Canal & River Trust

Delivering waterway interpretation projects

Inspiring more people to enjoy canals and rivers and support our work

Our interpretation projects have received the following:

BURA Waterways Renaissance Awards
Interpret Britain Awards
Civic Society Awards
Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge
National Lottery Awards in the Best Heritage Attraction category

Spring 2014

Contents

This guide has been written to help you plan and deliver interpretive projects. For more information on interpretation visit:

Association for Heritage Interpretation **ahi.co.uk**

Group for Education in Museums **gem.co.uk**

Museums Association **museumsassociation.org.uk**

Please refer to the Trust's Brand Identity Guidelines which are available from Hannah Kitchener at hannah.kitchener@canalrivertrust.org.uk
And don't forget to take a look at our Brand Portal at **crtbrandportal.org.uk** for Canal & River Trust templates.

If your primary audience is children please see the Canal & River Explorers Guidelines available from annette.simpson@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Rosters

The Canal & River Trust have a roster of interpretive planners, designers and practitioners who have all delivered a number of successful projects for us and our partners.

For more information contact the Canal & River Trust's education and interpretation team:

Annette Simpson, education & interpretation manager on 01926 626 125

Email: annette.simpson@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Why interpret a place?

Interpretation is, in essence, storytelling. It's the name given to the process of explaining the significance of a site to visitors and reveal why and how a place is important.

Interpretation has learning at its centre but well planned and delivered interpretation will also:

- help visitors to enjoy themselves
- stimulate their interest and encourage them to find out more
- communicate specific messages
- encourage the recruitment of volunteers and supporters
- involve the local community and encourage participation in our work

Interpretation can also help to deliver specific management objectives by:

- helping to encourage positive behaviour
- working with marketing, PR and fundraising strategies
- encouraging longer stays and greater expenditure
- helping to protect sensitive areas by influencing the distribution of visitors

Why does the Canal & River Trust interpret places?

We wish to inspire more people to enjoy the waterways and support the work of the Canal & River Trust.

We do this by providing opportunities to discover our canals and rivers, learn about their heritage and environment and create interpretation inspired by them. Providing these opportunities costs the Trust money at a time when budgets are tight – so why do we do this? It's because they all lead to behavioural change in visitors.

People who take part in our activities develop a growing enthusiasm for our canals and rivers and become active supporters. They visit our museums and attractions, they become advocates for the waterways and our work, they volunteer to contribute practically or they donate and become Friends.

Understanding

↓

Appreciation

↓

Protection

"**Our canals and rivers are national treasures,** rich in history and wildlife. **We're here to protect them for future generations.**"

Interpretive Principles

The Trust does not have an overarching interpretive strategy so to help ensure that any activity has a consistency while being capable of flexibility, it is suggested that these ten guiding principles should be followed when planning and delivering any interpretation.

The principles are:

Quality Learning
It is essential that learning opportunities are offered which meet the needs, interests and backgrounds of all those taking part so that they have a positive learning experience.

Creative
Creative approaches to exploring our waterways should be used to ensure a range of learning styles are catered for.

Direct Interaction
A hands-on approach to exploring the resource is essential to inspire long term appreciation.

Sustainability
The interpretation should promote sustainable development through community consultation, partnership working and collaboration.

Respect
All activity should respect the heritage and environment of the waterways and the distinctive character of local communities.

Innovation
To help attract a new and wider audience ensure contemporary excellence, innovation and creativity.

Accessibility
All elements of the interpretation should widen access to the waterway and its environment for people of all ages and abilities.

Skills
The programme should promote capacity building and skills training for local communities, teachers and young people.

Collaborative
Any interpretation should be planned and delivered through a collaboration of professionals, interpreters, specialists, volunteers, communities, teachers and young people.

Enjoyment
Remember to bring joy to the people who see it, use it and do it!

Involving people

Interpretation helps us to develop new audiences by engaging visitors in creative and relevant activities.

To ensure any interpretation is inspiring it should:

Provoke interest in your place or subject.

Relate what visitors see, hear, read or do to their own experiences (so that they understand the relevance of what they are learning).

Reveal meanings, relationships and messages (so it is not just about facts and figures but about the underlying concepts).

Interpretive objectives

Interpretation is a management process which helps an organisation deliver its objectives, which in the interpretive planning process are centred around:

Learning objective:
What do we want our visitors to learn?

Emotional objective:
What do we want our visitors to feel?

Behavioural objective:
What do we want them to do (or not to do)?

Sometimes we also add in:
Economic objective:
How do we wish to benefit financially?

Chillington Wharf plaques

"A place for Transport. The canal is still, but it's about movement. Here at Chillington Interchange, two massive cranes hauled goods from boats to trains. Worldwide journeys began. What traces of the past remain?"
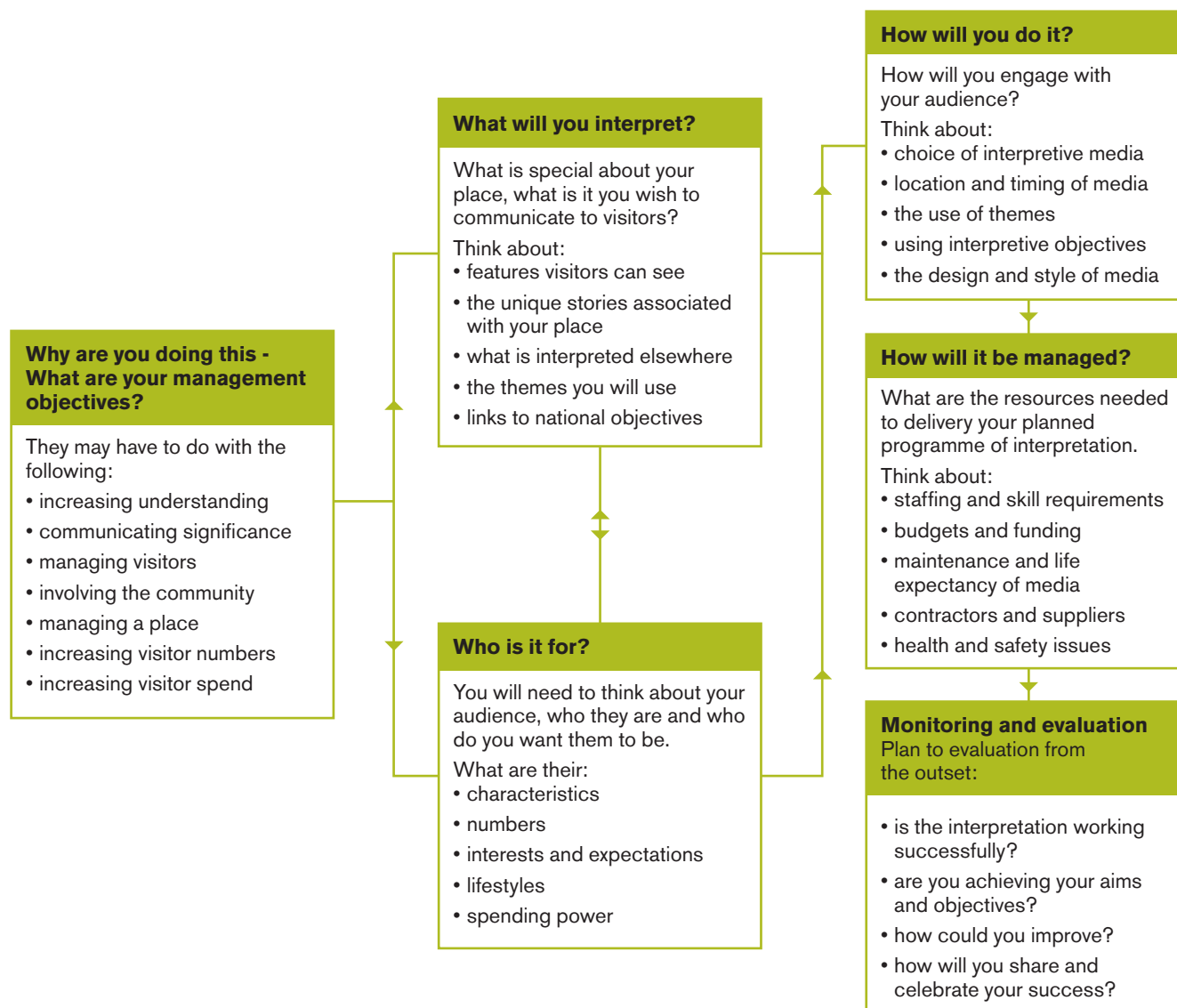
Interpretive Planning

To help us deliver effective interpretation we use the interpretive planning process.

An **interpretation plan** can be one page or a whole report. It does not matter whether you are creating an interpretive panel or redisplaying a whole museum. The planning process is a tool to guide you and provide structure to your thinking. To begin, we recommend that you do a site visit so that you begin to develop a good understanding of the place.

Use this **Top Ten** to start you off:

1. Why do you want to interpret something?
2. What are your specific objectives?
3. Who do you need to consult or involve in the process and why?
4. What are you interpreting; do you understand what is special about your place?
5. What messages do you wish to communicate?
6. Who are you interpreting for?
7. What media would you like to use?
8. How will you implement your plan?
9. How will you evaluate it?
10. How will it be maintained?

Now use the Planning Flow Chart to help you plan your project.

Why are you doing this - What are your management objectives?

They may have to do with the following:
• increasing understanding
• communicating significance
• managing visitors
• involving the community
• managing a place
• increasing visitor numbers
• increasing visitor spend

What will you interpret?

What is special about your place, what is it you wish to communicate to visitors?
Think about:
• features visitors can see
• the unique stories associated with your place
• what is interpreted elsewhere
• the themes you will use
• links to national objectives

Who is it for?

You will need to think about your audience, who they are and who do you want them to be.
What are their:
• characteristics
• numbers
• interests and expectations
• lifestyles
• spending power

How will you do it?

How will you engage with your audience?
Think about:
• choice of interpretive media
• location and timing of media
• the use of themes
• using interpretive objectives
• the design and style of media

How will it be managed?

