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Countryside **Recreation**



This issue... 'Green for Go! The Future of Recreational Greenspace Close to Where People Live'.

- Open Air Sitting Rooms • Green Infrastructure • Belfast Gets its Breath Back • How Green are my Valleys
- The Development of a Green Route System for South Dublin • Recreation Greenspace and the GCV Green Network
- Durlston: A Marketing Approach to Project Development • CRN Conference 2008
- Agency Profile - National Trail Office, Irish Sports Council • News • CRN Conference 2008
- Summary of Latest CRN Events • Forthcoming CRN Events • Publications



Countryside Recreation Network

Countryside Recreation Network (CRN)

CRN is a network which:

- covers the UK and the Republic of Ireland
- gives easy access to information on countryside and related recreation matters
- reaches organisations and individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors networks thousands of interested people

The Network helps the work of agencies and individuals in three areas:

Research:

to encourage co-operation between members in identifying and promoting the need for research related to countryside recreation, to encourage joint ventures in undertaking research, and to disseminate information about members' recreation programmes.

Liaison:

to promote information exchange relating to countryside recreation, and to foster general debate about relevant trends and issues.

Good Practice:

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

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Countryside Recreation Editorial Policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Summer journal will be based on the theme of 'Social Behaviour'.

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

Please note the following submission deadline dates:

Articles for editorial board consideration to be submitted by 18th April 2008.

Commissioned articles to be submitted by 23rd May 2008.

News items to be submitted by 6th June 2008.

Chair of Editorial Panel: Rachel Hughes, Sports Council for Wales

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Contents

CRN Contact Details and Editorial Policy

Editorial	2
Open Air Sitting Rooms	3
Jo Burgon, National Trust	
Green Infrastructure	6
Helen Philips, Natural England	
Belfast Gets its Breath Back	8
Jill Houston, National Trust	
The Development of a Green Route System for South Dublin	12
Michael Hannon, South Dublin County Council	
Recreational Greenspace and the GCV Network	17
Max Hislop, Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership	
How Green are my Valleys	22
Luke Maggs, Countryside Council for Wales	
Durlston: A Marketing Approach to Project Development	26
Martin Cooke, Heritage and Leisure Management	
Agency Profile - National Trails Office, Irish Sports Council	30
News	32
CRN Conference 2008	39
Summary of latest CRN seminars	40
Publications	41

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Editorial

Duncan Mackay, Natural England

We live in a bright world of ideas, sometimes realised in actions. One of our bright ideas has been urbanisation and forms the basis of civilisation. As humanity across the globe becomes more urbanised (but not necessarily more civilised) we either spread out or construct taller buildings or both.

The net effect is one of creating super cities that engulf their hinterlands displacing both ecosystems and human habitats. Global predictions indicate that this trend towards supersizing will continue. In Europe we are sceptical about sprawling cities and still show some of the signs of being on the rebound from the effects of the Industrial Revolution. We invented the Green Belt, for example. Many urban dwellers appreciate rural vestiges like parks and still 'value' their image of the countryside even if they don't have access to it, own it, or even want to go there. The vast majority of us live in towns and cities; we have little contact with nature and only a scant knowledge of where our food, water, materials and waste comes from or goes. We are living very close to the edge of the precipice of a new economic idea; which, as the UK petrol crisis of a few years ago indicated, is perilously dependent upon 'just in time' delivery of food and fuel from global sources.

Globalisation is shaping our lives in many ways and we are at a critical juncture in our spatial development in Europe. Some of the successes in good urban liveability concepts such as garden cities, great parks and urban forests where people and our relationships with nature are put at the centre of the decision making process have been around for many years. We are also informed by our disasters whenever wars, pestilence or fire cause us to rethink our designs and connections to the rural hinterland. We now need to reshape our relationship at this seam between town and country and integrate our creative thinking because we have to forge some workable responses to new perils, potentially as deadly as any medieval plague. Lack of activity and exercise added to a diet high in fat, refined sugars and alcohol is a lethal combination when turned into an increasing trend.

We are the inheritors of this trend and it is time to pause and do something that benefits the future. We need bright ideas or to reinvent some from the past. Countryside recreation itself was invented at a time that the Victorian middle classes, informed by the previous century of aristocratic discovery of the wild and romantic via the Grand Tour, were objecting to the trashing of their wild and romantic urban fringe. These ancient green spaces, the last remnants of the once extensive commons and open fields, were about to be built on by speculative, cheap house builders. It is hard to see this edge in London now but these wild urban fringes in the 1860's were Swiss Cottage fields, Wimbledon Common, Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest.

Social pioneers such as Octavia Hill wanted the urban poor to have access to not only 'every scrap of greenery' but specified the need for health in such places 'for air and exercise'. Sir Robert Hunter spent ten years of his life fighting legal battles in the courts to save the common land of Epping Forest. At the end of this battle of the urban fringe he put into writing his thoughts on the 'better preservation of open spaces' and mused about a company formed with the intention of owning land and buying common rights. The bright idea that grew from these two social and land reformers became the National Trust.

Somewhat spookily, albeit 150 years later, we are at a similar point of debate today although the penumbra of nearly all our cities has moved outwards since the 1860s. The bright spark of an idea bequeathed to us by Hunter, Hill and others is still alight and this edition explores the future of recreational greenspace close to where people live. We have sought views from Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England. In England we have asked if there is any sense left in the Green Belt and should the National Trust get back to its roots, review its relationship with the urban masses and buy greenspace in the urban fringe? Its Chairman, Sir William Proby thinks it should. In Scotland, there is not the same need thanks to social justice access legislation but there is a pressing need to engage urban people in the recreational value of places not too far from their front doors. In Ireland the fast moving Celtic tiger cities like Dublin need new cultural paradigms to explain their recreational needs to a political and land tenure system, still partly rooted in village life and many small ownerships. Wales has the challenge of uncovering the pre-industrial palimpsest recreational landscape layer that was visible before industry came to the valleys. It is doing well through more devolved focus and careful consideration. In Northern Ireland the new hopes of reconciliation between rival ideologies has also brought new reconciliation between urban and rural fringes where the culture of both sides of the land use divide burns as bright as the heart of a turf fire in winter.

We can create an urban heaven or hell from the choices we exercise next but recreational greenspace must be at the centre of the debate. The future of 'civilisation' could depend upon the outcome

Duncan Mackay
Natural England

'Open Air Sitting Rooms'

Jo Burgon, The National Trust



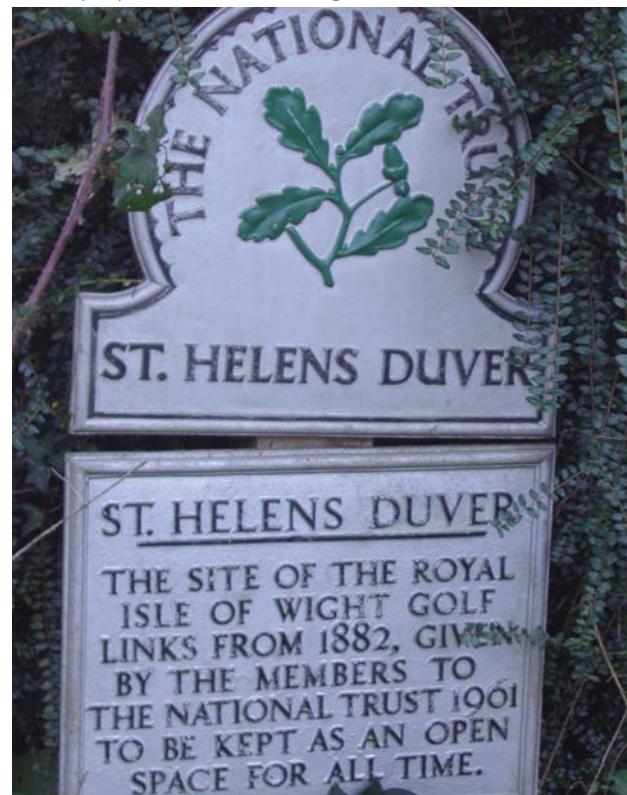
The Windmill at Wicken Fen

In 1884 Robert Hunter, one of the founders of the National Trust, who was at the time an honorary solicitor of the Commons Preservation Society, advocated the establishment of a Land Company with a 'view to the protection of the public interests in the open spaces of the country'. Ten years later the National Trust for places of Natural Beauty or Historic Interest formally came into being. The Trust's origins in the protection of open space are particularly important to hark back to and to draw from during the 21st century considerations of the need for open space or green space..

Another development phase of significant house building is upon us and the discussions of where these new dwellings will be located and the size of new settlements bring into sharp relief the impact on the rural areas around existing conurbations and the green space needs for these new settlements, let alone infilling and brown field developments.

Octavia Hill, another founder of the National Trust, was associated with housing reform and the saving of plots of land in London as 'open air sitting rooms for the poor'. Perhaps our modern equivalents have been the development of green gyms by BTCV and the Walking your Way to Health

initiative instigated by the Countryside Agency and the British Heart Foundation. This need for providing suitable and adequate green space for overall well being close to where people live is an enduring one.





As part of my work of investigating the Trust's approach to green places I have been reading the County of London Plan 1943 which has sat on the bookshelf at home for many years waiting to be picked up! The Abercrombie plan is a remarkable piece of work given the time it was being done, shortly after the Blitz. It set the course and standards of design for London, and reconstruction would not have been possible so soon after the end of the war without this visionary work. The mapping of green space was a significant and vital part of the plan and there are many beautiful hand coloured maps showing existing green space and where there is deficiency related to population density. The Plan recommended the better co-ordination of open spaces into a park system with green corridors forming links and wedges between the larger open spaces. The Plan goes on...'*the Green Belt and surrounding countryside need bringing more into the centre through green wedges formed by the existing undeveloped and public land..*' 'We are opposed to the development of the whole of the green wedges of undeveloped land which are still happily to be found between the radiating sprawl of outer London'.

It was estimated that London required at least 25,000 acres of new open space to meet the capital's recreational needs. '*The people of London need all the open space that remains, for both amenity and playing fields and nothing should be done to increase their isolation from the surrounding countryside*'.

So you can begin to see from the examples of the founders of the National Trust and the plan for reconstructing London after the Second World War how the seeds for addressing green space needs were sown and developed. The efforts of Natural England and its predecessors, notably the Countryside Commission and the Countryside Agency, have

addressed the green corridor, green spaces on your doorstep through Millennium Greens and Doorstep Greens. The Heritage Lottery Fund programme Parks for People has helped in the regeneration of established parks.

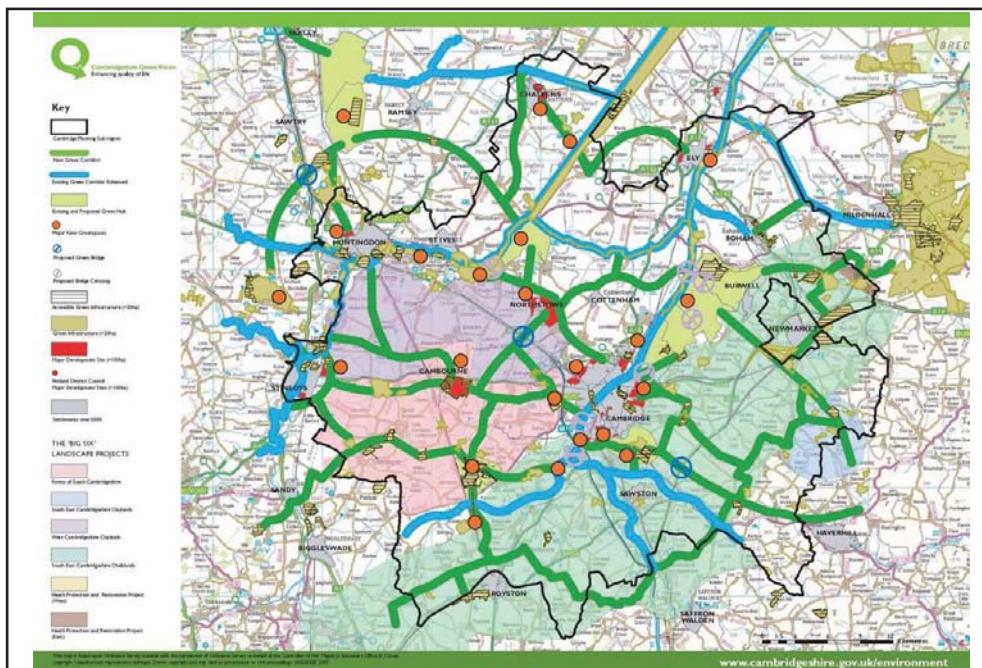
The setting of standards and targets to accessible green space was a challenge in the Plan for London in 1943 as it is today. The London Plan undertook a deficiency survey of open spaces on the basis of 4 acres per 1000 population and a walking distance of half a mile. Natural England's green space standards recommend that an accessible space should be available less than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home.

In the Trust's current investigation into accessible green space we have been mapping our existing land ownership around conurbations using Natural England's standard of 500 hectares within 10 kilometres of home. This begins to illustrate how much National Trust land holdings, both large and small are close to where people live.

This work is being undertaken as we take up the challenge presented by the Trust's Chairman, Sir William Proby, last November when he sought us to '*define the benefits that Green Belt land and open space bring to us all*'. '*Surely this is a debate that we have to enter, as our founders and generations of supporters would wish us to do - to protect the beauty and integrity of our green spaces for all of us.*'

This has stimulated a public debate which is being delivered through the Trust's internet:http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-chl/w-countryside_environment/w-green_places.htm

It has also enabled us to look more closely at our existing delivery of public benefit on our land especially in areas



Map of the green infrastructure for Cambridge showing Wicken Fen to the North East of Cambridge

close to where people live and to identify some new opportunities of how new green space might be secured and protected for the nation's benefit. This is exemplified by the Wicken Vision project which seeks to create a new 'lung' for an expanding Cambridge based on one of the Trust's first acquisitions of the Nature Reserve of Wicken Fen. For a long time this fenland reserve remained the outdoor nature laboratory for the University's natural scientists. It still serves to a degree that purpose, but as the size of the reserve grows so it is possible to bring public use more into play and new access routes. Most notably cycle routes developed with Sustrans will create new recreational opportunities in an area which is deficient in access space.

Alongside the spatial planning of accessible green space comes the management and resources needed to make these spaces safe and enjoyable spaces for people. Quality and varied spaces that meet peoples everyday air and exercise needs where fears of what might be around the corner are not a reality; where children can play safely and take risks with their own adventures and joys of discovery. At the Health Conference organised by Natural England last year one of the most telling moments for me was right at the start of the conference when 3 generations of the same family described their play space when children and how over the years that had radically diminished as roads became busier and concerns about safety increased. We cannot regain the play spaces of the past but connecting children with nature in a dirty hands way not just looking and observing seems to be a really important challenge to take up.

So what might accessible high quality green space look like in the future? How do we value and protect the integrity of what is already in place perhaps making more of it and making it available for a variety of outdoor needs? The need for new spaces has been recognised and efforts such as the National Forest and Community Forests coupled with the renaissance of country parks are signals of society's requirement for not only securing established green spaces but creating new. Some of these landscapes often located in and around old colliery waste sites and workings are still in their juvenile stage but the landscape of the National Forest will change radically in the next 20 years as it reaches its maturing phase. How will people wish to utilise and explore these landscapes and how will the links be secured? The combination of open space and connecting green corridors is not only good for wildlife but also for people moving through the landscape on foot, by bike or on the water. This wildlife and human network away from the noise of the busy road leads us from town to country and vice versa. Perhaps the National Cycle Network is our 21st century version of the drove road!

In 1895 the National Trust acquired its first property, a four and half acre field behind the seaside town of Barmouth on the Welsh Coast. The donor, Mrs Talbot wanted to prevent the arrival of 'asphalt paths and seats of serpentine design'.

