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Meet the family

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www.stannahlifts.co.uk
Welcome to Access by Design issue 135

There is much to celebrate in this latest issue; campaign progress, a centenary and award winners all feature.

The RHS Chelsea Flower Show celebrated 100 years, and provided an opportunity to review improved accessibility at one of this year’s most colourful occasions. Campaign success gets well-deserved attention by Changing Places Consortium partner, Mencap, as growing numbers of CP facilities are opened.

The 2013 Design for All Foundation Awards attracted entrants with some of the most innovative and inclusive designs and practices from across Europe, whilst CAE’s Grundtvig project demonstrates why European good practice in inclusive design should be shared.

We are reminded of the importance of ensuring our homes support independent living for an ageing population – Care and Repair Cymru champion this cause, and, not just a summer pursuit, beachside access welcomes everyone at Surfer’s Paradise.

We hope you find this issue of interest – we look forward to hearing what you think.

Geraldine McNamara
Email: geraldine.mcnamara@cae.org.uk

The double issue!

Access by Design readers will have noticed our schedule has been disrupted for some time. We are planning to publish a double issue of Access by Design, combining autumn and winter issues, 136 and 137.

We hope you’ll enjoy this unique bumper issue coming soon!
One Great George Street wins Accessibility Award

One Great George Street in Westminster has won the accessibility category at the Cateys 2013.

The hospitality industry’s Caterer and Hotelkeeper Awards (also known as the Cateys), are awarded annually to hotels, venues, restaurants, pubs and bars in a host of categories including, marketing, menus, management, training and accessibility.

This year, One Great George Street beat shortlisted Winford Manor Hotel of Bristol for the esteemed award. The conference and events venue was praised for its ‘inclusive approach to hospitality’ backed by its clear business case for inclusivity.

Readers may remember that One Great George Street also featured in issue 133, the favourite building of Jenifer Marian Littman, Chief Executive of Tourism for All. It also hosted the London Media Centre during the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

As the venue’s Cateys 2013 entry stated:

‘You only need one wheelchair user to win a conference of 250 people.’

For further information about One Great George Street, visit the venue’s website

Local Government News Street Design Awards 2013

Local Government News recognises best practice in UK street design through their annual Street Design Awards.

The winners of the 2013 Street Design Awards have recently been announced, acknowledging innovative designs in urban environments, in categories such as:

- urban green space: Millennium Town Park, States of Jersey
- highways: Wilton Street Northwich, Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council
- public lighting: LED street lighting project, Bath and north east Somerset Council
- children’s play: Brockwell Park, London Borough of Lambeth
- community-led design: Van Gogh Walk, London Borough of Lambeth (pictured above)
- pedestrian environment: Chapel Street public realm scheme, Salford City Council

For further details and information about next year’s Awards, visit the Street Design Awards website

The EHRC Disability Committee reviewed

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Disability Committee (the Committee) is a statutory decision-making committee. EHRC consults the Committee on matters affecting disabled people.

The functions of the Disability Committee include:

- promoting understanding of the importance of equality and diversity
- encouraging good practice
- promoting equality of opportunity
- promoting awareness and understanding of rights
- enforcing equality law
- working towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment
- promoting understanding of good relations

The Committee’s role has been subject to an independent review as part of a mandatory consultation under the Equality Act 2006.

The national consultation involved many stakeholders including disability groups, organisations and networks. Respondents to the review outlined a series of suggestions, some of which are listed below: Respondents suggested a broad range of areas for the Committee to focus on, such as:

- attitudes
- rights
• national and local government policy
• employment
• accessibility

Attitudes: Some respondents asked for more work to be done on challenging negative attitudes to disabled people.

Rights: Some respondents wanted more done on disability rights including, tackling barriers and making it easier for disabled people to enforce their rights.

National and local government policy: Some respondents believed that the Committee should take a proactive role on the impact of policies and services.

Employment: Some respondents saw the employment of disabled people as a crucial issue to tackle, by encouraging employers to employ more disabled people and addressing barriers.

Accessibility: Some respondents highlighted continuing problems with accessibility of products and services and the impact that can have on disabled people. They suggested that the Committee should consider:

- promoting access to the built environment and transport
- tackling the high cost of disability-related goods
- ensuring premises are accessible, whether commercial, public or private
- ensuring that all forms of transport are accessible and have adequate provision

The EHRC has since announced that it has formally written to the Minister for Women and Equalities to propose that it replaces the Committee with a ‘new, high level strategic advisory group’.

For further information about the independent review and the EHRC’s response to the review, visit the EHRC website

http://tinyurl.com/EHRC-Disability

Review of the Public Sector Equality Duty: Independent steering group report published

The Government implemented the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in 2011. The PSED aims to ‘ensure public bodies consider equality when carrying out their functions without adding unnecessary processes and bureaucracy’.

Last year, the Government announced a review of the PSED and an independent steering group was established to review the PSED for its effectiveness, and to ensure the main objective was still being met.

The independent steering group have since reviewed both the general and specific duties, gathering views from the public sector, the voluntary sector, unions, legal representatives, equality practitioners and business. The Government also called for public evidence to inform this review.

The group’s findings and recommendations for improving operation of the PSED have now been published. The group concluded it was too early to make a final judgement about the impact of the PSED. However, they found that implementation varied considerably across the sector, and an overly risk averse approach prevailed.

Is the Duty operating as intended? Apparently, ‘not as yet’.

For further information, visit the Government Equalities Office website


Design of the Year Award 2013 goes to GOV.UK

The Government’s newly revamped GOV.UK website has been awarded Design of the Year 2013.

Designed by the Government Digital Service, the website beat projects from fashion, graphics and architecture categories to take the prestigious award.

The website provides an accessible gateway to all UK governmental websites. Prime Minister David Cameron said the site was an example of ‘world class design talent’ and enhanced ‘the modern relationship between the public and government’.

For further details, visit the Designs of the Year website

http://tinyurl.com/DOTY-Design-Museum
The annual English Housing Survey (EHS) provides a general overview of housing stock across the country. It also examines the following areas:

- amenities, services and the local environment
- condition and safety
- energy performance
- improvement potential

This latest survey report contains data from 2011 and some of 2012, and comprises of 14,951 occupied or vacant dwellings.

Accessibility of dwellings and disability adaptations feature within the report. The survey assesses the features of accessible dwellings. There are four features which are considered to be key in achieving levels of accessibility for disabled dwellers or visitors. These include:

- level access
- flush threshold
- sufficiently wide door and circulation space
- WC on the ground or entry floor

In 2011, around five per cent of dwellings (1.1 million) were deemed accessible - possessing all four of these features, whilst almost six million dwellings (26 per cent) had none.

For further information, visit the Department for Communities and Local Government website

http://tinyurl.com/EHS-report-2013

BS 9266:2013: Design of accessible and adaptable general needs housing. Code of practice

BS 9266:2013 is designed to inform accessible and adaptable new dwellings. It can also be applied to existing dwellings and inform improvements and conversions.

BS 9266:2013 converts DD 266 into a full British Standard. It gives recommendations for the design of accessible and adaptable general needs housing, including flats or houses. It includes guidance on car parking, access routes to flats or houses, common circulation areas, circulation areas within dwellings, and key rooms and facilities.

The new guidance incorporates changes such as:

- general revision to take into account other recent guidance, including BS 8300:2009+A1
- revised recommendations for stairs and ramps
- revised recommendations for lifts
- revised and simplified recommendations for bathrooms and WCs
- additional guidance on lighting

Dwellings designed in accordance with BS 9266:2013 might be suitable for some wheelchair users. However, many wheelchair users and some older people might require the standards of the Wheelchair Housing Design Guide.

This British Standard supersedes DD 266:2007.

For further details, visit the British Standards Institute website

http://tinyurl.com/BS-9266-2013

Improving the design of housing to assist people with dementia

This new publication from the Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling, provides guidance on how design improvements to the home can be of benefit to people living with dementia.

Well designed housing can support a more independent life for people living with dementia. It can also contribute to a reduction in hospital admissions.

The guidance introduces key design features that will enhance internal and external living environments; it explains why extra care needs to be paid to design, and considers planning, refurbishment or redevelopment of accommodation.

The publication does not include detailed technical guidance or regulations, but none of the enclosed recommendations conflict with existing regulations.

For further details, visit the Dementia Shop website

www.dementiashop.co.uk
Design for people with dementia: an overview of building design regulators

This new report, also from the University of Stirling’s Dementia Services Development Centre, provides the following:

- information on key legislation, regulation, standards and guidance, relating to building design matters for people with dementia
- considers the variations in legislation, regulation, standards and guidance as they relate to design guidance for people with dementia
- clarification and next steps

This guidance applies to Scotland only, a version for England is being developed.

For further information, visit the University of Stirling’s Dementia Shop website

Inclusion now: The Northern Ireland Trailblazers report

The Muscular Dystrophy Campaign is the leading UK charity fighting muscle-wasting conditions. Part of this campaign is the Trailblazers, a group of young disabled campaigners from across the UK. Their efforts tackle social issues affecting young disabled people, such as higher education, employment and social and leisure opportunities.

