



landscape research

extra →

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH EXTRA
No 6 SUMMER 1990

LANDSCAPE IN FERNANDO PO

Your editor (RNY) recently returned from this volcanic equatorial island, now called Bioko in Equatorial Guinea. It was a fascinating experience of a hugely fertile landscape - parts in the south have never been explored and have the highest rainfall in the world - untouched rainforest and 60 degree slopes containing calderas and crater lakes. Lower parts are occupied by cocoa plantations most of which are abandoned and becoming more overgrown as the years go by.

Landscape highlights for me were the views across palm rich secondary forest over the bell towers of white spanish churches to the deep blue sea a thousand feet below and on to the coast of Africa (Cameroun); the reassuringly orchard quality of the cocoa groves; their large leaves copper pink and vulnerable when they first break; a fairy glade effect - enter Titania! when the trees are sprayed chalky blue with bordeaux mixture (the leaf litter also ends up blue!) the view through the thin trunks of cocoa to what at first seems to be a long building but materialises as the huge buttressing roots of a soaring rainforest tree; the hugeness (even compared with places in S America) of the trees - straight up for 170feet then branching - enough to overtop and shade almost any church tower in Norfolk where church towers are big; the brilliance of orange flowering trees growing wild, and the startling redness of wild poinsettias.

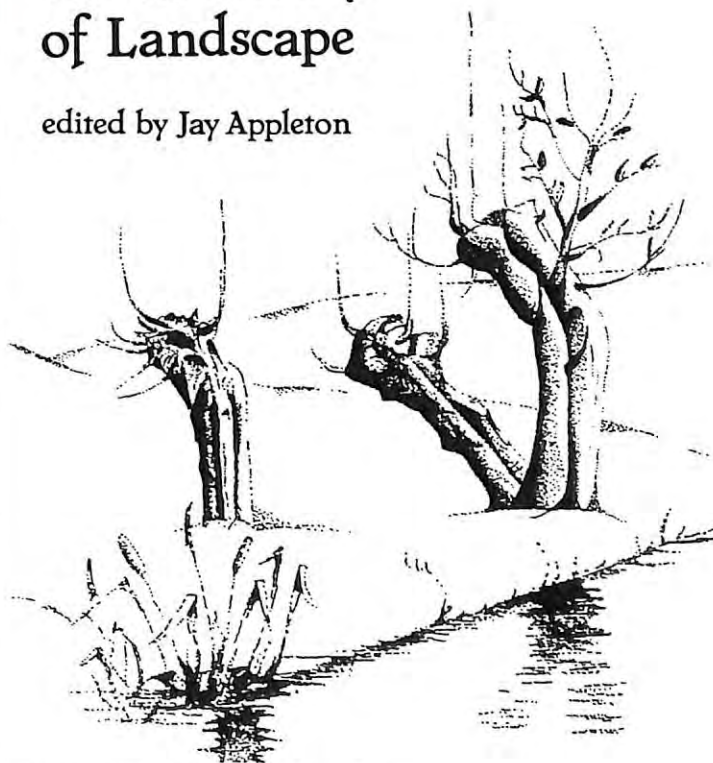
And in Malabo, once Santa Isabel, the palms 100 feet high in the plaza, their tops crowded by raucous bats; the tiled benches with turn of the century scenes of native life; the faded and dilapidated condition of the town and its extraordinary Spanish Colonial building style like pictures of New Orleans; the intricately painted exterior wall tiles and polished decorative charm of the Camerounian Embassy; watching a man walk straight up a forty foot palm using a wooden loop; how he used a sharp felling axe from his belt to trim the palms one by one along an unpaved avenue; lightning and the flare glow of Nigerian offshore

oil fields seen from the Lebanese port restaurant as night fell and warm little waves slopped at the rusted jetty.

On the human side, the ordinary people were warm, courteous, uninquisitive, smiling, poor in a way that we no longer understand and worth working for.

The Aesthetics of Landscape

edited by Jay Appleton



THE AESTHETICS OF LANDSCAPE
- papers edited by Jay Appleton

An unexpected cache of this nicely bound A5 typeset conference proceedings of 93 pages has just been located, pleasingly matured and in perfect condition in Professor Penning Rowsell's wine cellar. The topic does not date and it was a vintage conference. Help yourself to one copy at £2.50 + 50p for p&p or a class set of 10 for £22.50 plus suitable postage. Available from John Netson, Leiric North Road, South Kilworth, Nr Lutterworth, Leicestershire LE17 6DU, UK

THE VERNACULAR GARDEN: A SYMPOSIUM IN WASHINGTON DC

Hugh Prince spent a week, 15-22 May, in Washington DC attending and speaking at this Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks organised by its **Director of Studies, Professor John Dixon Hunt**. The Symposium was attended by 200 garden historians, social scientists, museum curators and practising landscape designers mainly from the United States but included a few participants from Canada, Britain, France and Germany.