Octavia Hill wondered whether this property would be this young organisation's first and last property.

Between 1895 and today lies a long history of land acquisition that has secured spectacular places and buildings for the nation's benefit. The story over the future of secure and accessible green spaces as part of the nation's quality of life is set to run and run.



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The Continuing Purpose - A History of the National Trust its Aims and Work - Robin Fedden (1968)
County of London Plan - JH Forshaw and Patrick Abercrombie (1943)

Photographic References

All photographs to be credited to Jo Burgon apart from the Map which is credited to The National Trust

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*"I rode out on a bright May morning, like a hero in a song,
Looking for a place called England, trying to find where I belong.*

Couldn't find the old flood meadow or the house that I once knew,

No trace of the little river or the garden where I grew.

*I saw town and I saw country, motorway and sink estate,
Rich man in his rolling acres, poor man still outside the gate,*

Retail park and Burger kingdom, prairie field and factory farm,

Run by men who think that England's only a place to park their car."

From 'A Place Called England' by Maggie Holland



Green Infrastructure

Helen Philips, Natural England



Gwennap Pit, near Cambourne, Cornwall

Life gets better: our lives are more bounteous and comfortable than our parents' and grandparents'. It is surprising that the blessings we enjoy have not made us more careful of the things that really matter.

Ask people older than 50, (especially women) what strikes them as different between now and when they were young and one particular change is likely to get a mention. It is the way today's children are deprived of the freedom to lead a life away from the house; to play and explore and grow in the open air. Mucking about in the fields or in the woods is how it is often described. We have lost it and are only just beginning to realise the damage it is doing to people.

One reason is our abject terror of children coming to harm. Abject is the right adjective to use for this because the risks of not getting out among nature are serious and to be reckoned with while the very slight risks of "stranger-danger" and traffic accidents mesmerise us.

So we produce battery-farmed children, prone to obesity, not only physically harmed by lack of exercise but frustrated too,

with the mental tensions that sets up. We reduce their opportunities to develop skills of adventure, self-reliance and socialising as we coop them up, and yet we can observe how contact with nature improves concentration and self discipline. In one study, play in the natural environment reduced significantly attention deficit disorder symptoms.

We are now beginning to pay the price. Obesity levels have doubled in the last 10 years for 6 year olds and trebled for 15 year olds. Obesity costs the national economy £ 7 billion each year.

Children are twice as likely to play outdoors where there is rich vegetation rather than in barren places. Being outdoors is the most powerful correlate of physical activity, particularly in pre-school children and yet children today have less access to the outdoors than any previous generation.

What is bad for children is bad for the rest of us. The costs to the national economy of mental sickness are £23 billion each year: the National Health service alone is having to find £7 billion of this. 70% of the population are not active enough to benefit their health. This doubles risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke and bowel cancer. Cardiovascular disease costs the national economy £28 billion each year.

A major contributory factor to this insane waste of money and human capability is the pathogenic nature of the sort of places we expect many people to live, deadening to the spirit, unattractive and criss-crossed by all sorts of barriers to free

movement. Places that feed people's fear of the outdoors.

In our Health Walks projects, Natural England is finding that 65% of participants cite "the seasons" as a reason for walking, 80% because it is "in the countryside" and 85% because the walks are "nearby and convenient". Research is showing that for every 10% increase in green space the local community enjoys a reduction in health complaints equivalent to a 5 year age reduction.

The more enlightened Victorian manufacturers knew the link between environment and social stability, the Victorian housing reformers saw chronic widespread poor health as an inescapable travelling companion of cheapjack building and poor environmental quality. The garden cities movement and the campaigners for a town and country planning system knew all this.

We have the knowledge, we have the tools to make the natural environment pull its weight in delivering human benefit but we seem to have forgotten why and how much it matters. Of the comparatively small amounts we invest in the natural environment, (about £130 million government spending on biodiversity in England) most is spent in the countryside at large. Our spending on the natural environment in and around where most people live is dangerously low. Local authority spending on urban parks and greenspace fell in the last two decades of the twentieth century by £1.3 billion. Many studies have linked the reduction in funding with the reduction in quality of urban greenspace.

We should therefore be both relieved and grateful that expenditure and performance are rising again, especially through the Government's support for green infrastructure strategies in 'Growth Areas'. The trick now is to ensure that the investment we make in the natural environment is linked to the delivery of functional social and economic benefits to people. The natural environment has a job to do and the investment we make in it needs to be geared to assist its ability to perform in this regard.

Which brings us to the Green Belt, an excellent tool that has done its job well in preventing the accretion of built development around our towns and cities but also a beautiful illustration of the negative imperative we often put on the environment. Any policy tool that rests on its ability to maintain stasis or prevent something from happening has less chance of enduring than a set of policies and instruments that are based on something we do want to happen.

For the Green Belt, we need to examine the job it does, ask whether we still want those jobs done and consider what other jobs need doing. Alongside that, we need to think about what other mechanisms exist for doing the jobs we want and how we use the Green Belt and other mechanisms to best effect.

It is hard to see a future for green infrastructure, rich in

biodiversity and powerful at delivering human benefit, if we do not identify the functions we want it to perform and are prepared to invest in its ability to deliver them.

But the prize for doing so is very rich in all senses of the word: for a fraction of the money we currently spend on looking after chronic ill health, we can significantly alter the conditions which give rise to it. We can make available too the sort of places that make a real contribution to sustainable communities, better functioning communities and to children's abilities to grow in a free-range environment that equips them to be healthy and fulfilled as adults and on into later life.

Photographic References

Gwennap Pit near Cambourne, Cornwall, credited to Duncan Mackay

Photograph of children credited to Natural England

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Belfast Gets its Breath Back

Jill Montgomery, The National Trust



The view over Belfast from Divis and Black Mountain

Geography and greenbelt

Belfast sits between County Down and County Antrim in the River Lagan Valley at the Western end of Belfast Lough. The Lagan has two tributaries, the Blackstaff and Farset. The city was originally sited at the lowest convenient crossing of the Lagan, where it joins the Farset, from which its name originates. Béal Feirsde, in Old Irish, translates as "the approach to the sand-bank or crossing." Originally a town in County Antrim, Belfast was granted city status by Queen Victoria in 1888 following rapid growth through industry.

Today, the Belfast metropolitan area is 960 square kilometres with a population of just under 700,000, and the inner core of Belfast City Council area is 115 square kilometres with a population of 274,000 - together a significant proportion of Northern Ireland's total population of around 1.75 million.

The physical structure of Belfast has been affected by the physical constraints of its site. The city is flanked to the northwest by the Belfast Hills, (including Cavehill which is thought to be the inspiration for Jonathan Swift's novel,

Gulliver's Travels) and to the south are the Castlereagh and Holywood Hills. The Antrim plateau lies to the north. These have largely constrained the city within the Lagan valley itself.

Nearly all of the planning strategies from the 1960s through 1990s concern the Belfast Urban Area, the expanded area of urban development built-up after Belfast became a regional capital and grew in importance. This area includes suburban development and is bounded by a greenbelt, the preservation of which is claimed to be integral to modern planning.

Greenspaces

There are a number of key players in the protection of Belfast's greenspace. Lagan Valley Regional Park, Northern Ireland's only Regional Park and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, was established in the late 1960s. It aims to protect the countryside and develop informal recreation along the River Lagan, which stretches for almost 18km from Stranmillis in South Belfast to Union Locks in Lisburn. Together with the relevant councils and government departments, plans are underway for appropriate regeneration of this area known as the Lagan Corridor.

Belfast City Council owns over fifty public parks including two city parks, 36 local parks, district parks and country parks. In 2005 the Council launched '*Your City, Your Space*' strategy for open spaces which is its '*vision of how Belfast's open spaces will develop between now and 2020*'.

The National Trust is a major contributor to the protection of

four strategically important areas of greenspace in Belfast. Historically the profile of these sites was low but the all-important acquisition of Divis (478m) and Black Mountain (390m) in 2005 kick-started awareness. The 1,500 acres of upland heath to the north-west of the city, part of the Belfast Hills, had from 1953 to 2005 been in private ownership of the Ministry of Defence and used as a training area for the army. The opening of Belfast's dramatic backdrop by the National Trust has been an important step in returning a stunning mountain landscape to the public, to tourists and most importantly to the urban communities that lie at its foot. The acquisition of Black Hill in 2007 opened up a further 500 acres for public access. The Trust has transformed the 2,000 acres into a major hill-walking facility, including a circular trail with a three hour trek.

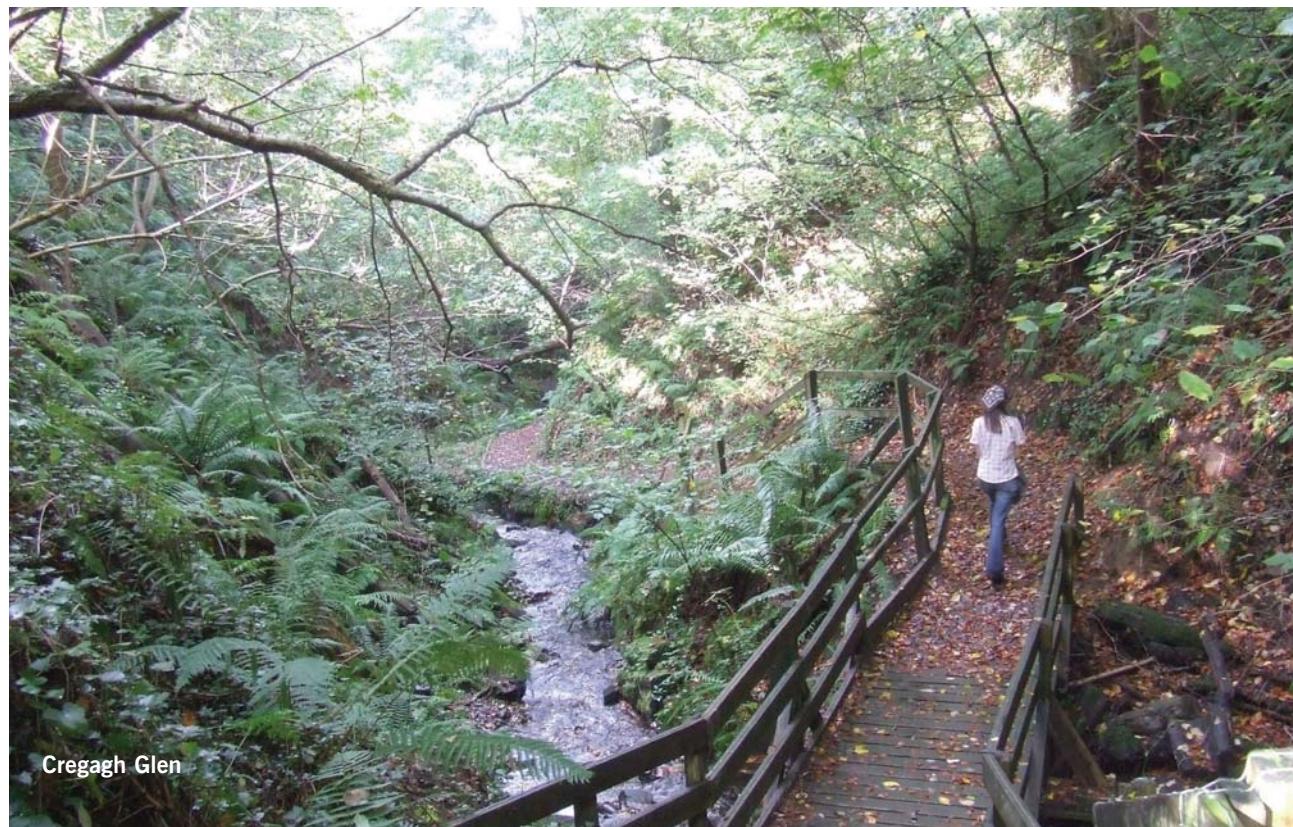
Much of the land in the Belfast Hills is privately owned and agricultural. However, there are five other main sites which are open to the public namely Carnmoney Hill, managed for conservation by the Woodland Trust, Cave Hill Country Park, Slivenacloy Nature Reserve, managed by the Ulster Wildlife Trust, Glenside Community Woodland and Collin Glen Forest Park. Cave Hill (356m) and Collin Glen have park status that guarantees public right of access and protects the area from development.

Collin Glen is a beautiful river glen of woodland, grassland and waterfalls tucked in off the Glen Road in the heart of West Belfast between Collin Hill and Black Mountain (200 acres). The National Trust owns the upper and steeper reaches of the Glen, which offer great views across Belfast

and mark the Trust's second key wedge of greenspace in the city. It was acquired from funds raised through a public appeal in 1945 to halt further clearing of native oaks which were felled around the Second World War. The Collin Glen Trust was set up in 1989 to manage the lower section of the glen which had deteriorated with quarrying, landfilling, illegal dumping and vandalism. With the capping of landfill sites, removal of debris and planting of thousands of native trees the Collin Glen Trust has taken great strides in restoring the glen for local communities and schools.

Mirroring the Belfast Hills are the Castlereagh Hills on the south east of the city. Cregagh Glen and Lisnabreeny marks the third key National Trust site in Belfast, 157 acres owned since 1938. Just off a main outer ring dual carriageway in close proximity to Cregagh housing estates, the glen provides a public riverside pathway through woodland. Beyond the glen the path continues up through open grassland that takes you to a former rath and scheduled monument with superb views over Belfast.

Minnowburn, the fourth key site owned by The National Trust in South Belfast is 128 acres of mixed countryside that lies within the Lagan Valley Regional Park. Minnowburn has been a special place for the citizens of south Belfast for generations, located historically at the end of tramlines and providing walks along the Lagan towpath. The National Trust have developed riverbank, meadow and woodland walks that link Shaw's Bridge with the Terrace Hill viewpoint and the Giant's Ring - a Neolithic henge monument ca 3000 BC.





Significance

The social, economic and environmental benefits of open space are as true to Belfast as they are to any other city in the UK. Benefits to health and wellbeing, regeneration and economy, heritage, education and community development and positive impact on anti-social behaviour are all vital outputs.

But Belfast is different from many other cities as a consequence of its history and strong ethnic divisions. Despite political advances in recent years, the city continues to have a very high degree of segregation along ethnic lines. Before 1969 Belfast was considered to be a 'connected' city. The Troubles have created 'peacewalls' and 'no-go' areas which have changed the physical map of the city.

Connections in Action

New developments in joining up the city's greenspace are underway. The Lagan Valley Regional Park received a grant of over £2 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2007 for community access and habitat creation initiatives.

The Connswater Community Greenway, announced in 2007, is a linear park connecting 379 acres of public open space from Belfast Lough to the Castlereagh Hills finishing at The National Trust's Cregagh Glen and Lisnabreeny viewpoint. It will include 43 bridges and 19 kms of cycle and walkways. Just under 50,000 people living adjacent to the greenway will benefit from opportunities for leisure and exercise on their doorstep.



Lisnabreeny

Improving connections between the city's green spaces and partnerships between key providers is therefore a priority for many organisations, including The National Trust, community groups and local councils. The restrictions of Northern Ireland's public access legislation reinforces the need for good linkages to maximise areas of uninterrupted greenspace. Most land is privately owned and since The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 for England and Wales did not extend to Northern Ireland, public access to countryside space is limited.

The Belfast Hills Partnership, an independent charity coordinating work in the Hills is working with The National Trust, the relevant city councils and Lagan Valley Regional Park to develop a continuous 10km trail from the summit of Divis Mountain through Collin Glen to Lady Dixon Park in South Belfast. Consultation with established community groups along the route will be a crucial part of this project. It is also anticipated that a range of paths will be developed in Slievenacloy, including those suitable for wheelchairs, thus opening this part of the Belfast Hills to the public.

