



landscape research

extra →



LANDSCAPE RESEARCH EXTRA
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LRG'S NEW CHAIRMAN

The LRG Board recently elected David Coleman as its new chairman. He has written a personal statement about his appointment which will appear in Landscape Research, but briefly he read geography at Cambridge then conservation at University College of London and has spent most of his working life involved in one way or another with landscape and countryside. He played a significant part in the creation of the Norfolk Broads Authority and agreements for the Halvergate Marshes grazing landscape in Suffolk - agreements which led into the designation of Environmentally Sensitive Agricultural Areas. In his work he heads the South East England office of the Countryside Commission in London at a time when that area is under the sustained pressure of economic development.

As someone who once worked in his office I can say three things about him: that he has wit and charm and has his office desk clear by 11am! It is reasonable therefore to expect a number of interesting advances in LRG if he is able to combine his political vision, clarity of thought and skills as a leader to the Group's affairs.

FIELD OF VIEW

To counteract an ever present tendency I have included some 'very foreign looking' images of landscape in this issue. Those who have travelled or regularly watch TV will know that the world is a wonderful place. To see places on TV is one thing, to move within them to feel them around you, to explore them or make your living from them introduces more than just one dimension of difference.

Two of the foreign images are familiar to me and one is not. How does the man with his pack mule feel about the palm grove landscape in 'Western Soudan' he is walking through? Does he know or care that he is walking through 'landscape' and is the wild palm grove undergrazed like an english

orchard? Would you feel fascinated or menaced walking down the chinese 'alley of the druggists' in Canton? Does its narrowness and its verticality (dictated here by the needs of Chinese script) have anything to do with it? Does it offer you any new ideas for interior design? Does the shade tree in the Ashanti village register memories of 'Under the spreading chestnut tree' or your favourite out of town shopping mall? And do the Ashanti have burgage plot gardens behind their little houses as I have here in my Dartmoor town?

Our view of landscape is too narrow and it would be very satisfying to receive something to publish from 'foreign parts'. So if you live in any of the landscapes pictured here or anywhere equally foreign(!) - please drop me a line.



RIVER LANDSCAPES: ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS IN PRACTICE

An LRG Conference run in association with the National Rivers Authority, Thames Region at Egham, Surrey September 1989

This conference came at a good time (remarkable considering it had been postponed!) a few weeks after the creation of the NRA on 1st September 1989.

It was very well attended and for most people it was stimulating and worth while. For NRA Staff it was an early opportunity to discuss different perceptions of the River Authorities' future. The variety of topics and of the backgrounds of the speakers led to a valuable exchange of ideas about landscape, and encouraged inter-disciplinary collaboration in keeping with the philosophy behind LRG.

Professor Malcolm Newson of the University of Newcastle began with an elegant, informative account of the natural systems and historical changes which play a major part in the formation of river landscapes. It was an important wider view which made at least one person wish he could be back at university again(!) It was also appropriate as most of the speakers following him covered the differing ways in which man perceives or interacts with these processes. Those whose backgrounds included river processes and landforms found his talk particularly enjoyable, and a little bit of the real stuff may have set many thinking, who deal mostly with the adversarial problems of urban affected rivers and planning solutions.

In "What River Landscapes Mean to People" **Jacquie Burgess** emphasised that it was the diversity of the river landscape which people value. Economic change and the switch away from the use of rivers for economic purposes had led to a reduction in river users. She emphasised sensuous appreciation of rivers and their value as a place for a variety of interests and activities. Women as a group, she said, wish to see children playing safely in close contact with nature: children need to explore in 'safe danger'. As these conditions are rarely encountered in river landscapes many children are growing up divorced from riverine experience. People feel frustrated by their inability to influence decisions made about rivers and see themselves as powerless.

Pam Gilder (Countryside Commission) emphasised that river engineering acted as a catalyst for landscape change, for instance through promoting hedgerow removal. She showed the results of the river landscapes study published by them in 1987, but for

some reason these did not make a convincing point. The Countryside Commission did not have a separate policy for river landscapes but, as many people sought out river valley sites for recreation it was important to improve them, and they could point to their many projects. She then seemed to indicate that the NRA with a free-standing remit to promote conservation should interpret this as liberally as possible and make the running on landscape conservation and improvement within river valleys.

The NRA, Thames Region was represented amongst the speakers by **John Gardiner**, Technical Planning Manager who strongly advocated partnership between local authorities, the NRA and developers (what developers!) and the practice of multi-disciplinary working during the planning and design of river landscapes. He explained his own region's approach to catchment planning, which provides a methodology for strategic co-ordination without which landscapes could not be conserved.



Dr Margaret House and Maureen Fordham, Middlesex Polytechnic, then talked about their studies in the public perception of river corridors and river works. They considered it possible to obtain reliable information on public preferences. For example people preferred white water, clean water, a stoney river bed, less or no litter, more wildlife, and more environmental improvements. Consultation on schemes should take place early to satisfy local preference.

Mark Lintell (Land Use Consultants) then spoke on the Lower Colne Flood Alleviation Scheme. The River Colne is an urban fringe river beset by many pressures and flowing southwards into the Thames. It was a rather dry paper, describing no doubt a long and meticulous process. The project's primary objective had been to define a flood alleviation scheme which had minimal environmental impact.

