

CMA Application Form

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS AND BLACK INK
ALL INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES

Title _____ Surname _____
Forenames _____
Home address (or address for correspondence)
Address _____ Town _____
County _____ Postcode _____
Telephone (H) _____ (W) _____ (Fax) _____
e-mail _____

Membership category applied for (tick one only)

Accredited Member Associate Member Affiliate Member

CORPORATE AND BUSINESS CATEGORIES

Contact name:

Title _____ Surname _____
Forenames _____
Home address (or address for correspondence)
Address _____ Town _____
County _____ Postcode _____
Telephone (H) _____ (W) _____ (Fax) _____
e-mail _____

Membership category applied for (tick one only)

Corporate Member Business Supporter

Number of employees or students that you estimate may wish to join in their own right (Corporate members only)

NB Please count volunteers as employees
The membership year is from 1st April-31st March

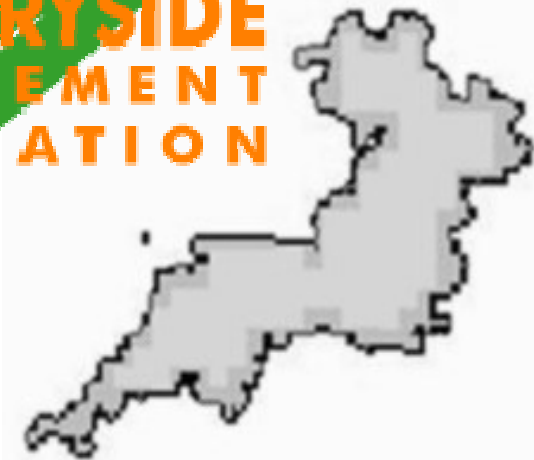
PLEASE RETURN TO WRITTLE COLLEGE (Details inside front cover)

Sou'wester

The newsletter for CMA members in the South West

www.countrysidemanagement.org.uk

**COUNTRYSIDE
MANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION**



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Regional Committee

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Membership Categories

Membership Categories:-

Accredited Member:

Open to individuals who have:

1. Satisfied relevant occupational standards at level 3 or above, or successfully completed the competence assessment form **and**
2. Experience in paid employment within the industry at an appropriate level for at least three years **and** a qualification at or above HND level

Subscription: £50 (if your employer is not a Corporate Member)
£40 (if your employer is a Corporate Member)

Associate Member:

Open to individuals working in the countryside or urban greenspace management (eligibility based upon job description)

Subscription: £30 (if your employer is not a Corporate Member)
£24 (if your employer is a Corporate Member)

Affiliate Member:

Open to anyone with an interest in countryside or urban greenspace management

Subscription: £30 (waged & not employed by a Corporate Member)
£24 (waged & employed by a Corporate Member)
£20 (unwaged and not employed by a Corporate Member)
£16 (unwaged and employed by a Corporate Member)

Corporate Member:

Open to employing organisations, training bodies and educational establishments

Subscription: Please contact Writtle College for details (contacts inside front cover)

About the CMA

The CMA is the largest organisation of its kind representing professionals engaged in countryside and urban greenspace management throughout England and Wales

Formed in 1966, CMA links professionals working in a range of environments from Urban and Country Parks to National Parks, Local and National Nature Reserves and other protected areas.

Members are employed in a variety of different roles from Rangers and Wardens to Project Officers, Rights of Way Officers and Ecologists and for a variety of organisations including Local Authorities, National Park Authorities, the Forestry Commission, National Trust, Wildlife Trusts, Water Authorities and Natural England.

CMA's diverse membership is linked by common themes such as conservation management, information and interpretation, environmental education, sustainability, social inclusion, recreation management and environmental protection.

CMA aims to:

- Be an effective and professional membership organisation offering a structure for continuing professional development.
- Promote professional and sustainable development of the countryside and urban greenspace.
- Inform the decision making process of organisations involved in the management of the countryside and urban greenspace.
- Provide information, training and authoritative comment on countryside and urban greenspace issues.

