

experience of environmental challenge and change. For them, landscape can “insinuate itself into vitalist, relational, and topological geographies: landscape reintroduces perspective and contour; texture and feeling; perception and imagination. It is the synthesis of elements, so elegantly traced by topologies, with something added: lightless chasms, passing clouds, airless summits, sweeping sands” (Rose and Wylie, 2006: 477).

In our geographical imaginations, the concept of ‘landscape’ is constantly being challenged. At the same time, the landscape itself is changing. This session offers a theoretical and empirical treatments of landscape in light of past/present/future environmental challenges and changes. We argue that a concern with landscape helps us to “re-balance spatial insensitivities in current academic debates” (Bailey, 2008: 420), not only on climate policy as Bailey argues, but on environmental changes more generally. As Mitchell argues: “landscape research must be about all manner of other things than just the landscape itself” (2003:790).

Papers given were:

- Questions of Indeterminacy: an Artist’s Approach to Whole Systems Ecology and ‘Integral Critical Futures’.
- Understanding the past in the present/ transforming the post-industrial landscape: Eden Project – designing new ‘narrated’ landscapes.
- A case study in post industrial identity: using site history to inform an art led approach to new place and meaning.
- Landscape and living with environmental challenge and change shifting shores and living landscapes: managing challenge and change on the Lizard Peninsula, Cornwall.
- Co-researching the Cairngorms: researching with, not just in, the Cairngorms National Park
- Walking the field, recomposing a visual landscape: planning wind power in the Eure-et-Loir (France)
- Landscapes of threat? Intersections with and resistance discourses of stigma when living near to large energy developments.

CL University of Exeter

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COMMUNITY GARDENS

‘Until three years ago King Henry’s Walk Garden site was in a sorry state. Built on the site of a demolished warehouse in the Mildmay Grove area of Islington, it had become a hang-out for bored youngsters and a focus for anti-social behaviour’. So goes



the press release. Since then the site has been transformed. Local resident action has turned it into an area for wildlife conservation, with 76 small plots (they really are tiny) on which local people (my daughter included) grow their own produce. The gardens are also an educational facility, with a classroom used by local schools. The Borough of Isling-



ton has the least amount of green space of any London borough. Converting this required more than £200 000 — the cost of a very small house in these parts. An exercise in community working. Lovely to visit but you need the password, a relative or a friend with a plot.

BY

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October 2010



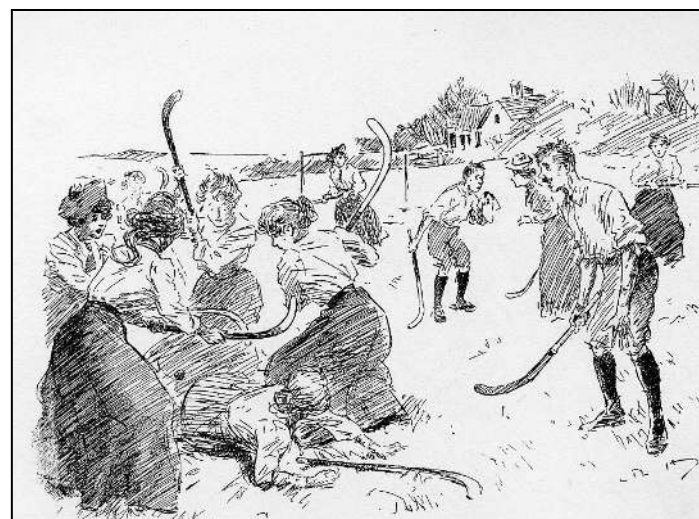
Contributors

Philip Pacey
Jay Appleton
Emily Kefoed
Delphi Jarrett
Paul Selman
Adriaan Luijk
Gareth Roberts
Catherine Leyshon-
Bud Young

Playing Fields

by Philip Pacey

On a wet and windy Saturday afternoon in November I switched on the television and almost at once, before a picture formed on the screen, the blast of a referee's whistle evoked all the field sports I've ever taken part in, watched from the touchline, or seen on television in the comfort of



an armchair at home. More specifically, the sound of the whistle evoked not just a scene but also a season; in Britain, whistle blasts, short and long, repeated (if a player fails to ‘play to the whistle’), or prolonged with a flourish (to bring a match to an end) are characteristic of autumn and winter, of the colder months when it makes sense (to some) to run around to keep warm - so this is the season for the running-around-team-sports of football, rugby, and hockey. (I shall overlook the way in which rugby league seems to be played all year round nowadays. (I don't approve),

Cricket and tennis umpires are not equipped with whistles. The soundscape of cricket has evolved, becoming more raucous as the game itself has developed, involving more running around than hitherto; the sound of ‘willow on leather’ can still be heard but as an unchanging instrument in a changing orchestra. But nobody would want to shatter the soundscape of a bowling green, with its polite calls and the clack of wood against wood.