Pierce Lewis (Pennsylvania State University) opened the Symposium with a discussion of the making of landscape tastes focusing on the role of popular magazines, such as **Southern Living** in raising regional consciousness and forming popular tastes in gardening. Talks on vernacular gardens in ancient Rome and the assimilation of vineyards and vegetable gardens into princely gardens in sixteenth-century Rome were followed by discussions of town gardens in eighteenth-century England by **Todd Gowan** (who has also contributed to the eighteenth-section of the exhibition "London's Pride" currently showing at the Museum of London - well worth a visit); and on suburban gardens in nineteenth-century London by **Hugh Prince**.

A later session of the Symposium discussed the transfer of vernacular elements from one culture to another. **Richard Westmacott** (whose publication *New Agricultural Landscapes* aroused controversy a few years ago and who is now at the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia) examined African traits in small gardens in the American South. **Frances Butler (University of California, Davis)** looked at Portuguese-style features in small private gardens in different regions in North America. **Michael Conan (School of Architecture, Paris-Conflans)** discussed the relations of a sub-culture of market gardeners to their marsh gardens and to the dominant culture of the citizens of Amiens. The practices of the hortillons changed very slowly over a span of six centuries until suddenly local producers were wiped out by competition from the Netherlands. The gardens have since been converted into a new type of vernacular garden - private leisure gardens close to the city centre.

The most challenging and thought provoking paper of the symposium was that of **Bernard Lassus (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, at present redesigning the Tuileries Gardens)** who discussed the external decoration and making of landscapes around working-class houses near Bethune and on a housing estate in a Parisian suburb. It offered a most profound analysis of the iconography of contemporary landscapes, interpreting visual images in the light of conversations with the people who had created them.

J B Jackson (founder of *Landscape* magazine) drew the symposium to a close by presenting a wide ranging historical survey of vernacular gardening.



The discussions generated a great deal of curiosity about gardens as expressions of popular culture. Many questions were raised about cultural history and geographical change, especially about the making of ordinary landscapes. Members of leading American architectural and planning practices voiced an interest in taking courses in cultural and historical geography. The appearance of John Stilgoe's **Common Landscapes of America** and his recent **Borderlands** and the new volume edited by Michael Conzen on **The Making of the American Landscape** have aroused a fresh thirst for landscape studies.

Hugh Prince

ACADEMIC SPONSOR REQUIRED

Landscape Research Group in cooperation with Paysage et Aménagement are proposing a major European conference at Blois in Autumn 1992. The theme will be:-

"Policies for managing the diversity of European regional landscape identities in the face of wider pan-European pressures."

Paysage et Aménagement will be largely responsible for the domestic organisation. Landscape Research Group will undertake much of the early work, especially in seeking finance and are looking to cooperate with a British Institution of higher education. This partner would provide some time and expertise in the initial stages of organisation and would help seek financial sponsorship. The connection with a major European conference may be sufficient reward. Please contact David Coleman, chairman of LRG at 49 Crediton Hill, London NW6 1HS if you are able to help us.

**LONDON'S PRIDE: Museum of London,
1 May - 12 August 1990**

My plant guide tells me that London Pride is 'intermediate between the parents' and this may serve as an apt judgement on the large, but fragmented, exhibition mounted at the Museum of London this past Summer.

The 'parents' of the exhibition seemed to be the Museum itself, the landscape profession, the curatorial and presentation skills of the staff, and the sponsors, Guardian Royal Exchange Properties. Consideration could be given to the role of each in the presentation for public view.

I have always had a love/hate relationship with the Museum of London, enjoying the portrayal of a city, but angry that a building dating from the same period as the Paris Pompidou, should be secreted behind the evolving walls of the Barbican, trapped in one of London's most alienating design phases.

Access is still far from easy and the entrance plaza cries out for design attention, but one feature of 'London's Pride' is that it has allowed re-design of the Museum's interior courtyard, to re-emerge as a permanent 'living history of the nursery trade from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century'. This note is therefore not just a comment on an exhibition past, but an invitation to view the living history of the garden court in future seasons.

The temporary exhibition's focus on London's gardens was underlit throughout and did not, I felt, reflect current best practice in exhibition presentation. There are inherent problems in 'encasing' and 'hanging' gardens as artefacts. Pictures with little explanation or interpretation tell so little of the garden story and there was no mid information point between the entrance folder and a glossy, detailed text.

Spaces in historic sequence featured paintings, portraits, equipment and catalogues which charted the evolution of London gardens and estates, introducing parks and public landscapes in the concluding periods. High points for me were the Sunderland Polytechnic models, including that of Evelyn's Deptford garden; evidence of Cochran's early 19th century plant (not JCB) hire service, and a group of late 19th century suburban garden views. A video placed some illustrations in better context, but as 'The Battle for a Green London' its purpose and content hinted at issues and areas neglected in the display.

A 20th century feature was detached from the main sequence and seemed to reflect rather different intentions, neglecting influences on garden design

and material supply in favour of loans from London Transport's Metroland. Here there was an opportunity to connect with the landscape of today's London, the rhythm of train-view backyards, the turmoil of ideas rather than implementation in public design, and even the surprises of the Barbican.

