Tourism associations and tourism development with special reference to rural tourism.

STONE, Christopher J.

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Tourism Associations and
Tourism Development with special
reference to Rural Tourism

Thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Chris Stone

November 1994
Tourism Associations and Tourism Development with special reference to Rural Tourism

Christopher J. Stone

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Sheffield Hallam University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

November 1994
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ABSTRACT

The thesis presents the results of a critical investigation of the work and role of 'tourism associations' (TAs) as part of the tourism development system at the local scale in England and Wales. Local tourism development groups existed for a century or more before recent notions of community involvement in visitor industry initiatives came to prominence as part of the debate about 'green' tourism, and the study represents the first in-depth investigation of these groups, aimed at offering some guidance for the community tourism organisations advocated by several tourism authors. Guided by systems analysis methodology, the study presents original data on the nature and role of TAs and develops theoretical consideration of such groups. Based upon these contributions to understanding, a critical assessment of the potential contribution of TAs towards the development of small-scale local visitor industries as part of the local economies in qualitative terms is made.

A review of relevant literature establishes that government policy has sought to develop tourism as a component of local economies in urban and rural areas. The sparse literature on tourism associations generally ascribes them lower-order publicity roles rather than the developmental functions that they could perhaps more usefully fulfil. Visitors represent a major economic opportunity for local communities, and economic multiplier studies show that local economies could benefit from becoming more visitor-oriented. However, relatively few areas benefit from conventional tourism development initiatives, particularly in the countryside, and voluntary effort may be necessary for communities to capitalise upon the visitor market.

A postal questionnaire survey of a large sample of tourism associations in England and Wales established that these groups exist as a response to a perception of need for such organisations. During the 1970s and '80s there was a surge in the formation rate of TAs. They were found to vary in many respects but shared common characteristics, and were classified into four basic types. While most members were businesses, many had representatives from the public sector and other organisations in membership. They undertook a broad range of useful activities, and certain public sector bodies provide financial assistance for aspects of their work. Some operated mainly as trade associations, but there are grounds for regarding all as community tourism groups to some degree. Measures of sophistication based upon the survey data and analyses are proposed, but the level of sophistication appropriate for any individual group depends upon local circumstances.

An interview-based case study of four TAs working in rural Herefordshire reflected and validated many of the questionnaire survey conclusions. Each group had different approaches and priorities, particularly regarding the relative balance struck between promotion and development of the south Herefordshire visitor industry. They worked alongside tourism-oriented public sector bodies to varying degrees, and some received financial assistance for certain activities. While quantification of the effects that the TAs had on the visitor industry proved impossible, interviewees' opinions indicated that the work of the groups was valuable and that, without them, the contribution of the visitor industry to the local economy would be reduced.

Analysis of the data collection stages showed that the goals of tourism associations are essentially the same as those of the more formal elements of the tourism development system, with marketing as a key focus. The work of TAs can produce positive economic benefits for local economies in urban, coastal and rural locations. Recommendations for best practice are made for the associations and their roles, and the public sector is urged to help establish and help support TAs. Conclusions drawn are that tourism associations have a valuable developmental role to play alongside their publicity function, and that the broad-membership association type is probably more appropriate for visitor industry development in lesser-known areas than sectoral types.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is one of the largest in the world. The importance of the industry has been recognised at local, regional and national scales, and it has been predicted that it will grow to become the largest component of international trade by the turn of the century (WTO 1991). But concern over many aspects of visitor industry development has been growing of late, voiced by academics and the public.

One theme of the debate is that tourism development is often forced upon the inhabitants of 'destination' areas. Local people have frequently had little or no say about the type of tourism development they would like to see, in spite of the fact that much of the industry could be said to be based around the most direct exploitation of their culture and environment. The process of development has been said to homogenise and degrade cultures, and alienate residents of destination areas. Other problems include long-term environmental degradation and social fragmentation, with the result that local people may have to put up with many of the costs of externally-imposed visitor industry growth while failing to share in the benefits as much as they perhaps should (Turner and Ash 1975; Mathieson and Wall 1982; Krippendorf 1987).

The idea of community involvement in locally-directed tourism development as one response to these and other criticisms has been growing in influence rapidly over the past decade or so. Murphy is the author most widely quoted in connection with the community-oriented approach (as opposed to a “pure business and development approach” - Murphy 1985), and parallels between this and the 'community approach' to urban and regional planning promoted by some academics and residents threatened with unwanted developments in the 1970s have been drawn by Prentice (1993). Adopting the perspective that local economic and social benefits may be derived from the tourism resources of individual communities, Murphy (1985) advocates the formation of community associations as a means of developing the unique character and attractions of individual areas for visitors (see also Parker 1984; Thibal 1988; Blank 1989; Keogh 1990; Pigram 1993) while minimising social conflict and environmental damage and providing visitors with authentic experiences - so-called 'green' tourism development, in essence.

Groups working for local tourism development have existed in Britain for at least the last century, but there has been little or no study of them or their work. The best-known types of 'tourism association' are probably the hoteliers' associations that exist in larger towns, cities and resorts, and while these predominantly industry-oriented groups may not share all the characteristics and objectives of the community organisations advocated by Murphy and others they undoubtedly hold many in common. Study of their organisation, activities, role and effectiveness may yield lessons for the community-based groups championed by Murphy in
addition to contributing to knowledge about the voluntary sector in local tourism promotion and development.

It is against this background, then, that the research project will seek to examine the activities and role of voluntary sector groups working to develop the tourism industry at the level of the community. The work aims to provide a 'benchmark' picture of TAs, working towards a typology of distinct group types operating in urban, rural and coastal locations; thus the findings and conclusions will have broad geographical applicability. However, the study will make special reference to rural areas at a time of growing concern and debate about how the economy of the British countryside can be diversified to maintain viable communities and services in the face of uncertainty about future agricultural incomes in many areas. Qualitative assessments of the potential contribution of tourism associations towards development of local visitor industries and how the work of such groups could affect local economies will be advanced.

The aims and objectives will be achieved through evaluation of the results of a process involving the collection of quantitative and qualitative data about the groups, followed by analysis and reference to the literature. A descriptive analysis of tourism associations will be made, and the general nature of the direct and indirect effects of their activities and relationships determined. Non-parametric statistical tests completed by key actors during a case study in a selected rural area will provide estimates, at an ordinal scale of measurement, of the effectiveness of the TAs under study. Modelling techniques will be used to aid understanding of the situation under study. Reference will be made to literature upon local tourism industries in assessing the contribution of the groups towards visitor industry development and incomes and employment in rural areas.

The research process will be structured using a systems approach to provide a conceptual framework for organising the material. This approach takes an appropriately holistic view, and concentrates upon inter-relationships. Use will be made of a modified version of the 'soft systems' methodology developed by Checkland (1981a) as a broad framework to help investigate complex human activity and organisational problems. Tourism associations will be considered as elements working as part of a wider tourism development system.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

**AIM**

To gain insight into the concept of the tourism association and to develop theoretical understanding of such organisations, locating them within the context of the existing system for visitor industry development. On the basis of this contribution to understanding, a critical assessment of the contribution of these associations towards the development of local tourism industries as part of local economies will be made. The work will make particular reference to the visitor industry in rural areas.
OBJECTIVES

1. To develop a theoretical framework for the study of tourism associations (TAs) as voluntary bodies involved in tourism promotion and development.

2. To analyse the structure, composition and activities of TAs and their relationships with other organisations involved with tourism industry development, with special reference to visitor destinations in the countryside.

3. To assess the contribution of TAs towards the development of local visitor industries in qualitative terms.

4. To suggest how such development could affect local economies in terms of employment and incomes.

5. To make recommendations concerning the future development of tourism associations and their roles, and best practice for their efforts to contribute towards development of the tourism industry.

STRUCTURE OF REPORT

Chapter Two discusses key concepts of the systems approach and introduces soft systems methodology, outlining the manner in which it was used to structure the research process and guide consideration of the results. Chapter Three consists of a review of relevant literature, establishing the context of and reinforcing the rationale for the study. Chapters Four and Five detail the results of a two-stage data collection process aimed at obtaining quantitative and qualitative data on TAs, and Chapter Six will present an analysis and synthesis of the data from the perspective of the study. Finally, the research study is drawn to a conclusion in Chapter Seven.
INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the choice of methodology and methods of working to be adopted for use in the study is discussed. After a brief introduction to relevant philosophical viewpoints on social science research, the concept of methodology is introduced and systems methodology selected for use in the study. A wide-ranging review of relevant systems literature is followed by an introduction to 'soft' systems methodology, a structured framework for the application of systems concepts, and a modified version of 'soft' systems analysis outlined. The choice of soft systems methodology is justified, and its contribution to the study carefully outlined.

The selection of methods of working is then made, and justified with reference to the nature of the study, the objects of study, and the methodology. The chapter closes with an outline of how the results of the data collection exercise, structured through the methodology, will contribute to the research objectives.

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

The tourism association study is social science-based, but in contrast to the situation with natural science, there is a dearth of literature linking the philosophy and methods of social science. Volumes have been written on the former, with some authors doggedly running the various philosophical arguments into the ground (see for instance Ryan 1970), and equally there are dozens of texts on method (frequently reduced merely to statistical technique) which, unfortunately, generally marginalise or ignore the philosophical basis of social science enquiry. Few authors have attempted to fill the gulf between philosophy and practice; of these, Sayer (1992) is probably the best-known, and while his treatise on how to engage in social science accounts for much less than half of his book, it is probably the best of its kind.
The validity of social science has long been questioned by natural scientists and, latterly, politicians frequently of a rightist persuasion. The status of social science is riddled with controversy because the most basic conceptions of human needs and interest are involved; opinions on the nature of the problems studied by social scientists are polarised; and perhaps the major problem is the internality of social science to its object - it is 'culture-bound' (Ryan 1970; Trigg 1985; Sayer 1992).

The detractors' main claim is that social science findings can be reduced to ideology, and the only way to overcome this perceived weakness is for investigators to adopt or emulate the practices of natural science (see for instance Ryan 1970), despite all the obvious difficulties involved. This position is perhaps understandable given the complexity of social science 'problems' and, perhaps more pertinently, the lack of consensus over what constitutes both a problem and an appropriate solution (or movement towards a solution). The lack of consensus is of course ideology-bound, infusing the whole debate with political overtones.

It is easy to see how ideology could potentially influence the outcomes of a social science study. While it is important to try to see society and its institutions as they are, without pre-determining the outcome of a study in any way, it is impossible in practice to study them without making one's mind up about what one is studying (Trigg 1985) - and thus enters an unavoidable element of ideology. The practice of social science cannot be divorced from philosophical assumptions about the nature of human beings and their roles within society, and the notion of a value-free social science is itself ideological because it masks the inherent values with which people view the world and live their lives. But the point must again be made that emulating the practices of natural science is usually inappropriate, not to say impossible, in social science research.

Arguments about the concepts and foundations of fact, truth and falsity have been applied by philosophers, notably Thomas Kuhn, to natural science too, however, questioning the basis of claims of its inherent primacy over social science. The debate about the existence, role and relative importance of paradigms in shaping both the foundations and findings of natural science will not be rehearsed here, nor will that about the growing doubts about traditional views of objectivity and progress in natural science (these are discussed in Sayer 1992), but the main conclusion to be drawn from the continuing debate is an obvious one - that there are no absolutes - and what physical and social science must hold in common is the aim of discovering the nature of whatever reality they are investigating, using methods best suited to obtaining the required knowledge (Trigg 1985). That in social science this knowledge is primarily propositional or referential rather than practical indicates why it seems only indirectly able to help humankind decide how to live (Sayer 1992). As far as it is valid at all, social science investigates 'problems' that are frequently critical to the condition of humankind; once the philosophical debates have ground to a halt, social scientists must adopt those values and techniques that are most
appropriate to the task in hand - though there is often disagreement on which to apply in specific circumstances - and do their best.

**EPISTEMOLOGY**

Decisions made during the early stages of a social science research study have a critical role in influencing the course of research. These include both explicit and implicit decisions, the most important of which concern:

- the initial definition of the field of study; and
- how key objects of study are conceptualised.

Sayer (1992) observes that, once these have been determined, the range of possible outcomes is necessarily limited. He goes on to point out, however, that while the world can only be understood in terms of available concepts, and that these are often about other concepts - those of the society we study - they don’t determine the structure of the world: and while we are trapped within our conceptual systems, it is still possible to differentiate between more and less 'practically adequate' beliefs about the material world.

Furthermore, Sayer asserts that truth is neither absolute nor purely conventional and relative, but a matter of 'practical adequacy', and that observation neither theory-determined nor -neutral, but theory-laden. His book *Method in social science* advances sufficient justification for this epistemology to be acceptable, and it will be adopted for use in the study.

**TAs AND CAUSATION UNDER REALIST PHILOSOPHY**

Inspection of literature on the philosophy of the social sciences reveals that a major part of the debate between natural science and social science concerns problems associated with determining causation. Much natural science is concerned with seeking causal regularities between events, but social science has found few such 'laws' and is frequently derided because of this.

The emerging philosophy of realism, however, claims that such a rigid view of causation is inappropriate for the social sciences, and replaces the regularity model with one that is less rigid. Under realism, objects and social relations have causal powers which may or may not produce

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Sayer uses the term as a modification of, or replacement for, the concept of truth. Knowledge is useful where it is 'practically adequate' to the world, generating expectations about the world and about the results of our actions which are actually realised.
regularities, and which can be explained independently of them (Sayer 1992). The realist perspective has informed the study in several ways (the concept of 'practical adequacy' mentioned above is one), but the most significant of these for the methodology/research design stage are that:

♦ no attempt will be made to quantify the effects of tourism associations work upon rural tourism; and

♦ no assumption will be made that all tourism associations function identically, or achieve similar results.

Precise quantification of the effects of the work of a tourism association on tourism activity in a region is difficult because:

1. Little is known about these organisations. The present study aims to provide a foundation upon which future study of causation can proceed, for there is presently little information - factual or conceptual - upon which to base any such study.

2. A tourism association is only one of several organisations involved with the promotion of the visitor industry in a locality. Even if precise figures were available for changes in visitor levels resulting from the work of a local system for tourism development, it would be extremely difficult to disaggregate the effects of the tourism association(s) from those of many other factors. These might include such obvious influences as the work of tourist boards, but also include a whole range of less immediately obvious influences, including improved accessibility, changing societal fashions and preferences, and national and international economic performance.

3. An important contention is that tourism associations may be valuable in the medium- to long-term development of local visitor industries as well as in day-to-day promotion. Quantifying the effects of the development function would be even more problematic than those of their promotional function.

An additional problem is that any comprehensive study of the effects of a tourism association would require a major market research component, again beyond the remit of the study not to mention the resources.

The study will not ignore the question of cause and effect in the development of rural tourism, but will aim more to establish the qualitative nature of the social objects and relations upon which causal mechanisms depend, and their interrelationships.
It would be wrong to make an a priori assumption that all TAs function in a similar manner, are constituted similarly; or even that their detailed aims are necessarily similar. As non-statutory organisations, it is to be expected that they will vary widely, according to the characteristics of local tourism industries (broadly defined) and the interests and abilities of those involved with their operation. These factors will also influence the success of each TA, allowing a wide range of variation and making each TA unique in its own way.

For these reasons, no assumption will be made that all TAs function similarly, or achieve similar results. Determining common patterns of causation in the study of TAs and rural tourism development will be highly problematic, given the high degree of likely variation introduced by local factors influencing associations. While the question of cause and effect will be tackled as far as is practically possible, the study will follow the general tenets of realist philosophy by focussing more on structures and processes than tracing causation and seeking regularities between events.

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD OF WORKING

INTRODUCTION

The research has adopted an explicit differentiation between methodology and methods of working. These terms are commonly used interchangeably, but they properly refer to quite different things.

Examination of the literature indicates that there are almost as many definitions of the term methodology as there are users of it. Kotarbinski (1965) provides a three-way classification of concepts of methodology:

1. Praxological - the science of ways of expert procedures

2. Logical - the study of methods of using one's mind

3. Epistemological - the study of sciences as historical products and processes.

For the purposes of the present study, methodology will be taken to have meaning in the praxological sense: treating method as a science, effectively. It will be utilised as a means of formalisation or scientific consideration of the stage of the research between the base philosophy and the day-to-day method of working. In this role, it makes a valuable contribution to the process of determining an appropriate method of working and serves as an interpretive framework for consideration of the results (after Checkland 1981a). Adopting a methodology
means that the study will be better structured. This is considered important because the research is essentially exploratory, and some formal basis upon which to guide the conduct of the study and to supply an interpretive paradigm is required.

A method of working, on the other hand, amounts to the technique or combination of techniques used to obtain data on a 'problem' situation. Methods of working commonly in use in social science include the questionnaire survey and case study, and these will be employed in the present research.

**METHODOLOGY**

This section will outline the reasons for adopting the selected methodology, referring briefly to other writers that have used a similar approach to tourism research, and go on to describe how it will guide the selection of methods of working and function as a broad interpretive framework for the results of the data collection phase. The methodology will be slightly modified for application to the study, and details and justification of the modifications will be given. Finally, the relationship between the methodology and the methods of working will be outlined before the methods are more fully described in a subsequent section.

Methodology has been defined as the science of method (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 1988). A methodology supplies an explicit, non-random approach to ordering the conduct of a study - a conceptual framework. It is independent from the content of the activity, and can be considered separately from that content; it is a firmer guide to action than a philosophy, but is not as prescriptive as a method of working (Checkland 1981a).

Given that a methodology provides a framework for critical elements of the study, it must be appropriate to the aim, objectives, and perspective of the work, and the nature of the objects of study. As part of the process of methodology selection, salient elements of these determining factors will be discussed below under the headings:-

- Study Aims
- The Environment
- The Objects of Study
- Study Perspective

Some of these were discussed in outline in the previous section on causation.

**Study Aims**

1. To describe the activities of tourism associations.
2. To determine the role of these groups in local, regional and national rural visitor industry development, with special reference to rural areas.

3. To assess the contribution of tourism associations in visitor industry development, and how this may affect communities in terms of employment and incomes.

4. To develop a theoretical and conceptual understanding of tourism associations and derive a framework for their study.

5. To make recommendations for the future development of TAs; best practice for their operations; and for further study.

The Objects of Study

1. As small-scale locally-based organisations with limited resources and power, tourism associations must work with other organisations and individuals to achieve their objectives. These other organisations include local authorities, tourist boards, enterprise agencies, and influential local individuals, many of which will not have tourism as their main focus. Relationships with external individuals and organisations will often be critical to TAs’ success, and investigation of their work must be structured to pay close attention to these relationships.

2. The objects of study are non-statutory, voluntary organisations, conforming to no specific model of organisation and with variable modes of operation. No-one is obliged to join; neither local authorities, tourist boards, nor other arms of government need pay heed to their existence or work; and visitors and potential visitors to an area need never be aware of their activities, role, or existence. The approach to the study that is adopted needs to internalise these nebulous and highly variable characteristics of TAs.

3. A tourism association is only as strong as its membership, or key individuals within its executive apparatus, allow it to be. But the goals of such organisations and their members and officers will inevitably be variable, ill-defined, subject to change, and even at odds with each other at times, and the methodology must be sufficiently 'loose' to accommodate these important factors.

4. Tourism associations will vary according to numerous internal and external factors. These include:
   - their history
   - the characteristics and history of the visitor industry in their local area, including its relative importance in the local economy
   - the influence of key individuals in each group
   - the composition of the membership
- the characteristics and attitudes of other organisations and individuals involved in visitor industry development locally and regionally
- the existence of other, possibly rival, tourism associations within their defined area of operation.
- the constitution and mode of operation of each group
- the fortunes of the tourism industry

Given the likely degree of variation in TAs, the chosen methodology (and method of working) must facilitate the development of a broad understanding of the general role of these groups as a whole rather than detailed knowledge of specific groups.

The Environment

1. The environment or context within which tourism associations will be studied is complex. No methodology, or indeed tourism development study, can assess and factor in the relative contribution of the many influences determining the benefits derived by a location from the visitor industry, but the methodology chosen must above all help maintain the focus on the main objects of study.

2. The institutional framework for visitor industry development in the UK is fragmented and relatively lacking in central direction. The tourist industry is composed of a collection of activities and supporting infrastructure, but policy is poorly articulated at national level; regional tourist boards seem often to operate in an ad hoc manner; and the efforts of many other agencies with influence and resources, including local authorities and governmental development agencies, frequently seem uncoordinated. Recent developments suggest that this picture of a lack of direction within a highly complex framework, much of which was not designed to facilitate tourism development, may be worsening (Mead 1993). The chosen methodology needs to be attuned to the examination of an ill-defined and steadily evolving development apparatus - a human activity structure - parts of which seem almost incidental to its task of tourism development.

Study Perspective

1. The study is based upon a foundation of local economic development theory, an approach which prescribes the use of local resources and initiative to promote and sustain local, and even community, industries. Generation of income and jobs through activities which are acceptable to the local population is a prime medium- to long-term consideration, as are inter-industry linkages and long-term sustainability in the broadest sense of those terms. Visitor industry development cannot be considered separately from that of other industries from this viewpoint. An holistic approach must therefore be adopted to the study of visitor industry development in any single location, able to encompass the many
interests involved, their goals, and the broad range and distribution of likely impacts, costs and benefits.

2. Following on from the above point, the study will be interdisciplinary, making it more important that the methodology provides a broad-based, loose yet purposeful integrative conceptual framework for organising the material and for the conduct of the study.

3. The view that a destination-specific perspective based upon local capacities and community decision-making is the most appropriate way to approach tourism development (Murphy 1985) chimes well with theories of local economic development, and reinforces the need for an 'holistic' methodology.

4. The nature of the study is more investigative than deductivist, more a process of learning and conceptualisation than a highly goal-orientated one, and more qualitative than quantitative in focus. Additionally, there is little literature available on local economic development through tourism associations; and there is a notable absence of both theoretical consideration of their roles and any framework for their study. The study aims to make a contribution towards the literature and tourism industry development concepts, requiring a methodology which will assist in the process of doing so in a 'soft' study environment without imposing limitations on the likely outcomes.

CHOSEN METHODOLOGY AND RATIONALE

Systems methodology has been adopted for use in the study. It has been selected because:

♦ it provides a framework for an ordered approach to the conduct of the study;

♦ systems analysis is an integrative and holistic methodology: this is important because of the need to integrate consideration of the various costs, benefits, impacts, and organisations in tourism;

♦ it will assist in maintaining the focus on the main objects of study within a wider framework;

♦ it offers a conceptual framework for an approach which is at once at micro and macro scales:-

- TAs will be viewed as systems in their own right
- TAs will also be viewed as sub-systems of the wider tourism development system in an area
and the tourism development system may be put into the context of the yet broader economic development system in a region

- systems analysis was developed specifically for the examination of ill-defined, 'soft' human activity systems, and organisations in particular;

- in focussing attention on what TAs do more than how they do it, or the details of their day-to-day methods of operation and constitution for instance, the research is focussed at the general level to elucidate the goals and role of these bodies; and

- it is essentially a learning-based methodology.

The contention here advanced that systems analysis is useful for investigating tourism is supported by the use of the methodology in several published works, including Mill & Morrison (1987) *The tourism system*, and Pearce (1981) *Tourist development*. Additionally, in *Tourism - A community approach*, Murphy (1985) refers to the need to adopt an 'ecological' framework for development, analogous to a systems approach.

The next section will present a review of the systems approach, with definitions of critical terms, a discussion of key concepts and perspectives, and how these apply to the research.

**The Systems Approach**

The systems approach in the social sciences brings an holistic perspective to complex 'problem' situations. Systems thinking is oriented towards gaining understanding of what assemblages of elements (organisations, for example) do as composites within their environments, and although systems may employ an analytic approach to the nature and contribution of each element and the stages by which the final effect is derived, the focus is primarily on the overall effect of the combination of the causative structures, elements, processes and relationships and interactions between parts of the system.

The systems approach looks for synergistic effects of the interactions between the components manifest in the achievements of the system. The approach is best summed up by the phrase 'the whole is more than the sum of the parts'. A system composed of discrete parts is viewed as having properties as a collective whose effects exceed what would have been expected from mere summation of the effect of the individual components - the outcomes of their combined effects are best considered at a higher level of analysis from that of their individual effects. The focus of systems investigation, then, varies between the macro and the micro but, again, although the individual components of the overall system and their interactions are of interest at their own level of the hierarchy, the focus of interest is more at the level of their contribution to the overall outcome of the wider system, and more on what the system does rather than the details of how it does it. By virtue of the way that the systems approach directs attention in all situations to parts,
wholes, interrelationships between system elements and the wider environment, and hierarchies of elements and effects, it is oriented towards revealing 'the general in the particular' (Emery 1969).

The focus of the systems approach is quite different to that of the reductionist approach of natural science, under which close attention is directed to disaggregated and usually isolated constituents of phenomena. Individual elements are still of interest under systems thinking, but only insofar as they contribute to the operation of the whole. Systems provides a framework for integrating them into a wider perspective. As has been established by organisational scientists, isolating organisations conceptually for analysis is relatively easy but the results are confined to a single level of analysis, and frequently reveal little about the broader effects that they produce (Emery 1969). The whole impetus of systems, by contrast, comes from an appreciation of the complexity of the elements and influences behind behaviour in man-made and natural systems, and the recognition that examination of any system needs to proceed on the basis of acceptance of this complexity.

Systems thinking, which came to prominence during the latter half of the twentieth century, owes much to biological and ecological research. Koehler (1938) pointed out at an early stage that the machine principle was incapable of offering a comprehensive explanation of organic regulation, and neither can it properly account for the complexities of the ecosystem concept, for instance. Despite biologists’ growing knowledge of the component parts and processes of the animated and organised organic world around them, as the limitations of the capacity of the essentially static findings of reductionist science to explain nature became clear the attraction of dynamic theories grew.

The methodology provides a logic for the study of complex systems displaying identifiably purposive and adaptive behaviour, 'the most distinctive behaviour of higher organisms' (Sommerhoff 1969) (and, by implication, of all organised activity), and while it certainly does not constitute a rigorous predictive theory it is an aid to furthering understanding, not simply a means through which competing explanations may be advanced (Emery 1981).

The holistic conceptualism of systems thinking has been applied in a wide range of disciplines including both the physical and social sciences (Kast and Rosenzweig 1981). It has been identified as constituting a "a 'grand' approach to the way in which humans should approach reality", based on the proposition that all aspects of the human world may be tied together in one rational scheme, in the same way as physicists are aiming to produce a grand unified theory of physical laws (Churchman 1979). The 'open systems' variant of systems thinking resonates particularly well with the dominant mode of conduct of the social sciences under which phenomena are assessed firmly in the context of the environment in which they occur rather than in isolation from them. Furthermore, it invites use as a vehicle or structure through which problems may be studied in an interdisciplinary manner, a property of particular relevance to the present study.
A system may be defined as an assembly of parts where:

1. The parts or components are connected together in an organised way.
2. The parts or components are affected by being in the system and changed by leaving it.
3. The assembly does something.
4. The assembly has been identified by a person as being of special interest.

Beishon and Peters 1981

A thing may be called a system if it is perceived as consisting of a set of elements that are connected to each other by at least one discriminable, distinguishing principle (Jordan 1968), although each part of the system may not necessarily be directly or formally related to every other (Ackoff and Emery 1972).

Development and Use

Early parallels with the systems approach have been found in the Chinese I Ching and the Hindu tradition exemplified in the Bhagavad-Gita (Churchman 1979). It also has many parallels with Gestalt principles in psychology, which are said to characterise the higher levels of organisation which we call living systems (Angyal 1981).

The modern-day development of a scientifically adequate theory of living systems and the respective roles and contributions of the individual/part and group/whole has been traced through the work of Singer and Sommerhoff to the recognition of potential applications in social science by Nagel (Emery 1981). Systems concepts are said to be central to the thinking of many scientists and technologists in the modern era, having helped to bridge many of the gaps exposed by reductionist research, and are increasingly becoming so for social scientists (Beishon and Peters 1981). However, progress towards wider adoption of the holistic and integrative perspective offered by systems thinking has been described as 'significant but not spectacular' due to the grip that reductionism maintains on the academic and wider world (Checkland 1981b).

In his review of the development of systems thinking, Checkland (1981b) notes a clearly identifiable dichotomy in the literature between the study of systems for their own sake ('pure' systems thinking) and application of the principles to other disciplines. The latter include organisational theory and analysis, where it has most often been applied to aid the solution of 'problem' or 'messy' situations, although the fields of biology/ecology, geography, sociology, planning, economics, management and engineering have also experienced their own systems revolutions. The design of computer systems drew upon and fed much back into early systems
theory development, and much of the available literature is still biassed towards this area of application (see for instance Parkin 1987; Bingham and Davies 1992).

An important avenue in the evolution of the study of systems ideas has been the development of general systems theory (GST). Strongly identified with Ludwig von Bertalanffy, the thrust of GST was to derive abstract principles common to all kinds of systems. However, the approach has failed to unify systems researchers, largely because its content suffers through its very generality and practical application is very difficult. Informed opinion holds that future progress for the systems approach is more likely to come from application within specific problem areas than from the development of all-encompassing theory. The GST strand of 'pure' systems development is distinct from the situation-specific 'problem-solving' strand, which is of specific relevance to the present study.

Basic Tenets

The systems approach directs research to concentrate upon several key elements and properties of the system under study. These are described and briefly discussed below:

♦ open and closed systems and the environment of the system
♦ the system boundary
♦ system elements
♦ system interrelatioships, communications, regulation, management, hierarchy, organisation and 'emergence'
♦ system behaviour
♦ dynamics and the steady state
♦ causation - sufficiency and necessity

Open and Closed Systems & the Environment

von Bertalanffy was a pioneer in making a rigorous distinction between open and closed systems. This was an important step forward in systems thinking, providing conceptual grounds on which to differentiate living systems from inanimate ones, the former including organisms but also social organisations. A system into which nothing enters and nothing leaves is a closed system, whereas one whose dynamic interchanges with its environment results in changes to its components is open (von Bertalanffy 1950). An open system may import, transform and export materials, and may also achieve stability in a steady state, 'a necessary condition of adaptability to environmental variance' (von Bertalanffy 1950); social scientists employing systems concepts invariably use the open systems concept for obvious reasons.

The environment of the system is a critical aspect of the 'open' systems perspective, and can be defined as follows:
"The environment is the set of all objects a change in whose attributes affect the system and also those objects whose attributes are changed by the behaviours of the system"

Hall and Fagen 1956

More recent formal systems models define the environment simply as that lying outside the system boundary (Checkland 1981a). It is a set of elements and their relevant properties which are not part of the system but a change in any of which can produce a change in the state of the system; thus it is all variables which can affect the state of the system (Ackoff and Emery 1972). The character of open systems requires management to concern itself with both the internal and external environments (Emery and Trist 1960).

For the purposes of the present study, both of the systems under study (TAs and the tourism development system) will be viewed as open systems. The two systems exist in the same environment in many respects, including such elements and properties as:

♦ the general UK system for economic development, and economic trends; and

♦ the market for tourism, subject to the influence of numerous factors.

System Boundaries

The concept of boundaries, setting the domain of the activities of the organisation is self-evident at a theoretical level but likely to be difficult to operationalise in the real social world. The boundaries of social organisations are very difficult to define; they are vaguely formed and highly permeable, being defined primarily by the functions and activities of the organisation. Cartwright and Harary (1977) develop notions of system boundaries, theorising about elements which act in boundary roles between the system and its environment ('gatekeepers'), and communication and transactions between the 'outside' and the 'inside', but overall there is a relatively limited amount of literature on the concept of boundaries. This is perhaps unfortunate, because guidance on the matter would help frame boundaries for study better. Factors influencing boundary definition for the social sciences have been considered by Kast and Rosenzweig (1981), who conclude:

"Frequently, in the study of social organisations, where to draw the boundaries is a matter of convenience and strategy."

- but any guidance would be very general anyway, for outside the most basic properties of a system (entities and connections) system properties can vary without limits (Ackoff and Emery 1972; Jordan 1968). To complicate matters, boundaries are flexible and change over time, depending upon the system's activities, functions, and environment. This is in itself valuable; the systems approach forces the analyst to consider the whole situation of interest, exploring what should and should not be included within the boundaries.
The study aims to investigate TAs as systems in their own right and as a sub-system of the wider tourism development system of their localities. While it is accepted that the latter in particular is in some respects an artificial construct, it can be described as 'a part of the world which interests an investigator' (Kast and Rosenzweig 1981).

Elements of the System

System elements, otherwise referred to as components or entities, are the most immediately identifiable parts of any assemblage termed a system. The level at which a system is being studied determines the identification of objects as system elements. For example, in physics atoms are discrete entities possessing specific characteristics and properties and can be positively identified as the main constituents of systems at the atomic level; but they are of a lesser order of importance at molecular and higher levels, and similarly of little relevance at the subatomic level, where particles are of primary importance. The present study is examining systems at two levels: these are the tourism association and the local tourism development system.

Social systems have a tendency to evolve towards greater complexity, with increasing numbers of elements. Over time, they will assume higher-order characteristics with associated differentiation and specialisation (Kast and Rosenzweig 1981). Social systems, of which TAs and local tourism development systems are examples, can be termed 'organic' because of these dynamic attributes and their open nature; and organic systems contrast with a general trend of growing entropy (von Bertalanffy 1929). The nature of the system has implications for system development in terms of numbers of elements. Closed systems have all significant positions filled - the number of elements they contain is broadly fixed - but open/organic systems may have some unfilled, leaving room for an increase in systems complexity through additional elements (Angyal 1981). Classic organisational theory and theories of self-perpetuating bureaucracies, holding that all organisations have a propensity to expand, have been adduced to systems thinking in this regard (Selznick 1981) and, following these principles:

♦ there may be room in local tourism development systems for TAs in areas where none exist; and

♦ there may be room for more system elements in the form of TAs in areas where one or more already exist.

Whether or not additional system elements will assist achievement of system goals is another matter entirely.

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2 Coined by von Bertalanffy (1929)
This notion of role-taking behaviour displayed by system elements does not necessarily postulate the initial existence of distinct, identifiable roles. Elements or actors may be seen to act as though there were roles, especially in open systems; the actors may define and make these roles explicit, and when they are perceived to provide consistency and a stable framework for interaction their role behaviours tend to become fixed and their legitimacy confirmed. Important criteria determining the legitimacy of system elements include their adoption of critical norms and values of the system as a whole, and anchorage in the membership of recognised groups of what might be described as system participants (Buckley 1981). The roles of TAs in local tourism development systems will be investigated in the light of these principles.

Under what Buckley (1981) describes as "the normal loose operation of society", there is usually a divergence between the formal, institutional role of an element and its day-to-day practices in actually trying to carry out the role. In 'organic', human systems, the framework of roles will operate as a loosely-conceived ideal framework of behaviour rather than a fixed set of formulae. The extent to which tourism associations have and fulfil formal roles will be examined, as will the differing perceptions of their role held by other system elements.

System Interrelationships, Communications, Regulation, Management, Hierarchy, Organisation and 'Emergence'

While individual elements are clearly of significance at each discrete level of a system, they are not of primary importance in systems. The organisation of the elements has been described as being of equal if not greater importance (Sommerhoff 1969), serving to optimise the efficiency of the work of the individual elements towards achievement of the goal. This section discusses important aspects of systems organisation and operation, and briefly introduces models of organisational types, developed from a systems perspective.

Interrelationships between system elements are a critical focus of systems study, almost by definition. Indeed, systems seek to establish and maintain interdependencies such that they ensure maximum potential for work (Emery 1969). Given that the phenomena under study - TAs, and the British system for tourism development - are considered as arising as the result of more-or-less formal organisation, the research task becomes one of understanding the nature of the interdependencies (Emery and Trist 1965).

Systems writers have examined the characteristics and outcomes of the vital workings of systems, and shown how certain attributes are common to many. Communication between elements is an inherent characteristic of systems. Much communication will travel along what are termed feedback and control loops; these are essential to the functioning of any system, permitting regulation and direction (Buckley 1981), and underly the concepts of system regulation and direction. Given their importance, the frequency and nature of communication within and between important system elements will be assessed in the study.
Regulation is another basic characteristic of systems (Emery 1969), but an important question arises over the degree to which any one system is controlled or managed by any single element. Ackoff and Emery (1972) insist that at least one subset of all systems has some control function, with the task of defining desired outcomes and determining targets against which to assess performance, and there may of course be a division of labour between organisational elements that make the choices and those which carry them out. Ackoff’s criteria for determining if one element (or system) controls others hinges on whether its behaviour is necessary and sufficient for subsequent behaviour of the other elements or systems, and necessary for the attainment of one or more system goals (the concepts of necessity and sufficiency are explored later). The measure of efficient regulation is the steady growth of system capacity to achieve its mission, and a critical question is whether at any time it is better able to fulfil its mission than previously (see also Emery 1969). The study will consider the degree to which the tourism development system as a whole is regulated.

Goal-directedness is an essential ingredient of systems concepts, implicit given the regulation function mentioned above. A common goal or goals are essential for rational coordination and correlation of activities of systems. Goal-directedness with ‘unidirectional progress’ requires leadership and commitment, and general agreement on a clearly defined end-state that lasts through changing circumstances and shifts in organisational relationships (Emery 1969). While a system may in theory work towards a single goal, any complex system will have a hierarchy of goals, which are interrelated and integrated, and each element will have a proximate or transient goal, which is subservient to others. In some cases, the goal of one activity or element will be to establish or maintain the conditions under which another goal-directed activity can take place. Relationships between activities and levels of operation enable the observer to attribute an individual goal to each, generating hierarchies of goals and subgoals and an ultimate goal to the whole sequence (Sommerhoff 1969). The relationship between the goals of the tourism development system and those of TAs will be considered, as far as these can be accurately determined.

This discussion re-introduces notions of management, hierarchy and of directive correlation, the idea that the goals at any single level of the system are oriented towards a single aim. Systems as a whole and their goals are subject to directive correlation which can only be fully understood in the light of the broad system context. Thus a hierarchy of system subgoals may be derived from a single ultimate goal or objective - often that of facilitating the achievement of the goals of the next level - and while this implies a more-or-less formal management function, Sommerhoff (1969) points out that this does not imply the necessity for a hierarchical organisation structure (this point is discussed further below). That there is a hierarchy of processes as well as structure is self-evident, too, for any system presupposes the need for some division of responsibility between task-oriented, organisational (managerial) and institutional (‘community level’) functions (Kast & Rosenzweig 1981). The study aims to gain an impression of the structural characteristics of the visitor industry development system, leading on to an assessment of the capacity of the system for directive correlation and further illuminating the position of TAs.
Systems analysis provides a useful perspective on appropriate forms of organisation for tourism development. The nature of the environment or 'field' will influence the nature of the form of organisation required to achieve the goals. A simple hierarchical structure is often sufficient - and perhaps inevitable - to cope with a relatively static environment, where each component part is restricted to a specified function and the hierarchy exists to coordinate the specialised elements, but 'turbulent' environments require a different organisational form. Under conditions of dynamic environmental change, discrete organisations which are basically dissimilar but whose fates are positively correlated need to work within a pattern of relationships that will maximise cooperation with an understanding that:

- each has a defined place in the structure, and
- that none can take primacy over the rest

Emery and Trist 1965

Such a pattern of non-hierarchical relationships is described as an organisational matrix by Emery and Trist (1965). It acts by:

1. Delimiting on value criteria what and who can be included in the field specified.
2. Enabling a definable shape to be worked out without recourse to much formal hierarchy between members.

The form of strategic planning which might be associated with more formal systems must be modified for application in a turbulent environment. Policy will frequently be biased towards goals offering the maximum convergence of the interests of other parties (Emery and Trist 1965) - the degree to which this occurs in the tourism system will be assessed. Also, efforts by any single organisation to secure dominance will be resisted, for systems' missions are far less likely to be achieved if one element attempts to take overall control; the balance of power in the tourism development system will be investigated with this in mind.

The classic theoretical model for organisational structure is represented by the familiar inverted tree structure, but it has frequently been criticised for not fully describing the way in which real-world organisations actually work. It would be difficult to apply in an attempt to model the structure for local tourism development because the various elements are autonomous; any joint working between a tourist board and a tourism association, for instance, results from mutual agreement rather than formal duty. They are separate entities, neither having direct power over the other. The inverted tree implies that communication and relationships are logically organised and formally structured to reflect levels of authority and responsibility, but such levels don't exist in a loose system of autonomous elements, each with different responsibilities and constituencies. Beer (1981) considers that firms as systems, for instance, don't work as the classic model implies, making the points that:
there is invariably much more communication within levels than there is between them; and

there are plenty of channels of communication available other than those indicated by the formal up-and-down-the-tree pattern.

Beer's main point, demonstrated mathematically, is that a looser organisation will be less likely to make errors than one operating wholly along formal lines, because of the richer information flows and massing of opinion that are facilitated (see Figure 1). The visitor industry development system is clearly not a formal hierarchical system, and a judgement on how closely it approximates to Beer's model will be made in the study.

![Diagram of the 'multinode' organisation type](image)

Figure 1 - Diagram of the 'multinode' organisation type
Source - Beer (1981)

The advantages of multinode organisations are their inherent freedom of action and flexibility, making them highly suitable for certain types of task. Building and maintaining mutually dependent and reciprocating relationships is a critical objective for the multinode organisation in a turbulent environment, for they will help produce the commitment and involvement critical to organisational action and success, and help overcome the multinode's inherent problems. Commitment and involvement of the elements are fundamental to organisational action and success, and thus a vital target for analysis (Kast and Rosenzweig 1981; Selznick 1981).
However, problems associated with 'multinode' organisation are that it is slow and can be difficult to control. The system must offer its members a degree of autonomy and selective interdependence for optimal functioning (Emery 1969).

The multinode concept of organisation, applied to systems of individual organisations working together, challenges hierarchical organisational thinking and offers conceptual structural guidance on how an informally-organised system of elements can potentially work as an integrated system. It suggests that the classic model is neither universally applicable nor necessarily desirable or efficient.

Other writers have extended the idea. Herbst (1981) developed a generic model, considering that some organisations have the capacity for multistructured functioning. They can be classified into three general types, one of which may be an appropriate model for use in the study:

1. The **composite autonomous group**, in which all members are capable of most or all of the required tasks. There is no special leadership function, and no set structure - the system can adopt any structure appropriate for the task in hand. The elements are correlated towards a specified aim, but usually work individually, although do work as a network occasionally. All parts of the organisation have to be competent in all tasks to a certain degree.

2. The **matrix system** is based upon the principle that each member has a specialist function but also overlapping competence with other elements. Again, alternative structures can be generated to cope with the requirements of specific tasks. There is theoretically no necessary limit to the size of the group.

3. The **network group** is the converse of the composite autonomous pattern. Network members work and communicate jointly on occasion, but more usually work individually or in dispersed sub-sets with long-term directive correlation to mutually facilitate a jointly recognised aim. It provides the maximum autonomy of individual members consistent with the achievement of a joint aim. Such organisations tend to remain unrecognised for long periods, communicating indirectly, working to the vaguest of aims, and directive correlation that may be invisible to all for a long period. A network of scientists offers a good example, with the capacity to maintain its existence over several decades while remaining essentially temporary.

- after Herbst 1981

Multinode organisation is essentially multistructured and co-operative. No single organisation can do much on its own because it is linked to the others by interdependence and complementarity relationships, although the structures for these are non-rigid. Individual elements interact as a whole in relation to a formal or informal system of coordination as far as resources and other
constraints allow, and under the view prevalent in systems thinking literature that it is impossible ever to divorce control and consent, *all* formal organisations must be viewed as cooperative systems (Selznick 1981). The resulting systems structure is a function of reciprocal influences of the formal and informal aspects of organisation, and reactions to influences. As in all cooperative systems, there is a persistent relationship between need and commitment, which adds a further factor to the framework for organisational analysis (Selznick 1981). An appraisal of the degree to which TAs are part of a cooperative tourism system will be made, based upon an assessment of the need and commitment of these and other system elements, and the mode of organisation examined.

The combined effect of the elements, attributes, structures and processes of a system is termed **emergence**. Emergence is what the system *does*, the combined effect of its structures, processes and relationships, and it is most readily apparent in biological systems (Checkland 1981a, 1981b). Emergent properties of a system are those which are possessed by the system but not its parts; they derive, in effect, from the sum of the activities and structures of any one level of the system, and are absent at the levels below.

Pursuing the biological analogy further to illustrate emergence, critical biochemical reactions which enable movement in a higher animal are arguably irrelevant as a lion stalks its prey - the stalking activity is the emergent result of the natural system at the level of the organism. The concept of emergent properties of organisations means that the organisation reaches decisions, takes action, and makes adjustments (Selznick 1981), and the goal-directedness of the loose system - organisation - of autonomous tourism development bodies will be viewed in relation to the concept of emergence, although it is expected to be highly imperfect. The degree to which the emergent results of the heterogenous tourism development system are sub-optimal because of the lack of directive correlation powers will also be examined.

**System Behaviour**

In another biological analogy, systems grow, change, and respond. They adapt to events and their environments, both external and internal, to help maintain their dynamic equilibrium. The adaptive behaviour of systems can be seen as a mechanism to exist in their often turbulent environments and achieve their goals.

Consideration of system behaviour must include systems events, a change in the structural properties of a system and/or its environment over a period of time requiring a response. A division may be made between static, dynamic and homeostatic systems with respect to events, as follows:

1. A **static** system is one to which no events occur.
2. A **dynamic** system is one whose state changes over time.
3. A **homeostatic** system is a specific type of static system, whose elements and environment are dynamic.
System changes include:

- system reactions, system events or behaviour caused by another event;
- system response, *coproduced* by a system and an environment and not necessarily by an event;
- system acts, self-determined and autonomous changes

(after Ackoff and Emery 1972)

Most systems display all three types of behaviour, and from these a behavioural classification of systems has been developed:

- state-maintaining systems (reactive)
- goal-seeking systems (responsive)
- multi-goal seeking systems
- purposive systems
- purposeful systems
- ideal-seeking systems

Ackoff and Emery 1972

A system is adaptive if it is able to modify itself to improve its efficiency in changing circumstances, whether the change is environmental or internal, to maintain the pursuit of its objective (Sommerhoff 1969; Ackoff and Emery 1972). A complex adaptive system is an open system in close contact with an environment characterised by rapid and thorough change. A fundamental principle of such systems is that their persistence and continuity often require, as a necessary condition, structural changes the better to achieve adaptation. The organisation of the complex adaptive system is the control, the characteristics of which change as the organisation changes (Buckley 1981). The research will establish the type and behavioural characteristics of local tourism systems.

The process of adaptation may include absorption of new elements into the leadership or policy-making structure of an organisation as a means of avoiding threats to its stability, or even its existence. Co-opting the relevant new elements is a defensive mechanism from the viewpoint of the system as a whole; the new organs may lend renewed legitimacy to the existing set-up, and can serve to re-establish the stability of authority (Selznick 1981). The significance of cooptation is that:

1. There is a change, usually a broadening, in leadership - an adaptive change.
2. This change is consequential for the character and role of the organisation.
Cooptation is an adaptive response of a cooperative system to a need for stability, '... generating transformations which reflect the constraints enforced by the recalcitrant tools of action ...' (Selznick 1981). It requires a two-way commitment, so groups coopted can both broaden and limit the choices available to the organisation. A goal will be to determine if tourism associations are coopted by the tourism system and for which reasons.

The process of adaptation implies a capacity for learning, an important characteristic of systems behaviour (Sommerhoff 1969). Learning enables a system to adapt to - 'map onto' - its environment more effectively. Feedback plays an important part in learning - the output is sampled, measured, and positive or negative data fed back to the input with subsequent modifications being actioned as necessary (Greene 1976). The level and role of learning and feedback in the visitor development system will be assessed.

Dynamics and the Steady State

Progress towards a steady state is said to be the most general trend in dynamic systems. Attainment of a steady state by an open system is said to be a necessary condition of its ability to perform work, for one in equilibrium is unable to do so (von Bertalanffy 1950). A system achieves a steady state with inputs, transformations and outputs of materials through the agencies of regulatory devices and mechanisms working towards a defined and agreed-upon end-state for the system. For the steady state to be achieved, there must be constancy of direction despite changes in the environment or the system itself such that the same outcomes are achieved and the elements are oriented towards the same ends. There will over time be a steady growth of the capability of the system vis-a-vis its mission and possibly an increase in the rate of progress, too. A system in steady state will manifest resistance to rapid change which might put the system out of balance with its environment.

It is debatable how far the steady state concept, imported into systems thinking from biology, is applicable to social organisations. Emery (1969), who adopted an explicit systems approach to social organisations, contends that 'human' or social systems do seek to achieve a steady state, or equilibrium, offering as an analogy an individual organism such as an oak tree. However, Kast and Rosenzweig (1981) consider that classic steady state concepts are not applicable to social organisations, which, rather, tend towards a dynamic or moving equilibrium involving adjustment to continually changing environmental and internal forces. Structural elaboration is inevitable in open systems; it is a common reaction to changing environments and may be a condition of system survival or viability (Buckley 1981). A complex system may be better able to achieve its goals than a simple one, and the roles and importance of TAs within the tourism system will be considered with regard to this perspective. However, again, management of complex systems presents difficulties for formal management systems due to the constraints imposed by the many internal and external forces, uncertainties, and a continuing requirement for adaptation, possibly negating some of the benefits of structural elaboration.
Examination of the system will proceed in the light of these notions. The applicability of the theory that social organisations accumulate a certain 'slack' of resources which can help them maintain equilibrium to mitigate effects of environmental and systems inflow variations (Kast and Rosenzweig 1981) will also be examined.

Part of the function of a successful TA will be to influence the activities and priorities of other system elements, such as tourist boards and local authorities, and the study will endeavour to find examples of adaptive changes produced by interchanges between components of the tourism system.

Finally, a characteristic of many systems is that they possess what is referred to as 'equifinality' (Emery and Trist 1960), the ability to achieve similar states (whether steady states or dynamic equilibria) from differing initial conditions and in differing ways. While the roles of TAs in the regional/local tourism systems in England and Wales are likely to be broadly similar in their contribution towards steady states, the ways in which they are involved and operate are likely to vary considerably, affected to a significant degree by the characteristics of local tourism development environments. The principle of equifinality thus reinforces one important conclusion of the causation debate mentioned earlier, that no assumption can be made that all tourism associations - or tourism development systems, for that matter - operate identically. This conclusion has clear implications for the utility of study data.