The blasts of the referee's whistle, along with shouts of the players (‘Man on!’) and the cheers and groans of spectators (if any) are *soundmarks* – the aural equivalent of landmarks – belonging to the soundscape (the aural dimension of a landscape), in this case a landscape devised for sport or in which the sounds of sport can be heard. The picture which eventually appeared on my television

screen was of Murrayfield, where Scotland were playing rugby against Fiji and my thoroughly attuned ears could unpick, woven into the soundscape, the unmistakable, iconic 'skirl of the pipes'.

However, the thrill of the whistle for me isn't associated with grandstands and stadia so much as with autumn afternoons which tremble with the anticipation of playing; afternoons through which I'm riding a bicycle, already changed and somehow clutching a hockey stick as well as the handlebars; and with acres of playing fields, of pitches for different matches and even different sports, with little or no accommodation for spectators, where it is possible to play to the whistle of the wrong referee on another pitch; where, a hockey player, I kicked back an old-fashioned leather football which had rolled onto our pitch and was astonished by how heavy it was (players hit it hard with their *heads?*); and where passing strollers can enjoy the luxury of watching more than one game at a time.

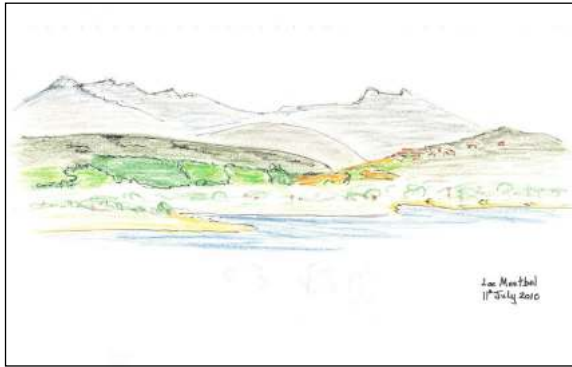
Nowadays I can indulge, as a non-player, in experiences like these, by wandering along the canal to where our local university has laid out an extensive sports ground. If I want, I can choose to stay on the towpath, see no sport at all, and hear its sounds mingle with those of the canal (the squawk of a moorhen, the beating of a swan's wings as it seems to struggle so to take off, the chug chug of a narrow boat). Or I can choose rather to step up from canal level to see a landscape more 'plotted and pieced' than the farmland it has replaced, each of several sports having its own grid of white lines painted on the grass, its own white goal posts raising rectangles in the air.

Such landscapes should, I feel, be welcomed and celebrated, as landscapes of *participatory* sport, at their most accessible and democratic in public parks, as distinct from arenas for *spectator* sport. Is this why I like them so much? because they are hospitable to my dreams of one day playing for England? There is a price to be paid – the loss of productive farmland; the creation of landscapes that are arguably as sterile as landscapes can be, at least so far as wildlife is concerned. But walk beside playing fields on a weekday and you may see a flock of seagulls scouring the grass, evidently finding something to sustain them. Sometimes I have seen gulls in formation resembling two teams of players, but I have looked in vain for the ball.

PP

LANDSCAPE PERCEPTION WORKSHOP IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE FRENCH PYRENEES

At Lac du Montbel, the first day, facing south towards high mountains, a varied group of European landscape enthusiasts examined what it was they saw. Using drawing it was evident that everyone noticed the lake, the hill with its village, an intrusive water-tower and fields. Behind that they recorded a hill-ridge covered with trees and still beyond, the high mountains. Notably each person had a different take



on the scene. One looked at geological features, one just at colour, another majored on agricultural features and the other noticed the mood/atmosphere including the sounds. Predictable perhaps, interesting certainly. The '*Legible Landscape*' manual, which is widely used in Holland to engage people in landscape and its development, was issued to offer guidance for the following days.

Recognizing that landscapes contain many different factors, both large and small, the next day the group concentrated on plant observation by walking through a deep gorge to a high mountain plateau. The main task was to observe the many different manifestations of plant growth (forms, colours etc.) in relation to their distinctive sites.

In the evening they were introduced to Merleau Ponty through a work by David Seamon and discussed how we experience and are engaged in the world. The main idea is that it is through our perceptive experiences that our body-subject learns/knows how to interact with the world and it is only partly through cognitive (conscious) endeavours that we experience the unlearned.