Approximately 20 per cent of the Northern Irish population is disabled. This new Trailblazers’ report looks at what it is like to be a young disabled person living in Northern Ireland. Their investigations have found, despite legislation and much progress, there is some way to go in promoting further inclusion.

The report includes various sections on education, transport, leisure, travel, employment and housing. Obtaining barrier-free, accessible accommodation is key to young disabled people leading independent lives, but statistics provided by the Foundation for Lifetime Homes and Neighbourhoods shows that more than 40 per cent of young disabled people aged 16 to 24 are living in accommodation that does not meet their needs.

For further details of the report, visit the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign website

Roger Wakefield

The Centre for Accessible Environments regrets to announce that our Vice-Chairman, Roger Wakefield, sadly passed away on 10 July 2013 after an extended illness.

Roger joined CAE as a Trustee in March 2008, when he was a partner in the solicitors firm Nabarro LLP, where he had worked for 20 years leading their London projects team. Previously he was Director of Legal Services for the Building Employers’ Confederation where he was also Chief Executive of BEC Pension Trustees Limited.

For many years Roger was an external member and trustee of South London and Maudsley NHS Trust Charitable Funds.

Roger was also Chairman of DEBRA, the national charity working on behalf of people in the UK with the genetic condition epidermolysis bullosa.

Roger became CAE’s Vice-Chairman in 2010 and was instrumental in guiding CAE into the merger with Habinteg Housing Association Limited by providing sound advice and guidance to the Board of trustees and his unfailing support to the staff team during that time.

Roger was married with three children and lived in Bromley in Kent.

Roger’s funeral was represented by CAE Trustees and staff, past and present.

Our thoughts are with Roger’s wife and children at this sad and difficult time.
The Changing Places Consortium campaigns on behalf of those people who cannot use standard accessible toilets.

by Lloyd Page, Volunteer, National Inclusion Support Team, Mencap

The Changing Places Consortium is a group of organisations committed to supporting the rights of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities to access their communities, and for Changing Places facilities to be installed in public places.

Members of the Consortium include:

- Centre for Accessible Environments
- PAMIS
- Mencap
- Nottingham City Council
- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Scottish Government

Who needs Changing Places toilets?

Standard accessible toilets meet the needs of some disabled people – but not all. Over 230,000 of people living in the UK need personal assistance to use the toilet or change continence pads. This includes people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, some people who have had a severe stroke, some people with acquired head injuries and some older people.

They – and their families and carers – need Changing Places toilets to be able to take part in their communities. But many face a daily challenge to leave their homes because this basic need is not met in most big public places.

The number of people with complex disabilities is growing, and we are all living longer – so more people are likely to need access to Changing Places toilets in the future.

Changing Places news from around the UK

Changing Places in hospitals:
GB Partnerships, an established healthcare developer, is a Changing Places campaign supporter. The company has been operating since October 2001 and has delivered in excess of £300 million worth of primary care centres and a mental health unit in the last eight years. They have supported the provision of Changing Places at:

- Harold Wood Polyclinic
- South Liverpool NHS Treatment Centre
- Finchley Memorial Hospital

Cadbury World opens Changing Places facility:
We are delighted to announce that Cadbury World in Birmingham has opened a new Changing Places facility as part of a major refurbishment project. As a Changing Places consortium volunteer, I visited Cadbury World to support the installation of a Changing Places toilet at this very popular visitor attraction.

‘I was amazed how big Cadbury World was and what an amazing experience. I enjoyed looking around the world’s biggest Cadbury shop full of different kinds of chocolate. The visit was absolutely choctastic and it is great that the Changing Places toilet has been put in!’

Lloyd Page, Mencap

Over the years Cadbury World has grown into a large family attraction and maintains visitor numbers of more than half a million annually. We are sure that the inclusion of a Changing Places toilet will allow even more people to come along with their family and friends to enjoy this great
opportunity. The Changing Places campaign calls for more Changing Places toilets in public places, so that people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and others who need extra support can access the same opportunities as everyone else.

**Christchurch campaign for Changing Places:**

The Christchurch Changing Places campaign group includes people with learning disabilities from the Juniper Day Centre in Dorset, People First Dorset and Mencap.

Jackie Buckley, Christchurch Community Coordinator at the Juniper was prompted into action by the lack of a Changing Places facility in the area. Jackie had been campaigning for a while and when People First Dorset visited the Centre, they were asked to help. They approached Mencap for help to form a campaign group and arranged a joint meeting at the Juniper Day Centre. We wish them good luck with their campaign work.

**Accessible Cyclopark:**

Lynn Alexander and her mother Sue went to Cyclopark near Gravesend in Kent to see if there were bikes that Lynn could also use.

There were plenty to choose from. Amanda Harkett who works at Cyclopark showed them how to use the bikes and took Lynn for a spin around the site, including a look at their excellent Changing Places facility. Lynn and Sue had a great time and will be coming back for more with their friends.

There are now 528 Changing Places facilities available across the UK.

*For further information, visit the Changing Places Consortium website*

[www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org)
The following case study examines improvements to accessibility made to one of Australia’s popular coastal tourist destinations in Queensland – Surfers Paradise, Gold Coast.

Surfers Paradise Esplanade has undergone an extensive upgrade, creating over one kilometre of accessible foreshore for all Gold Coast residents and tourists.

Its level surfacing now allows a greater ease of access for mobility impaired visitors, including people using electric scooters, wheelchair users, cyclists and people with prams.

The Esplanade has acquired six accessible toilet blocks, all spread out at regular intervals. Twin accessible parking bays have also been provided, at regular intervals, and seating areas for resting. Most notably, the improvements have included several 1:20 ramps and steps to support access to the world famous beach.
The Surfers Paradise foreshore layout has taken into account the change in demographics of an ageing population both on the Gold Coast and in Australia. Examples of these considerations include seating provided with armrests, and seating without armrests to allow wheelchair users to transfer to seats.

The following photographs demonstrate why Surfers Paradise arguably sets a benchmark for beach front tourism accessibility standards, not just in Australia, but worldwide.

The 1:20 ramp is typical for all the new ramps in accordance with the aim of the City of Gold Coast to ensure greater opportunities for independent access.

In total, there is approximately 1.2 kilometre of level accessible walkway from Central Beach at Surfers Paradise going north towards Main Beach. In the Central Beach area, accessible parking is managed by a pay and display system, however, towards the main foreshore area, accessible parking is provided for free.

Across the Esplanade from the beach, there are an assortment of restaurants, fast food outlets, and bars which offer inclusive services. The famous Surfers Paradise Surf Club located towards the south end of the Esplanade, has al-fresco seating and a unisex accessible WC at street level.

The City of Gold Coast has provided accessible self-catering barbeques at several locations along the foreshore walkways with ample seating and grass areas adjacent to them.

In addition to the beach access ramps, there are accessible viewing zones all along the foreshore with ample shaded seating and adjacent showers.

The accessible viewing platforms on the beach are situated less than 30 metres from the surf. These viewing zone platform areas provide opportunities for watching sport, and leisure activities such as beach volleyball, surfing competitions, sand sculpture, surf lifesavers training, and lots more besides.

One of the major advantages that Surfers Paradise foreshore, and for that matter, most of the Gold Coast beaches have over other
Case study: Gold Coast

competing tourist destinations, is that it has been designed and constructed to be almost completely level. This helps to make it more accessible, therefore, getting around for everyone, is far less demanding.

My conclusion is that Surfers Paradise beachfront is designed for enjoying the beach experience. Generally, if relaxing in the sunshine is one of your holiday criteria, then the accessibility provisions of Surfers Paradise foreshore should be close to ideal.

To contact David Bedwell:

Email: david.bedwell@bigpond.com

For further information about Surfers Paradise, visit the City of Gold Coast website

www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au

Association of Consultants in Access, Australia Incorporated

The Association of Consultants in Access (ACA) Australia is a national membership network of professionals working to achieve accessibility to the built environment for disabled people.

It administers national competency standards for accreditation of members and promotes the use of accredited access professionals. It also contributes and aims to influence the development of policies, regulations and codes.

For further details of their work, visit the ACA Australia website

http://tinyurl.com/ACA-Australia

Do you want to work with the best in the field of accessibility and inclusion or be identified as one of the best?

Are you seeking advice on accessibility?
To engage the services of an accredited access consultant or access auditor and receive professional, competent and pragmatic advice on accessibility, inclusion and equality legislation, contact the NRAC.

Do you want to be identified as an accredited access professional?
If you wish to join a professional organisation with national and international recognition as being the leading accreditation body in the UK for access consultants and auditors, contact the NRAC.

Contact the NRAC by telephone: 020 7822 8282
Email: info@nrac.org.uk
NRAC website: www.nrac.org.uk
The Design for All Foundation Awards
Informing the field and raising the bar

The International Design for All Foundation Awards recognise excellence in Design for All and publicise global examples of good practice. Design for All Foundation President, Francesc Aragall, and Director, Imma Bonet explain how the awards came about, and Madeleine Gray, Communication Manager, highlights 2013’s finalists and winners.

by Madeleine Gray, Communication Manager, Design for All Foundation

In 2010, noting the absence of a regular awards scheme in the field, the Foundation launched its annual awards, which,

‘came about from a sense that more and more people around the world were involved in delivering advances in Design for All and we wanted to recognise this’.