Dates for Your Diary

See www.countryside-management.org.uk for an up to date list

26th February 2008, Study Day - North Dartmoor, meet 10.30am Meldon Reservoir Car Park GR 561 917.
Booking ibrooker@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk or phone 07720 509273

31st March 2008 Dead line the Next Issue of the Sou'wester.

28th April 2008, Ancient woodland, nightingales, deer and dormice, Bradfield Woods, Suffolk, **Booking** Ben Calvesbert 01394388431 ben.calvesbert@hotmail.co.uk

31st July 2008 World Ranger Day.

March 2009 date TBC, 6th International Ranger Federation World Conference, Bolivia.

The following are day courses run by the Westcountry Rivers Trust. They cost £30 for Westcountry Rivers Trust members and £40 for non-members. Membership of the Trust is £24 per year and details can be found on the website. Paid up CMA members will receive a 25% discount to the Trust's membership scheme (please contact laurence@wrt.org.uk for details) Courses are normally run at Duchy College, Cornwall. Booking via www.wrt.org.uk.

13th February 2008, Riparian management
19th March 2008, Pond design, management and creation
16th April 2008, Riparian management
14th May 2008, Pond design, management and creation

Check our website for the latest courses (www.wrt.org.uk) or look out for the Westcountry Rivers Trust Article in the Next Issue of the Sou'Wester.

Chair's Report

Happy New Year to you all. I hope everyone had a really good Christmas and New Year eating and drinking plenty. I for one was lucky enough to have a couple of weeks off over Christmas hence I really made the most of it.

Well since the last issue of the Sou'wester we have some new editions to the South West Region Committee. I'll run through them quickly but please look out for articles in this and future issues of the Sou'wester where they will introduce themselves. **Tim Bailey** replaces Sarah Gibbs as Gloucestershire County Representative. **Jenny Heskett** has filled the vacancy of Cornwall County Representative and **Andrew Davis** has joined us as the new Somerset County Representative. **Ian Brooker** has also joined the Committee to provide an essential link for our regional members to the International Community of Countryside Management. Ian has a wealth of knowledge, experience and contacts on this issue so if your thinking of going to an international event or would like some contacts/ideas/advice on setting up an exchange then please contact Ian.

This is the first time in many years that we have had a full South West Regional Committee and it means we can provide you with so much more. These are voluntary positions that are supported by our employers so time can be tight, however with a full committee organising and carrying out study days, training events and the AGM is so much easier. Since August



Imagine the costs of the problems, and look at the savings generated by the solution...it is a win/win situation with no-one losing out...food for thought.

Over the decade it has been in existence, it has delivered:

- 1800+ farmers & landowners given advice
- 1400+ Integrated Land & River Management Plans
- 200 km+ vulnerable riverbank fenced
- 16 wetlands restored/improved
- 74+ km ditches prioritised for re-vegetation
- 400+ sites of accelerated erosion controlled
- 450 demonstration sites developed and operational
- 180+ sites of habitat improvement
- 50+ buffer zones created

In 2005 the Trust went through changes as the Directorship transferred to Dr Dylan Bright who, together with the Trusts financial director Lynne Hyland, have furthered the long term sustainability of the Trust by increasing core funding through expansion of Tamar Consulting, improving the Trust's membership scheme and encouraging bid writing in all staff.

The Trust now employs almost 17 people, rents its own offices in Launceston, delivers around £1 million worth of work every year, and comes into contact with many thousands of people every year. All this combines to make it an organisation with a passion for water and nature, and the determination to deliver its brief and provide courses and conferences to disseminate its findings.

Dr Laurence Couldrick
Project Manager - Higher Education

Westcountry Rivers Trust, 10 Exeter Street, Launceston, PL15 9EQ

Tel: 0870 774 0694

Web: www.wrt.org.uk

Email: laurence@wrt.org.uk

Registered Charity No.: 1045806

catchment where people swim and surf. They suffer from effects of bacteria etc in the water and tourism reduces. This has a knock on effect on the local economy.

5. Wetland being drained for farming means that water rushes through the river faster, as there is no stabilising effect and gradual release any longer. This leads to flooding in the city costing millions of pounds in insurance and requiring flood defence works. All of this is a problem because the headwaters of the river have been abused.