Sustrans is investing in efforts to join greenspaces through the Comber Greenway - a 7 mile traffic free green corridor of the National Cycle Network from the parish of Comber and through the heart of East Belfast to Belfast city centre. Sustrans has also developed a cycle route along the towpath between Belfast and Lisburn.

In parallel with these developments, the government has introduced an initiative known as Neighbourhood Renewal, designed to work with people at grassroots to reverse decline in deprived areas. Health and access to the surrounding physical environment are amongst a range of indicators which will be looked at to shape an action plan for each area.

Conclusion

As Belfast finds its feet in a new political era, there is an air of renewed vigour for restoring its 'green lungs' and developing open spaces for the city's people to experience the feeling of rural escape from urban bustle. The networks of community greenways and wildlife corridors offer tremendous benefits for physical health and well being but there is an added aspiration that sharing public space will help to overcome the physical and psychological barriers that remain. To some extent the physical map of Belfast will affect how it develops in the next 10 to 15 years. Space planning will only be successful if it meets the needs of the communities it serves so engagement is an imperative part of progress.



Minnowburn

Access to the countryside and greenspace will always be a principal purpose of The National Trust, being one of the main interpretations of 'benefit to the nation' and 'keeping commons...as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public' stated in The National Trust Act 1907. Encouraging and facilitating access on our four key sites, Divis and Black Mountain, Cregagh Glen and Lisnabreeny, Minnowburn and Collin Glen will be a priority for 2008. And by working in partnership with councils and other key providers in Belfast we collectively can demonstrate that the grass is indeed greener on the other side!

"With the possible exception of the equator, everything begins somewhere."

--C. S. Lewis

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Lisnabreeny - Jill Montgomery

Minnowburn - Jill Jennings

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The Development of a Green Route System for South Dublin

Michael Hannon, South Dublin County Council



Introduction

The South Dublin County Development Plan 2004 - 2010 includes a policy (7.8.1.i Policy T 20: Cycling and Walking) to "promote and facilitate the development of cycling and walking facilities in the County and to ensure that all developments facilitate access by foot and bicycle to public transport facilities and local services". The purpose of this policy is to facilitate sustainable development, facilities for young people, children and the disabled, healthy lifestyles for the population of South Dublin and as an integral part of the mix of leisure and tourism opportunities available in the county. To date this has been achieved largely through on-road cycling and walking routes and walking-only routes through parks and open spaces. Indeed, the idea of cycling through parks or open spaces has always been perceived in a negative manner by the public - mainly due to past experience of conflict between cyclists and pedestrians when both are using the same space.

Although a short cycle path has been constructed in Glenaulin Park, Palmerstown - which links Palmerstown and Ballyfermot - and a new cycle and walking route has been constructed in the as yet unopened Waterstown Park it is considered that there is an untapped resource for walking and cycling routes within the county as a whole which would utilise the existing and future parks and open spaces as well as the existing on-road network. The parks and open spaces of South Dublin County Council consist of an area of approximately 1,620ha. (4000 acres) and this land bank is comprised of small open spaces, neighbourhood parks and regional parks as well as incidental green areas associated with roads. Utilizing this resource would create a linked walking and cycling network throughout the county.

In order to provide a lead for the county and to follow through on the County Development Plan policy commitment, the Council established an interdepartmental committee to prepare a report and plans for connected walking and cycling routes throughout the county. The committee included representatives from the Development Department (the Council department dealing with property and economic development), the Parks and Landscape Services Department, the Planning Department, the Architectural Services Department and Roads Department. The committee was also charged with beginning the process of actually making a start on the construction of two routes. The plan that was prepared in December 2006 - Green Routes in South Dublin County - proposed a network of 12 routes that could in the long term be connected to each other. Each route would consist of a spine route for walking

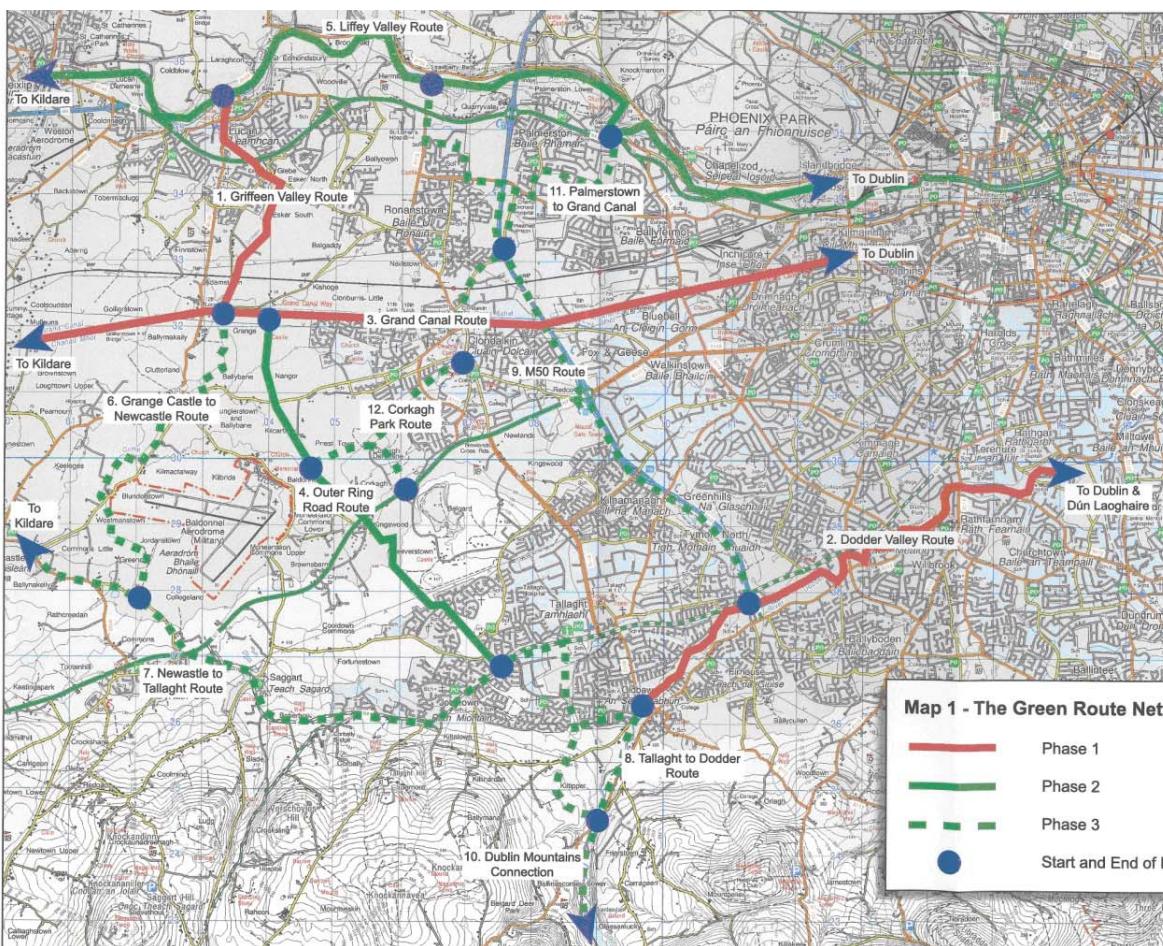
and cycling with the walking and cycling paths segregated as far as possible. The proposed spine route amounted to 85km of paths and when the connecting paths are added to this it is estimated that there will be a total of 150 km of new walking and cycling paths in South Dublin.

The plan is a long term one but work has already commenced on the construction of a section of the route in Griffen Valley Park in Lucan and the preparation of the plans for the route in Dodder Valley Park between Tallaght and Rathfarnham.

The Green Routes Network

The Green Routes network is comprised of a skeleton of 12 routes (as shown on Map 1) connected to each other and to which other radiating or connecting routes (example shown on Map 2) link local residential areas, schools and work locations. The skeleton of 12 routes consists of the following:

1. Griffen Valley
2. Dodder Valley
3. Grand Canal
4. Outer Ring Road
5. Liffey Valley
6. Grange Castle to Newcastle
7. Newcastle to Tallaght
8. Tallaght to Dodder Valley
9. M50 Route
10. Dublin Mountains connection
11. Palmerstown to Grand Canal
12. Corkagh Park Route



Map 2: The spine route (in yellow) is connected to adjacent residential areas by connecting routes. The spine route itself continues to other parks and open spaces to make a network of routes.



What will the routes look like?

The intention was that the routes would be clearly marked with separate colour codes for the cycling (red) and pedestrian (black) lanes to match with the existing standard road code. However, there is some debate about this since the most durable colour material is the red macadam and this is three times as expensive as the black macadam. Alternative marking systems are in use in France where, for example, in the Hortin area close to Bordeaux the cycle symbol on a black path is surrounded in green colour. In any case it is essential that the cycling and pedestrian routes are clearly distinguished from each other.

Map 1 - The Green Route Network

- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- - - Phase 3
- Start and End of Route



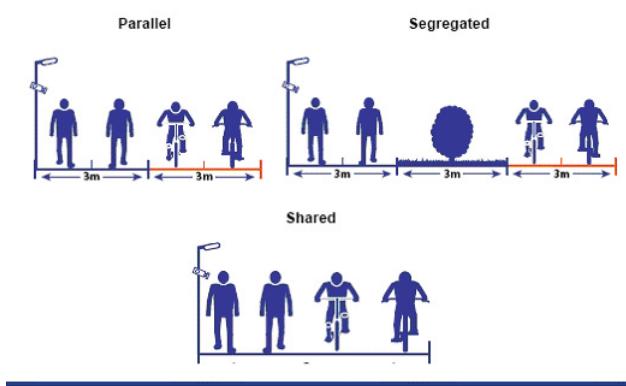
The routes will be signalled throughout by maps and information signs and information leaflets including maps will be available to enable users to plan their use of the routes.

Type of Routes

Each route will be a segregated cycling and walking route where possible. There will, nevertheless, be sections of the route where shared use is unavoidable but the length of these will be kept to a minimum. The routes will take the form of a mix of the following as shown on the following page.

Route Type	Where and Why?
Parallel Separate cycling and walking lanes with no segregation barrier between them and running adjacent to each other.	Road and narrow park and open space areas where it would not be feasible to have a segregation barrier.
Segregated With a separation median which can be grass, wildflower shrub or hedgerow or a combination of all.	Park and open space areas. The inclusion of a median strip will reduce the visual impact of routes in the landscape and make the route safer and an attraction in themselves.
Shared Cyclists and pedestrians share the same lane.	In some road and very narrow park and open space situations where it is not feasible to have segregated sections without excessive expenditure or major costly engineering work.
Advisory	On road sections where the road width is too narrow to allow for a segregated cycle path - in this section cars can pass over the path if free of cyclists.

Diagram of Route Type



Route Furniture

The routes will be punctuated with a co-ordinated and well designed system of signs, maps, bridges, seating and litter bins. They will also flag natural habitats, views and points of local interest. The use of artistic features either individually or intrinsically in the furniture of the route will be an important element of the proposal.

Security

The question of security in any area of the country is a recurring theme at present. In relation to the Green Routes there has been some discussion of lighting the routes and of installing a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system. The installation of a CCTV system would seem to have some merit, particularly in following up on anti-social behaviour.

In relation to lighting of the routes it is recommended that the entire route be ducted for lighting and that any lighting to be installed should be on a timer system to allow for lighting only during normal working or school hours. The reasons for this are that:

- In large parks the lighting may act as a magnet to actually attract an anti-social element.
- There would be some concern about the lighting of areas that may be important wildlife corridors and that would disturb this environment.

Universal Access

All of the routes will be designed to allow for access for the able bodied, the disabled, the aged and persons pushing prams or buggies - utilising the principles of Universal Access.

Sustainability

The Green Routes will utilise as far as is possible sustainable systems of construction and enhance and contribute to a sustainable natural environment along the routes. Specifically:

- During excavation there will be an objective that at least 60% of excavated material will be re-used on the site or within 1Km of the excavation area.
- The use of sustainable products such as Eco cement or recycled construction materials will be considered as part of the construction process.
- Existing natural habitat areas will not be disturbed and any work in or near them will be planned in conjunction with an ecologist.
- The creation of new natural habitats along the routes will be investigated with the ecologist.
- Drainage will be achieved by utilising existing natural systems and will avoid as far as possible using a piped system.

Support for the Green Routes proposal

Support for the proposal has been received from the National Way Marked Way Advisory Committee (NWWAC) (a subcommittee of the Irish Sports Council), from the Cycling

Federation and South Dublin County Tourism.

Progressing the Green Routes idea

Three routes are seen as having the potential to be commenced immediately once the required resources are in place. Undertaking these successfully would create confidence and a demand in the public mind about the potential for all of the routes in the long term. Nevertheless, the construction of these routes themselves will take place in self contained sections over a period of years.

These routes are:

1. Griffeen Valley
2. Dodder Valley - Phase 1
3. Grand Canal

The reasons for choosing these are:

- A significant area of the routes are in the ownership of South Dublin County Council and in the case of the Grand Canal by Waterways Ireland which would allow for the commencement of the routes once the necessary resources and planning procedures have been put in place.
- A Part 8 public consultation has already been agreed by the Elected Members for a significant area of Griffeen Valley Park and for the Grange Lands at Hayden's Lane.
- The three routes are of sufficient length and include different route options to afford an attractive cycling or walking distance that would attract the maximum usage.

The three routes are of sufficient length and include different route options to afford an attractive cycling or walking distance that would attract the maximum usage.

Why create a Green Routes network?

The gains from the planning and construction of the Green Routes network are:

- new routes to schools and work that take cyclists and pedestrians away from a large proportion of the busy road system.
- new routes that add to the recreation options available to the population..
- new routes that add to the tourism infrastructure of South Dublin.

These new routes and the gains from them also have other important benefits. The creation of the Green Routes system will create alternative routes that provide a large proportion of off road routes for the walker or cyclist and which should address some of the concerns of parents, walkers and cyclists reported by the Dublin Transportation Organisation (DTO) and also contribute to the health of the population - particularly children.

The Dublin Transportation Office (DTO) in its report, Safer Routes to School (2005) reported that "*In 1991, 24% of Irish school pupils were driven to school; by 1996 this had*

increased to 30%, reaching 42% by 2002. In 2002, school related trips accounted for over 20% of the total number of cars on the roads in the Greater Dublin Area during the morning peak period. This is indicative of a growing trend in the use of the car for the school journey. Over the same period the numbers cycling and walking to school dropped by 17%. These trends are particularly evident in urban areas. Almost half of all primary school children in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), which comprises the counties Dublin, Wicklow, Kildare and Meath, are now driven to school". The DTO cites the consequences of this trend as "increased obesity levels, exposure to pollution and impeding social development".

The reasons cited for not walking or cycling to school were Safety, Convenience and Distance but interestingly the distances from schools cannot really be considered to be very long as illustrated in the following taken from the DTO report:

In the Greater Dublin Area:

- 117,500 (43%) of all trips to school are 1 mile or less, and over 159,200 (58%) of all trips to school are 2 miles or less.
- 102,800 (64%) of primary and 56,400 (49%) of secondary school pupils travel under 2 miles from their home to school.
- Of the 94,700 trips to school made by car, 33,500 (35%) are 1 mile or less and 55,700 (58%) are 2 miles or less.

The DTO has also reported in the DTO Cycling Policy 2006 that generally there has "been a decline in cycling to both work and education. The mode shares for cycling to school and to work have both declined by over one third between 1996 and 2002. Because of the large growth in employment, the actual numbers cycling to work have declined much less".

