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Arenig, Nant Ddu and the beginning of Modern Landscape Painting in Britain

This year marks the centenary of the death of James Dickson Innes, an artist whose qualities and obsession with a North Wales mountain deserve to be better known. This article by Gareth Roberts, celebrates the work of Innes and other artists who painted in and around Arenig, North Wales between 1909

and 1914. A review of a recently published biography of the life and work of Innes will feature in Landscape Research.



Arenig Fawr and Arenig Fach are outliers of 'porphyry'; igneous intrusions of volcanic origin which rise, island like, from an extensive moorland landscape between Bala and Trawfynydd in North Wales. Although far from the highest mountains in Snowdonia they have a presence enhanced by their isolation. The views afforded from their summits are among the finest in the National Park. (see photo). The Migneint the blanket bog

moorland that surrounds the Arenigs is the most extensive in England and Wales. Its wet boggy nature made it difficult to cross historically. In 1798 the Reverend John Evans wrote that he saw here '*no vestige of a dwelling, no mark of human footstep*' only the '*awful desolation of this extensive tract of hopeless sterility*'. By the end of the 18th century North Wales had become a popular venue for artists in search of the picturesque but Arenig and the Migneint was not on their itinerary. By the beginning of the 20th century attitudes had changed. This is the how that came about.

In 1910, a young artist James Dickson Innes, stumbled across Rhyd y Fen an isolated inn on the moorland road between Bala and Ffestiniog in the shadow of Arenig Fawr. Born in Llanelli and trained at the Slade School of Art, Innes had embarked on a tour of North Wales in the summer of 1910 after reading George Borrow's *Wild Wales*. Suffering from TB and relying heavily on the support of family and friends, Innes had shown talent for landscape painting from an early age and whilst at the Slade had become close to Augustus John. John's bohemian lifestyle also attracted Innes. John preferred countryside to the city and often travelled in a caravan and consorted with gypsies.

The appreciation of the natural beauty of wild landscape was fast becoming a popular notion and chimed well with Innes. It is little wonder then that Innes was attracted to the landscape at Rhyd y Fen, overlooked by Arenig Fawr. So awe-struck was Innes by the place that he had little difficulty persuading his mentor Augustus John and student colleague Derwent Lees to return there with him a few months later and rent a cottage at Nant Ddu. They lived and worked there off and on for the next three years. Nant Ddu commanded a good view of Arenig Fawr and was only a short walk from the remote railway halt at Tryweryn so friends and families could visit relatively easily. We learn from John that Innes worked 'obsessively' undertaking long treks in search of favourable views of Arenig Fawr, which he painted in various atmospheric conditions and these often featured Euphemia, his muse and lover. John later likened the experience to Innes '*discovering some miraculous promised land.*'

Landscape paintings by the three artists inspired by their time at Nant Ddu featured in the Armory Show, the first major exhibition of modern art in North America launched in New York in

February 1913. It marked the pinnacle of the careers of Innes who died of TB the following year and Lees who was committed to a mental institution shortly after. John outlived both and went on to secure considerable acclaim during his lifetime.

In the history of British landscape painting, the significance of the 'Arenig' period 1910 -14 cannot be



overestimated. However, their achievement was somewhat overshadowed by the outbreak of the First World War and it was not until February 1939 that the first major retrospective of all three artists' work was staged in London's Redfern Gallery.

These three artists had come together in large part because of the influence of Augustus John who was already regarded among his colleagues at the New English Art Club as an outsider. They were undoubtedly kindred spirits, bohemian in attitude and hedonistic in nature, attracted to the language and culture of Romany people and receptive to new ideas emerging in art at the beginning of the 20th century in France.

Nant Ddu with its wild and untamed landscape suited them and was in John's words '*well placed for our purposes*'. Remote enough to 'protect' the privacy of their friends and lovers, it also offered the added convenience of a

railway halt at Tryweryn only a few minutes' walk from their front door, allowing guests to come and go relatively easily. It was also close to Betws Gwerful Goch where John's friend John Sampson, Chief Librarian at Liverpool University and champion of Romany culture, had a cottage. Sampson had his own gipsy caravan and travelled with Innes and Lees to visit the Romany families in local vil-

lages and taverns frequented by gipsy girls places which the Welsh nonconformists shunned. The three shared correspondence about the beauty of these girls and their willingness to serve as models. Women in landscape was to become a notable feature of their work during this period, but for Innes, it was the relationship between Arenig Fawr, '*his favourite girl*' and Euphemia '*the love of his life*' that dominated.

Augustus John reported that Innes buried his love letters from Euphemia in a

silver casket below the cairn on the summit of Arenig Fawr.

Innes' death at the age of 27 cut short what might have proved a far more illustrious career. It is to be hoped that the new biography of his life and work and the exhibitions being convened to mark the centenary of his death will help to raise his profile and enhance his importance as a leading landscape painter of the modern era.

Later this year the Landscape Research Group will convene guided walks and talks about the artists who worked in and around Nant Ddu between 1909-14, this in partnership with MOMA the Museum of Modern Art in Wales whose exhibition of the work of JD Innes opens in Machynlleth on Saturday 13th September.

GR Notes

1 Evans, Re. J. (1800) *A Tour through part*

of North Wales quoted in Condry William M (1990) *The Natural History of Wales* (page 45).

2 The National Trust for the preservation of historic buildings and natural beauty had been established in 1897 and endorsed by Act of Parliament in 1907.

3 Augustus John, in particular, wrote extensively in letters and in his autobiography, *Chiaroscuro* (1962) about his work time in North Wales, commenting very poignantly about his relationships with his family, friends and lovers and influences on his art.