Causation

Establishing a train of causation is difficult in the social sciences. This is at least partially related to the origin of concepts of cause and effect in the physical sciences and their arguably inappropriate application in the social sciences, as discussed earlier, as well as the complexity of the likely influences. But attempting to establish causation is nonetheless worth pursuing in the study, because it should offer some basis upon which to judge the contribution of TAs as a part of tourism development systems.

A focus upon cause and effect directs investigation with concepts of necessity and sufficiency:

- $a$ is the cause of $b$ if it's the **necessary and sufficient** condition of $b$ - if $a$ occurs then $b$ must follow it, but if $a$ doesn't then $b$ can't; and

- if $a$ is needed for $b$, but cannot alone produce $b$, it is a **necessary but not sufficient** cause of $b$. An acorn is necessary for an oak, but is not in itself sufficient for the grown tree.

These bring in train notions of producer, coproducer, and nonproducer to causal analysis (Ackoff and Emery 1972).
In the past, systems theorists have approached the problems of the concept of the producer: product relationship in social science from the perspective of structure: function analysis (see for instance Ackoff and Emery 1972). Under this approach, for instance, government is a rationally structured instrument for the achievement of goals, with an agreed purpose; a set allocation of functions and responsibilities; and conscious coordination. The formal organisation becomes the structural expression of rational action, with relationships sufficiently institutionalised that the organisation is free from dependence upon individuals and personal qualities (Selznick 1981). The structure: function approach postulates that the basic need of all empirical systems is the maintenance of the integrity and continuity of the system itself, including:

♦ continuation of policy and the sources of its determination; and

♦ broad agreement on the meaning and role of the organisation.

Selznick 1981

The flaw is that this structure: function perspective tends to ignore the fact that most organisations are the result of complex forces. For instance, despite the various ways of organising them, organisations never succeed in conquering the non-rational dimensions of organisational behaviour (Selznick 1981), presenting problems for the analyst investigating causation. While the task of analysis under the structure: function approach is to single out pairs of acts between which there is a necessary connection, this poses considerable problems for social science research given the many factors involved in organisational action. The systems approach, however, doesn’t concentrate upon finding direct relations between producer and product but seeks instead to find the superordinate system in which they are connected and/or to define their positional value within such a system (Angyal 1981). The appearance of structure is regarded as being only a relative stability of underlying, on-going causative processes: and, given this, the unit of dynamic analysis is the matrix of interacting, goal-seeking, decision-making individuals and subgroups, whether the matrix is part of a formal organisation or only a loose collective.

Thus a focus on systems structure may be replaced with one on function: process. A process-oriented viewpoint must nevertheless be integrated with structural conceptions for the production of general theoretical models of systems, for structure is the way in which moving reality is translated for an observer. Systems writers contend that the former has often been favoured to the complete exclusion of the latter (Buckley 1981).

Use of Systems Analysis in the Study

Overall, then, the systems approach directs research effort more towards what a system does rather than how it does it. Mechanisms, although important, are not the primary concern. Notions of sufficiency and necessity are as difficult to apply under systems analysis as under
other methodologies, but this is a small price to be paid for the insights provided by the holistic and integrative perspective.

Types of Systems Problems

Problem-solving applications of systems methodology can be categorised into:

1. 'Hard' systems uses
2. Decision-making applications
3. Application to 'soft' systems study

Checkland 1981b

There has been widespread use of the methodology for 'hard' systems analysis, applied to such diverse areas as engineering and computing, but the outcomes are generally considered too abstract and mechanistic to throw light upon social systems, as might perhaps be expected (see for instance Emery 1981). It offers few routes to comprehension of the behaviour of systems where the components are capable of purposive and even ideal-seeking behaviour.

Most if not all systems methodologies do take account of the 'hard' elements of a system - the technology - but 'soft' systems methodology focusses upon the human activity involved. The present problem is clearly a 'soft' systems problem, centred as it is around organisations involved in tourism development, whose interrelationships may be critical to success. Peter Checkland developed and refined a methodology for operationalising the investigation of 'soft' systems, which is now regularly used for organisational analysis and problem-solving. A modified version of this soft systems methodology will be utilised in the study, and the following section outlines the methodology, the main concepts upon which it is based, and details of the modifications implemented for use within the study.

Soft Systems Methodology

Checkland’s soft systems methodology (SSM) is a semi-formalised means of applying systems thinking to real-world 'problem' situations. Based largely upon the work of two previous writers (Churchman 1971; Vickers 1973), SSM has been used regularly by both the author (Checkland and Scholes 1990) and numerous others engaged in organisation analysis and development (see for instance Patching 1990). Essentially, it is a process involving four main elements:

1. Expression of a 'problem' situation - a description of an organisation that fails to function effectively, for instance.

2. Definition and modelling of what the organisation-as-system is supposed to do, expressed in systems terms.
3. Comparison of the theoretical concept of the problem situation with its real-world manifestation, enabling the production of a list of feasible and desirable changes.

4. Action to improve the problem situation.

In his influential work *Systems thinking, systems practice*, Checkland (1981a) expressed the process in the form of a diagram (Figure 2) which was modified slightly for his subsequent publication *Soft systems methodology in action*, but the basic procedure remains unaltered. The author notes, however, that the methodology is not a fixed or required sequence of activities, and that modification to suit particular circumstances or purposes is warranted.

![Figure 2 - Diagram of the soft systems methodology process](source.png)

*Figure 2 - Diagram of the soft systems methodology process
Source - Checkland (1981)*

Soft systems methodology is a broad framework for suggesting solutions to complex human or organisational problems. Checkland (1981a) notes that it is set firmly within a learning paradigm, using systems ideas to formulate the basic acts of perceiving, learning, exploring social reality and enabling debate about status quo and change. Of the many systems concepts noted earlier in this chapter, Checkland considers that the most important are:
emergence;
• hierarchy;
• communication; and
• control.

The concept of weltanschauung (w) is also critical to the methodology. It is a German term that loosely translates as 'world-view' or 'world-philosophy', giving meaning to human activity systems as perceived by human observers 'who are free to attribute meaning to what they perceive' (Checkland 1981a) according to their conceptions and perceptions of the world. This contrasts with natural and designed systems, which are perceived for what they are.

That there can never be a single testable account of a human activity system, only a set of possible accounts each valid according to particular weltanschauungen, is a truism that chimes well with the philosophy of social science. The w makes meaningful the operation, goals, and existence of the system under investigation, and is considered important because:

"... the ultimate object of enquiry [is] social reality..."

Checkland 1981a

It serves to make the perspective of the investigator explicit for the purposes of those considering the study outcomes, to convey their version of social reality. While hard systems are concerned only with a single w - there is a single defined need or objective, and the debate is centred around evaluating alternative means to accomplish it - soft systems investigates situations about which there are multiple perceptions derived from different w’s.

Application to Study - Relevant Systems

To help fulfil the aims and objectives of the study, SSM will be applied investigatively to both tourism associations and the loose organisational matrix that constitutes local tourism development systems. Each will be treated as a system in its own right, and the former as a subsystem of the latter. The rationale for viewing these as systems is based upon the system model developed by Checkland (1981a) specifically for such purposes. The model is outlined below, and in the two subsequent sections the status of these as formal systems is established through its application.

* S is a formal system if it:
  1. Has an on-going purpose or mission.
  3. Has a decision-taking process.
4. Has components which are themselves systems.

5. Has components which interact; are connected to a degree; and which lead to effects and actions being transmitted through the system.

6. $S$ exists in and interacts with wider systems and environments.

7. $S$ has a boundary separating it from the wider systems and environment noted at 6. above, formally defined by the area within which the decision-taking process has power to cause action to be taken.

8. $S$ has resources, physical and abstract, which are at the disposal of the decision-taking process.

9. $S$ has some guarantee of continuity, and long-term stability.

(after Checkland 1981a)

The Nature of the 'Problem' and the Checkland Methodology

Soft systems methodology is concerned with problems that are 'soft' rather 'hard', unstructured rather than structured. 'Hard', structured problems can be stated firmly in language which implies that a theory concerning their solution is or may be available:

"How can we spend the marketing budget for an attraction to greatest effect?"

'Soft' or unstructured problems, however, cannot be formulated as a well-structured search for an efficient means of achieving a defined end; the ends, goals and purposes are themselves problematic. Such problems are:

"... manifest in a feeling of unease but which cannot be explicitly stated without this appearing to oversimplify the situation ..."

Checkland 1981a

The common conception of a problem as a well-defined "question or puzzle propounded for solution" (Chambers English Dictionary 1990) applies more to 'hard' systems situations than 'soft' ones. The definition of a problem advanced in Systems thinking, systems practice is:

"A problem relating to real-world manifestations of human activity systems is a condition characterised by a sense of mis-match, which eludes precise definition, between what is perceived to be actuality and what is perceived might become actuality"

Checkland 1981a
The definition and the diagrammatic methodology summary (Figure 2) characterises SSM as action-oriented.

The present 'problem' as defined by the study aims and objectives is even 'softer' than most of Checkland's, however. It relates to a real-world manifestation of a human activity system, but the study is not action-oriented in the way that most SSM applications are. The sense of mismatch between 'actuality and what is perceived might be actuality' will be minimised to some degree by the development of knowledge and understanding of TAs; while the present 'problem' does "elude precise definition", it is susceptible to a process of learning and conceptualisation, although the nature of the study means that the action orientation of Checkland's stages 5, 6, and 7 is inappropriate. For this reason, the methodology will be modified for use in the research, as shown at Figure 3. It will be utilised as a means of carrying out a study based upon systems thinking to the stage of production of conceptual models. This will fulfil the requirements of the first half of the study aim, and the second will be achieved primarily through reference to appropriate literature. The nature of the problem has meant that straightforward application of SSM is inappropriate, but the author recognised that it would be modified for specific situations, and indeed has done so himself (see Checkland and Scholes 1990).

With the methodology determined in outline, the next section will detail how it will be employed to fulfil the aims and objectives of the study through a programme of work.

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**Figure 3 - Diagram of modified SSM process**
- after Checkland (1981)
Study Outline/Method of Working

The three principal steps required by the study aims and objectives, as informed by the modified methodology, are:

1. The problem situation - unstructured and expressed.

2. Root definitions of relevant systems.


These will be discussed in turn.

1. The problem situation - unstructured and expressed.

This stage, a contraction of the first two stages of SSM, directs the research to investigate the problem situation in depth without imposing a predetermined structure on it. The objective is to build up a 'rich picture' of the situation under study, collecting information and perceptions from a wide range of sources, without the use of systems terms or concepts at this early stage (Checkland 1981a). Once a sufficiently rich picture has been assembled, the viewpoint on the situation from which the study will proceed will be selected. This first stage is primarily about displaying the situation to reveal a range of possible and relevant choices, which will in practice be done by a process of 'organised finding out' (Checkland and Scholes 1990), often resulting in a basic structural picture of the problem situation.

As has been noted, there is very little available information with which to form a rich picture of the concept, role and work of tourism associations as part of the system for tourism development. It has thus been deemed necessary to obtain data on these groups and their relationships with other elements of the visitor industry, and this will be done by primary methods of data collection. Two methods will be used:

1. A postal questionnaire survey of a sample of TAs.

2. A case study to examine issues raised by the results of the questionnaire and conduct a more analytical study of TAs in an individual tourist destination.

The rationale for these data collection stages is given below.
Questionnaire Survey

The purpose of this is to gain an initial impression of the activities and role of TAs in England and Wales. To this end, the sample survey will seek to obtain quantitative and qualitative information about variables identified as significant in the study of voluntary associations, including:

- the range of interests and activities of TAs, their geographical area of operation, and any previous or anticipated changes in these
- the structure of the groups and the nature of their membership
- linkages associated with TAs, both internal and external

(after Pickvance 1986)

The questionnaire will yield original empirical data on the population of TAs in England and Wales. While much of this will be quantitative, enabling description of these groups, some qualitative data will also be collected, and more will be obtained during the case study.

While the questionnaire survey data will enable a good initial picture of TAs to be drawn up, they will offer little about the day-to-day operation and role of TAs within individual community-scale tourism development systems. The data will be at a high level of aggregation and, while providing a valuable insight into the national picture, will inevitably reveal little of the complex interactions between the private, public and voluntary sectors and the market for tourism.

A detailed appreciation of how TAs work as part of the tourism development system is critical in order to better understand their role and ability to develop and promote local tourism products. To this end an intensive study will be carried out in an identifiable destination area, for which the questionnaire sample survey will have provided a recognised means of obtaining a useful sampling frame for the linked case study (Hakim 1987).

Case Study

The purpose of this stage is to carry out an original in-depth study of voluntary tourism groups working within a defined area, adding qualitative data to the essentially quantitative information derived from the questionnaire. The case study, located in a rural area, will contribute to the accumulation of a 'rich picture' of TAs.
A programme of interviews held with key actors in the local tourism development system will aim to produce information designed to complement that collected in the questionnaire survey.

The case study will concentrate on assessing the day-to-day activities of the groups under study, and will pay particular attention to their relationships with other elements of the local/regional tourism development system, as guided by systems theory.

Use of case study findings - the case study material will make a significant contribution towards the 'rich picture' of the problem situation for subsequent derivation of root definitions and conceptual model-building. However, the findings of this final stage of data collection will be treated as illustrating the particular structure and operation in an individual destination rather than as a definitive account of TAs because of the wide range of likely variation in local set-ups and their environments. While the number and widespread distribution of TAs suggest that they fulfil a common role in the tourism development environments, and might thus be expected to share certain characteristics, each individual group is oriented towards particular local needs and opportunities as perceived by the membership and/or officers, so the detailed findings of the case study process will be locality-specific. Much of general applicability will however be established to add to the more generalised findings produced by the survey.

So the data collection stage of the study will build up a 'rich picture' of the situation under study. It will fulfill Checkland's prescription for the first two stages of the methodology by taking the perceptions of the real-world problem situation from an unstructured to an expressed form. Concepts of structure, function and process and the relationships between these attributes will be employed in the resultant analysis (Checkland 1981a).

2. Root definitions of relevant systems.

After the end of the problem expression stage, succinct base definitions of the systems selected for modelling are generated in the second stage of the method of working. While these root definitions must clearly be relevant to the problem, this doesn't imply that the systems selected are necessarily optimal, or that the definitions bear too much resemblance to real-world operations or needs; they should provide a concise definition of a human activity system from a particular point of view, a specific outlook on the problem situation, couched in systems terms, and should aim to be radical (Checkland 1981a). The suggested test of the efficiency of the definitions is simply whether or not they are useful for the task in hand.

The final stage of the modified SSM process is concerned with description. The systems under study are regarded as purposeful entities which receive inputs and transform them into outputs. The root definition will have outlined the activities conceived as a transformation process; the third stage of the method of working revolves around building a model of the activity system needed to achieve the transformation described in the definitions.

From this stage will emerge an account of what the system must do to accomplish the base system purposes outlined in the root definitions. The account will not attempt to describe real-world TA activity systems in detail: instead, it should consist of a minimum list of verbs covering the necessary activities for system, structured in a logical sequence. Detailed examples of such model building exercises are readily available in the literature (Checkland 1979; Patching 1990).

Given the importance of the conceptual model-building stage of the methodology, some validation of the output of this stage is necessary. SSM acknowledges that there are:

"...only defensible conceptual models and ones which are less defensible..."

Checkland 1981a

- and it is important to ensure that the conceptual models are not fundamentally deficient. This is done by comparison with the 'formal system' model noted earlier.

SSM users are not restricted to the concepts and concerns of the Checkland methodology. There is specific provision for the introduction of other relevant systems thinking during the conceptual model-building stage; this is possible because SSM is a methodology rather than an inflexible technique. Elements of the systems concepts outlined earlier in this chapter will be brought into this stage of the study, offering further insights into the systems under study from a systems analysis perspective.

CONCLUSION

After briefly discussing relevant philosophical points, this chapter has identified a suitable methodology with which both to structure the conduct of the study and interpret the results of the data collection process. The key methodological concepts have been outlined, and soft systems methodology specified as a semi-formalised vehicle for their application to the study. Finally, a method of working has been determined, based around the nature of the study and the methodological framework.
The soft systems methodology and associated methods of working will be used to help fulfil several important elements of the study objectives:

♦ analysis of the structure, composition, activities and interrelationships associated with TAs; and

♦ development of a theoretical framework for the study of TAs;

- and thence much of the study aim. The remaining three objectives will be met primarily through reference to appropriate literature:

♦ assessment of the contribution of TAs towards the development of the local tourism industries;
♦ suggestions about how such development could affect local economies; and
♦ recommendations on the roles of TAs and best practice for their operations.

The next chapter will present a review of relevant literature.
Chapter Three

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of a review of relevant literature. The review will establish the context of, and reinforce the rationale for, the study of tourism associations as potential facilitators of economic development through an enhanced role for the tourism industry. The scope of the literature review will be relatively wide; this is necessary due to the interdisciplinary nature of the study. While recognising the national perspective, the review will focus on the rural dimension.

A brief introductory discussion of tourism, tourists, visitors and the concept of the tourist destination, together with an outline of government policies for tourism and their implementation with special reference to rural tourism, covers fields that are fundamental to the issues discussed. The critical review of published work on tourism associations and the role the voluntary sector plays in economic development that follows is central to the theme of the study.

The context of local tourism development will be set through an introduction to the market for tourism and recreation in the UK. The structure of the UK visitor industry will also be outlined. Then, developing the focus on rural areas, the work moves on to an in-depth examination of tourism and recreation in the British countryside, followed by a brief discussion of the structure of the rural industry.

The context and need for economic development in rural areas will be established through a review of material on the state of society and economy in British rural areas. A review of literature on the regional economic and employment effects of tourism and recreation with particular reference to rural areas will be presented. The implications for local visitor industry development and that of wider local economies will be summarised to produce indications of what TAs could usefully do.

DEFINING TOURISM AND THE TOURIST

In this section, the various definitions of tourism and tourists that have been put forward are examined, and appropriate ones are selected for use in the study. It will be shown that their definition is problematic because of the difficulties inherent in distinguishing them from the full range of other human activities. The many definitions in use vary according to the perspective
and purposes of those proposing them. The general view is that there is no consensus on a comprehensive definition of tourists and, given the multitude of reasons why people travel, this is perhaps not surprising.

The Tourist

Samuel Pegge reported the use of ‘tour-ist’ as a new word for traveller in the early nineteenth century, and the English Sporting Magazine introduced the word ‘tourism’ in 1811 (Smith 1989).

Any definition must encompass the traveller’s:

♦ area of origin (‘generating area’);
♦ location visited and purpose of journey; and
♦ duration of stay.

In general terms, the definitions in use distinguish between local people and those from outside an area (at both domestic and international levels), and between those travelling for relatively short-term business or pleasure and people spending longer in a country or region. In addition, duration of stay is an important criterion differentiating day-trippers and tourists; the usual break-point between the two categories is 24 hours or an overnight stay in a country, region, or locality. Many definitions of tourism and the tourist are economically-derived at base, because many studies of the phenomenon are undertaken for economic purposes.

International travellers are relatively easy to enumerate because they cross well-defined boundaries. Several national and trans-national organisations have attempted to provide definitions, and the evolution of definitions between 1937 and the early 1980s has been summarised by a number of writers (see for instance Smith 1989). A scheme commonly used to categorise international travellers is described in Burkart and Medlik (1974):

(i) Tourists - temporary visitors staying over 24 hours in the country visited, the purpose of whose journey falls under one of the following two categories:

1. Leisure, recreation, holiday, sport, health, study, religion.

2. Business, family, friends, mission, meeting.

(ii) Excursionists (day trippers) - temporary visitors staying less than 24 hours in the country visited, including cruise passengers.
This definition and categorisation covers a number of elements which are common in most other definitions, both for international and domestic tourism:

- explicit differentiation between tourists and day trippers ('excursionists');

- tourists as temporary visitors away from home - the International Passenger Survey carried out in Britain by the OPCS closely follows the recommendations of the World Tourism Organisation, enumerating visitors who are permanently resident in other countries and visiting the UK for periods of less than twelve months; and

- purpose of travel - some journeys are excluded, including those for such purposes as to take up employment paid from within the destination country or area or to take up permanent residence.

**Domestic tourists** - there is less consensus on definitions of domestic tourists than on international¹, and this form of tourism is more difficult to measure. While international tourists cross commonly-accepted boundaries, using easily-identified entry/exit points, and can thus be defined and surveyed with relative ease, domestic tourism (used here to refer to the trips of home visitors to destinations within the UK) is much harder to define and quantify.

In terms of trips made, domestic tourism undoubtedly accounts for the greatest proportion of all world tourism (Pearce 1987), but the very scale and pervasiveness of the phenomenon makes it difficult to monitor. Unlike overseas travellers, domestic visitors do not usually travel through enumeration points, and travel for a wide range of motives - indeed, some journeys are likely to be made for a mixture of motives. And how far does one have to travel to be a tourist? Does a trip to the local shops count? Or if the trip is made to a nearby town, or to the nearest city?

As is so often the case, the choice of the most appropriate definition to use depends upon the purpose of the user and the demands of practicality. Logically, there has to be some recognition of the distinction between a tourist and a 'local', for the resident is likely to make an economic impact in his locality however much that area is promoted - an area seeking to boost economic activity, and thus jobs and incomes, will aim to attract additional spend within its boundaries.

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¹ New international agreements awaiting ratification will change the usage of the term 'domestic' to 'internal tourism' and, combined with inbound visits by overseas visitors, it will then be described as domestic tourism - see Baty and Templeton (1990).
The present study is concerned with regional economic development, and from the point of view of a local visitor industry a patron coming from outside the immediate area can be viewed as a visitor, while those coming from the locality are residents. In economic terms, residents will be spending money in their local area anyway - only visitors to the area will actually bring in significant quantities of additional income. A visitor industry can be regarded as an 'export' industry from the point of view of the local economy, then, although the economic 'loss' to an area from locals' tourism trips to other places may mean that, in net terms, the area actually incurs a deficit on its tourism 'account'.

'Visitors'

A distinction can be made between tourists and excursionists by reference to the length of stay at the destination. However, an excursionist could stay for less than 24 hours at a destination whilst still utilising all the facilities that a tourist would including, in the case of business travellers, hotels or other accommodation. In economic terms, the excursionist could, in practice, have a similar effect to the tourist within the destination, thus having similar impacts in economic, environmental and social terms, although not in quantitative terms. There is general agreement that the distinction between the domestic and foreign tourist is best regarded as one of degree rather than one of substance, the better to recognise aspects of common significance (see for instance Burkart and Medlik 1974).

Additionally, Mathieson and Wall (1982) note that it is difficult to distinguish tourism from other forms of recreation (as pursued by the 'excursionists' in the previous definitions, for instance), because their demands and effects are closely interrelated - indeed, as the authors point out, recreationalists and tourists can be found together at the same sites doing the same things. These may include a wide variety of activities, including those generally associated with holiday tourism; but also leisure shopping, for example.

For these reasons, then, the general term 'visitor' will be used as well as 'tourist', although a distinction will be maintained between tourists (in the sense that the term is generally used) and day visitors where appropriate - and thus all tourists are visitors, but not all visitors are tourists.

The term 'visitor' is used widely in the literature to refer to day trippers and tourists, and is a particularly useful term from the perspective of tourist attractions, for instance, who are more interested in the absolute numbers of people patronising their businesses than where they come from and how long they stay. From a regional economic perspective, the great majority of visitors will have at least some positive economic impact upon an area, spending money in shops and restaurants, and on trains and buses, so the term 'visitor' is appropriate for use where a distinction between tourists and day visitors is unnecessary.
Locals and Visitors

The geographical dimension is another aspect of the search for definitions. Murphy (1985) makes the point that although the definition used by the International Union of Official Travel Organisations (IUOTO):

"Any person visiting a country other than that in which he has his usual place of residence, for any reason other than following an occupation remunerated from within the country visited."

Murphy 1985

- was intended to apply to international travel, it is easy to apply to domestic travel if the term 'region' is substituted for 'country'. This can be further refined if 'area' is exchanged for 'region'.

In terms of a definition, then, the question is: where to draw the line between the locality and the 'outside'? From the perspective of the study, the boundary should perhaps be defined as that encompassing an individual local economy, but the obvious practical problems of doing so preclude its real-world application. In practice the most convenient way is to use local authority boundaries, upon which so many other statistics are based - thus anyone crossing a local authority boundary for recreational or touristic purposes can be termed a visitor.

Tourist boards in England use local authority boundaries in this way - the Northumbria Tourist Board operates within the counties of Cleveland, Durham, Tyneside and Northumberland, and uses these boundaries as a basis for the analysis of visitor and expenditure statistics, for instance. However, there is no suggestion that the use of county boundaries in this way delimits discrete economies.

A Definition of The Visitor

The definition of the visitor to be used in this study derived from the foregoing discussion will be:

"Any person visiting an area other than that in which he has his usual place of residence, for any reason other than following an occupation remunerated from within the area visited"

- after Medlik (1985)

- where 'area' refers to a single local authority boundary, specifically that of a single district council, because that is the smallest planning unit in the UK.
As is implied by some of the definitions quoted previously, tourism is increasingly being studied in the context of the entire spectrum of personal travel, not only that undertaken during people's free time. The close relationships between leisure, recreation and tourism have been explored by Mieczkowski (1981), and Travis (1985) considers the subdivision of the realms of tourism and leisure to be inappropriate both in conceptual and practical terms.

Travis argues that most tourism takes place in leisure time, and relies upon local leisure and recreational resources, facilities and opportunities which are almost always shared by both the temporarily resident visitors and the permanent residents of tourist destinations. The development of facilities for visitors can thus improve the availability of leisure facilities and community services for local communities, and business and other non-leisure visitor spending will add to the local income resulting from leisure, recreation and tourism.

Tourism

A definition of tourism proposed by Hunziker (1942) defines it as:

"... the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity."

- and this, subsequently adopted by the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism, while defining tourism as an activity undertaken during leisure, recreation and holiday periods, specifically excludes travel for business and vocational purposes.

Whether or not to include business trips within tourism is a debateable point - some argue that they should not be (see for instance Heeley 1980; McIntosh and Goeldner 1980). However, from the point of view of the destination, business and conference tourism is extremely valuable for much of the tourism industry - business/conference tourism accounted for about 27% of all expenditure on British tourism in Britain in 1990 (Middleton 1990) - and thus the Hunziker definition quoted earlier ignores the economic significance of an important segment of the market to destination area businesses, particularly the hotel and catering sector (Economist Intelligence Unit 1988). Ignoring business travel will result in underestimation of the potential economic and other significance of all visitors to a locality and its economy. From an economic point of view, travel for the purposes of business, attendance at conferences and training courses must be included in any definition for use in a study of tourism development for strengthening local economies.
The British Tourist Authority (BTA) uses tourist trips as a basis for defining the tourist and tourism; a tourist trip is:

"... a stay of one or more nights away from home for holiday, visits to friends or relatives, business, conferences, or any other purpose except such things as boarding education or semi-permanent employment."

British Tourist Authority 1980

- and Holloway, following this use of the trip itself for defining the phenomenon, goes on to broaden the definition to include day trippers, asserting that tourism is:

"... the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, and activities during their stay at these destinations; it includes movement for all purposes, as well as day visits or excursions."

Holloway 1985

This definition will be adopted for the present purposes. The definition is rather dry, however, and encapsulates neither the spirit or economic implications of tourism required from the perspective of this study. A description of tourism completes the picture (note that the author uses the term 'tourists' in the way that 'visitor' will be used in this study):

"Tourism is about people spending money away from the places where they live and work and on travelling to the places they visit. It includes travel for most purposes - for pleasure, on business or for other reasons, within and between countries, with overnight stays and on day trips - but not local and neighbourhood activities, travel to and from work, or to take up employment or residence elsewhere."

Medlik 1986

Types of Tourists

The classification of staying visitors used by the English Tourist Board (ETB) differentiates them according to their purpose of visit:

♦ holidaymakers;

♦ visits to friends and relatives ('VFR');

♦ business/conference; and

♦ other purposes (a wide-ranging category which includes 'academic tourism' and travel for religious purposes).

British Tourist Authority 1992
Holidaymakers are further divided into:

- those on their 'main', 'first' or 'long' holidays, defined by the English Tourist Board as those staying away from home for four nights or more; and

- those taking second and subsequent holidays in any one year - 'short-break', 'second' holidaymakers, the definition of whom is the subject of debate (see Middleton 1988) but which can be loosely termed for the present as any holidaymaker staying between one and three nights away from home.

Day visitors are not classified in this manner. The new UK Day Visits Survey works with a definition of a day trip as one involving a round trip of at least three hours and 20 miles or more away from home, providing a single category of day visitor.

TOURIST DESTINATIONS

In this section, the concept of the tourist destination area will be introduced, and brief mention made of the commonly-used types.

It has been said that tourism as an industry occurs at destination areas (Georgulas 1970), areas with natural and/or man-made features which attract visitors; and a destination area can thus be defined as a place where tourists (and visitors) go (after Holloway 1985). However, it is increasingly recognised that visitors go to all parts of the UK - the Prime Minister, John Major, recently echoed a statement made by the chairman of the BTA and ETB, Duncan Bluck, who stated that:

"Virtually the whole of Britain is now a tourist destination"

Towle 1992a

- although some destinations are clearly much more popular than others. The term 'destination area' may be applied to areas varying in scale from 'destination hotels' to areas of countryside to towns and cities.

In the UK, destination areas can be categorised into three broad types: seaside resorts, urban areas, and the countryside.

Much has been made of the development of urban tourism in recent years. London is, of course, the prime UK urban visitor destination in both domestic and international terms, but other UK cities have been developing their tourist product, the best-known examples of which are perhaps
Bradford and Glasgow. Taking their lead from American urban tourism developments in cities such as Baltimore, British cities have found that expansion of visitor numbers from a low base is possible given a carefully researched and targeted visitor market (Buckley and Witt 1985), and many have successfully exploited the visitor market to boost their economies.

The seaside resort, the traditional British holiday location, is suffering from the effects of declining visitor numbers, a problem which has been ascribed to a range of socio-economic and cultural factors leading to a decline in the market base (Urry 1987). Many resorts are working hard to develop their product to meet changing market preferences (see for instance English Tourist Board 1990), but it is difficult to imagine domestic holiday resorts regaining the market dominance that they had in the hundred years up to the middle of this decade (Lickorish & Kershaw 1975).

The countryside as a visitor destination will be discussed in a subsequent section.

The next section will present a critical review of the institutional and policy environment within which tourism development takes place, covering tourism at the national scale before developing the focus upon rural tourism.

GOVERNMENT AND TOURISM

The policies of the Conservative government have aimed to stimulate economic activity, and tourism has been used as one means to this end. Government plays an important role in the visitor industry, acting as strategist, planner, developer, regulator, provider and licenser and, as far as it is able to control interest rates and the money supply, as financier. In terms of direct involvement, government policy works through an institutional framework whose main components are the tourist boards and local authorities, and it is to these that the discussion now turns.

NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY

The visitor industry is seen by the government as having great potential for:

♦ economic growth;

♦ balance of payments equilibrium;

♦ employment, and
The importance of the industry has been affirmed by a number of government publications in recent years which have stressed the role of small firms and the self-employed within the sector (see for instance HM Cabinet Office 1985; Employment Department 1990). The English Tourist Board recognises the government’s wish to use tourism as a means for development of regional economies, and has stressed the importance of rural tourism in this context (see for instance Paynter 1991) while recognising that governmental policies for the rural economy balance encouragement for enterprise and economic diversification with the conservation of landscape and wildlife (see for instance Department of the Environment 1992b). Small scale enterprises are seen as having a vital role in the national economy, and that of the countryside.

Institutional Framework

The 1969 Development of Tourism Act is the only piece of legislation of the post-war period devoted to tourism. Brief and, in essence, enabling legislation, the Act gave the Secretary of State wide powers to set up public sector tourism promotion and development structures (Bowes 1988). Until this time, there was no stated policy on tourism, and the functions of a national tourism office were performed by the British Travel Association, itself a voluntary sector body - a tourism association working at the national level with a membership drawn largely from major operators, and in receipt of substantial governmental funds - which aimed to promote travel to Britain and the development of facilities (Burkart and Medlik 1974). There had been some development of organisation at the regional level too, again through the medium of what were tourism associations such as the Yorkshire Travel Association and the English Lakes Counties’ Travel Association (Bowes 1988).

The importance of tourism to the balance of payments prompted the establishment of a formal framework for the promotion and development of tourism to and within the UK under the 1969 Act. The British Tourist Authority is charged with the overseas promotion of holidays in Britain, and the prime responsibility of the English, Scottish and Wales Tourist Boards with tourism in their respective countries. The home Boards set up and sponsored regional tourist organisations under the Act, and there are now eleven regional tourist boards (RTBs) in England, three "Regional Councils" in Wales, and a combination of Area Tourist Boards and District Councils in Scotland with responsibility for tourism. The functions of these are to:

1. Carry out promotional and publicity activities
2. Provide advisory and information services
3. Assist with and undertake research
- and to advise central and local government and other public bodies on tourism matters. The regional and area tourist boards are constituted as voluntary associations with membership open to local authorities, commercial interests and their respective country tourist boards. The country tourist boards exercise a co-ordinating role over the regional tourism organisations but the latter operate, nevertheless, with a high degree of autonomy. Although no two are the same as a result, most see themselves principally as marketing operations, and as having important co-ordinating roles in their areas (Slater 1985).

RURAL TOURISM - POLICY

Rural tourism came to prominence as a means of developing the rural economy between 1987 and 1989. Before then, little real effort was made by the tourist boards to develop rural tourism as a distinct product. Coastal resorts, historic towns and cities were given the most attention, and the role of rural areas seemed to be to act as dormitories for these (Collinge 1982). The late 80s surge in governmental activity and interest is noted by Lane (1989a), with many local authorities in countryside areas appointing tourism officers for the first time. Tourism strategies were produced at local, regional and national scales by various governmental agencies. Similar developments took place all over Europe, where rural tourism was at a similarly early stage of development; Edwards (1989) describes Portugal, for instance, as having effectively no rural tourist destinations at the start of the eighties.

The government became interested in rural tourism because it offered a 'market' means for diversifying rural economies. The tourist boards realised that rural tourism meant that they had a new product to offer, and 'an activity which would please their paymasters in central government' (Lane 1989a). The English Tourist Board realised that, to develop tourism in the countryside it would have to work closely with the government's developmental and conservation agencies. Early signs of this partnership between agencies included *A Study of Rural Tourism*, a major economic study commissioned by the Board and the Rural Development Commission (then the Development Commission) (PA Cambridge 1987). This study formed much of the foundation of the publication a year later of *Visitors in the Countryside: Rural Tourism - A Development Strategy* (English Tourist Board 1988a). This document, produced in collaboration between the Board, Rural Development Commission, the Departments of the Environment and Employment, MAFF, the Sports Council, Forestry Commission, Nature Conservancy Commission, and the Countryside Commission, represents both the first national statement on the subject and the first attempt to integrate policy on tourism at the highest levels of government, a development which had been urged by commentators since the 1970s at least (see for instance Heeley 1977).

*Visitors in the Countryside* was aimed clearly at promoting rural tourism to help achieve economic development goals while conserving the countryside. The strategy document:

- outlined an area approach to development;
made proposals for marketing the rural tourism product;

offered guidelines for appropriate developments while stressing the need to improve existing facilities in the countryside as well as encouraging new attractions there;

noted the need for business advice and training; and

indicated means for implementation, principally through regional tourist boards, other government departments and agencies, including local authorities but also the private and voluntary sectors. The local community is also given a brief, but vague, mention in this respect.

Subsequently, rural tourism as an issue has been largely eclipsed by the efforts of the boards to appear environmentally friendly and as promoting a sustainable industry (English Tourist Board/Employment Department 1991; Scottish Tourism Co-ordinating Group 1991; English Tourist Board 1992c). Principles for sustainable development and "green" business practice for the visitor industry have been produced, but little has been added on either the relative priority of rural tourism or towards any vision for the future of the industry in the countryside since Visitors. The publication of Tourism in the UK: Realising the potential (HM Cabinet Office 1992) added little further to the rural debate.

Rural Tourism - Initiatives

In the 1980s, a variety of area-based initiatives were employed to develop the visitor industry in tourist destinations including rural areas. Seen in policy terms as part of a shift from achievement of national objectives to regional goals (Saleem 1992; see also Anon. 1993a), these have included:

- Tourism Development Action Programmes;
- Tourism Action Plans;
- Strategic Development Initiatives; and
- Local Area Initiatives.

They have taken the form of partnerships between local authorities, the tourist trade and regional and/or national Tourist Boards, aimed at improving both facilities and marketing, reflecting the Board's view that the effective implementation of the strategy is best pursued through existing
mechanisms in rural areas with the ETB and/or regional tourist boards offering advice and some funding.

The initiatives can be viewed as an application of the destination area concept to the work of tourism development, concentrating effort upon specific areas rather than country-wide product types and promotion. However, there are no publicly available studies of the success or otherwise of these area specific initiatives, and in spite of all the effort to encourage rural tourism since the later 1980s, there remains a feeling that:

"Despite the important aspects of the countryside for tourism in the UK, its marketing is nominal in comparison with other forms of tourism ... although the UK government has gradually recognised the importance of the tourism industry as a whole, it appears that limited support and planning have been apportioned to rural tourism ..."

Gilbert and Tung 1990

RURAL VISITOR INDUSTRY - DEVELOPMENTAL STRUCTURES

The main structures for developing the industry in rural areas are the regional tourist boards and local authorities. The roles of these will briefly be considered.

Regional Tourist Boards

In theory, the ten regional tourist boards outside London have a critical role to play in developing rural tourism. However, their activities are constrained by the fact that they have very little real control over the product and industry - and in England, any influence they did have diminished when the tourism grants scheme ('Section Four') aimed at individual businesses was terminated in 1988.

The Boards have regularly been subject to criticism directed at the manner in which they work, stemming principally from the difficult situation within which they have to operate. This was summed up by Pat Cook, the English Tourist Board's first chief executive, saying that the Boards had to satisfy three disparate sets of interests: the government; the commercial sector; and the general public (Gurney 1984). Board members and chairmen are often accused of having little experience of the industry (see for instance Ferguson 1992), and there is concern that regional tourist boards concentrate too much on specific parts of their regions and particularly favoured trade interests to the exclusion of others (Moir 1990) - it has been said that:

"... there is a widespread feeling at the local and national level that the tourist boards are manoeuvred by powerful interests to suit their own ends."

Gurney 1984
Their ability to adopt a developmental role is limited. It was noted earlier that the regional boards have been described as primarily marketing agencies (Heeley 1977) (and many boards would agree with this analysis - see for instance Bowes 1988), and their efforts in the developmental sphere have long attracted criticism from trade interests (see for instance Vaughan and Wilkes 1986; Shaw et al 1987).

The various area initiatives have been the main means of implementation of ETB development policies in rural areas (see Shaw et al 1987) but have been criticized. TDAP initiatives in rural areas have concentrated largely upon marketing at the expense of developmental measures (see for instance English Tourist Board 1982; Bramwell 1990). A competitive approach has been adopted to their selection, meaning that some areas have had to settle either for lower-profile Tourism Action Plans and most received nothing. The criteria for the choice of location of TDAPs are potentially conflicting, including:

- economic need;
- opportunities for development;
- national distribution; and
- 'the need for English Tourist Board involvement'.

English Tourist Board 1987f

The majority of the rural areas of England have had no contact with TDAPs and seem similarly unlikely to become involved with the more recent Local Area Initiatives. The tourist boards are unlikely to devote much effort to marketing and development in most of the countryside.

Local Authorities

Local authorities have a crucial role to play in the promotion, support and development of their local tourism industries (Burkart and Medlik 1974; Heeley 1977). This point was summed up by Morrissey:

"The essential role of the public sector in the field of tourism must be to help organise and support the fragmented industry and to help it to compete for changing levels and patterns of visitor spending."

Morrissey 1986

The collective amount of LA involvement has been increasing over the past decade, and the resources devoted to the task have increased commensurately during a time when there has been
increasing evidence that the regional tourist boards are under-resourced both in terms of staff and budgets (Moir 1990).

Tourism is not a statutory requirement for local authorities in the same way that education is, for example (Anon. 1993c), and local authority members are not always fully committed to the industry (Heeley 1977). Clarke (1986) offers an example of this in Gwent, an area with a long tradition of employment in heavy industries - tourism is often regarded as a ‘candyfloss’ industry, providing low quality jobs which are held in poor esteem compared to those in ‘real’ industries. As a result, the necessary organisation and support is not forthcoming, with predictable results; a report on managing and developing tourism in Cambridge stated that:

“In the past the Council’s policy towards tourism has not been particularly helpful to the industry and may have discouraged investment…”

Cambridge City Council 1985

While attitudes are undoubtedly changing and many local authorities do take a positive attitude to the development of the visitor industry, some still do not. This and the increasing restrictions upon local authority expenditure and activities of all kinds means that tourism is still downgraded in priority in many locations, and development/promotional efforts are likely to be focussed upon already-successful locations and those with the most immediate potential, leaving many others - including some with the greatest needs - out in the cold.

Conclusion

Overall, it is difficult to see how the visitor industry of lesser-known and perhaps less attractive areas (including rural and other types of location) will be developed given the present institutional framework and the general lack of public sector resources. Local developmental structures may be necessary for such localities to optimise returns from the visitor industry by improving publicity and pushing for product development in the absence of substantive initiatives from others, although it may be important to co-ordinate the activities of local-scale groups and governmental agencies.

TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS

Tourism associations can combine the roles of professional, sectoral, regional and provider organisations within the visitor-oriented voluntary sector at a local level:

♦ some TAs get involved in monitoring the standards of their members;
some are sectoral, representing specific parts of the industry within their local industries - Farm Holiday Groups, Attractions Associations and local Hoteliers' Associations fall within this category;

some take a trans-sectoral perspective within their local areas, encompassing the whole local tourism industry and working for ends that are essentially similar to those of the regional tourist boards but at much smaller scales; and

some TAs act as provider organisations in so far as they run Tourist Information Centres in some destination areas where the local authority is unable or unwilling to do so.

It is advanced that these organisations are important at the local level, and particularly so in rural areas where the industry is small-scale and fragmented. However, tourism associations receive scant attention in most tourism literature - nothing comprehensive has been written on the membership, structures, main activities and overall roles of these groups. The following section comprises a review of the extant literature on these organisations and will, firstly, examine the treatment of TAs in general tourism textbooks before going on to trace the development of attitudes towards them in:

the broader literature;

English and Wales Tourist Board publications;

literature from other governmental agencies; and

consultants' reports

- as far as the available literature will permit.

Tourism Associations in General Tourism Textbooks

General tourism works rarely mention local-level organisation for tourism. Burkart and Medlik (1974) refer briefly to "... local organisations consisting mainly of private interests ... " which preceded local government involvement in tourism in many locations, drawing an example from France. Mill and Morrison (1987) list a variety of non-profit organisations at the level of the destination which can influence the attractiveness of the area to potential visitors, including Chambers of Commerce, historical and cultural societies, recreation and sports clubs and community associations, but not tourism associations proper.
McIntosh and Goeldner (1980) offer a little more on the subject, referring to not-for-profit 'convention and visitors bureaus' representing cities and urban areas in the USA:

"... in the solicitation and servicing of all types of travellers ... whether they visit for business, pleasure or both."

Bringing together the interests of all tourism-oriented organisations within a specific area, the primary aim of the bureaux is to attract tourists. They are described as:

"... the city's means of liaison between potential visitors and the businesses that will host them when they come. [The bureau] acts as an information clearing-house, convention management consultant, and promotional agency for the city ... "

McIntosh and Goeldner 1980

Hall (1972) offers a more comprehensive description of the purpose, work and relationships of these bodies in the USA, considering that their purpose is essentially publicity, and that their programmes are geared "... in most instances, to complement and supplement those generated by the state travel promotion agency". The bulk of the membership of tourism associations in the USA is drawn from businesses "of all and any kinds"; although mainly tourist service firms. Membership is also open to "governmental units below the state level", including cities, villages, townships and counties. The affairs of the TAs are overseen by a board of directors, executive and other committees, and executed by staff members.

Few other general tourism works make much mention of tourism associations. Murphy (1985), however, offers a carefully-argued rationale for the establishment of such groups with the express purpose of catalysing 'bottom-up' tourism development based upon local priorities and resources. His approach is quite different from the other general tourism textbooks mentioned previously: noting that the traditional 'top-down' means of tourism planning and promotion often results in negative impacts upon destination communities over which their populations have little or no control. The hostility which inevitably develops may eventually contribute to the degradation of the local tourism product and the decline of the industry as a component of the local economy. Murphy's point is that local people are a critical part of the visitor product, and if inappropriate development is imposed upon a community it may lead to the withdrawal of goodwill and co-operation from these people.

From this perspective, a 'community tourism product' should be developed, with goals for the visitor industry being only one of several components of local economic activities. This requires the active participation of residents, and while Murphy fails to make specific proposals for tourism association-type groups, he does note that input from 'concerned community groups' could balance the 'often short-term' objectives of the business sector.

Other than the somewhat vague ideas of Murphy noted above, none of the general tourism textbooks that mention the groups view TAs as being any more than minor local trade
associations. None see them as having a role in local development of the industry, helping to
produce a truly sustainable tourism product in sympathy with the area's character, resources and
residents' wishes.

The Advantages of Joining Tourism Associations

A few industry-oriented publications have noted the advantages for individual tourist-based
businesses joining tourism associations. One of the earliest was produced by IUOTO, which
noted that:

"... each productive unit has considerable interest in publicising its own product but a much
smaller interest in promoting the area in which it operates since there exist in that area other
units which are either actual or potential competitors."

IUOTO 1969

This view has been termed 'shortsighted' by Greenwood and Hirst (1971), who note that IUOTO
extends the argument to rule out promotion by area other than by public authorities. Greenwood
and Hirst offer examples of joint promotional activities between Torquay hoteliers and British
Rail and the formation of a Resorts and Hotels Association in Sussex specifically for the purpose
of promotion at BTA overseas workshops. The authors felt that area marketing was essential for
the survival of both the small hotel and the economy of some areas, although better quality
establishments are urged to join group marketing consortia (such as the Best Western
organisation).

Subsequent literature has been oriented in the main towards the hotel industry. The advantages
of the collective approach have been shown to apply to area promotion and publicity campaigns
(see for instance Whitehall 1983 and Hotel and Catering Training Board 1986 for hotels, and
Middleton 1989 for attractions). There have been a number of reasons cited for the existence of
TAs: many of these have been summarised by Lane (1988), and include:

- co-operation in local advertising, marketing and promotional
efforts (see also English Tourist Board 1984; Pontin 1982;
McLeverty 1992; Evans and Ilbery 1992);

- establishing referral arrangements and developing packages
(Wood 1980);

- 'familiarisation' (arranging tours of the area for the travel press
and for local tourism operators themselves);
♦ inspecting the standards of those seeking membership, and thus attempting to raise the overall quality of the local tourist product (Gurney 1982);

♦ organising events (see also English Tourist Board 1984; Martins 1986; Foster 1982);

♦ purchasing discounts (see also Whitehall 1980);

♦ learning from each other’s experiences (see also L & R Consultants 1986; Ward 1987);

♦ as fora for joint working between the private sector, local authorities and tourist boards (see also Gurney 1982; Lilly 1984; Thomas 1993);

♦ offering advice to new starters (McCleverty 1992);

♦ a role as fora for local tourism industries and the communities within which they are set to discuss tourism issues and acceptable directions for development of the industry (Gunn 1977; D’Amore 1983; Slater 1985; Lane 1989b); and

♦ acting as pressure groups on the policies of other tourism organisations, including the national tourist boards (Clarke 1985).

There is very little published material promoting the advantages of TA formation specifically for rural areas (a notable exception is Denman 1993) and, other than D’Amore above, none encouraging the participation of people not directly involved in the industry in tourism associations.

Tourism Associations and Tourist Boards

In this section, English Tourist Board publications will be reviewed to illustrate the attitudes of both the English and Welsh Boards towards TAs. Tourism policy and practice operating in the two countries is developed at the British level, and although there are differences in emphasis it is essentially similar across both countries (Heeley 1977). Attitudes exhibited by UK tourist boards towards tourism associations, as expressed in their publications, have developed over recent years, but the following review indicates that the Boards have yet to fully acknowledge that TAs can play an important developmental role.
In the past, TAs have been seen as little more than conduits for obtaining finance from the commercial sector for Board marketing programmes, but the attitudes of the Boards changed to some degree in response to changing circumstances.

The English Tourist Board’s first 'Planning Advisory Note' on tourism, produced in the early 1980s for local authority planning departments, made no direct mention of TAs, although it noted that:

"Any successful tourist strategy will involve the co-operation of the major [local] tourist operators. In preparing policies for tourism, it is ... highly desirable to consult with the commercial sector at an early stage through their representative regional and national organisations and with individual operators in the area ... "

English Tourist Board 1981

No means of consultation was proposed; it must be assumed that this often took place in an ad hoc manner in the absence of TAs, with only the major operators in individual areas being consulted. This still happens in a few areas.

A review of new developments published by the Board shortly after this time as a guide to local authorities makes mention of tourism associations with reference to the promotion of farm-based holidays, and general tourism publicity (English Tourist Board 1983). Under the latter heading, four larger urban TAs are mentioned (in Plymouth, Scarborough, Leicester and Manchester), and described as means for joint working between local authorities and their local visitor industries. An example of a farm holiday group is also mentioned.

In terms of individual businesses, then, its public statements show that the Board has seen benefit in co-operation at the level of the destination since the early 80s at least. The value of tourism associations was considered to be primarily in contributing to the publicity and promotional efforts of local authorities (see also Whitehall 1980), and mention is made of the importance of their role in areas where the local authorities undertake little or no marketing themselves - those interested in setting up a TA are directed to their regional tourist board for assistance (Wood 1980). ETB advice along these lines developed throughout the decade up to the advent of TDAPs and TAPs.