Until recently Farmers have farmed intensively because the Common Agricultural Policy was tied to production, however this situation has been changed and farm subsidies are now directed towards environmental benefit and have been decoupled with production. It is still to be seen how much of an effect this political move will have over the management of the countryside and the quality and quantity of the water running into our rivers. The Westcountry Rivers Trust believed there are still a lot of environmental and management changes that need to happen which could have a massive benefit for the rivers. This is where the Ecosystem Approach comes into play.

1. Create buffer zones along rivers for wildlife, grasses and trees
2. Re-flood wetlands to create bird friendly zones and water carrying capacity.

These 2 simple actions, taken at the appropriate level result in the removal of all the issues listed above. They may not repair the damage done, although they will certainly help, but they will prevent further damage. They will result in an improved and protected environment, reduced flooding, reduced dredging, increased wildlife and biodiversity, improved summer and winter flows, improved fisheries and economic enhancement of river and a nicer landscape with more varied crops and cover.

Chair's Report

last year we have provided six such events that were well attended. Thank you to everyone who made the effort to provide and support these events. **Thanks are also due to Dave Ellacott** who put on the showing of The Thin Green Line and raised **£50 that will go towards supporting Ranger families who have lost their loved ones, for more information please see www.thingreenline.info**

The year ahead is going to be an exciting one as we are going to be hosting the National AGM, our usual Regional AGM and a number of training/study days, one such day will be in April when we will be hosting a study day and an opportunity for South West Members to meet the National Council please do try and attend this event. I will send out a date as soon as I know. Please support as many of these events as you can and bid for them ASAP in your staff review and development session with your employer. Dates will follow shortly so please keep an eye on the website. I know we have many passionate individuals working in countryside management and we are always pushed for time. I know people who read this magazine and feel guilty because they have not attended a training event, please do not! I see the names on the membership list and know that we have your support and know that you will promote the CMA to non members/employers. Thank you for your support, please keep it up.

As ever if any of you would like any advice or assistance with anything to do with Countryside Management or would like to request or host a training event then please get in touch with either myself or one of the Committee.

I hope you all have a happy and prosperous 2008.

Richard

Richard Eales

Regional Chairman – 07973 727473

Countryside Management Association

Introducing.....

Hello, I'm Jenny CMA rep for Cornwall.

I joined CMA in 1998 just before I finished my studies at Wye College in Kent, I think the main motive at the time was it would look good on my CV.

Since leaving college I have worked and volunteered mainly in Devon for the National Trust and in East Cornwall for the County Council (with a 6 month stint for Bucks CC).

I didn't really use my CMA membership and was all set to let it lapse about 5 years ago whilst I was working for the National Trust on the South Devon Coast. I got a phone call for the then Devon Rep Emma Townsend who persuaded me to stay. I made a decision then to use my membership for more than the magazine and a line on my CV. **I have made a point of going on at least one training day or the regional AGM each year and they are great!** The courses have all been well run and good fun (often good grub too) and really good for networking too!

So if you have never been on a CMA event get off you behind and come and see us (were not that odd or scary honest), even if the event doesn't seem that relevant to you, talking with the other people there will be.

I have been in my current job for 3 years working on sites and trails owned by Cornwall County Council in East Cornwall. Most of my time is spent on Kit Hill near Callington juggling people, archaeology and heathland management. Over the next few months most of my time will be spent chopping and burning Gorse bushes and Rowan trees or playing hunt the Dartmoor pony.

7. Decision-makers should be guided by appropriate tools from science
8. Ecosystem manager should act with caution
9. A multi-disciplinary approach is needed
10. Ecosystem managers need to think globally but act locally

An example of using the Ecosystem Approach to deal with conservation issues is shown below:

Imagine a river which rises in a rural catchment, which has been farmed for centuries. The river flows through pasture, then woods, then through a conurbation until it reaches a city where it widens substantially. Eventually it flows through the city and back in the countryside, before exiting into the sea at a popular tourist spot.