4 Augustus John, J D Innes, *Derwent Lees, Paintings 1910-14*.

5 'Crisis at the New English Art Club' (1904) a pen and watercolour drawing by William Orpen caricatures John, dressed casually with long hair and beard sitting on the edge of a precipice in remote landscape whilst his colleagues dressed for the town, look on askance. [Illustrated as figure 42 in 'Gwen John and Augustus John' Edited David Frase Jenkins and Chris Stephens, Tate Publishing (2004)]

6 Augustus John *Chiaroscuro* (1962) Johnathan Cape, quoted in *The Mountains of Wales* an anthology in verse and prose compiled and edited by Ioan Bowen Rees. Cardiff University of Wales Press (1992)

SOUTH HAMS: TOO MUCH PROSPECT NOT ENOUGH REFUGE

South Hams is a part of Devon people cross to reach the coast west of Salcombe. On returning today from the notable causewayed island of Bigbury we passed a cross roads called Seven Stones — likely we supposed to be some early pre Roman site. I noted to Rosemary Young that if I were an early Briton I would not wish to settle in this place and added 'it is not nooky enough'. 'Too much prospect not enough refuge!' was her quick response. Spot on.

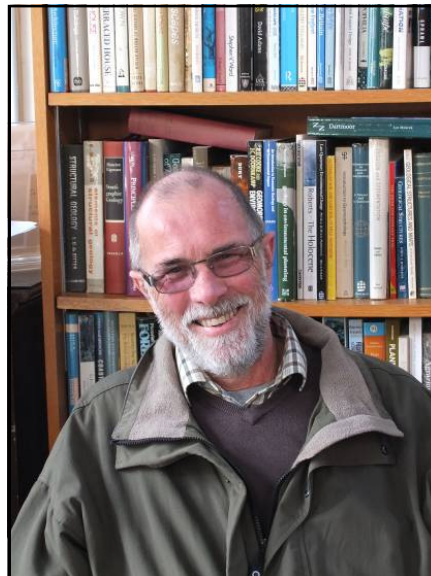
Just to sketch in some detail it is elevated, has rounded convex slopes, hedges but few woods, large agricultural fields in abundance, invisible

valley bottoms and a sense of height which makes the off-road views long. Modbury on the north edge of the area has woods, a twisting valley bottom, short slopes — nooky, comfortable, habitable and nice!

RAY/BY

HERCULES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

By Peter Howard



This note is intended to site our input to the HERCULES project within a framework of the intellectual development of 'Heritage' since the 1980s as an academic area of interest.

I founded the first theoretically based undergraduate course in Heritage and Landscape (at a School of Art) in 1990, and a few years later I founded the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* which I continued to edit for 13 years. I also wrote a text on heritage and co-edited the *Ashgate Research Companion in Cultural Heritage*. Heritage is now taught in about 50 universities, but also sits as modules within geography, archaeology, anthropology. Apart from the theoretical courses, there are Heritage Management and Heritage Tourism courses.

I have been concerned during the kick-off meeting that 'heritage' was tacitly being accepted as a largely unproblematic concept, unlike 'landscape' or 'culture'. This is emphatically not the case, so I am taking an immediate opportunity to write a short summary for the benefit of those who have not been immersed in heritage critical studies as it has developed over 25 years, greatly influenced by French philosophical thinking, Bourdieu et al.

There are four distinct ways in which heritage is studied. Two of these will surprise no-one in the 'landscape' discipline, as there is a study of stakeholders (including the clash between the expert agenda and the local agenda) and there are studies of identity level, although this has been very heavily dominated by the national level. Other work selects a field of heritage — nature, monuments, artefacts, sites, events, persons — but any attempt to define heritage by field inevitably fails. Lastly there is now wide agreement that 'heritage' is not a product but a process, and some papers attempt to describe elements of that process and here note that gentrification is an inevitable element in that process. So heritage is indeed **Conserved**, but there are three other ways of remembering; some heritage is **Collected** in museums, zoos etc, some is **Commemorated** by memorials, and some is **Copied**, so the Renaissance was effectively a heritage movement. The most interesting undergraduate dissertation that one of my students wrote was about Heritage theory and tribute bands (e.g. the New Elvis, or Beatles look-alikes).

There is no good reason for making a fundamental distinction between the cultural heritage and the natural heritage. Managing a zoo or a nature reserve is not fundamentally different from managing a museum or an archaeological site. However, the natural heritage fields have only very slowly begun to take heritage theory and practice into account. RAMSAR now has a cultural arm. Nature conservationists have only slowly accepted that people have to be welcomed into the nature reserve and not excluded.

Until recently I had postulated that there are two opposed streams within the heritage concept, but now I have

begun to think that they might merge. By far the most powerful stream, much the richest, has been described by Laurajane Smith as the Authorised Heritage Discourse. This is most clearly represented by the World Heritage Convention, an immensely successful branding system to produce tourist sites. It is a top-down and elitist system that conserves the heritage selected by experts, owners and governments for their benefit. It takes little account of the local population. The main tool is 'designation', where areas are defined to be conserved (automatically of course excluding other areas of no account), and within which experts are given control. Designation, like design, is linked to commodification. These 'protected places' many of them protected as landscapes, are usually in the intellectual portfolio of a particular discipline, just as galleries are within a museum.

The other stream has little money and very little power, but most 'Critical Heritage' specialists would regard it as intellectually superior, at least more democratic. This is the bottom-up system represented by the European Landscape Convention, attempting to include every place, land or sea, urban or rural, 'protected' and 'ordinary' by giving encouragement to local people to look after the heritage that is meaningful to them. It turns out that ordinary landscapes are as meaningful to local people as protected special ones, although the meaning is likely to be encapsulated in the commemoration of people and events rather than large material objects. I hope that this is the heritage direction which is represented by the HERCULES project.

That these two concepts need not be mutually exclusive is demonstrated by the recent history of the National Trust in the UK which is an NGO not a government body. It certainly was a full member of the 'Authorised Heritage Discourse' having acquired over the years a huge land holding of coastal and moorland landscapes, most of them within other government designations, such as National Parks or Heritage Coasts, and a large portfolio of country mansions and their parks, formerly the property of major landowners, who have even been allowed to continue in residence. But this large vessel has

been making a determined effort to turn around and take a serious interest in a more democratic heritage, purchasing simple workshops in Birmingham, and smaller homes for example, and interpreting the lives of the servants in its great houses. At the same time the National Trust now encourages local people to use its estates, not only for sporting events, but also to encourage new systems of sustainable farming. It may be rather patronising, but it is certainly setting an example: taking the lives of local ordinary people, and their heritage as a matter of concern.