Provided that the erratic sequence of signs were followed, the visitor met the new courtyard midway through the exhibition sequence. The Colson Stone Partnership scheme for the limited site should find a place in key London landscape lists in future years. With the exhibition came a rather too dense attempt to signal garden styles as well as the activities of twenty nurseries and plant suppliers from the medieval to Carter's of the present day. Unfortunately, for what is currently part of an exhibition and museum interpretation, the value of John Harvey's research was not brought to the fore. Differentiation between periods which could have been achieved through feature introductions and labels was not effective and whilst the sequence is a glowing Summer experience, stronger interpretation will be required to ensure the site's purpose in future years. A pamphlet of The Nursery Garden at £1.25 is a good value purchase.

As with most feature exhibitions these days, the Museum shop is dominated by 'add on' purchase opportunities themed to the exhibition; some represent more careful design than elements of the exhibition itself.

In his introduction to the book from, though not 'of', the exhibition, Sir Roy Strong reminds us that it is a decade since 'The Garden' exhibition at the V & A. My memories of that presentation suggest that whilst knowledge of garden history has increased considerably, our ability to communicate the subject has moved little. London's Pride, the book (£25.00 hardbound, £12.95 paperback) uses the majority of illustrations from the exhibition, but provides a professional though accessible text by period and will satisfy those interested in garden landscapes who were unable to see the exhibition.

As knowledge and public interest quicken with regard to garden history, there needs to be a conference discussion on the interpretation and presentation of the subject so that the next decade can reflect a professional willingness to explore, rather than just present, the garden in a museum context.

Brian Goodey

SHOULD YOU READ?

- * Deborah Bright **Of Mother Nature and Marlboro Men: An Inquiry into the Cultural Meanings of Landscape Photography** in *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, Richard Bolton (Ed) MIT Press 1989 124-142
- * Simon Pugh (Ed) **Reading landscape: country-city-capital** Manchester University Press, 1990 To be reviewed in *Landscape Research*
- * Jacqueline Burgess **The production and consumption of environmental meanings in the mass media; a research agenda for the 1990s** *Trans of the Inst of British Geographers* Vol 15/2 1990 139-161
- * David Barker & David Miller **Hurricane Gilbert: anthropomorphising a natural disaster** *Area* Vol 22/2 1990 107-116
- * Richard G Kenworthy **Published records of Italianate gardens in America** *J of Garden History* 10(1) 1990 10-71
- * Lawrence G Lise **Chinese Architecture, Palaces and Imperial Gardens** *Architectural Design* 59(11-12) 1989 XVI-XXX
- * John Haldane **Architecture, Philosophy and the Public World** *British Journal of Aesthetics* 30(3) 1990 203-217
- * John Corner & Sylvia Harvey **Heritage in Britain: Designer-History and the Popular Imagination** *Ten* 8 No 36 1990 14-21
- * Jeremy Seabrook **The Meanings of Environment** *Ten* 8 No 36 1990 22-41
- * John RR Christies **Ideology and Representation in Eighteenth Century Natural History** *Oxford Art Journal* 13(1) 1990 3-11
- * **Report of the National Parks 40th Anniversary Conference** December 1989 CCD57 £10.00 from the Countryside Commission
- * **The North Pennines AONB: Issues and priorities** A statement by the Countryside Commission CCP289 Free ISBN 086170.242.5
- * **Planning and Management of the Coastal Heritage** Conference Proceedings £7.50 John Houston Coast Management Officer, Sefton Borough Council, Merseyside L37 6PQ
- * **Views of American Landscapes** Edited by Mick Gidley and Robert Lawson Peebles, Camb Univ Press ISBN 0.521.36435.3 1990 £27.50
- * Robert Lawson Peebles **Landscape and Written Expression in Revolutionary America - the world turned upside down** Camb Univ Press 1990 £37.50 ISBN 0.521.34647.9
- * Jacklyn Johnston **Nature areas for city people** The London Ecology Unit London NW1 7JR 1990 120pp
- * Karl F Nordstrom **The concept of intrinsic value and depositional coastal landforms** *The Geographical Review* 80/1 1990 68-81