They had defined 'the best practical environmental option'. It was notable because initiated well before the Land Drainage Improvement Works (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988, otherwise known as 'Statutory Instrument 1217' came into effect and demonstrated a way of satisfying these regulations. The scheme's success depended on prevention of future development on the flood plain, and because of this it would always be necessary to incorporate catchment planning principles within local Unitary Development Plans (for metropolitan areas).

Robin Clement, politically knowledgeable, worldly wise planner in the London Planning Advisory Committee left mere rivers people feeling a bit impotent with his descriptions of 'what really happens'. He advised that 'now' was the time for achieving integrated catchment planning jointly between the NRA and the planning authorities in London: all except 5 of the 33 Boroughs were starting a planning review timetabled to conclude in summer 1991. He was clear that the best way of achieving appropriate policies was for river landscape experts to draft them, having taken the initiative and having checked what was needed. Such a draft should then be put for discussion to the planning authority. One sensed that some of the audience reeled at a political planning system that could so easily ignore their people- and habitat- and landscape-based ideals.



Martin Nicholls, a Landscape Architect with the Department of Conservation in New Zealand quite clearly operated at a refreshingly different level and geographical scale. His slides exemplified the

need for environmental partnership between land use planners and environmentalists. But the scenes, mostly were so different, reminiscent of the classic 1930's book 'The Rape of the Earth' by Jackson and Whyte - so much wilder and in a way evidence of a much more straightforward abuse of Mother Earth. Erosion problems created by vegetation clearance for agricultural improvement had in places devastated the riverine landscape. So also had industry and town development.

Seamus Filor, lecturer in Landscape Architecture at Edinburgh University, read his paper on the Paramatta River, Sydney from proofs of his forthcoming book and it was less easy to listen to than it might well be to read. His description of the river landscape of the Paramatta in 1974 with limited access to the foreshore, buildings turned back on the river and a general neglected quality sounded similar to that of many urban rivers in England. They had been successful in that many buildings now face the river frontage, and are set back 9-15 metres from the bank. Linear open space and footpaths have been created at the river's edge, while planting has been included which helps screen buildings. The reader might do best to read the book for details of his work.

The last session offered a description of methods and achievements by the project officer **Brian Smith** for the River Medway Project in Kent. Marvellous people these project officers full of initiative and drive and one hopes that increasingly they will be backed up by a system that supports them rather than makes their jobs (necessary and) harder.

We also heard from **Dr Chris Spray** (Conservation Officer for the NRA Anglian Region) and his co presenter **Jane Modgewick** of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust who with others had conducted a valuable and painstaking survey of habitat quality in the valley of the River Deben (Suffolk). It is heartening that information such as this will now make a positive input into river management plans. (It will won't it?)

Jeremy Purseglove finished the two day event with a literate and amusing slide show. Author of the book 'Taming the Flood' he has undoubtedly set an example to all involved in the water industry by the way he has achieved environmental gains on river works. At Severn Trent Water Authority the confidence he created with his ideas by working closely with those on the ground led to many changes in perception: environmental improvements came to be perceived as an integral aspect of riverwork.

However, the environmental destruction which can be

done by land drainage works with the help of EEC funds was illustrated by the current Loire Valley proposals which would severely damage internationally significant wildlife habitats and ruin a lot of landscape and by proposals for wetland reclamation in Eire. One hopes that the tide has turned and is seen to have turned but one suspects that it has not.

This account is based on a conference report by Richard Copas, Landscape Architect, NRA Thames Region, with editorial additions.

SHOULD YOU READ?