The group then went out for a day to practise a '*Legible Landscape*' session on the edge of a large flat valley facing Puivert Castle. In the evening through a work by G. Maier the group was introduced to Aesthetics as a new way to acquire knowledge, based on sense-perception and experience and not on logic or abstract thoughts. What came to the fore was that

any appearance is a combination of many factors and elements (they can even be in a certain way, outside our vision eg sun in case of shadows or plant growth) many of which we miss due to our original intentions. The main aim was to bring across how the many factors: light, weather and even personal attitudes, play a crucial role in how we 'meet the appearance' or how we 'experience the event' and the more conscious we are of these relationships and the more numerous they are, the richer the aesthetic experience. The group



seemed to have taken this in and the theoretical parts increasingly became more a discussion group around a few central thoughts, readings or texts, than a course instructor's presentation.

The next morning, they visited the 'End of the World, a valley deep in the high mountains bearing the imprint of human presence; the water reservoir, the shepherds' huts and cheese making rooms and the grazing cattle. What the group asked itself here was, what would it look like without such signs. Here the sheer vastness of it all combined with the feeling of the pre-historical (geology) and understandable history (the shepherding activity), the silence and their own small presence, constituted an experience of the sublime.

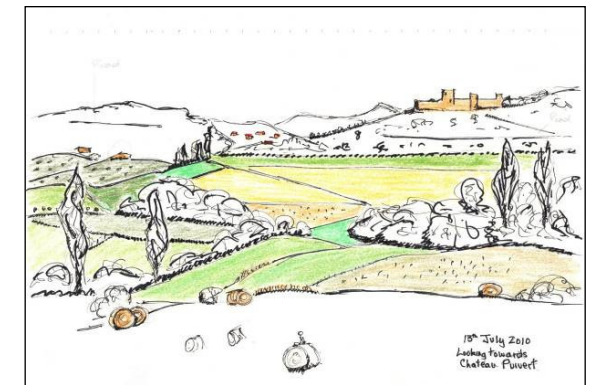
Subsequently on the Plateau du Sault, a remote high place between the mountains, the group explored to-



gether a landscape which has not yet been spoiled by adverse developments. There, a '*Legible Landscape*' walk and the act of drawing architectural features in the village, revealed the bones of an archetypal mediaeval landscape: the church in the middle, houses all around and beyond these the intensive vegetable and fruit gardens. Beyond which lay the further fields with a mixture of variable arable crops and intensive meadows, all encircled by more extensive grass fields; beyond this the forest. It was an experience that the landscape was a cohesive unity and had a strong identity as if everything grew 'out of the ground' Was it because it was so isolated? Certainly it was not easy to get there!

The group's experience of how the landscape reflected mediaeval Occitan society was deepened by visiting the mediaeval centre of 'La Cite' de Carcassonne and a village where the houses were situated in a circle around the church. From Fanjaux, a hill-fort village and important historical site they had a marvellous view of the large broad valley below, situated between Bordeaux (Atlantic) and Narbonne (Mediterranean), with its harmonious patterns of fields, hedges, and villages, and across in the far distance the Montagne Noire (Haute Lanquedoc). A true example of the working together of nature and culture through time.

Editor's note



This appears to have been a thoroughly European event. The group comprised one Welshman, one Latvian, one Dutch lady living in Finland and a man and woman from Spain. Days in the field were accompanied by evening discussions and a presentation. The

instructor/originator of this course was Adriaan Luijk who gives this account of his background:

I was born in Holland in the mid 1950s on a mixed, labour intensive farm teeming with farm workers, animals and many different crops. About seven years ago on moving to the Ariège in France, I found myself confronted by the most beautiful landscapes but now not as a farmer but more as a spectator. Grappling with the idea of landscape and beauty I had studied Environmental Ethics, Goethean Science, Environmental Aesthetics and Phenomenology. Within that framework my aim for the workshop was to give people experiences of the many different aspects of landscape and to help them to realise by working together that what we see or notice, largely depends on our intentions how we approach it and the way we think.
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Notes

Seamon "Geography of the Life World" http://www.arch.ksu.edu/seamon/books_intro.htm

'Legible Landscape' in Dutch 'Leesbaar Landschap' is based on a dissertation by Karina Hendriks and Dirk Jan Stobbelaar. See English abstract <http://library.wur.nl/WebQuery/wda/abstract/1683269>

DG Maier and others "Being on Earth, Tending the Appearances" <http://www.natureinstitute.org/txt/gm/boe/index.htm>

RAMBLERS, RAILWAYS AND ROSARIES

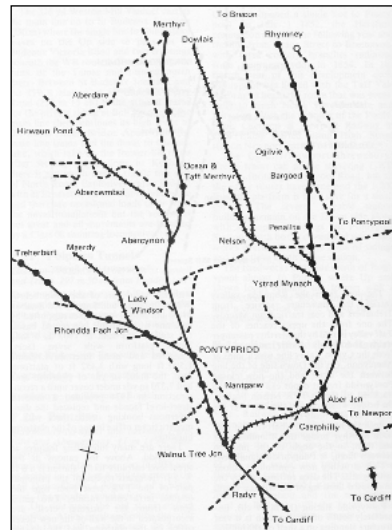
by Jay Appleton with Richard Appleton

By 1968 it had become apparent that the recent closure of literally thousands of miles of British Railways in the wake of the Beeching Report (1963) had left a legacy of long thin parcels of abandoned trackbed, mostly too narrow to be of much use for subsequent development other than for long-distance routes. Their potential for conversion into footpaths, bridleways, cycletracks, etc, was widely recognised, but with a lack of financial resources only a few limited projects, such as The Tissington Trail, (the old Buxton-Ashbourne line) in Derbyshire and The Wirral Way, (beside the Dee Estuary) in Cheshire, had been carried out.