- * **Beyond Green Belts** Regional Studies Association, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London WC1N 3ES Tel 071 242 0363 £9.95 1990
- * Editor Catherine Paice **Farmland Market** A Farmer Weekly Publication In assoc with the Royal Inst of Chartered Surveyors (twice yearly periodical)
- * Carys Swanwick **The Sound of Silence (A consideration of wilderness)** in *Opinion* p3 Countryside Commission News No 42 Mar/Apr 1990
- * Editor Michael P Conzen **The Making of the American Landscape** Unwin Hyman, Boston 1990 ISBN 0 049 17010.4
- * JWR Whitehand **Makers of the residential landscape: conflict and change in outer London** *Trans Inst Brit Geog* 15/1 1990 87-101
- * Dana Thomas **The edge of the city** *Trans Inst Brit Geogr* 15/2 1990 131-138
- * Ph Pelletier **Paysage sans paysans - le cas du Japon** *Annales de Geographie* Vol 553 1990 305-327
- * Jeffrey SP Hopkins **West Edmonton Hall: Landscape of Myths and Elsewhere** *The Canadian Geographer* Vol 34/1 1990 2-17
- * **Parkland design and management** Introduction by Stephen Daniels, papers by Susanne Seymour, George Revill, Susan Ford, Tim Warner, Hilary A Taylor, PT Wheeler, *The East Midland Geographer* 12/1 & 2 1989
- * John R Stilgoe **Borderland origins of the American suburb 1820-1939** ISBN 0 300 04257 4 (quoted by Hugh Prince)
- * Alfred Kazin **A writers America landscape in literature** New York Alfred A Knopf 1988 ISBN 0 394 57142 8
- * **Topological transformations underground maps** [-and our perception of the geography of cities] *Geographical Magazine* July 1990
- * **People, trees and woods** Proceedings of the 1989 Countryside Recreation Conference, organised by CRRAG £10 from Janet Hickling, School for Advanced Urban Studies, Rodney Lodge, Grange Road, Bristol, BSB 4EA Tel 0272 741117
- * Stan Davies & Stuart Housden **Can conflict become co-operation** from RSPB "Birds Magazine" Summer 1990

WHO SEES LANDSCAPE HOW - A USEFUL REFERENCE

Regarding the feature 'Landscape experience' a useful discussion of some observer related issues can be found in 'The beholding eye - Ten versions of the same scene' by D W Meinig in the book 'The Interpretation of ordinary landscapes' Editor D W Meinig, Oxford University Press 1979.

OTHER JOURNALS (see also pp 9-10)

- LANDSKAB 8.1989
- Annemarie Lund **Landscape and sculpture** 169-175
- Gertrud Kobke Sutton **Land art, wilderness hedge art and cult** 176-189
- Bogostale **Earthworks and beyond, sitings, site + sculpture, Landskabelig kunst** (no english summary) 190-191

A BRIEF FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

"Professor proclaims the end of British rural life" reads a headline in **The Times** reporting "A Vision" presented by Howard Newby, Chairman of the Economic and Social Research Council, to a conference on the future countryside at the Royal Society of Arts on 4th July. If rural life is at an end, what future, it may be asked, has the countryside? It is absurd to imagine that life itself is extinct: many rural areas are teeming with people. But the conference organizers deliberately did not identify agriculture as a separate topic on the programme, nor did anyone at the meeting speak of a peasantry seething with discontent against rapacious landlords, miserly employers or city moneylenders.

A tacit assumption shared by many participants was that villagers of all classes, natives and newcomers alike, are no less eager than townspeople to acquire the comforts of a modern home and enjoy the benefits of modern labour-saving machines. The affluent aspire to the special amenities of country living advertised to 54,000 readers of **Country Life** and 74,000 readers of **The Countryman**. Most of these people believe the countryside is alive and well and do not regard it as terminally ill. They think most problems in rural areas are little local difficulties.

Howard Newby pointed to a widespread social divide. Wealth has been accumulated most rapidly by those who have moved to the countryside since 1945. Those who have lived in villages all their lives are disadvantaged not only by the decline of agriculture and a contraction in other ways of wresting a living from the land, but also by a planning system that imposes restrictions on building and raises the cost of housing beyond the means of low-paid workers. The most traditional villages are the least competitive.

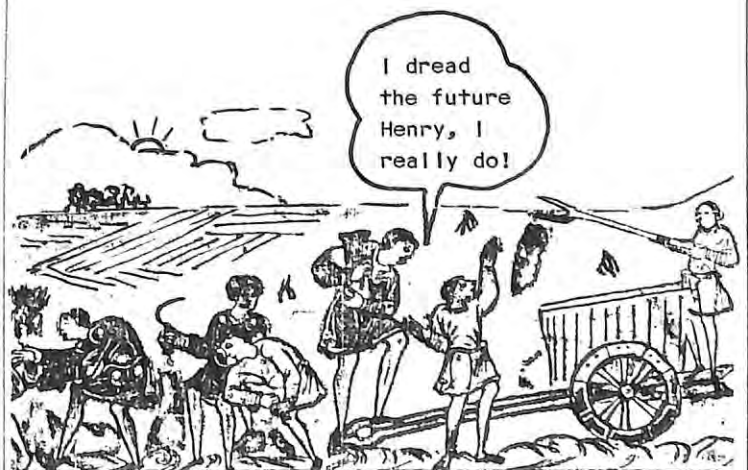
An introductory speech by **David Heathcote-Amory**, **Junior Environment Minister**, described the task of the recently established Rural Development Commission to diversify rural enterprises and encourage new employment in Rural Development Areas covering 35% of England. He outlined measures taken by government (with a little prodding from the European Community) to control the discharge of slurry and pesticides. To protect wildlife and traditional farming practices, 785,000 hectares have been designated Environmentally Sensitive Areas. He applauded continuing efforts by public and private agencies to plant trees and build low-cost housing. He also expressed the government's willingness to play its part in future international responses to global environmental changes - lightly brushing aside the urgency of the threat.