Even the World Heritage Convention has begun to make moves in less top-down directions, insisting that local people are involved (although of course this often means local entrepreneurs). I believe it is of major importance that HERCULES puts his strength also in that direction..... supporting the conservation of heritage landscapes by and for the people who are a part of that landscape.

PH

Editor's note: Nice to be able to report Peter (Prof Dr P) Howard of Winkleigh Devon has been elected to Honorary

DEFLECTED VISTAS

The thing I like about an avenue
Is how it takes possession of the eye.
Steers it directly where it's going to -
That faraway, magnetic patch of sky.
But if that vistol corridor is bent,
Thus cutting short the visibility,
It doesn't seem to put us off the scent;
It merely feeds our curiosity.
We humans daily struggle to survive.
By instinct we are programmed to explore;
It's part of how we keep ourselves alive.
That is what curiosity is for!
Deflected vistas therefore serve to show
How overwhelming is the urge to know.

Jay Appleton

First published in **A Love Affair with Landscape. Jay Appleton.** The Wildhern Press 2009

Life Membership for services to the Group. And by the way the bookshelf, background to the mugshot — for those who observe and analyse all parts of an image — is mine! And the fact that Peter is wearing an outdoor jacket suggests that he was a visitor on a cold day. **'Trained observer'**

Letter to the Editor From John Gittins

Dear Bud

Thank you again for another good LRExtra. Whilst our Journal (Landscape Research) occupies a key position in academic studies, LRExtra keeps us up to date in other and different ways. Meanwhile (flattery over) I would like to air a number of comments arising from LRE 68.

First a comment on Peter Howard's article entitled **'Biodiversity offsetting: the wider landscape and social consequences'**: This certainly made a series of very valid but often neglected points on a key issue. Landscape is certainly a place in which people live and also



Lets go cut the lawn: the Formula 1 approach in South Turkey

visit. If 'localism' is to deliver what one hopes will be positive outcomes, it is as Peter writes, vital that the parish is seen as the base where offsets can yield the maximum returns and as a result the problem of the wider landscape would largely be resolved. Peter is in my opinion also correct in stating that 'the process of designation coupled with gentrification is very powerful' but the issue is also tied up with the wider landscape and what has become known as the 'ordinary or everyday landscape where most people live.' Do we forget this vital fact? I recall with pleasure the concluding words of Sir Frank Fraser Darling in his Reith Lectures 1969 given under the title 'Wilderness and Plenty': he ended with: *'The near landscape is valuable and lovable be-*

cause of its nearness, not something to be disregarded and shrugged off, it is where children are reared and what they take away in their minds to their long future. What ground could be more hallowed?'

Jane Brown in a rather forgotten book, **'The Everywhere Landscape'** takes this as her theme and concludes by stating that we need to take a holistic approach to landscape and not to just think of it as countryside or 'my view' or protected landscapes only. This is why the European Landscape Convention is so important, vague as it may be in some areas, it applies to all landscapes, making it very clear that ordinary or everyday landscapes are significant and of special value to those who

live there. As Peter writes *'A process that continually favours the protected against the ordinary landscape could reasonably be understood as a breach of the Convention.'* For me, this is a live issue, for my home area of Montgomeryshire in the Upper Severn Valley is a major search area for wind-power developments, an area where local people are fighting a key battle to save their everyday landscape.

My second comment is in connection with the piece by Steve Shuttleworth and Laurence le Du-Blayo entitled **'EU. Research Project Hercules'** which I certainly support. However, when it comes to the key question 'How will success be measured?' I begin to ask questions. I recognise the importance and value of regional case studies and the proposed number of supplementary case studies to ensure the broad range of cultural landscape types *'so that researchers, landscape professionals and local communities can make practical use of them.'* In respect to this latter point I am drawn to the valuable editorial in Landscape Research, Volume 39/1 by our new editor Dr Anna Jorgensen who writes thus: *'It is rarely possible for purely descriptive research to be innovative in a landscape context: most high quality research starts with the aim of addressing a problem, which needs to be critically acknowledged and explored from some sort of perspective.'* (1)

In Cheshire, we have recently come to the end of a small project which sought to test how far the idea of voluntary landscape wardens at the parish level could promote, develop and sustain one element of the Convention through a process of recruiting volunteers and offering a series of focussed workshops on landscape elements and a support system to enable them to continue to work as eyes and ears in their local communities. First findings indicate that this approach, working in partnership with officers from the local authority and other interested parties — not least their respective parish councils — is yielding increases in locally based action.

This then fits well to the Forestry Research paper 'Principles of Public Engagement' by Paul Tabbush and Bianca Ambrose-Oji published by the Forestry Commission in 2011 and the

much earlier work by Sherry Arnstein in his seminal work *'A Ladder of Citizen Participation'* (1969) and subsequent updates. In Cheshire it has led to a number of Parish Landscape Statements which have been adopted by Local Authorities giving them status in the statutory spatial planning system. It has also led to a significant number of practical landscape enhancement projects — tree planting, the creation of orchards, hedgerow enhancement and the restoration of ponds — in individual parishes. Public engagement and partnership working is key in the 'New Vision for Lindow Moss' (Lindow Moss in East Cheshire is a large peat bog where a significant 'bog body' known as 'Lindow Man' also as 'Lindow 11 and 'Pete Moss' was discovered in 1984 — the body is now in the British Museum). This project is being led by the community based group 'Transition Town Wilmslow.'

All in all, I hope that the Hercules Project recognises the value of local participation and the experience and successes to date in promoting the principles which underlie the ELC set in the context of Anna Jorgensen's editorial and the words of Frank Fraser Darling and Jane Brown.

JWG

15th April 2014.

Notes, references

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(1) Also note a longer extract from Anna Jorgensen's editorial appears later in this issue.

UNIFYING FIELDS: — 'CHERISCAPE' AND THE INTERACTION OF LANDSCAPE AND CULTURAL HERITAGES

By Graham Fairclough

What's the difference between 'landscape' and 'heritage'? Is heritage



part of landscape or is landscape part of heritage — or are they in a Möbius-strip (or Möbius-matryoshka?) type of relationship, each both containing but contained by the other? Why is it so difficult to push either into 'mainstream' policy and politics, as the European Landscape Convention and the European Science Policy Briefing on 'Landscapes in a Changing World' tell us is possible and desirable? Why has the EC not opened landscape-specific funding streams (most of the recent landscape projects have arisen from other, not explicitly landscape-branded, streams — Hercules for example, in which LRG is an associate, is funded from the Environment and Climate Change programme?)