Under The Countryside Act of 1968 it became possible for the Treasury to fund such schemes, but only if they had been approved by The Countryside Commis-

sion, a body newly set up at the same time. To establish a basis for deciding which to approve and which not, The Commissioners called for a Report, the publication of which took place exactly forty years ago. *Disused Railways in the Countryside of England & Wales* was generally referred to as **The Appleton Report** having been written by J. H. Appleton, then a Reader in Geography at Hull University, with a Chapter by Richard Appleton on the special problems of restoring abandoned track to agricultural use.

By far the most important recommendation of the Report addressed what we called 'The Rosary Problem'. The narrow track became wider as it approached the station sites to accommodate, not only the station buildings, platforms, etc, but often sidings, even at isolated rural sites, since it was a common practice to leave a few coal wagons for a few days to be emptied by local coal merchants in their own time. An additional attraction was the availability of hard-



As an example: Solid lines active, dotted lines closed cross lines mineral usage. (Data at 1983 from PSL Field Guide to Railways of the Western Region by Geoffrey Body.)

The resulting pattern resembled a rosary with beads (station sites) separated by thin lines of thread. In short, the continuity of the route had been so fragmented that its potential for affording recreational access to the countryside was impaired if not destroyed.

The Minister, Peter Walker, Conservative Member for Worcester, later Lord Walker of Worcester, immediately implemented our recommendations on how to stop the 'spec builders' from jumping in and buying up station sites before the various pressure-groups could get their acts together. Before British Rail was allowed to sell any land, it was now required to give notice of its intention to the Planning Authority or Authorities concerned, who would then have six months in which to engage in consultation with such

surface road access and the provision of such services as water, gas and/or electricity, which collectively made these sites highly saleable. British Rail therefore had no difficulty in selling off many such sites for small housing developments at good prices.

interested parties as The Ramblers Association, The British Horse Society, The Cyclists Touring Club, and any others, such as The Country Landowners Association and The National Farmers Union, who might claim to have an interest. At the end of that period the Planning Authority would stipulate for what purposes in the best public interest the land could be used when sold.

Six or seven years were to elapse before Sustrans began to play a more systematic role in furthering the development of a National Network of such route-ways; supplementing the road system, during which time, but for Mr Walker's intervention, we could have had more 'rosary-type' developments, and much of what became the National Network might not have been made.

Anyone who has followed Julia Bradbury, recently elected President of the Ramblers, in her popular BBC Television Series, *Railway Walks*, may think it appropriate to remember with gratitude the fortieth anniversary of this important decision by Lord Walker, who died earlier this year.

JA (University of Hull)

RA (Natural England).

DEATH AND ENTOMBMENT IN MENORCA

by Bud Young

On the outer edge of Es Castell as one walks out to St Esteve near the port city of Mahon there is a small walled cemetery and while the established part is something I can feel accustomed to — despite the awkward fact of placing human remains in a four high set of drawers ... then sealed tight — the modern extension is something to gape at. On the outside wall an Obras Publicas notice to explain the extension. How long before this harsh design becomes a place where you might agree to implant the bodies of those



you have loved. To understand the scale each window in the 'block of apartments' is the size of a coffin, end on.

BY

BATTERSEA POWER STATION: A DISTURBING POST INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE

By Emilie Koefoed

[the Master's dissertation of which this is an abstract won LRG's first prize of £350]

The study offers an account of the aesthetic and cultural significance of Battersea Power Station. The analysis of the building enters into a more general discussion of the effects of and attitudes to the contemporary industrial ruins which make up a significant part of the urban landscape of London.

In the first part of the study, the concept of the sublime — and more specifically the technological sublime — is traced from its early development and established as a valuable mode of interpretation of the aesthetic effects of Battersea Power Station. However, the analysis also reveals the dependency of the sublime on its modern conception, which spells out its conceptual limitations in a contemporary, post-industrial context.

