landscape research extra 63

September 2012

landscape research group

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Contributors

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It's been an interesting summer, indeed an interesting year. I refer to the weather of course. I might have been referring to the Olympics and those wonderful wild flower meadows that you can see on suitable websites or, by attending the Olympic Park, at a cost of £5 (£1 for OAPs - Nice!) The image below is to remind us of the summer taken at Sidmouth, looking west about 3 minutes before the rain came down. I read in Peter Howard's book (page 31, qv) that this image exploits the double diagonal. Cool!

GOOD FENCES

by Philip Pacey

Many of my pieces for LRE have been about discovering paradise, happening upon different varieties of heaven on earth, actual, attainable and within reach, if also fragile, vulnerable, and short-lived. Sartre has one of his character's say 'Hell is other people', but over the years I have been learning that heaven is inhabited too.

I have been in paradise again today, an exceptional, warm and sunny spring day in March. We are staying in Birmingham, in a terrace house dating from around 1905. We spent the afternoon in the back garden, helping with a bit of light gardening, for which we are not appropriately dressed, reading the paper, chatting amongst ourselves and with the neighbours, stroking the several cats which were constantly coming and going. Chairs have been brought out; neighbours came and sat on two of them; one went to fetch a cooking pot, for our use this evening. The chairs were repositioned as the sun moved sideways, gradually losing height. Peace reigned. Birds were singing – greenfinches (noticeably audible now it's spring, and wood pigeons (apparently holding back the influx of collared doves). Crows argued in the trees. Not until late in the afternoon someone commenced cutting a lawn with a motor mower (and April still two weeks away!).

Several things, I think, help to make this paradise possible - in addition to the obvious prerequisite, good neighbours. Each house has a private back yard, next to a projecting kitchen and outbuildings, separated from the next house by high brick walls. Beyond the yards are gardens, long and thin, stretching some 30 yards. However, the gardens are only separated by relatively low fences and hedges, at a height which encourages communication between neighbours. Furthermore, a path runs at right angles between yards and gardens, its function being to provide access to the street via ground floor tunnels between every four or five houses. Mature trees form a tall, majestic barrier at the garden ends, providing a feeling of enclosure to the whole ensemble while sheltering the aforementioned birds. Washing, strung out on lines, is an ever-changing feature – is there anything lovelier to the eye than white sheets hanging out to dry?. Across the gardens to the south, the 'local' can be seen, flying a large flag of St George. (Alas! The pub doesn't fulfil its promise). All of these features contribute to the whole, which from the treetops must resemble a board game; several features in particular – the paths which cross properties, the low boundaries, the way in which houses and trees define and enclose the community - serve the ideal of neighbourliness, so much so it's as if everyone had got together and agreed to sacrifice a measure of privacy for the sake of community.

And indeed, it's as if this neighbourhood has been laid out in accordance with the guidelines offered by Christopher Alexander in his book A *Pattern Language* (a manual – not a blueprint - for building the urban bits of heaven on earth). Alexander has a lot to say which is illustrated by these Birmingham back gardens; for example, 'The strength of the boundary is essential to a neighbourhood'. But also, says Alexander, 'In many places walls and fences between outdoor spaces are too high'; he commends walls 'just low enough to sit on', and quotes a wonderful passage in which Ruskin recalls staying in a cottage with a low garden wall 'about three feet above the ground':

When I was inclined for society, I could lean over my wall, and talk to anybody; when I was inclined for science, I could botanize all along the top of my wall... and when I was inclined for exercise, I could jump over my wall, backwards and forwards. That's the sort of fence to have in a Christian country; not a thing which you can't walk inside of without making yourself look like a wild beast... (*The Two Paths*).

Robert Frost famously wrote, 'Good fences make good neighbors' - particularly true of farmers? less true for owners of boundary-defying cats. Reading Frost's poem again, I'm reminded that he puts that maxim in the mouth of his neighbour; he himself questions it, suggests that in one place 'we do not need the wall', acknowledges that what a 'good fence' is, is not always and everywhere the same:

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.

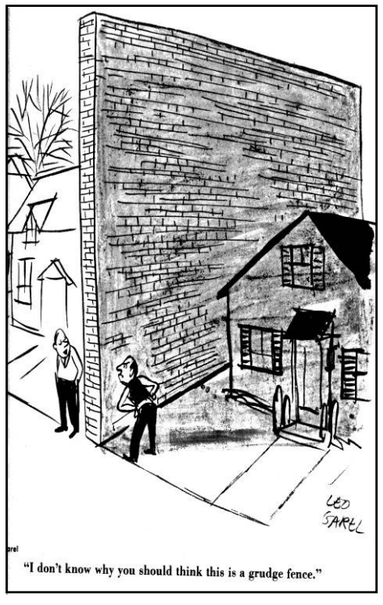
Finally, he goes so far as to suggest that there is something primitive about adhering unthinkingly to hand-me-down tradition.

……..I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

Tomorrow we return home – to privet hedges seven feet high, several feet wide, which I have to stand on a ladder to trim, at considerable risk to life and limb. Keeping good neighbours at bay!

PP

March 2012; revised and expanded July 2012.



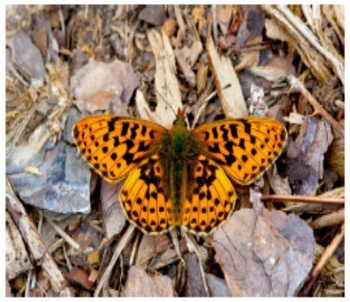
"I don't know why you should think this is a grudge fence."