I have just begun to be the coordinator — with my colleague at Newcastle, Sam Turner — of a new European project called CHerIScape ('Cultural Heritage in Landscape') which will explore such questions, and many others. It is mainly financed by five national research councils (AHRC in the UK, and equivalent councils in Norway, the Netherlands, Flanders in Belgium and Spain) as part of the pilot call for grants in the JPI on Cultural Heritage that was established in 2012. Its vision, and soon its 'Strategic Research Agenda, can be seen at:

<http://www.jpi-culturalheritage.eu/>.

What are JPIs? JPI stands for 'Joint Programming Initiative', a process used by the EC since 2008 to pool and coordinate national research efforts to study European challenges more effectively on a voluntary and partnership basis. Currently there are ten of these challenge-based initiatives, from 'Antimicrobial research' to 'Urban

Europe', ranging through topics as diverse as food security, 'healthy oceans', and Alzheimer's. Interestingly, 'landscape' ideas could potentially help to address most of the current JPI challenges, but I wonder how many landscape researchers have responded to JPI funding calls? We did however respond to the Cultural Heritage JPI's first invitation for funding, and the result (one of ten accepted from 66 eligible projects) is CHerIScape, a landscape-based project.

CHerIScape is a simple idea. We are a consortium of seven partners — three universities (Newcastle [Archaeology], Ghent [Geography] and Wageningen [Land-Use Planning]), three government-linked research bodies (the archaeological section of CSIC in Spain and in Norway NIKU [Cultural Heritage] and Bioforsk [nature and landscape]) and one national heritage board (RCE, the Cultural Heritage Board, in the Netherlands) — but we expect to welcome other associates on board during our three year voyage (ideas are welcome from all who read this).

We will organise five conferences, one in each of our partner countries, on the theme of 'landscape in heritage'. These international and interdisciplinary conferences, with key and influential invited speakers, will bring together experts and practitioners to explore the relationship between heritage and landscape and more importantly to look ahead toward future research avenues and ways to make that research work in terms of influencing social, environmental and economic policies at European, national and local levels. Our conferences will be separately themed but closely interwoven, focussing on the interaction and synergies of landscape in heritage (or landscape as heritage, and vice versa) in terms of: —

1. Policy (to be held in Ghent, Belgium, July 2014).
2. Science and research (at Amersfoort, Netherlands, November 2014).
3. Community (Oslo, Norway, May 2015).
4. Global change, (Madrid, Spain, October 2015).
5. Digital and virtual futures (Newcastle, United Kingdom, June 2015).

2016).

From these conferences we expect debate and argument, a level of public engagement, new ideas and inspiration — and we intend to capture all this in a series of conference proceedings, research agendas and specific and cumulative briefings for policy makers from the EC downwards. The CHeriScape website (at the time of writing ‘under construction’ but by the time of publication hopefully active) is at :

www.cheriscape.eu.

and that is where you will be able to find details of our conferences.

GF

A note from the organisers who call for contributions

HEARING LANDSCAPE CRITICALLY:

MUSIC, PLACE, AND THE SPACES OF SOUND

Harvard University 14-16 January 2015.
Website:

www.hearinglandscapecritically.net

Landscapes are spaces of community and segregation, of inspiration, mystification, nourishment, and devastation. Though landscape has long been acknowledged as a foundational element of our historical and contemporary engagement with the world, the significance of sound and music in shaping notions and perceptions of landscape has only recently begun to receive sustained critical attention.

The third meeting of the ‘Hearing Landscape Critically’ research network will take place at Harvard University, 14-16 January 2015. The aim of this three-year project funded by the Leverhulme Trust is to transform our sense of sound in landscape, and to document, investigate, and provoke critical encounters between the social and acoustic agents involved in the formations of landscape. The network embraces an interdisciplinary methodology and brings together scholars from diverse geographical contexts and academic fields (including art history, literary studies, and cultural ge-

ography) alongside creative practitioners, prompting new ways of thinking about sound, music, space, and place.

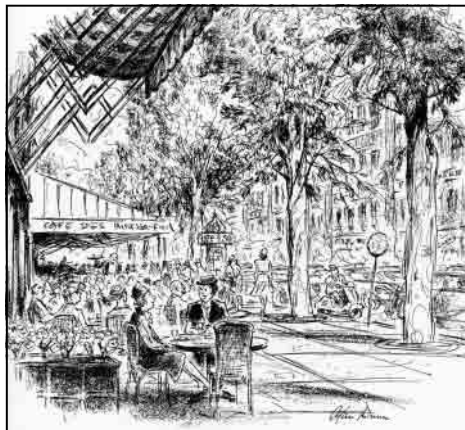
Key research objectives for the Network — and the conference — are as follows:

1. To investigate particular privileged or hidden sites and sounds of power, politics, coercion or subversion through landscape and music;
 2. To explore the different modalities of performing/performed landscapes;
 3. To interrogate the role of landscape, music, and sound in shaping subjectivity, social space, and the everyday;
 4. To articulate the theoretical gains and ethical imperatives of encounters between landscape, music and society.
- Everything that is, resounds ... The landscape resounds; facades, caricatures, halos, shadows dance across it.*

(Alphonso Lingis).

Editor's note

Bit deaf myself so I find sounds of particular interest and we have published before on the topic. Below traffic noise and chatter at a Paris pavement café. A cartoon by social commentator Alan Dunn 1966.



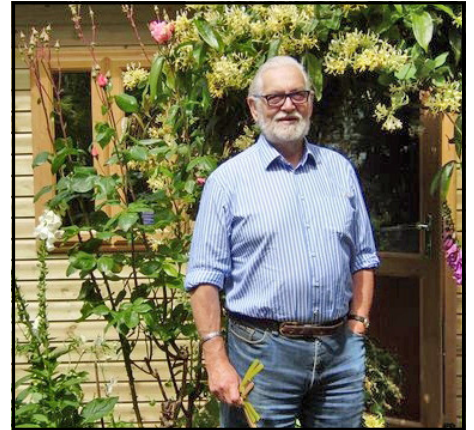
WANT TO BE AWARE OF LANDSCAPE CONFERENCES?