Rural TDAPs

Tourism associations were regularly referred to in plans for the Tourism Development Action Programmes of the later 1980s, such as those for Keilder Water (English Tourist Board 1985a), Exmoor (English Tourist Board 1985b), Norwich and South Norfolk (English Tourist Board 1987a), the Forest of Dean (English Tourist Board 1987b), and Shropshire (English Tourist Board 1988b) (see also Bramwell and Broom 1989). TAs were noted as partners in many of the Action Programmes, along with local authorities, regional tourist boards, and other governmental agencies including the Rural Development Commission in the case of Exmoor, for instance.
Again, the roles assigned to the TAs were primarily in the field of promotion and marketing; thus in Exmoor the tourism association contributed towards the costs of a marketing strategy, and the Norwich Hoteliers’ Association did so in Norfolk too. Certain aspects of product development were actioned by the TAs under some of the TDAPs, too, such as the research into traditional Exmoor recipes commissioned by the TA there.

Tourism associations were also involved with the Tourism Action Programmes and Local Area Initiatives of the later 1980s and 1990s. Once again, their roles were primarily to do with promotion and marketing (see for instance English Tourist Board 1986a, 1987c) but other roles included offering advice on training (English Tourist Board 1987d).

**Vision for England**

The English Tourist Board’s much-trumpeted *Vision for England* initiative of 1987, billed as a strategy for tourism marketing and development in England, contained few direct references to tourism associations or local marketing and development initiatives, perhaps understandably given the scale at which the strategy was devised.

The ETB’s marketing strategy was to be concentrated upon proven winners in terms of individual enterprises, locations (such as London) and markets offering the greatest potential returns. However, under the heading ‘Better Use of Assets’, the Board asserted that it would:

> "... work with regions, local authorities and others to devise marketing plans to boost tourist and visitor traffic to areas of high unemployment where there is unrealised tourism potential."

English Tourist Board 1987f

‘Others’ might of course include TAs. Another action point under the heading ‘Packaging and Product Presentation’ was:

> "To stimulate the formation and development of more consortia such as those for lower-priced accommodation and visitor attractions."

There were no references to TAs in *Vision’s* development component, which was oriented towards attracting investors in the industry.

**Other ETB Studies**

Another pointer to the Board’s attitude can be found in an ETB study produced for Great Yarmouth Borough Council (English Tourist Board 1986b). Their analysis of the marketing and promotion of tourism in the resort found that the Borough Council had expended fewer resources on tourism promotion than the majority of comparable seaside resorts, and the report also criticised the low levels of promotional expenditure spent by tourism enterprises in the town. The
local hoteliers' group, the Great Yarmouth Holiday Association, produced a brochure independently of that produced by the council in 1985 and 1986, but:

"... this is not being continued which perhaps highlights how complex and time-consuming it is to get an effective promotional brochure printed and distributed."

The report recommended that the Borough Council consider the establishment of a marketing bureau to bring more business to the resort, with up to 90% of its revenue coming from the local authority and the remainder from the private sector and revenue earning activities. The existing TA was felt to be inadequate.

**Visitors in the Countryside**

Perhaps the most interesting indication of the developing attitude of the English Tourist Board towards TAs in lesser-known areas including much of the countryside is gained from examination of the consultation document for and the final version of the Board's strategy for rural tourism, *Visitors in the Countryside*. The consultation document noted that the small scale and supplementary nature of many rural tourism enterprises posed marketing problems for many concerns. Numerous local "trade associations" exist to promote and support tourism in their localities, the document went on to say, "... but the great majority are clearly short of resources ..." The Development Commission and MAFF may assist groups based in RDAs and associated with farm enterprises respectively, and:

"The provision of additional assistance and marketing advice by the Tourist Boards to such groups could assist both the promotion of awareness of the area as well as providing a vehicle for small individual operators to maximise their marketing efforts."

_English Tourist Board 1987e_

The consultation document also suggested a number of key points that the national strategy would have to address, including:

"A need to develop local tourism programmes which reflect the character, potential and needs of particular areas of countryside ..."

_English Tourist Board 1987e_

- and:

"The provision of additional encouragement and support to existing and emerging bodies at the local level ... could assist the countryside sector to maximise its marketing share ..."

_English Tourist Board 1987e_
By the time the final version appeared, however, the emphasis had changed:

"At the area level, emphasis must be on promoting areas of sufficient size and character to be recognised by British and overseas visitors who are not familiar with these areas ... rather than focussing on small areas ... "

- and:

"The Board, together with the Regional Tourist Boards, the Rural Development Commission and MAFF will encourage the establishment of marketing consortia in those areas identified where there is most need so that products can combine in effective marketing campaigns, making them more attractive and accessible to the trade and consumer." (author's italics)

English Tourist Board 1988a

- again indicating the Board's view of TAs as marketing adjuncts to themselves and other agencies, recognising no developmental role, and referring to 'areas of most need' - the example given was of the Exmoor Tourism Association, and this is the scale at which the ETB seem to consider TAs should operate, rather than at the community level.

Green Tourism Guidelines

The publication of The Green Light: A Guide to Sustainable Tourism (English Tourist Board 1992c), encouraging environmentally-friendly practice for tourism operators, showed that the Board's views on TAs had shifted slightly since Visitors in the Countryside. Smaller enterprises are urged to engage in co-operative marketing as part of tourism associations. This was the first Board document with more than a cursory mention of TAs - the three different types of association identified in the guide are described as being composed of:

1. Similar types of enterprise, such as activity operators or craft businesses.

2. Organisations facilitating "... very local links between enterprises ... to supply mutual support such as referral of business, and links between accommodation and activities...".

3. Tourism associations involving all types of enterprise covering a wide area.

Group activities could include themed promotions, common booking arrangements, development of specific local/regional packages, and production of environmental charters to encourage environmentally friendly business practice. A specimen charter, produced by the Dartmoor Tourism Association, was offered as an example. Some of the content of the document implies that the Board may have been moving toward the notion of TAs taking a developmental role within their areas but, again, the impression gained is that the purpose of TAs is to contribute to local publicity and little more. There is no suggestion of involving the community in the
development of their own local industry - operators are urged to support the local community through employment and local purchasing policies, but this is said to be because it will improve the appeal of the area to visitors rather than for any more altruistic reasons.

Tourism Associations and Regional Tourist Boards

In spite of the fact that they have a high degree of common interest, in the past regional tourist boards often appear to have taken little account of the private sector of the visitor industry. Examination of regional tourist board publications from the 1970s and early 1980s reveals that they often make no reference to the trade in their development and marketing plans (see for instance Heart of England Tourist Board 1976; Cumbria Tourist Board 1979; Northumbria Tourist Board 1980).

This was clearly an absurd situation given that tourism plans have to be implemented with the cooperation of commercial operators, and by the later '80s regional tourist boards had adopted the practice of joint working quite widely, as evidenced by the TDAP/TAP documents of this time (see references cited above). The impression gained, however, is that many regions only started working closely with operators when their hands were forced by the English Tourist Board's programme of TDAPs, requiring RTBs to "work in partnership with leading representatives of the private sector" (English Tourist Board 1987f), using TAs as a means to contact the industry en masse rather than individually. There are no indications of how the relationships between the regional tourist boards and the private sector have developed since then.

Tourism Associations and Local Authorities

Joint working between tourism associations, representing local visitor industries, and local authorities, can yield substantial benefits for both (Greenwood and Hirst 1971). However, personality problems and differences of opinion and in their respective priorities and goals mean that the relationship is not always an easy one, and those that get written about are, of course, the success stories.

Some local authorities work closely with their local tourism associations (see for instance Stone 1989). LAs have long been advised to do so by their own associations and the tourist boards (see for instance Association of District Councils 1980, 1984; Satchell 1986) to achieve better market penetration through pooling resources for advertising and promotion and implementing 'short break' holiday promotions, for example (see Clarke 1986).

Local authorities have established tourism associations to further their tourism development objectives. Surrey County Council floated the idea of establishing a TA to cover the whole county, involving the district councils and the private sector; projected benefits were to include spreading the costs of publicity material and promotional efforts, harnessing efforts towards common objectives, and an improvement in dialogue and understanding between the various elements of the industry (Surrey County Council 1987). Gwent County Council helped establish
two county-wide groups, the Gwent Association of Tourist Attractions and Gwent Farm and Country Holidays, providing 'modest' set-up finance and advice. The authority subsequently supported the tourism associations through an annual discretionary grant (Clarke 1985). Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council encouraged local accommodation providers to set up an association there (Barnsley MBC 1988).

Thus local authorities' prime interest in setting up TAs is to improve publicity of their local industries. Councils frequently become members of their local associations to this end; in this role, they can be seen as 'honest brokers' in co-ordinating the work of tourism associations, for the local authority has an interest in the area as a whole but not in the performance of any individual operator, whilst many individual trade members might be suspicious of the involvement of their immediate local competitors (Morrissey 1986).

Not all councils feel it is appropriate to join bodies whose policies and priorities could conflict with theirs, however. Councillors of Purbeck District Council followed the County Council line in refusing to join a new tourism promotion group in south Dorset because:

"... the approach of the tourism group is geared towards promotion and development of the holiday business - when the council's idea is to protect the unique character of the [Purbeck] area and to try and manage tourism.

"They believe that the new group ... is heavily weighted towards operators of tourist facilities and 'should therefore be regarded as a pressure group representing the tourist industry in the same way as a chamber of trade represents shopkeepers'"

Anon. 1989

Local authorities have to take into account the full range of interests in their area. Some tourism associations represent sectional interests within their area of operation, and can quite easily bring adverse publicity upon their localities through ill-considered actions. One such example was reported in the Guardian: the Rye and District Hotel and Caterers Association opposed the granting of a licence for a hotel and tea room run by mentally handicapped staff, stating that while they had no prejudice against the mentally handicapped, in a town that was almost wholly dependent upon tourists for business 'we have to keep standards up' (Perera 1988).

Tourism Associations and Other Governmental Agencies

In 1991, the Countryside Commission developed and updated the policies put forward in its 1987 Enjoying the Countryside initiative. In a consultation paper, it noted that local tourism development forums could combine environmental care and tourism development, and be an effective way of 'bringing together different rural interests and a catalyst for enterprise and inventiveness' (Countryside Commission 1991b). The Commission has already 'experimented' with such fora in partnership with the Rural Development Commission, and 'Proposed Action' for rural tourism development includes:
"The Commission should share its experience of local tourism forums and advocate their adoption where they could lead to environmental, recreation and economic benefits in rural communities."

Countryside Commission 1991b

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food supported the setting-up of local Farm Holiday Groups and the national Farm Holiday Bureau, both TAs, through the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service.

Tourism Associations and Other Voluntary Organisations

Chambers of Commerce are sometimes responsible for founding tourism associations. One such example is the Southwark Heritage Association, a TA which promotes the attractions of that south London Borough. The Chamber set up a tourism committee, the Southwark Tourism Committee, in 1987, after having commissioned a report into the potential of tourism in the borough. This committee split off to become the Heritage Association, which was registered as a charity in October 1988 (Cox 1988; Goldsmith 1990).

Tourism Consultants’ Views on Tourism Associations

For obvious reasons, obtaining reports on tourism associations produced by private consultants is very difficult, and obtaining permission to quote from them practically impossible. One produced for the Borough of Langbaugh (on Teeside) recommended the formation of a TA to increase the level of involvement of the local industry in tourism development in the area and to help raise funds for the Borough Council’s tourism promotion efforts, but warned that these groups generally involve small operators whereas Langbaugh needed a "more dynamic and powerful initiative" than a TA could deliver (John Brown Tourism Services & Land Use Consultants 1985).

Another, produced for a regional tourist board in the mid-1980s, concluded that the 13 TAs under study suffered from a shortage of funds which restricted their activities; the recommendation was that the associations were best fitted to monitoring the supply side of the industry in terms of quality control rather than stimulating demand.

Conclusion

In general terms, public authorities concerned with tourism development view tourism associations mainly as means for generating funds for local publicity and advertising efforts -and their limited resources mean that their efforts in this sphere are restricted. However, the contention is that many areas, especially more remote and less well-known ones, need to develop their local industries at least as much as they need to improve their publicity; and in the absence
of effort from other quarters, they need to do so themselves. The government is known to favour
greater collaboration at the local level (see for instance Towle 1992b) and the tourist boards seem
to be moving closer to this view, but seemingly remain unwilling to propose a significantly
strengthened role for TAs. While attitudes are changing, as the literature review indicated,
catalysed perhaps in a few rural areas by the initiatives of the Countryside Commission, there
still seems to be a role for TAs as a force for development and publicity of local visitor industries
at a local level. This role is only recently beginning to gain widespread recognition.

THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND
LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The next section will introduce the voluntary sector and its role in the economy of Britain, before
moving on to briefly outline its role in the visitor industry.

The voluntary sector fulfils a number of important roles within modern economy and society in
the UK (Sampson 1982). The best known are perhaps social roles, exemplified by the work of
such organisations as the Salvation Army, Womens Institutes, and clubs and societies, but the
role played by various components of the voluntary sector in economic development is often
overlooked, largely perhaps because it is much less obvious than the contributions made by
private sector companies and governments and their agencies.

The principal characteristics of voluntary ('not-for-profit') sector organisations have been
isolated by Hyman (1979). They distinguish voluntary associations from businesses and arms of
government:

1. Members join to support certain aims.
2. They do not depend upon public bodies for their income.
3. Their primary concern is not with maximising their income.
4. Their ambitions are usually greater than their resources.
5. Members are free to resign at any time.

As financial constraints on the work of local authorities have become progressively tighter,
councils increasingly work in partnership with voluntary sector organisations to achieve social,
environmental and economic objectives. These local 'joint working' arrangements, mirroring
similar developments at the national level, often culminate in the formation of bodies that are
neither of the public nor private sectors, which can act in ways not open or appropriate to local
authorities, and the growth in the number of such arrangements in the 1980s has been placed
within a wider context of an accelerating pace of local authority experimentation and innovation
(Moore et al 1984; Stoker 1988).
An important reason for the interest of the public sector is to gain access to private sector funds and expertise. Local self-help strategies relying upon public and private sector collaboration through voluntary bodies can prove a potent force in local economic regeneration (Cooke 1985; Memon 1988; Derounian 1992), although their primary aims are usually the stimulation of the local economy rather than the direct creation of jobs (Sellgren 1987). Many economic initiatives established by voluntary bodies are subsequently taken over and run professionally because of the demands of their remit (Sellgren 1987).

An example of such public: private sector collaboration is provided by the Neath Partnership in south Wales, which worked closely with the Borough Council to identify projects which could generate fresh economic activity, and assisted in their implementation (Moore et al 1984). Tourism was identified as a worthwhile 'Activity Area', amongst others, and development proposals were pursued energetically by the Partnership’s Board, which then comprised representatives of local major industrial sponsors, the local authority, and other organisations such as the Welsh Development Agency as well as key individuals from trade unions. Similar working arrangements can be found in many areas of the UK.

THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Voluntary sector involvement is a major feature of the UK visitor industry (Burkart and Medlik 1974). A broad range of voluntary organisations is involved in addition to those under study, including:

♦ professional bodies such as the Tourism Society and the Hotel, Catering and Institutional Management Association;

♦ sectoral organisations include ABTA, and the British Hospitality Association;

♦ regional bodies, including the regional tourist boards (which are, properly, voluntary associations between the tourist trade, the English Tourist Board and local authorities); and

♦ provider organizations, many of which do not have tourism as their prime concern. These include organisations as diverse as the RSPB and the National Trust.

- after Burkart and Medlik 1974
The English Tourist Board has acknowledged the value of voluntary sector involvement with tourism marketing efforts, offering as examples the Youth Hostels Association and the Farm Holiday Bureau (English Tourist Board 1988a).

THE CONTEXT OF LOCAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

This section outlines the visitor market in the UK, referring to employment, trends and the structure of the industry before making special reference to the industry in rural areas.

TOURISM IN THE UK

In common with other developed countries, Britain is both a major generator and destination for international tourism, and this and domestic tourism generates substantial revenues for the national economy. The UK is the fourth largest generator of tourists in the world, having been ousted from third place in the 1980s by Japan. Inbound tourism expanded during the 1980s, rising by 50% from 12 to 18 million trips in 1990 (WTO 1991). In 1990, overseas visitors spent £7,785 million in the UK, and contributed a further £1,950 million to the economy through fares paid to the UK carriers, accounting for nearly 40% of the value of tourism to the country (BTA 1992). Overall, the tourism industry contributed 3.7% of the GDP in 1990 and supports 1.5 million jobs directly and indirectly (BTA 1992). A recent report considers that the national economy could be at risk if the tourism industry declines (National Economic Development Council 1992).

Trips and Expenditure

Domestic tourism has declined slightly in recent years, against a background of long-term growth - staying tourists made 95 million trips in 1990, a drop of 13% from 1989, and expenditure declined to £10,500 million, a 4% reduction before taking inflation into account (BTA 1992).

Levels of expenditure indicate the importance of different types of tourism to the industry -see Table 1. The figures illustrate the critical importance of the domestic holiday market, and the value of the overall market that local visitor industries could seek to gain a share of.
Table 1 - UK residents' expenditure in the UK 1990: by purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>£million</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holidays</td>
<td>7300</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFR</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10 400</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: British National Travel Survey 1991

Pattern of Domestic Holidaymaking

The pattern of domestic tourism has been changing. The number of long holidays taken has remained relatively stable at about 32 million since 1982, and in 1990 38% of British adults took at least one long holiday (four or more nights) in Britain (BNTS 1991). However, while the total number of holiday trips taken in Britain by domestic tourists has not altered significantly over the last decade, the average length of each is becoming shorter (Mintel 1990). Within this pattern, the second holiday market has become very important to the industry, accounting for 48% of all holiday trips made. This market has doubled in value since 1976, and is now second only to business tourism in terms of hotel revenue (Mintel 1990). The effect has been:

"... to produce a structural change in the nature of the British domestic holiday industry which has profound implications"

Middleton 1986

This trend has significant implications for less-visited areas, many of which have relatively few attractions. Such areas could conceivably aim to sustain the interest of visitors for short stays, but promoting long holidays there would perhaps be inappropriate at present; thus the trend may work in favour of non-traditional visitor destinations, including many rural areas.

DAY TRIPS

The first authoritative estimate of the scale of day tripping from home at a national level have been provided by the UK Leisure Day Trips Survey 1988-89. The sheer scale of day tripping is illustrated by the total of 360 million day trips between April 1988 and March 1989 (Leisure Day Visits Survey 1988/89). Expenditure associated with these trips was £5.2 billion in that year.
Outdoor activities were the most popular reason for making trips, and rural areas are well-placed to capitalise upon this market. The size of the market is shown at Table 2:

Table 2 - British day visits by purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Trips (million)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor activities</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFR</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits to attractions</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping trips (non-routine)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pubs &amp; restaurants</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parties &amp; dances</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor sport</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre &amp; bingo</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>630</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EMPLOYMENT

The visitor industry is a useful means of job provision in the UK. Employment in tourism related industries expanded during the 1980s, and is predicted to continue to grow throughout the current decade. Department of Employment figures show that there were an estimated 1.5 million employees serving overseas and domestic tourists in June 1990 (in jobs directly and indirectly supported by the industry) and a further 200,000 self employed people were also involved (Baty and Templeton 1990). The proportion of UK employment accounted for by the industry rose from 3.3% to 6.6% during the eighties, an increase of 26.1% in the workforce during a decade when all employment in service industries grew by 15.8% against a slight decline in the entire UK workforce (Baty and Templeton 1991).

Many more jobs are indirectly supported by tourism than these figures suggest. Department of Employment statistics include employees in hotels, restaurants, pubs and cafes, sport and recreation and tourist attractions, but people in transport and retailing cannot be identified from the available survey data. Jobs indirectly supported by tourism spending, such as those in industries, manufacturing food and drink for tourists, are also excluded (Baty and Templeton 1991). Overall, the visitor industry employs more than the health services; the construction industry; and about six times more than the motor vehicle industry (Employment Department 1990).
TOURISM TRENDS

The economy has been suffering from a severe recession. Predictions in the English Tourist Board’s Investment in Tourism publication (ETB 1992a) concurred with many others - that recovery will start in 1993, and the Board consider that the hard-pressed hotel and catering industry will return to profitability from then.

The recreation and tourism industry is frequently described as a safe long-term bet (see for instance English Tourist Board 1991), but the domestic market is changing and plans for future development must acknowledge this. Many predictions of future trends in the domestic tourism industry indicate that it will retain its market share, and rural areas will become yet more favoured as holiday destinations:

- Britain will remain a popular destination for the main and second holidays of the British because of the convenience of travelling (30% of all reasons offered in a consumer survey) and the desire to see the countryside (29%). Cost was third most important at 24% (Mintel 1990).

- The short break market will continue to expand, particularly for short holidays in British countryside destinations, against a background of stagnation or decline in domestic long holidays and a shift away from coastal destinations (Mintel 1990; English Tourist Board 1991; Cooper and Latham 1992).

- Activity and special interest holidays will continue to grow in popularity - a majority of the former rely on the resources of the countryside (Mintel 1990; Martin and Mason 1993).

THE BRITISH VISITOR INDUSTRY

Defining the UK visitor industry is as difficult as defining the activity and its participants. The English Tourist Board considers that:

"... the tourism and leisure industry is unlike any other economic activity in the UK in that it cannot be isolated by the goods or services it provides. It is not an industry in itself, but a consumer activity whose employment effects are spread across a wide range of industries."

English Tourist Board 1986c

At the national scale, it is made up of private, public and voluntary sector components. Government is deeply involved - its agencies provide a majority of the infrastructure, and are also
involved in regulation and promotion, for instance. An enormously diverse range of voluntary bodies is involved with the industry to varying degrees, including organisations as big as the National Trust, which runs some of the largest attractions, right down to local amenity societies. The private sector, that part of the industry with the most immediately influence over incomes and spending, consists of large numbers of small business and self-employed people, often only partly dependent upon visitors for revenue, and a relatively small proportion of large-scale companies (Slater 1985; Tourism Society 1989).

TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS

Defining Rural Tourism

Given the difficulties of defining tourism, the definition of rural tourism adopted in this study will be one that is concise and understandable; rural tourism is:

"... a trip to, or overnight stay in, a countryside area which is either agricultural or natural and has a low density of population."

Gilbert & Tung 1990

This definition has the merit of covering both day visitors and staying tourists.

Visitor Levels

In this section, the available literature on the development and characteristics of the market for rural destinations is reviewed to provide an outline of the potential of the industry to contribute to rural economies. The countryside is enormously popular with day and staying visitors. Rural areas have long taken the bulk of recreational visits made in Britain (see for instance Middleton 1982), and today nearly half the population visits the countryside every month, and three-quarters do so each year (Countryside Commission 1991a, 1991b). Sundays are particularly popular - up to eighteen million visits are made on a typical Sunday in summer, and up to 10 million in winter. In 1990, about 76 per cent of the population of England visited the countryside at least once, making a total of approximately 1,640 million visits (Countryside Commission 1991b).

The majority of visitors in the countryside are day trippers on trips from their home bases (Countryside Commission 1991b). Despite this, estimates suggest that nearly 100 million bed-nights are spent in accommodation in the English countryside each year (Broom 1989) and, during the summer months, as many as 20% of all users of the countryside are on holiday (Countryside Commission for Scotland 1985a).

Rural areas differ from resort towns and cities in that an integral part of their attraction power is that only small numbers of people are generally likely to be encountered during most trips. There
are many popular attractions located in the countryside, but most countryside tourism trips are to
the 'unmanaged' countryside (Countryside Commission 1989b). In terms of all rural visitor
destinations, locations attracting large numbers of people such as Chatsworth House (345,000 in
1991) and Alton Towers (1.9 million in 1991) are exceptional - the majority of places that could
be described as individual destinations do not receive anything like those sort of numbers.

History

The growth of interest in visiting rural areas for outdoor recreation and sports is ably described
by Harrison (1991). Until the last century, urban perceptions of rural areas were very often that
they were places of back-breaking agricultural drudgery and dangerous elemental forces; while
individual locations such as seaside resorts and inland spas had been popular with the wealthy,
public attitudes and the poverty of the majority of the population had limited the levels of visitors
to the countryside.

The writings of Wordsworth, Coleridge and later romantics helped change attitudes (Thomas
1984), and the advent of mass personal transport in the early twentieth century paved the way for
the growth of rural tourism and recreation to the levels seen today.

Reasons for Continuing Popularity

Countryside activities and life hold a deep-seated fascination for our predominantly urban
population. Popular television programmes such as 'One Man and His Dog' and the radio soap
opera 'The Archers' bring rural activities, landscapes, and concerns into urban dwellings. A
longing for the countryside - however romanticised - is deeply ingrained in our national psyche.

The growth in membership of organisations such as the National Trust and the RSPB (Lowe and
Goyder 1983) has reflected the growth in interest and concern for the countryside and what might
broadly be termed the rural heritage. The counter-urbanisation trend evident in the distribution of
the British population can be seen as a logical extension of the idea of visiting rural areas - why
not live there?

Other reasons why rural tourism is popular include:

♦ while towns are perceptibly becoming more congested, polluted
  and noisy, rural areas are seen as benefitting from clean air,
  peace and quiet, offering an appreciation of the seasons and
  natural rhythms;

♦ urban areas are becoming more and more alike in appearance:
  one of the fascinations of the British countryside is the variation
  it exhibits over quite small distances;
interest in health and fitness issues has paralleled the growing societal conservation ethic highlighting the environment, and 'green' consciousness has begun to take a hold on Western attitudes (English Tourist Board 1992c);

trends away from seaside resorts as they become unfashionable and there is rising concern over the health risks of excessive sunbathing - poor weather is one reason for the relative attractiveness of rural tourism in more northerly latitudes, where good beach weather is rare during most of the year (Middleton 1982);

a distinct trend away from packages, often resort-oriented, towards 'independent' holidays, frequently countryside-oriented (Jones 1992); and

interest in food and drink have focussed attention upon methods of food production and the agricultural industry.

Distribution

Definitive information on the distribution of rural visitors in the UK is unavailable. Visitor figures published by tourist boards do not generally differentiate between rural and other parts of their areas, and few areas of the countryside are comprehensively surveyed - the cost is prohibitive. Most of the data that is available is fragmented and of limited use, but the English Tourist Board has made an attempt to provide such data - see Table 3.

While the figures represent the best available estimates of all visitors in rural areas of England, no methodology is given, so it is difficult to determine how they were arrived at. The Board admits that the quality of the data is arguable, and they should be viewed only as broad indicators of distribution.

Bearing these points in mind, the figures confirm the popularity of the West Country with British staying visitors, although the high figure for East Anglia is not easy to explain. Overseas visitor nights are concentrated in the South-East, Thames and Chilterns, and the West Country. Levels of day visits are highest in densely-populated regions, as might be expected, including the South-East, North-West, Yorkshire and Humberside, and the Midlands. The natural and man-made attractions of Cumbria attract significant numbers of visitors to what is, nonetheless, a relatively remote part of the country; the figures for Northumbria, on the east coast of northern England, are relatively low, but illustrate that substantial numbers of visitors can be attracted to what is, arguably, a less attractive rural region.
Table 3 - rural tourism distribution by region 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourist Board Region</th>
<th>British tourist nights in the countryside (million)</th>
<th>Leisure trips to the countryside (million)</th>
<th>Est’d overseas visitor nights outside main conurbations and large towns (million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumbria</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorks &amp; Humbs.</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart of England</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thames &amp; Chilterns</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Country</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>599.4</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The regional figures offer no indication of the distribution of visitors around destination areas within their boundaries, however. To this end, and as part of the same exercise, the English Tourist Board identified areas of the English countryside popular with tourists by mapping parts of the country where tourism expenditure exceeded an arbitrarily chosen figure of £200 per resident (English Tourist Board 1988a). The result of this exercise, shown at Figure 4, brings out the importance of such traditional locations as the West Country, the Lake District, and the Cotswolds, but it must be considered as only broadly indicative of the distribution of tourists in the countryside - it is unclear whether the Board differentiated between spending in rural locations and that in coastal resorts, for instance, and again it is difficult to determine how the information could have been obtained.
Despite the inherent limitations of the methods used, these data indicate the popularity with visitors of areas of countryside designated for the quality of their landscapes. However, there are many areas outside these receiving significant levels of tourism expenditure, and it is likely that if the figure of £200 per resident were reduced and the exercise re-run, many more rural areas would be seen to gain significantly from the tourist. While the level of visitor activity varies greatly over the British countryside, all areas will receive some expenditure, and day visitor spending, if added, would complete the picture.

The quality and quantity of information about rural tourism is slowly improving. Presently available information shows the enormous popularity of the Parks: the most visited are the Lake District and Peak District National Parks, which receive 24 and 22 million visitor days per year respectively (Countryside Commission 1992), and in 1992 a survey was administered simultaneously in all the English National Parks for the first time (Centre for Leisure Research 1992).

This spending is estimated to have contributed £1,764 million to rural communities in the form of wages, profits, and rents (Countryside Commission 1991b), demonstrating the critical importance of the visitor industry to the economy of the countryside, and particularly so to that of the National Parks (Coppock et al 1981).
Spending by Visitors in the Countryside

Spending in the rural areas of England by visitors totalled £12,432 million in 1990 (Countryside Commission 1991b). Half of all trips to the countryside involve spending money there, usually concentrated on services and products - the ETB estimates that day visitors account for 60% of the total (English Tourist Board 1988a). The purpose of day visitor spending is shown at Table 4.

Table 4 - Spending by day visitors in the countryside

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Average spend per trip (£)</th>
<th>Total per year (£ million)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; drink</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>5,002</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrol</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>2,247</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance fees</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1,722</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse purchases</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>1,263</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafts &amp; souvenirs</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fares</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>1,017</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.58</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,432</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Survey of Countryside Recreation 1990 (England)

The Market for Countryside Tourism

Consideration of the market for visiting the countryside is important because individual destinations need to develop the sort of products that will attract visitors. The visitor market for the countryside is diverse (Mintel 1990). The back-packing walker has different requirements to the young family looking for a day with an enjoyable lunch and somewhere for the children to let off steam, and elderly visitors prefer spending time in villages and small towns instead of the countryside 'proper'.

Holidaymakers and day trippers are the prime markets in the countryside - levels of business tourism are relatively low for obvious reasons, and VFR is of limited significance compared to urban areas. Recent ETB market research indicates that rural areas are well-placed to cater for the requirements of an important slice of the domestic holiday-taking population (English Tourist Board 1992b). In a major piece of research, involving qualitative focus groups and a quantitative survey of 1,500 people taking long holidays on Britain, the ten destination attributes most frequently rated as important in the choice of domestic holiday destinations included beautiful
scenery (number 1), attractive villages (3), and uncongested roads (6). Five key domestic long holiday market segments were identified:

♦ sun and fun;
♦ bucket and spade;
♦ sights and service;
♦ heritage and hikes; and
♦ get away from it all.

The last two segments, those which the countryside visitor industry could well target, are more up-market than the rest: visitors tend to be older, are much less likely to have children in the holiday party, and dislike crowds, seeking peace and quiet and opportunities for active pursuits. They are termed 'countryside-oriented', but their destination preferences mark them out as two distinct segments - unlike 'get away from it all' holidaymakers, 'heritage and hikes' tourists seek good walking country with historic and cultural attractions.

These findings concur with those from earlier surveys of countryside holidaymakers - a study carried out for the Wales Tourist Board (BMRB 1986) found that most of those taking farm holidays in Wales were:

♦ adults over 35 with or without children;
♦ from social groups ABC1;
♦ resident in the south-east;
♦ levels of repeat visitors were high; and
♦ trips were second or third holidays for most people.

Respondents wanted a base in a peaceful and uncommercialised location for touring around an area of attractive scenery.

This upmarket holiday visitor profile is similar to that exhibited by day visitors. People in well-paid jobs are most likely to make trips to the countryside, over twice as likely as those in unskilled manual jobs (Countryside Commission for Scotland 1985b).

While countryside recreation appeals to all ages, a Scottish study found a surprisingly large proportion of elderly people (in the 60 to 70 age group, the 'young elderly') engaging in
countryside recreation (Countryside Commission for Scotland 1985a). The only other age group with higher representation was the 20-30 group, which accounts for only 20% of all recreationalists compared to 19% for the young elderly. Participation shows a slight decline with increasing age until retirement, when it increases dramatically (Countryside Commission for Scotland 1985b).

Some people are much keener on countryside recreation than others. A relatively small proportion of visitors make a large share of the total number of trips - the 10% of very frequent visitors make 44% of all trips to the countryside, while the infrequent visitor, accounting for only 12% of all trips, makes up 41% of the participating population (Countryside Commission for Scotland 1985b). The 25% of the population that visit frequently are often members of countryside-related organisations such as the National Trust or the RSPB, and the 50% of the population classified as occasional visitors come from white-collar and skilled manual sections of society and, in common with frequent visitors, generally live in or near the countryside and have access to cars (Countryside Commission 1989b).

Reasons, Motivation, and Activities

Studies show that the motives for countryside recreation visits are fairly simple. The desire to see Britain’s countryside is the second most important reason for the British deciding to take their holidays in the UK rather than abroad (the main motivation was to avoid the inconvenience of foreign travel) (Mintel 1990); informal activities, such as visiting places and going on short walks and picnics, account for the great majority of day visitor use of the countryside, and up to 80% of those of holidaymakers (Countryside Commission 1990).

Day visitors are more likely to visit paid-for tourist attractions than holidaymakers (Scottish Tourist Board 1990) but, overall, both groups seek informal recreation - the greatest single proportion of day visit trips is made for drives, outings, sightseeing and picnics (19%), followed by long walks (more than 2 miles) (14%), and visiting friends and relatives (13%). Informal sport and visiting the coast account for a further 20% of all reasons (Countryside Commission 1990).

Rural areas are well-placed to take advantage of the growing interest in active leisure pursuits. An in-depth study of countryside recreation in Scotland that involved time budget diaries and several cordon surveys found that, overall, about one in ten of all countryside visits are made for the purpose of active countryside pursuits (Countryside Commission for Scotland 1985a; Countryside Commission 1989a). While traditional countryside pursuits such as fishing, riding and shooting were found to be very much minority activities, accounting for only one-tenth of all countryside activities, new markets are developing and the growth of activity holiday centres and mountain bike hire facilities shows that some visitors are no longer satisfied with the more sedentary leisure pursuits.
Awareness of the Countryside

Awareness of the countryside is generally quite poor in the population as a whole, and many people are unsure of their rights and responsibilities. A 1985 survey found that 72% of people questioned considered that they would benefit from more information upon where to go and what to do, and up to one-third of the population lack a sense of confidence when they think about a trip to the countryside (Countryside Commission 1989b).

The Commission consider that:

"People tend to return again and again to the few places they know well. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with that, but such patterns do indicate that without relevant and easily available information, people's choice and variety is limited. The result is enjoyment opportunities are missed; prime sites become over-used; there is spare capacity in other places."

Countryside Commission 1989b

Wider information provision could help spread the distribution of visitors in the countryside, and have positive economic, environmental and social effects for the countryside as a whole.

Seasonality

Rural tourism in the UK is seasonal, for reasons that are primarily climatic, but the trend for taking second and third, often 'short-break', holidays has meant that the seasonal peaks are becoming less pronounced (PA Cambridge 1987). Even the remotest parts of the country, such as the Highlands and Islands, can sustain self-catering accommodation businesses for most if not all the year round (Lingard 1990). From the point of view of employment, not all jobs in tourism are concerned with holidaymakers - hotels, guest houses, pubs, cafes, and restaurants all cater for residents and business traffic as well, which helps to reduce the effects of seasonality.

The Market for Visiting the Countryside

To sum up, this section on the characteristics of the market for visiting the countryside has shown that:

♦ levels of demand for visiting the countryside are high, and seem likely to remain so for the foreseeable future;

♦ while certain rural areas are particularly popular, all areas receive visitors;

♦ both day and staying visitors spend substantial amounts of money there, which makes a significant contribution to many local economies;
♦ the visitor profile of the countryside is upmarket. It appeals to all ages, and levels of repeat visits are high. Staying tourists tend to be second and third holidaymakers;

♦ people go for informal recreation rather than for paid-for attractions. Active pursuits are becoming more popular;

♦ seasonality problems are becoming less pronounced; and

♦ many visitors regularly return to the same places, and much of the population lacks confidence in the countryside.

These findings indicate that there are opportunities for all rural communities to exploit the substantial and valuable visitor market for the countryside. While many visitors may not stay very long, there is potential for deriving income from them during their stay, and a key to exploiting the market is the provision of information about and at individual destinations on things to do and places to go, *making it easy to enjoy the countryside.* This would also tell people where they can spend their money. While the concept of the destination area is nebulous and difficult to operationalise, it would seem to be the best scale upon which to base the provision of such information, and in rural areas use should perhaps be made of more-or-less defined areas around key settlements to do this.

Having established the potential for new income from visitors, this review will move on to consider the approach to development most likely to optimise benefits to rural communities. This requires an investigation of the ways in which visitor income is converted into income and jobs for local communities.

The Rural Visitor Industry

The characteristics of the visitor industry in the countryside mirror the national picture. Again, it is a loose and diverse amalgam of economic activities including accommodation, recreation, entertainment, transport, and public sector services and amenities, most of which are also used by local residents. The diversity often obscures the impact of the industry upon the local economies - in popular holiday areas, the contribution of tourism is often readily apparent, but in many others it is not. This may be illustrated by an extract from a letter received during the course of the study from the Secretary of a rural District Council in the Midlands:

"... as far as I am aware, there are no tourism-related businesses in the area ... "

Like the national picture, the private sector of the rural visitor industry is fragmented in structure and made up of businesses that are small-scale and often only partially dependent upon visitors
for their income (Vaughan & Wilkes 1986; Shaw et al 1987; English Tourist Board 1987e; Greenwood et al 1990).

The industry has been developing rapidly and the number of new entrants has multiplied in recent years. The majority of new attractions that opened for the first time in the 1970s were located in the countryside rather than in urban areas (English Tourist Board 1980), and many indigenous rural industries have recognised the opportunities for devoting part of their activities to catering for the visitor. Farm tourism has long been feted as a means of sustaining agricultural incomes (Davies 1981; Frater 1982; Stevens 1987), and the 'Big Sheep' in north Devon is one of a new breed of commercial attractions seeking to offer visitors authentic experiences of traditional rural activities on a working farm, offering demonstrations of sheep milking, shearing, wool spinning, weaving and dyeing, and sheepdog trialling as well as less traditional pursuits such as sheep racing (Anon, undated a). The 70-mile long Malt Whisky Trail, guiding visitors to eight distilleries along seventy miles of Speyside in Scotland, is another example of the phenomenon (Stevens 1989).

Clones of Center Parcs-type 'destination' centres are springing up as the demand for safe, secure and active holidays in the countryside becomes more widely appreciated, while at the other end of the spectrum the Countryside Commission continues to sponsor countryside access projects and provision of basic accommodation ('stone tents'). The overall impression gained is that the visitor industry in the countryside is still capable of further expansion and development.

THE CONTEXT OF AND NEED FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT - SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

Throughout the developed world, the countryside has been held in popular imagination to be Man's rightful environment, in social, economic and physical terms. At the opposite extreme from impersonal and congested cities, rural areas are often the subject of romantic notions about easy, harmonious living in an unpolluted environment with friendly 'close-knit' social networks and a minimum of conflict and stress. Whilst this Arcadian vision may accord with reality in some areas of the UK, or with the lifestyles of certain elements of the rural population, there is a growing perception of the less romantic aspects of contemporary rural life.

Rural socio-economic problems seem to be becoming more acute, as a result of structural changes within the UK economy and inequalities in the distribution of incomes and employment opportunities. The problems to be outlined can be found throughout many rural areas in the developed world, and the aim of the present study is to investigate whether development of the visitor industry in the countryside through the means of tourism associations could help alleviate
them. This section of the literature review will set the overall context of the study, outlining firstly the state of agriculture, manufacturing and the service sector in British rural areas and going on to discuss aspects of the social situation there.

Agriculture

Many rural areas in the UK are suffering from a decline in the contribution to their local economies of the agricultural industry. In terms of direct employment, agriculture now accounts for less than 2% of the British workforce, a figure that has been declining for most of this century, and it is estimated that up to 100 000 full time jobs in UK farming may disappear in the 1990s together with 55 000 in related industries by 1995 (Rural Development Commission 1992a). This trend is likely to continue; productivity levels have risen at three times the rate of growth of output in the last four decades (Bowers 1985), and intervention measures by government and the EC have been shown to have had significant effects too. The Agriculture Act 1947 and the Hill Farming Act 1946 have both accelerated farm amalgamation, leading to fewer job opportunities in the industry (MacEwen & Sinclair 1983), and the continuing pressures for change in the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Community have resulted in reductions in spending, reduced price support and commodity prices and, ultimately, reduced farm incomes which will reduce employment levels yet further (Brown and Taylor 1988; Rural Development Commission 1991).

For some time now, alternatives to existing agricultural land uses have been sought to maintain farm incomes (see Carruthers 1986), and the diversification of farming enterprises has become a major theme of the work of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for nearly a decade (see for instance MAFF 1987, 1991), building on the work of many who have conducted research into the role which diversification into the tourism industry could play (see Davies 1971, 1983; Frater 1982; Slee 1987).

The problems besetting the agricultural industry at present are generally considered to be more severe in agriculturally less favoured areas (LFAs). Three broad types of agricultural land have been distinguished by Brown and Taylor (1988):-

- lowland
- marginal lowland
- uplands

It is generally accepted that agriculture on the lowlands is having, and will continue to have, the fewest problems in relative terms; it is in the disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged less favoured areas of the uplands where the problems will be the most acute. Whitby (1987) estimates from Department of Employment data that 15% of the workforce in LFAs work in agriculture, and a study conducted in 1980 concluded that conventional agriculture in such areas did not show a worthwhile return on investment (Cottam et al 1980). As the expansionist policy
which dominated agriculture throughout the post-war years comes to an end, remoter areas will find it increasingly difficult to compete (Striker 1987), and prospects for increased employment in forestry, for instance, already declining in employment terms within the LFAs (Whitby 1987), appear uncertain in the light of underlying doubts about its potential as an investment, changes to tax regimes, and increasing opposition being expressed toward new forest proposals (see for instance National Audit Office 1986, Countryside Commission 1987).

Present indications are that levels of support for agricultural production will decline, thus exacerbating the problems of rural areas (MAFF 1991). The EC is committed to a reduction in the level of expenditure on agriculture policy and in particular price support (see for instance Commission of the European Communities 1987b), and while the consequences of changes in the CAP are difficult to predict with certainty, depending upon the scale and pace of change and the effects of other policy measures (Centre for Agricultural Strategy 1986), declining support prices will have variable effects between different farm enterprises and regions (Marshall 1988). Marginal lowlands will see the greatest changes in the short term (Brown and Taylor 1988), for they have neither the productivity of the lowlands or the income support measures of the uplands in their favour; 'set-aside' is likely to be a realistic option in such areas, with all the consequences implied for employment levels. Pressures on the CAP seem likely to mean that measures taken to support the incomes of those in less favoured and remoter areas will be non-agricultural in nature (Whitby 1988), and the effects of reduced agricultural market and price support are predicted to lead to severe social and economic problems in marginal areas, particularly when the secondary consequences affect the farm supply, service, and food processing and marketing industries (Johns and Leat 1987). It is debateable whether non-agriculture rural policy will be sufficient to compensate for the effects of declining employment and incomes in more marginal areas.

The problems of agriculture in the UK are to be found in all parts of the EC. The number of farms within the community has fallen by 50% since 1950, and the number of workers by two-thirds (Clout 1984). An acceleration in the decline of employment in this part of the primary sector seems inevitable; this phenomenon has been associated with the process of economic development, and has been shown to continue even in countries where the proportion engaged in agriculture is small (Errington 1987). Throughout Europe, the trend of the latter half of the century has been one of broadening inequalities within the sector, to the detriment of producers in the uplands and other marginal areas (Commission of the European Communities 1980), and Neville-Rolfe (1989) cites demographic factors as being influential in the continuing decline of employment and land use. The Community-wide reduction in the number of holdings is referred to in this regard by Clout (1984), who observes in addition that despite policies of member governments which have the effect of accelerating this process, profound differences in farm size continue to exist, indicating that the decline in agricultural fortunes is likely to continue within Europe for the foreseeable future (see also MAFF 1991).
Extractives

Mining and quarrying are an important component of the economy in certain rural areas (Bradbeer 1987) - many sites are in National Parks and AONBs, areas which are often coincident with LFA designations (Department of the Environment 1984) - but it seems unlikely that the industry will provide significant numbers of new job opportunities in the future. Spooner (1981) shows that the direct local impact of individual projects is often considerable, but considers that volatile market conditions will always make such development marginal. In addition, whilst mineral demand is likely to remain the major influence on prospects for the industry (Bradbeer 1987), objections to new proposals for development are making the exploitation of reserves increasingly difficult (see for instance Blowers 1987).

Overall, it is generally considered that extractives are unlikely to employ many more people in the future, particularly as productivity levels increase (Gilg 1976; Dean 1985).

Rural Manufacturing Industry

Manufacturing industry in the UK has suffered from a range of problems in the post war period. Massey (1988) presents a graphic account of the relative decline of manufacturing as a source of employment since the mid-50’s and the absolute decline since the mid-1960’s, noting the steep decline which has occurred since the late 70’s. Furthermore, she describes the underlying trend of decline in output from a peak in 1973, and this can be viewed in the context of the restructuring of the British industry as a whole as increasing international competition has revealed the weaknesses of the economy (Sayer 1982).

A pattern of concentration of industry has been increasingly replaced by one of dispersion since the late 1960’s (Keeble 1976). The greatest absolute rates of decline have occurred in older peripheral industrial regions such as Scotland, Wales, the North and the North-West, while the less industrialised south has exhibited rates of growth much higher than those found in other areas of the country especially the south-east which has gained a disproportionate share of new ’high-tech’ ’sunrise’ growth industries (Martin 1988; Massey 1988). Manufacturing job losses have resulted in male workers becoming redundant, in the main (Hallett 1989).

Whilst certain rural areas are known to be benefitting from an influx of manufacturing plants, the situation in the majority of the countryside is less easy to determine. An ’urban-rural’ manufacturing shift has been identified, and Fothergill et al (1985) have predicted that the countryside will continue to gain an increasing share of jobs in the manufacturing sector which were previously concentrated in towns and cities. The government has directly encouraged growth of manufacturing in rural areas (see for example Department of the Environment 1980, 1987; Rural Development Commission 1989e), as well as through more general measures designed to promote an atmosphere conducive to business establishment and growth. Attractive rural areas are favoured for the establishment and growth of new manufacturing plants, often
because they are considered desirable places of residence by the individuals, often in-migrants, who establish the businesses (Keeble and Gould 1985). Peripheral areas of high amenity have been identified as well by Oakey and Cooper (1989), who see possibilities for science park construction in remoter areas.

However, it is difficult to determine the long-term prospects for manufacturing in rural areas. A study of high-tech industry in Plymouth, a city in a relatively peripheral area, raised doubts about the linkages with other local firms maintained by the new plants (Gripaios et al 1989). Problems with generating self-sustaining growth in areas which haven’t developed a 'critical mass' are exacerbated by more general problems associated with peripheral areas, such as poor communications and a dominance of branch plants in local industrial structures. The Plymouth study concluded that there were unlikely to be significant numbers of jobs generated in new industry in Plymouth in the future, and this finding appears to be applicable to all types of manufacturing formations in rural areas - it seems that the countryside close to major towns and cities exhibits high formation rates, but those of remoter districts are only average (Gudgin and Fothergill 1984). Finally, it is clear that while some rural areas have gained considerably, some have suffered substantial losses, and the performance of manufacturing in the countryside is only favourable in relative terms, against a context of a declining national total of jobs in this sector (Whitby 1988).

It is difficult to envisage new manufacturing industry growth constituting a major force in national industrial regeneration (Gould and Keeble 1984), and this applies particularly to problem rural areas hit by a decline in regional policy measures (Potter 1993). For much, if not most, of the countryside, manufacturing cannot be expected to be the main source of new jobs for the foreseeable future.

The Service Sector in the Countryside

The service sector has been an expanding component of the UK economy over recent years. This change in the composition of the economy, to a 'post-industrial' phase (Hirschhorn 1988), has been identified as a characteristic component of the pattern of long-term structural change in the economy (Fothergill et al 1985) - the tertiary sector has rapidly become the main resource for creation of employment in most developed industrial economies (Bonamy 1988; Hallett 1989). Growth has been concentrated in personal and producer services (Elfring 1989), and depends critically upon the demand generated by the manufacturing sector or its employees (Gripaios 1985).

The service industries are an important component of the economy of rural areas, although the extent to which the expansion of the tertiary sector in the country as a whole has benefitted the countryside is difficult to determine. Several reports have found that services dominate the structure of employment in the countryside (see for instance HM Treasury 1976; Whitby 1985), and in National Parks the importance of the tertiary sector is even greater, with a corresponding
reduction in that of manufacturing (Tourism and Recreation Research Unit 1981). Gilg (1976) estimates the service sector there to employ 60% of the employed population, about 10% above the national norm, and asserts that the sector is critically important in remoter rural areas where manufacturing is relatively insignificant.

The southern half of the country and particularly the south east has been benefitting from service industry growth (Howells and Green 1988), and producer services, identified as a growth industry, are often drawn to the region, leaving the lower-order jobs located in the North (Hallett 1989). Very few studies of service-employment growth in rural areas have been carried out, however - there is an assumption that the 'information economy' will be accompanied by a trend towards the dispersal of economic activities and 'teleworking', although it is considered that only rural communities with populations of 10,000 or more have a realistic potential for attracting footloose offices (Daniels 1989).

In a review of employment trends in the LFAs, Whitby (1987) found some growth in the sectors connected with leisure and services, and remarked upon the considerable and growing levels of employment in hotels, restaurants, pubs, sport and other retailing between 1971 and 1981. Many of the problems of developing other tertiary employment in the 'problem' rural regions were identified by Gripaios (1985), who noted the constraints imposed by little effective local demand and high leakages, both perennial rural problems.

The nature of much service-sector employment suggests that expansion of this sector may help alleviate the problems of rural areas, and the tourism industry is widely regarded as one service activity with particular potential to bring more jobs and income to rural areas (see for instance Pacione 1984). The part-time and often seasonal nature of providing services for tourists means that such employment provides a useful supplement to household incomes without foreclosing other opportunities, and as the industry has substantial requirements for unskilled labour (Hodge and Whitby 1981; Neate 1987) it is often particularly suitable for women with family responsibilities requiring flexible work schedules (Chandler and Lawless 1985).