Francesc Aragall, President, Design for All Foundation

The three original award categories include:

- public
- private
- not-for-profit sectors

In 2012, a fourth category was introduced: rather than complete projects, this seeks design ideas to be experimented with users in Living Labs, where users co-create products, services and environments in real-life settings.
Judging process

After an initial filter by the Foundation, award entries are evaluated by an international jury of experts specialising in a range of areas from different sectors. For 2013, the universal design community was strongly represented, along with representatives from internationally recognised design centres, local and national government, and Living Labs.

Projects are awarded points in five areas:

- how well they fulfil the award objectives
- methodology
- extent to which the outputs meet Design for All criteria
- impact
- innovation

Design for All, effectively synonymous with universal design, is a holistic discipline.

‘Design for All is not a limited, compartmentalised approach with a focus solely on inclusion for disabled people, but instead aims to include everyone in every aspect of modern society’.

Juror and EIDD - Design for All Europe ambassador, Pete Kercher

To succeed, award entries have to meet the Design for All criteria:

- respect
- safety
- function
- health and wellbeing
- understanding
- aestheticism

While rejecting form over function, genuine designs for all must be aesthetically pleasing so that they are more likely to appeal to a wide range of people. Original solutions are also valued, with the emphasis being on finding the most interesting concept or the most significant innovation. Perhaps this is why Valerie Fletcher, juror and Executive Director of the Institute for Human Centered Design, believes:

‘The awards inform the field about the state of the art and raise the bar on what to expect’.

Saint-Étienne International Design Biennial 2013

The 2013 award ceremony took place at the Cité du Design as part of the Saint-Étienne International Design Biennial. In addition to a programme of events, the biennial, whose theme was ‘Empathy, or the experience of the other’, featured exhibitions such as ‘Empathicity: Making our city together’, which considered how cities could be designed collaboratively to create people-centred places.

Another exhibition, ‘Sixième sens’ (‘Sixth sense’) examined the need for intuition to design results which are adapted to humans in all their diverse forms. Featuring a range of examples from around the world, the exhibition’s entrance was a tunnel with a roof sloping gradually downward, forcing most visitors to bend in order to get through and therefore making them physically aware of the effect of design choices.

Projects

The awards attract a huge range of projects, including adapted sports, inclusive playgrounds, municipal accessibility plans, multisensory museum exhibitions, communications, healthcare equipment and wayfinding aids.

Longstanding jury members agree that the standard rises every year; each project brings something interesting to offer to the Design for All debate and suggests new possibilities in the field.
Redesigning the UK ambulance might seem daunting, but it was perhaps overdue. According to the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design (HHCD) Senior Research Fellow, Ed Mathews, the current design is little more than an evolution from the horse-drawn carts used to transport injured soldiers during the Crimean War, yet needs have changed substantially; for example, today 40 per cent of ambulance emergency calls do not require treatment in hospital.

HHCD assembled a multidisciplinary team to co-design a new solution with key workers and patients. The team worked with paramedics to understand their needs and review proposals, while clinical experts delivered measurable and repeatable tests to evaluate design concepts and engineers solved technical challenges. Drawing on a wide range of perspectives occasionally led to differences in opinion, but decision making was steered.

The resulting design provides a standardised, intuitive treatment space which improves safety by designing out error, reduces injury through better ergonomics and allows stock levels and the risk of infection to be controlled. The intuitive user-interface design allows easier diagnostics, communications and data transfer.
Readers of Access by Design may be familiar with the I’DGO research project, delivered by a multidisciplinary consortium of research centres at the universities of Edinburgh, Salford and Warwick. Over several years, using analyses based upon large population samples, researchers examined the connection between getting outdoors and quality of life, ‘focusing on the most effective ways of shaping outdoor environments inclusively and seeking to provide the evidence that empowers older people to live an active life in their community for as long as they choose’.

Máire Cox, I’DGO Communicator

In 2012 the project reported findings which showed that the ability to get out and about impacts significantly on quality of life, that there are many environmental barriers to day-to-day access for all and that inclusive urban design and joined-up policy-making have the potential to improve outcomes. The consortium has contributed towards the development of policy, raised public awareness of age-friendly placemaking and provided guidance for professionals.

I’DGO has now come to an end, but in September 2013 the consortium’s lead organisation, OPENspace, launched Mobility, Mood and Place, a new research project funded by the Lifelong Health and Wellbeing cross-council programme.

Finalist: Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors (I’DGO)
Andere Augen created a multisensory guidebook telling the stories of a selection of Dutch Golden Age paintings at the museum. Texts about the paintings were written, an audio description was recorded and a series of tactile images was produced. These were then used in reading rehearsals with visually impaired users to determine which tactile images best conveyed the descriptions.

The final book contains paintings reproduced with increased visual contrast and tactile reliefs. Audio description and sound effects are provided, along with textual background information (a printing technique that embossing varnished Braille to be printed on top of standard print without interfering with its legibility). Hence the book allows readers to experience the same content and provides a tool for education.

**Government or other public body**

**Joint winners: Tactile, talking model of Berlin, and models of the Reichstag building**

Recently, Berlin has attracted international attention for its Design for All work: in late 2012, Technische Universität Berlin (TUB) students won the Schindler Award, an accessible design challenge for young architects, shortly before the city was named Access City 2013 by the European Commission. Completing the hat trick, two tactile-model projects submitted by the city senate and TUB respectively won the Design for All Foundation public body category.

More than most cities, Berlin has tangible experience of physical, political, social and cultural barriers, embodied by the wall which divided it for 30 years and which left a legacy of logistical issues following reunification. ‘The two halves of the city had to be brought together and different transport and planning systems standardised,’ explain Gerd Grenner and Ingeborg Stude from the senate’s urban development department (regular participants in the Euro Cities Barrier-Free Working Group). The senate endorsed barrier-free construction as the means to achieve this, enacting a state anti-discrimination law in 1999.

Proactive leadership from the Senate led to the development of manuals like 2007’s Barrier-free planning and construction in Berlin and checklists for barrier-free museums, as well as the definition of priorities in the design of public spaces, transport and infrastructure. Gerd explains that the role of public space is pivotal to the city’s aim to adapt to demographic change and present itself as a liveable, welcoming German capital. Accessibility is seen as a continuous process, with stakeholders being involved in the planning process and in setting priorities.

In 2011, following ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Berlin Senate adopted ten disability policy guidelines, based on a Design for All approach, to be implemented by 2020. This according to Gerd, represented ‘a paradigm shift in city policy’:

‘The future task will be to ensure that all buildings and spaces can be used by everyone independently, simply, intuitively and comfortably, so that special solutions for disabled people will be largely redundant and future generations, regardless of age, gender, ability or cultural background, will be able to take part in social, economic and recreational activities.’

Meanwhile, Fach Modell+Design (Model and Design Department) at TUB, led by Burkhard Lüdtke, had been involved in its own Design for All project: a tactile representation of the Reichstag, the German parliament building. The commission, prompted by requests from visually impaired visitors, represented a change in direction for the design team.

Modell+Design spent several years developing a material which allows the detail of the buildings to be reproduced whilst also recreating the temperature and surface feel...
of stone architecture. As well as creating tactile models of the Reichstag building and its surrounding area, they produced track-guided reliefs to represent the views from the top of the building, with a smart shoulder bag to carry them. A key aspect of their design process was to create multiple prototypes for testing by users, whose feedback was used each time to modify the prototypes.

The team used the same method when asked to create the tactile model of Berlin for the senate. Working collaboratively with users threw up some issues the team hadn’t predicted, such as the fact that tactile perception of three-dimensionality differs from visual perception, architect Annette Müller explains: ‘For example, if we look at the six-sided figure of the Memorial Church tower, we see one full side and two shortened by perspective, but our partners insisted that we show all three sides the same size.’

Annette Müller demonstrates to users how the relief and shoulder bag is used

The model, on permanent display at the urban-development department in Berlin, comprises different modules and offers the flexibility to be updated or extended. Major sites of interest are reproduced at a larger scale in order to highlight them. Using the same innovative material as that used for the Reichstag, the Berlin model also incorporates Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to convey information about points of interest as an audio message or text displayed on a smartphone.

The result, according to Reiner Delgado of the Deutschen Verein der Blinden und Sehbehinderten (German Association of Blind and Partially Sighted People), ‘allows citizens to get an impression of the city as a whole and a more detailed appreciation’, appealing to all visitors who, as Annette notes, are normally prevented from touching architectural models. An additional benefit of the project was that it made the university’s architecture students aware of the need to design for diversity.

Finalist: Aragonese Augmentative and Alternative Communication Portal (ARASAAC)

Funded by the Government of Aragon, ARASAAC facilitates functional
Finalist: Accessibility construction using local materials in New Lucena

Implemented by the Local Government Unit (LGU) of New Lucena in the Philippines, this project aimed to improve accessibility for all. A holistic approach was adopted, with the municipality setting up different committees focusing on data monitoring, capacity building, advocacy, networking and environmental accessibility. Using low-cost local materials such as wood and bamboo, the LGU installed facilities such as ramps, accessible toilets and pathways in government-owned facilities, and by creating ordinances and providing advice, encouraged the private sector to do likewise.

