
CIVIC TRUST

Report for 1979

MOST FUNDAMENTAL of the new government's environmental initiatives so far lie in their packages of proposed planning relaxations. For several years the British planning system, so carefully built up since 1947 and for long the envy of other countries, has come under increasing scrutiny. The new government, on financial grounds no less than ideological, gave early attention to the possibility of streamlining some of its machinery.

Some of the simplifications proposed will be welcomed as wholly sensible. However, we have not always in the past been very prescient at foreseeing the secondary effects of our policy decisions, and we must be very sure at this juncture, before agreeing particular changes on grounds of expediency or economy, that we are not thereby needlessly sacrificing environmental standards and quality. In today's circumstances, it is more necessary than ever to ensure that we get the best possible value from every pound spent on our surroundings — be it on construction, maintenance, protection or improvement.

In this situation the role of the voluntary and unofficial associations takes on added significance. Britain is particularly fortunate in the strength of her voluntary movement, and it is not too much to state that most of our planning legislation, and almost all our conservation legislation, spring from the thinking and pressures of unofficial environmental organisations over three quarters of a century. If that system is now to be reshaped, there is going to be renewed need for the unprejudiced view such organisations represent.

The particular role of the Civic Trust is a little more difficult to pin down than that of societies with narrower terms of reference. The Trust is concerned with environmental quality in all its aspects so that the detailed shape of the Trust's programme may change quite markedly over, say, five yearly periods. It may therefore be useful to set out here the main continuing

functions of the Trust as we ourselves see them. They may be summarised as follows:

- (a) Identification of issues of national importance and opening them up to public scrutiny and informed debate, where it seems likely that this will not otherwise be done adequately. The problems of urban wasteland and of heavy lorry transport are two recent examples.
- (b) Assisting a network of over 1200 local amenity societies and keeping them informed as to new legislation, government and local authority programmes, and environmental initiatives of all kinds — international as well as national.
- (c) Initiating pilot projects of different kinds, lessons learnt from which may be of benefit elsewhere. Those in Bradford and Wirksworth, Derbyshire, are two current examples.
- (d) Administering certain programmes on behalf of other organisations — eg, currently, on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Conservation Grant to conservation areas not recognised as outstanding and the work of the Heritage Education Group; The Architectural Heritage Fund; and programmes with the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust and The Monument Trust.
- (e) Giving recognition to the best environmental work being done, through an awards scheme, which is the largest and most wide-ranging of its kind in the world.
- (f) Representation on official and unofficial committees, national and international; comment on official consultation papers; appearance at public inquiries, etc.

The exercise of these functions during 1979 is dealt with in greater detail in the report overleaf.

Project Work

In the summer of 1978, two projects were identified in discussion with The Monument Trust which the latter were prepared to fund over a three year period. One centred upon Southfield Square, Bradford, and the other on Wirksworth, in Derbyshire. It is hoped that from them lessons will be learnt which may be of value in other places.

BRADFORD. Southfield Square consists of 75 listed, owner-occupied, buildings dating from 1854–62, grouped round three sides of a central garden area (which, unusually, is divided into individual plots belonging to the houses). Nine different ethnic groups are represented among the residents.

The Square has been under threat of demolition since 1969 and has, in consequence, suffered increasingly from blight. The Trust had spent nine months working with the Council and residents on the economic feasibility of rehabilitating the Square when, without warning, in August, the Council once more announced its intention of going to Public Inquiry (an earlier proposed Inquiry had been shelved after the Trust's intervention). Preparations were therefore made to oppose the Council's applications for compulsory purchase and 'listed building consent' (to demolish the houses); a new detailed survey was made, Counsel engaged, expert witnesses were organised and proofs of evidence prepared. In December the Council made another volte-face, announcing that it was withdrawing its applications and would offer no evidence at the Inquiry (in January 1980).

This once more clears the way therefore for a more constructive collaborative approach to the problems of the Square. The Council is now designating it as a Housing Action Area and a Conservation Area. The Trust has introduced a purchaser who is prepared to acquire and restore most of the empty properties; a freshly formed local historic buildings trust may purchase one or two more; and the Civic Trust/Monument Trust have offered to restore three or four as exemplars. 'Surgeries' with all existing owners have indicated their overwhelming readiness to play their part in bringing their own houses up to an acceptable standard; and

it is hoped that the central garden will eventually be redesigned and re-landscaped. 1980 should make it clear to all concerned that Southfield Square is coming back to life.