APPROVAL OF THE INDEPENDENT FORESTRY REPORT

By Paul Tabbush

The Final Report of the Independent Panel on Forestry Final Report, July 2012: (http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/reports/) is remarkable in several respects. In the first place, and although the Panel does not wish to be remembered for this, it exemplifies a new and successful process of e-democracy; it was set up in the wake of the internet campaign by 38-Degrees, that collected over half a million names and forced the government to back down on its plans to privatise England's publicly owned woodlands. In this is insight into the public discourse concerning these woodlands, in that it recognises the impact of thinking on Sustainable Forest Management.

Figure 8: Important woodland wildlife



This goes beyond the checklist approach of the UK Forestry Standard, and beyond old-fashioned ideas of multiple use, to embrace wider ideas of sustainability including the full range of ecosystem services to wider society. To quote the Chairman of the Panel, Bishop James Jones, the Bishop of Liverpool:

"Our forests and woods are nature's playground for the adventurous, museum for the curious, hospital for the stressed, cathedral for the spiritual, and a livelihood for the entrepreneur. They are a microcosm of the cycle of life in which each and every part is dependent on the other; forests and woods are the benefactor of all, purifying the air that we breathe and distilling the water of life."

The Panel also notes that:

"The net annual cost of running the public forest estate to the public purse is currently only around £20 million, equivalent to 90 pence per household each year. The annual returns on this investment have been estimated at £400 million in terms of benefits to people, nature and the economy. Yet this still does not reflect some of the benefits it provides, such as peoples' ability to connect with nature or the preservation of historic customs and traditions. We fully believe that if these benefits were accounted for on a natural capital balance sheet then there would be no question over continued investment by Government. In the meantime sufficient funding must be made available to avoid the sale of woods and forests recent years. This reduces the value of the public asset, and is unsustainable."

It would be possible to write a treatise on this paragraph alone. Do these notional annual returns figures actually, really, have an impact on government decision making? Has anyone sought to answer this question by researching the decision-making process? Is this a rationalisation of a reality, in line with current economic orthodoxy, but based on the outcomes of e-democracy?

Certainly, it means that we are going to see more attempts to put numbers in money units against ethical values held deeply by ordinary people, and with roots in environmental justice that go back to King John and "*Magna Carta*". David Pearce, who pioneered this type of environmental economics, used to counter strong and cogent criticism by asserting that his methodology might actually do something to *help* the environment. The manifest power of democracy might cause us to question this analysis. Perhaps e-democracy is more potent than theoretical economics?

This aside, the report is the most visionary policy document that forestry has seen for many years. It proposes a **new purpose** (a better word than mission, aim or objective!) for a public forestry body, based on the existing structures, and with governance something like the BBC: **Purpose**: "To sustainably manage the Public Forest Estate protecting and growing its social, natural and economic capital values"

This is visionary and exciting and new. But to echo an earlier point, does it mean that the new body has to monitor these values *in money terms*? How do the visit of a pensioner on £500 per month contributes less to the (public) value of the public forest estate than that of a banker on £500,000 a month? Some new thinking is needed.

So I welcome and recommend the Panel's report to all those interested in the English landscape, it certainly represents a landmark in National Discourse, and should stimulate a serious debate; a debate, not least about how we value the things that nature provides.

PT

Paul Tabbush is the chair of the Landscape Research Group with expert involvement in Forestry and its socio economic context.

HOW TO BECOME A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT, PART THREE.

By Owen Manning

Part Two concluded with my growing need for time to reflect on the ideas and influences flooding into my life, and for a means of communicating these more usefully than office practice seemed to allow. "You should be teaching," people said, and so I made the crucial shift to education, via Professor Weddle's newly established MA course at the University of Sheffield. [Photo above Owen recently and (in text) looking like a student himself, thirty years ago].

Weddle was the most frightening man I'd met. "I want my department to run like a well-oiled machine," he once said, glancing down a list of my faults, and it seemed I was the cog which didn't fit. Relations were never easy between us: we were both architects and designers, but Weddle, the older (wiser!) man was a manager rather than communicator, and I was clearly the opposite. Yet Weddle allowed me space to grow, for which I was grateful. Some frustrations there were: eager to teach ecology and the use of plants, I found noted ecologist Oliver Gilbert and expert horticulturalist Susan Cornwell already doing *that*; instead I was given unwanted 'construction' in place of a concrete man from Engineering. History on the other hand, taken over from Architecture, was an opportunity gladly seized to gain and pass on to others a fuller knowledge of where our landscapes and ideas came from, and a sense of how ancient are the roots of everything we do.

Design itself was central, with a need to convey 'the how' and 'the why' of it, and ideas from earlier years took on new significance. *Form follows function* had been the modernist cry at Bristol's School of Architecture, a dictum too often sterile in outcome. But 'function' seen as we saw it in Sheffield, as arising from the real character of a site, and the real needs of people and nature, will lead to much richer outcomes, which might well reflect that great historical idea I had encountered on Youngman's course years before: the idea that a designed landscape should arise so inevitably from its context as to seem naturally right. For me, the idea of a natural logic underlying how things come together in the landscape became a driving force.

As the Department grew in size and diversity, especially through its pioneering courses combining design with environmental sciences, still more opportunities arrived to convey the scope of the subject and the excitement to be found in it. All topics – even construction, I realised - could be taught not as abstract specialisms but connectedly, crossing boundaries, seeking the hidden logic tying all together in a balance of nature and human need; and landscape, art and design history similarly, not as dry facts but as vivid canvases of change arising from geographical and cultural pressures. Precision might suffer (I couldn't remember dates, so didn't expect my students to); relationships were everything. Everything connects; everything has origin, meaning and purpose; nothing is or should be arbitrary.

