

A Short Guide to Heritage Trails

by

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An Introductory Guide to Heritage Trails

Introduction:

Heritage Trails are a way of encouraging people to get the best out of visiting environments of particular cultural, natural, social and historical interest. A trail can be designed to assist people visiting a single building or location. It can help visitors understand a particular village, town, or area of interest and, on the larger scale; it can be laid out across an entire county, or region.

Heritage Trails broadly fall into two categories:

- Information Trails
- Discovery Trails

Information trails tend to be passive requiring the user to walk, or travel by other means, whilst gathering media information, or simply enjoying the experience.

Discovery trails are more active. They are particularly appropriate for younger people and family groups. Discovery trails rely on some sort of test in finding or using the information provided. For example, a discovery trail might provide the answers to a quiz where it is unlikely people could guess the answers without completing the observations of the trail.

The design and operations of a trail can be as varied and imaginative as your creativity and resources will allow. However, they will usually centre around four broad types:

- Paper-based Trails
- Information Board Trails
- Audio-tactile Trails
- Virtual Trails

Heritage Trails can either be set up in any one of these types, or all types can be used in combinations to meet the requirements of different people.

This Introductory Guide will touch on the requirements for setting up trails of each type in each category. The choice is yours.

How To Use This Guide:

The Guide is intended to help in the planning and realisation of a Heritage Trail.

If you already have a trail in mind and simply want some checklists that you have covered the key requirements, we suggest you consult the index and navigate your way through the information provided.

If your Heritage Trail is no more than an idea, then reading the whole Guide may help consolidate your plans and make your trail easier to realise and maintain.

Keith Small
Melton Mowbray
August 2006

Planning Aims and General Materials for the Trail

What Do You Want Your Trail To Do?

There must be a reason why you are planning a Heritage Trail so what do you want it to do? Is the primary function of your Heritage Trail?

- To inform
 - To educate
 - To entertain
 - To encourage tourism towards places of interest
 - To assist visitors in getting the best from their visit to your location
 - To control visitors in sensitive, or fragile environments
- ... Some combination of these

The purpose of the trail will often condition:

- The layout of the trail geography
- The materials included in the trail information
- The information methods used

Information Trails:

We live in an information age. People assume that information is valuable to their experience, even when it is forgotten shortly afterwards. However, we have become used to information coming in bite-sized, and varied ways.

The simplest information trail can be a photocopied sheet of A4 paper with some useful details about the site and the points to particularly notice when passing along the trail. These are particularly useful when presented in the form of a discovery trail.

At the other end of the scale, a professionally produced video telling interesting stories about the location in the form of a documentary drama. An example of this type can be seen at the visitor centre for Rutland Water.

The inclusion of specific items of trivia that visitors are unlikely to know already often stimulates information trails:

- The etymology of place names (e.g. streets called Cheapside get their name from the Anglo-Saxon word 'ceap', meaning market, or that pubs and houses called 'Chequers' are almost always associated with traditional cattle drover's ways – including the Prime Minister's residence)

- Obscure anecdotes that connect the site to more famous events and people (e.g. 'Peppermint Billy' was the last person to be publicly hanged at Leicester Prison after killing the tollgate keeper in Melton)
- Details of the lifestyles of bygone ages (e.g. How and why the potato became the staple source of dietary carbohydrates after its discovery in the New World)
- Details of the fauna that might be associated with a visit to the trail (e.g. an annual timeline showing the comparative life cycles of various insect species found at the site)
- Details of the flora (e.g. The flowering times for various identifiable species shown on a blocked out calendar)
- Brief details of legends and folktales associated with the site (e.g. stories of witches, ghosts and apparitions - or of walking trees and enchanted pools)

What are the points of interest around your trail and what little known anecdotes and trivia might be included in your information?

Education Trails

The information used in education trails is best when more factually based and, if possible associated with the curriculum requirements of subject studies. Education trails are usually best suited for organised parties from schools or special interest groups. It is important to make this information clear, accurate, mainstream and, whenever possible, 'recordable' in some way.

It is also worth considering activity opportunities if your trail is intended to attract younger people (e.g. opportunities to take rubbings of tree barks, or church brasses; or to colour in different flower and insect outlines)

When planning an education trail it is worthwhile collaborating with local schools or special interest groups to get their input on the key features needing highlights in your information.

Entertainment Trails

Obviously all trails need to be entertaining, whatever their primary function. Some trails are specifically designed to entertain however. The best examples of these are the various 'living museums' that give people a short living experience of the lifestyles associated with the environment. (e.g. being pupils in a 1930's classroom, turning the handle of a butter churner, watching a thatcher, or a shoemaker at work and trying some of the simpler and hazard-free skills).

The key to entertainment trails is usually to find a source of humour, if possible by allowing people to discover that some things are not as easy as they look.

A genuine entertainment trail is usually best associated with a special event, perhaps a village fete or a gala day, or at least particular operation times because entertainment trails usually depend on people being present to entertain the trail users. For example, a village in the South West opens its doors to visitors several times during the tourist season. The residents then put on a series of well-rehearsed and designed exhibits to entertain and inform their visitors whilst bringing new trade to the village.