What are the resources needed to delivery your planned programme of interpretation.
Think about:
• staffing and skill requirements
• budgets and funding
• maintenance and life expectancy of media
• contractors and suppliers
• health and safety issues

Monitoring and evaluation
Plan to evaluation from the outset:

• is the interpretation working successfully?
• are you achieving your aims and objectives?
• how could you improve?
• how will you share and celebrate your success?

Learning styles

People learn in different ways and have preferred ways of learning.

When creating interpretation, it's a good idea to offer a variety of ways that people can learn about our places.

1. Visual learners: people who think in pictures.

2. Auditory learners: people who learn best through listening.

3. Kinaesthetic or tactile learners: people who learn by touching, moving and active exploration.

However there are many other influences on learning.

- People who are cold, hungry or tired are much less likely to want to learn.

- If something is difficult to access due to physical or design limitations people will not participate.

- Some people tend to pay much more attention to landmarks when reading maps whereas others tend to prefer drawn maps.

- Some cultural differences can make it difficult for people to access information.

People learn better when they're actively involved in the learning process and when they're using as many senses as possible.

People retain about:

- 10% of what they hear
- 30% of what they read
- 50% of what they see
- 90% of what they do

Media

## There are many types of interpretive media
This chapter will give some guidance on what works well and what might not.

Here are some key points to consider when deciding on the type of interpretive media:

• It is important to consider your aims, themes, place and audience before deciding what interpretive media to use – take a look at the Interpretive Planning Flowchart.

• Think about your hook? Why would visitors want to use you interpretation – what are their motivations? How are you going to encourage them to use it or take part?

• What is your available budget now and in the future as maintenance is essential. Match your ideas to your resources.
Think about scale – what is an appropriate amount to spend.

• Do you have the staff or volunteer resources to implement and maintain your interpretation?

• Plan to layer your interpretation by using several types of media – some people will enjoy listening to an audio tour, others may prefer a concise guide or an occasional plaque highlighting interesting stories or ideas.

• The current trend in high-tec media may influence your thinking but think whether this type of media right for your site, audience and budget – don't be swayed by the latest gadget.

And finally…

• Think about the visitor experience when deciding upon your interpretation – what will it look and feel like? Will it communicate the Trust's brand or vision?
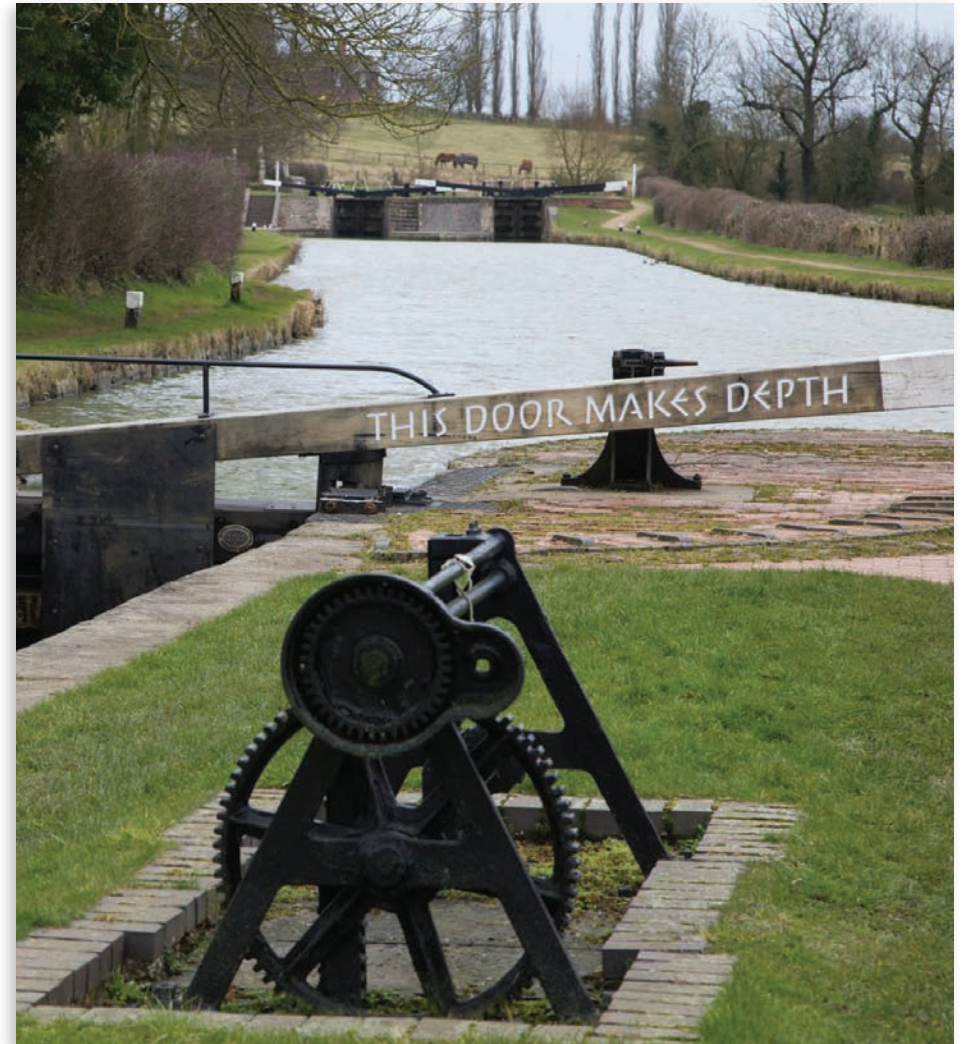
Chapter 2: Media

Pros and Cons of using different interpretive media

Media	Strengths	Weaknesses	Appropriate audience
Printed self-guided trail leaflets	Stories through text and illustration Can be produced to suit all ages, knowledge level and ability Update relatively easily	Need dry storage space Written word is not accessible to some people	Can be tailored to different audiences
Interpretive map	Local community input – sharing stories and reminiscences Focuses closely on the interpretive themes of site Used on site or taken home	Research and managing community involvement is time consuming Quality publication can be expensive Need effective distribution network	Day and staying visitors Local residents Children Education visitors
Posters	Use of dramatic imagery can generate strong sense of place Can be displayed in different places to reach many different audiences	May need to constantly encourage outlets to display them Can be prone to vandalism	All market segments
Children and family trails	Can introduce interactivity eg. crayon rubbings from marker posts Encourages family to discover and learn together	Leaflets may cause a litter problem Marker posts can be prone to vandalism	Children in family or education group Special needs visitors
Guided walks or cycle rides	Face to face interpretation for groups Leader can set level to suit audience Sense of place with immediacy	Staff costs may result in having to charge Totally reliant on quality of trained guides, their knowledge and ability to communicate Party size critical (15) to maintain effective communication	Day and staying visitors Specialists Local people Education visitors Young people
Participatory activities (eg. art and craft activities, photography, music or film making workshops)	Involvement and ownership Exciting and memorable learning experience Visitors understand more through 'doing'	Need to buy in skills of qualified and trained leaders can be costly Management and promotion can be time consuming and costly eg. bookings	Local people Young children Teenagers Special needs visitors
Performing arts, live interpretation Theatre, Music, Storytelling Poetry readings, Costumed re-enactment	Exciting, fun and memorable experience Can bring out the true sense of place by introducing local folklore and legend Can be multi-sensory and accessible to all	Need sites capable of accommodating needs of audience and performers Input from professional individuals or companies Admission charges may deter some visitors	Day and staying visitors Children and teenagers Education visitors if appropriately themed

Media	Strengths	Weaknesses	Appropriate audience
Interpretive panels **Marker plaques** **Listening posts** **Viewpoint orientation** **Tactile models or maps**	Accessible at all times Available to all visitors Encourages visitors to stop and look	Can be intrusive if not carefully designed and sited May require planning consent Vulnerable to vandalism and fading	Day and staying visitors Local people Family groups Education visitors Special needs visitors
Audio Tour	Uses two senses (hearing and sight) Can help with visitor flow and direction Flexible - can address intellectual access, some physical disabilities, children's version, languages	Not easy for the visitor to interact with others in their party Some people don't like them Not easy (or cheap) to produce or update	Day and staying visitors Special interest visitors Visitor with special needs
Visitor centre exhibitions **Museum displays**	Opportunity to present complete story Comfortable surroundings for visitors to browse and learn at leisure Can use existing visitor facilities or new purpose built venue	Requires building or accommodation Requires management structure, staffing, cleaning, maintenance etc Need business plan for long term viability	Day and staying visitors Local people Children in family groups Education visitors Specialists Visitors with special needs
Portable displays or roadshows	Relatively cheap to produce and easy to update Can involve local community as face to face volunteers Can include interactive elements	Time consuming to arrange venues, deliver, set up and staff displays Need robust display	Broad range of visitor types
Web site	Allows pre-visit planning Access to information at different levels Provides links between sites and facilities More easily updated	May need specialist help Can be time consuming to update Two-way flow of information must be screened and monitored	Day and staying visitors Overseas visitors Specialists Young people Special needs visitors
Multimedia: (a combination of audio, text, still images, animation, video or interactive computer based material).	Involves and focuses the user Video footage and animated material more expressive Database multimedia can allow access to a whole museum archive 3D representation can bring sites and objects to life	Development and hardware costs high Visitor flow problems Content and hardware need on-going maintenance	Day and staying visitors Special interest Young people Education and Life Long Learning Special needs
Smartphone Trail; QR codes and augmented reality	Freedom of exploration with opportunity to stop en route New technology is more reliable and flexible Accessible to people with visual impairment Allows visitors to pick and choose which information they want	Large capital outlay May only be used by a handful of people Loading on site May be temperamental Needs network coverage	Special needs visitors especially visually impaired and less mobile Children if special editions Local people through oral history input

Interpretive Leaflets

Two of the most common forms of interpretive media are leaflets and panels so we have included some notes to get you started on these**.**

What's great about interpretive leaflets?
• Visitors often welcome the reassurance of having printed information in their hands. They can be used to guide people around a place or route – and visitors carry them with them; important if they include maps.

