

landscape research extra

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH GROUP

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH EXTRA
No 5 SPRING/SUMMER 1990

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

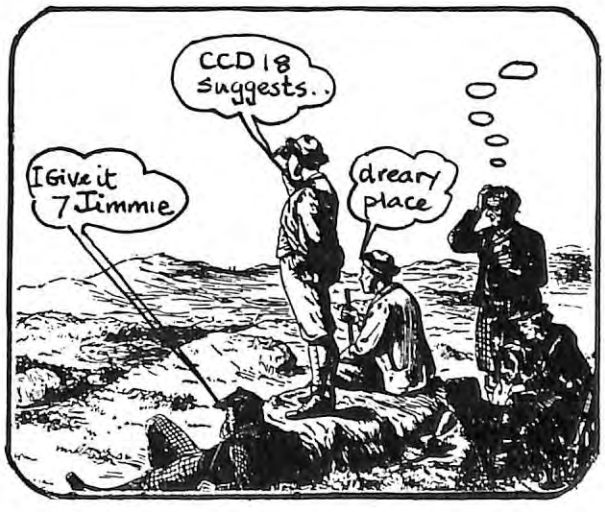
I enjoyed reading the provocative pieces on the Countryside Commission's approach to landscape description in issue 4 ('Describing the Landscape of AONBs ('Areas of outstanding natural beauty'), 'The Blackdown Hills Landscape' and 'New Forest Descriptions: Poetry and Prose').

They correctly identify the wide range of material and approaches which are needed to express adequately the value of designated landscapes for different audiences, serving different needs. As the Commission emphasises in its own publication on landscape assessment (CCD 18), an assessment can only be judged against a well defined purpose. There is no such thing as a neutral, all-purpose landscape assessment. Einstein did not get around to considering landscape assessment, but it is clearly encompassed within the general theory of relativity!

I can only comment with any authority on the New Forest example as I was the officer responsible for the Commission's study undertaken by Land Use Consultants and published as "The New Forest Landscape" (CCP220).

Unlike in some of the AONB's, a landscape statement which would establish this area in the public consciousness was not needed. It is better known than many national parks and there is a wealth of published material for every type of reader. The purpose of the New Forest study was to elaborate on the Commission's view that the area was of equivalent status to a national park for its natural beauty and amenity and the opportunities it offered for outdoor recreation. It was not intended as a general-purpose guide.

But this well defined, rather bureaucratic, purpose still left many options open. We spent a lot of time debating whether it would be better achieved by a "planners" type of publication or an "authors/artists" type. We invited both types of tender and interviewed a range of teams, including one which involved Douglas Botting, the author quoted in the LRG Extra article.



It was a difficult decision. On balance, we felt that the particular combination of purpose and audience we had in mind in this occasion would be better met by the "planners" type of publication offered by Land Use Consultants. Within this framework, we tried to refer to a wide range of aesthetic and emotional responses to the New Forest environment. Indeed, the final sentiment we left ringing in readers' ears was a quotation from the Rev. Gilpin....."The forest, like other beautiful scenes, pleases the eye, but its great effect is to rouse the imagination".

David Coleman

Dear Editor,
I am writing to you in response to "Field of View" in the "Landscape Research Extra No 4". Let me briefly introduce myself. My name is Erich Sachs. I am originally from Kassel, Germany but I have spent over 10 years in "foreign looking" landscapes in Asia. I have recentyly joined a Japanese company which is actively involved in saving and taking care of trees, and other greening activities.

I have no background in landscape architecture but I do like colorful (semi)tropical, Taoist/Zen and Sufi settings. My main interest in your inquiry is perception.

It seems to me that the way we view landscape (and the world) is determined during early childhood. [included at this point were a number of drawings with explanations depicting an infant's relationship to his surroundings as contrasted between Japan and the United states or Germany. Ed]

However, people see landscapes and things differently even in the same culture. What comes into play here is a combination of spatio-temporal cognition (as in the drawings) and individual personality. Although we are all unique, the idea of personality types is ancient, see for example the work of Freud and Jung. I highly recommend the book "Personality Types" by Don Richard Miso (Houghton Mifflin Co.) for more information on the this.