WIRKSWORTH is a small town of 6,000 inhabitants, situated at the head of the Derwent Valley, about 3 miles south of the Peak National Park. It is a place of very considerable character, but exhibits many of the symptoms common to rural decline. The broad objective of the Trust project here is so to revitalise the community as to halt the processes of decline and decay and to assure the life of the town for another generation and more.

This is clearly a more diffuse, and more complex, task than that in Bradford. However, during the year that has passed since the project was first put to a Town Meeting, useful progress has been made. A 'Town Scheme' of grant aid has been instituted by the District and County Councils in conjunction with the Historic Buildings Council — this is now fully operational and will generate spending of £24,000 p.a.; a General Improvement Area has been declared and detailed proposals are in hand; the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust has acquired two buildings for restoration; a Project survey has led to the purchase for restoration of an important group of buildings in the town centre; COSIRA is supporting the construction of a group of advance factory units and are interested in converting an older building in the town for workshop accommodation; a detailed landscape survey has been commissioned by the Project and is now completed; the Heritage Education Group has helped to launch an education project in the local schools; a Project office was established in a converted building from August onwards, and this provides an invaluable focal point and meeting place for local authority officials, townsfolk and members of the Project team, and a base from which advice can be given to all and sundry on a continuing, day-to-day basis. A wide range of further possibilities is under discussion with local groups, and it is anticipated that much will be learnt about community attitudes as the result of a survey to be put in hand during 1980.

Local Amenity Societies

1211 local amenity societies and 41 federations of societies were registered with the Trust at the end of the year — increases of 39 and five respectively in the period covered by this report. We have sought, to the best of our ability, to advise and assist them with their manifold problems. In consultation with the Charity Commissioners the model constitution for such societies has been revised. A new list of speakers for societies has been compiled and made available; talks have been given by staff members to some 40 societies.

At the fourth annual meeting of federations of local societies, held in London in November, speakers included Mr Marcus Fox, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, DoE, on forthcoming changes in the planning system; and Gerrit Vonkeman on the Dutch environmental movement.

CIVIC TRUST NEWS. It is convenient here to refer to the Trust's bi-monthly journal, in so far as it forms the main channel of communication between the Trust and the societies on its register — who receive three copies free of charge. However, *Civic Trust News* is 'for all concerned with their surroundings' and is also taken on subscription by the majority of local authorities, as well as by architects, libraries, public companies and organisations overseas. It is pleasing to note that over 500 new subscriptions in 1979 helped to offset rising production costs.

Reader response makes it clear that the journal is regarded

as authoritative and helpful, and that it fulfils a very real need. Its primary purpose is to keep its readers abreast of new legislation, government and local authority initiatives, and to deal with the problems and achievements of local societies (for example, the July/August issue carried the results of an important survey by the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies into the extent to which authorities in Kent fail to open up their decision-making process to the public). Additionally, however, the magazine provides a platform for opinion through interviews with such prominent people as Lord Winstanley, Chairman of the Countryside Commission; Roger Moate, MP; Philip Whitehead, MP; and Cyril Bleasdale, Managing Director of Freightliners Ltd. And, of course, it regularly covers matters arising out of the Trust's own current programmes.

HERITAGE INTERPRETATION PROGRAMME. Reference was made in last year's report to the three year programme under which Carnegie United Kingdom Trust have offered £100,000 towards 'interpretation' projects by local amenity societies registered with the Civic Trust. The response so far has been slow — by the end of 1979 a total of only some £7,500 has been offered to 17 schemes in England. However, *Understanding Our Surroundings*, an illustrated manual of urban interpretation, was published by the Civic Trust in the summer and it is hoped that this will stimulate

further applications. This book, the first of its kind, deals with every aspect of the subject from principles to useful equipment, and from full-blown 'heritage centres' to simple information boards. It received very favourable reviews and it is likely to remain the standard work for some years.

A NEW COMPETITION FOR SOCIETIES. Through the

Civic Trust Awards

The Trust's awards scheme has now been in operation for twenty years, apart from a brief break in 1976-77 when funds ran out, and from which it was rescued by the generosity of Messrs Bass Limited. During these two decades other architectural and conservation awards have been instituted; the Trust's Awards, however, were not only the first to give recognition to *environmental* factors — they remain the most wide-ranging and comprehensive in their field, and they attract a substantially larger entry than any other scheme. It is clear from the enthusiasm of participants, the ever-ready collaboration of local authorities (who administer the scheme locally) and from the weight of press publicity given to the results, that these Awards really do achieve their objective of drawing attention to the best environmental work being done in town or country — be it new construction, restoration, landscaping or improvement.

