

## Wanted: courageous managers

Interpretation is a people business. Communication between two human beings is at its core, a sharing of enthusiasm or a point of view. All the other functions that get loaded onto interpretation, such as encouraging people to behave in a particular way, or meeting management goals, are meaningless without this essential quality.

So with this issue we have looked at the people who work in interpretation in Scotland, and how they got there. Perhaps the most striking thing about the five profiles in the magazine is just what a motley crew they make: they started out as carpenters or zoologists, project managers or art history students. As Bob Jones argues on page 3, interpretation needs this range of background experience: to see it as a profession that can be taught as a stand-alone qualification is to miss the point.

Of course interpreters do need training. But how far can training go in delivering a set of skills before it must turn to developing what Susan Cross (page 5) calls 'creative courage'? Another, perhaps more fundamental, question is whether training is reaching the people who need it. A range of courses now caters for people working in direct contact with the public as guides, or coordinating projects as interpretation officers. What is lacking is an awareness of what interpretation means among designers and, crucially, among senior managers. They are the ones who really need to understand the role of creative courage as well as management goals. They also need to appreciate, as Graham Black argues on page 9, how all their staff can play a part in the people business.

*James Carter, editor*