The author of this Guide has also participated in an Archery Heritage Trail. Here visitors were conducted through various displays and exhibits showing the history of archery in war and sport. They were able to talk with archers dressed in various historic, military and archery competition costumes. They were able to pass through displays of archery and heraldic accoutrements, and finally, had an opportunity to practice archery, under supervision, with simple, low-powered bows at short-range targets, - and to do all this in the environs of a genuine and historic castle.

Controlling visitors in sensitive or fragile areas

Sometimes your trail might be in the proximity of private lands or residences. Sometimes the area might contain protected and rare plant species or have issues of erosions and other accidental damage. Ideally these areas should be controlled by barriers, but if this not convenient, your trail should be designed so that the path between any two nodes avoids the area needing protection.

Careful route planning and clear instructions of the route between two interesting features are usually the best way to deter casual curiosity. Experience says it is not usually a good idea to issue warning notices or erect prohibition signs. For some reason these tend to encourage the 'explorer spirit' in the users of the trail.

This does not apply to hazards that might be encountered on the trail however. These must be actively avoided, or physically protected against. (See section on Risk Assessment – page 10).

Maximising the benefits to tourist and encouraging visitors

Encouraging people to visit your trail will always be part of your aim. The chances are that, if you are hoping to encourage people to go out of their way to visit your trail, you already have some interesting and valuable features for them to see.

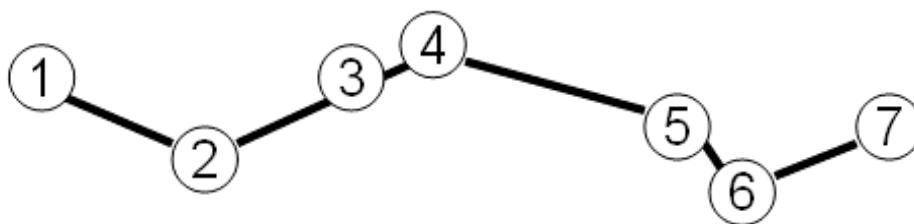
The key to this purpose is more associated with the publicity, operation and administration of your trail than with the trail itself. It is important to decide if you want your trail to be a tourist attraction, or simply a casual local facility, as this will largely condition the quality of your materials and their presentation.

Trail Geography:

The best way to plan a Heritage Trail is to pick a series of special interest points, or areas where trail followers can stop to gather and investigate information. These represent Information Nodes that will help visitors to navigate the trail and create a valuable and complete experience.

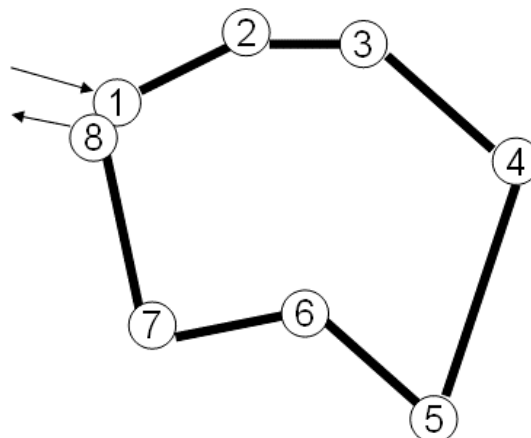
Consider how these information nodes can best be arranged around the area of your trail.

Linear Routes:



Linear trails are particularly useful when following a geographical feature such as a river, or a canal. They can also be useful to control access through, or across, sensitive or fragile environs where you want visitors to stay within defined areas. The nodes can highlight particular points of interest and the trail information can explain what to look for in the next section.

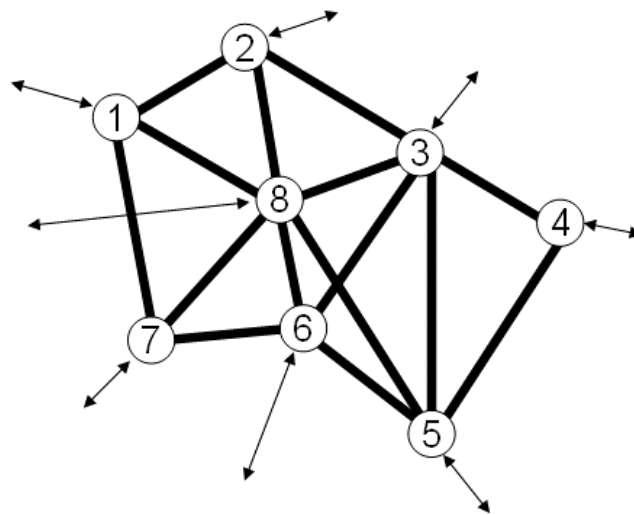
Circuit Routes:



Circuit trails can be used in circumstances such as flower meadows, woodlands, particular buildings, farm and factory locations where entry and exit are best through a specific access point and the trail follows a logical sequence of prospects or features of interest.

Longer circuit trails can also be planned when the optimum entry point is a car park, or cycle park, or an entrance gate that controls access to the area.

Network Routes:



Network trails offer the best option for towns and villages where visitors can enter and leave the trail at any point, pick their own routes through the trail and cover as many or as few points as they wish.

In a network trail the information nodes are numbered for identification purposes only and require some sort of marker, or obvious feature, which allows easy navigation around the trail. Network trails are often best supported by fixed information boards, more of which later.