At a time when the withdrawal of many community services has led to employment loss in the countryside, tourism can bring jobs which complement farming and other occupations, and help raise female activity rates. This may be done without necessarily incurring unacceptable costs to the environment, for although there may be sustainability problems in some locations and with certain types of tourism:

"Sightseeing is a product which can be sold over and over again without depletion of the original resource".

Waters 1966
The Rural Economy

This review has demonstrated that:

♦ primary industries, including agriculture, forestry, and extractives, have declined in the recent past, and are unlikely to contribute to rural incomes and employment as they have in the past;

♦ manufacturing industry has never been particularly significant in the rural economy as a whole, and the problems now besetting the sector as an employer will not be changed markedly by the widely-touted influx of new high-tech industry;

♦ the service sector, a major component of rural economies, exhibits the best prospects for future growth. Within this sector, the visitor industry offers an appropriate direction of development given the nature of the industry and the resource, and the market opportunities available (discussed in greater depth later).

RURAL AREAS - SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

In overall terms, the economy of rural areas in the UK and Europe in general seems to be in decline, and the prospects for the future do not appear favourable. However, rural areas are not homogenous between or indeed within countries, and it is clear that some areas are performing relatively well and others poorly. While acknowledging the undoubted existence of problem areas within more prosperous regions of the countryside, there appears to be an increasing disparity between central and remoter regions (Whitby 1988), and it is often in these latter areas in which social problems are most acute. The literature on these will be reviewed to help establish the context of the study.

It is generally agreed that rural areas suffer a range of social problems, problems which are so closely related to economic factors that they are generally described as socio-economic problems. The term ‘rural deprivation’ is widely employed to describe these socio-economic problems, although the extent to which such deprivation affects all sections of the rural population is arguable. Furthermore, whilst it is evident that socio-economic problems are not confined to rural areas of the country, it has been argued that the nature of the countryside adds a unique dimension to the problems faced by those living there due to such factors as a lack of accessibility and low population densities (see for instance Moseley 1979).

Rural problems are not recent phenomena (see for instance Horn 1980). Many have clearly worsened in recent years, and numerous proposals have been made to alleviate their effects.
Much research has been conducted into rural deprivation and change since the mid-sixties, yielding a substantial body of literature, and the general view is that the primary factor influencing levels of deprivation is household income, which is in turn directly affected by employment. For this reason, solutions advanced to the problems of rural areas usually stress the need for the provision and maintenance of jobs (see for instance Rural Voice 1981, 1988) – indeed it is widely believed that rural labour markets are the key to such problems (Hodge & Whitby 1981), and it is to rural employment that the discussion will now turn.

Rural Employment

Many people living in rural areas have difficulty finding jobs. There is often a lack of choice - in particular a lack of intermediate and junior non-manual occupations - and those jobs that exist are often in declining industries and low paid (Gilg 1976; McLaughlin 1985). There has been a wholesale decline in traditional rural employment over this century, and while unemployment is undoubtedly a problem within many areas, particularly for the youth (Cloke 1983; Chandler 1989) rural unemployment tends to be relatively invisible compared to that affecting urban areas.

Governmental assistance has encouraged the establishment of manufacturing industry to help remedy the situation in some areas, but the jobs provided are ‘low-grade’, with limited or no prospects for training (especially within small firms) or career advancement (Nicholson 1985; Thomas 1989). To make matters worse, the routine exercise of political power by landowners and farmers in their roles as councillors has tended to result in the exclusion of competitors for labour such as manufacturing industry, and thus the low-wage economy of the countryside is perpetuated (Newby et al 1978).

Incomes

Poverty is not widespread, although there are substantial inequalities in the distribution of income in rural areas. Again, the poor are less visible in rural areas compared to urban Britain, and this is partly due to the low population density and also partly to the presence within many less remote areas of countryside of commuters, who are generally more affluent than those employed within the low-wage local economy. Studies have shown that 20% of the rural population, corresponding to 25% of householders, are living at or below the margin of poverty, and this has been explained for those of working age by, again, the incidence of low pay (McLaughlin 1985, 1986). Low pay is often associated with agricultural employment, but service sector employment in rural areas is often low paid too (McLaughlin 1985).
In-Migration

Social problems associated with restricted employment opportunities and low pay are exacerbated in many localities by in-migrants. Many rural areas show evidence of population re-structuring over recent years - population profiles change as retirement and pre-retirement households move in, along with family households, which are often of higher-paid occupational groups working in nearby towns and cities (Harper 1989). Reasons suggested to account for this movement have included such 'push' factors as a perceived deterioration of the quality of life in urban and suburban areas, and 'pull' factors such as a desire to pursue a rural lifestyle or a 'village in the mind' (Pahl 1968; Carley 1990). The influences of commuters and other in-migrants within their chosen rural localities is often strong, and there is often a class dimension to this problem, for a majority of in-migrants tend to be middle-class (Pahl 1965) and 'gentrification' is commonly accompanied by rising house prices and opposition to economic development.

'Rural Regeneration'

'Rural regeneration' has been shown to be occurring in parts of rural Britain since the late 1960s as population trends have swung from centralization to decentralization (Champion 1981; Randolph & Robert 1981). These trends have been found in many developed countries over recent years (Champion 1989), and the 'rural revival' or 'population turnaround' has been extensively studied. While much research has concentrated upon movement to the remoter areas of the country (Glyn-Jones 1979; Pacione 1984), the assertion implicit in many of these studies that such trends are desirable from economic and social viewpoints may be difficult to sustain because of the problems accompanying 'gentrification' noted above. It is difficult to imagine how the negative effects associated with movements to remoter rural areas are likely to be qualitatively different to those engendered by incomers in less remote rural areas, as often seems to be implied.

Outmigration

Outmigration from rural areas has been proceeding since the nineteenth century at least, and is generally described as a problem because of the effects upon local population structures and thus rural economy and society. Rural depopulation has been found to occur in all developed societies (see for instance Clout 1975) - 'push' factors include low wages, working hours and the often isolated way of life, and 'pull' factors include urban employment, life style aspirations and living standards, multiplied by greater penetration of information concerning these (Garron 1973; Department of the Environment 1977; Cloke 1983).

Lack of employment is the most common reason cited for outmigration (Wallace & Drudy 1975; McLaughlin 1985). The problem is exacerbated by limited prospects both for movement to
alternative occupations and, commonly, the need to move elsewhere to obtain occupational training or higher education in order to improve job prospects (Drudy 1978; Chandler 1989). Also, while counter-urbanization trends may appear to be working in reverse to outmigration, evidence suggests that, in some locations at least, the 'rural revival' may result in population decline when combined with gentrification and geriatrification, as household sizes are reduced and properties are amalgamated, with consequent reductions in the housing stock (Weekley 1988). Rural outmigration has been proceeding over such an extended length of time that it is often overlooked as a problem; Cloke (1979) observes how some commentators:

"... have become almost blase about the acute and crippling effects that depopulation has upon the morale and lifestyle of residual communities."

Housing

Housing is a major problem for less affluent households in rural areas. The Rural Development Commission considers the need for low-cost housing to be the main social problem requiring action in the countryside (Rural Development Commission 1990, 1992b). Rural areas have a lower proportion of public rented housing stock, and a higher but declining proportion of private rented dwellings than the average for the country; and less affluent households are doubly disadvantaged by a correspondingly greater proportion of owner-occupied properties, priced comparatively higher than those in urban areas (McLaughlin 1985, 1986). Competition in the market from mobile commuters and the retired is exacerbated by the demand for second homes, and new housing development is often restricted by environmentally-oriented planning policies, or provided specifically for higher income households (McLaughlin 1985), although the government has recently started taking steps to alleviate this (Department of the Environment 1992a; Cherrett 1993).

The Rural Socio-economic Environment

Overall, then, the socio-economic position of the populations of many rural areas is poor and declining. The range of socio-economic problems affecting what might be termed the indigenous population includes:

- limited job opportunities in a predominantly low-wage economy, leading to low incomes;
- income and employment problems;
- 'rural regeneration' probably doesn't affect many of the neediest areas, and in that it is perhaps at best a mixed blessing, the term itself is a misnomer.
outmigration, a continuing problem, is often involuntary - it is frequently caused directly by economic factors; and

housing problems add to the long list of rural woes.

The key to solving the continuing socio-economic problems suffered by sections of the rural population are labour markets. Development of the rural tourism industry to optimise the contribution to incomes and employment may help to alleviate some of the problems of elements of the population of the countryside, and the following section will examine the characteristics of the industry and how it can contribute to local economies.

LOCAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

REGIONAL ECONOMICS OF THE RURAL VISITOR INDUSTRY

Economics lies at the heart of any study of rural development measures. This section reviews the body of work on the regional economics of the visitor industry. The concept of the multiplier effect is critical, and this section will present an outline of this before going on to summarise and interpret relevant conclusions of 'multiplier' studies of the income and employment effects of visitor spending in the countryside.

The Multiplier

Keynes developed the concept of the multiplier as a proposed instrument for national economic planning. It was intended to show how variations in national income result from injections of expenditure, such as from government spending, or exports, or indeed spending by tourists (Hanna 1976). When refined for use at the regional level, the multiplier acts as a tool to enable assessment of the economic impact of particular investments or expenditures in regional economies. This is valuable for determining the consequent effects upon local incomes and employment.

The tourism multiplier hinges upon the idea of new spending being made in a defined area from outside, creating direct income for a range of businesses including hoteliers, attraction operators and shopkeepers (this section is based upon Archer 1977 and 1982). This "injection" is termed direct expenditure, and gives an immediate boost to the local economy. But only a proportion of the total will translate into incomes and jobs for people in the destination area; considerable amounts "leak" from the economy in the forms of taxes, payments to outside suppliers for goods and services, savings, and remittance of profits to parent organisations. The level of this leakage is critical to the benefits received from tourism spending.

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Some money does remain in the area. Tourism businesses pay their staff, very often local people, and their purchases of goods and services from wholesalers and manufacturers within the local economy mean that these businesses receive operating revenue. A secondary chain of economic activity is set into motion, termed the *indirect* effect, and the overall output, incomes and job opportunities expand. As the initial expenditure makes its way through the economy, consumer expenditure increases and economic activity is further stimulated. Additional business turnover arising from this generates a further boost in the economy, and this is referred to as the *induced* effect. Thus the economic and employment effects of the initial expenditure is 'multiplied', boosting the local economy to a greater degree than would be expected from the direct expenditure alone.

The early origins and history of multipliers have been documented by Archer (1977). The concept of the multiplier was first applied in detail in the 1930s to determine the effect of public works spending in reducing unemployment. Brian Archer is probably the best known exponent of the technique in Britain. His *Tourism in Gwynedd: An Economic Study* (1974) was the forerunner of numerous such studies carried out in the 1970s and 1980s, with the focus moving from rural areas through coastal resorts to major towns and cities in that time. The technique has become widely accepted, and the more refined multiplier studies of the 1980s have placed more emphasis upon explaining the composition of expenditure effects rather than straightforward quantification, which was the focus of the pre-1980s studies ( Vaughan 1985).

Since the 1960s, multiplier models have become increasingly refined, but Keynes' basic model is still the basis for the complex equations used in modern-day studies:

\[
\text{Multiplier} = \frac{1}{1 - c + m}
\]

- where: 
  \( c \) is the marginal propensity to consume (the proportion of an increase in income spent on consumption)
  \( m \) is the marginal propensity to import (the proportion of any increase spent on imports)

(\text{after Keynes 1936})

The model calculates the multiplier by dividing visitor expenditure by the proportion of it which 'leaks' from the defined economic system. The weaknesses and limitations of multiplier theory have been well documented and need no elaboration here (see for instance Archer 1982; Jackson 1986).
Archer identifies four types of multiplier:

- sales (or transaction), relating tourist expenditure to the increases created in business turnover
- the output multiplier, showing how unit tourist expenditure increases the level of output of an economy
- the income multiplier, showing the relationship between extra spending and income
- the employment multiplier, showing how tourist spending creates jobs.

Archer 1977

Of these, the last two have been used the most in economic multiplier studies.

Partial Methodologies

It is important to note that multiplier studies are based upon Keynesian economic theory. Multiplier studies focus upon the income and employment effects of economic developments in specific areas, at the scale of a single town or an administrative region, investigating individual geographical parts of a national economy. The basic proposition is that any additional spending in an area will generate some jobs and/or income when the local economy is working at less than full capacity. Multiplier studies work with partial methodologies - economic effects are investigated within individual local/regional economies, as far as these can be isolated.

But mention must be made of general methodologies, which look at effects at the national level to determine if the economic effects are truly additional or are merely diverted from elsewhere. General methodologies operate from a monetarist perspective: they hold that additional spending under government regional policy, or by tourists in a destination area, produces a multiplier that at the national level is zero at best, and more usually negative, while Keynesians would argue that regional policy effects produce positive multipliers.

This study will proceed from a Keynesian perspective, working with the partial methodology of the regional multiplier precisely because local and regional effects are of interest, whether or not they are the result of diverting visitor spending from other areas.
Regional Tourism Economic Multiplier Studies

Relevant findings of regional visitor industry studies are discussed below, and their implications for the present research outlined after discussion of economic effects in this section and employment effects in the next.

Regional Economies

Studies of the output multiplier show that the visitor industry has a very high added value content as it is largely a service industry with a high proportion of labour relative to the purchase of materials. This is of importance for regional development as there will be less leakage of income than if developmental effort is concentrated upon manufacturing industries, for example (Richards 1972).

If there are unemployed or underemployed resources in an area, tourism can provide a use for them that does not require high levels of inputs from other sectors (Jackson 1986) and thus, again, the industry can be developed with limited leakages while increasing the efficiency of local resource use.

The main beneficiaries of visitor spending are not accommodation providers, the most visible parts of the visitor industry, but others receiving tourist spending either directly or through the supply of intermediate goods and services (relative proportions received in Tayside were 29%: 71% respectively) (Coppock et al 1975). Sectors receiving the most are services including retail shops and garages, and other major beneficiaries include wholesalers, transport, communications and agriculture (see also Archer 1974). Developing local visitor industries will have implications for a far greater range of businesses than the most obvious ones, and developing the visitor industry will benefit the community and place as well as the visitor by helping maintain the viability of rural services. More economic activity generated by the visitor-oriented sector of a local economy creates a knock-on effect that helps to keep many other sectors afloat, and will help maintain the viability of a range of countryside services.

Incomes

The direct impact on incomes is generally found to be substantially greater than the secondary ("second round") impact via the indirect and induced effects - the proportion is generally 85%:15%, first round: second round (see for instance Vaughan 1985) and this is also true for job creation. This indicates that, for the purposes of economic development, the number of spending opportunities in any individual area needs to be increased to take full advantage of the flow of visitors there (a consultants' study of visitors to Scotland found that many finished countryside-based holidays without having spent all the money that they would have expected to because of a lack of opportunities to do so (Cousins Stephens Associates 1990)).
In terms of incomes, tourism is useful in that it performs better at turning business income into personal income than other activities (Coppock et al 1981).

Indirect and induced income effects vary according to the scale of the economy under consideration. The Tayside study, considered more applicable to the British visitor industry than most others (Hanna 1976), found that each £1 of tourist spending generated £0.26 of household income (net of tax etc) in the immediate locality, £0.32 in the region and £0.46 in Scotland as a whole (Coppock et al 1975), and these figures concur with other studies (Hanna 1976). This is because more of the purchases required to service the visitor industry can be supplied from within a bigger economy (Jackson 1986) - in small economies, there are fewer linkages between firms and thus the greater is the likelihood that replacement orders and purchases of new equipment will be given to firms outside the area rather than local ones. Small island tourism economies, such as the Cayman Islands, have few sectoral linkages and high leakages, and many rural areas suffer from the same problem - a well-known study of the Isle of Skye reached similar conclusions (Brownrigg and Greig 1974).

In relative terms the greatest proportion of expenditure retained locally as income is that made in small businesses such as caravan/camping sites, holiday cottages, B and Bs and guest houses. Generally owned by local people, the turnover of such businesses contains a relatively high proportion of wages and profit, and they buy a considerable proportion of their inputs locally. The hotel sector, in contrast, often relies heavily on "imports" of products and services and often employs non-local labour (see for instance Brownrigg and Greig 1974). Thus encouraging small-scale business development is a useful way of improving incomes in the countryside.

Visitor Types

Day trippers spend little in comparison to tourists, largely because of accommodation costs. On Skye, their spending amounted to only one fifth of the average per night of a staying visitor (Brownrigg and Greig 1974). But day visitors cannot be ignored by many rural areas - in even the most popular areas, the numbers of staying visitors are often small. For instance, only 10% of visitors to the Peak District stay in the Park (Countryside Commission 1992), so developing provision for day visitors is vitally important for many rural economies.

As might be expected, self-catering tourists contribute relatively small amounts to the local economy compared to those staying in serviced accommodation, although their contribution to the local economy cannot be ignored since they often account for a major proportion of all income from tourism - in Tayside, about half (Coppock et al 1975). Those using hostels generate less local income, and static caravans are the extreme, with more than half the income generated going to outside the locality stayed in (Hanna 1976).
Indications for the Visitor Industry

The most appropriate role for the visitor industry in a regional economy is in the support of other sectors, rather than in a basic sector in itself, particularly where other economic sectors such as agriculture and fishing are on the margins of profitability, and there are few alternative employment opportunities (Coppock et al 1975).

The Tayside study showed that there is the capacity to generate more income out of existing facilities, primarily by lengthening the tourist season, and to devise more ways of inducing tourists to spend more, particularly on accommodation and locally-provided services (Coppock et al 1975).

Employment in the Rural Tourism Industry

Most studies of the economic impact of tourism contain assessments of the employment effects of the industry. Employment in the visitor industry depends upon the amount of visitor expenditure within local economies, and small scale tourism development initiatives thus firstly need to improve overall levels of visitor revenue if job creation is an objective.

The tourism industry is important as an employer in rural areas. In 1988, spending by all visitors in the English countryside supported over half a million full time, part time and temporary jobs, almost as many as the number in similar jobs in agriculture (Countryside Commission 1991b). Estimates of the proportion of jobs supported by the industry in individual rural areas varied from 12% to 40% in a study which enumerated directly and indirectly supported jobs in five English countryside districts (PA Cambridge 1987).

The industry is a relatively rapid and efficient vehicle for job creation. The leisure related industries, especially accommodation, provide more jobs per unit turnover than other activities (Vaughan 1985), respond relatively quickly to injections of capital and initiative, have a low opportunity cost, support other services, and are labour intensive (Egan 1983; Coppock et al 1981).

The main findings from multiplier studies of the employment effects of tourism spending are presented below.

For the same reasons that it influences overall spending levels, accommodation use is the main determinant of job creation in the countryside. Overall, overnight visitors support up to eight times as many jobs as day visitors, and hotel guests generate the most opportunities. Bed and breakfast and guest house tourists generate more than the average, while those staying in self-catering accommodation with friends and relatives, and camping and caravanning generate the least (Coppock et al 1975).
The efficiency with which different visitor industry businesses turn income into jobs varies quite widely. English Tourist Board figures show that the revenue needed to support a job at a caravan site was half that needed through a hotel, which was in turn half that through an eating and drinking business (Hanna 1976).

As with income effects, the magnitude of employment effects varies according to the extent of the area under study and the strength of the local economy (Vaughan 1985). Within individual National Parks, for instance, the direct effect upon employment is easily the greatest of the three, but when the scale of analysis is broadened to include the area within a 15 mile radius around each Park, the importance of the direct effect falls to only 50% through supply linkages and visitors' expenditures away from their bases (Coppock et al 1975; see also PA Cambridge 1987).

Linked to the previous point, tourism can be important for employment in all branches of the economy, even within the manufacturing sector (Shaw et al 1987), and nearly 20% of all jobs generated by visitor expenditure in Tayside were found to be in the wider regional economy, outside the sector receiving direct tourist spending (Coppock et al 1975) - thus, again, developing the visitor industry will have important implications for the viability of many other firms and jobs in an area.

Implications for the Development of Local Visitor Industries

The findings of British multiplier studies presented above can be interpreted from the viewpoint of the study to indicate what should be done to extract optimum benefit for rural communities from the influx of visitors.

In terms of local economies and societies, improving the contribution of the visitor industry means:

♦ increasing the absolute levels of visitor spending in the local area; and

♦ keeping as much revenue within the area as possible.

The positive effects of developing the industry will be derived from:

1. Strengthening the local economy through diversification - adding, or improving the contribution of, the visitor-oriented sector.

2. Providing a boost to other local economic sectors, through:
   a) direct, indirect and induced effects of tourism spending
   b) local production and delivery of products and services for visitors.
The two main things which must be done to improve the long-term prospects of a local economy are:

1. To encourage the whole local/regional economy to become more oriented towards visitors' needs. This includes the primary, secondary, tertiary and not-for-profit sectors:

   - strengthening linkages between businesses will keep more money in the area
   - persuading existing businesses to cater for the visitor will produce more direct income from visitors. This could be done by manufacturing industry putting on factory tours or producing specific visitor-oriented products, and shops selling goods for visitors, for instance.

2. Encouraging the establishment of new businesses where demand warrants, particularly those owned and run by local people. Accommodation businesses are highly desirable in this regard, but those supplying the needs of the day visitor are important too, and from a wider perspective encouragement should be given to all business types which are or could be connected to the industry.

There are many other incidental and additional needs, including training and the establishment or improvement of marketing and promotional programmes, but the above actions are those which must be taken to optimise the long-term contribution of the industry within a defined area.

**CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

The literature review chapter has:

- adopted definitions of the tourist, tourism, and rural tourism, and introduced the term 'visitor';

- outlined governmental policies and structures for the rural visitor industry development, noting that policy towards rural tourism has been developed only relatively recently and, in terms of on-the-ground effort, most areas of the countryside are likely to remain unaffected by developmental initiatives of governmental agencies;
presented a critical review of all the available literature on tourism associations, showing that little has been produced overall and what there is has mostly ascribed TAs marketing roles rather than any developmental roles that they could fulfil;

introduced the voluntary sector and outlined the role it can play in economic development at the national and local levels;

set the context of local tourism development by outlining the characteristics and structure of the industry in the UK and in rural areas in particular. The visitor industry represents a major economic opportunity for local communities;

reviewed the state of the economy and society of British rural areas, finding that many parts of the countryside suffer from considerable socio-economic problems, particularly remoter regions, and the prospects for their alleviation seem poor; and

summarised economic 'multiplier' studies into the economic and employment effects of rural visitor industries, concluding that development efforts need to be directed towards making local economies more visitor-oriented, and new businesses need to be established where demand warrants.

This review has confirmed that there are a number of roles that tourism associations could fulfil towards developing visitor industries. Their work may be particularly important in lesser-known areas that are of less immediate interest to visitors than higher-profile localities but which may have socio-economic problems of equal or greater intensity. It is not contended that such areas are deliberately ignored by the visitor industry developmental system, but its mode of operation often mean that this is in effect what happens.

The visitor industry is fragmented, particularly in the countryside, and needs to organise at the local level to optimise the returns from tourists and day visitors for it to play a more significant role in local economies. Tourism associations can help towards these aims, and although it is recognised that they would not necessarily make a major impact, any improvements made to the local returns from visitors will benefit local economies directly and indirectly.

The available literature on TAs stresses their importance for marketing; mention is rarely made of developmental roles for these bodies. The marketing role is very important, particularly in lesser-
known districts, but there do seem to be valuable opportunities for these associations to catalyse developmental initiatives in the absence of other organisations doing so.

The next chapter presents the results of the first of the two stages of data collection. A questionnaire survey was administered to a representative sample of TAs to gain quantitative and qualitative data on the characteristics and roles of these groups, and the findings are presented in Chapter Four.
INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the questionnaire survey of tourism associations in England and Wales conducted to help formulate a framework for the study of these groups. The survey was the first of its kind; a national, 'benchmark' survey of all types of local tourism association, including those located in urban, coastal and rural areas. The results provide a basis upon which comparisons between individual TAs and TA types may be made. The chapter details the various steps involved in the survey process, including derivation of a sampling frame, survey design, the initial 'pilot' survey, and the conduct of the final postal questionnaire survey. The results of the survey are then presented and interpreted, and indications for the next phase of the research, the case study, outlined.

SURVEY PROCEDURE

A conventional postal questionnaire survey procedure was employed for use in the study, informed by guidance from some of the standard works on survey practice (Oppenheim 1966; Moser & Kalton 1971; Hoinville et al. 1978). The process consisted of the following main steps:

1. Definition of population
2. Identification of population: TA database
3. Questionnaire development/pilot survey
4. Selection of sample
5. Postal questionnaire survey
6. Results and analyses
7. Non-respondent analysis
8. Conclusions

These are described in detail in this section.
DEFINITION OF POPULATION

There are many organisations working for local economic development in Britain. The first main tasks of the questionnaire process were to decide which were to be surveyed and which weren’t, and to produce a clear-cut definition of tourism associations.

The essential attributes of the organisations to be studied are:

- they are voluntary associations of interested parties - organisations that are neither public nor private sector (they are part of what is sometimes described as the not-for-profit sector);
- the organisations are independent, if occasionally only nominally, of the formal structure for tourism promotion and development;
- their primary objective is promotion and development of the visitor industry in their localities; and
- they act as vehicles for collaboration between elements of the visitor industry in a locality.

The definition of a tourism association derived from these attributes is:

Tourism association - an independent, non-statutory, voluntary association whose primary purpose is to act as a vehicle to enable its membership of visitor industry interests (including the commercial sector, but which may also include representation from the public and voluntary sectors, and private individuals) to combine resources with the aim of deriving mutual benefit from promoting the development of the industry in the locality.

This definition excludes the following:

- Chambers of Trade/Commerce/Industry perform broadly similar functions to TAs in many respects, but have been excluded from the study on the basis that their work is not primarily aimed at visitor industry development.

- The community-specific focus of the study ruled out the inclusion of the few national-scale tourism associations in existence, such as the British Hospitality Association and the lesser-known Star Collection, a hotel marketing group with members in resorts stretching from Bournemouth to Scarborough.

- Private agencies such as English Country Cottages were excluded on the grounds that they are profit-making private companies.
The study initially set out to examine independent TAs throughout Great Britain but, unlike those in England and Wales, TAs in Scotland are linked to the regional ('area') tourist board apparatus. Because Scottish tourism associations are not independent of the formal structure for tourism development, the study was confined to England and Wales.

IDENTIFICATION OF TOURISM ASSOCIATION POPULATION

The next step was to collect basic data on the number, types and distribution of all TAs in England and Wales, the target population. The first stage of this process began with enquiry letters being sent to the two country tourist boards, requesting names and contact details of any tourism associations of which they had knowledge.

While the Wales Tourist Board was able to provide some useful information, the English board stated that they held no information on TAs. Both country tourist boards suggested that further enquiries be directed to the regional tourist boards.

An information request sent to all the English regional tourist boards (RTBs) and the three Welsh regional bodies drew a response from all. A total of 229 associations were identified from the replies from the regional and national boards, but there remained a suspicion that this total was an underestimate.

The final step was to seek information from the other main public sector bodies involved in visitor industry development, local authorities. A letter was sent to every borough, district and county authority in England and Wales, and supplementary information obtained from:

♦ National Park authorities;
♦ the Farm Holiday Guide produced by the Farm Holiday Bureau; and
♦ the British Hoteliers, Restauranteurs and Caterers Association (BHRCA, now the British Hospitality Association).

The response to the local authority letter indicated that certain RTBs seemed to be quite unaware of many of the tourism associations in their regions, while local councils were much more knowledgeable. Overall, the search for information produced a database of nearly 450 groups (the study population or sampling frame).

The responses indicated that there were five basic types of TA. They could be distinguished, at least initially, according to the breadth of the tourism industry eligible for membership, and include:
1. Farm Holiday Groups - co-operative groups established by ADAS to support small-scale farm-based accommodation enterprises. There were 63 in England and Wales in 1988.

2. Attraction operators’ associations - with a total of eleven, there were fewer of this TA type than of any other in England and Wales.

3. Hospitality associations - from the names of the groups, it became clear that the breadth of business types in membership of these groups was appreciably wider than that of the first two. Hoteliers’ associations were probably the most familiar of all, but the population of this group also included associations composed of various combinations of:

- guest house operators;
- self-catering accommodation businesses;
- restauranteurs; and
- caterers.

Details of 133 hospitality associations were held in the database.

4. Industry-wide tourism associations - this TA type comprised the bulk of all such groups in England and Wales, with at least 233 in existence. Group names exhibited much variation:

- Epping Forest Tourist Association;
- North Staffordshire Tourism Association;
- Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire;
- Corwen and Vale of Edeymion Publicity Association; and
- Skegness 2000

- but the attribute common to industry-wide groups is that they accepted all local businesses with an interest in visitor industry development into membership. Comments from respondents indicated that many accepted other tourism-related interests too, from local authorities through key local private individuals to other voluntary groups.
5. Tourism association federations - six examples of regional or sub-regional TA federations were found. These acted as umbrella organizations for the smaller-scale, local groups; the Peak District Tourism Forum, for instance, planned to act as a co-ordinating and pressure group representing the interests of TAs and certain other groups throughout the National Park. Federations were excluded from the study because they generally cover much larger areas than the average TA, and cannot realistically be termed community- or locality-oriented.

Urban/Rural Dimension

The questionnaire aimed to remedy the general lack of data on TAs, and covered tourism associations based in urban and rural areas (including coastal locations). While the aim of the study was to examine TAs with special reference to rural tourism development, it was reasoned that these groups perform essentially the same functions in the countryside as they do in towns and cities. Data on both urban and rural tourism associations would provide a rich data set illustrating all the manifestations of these groups and their work and role, upon which theoretical constructs could be based. The case study, located in the countryside, would provide a rural focus, offering a more in-depth insight into TAs working in a countryside setting, and providing further material for conceptual development.

Any attempt to separate purely rural TAs from the population of all such groups would have been problematic and potentially misleading. During the compilation of the TA database, it became evident that there were few TAs in England and Wales that could be termed wholly rural. The information requested from public bodies for compilation of the database, confined to names and addresses for the main contact(s) for each group, complemented that gained from the results of consultations with numerous associations during the course of the study to indicate that the majority of TAs were based on identifiably urban areas ranging in size from small towns to cities. This was perhaps because urban areas are more likely to contain a critical mass of visitor industry interest and activity that the average countryside locality. Thus it is inevitable that TAs are more likely to be formed in urban than rural areas, although many urban-based groups drew members from their rural hinterlands.

PILOT SURVEY

A small-scale pilot survey was carried out to assist questionnaire development and in an effort to maximise the response rate. A draft version of the questionnaire was posted to 37 groups; the pilot was used to establish more detail on groups about which little was known. Some were subsequently sent the finalised questionnaire, while a few of those mailed were eliminated from the survey altogether when it transpired that they were not involved in tourism.
The pilot helped to:

- establish the optimum questionnaire layout for ease of completion;
- refine the wording and ordering of questions;
- determine best practice in mail-out and reminder procedures; and
- optimise the design and use of the computer statistical package to be employed for the analysis.

SAMPLE SELECTION

A decision was made to survey as many tourism associations as was practically possible to obtain the maximum amount of data on these groups. Rather than survey 1% or 5% of the population, then, as a conventional statistical approach might prescribe, much larger sampling fractions were employed. These were roughly in inverse proportions to the numbers of each type of group; the populations of the Farm Holiday and attractions groups were all sampled (but see note 1 below Table 5 below) because of concern that problems with representativeness might arise if the response rate from these relatively unusual groups was poor, as the results of the pilot survey suggested - see Table 5.

Table 5 - population sampling rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TA Type</th>
<th>Estimated population in England and Wales</th>
<th>Sampling fraction applied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Holiday Groups</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0.97&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractions groups</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality groups</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry-wide associations</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Two Farm Holiday Groups which responded to the pilot declined to take part in the main survey. Otherwise this figure would have been 1.
The final version of the survey form was produced in light of the experience gained in the pilot. A copy of the questionnaire is presented at Appendix One, sent with a covering letter (at Appendix Two) and pre-paid reply envelope to a sample of tourism associations. The sample was selected by stratified systematic (quasi-random) sampling to reduce the possibilities of sampling error (Yeomans 1968), stratified by TA type (refer back to Table 5 above). The first mail-out was posted on 22nd April 1988, and followed-up with a phone call a few days later; a reminder, consisting of a revised covering letter and a second copy of the questionnaire, was sent to non-respondents five weeks later; and the last few completed forms were received as late as mid-September. Appendix Three lists the TAs which responded to the survey.

The survey achieved a response rate well in excess of that normally expected from postal questionnaires. Overall, a total of 78% of all forms sent were returned, although not all were usable. The details are given in Table 6 and Figure 5.

Table 6 - Survey mail-out and response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TA Type</th>
<th>Population in Eng. &amp; Wales (estd.)</th>
<th>Sent</th>
<th>Received</th>
<th>Non-response</th>
<th>% response</th>
<th>Discards No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No. for analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Hol. Gps.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractions gps</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality gps</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry-wide associations</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NON-RESPONDENT ANALYSIS

A check to determine whether non-response was systematic was carried out by checking whether the characteristics of non-respondent groups were significantly different from those that replied. Stratified quasi-random sampling at a rate of between one-quarter and one-third was employed to select associations to contact from those that didn’t respond, the groups contacted by telephone, and the targets shown at Table 7 eventually attained, though not without some difficulty.
All responses

Figure 5 - questionnaire receipt

Cumulative total

Reminder sent

Weekly total

April

May

June

July

Sept

0

10

17

24

1

16

0

50

100

150

200

250
The non-respondent analysis established that non-respondent groups were not markedly different from those that did reply. The range of variation of their main characteristics fell well within that of the respondent groups and there was no geographical element to non-response. “I couldn’t be bothered” was the reason most often given for failure to return the survey form.

There were no systematic differences between respondents and the relatively low number of non-respondent groups, and it was concluded that the survey data from the respondent groups gave a true reflection of the characteristics and attributes of tourism associations in England and Wales.

**QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS**

**INTRODUCTION**

The report of the questionnaire sent to tourism associations in England and Wales is structured according to general principles for the study of voluntary associations advanced by Pickvance (1986).

In all cases the findings are based on the number of groups answering each question and, following usual practice, all figures in the tables presenting data are rounded and thus percentages may not add up to 100. The great majority of questions were answered by most groups, but not all TAs answered all questions (or even all parts of each question) and there are a few discrepancies in totals as a result. The data were initially processed using the SPSSx statistical package and subsequently re-analysed using Microsoft Excel version 4.0.

There were very few attractions’ operators associations in existence (13). Those that were detected during the process of compiling the database were all surveyed, and the nine usable responses yielded useful data, but the low overall number of attractions groups must be borne in mind when considering the data.

---

**Table 7 - Details of non-respondent analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-respondents</th>
<th>Sampling fraction</th>
<th>No. of groups contacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Hol. Gps.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractions Gps.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality Gps.</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry-wide associations</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The questionnaire survey was a descriptive, enumerative survey, to obtain basic facts about the target population to serve as a basis for more detailed investigation. Because there had been no similar studies done in the past, cross-sectional rather than longitudinal data was sought (Oppenheim 1966), yielding a 'snapshot' of TAs at a particular point in time; while this design gives no information about cause-and-effect relationships, the results may nonetheless offer indications as to which variables or characteristics are worthy of study in future projects.

INITIAL CHECKS

The group contact information obtained from the various sources had to be checked to confirm both the continued existence and precise objectives of the groups for which names and addresses were obtained. To check that each group surveyed was of the type targeted for study, question 14 asked:

>'Is your organization primarily concerned with the local tourist and visitor trade, with an interest in promoting the development of the area’s tourism/visitor industry?'

This question was placed towards the end of the questionnaire, to deter respondents from discarding the form at an early stage, feeling for whatever reason that the association they represented was not one of those sought for study (Hoinville et al. 1978). In the event, all respondents answered 'Yes' to this, confirming that each group surveyed was involved in the development of local tourism industries, and was thus considered to be of interest to the study.

In an attempt to check whether non-respondent groups had disbanded, the covering letter enclosed with the second, reminder questionnaire requested that the questionnaire be returned by the recipient even if the group no longer existed.

UNUSABLE RESPONSES

A small number of the returned questionnaires were found to be unusable. Further attempts were made during the survey period to obtain useful responses from the groups in question, but at the end of the survey period fourteen of all the returned questionnaires were unusable (Table 8).

The reasons cited by respondents for the dissolution of the seven associations noted above were varied. Three associations disbanded when their local councils established tourism departments - one such group considered that ‘our work has been taken over now’ - and “apathy” was cited as the reason for the demise of another. The other groups gave no reasons. The proportion of unusable responses is negligible at only 6% of all responses.
Table 8 - Unusable responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>No. of returns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TA had folded</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned blank</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA refused to supply information</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANALYSES

Membership

Business Membership and Group Types

The membership of each association will influence the capacity for and focus of their visitor industry development efforts, and the first impression gained from the data is that the great majority of the membership of all groups comprised private sector businesses. While some TAs had local authorities and other public sector organisations, voluntary sector bodies, and private individuals in membership, the bulk of the members were tourism industry operators of one sort or another. Many groups accepted only a limited range of types of business into membership: question four asked specifically about which businesses were eligible for membership of each group, and marked variations discovered in the breadth of the tourism industry represented within the membership of each group were found to be sufficiently regular to constitute a basis for classification of TAs, and confirmed the basis upon which the survey was stratified.

Responses indicated that a majority of all groups surveyed are only open to certain elements of local tourism/visitor industries. Fifty-nine percent were groups with restrictive membership criteria, while 41% of all TAs surveyed were groups with broad membership criteria, accepting all local businesses with an interest in the visitor industry into membership. In many cases, the group names provided clues as to the likely composition of each:

- ♦ Heart of Dorset Farm Holiday Group
- ♦ North Norfolk Hoteliers’ Association
- ♦ the East Sussex Tourist Attractions’ Association

- but some were more ambiguous, particularly the broad-membership groups:

- ♦ South Shropshire Tourism Association
- ♦ Alfriston & District Association
- ♦ Skegness 2000
The exclusivity of membership implied by the names and usual membership criteria of the restricted groups was not always absolute. Additional comments on a few responses indicated that at least some of the restricted groups were prepared to admit businesses of different types to those comprising the bulk of the group. For example, an hoteliers’ group may offer membership to non-accommodation tourist-oriented businesses in the locality if they expressed interest and there were no other more suitable groups for them to join (and one had a membership category termed ‘Recommended Suppliers’); and membership was offered to otherwise ineligible businesses by a few Farm Holiday Groups as a means of obtaining more funds to reduce the costs to the on-farm membership of producing publications. However, the responses showed that, in general, the memberships of individual restricted-membership groups were composed predominantly of specific business types. Such tourism associations can be termed sectoral groups for the purposes of the study.

In contrast, groups with broad criteria normally accepted into their membership any business with an interest in the local tourism/visitor industry. Such associations aimed to be representative of the full range of businesses involved in the visitor industry in their localities, and to this end accepted practically any interested private sector operator into their membership, often including businesses with little obvious immediate connection to tourism. Comments on this matter include:

“... we are open to anyone interested in helping further our aims ...”

- and:

“... the association needs to gain maximum support from local people and businesses if we are to develop the tourist industry properly ...”

It is the integrated perspective towards visitor industry development that makes the membership criteria of the surveyed tourism associations significant in the study. It is considered that the best way to develop the visitor industry in any individual locality is in an holistic, integrated manner, involving as many elements of business and the community as is practicable. While sectoral TAs may well fulfil certain valuable specialist functions, it is contended that broad membership groups are more likely and perhaps more able to pursue integrated community-scale visitor industry development, as far as any voluntary association is able to. Given this, most of the analyses of the remainder of the questionnaire data will be broken down between what will be termed:

♦ sectoral; and

♦ broad-membership groups
- in an effort to determine the key characteristics of the two major group types, and the degree to which each is able to promote integrated tourism development.

As will already have become obvious, the sectoral group type cannot be regarded as homogenous. A total of nine restricted-membership types were identified from the responses. The great majority were hospitality industry groups, with the remainder comprising nine attractions operators associations. The sectoral associations can be grouped as shown in Table 9.

Table 9 - Classification of sectoral hospitality groups
(ordered roughly according to increasingly restricted membership criteria)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of businesses in membership</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holiday accommodation &amp; catering</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday accommodation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels &amp; guest houses</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm-based B+B &amp; self-catering¹</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-catering (non-farm)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Quality' hotels</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small hotels</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels &amp; attractions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The Farm Holiday Groups

Table 9 indicates, in very general terms, that within the set of sectoral TAs, the number of groups in each category tends to decrease as the level of specialisation increases. The Farm Holiday Groups represent a special case within this broad pattern, for while they have quite specialised membership criteria (members must own, tenant or manage a working, registered farm on which the visitor accommodation is based (Farm Holiday Bureau 1988)), Table 5 showed that survey data was collected on a greater proportion of such groups than on any other sectoral type. This was partly because a sampling fraction of 1 was applied to this group type (ie 100% were sampled, to obtain as much data as possible on one of the more unusual group types), whereas that applied to the hoteliers’ group type was 0.75. However, the existence of relatively large numbers of Farm Holiday Groups is largely accounted for by central government policy in favour of their establishment, that of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries in England and Wales through the Agricultural Development & Advisory Service (ADAS), while the other types of tourism associations surveyed have had no such initiatives in their favour.

Attractions operators’ associations seem to be much more homogeneous in comparison to the hospitality-oriented associations. It proved impossible to differentiate between them within the type on the basis of membership attributes in the same way as hospitality associations were on the data derived from the survey. This was at least partially because of the small number of these very specialised associations in England and Wales.
The differences re-affirmed the choice of the basis of stratification of the survey. However, while it was apparent that many groups imposed restrictions upon the general type of businesses eligible for membership, it is emphasised that sectoral membership criteria were occasionally relaxed by some groups in the light of local circumstances to admit types of businesses, or certain businesses in particular, which would normally be excluded. In general, however, most groups exhibited broadly homogeneous business membership characteristics within their type - see Figure 6. They will be referred to in the study as follows:

♦ broad-membership groups; and

♦ sectoral groups:
  - hoteliers’ associations (also referred to as sectoral-H groups)
  - Farm Holiday Groups (sectoral-F groups)
  - attractions associations (sectoral-A groups)

![Figure 6 - variation in membership by group type](image)

Public and Voluntary Sector Membership

The likelihood of groups having non-business members varies across the two basic group types, sectoral and broad-membership. Analysis reveals that the public sector, in the form of local authorities - borough, district and county councils - was represented within the memberships of many more broad-membership groups than sectoral ones. The broad-membership groups were
also more likely to have non-tourism business promotion organisations such as Chambers of Trade and Commerce in membership, and also voluntary groups and private individuals (Table 10 and Figure 7).

Table 10 - Public, voluntary sector and other representation within TA membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major non-business member types</th>
<th>No. of other groups in membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Authy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to the proportion of each group type with the specified representation.

NOTES
1. Private members were individuals, not necessarily connected with the tourist industry, in membership of the group.
2. 'Other' groups include public & voluntary sector bodies such as Rural Community Councils, civic & arts groups, voluntary service groups, Enterprise Trusts & Business Clubs, regional tourist boards, and suppliers to the tourist industry.

The table shows that Farm Holiday Groups (sectoral-F) had the narrowest range of non-business members - only 6% (3 groups) had local authorities in membership, and this type had none of the range of voluntary and other member types that other group types did. For these reasons, the sectoral-F type can be regarded as the least broadly connected of all in terms of the representation of external bodies within their memberships, and were thus collectively the least able to take account of a broad range of opinions and factors while undertaking their tourism development function in a locality, at least in terms of formal contacts. The attractions operators’ (sectoral-A) groups had the next widest spectrum of non-business member types, followed by hoteliers’ (sectoral-H) and finally broad-membership groups.

The range of member types involved in a group is important, but some members may be more valuable than others. The local authority is the key player in the tourism development environment in most areas, and TAs with the local council on board may be more capable than those without. Table 10 and Figure 7 show that local authorities were much less likely to be involved with sectoral group types; while about one third of all sectoral-A and sectoral-H groups had local authorities in membership, this proportion rises to over two thirds in the case of the broad-membership groups. Additionally, broad-membership groups were much more likely to
Figure 7 - non-business membership

By group type

% with representation

Local Auth.  | Ch. Comm/Trade  | Priv. indivs.  | Others

Broad m'ship gps.  | Sectoral - H  | Sectoral - F  | Sectoral - A
have representation from Chambers of Trade or Commerce, other public and voluntary sector bodies, and private individuals than other types.

In terms of the composition of their memberships, then, the broad-membership group type was in general the most widely connected, indicating that they represent a much broader range of visitor industry-related interests than the other types. It may also be significant to note that, in many cases, their range of external interests in membership extends wider than the immediate, private sector beneficiaries of the tourism industry in comparison to the norm for sectoral group types. A variety of reasons can be advanced as to why external bodies and individuals may want to join a TA - or, for that matter, for a TA to welcome them into membership - including historical, locational, political and economic factors. It would however appear that:

♦ broad-membership groups were on the whole either more attractive to interested non-business parties; or

♦ the sectoral industry group types were less interested in offering membership to such interests; or

♦ both.

The *raison d'être* and philosophy behind the establishment and operation of each group could conceivably be an important factor influencing the decision of external bodies to join or not. It can be postulated that broad-membership groups will tend towards more holistic models of visitor industry development than sectoral groups, making them:

♦ more attractive to non-visitor industry members; and

♦ actively seek to recruit useful individuals and bodies not immediately involved in the visitor industry into membership.

Formal Membership of Tourism Associations

The majority of the groups surveyed offered formal membership to each of their defined ranges of potential members. This attribute was distributed fairly evenly across all group types (see Table 11 below), although in a few cases comments indicated that the membership was divided into full and associate sections.
Table 11 - Formal membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any co-operative, voluntary body promoting tourism development needs a formal membership structure for reasons of continuity as well as organisational and legal reasons. Also, a formal membership enables the TA to demonstrate to external bodies that the group is representative of the relevant local interests. Furthermore, if finance is deemed necessary for the groups’ operation, as it must be for an association with any significant ambitions, the membership of the group will represent a more or less guaranteed source of income.

Note must be made of the relatively high proportion of broad-membership groups without formal membership. Further investigation revealed that these groups were less formally organized in other respects, tending to be informally based (ie without legal basis and no formal executive committees, for example), and younger.

Group Sizes

Group sizes, measured by the numbers of members, vary considerably. Broad-membership groups tended to be the largest of all followed by sectoral-H, sectoral-F and sectoral-A types in descending order. Group sizes were classified into five classes, selected (approximately and with some difficulty) to reflect the distribution of all group sizes in the population (see Table 12 and Figure 8).

Table 12 - Group sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very small</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Large</th>
<th>Very large</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Up to 15</td>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>26-40</td>
<td>41-100</td>
<td>Over 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nearly one third of all broad-membership groups were classified as very large, and about 70% very large or large, whereas sectoral-A and sectoral-F groups tended to be very small. The
Fig 8 - group sizes by group type

Group sizes Sectoral-H gps.

Group sizes Sectoral-A gps.

Group sizes Broad-mdl ship gts.

Group sizes Sectoral-F gts.
membership numbers profile of sectoral-H groups approximates quite closely to that of broad-
membership TAs, but was slightly biassed towards small groups.

Farm Holiday Groups were exceptional in terms of group size. ADAS advice was that once the
membership levels of a group rise to about forty it should accept no more members, and in a
number of instances new groups had been created to cope with the excess demand in some areas.
This accounts for the relative lack of ‘large’ and ‘very large’ sectoral-F groups.

The variation in group sizes noted above may have significant implications for groups’ finances,
both for the levels of subscriptions required from the membership and thus also the level of
financial resources available to the group. Separate analysis reveals that around 90% of the
membership of all groups paid subscriptions (Table 13), and only in the case of the sectoral-F
TAs did all groups within a type levy subscriptions upon their membership. This was again
because these groups conformed to ADAS guidelines, under which individual farm holiday group
members paid an amount to cover their subscription and the Farm Holiday Bureau registration
fee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Subs. paid?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that the membership of the broad-membership group type will include a variety of
interests, and some TAs differentiate between member types (full and associate, for instance),
there exist possibilities for subscriptions schemes differentiating between the levels of
subscriptions paid by each member. This point is investigated at a later stage.

The utility of a group cannot be gauged by its membership levels alone, however. While this
measure is important in many ways, for instance in demonstrating to external bodies the level of
support behind its representatives, membership levels of all but the Farm Holiday Groups will be
determined by several factors. These include:

♦ the size of the groups’ defined area of operation;

♦ the perception of the group held by potential new members;

♦ the presence of any similar, competing groups; and
In terms of goals achieved by tourism associations, members cannot be considered simply in quantitative terms, for a small group with good connections may be more successful than a large one. It can also be suggested that a group whose membership comprises all businesses and other interests involved with tourism in a destination may be regarded as more legitimate than one with only a sectoral membership, even if the latter group is much larger than the former. However, the aims and objectives for which each group was established will clearly be important in determining its capacity for integrated tourism development, and this point will be further examined later in the study. Thus membership levels, while important in many ways, cannot be used as a straightforward guide to the utility of groups involved in local tourism development.

Recent Change in Membership Numbers

Information about membership change and group dynamics was derived from data collected about the change in numbers over the two years prior to the questionnaire. Analysis produced a mixed and often contradictory picture. Overall, a general trend of stability in the numbers of group members can be discerned, but 29% of all groups report a significant increase in their membership over the period 1986-88 (arbitrary thresholds of an increase or decrease of 25% in group numbers were deemed 'significant'), and only 6% of all groups reported a significant decrease (Tables 14 & 15, Figure 9).

Table 14 - Change in membership numbers in the two years before the survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All groups</th>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase of 25% or more</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No significant change</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline of 25% or more</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part of the reason for expansion in membership numbers may be that the utility of TA membership was increasingly being recognized by members of the visitor industry at this time, and may represent a consequence of the general increase in awareness of the characteristics and value of the visitor industry over the whole of Britain.
Fig 9 - change in membership numbers

By group type

Expanding groups

Declining groups
Table 15 - Change in membership numbers in the two years before the survey - by group type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By group type</th>
<th>Increase &gt;25%</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>Decline &gt;25%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad m’ship gps</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures refer to groups established two or more years before the survey. Those established during that period were not included in these figures. There were 13 broad-membership groups, 4 sectoral-H, 8 sectoral-F and no sectoral-A groups.