Roger Colomb, **Managing Director of Texaco** was optimistic about oil companies' contributions to rural conservation. He said that industrialists had often been cast in the role of villains in the countryside, but he assured us that it was possible to reduce risks of environmental damage - at a cost. The cost had either to be paid now in the price of products we consume or would have to be borne later in repairing environmental damage.

Debates focused on two issues: should development be encouraged or discouraged; and what methods should be used to manage change?

The first issue - whether to stimulate economic growth or preserve a heritage of landscape beauty was discussed in five workshops dealing respectively with rural employment, rural services, rural housing, nature conservation and climatic change.

Sir John Quicke, **National Economic Development Council**, summed up the employment problem as one of creating new jobs to replace those lost from agriculture. A partial solution to the problem might be found by retraining farmworkers for other occupations. The aim was to keep rural population numbers at their present level.



Michael Chisholm, **Professor of Geography at Cambridge University**, presented a summary view of the workshop on the provision of services: discussing the availability of services to different age groups, at different distances from service centres and through multiple use, for example, of village halls or delivery vans. The aim is to prevent rural areas becoming areas of service deprivation.

Housing, said **Richard Best, Director of the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust**, is the most intractable problem for the rural poor. The rich can afford to buy and maintain historic buildings, obstruct cheap building and profit from rises in land values. The aim is to reverse present trends and enable poor families to obtain housing.

Conservation, reported **Philip Lowe of the Rural Studies Research Centre, University College London**, is a question of saving as much as can be afforded for scientific interest, to maintain a diverse gene pool, and for cultural and aesthetic enjoyment. These objectives may be achieved by upgrading the quality of land use over broad zones and enforcing stricter controls against particularly harmful activities.

The problems of climatic change reviewed by **Roger Clarke, Director (Policy), Countryside Commission**, identify themselves through their effects on rising sea-level on crop and livestock husbandry, on forest growth and on water supplies. Remedial measures become increasingly expensive the longer they are delayed. The desired goal is to arrest change, slow down, or where possible, reverse present trends. The hope for the next century is to turn the clock back to a golden age in the past.

The second issue for debate was how might change in the countryside be managed. The issue was sharply polarised between advocates of a free market and those favouring strategic planning. **Professor Paul Cheshire, Department of Economics, Reading University**, asserted that the market cannot be bucked. Misdirected subsidies and regulation cause massive price distortions. If we want sustainable organic farming it is not helpful to offer subsidies that have the effect of raising land prices, because increased land prices force farmers to intensify production in order to meet higher borrowing charges. Nor is it helpful, if we want cheap houses, to create artificial scarcities of building land by planning controls. Appropriate market incentives must be carefully designed to foster benign land management and to ensure that natural beauty is conserved without inflicting serious financial penalties on landowners.

Professor Peter Roberts, Head of Department of Urban Planning at Leeds Polytechnic, put the case for long-term strategic planning: to extend the period of decision making beyond the five-year programme of a parliament, to ensure the health of the land, the provision of an adequate housing stock, and to maintain sound social and economic infrastructures in the countryside.

At this conference, the marketeers presented stronger arguments than the planners. Many

participants welcomed a suggestion that development gains be taxed in order to pay for transport services, local schools, affordable housing, care of landscape amenities and other 'public goods'. The money would be collected by charging developers for planning permits and levying a gains tax on agricultural land benefited by farm subsidies.

Concerning the 21st century, the debate is far from closed. The impact of Europe on rural Britain through European Community directives, movement of people into and out of villages on either side of the Channel for work or for recreation has yet to be considered. The aims of the conference working groups were backward-looking and heritage oriented rather than forward-looking, drawing visions of new landscapes.

Hugh Prince

University College, London



MONTGOMERY

This picture comes from a nicely illustrated pamphlet about Montgomery available from the pictured building, now a museum of local history run by their Civic Society. The town is a rural gem of the Golden Age. It once had more than fifty tradesmen and now has about fourteen so the information reads. It must once have been in commercial balance with its farmland for five or ten miles around. Newtown, Wales is now the dominant town and Montgomery (in the language of the conference reported above) would be classified as irrelevant to the urban needs of the 20th or 21st century. Those living in much less attractive parts of the country may view this failed urban centre with envy. Perhaps this offers Montgomery a new function in the national consciousness.

"LANDSCAPE: A QUESTION OF VALUE?" 26th May John
Harvard Gallery, Southampton University

Most of the papers at this conference in one way or another were about the opposition between landscape as image, ideology or text, and landscape as directly experienced reality. Generally there was dissatisfaction with and distrust of the former as being both remote and imposing with respect to the latter.

For example **Brian Molyneux**, archaeologist and part-time backwoodsman, felt that the usual attitude of the archaeologist to his material - his interest in style and iconography to the exclusion of physical engagement, his removal, literal or symbolical, of artifacts and features from their site - led to at best a partial understanding. To illustrate this he referred to the primitive red-ochre rock paintings found in the region of Hudson's Bay, and to one of these in particular: "man with phallus" said the archaeologists; "marten with tail" said a trapper, who lived near and knew the site and its wildlife intimately.