Users were involved throughout the process, a special educational programme was initiated, and preschool daycare centres also began accepting disabled children.

communication for all using graphic materials.

The system comprises more than 13,000 pictograms developed in cooperation with end users and is free to use, being distributed under a creative commons licence to maximise take-up. The pictograms have been employed in a wide range of different media, from websites to printed publications to signage, in a variety of contexts including education, health, welfare, leisure and culture. Software is also available, including AraWord, which allows words and pictograms to be written simultaneously and AraBoard, which allows communication boards to be created for computer and mobile devices.

Originally intended for school-age children, the system benefits a wide range of people including older people, people with conditions like cerebral palsy and people from different cultural backgrounds.

An example of ARASAAC used in signage in Málaga

An example of ARASAAC in a document explaining people’s rights

© ARASAAC

© LGU New Lucena
The council believes that impact in terms of changing attitudes and participation has been significant: residents have become more open-minded, while parents who had previously been hiding their children at home have now enrolled them in the Government’s special education programme.

**Finalist: UD Woonlabo (Universal Design Living Lab)**

Faced with the problem of how to explain the concept of universal design, Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg (Limburg Province University) and Toegankelijkheidsbureau (the Belgian Accessibility Office) decided to build a demonstration home to introduce visitors to the concepts of visitable and adaptable housing and universal design.

Co-creation meant users were involved in the design and retrofit of an existing building to create the demonstration centre. Focus groups were asked to select products from a list, the results were filtered and the project coordinators drafted plans, which were discussed with focus groups again and the resulting feedback used to inform the building stage. The feedback forms an on-going process that constantly informs the development of the demonstration home.

Users can try out the latest inclusive-design innovations, while manufacturers can test their products with users: more than 30 companies currently participate and feedback has been positive since the Lab’s opening in March 2013.

**Private company or professional**

**Winner: Hyvän Mielen Pihapolku (The Path of Joy)**

While many designers focus principally on aesthetics, iam design’s Isko Lappalainen views good design as much more – the creation of:

‘things that are better to use and easier to manufacture, leading to lower production costs and a more affordable consumer price’.

Usability was therefore the starting point of iam design’s winning project to transform an underused courtyard into a welcoming outdoor space for two assisted-living homes, in collaboration with residents and staff.

The co-design process used a range of
methods to engage users, including, interviews, workshops, an initial design concept, a wishes wall where participants could express what they would like to see, and an observation camera. This multifaceted approach led to a final design which provides a thoughtful, sensitive context-specific response which takes into account the challenges posed by seasonal conditions in Finland. The layout is designed to be safe, easy to use and understandable as well as flexible, with adjustable elements and areas for both sociable and solitary activities.

**Finalist: Accessibility Web Geographic Information System (AWG)**

In their work as access consultants based in Porto, Nuno Peixoto and Rafael Montes of ProAsolutions found that they were compiling a large amount of information about accessibility in local areas which was going unused. In addition, says Rafael, there was a great deal of accessibility information created by and for citizens which was failing to reach the right people. With the aim of putting clear, precise and reliable information at users’ disposal, they created AWG, an online platform based on an open-source database through which accessibility information about a municipality can be documented, managed and searched.

The interactive software allows users to inform themselves about accessibility in their local area and identify routes which meet their accessibility requirements; in addition, it offers a forum open to anyone where users can upload feedback for the local council and highlight where improvements need to be made. Municipal councils can use the software to gain a global view of accessibility in the area and use it in conjunction with the development and management of an integrated accessibility plan. When testing the software with users, says Rafael, the roles were therefore constantly shifting between those providing and those receiving information.

The company is currently improving the web version and hopes to launch a version for mobile devices in coming months. Rafael believes that new technologies such as AWG can contribute ‘to the creation of a more just and participatory society’, although he cautions that there is still much work to be done.

**Finalist: Guía Virtual Accesible Museos (GVAM) – Virtual Accessible Museum Guide**

In 2008, software-development company Dos de Mayo began a research project with private and public sector organisations, research centres and user associations to create a mobile museum guide which would offer a richer experience for visitors. The multidisciplinary, cross-sector consortium incorporated a range of expertise: Dos de Mayo and Madrid’s Carlos III University were responsible for technological development, the Centro Español de Subtitulado y Audiodescripción (Spanish Subtitling and Audio Description Centre) defined accessibility...
requirements, while disabled people’s organisations collaborated at all stages, especially in user testing, leading, according to GVAM Researcher and Product Director José Pajares, to a higher quality product, as the users demanded very high standards.

As tablet-style mobile devices did not exist at the time, the project developed its own device, manufactured in Spain, which incorporated accessible multimedia functions and an interior geographical positioning system (GPS).

Taking into account the anxiety of some users in the face of unfamiliar technology, the team created very simple controls. The system is now compatible with mobile devices, with more precise GPS; interfaces are accessible and can be adjusted according to individual requirements, activating features such as subtitling, audio-description, audio tours, sign language, magnification, pictograms and high contrast.

Its content management system, Ventour, allows museum professionals to upload content wirelessly and offers a statistics option so that they can study visitor behaviour. Venues can also create customised applications; the text-to-speech option can be used to produce a complete audio guide, while the subtitling editor generates captions instantly.

This is an exciting time for the cultural sector, with digital technologies offering museums more ways for visitors to interact with their collections. However, José cautions that a clear, coherent and user-centred digital strategy is important, with a focus firmly on ‘enriching the experience of all people’.

Finalist: The Standing Knife

According to Chief Executive Lone Kobberholm Storgaard, Danish company Design Concern always use the Design for All approach and tries to convince customers to embrace it as well:

‘We spend more time researching user needs, but it pays off as we create bigger market for our customers.’

In creating the Standing Knife, she explains, the company wanted to include users with limited manual dexterity and therefore set out to make a practical utensil which can be used safely and comfortably, irrespective of strength or dexterity.

Involving users and occupational therapists from the outset, the design process encompassed five stages:

- analysis of diverse user needs
- creative design development based on user input and observation
- development and testing of prototypes with users
- adaptation of design using user feedback
- user testing prior to manufacture
The final design is based upon the principle behind a saw, to ease joint strain; its angled shape facilitates use, while its upright position and ergonomic grip ensure less tension in the hands and arms. Its silicone-coated grip, in a bold colour which is easy to see, allows safe use even with wet hands. Yet the knife doesn’t advertise itself as assistive technology: Lone explains that user studies by Design Concern and Danish Design for All consultancy Bexcom show that many assistive devices are underused because users think they are unattractive and signal disability, and one participant in the design process commented that ‘the knife should be a tool that anyone would want to buy’. The design method used here thus results in a win-win situation, according to Lone, which has convinced the manufacturer of the need to incorporate Design for All in future operations.

User-centred design in Living Labs: Project proposal

Life 2.0

The term Living Labs may be unfamiliar, but the premise is simple:

The online platform in use on a tablet

‘providing better opportunities for co-design with users during the development stage’

Saara Newton, Life 2.0 Project Coordinator

Although relatively young, the Living Labs community in Europe is thriving: the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL) numbers more than 300 Living Labs. This dynamic new force for user-centred services has not escaped the attention of the European Commission: keen to foster closer collaboration between the design community and Living Labs, in 2012 they announced funding for the Integrating Design for All in Living Labs (IDeALL) project. Delivered by a consortium led by the Cité du Design and including the Design for All Foundation and ENoLL, the project aims to enhance competitiveness and improve public services by supporting user-centred design in industry and government.

As a first step towards bringing the design and Living Lab communities together, in 2012 a new category was created for the Design for All Foundation Awards, seeking design ideas which could be experimented with users in Living Labs. The 2013 winner, Life 2.0, is a European project to create a user-friendly online platform which would increase opportunities for older people to socialise and remain active, delivered by a consortium of research institutions, business, local authorities, user organisations and housing associations in Finland, Denmark, Spain and Italy.

Ethnographic research was conducted in Joensuu, Aalborg, Barcelona and Milan; the results were used to generate user personas, user stories and service scenarios before the platform was co-designed and piloted in real-life situations. This resulted in three priority areas, modified following user testing and feedback: to be able to offer or request assistance, to find out about local events and to look up local services.
The resulting service allows users to upload announcements about the assistance and skills they can offer, while local organisations can share updates about activities in the area and local businesses can publicise relevant services. Participants in the pilot have strengthened social relationships, acquired new skills and gained greater independence. The project consortium would like to see widespread implementation of the system, says Saara, and are currently developing a business model. Following the award, they hope to collaborate with Living Labs in multiple regions, ‘so as to widen perspectives in development issues,’ to find similar projects and partners, and to share methods for co-design development work.

Raising the bar and exploring what Design for All means

Jury members expressed their pleasure at seeing the inspirational range of work in the field and underlined the awards’ tendency to drive innovation, signposting new directions in Design for All. For Valerie Fletcher, ‘there is simply no comparable opportunity for a wide array of entities from across the globe to pitch their work for consideration’, and, as such, the awards ‘fulfil a global need to share the state of the art of inclusive design in the wide variety of sectors that must be represented if it is to fuel the movement’. In future she would like to see more appreciation in the design world that ‘designing for the reality of life in the 21st century is one of the most compelling and satisfying creative endeavours imaginable’ and hopes to see more collaboration between developing and more developed nations.