The between-types variation shown at Table 15 reveals broad-membership groups as the most dynamic of all the four types. There were almost as many growing broad-membership groups as there were static ones, and this type had the highest proportion of expanding groups. In contrast, the attractions operators’ groups were the most static in relative terms, followed by sectoral-H groups and then sectoral-F TAs.

Further analysis reveals that, for the broad-membership groups, there was some evidence to suggest that the larger groups were tending to expand, although this pattern was less obvious with the other groups (Table 16).

These data could be taken to suggest that the broad-membership group type was evolving and changing at a greater rate than the others, but this would be to over-simplify a complex situation. It is clear that the average size of broad-membership groups was more likely to be increasing than other group types, but although the four group types are all termed tourism associations, care must be taken in any attempts to draw direct comparisons between them on many points because of innumerable local and type-specific variables that are obscured by the process of data aggregation. For instance, it was noted earlier that the development of Farm Holiday (sectoral-F) groups stemmed largely from a policy initiative from central government in the mid-late 80s, perhaps partially explaining why a greater proportion of sectoral-F groups were growing at this time in comparison to sectoral-A and -H ones; and as noted earlier, the upper membership limits of the sectoral-F type were relatively invariate, constrained by needs for familiarity, co-operation and co-ordination between members (Heathcote 1988). While no such constraints upon maximum levels were known to be applied by most other group types, or individual groups - indeed, most groups would welcome additional members - it is possible that constraints could operate, and of course many groups may be at a mature phase of development, having brought into membership the majority of all eligible local businesses and unable to expand any further.
Table 16 - Change in group size by type and size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Group size</th>
<th>Broad</th>
<th>16-25</th>
<th>26-40</th>
<th>41-100</th>
<th>Over 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Up to 15</td>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>26-40</td>
<td>41-100</td>
<td>Over 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-25%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+25%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-25%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-25%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to the proportion of groups in each size class whose membership levels changed in the specified manner.

A comment from the response of an attractions group indicated that some TAs other than Farm Holiday Groups did operate with maximum limits on group size; the upper limit was determined by the physical size of the advertising leaflet produced to advertise the members’ businesses (!), which might offer some indication about the objectives of the group:

"...new members are accepted only when a space is vacant [in the leaflet] or if [it] is enlarged."

Thus for some groups at least, findings concerning changes in membership numbers cannot be viewed independently of other factors, including group type but also a wide range of other, less definable influences; and this caveat applies to varying degrees to many other conclusions drawn from the survey.

There was no evidence to suggest that the typical sectoral-H and broad-membership group operates pre-set maximum membership levels other than those determined by the numbers of eligible businesses within their areas of operation, but the possibility of such limits having been applied by some groups must be acknowledged. However, it can be postulated that, given their specialised nature, all three sectoral group types were likely to be smaller on average than the broad-membership groups, and the findings about group size presented earlier tend to confirm
this. All other things being equal, broad-membership TAs were likely to be larger than the others simply by virtue of the fact that they have a broader constituency from which to draw members. It may also be that the prevailing pro-tourism industry business climate acted as a spur for the relatively greater growth in the number and size of groups accepting a wide range of businesses into membership.

An important conclusion of the foregoing is that while the four group types represent voluntary sector vehicles for visitor industry development and promotion, they were often characterised more by their differences than their similarities. It is not suggested that the group types were highly dissimilar, but that while their similarities must be noted, the differences that clearly did exist in many respects between group types are important, and constitute bases for their differentiation. The four tourism association types cannot logically be studied *en masse* - each type is discrete, and must therefore be considered separately. This is not to imply, however, that TAs in aggregate do not have features in common, for they clearly do; and the findings already related suggest that, despite their many differences, the broad-membership and hoteliers’ groups share certain similarities and can perhaps be bracketed together as a sub-set of all tourism associations, and the sectoral-F and -A groups may together represent another sub-set. But from the results of the survey as well as the perspective of the study, the four TA types can be considered as essentially discrete for many of the present purposes. This point will be developed further below.

**Funding**

The questionnaire sought data on the sources of operational and project funding of tourism associations. Funds were obtained from internal and external sources, as subscriptions, grants and donations, and funding for specific projects.

**Subscription Levels - Structures**

No request for information concerning the levels of subscription paid by the members of the surveyed tourism associations was made. There was some concern, based on experience gained in the pilot survey, that the inclusion of a question on such a topic could adversely affect the response rate. However, schemes differentiating the levels of subscriptions paid by different classes of member were investigated, and were found to vary broadly according to the degree of specialisation exhibited by the membership of each TA type. Members of most sectoral-A and sectoral-F groups, whose memberships tended to be relatively homogeneous, tended to pay a uniform level of subscriptions, whilst only about half the sectoral-H type and even fewer broad-membership groups did so (Table 17).
Table 17 - Incidence of differentiated subscriptions structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subs. varied?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad m'ship</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, this between-groups pattern of differentiation was echoed in the way in which those groups with differentiated subs levels calculated the appropriate level for each member. As Table 18 shows, groups with a relatively homogeneous membership tended to vary their subscription levels according to the size of each business, while the subscription levels of tourism associations with varied memberships were more likely to vary according to the type and size of the member business.

Table 18 - Subscriptions structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of business</th>
<th>Type of business</th>
<th>Size &amp; type of business</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad gps.</td>
<td>2 5</td>
<td>9 24</td>
<td>20 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>10 33</td>
<td>4 13</td>
<td>16 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>5 56</td>
<td>2 22</td>
<td>2 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to the proportion of each group type utilising the specified basis of differentiation.

The differences in subscriptions structures can be attributed to attempts by groups to ensure fairness. The level of each member’s subscription should be seen to be fair in comparison to that of the rest of the membership, and while their ability to pay is important other factors influence the matter: broad-membership groups, for instance, had to strike a careful balance between the level of subscriptions paid by a shop relative to that paid by a local transport concern, for example, while maximising both membership levels and income. It may be surmised that, in effect, levels were set in relation to the levels of return from tourism that each business type was likely to achieve.

Farm Holiday Groups were populated by a very narrow range of member businesses, so the size of each business was of more relevance in determining subscription levels for those few that did differentiate. Again, though, the reason for the existence of each group type (and each individual
Sources of Operational Funds

The majority of all groups obtained the bulk of their operating funds from membership subscriptions, while some were supported by outside sources and others relied upon fund raising activities. Table 19 shows that nearly three quarters of all broad-membership TAs obtain a majority of group operating funds from the membership, while non-membership sources were relatively insignificant.

Table 19 - Source of majority of operating funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad m'ship gps</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question specifically asked for details of funds covering the majority of the TAs’ operating costs, but it is necessary to acknowledge that funding for lesser proportions of operating costs was obtained by some groups, judging by comments added to a few responses. Again, the questionnaire wasn’t used to investigate in more detail because of concern over the effects on the response rate.

A breakdown of non-membership sources of operating funds (Table 20) shows that the broad-membership tourism associations were almost one third more likely to obtain support for the greater part of their operating costs from external bodies than any other TA type. They were also more likely to raise money through fund raising efforts. The hoteliers’ groups were the only other type to raise money by fundraising, and less than one in twenty actually did so.

Analysis reveals that public sources were very important amongst all TAs which had the majority or all of their operating costs paid for by external bodies. Furthermore, broad-membership groups were much more likely to receive such funds from public sector sources than any other group type (Table 21).
Table 20 - Non subscription-derived operating funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund raising source</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures refer to the total of each group type with the specified source covering the majority of group operating funds.

Table 21 - External source of majority of operating funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local authority</th>
<th>Chamber of Tr./Commerce</th>
<th>Tourist board</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad m'shp gps</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to the proportion of all operational funding derived from the specified source by each group type.

The difference between group types on this variable is significant because the phenomenon of external funding can be regarded as some indication of opinions held by external bodies regarding the existence and work of voluntary sector tourism bodies. On this measure, the broad-membership groups were seen as being more appropriate for support than all the other tourism association types. This point may be especially revealing in the case of groups funded by public sector bodies such as tourist boards and local authorities, for it can be said to amount to a demonstration of agreement with the aims, objectives and existence of these TAs from the public sector. Given this, the data in Table 21 could be viewed as illustrating a measure of official support for the broad-membership TA type over the others. While no unequivocal conclusion of this nature can be drawn from the data, because the local socio-politico-economic environment will represent a major influence upon decisions to fund any TA, the figures do appear to offer a basis for suggesting that the broad-membership tourism associations were favoured more by funding sources over the sectoral TAs, or at least that they were more able to bring pressure to bear upon these sources.
Few groups derived the majority of their operating funds from fundraising efforts. As Table 20 (above) showed, only broad-membership and sectoral-H groups were found to do so. Their main means were:

- sale of advertising space;
- staging visitor-oriented events; and
- staging tourist trade-oriented events.

The survey shows that an enterprising TA can do a lot to reduce the levels of subscriptions required from its membership, but also that very few actually do. In addition to contributions towards their operating costs, many TAs receive funds for specific projects. The incidence of project funding is examined in a separate section.

Legal aspects

Legal bases

The majority of all groups surveyed were legally constituted as voluntary associations. The remainder were either informal groups without formal legal bases, or companies limited by guarantee. The distribution of these legal types is shown at Table 22 and Figure 10, which illustrate the preponderance of the voluntary association model as legal basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Voluntary association</th>
<th>Limited by guarantee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad m’ship gps</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the broad-membership and sectoral-H group types were much more likely to operate upon formal legal bases than the other two sectoral types. This finding has implications for the groups’ finances and the way in which the affairs of the associations were conducted. A group operating as a voluntary association has a written constitution defining aims and objectives and providing for general meetings, elections and duties of officers, and other aspects of the operation of the group. By contrast, informally organized groups need have none of these. The fourteen groups constituted as companies limited by guarantee operate as non-profit making concerns, and may be legally constituted such that the membership has less influence over the activities of the
Fig 10 - legal types by group type
association than may be the case with the voluntary association model. This may have implications for the professionalism and representativeness of the group.

Further analysis indicates that informally-organized groups tended to be distributed towards the smaller end of the range of group sizes (Table 23, Figure 11).

Table 23 and Figure 11 show a fairly clear relationship between increasing group size and legal basis. The data suggest that the legal basis of groups tends to progress from informal to voluntary association to company limited by guarantee with increasing TA size. It may be that this progression may accompany the professional development and growth of a group, although local and type-specific factors will influence the choice of legal basis adopted to a degree.

**Table 23 - Group size and legal type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group size</th>
<th>Very small</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Large</th>
<th>Very large</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>11 55 %</td>
<td>4 20 %</td>
<td>2 10 %</td>
<td>2 10 %</td>
<td>1 5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary assn.</td>
<td>36 23 %</td>
<td>27 17 %</td>
<td>21 13 %</td>
<td>49 31 %</td>
<td>27 17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guarantee</td>
<td>1 8 %</td>
<td>1 8 %</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4 33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL LEGAL BASES</td>
<td>48 .25 %</td>
<td>32 17 %</td>
<td>23 12 %</td>
<td>55 29 %</td>
<td>34 18 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to the proportion of each legal type represented within each size category.

An attempt was made to test relationships between the source of establishment initiatives and groups’ legal bases, but a possible problem with the veracity of the data must be noted. The data on source of establishment initiative rely upon respondents’ recall for their accuracy, so the analysis was confined to groups that had been established in the 1980s. Table 24 shows that TAs established as a result of private sector initiatives were more likely to be informal, while public sector-initiated groups tended to operate upon more formal bases, as voluntary associations or companies limited by guarantee. Fewer groups were established by business-oriented voluntary sector bodies; those that were tended to follow the voluntary association model.

The main impression gained from the available data, then, is that groups established as a result of public sector initiatives tended to be more formally organized than those resulting from private sector initiatives. This may be because public sector bodies, who may subsequently have extensive dealings with the tourism associations that they establish, were aware of the problems that may arise in dealing with informal groups (concerning financial dealings in particular), and were aware that the best course of action was to ensure that TAs were set up on a firm legal footing. Consultations have established that an informal legal basis may be sufficient for small and new groups, but is generally inadvisable for larger and longer-established ones.
Fig 11 - legal type by group size
All groups

% of each size class by legal basis
Table 24 - Legal basis by source of set-up initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of initiative</th>
<th>Date established</th>
<th>Legal basis</th>
<th>1980-4 No./%</th>
<th>1985 &gt; No./%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC SECTOR¹</td>
<td></td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>3/8%</td>
<td>3/11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Voly ass</td>
<td>31/86%</td>
<td>23/82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G’tee</td>
<td>2/6%</td>
<td>2/7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIVATE SECTOR</td>
<td></td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>6/15%</td>
<td>4/22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Voly ass</td>
<td>32/80%</td>
<td>14/78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G’tee</td>
<td>2/5%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOL’Y SECTOR²</td>
<td></td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1/20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Voly ass</td>
<td>5/100%</td>
<td>3/60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G’tee</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1/20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td></td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Voly ass</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G’tee</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to the proportion of groups of each legal type established by the specified initiative source in each time period.

NOTES 1. Includes local authorities, ADAS, Tourist Boards and CoSIRA (the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas - now part of the Rural Development Commission)

2. Includes other TAs and Chambers of Trade/Commerce
Formation of Tourism Associations

When Were They Formed?

Data upon the date of formation of tourism associations indicate that some groups had been in existence for at least 50 years, and that the five years from 1980 marked a major period of expansion in the numbers of voluntary tourism development groups. Data is unavailable for the entire post-1985 period, because the survey was carried out in 1988, and thus conclusions about whether or not the high rate of growth noted in the early ’80s was sustained throughout the latter half of that decade cannot reliably be drawn, although some decline in the rate of formation is suggested by the available figures. Table 25 and Figure 12 show the trends in group formation.

The total number of all TAs has been increasing since the early 1970s, but the different TA types exhibited significant variations in their rates of formation since then. Figure 12 indicates that the sectoral-H (hoteliers’) were the oldest established of all; a total of 38% of these groups were formed before 1960, while only seven percent of all broad-membership groups date back to this time. Figure 12 further shows that the rate of group formation was at its lowest in recent times during the decade from 1960-69, after which it increased gradually through the 1970s until peaking in the five years from 1980-84 (on presently available data). This finding denotes a rapid expansion of the tourism-oriented voluntary sector during this time, particularly in numbers of sectoral-A, -F, and broad-membership groups.

The reliance which can be placed on these findings is open to question, however, due to problems of respondent knowledge and recall. Also, some TAs may have altered their membership criteria between formation and the present (for instance, an association may have formed as sectoral-H group, but re-formed later as a broad-membership group).

The survey was undertaken in mid-1988, meaning that data for the post-1980/84 period is incomplete. However, it does cover almost four of the five years of the later period, and suggests that the rate of group formation may have declined in the later 1980s. However, the rate of formation of broad membership-type groups declined to a lesser extent than that of the other group types in the later 1980s compared to the first half of that decade:

- broad-membership group formations declined by 16%
- sectoral-H group formations declined by 46%
- sectoral-F group formations declined by 38%
- sectoral-A group formations declined by 86%
Figure 12 - TA formation trends

No. formed in period

Period

- Broad m'shp gps
- Sectoral-H
- Sectoral-F
- Sectoral-A

Data to 1983 only
Table 25 - Formation trends by type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td># %</td>
<td># %</td>
<td># %</td>
<td># %</td>
<td># %</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sect-H</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sect-F</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sect-A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Groups</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to the total number of each type established during each period.

There are many possible reasons as to why the rates varied as they did, but one may be that there were progressively fewer locations for expansion of the numbers of more specialized, sectoral types. Another may be that the pro-tourism industry climate favoured the establishment of broad-membership groups, especially in many non-traditional locations where TAs of any type are unusual. It may be significant that if the sectoral-F and sectoral-A types are withdrawn from the calculation of the change in rates of group formation on the grounds that:

1. The former were established in the climate of a specific central government policy initiative.
2. There were very few figures for the latter type,

- the 35% decrease in all group formations between the two 1980s time periods falls to 24%.

Changes in the Composition of Tourism Associations at the Local Level

Further information about group changes was obtained from the replies to question nine, which asked for outline details upon any other TAs in existence in the locality of those surveyed prior to their establishment. There were a total of 28 responses to the question, and the breakdown of these is shown at table 26.

Table 26 - Fate of earlier tourism association groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent group reformed to make present group</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent group split off from previous group</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbanded</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These data add detail to what is already known about the development of voluntary associations in general, confirming that TAs adapt and change over time. Few respondents gave detailed responses to this question, so the conclusions that can be drawn from the data are limited, but the questionnaire data do indicate that:

1. Groups may be re-formed in the light of changing circumstances if their previous form was deemed to be inappropriate. This type of change is particularly apparent amongst the sectoral-H group type; for instance, an hoteliers’ association in a popular northern resort was rejuvenated and much expanded to respond to the challenge of increasing visitor pressure.

2. The existence of one group can act as the catalyst for the establishment of others in the locality.

3. Several groups were aware of previous groups within their localities which no longer exist, and it may be that some of the respondent groups were formed to take the place of those which folded.

Tourism associations which disband generally do so because of a lack of interest or active support from the membership. The fluctuations found to occur during the lifespan of TAs are characteristic of all voluntary associations (Smith and Freedman 1972), and the very fact that these organisations adapted to changing circumstances is another factor to take into account in their analysis. Also, the attitude of local authorities and other public bodies towards TAs is bound to be conditioned by any perception of them as ephemeral, here-today-gone-tomorrow outfits which may simply not repay the investment of a lot of time and energy.

**Geographical Distribution of Tourism Associations**

The incomplete response to the request for TA contact information means that the available data concerning the distribution of the groups must be viewed as partial. For this reason, firm conclusions concerning geographical aspects of three of the four types of TA cannot be drawn. Given the data that are available, however, it can be said that TAs appeared to be concentrated in certain tourist board regions of the UK, and some types in particular exhibited concentration in their distribution (Table 27, Figure 13). The results show that the West Country tourist board region had twice as many surveyed TAs (all types) than the next most populated region, the Heart of England, and while this finding must be treated with caution, it offers an initial indication of the distribution of the groups.

Knowledge is complete about the distribution of the sectoral-F type, for the data on the locations of this group type was taken from the Farm Holiday Bureau’s *1988 Farm Holiday Guide* (Farm Holiday Bureau 1988), a comprehensive guide to the associations and their commercial memberships. The distribution was broadly similar to that of the surveyed tourism associations,
Figure 13(i) - distribution of surveyed tourism associations
Figure 13(ii) - distribution of surveyed tourism associations

Farm Holiday Groups

% of total
- 0-4
- 5-9
- 10-20
- >20

Broad-membership groups

% of total
- 0-4
- 5-9
- 10-20
- >20
Figure 13(iii) - distribution of surveyed tourism associations

Hoteliers' groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attractions groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with intense concentration in the West Country. There exists no authoritative information on the distribution of the other TA types.

Given the limitations of the geographical data, the pattern of concentration of Farm Holiday Groups in the West Country was broadly similar to that found for the sectoral-H and sectoral-A types. However, the broad-membership type exhibited a relatively greater degree of dispersion over tourist board regions in England and Wales (Table 28 and Figure 14).

It is inappropriate to draw firm conclusions on the relatively dispersed distribution of broad-membership TAs from the available data, but some suggestions can be advanced:

- the distribution of these non-specialized groups might have been expected to be more dispersed than that of the more specialized ones; and Figure 14 suggests that this was indeed the case

- a popular tourist destination with TAs already in existence may serve as fertile ground for the establishment of others through demonstration effects. This may partly explain the concentration of tourism associations in the West Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourist Board region</th>
<th>All TAs surveyed</th>
<th>Farm Holiday Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Country</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart of England</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East England</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Wales</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorks. and Humberside</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Wales</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumbria</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Wales</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thames and Chilterns</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Data from the 1988 Farm Holiday Guide (Farm Holiday Bureau 1988)
Fig 14 - geographical concentration

By group type
Table 28 - Distribution of surveyed tourism associations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Broad-membership groups</th>
<th>Sectoral-H (hoteliers') groups</th>
<th>Sectoral-A (attractions) groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Country</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart of England</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East England</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Wales</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorks. and Humberside</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Wales</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumbria</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Wales</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thames and Chilterns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to the proportion of the total of each group type in each tourist board region.

Given the previous two points, an area with a high concentration of tourism associations may be expected to have a correspondingly high concentration of specialized TAs, but the data does not support this theory (see Table 29).

Distribution by Size

The largest groups tended to be concentrated within certain areas of the country, with the West Country and the Heart of England tourist board regions containing particularly high proportions. The West Country tourist board region was particularly notable for the presence of many large sectoral-H groups, and the Heart of England region for larger broad-membership groups (Table 30). The West Country again had the largest sectoral-F group, followed by the Heart of England; and the biggest sectoral-A groups were also located in the West Country.
Table 29 - Comparison of the distribution of broad and sectoral groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No. of all TAs</th>
<th>No. of sectoral TAs</th>
<th>Ratio of all: sectoral TAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Country</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1.4:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart of England</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.5:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.9:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East England</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.2:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.9:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Wales</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.3:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.2:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorks. and Humberside</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Wales</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.4:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumbria</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.3:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Wales</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.7:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thames and Chilterns</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.3:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30 - Tourist board region in which the largest groups were located

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group type</th>
<th>Largest group sizes</th>
<th>Location and number of groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership</td>
<td>&gt;100</td>
<td>Heart of England - 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West Country - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East Anglia/S Wales/Cumbria/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N West - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-100</td>
<td>Heart of England - 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East Midlands - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S Wales/West Country - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>&gt;100</td>
<td>West Country - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N West/Southern/N Wales - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S E England/Y &amp; Humbs/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S Wales - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-100</td>
<td>West Country - 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S E England - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heart of England - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>26-40</td>
<td>West Country - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heart of England - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cumbria/E Midlands - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>26-40</td>
<td>West Country - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>S E England/West Country - 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Change in Membership Numbers by Region

Growth - the geographical pattern of membership change was mixed, and thus not easy to interpret. The 50 groups of all types whose numbers were expanding significantly were located in all parts of Britain, but a particularly high proportion of growing broad-membership TAs and to a lesser extent sectoral-F groups were found in the Heart of England region, while the East Anglia and Southern regions each show relatively noteworthy growth in the memberships of sectoral-H groups (a total of two), and the sectoral-A group in Northumbria expanded its membership in the two years prior to the survey (Table 31).

Table 31 - Location of expanding groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group type</th>
<th>Largest group sizes</th>
<th>Location and number of groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership</td>
<td>&gt;100</td>
<td>Heart of England - 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West Country/Cumbria - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-100</td>
<td>Heart of England/Cumbria - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East Midlands/N West/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Northumbria/S E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>England/ Southern/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wales/S Wales - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>&gt;100</td>
<td>N West/Southern - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-100</td>
<td>East Anglia - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cumbria/S E England/Heart of England - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>26-40</td>
<td>West Country - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Heart of England - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yorks &amp; Humbs - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>26-40</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;16</td>
<td>Northumbria - 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notable areas in which expanding TAs were located include the Heart of England, Cumbria, and South East England. The Heart of England region was the only one in which a majority of all TAs were growing (thirteen out of twenty five); the growth in broad-membership and Farm Holiday Groups in the area in the late 1980s reinforced the position of this tourist board region as the one with the highest rates of expansion of tourism association membership. The West Country was not dominant on this measure to the degree that the region was on others, suggesting that development of TAs in the south west had reached a limit by the time of the survey; perhaps the value of these organisations had been realised earlier in the West Country than elsewhere. Interpreting the results is fraught with pitfalls, but it can be said that a greater frequency of
contact between TAs, local authorities and, to a lesser degree, tourist boards may have accelerated this process in certain areas.

Decline - few groups were found to be suffering declining membership levels, as measured by a drop in numbers of 25% in the two years before the survey. Only nine groups were found to be declining, none of which were attractions associations (sectoral-A groups), and in no tourist board region was a majority of all groups declining (proportions of all TAs in decline in the regions ranged from none to a maximum of 13%, the latter figure representing two out of the sixteen TAs surveyed in South Wales). The geographical distribution of declining groups is shown in Table 32 below.

Table 32 - Location of declining groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group type</th>
<th>Largest group sizes</th>
<th>Location and number of groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership</td>
<td>26-40</td>
<td>Heart of England - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>Northumbria/South Wales - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;16</td>
<td>East Midlands/S Wales - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>41-100</td>
<td>S E England - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;16</td>
<td>S E England - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>&lt;16</td>
<td>North West/West Country - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>All sizes</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, interpreting the findings is difficult, but on the face of things the South East England and Heart of England tourist board regions had relatively noteworthy concentrations of declining groups.

To summarise the findings of this section, while a proportion of expanding groups were to be found within certain tourist board areas, they were distributed over many parts of the UK. There were substantially fewer declining groups and their geographical pattern displayed even less concentration. It can thus be concluded that there was a general pattern of growth in TA membership all over the country in the late 80s, and this may have represented a consolidation of the trend of expansion in the numbers of associations observed to have occurred in the 1980s. The findings concerning the number and distribution of groups with declining membership numbers do not appear to contradict this suggestion. There seemed to be significant activity in the Heart of England tourist board region, which stood out on measures of both group growth and group decline.

The Interests and Activities of Tourism Associations

Each tourism association surveyed was established as a means of achieving certain visitor industry development goals in its locality. The characteristics of the groups themselves have been
described and analysed in the previous sections, and this section examines the activities they undertook.

Range of Activities

Question fourteen consisted of a coded response list designed to determine the range of activities undertaken by each group in the year previous to the survey. This list was based upon the activities found to be pursued by the groups consulted during the early stages of the study. Plenty of space was left for additions to this list, and several respondents used it.

An initial measure of the levels of activity of each group type was obtained by computing a figure for the average number of activities undertaken. While such a determinedly quantitative approach may perhaps obscure as much as it illuminates, its merits are considered sufficient to make it worthy of inclusion as a basic, initial indicator, and the results are shown at Table 33.

The figures, crude as they are, show that hoteliers' groups had engaged in the greatest number of activities on average, followed by broad-membership, sectoral-A and sectoral-F types in descending order. The result indicates that the between-groups variation in activity levels was quite substantial, showing the average sectoral-H group undertook nearly 50% more activities than typical sectoral-F groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average no. of activities</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Coefficient of dispersion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad membership</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coefficient of dispersion, derived from the standard deviation, is used to compare the dispersion of distributions, and provides the data for the second main conclusion from the figures above; that the variation of the number of activities undertaken by individual sectoral-H groups was the least of all the types. In short, sectoral-H groups both undertook the widest range of activities overall, and more of these groups were engaged in a wide variety of activities in comparison with other group types. At the opposite extreme, the Farm Holiday Groups undertook the narrowest range of activities of all group types, and at 44% the coefficient of dispersion indicates that the range of number of activities carried out by sectoral-F groups varied widely - some groups engaged in several activities, some very few.
Types of Activities

This part of the questionnaire (refer to Appendix One) was designed to obtain information about certain categories of activity. Results of an analysis of the modal activities carried out by the groups is shown at Figure 15, derived from analyses based upon data presented at Table 34 (see also Appendix Four for more detailed results).

Figure 15 - Modal activities

Most common activities:

ALL GROUPS
1. Produced brochure aimed at public
2. Produced advertising aimed at public
3. Attended trade fair(s)

Next most common:

BROAD-MEMBERSHIP GROUPS
1. Consulted by local authority
2. Acted as pressure group

SECTORAL GROUPS
1. Business referral
2. Monitoring of standards

On the basis of the findings, the work of tourism associations characterises them primarily as organizations operating to publicise and promote the tourism resources of their local areas, including their members' businesses, to the public, for the most common activity mentioned was the provision of publicity material for the public. Taking advertising aimed at the public was the second most common activity, again oriented towards publicity. The third most common activity, attendance at trade fairs, was clearly oriented more toward the industry than the public but re-emphasises the prime role of TAs as vehicles for publicising their areas to visitors by various means.
### Table 34 - Activities by type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Broad-membership</th>
<th>Sectoral-H</th>
<th>Sectoral-F</th>
<th>Sectoral-A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public brochure</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public advertising</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend trade fairs</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business referral</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring standards</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted by LA</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act as pressure group</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce newsletter</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members' social events</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act as ideas fora</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade brochure</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade advertisements</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer professional advice &amp; support</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training role</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer package holidays</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage events</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake tourism research</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run TIC¹</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to the proportion of each group type which had done the specified activity in the year before the survey.

1. TIC: Tourist Information Centre

For the purposes of more in-depth analysis, the activities list was divided into several categories to permit differentiation of the groups according to their degree of involvement in certain broad activity types. Alongside the purely promotional activities mentioned in the previous paragraph, most groups engage in activities related to:

- broader local visitor industry development; and
- internal (or sector-specific) matters.

Analysis of specific activities corresponding to these activity types will produce data indicating their distribution across the group types.
In broad terms, TAs' activities can be split between:

- operational; and
- planning/development

- functions (after Kreitner 1980), and operational functions into:

- passive;
- active; and
- internal

- functions. This framework of analysis was selected to investigate differences in TAs' interest in, and ability to, play the fullest possible role in developing the visitor industries in their localities. The role of tourism associations in producing material publicising their localities is very important, but it is contended that in many areas, particularly non-traditional locations including many rural areas, they need to do more than this to develop their local visitor industries.

The breakdown by functional category of the activities on the questionnaire coded response list is shown at Figure 16. They are discussed further below.

Figure 16 - Classification scheme of tourism associations' functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities &amp; functions towards promotion and development of local visitor industries</th>
<th>OPERATIONAL</th>
<th>INTERNAL</th>
<th>PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROMOTIONAL</strong></td>
<td>Promotional</td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>Planning/Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Public oriented</td>
<td>Offering package holidays</td>
<td>Newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public literature</td>
<td>Staging events</td>
<td>Members' social events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public advertisements</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of advice and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Familiarisation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Business referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Running TIC ¹</td>
<td></td>
<td>Training role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade oriented</td>
<td>Offer package holidays</td>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Act as ideas forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade literature</td>
<td>Staging events</td>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade advertisements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade fairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. TIC: Tourist Information Centre
The aim of dividing the list of tourism development and promotional activities of the associations was to contribute towards a framework for their study. The rationale for the choice of the divisions was as follows:

'OPERATIONAL-LEVEL' FUNCTIONS

- **Promotional**

  - Publicity is an important aspect of the work of the tourism-oriented voluntary sector, and is here divided into passive and active categories. Passive promotional efforts are further divided into those aimed at the public and those at the trade. Such activities include the production of brochures and the taking of advertising aimed at the tourist trade, and attendance at trade fairs. Two activities are referred to as active promotional activities, in contrast to the relatively passive activities of brochure production and the placing of advertisements mentioned above, for they are pro-active attempts to increase local visitor trade. These are:

  1. The organization of package holidays to the TAs’ locality.
  2. Staging events for the public.

- **Internal**

  - Most of the activities listed as internal group functions are measures to maintain and improve the standards of the local visitor industry, and provide support for businesses. Newsletters, social events and the ideas forum role help keep group members in touch with each other and with developments in the industry and local environment. Referral of business between group members occurs when one member reaches capacity (a full hotel, for example); referral serves both to satisfy the needs of the visitor and to keep the visitor’s business in the locality (or, rather, within the membership of the TA, in effect). Many groups took their monitoring of standards function very seriously, especially the sectoral-F Farm Holiday Group type (one of which commented: “We are very keen on standards above those of the Tourist Board and have, in fact, refused people entry [to the group] if we have not been satisfied....we must maintain our high standards as more jump on the bandwagon ...”) - it is effectively an internal quality control check. Collaboration with training initiatives is another important internal function which helps raise the standards of the local tourism product; and the provision of advice and
support to members is a major component of the work of all trade associations.

'PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT-LEVEL' FUNCTIONS

Some tourism associations adopt active roles as pressure groups to attempt to influence other organizations active in their local tourism industry development environment. The pressure group role may result in benefits for the membership, the locality, or both. Many TAs are routinely consulted by local authorities as well, when the authority requires the views of the local tourism industry on relevant issues. A few groups had undertaken or collaborated with market research projects. These planning/development functions may be termed 'higher-level' relative to operational ones.

When the activities of the four group types are viewed with reference to this classification of functions, differences between the emphases of the work of the broad-membership and sectoral types begin to emerge. The work of the sectoral TAs exhibited a relatively greater emphasis on the 'operational', day-to-day functions of referral and monitoring of standards, while the work of the broad-membership type was relatively more concerned with 'planning/development-level' functions, including acting as consultees to their local authorities and as pressure groups. This might have been expected to a degree, given the composition of the member types within the groups - the monitoring of standards of members' visitor provision, for example, of the varied membership of a broad-membership TA is likely to be less appropriate and probably much more contentious and difficult in practice than doing so for the relatively homogeneous membership of the hospitality-oriented sectoral-H and sectoral-F groups. Nevertheless, the difference was real as far as can be determined from the available data, and may have implications for the utility of the various group types in the development of local visitor industries.

However, a significant minority of all broad-membership groups performed the monitoring function too, and over half of the sectoral-A groups also reported that they too carried out a similar monitoring function. This again indicates that there can be no hard and fast distinctions between group types on this or most other variables; and the function is of course no less valuable, from the point of view of the tourist, when applied to the membership of the broad-membership groups.

Further analysis confirms that the activities of the broad membership group type were biassed more towards 'higher-level' planning/development activities, as were sectoral-H groups to a somewhat lesser extent. A total of 177 respondents indicated involvement with 'planning/development' activities, and Table 35 shows their distribution across the group types.
Table 35 - Groups engaged in planning/development activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of groups</th>
<th>% of each group type involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relatively few Farm Holiday Groups were involved in planning/development activities, while a majority of sectoral-H and most broad-membership groups were. These findings are illustrated diagrammatically at Figure 17, taking the form of a continuum of degrees of involvement in the higher order functions. This tentative ordering of group types is further strengthened by investigation of levels of involvement in 'active' promotional measures, shown at Table 36. These findings indicate that the sectoral-H and broad-membership group types together were much more involved in 'active' promotional measures than the sectoral-A and, especially, the sectoral-F groups.

Table 36 - Groups undertaking 'active' promotional measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of each type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad m'ship gps</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two sets of findings concerning 'active' and 'planning/development' activities strengthen the impression that there was, in aggregate, a significant difference in emphasis between the range of activity types most often undertaken by the sectoral-H and broad-membership pair, and then the sectoral-F and -A groups. The work of a great proportion of hoteliers’ groups could be said to have been broadly similar to that of the broad-membership TAs but with a greater proportion of operational level, sector-specific functions, notably referral, and a greater emphasis upon advice and support functions and intra-group communication activities such as socials and newsletters. In relative terms, sectoral-F groups placed the greatest relative emphasis upon operational activities; it appears that these groups prioritised more immediate promotional activities than industry planning/development ones. The sectoral-A groups fell between the two extremes on many measures.

Further consideration of the continuum along which the group types are distributed suggests that the observed differences in function emphases between them may be explained to some degree by what may be the raison d'être of each type. While Farm Holiday Groups were more concerned
Fig. 17 - planning/dv't involvement
By group type

% of gp type involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TA Type</th>
<th>Sect-F</th>
<th>Sect-A</th>
<th>Sect-H</th>
<th>Broad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with day-to-day promotion of individual operators’ businesses, the work of the broad-
membership groups placed relatively more emphasis on the development of an area’s visitor
industry, and sectoral-A and sectoral-H groups fall between these two extremes. Of course, the
generally restricted size of most sectoral-F and sectoral-A groups may represent significant
constraints upon their work, for reasons of resource availability, but it is difficult to escape the
implication that the raison d’etre of the farm groups in particular was at one extreme of the
continuum from operational to planning functional emphases, and the broad-membership groups
are at the other (Figure 18).

Priority Activities

It was considered important to obtain an indication of the relative priority placed by the groups
upon the range of activities that they undertook, to gain qualitative indications about the groups’
work. Respondents were asked to indicate which of the activities were considered the most, and
the second most important, and a majority of each group type answered that the publication of
brochures and similar promotional literature was the most important part of their groups’ work
(Table 37).

Table 37 - the two most important activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Most important</th>
<th>Second priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership TAs</td>
<td>Public brochure</td>
<td>Ideas forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>Public brochure</td>
<td>Ideas forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advice &amp; support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>Public brochure</td>
<td>Business referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>Public brochure</td>
<td>Ideas forum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A full breakdown of the responses to the question is given at Table 38 and Figure 19. This offers
more detail than Table 37, and serves to illustrate that the attractions and Farm Holiday Groups
had a relatively narrow view of their roles compared to the broad-membership and hoteliers’
group types. The range of important activities specified by the sectoral-F and -A groups was
much narrower than those of the other two, and consisted entirely of operational activities, while
the sectoral-H and broad-membership groups indicated a relatively greater concern for
planning/development activities. Many of the latter group types also considered their efforts
towards active promotion of their areas’ visitor industry to be a priority, noting the importance
they attach to putting on events and package holidays. These findings are not altogether
surprising, for the broad-membership groups in particular tended to have more contacts so could
perhaps organise active promotion more easily than could the others, and the larger size of these
and sectoral-H groups may mean that they had more resources at their disposal to conduct active
promotional initiatives. Again, it seems that sectoral-F and -A groups appeared to place more
emphasis upon the promotion of individual members’ businesses than of local areas and
industries compared to the broad-membership and sectoral-H groups, and examination of the
literature produced by the group types tended to confirm this general view.
Fig. 18 - function continuum

Diagrammatic only

Planning/dvt.

Sect-H

Sect-A

Sect-F

Operational

Broad
Table 38 - Most important activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% of each type specifying activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership gps.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public brochure</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure group</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas forum</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted by LA</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public adverts.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staging events</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating TIC/Trade fairs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packages/Newsletter/</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public brochure</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure group</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring standards</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business referral</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice &amp; support</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public adverts.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas forum/Packages/Events/Trade ads./Newsletter</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted by LA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public brochure</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business referral</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring standards</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public ads./Advice &amp; support</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training initiatives/Trade fairs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public brochure</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral/Training/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring standards</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. TIC: Tourist Information Centre

Examples of public literature sent by several groups commonly include information upon all or most of the members of the association, with the more sophisticated efforts containing increasing levels of detail about the local area in the form of maps, suggested itineraries, and places of interest. In such terms of sophistication, the publications of broad-membership groups tended to be the most detailed, with those of sectoral-A groups generally the least, although there was more information about individual businesses in the attractions operators' tourism association leaflets than in most others. The quality of the material varies widely across the group types, although most Farm Holiday Group leaflets appeared to have been produced to a common formula, usually incorporating the artwork and details of each establishment used in the national Farm Holiday Bureau guide.
The ranking of responses to the question asking for the second most important activity is shown at Table 39 and Figure 20. These data tend to re-emphasize the conclusions drawn from responses to the query about the most important function, for the activities, and the order in which they are listed, are not markedly different from those in Table 38. One significant difference, however, is that for some sectoral-F and -A group types planning roles were considered of importance, if secondary. The importance of these functions to the broad-membership groups is re-stated, while in the case of sectoral-H groups such roles are downgraded in overall importance in favour of operational functions.

Table 39 - Second most important activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% of each type specifying activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership gps.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas forum</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure group/Pressure group/</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public adverts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public brochure</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade fairs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business referral</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice &amp; support/Running TIC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted by LA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packages/Consulted by LA/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring standards</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public brochure/Ideas forum/</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice &amp; support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral/Newsletter</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socials/Monitoring standards/Events</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public ads./Pressure group/</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulted by LA/Trade events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarisation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public ads.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public brochure</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas forum/Advice &amp; support</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring standards/Pressure group</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas forum</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training/Public brochure/Referral</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure group Referral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. TIC: Tourist Information Centre
Fig. 20 - Second priority activities
From the answers to the questions about the activities of the groups it is clear that tourism associations undertook a wide variety of activities aimed at promoting and developing their local visitor industries. Some groups, particularly those of certain types, were more active in planning/development and active promotional activities than others, and the results of the analyses of the first and second priority activities mirror those established in the previous section, Types of Activities. Important points drawn from the analyses of activities include:

- the work of the voluntary sector in tourism promotion and development was, in general, primarily concerned with the production of brochures and other literature for the information of the public

- other promotional activities of importance include advertising and attendance at trade fairs

- some groups targeted their promotional efforts at the trade as well as the public

- some groups undertook promotional activities that were active in nature, such as staging events and developing local package holidays, designed to obtain visitor business more directly than by simple advertising

- a proportion of all groups participated in what can be termed planning/development activities, aimed at developing their local tourism industries in concert with external agencies and some, particularly broad-membership and, to a lesser degree, hoteliers' associations, prioritise these functions

- the findings reinforce the impression that it is possible to generalize about each group type to a degree, and allow a tentative conclusion that the work of Farm Holiday Groups and attractions associations was oriented more towards the promotion and development of individual businesses, while that of sectoral-H and especially the broad-membership groups tended more to emphasize the wider tourism resources of the locality as well. These differences in emphases can perhaps be related to differences in the composition of group memberships, the influences at the time of the groups' inception, and perhaps most importantly the weltanschauung of those with the greatest influence in the group.

Staff

While the work of most groups was done on a voluntary basis, with perhaps a few office holders receiving honoraria, some groups employed staff to carry out their functions. About one-quarter of all tourism associations in England and Wales employed staff at the time of the survey - the figures are given in Table 40, broken down by TA type.
The table indicates that hoteliers' associations were the most likely to employ staff, but that the broad-membership groups employed the greatest number of employees. The sectoral-F and -A groups only employed part-time staff, and few in comparison with the broad-membership and sectoral-H groups, which were the only group types to employ full-time staff. A relatively large proportion of all staff were employed by broad-membership TAs, and two of these employers employed both full- and part-time staff.

Table 40 - Staff employed by group type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Groups without paid staff</th>
<th>Groups with paid staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part-time staff only</td>
<td>Full-time staff only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership gps</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to the proportion of each group type employing staff.

The appointment of staff by a TA suggests that the group is attempting to carry out its operations in a more permanent, organized, and perhaps sophisticated manner - or maybe finds it is forced to do so. At the minimum, such a step could provide a regular point of contact between the tourism association and its environment, and the possibilities of conducting a wider range of activities in a more professional fashion may increase dramatically. The appointment of staff may thus be seen as an important step for an association, for in having the effect of increasing the sophistication and possibly the continuity of the work of a group, it may be better able to develop the local visitor industry. Another effect will be that TA members can concentrate less upon the day-to-day running of the group and more towards the groups' essential activities - and of course their own businesses.

The appointment of staff requires both the perception of a need for such a measure and some commitment of finance. The finding that most staff were employed by broad-membership and sectoral-H groups is perhaps not surprising, for as shown earlier these groups were more likely to deal direct with the trade, put on events and arrange package holidays, all of which require permanent communications arrangements and dedicated staff. Informed opinion suggests that groups need at least one part-time member of staff (a "half-time" worker) to achieve any significant results (Jennings, pers. com.) but the ability to employ staff depends upon the level of finance available to a group, which will in turn be determined by its internal finances as well as the declared purpose of any funding received from external bodies, amongst other factors.
In conclusion, while appointing paid staff may be essential for higher-level functions, the ability of a TA to do so will be determined by the external environment of the group to a significant degree, notwithstanding any desire of the membership to retain employees. One of the major environmental factors influencing this decision will be the importance of the visitor industry within the local area, although this relationship could conceivably be positive or negative, again depending on local circumstances as well as the perceptions of the membership and external bodies.

Tourism Associations’ Relationships

This section will present the questionnaire findings concerning the relationships within the groups, and between TAs and their environments.

Internal Relationships

The existence of some tourism associations may have had the effect of formalizing relationships that already existed between the members and other elements of their operating environment, while the establishment of others may represent the first significant relationship between these. The former may be the case with the broad-membership group type, whose wide range of member types - businesses, governmental agencies, and so on - are likely to have been interdependent to a degree before the establishment of the group (whether conscious or otherwise), whereas the businesses in membership of the specialised types sectoral-H and, particularly, the Farm Holiday (sectoral-F) and sectoral-A groups, are less likely to have had such interdependent relationships to the same degree. The sectoral groups are likely to have a greater proportion of their membership in direct commercial competition with each other than the broad-membership groups, and thus the objectives and strength of the relationships between group members are likely to vary according to both group type and the perceptions of the members.

Establishing the intensity of internal relationships within TA memberships was not considered possible through the means of the questionnaire, though studies of other voluntary associations show that the majority of the membership of most such groups choose to take no active part in the groups’ work (Lowe and Goyder 1983). Comments on some responses confirm this:

"... only 2 or 3 members ever volunteer to do any work ..."

"... widespread apathy in the membership of the group means that the work is left to (a few members) ..."

The relationships between members of each tourism association will depend partly upon the mode of organization and operation of the group, and can thus be explored to some degree with reference to this. The most tangible indication of organisation and operation susceptible to

163
survey means of data collection is the executive committee; their presence/absence, membership, and meeting frequencies. There are examined in turn.

Executive Committees

A tangible indication of the formalization of relationships within a group is given by the presence of an executive committee. For the purposes of the study, executive committees can be seen as structures enabling formal participation by the membership, and survey enquiry produced the data presented in Table 41.

Table 41 - Distribution of executive committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Executive committee</th>
<th>No exec. committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership gps.</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again there was a clear divide between the broad-membership and sectoral-H pair and sectoral-F and -A groups, for the former were much more likely to have had executive committees. These bodies serve to formalize the groups’ relationships, delegating the running of the group to nominated people. Their presence, combined with the mode of organization of the group, may have had the effect of conferring legitimacy upon the representatives of the group in the eyes of external bodies, and in addition may enable decisions to be taken more rapidly and with more authority.

The need for an executive committee, however, will also be influenced by the number and type of activities undertaken by the group, and also by its environment. If the group concentrates upon ‘passive’ publicity and business referral between the membership, as in the case of the attractions (sectoral-A) and particularly the sectoral-F groups, the need for an executive committee will be less than that of groups involved in planning/development functions and trade-oriented promotion of their area’s tourism industry. Analysis confirms that trade- and planning-oriented groups did tend to have executive committees (Table 42), as did active groups.
Table 42 - Group functions and executive committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive committee?</th>
<th>All groups</th>
<th>Trade-oriented groups</th>
<th>Planning-oriented groups</th>
<th>Active groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The presence of an executive committee was also related to the legal basis adopted by each group. The majority of both groups limited by guarantee and voluntary associations had executive committees, while most informally-based groups did not (Table 43) - and groups without a formal membership status tended not to have executive committees (Table 44).

Table 43 - Legal basis related to presence of executive committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive committee?</th>
<th>Informal gps.</th>
<th>Voluntary associations</th>
<th>Guarantee legal basis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 44 - Formal membership status related to presence of an executive committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership gps.</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to all groups with an executive committee

Furthermore, groups with executive committees tended to have formalized arrangements for the payment of subscriptions (Table 45).
Table 45 - Groups with executive committees and arrangements for subscription payments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subs. paid?</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The presence of an executive committee in tourism associations indicates that the group has formalised certain internal relationships, and this characteristic has also been found to be correlated with increasingly sophisticated levels of organization and activities.

Executive Members

The composition of executive committees is as important as their mere presence or absence, and a question relating to this point was aimed at obtaining information about the different interests represented upon the committees to gain further data upon both internal and external relationships. This information offers no real indication of the voting membership of executive committees, which in some cases is not the same thing. The purpose was to establish the range of interests represented rather than the distribution of power, which would have been much more complex and could have reduced the response rate unacceptably.

The results of the analyses show that an attribute common to all tourism association executive committees was the presence of businesses. The frequency of membership of private individuals, local authorities, representatives from other governmental bodies, and the number of 'other' members varies markedly by type (Table 46), and the data show that the composition of executive committees of broad-membership groups exhibited the widest diversity of representation, and sectoral-F and -A groups the least.

Table 46 - Composition of executive committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private indiv'ls</th>
<th>Governmental</th>
<th>Other representation - no. of members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>ADAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad m'ship</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For all groups with executive committees. All TAs had business representation on their committees Percentages refer to the proportion of each group type with the specified representation
Considering the representatives in turn:

- Business representation was found on all executive committees. TAs exist primarily for the immediate benefit of their member businesses, and most were funded by these members, so they would be expected to take a major role in directing association operations.

- The executive committees of broad-membership types were much more likely to have representation from local authorities than the other types. This is an important finding, for it suggests that either local authorities were more receptive to this type of group (implying that they view the broad-membership type in a more favourable light to the others) or that these groups were more receptive to local authorities, again implying some mutual agreement over ends and possibly means. Overall, some degree of official support of the broad-membership type could be inferred from the findings, possibly because the objectives of local authorities were more closely aligned with those of broad-membership groups rather than the sectoral associations, although a range of political and other factors may also be likely to be responsible for the phenomenon. Again, too, the raison d'etre of the groups may also be a factor.

- The attractions groups (sectoral-A) surveyed had no other governmental members on their executive committees, and Table 46 illustrates that while 14% of the broad-membership groups with executive committees had such representatives, only 9% of sectoral-F TAs did (a total of 2 groups), and only one of the sectoral-H type. In numerical terms, tourist boards were the most commonly represented other governmental body, although they only demonstrated interest in broad-membership and sectoral-H groups. As with local authority involvement, the presence of a regional tourist board on an association's executive committee may be viewed as indicating a measure of official approval, but relatively few groups' executive committees had representation from tourist boards, and separate analysis shows that those that did tended to be larger and younger. Of the seven groups with tourist boards on their executive committees, four were in the Heart of England region, and there was one each in the Cumbria, East Anglia and London regions. ADAS sat upon the committees of two Farm Holiday Groups - the agency was instrumental in setting up Farm Holiday Groups in England and Wales, and might thus have been expected to be found on some executive committees. However, whether or not ADAS was represented on their executive committee, the groups could consult the agency for advice.

- Private individuals were found only on the executive committees of the sectoral-H and broad-membership groups. Responses indicated that these additional
members include people with specialized knowledge of the tourism industry, and others with experience of organization, administration, and publicity.