Sylvie Belanger, continuing the image versus reality theme, chose to deliver her paper with a video of a ferocious boxing match playing on the table beside her. Which would engage our attention more, the placeless, spaceless, timeless, pugilistic images on the screen, or the human reality of Sylvie Belanger herself? As it happened, she did - suggesting perhaps that her fears about the dominance of the technologically created image may be exaggerated. Fear of particular landscape images was evident in both **Anne Fallentine's** performance piece, "The Gag of Two Birds", and **Sabina Sharkey's** paper, which showed how images of colonisation imply domination of women as well as land.

Stephen Daniels traced the swing (over the last 20 years or so) between the idea of landscape as an ideological way of seeing and an organic or redemptive view of land; both of which views we saw evidenced in other papers during the day. He suggested we needed a subtler sense of landscape imagery, and a more visual one, so as to escape the very textual-ideological critique which, we, over verbal and non-visual Britons are peculiarly prone to.

John Metson

LRG Register and Survey of Membership

If you received an incorrectly bound copy and wish to return it to John Metson he will send you a perfect copy. See 'Aesthetics of Landscape' elsewhere in this issue for his address

Local Distinctiveness



Write to Common Ground

Please tell us of good new developments and projects which you think have been sympathetic to place, people, land, wild life, history and culture, creating new and positive identity. Let us know about the things which make your place locally distinctive and your progress in exploring and expressing them. Tell us how successful you have been in making your views known to local councils and what they are doing about it. We work to spread good ideas which help others to build confidence to take more active care of the places they value.

For further information please send an SAE to:-
COMMON GROUND
45 SHELTON STREET, LONDON WC2H 9HJ

LANDSCAPE EXPERIENCE EXAMINED

Clever people probe the values of landscape while lesser folk walk the dog along the misty river bank. Lesser folk may well be highly tuned into what they feel about landscape but never tell a soul. After all landscape enjoyment can flourish as a very personal, untransmitted and private satisfaction?

I walk my dog and have tried here to verbalise about a walk with my eight year old son. Though simple, this exercise was more revealing than I had expected. It was something fun to do on a cold misty dripping day in Dartmoor.

The landscape elements included small fields in a tight valley, a stream, a tussock bog, unmanaged woodland, stone walls surmounted by trees, adjacent steeply rising moorland with bracken and gorse and granite blocks and outcrops. It was February and had been raining hard. In detail, moving through and up.....

I liked the gentle slope which increased below the wooden field gate and stile and the slight cross-slope feeding a line of bog with waist high tussocks. My son remarked: 'the bog felt nice to my feet, it was very tussocky with bits sticking up'. I liked the thick ash poles, once a laid hedge which grew out of the granite and soil fieldbank - they promised shelter and sticks and had a feeling of age and tradition. One could feel secure and hidden in the top pasture screened by trees from a quiet road and protected by the bog from casual intruders. There was a view through a wooden gate past an oak and a sycamore into a more enclosed field which itself sloped more steeply to woods. What lay beyond the woods offered further exploration. The sound of shooting made the topographic connection with a known but unseen farm in the valley below.

Over the stile I was delighted to be on grass yet under an oak tree. I remembered how in even wetter weather a spring had issued here in the field. William said he liked 'how the bog stream goes down into a little valley' - in fact quite a steep one with boulders set in soil yet overhung by trees. In the lower field he enjoyed how 'the little patches of wet came down into a marsh' - all very subtly displayed within the pasture and something I had drawn his attention to. He was amazed how a big ash tree branch blown off by recent gales had found its way through other branches and onto the ground - how could it have fallen that way? He broke off some brittle twigs to take home for a fire and tried to get the hung-up branch to fall further. He was very impressed by this dynamic incident in the landscape.

The ancient holly tree in the granite boundary bank took me back to a childhood playing in the holly and oak woods of Sutton Coldfield (Royal) Park. Their great age fed my sense of history and personal continuity. The natural quality of the lanky fallen willows in wet ground at the wood edge pleased me for its carelessness and my son liked the way 'the trees sloped all kinds of ways'.

We walked up two hundred feet to the top of Hingston Rock through battered brown bracken and uneaten summer briars and through tall ugly sticks of burnt gorse. William combining observation with judgement, remarked that 'the hill was really steep and then went flat: it was lovely and green at the top with some gorse and a few flattish rocks'... and... 'the rock at the top was nice and cosy to sit in and made a good hideout.' When asked about the way up he said: 'the burnt gorse was not quite as nice' but the two meadows we had come from 'looked really little' (from within the midslope gorse area) and that was fun and a landscape plus. He had noticed the misty long view from the rock but nothing to say about it.

The dog meanwhile had been involved with a different sensory landscape mostly instinctive and dominated by his nose. He had rushed through the bracken and taken it slowly along the hedgelines.

Quite clearly to both of us of us and the german pointer this was a stimulating landscape, but then there are the questions.....for example:

* Do we humans have an instinct for landscape? Remember the prospect-refuge theory. Do those of Welsh ancestry (my claim) have greater affinity, and are there cultural differences?