The current ruinous condition of Battersea Power Station requires additional theoretical categories, which are developed in the second part of the study. Industrial ruins seem to testify to the failed dreams of the Enlightenment project and are a source of nostalgia for this past era and for the capacity to envision alternative futures. The present study explores different ambivalent reactions to ruins and establishes the potential of contemporary ruins to disrupt the ordered

spaces of late capitalism and to suggest alternative readings of the past.

The study does not adopt a pessimistic approach but highlights the potential of industrial ruins to provoke critical thought. It is argued that this potential is threatened by current practical strategies of handling industrial ruins. The last part of the study offers an evaluation of the preservation and re-use strategies which are forming the future of Battersea Power Station and other post-industrial landscapes.

EK

RETHINKING URBAN PUBLIC-NESS: A CASE STUDY OF GRAFFITI IN BERLIN

By Delphi Jarrett, Oxford University.

[the undergraduate dissertation of which this is an extract was highly commended by LRG judges]

Drawing upon recent attempts to reconceptualise the urban, this dissertation aims to rethink the ways in which graffiti participates in urban life. Geographers have long sought to describe what a given landscape stands for, what cultures and histories it expresses or represents, and previous geographical engagement with graffiti very much adheres to this tradition. The majority of geographical accounts concentrate on the spray-painted 'tags' of 1970s New York, and attempts have been made to link this graffiti to issues of urban identity, exclusion, territoriality and transgression. However, this dissertation takes a contrasting approach in terms of both its conceptual basis and geographical focus. The project is based on research carried out in Berlin during the summer months of 2008. In addition to its vibrant and dynamic street art culture and its long history of experimental living and public activism, the city was chosen for its distinct and contested nature: controversy exists within the city as debate rages over the identity 'modern', united Berlin is to take.

Recognising that previous engagements with graffiti have been limited by their semiological approach and representational focus, the first objective of this dissertation is concerned with exploring graffiti as an *act* as well as an *aesthetic*. The aim is not to determine what the symbols of graffiti reveal about urban life, but to explore graffiti as a way of experiencing and negotiating urban life itself. This draws upon recent work within the discipline which aims to move from grand, 'god's eye' views of urban landscapes, to an engagement with the smaller, street-

level elements of the city and the materiality of the landscape. Extensive interviewing of Berlin's street artists reveals a deep sense of commitment and dedication to the streetscapes of Berlin. The inspiration these individuals draw from the city's urban landscape and the acute attention they pay to the city's textures and temporalities indicate that graffiti is the way through which these artists come to know and value their city.

The second aim of this dissertation is to explore the implications of such a rethinking of graffiti through a focus on the issue of urban publicness. Graffiti is a contested practice, and through the rehearsal of a rather exhausted art/crime binary it is often framed as an intervention that conflicts with popular ideas about how public spaces should look and be used. However, this research demonstrates that the publicness of graffiti, both as an act and as an aesthetic, is complex and consequently distinctions between the public and the private are complicated. The development of more accessible styles of graffiti and its incorporation into public spaces through local authority commissions and advertising campaigns suggest that graffiti's participation in the public culture of Berlin is growing. It is frequently associated with formal and commercial spaces as much as it is with marginal spaces, and is tied to a broad array of contrasting urban rhythms and audiences which all add to the identity of the city.

This dissertation thus uses graffiti to highlight the dynamic and complex nature of the relationships and assemblages which contribute to the city, and in doing so provides a departure point from which other forms of creative urban living can be addressed.

DJ

URBAN LANDSCAPES.

YEAH! By Bud Young

London is a place to visit not a place to work in. Discuss. Bus and tube in the morning rush hour convinces me that it is no place to live in and I abandoned London 40 years ago to live in a two (cow) herd village. But what a lot I am missing and not simply opera and restaurants. I come back from my latest visit absolutely wowed by the visual experience, walking streets accompanied as often by the Editor of the RIBA journal (we are related) who leads me through interconnecting landscapes. Astonishing, mind blowing, exciting. To arrive at the mirrored grey wave front of glass clad City offices at Liverpool Street where they break against the low grimey historic Jewish/Huguenot immigrant areas of Shoreditch; to leave Dalston Junction Station on the

new London Overground, so modern, so clean so empty; to arrive at Shoreditch station as yet still an unconverted wasteland of lines and railway viaducts and their underarches; to visit the self assured Portland Stone church built by Nicholas Hawksmoor in a



streetscape crowded with historic references — and opposite to enter Spitalfields market alive with Sunday excitement. Show me anywhere rural that matches all this for landscape stimulus.