The Awards for 1979 were announced at the beginning of December. Applicable to Greater London, the Metropolitan

generosity of The David Knightly Charitable Trust, arrangements have been concluded for an annual competition, over a period of four years, for registered societies in England. The competition, for the best plans for practical improvement schemes, will be applicable in successive years in four broad regions; prize money will total £3,000 p.a., the cash to be used towards implementing winning schemes.

Districts of England, Edinburgh and Glasgow, they represented the second instalment of the two-year cycle on which the Awards are now administered. There were 517 submissions, received by 71 Boroughs and Districts; 27 Awards were made and 75 schemes commended. Full details are given in the usual illustrated report.

A pleasing feature this year was the additional 'Community Award' made by Messrs Bass Limited in respect of the scheme — selected from the 1978 and 1979 results — which best exemplified private or community initiative. The Award went to the Woodlands Residents Association in Glasgow for the extensive clean-up programme which, in conjunction with the City Council, they initiated and are still developing. Mr Derek Palmar, Chairman of the company and a Civic Trust trustee, presented a plaque and a cheque for £2,000.

We are delighted to announce that the next cycle of the scheme will be sponsored by the Midland Bank. We are no less grateful to them than to their predecessors.

Education and Young People

HERITAGE EDUCATION GROUP. The Heritage Education Group, sponsored by the Department of the Environment, sprang, like the Architectural Heritage Fund, from the activities of the Heritage Year campaign. Under its chairman, Lord Briggs of Lewes, the Group, which is widely representative, has continued to break new ground with regional conferences that bring together Chief Education Officers and Chief Planning Officers, together with members of their committees and staffs. Successful meetings of this kind were held during 1979 in Daventry and in Bridgwater, both in conjunction with the County Councils concerned. Publications have included *Environment and Community*, telling the story of the successful Romsey Environmental Project by schools in Hampshire, and two issues of *Heritage Education News*, of which some 34,000 copies are distributed free to schools by Local Education Authorities. The third 'Wide Awake Trail' competition, organised in conjunction with the Daily Mirror, produced entries of the highest

standard so far and the competition will again be run, on similar lines, in 1980. The Adult Education panel held a useful conference; initiated a research project into the improvement of guide books; and published two booklets, including a reference book for tutors — the first of its kind — on *The Built Environment in Adult Education*. The Group has received a number of television references and very encouraging press comment.

SHELL BETTER BRITAIN COMPETITION. The Trust continues to work with Shell (UK) and the Nature Conservancy Council on the Shell 'Better Britain' Competition for young people. 1979 marked the 10th anniversary of this competition. Over this period it has involved about 40,000 young people in practical improvement projects of many different kinds and an excellent film, made by Shell and released during the year, shows something of the range of their work and the tangible results of the competition. The 1979/80 results will be announced late in 1980.

Financing Conservation

CONSERVATION GRANT. This was the fourth year for which the Trust administered Conservation Grant on behalf of the Historic Buildings Council and the Department of the Environment to conservation areas in England which are not considered 'outstanding'. Funds allocated for this purpose during the present financial year amounted to £250,000; a smaller sum than last year when the budget was specially increased to £ $\frac{1}{2}$ million. In so far as grants represent only a proportion of total costs, it could be said that this scheme has made possible about £1 million worth of vital repair work in conservation areas. Public awareness of the scheme has grown and requests for assistance continue to increase, with the result that all available money was allocated by about halfway through the financial year and there is a backlog of about 100 applications waiting for 1980-81 funds.

The 180 projects assisted comprised, as usual, a wide range of building types. Thatched cottages, windmills, a mediaeval stone cross, canalside structures, buildings in city, town and village, have all received grant aid. Given the size of the budget, it is inevitable that the grants have been more helpful outside the inner city areas, where the scale of the problem calls for larger funds than we can muster. However, the scheme has continued to support the work of housing associations in these locations, by helping to meet the financial shortfall incurred in the conversion of older buildings.

