AMERICAN HERITAGE...A poem

Americans, in my experience/ Are seldom lacking in self-confidence/ And yet the founding fathers, it appears/ Back in those early nation-building years/ Displayed one sign of insecurity: They lacked the mark of authenticity/ At last the settlers hit upon a cure: They simply stole the old nomenclature/ Borrowing names without apology/ Which graced the cities of antiquity/ They'd build a modest, unpretentious home/ And find the arrogance to call it Rome/ New upstart towns competed to abuse/ Old names like Athens, Troy and Syracuse/ In Athens, thanks to this phenomenon/ You'll search in vain to find the Parthenon/ And never mind where Memphis used to be/ Most people think it's now in Tennessee/ But cultural respectability/ Doesn't require a phoney pedigree/ Nor can a reputation ever be/ Supported by a bogus ancestry/ To some philosophers the thought occurred / This situation simply was absurd/ And, keen to put an end to their distress/ They found their answer in the wilderness/ The forests which sporadically spanned / The bosom of their new-discovered land / Were worthy symbols of antiquity/ Older than anything in Italy/ Sequoias, still alive in Oregon/ Were saplings in the days of Solomon/ The Hudson River still appeared to flow/ Much as it did ten thousand years ago/ The Catskill Mountains flourished long before/ The time of Homer and the Trojan War/ Surely they had the majesty, the age/ To represent the nation's heritage!/ Nothing in Latium or Attica/ Could match the thunder of Niagara!/ New York just wasn't old enough to be/ A fitting symbol of antiquity/ The Woolworth Building and the Guggenheim/ Are products of a very recent time/ Nor are there many buildings in the West / To rouse an antiquarian's interest/ That work of art that spans the Golden Gate/ Though beautiful, came relatively late/ Having no ruins from antiquity/ No temples of a pagan deity/ People began to consecrate their own/ Beginning with the awesome Yellowstone/ Authorities were quick to designate/ National Parks in many a rustic state/ Outdoor cathedrals in this present age/ Now dominate the country's heritage/ The culture that we leave behind is what/ We add to assets we've already got/ Chief among which, by popular consent/ Must be the natural environment.

Golden acacia in full summer glory with trolleys at superstore

Jay Appleton

Picture credits:
Antartica space image from http://terraweb.wr.usgs.gov — and ex book cover Collins edition; urban art photos by Brian Goodey; South African fences by Drummond Densham and Gareth Roberts; LiDAR images from Forest Enterprise — other photos by the Editor.

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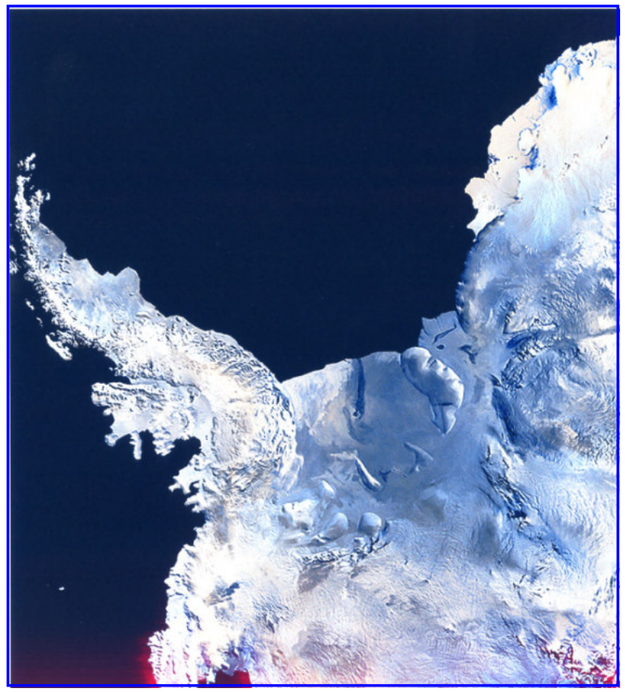
Aesthetics and the Antarctic plateau

Paul Selman's recent articles about sustainable landscapes raised many issues. He suggested we may need to "learn to love" new landscapes which are currently controversial and one of the keys to exploring possible ways to do this is understanding the notion of "acquired aesthetic".