Picking The Node Locations:

Selecting the Information Node locations is an early decision to make when planning a heritage trail. Four important considerations should be taken into account:

- The features that make the location a reasonable point of interest
- The convenience of the location for easy navigation around the trail
- The ease with which trail users can gather in groups to review the node information
- In this age of litigation it is important that the trail, and therefore each node is as safe as "reasonably practical" and entirely legal in its operation

The features of the location

This depends on the type of trail being planned and the overall purposes of the trail.

In linear trails, the location of information nodes may occur almost automatically. A seating area, a clearing, a bridge, or some other obvious feature that might represent a natural pause in the progress of the trail user where the next stage of trail information is read, or provided:

What are the particular features that might make a node location an appropriate place to pause?

e.g. You might want your information nodes to feature:

- A particular view or prospect that enables several features to be linked
- A particular building, or set of buildings, important to your trail objectives
- A ancient tree, or a particular plantation of trees, shrubs, or flowers
- A natural feature such as a pond, a badger set, a rock outcrop, or a particular species of flora
- An artificial feature such as a fishpond, a fountain, a stature, or a gazebo
- A place of historical, or social interest

This theme will be developed later when the Guide looks at “More Detailed Planning of Materials” (page 13).

The convenience of the node locations

- How many Information Nodes are needed to connect the trail?
- Where should they be located to make navigation easy?
- How far apart should the nodes be to give a sense of interesting progress to the trail?
- Are the nodes too close giving a sense of continuous interruption to the trail?
- Can people gather in appropriate groups: school parties, family groups, individual trail users, etc?
- Are there enough features at the location, or before reaching the next location to provide interesting progression through the trail?

When planning your route it is advisable to walk through it several times to make sure your node locations meet the criteria listed. Introduce new nodes, combine nodes, or move nodes until you have the right feel of progression in your trail.

Gathering groups at information nodes

It is worth considering the ways that groups might gather at the locations for the information nodes. This also depends on the overall purpose of your route and how many people you think might be using the trail at any one time, particularly if you are planning a network trail where 'traffic control' around the route can be random.

At best, a badly planned node location can cause delays and frustrations. At worst, overcrowding a node might create safety risks. Make sure the locations of your information nodes can cope with the expected numbers of people you hope will be using your trail.

Trail safety & law

The law requires that any public activity 'shall be conducted as safely as is reasonably practical'. This is not quite as simple as it might seem. If you are designing a trail for public use you may be accountable for the safety of that trail even if you are not intending to supervise the trail. The designers of the trail still have what Health and Safety legislation describes as "a duty of care" for those who use the trail.

It is worth carrying out a risk assessment for your trail and recording the results.

- If you are looking for grant funding to support your trail, evidence of a risk assessment may be required by the funding agency
- If your trail requires planning permission from the local authority, this will be dependent on a risk assessment
- If your trail crosses private land, the owners may also be liable to a duty of care. Before finalizing consents the landowners should require a written risk assessment for their files so that they can show that reasonably practical steps have been taken in the design of the trail.

It is important that all private landowners have given their formal consent for the trail to operate on their property and that the local authority's planning department has cleared trails using public land.

Risk Assessments:

Carrying out a risk assessment is not difficult, but it does require care and attention to detail. The Health and Safety Executive recommends a simple 'Five Step 5 by 5' approach. This Guide recommends that you conduct separate risk assessments for the trail as a whole and for each, and every, information node along the trail.

The first step is to identify and write down (audit) every hazard. A hazard is anything that might cause harm to a person.

The key things to look out for are:

- Tripping and falling hazards on steps, or uneven ground
- Falling hazards from steps, bridges, quays, river and canal banks, and other platforms
- Slipping hazards on sloping ground, or smooth artificial surfaces and especially any surfaces that become particularly slippery when wet
- Proximity of moving vehicles, including cycles, particularly where they may also use the trail paths
- Sharp hazards including railings, metal edges, tree branches, thorns, the potential for broken glass
- Strike hazards such as low tree boughs, archways, overhanging protrusions and signage
- Burn hazards where trail users might pass heat sources such as boilers, ovens, fires, etc.
- Electrical hazards of any kind
- Fire hazards of any kind, particularly if the trail comes near flammable materials
- Illness hazards that might come from particular allergy risks, or individuals being taken ill in places where the trail might be difficult for emergency access
- Special hazards that might be particular to your trail, e.g. a trail in a flower meadow, or woodland, or a farm, might be hazarded by the possibility of poisonous plants, insect stings, livestock or the proximity of parked machinery.

Every hazard, by definition, has the potential to cause harm. The risk is that the hazard will cause harm and to what extent. A Risk Assessment considers the hazard, assesses the likelihood of harm being caused, the severity of the damage it might cause, and takes active steps to minimize that harm so that the risks are managed.

The Five Step Risk Assessment Process:

1. Consider each hazard carefully. What harm could it cause, even in a worst-case scenario. When carrying out this process do not rely on people's common sense. Think about what could happen if people are distracted, excited, in a hurry, or even looking for trouble.
2. Give a numerical value from 1 to 5 of the likelihood of the risk happening where 1 is very unlikely and 5 is almost certain. Be as objective as possible. If in doubt, get the advice of an expert.
3. Give the same 1 to 5 numerical value to the harm this risk can cause where 1 is the possibility minor damage such as slight sprains and

abrasions, and 5 is the possibility of serious damage, or even death. Again, be as objective as possible. If in doubt, get the advice of an expert.