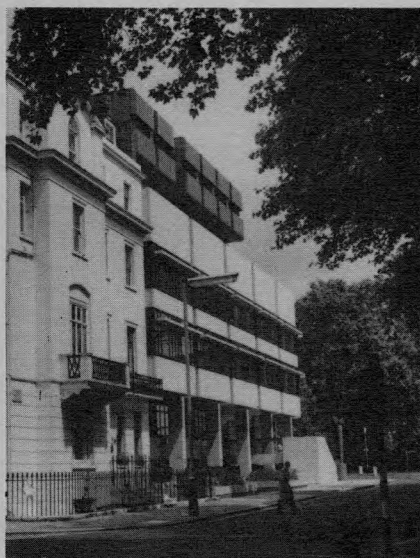
Where appropriate, the grants can be used in harness with other sources of finance. In its enterprising conversion and repair of 36 late 18th century canalside houses in Golden Valley, the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust has been supported by both Conservation Grant and The Architect-



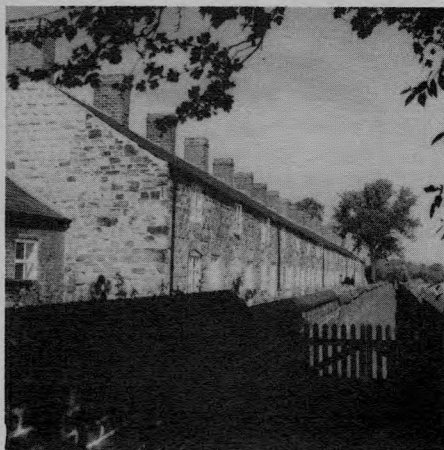
Wirksworth—see page 2



Heavy lorries report—see page 4



Award to the West German Embassy—see page 3



Golden Valley—see page 3



Heritage Education Group: Lord Briggs—see page 3

tural Heritage Fund (see below). At Rochford, in Essex, Conservation Grant is matched by the County and District authorities, enabling 50 per cent of approved repair costs to be met; this principle was extended in 1979 to Harleston in Norfolk, Barnack in Cambridgeshire, and Shardlow in Derbyshire — an exceptional surviving example of an 18th–19th century canalside port.

Management of this scheme involves a major commitment of time in administration, travel, monitoring of work on the ground, and advice at different levels. At the same time the work keeps the Trust in touch with a wide range of local authorities and other agencies, and as already indicated makes for tighter co-ordination, where appropriate, with the work of The Architectural Heritage Fund.

THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE FUND. Following an

Other Activities

TRANSPORT. In March the Minister of Transport accepted the judgement of the European Court that Britain was in breach of the EEC tachograph regulation; he thus presaged a successful outcome to the Civic Trust's campaign — started in 1976 — to get the tachograph into British lorries as a tool for road safety and environmental protection. Comments were submitted to the Department of Transport on the Foster Report on lorry operators' licensing. The Government has yet to announce whether it accepts the Report's recommendations, many of which have environmental consequences. By the end of the year despite repeated requests, the Trust had still not obtained from the Department of Transport a list of the lorry control schemes carried out by local authorities under the Dykes Act.

In November the Trust submitted substantial evidence to Sir Arthur Armitage's Inquiry established by the Minister of Transport into Lorries, People and the Environment and has since published it under the title *Heavy Lorries Nine Years On*. The evidence reviews the various measures to cope with the increase in lorry traffic taken since 1970 when the Trust published its earlier 'Heavy Lorries' report and concludes that, because of the dramatic growth in use of the largest lorries, environmental problems are getting worse. The evidence breaks new ground in analysing by-pass progress, lorry use in towns, and the impediments to the introduction of quieter lorries. Twenty-seven conclusions and recommendations are made and the evidence will provide a critique of lorry policies in the future.

OTHER CONTACTS AND REPRESENTATIONS. Representations were made to the Department of the Environment in respect of proposed changes in listed buildings law; the Government's White Paper *Central Government Controls over Local Authorities*; and the proposed General Development Order. Following discussions and agreement with the local authority associations, the President of the Trust and the Secretaries of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities and the Association of District Councils have made a joint submission to the Secretary of State for the Environment urging tighter control of outdoor advertising.

The Trust was invited earlier in the year to a meeting of the South East Regional Planning Council, to express its views on conservation matters; to a meeting in February of the Conservative Parliamentary Transport Committee, chaired by Mr Norman Fowler; and a meeting at the Department of the Environment to discuss the potential contributions of the local authority, professional and voluntary organisations to the Council of Europe's forthcoming 'Campaign for Urban Renaissance'.