However it was that these ideas came to me, I remain eternally grateful that Sheffield allowed me to express them.

But actual design requires more than logic; there are always more solutions than one to a problem, and finding the most productive and life-affirming calls for creative imagination. Design method itself had to be taught. This was a time of furious debate between proponents of traditional *Survey-analysis-design – S.A.D.* for short and criticised as sad in effect, a dry exercise which stifled the creative impulse – and *Post-modern intuitive* or concept-driven design, which could mean designing from mere whim: the notorious 'back-of-an-envelope' scribble. We have all seen the results of *that*, in buildings and landscapes ruled by ego more than sense. It still happens, at huge cost to society.

Such argument seemed absurd. How could responsible design be anything other than a process of exploration and integration, with logic and imagination working together? Landscapes can be 'sculpted' in dramatic and beautiful ways, but they are not *sculpture,* mere art-objects; people live in them! They are homes and habitats, for people and nature. Other movements were growing behind the scenes and these would soon give a new emphasis to that idea.

Meanwhile, I found new inspiration from sources as diverse as Koestler's *Act of Creation,* on the origins of inspiration itself, and Appleton's *Experience of Landscape* with his 'prospect-hazard-refuge' concept, both crossing boundaries to offer what I still consider among the best explanations of human behaviour around. Greenbie's *Spaces* with his 'proxemic-distemic' concept would later offer equal insights for urban design. Still more inspiration came from student field-tours: to Glasgow and Clydeside to see people-friendly landscapes at last repairing the damage of earlier decades, and to the Continent for quantity as well as wonderful quality of design. In Holland particularly we found both creative landscape provision in parks and towns (the current 'Streets for People' movement really starts here) and a move towards a more enriching role for nature throughout. 'Greening the City' also starts here if anywhere.

Holland's approach to designing with nature and people in a new provocative balance, arriving in this country via Ian Laurie's 1979 *Nature in Cities* conference, broadened my own thinking and brought valuable new opportunities. Most importantly, it added weight to the Department's own emphasis on nature at the heart of design, culminating in the work of Nigel Dunnet and James Hitchmough. All this moreover ran parallel with a move generally to understand the real needs and landscape responses of people, pioneered by such works as Whyte's *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces,* and Cooper-Marcus and Francis' *People Places,* with numerous studies revealing that nature is indeed essential to human well-being. Sheffield's Department under Anne Beer's leadership, with

colleagues such as Helen Wooley, was active in this, and it all fed into my own teaching.

Another related trend was also becoming established: the active involvement of ordinary users in the design process. Visiting and teaching in the USA in the '80's I saw, in addition to design of inspirational quality, 'People Power' accepted by practitioners to a remarkable degree. Student-power also – though not everywhere, for while the independent Conway School of Design under Walt Cudnohufsky practised spontaneous student-led learning of a stimulating kind, at UMass down the road I found rigid divisions leaving students desperate for the integrative approach I offered them.

"You gonna teach us how to *design*?" demanded a student on our first meeting: "Like, how to put it all *together*?" "Of course," I replied, all innocence, "HEY YOU GUYS!" she shouted with intent across a faculty-filled hall: "This guy's gonna teach us DESIGN!" and her fellow-students crowded round…….Mature, committed, responsive, they were some of the best people I ever taught.

A heady mix of ideas and influences was coming slowly together into a whole, my Theory of Everything. Some got written (two half-finished books!), some even reached publication ((Manning on nature, rivers, reservoirs, city landscapes, campus landscapes, earthshapes, walking in space, design criteria, etc). Why not more? Once again pressures of work were a problem, but above all my uncertain priorities as a pragmatic design teacher within a research-based university. Colleagues resolved the conflict of teaching and research, I did not. Trained to see research as related to a design brief, unfamiliar with wider traditions, diffident about publishing my thoughts until 'ready' (the fatal error!), prejudiced in addition by what I saw of 'research' in America – tiny territories of dubious worth defended by paranoid academics – I hardly grasped there was a conflict. Youngman in the '60's had said "We have enough knowledge; the task is to apply what we have", and I did just that. I taught, and taught, and dug myself a trap.

"Make yourself indispensable" they say: not always advisable. When the penny finally dropped, and pushed by my own students I formulated a significant PhD proposal (to explore Alexander's 'pattern language' in relation to landscape), it got a dry response: "We can't spare you for that; we need your teaching." Retirement should have helped but didn't: teaching continued, other issues intervened, momentum dissipated – and so the heroic journey came to an end.

Or perhaps not. Watch this space…….?

***Note** Books cited in Owen Manning's three-part account as having been important for his understanding of landscape and design are listed below.*

From part I - LRE 59

Shepheard, Sir Peter. *Modern Gardens* Publisher: The Architectural Press, London 1953

Ralph Morris Buchsbaum and Mildred Buchsbaum *Basic Ecology.* Publisher: Boxwood Press 1957

Edward H Graham *Natural Principles of Land Use.* Publisher: Oxford University Press - Oxford New York and Toronto 1944

Brenda Colvin *Land and Landscape,* Publisher: John Murray 1947, also enlarged and reset 1970.

Sylvia Crowe *Landscape of Power* Publisher: The Architectural Press, London, 1958

Sylvia Crowe *Forestry in the Landscape* Publisher: HMSO Forestry Commission Booklet 18 (31 pages)

From part II - LRE 62

A G Tansley classic *Britain's Green Mantle.* Publisher: George Allen and Unwin Ltd 1949 and second edition revised by M C F Proctor 1968

John Prebble *The Highland Clearances.* Publisher: Penguin Books 1973

Ian L McHarg *Design with Nature*: Publisher: 1969, currently (1995) in paperback by Wiley Series for Sustainable Design.