The place to go to if you are interested in European landscape conferences is www.landscape-europe.net where Jan Borovska and the ILE team run a Network Coordination Office. They present a list of conferences in attractive and clear format. It's a must and also makes pleasant reading. Contact them and they will make sure you receive their monthly alert. **Editor.**

“NAIRN THE GRATE” THE ‘TERRIER OF TOWNSCAPE’

A review touched off by Gillian Darley & David McKie **Ian Nairn: Words in Place (1)**

By Brian Goodey photographed outside his studio workshop (see below).



‘This is a marvellous book. I read it like a novel ... and like the very best novels I didn't want to turn the last page to see how things worked out... Yet there it is: intelligent, compassionate and witty’. That's Ian Nairn in 1970, establishing his credentials, if such were needed, for discussion in a landscape journal — here he endorses Nan Fairbrother's **New Lives. New Landscapes** linking her vision with that of Jane Jacobs: landscape and townscape demanding brave ideas (2), but his comment could well be applied to the present text.

This long overdue study of Ian Nairn is just not too late to be missed by those of us who grew up with Nairn as the journalistic environmental commentator to admire, and because then there was no better, to emulate. Born in 1930 and dead by 1983 his influence in campaigns, architectural criticism, books and pioneer TV series was from the early 1950's to the late 1970's.

To most he is almost of a forgotten generation, forgotten I think by A.A. Gill (3) writing of a Jonathan Meades architectural foray ‘almost every presenter on television appears as the reincarnation or imitation of some other presenter, but Meades remains singular, without progenitor or competitor, the great polemicist of the small screen, with his dry, comic, satirical and surreal visual style in stark contrast to his baroque, loqua-

cious and pugnacious prose.'

Meades, who has written elsewhere an incisive essay (4) on Nairn's contribution (and sad decline) may well be of his own invention, but he keeps light coming through the television crack that Nairn first opened and, if architects and planners can recognise the language, maintains a regular verbal assault on their presumed authority.

If Meades (who has fronted a TV retrospective on Nairn) is 'pugnacious' then Nairn was, both in print and on screen a terrier — not my term but one picked up in a bar discussion where another admirer suggested that Nairn's skill was in finely 'grating' the surface of commonplace views.

My first encounter with Nairn was, I find from this very well researched study, in 1957/8 when a travelling exhibition *Subtopia* 'prepared by the Royal Institute of British Architects' — Ha! — arrived in Chelmsford. The exhibition guide, summarising Nairn's campaign over landscape decay developed in **Outrage** and **Counter-Attack Against Subtopia**, encourages the reader or viewer to act. '*Your planning officer is — or should be — devoted to enhancing the landscape: go to him with your troubles and give him all the support you can. Architects are professionally trained in 'togetherness.'*' (5). Or you can contact the '*Counter-Attack Bureau*'. Which latter we now find was an in-tray for Nairn and illustrator Gordon Cullen at the **Architectural Review**.

Much is made of Nairn's early career as a jet pilot and his landscape appreciation from the air. Unlike most architects and planners he was able to set his swingeing criticisms of the roadside view within a broader context of unthinking environmental change. Certainly his use of a Rockefeller Grant to eat up some 10,000 miles of US roads in 1959/60 left a considerable mark in the USA '*Mr Nairn has succeeded in starting a grand argument, which may not be ended until this generation of city planners is in its grave*' reviewed Wayne Andrews. (6).

Although most enthusiasts highlight Nairn's two urban guides, for London and Paris, as his best and most repre-

sentative works, **Your England Revisited** (7) captures his early campaigning and participatory style rather better, especially as all photographs and flying for aerial views were done by Nairn himself. Sprawl, utopian roadsides, litter, badly built neighbours and the rest hark back to early CPRE and pre-war planning campaigns against 'The Beast' and forward to the Civic Trust to which Nairn's views contributed.

Darley and McKee review Nairn's life and work in a sequence of essays covering key media outputs: *Outrage*; *In America*; *Buildings of England*; the *Professions*; *London*; *Sunday paper essays*; *Screen appearance*. Each is introduced by a brief essay contributed by Meades, Hatherley, Saint, Glancey and others..

Andrew Saint (8) perhaps gets closest to Nairn's style ... '*Nairn's London is not about bricks and mortar but about the ways in which buildings, places and flesh-and-blood human beings shape and impose upon one another. His commonest complaint ... is not that a building is ugly or incompetent but that it is heartless.*' Hence, of London Zoo '*It's good to have a place which takes the mickey out of architecture, the animal world, and its human visitors simultaneously.*' How very incorrect.

In the latter part of his life when his shambolic protests featured rather too often in urban documentaries, the 'grating' image tended to subdue the earlier 'terrier'. Before you search YouTube (for Nairn is to be found there within a film from 'Europa 1970') imagine the exact opposite of the Michael Portillo image and approach to urban places and landscapes. Nairn had vision, saw the potential in places, was unchecked by officialdom, recognised a hidden beating heart, and too often felt its pain and loss. As here about Birmingham:

'Sitting on a goldmine? The whole of canal-side Birmingham, rightly used could become the Vauxhall or Ranelagh of the 1980's, a city centre to go into, not flee from, on a bank holiday. The will is there, nowhere better expressed than in the new Birmingham Repertory Theatre in the same few square yards near the canal basin....' (9). They laughed then ... but

someone listened and Birmingham's active tourist heart is now there for all to see.

For my generation and maybe for a wider readership Nairn, together with Gordon Cullen, Colin Ward and a few others, taught me to look, and to try and capture for others both the essence and the potential of place, be it urban or rural (or increasingly in-between). All part of one process which finance, rather than the environmental professions, understood.

Whilst Nairn did not 'invent' townscape he certainly codified its purpose and extended its meaning from Cullen's largely graphic representation. '*A new art needs a new name... and this one is townscape ... The only object of this book is to make the environment and hence life itself more exciting, humane and expressive.*' (10) — with the two key factors being relationship and identity.