- * N Lee **Environmental Impact Assessment: A Training Guide** Occasional Paper 18, 1989 2nd edition 184pp The Publications Secretary, Occasional Papers, Dept of Planning and Landscape, Univ of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL, UK
- * Editor C Wood **Environmental Impact Assessment: Five Training Case Studies** Occasional Paper 19, 1989 2nd edition 323pp. Address as above.
- * **Heritage Interpretation - The Natural and Built Environment** Selected papers given at the Second World Congress on Heritage Presentation and Interpretation held at Warwick University in 1988.
- * **Landscape 90 - the Environmental Review** Landscape Design Trust Contact: Louise Wilson, Assistant Editor (0737)223144 Landscape 90, 5a West Street, Reigate, Surrey RH2 9BL
- * Neil Sinden **In a Nutshell: A manifesto for trees and a guide to growing and protecting them.** Common Ground.
- * HH Birks, HJB Birks, PE Kaland & D Moe (Editors) **The Cultural Landscape: Past Present and Future** Cambridge University Press
- * Ed by MB Usher and DBA Thompson **Ecological Change in the Uplands** British Ecological Society special publication No 7. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford. 1988 449pp £35.
- * **A Mature Conservation Strategy for Derbyshire** 1989 £3.50 incl. from County Planning Department, Derbyshire County Council, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3AG
- * **The Cost of the Green Belt** BSL Business Strategies, Summary Report free, full report £25.00 from ARC Properties Ltd, 20 Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1LX A development company's assessment of the cost of maintaining the Metropolitan Greenbelt.
- * **Management Options for Expanded Field Margins** Countryside Commission and NCC 1989 Free brochure from Countryside Commission, John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Glos. GL50 3RA. Based on a research report commissioned by the two agencies.
- * **Conservation Headlands - A Game Plan for Wildlife** The Game Conservancy 1989 free from the Game Conservancy, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, SP6 1EF.
- * **Guidelines for the Management of Field Margins** also from the Game Conservancy 1989 free.
- * Ruth Gasson **Farmers' Response to Incentives for Land Use Change: A Review of Literature** 1988 Wye College discussion paper in agricultural policy 88/2
- * **The Effects of Agricultural Land Use on the Flora of Three Grazing Marsh Areas** NCC 1988 £5.50 incl. NCC Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA. A report which describes the various effects of different forms of ditch management.
- * Peter H Chaplin **Waterway Conservation** 1989 £9.95 Whittet Books, London.
- * **Forest Landscape Design Guidelines** The Forestry Commission 1989 £3.40 from Alice Holt Lodge, Farnham, Surrey.
- * **Forestry Commission: Land Capability for Forestry in Britain.** Forestry Commission 1989 free from the Forestry Commission, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT.
- * **Climatic Change, Rising Sea Level and the British Coast** Institute of Terrestrial Ecology 1989 £5.50 HMSO, London.
- * Jack L Naser (Editor) **Environmental Aesthetics - Theory, Research and Applications.** Cambridge Univ Press 1988
- * David Jacques and Aarend van der Horst. **The Gardens of William and Mary.** Publishers Christopher Helm 1988
- * **River Corridor Conservation: A Manual for Project Appraisal** Editor John Gardiner, National Rivers Authority, Thames Region. 250pp Approx £50
- * **A new National Forest in the Midlands - a consultation document** Published by Countryside Commission, John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham GL50 3RA
- * Vera Norwood and Janice Monk (Editors) **The Desert is no Lady: Southwestern Landscapes in Women's Writing and Art.** Yale Univ Press Newhaven and London 1987 281pp £27 hardback ISBN 0.300.03688.4
- * Jonathan Edis, David Macleod & Robert Barley **An archaeologist's guide to classification of cropmarks and soil marks.** Antiquity 63/1989 112-126
- * Stephen Essex **The effectiveness of planning intervention on woodlands in the Peak District National Park.** The East Midland Geographer Vol 11 No 69 Dec 1988
- * Anthony Lambert **President Ceausescu's highly controversial decision to raze 800 of Romania's villages** Geographical Magazine Vol 61 No 2 Feb 1989 pp16-20
- * John Chapman **The mixed blessings of Britain's ancient system of parliamentary enclosures** Vol 61 as above pp22-25
- * Frank Hams **Urban evolution, new towns, developments since the last century** Geographical Magazine November 1989 No 61 No 11
- * Douglas Botting **Wild Britain A Traveller's and Naturalist's Handbook** Ebury Press, London, 1988

SUCCESS IN URBAN FORESTRY?

This day seminar at Stourbridge adjacent to the English 'Black Country' was a punctuation between the 1st UK Conference on Urban Forestry held in Dudley in March 1988 and a second conference proposed for July 1991. At Stourbridge over 200 delegates - largely local authority and arboricultural interests - were exposed to a frustrating mixture of new initiatives and commonplace tree knowledge.

A new journal, *Urban Forests* was launched (order from 7 Acacia Court, Brocket Road, Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 8PF) and the *Forestry Commission Handbook, Urban Forestry Practice* (£11.50) was selling well. Mike Kirby (Countryside Commission) and Alistair Scott (Forestry Commission) opened the platform performances with some elaboration of the 'community forest' concept which will be launched at three sites in 1990. He recounted signs of energy, application and success based on the 1988 Conference and the current wave of public greening.

The remaining papers said less of 'success'. D. O'Callaghan undertook a breakneck review of 'Urban Forestry and New Technology' but like Derek Patch of the Forestry Commission who followed him, emphasised the 50% record for tree establishment by those professionals and public servants who are now adopting the urban forestry title. Such a failure rate in the built environment would, no doubt, lead to the re-use of the Tower Hill chopping block for architects!



Three slices of local authority experience in the afternoon began with a confessional from Mark Johnston of the Forest of London Trust who described how he discovered that environmental work in Wandsworth was a political act. Fortunately Steve Barnett of South Glamorgan reported arboricultural practice rather than political acts (!) in South Glamorgan and John Lacey (of the Black Country Development Corporation) described potentially exciting initiatives by that body and its local authority neighbours.

The term 'urban forestry' was applied to tree planting, street trees, existing woods and thickets, landscape master plans, recreation areas ... anything which was green and urban. One speaker, reporting the comments of an American guest, noted that all British forestry could well be described as 'urban' according to N. American definitions. The growing literature features generous definitions which stress the interdisciplinary nature of the urban forestry process but which feature projects which, ten years ago, might have provided fuel for 'community landscape' or 'environmental education' movements.