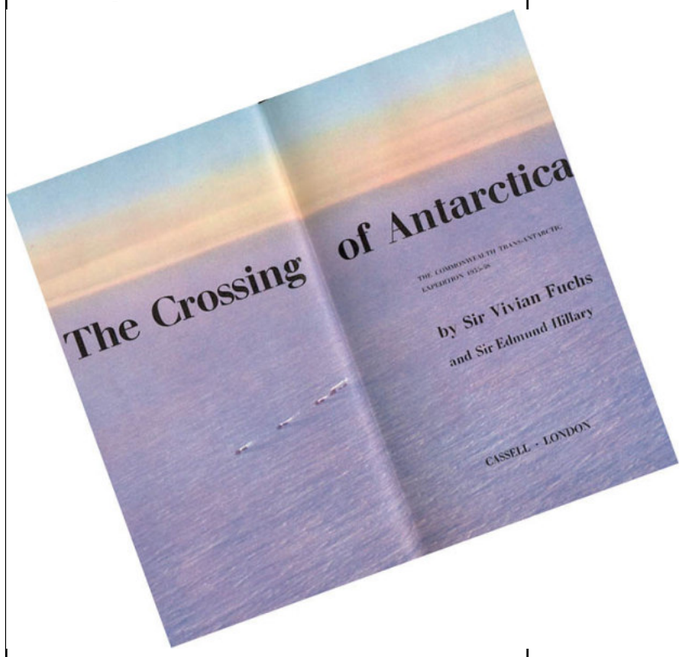


Most of my landscape planning thoughts over the last few years have concerned the Antarctic. Sustainability (another of Paul Selman's considerations) has not been a primary issue for me, even though it is now part of polar logistics, but "aesthetics" have. This has been because it was included in the 1991 Protocol on Environmental Protection signed by the Antarctic Treaty. The Protocol was ratified in 1998 and seeks "the comprehensive protection of the Antarctic environment". Much has already been written about the strengths and weaknesses of the Protocol, but I have been specifically examining one short phrase that occurred several times in the document - "wilderness and aesthetic values". The history and reasons for its inclusion are interesting, but not immediately relevant to any thoughts about aesthetics, whether acquired or not.

Taking a straightforward understanding of "aesthetic values" it is not surprising that parts of Antarctica such as the Antarctic peninsula or the Transantarctic Mountains (see above) are considered to have "high aesthetic value". Visitors, whether explorers, scientists or tourists write of "precipitous mountain glaciers plunging from alpine peaks or plateaus into an ice-choked

seas" or "magnificent pinnacle-like mountain-peaks" with hanging glaciers that "glow with wonderful shades of blue and green in striking contrast with the dark massive rock-faces between them." The majority of the laudatory phrases relate to areas with a varied visual pattern - the places where mountains can be seen, or along the rocky lengths of the coast. But there are other landscapes - the ice plateau covering millions of square kilometres, or the ice shelves, the vast floating ice sheets attached to the coast. For both of these the 'view' is 360° of uninterrupted undulating ice.

It is more accurate to say that there are two areas which can be called a polar plateau. Geologically, Antarctica is not one, but two continents, lying either side of the indentations made by the Ross Sea and the Weddell Sea. The Transantarctic Mountains form the divide. The plateau of West Antarctica is probably about one sixth the size of East Antarctica. This reaches heights of over 4000 m with the South Pole at



about 2800 m. Much of the concealed rock surface lies above sea level and is an old continental shield which once formed the central part of the Gondwana supercontinent. Some areas though are below sea level, and above them the ice cover reaches thicknesses of over 4,500 m.

In the most simple terms, laying a scale across a map of Antarctica in a school atlas suggests that a journey of 4,000 km could be made, from Dronning Maud Land to George V Land. That is about the distance from Edinburgh to Cairo, or Gibraltar to Moscow. On the Antarctic journey the surface would be only ice. Perhaps the peaks of mountains might be seen in the far distance when in Dronning Maud Land, but for the majority of the journey no rocks of any shape or size would be seen. This bare-bones geographical summary gives some indication of the vastness of the area, but says nothing about people's response to it.

From examination of available polar logs and diaries, it appears that visitors often respond to their surroundings by describing what they see, before commenting on aspects of its vastness and grandeur. They may then go on to record their emotional response, whether of desolation or loneliness, awe or appreciation.

On his first expedition Scott, together with Ernest Shackleton and Edward Wilson, carried out an arduous three-month Southern Journey over the Ross Ice Shelf. He wrote:

> *As one plods along towards the midnight sun, one's eyes naturally fall on the plain ahead, and one realises that the simile of a gem-strewn carpet could never be more aptly employed than in describing the radiant path of the sun on the snowy surface. It sparkles with a myriad points of brilliant light, comprehensive of every colour the rainbow can show, and is so realistic and near that it often seems one has but to stoop to pick up some glistening jewel. (4 December 1902; 1929: 441).*

During the next austral summer he was again on the polar plateau and recorded in his sledging diary for the 30 November 1903: *'The scene about us is the same as we have seen for many a day, and shall see for many a day to come — a scene so wildly and awfully desolate that it cannot fail to impress one with gloomy thought' (Scott, 1929: 605).* He later suggested that the interior of Victoria Land: *'must be considered the most desolate region in the world. There is none other that is at once so barren, so deserted, so piercingly cold, so windswept or so fearsomely monotonous' (Scott, 1929: 607).* His oft-quoted words *"Great God! this is an awful place"* from the day he and his four companions reached the South Pole on the second expedition — echo his previously expressed sentiments.