• They can be multi-purpose; containing orientation, information and promotion as well as interpretation.

• You can interpret a large are but still focus on detail.

• They can be a memento of a visit, although the quality needs to be high to make them worth keeping.

And the disadvantages?
• Some people just don't like reading and for some it does not fit their preferred learning style. And it is often worse when people are expected to read standing up!

• You will need to plan to distribute your leaflet and this may involve a cost.

• Printing costs can be high (although some visitors will download a simple flyer themselves).

Top Tips
• know your audience

• think about how the leaflet will be used (size, waterproof, leaflet racks)

• integrate text with any map to make it easier to use

• what story needs emphasis?

• write text in small segments with interesting sub-headings

• don't describe what's in the image or illustrations, but use meaningful captions

• test out a mock up with strangers

• don't print more than you need for one or two seasons

• check whether any sponsors are happy for you to sell the leaflets if you want to generate income from them

Interpretive Panels

On-site panels may be the only opportunity we have to communicate with visitors. However they may not be the best form of interpretation to meet your needs.

Here are some pros and cons to help you decide if you need a panel.

Why have panels?

- they explain the why's and how's close to the actual "thing"
- they are available all of the time
- they allow visitors to be selective and set their own pace
- they use images, archive photos, reconstructions and illustrations
- they concentrate visitor's attention
- and they reach people you otherwise could not

What are panels not so good at?

- answering visitor's questions!
- holding the attention of a significant proportion of visitors
- withstanding vandals, the weather and other outdoor elements
- being flexible – remember they could be around for ten years

So when should you install a panel?

When to use them:

- when there is something to see
- where there's a big throughput of people
- where there's not a lot of vandalism

When not to use them:

- for a complicated story or where's there's nothing much to say
- when there's no money for maintenance or no-one to repair them
- in very sensitive landscapes
- where they would cause an obstruction

Top Tips

- Standard lecterns will be cheaper and quicker to produce than a bespoke panel.
- Who will install it and does it need landscaping around the panel? In some locations people standing reading panel can cause damage to ground around it!
- What is the expected life expectancy and is there a warranty for the panel?
- Productions times vary, especially at busy times of the year – so plan ahead.
- Who will do the research, write the text, select images, commission graphics and carry out the design?
- And who is responsible for approvals of text and design?
- Make sure you pre-test the text and design out of doors.
- Install the panel carefully – see Installation and Maintenance on page 34

Live Interpretation

Live interpretation can be an exciting and inspiring form of communication. It can grab your audience's attention, heighten visitor experience and enables a two way communication about technical and social issues.

It is accessible to a wide audience and can deliver strong learning outcomes, as well as being entertaining. Most importantly it focuses attention on people and emphasises their relationship with a place, object or story.

When planning live interpretation use the interpretive planning process but also consider:

- Whether to use in-house or outside organisations. In-house could involve staff or volunteers, but training is essential along with an aptitude for the media. Outside organisations include re-enactment societies or theatre groups.

- Should the interpreters use first or third person interpretation? First person means that they must stay entirely in role whilst third person means that they will be in costume but not playing a role. Should the interpreter play an imaginary role or one based on a real person?

- Should the performance take place at one setting or is a tour of the site more appropriate? Should it be scripted or improvised, or contain demonstrations or interaction with the audience?

- Who are the audience?

- Will the audience be in role or not?

Canal & River Trust

Great design will encourage your audience to engage with your interpretation and allow you to focus on key messages. Here's how the Trust's corporate identity works on an interpretive panel.
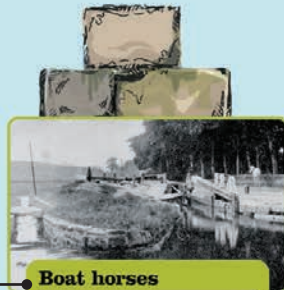
Typography

Icons

Photography

Illustration

Colour palette

Web address

Logo

Charity Statement

Effective Transport

Horses were vital for the growth of industry alongside the Peak Forest Canal.

This tunnel was built to allow horses coming from and going to Whaley Bridge Basin – to walk below the canal and return to the towpath on the other side where they were re-hitched to their boats.

It is said that only new horses needed to be accompanied. More experienced animals knew the tunnel so well that they would follow the path to the other side on their own.

You're visiting
Peak Forest Canal

Tramway horses

Horses were used on local tramways to bring limestone to the canal. Once the tramway waggons had been unloaded a team of 4 to 5 horses working in line was used to haul 12 empty waggons or 6, loaded with coal back up the tramway.

Horses also shunted waggons around wharfs and basins – such as Whaley Bridge Wharf or Bugsworth Basin.

Boat horses

The combination of boats and horses was designed for efficiency. A single horse hauled a boat loaded with around 25 tons of limestone or coal. Sometimes a single horse hauled two loaded boats at a time on the Peak Forest Canal.

German Wheatcroft

The Peak Forest Tramway and Upper Peak Forest Canal opened for trade in August 1796. German Wheatcroft became the first wharfinger or manager of Bugsworth Wharf.

He was also responsible for company business at Whaley Bridge, Furness Vale and the company limestone quarries near Dove Holes. As his duties were so wide ranging, the company provided him with his own horses and a stable.

Canal & River Trust

east midlands
funded by development agency

canalrivertrust.org.uk
© Canal & River Trust is a charity registered with the Charity Commission no. 1146792

Local identity

Any interpretation should reflect the place or story as individual and unique.
Think about the features of the place, the shapes, environment, colours and textures and reflect this in your design. You should aim to add interest rather than distract from a place or story.
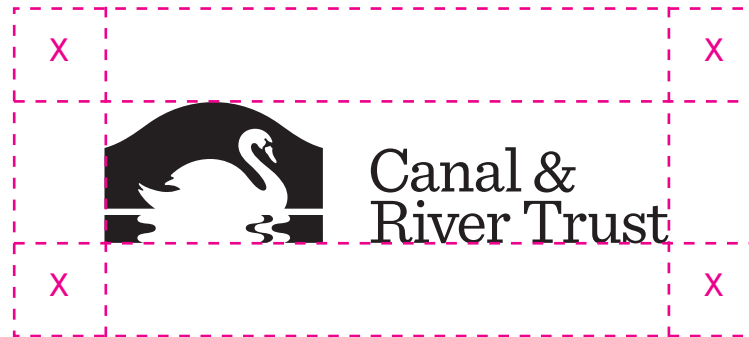
Graphic elements: Logos

Logos are used to create a corporate identity, to recognise funding partners and to celebrate those involved in the creation of the interpretation.

Our logo is one of our strongest visual assets – it is instantly recognisable and memorable. Many interpretive projects involve lots of people and organisations and sometimes lots of logos together can overpower any graphic or print – why not consider having a joint supporter's message or moving logos to a back page or separate plaque.

There are few rules for the use of our logo:

1. It should be at least 30mm, otherwise it is unreadable.

2. The logo is always produced in one colour, black or white out of a colour, and always solid. It is never tinted or shaded.

3. Always use original artwork, which we can send to you*

4. Leave clear space around the logo so that it's easy to read.

*To request a copy of the logo or the Trust's Brand Identity Guidelines please contact: **hannah.kitchener@canalrivertrust.org.uk**

Canal & River Trust

Minimum size

30mm

Glandŵr Cymru
The Canal & River Trust in Wales

Minimum size

45mm

Graphic elements: Typefaces

It is important that any text encourages the reader to invest the time and effort required to read it! We have chosen fonts that are clear, easy to read and attractive.

For headings we use
Clarendon bold and light

Clarendon bold

Clarendon light

For general body text we use **Berthold** bold, regular and light

Berthold bold

Berthold regular

Berthold light

For captions, speech and labels we use
Chalkduster

Chalkduster

For people with a disability, such as visual impairment we use **Arial** regular

Arial regular

Top Tips

- For maximum accessibility the minimum size for any printed text should be 12 point.

- You can use colours and different fonts to illustrate a point or theme.

- You might bold the first part of a sentence to attract visitors to a key part of your message.

- You can bold in key words you want visitors to focus on when introducing new words.

Graphic elements: Colour palette

Use colour to create attractive and engaging interpretation. Use it to help with communicating your story and to reflect the local identity of your place or story.

Primary colours

Pantone Black
CMYK 0/0/0/100
RGB 0/0/0

Pantone White
CMYK 0/0/0/0
RGB 255/255/255

Pantone coated 583C
CMYK 23/0/100/17
RGB 170/179/0

Pantone coated 320C
CMYK 100/0/31/7
RGB 0/152/170

Pantone coated 142C
CMYK 0/28/76/0
RGB 243/189/72

Pantone coated 138C
CMYK 0/42/100/1
RGB 227/124/0

Pantone coated 354C
CMYK 80/0/90/0
RGB 0/174/66

Pantone coated 1945C
CMYK 0/100/59/19
RGB 170/17/63

Pantone coated 228C
CMYK 0/100/4/41
RGB 135/1/80

Pantone coated 630C
CMYK 47/0/11/0
RGB 129/204/221

Pantone coated 284C
CMYK 55/19/0/0
RGB 104/172/229

Pantone coated 4635C
CMYK 0/48/96/44
RGB 148/94/58

Secondary colours (50% tint)

1945C

4635C

138C

142C

320C

354C

583C

284C

228C

630C

Graphic elements: Bridge arch

The shape of the bridge (from the logo) can be used to help crop photos, create a solid block of colour or space to create text boxes.

Using the bridge curve with photographs

Photos can either have straight edges or reflect the curve of the bridge from the logo. When considering photographs inside the bridge shape, the minimum width is half of the bridge shape and should never show the left, right or bottom edge. This can then be positioned at any height within an area to allow space for text and other elements.