By promoting the fragmented scatter of urban trees and greenspace to the ranks of 'urban forests' I sense there is a great danger that over-exposure of a buzz word will lead to early bankruptcy before any public evidence of new urban forests is visible (10-15 years?). Like mountains and seas, forests are vast features, carrying a sense of mystery, escape, fear and nature's grandeur. If 'urban forests' are merely the professional packaging of arcadian streetscape and left over plots, together with the slowly evolving planting of an urban fringe, the potential users are unlikely to be convinced.

Brian Goodey

DESCRIBING THE LANDSCAPE OF AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONBs)

For our membership overseas, AONBs are designated rural landscapes which are afforded some protection from development. Though some are relatively wild agriculturally marginal landscapes many are fully farmed. In which case they may have an unspoiled quality or represent a cherished spread of national heritage. Some areas are 'well', though often inaccurately imaged by the public: others conjure up no image. The Cotswolds are perhaps an example of the former while Arnside and Silverdale or the Howardian Hills may represent the latter.

To establish them in the public consciousness, one by one they are being described (that at least is the recently declared intention). The designating agency the Countryside Commission also wishes to associate itself with each AONB and put up some form of descriptive statement which if necessary it might fall back to should it need to protect an area in a public inquiry.

Given these two principle aims, the question is how should they be described? in dry unemotional fashion which becomes a planner or with subjectivity and emotion? By insiders who have a long developed relationship with the land they know? or by outsiders, expert in what constitutes landscape, who can both analyse and empathise and perhaps contribute something of the poetic response that could be said to distinguish landscapes from mere tracts of topographically variable land use offering views of varying content and quality.

It can be argued that one can only defend what is scientifically quantified and objectively described. Yet the most passionate defence of landscapes is found in what people feel about them as places, often as expressed for them by others of greater genius, writers, artists, poets and photographers who have been able to communicate the genius of the place: Dedham Vale, Egdon Heath the English Lakes come immediately to mind. This idea has already found public acceptance.

Look at it from the other side, what does the AONB booklet seek to achieve? An objective description so that people know why the designating agency think it an outstandingly beautiful area? What kind of objective writing or illustrative form can do this? What depth of analysis should such a description be based on? How much of this should be revealed to the reader? Is the reader to be taken into the experts' confidence and who is he/she anyway?

Or from another angle, what is it that brings out people who have an awareness of landscape and what do they hope they will gain from their passage through it?

I have no survey data, but suggest that people who might defend a landscape area may look for an experience that makes the experiences of the week seem less important. They may look for a feeling of calm and at the same time of exhilaration. They may look for the kind of remoteness that puts them into a more personal relationship with the world, with nature and even with the universe. They look for places to explore and perhaps to understand. They look for linkages with their past, their rural national history as far as they are aware of it. More pointedly they look for the close-to-nature experiences (or unfulfilled longings) of their childhood. More prosaically we are told, they look for nature and beauty as it has been portrayed to them on television natural history programmes.

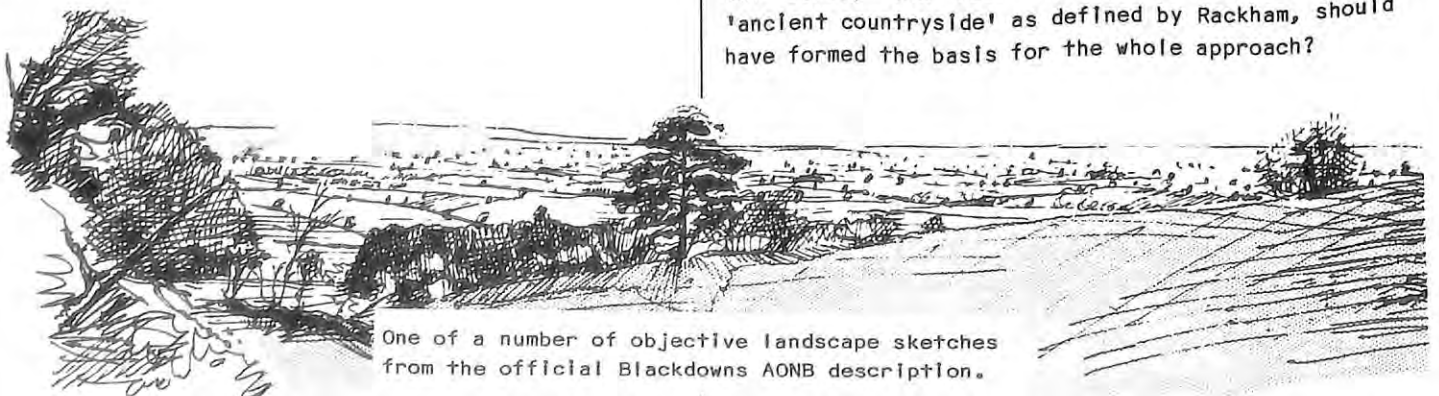
If they should find or read of the presence of these fulfilling elements they will begin to cherish and seek to defend the area which offers them. And it seems to me that the best elements of experience are the magical fusion of 'landscape' detail and the general view which contribute to what I have outlined above.

This is obviously a complex and personal subject and the Countryside Commission do well to start a debate by putting up descriptions such as that of the Blackdown Hills. We maybe have to ask ourselves now whether their preferred style and format succeeds in analysis, objective description, and 'magical evocation' and whether this style of description can achieve their ends. More constructively what kind of document can do this?