It is interesting to compare Scott's words with some of his companions' entries for the same period (mid-January 1912). Wilson, physician and naturalist, only

records details of the weather - *"the coldest march I ever remember"* and the surfaces they had to negotiate. He notes the direction of the sastrugi (sharp irregular ridges formed on the snow surface by wind erosion) and the variable snow types, both factors that directly influenced their speed of travel. Bowers' diary is blank from 4-19 January, but he wrote letters to his family whilst at the Pole. To his mother he said *"It is a bleak spot - what a place to strive so hard to reach."* To me, the tone of both Wilson's and Bowers' writings is pragmatic and realistic of the problems that faced them, but with none of Scott's more dispiriting or despondent tendencies.

More recent visitors who have lived on the plateau or on one of the ice shelves for months at a time have commented in more straightforward language. An American worker on the plateau during the Antarctic summer said: *"when you're sitting there drilling you can be totally entertained just watching the sky and watching the surrounding area. People say 'Well, isn't it white all the way round?' Well, I guess it is, but its quite beautiful, quite beautiful. People just don't understand the beauty of it all sometimes." (BBC Radio 4 broadcast The Big White, broadcast on 10 and 25 August 1996.)* A British worker who had lived on the Ronne Ice Shelf for much of an austral summer said he found enjoyment in the play of light on the uninterrupted surface. For whatever reason or by whatever means, both had found ways of enjoying environments that many would probably refuse to even grace with the name of landscapes. For the appreciative workers, an acquired aesthetic is clearly present. Question then follow — what were the processes they followed to reach their judgements? Will everyone be able to find genuine pleasure in such a situation?

Regretfully, I have not visited the plateau. Probably the closest experience to continuous ice cover as far as the eye could see was a visit to the Fuchs Ice Piedmont (a glacier covering a coastal strip of low-lying land) on Adelaide Island. Ice extended to the horizon. Some areas were heavily crevassed and as it was the end of summer, there was no depth of firm snow cover to provide safe travel. My response was one of awe in the scale of my surroundings (although it is miniscule in area when compared to the polar plateau), as well as enjoyment of the ever-changing light.

Suggesting different approaches to appreciation of all polar landscapes seems to take considerable time. A brief paper summarising my work in understanding "wilderness and aesthetic values" was put forward in 1998 at the XXII Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting. Within the document I gave a short definition of landscape in relation to the Antarctic as well as suggesting the need for objective landscape descriptions so as to be able to compare like with like. For many years those in the Antarctic Treaty System only used words such as "environment" in official papers, but more recently "landscape" and even "cultural landscape" have appeared. Hopefully this is evidence of change. Nevertheless, if any area of plateau is ever considered for formal designation under the terms of the Protocol, I suspect it will be as "wilderness", as at present I have found very few who see any aesthetic value in the polar plateaus.

Whilst drafting this note, I read an obituary of Albert Ellis, the psychologist who pioneered cognitive behavioural therapy (*The Times*, 27 July 2007). Ellis developed his ideas from studying Stoic philosophy, especially the statement by Epictetus*: "it is not events, but our opinions about them, which cause us suffering."* It is an interesting approach from which to view Scott's responses, as well as those of Wilson and Bowers. It also seems applicable to thoughts of "acquired aesthetic". I suggest that both the recent long-stay workers and I, as a shorter term visitor, were willing to look at the ice covered landscapes around us and find pleasure in what we saw. It could be called "making common sense of place".

Rosamunde Codling

Editor's note: Image on page 1 from http://terraweb.wr.usgs.gov website. I use the 'landscape appealing' Western Plateau image on the front page. I dropped the Eastern plateau from page two as too dull to entertain.

ENOUGH OF AWFUL DESOLATION

Lets talk now about the delights of towns and humanity. Write in.

URBAN ART INTERVENTIONS: SKULPTUR PROJEKTE MUNSTER 07

Brian Goodey

European circuits for cultural presentation are organized, in part, in order to help our understanding of the regional and local landscape. I am far from sure that they succeed in this but on the circuit for 2007 you can link-visit the Documenta at Kassell, Switzerland, the Biennale in Venice and the Skulptur Projekte in Munster. Observing coach-borne grey-rinsers disembarking in Munster, some seemed to be numbing themselves with the whole circuit.

Thanks to the British Arts Council, I had a chance to experience the Munster event where urban landscape issues were said to be on show. This is the fourth Munster presentation. There are 33 artists and as the best of any of these ten year events may be retained between times the artists must insert their concepts within what remains from events starting in 1977. Oldenburg's 'Giant Pool Balls' are amongst past elements still occupying key spaces.

Judging from my previous visit to Munster in the 1960's the city has now reconstructed from the bottom up. Of the then historic facades without buildings only one is still left. We, the 'Allies', demolished this provincial German city, now revived to a good facsimile of a facaded, arcaded, cobbled German place; tidiness, earnest faces with purposes to match, a quiet pleasure to walk in.