Using the Green Routes network for other objectives

Additional benefits and future options worth exploration is the use of the Green Routes as

- ecological corridors linking habitats which have been fragmented by infrastructure developments
- historical, cultural and social connections

Ecological corridors

There has been much work on the examination of ecological corridors to address the fragmentation of the landscape caused by intensifying agriculture, urban growth and infrastructure development (e.g. canals, roads, railways). Jongman et al (2004) have reviewed the effects of this fragmentation as "deterioration of ecosystems, loss of natural habitats and habitat structures, and extinction of species" and the creation of "habitat islands". They cite Fahrig and Merriam (1985) and Arts et al (1995) in the response of the conservationists as one of "a shift from a strategy of conserving the existing, more and more isolated, natural



'islands' to the conservation and restoration of interconnected natural areas".

If we create Green Routes connecting communities through walking and cycling we can also possibly capitalize and expand these - where appropriate - to make ecological corridors connecting fragmented landscapes. In some ways Green Routes also encounter the same problem as species in natural habitats - when the Green Route encounters a barrier such as a motorway it must find a way around this. This may not be the most direct or optimum path - which would be to cross the motorway! Crossing the motorway can only be achieved by an over or under bridge and there are a number of these situations encountered in the Green Routes project. Perhaps if a bridge has to be constructed to overcome these barriers it could be enhanced to create a 'Green Bridge' (as has been achieved in examples in Holland, Germany and France) which can cater for walking, cycling and species of animals and plants that need to connect across a barrier. This is an integrated approach which links the objectives of creating a healthier option for access to work and school and for recreation purposes with the objectives of healing and connecting damaged ecological environments.

Historical cultural and social connections

Whilst Green Routes can function to provide walking and cycling routes for work, school and leisure purposes and possibly also act as ecological corridors, they can also connect communities through an attractive landscape and by linking historical and cultural areas of the community. Jongman (2002) states "Ecological corridors, greenways or landscape linkages have aesthetic qualities, contribute to an attractive living environment, and perform educational, recreational and ecological functions." This objective is one that is worth exploring in the further development of the Green Route system and is one that also contribute to the development of tourism in the county.

Challenges

The challenges in the development of this Green Route system are:

1. Financial
2. Co-ordination between Departments
3. Barriers

1. Financial

The development of the system involves the commitment of a large financial and manpower resource and the development is in reality a long term one.

2. Co-ordination between Departments

In the development of a Green Route system there is a need for a multi departmental approach. For example, in the control of housing and infrastructure development it is important that the objectives of the Green Route system are understood and incorporated into current and future plans in order that routes that have been selected are not compromised and that the developments can also feed into the routes to allow them to contribute to the developments.

3. Barriers

The Green Route proposal has encountered barriers in the form of roads, railways, rivers and canals. The methods for overcoming these are relatively simple in engineering terms but costly in financial terms. As discussed earlier the method for dealing with these barriers should ideally be examined with the aim of also furthering other objectives, for example, the repair of fragmented landscapes and the connecting of communities, cultural and historical points.

Conclusion

The proposal to create a connected walking and cycling route throughout South Dublin is an exciting venture. The first completed routes are expected to be opened in June 2008 and it will be interesting to get feedback on the design of the routes as well as the usefulness of them as alternatives to car use. In relation to the design of the routes there is still some disquiet about the necessity for two segregated walking and cycling areas and the perceived damage that could be caused to the environment by them. The experiences gained in the development and operation of the first two routes as well as the feedback from the public will be used in the design and construction of the next phases.

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Recreational Greenspace and The GCV Green Network

Max Hislop, Glasgow and Clyde Valley (GCV) Green Network Partnership



Fig. 1. Aerial photo of the Clyde Gateway 'Flagship Regeneration' area. Celtic Park can be seen in the middle distance. Between there and the two tower blocks in the foreground will be the location of the Commonwealth Games Athlete's Village and a new National Arena.

'The Dear Green Place'

Glasgow is famed for its abundance of parks and other green spaces where local people can recreate, such as Pollok Country Park (recently awarded 'Best Park in Europe 2008'), Kelvingrove Park and Glasgow Green. Hence its sobriquet 'The Dear Green Place'. The seven local authority areas, which together with Glasgow make up the city region, are also well supplied with magnificent country and regional parks such as Mugdock, Strathclyde Park and Clyde Muirshiel, and even the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.

In a survey of attitudes to greenspace undertaken last year for greenspace scotland (Progressive Partnership, 2007), 97% of GCV residents interviewed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "*good quality greenspaces make a great place to live*", whereas 73% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "*my local greenspace makes the area a great place to live*". Similarly 97% of GCV residents interviewed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "*Greenspaces should be safe places to encourage physical activity*", whereas 73% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement

"*My local Greenspace is a safe place for physical activity*". The discrepancy between the aspirations and realities of greenspace for GCV residents indicates there is work to be done if the city and its region can live up to its sobriquet.

This article describes why the GCV Green Network Partnership was created and some of the programme of work that is underway to help raise the status of recreational greenspace in the city region as part of a Green Network, particularly through the Planning System.

The GCV Green Network as part of an 'Agenda for Sustained Growth'

The GCV Joint Structure Plan (2006) sets out an 'Agenda for Sustained Growth' for the city region. This is the basis for a twenty-year planning and development strategy, which will enable a major shift in the economic competitive position of the region. The Plan provides for 109,000 additional households and 70,000 extra jobs by 2018. Some of these homes and jobs will be provided through 'flagship' regeneration programmes within the urban area. Others will be realised through new 'Community Growth Areas' (areas that will provide for shortfalls in housing land) on undeveloped land adjacent to the urban area.

Figure 2 (see overleaf): The GCV region is home to a third of the Scottish population and covers more than 1300 square miles, encompassing the whole of the River Clyde catchment. The Green Network will integrate with



regeneration and community growth areas and make connections throughout the region, from Greenock to Lanark and Cumbernauld to East Kilbride.

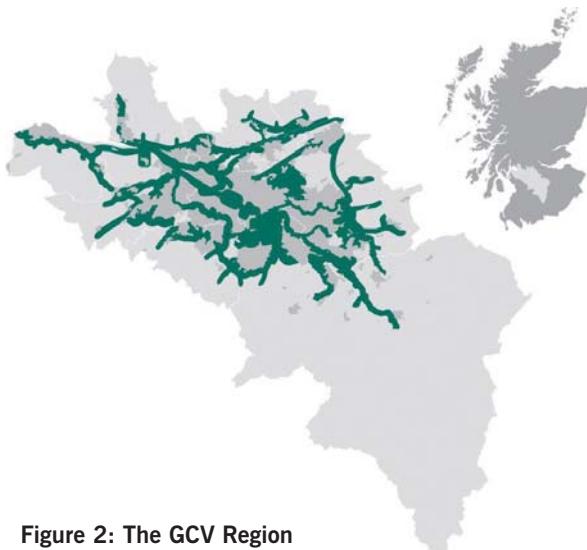


Figure 2: The GCV Region

The development of a Green Network is one of three strategic themes (along with economic development and strengthened communities) crucial to the delivery of the Plan's targets. The Plan emphasises that the Green Network will enhance the environment, not for its own sake, (or even to provide for the future of recreational greenspace), it is primarily to improve the economic competitiveness of the region. This represents an important shift in the perception of greenspace as a potentially sacrificial addition to urban developments once the 'grey infrastructure' of roads, drainage, telecommunications and other services have been taken into account, to a position where 'green infrastructure' is considered an equally vital part of the investment necessary to deliver a range of benefits leading to a successful city region.

The GCV Green Network Partnership

The GCV Green Network Partnership brings together the eight local authorities which comprise the Glasgow metropolitan region with five major government agencies that promote and deliver on the environmental, social, health and economic agendas throughout the GCV area, namely Communities Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Glasgow Centre for Population Health, Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage.

The Partnership's aim is to create a step change in the scale, quality and integration of greenspace within the city region. In doing so it will help create a Green Network that will contribute to improving the region's competitiveness for investment, enhancing quality of life, promotion of biodiversity and more sustainable use of natural resources, and encouragement of healthy lifestyles. Its role is to act

strategically to stimulate and facilitate the planning, delivery and sustained management of the Green Network.

Green Network Strategy Plans

In the last year the Partnership has commissioned the preparation of several strategic plans which analyse the opportunities for the integration of the Green Network into key development areas within the city region. Two of these strategy plans are briefly described below. The context for the studies is very different with the first study based on an area of Green Belt and the second study based on an inner city area which is identified as a Flagship Regeneration Area in the Joint Structure Plan (2006).



Figure 3: Aerial photo of the Gartloch Gartcosh area

The Gartloch -Gartcosh Green Network Strategy

The Gartcosh Gartloch corridor of land extends to approximately 2500 hectares of largely undeveloped greenspace on the north-west of the Glasgow conurbation that straddles the Glasgow/North Lanarkshire boundary. Although bounded by urban areas it retains an essentially rural character, with an interlinked network of lochs and wetlands creating an important, though largely unknown biodiversity resource. Much of the area is designated as Green Belt. Nevertheless the area will be subject to considerable change in the near future because it has been identified as a Community Growth Area in the Joint Structure Plan (2006).

It is against this background that the strategy (Land Use Consultants, 2008) sets out a long-term vision for the area. "The development of the Green Network to create a nationally important wetlands park with a wider network of recreation sites bringing significant environmental, community and economic benefits to the Gartloch/Gartcosh Corridor and Glasgow, North Lanarkshire and the wider Clyde Valley"ⁱⁱ

Recreational greenspace is very much part of the future of the area and is expressed in one of the detailed objectives of strategy identified to support the vision: "*Raise awareness of the area's biodiversity assets, its wider natural and cultural heritage and its range of recreation opportunities*".

The delivery of a comprehensive strategy that provides a strong vision of how to secure the Green Network alongside other changes to the area is all well and good, but it is the implementation of the recommendations from the strategy that will deliver the benefits claimed for the Green Network. The completion of this strategy in January 2008 is the start of a new phase of work for the Partnership to ensure that the needs of the Green Network are included in the early stages of masterplanning for the Gartloch Gartcosh corridor. There is general agreement that if these needs are included in discussions early in the planning process that accommodating the needs is neither onerous nor financially difficult to accommodate. Enthusiasm for this project is high and it is hoped that this approach will act as a model for other areas earmarked for development in the city region.

The Clyde Gateway Green Network Strategy

Clyde Gateway is one of Scotland's most significant regeneration initiatives managed by a recently established Urban Regeneration Company. Focused on approximately 850 hectares of a former industrial area in the east part of Glasgow and extending into South Lanarkshire, the initiative will result in extensive areas being remodelled to accommodate new communities, employment areas and open space. The area is also the location for the Athlete's Village and new sporting venues for the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

The Clyde Gateway Green Network Strategy (Land Use Consultants, 2007) provides a framework for project development and shows how the Green Network should support regeneration and connect with surrounding communities. It also describes how the Green Network will create new pedestrian and cycling routes, improve urban drainage, and bring biodiversity closer to where people live and work.

As mentioned above, implementation of the strategy recommendations is crucial. The strategy identifies the Planning System as 'one of the most effective means of implementing the Clyde Gateway Green Network Strategy'. It recommends the development of Joint Supplementary Planning Guidance by the two local authorities as a means

of ensuring that all new development in the area is subject to the same policies on the provision of greenspace, and coordinated policy statements to cover qualitative and quantitative standards for greenspace provision and design guidelines.

The Green Network and the Planning System

The examples of Green Network Strategy Plans described above indicate that the Planning System is potentially a powerful mechanism to deliver the Green Network and the recreational greenspace opportunities that will be provided close to where people will be living that this implies. The Planning System is currently going through a major process of change. At the highest level the recently published second National Planning Framework (Scottish Government, 2008) will guide Scotland's spatial development to 2030. The document sets out strategic development priorities to promote sustainable economic growth and recognises that the GCV Green Network (as part of a Central Belt Green Network): "*offers the opportunity to effect a step change in environmental quality, woodland cover and recreational opportunities*".

The recognition of the work of the Partnership and the potential that exists to deliver a transformational Green Network at this national level is truly gratifying. However, the Partnership's work in developing a number of Green Network Strategy Plans over the last year has highlighted that the Green Network concept isn't well understood and that there is a need to support those who are engaged in the planning system to assist them to identify the needs of the Green Network and to take opportunities to deliver it.

The Partnership is therefore engaged in several pieces of work which will provide the support required.

- GCV Urban Greenspace Mapping (GeoInformation Group Ltd, 2006) - a comprehensive aerial photograph analysis of the greenspace provision in the city region. This GIS dataset is classified according to a typology of greenspace taken from Planning Advice Note (PAN) 65: Planning and Open Space (Scottish Executive 2003) and will provide a valuable tool for partner local authorities

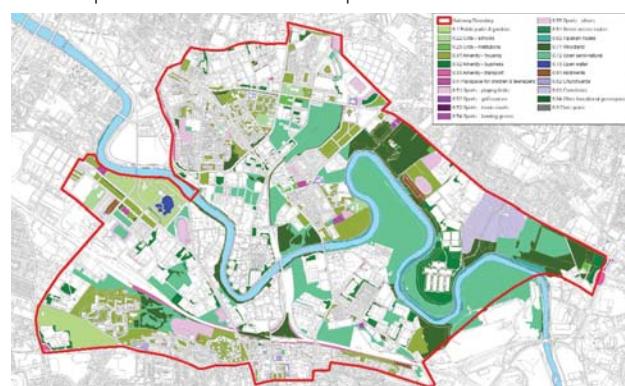


Figure 4: A map generated from the GCV Urban Greenspace Mapping study of the Clyde Gateway Flagship Regeneration area



- Greenspace Quality (Ironside Farrar, 2008) - the Partnership with greenspace scotland commissioned a study to develop a method to assess the quality and set standards of greenspace built around the assessment of sites using criteria categorised under five headings: Accessible & well connected; Attractive and appealing places; Biodiverse supporting ecological networks; Active supporting health and well being; Community supported.

The future of Recreational Greenspace in Glasgow and the Clyde Valley

There is an abundance of greenspace in and around the GCV region. However not all the population in the region have easy access to high quality greenspace that could provide them with the recreational opportunities and beneficial outcomes that an integrated Green Network can provide.

Assessment Criteria	5	3	1	n/a
	High	Fitness for Purpose	Low	
Provides places for a range of outdoor activities	Good diverse range of activity reflecting user needs and setting / location and character of the site	Range of activity reflecting user needs and setting / location and character of the site	Poor very limited range of activity that does not reflect anticipated user needs / site context	Not relevant
Diverse play, sport & recreational opportunities	A range of challenging play and sport activity provided for meeting a breadth of age and user groups	Play and sports facilities provided but limited range	Play and sports facilities not provided in locations were such facilities would be appropriate	Play and sports facilities not relevant to this type of space / location.
Providing places for social interaction	Offers good spaces/ places for social activity that are used by communities and include supporting furniture.	Offers spaces for social activity	Offers none or very limited areas considered safe, usable for social activity	Not relevant

Figure 5 : An example of assessment criteria for the 'Active supporting health and well being' heading.

- Integrated Habitat Network Modelling - due for completion in March 2008 (by Forest Research) the Partnership commissioned the development of a modelling tool to analyse the impact of development options on the habitat network for 'focal species' which represents the ability of the habitat they depend upon to support all the other species associated with that habitat. This tool will assist planners to identify opportunities to protect or enhance a habitat network and how to integrate these with other land-use demands within the city region.

GCV Green Network Planning Guidance - due for completion in summer 2008 (by Land Use Consultants), the Partnership has commissioned the development of non-statutory guidance that can be taken into account as a material planning consideration by planning staff and others involved in development management to help them understand the vision for the GCV Green Network. The output of the work will include a toolkit which will provide examples of policies and conditions, checklists and decision trees that can be used to assess the impact (positive or negative) of policies and development proposals on the Green Network.