The above scenario could give rise to a number of issues:

1. Intensification of farming leading to increased nutrient leaching, making water abstracted for human consumption expensive to treat, increasing costs of water companies treatment works, resulting in higher water bills.



2. Increased stock numbers leading to greater poaching of ground and increased sedimentation. This reduces fish spawning habitat, resulting in less fish. As fishing deteriorates, so does capital value of river/fishery resulting in less investment.

Less investment results in less care and attention for the river, and less interest in its well being....this is a vicious circle.

3. Sedimentation eventually arrives in estuary where it blocks shipping channels. This has to be dredged, which is expensive and very damaging to the environment, and is usually then dumped at sea...destroying a pristine marine environment.

4. Chemicals from headwaters flow through city, into coastal

The Westcountry Rivers Trust

The Westcountry Rivers Trust is an environmental charity established in 1995 to secure the **preservation, protection, development and improvement of the rivers, streams, watercourses and water impoundments in the Westcountry** and to advance the education of the public in the management of water.

A cornerstone of the Trusts philosophy is working in partnership with external individuals and organisations to share expertise and facilitate better information transfer. By collaborating with a whole range of stakeholders - ranging from individual businesses through to academic institutions, NGOs and government departments - the Trust aims to circumvent sectoral interests and encourages joint solutions to the complex environmental problems our society currently faces.

The Trust operates the Ecosystem Approach, which was **designed by the IUCN**. This approach allows us to implement environmental change at the appropriate level and means that rather than forcing our will on individuals and communities, we empower them to taken ownership, and thus responsibility for the work, thus creating sustainable change.

The principles of the Ecosystem Approach are:

1. Management objectives are a matter of social choice
2. Ecosystems must be managed in a human context
3. Ecosystems must be managed within natural limits
4. Management must recognise that change is inevitable
5. Ecosystem management must be undertaken at the appropriate level
6. Ecosystem management must seek to maintain or enhance ecosystem character and functioning at an appropriate level for social choice

...The New Cornwall Rep

Outside work my two passions are my collie cross' Prince and Jay who are also Kit Hill Canine Relations Officers. If I'm not with them then I am usually in my open canoe or sea kayak exploring the coast and estuaries.

Happy Christmas and Merry New Year to all and I hope to meet some more of you soon.

Jenny Heskett
Countryside Warden
Cornwall County Council
Kit Hill Country Park



Orchards past, present and future (Training day write up)

CMA South West Region: Orchards past, present and future

Herefordshire County Council's traditional orchard at Bodenham Lake Nature Reserve provided an ideal location on a sunny day in September for the CMA South West region's orchard training day.

Dave Marshall, a chartered accountant and **Bulmers Financial Manager for 13 years**, opened the event with a fascinating description of the economic benefits of traditional orchards.

He explained that the triple bottom-line accounting method – quantifying the broader economic, social and environmental benefits of an orchard – gives a much better indication of the true value of traditional orchards than the value of the harvested apples and pears alone. **The high biodiversity of Herefordshire's 3000 orchards is a highlight of the county, and has been recognised by the inclusion of traditional orchards in Herefordshire's Biodiversity Action Plan.**

Chris Fairs of Bulmers gave the group a detailed demonstration and explanation of the art of pruning orchard trees so that they produce abundant fruit but escape the attention of grazing animals.

The science of applying for Higher Level Stewardship grants was then demystified by Geoff Newman of Natural England, and James Bisset of Herefordshire County Council described the Fruit Tree Initiative run by the council to encourage planting of old fruit varieties in Herefordshire's orchards and gardens.

The afternoon was spent in the converted hop kilns where Tom Oliver produces ciders and perries from unsprayed vintage cider

problems that you may be encountering so why not send in an article about things that effect you in your work?

Ian Brooker Senior Ranger Dartmoor National Park Authority
ibrooker@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk

CMA Study Day

North Dartmoor

Tuesday 26th February

Meeting 10.30am

Meldon Reservoir Car Park GR 561 917

There are toilets in the car park but no other shelter so please come prepared for a walking guided tour of the area which will include discussions on access agreements, woodland management, pied flycatcher and dormouse surveys, the National Cycle Route and proposed new cycle routes, military use, visitor management and work with a parish council, industrial archaeology and anything else that I can think up for the day!