4. Record your scores.
 - a. Any score of three (3) or above needs active management such as warning signs, barriers, the convenient provision of safety equipment such as buoyancy aids near a canal bank, or clear and prompt access to first aid materials
 - b. In addition, any score of four (4) or above should be avoided where practical, removed from the trail, or actively protected by physical barriers and pictorial signage
 - c. NO SCORE OF FIVE (5) IS ACCEPTABLE. The trail must be redesigned so that the hazard is completely avoided.

5. Record the measures taken to avoid and/or reduce the risk potential and, when you are satisfied the trail is safe, i.e. no '5 scores' and control, or advisory measures, implemented, put copies of your completed written risk assessment in a safe place and review them regularly.

Note:

The final page of this Guide includes an example pro-forma that can be photocopied and used for your trail risk assessments – see Page 30.

More Detailed Planning Of Materials:

Realising the plan

Once your trail has got past the initial idea stage, it may be necessary to form a partnership with all interested parties and begin to allocate specific tasks. Ideally you want this group to be 'doers' rather than 'talkers'. You will need to explore all the options and discuss the practicalities of your plan, but essentially, you will need people who are prepared to do the work required to make the plans reality.

Once this Action Group is formed, it is important to review and agree a more detailed plan and begin to work out the details of what will be done by whom.

What is the main purpose of your trail?

- Explaining the features of a place or landscape
- Natural history
- History
- Flora, fauna and natural features
- Tracking an interesting route, or pathway, perhaps around a church or a woodland, or even a garden

How will your trail inform users?

- Leaflets, Information Boards, Artefact exhibits, etc. using:
 - Text
 - Artwork
 - Photographs
 - Tactile artefacts
 - Visual exhibits
- Audio recordings (particularly effective in secure and controlled locations)
- Film or video recordings (particularly effective for controlled access heritage centres)
- Information and communication technology (ICT) based packages. In other words computers and virtual internet trails

What is the intended route for your trail?

- Point-to-point, or circuit
- Fixed start and finish, or flexible ingress and egress
- Trail network, or single track progression

How many trail nodes?

- This decision should be based on anticipated funding for materials' production as well as those navigation, information management and safety issues covered in earlier sections. An information node is the source point for information to the trail user. The more you

have the more information you will have to provide, and usually the greater the cost.

- Something between eight and twelve nodes is a sensible number to initially investigate. Less than eight is likely to make the trail too short and difficult to navigate as an experience. More than twelve needs the trail to be in a location of particular interest and may be more in the nature of a guided tour rather than a casual trail meander.

Investigating The Funding Methods

Unfortunately, even the simplest trail involving little more than a leaflet made obtainable from your local church, village hall, post office, etc. will require some production funding.

Planning for trails that are more ambitious may involve additional hidden costs. The production methods used for fixed information boards, graphic displays and signposts are, in themselves, relatively more expensive. Planning permissions may also be required, as might vandal proof installation and methods of maintaining, cleaning and damage repair have to be budgeted for in your cost breakdowns.

The equipment required for creating audio trails and those involving information technologies that are even more complex can be very expensive.

As soon as your plans are taking shape it is a good idea to obtain estimated costings and prepare an outline budget of the expenditure that might be incurred.

The funding available and the options for raising funds might condition what is a possible and practical for your trail. Have some clear ideas of how you will meet the costs envisaged before going too far with your plans.

You might then approach the following sources with a brief business plan to see how likely it is that the required funding can be raised:

- Benefactor donations
- Commercial sponsorship
- Local authority initiative grants
- Regional development grants
- National Lottery funding
- Specialist charitable funding

Benefactor donations

The easiest method of funding is to seek money, or in-kind donations of materials equipment and production time, from local clubs, groups, associations and individuals.

- Is there a local artists' group whose members might donate specific pictures and drawings, or local photographers who can donate archive pictures to enliven the trail's more interesting features?
- Can you persuade a local artisan to fabricate the display frames, or arrange for their installation?
- Might you find a local printer who will donate a print run of leaflets for your trail without cost?
- Can you arrange for local clubs and special interest groups to organise successful fund raising events and activities for the trail?

Commercial sponsorship

Again, commercial sponsorship can be financial, or in-kind. However, a commercial sponsor will usually require a commercial advantage gained directly from their participation so a short business plan will be an essential part of gaining their sponsorship.

The essentials of such a business plan must include:

- How much money or in-kind time and materials are you seeking from each particular sponsor?
- How will the sponsor's links be identified, acknowledged and publicised?
- How many visitors do you anticipate experiencing the trail information directly and therefore knowing about the sponsor's involvement?
- How will other people become indirectly aware of the sponsor's involvement?
- What benefits will the sponsors gain from their involvement (usually publicity)

Local authority initiative grants

Many initiative grants are now available through local authorities and their associated agencies. The difficulty is that these grants are often, almost by definition, associated to short-term initiatives. What is eligible for funding may change, with very little notice, from time-to-time. They will also require evidence of a reliable audit trail to show how the funding is used and reliable contacts who will take responsibility for the administration of the project.