Using bridge curve as a block of colour

The bridge shape can shown in any colour from the colour pallette. It can be used to cut across a corner of an image or area and be used horizontally as well as vertically.
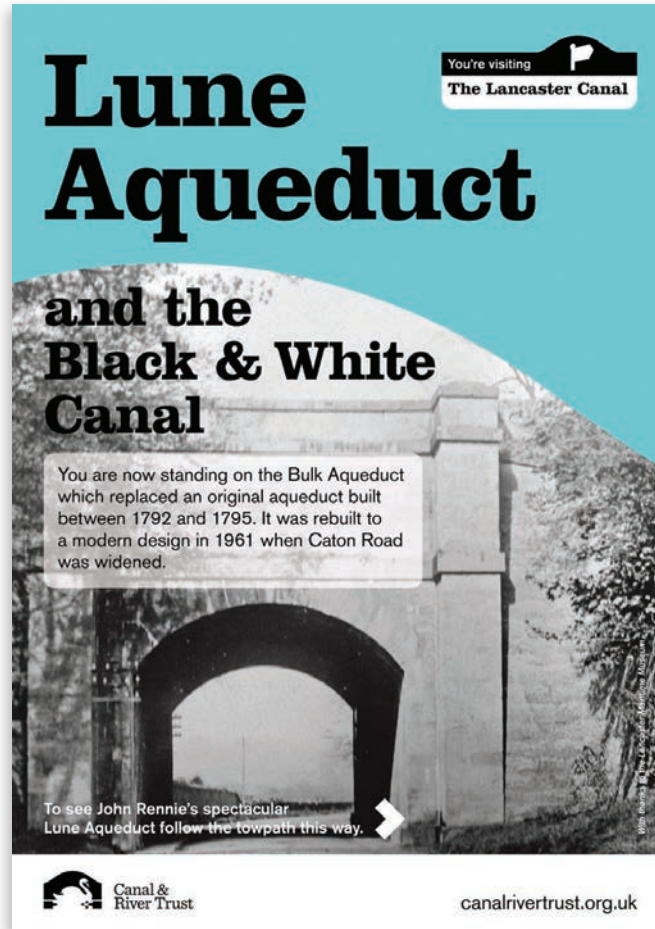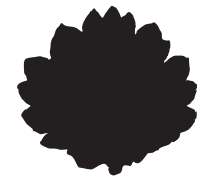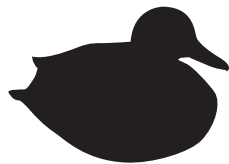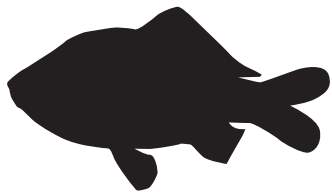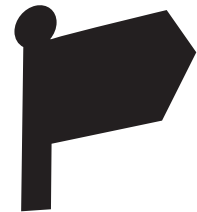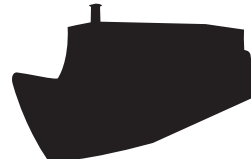
Graphic elements: Icons

The Trust has a range of icon shapes which can be found in the waterway environment. The icons shown below can be used as an option to support the interpretation being produced.

You're visiting

Peak Forest Canal

This shows how the sign icon works on an interpretive panel as a wayfinding graphic.

Mapping

Maps are useful as both an illustrative device and as an orientation tool. However many people find it difficult to read and understand maps. Hand drawn or illustrated maps not only add to the visual appeal of interpretation but encourage greater understanding and help to communicate a sense of place or a sense of time.

Graphic Map

Before creating any new map contact our GIS specialists for advice and check the Trust's mapping style in our Brand Identity Guidelines.

Creating Maps

When printing or emailing maps you must include the following:

© Crown copyright and database rights, [year of publication], Ordnance Survey 100022432. © Next Perspectives, [year of publication]. Contains Royal Mail data, © Royal Mail copyright and database right, [year of publication]. Contains National Statistics data, © Crown copyright and database right, [year of publication].

An illustrative map aimed at a general audience for Hatton Locks.
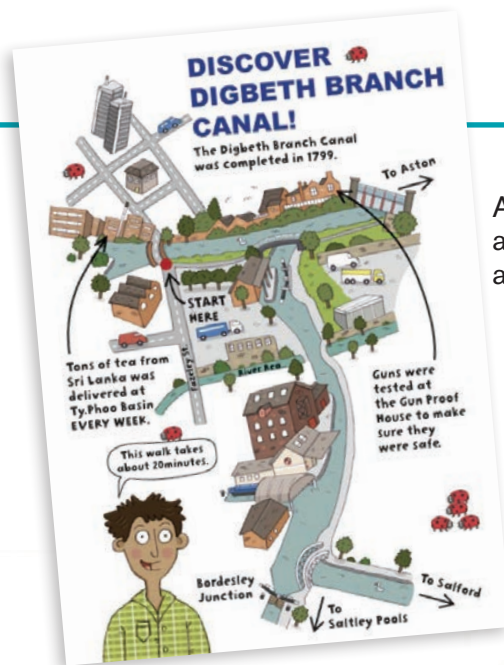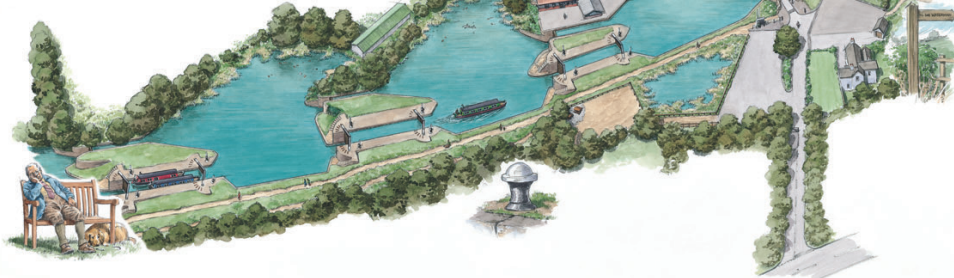
An illustrated map aimed at a family audience.
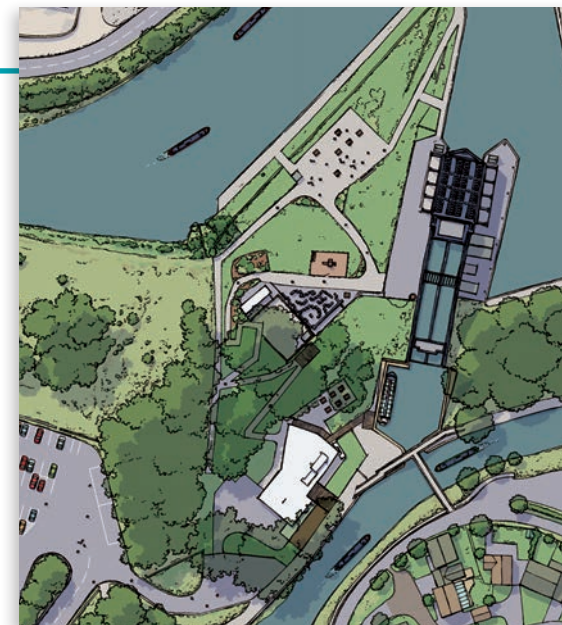
An orientation map used at the Anderton Boat Lift.

Remember we have created over 100 illustrated maps as part of the Hidden Gems campaign - all of which are available to use.

Illustrated maps

Use illustrated maps to:

- help to highlight what is special about a place and to weave stories into a landscape

- make local landmarks very clear and obvious

- engage people with features of the site by creating a visual communication which might stimulate a virtual visit

- increase enjoyment by generating an emotional response, possibly of wonder or awe

- interpret the layers of history

Illustration

We use illustrations to:

- help to communicate a sense of place – perhaps exggerating particular things
- convey detail or how something works without a lot of text
- demonstrate something that is almost impossible to film or photograph, or where no photograph exists
- show how a place might have looked in the past
- make the interpretation attractive and engaging
- to prompt an emotional response
- to introduce humour into our interpretation
- to humanise our interpretation
- to weave story and personal memories into the interpretation
- to highlight certain features so that we draw people's attention to a specific item or place

A note on copyright

There are some copyright and permission issues which you need to take account of when working with illustrators.

In line with our Terms & Conditions the Trust will own the material created for your interpretation. However you will need to ensure that any illustrators or artist you commission are aware of this – and agree any special agreements (such as joint copyright) or licences before commissioning.

Anderton Boat Lift in 1875 and the lift's designer Edwin Clark
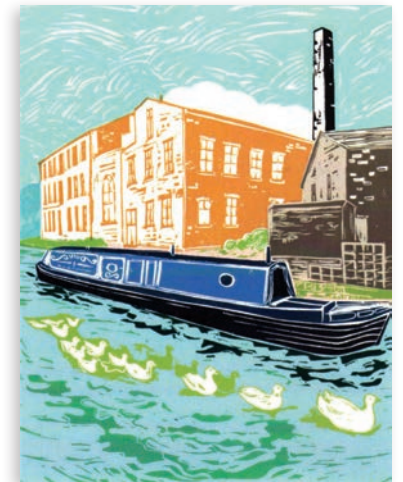
Postcard of Airedale Mills, Micklethwaite on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal

Lock keeper's cottage at Foxton Locks
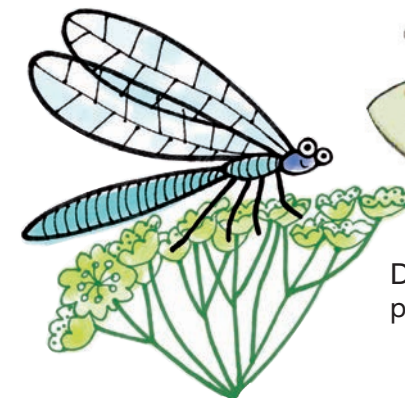
Damselfly and boatwoman produced for family trails

Writing for interpretation

Writing for interpretation means that any text should **provoke** the reader's attention, **relate** to their everyday lives and **reveal** the main point of your story. It should also help you to deliver your learning, behavioural and emotional objectives (as outlined in the project's interpretive plan).