Some of his thinking in this regard still permeates urban and landscape design but excitement seldom gets further than the press photo icon, the street performer and the dribbling fountain. The art of making places too often ends with the unveiling rather than the joy of occupation.

Nairn was no joyful man, but it needs joyful people to pick up his dormant legacy. This should not be a biographical history, however enjoyable and quietly provocative it is. A number of authors have tip-toed the way Nairn trod, Gavin Stamp maintained a 'Townscape' column for a while (and is still *Private Eye*'s 'Piloti'); Will Self and others have adopted 'psychogeography' which brings the inevitability of Iain Sinclair, probing, linking, reflecting, yes, but with interpretations of relationship and identity that have little mass resonance.

For a few moments in mid-20th century history Ian Nairn caught, or created, the mood of public murmurings on the rapidly changing environment (11). This book is a fine record of what he achieved ... and why the effort was so, personally destructive. With Darley & McKie as foundation we could do with a collection of Nairn's newspaper articles with updates, a re-revised edition

of **London** and a new Townscape Manifesto app. On the back of these, let's have a television series that achieves the direct critical address, the grating of images and attitudes, that Nairn managed, at his best, to achieve.

BG

Notes

(1) Gillian Darley & David McKie **Ian Nairn: Words in Place**, Nottingham : Five Leaves Publications, 2013 160pp £10.99. From the publishers at PO Box 8786, Nottingham, NG1 9AW info@fiveleaves.co.uk.

(2) Ian Nairn, **'New Look for Britain**. Sunday Times March 1st 1970

(3) A.A. Gill **'Brutal honesty is always the best policy'** – Review inc. Concrete Poetry BBC 4' Sunday Times Culture Section March 2nd 2014

(4) Jonathan Meades **Ian Nairn (1930-83)' Museums Without Walls** London: Unbound 2012. Pp 386-400

(5) **Subtopia** Exhibition leaflet, 1957?

(6) Wayne Andrews **'Townscape : A New Name for a New Art'** New York Times Magazine March 7th 1965 page 7 This is a review of **Ian Nairn, The American Landscape : A Critical View** New York : Random House, 1965

(7) Ian Nairn **Your England Revisited** London: Hutchinson, 1964

(8) Andrew Saint **'Preamble to Nairn's London'** in Darley & McKie 87-8: refers to **Ian Nairn's London**, Penguin 1966. Revisited by Peter Gasson **Nairn's London**. Penguin 1988. Both out of print, I buy them where I can as the best possible gifts for students and overseas visitors ...

not to mention the implicit pub guide.

(9) Ian Nairn **'This Britain: Venice lurks under all that spaghetti'** The Sunday Times December 17th 1972

(10) Quoted in Andrews above.

(11) Worth reading, also, are summaries by Jonathan Glancy **'Ian Nairn's Voice of Outrage'** The Guardian May 15th 2011 and Rowan Moore **'Why Ian Nairn, outspoken critic of post-war modernism, is as relevant as ever'** The Guardian November 2nd 2013

BRECKLAND, LANDSCAPE 38 — ARE YOU SURE DEAR?

By Bud Young

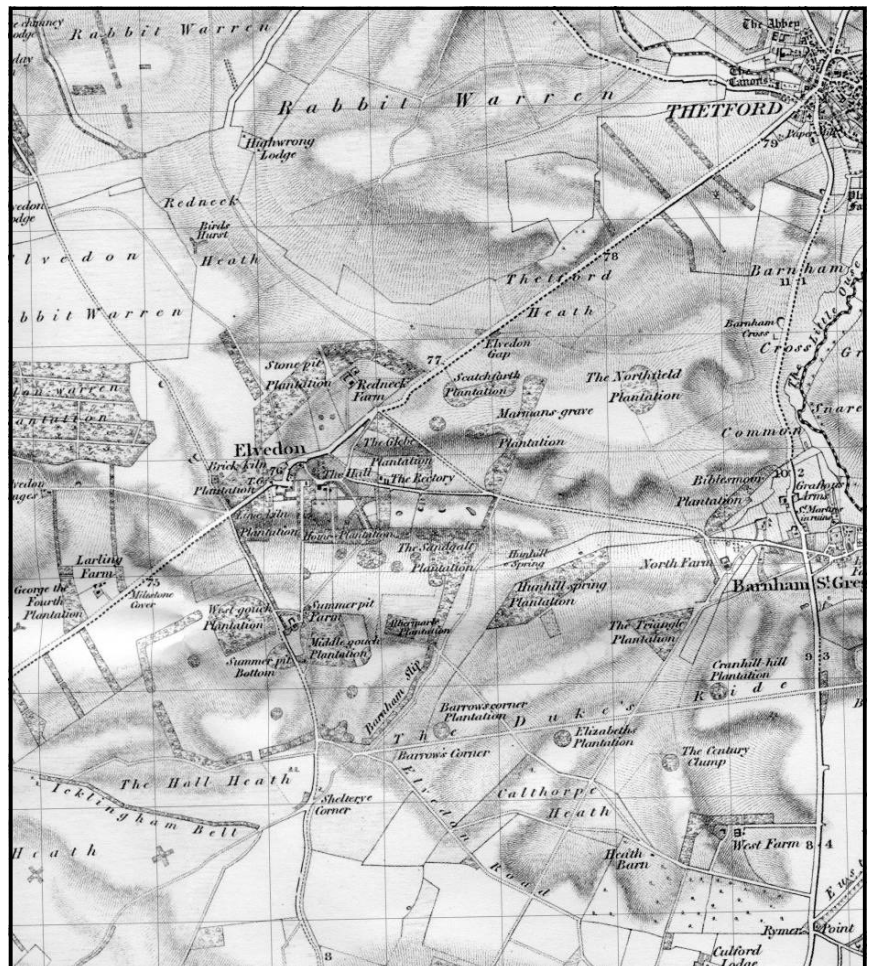
A few weeks ago a friend whose interests lay in the publication of old maps gifted me a complete set of the latest Ordnance Survey style historical maps (1) from Cassini. My friend knows me as a compulsive hoarder of unwanted materials (anyone need 1/ 50 000 scale maps of Rhodesia? aerial photography of Fiji or northern Kenya?).