Jury member, Hugh Musick highlights two aspects of the awards as important: ‘providing a context for designers from around the world to think about the meaning of universal design and to bring their creativity, energy and process to bear upon it’ and ‘guiding people from around the world to examples which make compelling cases for designed objects, services and experiences that accommodate people of all abilities’. 

Awareness-raising was cited as a key benefit, whether among other designers, governments, industry or the general public: Mieke Nijs suggests that, in encouraging more people to apply Design for All, ‘companies are more likely to start integrating the concept into the market’.

Public-sector applicants also welcomed the opportunity to show what they had done and encourage other governments to remove barriers; according to Mylyne Sustento, the awards inspire countries ‘to implement best-practice projects that serve the greatest number of people, regardless of their needs and diversity’.

The awards format is changing from the 2014 edition, with a new application process and structure. However the awards develop in future, the range of talent among designers, government commitment and in-depth, valuable research they have highlighted is inspirational.

If you are working on a project which takes the needs of all users into account, why not show it off to the world? ●

For further information about the annual Design for All Foundation Awards, visit the Design for All Foundation website

🔗 www.designforall.org
RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2013

Celebrating 100 years of garden design

This year the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) celebrated its centenary of the Chelsea Flower Show. The Show, which has been taking place in the Chelsea Royal Hospital grounds in west London since 1913, has flourished over the years and has become an internationally applauded institution, devotedly attended by those that cherish plants, the outdoors and garden design. Geraldine McNamara, Editor of Access by Design and Anne Davies OBE, former Chairman of CAE, both visited to find reasons to celebrate inclusive design at the Show.

Design evolution

Anne, who was originally invited in 1996 to advise the RHS Chelsea Flower Show (the Show) on accessibility, has witnessed several positive developments in the design and delivery of this wonderful horticultural event. Access by Design readers may recall an article in issue 120, also dedicated to the Show – outlining the challenges of producing such outdoor events on an impressive scale.

The RHS deserves to be proud of its long and admirable history, and the commitment it makes to welcoming over 160,000 visitors each year. Much of what it creates each year is possible due to the hard work of many dedicated volunteers and thorough planning.

Working outdoors presents many challenges but the opportunities for creative solutions are plenty. It is clear that the Show has learnt from its 100 years of delivery, responding positively to feedback from dedicated supporters and visitors, and incorporating learning through effective means. But, has this learning remained constant?

Let the Show begin

Visitors to the Show can acquire a lot of useful information well in advance, including information about the accessibility of the site and the Show. It is advisable to contact the RHS so they can provide further information on the
various options and services available, which include:

- accessible car parking nearby
- local accessible transport options
- wheelchairs for hire
- restaurant bookings can be made in advance with specific arrangements
- tracking around the site provides accessible pathways (including in the Pavilion and around show gardens)
- disabled visitors are permitted to bring one assistance companion free-of-charge
- and, assistance dogs are of course welcome

On arrival at the Show, it becomes instantly clear how popular it remains in its 100th year. To gain entry, bookings must be made months in advance. Once you have been granted a ticket for entry – all you have to do is wait in anticipation of the date, safe in the knowledge that you will not be disappointed by the wondrous displays that await you.

The excitement generated by the RHS Chelsea Flower Show invigorates an acute interest in great design and gardening. There is much to be gained from attending the Show as it presents new and innovative displays and projects, and inspirational ideas for the keen gardener. The focus of the show is of course parade the grand array of plants primed to bloom, but there is no getting away from the presence of design – it is in everything and everywhere.

Inclusive design is very much part and parcel of most people’s expectations today – a combination of awareness-raising, and disabled and older people becoming more aware of their rights as visitors and customers, has led to greater expectation of participation at all events, and with obvious benefits for all. The RHS Chelsea Flower Show is no exception.

The devoted audiences of the Show have been supporting it for years and clearly enjoy their own gardening pursuits. An expectation that their requirements will be taken into account today and, during future planning of the event is not surprising. An increased presence of wheelchair users at the Show would suggest the RHS has certainly achieved greater levels of access for many more disabled people in recent years – undoubtedly something to celebrate.

Visitors to the Show will immediately be aware of an avenue of merchandise outlets that form a long corridor of distraction long before you begin viewing the gardens. It may well provide a gentle introduction to the large site of visual spectacle. There are of course facilities available on arrival too – in fact an accessible toilet is made available in the accessible parking area. A welcome facility if one’s journey has been lengthy.

The gardening-themed outlets entice you with a wide variety of garden-related products, from wellington boots to garden sculptures. It does become immediately apparent however, that these are not easily browsed by everyone. Access to each is via one or two steps – perhaps not too challenging for the majority of visitors but none-the-less impossible for many just as keen to spend their money. However, the site at the Royal Hospital in Chelsea provides organisers with an uneven surface to contend with and all temporary structures have to accommodate a certain amount of fluctuating levels, therefore steps appear all along the route to compensate. It may present an opportunity for redesign and/or relocation – easier said than done of course in such a challenging open space but, perhaps alternative areas could accommodate many more visitors. Nonetheless, the friendly manner in which the sales people readily engage and provide assistance to those that may need it, presents a warm welcome to the Show.

**Demonstrating excellence**

The M and G (M&G) Centenary Garden, Windows through Time, was a gold medal winner this year. It incorporated new and old influences and aimed to demonstrate how design has evolved over the decades.
Designing a garden takes immense patience, planning and attention to detail, not to mention knowledge. If you appreciate this, you will certainly recognise the amount of work that has gone into preparing a garden design for the Show.

Choosing specific plants for particular conditions, considering the suitability of locations and the maintenance requirements alone, all generate a substantial amount of work. All of this has to be carefully pondered alongside the delightful process of choosing themes and designs, deciding upon an inspiring layout to do it all justice, whilst resolving the inclusion of water features, seating arrangements and sculptures. It is a labour of love that reflects great design.

This year, with so much to celebrate at the Show, the designs have been bountiful and brimming with excellence. This year’s gardens have also represented, and in some cases, been inspired by many causes – including several disability-related charities. Some of those present included:

- Arthritis Research UK, who investigate the cause, treatment and cure of arthritis
- See Ability, support people with visual impairments
- Alzheimer’s Society, support people living with dementia
- Groundwork, is a community charity that creates spaces that are safer, greener and look better

Some of the garden designs used impairment-specific knowledge and awareness to inform their final designs and plant choices, such as the See Ability garden. Colour contrast featured highly amongst the plant choices, and those that created strong silhouettes played a key role in drawing the viewer’s attention to various corners of the layout. Water was used to distort the images of plants reflected in rounded steel sculptures whilst the use of large sheets of glass with opaque bubbles created cloudy views of the spaces beyond.

Aside from the beautifully presented outdoor garden designs and displays, the Show includes a large enclosed temporary exhibition arena, called the Great Pavilion. The Pavilion is devoted to striking displays of nursery plants, exotic flowers and floral sculptures – a very popular destination for visitors to the Show. The RHS has made great improvements to the accessibility of the Pavilion by providing metal tracking around and through the enclosure, continuing outdoors to the rest of the grounds. It makes all the difference providing a level surface for wheelchair users and those with children in buggies, also acting as a great way of preserving the ground in damper conditions.

This has certainly been one of the main improvements to the grounds and a commendable one. Within the last twenty years, the vast majority of access improvements have been applied including the most vital and effective measures – ramps, level surfacing and accessible facilities.

Personal development, wellbeing and inspiration

The RHS have several strands to their work and well-established methods of achieving their aims of ‘advancing horticulture and promoting good gardening’. One such method is their RHS
RHS Chelsea Flower Show

Campaign of School Gardening. The campaign aims to encourage schools to develop their own gardens in order for children to benefit from the personal development, wellbeing and inspiration associated with gardening activities and learning.

It is well documented that gardening is of great benefit to people of all ages, however, in order to maximise that benefit, it is crucial that access for all is made available. The challenge for this Show is ensuring that the gardens, with their carefully divided plots, remain secure and manageable for the duration of the Show, but also visible to viewers – each keen to get a clear view of the beautiful displays.

Views of the gardens were occasionally interrupted; in some cases due to the choice of fencing – there to establish the boundaries of the gardens. Garden designers are provided with a ten-by-ten metre-squared plot to present their garden designs; others are larger, covering a ten-by-22-metre-squared area. They also ensure that access to the gardens is controlled which is vital to preserving the delicate nature of the exhibits.

It did take real effort to ensure a view of the exhibits, getting as close to the exhibits as permitted and accessing the information accompanying the gardens. With a lot of information and imagery to absorb, the moveable crowds, leaning and stretching to catch brief glimpses, also created an added barrier. The behaviour of visitors is of course not the responsibility of the Show organisers but any future considerate design elements that anticipate this potential crowd behaviour will certainly make a difference to many visitors.

The installation of heavy and improper fencing, and a lack of consistent information panels and leaflets, made it more difficult to discover who designers were and what their chosen themes may have been. There is some room for improvement in this area: the considerate placement of legible information panels could greatly enhance a visitor’s experience, whilst considering less weighty fencing or boundaries may very well ensure the gardens are on view to many more gardening devotees. Guidance is available through such resources as:

- Designing for Accessibility: 2012 Edition
- Sign Design Guide
- BS 8300:2009+A1:2010 (British Standards)

All around the gardens

Throughout the site there were several points to aid orientation such as site maps, many of which could benefit from being displayed at more appropriate heights and the scale increased – there is, after all, a lot of information to comprehend. Again, guidance is available to support informed decisions about positioning.