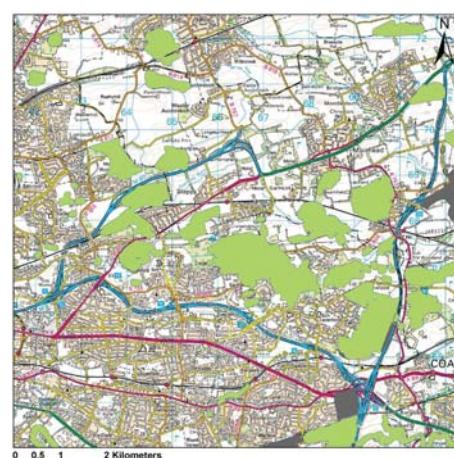


Figure 6: A Wetland Habitat Model scenario for the Gartloch-Gartcosh Green Network Strategy area.

Wetland Habitat Network
 "Sensitive" Development Areas

The GCV Green Network Partnership is a unique champion for those opportunities and beneficial outcomes and is working to ensure that they are delivered across the region.

By working strategically the Partnership considers how each piece of the Green Network relates to other pieces and the needs of a city in the 21st Century. The approach is not 'ad hoc' but considers each element as part of a massive, complex jigsaw puzzle which over the next 25 years will reveal the many benefits of an integrated, functional Green Network.

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Photographic References

Figure 1: credited to Patricia and Angus MacDonald, Aerographica

Figure 3: credited to Guthrie Aerial Photography

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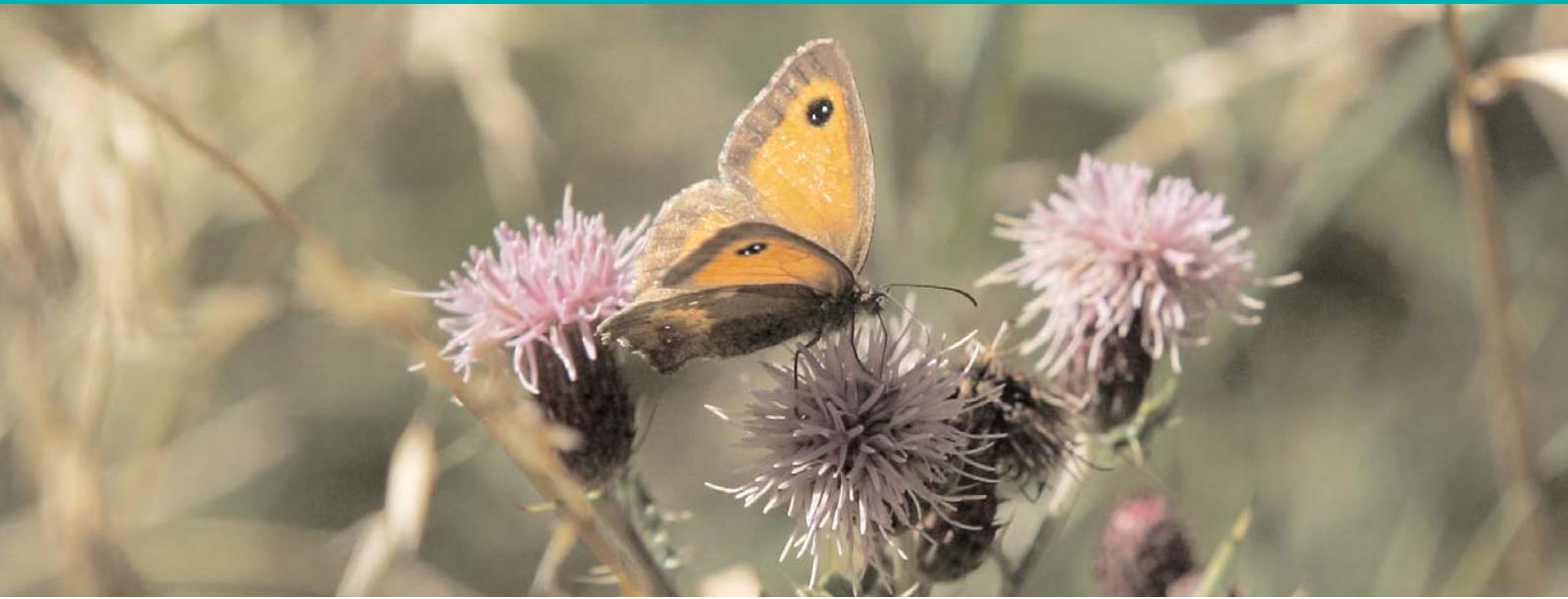
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'How Green are my Valleys?' - The post industrial recreational greenspace

Luke Maggs, Countryside Council for Wales



The 'Valleys' of South Wales once provided the United Kingdom with vast amounts of coal and iron, enabling and powering a rapid industrial revolution, however this legacy has not come without a price. The impacts and effects of such activity on the environment and society are well-documented and complex, this article attempts to convey the aspirations of an exciting project which is being developed in South Wales by a wide range of partners from the environmental, countryside, tourism, heritage, recreation and voluntary sectors.

With industrial activity long gone, the ex-coalfields of South East Wales have undergone considerable environmental improvement during the last few decades. However, whilst there have been many individual successes, the area still suffers a negative image brought about through missed opportunities, lack of coordination, low economic performance (60% of the 134 Communities First areas across Wales are located in the Upper Valleys) and consistency in approach across the region (Parkin, et al, 2007). This is not a new phenomena, a group of over thirty public, voluntary and private sector bodies have been working collaboratively for almost a decade under an

umbrella called the 'Greening the Valleys Partnership' to resolve these cross cutting issues in South East Wales. As a result a concept called the "Valleys Regional Park" has emerged as a holistic approach to ensuring sustainability of the natural, social and economic environment.

The Valleys Regional Park Vision

"A high quality, sustainable network of greenspace offering outstanding recreational opportunities which will change the image and perception of the Valleys for ever, improve the quality of life, health and well being for local people, generate pride in their area, create an environment that stimulates inward investment and becomes an attractive destination for visitors."

(VRP Framework, Working Draft, July 2007).

The Valleys Regional Park is seeking to apply this vision across the region by establishing an integrated and networked collaboration of resources and expertise from a variety of organisations to deliver environmental, economic and social benefits. It is not seeking to re-name the area or be prescriptive about a boundary within which to operate; the need to avoid duplication of effort and improve efficiencies across all sectors is a main driver of the project in line with sustainability principles (Butler, 1999). Roughly speaking the area encompasses the entire ex-coalfields of South Wales, stretching from Monmouthshire in the East, to Carmarthenshire in the West, and as far South as the M4 corridor and cutting across twelve Local Authority Boundaries.

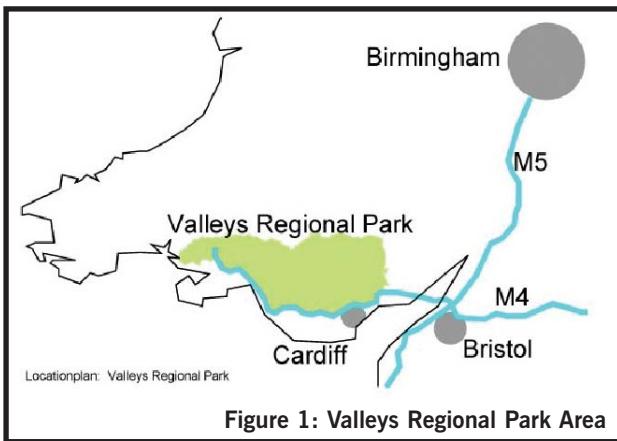


Figure 1: Valleys Regional Park Area

Strategic context for the project:

The Wales Spatial Plan: People Places and Future (2004) highlighted in its vision: '*we will sustain our communities by tackling the challenges presented by population and economic change*'. It went on to state that '*our future depends on the vitality of our communities as attractive places to live and work*'. The Valleys Regional Park covers two spatial plan areas, and is covered by two interim statements; South East Wales - The Capital Network, and Swansea Bay - Waterfront and Valleys. These documents determine the local priorities for action and investment, and the synergy with the Valleys Regional Park concept can clearly be seen in both statements (Parkin, et al 2007). The Welsh Assembly Government's "*Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services for Wales*" (2004) public service reform policy, set the context which led to the establishment of the Heads of the Valleys Partnership (HoV) as an innovative approach to delivering joined-up working and promoting sustainable regeneration within South East Wales' deprived ex-coalfields. This was developed further, and a strategic framework entitled "*Heads We Win*" (2005), was produced for the HoV area along with a subsequent strategy "*Turning Heads: A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020*" (2006). Whilst the HoV area covers only five Local Authorities, its strategy sits firmly within the Wales Spatial Plan, and reinforced the potential for the Valleys Regional Park to become an exemplar for urban living in a rural environment, tackling poor economic activity, social deprivation and high unemployment. Throughout these plans and strategies, the concept of a 'Valleys Regional Park' was identified as a way of delivering national and local targets and building a green economy. This strategic governmental steer provided the context, and the funding to explore the concept further.

The Response

The Greening the Valleys Partnership, comprising of representatives from the twelve Local Authorities that would make up the Valleys Regional Park, along with WAG, national agencies and the voluntary and private sector had

already been working to promote the 'environment' as the basis of sustainable regeneration of the South Wales Valleys. With the concept of a Valleys Regional Park now fully supported in the strategic context, a study was commissioned in July 2006, to explore the feasibility and reality of such a scheme. The results of this work have driven the initiative ever since, setting out the vision for a collaborative and ambitious programme to rejuvenate the image of the South Wales Valleys forever.

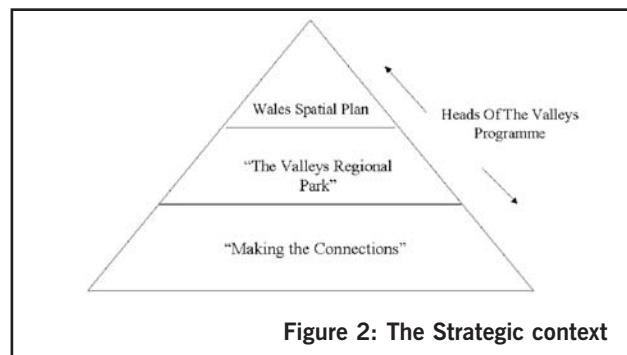


Figure 2: The Strategic context

Following on from this initial study, a 'Valleys Regional Park' working framework was produced in July 2007, which explored the reality in more detail. The framework set out a comprehensive Master Plan, Business Plan and a Costed Action Plan, all produced through extensive consultation with the partners. These documents set out a route map for delivery and a vision for the next twenty years, which are clearly aligned to deliver and meet a plethora of national, regional and local targets, strategies, remits and legislative requirements (Parkin, et al, 2007). The Valleys Regional Park could therefore be viewed as a strategic delivery mechanism, for cross sector and cross boundary working across the countryside, recreation, tourism, heritage and environment sectors, whilst also underpinning a sustainable economy and vibrant communities.

Whilst this is an impressive project in terms of collaborative, cross boundary and cross sector working, its fundamental concept is the belief that the green environment of the Valleys is the resource with which to base the economic, social and cultural regeneration of the region. The recent Wales Spatial Plan Update 2008: "*People, Places Future*" reinforces the importance of the Valleys Regional Park approach to achieve the aspirations of a fully integrated and vibrant economy, which provides a high quality natural and built environment and strong communities. The benefits that a healthy environment and accessible greenspace can have on individuals and communities is dramatic, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) has produced a toolkit, which backs up these conclusions and sets out the quantitative standards for provision.

Access to informal countryside recreation is integral to the well-being of every citizen, the clinical signs of stress falling within just three minutes of entering the right kind of

**Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards**

The Countryside Council for Wales recommends that provision should be made of at least 2ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1000 population according to system of tiers into which sites of different sizes fit:

- No person should live more than 300 m from their nearest area of natural greenspace;
- There should be at least one accessible 20ha site with in 2km from home;
- There should be one accessible 100ha site within 5km;
- There should be one accessible 500ha site within 10km

Figure 3: CCW, Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards

healthy, natural greenspace (CCW, Toolkit, 2006). The Valleys Regional Park seeks to build on this principle, and realise the economic potential of the natural environment to support the sustainable development and prosperity of the region. This holistic approach recognises the interconnectivity between natural, economic, political and social systems.

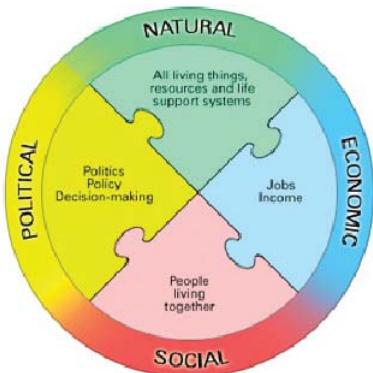


Figure 4: Unesco, Patterns of Interdependent Systems, (www.unesco.org/education)

Existing Situation

The area and concept in question is vast for a so-called 'park', covering around 570 square miles, over one million inhabitants, twelve local authorities and numerous other stakeholders within the region and its fringes. However the concept benefits of 'Regional Parks' are not new, they have proved successful throughout Europe and the rest of the World during the last decade (Canova, 2006). The strategic coordination of economic regeneration, underpinned by a healthy environment, which provides the opportunities for reconnecting people with nature, heritage, visitor attraction, along with enhancement and protection of biodiversity and cultural heritage, creates a significant piece of environmental infrastructure. The Valleys Regional Park offers real potential to integrate a 'green economy' within the region. Crucially the majority of the infrastructure and resource required to take forward the vision is already in place, such as the stunning landscape, diverse and rich heritage, and a committed group of relevant partner organisations.

The area includes an extensive network of accessible

greenspace including over 620 km² of open access land, linked by some 4500 km of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and numerous other cycle routes and bridleways (Parkin, et al, 2007). The Valleys Regional Park Action Plan sets out a collaborative raft of projects that will enhance and upgrade these existing resources. For example a 'Valleys Cycle Network' will be established, utilising existing cycleways and trails that partners like the Forestry Commission, Sustrans, Local Authorities and Voluntary Organisations have endeavoured to develop over the last few decades. Identifying key gaps in current provision and discrepancies in quality, then drawing in and coordinating the investment and collaborative expertise to link, enhance and promote the regional network will enable this to be achieved. These sorts of strategic initiatives will also be integrated with other schemes in a comprehensive and holistic management approach, enabling efficiencies and maximum value for money.

The landscape is home to a diverse range of European, National and locally protected species and conservation areas such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), National Nature Reserves (NNR), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC), and other local designations. The 'Valleys' of South Wales also include an extensive network of internationally important industrial heritage sites, such as Blaenavon Industrial Landscapes World Heritage Site, and many other older historical attractions. These important assets have been established and maintained thanks to years of investment and hard work by local authorities, public agencies and voluntary organisations albeit from a restrictive organisational remit.

Progress & recent development

Whilst the Valleys Regional Park is aiming to attract large amounts of European Funding, matched through domestic sources (in excess of £10 million), the project itself is aiming to transcend political timescales and funding sources. The current VRP Master Plan, Business Plan and Action Plan set out the route map for the next 10-20 years, acting as a driver for sustainability within the region (Reflecting the National Assembly for Wales's, Sustainability Duty). It is imperative the intrinsically dynamic environment is managed in a coordinated manner. The partners have recently been working hard together on developing the collaborative range of projects, and organisational structure that they will be delivering as part of the regional approach. The Valleys Regional Park has to create an economy that becomes self-sustaining, without dependence on short-term funding opportunities, creating a significant piece of environmental infrastructure that can provide for future generations. A focused and collective effort to coordinate resources and expertise into existing countryside, landscape, recreational, tourism, heritage assets, and upgrading them to world-class standards, will directly benefit the economy and well-being

of the area, whilst simultaneously establishing an integrated and sustainable network of greenspace.