THE BLACKDOWN HILLS LANDSCAPE

Latest in the Countryside Commission's 'AONB' appraisal series (CCP 258 "The Blackdown Hills Landscape", Cobham Resource Consultants) is in an attractive format, with plenty of colour. But the style is bland and objective and lacks that spark which ignites curiosity. Geology is briefly mapped, and enclosure history mentioned, and there is a very interesting section on perceived landscapes and folklore.

But surely the fact that this is an area of 'ancient countryside' as defined by Rackham, should have formed the basis for the whole approach?



One of a number of objective landscape sketches from the official Blackdowns AONB description.

We are told, rightly, that the ridge-top commons were enclosed late into square fields, but wrongly that everything else is more or less 13th century 'enclosure of open field'. Is there evidence for the open field? - certainly not in the Hoskins quoted. A few examples of real enclosure pattern maps, even an airphoto, would have helped - there are photos of real paintings but not a single map of a real place!

It is stated that the Commission recognises that 'natural beauty' includes flora and fauna, but we are given little basic data on these aspects. Are they not part of the landscape? And how much ancient vegetation survives on the commons and in the valleys? What sorts of grassland on the Culm measures did the Somerset Trust find being decimated? Are any of them protected? What are the hedges like? How do the woodland stand-types relate to the soils? How old are the dispersed farms? What is the source of the pressure for farm change? And how does the writer manage to refer to Rackham's 'History of the Countryside' and simultaneously ignore the valuable lessons that it offers.

Certainly this publication is worth a read and it may well have a place with the Commission's identified public whoever they may be. For my part I feel I learned more about the Blackdowns in half an hour with the old 1800 OS map! To me the general approach raises some very difficult points. Is it only topography that justifies designation? Is there any point in designation if nothing can then be done to stop the remorseless piecemeal destruction of ancient features not subject to planning control? Would an ESA be more use? Or Section 39 Management Agreements?

In the end one is left with a feeling of frustration that here was a golden opportunity missed to explain the Blackdowns in historical-ecology terms and add a layer of interest and excitement to the purely visual. At the same time to pose some awkward questions about landscape destruction. Are we looking to the time when a landscape historian or ecologist will be involved in preparing one of this series?

Phil Colbourne

NEW FOREST DESCRIPTIONS: POETRY v PROSE

The following descriptions are of roughly the same areas and landscapes in the Hampshire New Forest, England: the first was written by a geographer landscape architect and forms part of the official description of the Forest's landscape; the other is written by a writer who loves landscape and

understands his relationship to it but is not part of that profession normally called on to make official descriptions.

"The plain of Beaulieu Heath in the south is different again. Here the ground is flat and gives no great sense of elevation. But the area is large and the continuous tracts of heather and gorse which cover most of it give a feeling of extent..."

"Each heathland scene has its own special qualities but they share certain characteristics. The valley bogs are a feature of all these areas, but are most extensive in the southern part. They have a distinctive vegetation, with purple moor grass, sedge and sphagnum moss dominating, depending upon the drainage conditions, and often with a central area, near the stream, with species such as bog myrtle, reed and other marsh species. Alder or willow trees usually mark the line of the water course. This characteristic vegetation is easily distinguished from the surrounding heathland and gives warning of the wet conditions underfoot."

From The New Forest Landscape by Landscape Consultants; published by the Countryside Commission as CCP220

Alternatively by a professional writer and in a different idiom....

"It was a hot summer day. A few puffs of cloud floated lazily across the blue sky before a light north-easterly wind. Young foals lay collapsed in the heat on the grass by their mothers. There were no people around and a great silence, an all-pervading, lethargic hush hung over the heath, broken only by the occasional cries of the birds. The track took us into a subtle, elusive landscape of horizontal planes - the belts of gorse scrub, the low lines of ridges undulating gently away one behind the other, the dark wall of conifers (sequoias, good heavens) on the skyline, wobbling in the heat haze - strata of landscape piled one on top of the other and topped by a broad band of sky. Such a profoundly recumbent terrain induced a sense of space and repose, and an impression of lifelessness.

But when I turned the binoculars on this vast and empty plain, life suddenly jumped out at me from the middle distance: a small group of ponies grazing stilly as if frozen in a kind of Victorian pastoral woodcut, two fallow deer blundering about in a thick gorse copse, a tall pillar of gyrating mayflies suspended above a swampy patch in a valley bottom, a girl with long flaxen hair on a horse ambling down a shallow gulch until the landscape swallowed her up at the valley bend. We ventured into the woods in a state of heightened curiosity".

From Wild Britain writer Douglas Botting published by Ebury Press 1988.

OTHER JOURNALS

ARBORICULTURAL JOURNAL 13(4) November 1989

CD Pigott **Estimation of the age of lime trees (Tilia spp) in parklands from stem diameter and ring counts.** 289-302

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K Peter Lawrenz **Selected arboreta, parks and tree collections in Switzerland** 321-332

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Features 14 articles on cemeteries and graveyards.

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Issue devoted to the use of computers to support landscape architecture, includes applications in design, computer graphics, electronic distance measurement as a basis for CAD use, digital cartography in landscape planning, video imaging, laser videodisc technology.