And so when asked by a notable footpath group to investigate one of the country's ancient routes I turned first to the aerial photography then to these maps, and pulling out a map dated 1837/8 I was delighted to find an ancient landscape revealed. It was that part of East Anglia at the northern border of West Suffolk where it abuts Norfolk. And of course it is well known in Natural England analysis ergo parlance as 'Breckland'. If you travel

there you will see large fields intensively cropped separated one from the other by chain-width plantations of conifers and industrial scale pig rearing units. You can read about the area in the Natural Areas of England web site and it is Landscape 38.

The name Breckland persists, romantic because elusive and historic. And perhaps the enthusiastic tourist passes through the area and remarks on the coniferous shelter belts which incidentally are much more expressively displayed on Google Earth. And those enthusiastic travellers will pause a while puzzled and not quite get the gist, see the significance, of what they are seeing or why it should be a special landscape apart for the ever present pine shelter belts and the monotony of high tech cropping.

Last week, I was more fortunate for it was my job to investigate that landscape back as far as I could, using old aerial photography. I began 'as you do' with Google Earth, travelled back and added in a handful of late 80s and 90s airphotos flown by ADAS (the now



forgotten aerial survey arm of the Ministry of Agriculture). Digging down into the boxed airphoto archive (2) I got to 1976, 1955, 1951 and back into Post War views of the later 1940s (the USAF flew it in 1944). **I was thrilled by this process to see the landscape reconstruct itself into a vision of its early origins.** What I saw might have been from the 1830s for all the difference an extra hundred years might have made. And why? Because in early post war years it was an open unhedged landscape, no apparent fields or fences, certainly no shelter belts (3) and no arable; low quality thin natural pasture and patches of gorse. Tracks across this neglected emptiness were there and still exist — named Dukes Ride (to Euston Park) and of course the Icknield Way — not so named in 1837/8 but a clear track sharp etched down into the chalk. The total transformation so revealed lies wholly within my life time and for that reason it astonished me. A transformation which of course you may read

about: how this low fertility land with poor soil, low value and a tendency to blow got the area its name; got a reputation which the enthusiastic ‘day-outer’ finds puzzling or obscure. It is not now so special though certainly distinctive. The map of 1837/8 identifies a patchwork of locally named heaths. Officialdom still calls it Breckland (coy nostalgia, the equal of the Ye Olde Tea Shoppe)) but that name is ‘so not true’ anymore.

BY Notes

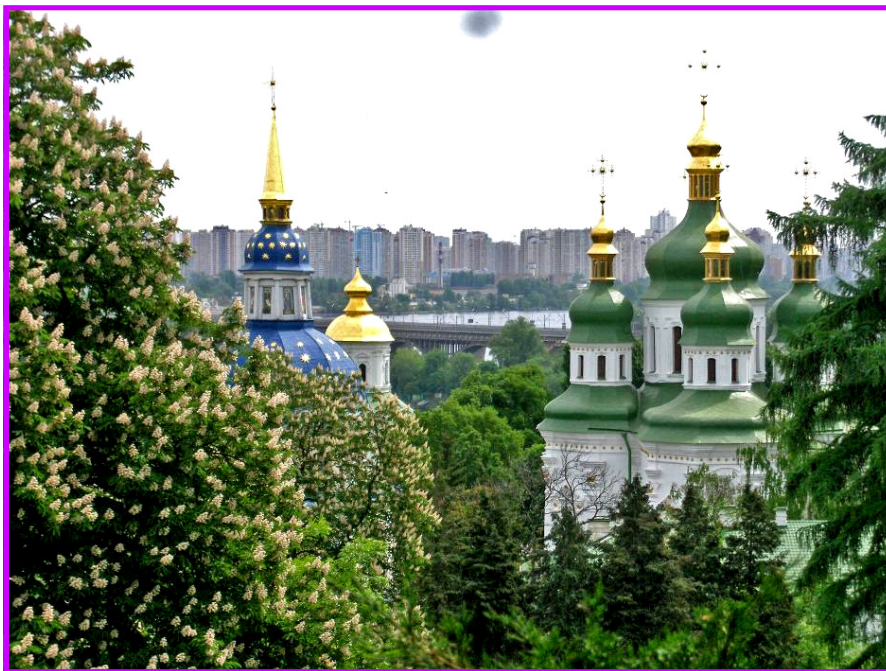
1 Published by Cassini Publishing Ltd www.cassinimaps.com Specifically Sheet 144 Thetford and Diss: Old Series. The tag line on this series of maps is “Discover the Landscape of the Past.” Particularly worthwhile in agricultural improvement areas (such as this) and spread industrial regions.

2 Aerial photography viewed in the library of the National Monuments Record Centre (English Heritage) Swindon.

3 In truth — of shelter belts there were a scatter even then but not in this immediate area.

KIEV SPRING

Image from Ivor Harding and note from Gareth Roberts.



Many guide books recommend late April / early May as the best time to visit Kiev, the capital of Ukraine. They often cite the warmer weather and the magnificent displays of lilac and horse chestnut flowers as good reasons for going at this time of the year. The attached photos from a friend who lives in Kiev with his Ukrainian wife, Raisa, show the contrast between landscapes on the two sides of the river Dnepr. The golden domes of the Lavra which is the centre of the Orthodox Ukrainian Church, the equivalent of the Vatican for Catholics — stand out in stark contrast to the slab tenement blocks built during Soviet times.

IH/GR

LRE WELCOMES ANNA JORGENSEN

Anna has taken over from Maggie Roe as managing editor of Landscape Research. Her first issue is volume 39/1 which members may have seen. I was particularly pleased to see the paragraph (cited in italics below) outlining the type of paper she wishes to encourage. I quote from her editorial at page 2. It is worth reading the full 5 page essay.