* Should we believe that everyone standing in a preferred landscape (place, room or urban scene) absorbs and reacts to it in a complex way, or are some peoples' reactions uncomplicated?

* Would it be possible to measure levels of mental and emotional excitation produced by landscapes?

* Are there people, highly knowledgeable about landscape who yet react in an uncomplicated, unstimulated way,

* How much does emotion and a sensual desire to become involved with one's surroundings play a part and is this in some way related to inhibition?

* Does it deepen or merely transmit the experience if we put it into words? And do those who do not express themselves much in words feel any less strongly about the landscapes they see?

OTHER JOURNALS

ARBORICULTURAL JOURNAL 14(2) May 1990

The wind storm of January 25th 19901. **A preliminary report on damage to the garden at Wisley** P Macmillan-Browse 97-1012. **Westonbirt Arboretum** TD Russell 101-106Edith M Makra & John W Andresen **Neighbour Woods: volunteer community forestry in Chicago** 117-127R M Baker **Investigations into selected properties of open-cast spoil related to tree growth** 129-137CY Jim **Arboricultural recommendations for urban Hong Kong** 139-148Deborah J Gangloff **The National Register of Big Trees** 149-154Victoria Hallett **Leaves from a tree measurer's diary** 155-158DR Helliwell **Acceptable levels of risk associated with trees** 159-162

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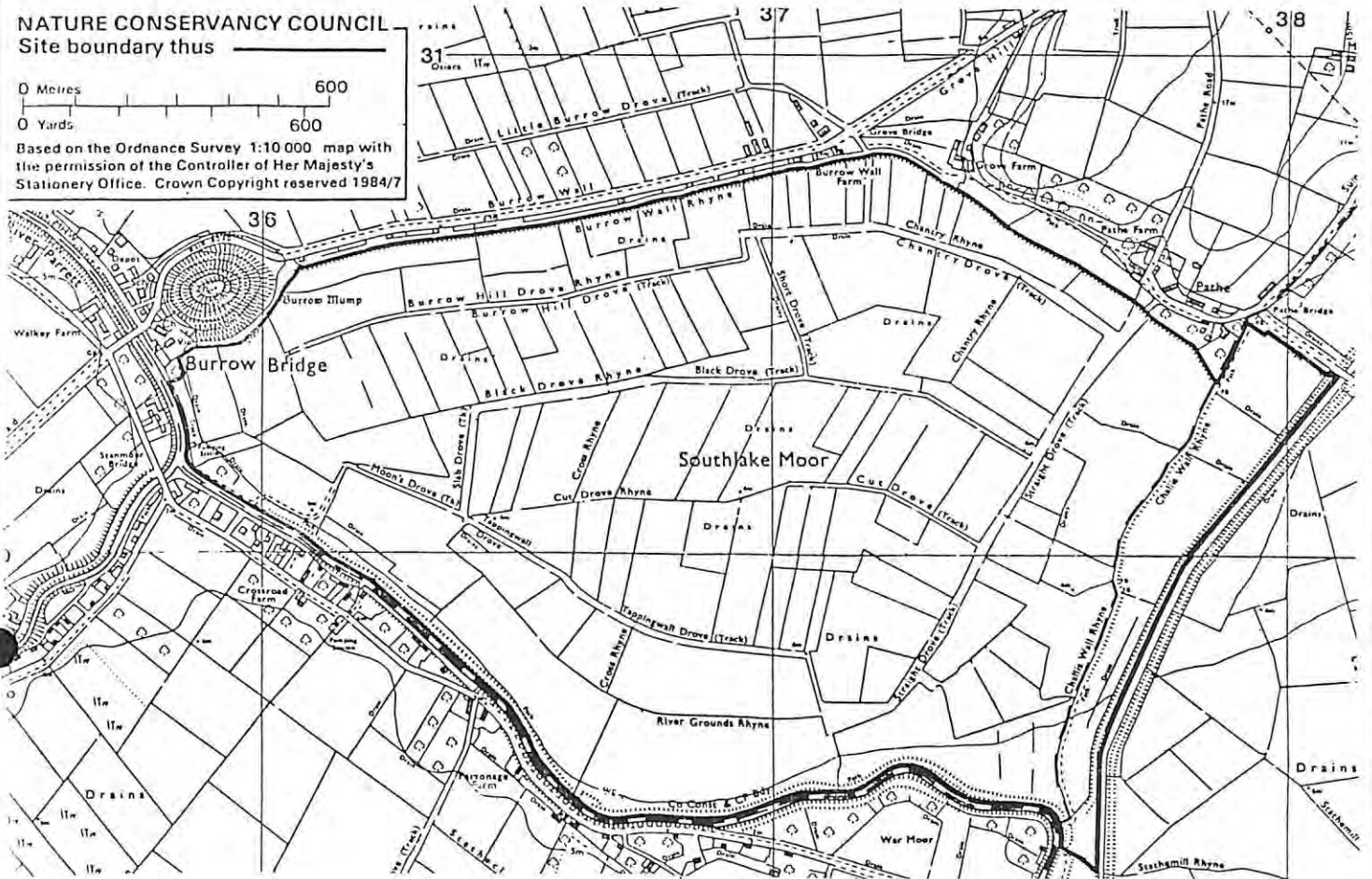
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NATURE CONSERVANCY COUNCIL
Site boundary thus 