The Skulptur Projekte is clearly a developed cultural tourist attraction, bringing in a variety of culture-vultures, and proposing a scattered array of what is current and mildly debatable in the public art world. In the hundred days between 17th June and 30th September, there is still time to make your own judgement.

My own criteria for success start with **the Place** – curated contributions need to add to, or reflect on, the particular history and being of Munster. Second, they need to be **accessible – both physically and intellectually**, to the citizen and the visitor. A number of commissions fall by the wayside on these two criteria. Thirdly, the added elements need to provide **a provocation, an experience-changing event in public space**. Finally, they need to insert a WORM, **a worm of image or of purpose,** which sticks with you whilst you are in the city and after you have left. This links the provocation of the piece to the place in your personal global map.

Two days of ambling round selected items, and a rushed taxi to include some that slipped the walk made me realize that my criteria may be both traditional, and conservative, when considered by the younger, and more media savvy, visitor. The landscape context, it seems, may not be essential.

Much of what has been implanted will be removed, sensibly the city retains only a few proposals from each decade. Of those retained, **Bruce Nauman's 'Square Depression'**, safely installed in an academic context and originally conceived in 1977, is a perspective-twisting concrete structure which really deserves to survive as a visual trick in the peri-urban landscape. **Gustav Metger's moving blocks** are in the same category of solid (though frequently re-located) landscape elements, which carry with them an array of urban meanings. But this is especially true of **Mark Wallinger's 'Zone'**, an ephemeral five-kilometre thread at 4.5 meters high which links buildings around a central zone of the city. Hardly visible, this is the link between designation and definition of urban space, and the reality of 'urban' being. The fact that this line has been installed, can be read, and its implications pondered on, is to my mind, the major achievement of the Munster exhibition. It is so ephemeral, such a slight suggestion, that it may be lost to most, but as an artistic intervention it is brilliant and deserves to be reproduced elsewhere — possibly with more interpretation so that residents and visitors can really share the purpose. No photograph does it justice.

In pursuing the elements of the Munster project I am struck by the fact that few artists seem to have been here and taken in the character of the place. Some have fled to the edge, unable to engage in this most polite of cities. Others have played their games regardless of the specific context.

Adding to the place, not centrally, but under a marginal road bridge is **Susan Philipsz**, who has used the acoustics of bridge structure to echo Offenbach in a found place, marvellous enhancement adding voice over traffic. And **Pawel Althamer**, cutting a walking path out from the city edge to the unsigned countryside beyond. Both are quietly breaking boundaries.

But, adding to the townscape (which must be the key) and as party to the urban fabric, what most meets my criteria and takes my prize is **Silke Wagner's 'The History of Munster from Below'.** This placarded

bollard, with feet below and a penetrating head above, reports on Paul Wulf, a local man who was erroneously sterilized in 1938 as mentally deficient, and who survived the Nazi era to walk the streets of Munster. In their encounters with Paul Wulf residents looked on the horrors of a past Germany. His statue, slap in the city's commercial centre, now invites the

attention of bollard readers, and his story reflects on the evolution of an urban landscape. Federal awards he may have received, but this sculpture keeps his urban role alive. His is the memory of a 'weirdo', something which contemporary retail management too often removes from the townscape.

Public space is the space for critics, for oddballs, for those who need people and air to spread their ideas. Wulf walked these streets and was always a voice aside. Wagner's project, with the essential add-ons of local archival research and community groups, stands as a monument to the past and future of Munster. Wagner has engaged, has joined the affluent, tidy, throngs of residents and asks questions about the nature of the city whilst the majority of contributors to this event have fled to the suburbs.

The big question raised by the increasingly large supply of cultural artistic events in Europe is: "Are they superficial add-ons intended to draw tourist finance, or are they genuine contributions to the evolution of place?" This is not difficult to answer: it is regrettable but the 'curatorial & art world', and the 'criticism & town promotion world', will ensure that the tourism monies roll in. Decreasingly though will there be any contributions that add to the towns and landscapes which offer the setting for such events. Or am I beginning to miss something, do my criteria need updating?

I am pleased to find that in Munster there are still messages for that city, and for our understanding of an evolving urban landscape – sounds and the ephemeral hints as to urban meaning are still being stimulated. ***Far too many artists have signed up to the 'idea anywhere' response. Over the heavily archived history of the past thirty years we can see the sense of place fading into the background in favour of a globalised contribution anywhere.***

URBAN NON-ART INTERVENTIONS

Bud Young

I am sure you've all seen on of them; they seem to be going up all over the place these days. Why I even saw one next to St Martins in the Fields church — but thronged by tourist minors taking photos of Trafalgar Square I was reluctant to take my camera out — it's a small film based job. In the rather more anonymous surroundings near London South Bank University I

snapped this elegant member of the species. What do you think? Urban art? Christo drapes the city?