Remember - most importantly pre-test your text with its intended audience!

Tone of voice

The Canal & River Trust's tone of voice is informal, reassuring and upbeat. It is not complicated or selective and it doesn't use business speak or corporate jargon.

This allows us to communicate the pleasures and benefits of canals and rivers in an easy to read and positive way.

For more guidance take a look at he Marketing pages on Gateway.

Top Ten Tips for writing interpretation:

1. **Hook them**
   If your text looks boring no one will bother to read it. Use headings to excite and engage your audience; then subheadings to maintain their interest. Remember that the first paragraph is crucial so make it lively and snappy.

2. **Start with the end of the story**
   Visitors may not read to the end so put the important bits first.

3. **Keep it simple**
   Don't cram in lots of dull information as your audience will not read it. Draft, re-draft and think hard about how much text you need. Back up key messages with a few punchy facts.

4. **Explain unfamiliar terms**
   If you use unfamiliar terms or difficult words explain them.

5. **Keep it short**
   Aim to keep paragraphs fewer than ten lines; vary the lengths of sentences and be aware of their complexity.

6. **Engage the emotions**
   If your writing does not engage the emotions the chances are your visitors won't be bothered to read it.

7. **Relate to the reader**
   If you wish to engage readers with your writing you need to relate it to them – for example compare past lives to readers' lives now, habitats to where they live and measurements to things they are familiar with.

8. **Ask questions to provoke conservations**
   This is a very direct and conversational way of communicating with your reader. Draw them in by asking them questions which can be serious or jokey. Think about how to generate debate especially amongst a family audience.

And for children and family audiences…

9. **Alliteration and rhyme**
   Use alliteration in headings, sub-headings and punchy phrases – children love it! Rhyme is also appealing and lends itself to being read out.

10. **Buzzwords and exclamations**
    Exciting, awesome, amazing, fantastic, wicked – include these descriptive words to enthuse children, but be careful buzzwords are ever-changing. Keep up to date by reading children's publications and watching television.

Interpretive Panels

People will not want to stand reading large amounts of text on interpretation panels. You will be more successful in engaging visitors if they feel that they are in control of the amount of text they want to read.

1. Title
Normally this is positioned prominently at the top of the panel.

2. Strapline
This optional phrase qualifies or extends the meaning of the title and is positioned directly below.

3. Main heading
Main headings generally describe the overall subject of the panel and should be set in a large size to be legible from a distance.

4. Main text
This is normally an overview of, or introduction to, the main subject. It should be set in a large size and ideally be 50-60 words and certainly no more than 100.

5. Secondary text
Sub-topics can be set in a smaller size than the main text. Topic headings are always helpful as they allow visitors to decide quickly whether the topic is of interest. The number of words for each topic should be around 60-80.

6. Captions
These are the explanatory texts to visual images and are a useful way of getting over a degree of information to visitors who want to 'look at the pictures'. They are normally set in a smaller size than the secondary text and numbers of words between 5-20.

Top Tip

Research by the US National Park Service has suggested that the type size to use on interpretive panels is 28-30 point if it is to be read by people standing 1-1.5 metres away.

Standard A1 panel

Please use this template to help you design a standard interpretive panel.

Top level text 62pt
Clarendon

Main heading 127pt
Clarendon

Intro text 38pt
Berthold

Picture boxes have
5mm radius corners

Body copy text 28pt
Berthold regular

Picture caption text
20pt Berthold medium

Sub headings 32pt
Clarendon

Call to action 20pt
Berthold regular

The Trust's logo
85mm wide (minimum)

Allow 5mm
bleed around
the panel

Wayfinding
graphic

Area for
local map

Inset area to
shown position
of waterway
nationally

Picture boxes
can have a 5pt
colour stroke
around them

Sub headings
have a 5pt keyline
underneath them

Area for QR
code if required

Area for additional logos

Welcome to
The Lune Aqueduct

The Lune Aqueduct was designed in 1792 by the great
Scottish engineer, John Rennie. Check out this panel and others
at the aqueduct to find out more about this amazing place.

This masterpiece of civil engineering carries
the Lancaster Canal for 202 metres (664 feet)
over the River Lune and takes about 3 minutes
to walk across. At 19 metres (63 feet) above
normal water river level, it's the same height
as 2 double decker buses.

The aqueduct is a Grade I listed structure.
This means that it is recognised as being
of international importance and special care
has to be taken when work is carried out
on or near to it.

The structure has five semi-circular arches,
each spanning 21 metres (71 feet).

Restoration challenge

In 2011 British Waterways
began a programme of £1,500,000
maintenance and repair work to the
aqueduct. Engineers put together
a detailed plan of work.

Repairs included replacement
of some of the beautiful carved
balustrades.

Find out more
Take the steps or the
access path to the top
of the aqueduct to
uncover its secrets.

Canal &
River Trust

canalrivertrust.org.uk

Do you fancy a challenging job?
Specialist contractors working on the
restoration project abseiled off the top
of the aqueduct to clear plants growing
in the stonework and clean off graffiti.

See it for yourself

You're visiting
The Lancaster Canal

To find out who built the aqueduct
and why the Lancaster Canal was
nick-named the Black and White
Canal, follow the steps or access
path onto the top to see it for yourself.

Easier visiting

Once the aqueduct was taken care of
British Waterways carried out lots more work
to make better pathways between the river
and the canal – there's a new access ramp
to the top of the aqueduct.

They've also improved the towpath, put in this
car park and carried out landscaping work.

You can find out more about the aqueduct
as local people have helped to create a
waymarked trail along the Lancaster Canal.

Towpath improvements have made a difference for visitors.

Wild Place

The Lune Aqueduct is a great
place for wildlife. Canal and river
habitats provide places for all sorts
of different creatures from tiny
stoneflies to beautiful swans.

You can find out more about
them when you visit the aqueduct
and explore the River Lune
Millennium Park.

Follow the waymarkers

There is a waymarked trail from the
Penny Street Basin in the city centre,
out along the canal towpath to the
aqueduct and back via the footpath
along the south bank of the River Lune.

Scan to find out more about
the Lune Aqueduct or visit:
canalrivertrust.org.uk/lune

heritage
lottery fund
LOTTERY FUNDED

Interpretive Panels: Location & Positioning

The positioning of panels and plaques is as important as the size of the sign and the type on it. As it will impact on not only those with a visual impairment but also those with a physical disability.

Consider when auditing sites where the sign will be placed and how far they will be away from the sign. This will often be a balanced judgement against the risk of theft or vandalism.

Wheelchair users
Consider heights of both adult and child wheelchair users. Also consider the location of the interpretation element – how easy is it for a wheelchair user to get there? Lecturn style signs are the most accessible for wheelchair users or others with mobility issues. Angle the panel appropriately. For further guidance please see the B.T Countryside for All Project at **fieldfare.org.uk**

Children
Consider average heights of children when designing interpretation elements specifically for them. Avoid sharp edges and materials that will easily deterioate. Consider maintenance of moveable parts.

1700mm

1400mm

750mm

Signs to be read at close range
The average eye line of a person is in the range of 1400 - 1700mm above the floor level. Signs that are intended to be read at close range, should be mounted as close to this as possible.

Signs to be read at medium range
Overhanging and projecting signs must be positioned high enough to avoid causing an obstruction. 2300mm to the underside is the recommended dimension from floor level. Flat-fixed wall-mounted signs should be placed high enough so as not to be obscured by people congregated nearby and should project no more than 100mm.

Signs to be read at long range
Long range signs are best positioned at a height that renders the signs obvious and avoids them being obscured by intervening objects such as cars.

Outdoor Interpretation

There are many different types of interpretive installations you could use – here are a few examples for inspiration.

Plaque – Small plaques could be inset into the ground or mounted on walls or posts. You could use a local material.

Standard lectern – By choosing a standard format, you'll save money on the frame, but you can still create exciting graphics.
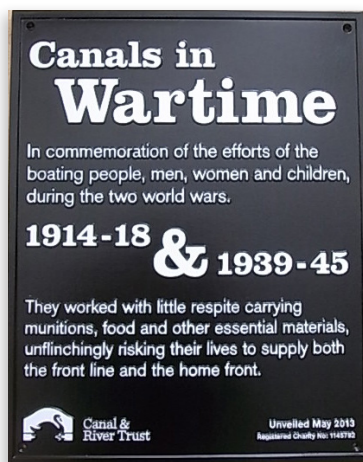
Bespoke panel – These can reflect something about the place or story.

Sculptural – A local artist might work with you to create a special sculpture or installation.

Tactile map – Designed to be touched these help visitors understand historical or geographical features. Some specialist suppliers make tactile maps for partially sighted or blind visitors.

Label – These allow you to be very specific focusing on one message.

Community art – Developed with local people, encouraging them to interpret places creatively.

3D – 3D installations can convey messages without any words.

Digital Media

Smartphone tablet ownership is growing rapidly and many now see digital media as essential to any interpretive provision. Although not all of our visitors needs can be addressed though smartphone technology, we do have a great opportunity to address them in an innovative and accessible manner.

Some areas where there are great opportunities:

• attracting new audiences for heritage and the environment; families in particular are using smartphone technology in their everyday lives

• providing new ways to interact and learn at the visitor's own pace and in their own style

• providing enjoyable experiences through activities and creative engagement

• providing planning tools and visitor information on demand, which is also easy to keep up to date

• communicating a welcome and extending activities or with limited face to face interaction

• increasing accessibility to resources, artefacts and activities

Important issues to consider:

• The choice of device and operating systems can be overwhelming – but a small number of manufacturers and operating systems account for the majority of users, so the choices are narrowed. Please discuss any ideas with the Trust's Mobile App Group.

• Understanding the audience and the technical infrastructure of a place will be important in deciding which system will work best. The most likely routes will be:
• Mobile web
• QR code
• App (linked to mobile web or app)

• It is important not to forget marketing of your interpretation – the web and app stores are crowded places – so how will your visitors know about your interpretation?