Remember, these are usually public funds so you must be prepared for the paperwork and evidential demands required. These schemes will also require

matched-funding. That is to say, the grant will top-up funding, or accurately evaluated, in-kind contributions from elsewhere. Local authority websites can be a useful source of information on currently available grants.

A less formal way of approaching this sometimes-daunting exercise is to:

1. Prepare a brief outline of your plans
2. Try to arrange an informal meeting with officers of your local authority to present your outline to -
 - o Planning Officers
 - o Community Development Officers
 - o Youth Development Officers
 - o Environmental Development Officers
 - o Town Centre Managers (if you have them)

... at this meeting you can seek their advice on funding sources that might be available and to whom you should be specifically applying

3. Make contact with those people recommended requesting an application pack for the appropriate funding sources
4. Complete all application requirements accurately, fully, and in the required detail
5. Send in your application
6. The application system will then take over so you will need a keen and experienced administrator to respond to any additional requirements and queries

Regional development grants

The regional process is similar in most respects to local authority grants. Indeed, regional funding is increasingly being delegated to local authority agencies and associates.

Regional 'pump-priming' funds can still be available for larger and more ambitious projects however, particularly if the planned Heritage Trail has the potential to exploit commercially useful, or technological, innovations.

Again it is important to note that matched-funding of at least 50% of the total budget will usually be required.

National Lottery funding

Sometimes thought of as the Eldorado of funding sources, and sometimes just as difficult to find, the national lottery is still a source of local project funding. A key advantage is that lottery funding will often meet the entire cost of a worthy project with no, or at least little, additional matched funding needed.

The downside is that your plans need to be fully developed with all required permissions, planning consents and authorisations presented in writing with your application along with a complete financial breakdown of direct and indirect costs needing to be met.

In other words, a lottery application can raise hopes and expectations and still not obtain the funding required. This can be very demoralising for your action group and considerable efforts may come to nothing in the long run.

The National Lottery website is a good source of information for the types of funding available and the appropriate fund to aim at for your grant application. Alternatively a telephone call to the regional office describing the nature of your project will usually obtain an application pack and a set of guidance notes for the appropriate funds.

Other funding agencies and charities

If your planned Heritage Trail has a specific and specialised theme it may be possible to obtain more direct funding made available for more imaginative and creative projects. For example, a rural heritage trail associated with a farming community may be eligible for support from one of DEFRA's diversification funds. An application by the landowners to the NFU will often obtain guidance on eligibility of such schemes.

You might want to feature works of sculpture, or other creative artefacts as the nodes for your trail. Various charities have the development and encouragement of local artists, graphic designers, craft workers and technicians in their mission. An application that links the creativity of your trail with the aims of such charities can sometimes bring unexpected and often highly publicised success.

Obtaining Planning Permissions And Land Owner Agreements For Rights Of Way

Permanent signage in public areas

If you intend to put 'permanent' information boards, pictorial displays, or directional signs in any public places to guide people through your trail you will require formal planning consent from the local authority.

This will require a standard planning application with detailed architectural style plans of the locations and types of signage intended. It will also incur a fee.

One tip is to try to get your local planning department to agree to treat the entire trail as a single planning application thereby incurring one set of fees

only. Otherwise, the authority might deem that each-and-every board, sign and display is a separate planning application and this can be expensive.

Planning applications are unlikely to be successful if:

- The proposals cause an actual hazard in the location
- The proposals cause an actual distraction to road users and others passing by that could lead even indirectly to creating a hazard
- The proposals could cause distraction or confusion with other legitimate road signs and information signs
- The proposals interfere with the usual public use of the location
- Other people object that the proposal will interfere with, or inconvenience their normal and legitimate use of the location
- The proposals could cause obstruction, or inconvenience in the pathway, particularly for people with sensory deprivation
- The proposals are not in keeping with the planning policy for the area around the location

Try to take account of as many of these as possible during your own Risk Assessment.

Permanent signage in institutional or trust areas

Perhaps your trail plans to put permanent signage around your local church, or on lands owned by a trust or estate for the public good. If this is the case, it is worth making a formal application for permission to erect or affix your signs. Local representatives such as the vicar or a member of the trust board may support the project, okay the plan, and even be members of your Action Group.

However, people move on and it would be a pity if, after all the trouble and expense of putting the trail together, you had to take your signs down.

It is worth keeping such bodies in the communication loop from the very beginning of your plans. They may even be able to provide practical help.

Trails over private land

Most Heritage Trails that use private land have the initial support of the landowner. A landowner who wants to share some informative, educational, or entertaining aspect of the land may even initiate the idea of a trail.

However, it is worth checking on the rights of way, and clearly agreeing what is included in the trail and, more importantly, what is excluded. Constructing a written agreement of acceptance of the trail plan provides at least some

protection that you will not be wasting your efforts. Landlords do tend to change their minds if heritage trails across their lands turn out to be more intrusive than they expected.

If your trail looks like being really beneficial to all concerned, and the landowners are enthusiastic, they might even be prepared to sign a legal covenant protecting the Heritage Trail on agreed terms.