The clue dear readers is that no one goes into the shops and the window dressings never change. A nookier piece of scientific observation is the shadow of scaffolding visible on the fabric façade — from the inside workings. Should we question the validity of urban art as reported by Brian Goodey? One of Munster 07's reported interventions was a group of fallen parasols. I ask you!
This WORM stays with me.

‘THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS’

Philip Pacey

It is Saturday the 2nd of June, 2007. With this morning’s copy of *The Guardian*, among all the usual Saturday supplements, is a booklet, *The Guardian Guide to Walks*. And in it there is a description of a landscape I saw maybe only once as a child, and have but seldom recalled in later life. But I am in no doubt that it enchanted me; I fell in love not just with it but with the type of landscape it represented and which I saw here for almost the first time — chalk downland.

Where is it? My guess is that not many *Guardian* readers, and maybe not many readers of *LRE*, will be familiar with the Pegsdon Hills, as I recall them, or the Barton and Pegsdon Hills as they are called in *The Guardian*. We were living at Hitchin at the time; I must have been nine or ten. The Pegsdon Hills are on the Hertfordshire-Bedfordshire border; *The Guardian* advises taking the 77 or 78/79 bus from Hitchin to Hexton. Did we travel by bus or is it possible we cycled? It must have been a holiday; we often ventured into the countryside on a Saturday afternoon, after my father – a Methodist minister – had written his sermon in the morning, but I think this must have been a whole day’s outing.

What do I remember? I have vague recollections of the shape of the hills, and of the flora which clothed their voluptuous curves; of being able to look out across a flatter landscape, and of being enfolded by combes and hollows. I also associate with this trip a habit I practised frequently with singular lack of success – scrutinising turned up soil along field paths, in the hope of picking up a stone axe or arrowhead, or a shard of Roman pottery, for my ‘museum’. Of course, a landscape such as this would have been attractive to our ancestors; the Icknield Way passes through it, and it includes Ravensburgh Castle, an Iron Age hill fort – the name sounds familiar, but I can’t visualise it.

> THEY went then till they came to the Delectable Mountains, which mountains the boy of the Lord of that hill of which we have spoken before. So they went up to the mountains, to behold the gardens and orchards, the vineyards and fountains of water; where also they drank and washed themselves, and did freely eat of the vineyards. Now, there were on the top of these mountains shepherds feeding their flocks, and they stood by the highway-side. The pilgrims, therefore, went to them and leaning upon their staffs, (as is common with weary pilgrims when they stand to talk with any by the way,) they asked, Whose Delectable Mountains are these; and whose be the sheep that feed upon them?

What I chiefly and very clearly remember is what didn’t happen. For some reason – an instinctive, primal response to a landscape which was *inviting*, and which felt *hospitable*? — I conceived a powerful, nagging desire to come back, on my own or with one or two friends of my own age; not only to come back, but to spend at least one night here, in a tent or under the open sky; and to bring with me for sustenance *a steak and kidney pie*! It seems odd that this one detail remains clear in my memory; I guess I had recently discovered just how delicious steak and kidney pie can be cold as well as hot. Perhaps even more delicious cold, at least in propitious circumstances, which these most certainly would have been. Well, of course it was not to be. I can’t remember if I actually sought permission, or whether I merely nourished a dream which I knew had no chance of coming true… or not yet. My parents being teetotal, ‘The Raven’ at Hexton didn’t feature in our outing; according to *The Guardian* it is known for its steak and cask ales. I wonder if it could be persuaded to serve cold steak and kidney pie?

I initially wrote in the opening paragraph above that this was my first experience of chalk downland. Subsequently I corrected myself and added ‘almost’, because I recalled, from the same era, a Sunday School outing to Dunstable Downs, and maybe there were other occasions as well. It would have been some years later that I first experienced the Sussex Downs when we stayed with an aunt and uncle who lived near Rottingdean. From the day on Dunstable Downs I recall, of course, the sense of looking out as if from the top of a wave across the flat land it seems about to engulf — a sense which was heightened by the gliders taking off from the top of the downs, throwing themselves (it seemed) into the space below. Nowadays I have no head for heights; looking back now I feel gratitude for the fact that, for all its abruptness, downland’s edge is never sheer, is safe to roll down. But I have no memory from that day of exploring the *interior* of the downs; no sense of shelter or containment. And it was a busy scene, whereas the Pegsdon Hills were quiet; no-one else was about …and as I write I can hear in my mind a lark singing. It was on the Pegsdon Hills that I learned to love chalk downland.

Because they were so special - because they evidently still are special, relatively unknown and capable of being discovered despite being in the heart of England – I have been delighted to have learned something about the Pegsdon Hills which I didn’t know before and I don’t think my parents knew either. Of course they were familiar with *The Pilgrim’s Progress* , and on another occasion we visited John Bunyan’s cottage at Elstree. Maybe I’m wrong and they did know (I rather hope so) that these gentle hills were the inspiration for Bunyan’s ‘The Delectable Mountains’.