- **other representation** on executive committees included the following: Chambers of Commerce and Trade; civic groups; Rural Community Councils; educational bodies; and arts-related organizations. The presence of such additional members means a wider range of contacts and links for associations to utilise. Furthermore, in accordance with many other findings concerning the type, executive committees of broad-membership TAs were more likely to have 'other' representation than any other type although the numbers of groups involved was relatively small.

The figures on executive committee membership indicate that broad-membership TAs can act as fora for relationships between an occasionally surprisingly wide variety of members, while interrelationships within the other group types were predominantly between tourism industry operators. There is of course no indication of the strength or nature of these relationships, but the broad-membership type again stands out as having the potential to act as a vehicle for encouraging interrelationships within group memberships which could prove valuable in visitor industry development.

To obtain further indications of interrelationships through group activity levels, the questionnaire asked for the frequency of executive committee meetings (Table 47).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fort-nightly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Bi-monthly</th>
<th>Quarters</th>
<th>Off-season</th>
<th>Irregular</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad m'ship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sect-H</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sect-F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sect-A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 47 shows that monthly, and then quarterly, were the most common frequencies of executive committee meetings. Sectoral-H groups' executive committees meet more often than those of other types, followed by those of the broad-membership groups, while in contrast those of sectoral-A groups mostly meet irregularly, and sectoral-F executives meet quarterly in general. It can be postulated that for most groups the meeting frequency of executive committees will be proportional to the activity levels of each group, and reference to Table 33 (average number of activities undertaken by the members of each group type) confirms this. But the type of activities undertaken is also of importance, and it may be appropriate here to note that the executives of sectoral-F and -A groups, whose activities were biased towards operational activities, meet less frequently. Conversely, the broad-membership and hoteliers' groups, whose work tends to be more planning/development- and active-oriented, meet more often; thus while the group types
were all voluntary tourism promotion and development bodies, some types concentrated more upon certain functions and executive committee activity levels may reflect this. The relatively high meeting frequency of broad-membership and sectoral-H groups may indicate higher levels of interdependence between members, and perhaps too that there arose a greater range of matters of common interest.

Overall, there are a limited range of conclusions that may be drawn from the data upon internal relationships, but the most obvious are that:

- broad-membership groups acted as fora for relationships between a much wider range of elements of the tourism industry than did the sectoral types; and

- based upon the interpretation of many measures, the broad-membership and sectoral-H types stand out as similar again, having more formalised and regular internal relationships, in direct contrast to the sectoral-A and -F group type pair.

External Relationships

Some aspects of the external relationships of TAs have been dealt with already, such as external support for operating costs, but the remainder of the questionnaire findings on this subject will be discussed in this final section of the survey analyses.

Project Funding

Many tourism associations undertake specific projects in collaboration with, or on behalf of, external bodies. Question 10 enquired about projects undertaken by associations in the year previous to the survey for which they received at least a proportion of the funds from external sources. The results are shown at Tables 48 to 52.

Table 48 - Groups receiving project funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In receipt of project funds?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad membership gps.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 49 - Use of all project funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at trade show/exhibition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employing staff</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor event</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism research</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 50 - Use of project funds by group type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Broad m'ship gps</th>
<th>Sect-H</th>
<th>Sect-F</th>
<th>Sect-A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at trade show/exhibition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employing staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor event</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism research</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to the proportion of the total project funds use by each group type used for the respective project categories

Table 51 - Sources of project funds - all groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>No. of instances</th>
<th>% of all sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional tourist board</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryside Commission</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales Tourist Board</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other governmental</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.2 - Sources of project funds by group type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Local authority</th>
<th>Tourist board</th>
<th>C’side Commn.</th>
<th>BTA</th>
<th>Wales Tourist Board</th>
<th>Other gov’l</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad m’ship</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-third of all groups had received project funds in the year before the survey, but the distribution varies markedly across the group types. The data show that:

♦ of all TA types, broad-membership groups were much more likely to obtain funds from outside sources for specific projects;

♦ that the majority of all project funds received were given by local authorities, with the remainder coming from a variety of other public sources (notably the Wales Tourist Board); and

♦ while the most common use to which these funds were put was the production of publications, the range of activities varies by group type.

Despite having a larger average number of activities overall, the range of projects for which sectoral-H groups were externally funded was smaller than that for broad-membership groups. Additionally, the sectoral-H groups surveyed attracted less than half as many donations of project funds than did the broad-membership associations, suggesting again that broad membership groups were preferred by funding sources - or, alternatively, that they were better able to extract funds from them.

Sources of project funds were predominantly public sector, but not exclusively so - one group received sponsorship for its leaflet from a private company in their locality whose business was quite unconnected with tourism, for instance. Local authority sources were much more important in numerical terms than tourist boards, and this fact may be a reflection of the differing roles and attitudes of local councils and tourist boards towards tourism associations and the development of local visitor industries. It is conceivable that the work of TAs was more highly valued by local authorities than tourist boards; whichever is the case, it appears that governmental agencies in general took the view that some associations were useful mechanisms for accomplishing certain goals. However, as indicated in Table 5.2, a much wider range of agencies contributed project funds to the broad-membership and sectoral-H group types compared to sectoral-F and -A groups, and given that broad-membership groups in particular were the most likely to have a
range of external interests represented in membership, it is perhaps to be expected that they would tend to obtain more project funds.

As noted previously, most project funding was for promotional and advertising purposes. Of the remainder:

- some was to employ staff (frequently for running tourist information centres);

- some was for use in 'active' promotional measures such as staging events to attract tourists.

Only broad-membership groups received cash for 'planning/development' functions; in Table 50 two groups are shown to have received finance for commissioning research into their local tourism markets.

To obtain a further indication of the relationship between tourism associations and external bodies, the characteristics of groups receiving both operating and project funds were examined. Again, broad-membership groups predominated (Table 53), with 10% receiving dual support compared to figures of only 1% and 2% for sectoral-F and sectoral-H groups respectively.

The pattern of relationships between tourism associations and external funding sources is important in as much as it can be argued that the funding of a group by an external body implies some degree of congruence of the objectives of the voluntary association and statutory agency. The findings suggest that, on aggregate, the broad-membership groups appeared to be favoured the most by public sector agencies, and sectoral-F and -A groups the least. A wide range of explanations may be advanced as to why this should be so, but the possibility exists that the work and attitudes of broad-membership groups were more to the taste of the funding agencies, and if this was so differences in the aims and objectives of the group types and the varying width of their memberships may be part of the explanation. An agency may see more benefit in supporting group types which attempt to promote and develop a locality's visitor industry in a holistic manner rather than sector-based efforts. The findings reported earlier indicated that broad-membership groups were much more likely to have formal contacts with external agencies, which may have improved their chances of receiving financial help. Such contacts may be maintained to keep public agencies informed, but also to allow them to use the group when required, and could serve to provide a channel through which public support may be drawn.
Table 53 - Groups receiving both operational and project funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Receive operational <em>and</em> project funding?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad membership gps.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One important use of project funds was the production of publications. Such efforts, frequently collaborative, may have resulted in lower costs falling upon public agency budgets for literature whose production was felt necessary or at least useful; and the costs to industry operators were reduced, so the relationship worked to mutual advantage.

External Relationships - Local Authorities

Local authorities were found to be closely involved with tourism associations, and especially with the broad-membership type. This relationship was given formal expression either by authorities being members of or acting on the executive committees of TAs, or both, and also by TAs being represented on local authority structures. Separate analysis revealed that 65% of all associations reported consultation by, and co-ordination with, local authorities in the year before the survey, and the group types most likely to participate in a dialogue with local authorities are, again, the broad-membership and hoteliers' types (Table 54).

Table 54 - Tourism association: local authority contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Is TA consulted by LA?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership gps.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Informal means of contact between tourism associations and local authorities undoubtedly exist, but formal means were the easiest to survey, so the incidence of TA representation upon local authority structures was examined. The responses to this part of question five demonstrated a familiar pattern, with sectoral-H and broad-membership types being much more likely to be represented than sectoral-F and -A groups (Table 55).
Table 55 - Representation of TAs upon local authority structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is TA represented on LA?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership gps.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It appeared, then, that at least some local authorities had close relationships with tourism associations, and again it was the broad-membership groups which were the most likely to have had these relationships. Further data indicate that tourism associations were in regular contact with all levels of local authorities but particularly borough and district councils (Table 56). Local circumstances dictated exactly which level any particular group will have had contact with.

Table 56 - Levels of local government with which TAs were in regular contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local authority level</th>
<th>% of all groups affirming contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town/Metropolitan Borough</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County/Regional</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

External Relationships - Tourist Boards

The most obvious indication of a relationship between a tourism association and a tourist board is for the former to be in commercial membership of the latter. The majority of all groups were found to be in membership of their local boards, as Table 57 shows; and the broad-membership groups and then the Farm Holiday Groups were the most likely to be in membership.

Table 57 - Distribution of tourist board membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is TA member of tourist board?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad-membership gps.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The figures in Table 57 may serve as a measure of varying degrees of common interest between
the voluntary sector groups and the work and outlook of the various tourist boards. If this is the
case, it would seem that the broad-membership and sectoral-F groups value the work of tourist
boards more than the other types do. But such a simplistic explanation cannot be sustained given
the scale at which the questionnaire was conducted, for attitudes towards tourist boards were
likely to vary markedly for many reasons, and many other factors at the local scale may also
contribute. These may include:

- a majority of the membership of some sectoral-H groups were in membership of
  their local tourist boards, so some hoteliers’ groups did not join. In comparison,
  relatively few of the wide range of members of many broad-membership groups
  may have been members of their regional tourist boards, so the group may have
  joined to keep in contact.

- some associations claim to be kept informed about tourist board activities
  through their local authorities (which were usually tourist board members).

- group may be expressing a relatively simple desire to take up the advertising
  opportunities offered to tourist board members rather than joining for other
  reasons.

- some tourist boards were reluctant to accept tourism associations as members.
  Others preferred groups that were larger and formally organised.

- pressure to join from other governmental organizations with which the TA had
  contact may be significant. Certain ADAS offices were keen to ensure that
  sectoral-F groups joined, for instance.

In an effort to obtain further information about links between TAs and tourist boards,
respondents were asked to describe the nature of the relationship. Responses were classified into
four categories of 'Good', 'Moderate', 'Poor' and 'No contact', and the distribution of the
responses is shown at Table 58.

Table 58 indicates that the majority of all groups in membership had a good relationship with
their regional tourist boards, and examination of the variation across group types yielded little
further insight. Within the overall picture, broad-membership groups recorded the highest
proportion of good relationships, but around 90% of all except sectoral-A groups described the
TA:TB relationship as good or moderate, and no type exhibited a particularly high percentage of
poor relationships. This might have been expected, for groups would not renew membership if
they felt that the relationship was not worth maintaining.
Table 58 - Descriptions of TAs' relationships with their regional tourist boards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups in membership</th>
<th>Groups not in membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad m'ship</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL GROUPS</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data are difficult to interpret because the definition of 'good' and 'poor' will vary according to a wide range of factors, not least the viewpoint and experiences of the individual respondent, the priorities and policies of each regional tourist board, and the perceptions of each group type (and indeed each individual group) of what a tourist board should do. However, it was clear that the majority of groups considered that they get on at least reasonably well with their local tourist boards, and thus that this particular public:voluntary relationship both exists and appeared to be at least adequate. Nevertheless, a small proportion of groups expressed dissatisfaction with their regional tourist boards. One RTB was described as:

"... incompetent and bureaucratic ... bumbling ... (ignoring) commercial members ... Their objectives are:- a) empire building b) acquiring a legal authority to rule over the industry ..."

Only one tourism association had the majority of its operating costs funded by a tourist board. It was a broad-membership group in Wales, formed in the period since 1985.

External Relationships - Other Bodies

Other voluntary bodies - few associations were represented upon other voluntary bodies, including other TAs. A relatively high proportion of sectoral-A groups were represented upon other tourism associations, but in numerical terms the hoteliers' groups were shown to have the most significant number of links within the wider voluntary sector. However, the overall figures were low, and Table 59 shows that, in general, groups were more likely to be linked with Chambers of Trade or Commerce than other tourism associations.
Table 59 - Tourism associations represented on other voluntary bodies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chambers of:</th>
<th>Other TAs</th>
<th>Other bodies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad membership groups</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages refer to the proportion of all groups with the specified representation.

Intra-voluntary sector relationships with local bodies may be important within a specific locality, but were less likely to be so between areas, particularly as different tourist destinations are effectively in competition, and groups may not want to share their ideas with TAs from competing areas. The data relate to formal contacts, however, and no account was taken of informal ones - and public agencies such as tourist boards, county councils, and ADAS, for instance, may serve to provide inter-TA links.

**TA federations: national** - formal contact between groups can also be assessed with reference to the associations' representation on the various tourism association federations in existence. Question 5 asked about representation upon national federations, and the results (Table 60) show the sectoral-F groups were the most likely to be externally represented, but also that a relatively high proportion of sectoral-H groups reported affiliation, and that hoteliers' groups were allied to a wider range of bodies than the other TA types.

Table 60 - National trade associations upon which TAs were represented

| | BHRCA | Brit. S/C Federn. | Brit. Federn. GHAs | Farm Holiday Bureau |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Broad membership groups | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sectoral-H | 16 | 23 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| Sectoral-F | - | - | - | - | - | - | 52 | 100 |
| Sectoral-A | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Percentages refer to the proportion of all groups with the specified representation.

**Abbreviations:**
- BHRCA - the former British Hoteliers, Restauranters and Caterers Association (now the British Hospitality Association).
- Brit. S/C Federn. - British Self-Catering Federation
- Brit. Fed. GHAs - British Federation of Guest House Associations
Many hoteliers' associations were federated to the former British Hotels, Restauranteurs and Caterers Association (now the British Hospitality Association). Farm Holiday Groups joined the Farm Holiday Bureau, but were represented on no other federations. In contrast, only one broad-membership group was found to have membership of a national trade/industrial body (the BHRCA); along with sectoral-A tourism associations, this type tends not to affiliate to federations, probably because there were none at a national level which represent their broad interests.

**Federations: local** - relationships between TAs are also formalized, and thus more easily surveyed, when they join local TA federations (Table 61).

Just as few tourism associations were represented upon other TAs, few joined formal regional TA federations. Those that did tended to be the broad-membership and sectoral-H associations. This was probably largely because there were very few federations in the UK, and most of those that did exist were located in the south and south-west of England. Perhaps more groups would join federations given the opportunity, for these bodies work to:

**Table 61 - Tourism associations in membership of local-scale federations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Represented on regional TA federation?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad membership groups</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

♦ co-ordinate the work of TAs;

♦ promote information exchange; and

♦ present a united front when dealing with organizations operating at larger areal scales than the average TA such as regional tourist boards, of which one federation said:

"We work very closely [with the tourist board] on all matters relating to tourism."

The roles of federations may be seen as valuable to some but not others for reasons arising from the atmosphere of competition likely to prevail between nearby destination areas as well as inevitable conflicts between personalities and the differing ethos of the various groups. While
local federations may indeed have had an important role to play, any tourism association joining one might be expected to carefully guard its independence.

Perhaps the main lesson to be drawn from the data on federations is that, once again, the survey findings on a particular subject and their interpretation are shown to be critically dependent upon the specific local environment of the respondent groups.

Other local bodies - other local bodies upon which TAs were represented include civic and voluntary groups, but few groups had such contacts. Broad-membership and sectoral-H groups were the only types to report connections with these bodies, but very few of each type reported any (Table 62).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LA committee</th>
<th>Civic group</th>
<th>Voluntary service group</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad membership groups</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tourism associations were found to be represented upon such diverse bodies as a rates consultative committee and a lighting sub-committee, and the interests of one sectoral-H group were represented upon local committees concerning:

- town twinning;
- theatre
- crime prevention;
- liaison with the police; and
- crime prevention.

These examples show that some tourism associations contributed to affairs in their localities in ways that were not immediately related to visitor industry development. Local circumstances in some areas may mean that TAs were not offered representation upon these voluntary sector groupings, and some TAs may not have been interested anyway, seeing their role in a much narrower light than those which did join such bodies.
Overall, tourism associations did have cross-representation within the voluntary sector, but such links were maintained by only a minority of groups.

External Relationships - Initiative for Establishment

The final indication concerning external relationships was gained from enquiry about the source of the initiative for each group's formation. Respondents were asked:

"Who provided the initiative for the formation of the group?"

- and the responses are presented at Tables 63 and 64.

Table 63 - Establishment initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private individuals</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authority</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Trade/Commerce</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADAS</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another tourism association</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist board</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CoSIRA(^1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Now part of the Rural Development Commission

Table 64 - Initiatives by group type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private indiv's</th>
<th>Local auth'y</th>
<th>Chamber Tr/Com.</th>
<th>ADAS</th>
<th>Another TA</th>
<th>Tourist board</th>
<th>CoSIRA(^1)</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad m'shp</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-H</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-F</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral-A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Now part of the Rural Development Commission

The data gained from this part of the survey must be regarded with some reservations for three reasons:
1. Information about the initiative source provided by groups established before the recent past may be inaccurate.

2. There may be an element of inaccuracy in the figures resulting from selective memory on the part of respondents - for example, private sector respondents taking credit for initiatives which actually came from the public sector.

3. Distortion may also arise as some groups may have re-formed with new membership criteria leading to mis-classification. For example, the initiative for a sectoral-H group set up 30 years ago could be included within those of present-day broad-membership groups if the group had re-formed as such.

4. It is conceivable that attributing the initiative to form a group to a single source is oversimplifying what may frequently have been a complex process.

With these reservations in mind, the results indicate that the majority of initiatives came from private sources, including people within and without the tourism industry, with an exception in the case of the sectoral-F groups whose breakdown of initiatives was dominated by ADAS. However, a high proportion of broad-membership and sectoral-A groups were initiated by local authorities, while more sectoral-H groups were established as a result of private initiatives than of initiatives from all other sources. Other governmental agencies involved include tourist boards and CoSIRA (now part of the Rural Development Commission), accounting for four groups between them; and voluntary sector bodies providing initiatives include chambers of commerce/trade, and other TAs.

Broad-membership groups showed evidence of having the widest range of initiative sources (six), with the sectoral-F and -H groups having five. Attractions groups responded with a total of three; a relatively large proportion of this type were established by tourist boards, suggesting that some boards considered attraction operators’ associations had a valuable role to play.

Analysis of the profile of initiative sources over time shows that public sector bodies were becoming increasingly involved in the establishment of tourism associations. Given the reservations about the veracity of the data expressed earlier, local authorities and ADAS became important in establishing sectoral-F groups from the late 1970s (Figure 21), and local authorities became proportionately more involved in setting up hoteliers’, attractions and particularly broad-membership groups since the mid-1980s.

Figure 21 shows that governmental agencies of all types were becoming increasingly involved in the establishment of tourism associations, and particularly broad-membership groups. It again
Fig. 21(i) - sources of establishment initiatives

Data to 1988
Fig. 21(ii) - sources of establishment initiatives

Data to 1988

Attractions groups
seems clear that the public sector views TAs favourably, presumably believing that they had a valuable role to fulfil.

The available data on external relationships indicate that most TAs maintained contacts with the most important elements of their local tourism development environments, local authorities and tourist boards. Relationships with local authorities may have been particularly valuable because they were the largest single source of project funds. Tourist boards were much less useful in this respect in aggregate, but nearly two-thirds of all TAs were in membership. Comments indicated that most found the relationship at least satisfactory, and many non-member groups were aware of what the boards were doing.

The broad-membership and hoteliers’ groups generally had more external relationships than the rest but, overall, relatively few groups had extensive external relationships other than those with tourist boards and local authorities. Of those that did, local contacts tended to be with business-oriented groups, including other tourism associations and Chambers.

The hospitality groups (sectoral-H and -F) joined their appropriate national TA federations, but it was the broad-membership groups that were the most likely to join the few regional/sub-regional federations in existence. TA representation on other local groups and initiatives occurred but was unusual.

The private sector provided the bulk of all initiatives for group establishment, suggesting that TAs exist primarily as trade associations. The public sector in the form of ADAS and, secondly, local authorities, was shown to have had an important role in the setting-up of the Farm groups in particular, and to have taken a higher profile towards initiating TAs since 1975 or so.

TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

The main aim of the survey was to gain an impression of the principal characteristics of the population of tourism associations in England and Wales. The findings, based on responses from almost half of the known population of nearly 450 TAs, confirm the characterisation of these groups as voluntary cooperative means for the development of local visitor industries. Their memberships were primarily composed of businesses, but the public sector, business/community groups and private individuals were also involved in many TAs. Most were formally organised, with sound legal bases, and some employed staff. In geographical terms, the groups were distributed widely across England and Wales, based in both urban, coastal and rural locations, although there were notable concentrations in popular holiday regions such as the West Country.
Their members demonstrated commitment to a common purpose principally by joining and sustaining the associations. Many of the groups worked alongside the major players in the local tourism industry development environment, tourist boards (regional and national), and local authorities, and maintained contacts with other business promotion organisations in their areas, such as Chambers of Trade/Commerce.

Tourism associations exist as one response to a perception of need for such organisations, a need perceived by the private, voluntary or, increasingly, the public sector. The findings illustrate that this need was felt in all parts of England and Wales, and that the formation of a TA was one widely-adopted response.

While a substantial proportion of all TAs were established in the late 1970s and the '80s, some date back 100 years or more, demonstrating that the tradition of local non-statutory organisation for tourism has a long pedigree - substantially longer than statutory organisation, in fact. While individual TAs tended to wax and wane over time - TAs as a group are nothing if not dynamic - the concept of local-scale organisation for tourism remains valid, and some of the findings of the survey suggest that it has been gaining in credence with the commercial sector, public agencies, and even local populations. Higher-level organisation of these essentially community-based groups was evident in the existence of federations operating at sub-regional, regional and national levels in some areas and industry sectors.

Tourism associations are highly variable in many respects, but they do share common characteristics and may be differentiated according to certain criteria. Their nature and purpose make them identifiable as a distinct set of organisations amongst the many others working for local economic development, and they may be classified for some purposes according to the breadth of the visitor industry within membership, and for others with reference to the relative balance struck by individual groups between operational and planning/development functions.

While many tourism associations operate mainly as trade associations, characterising the entire population of these groups as mere vehicles for the pursuit of self-interest by tourism industry operators would be erroneous. Tourism associations undertake a broad range of activities many of which are undoubtedly for the immediate benefit of their membership of commercial interests, but others contributed towards the longer-term development of the visitor industry in their localities (although it could legitimately be argued that the overall effect of most or even all of the work of each of these groups benefits their local economies to some degree). Certain public sector bodies, including many tourist boards and local authorities amongst others, recognise that at least some TAs had potential in this regard, clearly viewing some of their activities as complementary or additional to their own, and provided some financial assistance for aspects of the associations’ work. Some groups staged events for the public, both visitors and locals, and a few contributed in ways which enriched the life and times of their communities, demonstrating again that their activities and existence were not motivated entirely by the prospect of short-term financial gain for their business membership.
Measures of sophistication could be devised for tourism associations based upon the survey data and analyses. These measures might include:

- voluntary association/company limited by guarantee legal bases;
- a formal membership paying subscriptions;
- presence of an executive committee; and
- involvement in progressively more sophisticated degrees of activity:
  - tourism-trade orientation
  - 'active' promotion/publicity activities
  - involvement in 'planning/development' of the local visitor industry

The proposed list of criteria for identifying the more sophisticated groups is not necessarily always applicable, however, for local circumstances will dictate the level of sophistication required of any individual group to a significant degree. Also, measuring sophistication implies nothing about the effectiveness of any individual TA, and no real idea of the effectiveness of the surveyed associations can be gained from the data produced by the survey.

The survey findings indicated that the activities of hoteliers' (sectoral-H) and broad-membership group types may have been more likely to be aimed at broad-based development of local visitor industries (via the 'planning/development' functions) rather than straightforward promotion of member businesses (via the 'operational' functions) undertaken by all groups but to which many Farm Holiday Groups (sectoral-F) and attractions operators' associations (sectoral-A) confine themselves. However, this conclusion is difficult to sustain in practice because of the level of aggregation at which the data were analysed. Much of the uncertainty is due to the fact that the effectiveness of such organisations cannot adequately be assessed by the essentially quantitative means of a questionnaire survey.

Additionally, it does not necessarily imply that an area with a tourism association that undertakes only 'operational'-level functions was likely to have had a less successful visitor industry than one with a relatively 'sophisticated' group. The former area could benefit from a high degree of attention from the regional tourist board and local authority in the form of publicity and developmental measures, for example, while the latter might be:

- less immediately attractive to visitors;
- ignored by the formal apparatus for tourism development; and
- in need of a local initiative
- in order to reap the economic benefits of an expanded visitor industry. Thus the point is that tourism associations are locality-specific responses, and that the role of groups will vary according to the characteristics of each area.

This was confirmed by the finding that the incidence of 'planning/development'-oriented TAs cuts across the group types. Based upon their history and membership, the Farm Holiday Groups might conceivably have been expected to concentrate solely upon promotion of individual businesses, but over one-third report having had involvement in 'planning/development' activities in the year before the survey.

Given that each group exists as a locality-specific response to a perceived need, and that each locale is arguably unique as a visitor destination, there can be no ideal model for tourism associations. A 'sophisticated', well-organised group may actually accomplish less than an unsophisticated, loosely-organised one that has the right connections, ideas and support and, given that tourism associations are continually-evolving responses to their local environments, the only way to gain an impression of their effectiveness is to study their work in an individual destination area. The next chapter will present the results of a case study of tourism associations. For this second part of the two-stage data collection process, a rural area was selected in order to build up a detailed picture of the work of TAs in this destination area type.
This chapter presents the results and analysis of the case study of tourism associations based in a rural area. Beginning with the justification for selection of the study area and a brief description of its characteristics, the chapter goes on to outline the salient points of the visitor industry development system there before outlining the programme of interviews undertaken. Then, the data collected on each tourism association during the case study are briefly related back to the questionnaire survey findings before being analysed to produce an account of these groups working as part of the system for tourism development in the selected area. The chapter ends with a summary of the principal conclusions of the case study.

**SELECTION OF CASE STUDY AREA**

The selection of a suitable area for the case study of the work and role of tourism associations was influenced by a number of considerations:

- conceptual considerations
- findings of questionnaire
- the rural perspective of the study, and the economy of English rural areas
- a desire to work within easily defined geographical boundaries
- the need to study at least one of each of the four types of tourism association
- practical considerations:
  - the need to minimise the number of people and organisations that had to be contacted
  - a desire to contact people with knowledge of more than one of the TAs under study, if possible
  - the need to obtain the fullest cooperation, and from the TAs in particular

These considerations are discussed more fully below.

**Conceptual**

It was originally envisaged that selection of a number of ‘successful’ tourism associations for study could be made, but the conceptual basis of this approach is considered to have been flawed.
The questionnaire data are of no use in determining the 'success' or otherwise of the groups' work; the survey aimed to gain information upon the structure of the TAs, and the range of their activities and linkages, and it was not considered appropriate, practical or, realistically, possible to survey respondents regarding any perceived success of the groups. Many questions would have to have been added to an already long questionnaire to obtain such quantitative information, and these additional queries may have had an adverse effect upon response rates. Furthermore, respondents (the TAs' officers) could hardly have been expected to be impartial in answering any such questions.

Additionally, the very idea of isolating 'successful' groups is fraught with complication. In terms of the study itself, investigation of a number of such groups, supposing that they could be identified, would yield little more than a picture of isolated successes; and obtaining independent judgements upon the relative degrees of success of each of the groups would be problematic. Relating any observed success of the work of a TA to such factors as the characteristics of the group, for example, would have also been difficult.

Finally, and stemming from the perspective that each group can only properly be considered within the context of the tourism development system in its locality, the definition of 'successful' is unlikely to be the same for all groups - or for all localities, or group types, for that matter.

**Findings of Questionnaire**

The first stage of data collection was to survey TAs in England and Wales, including those in rural, coastal and urban areas. This was to gain an impression of the distribution and activities of these associations to act as a context. Analysis of the questionnaire findings confirmed the view that an area-based approach to the selection of a set of tourism associations to study was the most appropriate, rather than one involving the selection of individual TAs.

The findings showed that the framework for evaluation of TAs by which the survey was stratified was a valid one (dividing them into two main types - broad-membership and sectoral associations, and the latter into hoteliers', farm accommodation and attractions groups), and it was thus important to study at least one of each type. More significantly, however, the results of the questionnaire survey indicated that the activities and role of each association were to a large extent dependent upon local circumstance and, together with direction from the methodology towards the study of interrelationships associated with the groups, it was obvious that the study of tourism associations should proceed with the aim of locating the work of each group firmly within the context of its local visitor industry development system.
Rural Focus of Study

An important consideration in the choice of rural area relates to the state of the rural economy. In many areas of the countryside, the influence of a range of factors has led to stagnant or declining local economies, particularly in those areas which are either more remote, less favoured agriculturally, relatively unattractive, or conversely, particularly attractive to wealthier commuters or the retired. It may be surmised that the economies of such areas would benefit the most in relative terms from the successful development of tourism, and indications of such benefits may be more apparent there.

Boundary of Study Area

The amount of work necessary will increase proportionately with the size of area under study, and thus it seemed sensible to limit the case study to the smallest possible area commensurate with achievement of the objectives of the exercise. Furthermore, if the area was delimited by reference to local authority boundaries, fewer contacts in local authorities and other governmental organisations would have to be made than if the defined area overlapped a number of authorities. Also, the people contacted would be likely to have knowledge of more than one tourism association, making the task of obtaining comparative evaluations easier.

It was decided that a district council area would be suitable. These have clearly defined boundaries and are of a manageable size. The survey results and consultations indicated that most TAs operate predominantly within the boundaries of individual authorities. The need to study at least one of each of the four types of TA was an additional consideration in the choice of area.

Cooperation

This was plainly critical for successful pursuit of the case study. Obtaining cooperation and goodwill from the tourism associations themselves was considered the key to a successful case study, for interviews with the officers and membership of the groups might be lengthy and not all TAs are prepared to submit their activities to examination, as was discovered upon receipt of a few of the returned questionnaires. Good relationships with the tourism associations under study would help facilitate similarly easy working relationships with most of the other organisations to be consulted, too, and it was considered desirable that these external bodies were known to have a positive (or at least neutral) attitude towards the work and role of TAs.
Case Study Area

It was decided that the case study of tourism associations within a rural environment would be based on the area of the South Herefordshire District Council (see Figure 22). This location, within the Heart of England Tourist Board region, was selected for several reasons which are detailed below.

Rural Area

South Herefordshire can certainly be described as a rural area. The only sizeable town in the District is Ross-on-Wye, population 6500 (1988 figures), situated to the south-east. Excluding the City, the study area was home to about 48,160 people. These indications of the general character of the area are confirmed by the work of Cloke (1977), whose index of rurality categorized the great majority of the DC area as being 'extreme rural' in nature, thus classifying it in the same category as much of Wales and the northern Pennines, for example. Most of the rest of the area is termed 'intermediate rural', with only Ross-on-Wye and Hereford being identified as urban areas. Lying to the north-east of the centre of the district council area, the city of Hereford (population 49,400 in 1988) has a distinctly rural character although it is only 50 miles from the centre of the West Midlands conurbation.

Local Tourism Industry

Determining the levels of tourism within the defined study area, and thus the relative attractiveness of the area to visitors, was very difficult. The only data available was that collected for the entire Heart of England tourist board region, an area stretching from Cirencester in the south to Leek in the north, and east-west from Rugby to Hay-on-Wye. English Tourist Board data shows that in 1987 the region as a whole ranked equal third as a destination for tourist trips made by British residents, alongside the South-East and North West regions with 11 million trips, but behind the West Country (ranked first, with 16 million) and London (15 million) (BTA/ETB 1988). In terms of overseas visitors, the region ranked fifth.

These figures are of only limited utility in determining the levels of tourism in the study area because of the size of the tourist board region. The presence of the West Midlands within the region, for instance, means that the regional figures are distorted by the high levels of tourism to this county, particularly in terms of VFR and business/conference tourism. Also, major attractions such as the Alton Towers theme park, which received 2.3 million visitors in 1987 (Heart of England Tourist Board 1989) serves further to diminish the utility of the regional statistics for the present purposes. Similarly, in estimates of all tourist trips within each of the six counties of the tourist board region, Hereford and Worcester ranked second in 1987 - but the total of such trips to the county was less than half that of those to the West Midlands (Heart of England Tourist Board 1989). Nevertheless, with an estimated 2.3 million trips (1987), the county of Hereford and Worcester received 25% more than Gloucestershire, the third ranking
Figure 22 - map of case study area
county within the region, so it can be concluded that, within the Heart of England as a whole, the county of Hereford and Worcester is relatively attractive to tourists.

Data is not usually available for tourism within Districts, but some idea of the magnitude of levels of tourism within the study area can be gained from the results of estimates made by the regional tourist board in their report for the Tourism Action Plan in Leominster District (Heart of England Tourist Board 1988) (see Tables 65, 66 and 67), an area of comparable size immediately to the north of the study area. The Board emphasises that the figures are “very rough approximations”, but they are indicative of the likely levels of tourism in the area at the time.

Like the northern district, southern Herefordshire contains no national-scale attractions, and it can thus be assumed that the visitor estimates for Leominster District Council are likely to be representative of the general magnitude of the visitor market within the study area, given the absence of other data. The area is outside the zone of high rural tourism expenditure mapped by the ETB shown at Figure 4.

Table 65 - Tourists staying one or more nights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leominster</th>
<th>Hereford &amp; Worcester</th>
<th>Heart of England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nights (millions)</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% from overseas</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending (£ million)</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% by overseas visitors</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Heart of England Tourist Board 1988

Table 66 - Staying tourists by accommodation type used, Leominster District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total nights</th>
<th>Total spending £ million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotels/Inns</td>
<td>98 000</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+B/Guest Houses</td>
<td>66 000</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-catering (cottages, flats etc)</td>
<td>62 000</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caravans &amp; camping</td>
<td>75 000</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group accommodation</td>
<td>7 000</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting friends &amp; relatives</td>
<td>125 000</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>433 000</td>
<td>5.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Heart of England Tourist Board 1988
Market for Tourism

A survey of tourists carried out for the Tourism Action Plan report (Heart of England Tourist Board 1988) concluded that, while tourism within the area grew slightly during the later 1980s:

♦ the market was dominated by individual (i.e. non-package) holidaymakers;

♦ accommodation occupancy levels were generally low; and

♦ the majority of guests staying in serviced accommodation stayed for only one night, although self catering occupancies were generally better.

Resources for Tourism

Although there exist a number of attractions in the study area, none received high numbers of visitors. The majority of attractions can be described as historical or natural in nature. The villages of the area are feted for their unspoilt character, and castles, historic houses, and churches add to the attraction of the area’s built environment. Natural attractions include undisturbed lengths of watercourse, especially along the gorge of the Wye to the south (a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty); the remote Golden Valley of the River Dore; and, to the west of the area, the foothills of the Black Mountains along the eastern edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park. There is much to interest those seeking active holidays, and much too for the wildlife enthusiast.

In conclusion, the visitor industry of the area can be said to be similar to that in many other attractive, remoter rural regions.

Local Economy

The economy of the study area could best be described as fragile. About 40% of South Herefordshire was classified as a Rural Development Area by the Rural Development Commission; the RDC has identified such areas as those with the most significant rural problems, and they have received the greater part of the agency’s resources. The criteria for the choice of RDAs included:

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Table 67 - Day visits to Leominster District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total visits</th>
<th>800 000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spending</td>
<td>£2 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Heart of England Tourist Board 1988
♦ above average unemployment;
♦ a limited range of job opportunities;
♦ problems caused by sparsity or decline of population;
♦ a net outflow of people of working age;
♦ a high percentage of elderly people; and
♦ poor access to services and/or facilities

Rural Development Commission 1988

Development programmes prepared for such areas included building and conversion of workshops and housing; transport schemes; environmental and community projects and services; and tourism projects. The RDA designation covered perhaps 20% of the area of England, and included such areas as the northern Pennines, most of Cumbria, and inland Devon and Cornwall, so the economy of much of the study area ranked alongside that of other English economically depressed areas, with all the attendant social problems.

A further indication of the condition of the economy of South Herefordshire was given by the designation of the Cinderford and Ross-on-Wye travel-to-work area as an Intermediate Development Area. The Department of Trade and Industry offered incentives to attract firms to establish businesses in such areas, and despite the government having reduced the overall area covered by RDA designations it was significant that a proportion of the study locality was designated at the time of the case study.

The agricultural industry of the district council area was varied, but pear and apple orchards are important, together with hops. Livestock form the basis of many farms, however, and particularly so towards the western margins of area. An indication of the condition of the agricultural economy towards the Welsh border is given by the Less Favoured Area designation applied to the western extremes by the Ministry of Agriculture in recognition of the harsh physical conditions there.

Thus the predominantly rural economy of the area was typical of many problem areas in the English and Welsh countryside.

Tourism Development System

The questionnaire survey indicated that Heart of England Tourist Board region contained the second highest density of TAs in England and Wales. Only the West Country region had a higher
density. The survey findings also established that a relatively high proportion of all groups in the Heart of England were growing in size.

The tourism associations in South Herefordshire operated in a complex and dynamic environment. The main institutional features of this are briefly described below.

PUBLIC SECTOR

Local Authorities

Hereford and Worcester County Council - had no tourism officer at the time of the case study. Views within the Council were said to be sharply divided between:

♦ those seeing a need to appoint one; and
♦ those considering that the voluntary sector "was doing a good job" (in the form of TA activity).

There was general agreement amongst respondents that the County Council’s level of involvement with tourism promotion and development was minimal. It seemed difficult to persuade the authority to do anything, and they would only contribute funds towards the tourism efforts of other organisations if the district councils did so as well.

South Herefordshire District Council - had appointed a tourism officer for the first time in the year before the case study interviews.

There was appreciable friction between the two levels of local government over the role each should adopt towards visitor industry development. One viewpoint was that the County wanted to remove the autonomy of the Districts; another that it was more appropriate for the larger authority to undertake certain tasks.

A plan to establish a working structure to be called the Herefordshire Tourism Forum was in the early stages of development at the time of the case study programme. This was to include all the local authorities in the ex-county, representatives of the private sector, and possibly the regional tourist board too.

Heart of England Tourist Board - based in Worcester, the Board had a membership of about 8000, of which 80% were described as small operators (HETB 1990, pers. com.). This contrasted with the adjacent Thames and Chilterns Board (now defunct), serving a smaller area with a much stronger resort tradition; the TCTB was said to have had a membership of only 1000, but this was composed predominantly of large industry operators. A complaint about the Heart of England Tourist Board heard frequently during the case study programme was that it devoted its resources to better-known areas of its region rather than to Herefordshire, and to major industry operators such as Alton Towers in Staffordshire rather than its smaller members.
There were three tourism development initiatives of particular note in the study area.

The English Marches campaign was a trans-authority initiative promoting the English-Welsh border region to a national and international audience. Sponsored by the regional tourist board with involvement from local authorities and the private sector, the campaign aimed to raise the profile of the border region as a quiet, rural destination area.

The Country Village Weekend Breaks organisation, based in Eardisley village in Herefordshire, was an essentially private scheme aimed at bringing visitors to small and often remote locations in the county, where they would stay with local people. The project aimed to offer authentic experiences and an insight into rural heritage and communities. It was still in the developmental stages at the time of the case study.

The Big Apple initiative was another relatively small-scale attempt to bring visitors to the Herefordshire countryside. Themed around the extensive apple and apple products industry of the county, events during the four-week autumnal festival were scattered throughout village halls, orchards and cider mills. It was organised and run by a loose collective of local people and one or two industry advisors.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Tourism Associations

Number & types - the survey of tourist boards and local authority tourist officers revealed four TAs in the study area, one of each of the four types:

- the Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire, a broad-membership group covering most of the county;
- the Ross and District Hoteliers’ Association, in the south of the District;
- the Herefordshire Farm & Country Holidays Group, consisting of a farm-based membership offering bed and breakfast and self catering accommodation; and
- the Wyedean Attractions Group, whose membership was drawn from tourist attractions operators in south-east of the county.

Thus there was an example of each TA type within the south Herefordshire area, all of which had been surveyed. There were no regional tourism association federations in the study area.
There were two Chambers of Trade/Commerce/Industry in the area, in Ross and Hereford.

**CASE STUDY PROGRAMME**

A programme of semi-structured interviews with representatives of the main elements of the tourism development system was carried out over three weeks from 15th June to 6th July 1990. Requests for interviews were granted by all thirty seven individuals contacted and by the end a comprehensive picture of the work, role and effectiveness of TAs in south Herefordshire had been gained.

Each respondent was asked a series of questions seeking descriptions of the relationships between their organisation and each of the others. This was the major part of the work necessary to construct a 'rich picture' from which a detailed analysis of the work of TAs in the destination area could be made. Systems methodology emphasises the importance of interrelationships between components of a system, and such 'linkages' are of course important for any voluntary sector group, generally having only limited resources with which to achieve their aims. Interrelationships between elements of the tourism development system within the south Herefordshire rural area were to be studied, therefore - specifically, those associated with the work and role of the TAs within that area. This approach is supported by the 'bottom-up' philosophy of local tourism development favoured by Murphy (1985) and Lane (1990) for example - the work and role of the groups must be considered within the context of the structures and processes of their respective destination areas.

Additionally, attempts were made to gain quantitative information about the overall effects of the work of the TAs. Respondents were asked whether they could quantify the effects that the work of the local TAs had upon visitor levels and/or upon the local economy, in terms of employment and incomes. It was not anticipated that this part of the study would yield much usable information, given the wide range of factors affecting the aforementioned indicators, but it seemed reasonable to attempt to obtain any available.

Qualitative assessments of the work of each of the tourism associations under study were also sought. The objective of this exercise was to rank the TAs in terms of their success in promoting and developing the tourism industry in the area. Key actors were asked to rate the groups using non-parametric statistical tests, and the results of this exercise would enable conclusions to be drawn concerning the relative effectiveness of each in the locality.

Contacts were made with several individuals and organisations based outside the South Herefordshire District Council area in an attempt to obtain relatively unbiassed assessments of
the groups’ work and different perspectives on the work of the tourism associations and visitor
industry development system there.

The organisations and individuals interviewed were:

**Tourism Associations**

- Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire
- Herefordshire Farm and Country Holidays Group
- Ross and District Hotel and Caterers’ Association
- Wyedean Attractions Group
- Wyedean Tourist Board (which had folded)
- Royal Forest of Dean Tourism Association
- Leominster Tourism Association
- Herefordshire Farm Cottages

**Public Sector**

- South Herefordshire District Council
- Hereford & Worcester County Council
- Hereford City Council
- Malvern Hills District Council
- Leominster District Council
- Wychavon Borough Council, Worcestershire
- Heart of England Tourist Board
- Rural Development Commission (three offices)
- Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (MAFF)
- Countryside Commission

**Tourism Initiatives**

- Big Apple
- Country Village Weekend Breaks
- Forest of Dean TDAP

**Others**

- Richard Denman: independent tourism consultant

**Individuals:**

- visitor industry operators
  - ordinary members of TAs
  - non-members
Case Study Interviews - Introduction

Contact was established with the secretary of the Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire, and she agreed to cooperate with the study. Her status and contacts within the local tourism development system made gaining local cooperation with the interview programme, essential for a successful case study, relatively straightforward. All the scheduled interviews were completed successfully, and much goodwill and cooperation was received from the public, private and voluntary sector interviewees, who were generally open and forthcoming. Some devoted considerable periods of time to the interviews. Several tourism industry operators which were not in membership of TAs were also interviewed.

Initial Points

The case study revealed the dynamic nature of the rural tourism development system. It exposed a wide range of differing opinions and perceptions regarding suitable approaches to development; intense personal inter-organisational and geographical rivalries; public: private sector conflicts; the seemingly ad hoc basis upon which many important decisions are taken; and a lack of agreement on some of the most basic facts regarding the historical development of the south Herefordshire visitor industry environment.

It became obvious that some - if not all - groups operate to a significant extent as 'front' organisations for the views and ambitions of one or two of their officers, and that there are often fundamental and long standing disagreements within the membership of tourism associations over policy. As expected, most members had little or no involvement in the activities of the associations of which they were members.

Structure of Case Study Accounts

For convenience, the study of interrelationships associated with TAs was divided into two main sections - internal, those within the groups themselves, and external, those between the groups and other public, private and voluntary elements of the local tourism development system. It is recognised, however, that this distinction is artificial to a degree, for some members of TAs are also members of external bodies (tourist boards, etc), or conduct their own lobbying or development efforts quite independently from those of the voluntary body.
The accounts of the findings of the case study interviews have been structured in the following manner:

INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS
TA: membership

EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS
TA: public (the visitor market for the area)

Public Sector Organisations
TA: regional tourist board
TA: local authorities
TA: other governmental bodies

Voluntary Sector Organisations
TA: other tourism associations
TA: other voluntary groups

Private Sector
TA: travel trade
TA: non-members, others

The characteristics of each interrelationship have been presented following a common structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>MEANS</th>
<th>NATURE</th>
<th>DIRECTION &amp; SCALE</th>
<th>MOTIVES/OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EFFECTS</th>
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- information/other resource
- route through which interrelationship took place
- eg formal/informal? short/long term? collaboration with another organisation?
- of interaction - reciprocal?
- of interaction
- of interaction - success?

An introductory description of each tourism association based upon information derived from the questionnaire survey precedes the analysis of each group’s interrelationships.
The Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire

Operating from a small village near Hereford, APH is a broad-membership tourism association. It was constituted as a voluntary association, and had a formal membership numbering over 100 which classifies the group as 'Very large'. The group's membership had grown by a quarter during the years 1986-88. Formed as a result of a private sector initiative in the 1980-84 period, APH took over the role of the former Hereford Hotels and Caterers Association which had folded, extending the geographical area covered while retaining much of its city-based membership and broadening the types of businesses eligible for membership. It pursued more activities than the average for all broad-membership groups, and prioritised:

♦ production of a visitor brochure; and
♦ attendance at trade fairs.

While APH carried out all the common 'operational' functions (including trade-oriented activities) it was also involved with higher-level 'planning/development' functions. It was not, however, involved with 'active' operational activities (offering packages and staging events). Overall, the characteristics of the association identified it as a more sophisticated group in comparison to many.

The Association employed a single part-time paid member of staff notionally titled Group Secretary to organise its work. In reality, she was the mainstay of the group, and it was said that APH would have folded years ago without her tireless efforts. Unlike the prime movers of the other associations studied, she had no business interest. The secretary was answerable to the executive committee, which met at relatively frequent monthly intervals. The majority of the operational costs of the group were obtained from subscriptions, the structure of which was differentiated according to the size and type of each member business (a typical arrangement for broad-membership TAs).

Much more information was obtained on APH during the course of the interviews than on the other tourism associations under study. The group was very active, and was said to fill the gap left by what was often referred to as the lack of interest shown by the district and, particularly, the county council. APH had a dual role; in addition to its visitor industry development activities, its secondary function was said to be wide-spectrum promotion of the Herefordshire economy, and of the county as a location for incoming investment.
TA: Membership

The interrelationships within the membership of this tourism association were substantially more varied and complex than those of the others studied. They were informational, advisory, social and business development-oriented in nature.

The Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire:

- organised a big 'familiarisation fair' each year, at which members exchanged leaflets and experiences;
- staged 'open evenings' at which members could better acquaint themselves with the area’s industry;
- produced a newsletter three or four times each year;
- arranged training sessions for tourism operators;
- attempted to maintain and improve standards of accommodation provision by supporting the introduction of a new national classification system; and
- staged regular fundraising social events.

The motives behind these internal functions were to maintain the cohesiveness of the group; inform visitor and other businesses of developments in the local, regional and national industry; improve the standards of visitor provision; and provide social opportunities for a scattered membership. The effects of the group’s activities were difficult to gauge accurately, but there was general agreement amongst respondents that they were positive and valuable. They seemed to be particularly important for the group’s members in the remoter parts of the county for whom there were no other associations to join.

EXTERNAL

TA: The Visitor Market

APH maintained a strong informational relationship with the visitor market by means of an annual brochure, frequent advertising using several media, involvement with promotions, and attendance at public travel shows. The aim was to attract more business to the member businesses and to the County as a whole. The brochure was notable for a much greater concentration on the attractions of Herefordshire than on the member businesses alone in comparison to those of the other TAs. The effects of the TA: visitors linkage could not be quantified by respondents, and no marketing effectiveness surveys had been conducted, but one
individual member (a guest house operator) regarded the annual fee of £200 as extremely good value in marketing terms.

**PUBLIC SECTOR**

**TA: Tourist Board**

The Association was involved in a close and complex relationship with the Heart of England Tourist Board (HETB) that was informational, advisory, commercial, representational and directed toward maintaining standards. The linkage was maintained through the Association being a member of the Board, and frequent formal and informal contacts. Unusually, the secretary of APH was the Board's county representative - such roles were normally assumed by local authority representatives.

There was a substantial flow of information between the two organisations. The Board assisted with distribution of APH's brochure, offered professional advice regarding this and other marketing media, and featured association members and events in their own publications. The tourist board kept TA members supplied with trade information via the APH newsletter, and also provided training opportunities for visitor industry businesses. The Association reciprocated with market data, and regularly took advertisements in Board publications in addition to inclusions by reason of its status as a Board member.

The Association was a prime mover in the genesis of the HETB/ETB Marches campaign, and other collaborative promotional efforts included joint attendance at travel shows with the Board, including such major occasions as the World Travel Market.

Each organisation influenced the activities of the other to a considerable degree. APH used its presence on the executive committee as an opportunity for constructive criticism of the Board and other elements of the visitor industry development system in Herefordshire. One example of this was collaborative lobbying aimed at persuading Hereford and Worcester County Council to appoint a tourism officer; APH would often accompany Board officers to meetings with this and other local authorities. The Board valued the fact that the work of APH crossed the boundaries of several district authorities, noting that the county council was not entirely successful at co-ordinating the work and priorities of the districts.

The Board influenced the work and priorities of the voluntary association too. APH adopted and promoted the then hotly-disputed national accommodation classification system in consultation with the regional board, in full knowledge that it might lose some members as a result.