However, there are some obvious challenges to be tackled, as well as some critical thinking needed as to how best to deliver such an ambitious programme, and deal with practical issues on the ground. For example, even when considering the Greenspace Standards set out by the Countryside Council for Wales, true integration of accessible, inclusive greenspace is complicated. Due to the topography of the region, with its hills and steep wooded valley sides, tantalising greenspace can often be within view and technically within distance, but totally inaccessible to all but the most able bodied and intrepid of hill walkers (Heads of the Valleys Greenspace Provision Report, exegesis, 2007). There already exists a wide range of key recreation and tourism routes, however many of these are missing vital links and missed opportunities to pool resources and establish best practice and quality guidelines. The overarching problems of an ex-industrial landscape are prevalent everywhere, reinforcing the common image of a damaged landscape with underused or misused urban fringes, social deprivation and lack of pride (Parkin, et al, 2007).

The Valleys Regional Park aspirations are summarised below:

- To improve the valleys landscape/countryside/environment infra-structure
- To raise and improve the perception of the 'Valleys' landscape/countryside/environment among the local population and visitors
- To make the management of the above sustainable in the medium to long term.

It will achieve these through:

- Carrying out major environmental, landscape scale, improvements (funded primarily through EU structural funds i.e. Convergence, Interreg and other domestic sources such as Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales, Welsh Assembly Government etc)
- Targeting resources for access improvements, management, community engagement, skill development, awareness raising, etc. in specific valleys (corridors) throughout the area
- Focusing on a number of key gateways into the region
- Developing consistent quality standards.
- Removing duplication of effort and making the "green pound" work harder in Wales

The Valleys Regional Park will enable the delivery of a wide range of national government strategies and initiatives, encompassing elements of environment, tourism, health, heritage, landscape, recreation and community engagement. It will focus on raising the quality standards of infrastructure, ensuring continuity and consistency, effective marketing, and attraction of inward investment. The overall concept is a raft of collaborative projects, driven by a slim committed core team, guided by partners and working towards the shared

strategic vision. The VRP will expand major landscape-scale projects, ultimately producing world-class facilities to act as flagships for the park, whilst encompassing additional smaller projects and for the first time developing truly cross-boundary and cross-sector working within the area. It will ensure a long-term, coordinated and networked approach, using the environment, access and tourism as an important catalyst for the social and economic regeneration of the region. By working effectively with its partner organisations, the 'Valleys Regional Park' will create a synergy that can cross political divides, drive forward sustainable development, and create a significant piece of green infrastructure that will be of immense benefit to the social and economic well being of Wales.

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Durlston A Marketing Approach to Project Development

Martin Cooke, Heritage and Leisure Management

Aerial view of Durlston near Swanage



Introduction

Durlston Country Park near Swanage in Dorset is a 280-acre cliff top paradise of international importance for its habitats, wildlife and geology. At the eastern end of the Park is Durlston Castle. This was built between 1887 and 1891 by locally born stone merchant and philanthropist George Burt as the centrepiece of his Durlston estate. The castle has spent recent years as a pub, restaurant and nightclub but with funding from the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) the lease returned to Dorset County Council in 2003.

Dorset County Council and its partners now have the opportunity to develop the Castle as an integral part of the Park and establish a world class 'Gateway Centre' for visitors to Durlston and the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, England's only natural World Heritage Site.

In December 2006 the Project was awarded a Stage One pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) with a £3.27m grant earmarked as part of a £5.85m project. The stage two bid is being submitted in March 2008. It is anticipated that work on

site will start in spring 2009 with the Castle opening 16 months later.

The marketing approach

It is still perceived by many that marketing is a functional activity and relates primarily to advertising, promotion or branding. In addition it is often thought within service industries and the countryside sector that marketing is about generating a profit and is not applicable to countryside recreation and public services. There are few marketing texts of particular reference to countryside sites; I find *Countryside Recreation Site Management, A Marketing Approach* by Ian Keirle (2002), to be the most useful.

The current definition of marketing, as used by the Chartered Institute of Marketing, is 30 years old and is "*the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably*".

In its November 2007 Journal, the Chartered Institute of Marketing's research and information department suggested a new definition of marketing: *The strategic business function that creates value by stimulating, facilitating and fulfilling customer demand. It does this by building brands, nurturing innovation, developing relationships, creating good customer service and communicating benefits. By operating customer-centrally, marketing brings positive return on investment, satisfies shareholders and stakeholders from business and the community, and contributes to positive behavioural change*

and a sustainable business future.

So how does marketing relate to the project development of a £6m new interpretation facility on England's only natural World Heritage Site, the Jurassic Coast? And is the proposed new definition of marketing applicable to this project? Over the next few paragraphs I hope to explain why I think it is!

Customer demand

The first issue to consider is who are the customers. What is particularly distinct about the Durlston Project is the variety of customer groups that have an interest and involvement in the success of the project. The marketing technique of segmentation is widespread and used by the providers of a wide range of products and services. Market segmentation is defined as the subdividing of the market into distinct and increasingly homogeneous subgroups of customers, where any subgroup can be selected as a target market to be met with a distinct marketing mix. For the Durlston Project this process of segmentation can be applied not only to users of the Country Park but also to the broad base of stakeholders who have an interest in the project. This creates a great variety of customers to whom a different approach or marketing mix needs to be applied.

The range of customers with particular needs or demands includes:

- The site owner - Dorset County Council (DCC)
- Site managers - Dorset Countryside
- Supporters - Friends of Durlston
- Users - locals and visitors
- Local community - Swanage Town and Community
- Partnership, Swanage Town Council, businesses (accommodation, suppliers, transport, creative industries)
- Local authority - Purbeck District Council
- Funders - including: HLF, SWRDA, DCC, Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT), charitable foundations, businesses
- Partners - DWT, World Heritage Team, Jurassic Coast Trust
- Other interested bodies - Dorset and New Forest Tourism Partnership, Dorset AONB, Dorset Gardens Trust, English Heritage, Natural England

Before the particular approach or marketing mix can be determined there is a need to understand the situation and the needs of the customer.

In 2003 detailed on and off-site survey work was undertaken by the Market Research Group from Bournemouth University, this research used face-to-face questionnaires to Durlston visitors establishing their demographics and asking their views about current provision and ideas for the future. The same interviewing technique was used in the local towns of Swanage, Dorchester, Weymouth and Poole to establish their awareness of and visiting patterns to Durlston and their general preferences for visits to countryside sites. This research has proved invaluable to support funding applications, generate

economic impact assessment and shape design solutions. With the launch of the Project publicly in 2004 a stakeholder meeting was held in the to be opened Lookout café, this provided the opportunity for informal discussion.

As well as this initial research, opportunities existed for continual feedback from visitors. The Lookout café had on each table a feedback form that customers could complete to give both their satisfaction on the café and their comments on the proposed Durlston Project. During the first two years of the café operation over 500 feedback forms were received.

The 'value' achieved by the Durlston Project can be considered in terms of ongoing and future user support but importantly at this stage of the project the buy-in from capital funders. The success of the project relies on a wide range of funding from individual donations, foundations, trusts and businesses to major contributions from organisations such as SWRDA, DCC and the HLF. The principal funder identified for the project was HLF. Early discussions were held with development officers and a Project Planning Grant (PPG) application for £50,000 for funding towards conservation, audience development, access and interpretation studies was awarded early in 2004. The success of this bid, although not a guarantee of future HLF support, was encouraging.

After successful completion of the PPG work there was further discussion with HLF officers regarding the scale of the bid and the scope of the work, this led to the project being reduced in cost from £7.8m to £5.8m. In April 2006 a bid for £3.27m was submitted to HLF for development and capital funding, a stage one pass was received in December 2006.

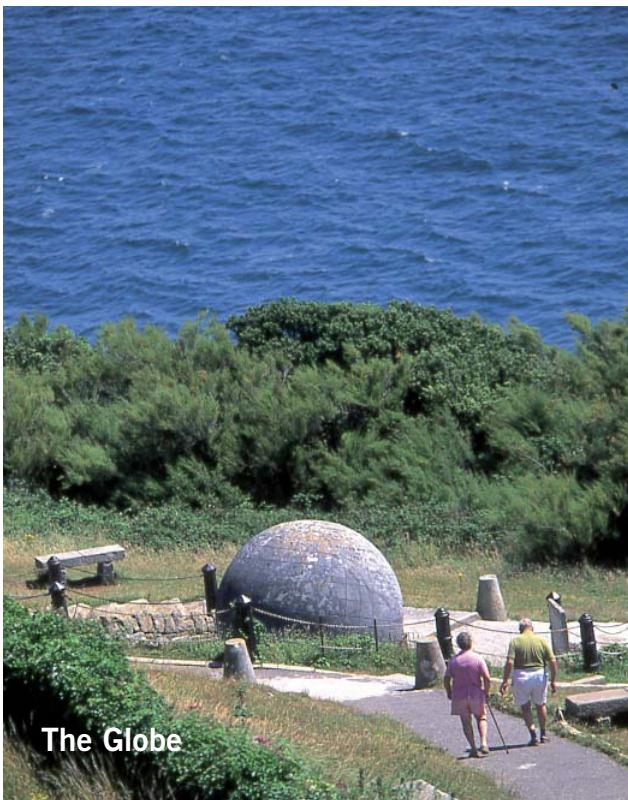
It is important to remember that funders are in the business of giving their money away, that is their remit and goal. However they will only want to give money to projects that best meet their needs. Although projects shouldn't be changed to meet a funder's requirements, most major funders have properly researched and considered objectives e.g. to improve access, so these needs must be considered throughout the process of project development.

Building brands

A number of initiatives were undertaken between 2004 and 2006, designed to showcase the new activities that Durlston could offer. Arguably the most important, considering the importance of catering for the future economic viability of the Castle, was the opening of the Lookout café in the Castle's lower annexe. The Castle's reputation for catering had been variable during its 30-year history as a pub and restaurant so to change the public's perception of the Castle it was essential that this initial catering operation was successful. With a focus on local produce, fairtrade supplies and a strong environmental awareness the café's success has grown since it opened in 2004. In 2005 the café won the Taste of the West Silver award in the tea room/café category in Dorset, in 2006 it topped that



with a Gold Award and entry into the regional finals. Other activities at Durlston have included arts events (including open-air theatre) and the 'Dawn to Dusk' open day that attracted 3000 people.



Nurturing innovation

Due to the complex nature and individual circumstances of any development project it is difficult to find a project management tool that is applicable to any one project without being cumbersome and catch all in its approach. What can often be more suitable is a bespoke plan based on a strategic approach, it was this approach that was developed for Durlston, i.e. a structured approach that set out a forward strategy but one that still allowed flexibility for changing circumstances and new opportunities.

As part of the forward planning process it's important to know what problems might be encountered early on in the process and then consider how these could be mitigated or overcome in the future through the project's development.

Durlston Castle's use as a pub by a private operator caused years of problems for Country Park staff and for residents on the exit roads, so support for appropriate redevelopment of the Castle was strong. But Durlston is in an area of Dorset much affected by traffic congestion; it has limited public transport links and can only be accessed by car through the seaside town of Swanage. The potential transport problems associated

with the redeveloped castle were of concern to local people, planning authorities and funders. In response to these concerns a 28-day trial was launched in 2005 to demonstrate the possible effectiveness of a frequent shuttle bus service from Swanage to Durlston. The service was free, although donations were welcome, and a total of 2,500 people were carried. The shuttle also linked to an on-site four-seater 'golf buggy' that provided a service along the steep hill between the Lookout café, car parks and Visitor Centre. Both of these proposals have been incorporated into the plans for Durlston and will be further developed as part of a detailed Travel Plan to be produced for the site before the Castle opens.

Developing relationships

As well as gaining the views of current users and non-users it was essential to gain the support of a whole range of organisations. With a project that will take seven years to completion it was important to take a long-term view and during the initial stages regular meetings with key stakeholders were held. Stakeholders were given a tour of the Castle, project presentation or cliff top walk to show them the future role of the Castle and Durlston. As the project progresses it will remain paramount that all those involved feel that progress is being made and that the proposed operation will be successful.

In such a long-term project the internal relationships between the project team and its associates are vital. A project such as this is not achieved by one person, but by a group of complementary people working together to a shared vision. What's important is that the right people make the right decisions at the right time and that they are committed to the project's success. External consultants and advisory staff worked with the existing Durlston staff and the Friends of Durlston, an organisation now in its twentieth year with 700 members, a significant number of whom provide invaluable volunteer work on the Park. These volunteers have aided the project through professional input, fundraising, research and practical work.

Creating good customer service

There has been a lot of talk over the last few years about CRM or Customer Relationship Marketing. Various different thoughts exist as to what this is, ranging from detailed and accurate database and purchase recording systems, to the importance of excellent customer service. My view is that accurate records and systems of communication support and re-enforce the messages communicated through one-to-one relationships. The strength of Durlston is the knowledge and commitment of its staff and volunteers, with their customer skills expressed through the Visitor Centre and guided events. As part of the development of the project this will be expanded through the training of volunteers to be 'live interpreters' positioned at strategic positions around the Park such as the Castle rooftop observation deck where they can provide 'real-time' interpretation to visitors.

Communicating benefits

It was important that as the project developed people were kept up to date with progress (which to many was seen as painfully slow) and to have the opportunity for further comment and input. In addition to regular media releases to cover new events or the achievement of milestones a variety of other communication methods were used. Update seminars were held and supporters received a quarterly Project Update newsletter. Friends of Durlston were kept informed through their monthly newsletter and through regular on-site meetings and presentations. Part of the Lookout café was set out as a display on the Castle and its history with a separate display on the Jurassic Coast World Heritage site. Within the local free magazine a full page on Durlston was agreed with a linked advert for the Lookout, this provided a confirmed and regular slot for project news. Being part of Dorset County Council enabled Durlston to be featured regularly in the quarterly Council publication Your Dorset, which is distributed to homes across Dorset.

Conclusion

The November 2007 Institute of Marketing definition is not as pithy as the original 30-year-old definition but it does provide clear guidance in one paragraph about what marketing is really about. Hopefully the illustrated case study above provides an insight into how a marketing process can relate to project management by:

Building a brand, helping develop innovation, developing beneficial relationships, creating good customer service and communicating benefits.

The Durlston Project by operating customer-centrally, has brought a positive return on the County Council's investment with over £4.5m in funding, helps to meet the authorities Corporate Aims, has provided satisfied stakeholders from across a range of organisations and has now set in place the foundations for positive behavioural change and a sustainable business future for Durlston Castle.

There are many challenges ahead for the Project but through continuing this marketing-led approach the development of a remarkable facility and 'world-class' venue are achievable.

Profile

Martin worked as Durlston project manager between 2004 and 2006, a role that included submitting the successful £3.2m HLF stage one bid. Since August 2006 he has worked as project management consultant on the Project for Dorset County Council through his own business Heritage & Leisure Management www.heritageandleisure.co.uk

Further information

Durlston Country Park www.durlston.co.uk

Jurassic Coast www.jurassiccoast.com

The Jurassic Coast Trust www.whct.org.uk

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Tilly Whim Caves



Agency Profile

Each issue of *Countryside Recreation* will profile a relevant agency/organisation.

National Trails Office, Irish Sports Council

Cormac MacDonnell, Programme Executive, National Trails Office



The National Trails Office is a new and exciting programme run by the Irish Sports Council to coordinate recreational trail development in Ireland and encourage more people to become active in the great outdoors.