But now to the "very foreign looking" images of landscape....(1) The man with the pack mule: people who live a simple life are much less separated and alienated from their natural environment (as compared to modern man). Thus there is no strong division between the individual and landscape. (2) The Chinese alley of the druggists: I asked my wife, who is Cantonese, how she felt about the image. Her definite and clear answer was: OLD! I myself would love to eat, drink and experience the strangeness of such an old-style alley. However it does not offer me new ideas for design because I have already visited Hong Kong so many times
(3) The Ashanti tree does not register any memories.

All my best wishes for your work.

H Erich Sachs. Tokyo.



Mr Sachs' Company name is given above principally for its decorative charm

PREHISTORIC ECHOES IN A DEVON LANDSCAPE

A short distance west of the village of Bow in the very centre of Devon is an ordinary arable field of about 13 acres, rising gently to its southwest corner. Superficially it looks like tens of thousands of others. And yet, culturally, it may well be the most significant site in the whole county, rivally Exeter Cathedral in importance.

Realisation of this, and its implications carries with it ideas and beliefs stretching over four thousand years or more. Placenames, christianity, folklore, the Green Man, and skilled used of timber all play a part.

For beneath the surface of the field lie the remains of a prehistoric "henge" discovered by aerial photography in 1984. A space up to 45m in diameter is defined by a substantial ditch broken by two opposing entrances. Originally there would have been an external bank beyond the ditch. Within the area is an irregular oval arrangement of nineteen pits, each of which may have contained a substantial timber post.

It is the first henge to be positively identified in Devon but is one of more than three hundred throughout Britain broadly dating to the third millennium BC. Stonehenge and Avebury are its best known cousins, which incorporate stone, but pre-eminently henges were structures that used timber, mostly oak, often of massive size and in vast quantities.

The discovery alone of the site is of the greatest importance but even more astonishing is the fact that people in this part of Devon have been unwittingly recording its existence in title deeds for centuries, and on letters written today. For there is a cluster of placenames here with the element "nymet" in them. The parish church of Bow is at Nymet Tracy, and nearby is Broadnymet, Nichols Nymet, Nymetwood, Nymphayes and Nymph. A Roman site in the area was recorded as 'Nemetostatio' in c700 AD.

These names contain a Celtic element which is the equivalent of the "nemeton" of the Gauls or the "nyfed" of the Welsh, and which means a "sacred place" or "sacred grove". It is highly probable that the Bow henge is it, or is at the centre of an area to which the term "nemeton" was applied. If so, the survival of the placename element until its first written record suggests an extraordinary continuity over two or three thousand years, at least in folk memory.

Tom Grieves

VIEWS AND ENCOUNTERS IN A ZOO DESIGNED BY DAVID HANCOCKS

The first two of a series of three papers in the journal Landscape Australia catch my eye: they are entitled "Seeking to create illusions of wild places" by David Hancocks who refers to his designs for Melbourne Zoo.

The paper stands very solidly within the field of landscape architecture inasmuch as it is the creation of places with materials and plants. It may also have parallels worth investigating in the creation of interactive spaces for people, and the design of view sequences in cities or woodlands. It displays fragments of prospect refuge theory in action.

And of course it seems to have a bearing on social confrontation and concealment within an office, on the theatrical stage or at a cocktail party and particularly in those circumstances where the setting favours one group, the watchers, and puts the watched at a disadvantage. It is likely that David Hancock has drawn on and is aware of all these nuances but some perhaps may be worth examination and further development.

WHAT SHAPE IS A TREE

When the boy was seven he ventured late on a spring evening into a truly spooky wood, yes possums, where trees grew up and up out of immense rounded rocks. His picture drawn that evening showed the rounded rocks and trees with absurdly tapering tree trunks and silly small crowns.