Some of the route will be weather dependant but the emphasis is not on a route march but more on plenty of stopping and talking whilst hopefully enjoying what this area of Dartmoor has to offer!!

Approx finish time will be about 4pm but this can be changed according to the wishes of the group.

Please bring your own food for the day and wear appropriate clothing.

We can retire to a local hostelry for a farewell drink if anyone wishes to stay on for a while!

Please e-mail your host Ian at ibrooker@dartmoor-npa.gov.uk or phone 07720 509273 to let him know if you are coming or if you would like any further information.

He will go with one or twenty one so even up to the day before you can still book on!!

missing including poor way-marking, and a non circular route. Little had been done to monitor route usage and some of the interpretation panels had only just been replaced.

Benefits of the seminar!

The benefits to the Romanian Ranger Service of hosting this event cannot be over emphasised. Romania is a country where nature-based tourism and conservation in general is relatively new and is politically very complex. TV coverage added to the benefits and in addition helped to bring kudos to the park. There is a real pride in the work done by the Ranger service here, they are totally committed and it was easy for us to forget just what difficult circumstances they are up against. This in itself was refreshing to see and reminded us all of how our problems and issues in our home areas may not be quite so bad in comparison.

Personally, I think that the opportunity to meet colleagues from various parts of Europe is always of benefit. It still surprises me that although places can be very different, the problems and issues can be very similar and its good to be able to share knowledge and experience and to know that others go through the same challenges as we do in our own parks and protected landscapes.

It is also a great opportunity to recharge the batteries and to return home to our own areas with renewed interest and enthusiasm.

2008 European Seminar!

Thanks to the enthusiasm shown at this seminar, it seems likely that the Hungarians will be hosting a similar experience next year so keep your eyes open for information soon. And don't forget the next **World Ranger Congress in March 2009** which will be held in Bolivia, so go on, get involved!!

Keep informed

Why not look up the International Ranger Federation website www.int-ranger.net and click on the newsletter at the bottom of the home page. The Thin Green Line publication will keep you up to date with IRF activities and the bi-weekly publication, Guardaparque is a fascinating update of various activities effecting Rangers all over the world. The editors are always looking for information re

apples and perry pears – washed, milled, crushed and then fermented in old oak whisky barrels. A better final product from a traditional orchard would be hard to imagine.

Tim Green of Herefordshire County Council organised this well-attended event, providing a link between speakers and making sure that everyone tasted a sample of Tom Oliver's best Herefordshire perry and cider at the end of the day.

Judy Hart

**Community Commons Project Officer
Herefordshire Nature Trust**

South West Rangers Forum

On Friday the 19th October 2007 members of the Ranger Forum met at 10 a.m. at the Ley Arms, Kenn, near Exeter for a pre-arranged event organised by members of the Forestry Commission. Attendance was good with approximately 20+ members appearing from as far away as Exmoor and the Quantocks to the more local members from such organisation such as South West Lakes Trust, members in East Devon and Dartmoor National Park.

Having finished college recently and been fortunate to find work as a temporary assistant ranger with the Dartmoor National Park ranger service, I had heard colleagues talk about the forthcoming event and was pleased to be offered a place at the venue for a number of reasons.

Having heard of the CMA and the valuable work that they do, here was a chance to see what it was all about.

To hear about the range of work being done by CMA members across a spectrum of jobs, meet like minded people within the countryside sector, and build a contact base. Most importantly though to hear about a local South West project of some considerable significance that had been undertaken by the Forestry Commission in the Haldon Hill area.

Fortunately or unfortunately dependant on your opinion of my writing skills, I unwittingly offered a chance to complete a short narrative on the day and my interpretation of the project itself.

The Meeting

The agenda started with a 'welcome' over tea or coffee (whilst demolishing the trays of biscuits) and an outline of the day by Ian Parsons.