• Presenting the experience to visitors is essential. How will people know what is on offer, why should they take part and how will it benefit them?

Thanks to: 'Smartphones and their potential to support Family Learning in the Cultural Sector' by Frankley, Green & Webb with Fusion Analytics

Digital Media cont...

Things to consider when planning digital media:

- Allow a budget for updating and maintenance of the media itself, but also of any webpages, waymarkers or signage.

- Your interpretation could be a once only activity or visitors could use it again and again.

- Think about ways of delivering the media – is it on your device or on the visitors? What kind of device is it?

- Visitors need a good signal to be able to download anything at a canal or river. It's worth testing how good the signal is in advance!

- There is a vast amount of material out there and digital media is great at improving accessibility to archives but the same rules of scriptwriting apply - so be selective and don't use digital media as an excuse to script a novel!

- You could include audio memories, video, animation and photographs, maps, games or augmented reality to enliven your interpretation.

- Will visitors be walking, cycling or climbing steps while they are using the digital media? Think about how visitors will use your interpretation.

- The cost of downloading data might put some visitors off using your media.

- If you're using QR codes, visitors will need to download a QR reader before they visit.

- Think about you can make digital media work together with low tech media so that you can cross-promote as well as appealing to different audiences.

- Digital media can be a solitary activity and some people will like his, but it can also be a fun way of bringing families together in a fun activity.

- A great deal of mobile access is directed toward gathering visiting and location based information. So it's essential that any relevant website content is clear, succinct and quick to discover and understand as it will be viewed on mobile devices.

- Larger screens, mainly desktops are still preferred for viewing rich content. Websites often combine text with images, video and animation – so often it's a question of "fit for purpose".

A note on QR Codes

These are one of the most popular mobile technologies – and the most cost effective to produce. However many question whether they have captured visitors imagination as some people are reluctant to use them.

But they are a great way to provide additional or more engaging content. So integrate QR codes into interpretive labels or signage by layering with text, archive material and images.

Social Media

Social media is changing the way we engage with visitors. We are working to build our audiences through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and Blogs. There are some great creative examples out there – let yourself be inspired.

You Tube

Search for **Dumb Ways to Die** *on YouTube and watch one of the best and innovative safety videos ever! Humour can be a great way to communicate your message.*

If you are producing a video you will need to consider compliance with accessibility and best practice standards, write scripts and story boards, check you have the right editing requirements and decide who will film and edit it for you.

Video length for online audiences is subjective and depends on your project, but they should ideally be 90 – 180 seconds and should not exceed five minutes. You will need to include an indent or branded credits at the beginning and end of the video.

Ensure space is left for captions and subtitles. For readability it's best for text length not to exceed two lines, use Ariel typeface in black or white with 3.0 leading and align left. You can also use text slides to punctuate footage and supply transcripts if necessary.

The Trust uses YouTube to distribute and videos should be uploaded at **youtube. com/canalrivertrust**

Flickr

Visit the British Library's Flickr pages where they have made over one million images available for download and use – they are using crowdsourcing to help describe and label the images!

Facebook

Take a look at the Natural History Museum's page for a great example of using Facebook as a learning and engagement tool.

Bear in mind that once you post something online, you can't always take it back.

Don't post comments, photos or videos that may cause embarrassment, and never post comments that are abusive or may cause offence.

Blogs

Susan Cross writes great blogs on the subject of interpretation – there's always something to inspire and spark interest. Take a look at **susancrosstelltale.com**

Blogs are online journals where stories or subjects can be shared with readers over weeks, months or years. Popular blogging services include Tumblr, WordPress and Blogger.

They are a great way to start conversations as readers can add comments and questions – in fact most authors want readers to respond.

If you're inspired, you could start your own blog, perhaps on the Canal & River Trust website. There is lots of advice at **problogger.net**.
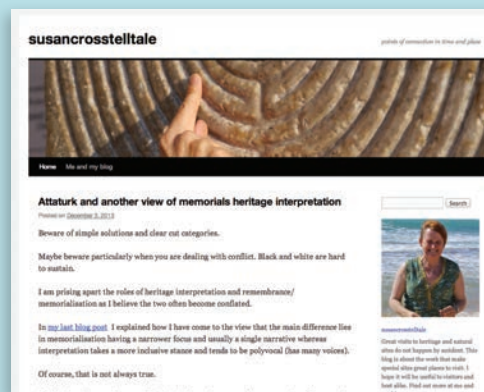
I Tweet Dead People

A young 4th-century Roman woman has been tweeting from beyond the grave, giving visitors to the Yorkshire Museum insights into her mysterious life as well as a way of using technology to bring history to life. The interpretation includes an interactive trail, using Twitter as a trigger to "awaken" the Ivory Bangle Lady at various key points around the museum's galleries.

Tweets are great for sending quick and frequent messages to your followers. They should be 140 characters or fewer and it's good to include hashtags. A hashtag is an easy way for people to categorize, find and join conversations on a particular topic.

The hashtag is used to highlight keywords or topics within a Tweet, and can be placed anywhere within a post.

Permissions – for photography and video

Always use a consent form if you are producing video or images, and for vulnerable adults and those under 18 years you should seek written permission first. The Trust's education team has a specific consent form for children.

If you are in a public location use a highly visible disclaimer notice – so that people have an opportunity to opt out.

If you are interviewing someone over 18 years on camera record a verbal agreement as evidence of permission – and make sure you keep the edit!

Accessibility

Principles of Universal Design

Universal Design describes the concept of designing all products and buildings to be usable to the greatest possible extent by everyone regardless of their age or ability.

Here are some things to consider:

1. Media and format

Choose the right media for your audience and then think about how you can extend your audience by providing interpretation in different formats.

Why not provide large print versions of any text, include an audio guide or use handling objects instead of text?

2. Design it well

Use clear uncluttered design and page layout, use good colour contrasts, think about colour combinations (remember red and green don't work if you are colour blind!) and aim for clear illustrations and symbols.

Think about how your interpretation is to be used and handled by your visitors – is an unwieldy leaflet to best thing to use in the outdoors for example?

3. Install it carefully

Think about the location of outdoor panels. Are they at the right height and angle for a wheelchair users or children to read? Is there level space in front of the panel, how is it aligned in relation to the sun or is there glare which will make it difficult to read?

Indoors think about circulation patterns, reach and sight lines for wheelchair users and children.

4. Consult

Consult with local people with a disability or organisations to provide feedback and to distribute or promote your interpretation.

5. Staff and volunteers

Are your staff and volunteers aware of the abilities and needs of your audience and people with a disability? Or how about welcoming families to your place?

6. Information and choice

Provide objective information for people with a disability. This allows people to make their own decisions and judge for themselves whether to visit or participate. Sometimes you may have to provide subjective information, which does not allow visitors to make a decision eg 'not suitable for wheelchairs'.

Different kinds of access

If you wish your interpretation to be accessible to the widest audience possible then you should consider how to encourage access under the following headings:

1. Physical access

Think about natural (slopes, vegetation, mud, streams etc.) and human-made barriers (stiles, steps, lack of reserved parking, heights of signs, handles etc.).

How can you overcome or plan out these barriers?

2. Sensory access

Many people have sensory impairments most commonly some form of visual or hearing impairment.

Think about how to use Universal Design or provide interpretation in alternative formats to meet the need of your visitors. If you would like to know more see

"Working with visitors with disabilities, especially those with a visual impairment" – available from annette.simpson@canalrivertrust.org.uk

3. Intellectual access

When thinking about intellectual access there are two distinct areas to consider:

i. People with learning difficulties.

ii. People who wish to increase their knowledge of your place or story without having direct contact with you or it.

Plan to provide interpretation which meets Universal Design principles and think how to extend learning opportunities by providing more in-depth information or directing people to other sources.

4. Cultural access

Cultural barriers are often the hardest to overcome. Many people will not have an awareness of waterways and people from a non-indigenous background may not have an awareness of geography or the characteristics of different towns and communities.

Avoid all assumptions and explain cultural "pegs" such as "Victorians", "navvies" or "boaters" by cross –referencing to widely known facts and events.

5. Economic access

The cost of getting to a place or an entrance fee may be a barrier to access for many people. The great thing about the waterways is that they are freely accessible 365 days of the year.

Think about providing a range of local interpretive offers so that different audiences can access a place easily.

Readability

How easy is this to read?

How easy is this to read?

| 90% | 80% | 70% | 60% | 50% | 40% | 30% | 20% | 10% |
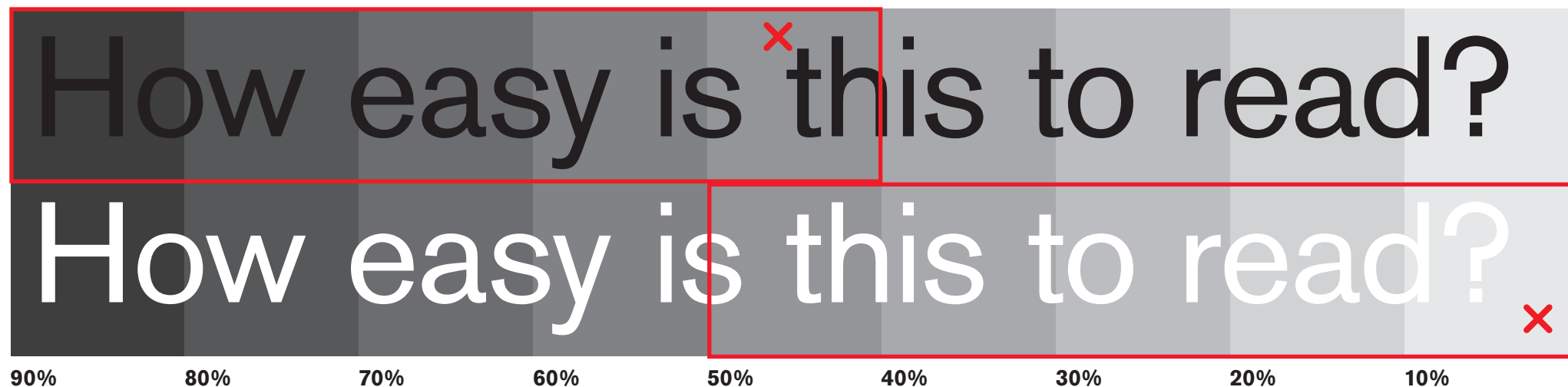
Hints to aid readability