Why did he not draw the scene the way I saw it? Is this really how young children, peering upwards from the solid comprehensible base to the remote upper trunk actually see trees? Do we as adults see them in the same way but then apply a 'learned image conversion programme'. Quite by coincidence the same 'wide angle lens effect' is captured by my correspondent from Japan in his company sales literature for tree anchors.

A 'more realistic tree' - well I think so - produced by another seven year old by blowing through a straw at a pool of ink, conjures for me a whole landscape of wet grazing marshes and old pollarded willows. But to my eight year old advisor on trees and child art 'it looks dead: a desert tree with all the stubby bits and it would look more like a tree if it were painted in green and brown.' No mention of grazing marshes.

A huge wind-felled beech with many stems which I saw today looked like a charnel heap of dead elephants. So my friends we have this dilemma... what shape is a tree? And is describing a tree any easier than describing a landscape?



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SHOULD YOU READ?

* Editor Brian Clouston for the Landscape Institute **Landscape design with plants** 2nd Edition 1990 ISBN 0.434.90234.9

* Editor D O D Bourke **French-English Horticultural Dictionary** ISBN 0.85198 626X 240pp CAB International, Wallingford Oxon OX10 8DE UK

* Darra Baldock **The European Community and the farmed environment** in Landscape 90 p66-68

* John Newton **Urban regeneration - an ecological approach** in Landscape 90 p69-72

* Brian D Clark **Environmental Assessment** in Landscape 90 p73-77

* Landscape 90 published by the Landscape Design Trust (see last LR Extra) contains a useful list of educational courses and resource of legislation in landscape related subjects.

* Editors Denis Cosgrove & Stephen Darnels **The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the symbolic representation, design and use of past environments. Cambridge Univ Press 1988 ISBN 0521324378**

* **J H Andrews Plantation Acres: An historical survey of the Irish Land Survey** Ulster Historical Foundation 1985 (Information to background of large range of local maps pre O/S. Transformation of the Irish landscape and the history of its occupation)

* Editors W J Smyth and K Whelan **Common Ground: Essays on the historical geography of Ireland** presented to T Jones Hughes Cork Univ Press 1988

* Editor Michael J Bannon **The Irish Experience 1920-1988** Dublin: Wolfhound Press 1989 ISBN 0.863278.212.6

* Malcolm Newson **Forestry and water: "good practice" and UK catchment policy** Land Use Policy Vol 7 Jan 1990 p53-58

* D A Robinson & J D Blackman **Soil erosion and flooding - consequences on land use policy and agricultural practice on the South Downs, East Sussex UK** Land Use Policy Vol 7 1990 p41-52

* M G Lloyd & D Newlands **Recent urban policy development in Scotland: the rediscovery of peripheral housing estates** Scottish Geog Mag 105 p116-119 1989

* P A Selman **Conservation, development and land use planning: Scotland leads the way.** Scottish Geographical Mag 105 p142-148 1989

* A W Magill and C F Schwarz **Searching for the value of a view** USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experimental Station Research Paper PSW-193

* Yi Fu Tuan **Surface phenomena and aesthetic experience** Annals of the American Assocn of Geographers Vol 79/2 1989 p233-241

* David Crouch **The allotment, landscape and locality: ways of seeing landscape and culture** Area 21/3 1989 p261-267

* Special issue of the Journ of Applied Ecol 26/3 1989 12 papers on **Environmental problems of industrialised countries.** A joint symposium of the British Ecol Soc and the Ecol Soc of China, Beiging, China 12-13 Sept 1988. It covers environmental impact, conservation, pollution of water and air, and urban ecology.