Visitors this year also used the Show’s centenary brochure which contained a fold-out map of the site – again communicating a lot of content in a much smaller format.
Attempts were made to highlight key facilities such as refreshment areas, restaurants and toilet facilities, but we did experience some inconsistencies when searching for facilities. On nearing indicated toilet facilities, there was a distinct lack of signage for accessible toilets. Some overhead signage suggested male, female and accessible toilets could be found, only to guide visitors to limited facilities.

This was an exception and for the most part, we could guide ourselves to the appropriate facility but this may have presented some visitors with unexpected dilemmas. Ideally the overhead signage, which proved helpful, needed to be consistent with that found on the ground.

A true test of any event, venue or level of service, is the provision of accessible toilet facilities. Everyone needs them – wherever you are, whatever you are doing. So, how did the Show’s accessible facilities measure up?

Accessible toilet facilities were situated within blocks of male and female toilets. As mentioned earlier, although overhead signs for accessible WCs were visible from a distance, the signage and accessible facility symbol that most people recognise was not present on the accessible cubicle entrance. The accessible toilets could also have benefitted from the provision of the following basics:

- paper towels
- a mirror
- conveniently placed waste bins
- inclusively designed flush handles
- consistent and accessible lavatory heights

These are just some of the details that require some fine-tuning, but the facilities provided could be commended for being clean, a very important element of the provision.

Other key facilities required at such events are cafes and restaurants. Throughout the Show there were a variety of quick, take-away options for fast refreshment, including a covered café area with ramped access and moveable furniture. Some of the restaurants however, were not accessible and access to them was via several steps or stairs. In a reasonable measure, the fine-dining menus from each of the restaurants were also made available to visitors in the more accessible settings.

The Show receives considerable media coverage each year, broadcasting on television during primetime viewing. On press day, countless journalists, photographers and camera men from the UK and abroad, swarm on the gardens to gather as much of the delights for their press coverage as possible.

The busy press office, situated on site for the duration, is placed at the southern end of the site and on a steep slope – again evidence of a challenging site. The temporary office, requiring stairs to access the media information point, also has an accessible entrance to the rear for disabled journalists and media representatives.

Accessing this entrance was a definite challenge. Unfortunately, it was not maintained or monitored for clear access, a real disappointment after negotiating the very steep slope. Additional signage adjacent to the accessible entrance would help identify its whereabouts and perhaps raise greater awareness amongst site visitors.
Obvious recommendations for next year’s Show would include:

- Ensure the accessible path and entrance is maintained and clear of obstructions.
- Clearly identify the accessible press office entrance to ensure it is not hidden from view.

Such measures will benefit those that need it most – those disabled journalists and media team members that will most certainly make the return journey for the grand RHS Chelsea Flower Show in 2014.

In addition, further recommendations would include:

- A coordinated approach to accessibility across the site so all staff can be mindful of the importance of providing an accessible and inclusive experience.

Without a doubt, inclusive design has a big part to play at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show – how it can be absorbed into future plans is another discussion but one most certainly worth having; for necessity, for equality of access, out of respect for hard-working and devoted gardeners and designers that regularly attend, for our ageing population, and to reflect a more progressive and creative view of the world through design, as it should be, for all.

For further information about the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, visit the RHS website

http://tinyurl.com/RHS-Chelsea-Flower-Show

For further information about accessibility at the RHS, visit the RHS webpages

http://tinyurl.com/RHS-access
Our ageing society
A view from Care and Repair Cymru

Wales’ population is growing older and we are living in an increasingly ageing society. Wales has the highest proportion of older people in the UK. Population projections predict an increasing proportion of older people well into the future. In this following article, Chris Jones, Chief Executive of Care and Repair Cymru, also known as the older people’s housing champion, relays the critical work being conducted by agencies such as his, to ensure Wales’ ageing population continues to live independently, in safe and well-maintained homes.

Life expectancy for men is predicted to rise from 76.4 years in 2004 to 80.3 years in 2024 and for women the rise will be from 80.7 years to 84.0 years in the same period. The projected population for over-65s in Wales will grow from 719,000 in 2007 (24 per cent), to 890,000 in 2020 (28 per cent), and 1,044,000 in 2030 (31 per cent). For over-85s, numbers will grow from 70,000 in 2007 (two per cent), to 98,000 in 2020 (three per cent), to 150,000 in 2030 (five per cent). These changing demographics present considerable challenges for citizens, service providers and policy makers, with an increased need and demand for services for older people.

Wales has some of the poorest housing conditions, highest levels of pre-1919 terraces, highest rates of unfitness for human habitation and disrepair, and highest levels of absence of basic amenities, all documented in successive house condition surveys. These surveys also pointed to older people enduring disproportionately poorer housing. Older people are more likely to be fuel poor, have more difficulty with cold and damp homes, and this leads to extreme levels of excessive deaths and illness over the winter months.

Suitability of housing for older people in terms of warmth, safety, security and accessibility is a growing concern. Older people prefer to remain living independently in their own homes. In order to provide comfort, safety and security, their homes need to be in good repair, allow for access to all facilities, and be free from hazards that cause accidents. Evidence readily points to large numbers of houses occupied by older people having complex accessibility and safety challenges that are a barrier to independent living. This is recognised in the Welsh Government’s Housing Strategy, Improving Lives and Communities, Homes in Wales 2010 – which targets:

‘Developing more ways of meeting the housing needs of an ageing society, enabling people to live independently for as long as possible in their own homes’.

There is broad consensus about the detrimental effect of poor and unsatisfactory housing on the health of occupiers. National research and the long experience from Care and Repair service delivery is that investment in smaller, stitch-in-time repairs, improvements and adaptations can make an exponential difference to the quality of lives of older people, and prevent more costly solutions and services being needed in the future. Services that are preventative, closely related to client need, holistic and supporting personal choice and independence, have a cost-saving benefit for health and social care services (it is likely that people will be kept out of hospitals and residential care). This preventative ethos also saves money on more costly hospital and residential care stays.

The Rapid Response Adaptations Programme costs £2.1 million per year. It has been estimated however that the programme saves around £15
Care & Repair Cymru

million by preventing and reducing the length of stay in hospital and residential care, making a significant contribution to dealing with delayed transfer of care (or bed-blocking).

The future

The impact of the UK Government deficit reduction measures is being felt hard in Wales. Care and Repair Cymru believes that innovative approaches which harness the potential of the not-for-profit sector in Wales will help minimise the potential damage posed to public services such as housing, health, care and support. We are keen to continue our strong partnerships with the Welsh Government, Local Government and Health to deliver this.

Care and Repair Cymru is the national body for Care and Repair in Wales, and the ‘older people’s housing champion’. We are a charitable, not-for-profit body and actively work to ensure that all older people have homes that are warm, safe, secure and appropriate to their needs. There are 22 Care and Repair agencies covering the whole of Wales.

Each agency provides a wide range of services and support for older and vulnerable people, helping them to remain living independently in their own homes and communities. Care and Repair Cymru is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of older people in Wales by providing advice and assistance with home improvements, adaptations and general repairs.

Care and Repair work in partnership with a number of organisations including the Welsh Government, local government (housing and social care teams), NHS, occupational therapists, other third sector organisations, the Older People’s Commissioner, and housing associations to ensure that older people have access to a range of housing and social solutions that enable them to live in housing that meets their individual needs. Care and Repair Cymru is partly funded by the Welsh Government.

The 22 Care and Repair agencies in Wales operate to the same boundaries as local government but are independent organisations, all of which operate on a charitable / not-for-profit basis. Care and Repair provides services to some 40,000 older people every year. Agencies are also part funded by the Welsh Government and attract funding from local government, local health boards, housing associations and various other sources.