Chris Marrow introduced himself and gave the audience an overview of the way the Forestry Commission has developed since its conception in the latter stages of the First World War, with its single aim of providing enough timber for the Nation's future needs, to the 2007 model which has a far wider and encompassing set of aims and objectives. Radical and far reaching Government policy changes, reflecting the rapid social changes and aspirations of our modern society have helped shape the priorities and emphasis of the Forestry Commission. The aim of this project was to present a multi-purpose facility which combine production with managed habitats etc but of equal importance, supply a recreational breathing space for members of the public to engage in outdoor activities.

These changes in direction have successfully culminated in the generation, after major financial investment, of a pioneering outdoor activity centre at Haldon Hill, near Exeter.

Chris was followed by an engaging and thought provoking talk by Tim Powles on the Outreach programme that he is undertaking. Tim went on to describe and give many examples of the positive

Management of Tourist Activities

With an estimated annual visitor number of 15,000 many would argue that the associated human impact should be easily manageable but, as a result of a lack of information and interpretation and poor staffing levels, the impact along certain trails has been quite significant. A visit to the trail leading up to Bacura Lake emphasised some of these problems which included litter, open fires and erosion of path surfacing. External funding has enabled some information to be provided and some impressive interpretative panels have recently been erected but they don't always seem to have been placed in the most appropriate locations. The interpretation that was provided did appear to be fairly simple and humour was used pretty effectively, if not always intentionally. Some of the best humour resulted from some slightly dodgy English translations and one particular sign warned of the dangers of bathing in the cold alpine lakes; 'don't lose your life for a trifle', conjuring up delightful images of ferocious fresh water trifles devouring unsuspecting bathers!

Education and Interpretation

The final day looked specifically at recent efforts to improve this important area of park management. Two impressive new visitor centers have been built which, in time, will serve an important purpose not only for tourists and visitors but also for school groups and local communities. It was a shame, however, to see that they suffered from a lack of publicity and signage and were not open very often as a result of staff shortages. There was some discussion on this subject, as these centers were heavily funded from external sources and it would seem that although there is a great deal of expertise from external agencies in helping to develop this infrastructure, basic mistakes are still being made. Our final visit took us to the educational trail at Rausor which had been specifically designed to encourage family groups to explore the area and to learn about the complexities of the different habitats. Although the concept of the trail was good, with some innovative interpretation, some of the fundamentals of good trail design were

2509m at Peleaga, the highest peak. In the northern part of the park there are classic glaciated landscapes including glacial valleys, cirques, lakes and peaks. In the southern area, the geology is predominantly limestone and there are spectacular caves gorges and sinkholes. In the spring and summer, the plateaus are covered in flower-filled alpine meadows. The park is also home to a rich diversity of mammals including chamois, red and roe deer, wild boar, bears, wolves, foxes and lynx and Retezat is internationally important for its 1,200 nesting bird species. These include the rare Golden Eagle, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Scarlet Rose Finch, Three Toed Woodpecker and Horned Lark.

Management and Biodiversity Conservation

Gemenele, a small scientific reserve which covers about 4% of the total area of the park, has enabled Romanian scientists to study an undisturbed area of flora and the potential impact of human activity upon it. The park represents over a third of all of the biodiversity found across Romania and, perhaps surprisingly for some, Romania boasts the highest levels of biodiversity in Europe!

Although the landscape is termed wilderness it has, in common with most areas in Europe at least, been influenced by man, not least through the introduction of marmot in 1973 for hunting purposes. Ironically, during the Ceausescu years, there was a marked increase in raptor and bear numbers as he and his family were the only ones allowed to hunt in the area. Since hunting has been reintroduced, although not in the Park itself, numbers of bear have dropped to around 3,500 but now appear to have stabilised.

Brown trout have also found their way into the higher alpine lakes and are seen as a threat to native species. Debates have centered on whether to allow fishing to take place to remove them but as always, seeing the whole picture is important, as such activities in remote alpine areas would increase the human impact and could lead to illegal camps, fires and litter.