* Editor J M Wagstaff **Landscape and Culture: geographical and archaeological perspectives** Basil Blackwell Oxford 1987

* Tadahiko Higuchi **The visual and spatial structure of landscapes** MIT Press 1988

* Germain Bazin **Paradeisos on L'Art du Jardin** Paris: Editions du Chene 1988

* **The AONB Directory** CCD54 Countryside Commission 1990

* R Bruce Hull IV & Grant R B Revell **Cross-cultural comparison of landscape scenic beauty evaluation: a case study in Bali** Journ of Environmental Psychology Sept 1989 9(3) p177-192

* Kalevi Mikael Korpela **Place-identity as a product of environmental self-regulation** Journ of Environmental Psychology Sept 1989 9(3) p241-256

* Kimberley Devlin & Jack L Nasar **The Beauty and the Beast: some preliminary comparisons of 'high' versus 'popular' residential architecture and public versus architect judgments of same** Journal of Environmental Psychology Dec 1989 9(4) p333-344

* Timothy O'Riordan **Nature Conservation under Thatcherism: the legacy and the prospect** Ecos 10(4) 1989 p4-8

* Jo Rose **Pocket Parks - countryside conservation by local people** Ecos 11(1) 1990 p7-11

* Garrett Eckbo **The City and Nature** Ekistics Vol 54 1987 p323-325

* T W Knight **Mughul gardens revisited** Environment and Planning B 17(1) 1990 p73-84

* Jack L Nasar **The evaluation of the City** Journ of American Planning Association Winter 1990 56(1) p41-53

* W Voigt **The garden city as eugenic utopia** Planning Perspectives 1989 4(3) p295-312

* Jane Tompkins **Language and Landscape: an ontology for the Western** Artforum Feb 1990 p94-99

* Virginia L Wagner **Geological Time in Nineteenth century paintings** Winterthur Portfolio 1989 24(2/3) p153-164

* David Leslie **Land Use policy and tourism in Northern Ireland** Land Use Policy Jan 1990 7(1) p2-5

* CPRE **Paradise Protection - How the European community should protect the countryside,** subtitled **Paradise Destruction - How Europe's farm policies are destroying the countryside** March 1990

LUIS BARRAGAN AT THE ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION

An enticing and mysterious pool by Barragan appears in a number of landscape and garden books - enticing because the water is cool in the shimmering heat, mysterious because the pool is fed by a U-shaped spout set in a wall of apparently limitless height. So I took the trouble to divert to Bedford Square on my way back to Paddington and found more walls and pools. The pools are always still and rectangular and full to the brim. The walls are always straight and impenetrable -no Corbusian curves here.

Barragan died last year. From this exhibition it seems his achievements were modest and his approach to design spartan but he understood external space. A rectilinear pool, rustiely executed, sits perfectly, even majestically, in its tawdry surroundings. A red wall creates space by its very redness. Barragan, so we are told, created with his eye, dispensing with drawings.

The four AA rooms are domestic Georgian - one of these ends in a mirrored bar. The exhibition is just square photography roughly framed with minimal captions and a few measured drawings of domestic work. In the bar an ageless woman spoke from the depths of an armchair, startling me as there were no other visitors in late afternoon. I left as intrigued as I went in and only a little wiser.

Simon Rendel

THE LANDSCAPE PRINTS OF JOHN BRUNSDON

By chance I was sent a card entitled "End of Harvest" and it is a landscape with bales! Having seen three of these etchings in a friend's office I contacted the artist, John Brunsdon who kindly sent me some information about himself and his work. I include it not to boost his sales (though why not) but out of personal admiration for the way in which he conveys the sense of the landscape.

He is described by 'Contemporary Arts' who sell his work in the following way:

'John Brunsdon is a topographical artist who produces colourful and robust prints of considerable refined aesthetic sensibility that have, in the best tradition of such art, a strong sense of the genius loci. He is interested in man's influence upon the landscape, the contrast between architecture and the countryside and the way in which man has sculpted the surface for his own use ...He takes delight in the texture and decorative qualities of etched marks and the sweeping shapes of broad colour which fuse into extraordinary timeless images...'



