forests have included locations in the heart of urban areas whilst others have opted for a hierarchical division between local gateway sites which are very much on the edge of urban areas to more strategic sites of a larger nature (some of which are also located on the "urban fence"). The Cleveland Community Forest Plan (June 1994) states that:

"a network of gateways will be developed as a focus for recreational access and interpretation in the forest. Gateway sites will contain locally appropriate infrastructure and have the purpose of channelling visitors into the Community Forest via greenways and into open woodland areas."

Gateway sites are often compared to country parks. However, the traditional concept of country parks has been challenged with gateway sites highlighting multi-user, integrated aims in a woodland setting, following extensive consultation exercises. Of particular importance is the role gateways play in linking urban populations to the local countryside and to other sites within the forest area.

It is here that the leisure/landscape interface is most recognisable. Recreation opportunities (active and informal) are "legitimately" planned into the development process rather than being "tacked on" to an area as an afterthought. Planning, design and management are considered as one process rather than separate phasings. Community involvement and consultation are seen as vital parts of this process.

The inclusion of new areas of research plays an important role in the development of gateway sites. For example the research undertaken by Dr Jacquelin Burgess on behalf of the Countryside Commission's Community Forest Unit entitled *Growing in Confidence – understanding people's perceptions of urban fringe woodland* (CCP 457, 1995), is a case in point. This study, whilst recognising the value of wooded areas, confirmed that perceptual fears, rather than the reality of risk, were very high regarding woodlands close to where people live. Ways of reducing risks (perceived or real) have been suggested and are especially important when creating and/or improving gateway sites, including:

- appropriate design and management including "zoning";
- people need people;
- media strategy;
- creating a choice.

Other initiatives, aimed specifically at people management are clearly important and could be incorporated into gateway development. The Countryside Commission and the Sports Council have, over the years, being investigating the concept of Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC). This is an American concept which has been developed as a tool for managing ecological effects of recreation in sensitive landscapes, providing a framework for describing the resource, setting thresholds of unacceptable change and operating a series of indicators of environmental and social change. Although predominantly researched in upland areas the Commission was keen to test the theory in a lowland situation. For example, consultants in the

Cleveland Community Forest are investigating development options for a gateway site in Hartlepool and are currently assessing how useful this approach might be. The Commission's "Visitor Welcome Initiative" (CCP 476) is another good example of addressing the needs of people, especially in the setting of good countryside management examples which may influence the way people experience the countryside, perhaps for the very first time. It is from these surroundings that some people will feel more confident to explore the wider countryside on their doorstep. The role of community forests in developing and applying these examples of good practice is considerable.

Greenways

It is envisaged that community forest strategic routes or greenways will not only link gateway sites but will extend into the heart of urban areas and also into the wider countryside beyond. The Great North Forest (1993) describes strategic routes that will

> "...connect these sites [gateways] to other gateways, into the urban areas and to routes beyond the Forest boundary, opening up opportunities for longer distance travel. Wherever possible they will be available for multi-purpose use by walkers, cyclists and horse riders ... Such routes will need to be constructed to appropriate standards of width, alignment, surfacing and detailing to ensure their safe and convenient use ..."

The development of strategic routes/greenways followed draft Forest Plan consultation exercises which indicated potential routes and conflicts (real or perceived) throughout forest areas. A framework of routes is often established using old railway lines, canal and river corridors. Organisations such as Sustrans and the National Urban Forestry Unit specialise in these areas and encourage the links between town and country. In the Great North Forest and Cleveland Community Forest a greenways strategy is progressing comprising:

- A consultation exercise with local authorities, governing bodies of sport and farmer representatives. Users must be involved in the process to get the ground rules right, to draw on their practical experience and to ensure that they adopt and respect the end result.

- Detailed route investigation.

- A rolling programme of local authority implementation utilising Commission grant aid and possibly the National Lottery.

The Present Debate

At the present time there are great concerns relating to urban parks and greenspaces which are being actively debated by many organisations including the Landscape Institute and Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM). However, little is discussed relating the linkages between urban parks, greenspaces and the countryside around towns. ILAM's *Urban Parks – Policy Position Statement* (no 7) makes reference to its guidance on strategies and management plans for parks and open spaces and regards "... public parks as central to the quest for urban quality and sustainable development".

It goes on to say that they are looking for an "... authoritative national overview of urban parks ... [which would] ... cover all urban greenspace or the wider civic realm."