SOUTH AFRICA’S FENCED LANDSCAPES

Gareth Roberts

With additional photos by Drummond Densham

There has been a surfeit of television programmes about South African landscapes and wildlife of late. They include excellent educational insights into one of the most wonderfully biodiverse parts of our planet, as well as programmes that strike me as merely pandering to armchair ecologists and those who thrill to action packed programmes as vets whiz across the *bushveld* ‘darting’ rhinos from helicopters. British audiences do not seem to appreciate the 'reality' of circumstances in much of southern Africa – poverty, HIV/Aids, water shortages and poor governance. Television shows us little of the wider landscape of South Africa today, in which (to my mind) fencing seems to symbolise the social condition.

Fences in South Africa rarely exist just to demark property boundaries or — as avid watchers of British TV reality programmes might assume — to keep the wild animals and people apart! Their primary purpose is more often, to keep thieves, poachers and the desperately poor, out! I have come to realise from a couple of visits this year that fencing of all sorts, is big business in South Africa today.

Sitting at my window seat in a South African Airways Jumbo as it starts to make its descent through the smog-filled pall that now seems ever present over Johannesburg, I remind myself that this is a city whose name commemorates Johannes Rissik, the 19th century surveyor of this memorable land. Johannesburg is a city established to exploit the biggest gold reef the world has ever known, and a city of over 5 million whose contradictions embody daily life from Soweto's shack settlements to the super-rich suburb of Sandton.

On this bright day, you could not help but notice the thousands upon thousands of tiny metal roofed shacks, glinting in the early morning sun; the sprawl of shanty towns — established under the Group Areas Acts to segregate blacks and whites — stretched out in every direction. Many of these townships remain, unchanged a decade after *'apartheid'* has ended. Largely devoid of trees or green grass they are 'serviced' by open ditches and dusty dirt tracks lined from day break to dusk with folk shifting hither and thither, like people in a Lowry painting. Just before landing, I look down again, and my eyes are drawn away to the bright green of well-watered English style gardens fringed with exotic trees shading the traditionally white — now slightly de-segregated, suburbs, permeated by ubiquitous sky-blue swimming pools. In a city where private water supplies are intermittent and unaffordable for most, such symbols of affluence seem incongruously hedonistic.

Even more in evidence are the security fences that skirt all these and many far less salubrious homes. I ask my South African hosts about this and am told that violent crime is rampant in the inner suburbs of Jo'berg and other major cities. Three metre spiked steel pale fencing, electronic gates, and razor wire is commonplace. Security fencing dominates the urban landscape of South Africa today.

Travelling out of the city and Gauteng province, to the northern outskirts of Pretoria, I head north along the N1 highway for 40 kilometres through a predominantly industrialised landscape. After that, the landscape changes and the flat *highveld* grassland becomes more prominent. Fencing is ceaseless, fringing the road continuously and always reflecting its primary purpose – to keep people out. Fence types reflect the significance of what is being protected.

Fencing around the shanty towns is always the crudest, while for obvious reasons perhaps, fencing around the diamond, gold and platinum mines is the most sophisticated. Less clear are the differing fence styles elsewhere primarily linked to managing wildlife.

North of Pretoria, as one enters the Limpopo Province, the character of the landscape changes. The

highveld gives way to *bushveld* (savannah) with predominantly mixed (acacia/broadleaved) woodland in the south and central Limpopo and dry woodlands dominated by mopane and boabab trees in the northern parts of the Province bordering South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana. The fences change character likewise. The *bushveld* is the principal habitat of some of the biggest and potentially most dangerous animals hence the sturdy fencing fringing nature reserves, national parks,

game lodges and safari parks. Some fences are electrified and have to be extraordinarily high if there might be any prospect of a kudu or other large antelope vaulting them.

Tourism is a South Africa's biggest earner (after gold and diamonds) and wildlife tourism is the backbone of this economy. Former agricultural land is being acquired by both the Government and private investors and is being encouraged to revert to its semi-natural state. Buying wild animals and reintroducing

them into private game reserves to be shot at by trophy hunters is, ironically, what increasingly sustains the effort to conserve these animals today. However, it also causes tensions with local tribal communities who see this as working against their interest in the restitution of their ancestral lands following the apartheid era. Once land is established as a wildlife reserve, the locals are effectively fenced out: fencing is installed to contain the wild animals who would otherwise prey on domestic stock. At the same time fences deter 'poachers' but these may simply be desperately poor people who need bush meat to survive. Meanwhile, entry into South Africa's National Parks and other private game lodges is expensive (prohibitively so for most black people) living around and about them.

Fences are symbols of a divided society, in South Africa today and seem set to be increasingly dominant features of its landscapes too.

Editor's note.

The fence shown below is innocent of all political or social undercurrents malice or wrong, to which end it has elected to grow on every one of its posts a tiny roof gardens of bilberry. Yet another soft hearted Devonian landscape.