Trails on public footpaths and rights of way

Even when your trail is entirely along public rights of way and only exists in the form of an information leaflet, booklet, or brochure, it is worth engaging as many local landowners as possible at an early stage and explaining the purposes and benefits.

Your trail is intended to encourage the use of these footpaths and local rights of way. If this becomes intrusive, a local landowner can often find innovative ways to startle, intimidate, discourage, or deter unwelcome visitors.

The author has had several experiences of multiple shotgun blasts being discharged in adjacent fields and large, intimidating, bulls standing on footpaths, when he has been testing his map reading skills.

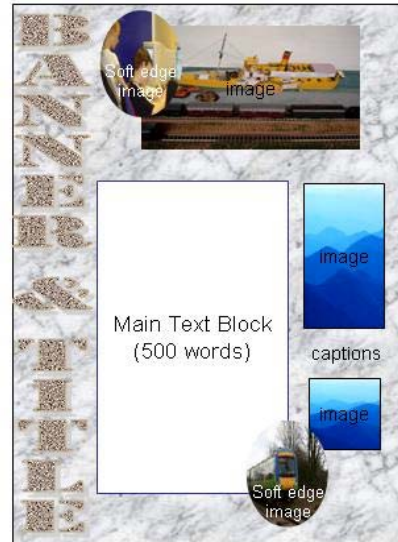
On the other hand, many landowners feel a sense of responsibility to share the land with others providing it is done in a reasonable and non-destructive manner. Even the passive approval of local landowners is better than any form of active resistance to your plans.

Planning The Graphical Layout

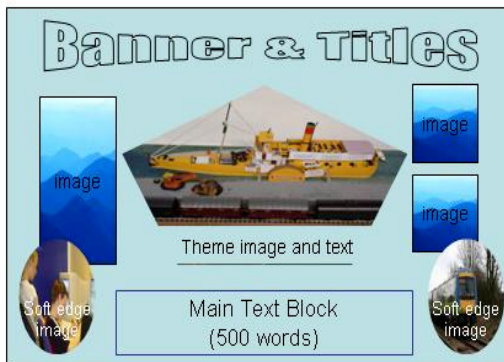
Page Layout

The increasing availability of digital desktop publishing technologies presents many exciting opportunities. Conducting an image search on your world-wide-web browser makes literally billions of photographic images available covering every conceivable subject and genre. There are also many sites providing drawings, cartoons, diagrams and other schematics. You should however be aware of any copyright conditions – see Copyright (page 27)

At the same time, digital photography makes it easier to produce spontaneous pictures that can be adjusted in post-production to achieve high quality images. There is also a vast range of desktop publishing software (DTP) offering the opportunity for even casual part-timers to produce work that aspires to professional techniques.



Display Boards



With a little technical knowledge, creative talent, and a lot of time and patience, almost anything is possible.

When producing information, whether on boards, books, or leaflets it is worth remembering the ancient cliché that “one

picture is worth a thousand words”. Try to get as much information across using photographs, drawings and diagrams as possible.

Use your words to tell the stories associated with the images. Often it is good literally to tell the story in a précised format. Interesting and generally unknown trivia about people’s lives, or even the intimate life cycles of plants and animals, always seems to entertain.

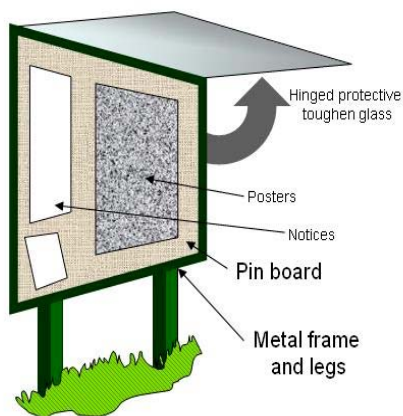
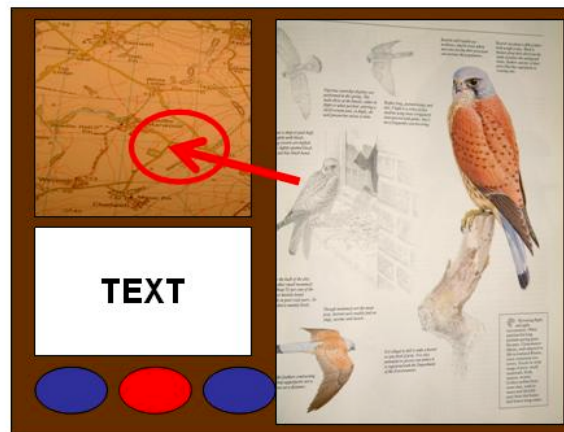
Balancing the graphical images and text boxes is best done by laying out panels across the working surface until the desired balance is achieved (see

examples). It is usually best to standardise the theme and style of all information using a template.

However, some heritage trails achieve their originality by having different publications and information boards freely designed by different people so that each piece has its own characteristics and the absence of a template identity is one of the unique qualities of the trail.

Notice Boards

An interesting approach for the more economical heritage trails, particularly those intended for educational purposes, is to use notice boards. It requires a reasonably secure and protected notice board erected at the site of the information node. The notice board can then be used to display posters, maps, text information and photographs that are relevant to a particular site.



One advantage of this approach is that materials can be changed to suit particular times of the year, or to incorporate improved material. Another advantage is the dynamics of the situation mean that relatively expensive artwork can be put alongside lower cost, home-printer information to get flexible understandings across to visitors.