Though his vision of the landscape will not appeal to everyone I find it very exciting or should I say satisfying and beautiful. As a landform and airphoto specialist I note the accuracy and complexity of the scenes he creates in the twelve scenes sent to me, the marked three dimensionality of the image which registers well with the way in which I react to views of landscape. A commercially successful formula? One man's artistic truth? A statement of universal application in the experience of landscapes? Very collectable certainly, and I wish I were a little richer.
John Brunsdon lives at the Old Fire Station, Church Street, Stradbrke, Near Diss, Norfolk IP21 5HG

We acknowledge Contemporary Arts Box 1, 64 High Street, Stevenage, England SG1 3AE for our illustrations of his work.



OTHER JOURNALS

ARBORICULTURAL JOURNAL 14(1) February 1990
Claus Mattheck **Why they grow, how they grow: the mechanics of trees** 1-17
Jennifer Gardner **The Waite Arboretum** 19-25
CY Jim **Evaluation of tree species for amenity planting in Hong Kong** 27-44
Janie Thomas **The politics of paradise** 45-52
P H Selman **Forestry and land use planning - a case for indicative strategies** 53-59
David E Aldous **Trees of the historic Burnley Gardens, Melbourne, Australia** 61-73
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Karen Bomford **Community woodlands** 26-27
Louise Wilson **Hooke Park -a working landscape** 28-30
Angela King **Inspiration in the forest** 32-33
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Lance Neckar **Developing Landscape Architecture for the Twentieth Century: the career of Warren Manning** 78-91
I D Bishop & P N A Leahy **Assessing the visual impact of development proposals: the validity of computer simulations** 92-100
Robert L Thayer Jr **The experience of sustainable landscapes** 101-110
Mary D Ravenhall **Aggies in the library: the beginnings of the Landscape Architecture and City Planning Collection at the University of Illinois 1867-1924** 111-121
Edward Ruddell and Joanne Westphal **Images relating to park titles and ambient qualities at select National Park service areas** 122-127
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Issue principally about Peter Joseph Lenne, his work as planner and landscaper in Germany in the first half of the 19th century.
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Michael Goecke **Origins of the Englischer Carten in Munich** 44-47
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Clemens-Guido Szamatolski **The role of cemeteries in future urban development** 22-26
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Gabi Putz **Garden of the dead** 46-48

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Gerhard Hahn-Herse & Stefan Wirz **The further development of landscape planning** 27-29
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Sarah Zarmati **Contemporary Brazilian Landscape Architects** 106-114
Gilles Amphoux & Daniel Laroche **The Mine of Malines** Restoration and a new landscape for a deep heavy metal mining area with tailings ponds. 115-121

PAYSAGE & AMENAGEMENT in PAYSAGE ACTUALITES No 124 January 1990
Hindsight and perspective - Horticulture, plant protection, landscape. Report of three speakers at a conference of landscape and horticulture held at Versailles June 1989 - includes an illustrated itinerary around landscaped gardens and managed landscapes in the Paris region. 24-32
E Burle **Managed open spaces in the Senonais area (around the town of Sens)** 42-47
E Burle **The mini golf adventure** 48-49
Martine Broche **The town on foot** 54-59

DESIGNING FOR DEAD PEOPLE

Garten und Landschaft 12/89 is devoted to articles on cemetery landscape and cemetery design. What a fascinating topic.

There are three landscapes in my mind when I think of death - the least inviting is the crematorium set in its fully regulated, high quality municipal landscape. The most inviting yet perhaps too romantically lonely is the small windswept english parish churchyard so beloved of TV film makers (many detective thrillers begin here). And yet I begin to veer towards the busy, crowded and rather unkempt urban cemetery - as long as it **is** unkempt with as many trees as possible. Does this mean I am becoming an urban green? does it acknowledge that as in life I exist in the mass of suffering humanity and wish to identify with them in death