Jane Jacob *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* Publisher: Random House 1961, then in UK by Jonathan Cape 1962 and by Penguin Books (Pelican) 1965, 1972.

Kevin Lynch *The Image of the City.* [In which the author coins the term 'Imageability'] Publisher: The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142. Originally published 1959. 26th printing in paper back 1998.

Nan Fairbrother *New Lives, New Landscapes* Publisher: The Architectural Press, London 1970.

From part III – LRE 63

Koestler *Act of Creation.* Publisher: Penguin Books 1964

Jay Appleton The *Experience of Landscape.* Publisher: John Wiley and Sons, London 1975.

Barrie B. Greenbie *Spaces: dimensions of the human landscape.* Publisher: Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1981

Ian Laurie *Nature in Cities: Natural Environment in the Design and Development of Urban Green Areas.* Publisher: John Wiley and Sons Ltd 1979. First chapter *'Designing for nature in cities'* by Owen Manning.

William H (Holly) Whyte *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces.* Publisher: PPS (Project for Public Spaces) originally published 1980.

Clare Cooper Marcus and Carolyn Francis *People Places: Design guidelines for urban open space* Publisher: revised 2nd Edition *1997 John Wiley* 384 pp paperback

Christopher Alexander with Sara Ishikawa and Murray Silverstein *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* Publisher: Oxford University Press 1977.

NARROW AND WIDE LANDSCAPES:
SCALES PERCEPTIONS AND ABILITIES

by Peter Howard

The scale of landscape

On the last page of LRE62, considering Siberia, Bud Young dared to whisper that perhaps landscape studies were in danger of missing the wider picture. But are we are also in danger of missing the **narrower** picture? How do landscape and scale relate?

I am concerned that the idea of 'landscape as scale' or landscape being extensive, is becoming entrenched.

TREE VASE SPOTTED IN ESSEX!

This 'tree in a vase' exemplifies the reverence accorded to ancient trees and cultural continuity. It stands at the start of a lane which led from a small county road to an important ford over the River Colne at Great Yeldham, Essex. Perhaps its waymark value made it even more important. The Colne is a river which floods and the ford is now bridged. A substitute replant oak stands next to it and is now about 100 years old though still quite slim. I should have read the plaque! The old oak is steel bound and concrete filled. A gloom-ridden view of the future to those of advanced years.
BY

This usage is most obvious in landscape ecology where landscape implies a particular scale of study, but it is also common in archaeology. The idea of scale is implicit in the artistic concept of landscape; a landscape is large enough to include a foreground, a middle ground and a background. Yet within the art world for example in Dürer's famous depiction of a Great Piece of Turf, and the work of many recent painters and photographers who depict landscapes as very small places, the presumption of extensiveness has long been contradicted. Nor does the idea of landscape having a predetermined scale or extent have a place in the ELC* definition of a 'place perceived by people,' nor in any situation which puts the emphasis on people and not territory.

**European Landscape Convention*

Small landscapes as from a wheelchair.

This leads me to the core incentive for writing this piece. For several months I have been much more restricted in my movements than previously, spending some weeks confined to the house and garden, and several more where only a short walk was possible. When I became able to be driven, my favourite visit was to a car park beside the Taw-Torridge estuary where I could sit all day and watch the tide ebb and flood again. It has all been very restrictive, also very instructive.

Years back I was at a landscape conference where we were addressed by Professor Hal Moggridge, showing slides (if you can remember slides) of the reservoir-lake in Wales which he had designed. There were school parties on field work, people hiking, fishing, running and cycling, and the last slides showed people sitting in their cars in the sunshine. I regret to admit that I was one of those who tittered in derision. We were sharply rebuked: those sitting in their cars (said Moggridge) were the real connoisseurs who had come many miles simply *to* **look at** the lake landscape.

I have now become a connoisseur.

Following others whose areas of interest were constrained by circumstances, most notably Gilbert White, late 18th century naturalist and ornithologist who scarcely left his home parish, the landscape in which I am now expert is my own garden (which even in the good times I have largely left others to tend). The view of the crab apple tree outside my room has occupied my attention for many hours, and I could certainly now write a considerable monograph on its progress through spring and summer and the variety of wildlife to which it is host. And this landscape is not only visual, for when the blossom is on the tree I have spent many hours simply listening to the insect life.

The other landscape on which I am now expert is the lane from the village, which, for weeks, was my furthest possible walk. It took me past the odoriferous landscape of the cider company out to a properly agricultural field complete with hedges. Here then is two hundred metres of lane; I think I know every nest site and almost every shrub, and the agricultural practices on each side. I have been startled by the alarm call of the whitethroat (there are three nests) and thrilled by the yellowhammers on the wire. Across the hedge, the loss of the crop of thatching straw through rain has been only too obvious. And if landscapes are all about people, then I know them too, and whose vehicles go past and at what time of day, and who are all the dog-walkers, and the names of the dogs. I am the witness behind the net curtains!

So what do I draw from this?

Landscape architects have certainly been busy creating landscapes for those with constraints on their lives, not least for the blind, and for those in wheelchairs. In doing so they have become aware of the special expertise that these groups bring to the debate.

I am rapidly returning to what is for me a more normal way of life. Visits to big cities, to other parts of the country and even overseas begin to be possible. But for many people constraints similar to those of my recent experience are a regular part of their lives. The public understanding of landscape, which we are nowadays so keen to capture, needs to include the understanding of those with constraints; it may be deafness or blindness, or being house-bound, and the limit to appreciation of those who have never travelled. It appears, as great composers so often found, that constraints can enhance understanding. Landscape, I contest, repays attention at all scales.