SNOWDONIA TRIP 5th-6th October
More than 20 people are expected to this field based event including committee members of the Group. We would be pleased to see more attend.
If you would come, but for the expense, please contact the organisers who may be able to offer a small subsidy from the Group's budget.

SHEFFIELD INVITED SEMINAR 20th November
We have perhaps five places free for this prestigious European seminar. If you feel you can make a contribution to the discussion or would particularly benefit from it please contact the organisers Professor Paul Selman or Gareth Roberts. Contact details in LRE 43 or email, me, Bud Young.

ROSEMOOR GARDEN AS A LANDSCAPE SURROGATE

Bud Young

I have just come from walking for three hours around the Royal Horticultural Gardens at Rosemoor, near Great Torrington in mid Devon. It's said to be 65 acres and we focussed on about six acres, much of the rest is woodland. I was aware while we walked, the assistant editor and me, that there were places and places: places which I liked with features that I liked and places which left me more than unimpressed, rather they left me feeling dispirited. And there were discernible elements.

My favourite place undoubtedly was in an old garden near the original house where there were gladed lawns small and gently sloping, not a straight line in sight in and between, huge oak trees. I was brought up in such a place. These delicious elements were 'held in' by beds with plants shrubs and trees. The beds made the edges but were themselves mere containing masses. On inspection these beds comprised a number of horticultural collections which had little appeal to me. Each was some form of oval or amoeboid shape bounded invariably by a wall line of the dark local Culm sandstone; shape uninteresting, path space between curved but of no spatial consequence.

I was impressed by the walk through the stream garden a mini defile, strongly enclosed by huge sandstone blocks, bamboos, wet plants and with a blobbling sound of water. It was cool and shaded, the day was hot. Very impressive. The stream, followed down, led to a delightful small lake. An irresistible destination which of course is in line with widely accepted landscape preference for reflective water features. I have never seen that huge rhubarb like plant *Gunnera* looking more at home. It can be a dreary monster… and have you ever seen it after frost!

I had entered the garden — as one does with these places — past the shop and café and onto the formal terrace, full of hard lines and careful stonework. Didn't like it; too much 'drawing board' though I appreciate that lots of houses need such a sitting out area. Below this a seven celled planscape of garden compartments each looking to attain individual distinctiveness — as a cottage garden, a plantsman's garden, one for herbs, for roses, one with vegetables woven in, one for foliage; the square garden and the spiral one and one for the Queen Mother. Strange naming convention. Walking with the deputy editor who knows her plants we did what was expected of us and scrutinised labels. But we were also taken with the great variety of form and the contrasting colours. In places those elements of design — a mass of red here or blue there — that juxtapositon of colours and foliage brought out exclamations of pleasure. Sometimes, this, I realised, was for the sheer variety on show, visual stimulus, an intellectual jolt to the system. Like complex music.

By contrast and as part of the cross-axial design a rectangular corridor of lawn, edged by vertical yew hedges was calm and one of the few parts of the garden with clear architectural quality. I liked it despite or for its simplicity. But by itself or repeatedly, how dull.

We arrived in the Rose Garden where there was no colour, little obvious variation, little sense of height and no mystery and it left me with an empty feeling. I had visited a much lovelier 'ordinary' display of scented roses in Clissold Park the week before: ordinary flowerbeds by the local authority of Camden. Nor was there any significant variety in the Rose Garden and I realised that what I was (unconsciously) looking for was that kind of mental and visual stimulus that rattles the little grey cells. In fairness, few roses were in bloom that day.

In all seven gardens, I was looking for rapid changes and differences. At the same time I responded (is this an emotional response … I think so) to colours that I liked of which warm strong reds such as *Crocosmia* with oranges featured high in the preference list, blues, such as *Perovskia*, with lighter blues and pink purples and grey green foliage. I was also taken by the aromatics of the place, of the junipers, by fennel, sages thymes and rosemary, of a particular eucalyptus and that lovely plant wormwood, botanical name *Artemisia*. And by the calm spaces.

Halfway through I began to think that this garden might usefully stand for a surrogate of landscapes rural and urban and allowed me to test what it might be that I valued in that wider context.

HI-TECH SOLUTION TO AN AGE-OLD PROBLEM: MAPPING ANCIENT SITES IN WOODLAND.

Peter Crowe
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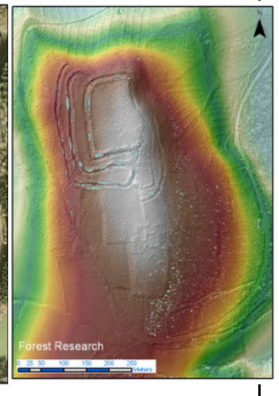
Ever since the first aerial photographs of landscapes were collected early in the 20th century, woodland canopies have kept the archaeological resource beneath hidden from view. Ground-based archaeological survey can be undertaken in woodland, but this is time consuming and often difficult due to uneven terrain and limited visibility. The low number of woodlands surveyed on the ground means that woodland is regarded as the UK's last potentially untapped, archaeological resource. However, recent developments in remote sensing techniques have provided a method to see through the woodland canopy and map this undiscovered heritage.

LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) uses a laser, housed in the underside of an aircraft to scan the landscape below. The laser is reflected from the ground, back to the aircraft where it is detected by sophisticated sensors and computers which calculate millions of data co-ordinates. This data can be used to produce accurate quasi 3-dimensional maps of the ground surface. When used over woodland, some of the laser energy is able to pass through the canopy allowing the forest floor to be mapped. The effectiveness of this process is limited by the ability of the laser to penetrate the canopy and the best results are obtained from mature broadleaf canopy with little understorey vegetation. For example a beech woodland with bluebells, surveyed during the winter would allow most of the laser energy to reach the forest floor uninhibited.



Under optimum survey and vegetation conditions, very subtle changes in surface elevation are revealed, allowing many archaeological features to be seen. The method is most effective at revealing linear features and even very subtle earthworks can be shown, many of which are difficult to see on the ground. Recent surveys of the forests of Dean (Glos), Savernake (Wilts) and Wyre (Worcs) in England have shown hundreds of features of potential interest. Examples include earthworks of field systems, boundary banks, lynchets, route-ways and drainage channels. When used over optimum vegetation types, smaller, more discrete features such as charcoal platforms and bell pits have been mapped.

But, there are important limitations. LiDAR will not show every historic environment feature and will not work as effectively over all woodland types. Whilst the technology can work through mature, thinned conifer — revealing some linear earthworks, quarries and pits, — young, dense conifer plantations or thick understorey vegetation of bracken, bramble etc will greatly reduce its effectiveness. A knowledge of the vegetation types through which the survey is expected to work is therefore essential when considering potential areas for survey and levels of confidence in the resulting data interpretation.

LiDAR is also indiscriminate and the derived images will show archaeological features but also modern roads, paths, buildings, forest residue, timber stacks and possibly changes in ground vegetation. Distinguishing between genuine and artificial historic environment features is therefore an important and necessary process although it is likely to be a long-term process.

For further information or advice on the use of LiDAR over woodland, contact Peter Crow of Forest Research or see the survey section under the web link below.

Suggested follow up site
http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/heritage

Editor's note:
The programme "Open Spaces" on Radio 4 alerted me to the ground reconnaissance of woodlands for previously undiscovered earthworks and archeological sites. Dick Greenaway (one time chief surveyor for NRA Thames Region,) described a reconnaissance project in West Berkshire, and spoke with his characteristic vigour and enthusiasm. Peter Crowe acknowledges that ground surveys are often the only way to establish earthworks below certain types of cover.

SOIL FORMATION, DEATH AND DECAY FOR THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.

Or: Ruined 17th century house in faintly outlined burgage plot (with acknowledgments to the Fast Show).

Bud Young.

Here's another bit of science of interest to practicing landscape architects. If you live in a thatched cottage down a town alley, as I do, and face a tall granite wall once another cottage, with old lime mortar and an abundance of pink flowering valerian and summer jasmine in the joints and if all this stands above your carefully paved granite court yard, then you may sweep up shovels full of rich soil with worms every second year. This is derived from thatch droppings, lichen pecked from the roof by jackdaws, valerian litter, lime fragments and rotting granite minerals. Once on the ground and trapped by a delightful but persistent blue flowered weed, campanula, it is digested by slime fungus, soil bacteria, and woodlice. The worms parachute in (I am really guessing here) as undigested eggs and play their Rothampsteadian/ Darwininan role, turning the soil over. Tiny ants who live in the lime/sand base below the granite slabs and troupe out of tiny mortar holes, probably come in for part of the action.

I often wonder, fascinated as I am by time, death and decay, how many years it would take for my courtyard to become an impassable tangle of jasmine, brambles, buddleia and ash saplings scarily strung together by huge spiders. Just to be on the safe side Ben Pell the nimble tree surgeon will crown lift and thin so that we do not become entangled in branches and Adam Hyne, master thatcher will rethatch the shrivelled roof in golden colour water reed. In this way we forestall chaos — the trees will not envelop us nor the thatch slide down into the void — *'nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness nor the plague that destroys at midday'*. Meanwhile this military administrative block attached to the fortifications in Verdun illustrates my anxieties in another context. Black, black! Perhaps I need help? Come on Johnnie, let's get home…!

Stop Press
Early this morning (9/11) three linked thatched houses burnt down one hundred yards away from us in our little town. They attracted nine fire engines. Your editors watched the blaze for two hours from 2AM in the morning. It was an ancient hall house built as an inn in the 1500s. Older than ours, but like ours, thatched. . . Part of the settlement's memory. Black! Black!

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