Boards can even be customised to show the particular needs of specialist groups, or personalised to convey messages to particular visitors.

Creative Approaches

The most important aspect in planning your Heritage Trail is to be as creative as possible with both the media and the message when informing the visitors to your trail.

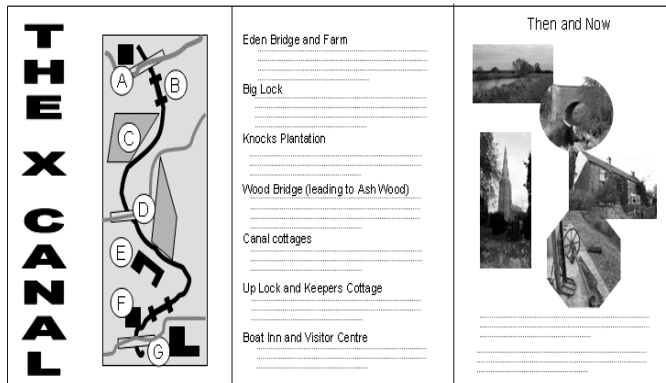
Keep your information clear, simple and interesting. Use pictures and graphics as much as possible. Keep the locations of your information nodes clean tidy and comfortable to be in.

Heritage Trails can be great fun to design and 'nice', gentle exercises in learning for the users. A Heritage Trail can be a great reward for the effort and planning required so we wish you:

Good Trailing!

Some Examples Of Typical Trails

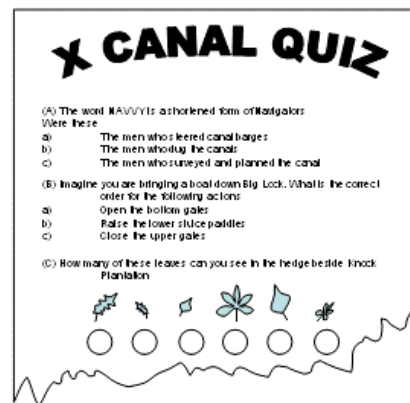
A Simple Heritage Trail Leaflet



The accompanying illustration shows one side of a black and white, photocopied A4 paper intended to be folded into three compartments. In this particular case it is intended to support a Heritage Trail along a section of canal. It has seven information

nodes leading to a small visitor centre in a local inn. The innkeepers met all the costs and the leaflets are distributed in local stores and public buildings. It goes from a car park near Eden Bridge Farm for about two miles along a canal tow path making it an ideal evening walk. Crossing the bridge at information node (G) follows a meandering lane that, after about 4 miles, leads back to the car park. The route itself is linear and is intended to be a there-and-back walk.

The opposite side of the paper might have a discovery trail quiz for young people and family groups. The local inn could offer small prizes for every sheet of correct answers presented to the bar staff.



Paper-based Heritage Trails can also be used for one-off special events. The writer has organised orientation trails that have been used to support visiting students on visits to various European capitals and for tours across the UK.

To make sure these groups took in most of the cultural and heritage sites at their own pace the trail was organised as a discovery quiz. What is written on the plaque at this location? Describe what is in front of you when you stand here? Token awards were made for fully completed entries and sometimes the trail required evidence to be gathered en route.

More Professional Leaflets, Pamphlets & Books

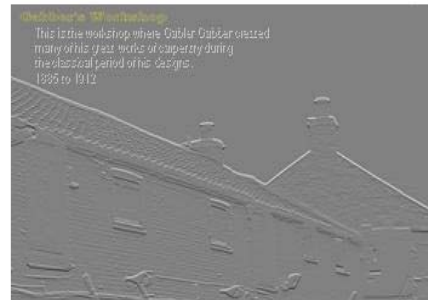


Simple trail leaflets can be much improved using proper graphic design techniques, text art and coloured print fonts, full colour photographs and artwork. Nowadays the technologies for this approach are more accessible than ever and costs are coming down.

It is worth considering if your trail leaflet can be expanded into a pamphlet with three or four A4 sheets folded to an A5 booklet or even a larger A4 binder. You might then persuade your trail visitors to make a donation, or pay a marked price for this souvenir item.

Fixed Trail Boards

Ideally, there will be a convenient building, or other permanent structure onto which you can fasten your trail boards and direction indicators. This is a relatively trouble free option. You will need to confirm permissions to use this location and consider the methods of fixing and the ways in which you will protect your boards from thieves, vandals and pranksters.



Wall-mounted trail boards are sometimes made from very creative materials. The writer has seen:

- etched aluminium
- incised, multi-coloured, plastic laminates
- cold-cast bronze
- carved wood
- ... even cast iron (though you would need to be sure the wall fixings would carry the weight)

The information on a wall-mounted trail board may have to be limited to what people can see at the location to avoid confusion and maintain the logical flow of the trail.

Permanent Trail Rostrums



It will always be difficult to control the operations of a trail around a village or a town. People will come and go as they wish, picking up only those parts of the trail that are convenient.