It highlights the role of partnerships but makes no mention of linking urban areas to the local countryside around towns. ILAM's response to the Countryside Commission's *Quality of Countryside : Quality of Life* perhaps reveals more and recommends that the Commission should extend its remit to cover all recreational greenspace allowing "... access to natural landscapes."

In a nutshell "... the Institute believes there is a need for the Commission to play an important role in bridging the gap between rural and urban communities".

The Landscape Institute's symposium on *The Future of our Urban Parks* (LD No 236, December 1994/January 1995) again makes hints in the right direction and yet fails to explicitly link parks and urban open spaces to the countryside around towns. Partnerships, the importance of local politics, a broader system of urban greenspaces and parks as an integral part of urban areas almost suggest the idea of linkage. The symposium's morning session almost went the full distance by stressing "... the importance of looking at the street, urban space and public parks as one resource ...".

If only this had been extended to the local countryside around towns and discussed more fully as a continuum, then a more complete linking system could have been suggested. This, to a certain extent, is achieved in the Landscape Institute's *Policy Statement on Urban Parks* which advocates the role of an urban parks commission and the use of urban landscape plans. Unfortunately whilst wishing to "establish cogent policies" it is only in the background notes that an "holistic approach" is suggested. Mention is made that urban parks should not be seen in isolation, that they should be interconnected and "... ideally providing links between the centres of urban areas and surrounding open countryside".

To truly develop partnerships, allocate funding and treat plans in an integrated way then this urban/urban fringe linkage must be made, both conceptually and physically.

It is to be hoped that the recently published Comedia/Demos report and the Department of Environment's recent publication *Park Life: Better Parks, Better Cities* (1995) can fuse these two areas together. However, even though it is suggested that "in the future local authorities may be responsible for a wider portfolio of open space [and will] have a strategic overview as to how all these places complement each other, and make for a diverse mix of public open space," there is little explicit discussion of the ways and means by which linkages can be developed.

A Bridge Too Far?

So far we have reviewed the role of community forests in providing linkages into urban areas, and of the urban parks movement starting to think in terms of integrating strategies. How far should community forests permeate into the heart of urban areas and become actively involved in the development of urban greenspaces? The focus of such discussions often involves the position of the inner boundary of a community forest plan. The three lead forests all indicated solid inner boundaries whilst a number of "second wave" forests make no mention of an inner boundary ie Red Rose Forest, Forest of Avon. It seems that the "second wave" forests have a more flexible approach to their inner boundaries, although in practice even the lead forests recognise the role of the urban area in forest development. The relevance of these issues is reflected in the degree of people management in and around the community forest areas. These discussions can be indicated by making reference to several community forest plans.

The Great North Forest Plan (1993) puts an emphasis on access to open space and recreation facilities close to where people live. It states its aim is to "... provide a positive framework to support the regeneration of green belt and urban fringe countryside" and that "... at its inner boundary the Forest is hard edged and connects with the numerous green corridors and open spaces which permeate the urban fabric and link the open countryside with the built up area".

The Cleveland Community Forest Plan (June 1994) states that "... the boundary focuses the future forest to urban fringe areas [but that] the boundary does not represent a hard land use boundary."

The Plan highlights the role of complementary strategies which should provide a cohesive link with urban areas. Urban forestry strategies are encouraged within partner local authorities whilst transitional landscape strategies are encouraged beyond the forest boundary. For example, Middlesbrough Borough Council has produced a number of documents which complement the forest plan. *The Middlesbrough Forest – a strategy for urban forestry in Middlesbrough* was prepared in January 1994 and states that "...the Cleveland Community Forest gives added benefit and dimension to what Middlesbrough is already doing, especially in terms of scale and through the targeting of the private sector."

A further focus is the South Middlesbrough Forest Plan (1994) which aims "... to improve the current level of tree cover and to implement a programmed corporate management regime". A major aim of the South Middlesbrough Forest Plan is to establish new woodland and to expand existing woodland as an integral part of the Cleveland Community Forest. As detailed implementation programmes are developed, links are to be established with new neighbourhood parks – all contributing to the aims of the community forest.

The South Yorkshire Community Forest Plan (August 1994) has as one of its objectives to "... complement the government's priorities for inner cities and urban areas, by providing leisure and open spaces needs as close as possible to where people live ...", whilst the Plan's zone map indicates a number of specific opportunities in the urban area around larger open spaces, school grounds and business parks.

