

Members' News

March 2005

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Conservation, Recreation, Community Inclusion

**COUNTRYSIDE
MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION**

A New National Chair for CMA

Profile - Mike Woods

Mike is a committed countryside manager, with the imagination and drive to take countryside principles into the twenty first century and make them work. Mike has been with Buckinghamshire County Council for 13 years and currently leads their Countryside and Heritage Service. He has a breadth of experience under his belt, working for the Countryside Service of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council; as Warden of a field study centre in North Yorkshire; volunteering for the Flamborough Heritage Coast and the North York Moors National Park, and as a Deputy Warden/Chief Instructor at an outdoor pursuits centre in Scotland. He has been a member of CMA/ACR for over 20 years and sits on the Corporate/Senior Members Working Group.

A New National Secretary for CMA

'In my own words' Mike Anderson

I thought I'd start by telling you a secret. No, not that one! You see, I have a real passion for country parks. Big ones, little ones, old ones, young ones - I just can't get enough of them. But there's more to it than that. You see, I want to fix the 'broken' ones, which is probably why I became a volunteer Green Flag Judge. I don't mean to sound arrogant, although I can be a little autocratic... sometimes, but definitely ambitious all the time!

Like the majority of us, I count myself lucky that my personal interest is also my career. I have worked in country parks for the last ten years – for those of you who knew me at Seale-Hayne it really has been that long! I now work for Northamptonshire County Council as a Country Park Officer, frontline managing two parks. It is through one of my parks that I am part of the GreenSpace pilot study, looking at raising standards in country parks and this has also given me the opportunity to sit on the Country Parks Renaissance Delivery Group.

I'm proud to be giving some of my time to take up the role of Secretary of the National Executive. My intention is to help deliver a CMA that you all deserve. And if your country park needs fixing then I'm your man!

CMA Secretary – Mike Anderson (see contacts)

CMA offers a warm welcome to both Mike Woods, and Mike Anderson, and wishes them every success in their roles after their election into post at the Bradwell Abbey AGM of Sept 2004, reported on later in this edition.

E-Members' News.

Feedback from the last issue was nothing but positive for a digital MN. This edition is the first step in this move that will reduce CMA's printing costs, so that membership funds can be used for other purposes, such as organising better training events. If you do not receive this newsletter in e format, it means that CMA Admin does not have your email contact. Contact Heather Tarrant at cma@writtle.ac.uk if you would like Members News to be sent in future to your inbox instead of your postbox.

Marketing Group

Help make our voice heard!

CMA are looking for a volunteer

EDITOR

for their quarterly flagship magazine

“RANGER”

This is a unique opportunity to gain experience in editing a high quality magazine, respected nationally within the countryside management profession. Contact CMA's Head of Marketing, Roger Cole, for the job description, at thecolefamily@btinternet.com or phone 01245 441157 for an informal chat. Closing date 30th April 2005.

“The Thin Green Line”

The Thin Green Line is the newsletter of the International Ranger Federation. For those wishing to read more about the day-to-day issues of fellow Rangers around the world you can download the latest newsletter at <http://www.int-ranger.net/newsletter.html>.

The November 2004 edition includes news from Bolivia; Germany; South Africa; Scotland; USA; the Galapagos Islands and the UK. The next edition is due out in February.

There is also information on IRF's Ranger Relief Program aimed at providing materials e.g. surplus or redundant uniforms and equipment to fellow Rangers in less fortunate

situations. Help has already been given to Rangers in Ivory Coast (uniforms and equipment); Thailand (boots and rain gear); Cambodia (clothing and equipment). If you have anything to offer get in touch with the co-ordinator einar_olsen@nps.gov.uk.

IN BRIEF

CMA links up with Losehill Hall.

CMA and Losehill Hall Training Centre in the Peak District have forged closer working relationships. As a member you can now receive a discount on certain qualifying training courses. Losehill Hall will also be promoting CMA to relevant course attendees. CMA will be providing corporate membership benefits and leaflet mail-out facilities to Losehill Hall. This year, in addition to these practical arrangements, CMA will be hosting two key events at the Hall - the Corporate Members Seminar in April, and the Annual Seminar & AGM in September.