Committees on which the Trust was represented through 1979 included the UK National Commission for UNESCO;

earlier report by the Civic Trust this Fund was created, it will be recalled, as a specific objective of the UK Heritage Year campaign. Its purpose is to provide low interest loans to local historic buildings trusts, to ease their cash flow problems in acquiring and restoring old buildings. Half the Council of Management are nominated by the Department of the Environment, half by the Civic Trust.

In so far as the Fund recently published its own first report, covering the first three years of its existence, there is no need here to elaborate on the details of its work. Suffice it to state that assets are now in excess of £800,000; that some 18 projects have so far been assisted; that the Fund is 'revolving' satisfactorily; that 43 local trusts are now registered with the Trust; and that it is clear that the Fund has a real and developing role to play in the conservation of historic buildings by private associations.

the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment (the 'Leitch Committee'); the Noise Advisory Council; the British Railways Board's Environment Panel; a Transport and Road Research Laboratory advisory committee; and the Design Council's Street Furniture Panel.

GENERAL. The Trust report *A National Register of Craft Skills in the Building Industry*, published in March, recommended the setting up of a central register of building firms competent to handle high class restoration and rehabilitation work. The Crafts Council has offered to act as host body for such a register and is actively engaged in further developing the concept.

The Trust co-sponsored, with the Adult Education Department of Nottingham University, a successful weekend conference of members of Conservation Area Advisory Committees. About one hundred people attended, from all parts of the country.

The Trust was the recipient of a special 'Come to Britain Jubilee' award by the British Tourist Authority, the plaque acknowledging 'the outstanding contribution to British tourism made by the Civic Trust'.

INTERNATIONAL. The Trust remains a member of Europa Nostra (the federation of conservation societies in consultative status with the Council of Europe) and the European Environmental Bureau (which provides a two-way link between unofficial environmental organisations and the European Commission in Brussels). Lord Duncan-Sandys is President of the former; Mr Nigel Haigh, of the Trust staff, Vice-President of the latter. The Trust organised several meetings with Ministers in this country on EEC environmental policy for British members of the Bureau. The EEB manifesto 'one Europe-one Environment' was widely distributed during the elections to the European Parliament (comments were received from 38 of 81 UK MEPs).

The President attended a meeting of Pacific Area Travel Association in Bangkok in October. The Director was invited to speak at an important conference, held at Williamsburg, Virginia, in March, on American Preservation in the nineteen eighties (the only foreigner invited to participate). He was also invited to give a paper at the annual meeting of Heritage Canada, held in Victoria, BC, in October. Gordon Michell joined an official British party to Czechoslovakia in October, to exchange views on conservation matters.

During the year the Trust has received visitors from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Japan, the Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden and the United States.

Finance and Administration

BOARD OF TRUSTEES. Four members of the Board, Viscount Norwich, Lord Briggs of Lewes, Lord Robens and Sir John Hedley Greenborough, completed their three year term as Trustees; all, being eligible, were re-elected. The Board is therefore as follows:

- Lord Duncan-Sandys (*President*)
- The Archbishop of Canterbury
- * Lord Armstrong of Sanderstead
- Lord Briggs of Lewes
- Lord Elwyn-Jones
- Sir Derek Ezra
- † Mr Sebastian de Ferranti (*CTNW*)
- * Sir John Hedley Greenborough (*Hon Treasurer*)
- * Sir Maurice Hodgson
- † Mr T Mervyn Jones (*CTW*)
- Lord Lever of Manchester
- Sir William Mather
- † Viscount Muirshiel (*SCT*)
- Viscount Norwich
- * Sir David Orr
- Mr Derek Palmar
- Sir Peter Parker
- Mr Geoffrey Rippon
- Lord Robens
- Lord Shawcross
- † Mr Peter Wrightson (*CTNE*)

Members marked with a dagger are Trustees ex-officio, as Chairmen of the four Associate Trusts in Scotland, Wales, and the North West and North East of England. Those marked by an asterisk form the Finance Committee, set up during the year under the chairmanship of Sir John Hedley Greenborough.