The relationship between the public and voluntary sector bodies was reciprocal, therefore, and on a large scale. The TA’s motives included:
♦ access to advertising and promotional opportunities, and on a scale that would have otherwise been out of its reach;

♦ access to valuable trade information; and

♦ having a voice in the development of the local and regional visitor industry.

Precise measures of the success of the linkage between APH and the regional tourist board were unavailable, but it was clear that each side regarded the relationship favourably and intended to maintain it.

TA: Local Authorities

The Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire maintained relationships with all the local authorities in the County, and with several neighbouring ones. Within the study area, the relationships were informational, collaborative, financial and representational in nature. APH claimed that its role as a pressure group influencing local authorities had been an important function from the organisation’s earliest days.

South Herefordshire District Council - the relationship between the Council and APH was maintained through fairly frequent contacts. The tourism officer attended many executive committee meetings and every AGM, and association representatives met her in Ross on occasion. APH used the authority as a means to distribute its brochures, mainly through TICs, and the two bodies organised jointly-funded marketing and promotion exercises on the basis of a yearly programme devised by the TA. The Council declined to become involved in the Association’s World Travel Market exhibition trip, however.

The tourism association took adverts in tourist board promotional literature (such as Short Breaks in the Marches), part of the cost of which it covered by re-selling the space to the Council. Otherwise, relatively little information was exchanged between the two organisations, however; this was put down to historical reasons, mainly that the Council had only been formally involved in tourism (through the medium of a tourism officer appointment) for the preceding ten months, but political undertones were detected during the interviews as well.

The Association levelled pressure upon the authority on certain occasions. APH sought improvements to the tourism infrastructure of the district, including better parking facilities and the professionalisation of the TICs.

One instance of APH’s relationship with Hereford City Council is worth mentioning. A group of American journalists in the City for a trade show wanted to tour the rural area, and APH was used to arrange the visit. The Association was regarded as efficient, neutral, and plainly had all the necessary contacts required.
Hereford and Worcester County Council - the Association had a stronger relationship with the county than the district council. Contacts between the county and the voluntary body were fairly frequent, maintained by attendance at each others’ meetings and other formal and informal contacts.

The Council gave the Association a grant to cover certain commercial operating costs in 1990, one for an overseas promotional initiative - the World Travel Market - in 1989, and another for the production and distribution of publicity material in conjunction with the Heart of England Tourist Board. The authority was clearly satisfied to allow the association to promote the county at a time when there was disagreement over the extent to which the public body should be involved in doing so.

The Association frequently lobbied the County Council. Its aims included:

- persuading the Council to set up a tourism department;
- improving tourist facilities in the County - public conveniences, parking provision, TICs; and
- the provision of more money for the work of the Association.

The TA was consulted during the production of the county Structure Plan, but was careful to remain neutral regarding potentially sensitive matters. It would not get involved in individual visitor industry planning applications to avoid divisions in the membership. It did take a stand on less internally contentious matters, however, and once opposed major gravel extraction proposals for one part of the County.

Another important aim was to speed up the decision-making process regarding visitor industry matters, seen as bogged down with committee cycles and trivial matters. APH was said to 'force the pace' through pressure applied to officers.

Thus the interrelationship was two-way, with the balance perhaps being from voluntary body to public authority. The scale of interaction was quite substantial; the county had many more dealings with this TA than any of the others in South Herefordshire. Although this was at least partially because APH 'fronted' for the others on certain matters, it was clear that the authority preferred to deal with the broad-membership group because (in the words of officers and councillors) it was a 'broad church' and an 'umbrella grouping' covering the whole ex-county, and regarded as a legitimate representative of private sector interests.

The relationship was motivated by a desire on the part of APH to promote and develop the visitor industry in a county which was seen - and perhaps regarded itself - as something of a backwater in tourism and other terms. No objective measurements of the effects of the linkage were available, but almost all respondents agreed that APH was a significant, positive and very
effective force. Malvern Hills District Council described the TA as “a lynchpin of Herefordshire tourism, and possibly of the whole local economy”.

TA: Other Governmental Bodies

The Association maintained occasional contact with the Rural Development Commission and ADAS, and a greater degree of involvement with the Countryside Commission. These linkages were informational, commercial and collaborative in character.

Rural Development Commission - contacts were maintained through informal contacts and occasional talks given by the RDC at APH meetings. Commission officers would regularly refer prospective new visitor industry entrants to the tourism association for help and advice “on publicity”. The two organisations kept abreast of each others’ activities.

ADAS - were in contact with APH through cross-memberships with the Herefordshire Farm and Country Holidays Group. Individuals in the association and agency were aware of each others’ work.

Countryside Commission - the local organisation was a member of APH, and in addition maintained fairly regular official contact at officer level. The agency received positive editorial coverage in the TA’s brochure, which it distributed, and the two organisations undertook collaborative advertising, promotions, and attended some tourism fairs together. The Commission kept the TA informed of visitor events it organised.

Interrelationships between the agencies and TA were broadly reciprocal. The objective of each was to advance the work of the organisations involved and promote and develop the visitor industry in southern Herefordshire. The effects were unquantified, but each organisation rated the relationships highly, particularly the APH: Countryside Commission linkage which was valued as a means of sharing expertise.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR

TA: Other TAs

APH had relationships with the other three tourism associations operating in the study area. The linkages were informational, commercial, advisory and collaborative in nature.

Ross And District Hoteliers’ Association - linkages between the RDHA and APH were maintained through:

♦ an RDHA presence on the broad-membership group’s executive committee;

♦ numerous cross-memberships; and
other fairly frequent formal and informal contacts.

APH was used as a channel for distributing RDHA literature, taking the group’s guide to trade and public fairs. Additionally, the hoteliers’ group utilised APH expertise in the fields of marketing and promotion. The predominant direction of the relationship was from APH to the RDHA, and it was on a moderate scale. The motive behind the linkage was to promote and develop individual RDHA members’ businesses and the local industry in south Herefordshire. No concrete indications of success were available, but the relationship was considered useful as far as it went.

Herefordshire Farm and Country Holidays Group (HFCHG) - means of linkage between APH and the farm accommodation association were similar to those with the RDHA, including the farm sector group being in membership of the former, individual cross-memberships, and individual contacts of various kinds. The farm group regularly shared advertising with APH, and obtained discounts for group advertising in APH literature. Each tourism association distributed the other’s brochures, and appropriate tourist enquiries made to APH were directed to the accommodation association.

The broad-membership association frequently represented HFCHG at fairs, and fronted their bid for financial support from Herefordshire district councils. The two bodies maintained frequent two-way communication for the purposes of collaborative policy evolution.

The linkage was clearly two-way, and although the balance was from APH to the farm sector group both organisations derived benefits from the relationship. The motive of the interactions between the associations was to promote and develop the visitor industry both in terms of individual businesses and the wider industry in the area. The precise effects of the linkage were unknown, but APH pointed out that the farm group would have withdrawn its advertising business from their publications if they felt they were not getting value for money.

Wyedean Attractions Group - relationships between APH and WAG were described as cordial, and were informational in nature. There were no formal links between the two TAs, but about a quarter of the attractions group were individual members of the broad-membership association and informal links were maintained on an infrequent basis.

The broad-membership association distributed the WAG leaflet, but this action was not reciprocated by the attractions group. This seemed to be the only real manifestation of a linkage between the two, indicating that the relationship operated in a direction from APH to WAG alone, and was on a relatively small scale. This assessment of the interrelationship is backed up by respondents’ descriptions of WAG as “independent”, “localised”, and “hard-nosed entrepreneurs”.

The objective of the relationship was both to bring more business to attractions operators in the Wyedean area and for APH to have more Herefordshire visitor product to promote. No measures
of the effectiveness of the linkage were available, but each group praised the others' role and the quality of their marketing and PR operation.

Finally, mention must be made of the role of APH as training provider for the three other associations operating in south Herefordshire. Training courses were organised by the broad-membership group in collaboration with other organisations including the Heart of England Tourist Board, and publicised to individual and association members of APH.

TA: Other Voluntary Bodies

APH had more contacts with other voluntary bodies in the study area that did the other TAs there. These were informational, collaborative, commercial and advisory in nature.

Herefordshire Hamper - the food producers' organisation was an associate member of APH, and had a member on the executive committee. The organisation was classified as a "privileged supplier" within APH, offering preferential prices to the members of the broad-membership association, and several individual cross-memberships provided further linkages. HH distributed the APH brochure, an action reciprocated by the Association, and benefitted from favourable editorial coverage in APH literature. Some mutual evolution of policy occurred.

The predominant direction of the linkage was from APH to Herefordshire Hamper. The relationship was relatively small-scale at the time of the case study, but there were plans for expansion. The motive of the producer group was to gain more business for its membership; for APH, the linkage provided more countryside visitor product to promote, and highlighted the potential attractions of locally-produced cuisine to its membership. Both sides valued the relationship, but neither was able to estimate its effects.

Big Apple - maintained an informal relationship with APH. Some participants were individual members. APH helped distribute Big Apple literature, and the organisations shared promotional stands at fairs including the Three Counties Food and Farming Show.

The relationship was oriented predominantly from APH to Big Apple, and operated on a moderate scale. The motives were to promote and develop the visitor industry of the county and support the agricultural sector. Effects of the linkage were unquantified, but both sides valued the relationship.

Herefordshire Rural Community Council - maintained occasional informal links with APH.

Chambers of Trade/Commerce/Industry - APH had infrequent informal links with the few Chambers in the County.
PRIVATE SECTOR

TA: Travel Trade

The Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire had no direct links with the travel trade, although a new Herefordshire tour operator had joined the group shortly before the case study.

TA: Non-members and Others

The Association was linked informally with Richard Denman, a tourism consultant operating from Ledbury. He had advised APH at the time of its establishment, maintained this advisory relationship on an occasional basis, and was a valuable indirect link to regional and national organisations.

APH acted as a major force in the establishment of the Country Village Weekend Breaks organisation, and offered advice during its early stages.

One non-member engaged in the tourism trade, a guest house operator, regarded APH as a highly professional and efficient organisation. However, as her small concern specialised in accommodating walkers she restricted her marketing outlay to adverts in suitable publications and felt no need to join the TA.

A specific new membership category had recently been created for people with a non-business interest in the tourism industry. There was one such member at the time of the case study.

The relationships between the Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire and other elements of the visitor industry development system of south Herefordshire are illustrated at Figure 23.

The Ross and District Hoteliers’ Association

Operating in and around the small town of Ross-on-Wye in south Herefordshire, the RDHA was a hotel and catering (sectoral-H) tourism association. Constituted as a voluntary association, its 50-odd members identified it as a 'Large' group, a common size for hoteliers’ groups, although its membership levels were static (typical for this group type). Formed as a result of a private sector initiative in the 1950s, the RDHA was the first TA group in the town. The number of activities it pursued was average for the sectoral-H type, and it prioritised:

♦ production of a visitor brochure; and

♦ the ideas forum role.
The association had undertaken certain 'planning/development' and 'active' (specifically, staging events) functions in the year prior to the questionnaire survey in addition to the more usual 'operational' and 'trade-oriented' ones. Overall, the characteristics of the association identified it
as a more sophisticated TA than many, although not to the same degree as APH as measured by
the number of activities in which it had been engaged.

RDHA employed a single part-time paid member of staff to organise its work. The majority of
the group's operational costs were obtained from subscriptions. It received no project funds.
Like the majority of sectoral-H groups surveyed, the Ross hoteliers' group was not a member of
any national federations.

INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

The principal internal relationships were:

♦ information flows; and

♦ social events.

The main information function for the majority of the membership was business referral. This
happened when an accommodation establishment was full. RDHA had no formal means for this,
however - it occurred informally between members, and had the effect of keeping visitors' business within the TA and, effectively, within the local area. Referral constituted a minor proportion of all members' business, however. Members attending meetings gained the full benefit of internal information flows, but the majority did not do so. The TA produced an occasional newsletter.

Business development functions were regarded as important. The Rural Development
Commission recommended that businesses setting up in the local area join the TA. Members
agreed that the professional advice and support provided to new starters was very valuable,
contributing to business success in the difficult trading conditions of the late 1980s.

The frequency of social events varied with the enthusiasm of the officers. The events were said to
be useful sources of business information for less active members as well as social occasions, but
occurred on average only once or twice each year.

EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

TA: The Visitor Market

The Association promoted the locality and produced information for visitors. This included:

♦ a local guide and brochure for use in local TICs and distribution to the Wyedean
Attractions Group;
♦ advertisements placed in the *Radio Times* and other publications including regional tourist board material; and

♦ the purchase of an exhibition caravan for use at public and trade shows (at a cost of £5000).

Contacts were maintained with the media in order to gain free publicity in the form of articles and mentions on TV and radio.

Promotional efforts varied from year to year, again according to the enthusiasm and perceptions of officers and members. Many were actioned in collaboration with the South Herefordshire District Council, which shared certain costs. Events for visitors were organised very occasionally. The promotion and advertising was intended to encourage people to visit the area, and inform them of the various opportunities for visitor activities while there. The objectives were to bring and keep business within the membership of the TA and the destination area.

The effects of the visitor information function are difficult to gauge because no studies of marketing effectiveness had been done. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that it was valuable:

- an item broadcast on Anglia TV resulted in over 2000 enquiries

- a familiarisation visit staged for Dutch journalists produced an appreciable though unquantified increase in visitors from the Netherlands

- members agreed that the TA was the best means of marketing to potential visitors outside the local area. Every enquiry to the Ross-on-Wye TIC received an Association brochure.

PUBLIC SECTOR

TA: Tourist Board

Interrelationships between the TA and the Heart of England Tourist Board were primarily informational and commercial. Representatives of the Board meet the Association twice yearly, upon invitation. The TA was a member of the Board, and received standard membership information regularly. Minutes and activity reports were exchanged between the two bodies.

The relationship existed to keep each party informed of the other’s activities and other relevant matters. The Board met with the Association to explain:

♦ the new business rating system; and
the new accommodation classification system.

The bodies attempted to influence each others' work, but to limited effect as far as could be determined. The Association also made representations to the English Tourist Board on the then-vexed matter of tourist signposting, specifically referring to the area's main route, the M50/A40.

The effects of the interrelationship cannot be evaluated, but they were generally agreed to have had a positive effect on visitor industry development.

TA: Local Authorities

The Ross and District Hoteliers' Association dealt mostly with the South Herefordshire District Council, whose tourism officer worked from an office in the town.

The relationship between TA and local authority involved interchange of information and other resources. Regular contacts were maintained between the two bodies through the means of formal and informal meetings. The tourism officer attended all meetings of the TA, and other contacts were frequent. Information passed from SHDC to the TA included:

- general tourism trends;
- TIC enquiries; and
- LA tourism activity.

The Association reciprocated with information on bookings, occupancy levels and general matters, although on an informal level and not in detail. Indirect financial support from the authority included schemes to share advertising and mailing costs.

Each body attempted to pressurise the other. The DC was engaged in a medium-term effort to broaden the TA's membership to cover the whole DC area and a broad range of business types - for it to change to a broad-membership association, in essence. Examples of what the TA pushed for include:

- the conversion of a market house in Ross to a heritage centre; and
- a change in the priorities and focus of the work of the new DC tourism officer.

The majority of informational interaction was from authority to TA, while most of the attempts at influence seemed to be in the reverse direction.

The only known direct relationship between the hotelier's association and Hereford and Worcester County Council was when the TA voiced its views on the route of a planned by-pass.
The LA:TA relationship aimed to promote and develop the visitor industry in South Herefordshire. Each body had its own priorities and constituency, but there was clearly general agreement on most matters.

There was no data to enable evaluation of the effects of the relationships. That between the Association and SHDC was clearly very close, however, each body regarding the other as an important part of the tourism development system.

TAs: Other Governmental Bodies

The frequency of contacts between the Association and non-LA governmental agencies was low. They are summarised below:

- Rural Development Commission: contacts were with individual members businesses rather than the TA.
- ADAS: no contact.
- Countryside Commission: this body occasionally employed TA members to provide commentary on guided walks arranged and publicised by the Commission for local people and visitors. Such initiatives can be seen as attempts to develop the visitor industry of the area.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR

TA: Other TAs

The other three TAs were active to varying degrees in the Ross association’s area. The interrelationships were informational in the main.

The principal means by which three of the four TAs interacted was through the broad-membership group, the Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire. The Ross TA and the Farm Holiday Group had representatives on the APH executive committee, although the Wyedean Attractions Group did not. Occasional informal contacts were maintained between the groups, however, not least by cross memberships.

The tourism associations exchanged relevant information about their activities, but did not undertake activities together. An important element of the relationships was the exchange of leaflets and other advertising material; the hoteliers’ group exchanged literature regularly with the attractions association, and occasionally sent literature to promotional events via APH. The association was a member of APH and received the APH newsletter, and regularly received the minutes of the meetings of the Herefordshire Farm and Country Holidays Group. Training courses ran occasionally by the APH were publicised to the hoteliers’ group.
The direction and scale of inter-TA relationships were difficult to assess. The impression gained was that both APH and the farm group provided the association with more than it provided them, while the relationship with the attractions association was more evenly balanced.

The interrelationships were maintained to advance the work of the association. The hoteliers' group complemented and extended the work of the others; sometimes depended upon the others, particularly APH; and some undertones of clashes were detected during the interviews. The effect of the interrelationships with other TAs was to:

♦ keep the Association informed about the activities of the others;
♦ extend the work of the group; and
♦ provide potential avenues for joint working.

The interrelationships certainly contributed to the work of the TA, but this effect could not be evaluated.

TA: Other Voluntary Sector Bodies

Apart from very occasional contacts with the Ross Chamber of Trade and Industry, the Association had no significant contacts with other voluntary sector bodies.

PRIVATE SECTOR

TA: Travel Trade

The TA had no direct contacts with the travel trade, although it did maintain an indirect informational relationship through means including travel shows, promotional events, and the mass media contacts mentioned earlier. These contacts appeared to be irregular and subject to the availability of volunteers and enthusiasm. The effects could not be gauged, but were thought to be minimal.

TA: Non-members and Others

The tourism association had little formal contact with private sector tourism industry operators that were not in membership, nor with private individuals. Non members in the visitor industry might be offered the opportunity to advertise in the Association's brochure for an appropriate fee, but otherwise only knew about what the group was doing through hearsay. Contacts with the non-tourism private sector were minimal, occurring indirectly and very infrequently through the informal link with the Ross Chamber of Trade and Industry.
The relationships between RDHA and other elements of the visitor industry development system in south Herefordshire are illustrated at Figure 24.
The Herefordshire Farm and Country Holidays Group

The operations of the HFCHG had no central geographical focus unlike those of the other TAs studied. Its officers and membership were scattered throughout Herefordshire, meeting at each others’ farmhouses. The association was a recognised Farm Holiday Group (sectoral-F type), affiliated to the Farm Holiday Bureau.

Constituted as a voluntary association, its membership of about 40 (predominantly women) identified it as medium-sized in comparison to the average for all TAs but it was large for a farm group. The membership had grown significantly in numbers (25% or more) over the two years prior to the questionnaire survey. The regional tourist board had supplied the initiative for the group’s formation in the early 1980s.

The Herefordshire association pursued more activities than the average for all sectoral-F groups (8 compared to 6.5), and prioritised:

♦ the monitoring of its members’ standards; and

♦ production of a visitor brochure.

The association undertook the usual ‘operational’ activities, and had attended trade fairs. Otherwise, its activities characterised it as a less sophisticated tourism association, concentrating upon ‘operational’ rather than ‘planning/development’-oriented functions, in line with most sectoral-F TAs.

HFCHG employed no staff. The group sourced the majority of its operational costs from subscriptions, and received no project funds.

INTERNAL

TA: Membership

The nature of the interrelationships within the group’s membership were:

♦ for the purposes of business referral;

♦ informational;

♦ monitoring of standards; and

♦ social

- in character.
The vehicles for interactions within the group were the accommodation booking system that it operated; regular committee meetings; and a novel twice-yearly “Grand Tour” of each other’s establishments. Most of the group were personal friends, too, extending opportunities for dialogue.

The most important internal relationships were those between individual members and the booking system (two booking secretaries, one for bed and breakfast and one for self-catering accommodation establishments), although it must be noted that many establishments undertook their own publicity and booked their accommodation themselves. Contacts for the purposes of exchanging business ideas and suggestions were also valued, and this function was said to be critical for new entrants to the farm accommodation business. Several members had attended business training courses (accounting, marketing, catering, etc) and passed their knowledge on to the others.

Group members inspected each others’ properties to maintain standards of provision, and ’vetted’ what was termed “the attitude” of prospective new members according to set criteria. All members were expected to play some part in running the TA.

The social function was much more pronounced in this association than the others. The “Grand Tour” was primarily a social affair, to which members’ husbands were invited, and the association staged a regular Christmas party. The opportunities for social interaction were evidently highly valued by the group.

The aims of the intra-group relationships were:

♦ to strengthen the individual accommodation businesses;

♦ to present a quality-oriented profile to visitors; and

♦ to provide social opportunities for the members.

These in-group interactions seemed to be very successful. Members ran their businesses in a supportive environment, able to draw upon expertise and experience as required, and the product was undoubtedly of a good standard. Many visitors returned regularly.

EXTERNAL

TA: The Visitor Market

The predominant relationship between the association and the visitor market was an informational one. The two main vehicles for it were through the groups’ own leaflet and their entry in the Farm Holiday Bureau guide (Farm Holiday Bureau 1988). Many member establishments were located in relatively remote areas, so these forms of advertising were critical to business success.
The HFCHG leaflet was distributed widely amongst attractions in the region, and further afield when members travelled to other areas.

Other means of contact with the visitor market included attendance at smaller public and trade shows, aided by a stand provided free by a local enterprise organisation. APH promoted the group at the major UK travel fairs. 'Familiarisation' trips were laid on for travel press visitors from as far away as Lancashire. Farm Holiday Bureau questionnaires were given out to guests in an effort to obtain feedback from their market.

The various aspects of the tourism association's relationship with the visitor market were aimed at bringing business to the members of the group. There existed no objective data on the success of the TA: visitor linkage, but it was clear that the group was reasonably satisfied with the results of their endeavours. A few members indicated that their involvement in tourism maintained the viability of their farm units - this was considered a measure of success. The TA was considering conducting a formal marketing effectiveness survey, but this was unavailable at the time of writing.

PUBLIC SECTOR

TA: Tourist Board

The characteristics of the relationship between the TA and the Heart of England Tourist Board were primarily informational, commercial, and directed towards maintaining and improving standards. Relationships were kept up through the TA being a commercial member of the Board (many individuals were also members and all had to register), Board attendance at some group meetings, and Board inspections of members' properties.

The group received quarterly information bulletins and discounts for advertisements placed in Board publications. Training opportunities were provided, and Board officers would attend HFCHG meetings, advising on such matters as the then-new accommodation grading system. In most cases, the TA responded to Board policies without demur. Information on occupancy rates was occasionally requested, and provided by members. Certain grievances were taken up with the HETB through the medium of APH.

The relationship was thus reciprocal and on a relatively large scale, although essentially in a direction from Board to TA. The membership of the association sought to derive business from the contacts, and also to improve their image, profile, competence and knowledge of the visitor market. The members considered the relationship very helpful, and had every intention of maintaining it.
TA: Local Authorities

Within the study area, the group had relationships with South Herefordshire District Council and Hereford and Worcester County Council. These were informational, financial and representational in character, and took place through the means of meetings and other direct contacts between the public and voluntary bodies. Additionally, indirect contact was maintained through APH.

The farm association distributed their leaflets to the district and city councils which passed them on to TICs. The district took them to trade shows, and the tourism officer gave the group a talk on accommodation marketing.

Small amounts of finance were obtained from the county council in the past, and further amounts were being sought from local authorities within and without the study area in collaboration with APH at the time of the case study.

The group made representations to the local authorities regarding the incoming Uniform Business Rate and planning permission for roadside signs.

The direction of the interrelationship was mostly from the TA to the local authorities. Contacts were cordial, but on a less frequent basis than those with the regional tourist board or the Farm Holiday Bureau.

Motivated by a desire to strengthen and improve their member businesses, the group was unable to quantify the effects of the relationship but agreed that it was useful.

TA: Other Governmental Bodies

The group had no collective relationship with the Rural Development Commission, although some members had had individual relationships. It maintained a relationship with ADAS, however, and to a lesser degree with the Countryside Commission.

The relationship with ADAS was informational and advisory in nature, maintained by a representative of the agency sitting in on some TA meetings. The relationship with the Countryside Commission was informational and commercial, though the agency and association met rarely, if ever.

ADAS monitored the progress of the group, and assessed the contribution of the visitor business to the viability of the farm units. The Service offered advice on group operation and development - one respondent considered that it had helped “professionalise” the association - in addition to that provided by the national Farm Holiday Bureau organisation. The relationship was thus two-way, but group members noted that the Bureau provided more assistance overall. The TA
derived help and assistance from the arrangement, and operated more efficiently as a result - the agency was described as “helpful”.

The Farm Holiday Group advertised in *Great Escapes in Hereford and Worcestershire*, a pilot publication being produced by the Countryside Commission. In return, the group was kept aware of visitor industry initiatives being taken by the agency. The interaction was two-way, therefore, and to the benefit of both parties:

- TA members would gain new business; and
- the Countryside Commission publication was supported and its rural tourism initiative strengthened.

No measures or indications of the success of the interrelationship were available.

**TA: Other TAs**

The Herefordshire Farm And Country Holidays Group maintained formal relationships with APH and the Wyedean Attractions Group, but not with the Ross and District Hoteliers’ Association. The relationship with these two TAs can be described as informational and, additionally, that with APH as commercial and advisory.

APH - the farm group was a member of the broad-membership association, as were an estimated 80% of the individual members. The link was strengthened through the chairwoman of the association holding a position on the APH executive committee.

APH passed business directly to the farm accommodation group, and the two associations were closely involved with policy evolution. Communication between the TAs was regular and intense, and each distributed the other’s leaflets. The Farm Holiday Group invariably took advertisements in APH publications, for which they received member discounts.

The interrelationship with APH was plainly two-way, frequent, and on a large scale, with the balance seeming to be from APH to the farm sector group. HFCHG derived business and advice from the arrangement (the view was expressed that contact with APH had contributed to the “professionalisation” of the more recently established association), and APH gained advertising revenue and a more varied product to promote, amongst other benefits. The groups developed many policies in tandem, with APH being used to ‘front’ the farm group to the regional tourist board in certain instances.

The effects of the complex relationship between the two voluntary associations were considered positive and very valuable by both parties, although they had not been evaluated.
Wyedean Attractions Group - there were no formal connections between the farm and attractions groups, but individuals swapped leaflets. This informal relationship (described as a “grapevine”) seemed balanced though small-scale, and was maintained for the purposes, effectively, of business referral. The effects of the relationship were unquantified.

TA: Other Voluntary Bodies

The Association had no major relationships with other voluntary tourism bodies other than the Herefordshire Hamper food producers group. This organisation was permitted to join HFCHG to share certain promotional costs. The relationship was insignificant in comparison with most of the others, however.

TA: Travel Trade

The group had no direct contact with the travel trade, although APH provided some indirect assistance in this regard. The effects seemed relatively minor.

TA: Non-members and Others

The farm accommodation group had no formal contact with non-members within or without the visitor industry of south Herefordshire, apart from the fact that it was actively seeking new members at the time of the study.

The relationships between the Farm Holiday Group and other elements of the visitor industry development system in south Herefordshire are illustrated at Figure 25.

Wyedean Attractions Group

Constituted as a voluntary association, WAG was based around the River Wye valley and the Forest of Dean. It was composed of twelve attractions scattered throughout the countryside of south Herefordshire and surrounding districts, making it a small group compared to most TAs while being a typical size for attractions associations. The membership levels had been static for the two years before the survey, again usual for sectoral-A groups.

Formed as a result of a private sector initiative in the early 1980s, WAG was the first - and only - attractions group in Herefordshire. The association prioritised:

- publishing a visitor brochure; and
- acting as an ideas forum

- but was involved in a third fewer activities than typical sectoral-A groups.
The survey indicated that, in the year prior to the questionnaire survey, WAG had undertaken the more basic TA functions, including one 'trade-oriented' activity (attendance at a trade show), but
no 'active' or 'planning-oriented' ones. Like many attractions sector TAs, the group was relatively unsophisticated in this respect compared to all tourism associations.

The Group did not employ any staff. Operating costs were derived from membership subscriptions, and it received no project funds. It was not a member of any federations, national or local.

INTERNAL

TA: Membership

Interrelationships within the WAG were almost exclusively informational in character. It was stated that:

"The group exists solely as a means to produce the leaflet ..."

- and interviews with case study respondents reinforced this. Group meetings were infrequent, limited to two or three each year, the minimum necessary to produce the leaflet. Each attraction received large quantities of the leaflet to display and distribute (the print run was 350,000 in 1989).

Most business development functions were absent, although individual members advised each other outside the medium of the group. However, the WAG did exercise a limited standards monitoring function. One ex-member was excluded from the group after his attraction was deemed sub-standard and it was discovered that he was advertising features that he did not have.

The social function was almost entirely absent too. Events were organised jointly with the Ross and District Hoteliers' Association, but these were very occasional and most WAG members seemed to not attend.

The main motive for the groups' internal relationships was promotion of the twelve individual businesses and the attractions as a group. The members seemed content with the relatively low level of intra-group interaction and considered the joint leaflet a very useful promotional tool. The overall effect of the intra-group relationships can be likened to that of the referral function of the Ross Hoteliers' group. Visitors to one attraction would pick up the leaflet and be 'passively referred' to eleven others.
EXTERNAL

TA: The Visitor Market

Relationships between the tourism association and visitors were purely informational. The leaflet, revised yearly, was almost the only means of contact. For at least some operators, it was the only print advertising that they undertook. Some leaflets were distributed by an agency, and others on an ad hoc basis by individuals in the group. The motive for the visitor leaflet was promotional. Group members were unable to quantify its effects, but considered it successful.

PUBLIC SECTOR

TA: Tourist Boards

The group had no relationship with the Heart of England Tourist Board. It was not a member, and operators commented that individual membership was costly and not worth the expense.

TA: Local Authorities

The relationship between WAG and the local authorities was almost exclusively informational, with the leaflet being sent to tourism officers for distribution to TICs.

Of the local authorities, only the South Herefordshire District Council was sent leaflets. The new local DC tourism officer visited group members individually when she took up her appointment, but had no subsequent contact with the group and only occasional ones with individual members. The TA did not receive information from the authority. The group once applied pressure upon the council seeking better signposting, but most representations were made individually by members.

The main aim of the linkage maintained with the local authorities was promotional. Again, there was no tangible indication of success, but the fact that the TA maintained the relationship indicates that it considered it worthwhile.

TA: Other Governmental Bodies

The group had no contact with the Rural Development Commission or ADAS. It had frequent contacts with the local Countryside Commission office, however, with whom it maintained a relationship that was both informational and collaborative.

The Countryside Commission was described as having "an extensive interest" in WAG, and dealt with them through occasional meetings with individuals and, rarely, with the group as a whole. Wyedean Attractions Group leaflets were exchanged for Countryside Commission ones; the
group took adverts in Commission publications; and collaborative countryside events were held at the picnic area at one member attraction. The interaction was quite regular, and reciprocal.

The aim of the relationship was to bring more business to the member attractions. No figures were available to quantify the effects, but the TA evidently valued the link:

"... dealing with (the Countryside Commission) is cost-effective, straightforward, quick and simple (in comparison to slow district councils) ..."

VOLUNTARY SECTOR

TA: Other TAs

The Wyedean Attractions Group had little overall contact with other TAs in the study area. The interrelationships were mostly informational in nature.

WAG leaflets were regularly sent to APH and RDHA for distribution, and swapped with the Farm Holiday Group on an individual basis. There were some cross-memberships with the broad-membership and hoteliers' groups, but none with the farm TA. The Ross Hoteliers' Association had a member on the WAG committee, but there was no executive level cross-representation between APH and WAG, despite a wish expressed by the former for this.

The direction of the relationships was predominantly from the other TAs to the attractions group. The scale of the intra-voluntary sector relationships was appreciably less than those between the other TAs studied.

Group promotion was the main objective of the relationships maintained with the other TAs. Both sides felt that it was reasonably successful, although no analyses had been carried out. The quality of the attractive WAG brochure was commented upon frequently.

TA: Other Voluntary Sector Bodies

The Association had no contacts with other voluntary groups.

PRIVATE SECTOR

TA: Travel Trade

WAG had no direct contact with the travel trade, although its loose links with APH constituted very indirect contact. The effects cannot be gauged, but were thought to be minimal.
TA: Non-members and Others

But for a few that displayed the WAG leaflet, the TA as a whole had no real contact with private sector non-members. Neither did it have any with private individuals.

Relationships between the Wyedean Attractions Group and other elements of the visitor industry development system in south Herefordshire are illustrated at Figure 26.

Assessments of the Associations

Each respondent was asked to rank the groups according to their relative effectiveness at promoting and developing the visitor industry in the study area, using non-parametric statistical methods. Most agreed to do so for most of the TAs, but for reasons of confidentiality the rankings cannot be attributed to the individuals/organisations which made them. The results of the exercise are presented below at Table 68.

APH was a clear winner across all types of respondent, particularly with public sector interviewees but also with members and non-members of tourism associations in the study area. The two votes for RDHA for the top spot were from two committee member respondents of that organisation.

Table 68 - Overall ranking of tourism associations operating in south Herefordshire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Group name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nominations: APH 14; RDHA 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Herefordshire Farm &amp; Country Holidays Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nominations: HFCHG 6; RDHA 2; WAG 2; APH 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wyedean Attractions Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nominations: WAG 4; RDHA 3; HFCHG 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ross &amp; District Hoteliers’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nominations: RDHA 3; WAG 2; HFCHG 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Nominated by those interviewed
The rankings given by the interviewees cannot be taken as constituting a definitive judgement on the groups, however. It was clear that the associations had overlapping and often complementary roles within the local development system, with the most obvious of these being that APH served as an umbrella organisation through which the other three maintained relationships with other
system elements in addition to performing many of the functions that the others performed. APH were obviously good at what they did, but the other groups performed valuable functions too.

Ranking - Respondents’ Reasoning

Those respondents that did so tended to offer justification for their reasons for ranking groups highly rather than for the ones they downgraded, perhaps understandably. The Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire was considered the most effective of all in promoting and developing the visitor industry in the study area because the TA was considered:

♦ more professional, efficient and organised than the others;
♦ to have a larger and broader-based membership;
♦ had more money to spend; and
♦ covered a greater spatial area than the others (the activities of the sectoral-H and -A groups in particular were said to be “localised”).

Most of the specific comments made about the other three tourism associations are covered in the list of points above apart from one made about the Wyedian group that “... they look after themselves ...”

TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS IN SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE

The main aim of the case study was to gain an impression of the operation of voluntary tourism associations within the visitor industry development system in a defined locality. The four groups operating in the south Herefordshire area were studied through the means of interviews conducted with key actors, ordinary members of the groups, and non-members involved in the visitor industry in the area, and a useful impression was indeed gained.

The findings of the rural Herefordshire study reflect and validate many conclusions of the first phase of data collection, the questionnaire survey of TAs distributed across England and Wales. The four studied were formally organised, legally constituted as voluntary associations, and two employed part-time staff. Their memberships were composed almost exclusively of private sector businesses, but organisations of the public and voluntary sectors and private individuals were involved with some. The groups functioned as voluntary cooperative means for visitor industry development, though with different approaches and priorities, particularly regarding the relative balance struck between straightforward promotion of member businesses and the
development of the south Herefordshire visitor industry as a whole. Their members can certainly be said to demonstrate commitment to a common purpose, but in most cases active involvement was limited to payment of subscriptions (a representative of the Ross hoteliers’ group said that open meetings of the tourism association generally attracted only about twenty of the fifty-odd members - usually the same twenty).

The groups all worked alongside the major players in the local tourism industry development system, the regional tourist boards and local authorities, although to varying degrees and in different ways. The public sector bodies recognised that at least some of the activities of certain of the tourism associations were valuable as complementary or additional to their own, and demonstrated this by providing financial assistance. There were collaborations with visitor industry promotional initiatives, too. Direct contact with other business promotion organisations in Herefordshire, such as Chambers of Trade/Commerce/Industry, while maintained by some, tended to be very limited.

Only the Ross hoteliers’ association had staged events for the visitor market, and on the case study evidence it must be concluded that in general the tourism associations had no major role in attracting visitors directly to a significant degree. Neither did they significantly improve the social opportunities of the south Herefordshire population.

The groups studied operated at different geographical scales. Two worked over the whole of Herefordshire, while the operations of the other two were restricted to limited parts of the ex-county. There were no TA federations operating in the study area. The only instance of a link to such higher-level organisations was that maintained between the farm holiday group and the Farm Holiday Bureau. Questions directed to a few members of the local public during the case study programme confirmed a suspicion that most of those not involved in the industry were quite unaware of the existence of the associations.

The tourism associations working in south Herefordshire existed for a range of reasons, one of which was a perception of the need for such organisations by elements of the private and public sectors. Growth in the membership numbers of APH in the later 1980s suggested that this perception was becoming more widespread, coinciding with a time during which the visitor industry was expanding and fragmenting (Heart of England Tourist Board 1990 pers. com.). Although similar growth in the membership of the farm accommodation group can at least partly be attributed to institutional factors in favour of this sectoral-F TA type, the fact that both this group and APH were rated highly by almost all the case study respondents may also be significant in this respect.

The tourism associations collectively composed only part of the set of all organisations working for visitor industry development in rural Herefordshire, and quantification of the effects they had on the visitor industry proved impossible to obtain. Despite these qualifications, however, the opinions of almost all the key actors and others canvassed suggested that the work of the tourism
associations there was positive. In turn, it seems clear that, without them, the contribution of the visitor industry to the somewhat shaky rural economy would have been less than it was.

The Herefordshire study offers a detailed glimpse of the work and role of tourism associations in all types of destination area in England and Wales. While the case study was based upon a rural area, many of the conclusions of the national survey were supported, suggesting that, as advanced earlier, tourism associations fulfil essentially the same role in the countryside as they do in urban and coastal locations.

The next chapter will present an analysis and synthesis of the study as guided by the methodology.
This chapter is composed of three sections. The first presents the results of an analysis couched in systems terms of tourism associations and their positions and roles within the tourism industry development environment of England and Wales. It utilises the modified version of soft systems methodology developed by Checkland (1981a) and described in the Methodology chapter, and in addition incorporates other relevant systems thinking concepts. The second section links the results of the two stages of data collection and associated analyses with elements of the literature review to describe how tourism associations can help develop local economies, and specifically those in rural areas. The third presents suggestions of ways in which tourism associations could develop and best practice for their work and relationships with other system elements.

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS AND MODELLING

SOFT SYSTEMS MODELLING

Introduction

The methodology and associated method of working were described in Chapter Two. The modified soft systems methodology used to guide the research study prescribed three principal steps:

1. The problem situation - unstructured and expressed
2. Root definitions of relevant systems
3. Making and testing conceptual models

The first step has been completed, and the results of the second and third are presented below.

The Problem Situation

The first stage was to investigate the problem situation in depth, with the objective of building up a 'rich picture' of the situation under study by collecting information and perceptions from a wide
range of sources. This data gathering exercise was completed in the forms of the literature review, postal questionnaire survey, and Herefordshire case study. The 'rich picture' derived from the results of these exercises formed the basis from which the remaining two steps proceeded.

Root Definitions of Relevant Systems

The two systems selected for modelling were:

- the tourism association; and
- the tourism development system.

A root definition is a condensed definition of the system selected for modelling from the point of view of the study, expressed in its most fundamental form (Checkland 1981a). The two definitions have been derived from thorough consideration of the results of the data gathering stages.

Root definition of a tourism association - illustrated at Figure 27, the analysis has revealed a system for marketing the visitor product of an individual destination, but here the term 'marketing' is employed in its widest sense, referring to publicity, promotion and product development rather than simply as a synonym for publicity as it frequently is elsewhere (Kotler 1991).

![Figure 27 - root definition of a tourism association](image)

Root definition of the tourism development system - the analysis has revealed a system for marketing the visitor product of an area, again using the term 'marketing' in a broad sense. The system is illustrated at Figure 28.
The root definition process has revealed the essential characteristics of the two entities to be similar, and that they are engaged in the same exercise though at different scales.

Making and Checking Conceptual Models

The third stage of the modified SSM process involves building models of the activity systems needed to achieve the transformations described in the definitions. The focus of this conceptual stage is on what the system must do to accomplish the basic system purposes outlined in the definitions, and to this effect consists of a minimum list of verbs covering the activities necessary for these expressed in the form of a diagram. The conceptual models are shown at Figures 29 and 30.

Checking the Conceptual Models

Before further discussion, the models will be checked against the 'formal system' model outlined in the Methodology chapter. After that, they will be examined with reference to relevant systems thinking concepts.

The Tourism Association Model as a System

1. A tourism association has an on-going purpose, defined broadly as to further the cause of the tourism industry in a defined locality. Typical aims are exemplified by extracts from TA constitutions:

---

235
Publicise & promote
destination & members
- means

Communicate
with members, public &
tourism development
bodies

Assess
product: market
fit

Maintain &
Improve
destination
product

Market in
destination
area

Market elsewhere

Existing
market

Potential
markets

Communicate
with members, public &
tourism development
bodies

Market research

Monitor
performance

Assess
product: market
fit

Maintain &
Improve
destination
product

Figure 29 - conceptual model of a tourism association

Publicise & promote
destination & members
- means

Communicate
with members, public &
tourism development
bodies

Assess
product: market
fit

Maintain &
Improve
destination
product

Market in
destination
area

Market elsewhere

Existing
market

Potential
markets

Communicate
with members, public &
tourism development
bodies

Market research

Monitor
performance

Assess
product: market
fit

Maintain &
Improve
destination
product

Figure 30 - conceptual model of the tourism development system
"To promote the general advancement of tourism (sic) to the Mansfield and surrounding areas..."

Mansfield Tourism Association 1977

"To promote the interests of members ... [and] channel [their] views to other bodies ... To improve the quality of the tourism and leisure service provided for visitors to Salisbury. To extend the tourist season ... thus creating additional employment opportunities in the area. To create a united marketing strategy for tourism in Salisbury"

Salisbury Tourism Forum (undated)

"To promote Wansdyke, villages, tourism attractions and destinations to visit, to bring prosperity and employment to the residents"

Wansdyke Tourist Board (undated)

2. Measures of performance that can be devised for TAs might include:

- levels of public awareness of individual visitor destinations;
- visitor numbers and trends; and
- levels of tourism-derived income and employment.

3. Tourism associations have decision-taking structures and processes, both formal and informal, which are similar to those of other legally constituted voluntary associations:

- executive and other committees;
- officers with specific powers and responsibilities; and
- AGMs and EGMs.

4. The components of a tourism association are systems in their own right. The private, public and voluntary sector tourism industry interests comprising the majority of the membership of most TAs can all be viewed as systems, and will pursue independently some or all of the objectives of the TAs of which they are members.

5. The components, or members, of a TA will interact to a greater or lesser degree. They will be connected at least in so far as they are all part of the tourism industry within an individual locality and thus all part of the same local tourism product, whether they collaborate to attract visitors or perhaps compete; many
6. The tourism association exists and interacts as a system to varying degrees with:

♦ the tourism development system;

♦ the wider regional/national system for tourism industry development;

♦ the local-to-international system for economic development;

♦ other systems at local, regional and national scales; and

♦ the system environment, including the market for tourism.

7. The TA system boundary is distinct from those of the wider systems and environment mentioned at 6 above. Within the TA boundary, the decision-taking process of the association has the power to make certain things happen.

8. Tourism associations have varying levels of resources at the disposal of their decision-taking process.

9. Some tourism associations have been in existence for a century or more: thus the TA concept has some inherent long-term stability, even if individual associations tend to come and go.

The Tourism Development Environment Model as a System

A formal organisation has been defined as:

"... the rational coordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common explicit purpose or goal, through division of labour and function, and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility"

Schein 1970

- and the distinguishing principle advanced by Jordan (1968) was that a system must consist of a set of elements that are connected to each other by at least one discriminable, distinguishing principle, although each part of the system may not necessarily be directly or formally related to every other. It is contended that there is an identifiable, formal organisation for the development
of tourism in England and Wales; and, further, that it displays all of the characteristics of a system noted above. The components of the system include:

- regional tourist boards;
- local authorities;
- a wide range of government agencies including, in the countryside, ADAS, the Rural Development Commission, Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission (and their Welsh equivalents);
- the visitor industry at local, regional and national scales;
- key private individuals;
- local communities; and
- tourism associations.

Some of the components are formally connected in an organised way, but certainly not all of them. It is doubtful, for example, that efforts made towards promotion and development of their visitor business by small retailers in the countryside are related at all to tourist board campaigns, despite the fact that shopping is an important component of the visitor experience.

The degree to which the activities of the tourism development organisation are 'rationally coordinated', and working towards 'the achievement of some common explicit purpose or goal' is arguable, of course, and the 'hierarchy of authority and responsibility' somewhat blurred, but the set-up can be regarded as a systematic organisation.

The organisation for tourism development conforms, however loosely, to all the requirements for a formal system, and this system is illustrated by the conceptual model shown at Figure 30.

1. The system has a purpose.

2. It has a number of conceivable measures of performance in any single locality, including:

   - numbers of visitors and trends;
   - visitor spending levels; and
   - regional income and employment derived from tourism.
3. The system has a decision-taking process, although it is frequently very loose, indistinct, and decentralised.

4. The elements comprising the tourism development system are all systems in their own right.

5. The elements interact to greater or lesser degrees.

6. The system in any individual locality or destination type, including rural destinations, exists as a sub-system of the broader national tourism development systems, which are in turn part of the national system for economic development and, ultimately, British society.

7. The system has resources, both physical and abstract. Some of these are at the disposal of the decision-taking process and the use of others may be influenced to a degree.

8. The tourism development system possesses a measure of long-term stability, as shown by the longevity of its key components (local authorities, the private sector and tourist boards dating back for decades). It will continue to exist for the foreseeable future.

9. Focussing on rural areas, the boundary between the rural tourism development system and the wider regional/national system is indistinct (as indistinct in some ways as is the definition of the term 'rural') but arguably exists nonetheless:

   ♦ several TDAPs/TAPs and now Local Area Initiatives (LAIs) are rural-based;

   ♦ some tourist boards mount specifically rural promotional campaigns, and the ETB has produced a rural tourism development strategy (*Visitors in the Countryside*); and

   ♦ the Countryside Commission/CCW can be regarded as having a rural tourism development role, as can ADAS and the RDC.

Within this boundary, the loose, complex and ill-defined decision-taking process has a degree of power to cause action to be taken.

Thus the two entities modelled been established as systems in their own right with reference to the criteria specified by the 'formal system' model. The use of modified soft systems analysis has established that the primary function of tourism associations is communication.
The use of SSM has established that not only are tourism associations and the wider, formal organisation for visitor industry development engaged in the same endeavour, but each system goes about its business in a broadly similar fashion. The systems focus upon synergistic effects of the interactions between components has helped in the process of achieving understanding of what the organisations do within their environments, and how the combination of the causative structures, elements, processes and relationships may serve to develop the visitor industry, as discussed in the previous chapter. The whole is indeed more than the sum of the parts.

The findings of the case study suggest that it is likely that the effects of tourism associations as systems exceed what might be expected from summation of the effect of the individual components, the members. From this it follows that at the next level up the tourism development system is likely to be enhanced by the involvement of these groups, and the Herefordshire experience suggests that this is so. While it was difficult to evaluate the level of contribution of the TAs there to the overall outcome of the wider system, because of the complexity of the elements and influences involved, they all seem to make at least some.

Finally, the discussion must turn to the weltanschauung (w). The w makes meaningful the operation, goals, and very existence of the system under investigation, but it will of course vary according to the viewpoint of the observer. That of the investigator in the present study has been clearly demonstrated to be a corporatist 'world-view' towards approaches to visitor industry development, heavily influenced by the 'green' theories of Murphy (1985) and others.

OTHER SYSTEMS THINKING CONCEPTS

This section presents further analysis of the position and role of TAs as part of tourism development systems founded upon elements of the systems thinking concepts discussed in the Methodology chapter.

System elements - the study has examined systems at two levels, and found the elements of each to be:

1. The tourism association
   - officers and/or staff
   - membership

2. The local tourism development system
   - tourist boards
   - local authorities
other governmental bodies - including in rural areas the Rural Development Commission, ADAS, and the Countryside Commission
- private sector entrepreneurs
- certain voluntary sector bodies and initiatives

Tourism associations in Herefordshire have tended to become more complex internally (APH in particular), and the structure of tourism associations there has evolved towards greater complexity, as is the norm in social systems. The number of TA elements in the system has steadily increased over time, and the establishment of the farm sector association and Wyedean Attractions Group can be seen as one part of a process of differentiation and specialisation within the set of tourism associations in the county during the 1980s. The evolution of APH from a city-focused hospitality group to what became in part a county-wide umbrella organisation for certain activities of the other TAs and a critical element in the tourism development structure in the county was another. It seems likely that these developments reflect a trend that occurred throughout England and Wales during the last decade judging by the questionnaire data, and identify tourism associations as organic systems.

The work of Selznick (1981) linking classic organisational theory and theories of self-perpetuating, expanding bureaucracies to the systems perspective is of relevance here:

- there may be a role for more TA system elements in areas where one or more already exist. In Herefordshire, APH was the major tourism association player, with a county-wide role, but was linked with the more locally-oriented groups based around Ross-on-Wye and the Wyedean area as well as the specialised farm holiday group.
- it seems certain that there is room in tourism development systems for TAs in areas where none presently exist, and perhaps in rural areas in particular.

Quite how far the numbers of tourism associations could grow within the visitor industry development system of an individual destination area while continuing to assist achievement of system goals is difficult to decide, however. A possible structural model for tourism associations in a destination area is shown at Figure 31.
Systems thinking on role-taking behaviour suggests that elements within systems define and carry out roles within systems which may then become fixed when they are perceived to provide consistency and a stable framework for interaction (Buckley 1981). This has clearly happened with tourism associations in the south Herefordshire environment as their legitimacy has been confirmed to greater or lesser degrees in the eyes of the other elements. The TAs there are populated by system participants, and the associations adopt the norms and values of the wider system to varying degrees. This process could and plainly does happen elsewhere.