BY

VIRTUOUS CIRCLES IN LANDSCAPE

by Paul Selman

Cultural landscapes are amongst the most valuable elements of our heritage. The European Landscape Convention also affirms that all landscapes, whether spectacular or mundane, are important. The cultural landscape, as we are often reminded, is a product of both people and nature, and in developed countries almost all landscape is cultural rather than natural. As a consequence, most of the landscapes that we visit, either as insiders or tourists, are subject to 'drivers of change' which may operate at various intensities, from imperceptibly slowly to very rapidly. Change drivers are typically associated with economy (e.g. external investment), social and cultural trends (e.g. housing demand, leisure activities), technology (e.g. telecommunications infrastructure), energy (e.g. wind-farms) and policy (e.g. agricultural support). Often these drivers are global in their origin so that our buildings, farms, shops and even our lifestyles start to become similar — a process which some have described as McDonaldization. Whilst cultural landscapes derive their value from characteristic difference, most contemporary change drivers inexorably produce sameness.

This poses two dilemmas for people who are concerned about landscape. How do we retain the character of important cultural landscapes, when the historical drivers that produced them are often socially and economically obsolete? And how can new landscapes that are being created by contemporary urban and rural development acquire a distinctive and valued character? The former often leads us into Canute-like stances, shoring up traditional livestock systems through public subsidy across unaffordably large swathes of land. The latter may lead to bland, planned cookie-cutter countryside. In addition, the urban fringe and 'urban green', that is, the landscape where most people live, tends to get overlooked. There is another complication, namely, that we tend to oppose change because we value familiar landscape, even though a changed future landscape may end up having an unanticipated beauty that subsequently becomes valued, because of its intrinsic qualities and the changes in society's aesthetic. As an example, when the foot and mouth disease crisis of 2001 threatened to decimate the sheep flocks of the Cumbrian fells, there was much anguish about the potential reversion of pastures to 'scrub' — yet the resulting landscape would have been very similar to that viewed and celebrated by Wordsworth, and no doubt in a generation's time we would have been demanding that the 'natural regeneration' be retained and not converted back to grazing. This is obviously a complex and intractable problem to which there is no 'one size fits all'

solution. However, there is a general principle about which the Editor has asked me to write, namely, the 'virtuous circle'.

The term 'virtuous circle' has been in circulation for a long time although I cannot trace its origin. I first encountered it in the early 1990s in discussions about sustainable development, and so make no personal claim to it, although I have been responsible for introducing it into discourses about landscape. Basically it is the opposite of the 'vicious circle' that causes places to deteriorate and become unsustainable – a downward spiral comprising outmigration, neglect, disinvestment and so forth. **At the heart of the virtuous circle is the idea that, if landscapes are to remain or become distinctive, they must be driven by cultural and economic dynamics that override the drivers of homogenisation.** Further, this needs to operate in a self-sustaining and spontaneous manner, not dependent on inordinate taxpayer subsidy to shore up old ways of farming, or planning policies that demand pastiche styles of mock vernacular buildings.

In a nutshell, cultural and economic activities create landscape features, and these features may become culturally and economically valued in ways that encourage collective and individual investment in them. Some taxpayer input is likely to be involved as, in a sophisticated mixed economy, the roles of public, private and third sector cannot easily be disentangled. In greater or lesser degrees, the state (or heritage lottery fund) continues the landscape patronage role of erstwhile gentry (the Park, the elegant landscape), though it should not be relied on excessively. Where **spontaneous virtuosity** occurs, and becomes naturally embedded in the local place, we might well claim to have defined a 'sustainable' cultural landscape.

Instilling a sustainable, virtuous circle will typically have one of four primary drivers.



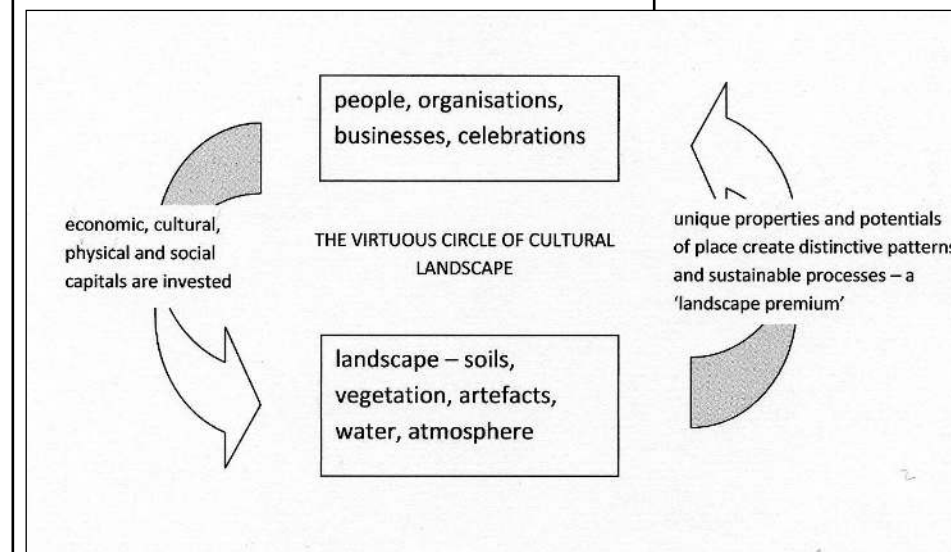
- Economically, the landscape may form an effective basis for marketing products and services. The most obvious and widely touted ones are tourism and traceable, speciality foodstuffs, where *landscape associations* can add significant value – land managers then see time and money spent on caring for the landscape as being good business.