They provide a free home-visiting service to support older people to remain living in their own home, listen to what the client wants and needs and helps them to make informed decisions regarding any adaptations or repairs to the home and subsequently supporting them through the duration of any necessary works. The various mechanisms for delivering services include:

- a Healthy Homes Check – identifying the need for energy efficiency work, repairs, maintenance, or adaptations to prevent accidents and falls or the worsening of existing health conditions
- financial information – this includes welfare benefit checks and applications. Help is also given with applying for grants and charitable funding where available, to support those who may have difficulty in funding their own essential works to the home
- administrative support – this includes practical help with form filling, or obtaining builders’ estimates and coordination of work
- architect and surveying service – this includes drawings and work specification, help with obtaining quotes from bona fide trusted contractors, monitoring work quality and managing contractor payments
- handyperson services, which help directly with small jobs around the house and in some agencies, with gardening and decorating services. These services can be free, material cost only or, privately funded by clients depending on the nature of works needed and whether works are covered by grant schemes
- Rapid Response Adaptations, a Welsh Government funded programme since 2002 that specifically enables small improvements and adaptations (typically costing around £150) to enable safe discharge from hospital or to help prevent admission into hospital
Repairs and improvements to well-loved homes can make a considerable difference to the occupier's quality of life. Examples include accessible shower facilities, handrails and ramped entrances.
In 2011 / 2012 the following services were provided:

**Core services**
- over 40,000 older people helped
- all clients are aged 60-and-over, 60 per cent of clients are aged 75-and-over, 23 per cent are aged 85-and-over, and the average client age is 76
- 37 per cent of clients are single pensioners living alone
- 37 per cent of clients are disabled
- 11,500 clients received the intensive casework service
- 1400 clients received help to apply for additional welfare benefits which increased household income by £2.5 million
- 500 clients received help from the £450,000 raised from charitable funds to pay for repairs or adaptations
- £15 million repairs and adaptations facilitated
- 2200 older people helped make their home more affordable to heat
- 12,500 clients were helped with falls prevention work

**Rapid Response Adaptations Programme**
- helped 13,000 clients
- 4000 of whom helped return home from hospital
- 10,500 of whom had works that helped prevent hospital admission
- average time enquiry to completion, seven days

Care and Repair has become a successful advocate, influencer and advisor, at national and local level. It has helped to shape policy and service delivery connections between housing and wider social inclusion agendas. These include the role of housing in social care, health and fuel poverty. The work of the Care and Repair movement in Wales has been about achieving social justice; enabling older people at times of vulnerability to remain living independently in their own homes and communities, and supporting them, in a highly personalised way, through what can be complex circumstances. The commitment to Care and Repair Cymru’s vision that ‘All older people in Wales shall have warm, safe and secure homes that meet their individual needs’, has led Care and Repair to grow into a highly respected movement, with cross party support in the Welsh Government and high regard within the third sector.

Partnerships with local authorities, local health boards, other third sector organisations and housing associations are crucial to our approach of solving older people’s housing problems with tailored solutions, and will be the focus of our work over the coming years.

For further information and to contact Care and Repair in Wales (where you can be directed to local agencies), visit the Care and Repair website

[www.careandrepair.org.uk](http://www.careandrepair.org.uk)

Alternatively, telephone: 0300 111 3333 (local rate)
Ambling about in the countryside, along our coastal paths, through heritage sites and around open spaces is one of the delights of summer in the UK. Supported by legislation such as the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act), it is also one of our rights. But how accessible is the great outdoors? Vivien King takes us through the responsibilities and some of the available guidance that supports opening up the countryside to everyone.

With the passing of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 95) – now encompassed of course in the Equality Act 2010 – came a huge, and at times, heated debate about whether the open, as opposed to the built environment, fell within the ambit of the legislation. Was the owner or manager of open space a service provider within the meaning of the legislation? And if so, did this service provider have to make reasonable adjustments in particular to physical features which put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage? Many an access consultant will remember these discussions and the alarm caused to some in the leisure industry at the time.

Later, with the passing of the CROW Act, the arguments extended to whether the imposition of a statutory duty upon an owner or manager meant that the countryside and seaside should be made accessible to all, whether or not that owner or manager had made a decision to invite the general public onto its property. How was, for instance, an owner of open moorland able to make its estate accessible to all? Looking back at those early discussions and arguments, an amazing amount of naivety was exhibited.

The fact remains that however hard one might try, much of our environment is simply not accessible to all – on a practical basis much of it is accessible to very few of us. There comes a time when climbing Scafell Pike or Helvellyn is simply not physically possible (if indeed it ever was) for the majority of the population. We now all, hopefully, some 18-or-so years after the passing of the DDA 95, have a better understanding of what the disability discrimination legislation was attempting to do. It did not and does not mean that mountains should be levelled or beaches covered in hardcore and tarmac. But it does mean accessibility to all should be at the forefront of everybody’s mind.

Visiting member of the public

What one has to do as a member of the public is recognise one’s own abilities and make a reasonable choice about those abilities before
Legislation

setting out. The On paths less travelled article in issue 126, spring 2011, by Alison Rae of The Fieldfare Trust and Colin Antwis, Fieldsman Trails Limited, gave us a fascinating insight into first doing one’s homework.

The Fieldfare Trust works with countryside managers and disabled people in order to improve access to the countryside for everyone. It provides help and training for countryside service providers and undertook the research for the 1993 BT Countryside for All Project. Fieldsman Trails Limited publishes mapping information for rural and urban environments in alternative formats.

A service provider

If one is an owner or controller of sites open to the public, being undoubtedly a service provider if one’s property is open to the public or a section of the public (whether for payment or not or by choice or because of legislation), one cannot simply shrug off legislative duties. One should take reasonable steps to aid accessibility and has a duty to make reasonable adjustments where necessary.

Most readers will be familiar with what is meant by making reasonable adjustments but to remind us all, this statutory duty comprises of three requirements under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010:

- ‘Where a provision, criterion or practice of A’s puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage’

- ‘Where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage’

- ‘Where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide the auxiliary aid’

We discussed all three elements in the article, Navigating reasonable adjustments, in issue 125, winter 2010.

Guidance and assistance is available to the service provider and should be employed even if the prime purpose of the open countryside is, for instance, agricultural. Under these circumstances, whilst it is recognised that livestock has to be enclosed within fields surrounded by hedges and / or walls, those fields still need to be accessed by gates or stiles designed to result in as little restriction as is practically possible by those entitled to access.

British Standard 5709: 2006 considers gaps, gates and stiles. We must all have come across stiles over which one has to clamber, in a rather undignified fashion, only to find one has a drop into a muddy patch several inches below the side from which one has come; accessible to hardly anyone let alone people with mobility or visual impairments. Well, new structures (where no access point previously existed) should not now be stiles other than in exceptional circumstances.

Nevertheless, BS 5709 gives examples of design but it should be remembered that the least restrictive option of access should be chosen in each case. If one is unable to obtain a full copy of this British Standard, The Pittecroft Trust gives a very useful explanation on its website entitled, Understanding the British Standard for Gaps Gates and Stiles.

Footpaths, too, should not be forgotten. These are open to all and are covered by the law relating to accessibility. Whilst it may not be the whole of the land owned or managed by a service provider which is open to the public, many private landowners find their land crossed by a public right of way.
The GOV.UK website has a simple guide to right of way and open access land, including what to do if a problem in use of a public right of way is encountered; report the complaint to the local highway authority via one’s local council, to the National Park Authority if the path is in a national park or, to the Forestry Commission if in woodland. Complaints about how a local authority deals with a disputed footpath can be made to the Local Government Ombudsman – see the fact sheet produced by the Ombudsman which is available online and updated earlier this year.

And whilst physical accessibility to the unbuilt environment is what we are considering today, owners and controllers must also concentrate upon the provision of information in an accessible format. We looked at accessibility and the web in the article entitled, Shopping, issue 130, spring 2012.

Accessibility examples

There are ample examples of good practice for accessibility in our context of open land. Take for instance Exmoor National Park and its link with Countryside Mobility South West. The hiring of all-terrain mobility scooters – Trampers, is possible from some sites, and work on redesigning accessible paths is on-going. Information can again be downloaded from the National Park’s website.

The National Trust has worked hard to make both its website and its properties as accessible as possible to as many as possible in ways which are, ‘creative and sensitive to the surroundings’ but within the physical limitations of the individual properties. It gives full details of each of its properties in its Access Guide explaining the location of, for instance, accessible toilets or car parking spaces or the number of steps to be encountered at various parts of the property and whether all or parts only of each estate are wheelchair accessible. The guide also highlights sensual opportunities for visitors. For instance, in describing Cotehele Mill (near Saltash) it states:

‘There is a wide range of craftmen’s tools which can be touched and lifted. Also, the noise and smell of grinding flour. Hear the sound of water as the water mill turns, and smell of the wood fire in the blacksmith’s forge. Listen to the silence in the valley.’

It enables sensible planning by the visitor and suggests contacting staff members at the properties to discuss particular requirements in advance of a visit or to book, for instance, one of a limited number of wheelchairs.

In addition to numerous visitor attractions having access details available through the owner or manager in hard copy and / or upon the web, for example, Kew Gardens or Blenheim Palace, there are numerous general guides available, including, The Good Access Guide – the online guide to life, leisure and mobility, or The Rough Guide to Accessible Britain. A browse through them will be enough to engender a desire to get out there and amble about in the open air – whatever one’s ability may be.

by Vivien King, Consultant to Malcolm Hollis llp

For further information, visit the following resources online:

🔗 The Pittecroft Trust: www.pittecroft.org.uk
🔗 GOV.UK: http://tinyurl.com/Public-rights-of-way
🔗 National Parks: www.nationalparks.gov.uk
🔗 Forestry Commission: www.forestry.gov.uk
A vision for accessibility: a given, not a utopia

When the partners came together to discuss and shape the project, they all shared a fundamental vision about accessibility: to make it a given, not a utopia. Their drive was to remove barriers faced not only by many disabled people, but also by older citizens, parents with children or effectively anyone engaging with society. The key to materialising the vision was to identify and share solutions for user-friendly and inclusive environments by involving all sectors of the community in the process.

Each partner organisation had a wealth of experience and knowledge in the field focusing on different aspects, from advocating for disability rights and campaigning, raising awareness, to providing consultancy and developing access tools. Sharing this knowledge and learning with each other resided at the heart of the two-year Lifelong Learning project.