Annual Seminar and AGM – Thursday 29th & Friday 30th September 2005

The 2005 Annual Seminar and AGM is due to take place at Losehill Hall, Peak District; Derbyshire. The theme will be "Integrated Land Management". The guideline price is a bargain £100 for which members receive all their meals and overnight accommodation at Losehill Hall. A field visit is planned for the second day, relevant to the seminars' theme. Members also will have the option of extending their visit into the weekend, and bringing partners.

AHI Award 2005 invites entries

Run by the Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI), with sponsorship from English Heritage, the 2005 Interpret Britain & Ireland Awards recognise the very best examples of heritage interpretation. The Awards are open to projects that show imagination and innovation, combined with good interpretive planning, involvement of communities and staff, and a commitment to sustainability. Each year the Awards are presented by AHI's patron, heritage campaigner and television personality Loyd Grossman. If you think that you have a project that could gain an Award, details and entry forms are available on www.heritage-interpretation.org.uk, the AHI website, which also includes a useful directory of consultants and contractors. The closing date for entries is Wednesday 4 May 2005.

For further details contact Michael Glen on 01738 621996 or admin@heritage-interpretation.org.uk.

2005/2006 Membership Subscription.

Subscription renewal time is approaching. If you already pay by standing order, then your subscriptions will automatically be deducted in the first few days of April 2005. Please help to make sure that your order is for the up-to-date amount, taking into account subscription increases last year or any changes in your membership category. If you prefer to pay by cheque, you will be receiving an individual letter as normal, together with a request to consider using a standing order in the future. Standing Orders helps to reduce CMA's administrative costs, so why not consider it?

Richard Brooks; CMA Treasurer

Members Survey

CMA Marketing Group has been working on a 'Members Survey' to better understand your opinions on various aspects of your Association. This should be coming to you all in the spring so please keep an eye out for it and please respond, so that your CMA can better serve you.

Roger Cole - CMA Marketing Group

Your Patch

Flintshire Countryside Service – An Approach for the 21st Century

In 2002, our small but effective Countryside Service was given a rating of '2 star - good' by the Audit Commission. However, the Inspectors also concluded that FCS was unlikely to improve with our existing set-up, so they provided funding to appoint a consultant to look at what, if any, were the alternatives of delivery within Flintshire. Up to this point we were very much like any other Local Authority Ranger Service – trying to do the impossible with very little, and joking about how we had spent a debt-ridden, 3 years at college, just so that we could pick up litter and empty bins whilst the real conservation work took a back seat. Three years after the original inspection, we have now developed a new, cost-neutral structure. As we slowly evolve into it, the plan will mean that our urban parks and greenspace will be clean and safe, whilst our highly trained and experienced rangers will be put to better use.

We have created two distinct new teams within Flintshire Countryside Service. The Urban Parks team will be run by one of our senior staff with a team of semi-skilled staff to do the mundane yet vital work of litter picking, bin emptying, and maintenance, based at our key visitor centre at Wepre Park. The Countryside Unit team will be the more experienced rangers, who will carry out project management, SSSI work, and 'community enabling'. Without the 'litter' bogging the rangers down, they will be released to do what they're good at, thus giving Flintshire's residents much better value for money.

This process of restructuring and working out the detail is taking some time to complete. Obviously it's a big change for our existing staff and has to be undertaken fairly and with deliberation and consultation. Eventually, though, we'll have a Service that truly does reflect the needs of countryside management in the 21st century. If you are interested in what we're doing, we'd be only too happy to talk to you.

Tom Woodall - Chair Welsh Region (see contacts)

This is your opportunity to share what's going on in your area with your national colleagues. So go on! Put your pen to paper and send in to MN! Ed.

Bradwell Abbey, Milton Keynes 2004 Seminar & AGM Report

This years' Seminar & AGM, held in Milton Keynes, was designed with more than the usual business of an AGM in mind. It doubled up as a very effective briefing day for all those of us concerned about how the governments shake-up of it's Departments and Agencies (following the Haskin's report) will effect our daily working relationships.

Staff in the Countryside Agency, Defra, English Nature, and the Regional Development Agencies will all be directly affected when their own delivery mechanisms are streamlined and simplified into an 'Integrated Agency'. But what does that mean for the rest of us?

Dr Andy Clements, Director of Designated Sites for English Nature and involved in the consultation over the creation of the new Integrated Agency (IA), gave us a candid presentation that picked out the key principles of Haskins, and introduced the vision for the new IA. It seems now that the government are listening to what the general public feel is important – consultation has highlighted the fact that 'people value landscape rather than wildlife' and this is now one of the key building blocks of the Haskins-led changes.