The Great Western Community Forest Plan (October 1994) identifies an urban project area highlighting main areas of public open space and recreational corridors. The sub-division of the community forest area includes an area identified as Swindon Forest which extends into the heavily built up area and aims to manage and promote the urban open space system.

The Forest of Avon Plan (January 1995) perhaps develops the idea of linkages furthest. It states that "... the Forest will permeate into the very heart of the city and towns in the area and therefore has no inner boundary." The Plan treats its city space as a strategy area and "... intentionally draws no boundary between the countryside and the urban area, and harmonises the transition between the two ...". However the Plan recognises that "... it is unrealistic to treat the urban area in the same way as other strategy areas in terms of woodland cover" but that there are many open spaces where community forest benefits can be brought to local people. Within the Plan's *mechanisms and targets* section it states that "every opportunity should be taken by the partners to establish woodlands in association with parks, greenways and other public open space. This will primarily serve the urban populations, providing a woodland on the doorstep." In effect the Forest of Avon has legitimised the role of Bristol City Council in the development of the forest and has strengthened the City's bid to the Countryside Commission for an urban forestry initiative.

Therefore, although there may have been a shift of thinking during the evolution of the community forests from one of a solid inner boundary to one of explicitly viewing the urban area as a continuum, in practice many, if not all, the community forest projects work directly with urban communities, extend linkages into urban areas and/or encourage local partners to further develop that role. The "politics of reality" are important in this respect especially in terms of how potential local partners view the role and geographical area of a particular community forest.

Inevitably community forest project teams cannot solely concentrate on inner urban areas. Yet the Forest Plans identify a structured framework from which the forest teams and partners can make informed decisions of the extent a community forest should become involved in urban areas. The key point is that the countryside around towns remains the focus whilst the development of linkages are explicitly stated and identified within the forest strategy. In this way the links between urban parks, greenspaces, the local countryside and beyond are viewed as a continuum.

Conclusion

Partnerships and integration have and continue to be prominent buzz words and yet we seem to be in a position of two camps – on the one hand we have discussions on urban parks and greenspaces whilst on the other discussions cover the problems associated with the urban fringe countryside. It seems that the Landscape Institute and Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management are encouraging wider participation in the urban parks debate and yet do not comprehensively make the connection between these areas and the countryside around towns. The Countryside Commission seems keen to encourage this link and should be applauded. Whilst they may not wish to take on the full remit of urban parks and greenspaces it is good to see the linkage with the countryside being examined and encouraged. Community forests offer a workable model which focuses on the countryside around towns and yet provides a wider framework for multipurpose development. The role of the DoE and Forestry Commission are very important in this respect. The bridging of the urban/urban fringe gap is vital and a number of suggestions are made which could strengthen this bridge:

- The Countryside Commission could champion the cause of positive linkages, partnerships and integrated plans covering the urban/urban fringe countryside.
- The community forest "model" could be more widely circulated as an example of good practice for other towns and cities to investigate. The community forest "process" is perhaps just as important as the "product" and this approach could also be applied to other landscapes. The role of increased media coverage is also of importance in discussing these issues including integrated seminars and conferences.
- The LI and ILAM could more positively include the local countryside into the urban parks and greenspace debate. Strengthened links could be pursued at national, regional and local levels between these organisations and community forest projects.
- If an urban parks commission is sought then this should have a remit which includes the development of linkages with the countryside around towns. Bridging the gap must be seen as a continuous progression with all potential partners responding to an integrated policy and plan.

Note. The views in this paper do not necessarily represent the views of the Countryside Commission or community forest projects.

Climbing and Conservation

Jeremy Barlow
British Mountaineering Council

Despite its name, most of the British Mountaineering Council's concerns over access and conservation issues do not revolve around mountains but tend to focus on lowland outcrops and sea cliffs, which may be near centres of population, are often climbed on year round because of their mild climate and are also often ecologically sensitive. For example over half the climbing sites in Wales are on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). To promote good practice on sites throughout Britain and to resolve any difficulties which arise the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) employs two full time staff and has developed a network of volunteers.

A strong concern for the environment has always been an important part of climbing and the BMC has led the way in promoting restrictions where they are necessary to protect plants and wildlife. A 1995 BMC survey of climbers found overwhelming support for the current restrictions which balance the freedom to climb and the need to protect wildlife.