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PAYSAGE & AMENAGEMENT in PAYSAGE ACTUALITES No 120 September 1989

Editorial **The garden as an expression of society** Raymond Chau

Isabelle Auricoste **The useful, the pleasing and the revolution** (Pre and post revolutionary landscape and design tastes) 114-118

IFPRA The International Federation of Park and Recreation Administration **What 12 different countries see as the most important issues affecting them.** 119....The briefly described entries name issues which vary between salt on roads to landscape and soil conservation to finding the right soil for town trees. 119-143

PAYSAGE & AMENAGEMENT in PAYSAGE ACTUALITES No 121 October 1989

Y Luginbuhl **The revolutionary landscape plan** (The new landscapes envisaged at the time of the French Revolution)

J Sgard **The restyling of derelict industrial land in Lorraine - a landscape architect's approach** 38-42

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Eric Compan **Fountains** 50-53

ROMANIAN VILLAGE LANDSCAPES SAVED

The second issue of LR Extra carried a request for information about the brutal transformation of the traditional rural landscape. Since then everything has happened in Eastern Europe; President Ceaucescu and his wife were executed yesterday and 70,000 people may have died.

The first three reforming ordinances announced today, 27th December, were the suppression of the Securitate, the re-instatement of freedom to worship, and the lifting of those 'laws' which had legitimised the razing of village landscapes.

In circumstances of great tragedy, hope and considerable uncertainty we may scientifically note the importance accorded to familiar landscapes and places. We can also register our heartfelt good wishes to the Romanian people at a very difficult time.

RSA FUTURE COUNTRYSIDE PROGRAMME: SEMINAR ONE

This, the first of six specialised seminars (to supplement a series of regional seminars) organised by the Royal Society of Arts on the 'Future of the Countryside', took place at the London School of Economics on 27th September 1989, under the title 'Partnerships and Pathways'. Representatives from many different groups were invited to discuss first their respective visions of the countryside in the next century, and then the means by which these might be achieved, having identified the main obstacles to such achievement.

Quite properly each lobby urged its own case, though some, such as the Landscape Institute, were regrettably not there to do so, and inevitably the means took precedence over the ends, so we found ourselves reciting the difficulties of implementing policies without having really established what we wanted them to be. One has attended many seminars in which vision has not been matched by realism. Here the balance went the other way. 'Sustainability' emerged as the watchword, and the visual image remained under wraps.

To say that the mixture still looks more like a bowl of ingredients than a cake is not to denigrate the efforts of the RSA which is doing an important job, but there is still a long way to go before the final conference next May, and during that time those of us who are concerned with landscape may find it difficult to make ourselves heard even if we know what we want the future countryside to look like. **But maybe we don't.**

Jay Appleton

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

The following extract from a longer report entitled **People, Nature and Landscape - a Research Review**, Carys Swanick for LRG, 1989 (funded by the ESRC) describes the present 'state of play' within Landscape Assessment. It should be read with the substantial review of landscape assessment from the same source which was issued by the Countryside Commission as CCD25.

"[Landscape assessment] is a notoriously difficult subject to tackle, as will be apparent from the divergent theories on the philosophical base [discussed earlier]. The difficulties are demonstrated by the lack of any clear direction to emerge from the mass of academic research and practical studies which have accumulated over the last thirty years.

Much of this work has been carried out in the UK and the USA and it is clear that developments have been different on both sides of the Atlantic. In the USA there appears to have been a more general acceptance of the need to deal seriously with assessment of landscape (or the 'visual resource' as it is often described in American papers) as an important input to many aspects of policy and decision making. More attention has been given to the separate processes of description and inventory, of classification and of evaluation, and specific and carefully prescribed methods of assessment have been developed and adopted by the main government agencies concerned with land use and landscape management.

By contrast, the search in the UK for a commonly accepted method of assessment, particularly in the 1970's when the first County Structure Plans were in preparation, has failed to produce any consensus. The emphasis on supposedly objective, quantitative approaches, the use of complex statistical methods, the desire to reduce the complexities and emotions of landscape to a dispassionate, scientific subject, and the jargon which has sometimes been used, have all combined to create considerable disillusionment with such approaches. This disillusionment led, for a period at least, to something of a vacuum, demonstrated by a reluctance to tackle the visual and emotional aspects of landscape, as opposed to the more specific and often more easily dealt with aspects of land use and management, such as agriculture, recreation and nature conservation. However, there are signs that in the 1980's the tide is turning and there is again growing interest in finding acceptable, structured approaches to landscape assessment.

On both sides of the Atlantic there continues to be debate about the extent to which value judgements should be based on professional views or on public preference. There is certainly no consensus as yet,

in either the UK or the USA about the relative merits of attempting to take account of the preferences of the general public or about the best way to do this.

One view which is currently emerging is that there may be a need to consider the public as 'consumers' of landscape, introducing the idea of market segmentation in recognition of the fact that different groups of people have different tastes and preferences. On this basis landscape professionals can clearly take the lead in identifying the 'product' i.e. the different types of landscape which exist and the characteristics which distinguish them, but public preference must be at least one of the factors which influence the value placed on different landscapes. However in the final analysis public preference is only one aspect of value albeit a very important one. It is especially important in considering local landscapes and the way they are valued by 'local people, an area which is becoming increasingly important, as evidenced by the flourishing activities of organisations such as Common Ground.