Forestry operations are permitted in certain zones at the edge of the park, with obvious associated conflicts with the purposes of the National Park.

benefits that are already becoming clear and evident within the community, of his work. As an ardent enthusiast of the programme Tim, I suggest could get the message across with flair and in a manner that will engage with almost everyone in the community (there are always some sceptics).

After a short time for questions and answers, lunch time came upon us very quickly. It was decided that we would quickly partake of refreshments and then get up into the Forest and begin the tour of the new facility with Ian and continue with the questions and answers as we walked the routes.

The Tour

It is hard to describe the new facilities in the written word and without putting numerous images in this narrative, but true to say the place is a sea-change in concept and delivery in multi-functioning activity centres. For those who have web, visit <http://www.haldonforestpark.org.uk/> for a more informative and interactive way to see what is on offer.

What was evident from the time we arrived in the new car park and 'hub' area is that it has been designed to eliminate previous areas of concern such as litter and certain car park activities (not the 4 legged doggers!) and create a positive inviting, user friendly facility. Signage for the various multi-use networks is distinctive, big and bold; interpretation centres novel and even new toilet facilities!

What is on offer at the centre? Well everything from walks and trails for all abilities (dogs welcome), running facilities, cycle trails, (and cycle hire) for a typical family and mountain biking trails for those of a more challenging nature, horse riding trails, children's play areas with den building and free-play locations, sensory trails, dedicated event and training areas ~ the facilities just went on and on. All this within a glorious, 3,500 acres elevated location, providing some stunning coastal and countryside scenery and within 15 minutes of Exeter City centre, the target audience of the facility! Ian did a

brilliant job describing the thought processes and detail that had gone into designing the routes that we had time to walk, as well as discussing and answering various issues and questions that were raised. He also had time to describe various habitats and wildlife of conservation status and value, some quite rare e.g. nightjar that are in abundance within the woodland area.

Conclusion

All in all, I would say that the day and the visit to the Haldon Forest Park facility itself were a complete success and eye-opener for those who attended. Whilst many of those that attended work or have backgrounds in maintaining natural, ecologically sensitive sites using minimum intervention policies, we were shown how a well thought out, 'managed for predetermined human goals' site can offer the principal, positive benefits for humans that were designed in at the concept stage. Whilst maintaining a balanced approach to the natural environment, minimising negative interactions and if well thought out and implemented, in some cases enhancing sensitive wildlife habitats.

I for one, and am sure that the majority of attendees at the Forum were impressed. **Well done the Forestry Commission!**

Brian Johnson,
Temporary Assistant Ranger, Dartmoor National Park

Restoring your faith

A farmer in Northern Ireland has sent an envelope containing £5,900 in cash to the Department of Agriculture. A spokesperson said: "It appears that this money had been wrongfully claimed by the individual in the past for capital works and that the individual now wishes to return it.

This is very rare, in 2005/2006 only £10 was returned.

European Rangers' Training Seminar 17th-21st September 2007

Over a hundred Rangers, from 17 countries, made the journey to Hunedoara in Romania to take part in the first European Rangers' Training Seminar. The need for an event to fill the gap between World Congresses had been recognised and endorsed by the IRF (International Ranger Federation) at the 2006 World Ranger Congress in Stirling.

Our base for the week was the Hotel Rusca, in Hunedoara, situated about 1.5 hours drive from the Retezat National Park. The Park itself provided the backdrop to a series of well organised and enjoyable group activities and discussions focusing on three main topics; education and interpretation; management and biodiversity conservation; and management of tourist activities. As with all of the IRF events that I've attended over the years, the organising team had done a tremendous job and thanks in particular should go to the IRF's European Representative Rigmor Solem and to the Romanian Ranger Association, ably led by the charismatic Florin Halastauan, known as "hombre" to all his friends!

Retezat National Park

Retezat was the first National Park in Romania and was established in 1935. However, in common with the rest of the protected areas in the country Retezat remained a paper park (a park in name only), until it was given its own administrative structure in the late 1990s, and it is now one of nine certified PAN Parks in Europe (for more information see www.panparks.org).

The Park is situated in the Southern Carpathian Mountains and covers an area of 38,138 hectares. Altitude ranges from 794m to