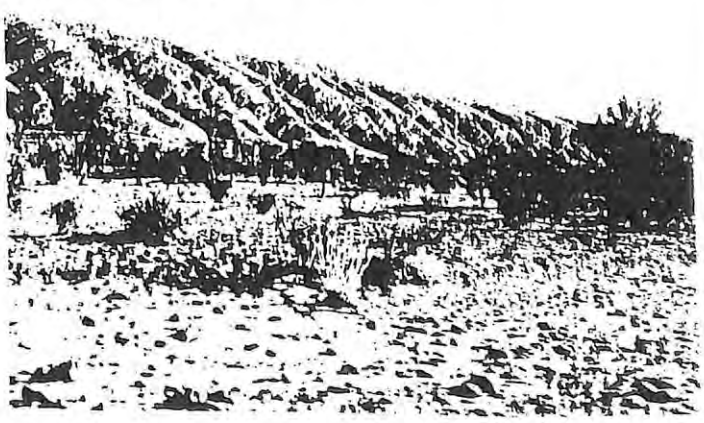
And the whole subject of landscaping for the dead attracts. If we cannot find a unique landscape preference for 5000 live individuals how do we expect to do so for 5000 souls (or cadavers)!

No of course we plan for those who grieve, remember or perhaps forget. Do they hope for a quality of visual restfulness, a classical elegance of design, well trimmed lawns and the reassuring presence of gently buzzing garden machinery. Perhaps this represents for some an earthly image of heavenly bliss; the highest expression of the well mannered suburban garden - rest at the end of the day or at the end of an urban working life. How then does the image of a victorian soot stained millstone grit graveyard of our industrial north country fit in? Certainly it makes strong film images.

To me this is all about my choice of place but if no one visits my tomb except strangers do my landscape preferences communicated ex mortuo really matter? Where would other LRG members wish to be deposited. Anyone for a burial at sea?

A CONNECTION BETWEEN AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPES AND WALES

Landscape Research Group members may be interested in a new venture planned by the British Australian Studies Association (BASA), in which an 'Environment and Planning' group is to be inaugurated at this year's BASA annual conference to be held in Edinburgh in August. The Australian landscape is unique both in pure environmental terms, with very distinctive flora, fauna and landforms in a harsh hazard-prone region, and int terms of Aboriginal and recent non-Aboriginal human imprints and impacts.



In addition, the Centre for Australian Studies in Wales is holding its second one-day symposium entitled 'Landscape and Literature' on june 30 this year. This event aims, through literature and environmental studies, to draw out the similarities and contrasts between the Welsh and Australian landscapes.

Further details of either or both may be obtained from **Dr Graham Sumner, Centre for Australian Studies in Wales, St David's University College, Lampeter, Dyfed, SA48 7ED**

FORESTRY STRATEGIES - COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION STUDY IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE NOW COMPLETE

Throughout much of 1989, consultants were busy on behalf of the Countryside Commission developing an approach to 'Forestry Strategies for the Lowlands.' Their final report has recently been completed.

Whilst "Indicative Forestry Strategies" are now an accepted planning tool in Scotland, the rest of the country lags behind. The Commission recommended in their 1987 document "Forestry in the Countryside" that forestry strategies should be prepared by county councils and other appropriate authorities.

Because of their commitment to advise those responsible for preparing forestry strategies, the Commission have sought experience in different parts of the country. An earlier exercise in the mid-Wales uplands was followed by the Buckinghamshire study, and a third project (in conjunction with the Forestry Commission) has been carried out in Gwent.

Buckinghamshire was chosen as a pilot area for a lowland strategy because of its diversity of landscapes - from the partly urbanised Thames Valley, through the Chiltern Hills (low wooded chalk hills and AONB) to the low clayey Vale of Aylesbury, and on to the rolling hills of north Bucks - and also because the County Council had already carried out a lot of the necessary background work.

The approach adopted in this study drew on "state-of-the-art" computer technology, using a Geographical Information System (GIS) to collate, store, interpret and map a host of information which has a bearing on the future of trees, woodlands and forestry in Buckinghamshire. Amongst other UK applications of GIS to date, this one is unusual in that it contributes to a policy for creative management of the environment.