The roles fulfilled by tourism associations, outlined in the questionnaire and case study chapters, complement and extend those of the other main elements of the visitor industry development system. TAs may be viewed as structuring the industry at the level of the individual destination, while tourist boards carry out a similar but distinct role at the regional scale. It may be significant here that a considerable proportion of the membership of many TAs are not in membership of their RTBs, particularly the broad-membership groups. Perceptions of the role of tourism associations held by other system elements do of course differ, as was established during the case study, but the fact that many of those in England and Wales were set up as a result of public sector initiatives indicates that a need for these groups is recognised by local authorities and tourist boards.

Open and closed systems - TAs are open systems in dynamic interchange with their environments. They import, transform and export materials across their boundaries, and that a TA can achieve stability in a changing environment is confirmed by the longevity of some groups (one tourism officer regarded the continuing existence of the Herefordshire associations in the
Tourism associations can and do change as a result of relationships between the groups, the local/regional tourism development system, and the environment. To use an example from the rural case study, one of the reasons behind the pressure being applied to the Ross and District Hoteliers’ Association to re-form as a broad-membership TA was because the vulnerability of sectoral associations had been demonstrated by a series of members’ business failures in the difficult trading conditions of the later 1980s.

System boundaries - while the officers of each group are probably the main elements acting in boundary roles between tourism associations and the wider system on a day-to-day basis, it could also be said that all members of TAs running visitor businesses are doing so, indicating that the definition of the boundaries of a system depends upon the viewpoint of the observer. Other boundary roles are occupied by the staff/volunteers used by some TAs to run Tourist Information Centres, for example. Certain boundary positions between the tourism development system and the environment are occupied by TAs alone; others are shared with other system elements; and some are occupied exclusively by other elements.

Regulation of the visitor industry development system - attempts at determination of how far the system is controlled or managed by any single element on the basis of the data collection exercises are fraught with danger. Ackoff and Emery (1972) claim that at least one subset of all systems has a control function, but this is difficult to substantiate in practice. For example, Herefordshire tourism associations displayed numerous interdependencies with other elements of the system but there was also much scope for the voluntary bodies to take independent action. The Ackoff criteria for identifying control (the behaviour of one element being necessary and sufficient for subsequent behaviour of the other elements or systems and necessary for the attainment of one or more system goals) are difficult to apply in the present study, for:

- the information obtained in the Herefordshire case study was inevitably both incomplete and imperfect; and

- because many TAs undertake several activities, some alone and some in collaboration, attempts to trace control would produce mixed and probably contradictory results.

Identifying control is thus very difficult, but while there are numerous indirect means of control that could be applied on occasion if required (withholding of collaborative finance by LAs or tourist boards, for instance) the impression gained is that TAs are able to operate independently in the system in the main but may choose to do otherwise in certain circumstances.

The example of the on-going differences between the local authorities and Heart of England Tourist Board found at the time of the study suggests that the development system as a whole is
not formally controlled by any single element but shared amongst them, although it is accepted that identifying real power within a system is not realistically possible through the Herefordshire case study. The measure of efficient regulation of a system was noted to be the steady growth of the capacity of the system to achieve its mission (Emery 1969), and the only conclusion possible on this matter given the foregoing is that, in Herefordshire, the development system did seem to be improving in its capacity to develop the industry in the south of the county. However, attributing the regulation deemed necessary for this to a single system element is simply not possible on the present data and may not be realistic at all, although the role of the HETB was probably significant in this respect.

Divisions of labour - some were evident in the system, with TAs undertaking several functions that RTBs and LAs did not or would not do, but they also undertook activities in collaboration with these and other bodies.

Organisational form - the form of the visitor industry development organisation is subject to numerous influences within the 'turbulent' environment in which it operates. The fates of tourism associations and their members are positively correlated with those of other system elements, however loosely, but they evidently do not operate solely in a simple hierarchical structure. Rather, the pattern of non-hierarchical relationships described as an organisational matrix (Emery and Trist 1965) is a better model, with some power sharing and the ability for elements to undertake autonomous action. The diagram of multinode organisation produced by Beer (1981) and illustrated at Figure 1 seems appropriate.

The advantages and disadvantages of multinode organisation were discussed earlier. The expected problems associated with the type were found - it can be slow, and is difficult to control, but the loosely-organised system of which TAs are a part does work in an integrated manner to some degree. Of the three types of multinode system developed from the generic model by Herbst (1981):

♦ the composite autonomous group;

♦ the matrix; and

♦ the network group,

- the visitor industry development organisation approximates most closely to the matrix system. This is based upon the principle that each member has a specialist function but also overlapping competence with other elements. The tourism associations studied in Herefordshire did operate as part of a cooperative system, and the commitment of each to the system as a whole varied with the needs of their membership, as far as can be determined. Levels of commitment to the four TAs from other system elements varied similarly with need.
Emergence and goal-directedness - tourism associations are part of a system which aims to develop the visitor industry in the countryside. Each element has its own constituency and priorities - tourism development is not the primary function of all of the major players - and a significant measure of autonomy, but the results of the case study imply that, in Herefordshire at least, there is a fairly high degree of agreement over ends. While there is probably less over the question of means, the numerous examples of collaborative projects found in Herefordshire and, through the survey, in England and Wales generally, indicate that the system works towards its goals in a concerted manner.

Selznick (1981) maintained that the concept of emergent properties of organisations means that the organisation as a whole reaches decisions, takes action, and makes adjustments. This was found to hold true in many respects in rural south Herefordshire, where there is regular joint working between public and voluntary sector organisations, each with its part to play, and the effects work back to the private sector (TA members) and the public/market. This shared mode of decision-making involves the tourist board, APH and the farm sector association in particular (one good instance was the example of APH agreeing to champion the accommodation grading scheme) although the other two TAs participated to lesser degrees. There seems no reason to suppose that this doesn't happen in all types of tourist destination.

The system of broadly autonomous tourism development bodies in south Herefordshire did appear to exhibit goal-directedness. It was not possible to determine to what extent the emergent results of the system were sub-optimal because of the limited amount of formal coordination, however. The goals of tourism associations there and elsewhere can be surmised to be similar but not identical to those of other system elements in local/regional visitor industry development systems. Without common goals, rational coordination of system activities is a problem, and indications of this can be found in the case study chapter. However, the complex system under study can be said to have had a hierarchy of goals, and many or even most goals of the tourism associations studied in Herefordshire can be regarded as sub-sets of those of other system elements there, whether or not the groups - or system - recognised them as such.

Some tourism association goals are proximate and subservient to others, while others serve to establish or maintain the conditions under which subsequent activities can take place. Many TA goals will be implicit in the foregoing chapters, but the main one is marketing - publicising, maintaining and improving the tourism resources of individual destinations. This goal fits well alongside those of local authorities and regional tourist boards, operating with similar objectives but at different scales. Conclusions to be drawn are that:

♦ the goals of the tourism development system and those of TAs are similar; and

♦ a set of system subgoals exists, explicitly and implicitly, derived from the overall system goal to reinforce local economies. While these are generally pursued in a hierarchical manner within the
system, many of the elements can and do set their own agendas, notably the tourism associations.

System behaviour - tourism associations can be viewed as complex systems displaying identifiably purposive and adaptive behaviour (Sommerhoff 1969, Ackoff and Emery 1972). The fact that they are voluntary sector organisations working to develop the visitor industry at destinations is the principle distinguishing them from other organisations (Jordan 1968). The wider system in south Herefordshire can also be described as complex adaptive and purposeful one. The structural changes within the visitor industry development system which occurred as responses to numerous internal and external pressures characterise it as a homeostatic system. Examples of the three types of system changes, including reactions, responses, and acts, were described in the case study chapter.

Co-option of tourism associations into the organisation for tourism development can be viewed as part of the process of adaptive behaviour from a systems perspective. The process of absorption of new elements into the structure of an organisation has been termed a defensive mechanism from the viewpoint of the system as a whole (Selznick 1981), but while this may be true the experience of TA co-optation in south Herefordshire suggests that it can also be seen in a positive light, as a means of strengthening and improving the organisation for visitor industry development. The co-optation of the Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire was plainly the best example of this process, but all the other three could be said to have been co-opted to some degree, the Wyedean group the least and the Herefordshire Farm and Country Holidays Group the most.

The system co-opted the tourism associations through a need for stability, the conventional systems thinking reason. It attempted to better integrate the work of the groups with its own, and to achieve more and better results, amongst other motives.

In their turn, the tourism associations allowed the process to occur because they saw immediate and longer-term benefits for their members. Cooption requires two-way commitments and can obviously both broaden and limit the choices available to the organisation as a whole, and to individual tourism associations.

The learning associated with the co-optation process should in theory make the system better able to adapt to its environment (Sommerhoff 1969). To offer a concrete example of this, if the number of visitor-oriented businesses (and communities) directly involved in the promotion and development of an area’s industry increases through the means of TA co-optation, the result should be richer information flows (feedback - in both directions) and better overall system performance. This was found to occur in practice in south Herefordshire, and while the usefulness of the process was difficult (if not impossible) to quantify, many of the interviewees seemed to think that it was of value.
Dynamics and the steady state - these concepts were discussed in the Methodology chapter, and an important question was posed: how far is the steady state concept applicable to social organisations? It has been established that tourism associations work towards visitor industry development as part of a wider system, but does the system work towards a defined and agreed-upon end-state or equilibrium (classic steady state theory - Emery 1969) or a dynamic equilibrium involving continual adjustment to changing environmental and internal forces (Kast and Rosenzweig 1981)? An answer to this provided by the tourism association study is that both are relevant:

- the research has demonstrated that a measure of agreement over the goals of the visitor industry development system within destination areas is shared by system elements (if only implicitly, and operationalised in different ways at varying levels of that system)

- but at the same time the system itself changes continually in response to internal and external pressures, and its goals will inevitably be modified over time as well.

Related to this discussion, quite how far the system gets better at achieving its goals is a moot point given a constantly changing environment and evolving structure. Perhaps the best that can be said is that its performance will be optimal rather than maximal at any one time.

The concept of equilibrium does seem less appropriate in such dynamic situations:

* ... rather, a characteristic resultant to such a dynamic situation *sic* is the elaboration of organisation *"*

Greene 1976

- and the involvement of tourism associations in the system for visitor industry development can be regarded as part of a process of elaboration, one which may be a condition of system survival. The potential and actual contributions of TAs to the system, including for example to promotional budgets and as lobbying forces, can be viewed in terms of the social organisation accumulating resources which can help to maintain its work at a time when public sector resources are declining (Kast and Rosenzweig 1981).

Finally, the two stages of data collection suggest that the elements of visitor industry development systems in tourist destinations probably do have the ability to achieve 'equifinality', achieving broadly similar states (whether steady states or dynamic equilibria) from differing initial conditions and in differing ways. Tourism associations probably do not operate identically within the tourism system in different areas on a day-to-day basis, but it can be postulated that they fit into each local organisation in a comparable manner throughout England and Wales and, further, that the main characteristics of each system are likely to be essentially similar. While the case
study data are locality-specific, therefore, the chief conclusions of the rural case study can be extrapolated to other destinations and destination types with appropriate care, informed by national data from the survey.

Causation - seeking to assess the contribution of TAs as a part of the tourism development system through tracing cause and effect combined with the concepts of necessity and sufficiency is complicated enormously by the many factors involved. The best way to approach it is probably to ask: does the system function better with tourism associations than without? Referring back to the concepts of necessity and sufficiency outlined in the Methodology chapter, it can be said that:

♦ the work of tourism associations is probably not a necessary and sufficient cause of visitor industry development in an area; rather,

♦ it seems more likely that tourism associations are needed (or at least very useful) for industry development but cannot produce it alone, making them necessary but not sufficient causes.

Thus TAs can be seen as coproducers of industry development in destination areas (Ackoff and Emery 1972). However, the scale of analysis at which the question is asked will affect the outcome for, in theory at least, it is conceivable that the work of a well-organised and enterprising TA could be sufficient to develop the industry in an individual, small countryside location neglected by other developmental bodies - the TA would then be a producer.

To end this section, the analysis has up until now been couched predominantly in structure:function terms for reasons of simplicity and clarity. This viewpoint is undoubtedly of relevance, because for example broad agreement on the meaning and role of the organisation for developing the rural industry was discerned from the case study findings in particular, a key foundation of the structure:function perspective (Selznick 1981).

However the process-oriented viewpoint, more attuned with systems thinking, must also be acknowledged. Recognising the fact that most organisations are the result of complex forces, a major tenet of the function: process perspective is that despite the various alternative ways in which they may be ordered, organisations-as-systems never succeed in conquering the non-rational dimensions of organisational behaviour, an aspect which the structure:function viewpoint tends to neglect (Selznick 1981), resulting in problems for the analyst investigating causation. With a function: process perspective, the unit of analysis becomes the matrix of interacting, goal-seeking, decision-making individuals and subgroups, whether the matrix is part of a formal organisation or only a loose collective.

The conclusions that may be drawn are limited because of the quantity and quality of the data, but it was clear from the case study interviews that personalities, politics and rivalries had a lot to

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do with the way in which the system operated in the case study area of south Herefordshire. The structure: function perspective has its merits, but function: process considerations are important, although to what degree it is difficult to tell precisely.

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS - CONCLUSION

This section has analysed the data collection stages from a systems perspective, and established that:

♦ both tourism associations and the system within which they work are systems for marketing the visitor product of tourist destination areas

♦ the primary function of tourism associations and the wider system is communication;

♦ TAs were found to be complex, purposive and adaptive organic organisations, open systems working in changing environments, occupying certain boundary roles and sharing others, working cooperatively as part of a non-hierarchical, multinode, matrix organisation to which they had been coopted;

♦ their goals could be seen as linked and broadly similar to those of the rest of the system;

♦ they could operate independently or in a more or less controlled fashion;

♦ TAs undertook functions that other bodies could not or would not do, but also undertook collaborative activities;

♦ tourism associations could variously be regarded as producers and coproducers according to circumstance, and were necessary but not sufficient causes of industry development;

♦ they may have a role in structuring the industry in destination areas including those in the countryside, one which may be recognised by public bodies; and

♦ the process-oriented viewpoint has a role in the analysis of these organisations alongside the function:process perspective.
The next section will link the literature review with the results of the data collection and systems analysis to offer indications as to how the work of tourism associations can affect local economies in terms of employment and incomes. It will focus upon the potential impacts of TAs working in rural destination areas, but it is emphasized that the findings are broadly applicable to all types of destination areas in England and Wales.

TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS AND RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The literature review established that the primary and secondary sectors of the rural economy of England and Wales are suffering continuing problems, and the vitally important service sector is often constrained by low effective local demand and high leakages. The visitor industry was identified as having potential for job growth, helping to raise local incomes with positive effects upon the socio-economic environment of the countryside.

Visiting the countryside is likely to remain popular, particularly with more wealthy social groups, and the work of tourism associations can help bring more money into the rural economy and keep it there for longer.

The Regional Economics Perspective

The main beneficiaries of visitor spending in the countryside are not accommodation providers but others receiving visitor spending, either directly or through the supply of intermediate goods and services (Coppock et al 1975). The service sector, including shops and garages, is particularly well supported, and the publicity role of TAs can draw the attention of tourists to these businesses in a destination area while the developmental role could include making proprietors fully aware of the possibilities of improved levels of visitor income and the sharing of experience on how to go about achieving this goal. This latter point could of course extend to other major tourism beneficiaries such as the transport, communications and agriculture sectors, and the case study provided a good example in the form of the Herefordshire Hamper food producer group.
Economic multiplier studies have concluded that the number of spending opportunities in an individual area needs to be increased if the locality is to take full advantage of the spending power of visitors to create and maintain jobs and incomes (Vaughan 1985). TAs can contribute by encouraging new starters, especially in locally-provided services and accommodation, and the Herefordshire Farm and Country Holiday Group provides a good example of one doing exactly this (see also Frater 1983). Small businesses such as those owned and run by the group members are an excellent means of ensuring that visitor expenditure is retained locally as income.

Also, as agricultural incomes in less favoured areas decline, the role of tourism associations in promoting and developing the visitor industry is valuable because tourism performs better at turning business income into personal income than other activities (Coppock et al 1981). This may also be regarded as additional justification for the involvement of local authorities and other public sector bodies in TAs.

Small, locally-owned tourism businesses are known to purchase a considerable proportion of their inputs from other local businesses (Brownrigg and Greig 1974), but the work of tourism associations can further improve these inter-business linkages in rural destination areas. This would have the effect of reducing 'leakages' and thus increasing the proportion of visitor revenue retained within the local economy (Jackson 1986). The Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire has a "privileged supplier" membership category, the members of which offered preferential prices to the rest - this can be seen as one very practical way of improving sectoral linkages.

A successful TA that improves visitor levels in an area could also have the effect of raising demand from businesses for all forms of inputs, and thus potentially improving local linkages with the visitor industry still further and creating opportunities for new local suppliers. As the most appropriate role for the visitor industry in a regional economy is in the support of other sectors rather than as a basic sector in itself (Coppock et al 1975), strengthening sectoral linkages is very important. Also, as tourism can be important for incomes and employment in all branches of local economies (Shaw et al 1987), developing the industry will benefit much more than just those businesses with obvious visitor connections.

**Employment**

Given that accommodation use is the main determinant of job creation in the countryside through tourism (Coppock et al 1975), it is important to publicise and stimulate the sector. The role of hoteliers' associations such as the one in Ross-on-Wye is clearly important, therefore, in both their promotional functions and such internal ones as:

- referral (keeping the bednight in the locality and the local economy);
♦ monitoring standards and arranging training; and
♦ providing advice and support to new and existing businesses.

Again, this constitutes further justification for the involvement of public sector bodies in setting up and sustaining TAs, including those in sectors other than accommodation.

While tourists in bed and breakfast and guest houses generate little more employment than the average for all accommodation use, and those staying in self-catering accommodation, with friends and relatives, and camping and caravanning generate the least (Coppock et al 1975), it must be recognised that these progressively less formal types of accommodation provision may be all that many remoter and less well-known localities have to offer to the visitor. Tourism associations have as much of a role in strengthening the sector here as elsewhere, and are perhaps even more valuable in relative terms than in better-known places where the accommodation sector is more developed. This is because of the lower revenue-per-job ratio associated with less formal types of accommodation (Hanna 1976), although purely hospitality-oriented TAs are less likely to be formed in quieter areas because of the low density of suitable businesses (this does not apply to the special-case Farm Holiday Groups, of course).

Visitor Markets

While it is true that day trippers spend little in comparison to tourists, largely because they do not pay for accommodation, the numbers of staying visitors are often small even in the most popular countryside areas. The first task for tourism associations based in remoter, less well-known or less attractive areas is to attract visitors there (and the potential for this was recognised by the ETB in *Visitors in the countryside*), for any spending is better than none. Thus the publicity function is vitally important - the visitor leaflet produced by the Wyedean Attractions Group is a good example here.

Product development is important too, however, for visitors have to have something to do and see, and it is through this function that a locality can hope to hold on to its day visitors for longer and even aim to turn them into staying visitors once a critical mass of activities, attractions and accommodation is achieved. The relationship between the Ross and District Hoteliers' Association, WAG, and the Countryside Commission can perhaps be seen in these terms.

Seasonality

The Tayside study demonstrated that there is the capacity to generate more visitor income from existing facilities, primarily by lengthening the tourist season (Coppock et al 1975). A survey respondent noted that one tourism association in the English Midlands does this by staging and
publicising a pre-Christmas festival in the otherwise unremarkable small country town in which it was located, and successfully attracted hundreds of additional shoppers at a quiet time of year for visitors.

**Rural Economic Development - Conclusion**

In the literature review chapter it was stated that, in terms of local economies and societies, improving the contribution of the visitor industry means:

- increasing the absolute levels of visitor spending in the local area; and
- keeping as much revenue within the area as possible.

While they are not the only organisations working for visitor industry development in the countryside, it has been demonstrated that tourism associations can and do have an important role to play as part of visitor industry development systems in achieving these aims. They are able to do this in urban and coastal destinations as well as in rural areas, primarily through encouraging local economies to become more oriented towards the needs of visitors, particularly through locally-owned and -run businesses - through marketing in the broadest sense of the term.

Stimulation of the accommodation sector is highly desirable in terms of local economies, but less well-known areas with little or no provision for staying tourists need to publicise and develop their visitor industry before hospitality jobs can contribute significantly to local welfare. Firms supplying the needs of the day visitor are clearly important, then, and tourism associations should be formed in areas without them to help support all types of business which are or could be connected to the industry.

Criticism of tourism associations was encountered on numerous occasions during the course of the study. One regularly-aired complaint was founded upon the (frequently unsubstantiated) assertion that many are populated by and often seemingly run for the benefit of small businesses, and were of little use as a consequence. The role of major industry players is clearly very important in any local visitor industry, but small businesses predominate in the structure of the oft-fragmented rural tourism industry and are important for local incomes, and thus TAs are perhaps more useful in the countryside in relative terms than they are in urban areas.

Finally, in bringing people, money and activity into an area, the visitor industry can act as a 'shop window' for destination areas, helping to attract investment in tourism and a wide range of other types of business. In south Herefordshire, APH recognised this as an important function.
DEVELOPING TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS AS PART OF VISITOR INDUSTRIES

This section advances suggestions concerning suitable ways in which tourism associations could develop and best practice for their work and relationships with other system elements.

ASSOCIATION DEVELOPMENT

How could tourism associations in England and Wales best develop to improve returns from the visitor industry for the purposes of local economic development? It is difficult to generalise because everything depends upon local circumstances; a blanket prescription for 'sophisticated' TAs may not necessarily be appropriate for areas where other elements in the development system are active and enterprising, but the first point to be made is that there should be more of them - TAs should be formed in locations which presently have none. Efforts to rejuvenate those that have become inactive may be appropriate in some cases, but care must be taken not to create more problems than are solved.

Other recommendations are briefly discussed below.

Types and Structures

Determining the type of TA most appropriate for an individual area will depend upon the characteristics of the local industry. Sectoral TAs undoubtedly have their roles; there is much to be said for groups that can provide their members with specialist support and advice (Farm Holiday Groups are already widespread, of course), and it is contended that any TA is better than none. There may be a role for new types of sectoral tourism associations for industry sectors other than those covered by the existing accommodation and attractions group types, too.

However, focussing upon the lesser-known areas with small-scale tourism economies, including many countryside areas, the relatively low numbers of all types of visitor businesses and the lack of concentration of sectoral businesses in such areas add to the reasons for recommending that broad-membership groups are probably the most appropriate for pursuing integrated community-scale visitor industry development. Broad-membership groups do seem to have greater potential for developing small-scale tourism industries and from the perspective of the study are attractive because they are more likely - or able - to adopt a holistic perspective towards development. Some existing associations, particularly hoteliers' groups, could perhaps be re-formed as broad-membership groups.
Establishing sub-regional federations may be worthwhile. They can help as channels of communication between locality-specific tourism associations, for pooling experience, and undertaking activities which are beyond the resources of the average individual group. There may be problems with levels of commitment to such organisations, and conflicts of interest may be inevitable, however.

Membership and Linkages

Small TAs inevitably have resource and other constraints that limit their effectiveness, and it is recommended that they should make active efforts to recruit more members. Local businesses of all types should be persuaded to join, and membership fee structures adjusted to attract them.

The public sector - tourism associations should actively seek to obtain public sector involvement with their work.

The voluntary sector - links with many kinds of local voluntary organisations can be important. Formal links are not necessarily needed (because individual cross-memberships and interpersonal relationships may be sufficient) but may be more reliable.

Private individuals - individuals with specialised knowledge are valuable as members or unpaid staff, especially those with organisational, administrative and publicity skills. One group surveyed had recruited a 'tame' local journalist.

For visitor industry development to be truly community-directed, TAs should in theory extend the opportunity of membership to ordinary local private individuals with an interest. It was not possible to determine the nature of the private individuals in membership of the surveyed groups, and there was only one private individual in one of the south Herefordshire tourism associations (APH). While there could clearly be serious problems involved with extending membership to local populations, and local authority involvement with many groups can be regarded as an indirect means of community participation, tourism associations should carefully consider the merits of involving ordinary members of the public in their work if visitor industries are to respond to market requirements and for tourism development to become more community-driven, amongst other considerations.

Activities

Operational - Promotional

TAs should seek to obtain financial support for producing literature advertising their local tourism products.
The visitor market needs clear information on the opportunities available at tourist destinations, information that is accessible while they are planning visits and, perhaps even more importantly, when they arrive. Groups not presently producing publicity literature should do so if there is little or no other appropriate local material available. Publicity material should aim to make visitors aware of all the visitor resources of a locality, not just members’ businesses. Maintaining contact with any other organisations which might be able to assist with distribution is worthwhile.

Appropriate advertising may be also worth considering, aimed at the public but also at trade. While a presence at trade fairs is expensive (well beyond the means of most TAs), and opinions differ on the value for money of these events, tourism associations should seek to collaborate with other public and voluntary organisations to reduce the costs of these and all other forms of publicity and promotion.

Active promotional measures (packages, events) are perhaps the most direct way of raising levels of visitor expenditure in the destination. Staging events should not be beyond the resources of most TAs if they work in collaboration with other local bodies and initiatives, and in most rural localities for example there are fairs and competitions to which carefully-managed numbers of visitors could be attracted. Holiday packages require inputs of time, finance and commitment that are probably beyond most small TAs at present, but the link between APH and Country Village Weekend Breaks in Herefordshire demonstrates that a tourism association can act as a catalyst to get such ideas off the ground to everyone’s benefit.

Operational - Internal

Newsletters are time-consuming to produce but serve as a useful means of maintaining contact with less active members. Social events help maintain the cohesion and enthusiasm of the group; they are often the only formal meetings that many members attend. Related to this point, the intra-group advice and support function seems very valuable too.

The business referral function is important. Making formal referral systems work in practice between members of accommodation sector tourism associations is often difficult, but referral usually occurs informally anyway. For broad-membership and attractions TAs, business referral can be easily accomplished by placing group leaflets at members’ establishments.

The market for tourism appreciates a quality product. To this end, monitoring of standards is valuable, though can clearly be highly contentious, and training and other means of professional support is very important. Training may be provided though links with local colleges, tourist boards, and other training providers.
The pressure group function may be critical to the long-term development of local visitor industries, but more direct effort is probably needed in most locations. All tourism associations should take a more active role in providing and developing the tourism product that the market requires. This can be done by lobbying other bodies to take action, but all TAs can take simple measures to develop local tourism resources themselves. This should be done in a planned way, in consultation with appropriate other organisations and individuals, and over a medium- or long-term time horizon. If locally-based visitor-oriented groups do not make an effort, no-one else is likely to, particularly in lesser-known areas.

It is recommended that TAs maintain contact with all levels of local authority, however their views may differ. There are advantages and disadvantages associated with having local authorities in membership and/or on executive committees, and indeed many LAs resist, citing possible conflicts of interest. But local authorities have resources and powers that are often critical to successful local visitor industry development.

Market research is important. Much published market information is available for tourism associations to draw upon, but there is no substitute for locality-specific data. The collection and analysis of this need not be necessarily complicated or expensive.

External Relationships

The point has been made that local authorities are a prime contact, but close contact with other public sector organisations including in rural areas for instance the Countryside Commission, RDC, and ADAS can be very valuable too.

TAs are strongly recommended to join their regional tourist board (if permitted to do so) unless the membership has full access to the usual RTB services by some other means and a good channel of communication.

Link with other local tourism associations are a good idea in areas where formal resources for tourism may be thinly spread. TAs should get connected to other appropriate local voluntary bodies, too - again, formal links are not necessarily needed, because individual cross-memberships may be sufficient. The utility of national federations is difficult to judge (other than the universally-praised Farm Holiday Bureau).

Management and Organisation of Tourism Associations

Tourism associations should organise on formal legal bases, as voluntary associations with formal memberships as a minimum, if only to ensure that they are taken more seriously (it also
reduces the liability risks run by officers). Getting established as companies limited by guarantee is useful for large groups and/or if the TA is likely to be trading extensively.

Appointing officers gives identifiable points of contact for communication with other visitor industry development bodies. However, it is important to spread the necessary workload amongst the membership to avoid 'burning-out' key individuals.

Groups that are able to do so should aim to employ at least one member of staff part-time. This might ideally be someone with a good knowledge of but no immediate business interest in the local visitor industry. Permanent communication arrangements may be important, too. It is recognised, however, that these may be beyond the means of many tourism associations.

Resources

Subscription income can be usefully augmented in several ways to help cover the costs of group operations and publications. The sale of advertising space in TA publications is one method, and fundraising efforts another (these can of course take the form of visitor-oriented events). TAs should try to obtain financial support for basic group operational funds - the public sector is important source, primarily local authorities.

Geographical

The choice of an appropriate geographical scale upon which to base the activities of a TA is important but not straightforward. It will be influenced by a wide range of considerations, including TA type, local organisation-for-tourism structural factors (briefly discussed below), the nature and resources of individual destination areas and market perceptions, and the presence of existing groups. District council areas are frequently used, but may be too large for full membership commitment and the development of a true community-oriented visitor product - trading-off size (numbers and area covered) and local involvement is a complex business, and an important practical consideration in countryside locations is the time and effort required to get to meetings.

Cross-boundary tourism associations may have valuable coordinating roles to play, particularly where DC boundaries do not coincide with recognizable visitor destination areas.
How can external bodies best assist the development of tourism associations? While much will depend on the characteristics of each locality, some recommendations of general applicability can be made.

The public sector should recognise the enabling role that it undoubtedly has towards tourism associations and similar local initiatives within local visitor industry development systems. TAs share sub-sets of the aims of many public sector organisations, and should be viewed as potentially useful partners rather than competitors or irrelevancies, particularly at a time of constrained public sector resource availability. Certain tourist boards could usefully modify their attitudes towards these voluntary groups.

Local authorities are probably in the best position to encourage and coordinate the work of TAs. They should possibly take the initiative for establishing TAs where none exist in the absence of action from the private or voluntary sectors. Small amounts of financial support provided by LAs can go a long way when most of the work is provided by volunteers. Project funding can be a good way to stimulate action and attract contributions from other organisations, but core funding - or at least the provision of a secretariat - may be essential in the formative years of a tourism association. Support and encouragement from other public sector bodies goes a long way too, and can help meet some of their objectives.

Relationships between the public and voluntary sector organisations can often be problematic, but attempts by LAs to control TAs are often counter-productive in the long term.

The public sector should get involved with tourism associations to produce a public: private: voluntary sector structure that will help develop local visitor industries in a manner that is efficient, equitable and effective. This will inevitably involve some sharing of power by all participants.

The visitor industry development environment in other parts of England and Wales could arguably aim to evolve a structure similar to that in south Herefordshire, consisting of one big, broad-membership group with which smaller broad-membership community groups and sector-specific TAs collaborate.
CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has:

♦ presented the results of soft systems modelling of the 'problem' situation, and discussed the application of more general systems concepts;

♦ outlined the ways in which tourism associations can help develop local economies, and thereby incomes and employment with particular reference to the countryside; and

♦ advanced recommendations about how the work, roles and effectiveness of TAs might be developed by the groups themselves and other elements of tourism development systems.

The final chapter concludes the study.
Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

The study has established that there are hundreds of voluntary sector groups working at the level of the destination to publicise and develop local visitor industries in England and Wales. Part of the work focussed upon rural areas, but most of the conclusions are applicable to TAs based in urban and resort areas too.

Outwardly, the tourism associations could be differentiated according to a common set of criteria. When viewed as a group, they exhibited common characteristics but were plainly varied and could be differentiated according to certain criteria. The tentative classification of tourism associations according to the breadth of the visitor industry within membership proposed in the questionnaire survey chapter (broad-membership and sectoral) was found to be operable in practice in general terms. The ability broadly to differentiate individual groups according to the relative balance of their functions between 'operational' and 'planning/development' activities was confirmed during the case study, with some groups undertaking more of the latter 'higher-level' functions than others. Characterising any of the four south Herefordshire groups as trade associations operating purely as vehicles for the pursuit of member self-interest would be to oversimplify matters, for all contributed towards the longer-term development of the visitor industry in the district; but some clearly did so more than others.

Two main measures of sophistication were proposed, based upon the survey data and analyses. The first of these was that more sophisticated TAs were legal voluntary associations with executive committees and formal, subscription-paying memberships, and all the groups in the case study area conformed to this model. The second registered the involvement of groups in progressively more sophisticated degrees of activity:

- tourism-trade orientation
- 'active' promotion/publicity activities
- involvement in 'planning/development' of the local visitor industry

Involvement in 'planning/development' activities is held to be a useful characteristic of tourism associations, and particularly in lesser-known locations which the formal tourism development system tends to ignore. As predicted, however, the case study (and the case study TA rating exercise in particular) showed that the criteria determining sophistication could not be applied in a straightforward manner to determine the effectiveness of tourism associations as factors in the development of local tourism industries.

While analysis of the survey findings indicated that the activities of hoteliers' and broad-membership group types were more likely to concentrate upon the potentially important
'planning/development' functions than those of the other group types, the case study indicated that this was a matter of degree. The discussion about the need for 'sophisticated' TAs that concluded the questionnaire chapter needs to be reiterated here - tourism associations are locality-specific responses to a perceived need in visitor industry development systems, and as each locale is unique as a visitor destination there can be no universally-applicable model for tourism associations. However:

- TAs are valuable for visitor industry development;
- they can have positive effects upon incomes and employment; and
- it is difficult to escape the conclusion that broad-membership groups are probably the most appropriate tourism association types for visitor industry development in lesser-known areas, including many parts of the countryside.

Measures of success were hard to come by. Understandably, none of the tourism associations case-studied had figures available on the effectiveness of their work and interrelationships with other elements of the visitor industry development environment in south Herefordshire. For this reason, objective evaluation of the effects of tourism associations within wider tourism development systems was not possible.

The conclusion that the effectiveness of these organisations cannot adequately be assessed by the essentially quantitative means of a questionnaire survey is reiterated. The rural case study suggested that they have the potential to perform valuable roles as part of the visitor industry development systems in their areas. The work of TAs may produce direct and indirect benefits for local economies in terms of jobs and incomes, although it is not contended that these benefits would necessarily be of major significance given the nature and scale of the problems of rural areas outlined in the literature review (McLaughlin 1987; Rogers 1987). Any attempt to measure the effects of their work in quantitative terms would be complicated by the fact that each operates in a complex environment, however - disentangling the precise contribution of a tourism association to jobs and incomes in a specific locality from those of other elements of the tourism development system there and the huge range of intangibles that affect the attraction of tourist destinations would be an extremely difficult, if not impossible, task. To complicate matters further, it is plain that the choice of measures of TA effectiveness (success of the industry within the local community vs. the district, of individual businesses vs. sub-regional tourism economies, for instance) would be critical to the utility of the results. Determining their real-world effectiveness would thus be difficult, and if it were possible would yield results the interpretation of which would depend to a significant degree upon the perspective of the observer.

The list of recommendations for the future development of TAs in lesser-known areas can be collapsed into four. These are:
1. There should be more of them, and new ones should probably be broadmembership groups.

2. They should become more professional, and get better connected both internally and externally.

3. Publicity functions are necessary, but the planning/development role of TAs should be emphasised in appropriate locations. 'Active' measures to attract visitors may produce the most direct results.

4. Public sector bodies should welcome and support professionally-minded TAs, recognising that the groups share many of their own goals and have a valuable role to play as part of the visitor industry development system.

The work and role of tourism associations can be seen as complementing the visitor industry development work of tourist boards and local authorities, or as substituting for the omissions of these bodies, depending upon the perspective of the observer.

Given that it has been established that:

♦ TAs are engaged in much the same enterprise as other elements of the tourism development system (most notably tourist boards, but also local authorities); and

♦ they may (and do) develop to achieve the status of legitimate system participants, able to contribute resources to the system's work

- there exists a strong theoretical rationale for closer working between tourism associations and public sector organisations with tourism responsibility. Government spending on industry support in England is projected to decrease by 50% between 1993 and 1995/6 (Anon. 1993b), so the roles of TAs may become increasingly important as the regional and national tourist boards are threatened with collapse (see for instance Davis 1993; Ison 1993; Mead 1993).

However, one of the many interesting points to come out of the study was that regional tourist boards seemed to be aware of no more than about half of all the tourism associations in England and Wales. Some were clearly more aware of the populations of TAs in their regions than others, but none knew of them all (or were in a position to inform the research project of them). This lack of knowledge of groups which were at least potentially important allies of the boards was surprising. Some tourism associations are probably limited to being ineffectual talking shops providing opportunities for the disgruntled to complain, and others are seen by certain regional tourist boards as competitors and a threat to the boards' status. However, the case study found that, if properly managed and allowed a measure of freedom that necessitates some sharing of
power, tourism associations can be important components of the visitor industry development system of rural areas - and, by extension, of urban and resort destinations too. There are many questions which the study has, inevitably, left unanswered. One important one is - what proportion of the tourism associations surveyed were community tourism development associations in the sense implied by the work of Murphy (1985) and others? On the basis of the limited data available, the membership of most seemed to be composed predominantly of private sector businesses, and it thus seems that there were few or even no more community-oriented associations in existence at the time of the study. Despite the fact that the difference between the two can arguably be said to be only one of degree, it is hard to imagine how members of the public that were interested but not directly involved in the visitor industry would fit into organisations case studied, like the Wyedean Attractions Group or the Herefordshire Farm and Country Holidays Group. Even APH would have had little time for them, realistically - the single individual for whom a membership category was created was, it was implied, intending to enter the visitor industry himself at some stage in the future.

But for the industry and communities to survive and prosper over the long term, they must develop together (Murphy 1988). A two-way relationship exists:

♦ the industry has a responsibility to the community; and

♦ communities often look to the visitor industry to improve not only incomes and employment but also their quality of life, including conservation of local heritage (D’Amore 1983).

It may not be easy for businesses in the visitor industry to work in partnership with the communities in which they are based. The notion of a shared interest upon which participation by ordinary members of the public would be founded is not always easy to sustain (see for instance Prentice 1993). While a greater degree of involvement by local people may well bring benefits for existing tourism associations, localities and visitors, there may be a case for setting up community associations to work in parallel with the more industry-oriented TAs studied in this research project.

Tourism associations are one means for involvement of people in their local visitor industries, and their role may be of particular importance in lesser-known locations, including many rural areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study has opened up numerous avenues for future research. Much work needs to be done on ‘greener’, more community-based tourism associations. Such research could utilise the theoretical constructs developed during the course of the present research.
Other studies should include:

♦ more work on measures of the effectiveness of TAs;

♦ the appropriate organisational structures for tourism associations within various tourist destination types;

♦ the prospects for raising levels of community involvement in existing, relatively industry-oriented tourism associations; and

♦ detailed consideration of TAs in resort and urban locations.
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APPENDIX ONE

Questionnaire Form
CONFIDENTIAL

TOURIST / VISITOR ORGANISATION SURVEY
Please skip any question with which you have difficulty.

1. Is my record of your organisation's address & contact name (on the envelope of this letter) correct?

PLEASE TICK: YES □
NO □

If not, please write the correct details here, including the names of the Secretary &/or Chairman (where relevant):

Telephone: ( ) .....................

MEMBERSHIP

2. Does your organisation have a membership?

PLEASE TICK: YES □
NO □ Go to question 5

What is the approx. number of members at present? ...........

Please estimate the number of members that the organisation had 2 years ago:

..........

SUBSCRIPTIONS

3. Does the membership pay subscriptions?

PLEASE TICK: YES □
NO □ Go to q. 4

If YES, is the subscription rate the same for all members?

PLEASE TICK: YES □ Go to q. 4
NO □

If NO, how does the subscription rate vary? Please give brief details:
MEMBERSHIP
4. Does your membership include representation from any of the following:

TICK ONE OR MORE AS APPROPRIATE

Local authority (District/Borough/County/Regional Councils) □
Chamber of Commerce □
Chamber of Trade □
Private individuals □
Businesses □ [See below]
Other □ [See below]

If you ticked 'BUSINESSES' what type of businesses are, in general, eligible for membership of the group?

PLEASE TICK

All local businesses □
All local tourist/visitor-related businesses □
A restricted range of local businesses only □

If you ticked 'A RESTRICTED RANGE OF LOCAL BUSINESSES ONLY', please specify the type of business generally acceptable:

If you ticked 'OTHER' please give brief details of these members:
REPRESENTATION
5. Is your group represented upon any other bodies?

PLEASE TICK: YES □
NO □ Go to q. 6

If YES: which bodies?

TICK ONE OR MORE AS APPROPRIATE

Local authorities (District/Borough/County/Regional Councils) □

Chamber of Trade □
Chamber of Commerce □
Tourist Board □

A group similar to your organisation □

A federation of groups similar to your organisation □ [See below]

Other □

Please name the federation/other group upon which you organisation is represented:

LEGAL STATUS
6. What is the legal status of your organisation?

PLEASE TICK

Informal group with no constitution □
Voluntary association with constitution □
Company limited by guarantee □
Company limited by share □
Other □ [See below]

If you ticked 'OTHER', please give brief details:
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
7. Does your group have an executive committee?

PLEASE TICK: YES □
□ Go to q. 8

If YES, state the approx. number of members of the executive committee:

NUMBER OF PEOPLE

Private individuals..........
Businesses & their reps...........
Local authority reps...........(District/Borough/County/Regional Councils)
Reps. of other government bodies...........
Other...........

Please briefly specify who these are:

What is the frequency of committee meetings?

PLEASE TICK

Weekly □ Monthly □ Fortnightly □ Quarterly □
Other □ (Please specify below)
HISTORICAL ASPECTS
8. Please give the approx. date of establishment of your organisation:

......................

Who provided the initiative for formation of the group?

TICK ONE OR MORE AS APPROPRIATE

Individuals from private sector □

Local authority (District/Boro'/County/Regional Councils)

Chamber of Commerce, Trade etc □

Other □ Please specify below:

OTHER LOCAL ORGANISATIONS
9. Was there an organisation in your area with similar aims to those of your group before yours was established?

PLEASE TICK: YES □ [See below] NO □ NOT KNOWN □

If YES, please give brief details about this previous organisation, if known, such as the fate of the previous group & any reasons for it ceasing to exist (if appropriate.)

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RESOURCES

10. Many voluntary and semi-public agencies operate on a shoestring - where does the majority of your organisation's operating funds come from?

PLEASE TICK

Member □
Other □ Please briefly specify where these funds come from:

Has the organisation, in the past year, obtained funds from outside sources for particular projects?

PLEASE TICK: YES □ [See below]

If you ticked YES, what were these funds for, and what was their source? Please give brief details:

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11. Does your group have paid officers or staff?

PLEASE TICK: YES □

NO □

If YES, please indicate how many:

Full time paid........

Part time paid........

12. Is your group a member of a regional/area tourist board?

PLEASE TICK: YES □

NO □

If so, which?

.................................................................

Whether you ticked YES or NO, would you briefly describe the nature of your group's relationship with the regional/area tourist board, and your attitude toward the board?
ACTIVITIES

13. In the last year, has your organisation been involved in any of the following activities & functions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provided a brochure aimed at the trade</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provided a brochure aimed at the public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken advertising aimed at the trade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken advertising aimed at the public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a presence at trade fairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided a newsletter for members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranged social events for members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitored the standards of tourist provision of members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acted as a pressure group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoted business referral between members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been consulted by the local authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborated with training initiatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided a forum for the interchange of ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offered professional advice &amp; support to members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised package holidays to the area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put on events for the public</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other functions/activities of note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Please specify below)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the activities/functions that you indicated above, please list the 2 roles performed by your group that you consider are the most important:

1. Most important: .................................................................

2. Second most important: ......................................................
PURPOSE OF ORGANISATION
14. Is your organisation primarily concerned with the local tourist and visitor trade, with an interest in promoting the development of the area's tourist/visitor industry?

PLEASE TICK

YES

NO

If not, what is the primary concern of the organisation? Please give brief details in the space below:

LOCAL AUTHORITIES
15. Do you have regular contact with your local authorities?

PLEASE TICK: YES NO

Town/Borough/Met. Borough Council

District Council

County Council (Region in Scotland)

What is the name of the local authority with which you have the most contact (if applicable)?

If you would like a summary of the research findings, please tick box
16. Is there anything else that you can add to the information already given that will more fully describe your organisation and its work?

17. Please add any specific views or details relating to your experience of tourist/visitor groups that you feel may be of use to the research study:

THANK YOU FOR BEING OF ASSISTANCE TOWARDS THIS RESEARCH STUDY.

If you have any points to make, or have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at the following address, which is where completed questionnaires should be sent:

CHRISTOPHER STONE  M.Sc.
Department of Food & Hospitality Services,
Sheffield City Polytechnic,
Pond Street, SHEFFIELD S1 1WB
Tel. Sheffield (0742) 720911 ext.2416
(or departmental secretary ext.2329)
APPENDIX TWO

Questionnaire Covering Letter
Dear Sir / Madam,

I am conducting a survey aimed at gathering basic information about organisations similar to yours within the UK. There is an urgent need for such information, and the English Tourist Board have shown considerable interest in my research for this reason. I hope that you will assist the study by completing the short questionnaire enclosed.

My aim is to assess the contribution made by voluntary associations, semi-public agencies and similar groups towards the development of local tourist and visitor industries. I believe that your organisation, and similar groups, have an important role to play, although this is insufficiently understood at present; it is clearly important to obtain the views of every group, therefore, for a comprehensive study. I wish to stress, however, that individual replies will be treated with the strictest confidentiality - the findings will not refer to any particular individual or group.

The study, at Ph.D. level, will reinforce the Polytechnic's reputation for tourism-related teaching and research, and the conclusions will be of direct practical relevance to the development of the British tourism and visitor industry. If you would like a summary of the results, please tick the appropriate box at the end of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire has been designed for ease of completion; it may look long, but pilot studies have shown that, on average, it takes only 12 minutes to complete. If you find problems with any question or part of a question, please do not hesitate to phone the number at the top of this letter and discuss the matter with me.

Early return of the questionnaire would assist the study immensely, and thus I urge you to complete it as soon as possible. A pre-paid reply envelope is enclosed for its return.

I look forward to hearing about your organisation,

Thank you,

Yours faithfully,

CHRISTOPHER STONE M.Sc.

PS If you no longer hold office in the organisation named on the envelope, would you please forward the package to the current secretary or director.
APPENDIX THREE

List of Respondent Tourism Associations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad-membership groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abergavenney Tourism Association</td>
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Southampton Tourist Group
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Vale of Usk Tourist Association
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Windsor Association for Tourism
Wisbech Tourism Development Group
Wrekin Tourism Association
Hoteliers' groups

Association of Ilfracombe Hoteliers
Bath Hotels and Restaurants Association
Beaumaris Tourist Association
Blackpool Self-Catering Association
Blackpool Hotel and Guest House Association
Bridlington Hotel and Guest House Association
Bridlington Flatlets Association
Brighton and Hove Hotel, Guest House and Restauranters Association
Brighton and Hove Holiday Flats Association
Brixham Hotel and Catering Association
Broadstairs Hotel and Guest House Association
Cambridge Hotel and Guest House Association
Cambridge Hoteliers Association
Canterbury Hotel and Guest House Association
Cardiff and District Hotel, Guest House and Restauranters Association
Clacton Hotel and Guest House Association
Conwy Valley Hoteliers
Corrbridge Bed and Breakfast Association
Coventry Area Visitor and Conference Association
Cumbria and Lake District Self Catering Association
Dover Hotels and Guest House Group
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English Lake District Hotel and Caterers Association (North)
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Hunstanton Hotel and Guest House Association
Isle of Wight Self-Catering Holidays Association
Lincoln Hoteliers Association
Littlehampton and District Hoteliers Association
Llandudno Hotels and Restaurants Association
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Margate Hotel and Guest Houses Association
Newquay and District Hotel and Caterers Association
North Norfolk Hoteliers Association
Nottingham Conference and Tourism Association
Penzance and District Hotel and Restauranters Association
Plymouth and District Hotel And Restauranters Association
Rhyl Hotel and Guest Houses Association
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West Wight Hotel and Caterers Association
Whitley Bay and District Hotels and Guest Houses Association
Windsor and Maidenhead Hotel and Restauranteurs Association
Worthing and District Hotel, Guest Houses and Restauranteurs Association
York Hotel and Guest House Association
York and District Hoteliers and Restauranteurs Association
Yorkshire Dales Discovery Group
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xix
Heart of Wales
Tanat Valley
Clwyd
Lleyn Peninsula

Welshpool
Llanrhaeadr-y-mochnant
Ruthin
Pwllheli
Attractions Operators' Associations

Association of Bath and District Leisure Enterprises
Association of South East Wales Attractions
Cornwall Association of Tourist Attractions
Devon Association of Tourist Attractions
East Sussex Tourist Attractions Association
North Devon Association of Tourist Attractions
Northumbrian Association of Tourist Attractions
Spectators Guide to Snowdonia Group
Wyedean Attractions Group
APPENDIX FOUR

Common TA Activity Data
APPENDIX 4

Detailed breakdown of the most common activities of tourism associations

More than 50% of TAs of each group type had done the following:

Broad-membership groups:

♦ public brochure
♦ public advertising
♦ attended trade fairs
♦ produced a newsletter
♦ arranged social events for members
♦ acted as a pressure group
♦ business referral
♦ consulted by local authority
♦ acted as ideas fora

Sectoral groups:

Sectoral-H:

♦ public brochure
♦ public advertising
♦ attend trade fairs
♦ produced a newsletter
♦ arranged social events for membership
♦ monitored standards
♦ acted as a pressure group
♦ business referral
♦ consulted by local authority
♦ acted as ideas fora
♦ offered professional advice & support

Sectoral-F:

♦ public brochure
♦ public advertising
♦ monitored standards
♦ business referral

Sectoral-A:

♦ public brochure
♦ public advertising
♦ attended trade fairs
♦ monitored standards
♦ acted as a pressure group
♦ business referral
♦ were consulted by local authority
More than 70% of TAs of each group type had done the following:

**Broad-membership groups:**
- public brochure
- acted as pressure group
- are consulted by local authority

**Sectoral groups:**

**Sectoral-H:**
- public brochure
- produce a newsletter
- arrange social events for membership
- business referral
- consulted by local authority
- act as ideas fora
- offer professional advice & support

**Sectoral-F:**
- public brochure
- public advertising
- business referral

**Sectoral-A:**
- public brochure
- attend trade fairs
- business referral