The Board was delighted to be able to congratulate Sir John Hedley Greenborough and Sir Maurice Hodgson on their Knighthoods, and Lord Lever on his Life Peerage, conferred on them in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

STAFF. The Trust's full time staff numbers 21, of whom seven are employed on, and financed by, programmes undertaken on behalf of other organisations. During the year Timothy Cantell received a Churchill Fellowship to study the problem of urban dereliction in the United States, and later left us to take up the post of Assistant Secretary (Environment) with the Royal Society of Arts. Caroline Grant, a town planner, joined the Trust team on the Wirksworth Project (see main report). At the end of the year, Victor Rose, our invaluable designer, celebrated 20 years service with the Trust — a period exceeded only by the Director. The stability of the staff is indeed one of the Trust's greatest assets, and it owes them a deep debt of gratitude for their unswerving dedication in the face of a heavy work-load.

FINANCE. The Trust, in common with the nation at large but perhaps particularly with other voluntary and charitable organisations, suffers greatly from the effects of continuing inflation. It has to be stated yet again that the Trust receives no government grant towards its general activities; that apart from the direct costs incurred in its administration of

two government-sponsored programmes, it is wholly supported by voluntary contributions; and that there is no way in which charitable agencies like the Trust can take for granted, an automatic increase in their income, year by year, to take account of inflation.

This is not a matter of expansion, though the demands made upon us — now from many parts of the world — increase steadily; it is a matter of survival as an effective organisation. It may be of interest that the Civic Trust's spending power in 1979 was two-thirds of what it was when the Trust was formed in 1957, notwithstanding today's vastly increased output. We know that we are not alone in facing the threat of an ever-mounting deficit; environmental organisations older than the Trust are battling with exactly similar problems. Are the voluntary associations now a luxury that the nation can no longer afford? It will be a sad moment for Britain if that be proved true.

To consider the Trust's own problem, and to initiate whatever action may be desirable, the Board during the year set up a Finance Committee under the chairmanship of Sir John Hedley Greenborough (for membership, see opposite). The Committee has been assisted, since the autumn, by Mr K J B Webb, acting in a part-time and honorary capacity, and wishes here to pay tribute to the contribution he is making to a resolution of the Trust's financial problems.

Income for the year ending 5 April 1979 was £151,661, of which over £96,000 came from 145 covenants and donations. Revenue from the administration of projects and programmes financed by other organisations amounted to over £40,000 — nearly double that of the previous year. Remaining income accrued from the sale of publications, advertising, rental from sub-lessees, etc. With expenditure of £144,304, the Trust was able to show a small surplus of £7,357 at the end of the financial year — though only at the cost of reducing desirable activities.

By the same token, there is some satisfaction to be had from the fact that, at least for the first half of the present financial year, it proved possible — against our expectations — to keep income and expenditure in balance. However, Trust income fluctuates widely from one part of the year to another, and mid-year figures are an unreliable guide to year-end figures. On the expenditure side, moreover, the situation has been contained only by staff reductions and a diminution of work and services which have been normal in the past. The Trust is a labour-intensive organisation, with slender reserves, and further erosion of staff and spending power would rapidly inhibit its continued effectiveness. It is thus going to be a matter of urgency during 1980 to secure substantial new sources of income.

The Trust's auditors are Messrs Moore, Stephens & Co.

CIVIC TRUST, 17 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE LONDON SW1Y 5AW (01-930 0914) FEBRUARY 1980

PUBLICATIONS DURING THE YEAR

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY

K V Bailey's study of the Hampshire/Romsey Schools Project, a complement to his earlier review of the Avon Project.
£1.30 (£1.65 post paid)

A NATIONAL REGISTER OF CRAFT SKILLS IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY

This feasibility study considers the current problems facing restoration firms, examines the use which might be made of a crafts skills register and suggests how one might be organised.
£1.50 (£1.85 post paid)

UNDERSTANDING OUR SURROUNDINGS

The first manual of urban interpretation, giving step-by-step guidance from the initial stocktaking of an area to the final implementation of a scheme.
£4.00 (£4.60 post paid)

THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE FUND REPORT 1976-1979

Illustrated report on restoration work supported by loans from the Fund during its first three years. Foreword by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.
Available Free on request

1979 CIVIC TRUST AWARDS REPORT

Illustrated reports on the 27 Awards and 75 commendations made in Greater London, the Metropolitan Districts of England, Edinburgh and Glasgow.
£3.00 (£3.50 post paid)

HEAVY LORRIES NINE YEARS ON

Brings the Trust's 1970 report up to date. Submitted as evidence to the Armitage Inquiry, the report includes an original analysis of by-pass progress, of growth of lorry use in towns and of the prospect for quieter lorries.
£1.25 (£1.70 post paid)