The BMC believes that the informal approach of establishing mutually agreed restrictions for conservation and land management that it has developed over more than 25 years is better than the statutory approach. Being specific to a particular species and site allows for more flexibility and greater sensitivity to the precise requirements of the restriction and hence greater opportunities for access and better environmental protection. The informal approach to establishing the extent and duration of restrictions, along with signing and other information, leads to greater understanding and empathy for the issues amongst participants and consequently greater compliance. The BMC also believes that this approach has the advantage of being significantly less time consuming and hence less costly for land owners, conservation bodies and local authorities than an adversarial approach.

The BMC works hard to achieve the right balance between access and conservation and ensures that restrictions are only supported where there is a reasonable case that climbing may have a significant impact on important species. Very ocasionally the BMC has resisted supporting restrictions where the evidence is weak or the restrictions unreasonable, partly because it is vital that we maintain the support of the climbing community for the bulk of restrictions to be supported.

Where the BMC supports restrictions, they work well. CCW, the government conservation body for Wales, has described the BMC's voluntary restrictions at Gogarth on Anglesey as *"a model example of a good practice site where the voluntary agreement has worked almost entirely successfully since its inception"*.

Last year, at Avon Gorge, one of the South West's most popular climbing areas, a pair of peregrine falcons nested for the first time, successfully rearing two young. Tony Robinson of English Nature said, "The climbers have been marvellous and there have been no problems at all. We are used to working with the BMC in other parts of the country and so this is just the sort of response we expected."

Currently nearly all agreed restrictions are for important sea bird colonies or schedule 1 species such as peregrines and chough. However, recently the BMC has been assessing the need for and impact of restrictions for birds such as ring ouzels and ravens, for which some land managers have been asking. This has prompted the BMC to undertake a wider review of the criteria by which restrictions are agreed to. In its early stages this review has raised a number of interesting questions such as how the significance of a site's recreational provision is assessed alongside environmental criteria such as the species and size of the protected population. At the moment such questions remain unanswered but the BMC remains committed to working in partnership with a wide range of conservation bodies to develop answers.

Postscript

Richard Broadhurst
Chair, Countryside Recreation Network & Senior Adviser,
Recreation, Access and Community, Forestry Commission

The speakers and other participants in this conference covered an enormous range of thinking. If thoughts could be transmitted like radio waves, received, decoded and assimilated in parallel, what an incredible world it would be. How much the wiser we would be...so long as we could tease out the thoughts that were relevant for us, match and bring together exciting combinations of thoughts to create something new. We have not sought, nor are we able, to print all thoughts. We would have insufficient paper, and you insufficient shelving. Fortunately when we put words on paper, or prepare presentations, we have to be selective. Equally, when we attend conferences with a breathtaking array of workshops, we have to make decisions (or have them made for us) on which to attend. After that the arrow of time ensures a certain sequence of events. What we say at the workshop will have some bearing on how the subject is discussed and what each of us takes away. The output may rumble on or take sudden unexpected twists and set one or many of us thinking on another course. What has been said at this conference will feed into the discussions promoted by the Countryside Recreation Network. The workshops and papers were very important, but what is even more important is where they may lead us. Printed proceedings, no matter how beautifully produced, are a very poor substitute for attending conferences and taking part. However they do provide an opportunity for those who could not attend; provide an aide memoire for those who did attend and an opportunity to at least read a selection of the thoughts which were being exposed in the many other workshops which participants could not attend. We still publish proceedings on paper, a medium most people feel happy with. Perhaps we should really be exploring whether we should publish on the Internet, or on disk, where reading and referencing would be that much easier. Publishers are taking trouble to grow a market for talking books. Maybe tomorrow the Countryside Recreation Network too will be publishing conference proceedings in that way, on mini-disks. We should stay in touch to continue today's thinking into tomorrow and forever explore new ways of spreading and exchanging information to develop best policy and practice in countryside recreation.