PH

THE LANDSCAPE CAUSE

by Gareth Roberts

The Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention (ELC) is losing its momentum at a critical time in its gestation, its implementation phase! To avoid this European law being relegated to the waste bin consideration needs to be given urgently to speeding up the implementation of this Convention to which the UK and 37 other Governments in Europe are signed up. For this to happen we need to encourage more public debate about our landscape and secure greater consensus about how the quality and diversity of the places we live, work and socialize in, (our landscapes) should be improved for the benefit of all. Landscape is a cause people should engage in because we all 'experience' landscapes and their character and qualities, or lack of them, profoundly affect our lives. This cause is central to the mission of the ELC: to improve the quality and character of all our landscapes Europe wide.

I spent most of my working life in the public sector involved in the planning, management and protection of landscapes. I am disappointed at the faltering progress being made in delivering the ELC and that political interest in, and awareness of, the Convention is generally so very poor, and that the cause of landscape is so often sidelined in public policy.

The slippery politics of landscape

The irony is that landscape is a popular notion but paradoxically a slippery one, too! By popular I mean that most people will have something to say about it. By slippery, I mean it is often devilishly difficult to reach a consensus about what sort of landscapes people want. This poses a dilemma for politicians. The challenge for those of us who are passionate about landscapes is to promote the cause of landscape and facilitate the debate and in so doing encourage people everywhere to take greater interest in how their landscapes are changing. Landscapes are a kaleidoscope of social, environmental and economic interests, both contemporary and historic. This kaleidoscope is being aimlessly turned with little debate about what sort of landscapes we want. Moreover, there is no clear vision from politicians to guide us. Therefore the big challenge is to decide how to better enjoin civil society, governments and others to more effectively engage in the planning, management and protection of our landscapes. This needs to be a common cause for all European countries and its citizens! The Convention requires countries to work together to realise spatial planning visions that extend beyond national boundaries. Such visions can only be realised if European states co-operate in the planning, management and protection of their territories, comprehensively.

In parallel, there has to be a commitment to sustain and enhance the diversity of European landscapes, and an acceptance that this diversity is an important part of Europe's shared heritage. It is this wide diversity of landscape that gives Europe it's uniquely special quality and richness. Maintaining this quality is important to the economy and the social well-being of European citizens. But European landscapes are fast losing their diversity. They are becoming more homogeneous. This is fundamentally why the ELC is so important and why, as a matter of urgency, politicians need to take up the cause of European landscapes more fervently.

GR

Notes In the next issue GR will go further to consider solutions.

IN SEARCH OF SUBLIME
SNOWDONIA
A course Friday 21-23 September 2012. Register from 4.30 Friday.
Course supported by the Landscape Research Group.
Price £156.75 to £176.75 full residential. Day visit delegates subject to separate pricings

The search for the sublime and beautiful in landscape began in earnest in the second half of the 18th century and led to a movement that influenced the designation of National Parks, acknowledged as our most prized landscapes, two centuries later. Philosophers, poets and painters led the way in generating public interest in wild and remote landscapes in highland Britain that previously had been shunned by visitors. Eryri was a particularly attractive venue and a few wealthy landowners and industrialists were to be instrumental in promoting access to these landscapes and facilitated tours which helped establish Snowdonia's enduring popularity with visitors.

This course will consider changing attitudes to landscape that occurred in the 18th century, discuss ideas about the sublime and beautiful in landscape aesthetics and their implications for public policy today. We will visit selected sites in Snowdonia made popular by artists and poets in order to better appreciate how these landscapes influenced their work.

For further details please contact:
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RECENT AND NEW BOOKS FROM LRG MEMBERS

Ian Thompson

P.S. Nice to see my trenchant views on Landscape Urbanism appearing in LRE! [Editor's note: Ian is referring here to 'LR Author tells it how it is' pp10-11 LRE 62]

He adds the following post script:

PPS. *'The English Lakes: A History'* won the Bill Rollinson Award for Landscape and tradition at the Lakeland Book of the Year Awards 2012. Here are a couple of links: http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2000/mar/29/guardianobituaries http://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/barrow/success-and-close-calls-for-authors-with-furness-links-1.975174?referrerPath=afc

And from the Daily Mail on line:

"His superb book reminds us that we all have a right to explore and to be spiritually refreshed by our English countryside, and that away from the Cumbrian bottlenecks it is still there, untrammelled and inspirational and as utterly breathtaking as Thompson's photographs so brilliantly demonstrate".

Publisher: Bloomsbury Publishing plc 2010.

Peter Howard

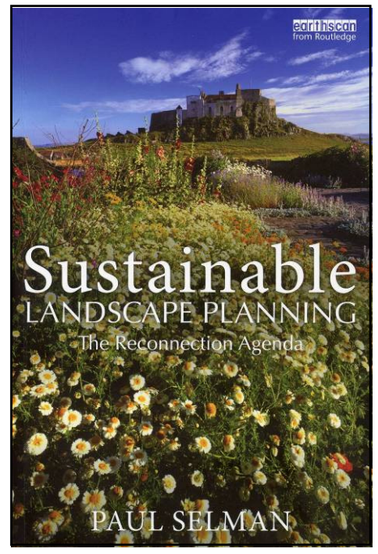
Peter Howard's book "An Introduction to Landscape" is extremely readable, and reader friendly and very fluent. It is aimed at students of landscape and based on his many years involvement as an academic in an art based department. He is also able to draw on personal and in depth contact with European experts and organisations. 'Capsules' of information in addition to main chapters allow readers to grasp a variety of landscape topics as separates; this is ideal for those who will not commit themselves to long chapters before bed. I was aware that many such separates deal with landscape in a way very different from my own land resource cum geographic view. However 'landscape is a wide church'. That said the idea of landscape as culture, as picture, as scale, of the other senses and so on works well. He also deals with landscape as a common heritage, personal landscapes etc. It is fully illustrated in grey scale with illustrations he may have used in class. In this style of illustration it reminds me rather of Nan Fairbrother's New Lives New Landscape: images chosen not to be spectacular but to make a point. His declared aim is to inform and get the reader thinking.