- Second, local landscapes may be cherished by individuals and communities, so that cultural capital, in the form of voluntary labour and fund-raising, is directed to landscape. In practice, this often incorporates ideas of 'intelligent care' advocated by the American landscape architect Joan Iverson Nassauer. Examples can range from community woodlands to allotments. Because of the associative values invested in such places, even quite banal or untidy landscapes can be seen as things of beauty by insiders.

- Third, landscape may be under the patronage of an owner committed to particular landscape objectives. In late modern society, this might well be a non-governmental organisation such as the Royal Society for Protection of Birds, who increasingly pursue a future-oriented landscape approach across its 130,000 hectares of nature reserves.

- Finally, there may be a high-profile policy driver, primed by government money (e.g. grant aid or direct expenditure) or state controls (e.g. 'developer contributions' linked to planning consents). An example would include public and private investments in urban green infrastructure, in view of the range of landscape services that it supplies to nature and people.

Although it has many issues to be resolved in detail, the virtuous circle concept is, in essence, simple and plausible — distinctive landscape under-



pins economy and community, so that people and businesses reinforce distinctive landscape.

One barrier to its wider influence, however, is that 'good practice' examples are often limited to the 'usual suspects'. We are all happy to cite examples of premium organic foodstuffs from national parks, but what about unconventional eco-settlements, semi-wild washlands, permaculture, biofuels, etc? What about landscapes that expose the scars of past industry, such as the Emscher Landscape Park? What if the traditional suburban garden transmutes to a xeriscape or a food production site? How might we re-invent the massive landscape resource that is associated with business parks, roadsides and roundabouts? All of these may have a potential to create virtuous and valued future landscapes, but also they might turn out to be unloved and characterless, and certainly in the short-term they may offend polite tastes or cause local unease.

There is no simple answer to this, but it is an important question for anyone concerned with landscape to consider. When discussing virtuosity, we have an understandable tendency to fall back on 'safe' exemplars of good practice, citing self-evidently popular case studies of visually and recreationally appealing landscapes. These will normally have included significant government funding and specific project management. Whilst laudable, these circumstances cannot be achieved everywhere and they fail to grapple with macroscopic issues that are affecting landscapes at continental scales.

Yet, as Natural England keep reminding us, 'all landscapes matter'. The European Landscape Convention rightly attaches importance to the task of 'protection' in respect of our most valued heritage resources, but it gives equal prominence to 'management' and

'planning'. Both of these can apply to ordinary landscapes of the present and the future. I think this is a major task for professionals and an important question for anyone concerned about the landscape. How can we harness the virtuous circle so that everyday drivers operating in everyday landscapes produce something rather special?

PS

THE CHANGING TOURIST LANDSCAPES OF THE MAGHREB

by Gareth Roberts

In 2007 over 265 million tourists, almost a third of the world's total, took a holiday in the Mediterranean, the foremost tourist destination in the world. Tourism is now the world's largest industry and like other international business has suffered from economic and other crises in recent years. But there are other factors at play in the Mediterranean that are impacting adversely on its landscapes that suggest that the region's dominance in the global tourism stakes might be short lived.

The crises facing Mediterranean tourism and how these might be overcome or mitigated were the subject of a conference convened by the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Economiques et Sociales (CERSES) which I attended in Tunis between the 9th-11th March this year.

Global warming is the biggest worry. The climate we associate with countries with surrounding the Mediterranean basin is widely forecasted to shift northwards by up to 300 kilometres by the end of the century.

Geographers widely agree that dominance of the Mediterranean as a tourism destination is the product

of three assets, the warm and sunny climate, the region as the cradle of 'western' civilisation and its friendly people. The region's image as reflected in the tourism websites of the Ministries of the 21 countries around Mediterranean shores show these three assets



as those most promoted in the region. The Maghreb, the Levant the Balkans, promote on the same in anticipation that they can attract tourists who in the past half century frequented Spain, France, Italy and Greece.

Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco are the new kids on the



block. All are developing and marketing their coastal areas aggressively by inviting foreign investment and by relaxing their planning controls and even their cultural mores in their pell-mell endeavours to boost tourist business. The environmental implications are worrying but the motivation understandable, especially in those countries whose balance of payments still remain heavily dependent on oil revenues.