The activities focused on conducting two-day visits to each partner’s cities, meeting with local authorities and organisations, presenting the legal and regulatory framework and examining good practice examples. The visits would conclude in sharing useful ‘do’s and don’ts’ and be followed by a summary of the learning that each partner took back to their respective country.

The partners

Five not-for-profit organisations formed the partnership, including:

- Lithuanian Association of People with Disabilities – the project lead
- Latvian Multiple Sclerosis Association
- The Estonian Union of Persons with Mobility Impairment
- The League of Rheumatology Affected Patients and Persons with Disabilities of the Tarragona Region
- Centre for Accessible Environments

Focus on good practice

A two-fold approach was applied in capturing the learning and developing a platform to share it effectively:

Focus on specific sectors to present case studies for and explore at site visits:
Examples of good practice and creative access solutions in heritage seemed to be of paramount importance. Visits included archaeological sites and towns, medieval castles in the countryside, and renovated museums and churches in busy urban settings. Emphasis was placed on external and internal design of listed buildings, modernised solutions applied, outdoor circulation routes, facilities and management systems.

The CAE team was particularly impressed with the following adaptations in listed buildings and heritage sites:

- the glazed passenger lift in the Museum of the Riga Stock Exchange (Latvia), that has been renovated and beautifully integrated into the buildings’ layout. The lift can accommodate 15 people and at least three wheelchair users at the same time
- the access features in the Money Museum in Vilnius (Lithuania), where displays could be scrolled up and down, were complemented by height-adjustable magnifiers which allowed visitors to view different currencies on display. Sign language description was also available for selected points of interest, while the museum provided a free audio guide in five languages
- the accessible entrances and surfaces in archaeological sites in Tarragona (Spain), allowing all visitors to explore tunnels and find their way into the centre of these fascinating structures
- the platform lift serving a subway crossing in the countryside, on the way to the Gutmana Cave in Turaida (Latvia), allowed for a safe and accessible crossing as there were no traffic lights or crossing points on the street

In conjunction with; Observations and recommendations about further areas of interest:

- access campaigns and awards
- access mapping
- public realm
- retail
- other service providers
Alongside good practice in arts and heritage, the project participants observed many more notable applications of inclusive design in the built environment throughout (including education facilities) and service provision (such as public transport).

- the tactile name plates for each resident student in the dormitories of the Helen School in Tallinn (Estonia). The plates are placed on the wall next to each student’s room, and include a large clear-print sign in Braille and their own distinctive tactile label such as a piece of wood or a button

- the accessible public bus network in Reus (Spain) where 13 routes are in operation to serve a city of 120,000 residents. Apart from the in-built function to lower the vehicle at bus stops for a ramp to open, the buses can accommodate up to four wheelchair users at the same time (reduced to two if accommodating powered-wheelchair users).

During one of the project visits to London, we visited St Paul’s Cathedral, where we were shown the innovative solutions applied both externally and internally – part of a complex restoration project. The use of media and technology was also applied to increase access, such as, the virtual tour of the dome galleries, projected in a step-free room in the crypt. The programme also included a day visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum where the Museum’s holistic approach to inclusion and access was presented in detail, such as, supporting disabled staff and building adaptations for both staff and visitors.

Sharing the learning online

Alongside the project activities, partners created a website to document the partnership, compile existing knowledge from their countries and develop a set of practical information and simple recommendations on how to implement inclusive environment solutions. Visitors to the website will find a combination of tools, resources, articles, publications and successful initiatives in partnering countries, which can be useful for research, starting a campaign, project planning or professional development.

The website is divided into three key sections:

- good practice case studies
- compendium of tools
- guides and recommendations

Although the partnership project activities have now been completed, the Universal Design: Barrier-Free Environments website continues to be shared locally and across European networks. It seeks to inspire and assist individuals, organisations and local authorities implement inclusive design solutions and develop their approach.

Further examples of good practice which were discovered throughout the project, include:

**The Golden Crutch Award (Latvia)**

Apeirons is an organisation of disabled people and their friends, based in Riga. They run The Golden Crutch Award, a successful annual campaign to raise awareness of environmental accessibility amongst politicians, architects and other stakeholders.

The Award was created in 2009 after members
Grundtvig

of the organisation found out that the vast majority of buildings were inaccessible, despite the legal framework. Through the Awards, the organisation promotes the implementation of both the law and inclusive design from the start of a building project.

Essentially the campaign has led to increased interest in accessibility by architects and better monitoring systems for new or renovated buildings by local authorities.

For further details, visit the Apeirons website http://tinyurl.com/Apeirons-English

Pavement Mapping (Estonia)

Following a request from the city council, the Tallinn Union of People with Mobility Impairment ran a mapping project to record access challenges in the public realm.

The team comprised of wheelchair users with experience of accessibility issues and professional mappers. The team used GPS devices, enhanced with tracking software to record routes and waypoints in an area of 100 kilometres worth of pavements and streets.

The data collected was edited using ESRI GIS professional software. An interactive map was then created, using colour-coding to identify different types of circulation routes:

- green: barrier-free
- yellow: accessible but assistance required
- red: not accessible

The map shows the location of street or pavement obstructions, or hazardous points (such as high kerbstones, damaged pavements, open rainwater canals), accompanied with a photo and a short text description. Accessible parking bays are also marked. The mapping project led to the successful refurbishment of one particular street – Tellinski Street.

For further details, visit the Pavement Mapping project website http://tinyurl.com/Pavement-mapping-Estonia

For further information about the partnership project, visit the project website

www.universaldesigneu.info

Alternatively, contact Project Manager, Foteini Galanopoulou

Email: projects@cae.org.uk

Alternatively, visit the project blog:

www.cae.org.uk/udbe.html

For further information on the organisations taking part in this project, visit the partner websites

Lithuanian Association of People with Disabilities

www.negalia.it

Latvian Multiple Sclerosis Association

www.lmsa.lv

The Estonian Union of Persons with Mobility Impairment

www.elil.ee

The League of Rheumatology Affected Patients and Persons with Disabilities of the Tarragona Region in Spain

www.lalligaonline.org

CAE would like to take this opportunity to thank Barry Ginley for arranging a wonderful visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

This article is dedicated to the memory of John Penton who led a very stimulating tour of St Paul’s Cathedral to project participants.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This announcement reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
BlindSquare

BlindSquare is a new app designed to assist visually impaired people with day-to-day navigation by making the most of the latest features available on smartphones.

During the design and development stages, it was informed and tested by visually impaired people.

BlindSquare works by determining a user’s location using a smartphone’s GPS function. It can gather information about the user’s immediate surroundings on Foursquare (another app that informs users of local services and suggests places of interest to visit based on personally preferences) and Open Street Map (which is a free and evolving editable map of the world). The app establishes which information is most useful and this is then relayed audibly to the user.

BlindSquare can assist users to find services within a given radius, such as cafes, libraries or a post office. Users can also discover their current address by shaking the device.

BlindSquare continues to support navigation by periodically announcing the distance to a desired destination, and the direction the user is traveling in. BlindSquare will also store preferred or regularly used addresses, and notify users if they happen to be in close proximity.

Users will need VoiceOver (a screen reader) to use the app, but BlindSquare also has several voices available to choose from, and can share information in a variety of languages.

BlindSquare won the Apps4Finland competition and the European Open Cities App Challenge in 2012.
CAE is the UK’s leading authority on inclusive design, assisting clients to create and manage built environments that everyone can use.

We can help businesses and organisations meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010 through our services. We provide both access consultancy and training.

**Our access consultancy services include:**

- Access consultancy as part of a design team for new developments
- Design appraisals of schemes
- Design and Access Statements for planning and Access Statements for Building Control Approvals
- Access audits of existing premises with prioritised recommendations for improvements
- Consultation with user groups and access groups

A challenging economic climate is really an opportune time to invest in your skills. We run a range of training programmes both scheduled and in-house training that can be tailored to your needs.

**These include:**

- Access auditing and the Equality Act 2010
- Disability awareness training
- Lifetime Homes and accessible housing training
- Reading and using plans
- Inclusive design
- Home adaptations for occupational therapists
- Inclusive public realm

For further information or to get a quote, telephone

📞 020 7822 8232

email

✉️ consultancy@cae.org.uk

or visit our website

🌐 www.cae.org.uk

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**Major clients we have worked with include:**

- Ambassador Theatre Group
- Barclays Capital
- Berkeley Group
- British Council
- Britten-Pears Foundation
- Caravan Club
- Department of Energy and Climate Change
- Gatwick Airport Limited
- Havering Homes
- Imperial War Museum
- Mary Rose Trust
- McDonald’s Corporation
- Royal Academy of Music
- Zoological Society of London
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Centre for Accessible Environments
RIBA Publishing I June 2013

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ribabookshops.com/access £49.99

You may also be interested in:

Designing for Accessibility

Centre for Accessible Environments
RIBA Publishing I October 2012 I £30.00


Aimed at all those seeking to fulfil their service provider duties under the Equality Act as well as architects, designers, facilities managers and a range of consumers (including disabled people), Designing for Accessibility includes extensive plans and dimensional data illustrating internal and external features that commonly need attention in public buildings.