- don't place text over images or illustrations

- don't have lines of texts with less than five words and avoid the use of columns

- try to have whole sentences on a line and avoid single words from a sentence at the beginning or end of a line

- don't use justified text as this effects the spacing in between words (apart from in the main title)

- don't use shadows on text or images

- be careful when using capitals or italics as these are harder to read

- use non-reflective coatings or matt finishes on panels and leaflets

- consider the use of some raise text within the output

- consider the use of symbols to support the meaning of the text

Type and colour

- aim for high contrast where text is used, ie. use dark text on pale backgrounds

- avoid text and background colours that are close in tone

- avoid text on busy backgrounds

- avoid combinations of colour difficult to distinguish by colour-blind people (red and green together, also brown, orange and yellow)

Chapter 5
Implementation

Canal & River Trust

We want any interpretation on our canals & rivers to be attractive, safe and accessible.
So we ask anyone developing interpretive projects to think about the following:

Planning

- Any interpretation should respect the waterway heritage and environment.
- All site designations will need to be adhered to and permission sought – is your place listed, in a conservation area or SSSI?
- You should respect the waterways original function as a navigation – no interpretation should restrict boat movements or the use of the towpath.

Heritage

Before any work is carried out a heritage audit should identify:

- **Statutory designations** e.g. Listed Buildings, Conservation Area, Scheduled Monument
- Works to or adjoining, or within the curtilage of designated assets may require consent that may or may not be granted. Unauthorised works are illegal.
- **Archaeological designations** e.g. Local Authority based Historic Environment Record (HER) registered sites, which may be non-statutory but can still require investigation.
- **Non-statutory heritage** e.g. local listings or items recorded in the Trust's Architectural Heritage Survey.

  The Trust treats all its heritage assets the same, whether designated or not and as part of the planning of any works the Trust's local heritage adviser should be contacted and their advice sought.

Environment

Take every opportunity to enhance the environment:

- **Trees** are valuable visual features and form important canalside wildlife habitats. When working around trees take care not to disturb the roots. When looking at positioning your interpretation do not allow overhanging vegetation to obstruct the installation, or create a low walking tunnel.
- **Planting schemes** should only include species of British seed source and should match that occurring naturally in the area.

  If planting around installation look at existing vegetation and compliment it. Don't plant anything that will grow and smother or cover the interpretation.
- **Timing and seasonality** if installing in summer make sure the area is not environmentally sensitive for wildflowers or insects. In spring don't upset nesting birds or hibernating animals.

Sustainability

The Trust has a corporate responsibility to look at sustainablity in all areas of it's work:

- **Timber** should have a FSC Certificate and be purchased directly from approved suppliers. Any alternative supplier (to those on national Canal & River Trust contract) must be approved by the Trust's procurement managers.
- **Aggregates** we should be recycled or secondary aggregates where possible.
- **Solar power or mechanical operations** (eg: manual wind up) should be considered as power sources.

Remember an Enviromental Appraisel is required for all activities which may have an impact on the environment. See the Enviroment page on Gateway for more info.

Installation and Maintenance

- Use high quality materials which do not need constant maintenance and has a long life expectancy.
- Agree a maintenance plan.

A. Aim to make your interpretation blend into sensitive settings. Think about the historic and aesthetic qualities of landscape – don't block the view.

B. Think about siting of the interpretation from the beginning. Consider path surfacing around interpretation; avoid placing panels facing due south because UV light may cause bleaching of colours. Consider lighting, sun glare, air circulation, falling leaves or sap.

C. Ensure all visitors can get to the interpretation. Don't place where it could cause an obstruction. Consider height and angle so it can be read by all visitors. If you have to walk under a sign it should be a minimum of 2100mm above ground level.

D. Orientate the interpretation so the visitor can relate the contents to the place.

E. How do visitors use this place now? Look at patterns of use, desire lines and points of interest.

F. Use materials that reflect the local area or the wider landscape scheme (eg: frame or surfacing).

G. Consider using the same materials for interpretation as other street furniture, lighting and seating.

H. Take the opportunity to rationalise any other signing to avoid clutter.

I. Consider using artists or crafts people to create interpretation that reflects the landscape or adds to the aesthetics.

J. To encourage greater access ensure surface around the interpretation is level, compacted, well maintained and links to the existing path.

K. Mountings for signs should be fixed through mortar joints, not through the faces of brick or stone.

Installation example for plaques

Plaque - Simple labelling only (circular wall-mounted panel)

Fixing
Do not fix to historic structures unless there is no other alternative. If you have to, please fix into the mortar only. Before installation check with the Trust's local heritage adviser.

Listed Building Consent
Check with the Trust's local heritage adviser before commissioning any works

Maintenance
Use anti-grafitti film and check regularly for signs of damage or vandalism
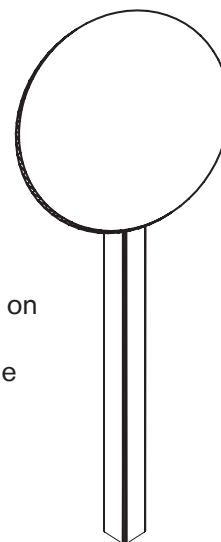
Level A - section

4mm thick nom. ms steel graphic panel. External grade graphic treatment as specified. Weather seal to both sides. Circular angle trim to edge with tamper-proof fixing to wall frame.
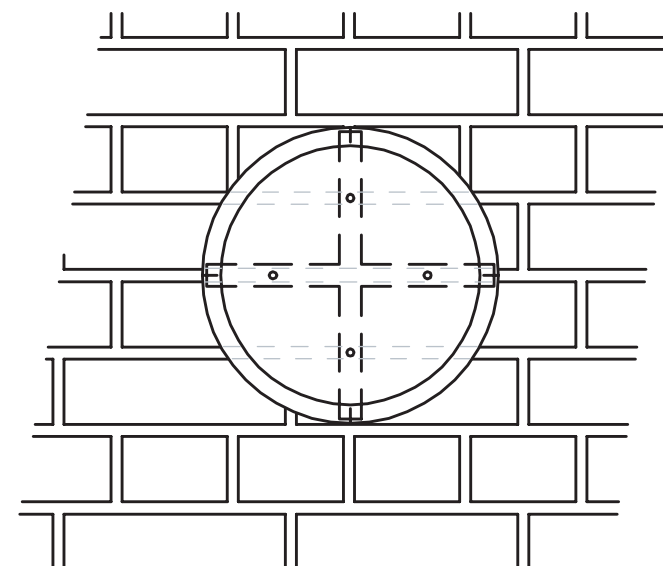
400mm

GL +1.5m
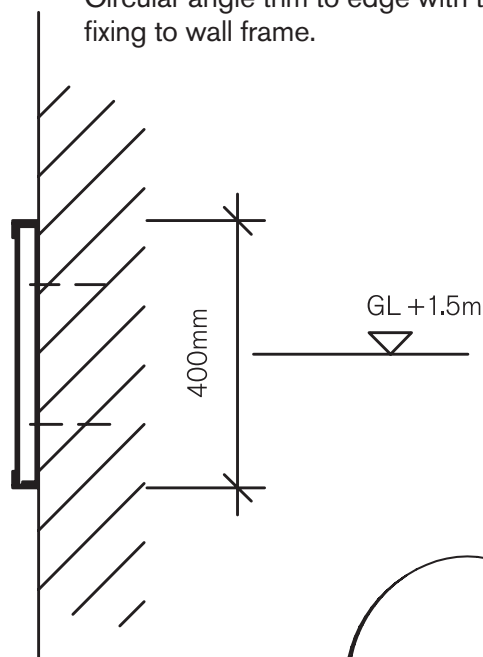
Alternative:
Oval or circular sign on steel or timber post mounted lectern style

Level A - elevation

Ms wall frame fixed to masonry with expansion anchors. Galvanised finish.

These are guidelines only and are subject to a full site survey undertaken by a signage specialist. For further information please refer to the BT Countryside Access for All guide is available from **fieldfare.org.uk**

Or the BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) handbooks at **btcv.org.uk**

Installation example for standard lecturns

Lectern - Standard 20"x30" interpretive site panel on posts

Fixing
Do not fix into archaeologically sensitive areas. If in doubt, check with the Trust's local heritage adviser.