At other than the local level a whole range of factors have a bearing on the values attached to landscapes. Society as a whole may place a particular value on one type of landscape at a certain point in time. This societal or cultural view may differ from the the public preferences of, for example, the local people, but will reflect other factors such as assessment of rarity, uniqueness, special cultural associations, special value for recreation, historical importance, and so on. It is also clear that these visual and cultural values in landscape have to be considered in parallel with ecological values and functional values. The whole question of values in landscape is therefore extremely complex and the question of public preference is but one aspect of this complexity.

What appears to be needed for the future is an open and flexible approach to landscape assessment which recognises the distinction between the separate processes of description/inventory, classification and evaluation, and which accepts that there is no single value system. All possible sources of information about the way a landscape is perceived and valued needs to be used, including art, literature, guide books, photographs and so on. Much more information is needed about preference for different types of landscape and about the attitudes of different groups of people, to provide an input into assessments. Above all, assessment methods must be able to respond to and represent whatever it is that gives any landscape its special 'sense of place' and to address the question of why this is important and to whom. A number of current practical studies are attempting to achieve such a balanced approach."

ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE LANDSCAPE CONFERENCE

Landscape poses a problem for the anthropologist in many ways similar to that posed by the notion of culture: it is everywhere present, is of great and obvious significance, but what, after all, is it? For the anthropologist the answer lies not so much in the formulation of abstract and highly generalised propositions, but in the detailed work of ethnography and ethnographic interpretation.

On the one hand, landscape is a new domain of inquiry for anthropology. On the other hand, it is as old as the tradition of the modern ethnography itself (ca. 1920's). Landscape has always had a place in the modern ethnography. But its place has been mostly as a 'background' onto which the culture of the people or region under study was 'foreground'. In other disciplines, particularly art history, and more recently social geography, landscape has been more in the foreground of empirical analysis and interpretation. What has recently become apparent in these disciplines is that the separation of culture from landscape is a most tenuous one.

A recent multi-disciplinary conference on the 'anthropology of the landscape' was convened in order to begin to rectify this bias within anthropology and explore the areas of common understanding between anthropologists, social geographers and art historians. The conference took place on the 23-24 June 1989 and was held at the London School of Economics. A total of 13 papers were presented (10 from anthropologists, 2 from social geographers and a paper from an art historian). There was a total of 30 people present, inclusive of those giving papers. A broad ethnographic map was covered and included papers based on research among Australian Aborigines, peoples from Amazonia, Madagascar, Israel, India, Mongolia, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea as well as papers dealing with aspects of English and French landscapes. The conference produced a great deal of vigorous and lively discussion and by all accounts of such events was an important success in achieving its aims. It is hoped that this is the beginning of fruitful collaborative relations between anthropologists and others more conventionally associated with the study of landscape.

Most of the papers from the conference are planned to appear in an edited volume published by Cambridge University Press. The volume will include a sustaining introduction which outlines a number of theoretical and substantive issues involved in the anthropological study of landscape, and a drawing together of the arguments presented in each of the papers. The volume will hopefully be

available by 1991. Any further information about the above can be obtained from: Dr Eric Hirsch, c/o CRIC, Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH.

CRIC, Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH.

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

9-12 January 1990 **Planting and the Upkeep of Old Gardens - short course.** The course will include sessions on the history of planting design and the garden flora, the conservation of garden plants, planning and upkeep of gardens, maintenance techniques and renewal of planting schemes. See IoAAS address as shown in Trees and Woodlands (below)

11 January **Environmental Assessment: How well is it working?** Venue: Architecture and Planning Building, University of Manchester.

Evenings 11 January, 1 February, 1 March, 29 March, Field Outings 3 March, 31 March 7 April **Landscape History in Warwickshire** Contact: Della Hooke at School of Geography, The University of Birmingham, P O Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT Tel 021 414

23 January **Street Design** Exhibition, The Crest Hotel, Liverpool. Contact: Mary Curtis, Exhibitions, Events & Conferences PO Box 13, Hereford House, Bridle Path, Croydon CR9 4NL Tel 01 680 4200

23-25 January **Enterprise 3 - Exhibition and Conference on European and UK Urban Regeneration** The Barbican Centre, London Contact: Tricia Neill, World Trade Promotions, 19-21 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1NF Tel 01 642 7688

23-25 January **River Basin Management and Introduction to RBM-DOGS**, Course, Hydraulics Research, Wallingford, Oxfordshire Contact: Fiona Farnsworth, Hydraulics Research Ltd, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 8BA Tel 0491 35381

14-16 February **Trees and Woodlands in the Landscape** at the Centre for the Conservation of Historic Parks and Gardens within the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies at York. Contact: The Secretary of IoAAS, University of York, The King's Manor, York YO1 2EP Telephone 0904 433966

13-17 March **Making Cities Livable** 7th International Conference, Carmel, USA Contact Suzanne Crowhurst-Lennard, Centre for Urban Well-Being, PO Box 7586, Carmel, California 93921 USA. Tel 408 626-9080