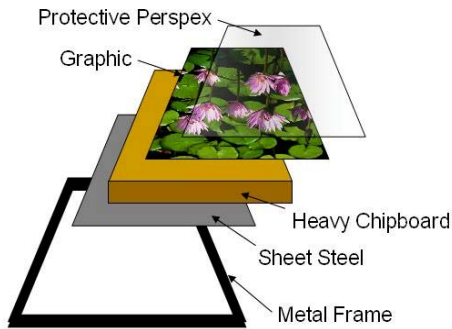


This is an ideal situation for a Network Heritage Trail; - and a good way to impart information on a network trail is by graphically displayed rostrum boards.

The accompanying example shows a metal-framed rostrum standing on two square section metal legs that have been set and bolted into concrete.

This particular board is about 1 metre tall so the information itself has been angled so that it can be viewed more easily.

Boards mounted on longer legs can be mounted vertically. However, taller boards tend to be obtrusive in the landscape and can represent a serious hazard where there is a risk of people striking their heads against the framing.



Again, gluing and riveting into a metal frame substantially protect the particular information in this example. The graphic is laminated onto a plastic sheet, backed by heavy chipboard, which in turn is protected by a thin steel sheet. The graphic lamination is vulnerable to vandalism and sunlight so a sheet of polarised, paint-resistant, surface-hardened, Perspex protects it.

Information Boards of this type can be quite expensive to produce but should last a very long time with minimum maintenance. They can be very effective and can be designed to blend into the terrain.



Technology-based Trails

Audio, audio-visual and even virtual reality is becoming more and more available for the creation of technology-based Heritage Trails. Again, this is dependent on the increasing use of Digital ICT in almost every aspect of communication. Prices are coming down and the range of technical equipment options is almost too wide to make an informed choice.

Of course, audio trails have been around our cathedral churches and stately homes for some time. These trails were first intended to accommodate people with different sensory requirements and later became a useful way of communicating information in a portable format whilst walking around an information rich environment without a tour guide. Stonehenge operates a particularly interesting audio commentary as you walk around the site. The main issue for your trail is likely to be how to recoup the cost, and protect the asset, of what will still be relatively expensive equipment. Stonehenge is now a completely closed environment. It would be impossible to walk away unintentionally with the equipment still in your pocket.

Digital recording and editing has also greatly improved the image quality of home-produced video-television programmes. Many visitor centres now offer some very good video programmes about the location and set the scene in which the trail exists. An advantage of video for the dramatically inclined is that time can be moved around in seconds and videos can show dramatic reconstructions of historical events, present situations and future plans in a matter of moments.

Finally, all of these techniques can be brought together to create a Virtual Heritage Tour so that people do not even have to visit the physical site. The experience, and even some of the atmosphere, can be achieved in the comfort of an armchair at home, or a desktop in school.



Virtual Trails can be very valuable for those who are genuinely trying to use their trails to increase the tourist footfall. If the virtual trail can achieve interest, curiosity and enthusiasm, it can work as an appetiser for the real thing. However, with all technology-based ideas, and particularly for virtual reality tours you need to tackle it as a specialist field. Creating the information is often easy. Delivering it can be the interesting challenge.

Copyright

If you include words and images that have been created by others in your trail materials, or if you wish to protect your own creative work in your Heritage Trail, you need to consider copyright.

Copyright is a set of exclusive rights regulating the use of a particular expression of an image or information. It is literally "the right to copy" an original creation.

The symbol to show copyright is applied to the work is ©, alternately written as (c). Copyright law covers only the particular form or manner in which ideas or information have been manifested, the "form of material expression". It is not designed or intended to cover the actual idea, concepts, facts, styles, or techniques that may be embodied in, or represented by the copyright work.

Copyright is primarily intended to protect the commercial exploitation of an idea or expression. Usually there will be no consequences in using an image for purely personal or community use, providing the originator is fully acknowledged. This acknowledgement should be sufficient to direct any

subsequent commercial opportunities to the originator, or their representatives.

A little caution should be used if you intend to make a financial charge for access to your Heritage Trail, or for the printed materials and booklets.

Even if the charge is intended only to recoup direct costs it could be construed as a commercial benefit. It may be best in this circumstance to obtain, or even buy, the rights to use the copy.

Most copyright owners will happily grant permission for the free use of their creation in non-profit-making, community applications and, when this is not possible, as for example with images obtained over the Internet where the copyright owner cannot be contacted, the cost of purchasing a single image for restricted use, even for commercial advantage, need only be a few pence.

If you wish to protect your own creative work it is usually sufficient to mark it with the symbol ©, or (c) and the date of creation. Bear in mind that this mark only gives you the right to bring a civil action of tort against any infringement, for which you will bear the costs. The symbol is usually little more than a courtesy protection. It is usually too expensive to turn the protection into reality unless the creation has real commercial value.

If you believe that your words and images have a real commercial value, and particularly want to protect it, you should place the original documents in a sealed and dated package that is then deposited with a neutral party such as a bank, solicitor, accountant, etc.

If you later believe your copyright has been infringed, your legal representative can withdraw this package on your behalf, check the date and the seal, compare your material to the potential infringement and present this as evidence in any civil action.



Notes for your Trail

Useful websites

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk
www.awardsforall.org.uk

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

HAZARD	LIKELY-HOOD 1 - 5	IMPACT 1 - 5	LOCATION	REQUIRED ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTED -DATE-

Please photocopy and use as required.