Publisher: Ashgate Publishing Ltd 2011, pp 309 paperback.

Paul Selman

Paul Selman's book "Sustainable Landscape Planning: The Reconnection Agenda" takes the sustainablility of landscape and deals with it in a whole series of ways. Though a short book (162 pages) it makes detailed reading and contains many diagrams suggesting interrelationships, cycles and flows together with tabulated information drawn from various authoritative sources. This, in my opinion, is an organised and well researched book typical of its author. Bearing in mind the importance and high current interest in sustainability, this book is likely to find its way onto the desks of many who need to know. I quote from the author's front statement which outlines his approach….

"… This book takes as its starting point the need to examine critically the case for landscape reconnection. It looks at alleged disconnections and their supposed consequences. It explores the arguments about reconnecting the natural and human elements of whole landscapes. More broadly, it considers landscape as an arena within which science, humanities and professions can find common ground, and in which vivid social learning can occur about key social and environmental issues. It takes a dynamic view of landscape, in contrast to the popular image of time-



less, traditional scenery. It accepts that even the most cherished cultural landscapes will change and, indeed, it views 'change drivers' as a potentially positive means of creating new connectivities between people and place. It recognises the growing interest in promoting resilience and ecosystem services across extensive landscapes - such as by creating new 'space' for water and wildlife".

Publisher: Routledge 2012, Earthscan Series (Taylor and Francis Group)

'LANDSCAPE ON MY HOLS': TOURING IN ESSEX AND SUFFOLK

by Bud Young

It seems some time that I was in *'Corn Country'* and I use the term to echo the title of the Batsford* book by Warren C Henry published 1940 as referring to Essex and Suffolk a land of late Pleistocene chalky boulder clay and fluvioglacial gravels. It's arable over there! For me travelling through fields of wheat and barley is a delight, a surprising refreshment, an invigoration. The top surface of these immaculately managed golden crops is so uniform, so level; the stalks are densely packed, almost impenetrable to a mouse. 'Arable' spells activity and a busy field; a time to be sowing and a time to be reaping, the movement of the year. Romantic prose! Celebrated landscape art! — but let's not go there.

**Batsford Books are known for their down to earth often elegiac descriptions celebrating rural England before and after WW2. The horse ploughing shown here is from The Countryman's England by Dorothy Hartley, 1935 and probably taken by herself. Itself a first rate book.*

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Having done these arable travels I reflect on the absence (in a landscape text I have just been reading) of any mention of the abrupt differences between landscapes within even the limits of S and SE England. Why not I wonder?. For those of us who see this as a fundament of landscape thought, here is an example of the real contrast you may find. Following a mostly flat journey from Essex and then, travelling west between Ampthill and Milton Keynes you drive through a landscape of low round hills. The road reflects this hilliness, it is wiggly, there are more trees, the view direction continually alters, the woodlands reflect it, there are more of them and a lot of conifer. And then as quickly as you are immersed in this new landscape, you are out of it. A lovely 'passage of play'. More interesting. Different! There is a sign to Woburn and as a geologist you recall the Woburn Sands, Cretaceous, Lower Greensand. And the lovely town of

Ampthill (Befordshire) is on the Upper Jurassic Ampthill Clay, another recollection. All this reflects a well defined geologically controlled difference. But is this reflected in my latest reading about landscape? Not so far.

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And so here I am congratulating myself on my grasp of the landscape, the view from the road, as I trail a caravan at 50 mph. But hang about. Go to Google Maps which gives a high definition airphoto view of my journey. Not confined by hedges and banks I now revisit my Corn Country, that lovely golden arable. En route to Coggeshall (a town of lovely timber framed houses) and coming from Cressing, Perry Green and Silver End I had seen a tell tale screening bank suggesting gravel works. A reinvestigation now reveals my 'thousand acre spreads of golden corn' as a huge, yes huge, shallow, dry gravel workings with all those lagoons, washing and screening plants and huge piles of flint gravel that come with the industry. What is more it occupies the site of a WW2 aerodrome. I got the merest hint of this concealed facility as I drove. I had no idea it was so huge. 'Fluvio- glacial gravels' — that figures both for aerodromes and gravel workings. Cornfields later (TBR — to be restored). I feel a little naïve.

*****

And what of my wiggly road and its conifers and continuously altering view direction. A pretty place to picnic. What does Google Maps reveal ? Just north of my wiggly road which is the A507, lies an astonishing motor testing site; much landscaped it is laid out more impressively than the Palace of Versailles; a pure circular test track 800 metres across; a concrete circle hundreds of metres across and every possible test, grandstand, exhibition facility, and car store area for the Motor Manufacturers of the World. A golf course thrown in (or was it two?) to encourage business communion. I have been deceived for the second time. The significance of geology based landscapes?