0 Metres 600
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SOMERSET LEVELS, HABITAT, HISTORY, LANDSCAPE

This year the Somerset Levels were deeply inundated by the storms and heavy rains of late January. The floods behind Langport spread out as a vast sheet of water islanding farmsteads and making sense of their mounded sites as the waters queued for release down the River Parrett. Five Head Hill stood out like a steep lake shore above West Sedgemoor. It was a very good for those romantics who like places to be as histories tell us they once were. It was a good sight for aerial archaeologist Frances Griffiths capturing a view of the past as the flood waters gradually subsided. It was a promising sight for the RSPB and their proteges those long-billed, soil probing birds, snipe, redshank and curlew that like their habitat well softened.

There has been fierce fighting over Sedgemoor and the Levels: the situation is still not resolved but gets better and farmers in the area receive annual payments to encourage them to not to improve these old wet marsh grazings. It has many forms of designation and the NCC has now negotiated 5 new National Nature Reserves (NNR's): three hundred hectares more of protected habitat and landscape to add to that of the RSPB at West Sedgemoor (400 hectares) and smaller sites managed by the Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation. If you wish to find out more about the five moors contact the Chief Warden at Roughmoor, Bishops Hull Taunton TA1 5AA.

Those who find it difficult to separate the richness of nature, its birds, flora and insect life from the experience of landscape will be very glad.

The official ecological descriptions of each NNR begin with soil, site and water regime and contains a rich catalogue of species names. Exciting in their way, very exciting to some and the common names may stir an unexpected nostalgia "frogbit, meadowsweet, marsh marigold, rigid hornwort". Conspicuously they omit the non scientific and non factual namely the artistic, aesthetic, experiential and spiritual descriptions. Of course it isn't their role (they are government's advisors on ecology). Such non factual descriptions rest with landscape. But would a landscape description convey the essence of these Levels if it did not refer to the rich detail of their wet meadow flowers, the variety of plants along the watercourses or the piping sounds of redshank across lonely marshes. What are the objective scientific landscape descriptors - flat or less flat, with or without pollarded willows, rhyne and other points of visual interest. One would refer to the 'lazy reposeful horizontality' of the land to the immensity of the sky or project to the rich historical fabric.

But without the flowers, the insects and the birds, what would it amount to..... I ask you!

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

2-7 September **The care and upkeep of gardens of special and historic interest** Contact The Secretary, Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York, The King's Manor, York YO1 2EP Tel 0904 433987

10-13 September **The conservation and management of rivers** International conference at the University of York. Contact Philip Boon, Nature Conservancy Council, Tel Peterborough (0733) 40345 ext 2320

13 September **Planning for coastal management** Anglian Coastal Authorities Group seminar in Cambridge. Contact Terry Oakes Tel 0502 523301

23-24 September **Establishment and maintenance of farm and estate woodlands** Practical course run by Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester. Contact Bob Evans Tel Cirencester (0285) 652531

26-28 September **Urban Edges** Conference, Glasgow Contact Urban Design Studies Unit, Dept of Architecture and Building Science, University of Strathclyde, 131 Rottenrow, Glasgow G4 ONG Tel 041 552 4400 ext 3011

29-30 September **New direction in landscape architecture** Conference, Canberra, Australia Contact Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, c/o Conference Solutions Pty Ltd PO Box 135, CURTIN ACT 2605 Tel (06) 285 3000

9-12 October **Heritage coast national conference** examining two main themes: 'Planning and policy' and 'Presenting the coast' At Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland. Contact: Tim Badman, Heritage Coast Forum Tel 061 228 6171 ext 2546

12 October **One day study tour of Chester** Contact Conference Dept, Town & Country Planning Assoc 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AS Tel 071 930 8903/4/5

21 October **Apple Day - a demonstration of variety and taste** (Common Ground and Orchards) The Piazza, Covent Garden, London WC2 Contact Neil Sinden or Angela King on 071 379 3109

26 October **Architectural conservation - the issues and the future** Conference, Cavendish Conference centre, London Contact: Debbie Garrity, Press Officer, Royal Town Planning Institute, 26 Portland Place, London W1N 4BE 071 636 9107

20 November **Wildlife Link conference - The Environment White Paper 1990** preparing a new programme for nature conservation and countryside protection in the 1990's St William's College, York Contact: The White Paper Conference, Wildlife Link, 45 Shelton St, London WC2h 9HJ Tel 071 240 9284

NOTTINGHAM

7-9th Sept



If you missed the mailshot or haven't been back to your in tray for rather a long time ring **John Metson in Oxford on Telephone (0865)722968** to book your place, but maybe check your in tray first!

Full conference registration with accomodation etc costs £95, day registration for \$33 on either day. The Nottingham campus environment is extremely pleasant and self contained...sounds like an enjoyable weekend.

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