Conference delegates learnt how Tunisia's tourism economy is developing. Travelling south of Tunis into the Sahel, the most prosperous party of Tunisia, we visited a rash of holiday complexes, served by a newly developed airport and motorway and all designed to cater primarily for a European clientele. Most of this new investment we were told was backed by Tunisian



money. Most is focused on the Gulf of Hammamet, framed by wonderful sandy beaches backed by pine forests and saline lagoons or shotts. These developments, despite some attempts at spatial planning, seemed to be fast coalescing. Gleaming white monster hotels, some developed to provide the highest standards of luxury imaginable, are springing up along the coastline; interspersed between these, a growing number of extensive marinas. Tunisia now offers Mediterranean tourists most everything their northern counterparts traditionally provided.

What they don't cater for is the alcohol fuelled bawdiness prevalent in many European resorts in the Mediterranean rim. Even in those resorts designed to cater for 'mass tourism' there is little by way of street traffic noise, the razzmatazz and crassness of arcades and casinos and wanton hedonism of bars and discothèques evident. Moslem attitudes and traditions make access to alcohol refreshingly more difficult and beach nudity prohibited. Tourism landscapes have more quality and refinement about them in other ways, too. There are far fewer garish advertisements, fast food outlets are almost non-existent as people dress and behave with a decorum long lost on European beaches and coastal settlements. Places are smart and tidy in ways that seem natural, the traditional use of materials all pervasive, and the uniformity of style and colour of buildings traditional and modern, from public toilets to the grandest of hotels, makes for stunning landscapes. Even in the souks where tourists come in search of bargains the traders are to be found making authentic crafts on the spot rather than peddling replicas imported en masse from Taiwan or China.

Our Tunisian guide on our field trip was Wasjidi, a very affable and dapperly dressed gentleman. He spoke with an English accent which reminded me of David Niven. 'I learnt my English listening to the BBC World Service' he confided in me, 'The BBC is a great institution, one of your country's greatest assets' he lauded, heartedly slapping my back before

inviting me to join him in a glass of sweet mint tea.

Tunisians come across as relaxed, hard working and pleasant people. They have lived in an autocracy since 1987 when Zine El Abidine Ben Ali ousted the former President Habib Bourghiba in a bloodless coup. Adorned by shoe black hair belying his 75 years the face of the President beams down on passers-by from massive bill boards everywhere you turn. 'People are content', said Wasjidi 'and compared to their oil and gas rich neighbours (Algeria and Libya) Tunisia has



done well. They have made the most of their meagre lot and played their cards more adroitly. Unemployment is less here than in the other Maghreb countries and tourism is more finely and diversely developed too'.

What seems very clear is that the tourism landscapes of the Maghreb are fast changing. Quite how quickly they continue to do so will depend in large part on the influence of Islam and how democratic processes develop in these countries. Attitudes are becoming more liberal but still are a far cry from the 1960s when William Burroughs and countless hippies flocked to Morocco to smoke kif and further removed still from when artists and writers like Delecroix and Flaubert imbibed in the exoticness of harem culture. I guess the prospect of enjoying a hubble-bubble pipe after a session in a hammam being entertained by dancing

girls while painting my own odalisque by the pool side in Hammamet will have to remain a figment of my imagination for some time to come. **GCSR**

POST INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPES INSIGHTS FROM ART, GEOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE.

Report by Catherine Leyshon

The Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers is the largest conference for geographers held in the UK and attracts an international audience of both physical and human geographers. LRG sponsored two sessions: "Post-Industrial Landscapes: Insights from Art, Geography and Landscape Architecture", co-sponsored by the Landscape Institute, and "Living with Environmental Challenge and Change". Each session featured four papers and a discussant.

The sessions were well attended by about 20 people for Post-Industrial Landscapes and 35 for Living with Environmental Challenge and Change. Each session opened with an introduction to Landscape Research Group and the journal Landscape Research. Copies of the journal were available for inspection at the publishers' exhibition. In session one the papers generated an interesting range of discussion points, including on the varied definition of 'post' industrial referring both to the modification of previously industrialised landscapes and the emergence of new landscapes associated with post-industrial economies and processes. In session two, the papers demonstrated the breadth of ways in which landscape is deployed as both a site and an object of analysis in relation to environmental change.

Overall these sessions were a great success, profiling LRG to geographers at a high status international conference. The papers from the sessions are going to be gathered together into a special issue of the journal, subject to the usual refereeing procedures.

Landscape grounds change in a fundamental way. As Henderson (2003: 196) argues, "the study of landscape, that thing which so often evokes the plane on which normal, everyday life is lived – precisely because of the premium it places on the everyday – must stand up to the facts of a world in crisis..." It is precisely the qualities of a newly theorized landscape outlined by Rose and Wylie (2006) that enable the concept of landscape to be used to explore the lived

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