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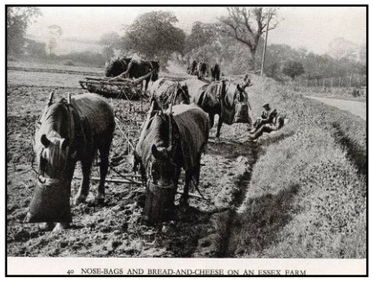
To come back to Corn Country you may wish to see ploughing in action close by Coggeshall. They don't mess about here with little tractors and in this image the monster tracked vehicle dragging tines and discs is being followed by a seething cloud of '5000'



49 NOSE-BAGS AND BREAD-AND-CHEESE ON AN ESSEX FARM

seagulls. Compare the Batsford view *'Nose-bags and Bread-and-Cheese on an Essex Farm'*. Another 'Get Real Moment' for those who might think that harvest landscapes by Samuel Palmer or ploughscapes by other artist-doyens of ancient days are anything to do with the modern English landscape.

BY

The views and opinions in this publication are those of the authors and the senior editor individually and do not necessarily agree with those of the Group. It is prepared by Rosemary and Bud Young for the Landscape Research Group and distributed periodically to members worldwide as companion to its refereed main journal Landscape Research.

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UKRAINE'S ENDLESS LANDSCAPES OF OPEN SKIES AND CORNFIELDS

Gareth Roberts *travelled widely in the Ukraine in 2012. In the next few issues LRExtra will carry a series of short reports about the landscapes he visited in this extensive, diverse and largely undiscovered country*

The blue and yellow flag of Ukraine reflects its landscape, expansive skies and open fields ablaze with sunflowers in the summer, at least! Ukraine has been described as one of Europe's last genuine travel frontiers. It is a big country, the second largest in Europe, after Russia. So big in fact that it can also claim to contain a place calculated by Austro-Hungarian geographers in the 1850s to be the geographic centre of Europe. Travelling east – west across the Ukraine by train is a major commitment. The journey takes about 44 hours to complete and can leave you buzzing for days after! That said trains are the most convenient and reliable means of long distance travel and can be wonderful way of meeting the people.

Ukraine's diversity is as much, if not more, a product of its people and cultural traditions than its landforms which for the most part, are flat and open and often dominated by views of the broad river valleys of the mighty Dnieper and its tributaries. This statue of Taras Bulba epitomizes Cossack pride in their homeland and the river that divides the country (east-west) yet unites them as a nation. In the 16th century formerly disparate groups of Cossacks came together under a single leader or '*hetman'* to establish the Zaporizhsky Cossack brotherhood of 20,000 fighters pledged to defend their territory and religion . Khotytsya a large island in the Dnieper near the modern city of Dnipropetrovsk, remained an impenetrable fortress (sic) for the Cossack for nearly 70 years after Peter the Great had defeated the Cossacks and annexed Ukraine for Russia at the battle of Poltava in 1709

In the 1930s Stalin introduced a policy of 'collectivization' This removed from farmers their rights to own and manage land, forced them onto 'collective farms' in support of Soviet industrialization and led to the Great Famine which took the lives of an estimated 7 million Ukrainians between 1932-33. It all but transformed the rural landscapes of the Ukraine for ever. Yet today just over a decade since the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union the landscapes of the wider countryside are again regaining their traditional character as 'collective farms and other symbols of soviet idealism are left derelict and decaying. Some of these changes are very subtle reflecting a return to traditions and practices in building styles, and the management of agricultural land, forests and water courses in place before communism

Despite being forced for two or more generations to live cheek by jowl in slab block homes and collective farms Ukrainians still retained a passion for the outdoors or what they term 'na pryrodu' ('out to nature'). Since independence from the Soviet Union and with the development of a 'free market' economy there has been an upsurge in interest in acquiring dachas, (little country houses with garden) and in building 'villas'! The objective is to have somewhere to escape to at weekends, to relax, go to fish or swim, tend vegetables, and prepare and eat in the outdoors *shashlyk* (barbequed skewered pork). Such customs linked to hospitality and partaking in food and drink are part and parcel of Ukrainian society and family life and far more common than in Western Europe. Understanding these things help explain how this society and these landscapes have evolved and continue to change.

Food and drink feature prominently in Ukrainian family life and women are regarded first and foremost as keepers of family traditions. A Ukrainian proverb says that *'The man is a head, but the woman is a neck. The head looks where the neck turns'*. Ukrainian women are renowned for being hard working, self-reliant and individualistic. These characteristics are especially evident in rural communities where traditional dress is often worn and where the sale of confectionery, fruits, jams and crafts are displayed for sale in the home or on roadsides.

The demise of the Soviet Union has also brought about a reawakened interest in promoting minority cultures several of which survived the best efforts of Stalin and Soviet totalitarianism to eradicate them. Places like Bakhchysaray the former capital of the Crimean Tartar khans — and Kosmach the centre of the Hutsul people in the Carpathian Mountains in North West Ukraine — are a testament to the resilience of such cultures to hang onto their identities against such overwhelming adversity.

However, more than a decade has passed since Ukraine declared its independence from the Soviet Union yet the country remains deeply divided by its history and its political and religious allegiances. The future character of Ukrainian landscapes will depend on how these differences are reconciled, or not. Broadly speaking the country is

split in two by the Dnieper the east leaning towards Russia and Belarus whilst the western part of the country favouring stronger ties with the European Union. It is perhaps because of these political differences and economic uncertainties compounded by widespread reports of corruption that this country is likely to remain one of Europe's last frontiers for some time to come.
GR

Greenspace and health

Reading matter recommended by Paul Tabbush

'Greenspace Design for Health & Well-being' by Aileen Shackell and Robin Walter has now been published by the Forestry Commission as a Practice Guide. The authors would like to thank all who gave their time and insight to this work. "It is full of practical, do-able advice: a great piece of work — sound, timely and inspirational" says Janet Doyle, healthcare consultant and former CEO of the Norfolk Hospice.