Ellie Robertson, the National Trust's Assistant Director of Policy for Land-use and Environment, brought the practical concerns to the seminar, of realistic budgets and how the new IA would work in reality on the ground through its Regional Agencies. As a key consultee in the process - one of the largest single landowners and managers of our country's landscape – the National Trust has so far given support and optimism to the initiative, which if 'snagged' thoroughly, could bring us land managers into a closer, more meaningful relationship with the government's landscape decision makers.

Two workshops followed a hearty, tasty lunch, within which CMA members had open discussions about the reality of Haskins, and how it would affect them on the ground. Linked to the new 'bottom up' approach that the Regional Development Agencies could establish, the second workshop sparked off some insight-ful discussions around the question "How far is it reasonable to meet public expectations?" for land managers. The consensus of opinion seemed to be that, because we are driven by so many expectations (the government's, the general public's, our public and private funders, and our own employers) it's no wonder that there is a general lack of understanding of the purpose and achievements of our profession.

One member drew this nicely back to the importance and purpose of the CMA – 'no other organisation can blow our trumpet!' If we as professional land managers are to be taken seriously at a national and household level, CMA has a vital role to play in both marketing and consultation. And how effective CMA is at that depends on each one of us, and the time that we can make for it.

Thanks must go to all those that contributed towards the success of this year's event. And if you didn't manage to get a place this year, why not make a point of coming the 2005 Losehill Hall Seminar and AGM that promises to be every bit as worthwhile for CMA members?

Nic Sheerin, Editor MN

IRF 2006 Congress

CMA members have already been putting their names forward to act as volunteers or as "hosts" for job shadowing before, during or after the IRF 2006 Congress due to be held from 14th to 21st June 2006 in Stirling.
(<http://www.ranger-irfc.com/scotcover2006.htm>).

The organisers, Scottish Countryside Rangers Association (SCRA) are anxious to recruit more helpers from amongst CMA members to assist with any of the following tasks: session organisation; programme and speakers support; entertainment; accompanying persons programme; field trips; pre and post congress tours; sourcing funding; travel and visa; visual aids liaison; 'Help Desk'; accommodation; and job shadowing. If you would like to help, please contact Roger Cole (see contacts list below).

The **EUROPARC** Federation is inviting applications for funding to those parks starting Junior Ranger programmes for the first time in 2005. Successful applicants will receive a grant of €1,500 from the **EUROPARC** Federation. In addition in August, the **EUROPARC** Junior Ranger network will be holding the "3rd International **EUROPARC** Junior Ranger Camp 2005", hosted by the Bavarian Forest National Park. Participation will be open to those protected areas who run their own Junior Ranger programme in 2005. Expressions of interest to take part in this event are welcome with possible funding for 2 JR's & one Ranger. Please contact Roger Cole (thecolefamily@btinternet.com) in the first instance.

INFORM YOURSELF

In Praise of Peatlands

Peatlands are one of the largest terrestrial carbon reservoirs in the world. It is estimated that they contain 5,000 tonnes of carbon per hectare and absorb carbon from the air at 0.7 tonnes per hectare per year. This "locking-up" of carbon in peatlands, otherwise known as 'sequestration' (see article in RANGER Issue 70), is believed to be between 20 and 30 g C/m² per year.

We all understand that plant material does not decompose in the waterlogged, airless, acidic conditions of peatlands. The organic material builds up slowly as peat, resulting in a net transfer of carbon from the atmosphere into this carbon rich environment. The term 'carbon sink' thus explains the phenomena of CO² being tied up in a peatland ecosystem, where plant productivity exceeds plant decomposition..

Peatlands worldwide are now under threat from a variety of land-use practises and climate change. Many have been drained and ditches created to improve farming and forestry. There is also considerable damage to peatlands from overgrazing. The infamous extraction of peat for horticultural purposes has also taken its toll. Climate change poses yet another threat. Rising temperatures and increased precipitation will lead to peat bogs drying out through increased evaporation and erosion.

The concern is simple. All of these processes are combining to release carbon dioxide, once stored in the bog system, back into our atmosphere at an increasing rate.

Catherine Flitcroft is Research Manager of the 'Moors For The Future' Partnership

CMA Contacts list

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