“Second as well as widening geographic representation I would also like to widen the scope of the journal while strengthening its overall focus. Currently the journal already publishes material from within numerous landscape-related disciplines on a wide range of topics including soils, cultural landscapes, landscape characteristics, ecosystem services, nature conservation, archaeological investigations and historic landscapes, landscapes in art and literature, the visual,

mapping, parks, gardens and the social construction of landscape to name but a few subjects. However Landscape Research has tended to publish a great deal of material related to large scale landscape research in predominantly rural area, perhaps reflecting the idea of landscape as subsisting primarily at this scale and in this territory. There is also a belief that Landscape Research publishes mainly qualitative or at least mixed methods research, as opposed to work deploying quantitative approaches. I think it is very important that Landscape Research continues to publish this kind of work; but I also feel that it should publish the broadest range of landscape studies, including, say, papers that are small scale or urban in their remit, or quantitative in their approach. In terms of an overall focus, the overriding con-

cern should be to publish innovative scholarship that is conceptually founded in landscape, and to cement the journal's reputation as a vehicle for the highest quality landscape research".



If you wish to contact her she is at a.jorgensen@sheffield.ac.uk and full detail of her requirements for papers can be found on LRG's website (given on page 12 of this issue).

Interesting too to read what she says about herself in her departmental staff information. With her permission (or should it be that of the University — who owns information this days!) I grab the following information.

"Like a large number of people involved in the discipline and practice of Landscape Architecture I converted to Landscape as a mature student, and have brought a range of different skills and understandings to my teaching and research practice.

I studied English Literature for my first degree at Cambridge University, reflecting my interest in creative, intuitive and fictionalised ways of understanding and representing the world. On completing my undergraduate degree I was attracted to the legal profession as a means of

participating in political and social justice, taking a conversion course in Law and qualifying as a solicitor in 1984. I practised for 13 years until 1997, gaining experience of criminal, family, industrial, employment and personal injury law in a South Yorkshire Legal Aid practice. I became a partner in the practice but by the late 1980's I had become keen to develop my creative abilities and my interest in social equity in a different arena.

Throughout my life I have been privileged to enjoy a close relationship with a number of particular landscapes, most notably a suburban brownfield site, a royal park, my grandmother's allotment in Copenhagen, a Danish rural/coastal landscape and the Pennine Peak District. Eager to develop this relationship I took the MA/Dip in Landscape Design at Sheffield. During the MA I was successful in obtaining temporary employment in public arts administration, working for Public Arts in Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

On completion of the MA, I was torn between a desire to practise Landscape Architecture and the possibility of continuing to study. The award of an Economic and Social Research Council studentship to undertake PhD research in the Department convinced me that this was the appropriate way forward. After 2 years PhD study I successfully applied for the position of Lecturer in the Department, and have held this full-time, permanent post since 2001.

My career to date has therefore provided me with a combination of creative, analytical and research skills and interests, which continue to inform my approaches to teaching and research.

My research interests focus around the ways in which different people experience, interact with, understand and represent landscape, and especially wild or natural-looking vegetation; and the desire to see a more holistic and environmentally friendly approach to planning and designing urban greenspace and green structure."

Editor

URBAN CANALS

'Ian Nairn', writes Goodey in his article on page 7, 'was ahead of his time in seeing the value of once industrial urban canals.' In his explorations of the USA in the late 1950's Nairn discovered the growing canal system of San Antonio (Texas, 3 images over page) an inspired expansion of desert flood drains. Brian Goodey was equally impressed on first seeing this expanded system. Did this, perhaps, lead Nairn to see the potential for Bir-



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 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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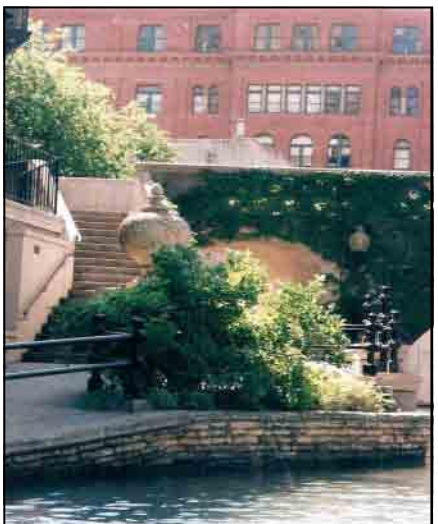
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mingham's industrial canals (3 images on page 11) as a focus for future tourism? .



GARDENS IN NEWLY DEVELOPED HOUSING AREAS

by Bud Young

I spent some working time a few years ago mapping the structure of urban and suburban areas and at that time found a way of discriminating what planners had lumped into the category **R - Residential** into perhaps 35 types based on their age and the type of housing; some of this was high rise, some single storey, some terraces, some spaciouly set houses, some local authority housing and so on. There was a strength in that analysis as it combined type with age. This study I performed across two London Boroughs, all of Doncaster MBC and much of Liverpool. The distribution so revealed is in itself a very telling demographic. All of this was done from aerial photography.

Notably interesting was the large amount of space provided for suburban gardens up to the 1950s and the poverty of space in modern day housing developments where 'units per hectare' is policy tightened to gasping point.

Analysing the late-modern developments — dating them on aerial photography each with its own date point — achieved by comparison of house type and layout styles and the condition of the gardens — allowed fine date tuning of recent developments. Garden plots start as grass rectangles surrounded by the usual board boundary fence. Then the garden path, then the shed and the trampoline. But how quickly is the change made to 'gardens of delight'. And how few properties display planting and design quality.

My town has developed by at least 4 housing patches in the last 12 years. I watch their development. The one closest to me has the least provision of garden space. It is 8 years old and the most significant feature visible to me

is the narrow strip of streetside land that a gifted guerrilla gardener has made into a floral paradise (see top image). It is opposite his kitchen window! Their tiny gardens are invisible; some are approached only via the



house or by a shoulder-width narrow alley. The aerial view probably shows pot plants on patios.

A another development, a slightly larger site has a successful small public green space (above), two residual oak trees, a new-planted now bushy roadside hedge and deep set rivulet, fenced off — but part guerrilla gardened by one householder. Children actually play among the trees of the greenspace. Hurrah!

Few development today have space for those large trees that were and still are the hallmark of pre 1950s areas. So the dilemma. Pack those houses in? Remove gardens? Increased paved runoff? Create small townscape spaces? Limit sprawl? Save our countryside? Spread out and let us breathe? What is all that farmland doing anyway!

BY