

News, reviews and events

Interpretation advisory web site

SNH have launched an interpretation advisory web site, which contains basic guidance on key aspects of interpretation such as interpretive planning, producing interpretive panels and writing effective interpretation. You can access the site at www.snh.gov.uk or through the Interpret Scotland web site www.interpretscotland.org.uk

Scotching the Myth

Scotland's first national interpretation conference was a great success, with over 200 participants enjoying site visits, presentations, workshops, a trade show and the beautiful surroundings of the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh. The Scottish Interpretation Network, who organised the conference with support from Interpret Scotland, are keen to organise future events. If you would like to get involved, join SIN at www.scotinterpnet.org.uk

National Museum Audit

A national audit of museums and galleries has been carried out by the Scottish Museums Council (SMC). As the largest survey of its kind it covers over 12 million objects held in trust for the people of Scotland. A number of issues were examined including provisions for equal access. Here the findings show room for improvement:

- * Only 23% of museum organisations have carried out an access audit in the last five years
- * In most organisations less than 25% of staff have undertaken DDA training
- * Less than half of museum organisations, and less than a third of local authority organisations, have an access policy

Jane Ryder, SMC director, said "The importance of the results cannot be overestimated in demonstrating both the extent of our distributed national collection and the contribution the museum sector makes to our cultural, economic and social life."

The full report is available from the SMC, Tel 0131 229 7465.

Fancy a trip to the US?

Expressions of interest are sought for an interpretation study tour to the west coast of USA. This trip is being organised by Bill Taylor with assistance from Sam Ham. The trip is likely to take in such classic sites as Monterey Aquarium, Alcatraz, Yosemite, Mount St Helens and Mount Rainier. Timing sometime summer 2003: cost between £1,000-£1,500. Contact bftnet@bill20.freeserve.co.uk

Events

Hewn from the Living Rock

Interpret Scotland in association with British Geological Survey

10 October, Crathes Castle, Banchory, £50.00

Contact Lorna Brown, SNH, 01738 444177

Lively leaflets and perky panels

Losehill Hall / TellTale

11-12 November

Losehill Hall, Derbyshire

£290.00

Contact: Losehill Hall, Tel 01433 620373

WFTGA Convention 2003

10th World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations Convention

Sustainable Tourism

Dunblane, Scotland

26 - 31 January 2003

Hosted by the Scottish Tourist Guides Association

Tel 01786 451953 or www.stga.co.uk for details

Objects of Admiration: interpreting museum collections for the public

Scottish Museums Council

12 February 2003

£75.00 members / £97.00 non members

Contact: SMC Training, Tel 0131 467 8453

Writing effectively for your visitors

Scottish Museums Council

6 March 2003

£75.00 members / £97.00 non members

Contact: SMC Training, Tel 0131 467 8453

Publications

The Manual of Museum Exhibitions

Barry Lord and Gail Dexter Lord (2002) Altmira press

ISBN 0 7591 0234 1, 544pp, £33.95

This wide-ranging and comprehensive book explores all the key issues involved in developing museum exhibitions. It addresses both the philosophical basis for the function of museums and their exhibits, and an array of practical matters relating to the planning, design, construction, running and evaluating of exhibitions. There are chapters on project management, the curatorial process, equipment and facilities, interpretive planning, exhibition accessibility, scripting, and exhibition retail, amongst others. Much of the content is reinforced with a series of practical case studies from museums around the world.

This is a valuable book on a broad subject, with many useful insights into the 'bigger picture' of museum exhibitions. It is good to see a section dedicated to interpretive planning, although it presents a simplified planning model and uses terminology that most heritage interpreters would fail to recognise. Don't let this put you off though - if you want a single textbook about museum exhibitions, this is it.