

# SITES OF MEANING

## Marker Stones for the Millennium

### BEING IN A NATIONAL PARK

Being in a national park is a very mixed blessing. On the one hand, most of us live in attractive old houses, farmhouses and cottages, in delightful villages and in splendid countryside. We have the security of an entry in the land registry, and a strict planning regime, almost guaranteeing that what we have, we'll keep. We also enjoy (sometimes!) the company and spending power of our visitors, and they seem to appreciate us and our places.

On the other hand, the visitors – *grockles* - can be a bit overwhelming and demanding. I recall the day when a visitor knocked on the Square House front door to Middleton Square, to complain that my son's band – rehearsing in a distant back room – was disturbing the peace they had come to enjoy. I didn't know the power of his vocabulary 'til then! And on a similar note, new residents - *offcomers* - tend to sue their solicitors for not warning them that sheep bleat, owls hoot and cow poo smells.

Even worse, local residents of limited means – i.e. those who actually work to sustain, support, service and maintain the park and its people, on heavily taxed low wages – can't afford to live here nor easily to comply with the rigid rules.

So it was a great joy to me to be part of the Sites of Meaning project. We involved, for example, the older farming generation – Henry Brocklehurst's "...*Come you old gypsy man...*" (site 13). And the children – Jenny Bristow's brilliant poem *Fossilised life*. And the *offcomers'* lateral thinking, fresh eyes, and creative hand - Charles and the team. And we had the local knowledge and landowners' perspective from John Warren and Heidi Maher.

SoM celebrates the essence of our history, culture, stones, language and landscape. Our *settlement* of this land.

We have brought about £40,000 into the village and to surrounding workers and craftsmen, and created a *visitor attraction* that will add another little bit to our well-being. Many authorities and bodies willingly contributed, not only on the merits of the project, but also, I suspect, because it is where it is – in the middle of the nation's favourite National Park and, (I assert shamelessly), in its very best small village and large parish.

The sponsors form a long list (16), but perhaps it is fitting that the last major grant came from the Park Authority itself. Bless it. Through gritted teeth...?

See Middleton page in [www.youlgrave.com](http://www.youlgrave.com)

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