

News

Bill Bryson set to be CPRE's new President

2 May 2007

Leading author Bill Bryson is set to become CPRE's [1] new President, taking over from newspaper columnist and military historian Sir Max Hastings. [2]

The best selling American writer, who lives in Norfolk, has long worn his love for England's superb countryside on his sleeve, celebrating its beauty and variety in books such as Notes from a Small Island.[3]

CPRE believes his Presidency of one of the UK's leading and longest established environmental bodies will raise the profile of our cause – protecting and enhancing England's countryside for the benefit of everyone, wherever they live.

Bill is being put forward for election at the national organisation's Annual General Meeting on July 9, having been warmly endorsed by the Board of Trustees.

CPRE Chairman Sir Nigel Thompson said: 'We're just delighted that Bill has agreed to be put forward as CPRE President. He's a person who communicates how wonderful and precious England's countryside is to the widest possible audience.

'He has particular concerns about some kinds of damage to the countryside, such as litter, and we'll be working with him on those. But Bill understands and supports our fight across the board.

'In putting him forward to our AGM we also want to pay a big tribute to Max Hastings for the tremendous job he has done as CPRE President over the past five years. We wish him the very best for the future.'

Bill Bryson will formally take up the post after the AGM. He said:

'I'm very honoured to be asked. For a very long time I've been a huge admirer of CPRE, what it does and what it stands for. I'd like to help it to build on its successes if I can.'

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Notes for editors

1. CPRE, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, is a charity which promotes the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England. We advocate positive solutions for the long-term future of the countryside. Founded in 1926, we have 60,000 supporters and a branch in every county. Patron: Her Majesty The Queen.

2. Sir Max Hastings, former editor of The Daily Telegraph and Evening Standard, became CPRE's President in June 2002 and will step down at the AGM in July 2007 after serving a five year term. He took over the Presidency from actress Prunella Scales.

3. Bill Bryson was born in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1951, the son of two journalists. A

backpacking expedition in 1973 brought him to England. He got a job in a psychiatric hospital in Virginia Water, Surrey where he met his future wife, Cynthia. After working for The Times and The Independent in the 1980s, he became a full time author living in North Yorkshire. He and his family returned to the USA for several years, then moved back to England in 2003 to live near Norwich. The Lost Continent (1985), his first travel book, chronicled a trip in his mother's car around small town America. Since then he has written several more including Notes from a Small Island (1995), A Walk in the Woods (1998), Notes from a Big Country (1998) and Down Under (2000). He has also written books about language and an autobiography (The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid, 2006). His magnum opus on science, A Short History of Nearly Everything (2003), won the Aventis Prize for best general science book. Bill is Chancellor of Durham University, a Commissioner for English Heritage and in 2006 was awarded an honorary OBE for services to literature.

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The Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

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