The National Trails Office was established in 2007 to co-ordinate and drive the implementation of an Irish Trails Strategy which units all agencies and organisations with an interest in recreational trail development in Ireland in one mission - ***the development of a world class recreational trail network that is sustainable, integrated, well utilised and highly regarded, contributing to the better health and wellbeing of all Irish citizens and attracting visitors from around the world.***

The National Trails Office works under the direction of a National Trails Advisory Committee (NTAC) which is made up of all the main organisations involved with trail development in Ireland including a number of Government Departments, State and

Semi State bodies and a number of non-governmental / representative bodies.

Recreational trails come in many different forms in Ireland today, from the familiar waymarked walking routes to health focused Sli na Sláinte routes, urban greenways, canal towpaths and forest trails. Ireland's network of trails spans its twenty six counties and provides a much needed means to exercise, relaxation and enjoyment for the entire population. It is now well recognised that exercise in the outdoors contributes to social, mental and physical health in children and adults of all ages, abilities and fitness levels.



Enormous potential exists for new trail offerings in both rural and urban settings throughout the country and the demand for more areas to walk, cycle, horse ride or paddle is increasing at a significant rate. The challenge for the trail development community in Ireland and the National Trails Office is to try to meet this demand in a sustainable way.

The role of the National Trails Office in this regard is to:

- inform trail policy at National level
- guide, facilitate and monitor the planning, provision and maintenance of trails at local (county) and regional levels
- develop a strategic national trails development plan
- establish a classification system for Irish trails and agree/monitor trail standards
- provide a technical advisory service on all new trail development projects, insuring compliance with recommended standards
- coordinate a trail quality assurance programme
- maintain an up to date register of all approved trail developments
- coordinate trail education & training for the Irish trail community
- carry out research to assist the development of trails in Ireland
- increase awareness about Irish trails and the range of activities and pursuits that

can be undertaken on trails.

The principles of partnerships, sustainable development, joined up thinking and forward planning define the work of the NTO and the reaction and achievements to date from the programme have been encouraging.

To find out more about the National Trails Office and its work on recreational trails in Ireland and the Irish Trails Strategy contact:

*Cormac MacDonnell
Programme Executive - National Trails Office,
Irish Sports Council
Top Floor, Block A
West End Office Park
Blanchardstown
IRELAND
Tel: 00353 1 860 8823.
Email: cmacdonnell@irishsportscouncil.ie*

*Cyclist photograph credited to Pat Callum
Walkers photograph credited to Failte Ireland*





News



COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION NETWORK

New jobs service for *Countryside Recreation* Readers

The Countryside Recreation Network is pleased to offer a new job vacancies listing on its website. The aim of this service to provide a current list of job vacancies relevant to countryside recreation and access professionals in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Please see below for details of how to advertise any relevant vacancies in this section:

Rate:

£200.00 per vacancy (Max. 1 A4 page).

Payment:

Once advertising arrangements have been confirmed, we will send you an invoice in the post. Once you receive the invoice, payment can be made by cheque, BACS or online via credit card.

Timescales:

Job adverts can be displayed for a maximum of 6 weeks. Please allow at least 2 days notice for jobs to be uploaded on to our website.

Volunteer Jobs:

These can be advertised free of charge.

If you are interested in advertising through the CRN website, please contact the CRN manager by email: crn@shu.ac.uk, or telephone 0114 2254494.

Current vacancies can be found by following the 'jobs' link from the CRN home page at
www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk

BIKE WEEK

'Free the Family' during bike week, 14-22 June 2008

Bike Week, the UK's biggest mass participation cycling event, is this year challenging families to get out of their cars, step away from the TV and get on their bikes. The call to action is 'Free the Family' and rediscover how much fun you can have together on a bike.

From Bristol to Belfast and Edinburgh to Eastbourne, thousands of free cycling events will provide the opportunity for everyone from total novices to passionate cyclists to get on their bikes. This year's focus on the family means there will be children's rides, free bike safety checks and advice on getting started.

Andre Curtis, Manager at Bike Week said; "*Plenty of parents have forgotten how much fun cycling was as a child. This year's Bike Week will help to revive those memories and encourage families to spend quality family time together, have fun and get fit at the same time. We hope that taking part in a Bike Week event will act as a catalyst for people to cycle more regularly and enjoy the long term benefits of a healthier lifestyle.*"

Why not join the 500,000 people who came along last year? To find out what is taking place in your local area, visit www.bikeweek.org.uk and enter your postcode. If you'd like to take part but don't have a bike - this shouldn't stop you - you can simply search for your nearest bike rental outlet on the website. All participants get the chance to win a Center Parcs family holiday - giving another reason to get on your bike!

For further information, or if you'd like to organise your own event, log on to www.bikeweek.org.uk or phone 0845 612 0661.

Five reasons to get on your bike:

Cyclists live on average at least two years longer than non-cyclists and their fitness levels are equivalent to being ten years younger - so forget nip and tuck, think pedal and push!

Cycling is the ultimate family activity; it's healthy, fun and encourages children to be independent.

Twenty minutes of gentle cycling burns up to 100 calories, so if you cycle to work, you'll be able to have that afternoon treat without feeling an inch of guilt!

Studies show that car drivers are exposed to five times as much polluted air than cyclists, making cycling good for the environment, as well as your health.

In a rush? Cycling is often much quicker than public transport or taking the car - even better, you won't spend a penny on public transport, road tax, parking, MOT or fuel.

The partners that run Bike Week are drawn from the whole cycling community including the cycle industry, Cycling England and Cycling Scotland, Sustrans, CTC and Cycle Campaign Network. More information can be found at www.bikeweek.org.uk

COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS AND ACTIVITIES NETWORK NORTHERN IRELAND (CAAN)

The work of Northern Ireland Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN) has been recognised by a number of prestigious awards.

WalkNI.com the definitive guide to walking in Northern Ireland has continued its meteoric rise by winning the BEST WEBSITE Category at the Northern Ireland Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) NEW PRide Excellence Awards 2007. In addition, the Lough Erne Canoe Trail has been announced as a finalist in the Waterways Renaissance Awards 2008, becoming the first Northern Irish based project ever to receive such recognition. The project has been nominated in the Innovation Category as it is the first Canoe Trail of its type in the United Kingdom.

The CIPR Gold award was presented at a dazzling awards ceremony held in the Europa Hotel, Belfast. In Northern Ireland there were 99 entries, in which 56 were short listed to the final stage. The New PRide Awards is a showcase for the excellent PR work being carried out in Northern Ireland and the contribution this makes to business and society. "Having faced a rigorous judging process to come out on top is a tremendous achievement" stated Jennifer Maguire, Chair

of CIPR Northern Ireland.

The judges commented that the concept behind WalkNI.com was outstanding and well thought out making it easy for locals and tourists alike to use. Interesting features such as "suggest a walk" give added benefit to site visitors. Dr Caro-lynne Ferris (Director of CAAN) commented "We are extremely delighted to have won this award, especially as the website was developed within a restricted budget.

Thanks are due in particular to the small Marketing team of CAAN, Ross Webster (Phizz - the website's designer) and also Environment and Heritage Service and Northern Ireland Tourist Board for their funding support. Congratulations to everyone involved".

Visitors can not only access information on the best walking routes in Northern Ireland but also information on how to get to Northern Ireland, getting around Northern Ireland and accommodation.

So it is fingers crossed for the next awards ceremony to see if CAAN can keep their winning streak going. The winners of the Waterways Renaissance Awards will be announced at a prestigious awards ceremony and dinner, which will take place at the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester on Wednesday 12 March 2008. The event will be hosted by Jim Hancock, former BBC Political Editor and presenter of BBC News North West. The Waterways Renaissance Awards, run by The Waterways Trust and BURA (British Urban Regeneration Association), aim to recognise best practice in sustainable waterway regeneration and development throughout the UK.

The 50 km Lough Erne Canoe Trail stretches from Muckross on Lower Lough Erne to Crom in Upper Lough Erne. Launched in May 2005, the trail has gone from strength to strength attracting avid canoeists from all over the world. "The trail is a fantastic concept as it creates a novel way of joining together all the excellent facilities and attractions we have on the Lough shore, it has provided us with a excellent activity tourism product to promote Fermanagh throughout Europe" stated Tanya Cathcart, Marketing Manager, Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism.

The Canoe Trail was developed by the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN) for Northern Ireland and the Canoe Association of Northern Ireland with financial support from Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Inland Waterways Division), Environment and Heritage Service, Fermanagh District Council and the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. The project also received support from The National Trust and Waterways Ireland.

"Canoeing is a great way to enjoy the unspoilt beauty of Lough Erne, where else could you see beautiful sites such as Devenish Island, the Crom Estate and have the ability to paddle around a whole town (Enniskillen) all on one trail"



enthused Chris Scott, Marketing Officer, CAAN. The Lough Erne trail has acted as a template for four other Canoe Trails in Northern Ireland. The Blackwater Canoe Trail was launched in November 2007 and Lower Bann in February 2008 with Lough Neagh and Strangford Lough coming on-line in 2008. More information is available on www.canoeni.com.

For further information please contact Chris Scott, Marketing Officer, CAAN on 02890 306940.

DEFRA

Marine Bill promises better protected seas

The draft Marine Bill published recently sets out radical plans for a new network of marine conservation zones around Britain's coast.

The nature reserves will have clear conservation objectives, to protect habitats and species of national importance, ensuring that some types of fishing, dredging or other forms of development do not damage them.

Environment Secretary, Hilary Benn said:

"Our seas are already showing the effects of climate change and with increasing use of the sea by many competing interests we must make sure that the marine environment can cope with changing conditions. We have a duty to look after our seas for future generations."

"Our proposals will raise protection and management of our seas to a new level, halting the decline in biodiversity to create clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas."

"For the first time in our history all of us will be able to walk the length of the coast and get close to the sea right around England."

The draft bill also includes new systems for managing and protecting our coastal and marine waters through:

- a new UK-wide marine planning system, which will enable us to set a clear direction for how we are going to manage our seas and make the best use of marine resources;
- simpler licensing of marine developments, for example, offshore wind farms; and
- improved management of marine and inland fisheries.

A new Marine Management Organisation, a centre of marine excellence, will be created to regulate development and activity at sea and enforce environmental protection laws.

Migratory and freshwater fisheries will benefit from modernised and more flexible powers. These will give the Environment Agency the tools to better manage fisheries for the benefit of anglers and commercial fishers.

Marine and Fisheries Minister, Jonathan Shaw said:

"The draft Marine Bill is a major step forward in marine protection and planning. It will benefit all who make a living from the sea by helping to get the most we can from it in a sustainable way while protecting precious resources."

For further information: the draft Marine Bill is online at www.defra.gov.uk/marine/index.htm.

Defra has also published a summary of planned and current conservation measures, Protecting our marine environment under the Marine Bill, online at www.defra.gov.uk/marine/index.htm.

ENERGY SAVING TRUST NORTHERN IRELAND

Energy saving 'Top Tips'

The Energy Saving Trust advice centre offers free comprehensive advice and support on energy efficiency, renewable energy technology and low carbon transport, helping you to save money, energy and the environment. The following top tips can help you save energy - and all of them are simple, inexpensive and easy and more importantly you can do your bit to help fight climate change.

1. Be switched on - take a free home energy check...

For a report on how much energy can be saved in your own home, fill out the Energy Saving Trust's free home energy check questionnaire online at www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/northernireland.

Alternatively you can obtain a paper version by calling on free phone 0800 512 012. You will receive a tailored report on your home highlighting the energy saving measures you could employ to save up to £250 a year on your household energy bills.

2. Switch off your appliances and lights when not in use both at home and in work.

3. Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows.

4. Don't leave appliances on standby and remember not to leave appliances on charge unnecessarily.

5.Turn your thermostat down. Reducing your room temperature by 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10%. You could save around £40 per year.

6.Ring the Energy Saving Trust advice centre on free phone 0800 512 012 to find out how you can claim £300 cash back for insulating your home. The cash back is available to homeowners across Northern Ireland.

For more information on saving energy in the home, renewable energy technology and low carbon transport log on to www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/northernireland or contact the advice centre on free phone 0800 512 012. The advice centre can also advise on the range of cash backs and grants available to householders in Northern Ireland.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Creating a better place to play

We have recently published this year's Conservation and Recreation Report detailing many of the projects we completed within the year. To find out what we're doing to create a better place near you - and how you can work with us please visit our website <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/recreation/1822271?version=1&language=e>

National Award for Regeneration Scheme

A £30 million regeneration scheme in North Lincolnshire involving the Environment Agency and spearheaded by the South Humber Bank Partnership has won a prestigious national award for excellence and innovation.

The partnership stood out against 150 regeneration schemes from all over the UK to receive the 2007 British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) Award for Best Practice in Regeneration, for a range of projects along the south bank of the Humber Estuary around Barton upon Humber.

The Partnership includes North Lincolnshire Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, English Heritage, Queen Street School Preservation Trust and the Waterside Artists' Co-operative. It has received valuable support from Yorkshire Forward and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Waterway Improvements

We have recently unveiled a record £13m works plan for our waterways. This will be spent on essential repairs and improvements to hundreds of navigational sites and structures along Environment Agency-managed rivers this winter.

Announcing the record level of spending for the 2007-2008 works programme, Julia Simpson, Head of Recreation, Navigation and Marine, said: "Our teams of engineers and divers are ready to get to work on a host of projects over the forthcoming months. "Thanks to enhanced funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), we have made great strides in tackling much-needed jobs, such as replacing old lock gates, on our waterways over the past two years".

A map of the works will be regularly updated once projects get underway and the latest version can be downloaded at www.visitthames.co.uk/winterworks

For the latest information about works in the Anglian Region and the River Medway, view our website www.environment-agency.gov.uk/navigation

Environment Agency summer floods review

In June and July 2007, there were several periods of extreme rainfall which gave rise to widespread flooding in England and Wales. We experienced the wettest May to July since 1766 when reliable records began. Approximately 49,000 households and nearly 7,000 businesses were flooded. Major infrastructure such as transport links, schools, power and water supplies were disrupted for a considerable time.

The flooding was caused by drains, river channels and flood defences being overwhelmed by extreme water flows following periods of heavy rainfall. This often happened very quickly and in these circumstances it proved very difficult to predict where flooding would occur.

A full report of the floods and subsequent recommendations can be found on <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/1867303/Website Award>

www.visitthames.co.uk

www.visitthames.co.uk has been voted the 'Tourism Website of the year' at the Tourism EXSEllence Awards 2007. The event, held on 23 October at the world famous Wentworth Club in Surrey recognises outstanding performers in the South East region.

Relaunched in April this year, the visitthames.co.uk website provides everything visitors need to make the most of the River Thames. The website was praised for its excellent content, design, and use of innovative technology. Following its success at the regional awards, the website is now entered into the national 'Enjoy England' awards to be held in April 2008.

The Environment Agency developed the website on behalf of the River Thames Alliance Marketing Partnership. This



public/private partnership is dedicated to promoting the River Thames from the source in the Cotswolds to the outskirts of London as a leisure destination.

NICE guidance uses Environment Agency project

Newly published guidance from the National Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence on Physical Activity and the Environment cites one of our partnership projects at Easington, Northumbria as a model of best practise. The research by Prof Jules Pretty looked at the health benefits of a number of projects including a partnership led by the Environment Agency working with Easington District Council, Durham Heritage Coast, National Trust and Easington Primary Care Trust and showed that people who previously took no or little exercise did use a new cliff-top path for exercise and relaxation and their mental and physical health did improve.

Use of the new path has been sustained by most of the initial participants and the number of people using it is increasing so our investment has made a significant and sustained improvement to the mental and physical health of local people in one of the most deprived wards in the country. This link will take you to the guidance

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=byID&o=11917>

Award nominations for inspiring Environment Agency schemes

Two exciting Environment Agency-led projects are just one step away from scooping national honours after reaching the finals of this year's prestigious Waterways Renaissance Awards.