It is available from the Forestry Commission as a **free download** or in hard copy for £13.50. It can also be downloaded from Robin Walter's website:
http://www.trees-for-transition.co.uk/design_guidlines.html
This also gives a list of his research references, as well as other interesting information and links. Walters says that they could not fit in all the case studies into the final text, but the Forestry Commission for Scotland were particularly interested in their work and have just published **22 Case Studies** on their website: http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-8T9D46

PERCEPTIONS OF 'COASTEERING'

by Ant Rogers.

Ant (Antony Rogers) has supplied this informal version of his findings which gained him an LRG award for his master's thesis.

The novel sport of coasteering (traversing the coast by a combination of climbing, scrambling, cliff jumping and swimming) has become very popular in Pembrokeshire in recent years. There is no 'typical' coasteerer. Locals, visitors, the young, the old, family groups and even stag parties regularly book sessions with some of the many activity providers in the area. It is promoted as an opportunity to discover areas of coast inaccessible by normal means, to seek adventure and to 'commune with nature'. This, combined with perceived overcrowding at coasteering hotspots and the desire of activity providers to give their clients a high quality experience, has led to the latter seeking access to remoter sites previously used for more traditional 'quiet enjoyment' pastimes such as walking, nature-watching and sea fishing..

A letter to the local paper complaining that a walker's day had been ruined by encountering a group of 'wetsuited buffoons' (Western Telegraph, 2009) prompted me to ask whether and how coasteering in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park may impact upon others enjoyment at coasteering venues and to explore how the findings could be used to manage recreation for all users and reduce conflicts.

Using careful, peer group reviewed methods, people visiting coasteering venues in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park were asked to rate any impact of different types of encounter with coasteerers on their activities using a five point Likert scale. These results were supplemented with qualitative information to open ended questions.

Rather fewer than two thirds of people expressing an opinion, felt that encounters with coasteering groups would add something positive to their recreational experience. Most positive comments concerned adding interest, or enjoying watching people having fun. If the aim of recreation management in the National Park was to maximise positive recreational experiences, this simple statistic would be sufficient to promote further development of coasteering in the area.

However, about a third of respondents considered that encounters with coasteering groups would detract from the quality of their own recreational experience and there were many negative comments associated directly with disruption to tranquillity. Tranquillity is considered one of the 'special features' of the Park which the Pembrokeshire Coast NP is required to protect.

In addition to its status as a 'special feature of the National Park', tranquillity is reportedly crucial: visitors overwhelmingly regard it as important to their visit. However, tranquillity is a construct of the cognitive processes of the person experiencing it and the perception of tranquillity has been shown to vary with many factors (eg Suckall et al., 2009).

In this study, the proximity, type and frequency of encounters (amongst other things) were significant variables affecting the formation of a perception of negative impacts. For example, coasteerers 'doing their thing' in the intertidal zone (and therefore at a distance from the observer) were viewed more positively than groups walking between venues on the coast path. The complexity of factors informing individual, subjective judgements was also highlighted. For example, meeting with coasteerers without helmets travelling between sites was consistently rated more positively meeting with those wearing helmets. Qualitative results suggested that it was not the smaller group size that caused respondents to rate the encounter positively, but the fact that the people depicted had their helmets off and looked 'friendly'.

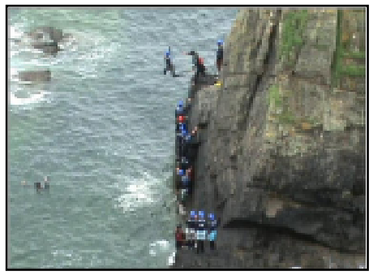
The images displayed were all of well equipped groups under professional supervision. When asked about unsupervised groups jumping from rocks without safety equipment (known locally as 'tombstoning') respondents were overwhelmingly negative about potential encounters, often fearing witnessing an accident or having to get involved in a rescue. **AR**

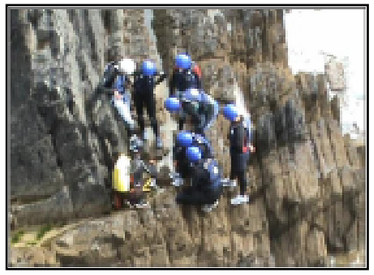
Notes

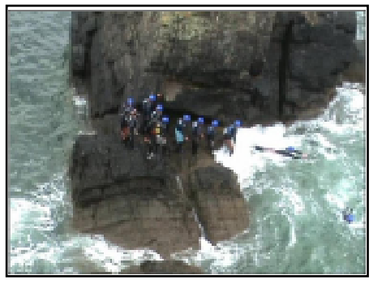
All photographs by the Author, with thanks to TYF Adventure, St David's for their cooperation in filming their groups.

Western Telegraph (2009). Letter to the Editor dated 03/11/2009 has been available online from: http://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/letters/4712485.Concern_for_fragile_coast/ [accessed on 19/04/2010]. Letter of response dated 14/11/2009 available online at; http://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/letters/4730767.Benefits_of_coasteering/ [accessed on 19/04/2010]. Newsquest Media Ltd.

Suckall, N., Fraser, E. D. G., Cooper, T. & Quinn, C. (2009). Visitor Perceptions of Rural Landscapes: A Case Study in the Peak District National Park, England. *Journal of Environmental Management*. 90: pp 1195 - 1203.







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