30 March-2 April **Workshop: Environmental Perception in North America** BAAS Conference Details from Bob Lawson Peebles, School of English & America Studies, Queens Building, The Queens Drive, Exeter EX4 4QH 0392 263263

7 April **Managing the Living Churchyard** at Winterbourne in Birmingham. Enrol with The School of Continuing Studies, University of Birmingham, PO Box 363 Birmingham B15 2TT Tel: 021 4145606

10 April **Landscape Management** Conference, University of Manchester Department of Planning and Landscape Contact: The Landscape Secretary, University of Manchester, School of Landscape, Manchester M13 9PL Tel:061 275 6890

10-13 April **First European Conference on Geographical Information Systems, EGIS'90** Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Contact: Geoplan, Mieke Elekan/Annelies van de Beld, Weteringschans 12, 1017 SG Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Telephone 31-20-241433/247599.

19-22 April **The Role of Horticulture in Human Well-Being and Social Development: Setting the Agenda.** Arlington, Virginia, USA Contact: Diane Relf, Associate Professor, Department of Horticulture, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061 Tel: (703) 231-6254

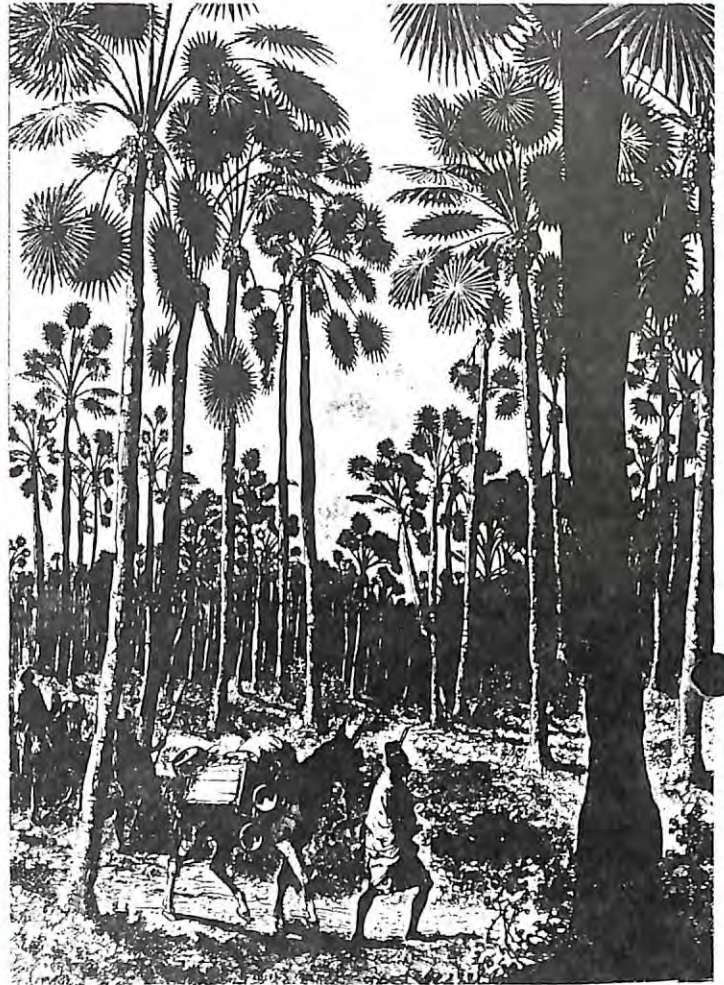
15 May **A Brief for the Countryside in the 21st Century** Future Countyside Conference, Regents's College, Inner Circle, Regent's Park, London NW1 4NS Contact Ben Horsbrugh at the RSA 01 930 5115

14-16 May **Protecting the Rural Heritage: Landscapes** Contact: The Secretary, IoAAS, University of York, The King's Manor, York YO1 2EP Tel 0904 433966

17-18 May **Protecting the Rural Heritage: Development Control** Contact: The Secretary, IoAAS, The King's Manor, York YO1 2EP

COUNTY CLARE - glimpses of a holiday landscape.

Black peaty waters of Shannon, reeds, August. Visiting fishermen with waders and tackle have gone, leaving the river to urchins with spinners, to old men with poetical tales and tobacco tins of gorgeous flies, and to the great kerflopping uncatchable salmon. Along the banks lovers stroll out from Limerick. There are friendly men with friendly dogs, people ill-clad in city clothes and smoking cigarettes. Magnificent chestnut horses gallop freely in a field. Willows turn the white sides of their leaves to the wind. Blackberries are large, luscious and sweet. And it rains.



The above is one of three foreign landscapes in this issue which come from 'The Peoples of the World' published by Cassell & Co Ltd 1900.

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES

New rates for membership of LRG are:

Individuals within the EEC	£20.00
Individuals not in the EEC	24.00
Corporate UK and Eire	42.00
Corporate 'Overseas'	47.00

Those associated with LRG will be interested to hear that we now have 614 members - a healthy increase over numbers two years ago.

This newsletter was prepared and edited by R A and R N Young. It is published by The Landscape Research Group Ltd, Leuric, North Road, South Kilworth, near Lutterworth, Leicestershire.

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