The Clean Becks Campaign and Hemlington Lakes Angling Improvements Scheme (first phase), both Middlesbrough-based, outshone a host of entries to make the last stage of The Waterways Trust and British Urban Regeneration Association-run awards, which celebrate best practice in sustainable waterway regeneration and development.

The Clean Becks Campaign is one of two finalists in the Natural England-sponsored Natural Environment category, while Hemlington Lake is up against two other schemes in the Defra-backed Community section.

Both schemes are part of the Environment Agency's Tees Valley Project, an initiative aimed at making the environment a higher priority across the region and improving it for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

For more information about the Waterways Renaissance Awards contact: Justine Lee, Communications Manager, The Waterways Trust, Tel: 01452 318213 / 07917 804550/ Email: Justine.lee@thewaterwaystrust.org.uk

ESRC

ESRC / DEFRA RESEARCH CENTRE ON SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOURS - CALL AND BRIEFING EVENT.

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), together with the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly Government, the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Environment Agency, and other potential partners across the UK, are jointly working to establish an independent, multidisciplinary Research Centre on Sustainable Behaviours, to inform our understanding of the motivations and barriers to pro-environmental behaviours.

The Research Centre will focus on a number of essential, cross-cutting strategic areas of research, aiming to deepen understanding of the key factors that determine behaviours, including attitudes, lifestyles, values and beliefs. It is hoped that the Centre will research a range of environmental issues, such as transport behaviour, energy use and food consumption, rather than focusing on any one single area, and will undertake international collaborative and comparative work.

Defra, the ESRC and other funding partners held a public consultation in November/December 2007. The report on the consultation has been published on ESRC's website, and the final specification for the Centre has been informed by the outcome of this process.

A call for outline proposals for the Centre has now been published today on the ESRC website. Both the call, and the consultation report, can be found at:
<http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/sustainablebehaviours/>

The deadline for submitting outline proposals is 28th May 2008.

GREENSPACE

Prepare for Love Parks Week 2008!

Love Parks Week is a national campaign to raise awareness of the central role that parks and green spaces play in communities across Britain

The next Love Parks Week will take place between 14 - 22 June 2008 and we want you to help us put parks in the spotlight.

The website will be updated as the campaign develops so keep an eye open for more information and let's make Love Parks Week 2008 the biggest yet!

For Love Parks Week enquiries or partnership and

sponsorship enquiries please contact Jon Cornwell, Marketing Officer on 0118 946 9062 or email info@loveparksweek.org.uk

For general park enquiries, please contact:
GreenSpace. Caversham Court
Church Road. Reading, Berks, RG4 7AD
Tel: 0118 946 9060
Email: info@green-space.org.uk
Website: www.green-space.org.uk

NATIONAL TRUST

Valentine flowers flourish in Trust gardens

National Trust gardeners throughout Devon and Cornwall undertook the daunting task of counting the number of plants in bloom in the gardens, appropriately on St. Valentine's Day. With 3,335 plants counted the results show that spring had arrived even earlier in the far South West. This figure represents a 76% increase on the total number of flowers in bloom reported in 2007.

This year the highest count was made at Trengwainton - the Trust's most westerly garden in the UK - where 619 plants were in bloom on Valentines Day. This figure is more than three times the number recorded in 2006. Among the biggest increases discovered were at Lanhydrock, near Bodmin, where the number of flowering varieties increased by 203% from 185 in 2007 to 561 in 2008, and at Killerton, near Exeter, where the figures increased by 216% from 60 in 2007 to 190 in 2008.

Gardeners have been carrying out the count annually since 2006. As year-on-year records build it will provide a record of when spring arrives in the South West and if the timing of the season changes.

This year the gardeners have commented particularly on the abundance of camellias that are in bloom, forming spectacular displays in Trust gardens all over the two counties. At Killerton a Californian Hybrid Iris was found in flower well ahead of its usual April/May flowering time. At Saltram the Magnolia Stellata, usually in bloom at the end of March, were in bloom as were a number of Epidemiums, usually flowering in April, and Wild Garlic, which usually flowers with the Bluebells in May. They were even surprised to find Myrtle and Hydrangeas coming into flower, well ahead of their usual June flowering.

Barry Champion, Head Gardener at Trelissick, commented, 'We have counted 150 different varieties of Camellia in flower in the garden. They are particularly spectacular this year and visitors should take the opportunity to see them, as well as all the other beautiful blooms currently on display.'

For further press information contact Sophie Gaffney, press officer on 01793 817706 or email: sophie.gaffney@nationaltrust.org.uk.

RoSPA

Water recreation in safety spotlight

RoSPA's National Water Safety Congress on 3/4March considered the roles of education versus legislation in promoting the safe recreational use of the sea, lakes, rivers and canals in the UK.

The conference, took place in Bristol on Monday and Tuesday (March 3/4), and focused on the importance of people having access to water safety education and information throughout their lives so they are able to make informed choices about safety issues, including their behaviour, in and around water.

It also considered the role of regulation in reducing the number of people who drown accidentally in the UK. Peter Cardy, Chief Executive of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, will give the keynote address about striking a balance between education and legislation.

Peter Cornall, Head of Leisure Safety at RoSPA, called for the education system to provide young people with the opportunity to gain safety knowledge that will benefit them throughout their lives.

He said: "Young people need to be equipped to make and take independent action to protect themselves and participate in active lifestyles. For this to happen, we need to provide them with better skills than we currently do."

"We should be endeavouring to improve basic swimming ability, water safety knowledge and rescue skills."

"There is also a need for a proper debate about when safety is an individual's responsibility and when society has a role to play."

"The most recent figures show that 1.1 million children under the age of 16 go to hospital in the UK each year after accidents outside the home. We also know that around 40 children drown in the UK each year. Figures such as these show the need for young people to be equipped with an understanding of risk and how to deal with it. They need to be risk aware, not risk averse."

In the UK in 2005, 435 people, including 39 children, drowned accidentally. Nearly 200 of the tragedies are known to have happened in inland waters, such as lakes, rivers and canals; 80 around the coast; 37 in residential settings; 16 out at sea; and seven in swimming pools.



For further information on RoSPA's mission to save lives and reduce injuries, please visit their website:
<http://www.rospa.com/waterandleisuresafety/index.htm>

WOODLAND TRUST

Spring has sprung - but at what cost?

Spring has sprung in no uncertain fashion across the UK, with recordings flooding in from nature watchers to the Woodland Trust's Nature's Calendar seasonal survey. Frogspawn, tadpoles, nest-building birds, butterflies, catkins, celandines and snowdrops galore have all been spotted by the 50,000 people registered with Nature's Calendar – welcome signs of spring for many people but raising serious concerns over the long term impact of ever earlier seasonal activity.

Dr Kate Lewthwaite, the Trust's Nature's Calendar manager confirmed: "There are a lot of early sightings such as active ladybirds and butterflies out and about, including brimstone, holly blue, peacock and red admiral butterflies."

"We have had confirmation of frogspawn seen as early as December and even tadpoles hatched already," she said.

The natural world is giving us clear year-on-year indications that things are changing. The timing of natural events is one of the most responsive aspects of the natural world to warming, so it is an important indicator of change.

As such the Spring Index, which spans more than 100 years of data and focuses on four key species, now forms part of a suite of Government Biodiversity Indicators.

The last few years have thrown up mild springs," Kate explained. "Last year records between January and April made it the warmest spring since records began in 1659. January temperatures for this year are probably two degrees above the seasonal average, but until we have the complete spring picture it's too early to judge overall impact.

There are three main concerns thrown up by spring's continued advance. Species fooled by warmer weather into activity, blossoming or breeding are very vulnerable and can get caught out by the sort of freeze not uncommon in February.

Frogs will only breed once a year, for instance, so if their spawn does not survive, it's critical for the species.

It's also possible that food chains could start to break down. If some species adapt and change their habits, do the species they prey on do the same, or the species that prey on them? If birds nest and hatch their chicks earlier, is their normal food stock going to be available to them?

Another implication is what we might call competitive advantage. As the oak tree has started to leaf before ash, does that mean over time that oak will have a greater advantage by virtue of a stronger canopy? It certainly suggests the composition of our woods might change

Only by careful and ongoing recording can scientists judge the impact of what appears to be a changing spring, so we need all the information we can get from the public."

Specific sightings include:

Hazel flower (catkins): 200 submissions so far, the earliest on 9 December 2007 from the Isle of Wight, and from Lancashire in mid January.

Snowdrops: 615 submissions so far, beginning in Somerset in November last year, and now including Exeter, Ipswich, Coventry, Leicester and Yorkshire.

Frogspawn: 112 recordings starting from Penzance on 24 December 2007, and with renewed recording activity from 9 and 10 January, mostly in the south west of the UK.
First nest-building rooks: 43 submissions from 20 December 2007 to date, covering the south west, Oxfordshire and Surrey.

Seven-spot ladybirds: 47 recordings so far through January, starting in Staffordshire and Rugby and now across the south and midlands

Tadpoles: The first of four sightings to date was reported from 24 January in Devon

First nest-building blue tits: three sightings from the middle of January near Sutton Coldfield and London.

Newts: 17 observations so far from Cheshire in mid-January to Somerset, the south and the south west later in January.

For further information please contact Steve Marsh, PR Officer, The Woodland Trust Press Office on 01476 581121, email: media@woodland-trust.org.uk or visit their website: www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

CORRECTION/AMENDMENTS FROM AUTUMN/WINTER JOURNAL 2007

Free Range Teenagers: The Role of Wild Adventure in Young People's Lives

Apologies to Catharine Ward-Thompson for the misspelling of her name and apologies to all three authors, Catharine, Jenny Roe and Penny Travlou for typing and setting errors throughout the article.

Life's One Big Adventure

This article was written by Richard Godley, Peak District National Park Authority and Jane Bellamy, Adventure Network. Apologies to Jane Bellamy for omitting her name as co-author.

If you would like to submit a News item for the Summer 2008 Journal please email the Network Secretariat at crn@shu.ac.uk

Summary of CRN Seminars

Accessible Outdoor Environments for All: Shared Understanding"

21/11/07, Centre in the Park, Norfolk Park, Sheffield

This seminar attracted 45 delegates and was chaired by Glenn Millar from British Waterways and Countryside For All (CfAll) member. The seminar aimed to help redress the imbalance through exchanging ideas, sharing good practice and perhaps moving towards common approaches to information provision for people with disabilities. It focused on how to raise awareness of opportunities and how to give people information before their visit; and the provision of on-site information and interpretation.

The day included presentations from Lars Stenberg, Sensory Trust whose presentation focus was "Overview of information provision"; 3 rotating workshops with the following topics: "Information before the visit" facilitated by Phil Chambers, CEM Ltd; "Information at the recreation site" facilitated by Matthew Jones, Imagemakers and "Involving people with disabilities" facilitated by Robin Helby, Disabled Ramblers

The proceedings from these events are available to purchase from our website:
www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk/publications

Preparing for Climate Change in the Outdoor Recreation Sector

30/01/08, The Priory Rooms, Birmingham

This seminar attracted 29 delegates and was chaired by Andy Maginnis from Worcestershire County Council. The seminar aimed to increase attendee's knowledge of how climate change might affect their business, begin to formulate a plan for adapting to change and to gain support for implementing the plan within their organisation

The morning session included presentations from Dr Mark Broadmeadow, Forestry Commission whose presentation was on "*Climate Change and the Outdoors: implications and options for adaptation*". Several case studies from William Crookshank, Environment Agency on Coastal Issues; John Atkinson, The National Trust on Upland issues; and Richard Gunton, North York Moors National Park Authority on '*Preparing for Climate Change in the North York Moors*'.

The afternoon session consisted of 2 workshops on "*Scoping the impact on your operation*" and "*Preparing an action plan*" facilitated by Chris Gordon, Natural England and by John Watkins, CCW. The last presentation of the day presented by Georgina Combs, Futerra was on "*Communicating Climate Change*".

CRN EVENTS

Sustainable Leisure Travel
Thursday 25th September 2008
The Priory Rooms - Birmingham

For further information please contact
Kim Haigh
Acting Network Manager
Tel: 0114 225 4653
Email: k.haigh@shu.ac.uk
Website: www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk



Growing Up Outdoors



Countryside Recreation Network 40th Anniversary Conference

Date: Wednesday 3 December 2008

Venue: The Oval, Kennington, London. SE11 5SS

To celebrate our 40th Anniversary, the CRN presents a landmark conference to explore the benefits and the challenges in encouraging children and young people to experience and enjoy the outdoors.

The conference will have a UK and Ireland wide perspective.

The Conference will address a range of questions including:

Are young people today increasingly disengaged from their natural environment?

What will this mean for their personal development and for society?

Whose responsibility is it to remove the barriers which prevent young people from enjoying the outdoors through play, recreation, sport and adventure?

What do young people themselves want? Can we make a difference?

The conference will include sessions facilitated by:

British Waterways, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency,

Forestry Commission, Natural England, National Park Authorities,

Sports Council for Wales, The Children's Society, The National Trust.

Delegate rate: £175 (£150 for CRN member agencies)

To reserve your place at the event please email growingupoutdoors@shu.ac.uk
or visit our website www.countrysiderecreation.org.uk

For information on sponsorship opportunities, please email m.bull@shu.ac.uk



A Countryside Recreation Network Conference in association with



Countryside Recreation Network Publications List

	Price (incl.postage)	Tick
REPORTS		
A Countryside for Health and Wellbeing: The Physical and Mental Health Benefits of Green Exercise (2005)	£20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Exclusion in Countryside Leisure in the United Kingdom - the role of the countryside in addressing social exclusion (2001)	£10	<input type="checkbox"/>
CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS		
Removing Barriers; Creating Opportunities: Social Inclusion in the Countryside (2001)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing the Challenge of Access (2000)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the Honeypot Overflowing? (1998)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Access for All a Reality (1997)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Today's Thinking for Tomorrow's Countryside (1995)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communities in their Countryside (1994)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS		
Preparing for Climate Change in the Outdoor Recreation Sector (2008)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessible Outdoor Environments for All: Shared Understanding (2007)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Impact of Outdoor Recreation on Changing Social Behaviours (2007)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Changing Funding Environment for Outdoor Recreation (2007)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Branding the Outdoor Experience (2007)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activity Tourism: A Practical Approach (2007)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outdoor Recreation and Nature Conservation (2007)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Why? How? Who? Community Engagement in Countryside and Urban Greenspace Management (2007)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Young People in the Countryside (2006)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteering, Strategies and Practice for Engaging Volunteers in Countryside Recreation and Management (2006)	£15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activity Tourism: From Strategy to Delivery (2006)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrating the Economic Value of Countryside Recreation II (2006)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reasonable Access? (2005)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Question of Respect; Conservation and Countryside Recreation (2005)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Visitor Safety in the Countryside (2005)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
'And Your Evidence Is?' Evaluation Frameworks (2004)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Information and Wayfinding Needs (2004)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrating the Economic Value of Countryside Recreation (2004)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessible Greenspace (2003)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Country Parks II (2003) (Country Parks I & II can be purchased together for £20)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Country Parks I (2003)	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Rights of Way Improvement Plans (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funding for Social Projects (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opening Up Access In and Around Towns (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Payback Schemes (2002)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Access Forums (2001)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundraising and the Lottery (2001)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are We Getting There? Delivering Sustainable Transport in the Countryside (2000)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Breaking New Ground in Sustainable Tourism (2000)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using Local Distinctiveness as an Economic Development Tool (1999)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Just Walking the Dog (1999)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sponsorship (1998)	£8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making Ends Meet (1997)	£6	<input type="checkbox"/>

Title _____ First Name _____ Surname _____

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