Listed Building Consent
If you are fixing to or around any historic buildings or sites, you may need to apply for Listed Building Consent. Check with the Trust's local heritage adviser before commissioning any works
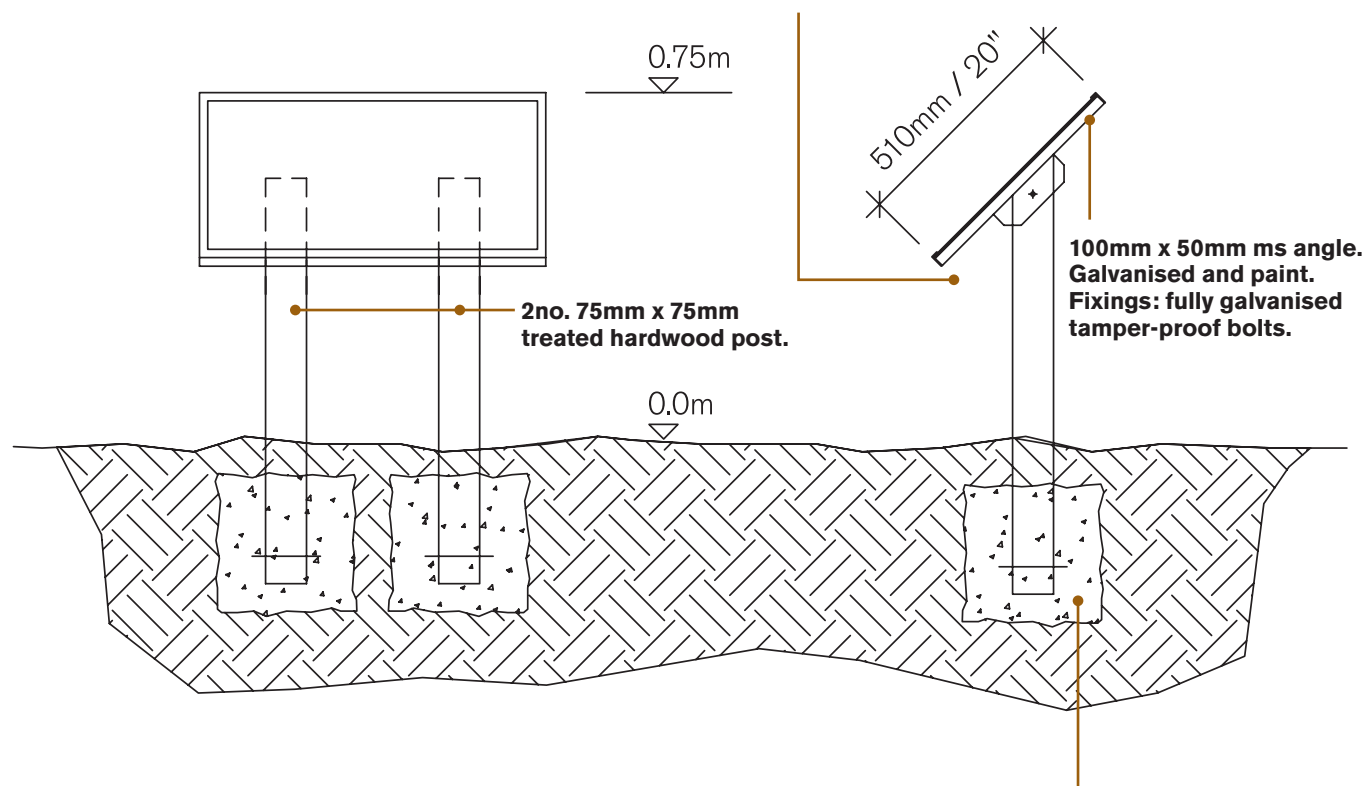
Viewing position
Ensure that the height and angle of the panel is readable for all visitors.

Front and side elevations
4mm thick nom. ms steel graphic panel. External grade graphic treatment as specified. Weather seal to both sides. Set at angle of 45 degrees.

Alternative:
Steel post, galvanised and painted

Ms angle edge to full perimeter of sign. Galvanised and paint finish. Concealed tamper-proof, non-weld fixings to sign panel.

0.75m

510mm / 20"

100mm x 50mm ms angle. Galvanised and paint. Fixings: fully galvanised tamper-proof bolts.

2no. 75mm x 75mm treated hardwood post.

0.0m

Combination concrete and stabilised earth to secure post in ground. Nom. 300 x 300mm pinned concrete block.

These are guidelines only and are subject to a full site survey undertaken by a signage specialist. For further information please refer to the BT Countryside Access for All guide is available from **fieldfare.org.uk**

or the BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)handbooks at **btcv.org.uk**

Involving local communities

What are the benefits of working with communities of both place and interest?

- involvement in planning and delivering interpretive projects will encourage more people to get involved, enjoy canals and rivers and inspire them to support our work

- active engagement will result in rich experiences meaning higher levels of learning and deeper appreciation

- it is amazing what skills and experience people can bring to projects!

- it ensures that projects fulfil community wishes and takes into account concerns, which can reduce the risk of conflict later

- local people or those with a particular interest are often the best sources of knowledge

- community participation will allow individuals to contribute and helps avoid the possibility of one group or individual being dominant. There are many techniques you can use to involve as many people as possible – see **participationcymru.org.uk** for advice

- sometimes community consultation will confirm what others say, but involving the community will ensure your plans will have more support, especially from funders

However it is important that we recognise that community interpretation is not always able to deliver immediate hard benefits. You should be prepared for early soft targets and to plan for the long haul – it will be worth it!

Before you start

If you are planning to work with communities on interpretive projects it is essential that you plan to support them through:

- guidelines to help with the interpretive planning process

- workshops and training to help with the delivery of any interpretive media

- mentoring throughout the project

It is also essential to decide what type of outcome is important to you. Which is more important the process of involving people or the product at the end of the project?

This should be discussed and agreed at the start of any project. Otherwise the danger is your role will be to enforce method at the expensive of the enjoyment of the participants.

Top Tips …or lessons learnt from other projects!

- Be very clear about the difference between informing and consulting communities – only consult if you are really interested in getting feedback.

- Some communities want or need more support than others.

- Community working requires time and energy.

- Trust can be a big issue and building relationships with community groups is essential.

- All community projects require a champion and can succeed or fail due to one or two key individuals.

- Any approach needs to be flexible enough to learn from experience.

- Community projects need on-going support.

- Funding and the complexity of grant applications can be an issue.

- Training ambassadors is fine but they need support and prompting to put those skills into action.

- Do you have the necessary skills and resources to support community projects?

- Do you need to involve an experienced facilitator or trainer?

Here are some tried and tested ways of starting off community projects…

Surveys and Questionnaires

These are a good way of starting and can be used to reach a large number of people and to sample opinion. Responses to postal surveys are often very low so create your own online survey using **surveymonkey.com**.
If local people are involved in the writing, collection and analysis of the survey the community will have more buy in.

Mind Maps

Mind Maps or Spider Diagrams are useful if you are working with a small group. They use drawing to help people think about issues and solutions. Write the issue in the centre of a large sheet of paper and list all the reasons for the issue around it. Then add any solutions and actions around the outside – link everything up with lots of coloured pens!

Exhibitions and Roadshows

These are great good for reaching a lot of people quickly. They are good for explaining a new area of work or policy. You will need to build in an interactive element for people to give feedback. It's a simple idea but Post-Its can be very helpful in encouraging people to comment. Just give them pads of Post-Its and pens to write down their ideas and design a chart or an Ideas Wall as a method of display. If you photograph them it will save on typing the comments up!

Photo safaris

Gather people on location and ask them to take photos of what interests or concerns them. You can collate on line or print out and then ask them to annotate or build a visual "map" of your location.

It's great to see things from others perspective and very useful for involving children, young people and those who find it easier to take in information in visual form.

Visioning Exercises and Focus Groups

If the project is more complex these are good for bringing together a small group of people to consider an issue in more depth. These can be particularly good techniques for targeting normally underrepresented groups.

Community Art

Working with artists is a fun way in which people can get involved. Techniques include parish maps, performance art and much more. There are lots of arts organisations who can provide excellent support and ideas – and even some who specialise in interpretation!

Memory Days

Use the local press to invite people along to a Memories Day asking them to bring old photographs and any other interesting documents about the place or object your project is based on.

Record their stories, perhaps even setting up an oral history session at the event or as at a follow up visit. If you need advice on Oral History take a look at **oralhistory.org.uk**. A printer, scanner and recording device are essential.

Evaluation

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Evaluation is a systematic way of deciding how well something has worked.

After your interpretation has been in place for a while, take some time to assess whether it met your objectives.

To find out whether visitors were really engaged with your interpretation, you will need to spend time gathering feedback from people.

There are two kinds of information you can gather:

- **Quantitative** – Statistics such as the number of visitors and how long they pay attention to your interpretation.
- **Qualitative** – The opinions, attitudes, perceptions and feelings of your visitors.

You can collect information in two ways:

- **Indirect** – Observe visitors without their knowledge.
- **Direct** – Use interviews or questionnaires to ask visitors what they think.

Observing and listening to your visitors can give you clues to what they thought and felt as a result of using your interpretation.

An evaluation process

Here's a process you could use for evaluating your project:

1. Make sure everyone is clear about the project's mission, values and objectives.
2. Identify the main reasons why you want to prove success or improve your interpretation.
3. Think about who is affected by your project and what it means for them.
4. Describe how you intend to achieve your goals.
5. Choose indicators of success carefully. You may need to measure things that were not originally expected or intended.
6. Make an evaluation plan, outlining methods and how you will ask people their opinions and collect data
7. Collect the information.
8. Analyse the information and draw conclusions.
9. Share it with others.
10. Learn from the evaluation and take action.

:-) Don't forget to celebrate a job well done!

Here are some methods of evaluation which are effective and can be delivered easily...

Type of evaluation	How do you do it?	Pros	Cons
Activity based research	Plan an activity such as a guided walk to gather thoughts from visitors	People enjoy the activity	Surveyor needs to record feedback on the move and write up later
Written survey by post	Post out copies or distribute on site	Easier to get people to complete on the day	Costly printing and paper. Time consuming to input data afterwards
Digital survey	**surveymonkey.com** is an easy way to set up online	Easy to tell people about it and get it out	People who don't use e-mail won't be consulted
Telephone survey	Plan an outline script and arrange phone calls	Can explore questions in depth	Costly and time consuming to conduct and input data
On-site face to face survey	Compile survey and speak to visitors on site	Good data if surveyors are well trained	Costly and time consuming to input data
Interviews	Sit down with visitors and have a conversation	Great for getting quality data	Very time consuming
Focus groups	Group of five to eight people with a facilitator, sit and discuss specific questions	Great for qualitative data and exploring themes in some depth and reacting to responses	Challenging to set up Need skilled facilitators
Artworks, video, film	Record people's feedback on and off site. Allows for set questions or to be more creative	Useful for using information on websites later	Can be costly to edit

Coming soon

Look out for new guidance on:

Exhibitions

Interpreting objects

Working with artists

Researching projects

Interpretation for children

How to write a brief

Telling our story

Thank you :-)

…to the many interpreters who work with the Canal & River Trust and who have contributed their knowledge and experience to these guidelines.