List of participants

Ann Appleing	Countryside Commission
Sue Arnott	Countryside Access Management Services
Ian Bamforth	Hereford & Worcester County Council
Jeremy Barlow	British Mountaineering Council
Joan Bennett	CAG Consultants
Kevin Bishop	University of Cardiff
Lance Bourne	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
Tim Braund	Exmoor National Park
Richard Broadhurst	Forestry Authority
Jo Burgon	The National Trust
Sue Burkett	English Nature
Gary Charlton	Great North Forest
Marsailidh Chisholm	Scottish Sports Council
Mike Christie	Welsh Institute of Rural Studies
Andrew Coleman	Wyre Borough Council
Michael Collins	Institute of Sport & Recreation Planning
Elizabeth Dean	Mid Glamorgan County Council
Tim Dixon	Stirling District Council
Kimberley Dyer	University of Ulster
Brian Eaton	Coventry Business School
Peter Epton	ADAS Crewe
Catherine Etchell	Countryside Recreation Network
Martyn Evans	Countryside Council for Wales
Nicky Ferguson	University of Bristol
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David Fisher	Forestry Commission
Anne Freund	Wigan and Leigh College
Andy Gale	Countryside Commission
Sue Ginley	Forest Enterprise Wales
Anne Glover	Pennine Way Co-ordination Project
Julian Gray	Sussex Downs Conservation Board
Debbie Greene	Scottish Natural Heritage
Robin Grove-White	Centre for Environmental Change
Claire Guyer	University of Ulster
Annette Handford	British Waterways

Carolyn Harrison	University College London
David Henderson-Howat	Forestry Commission
Tim Herbert	British Waterways
Malcolm Hodgson	North York Moors National Park
David Holding	Newcastle Business School
Yvonne Hosker	Training and Advice Service
Harriet Hudson	British Waterways
Philip Insall	Sustrans Ltd
Tony Jackson	Cumbria County Council
Mel Jones	Sheffield Hallam University
Ian Keirle	Welsh Institute of Rural Studies
Simon Kemp	Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
John Kingsbury	Youth Hostels Association of England & Wales
Penny Knock	Forest Enterprise
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Craig McGarvey	National Rivers Authority
Roger McKinley	Forest Enterprise
Sandra McNally	National Environment Research Council
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Glenn Millar	British Waterways
Ross Millar	Environment Service
David Mount	Losehill Hall
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Helen Partridge	National Rivers Authority
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John Pollard	University of Ulster
Sean Prendergast	Peak District National Park
Malcolm Ridges	Southern Water Services Ltd

Nick Riding	Hereford & Worcester County Council
Gareth Roberts	Countryside Council for Wales
Rhys Roberts	Gwynedd County Council
Terry Robinson	Countryside Commission
Andy Rowland	Centre for Alternative Technology
Jim Saunders	Countryside Council for Wales
Peter Scott	Peter Scott Planning Services
Fiona Simpson	Forest Enterprise
Ian Smith	Landsmith Pty Ltd
Liz Stuffins	Walsall MBC
Sue Toland	Department of the Environment
Simon Vincent	British Waterways
Malcolm Watt	Cotswold District Council
Audrey Wedderburn	Countryside Commission
Rob Wightman	University of Central Lancashire
Mike Wild	Sheffield Hallam University
Chris Wood	Yorkshire Dales National Park
Jim Wyatt	Bicton College of Agriculture

Today's Thinking for Tomorrow's Countryside

Day 1
Tuesday 19th September

0930 Coffee and registration

1030 Welcome and introduction
Richard Broadhurst; Chair, Countryside Recreation Network

1040 Today's Thinking
Ian Mercer; Chief Executive, Countryside Council for Wales

1110 Tomorrow's Countryside
Terry Robinson; Head of Recreation and Access, Countryside Commission

1150 Workshop session 1

1240 Lunch

1400 Workshop session 2

1450 Case Study 1:
Access Management for the Millenium
Tony Philpin; Pennine Way Coordination Project

Discussion

1525 Tea

1600 Workshop session 3

1650 Case Study 2:
Landscapes for Tomorrow
Chris Wood; Yorkshire Dales National Park

Discussion

1725 Case Study 3:
Expert-Systems-in-Countryside Management
James Petch; Manchester Metropolitan University

Discussion

1800 Dinner

2000 Fringe events

Today's Thinking for Tomorrow's Countryside

Day 2
Wednesday 20 September

0915	**Achieving Sustainability: social, economic, environmental** Joan Bennett; consultant with CAG
	Discussion
1015	Case study 4: **New Roles for Rangers** Yvonne Hosker; Training and Advice Service
	Discussion
1040	Coffee
1110	Workshop session 4
1200	Workshop session 5
1250	Lunch
1400	Any Questions — Any Answers: Panel
1440	**Brave New World or What?** Robin Grove-White; Director of Centre for Study of Environmental Change, Lancaster University
1515	Chairman's closing remarks
1530	Close