The strategy represents a conscious effort to influence the appearance of the countryside for the greatest benefit of the greatest number of people. Improvement and enhancement of landscape quality is a key factor, whilst recreation and nature conservation are also major considerations. Timber production and woodland economics play a part but perhaps less so than would be appropriate in many parts of the country - whilst agricultural diversification is seen as an underlying and fundamental factor.

A landscape assessment of Buckinghamshire was carried out to classify and evaluate the rural landscape types in the county. This was used as the basis for drawing up 46 strategy zones within which specific objectives and policies were developed. In the north of the county, the emphasis was on landscape improvement, by encouraging new tree planting and guiding its location and type. In the south, the report tackled the difficult issue of neglected management of existing mature woods. In particular it identified priority areas for improved management.

The study included an airphoto based inventory of all existing woodland and significant tree clumps; a study of current agricultural practice; predictions of the likelihood of land-use change; "sieve maps" to identify land available for planting; design guidelines relating to the silvicultural, visual and nature conservation aspects of forestry; targets for the amount of new planting in each zone; a discussion of the means for implementation and the need for greater financial incentives for landowners; priority areas for major planting initiatives in the interests of landscape improvement and countryside recreation; and proposals for the monitoring and updating of the strategy.

The recent storms and consequent tree losses throughout much of England and Wales serve to emphasise the need for comprehensive and systematic planning for trees and forestry. What remains to be seen is whether County Councils can be persuaded to invest the considerable resources needed to do the subject justice. And that means not just the large amount of work involved in preparing a strategy detailed and specific enough to be worth having..... actually implementing the strategy could have major resource implications for a County Council unless central government steps up its input considerably.

Nick Ward.

The Buckinghamshire Trees and Forestry Strategy was prepared by Richards, Moorehead and Laing Ltd, a multi-disciplinary practice of environmental and engineering consultants. RML brought together a team of specialists in landscape planning and design, forestry, ecology, Town & Country Planning, GIS, agricultural economics, soils and airphoto interpretation.

RML would be pleased to discuss their work with any readers who may want more details of the project and its findings. Phone Nick Ward on 08242-4366 or write to him at:

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ACKNOWLEDGING THE SUBURBS

In reality the authentic voice of late twentieth century England lies in the suburbs, the housing estates and the so-called 'new villages'. The new society with mass communications, universal basic education and its ever more subtle class distinctions has produced an extraordinary architectural form, and a peculiarly British one.

Of course it shows little regional variation, for we now have a national society. Of course there is eclecticism rather than a common cohesion of style - we watch television and have comprehensive education. If it is more self conscious than its vernacular predecessor, then the same is true of our appearance and of our other possessions. Even the latest 'vernacular hints' of stained frames surrounding arched windows which seem to represent an entirely authentic emotional attachment to a nostalgic past, pragmatically accept that the past has gone.

- * -

A few years ago I took a party of students on a painting field trip to the far north west of Scotland, under Cul Mor north of Ullapool. The landscape was new to me and very strange, miles of undulating dark brown bog with occasional, dramatic black mountains rising very suddenly from it. The only green was on the better drained hillocks - glacial drumlins - and beside the few houses. Many of these houses were abandoned, and most consisted of the traditional 'but and ben' style, in stone with a stone flag or slate roof. The rest were in an extraordinarily ornate style done in corrugated iron, usually with intricately cut fascia boards in the same material.

On one drumlin however, an Englishman had built a bungalow. It must have passed the dour local planning regulations - it was faced in grey stucco - but the outstanding colour was of a green grassy lawn which made all other greens in the landscape seem tame.

Further inspection showed an English suburban garden, completed by white wheelbarrow with daffodils, a small pond with a 'garden centre cherub' and heron, and neat borders. The bungalow itself sported hanging baskets and an 'Old Colonial' front door. Net curtains were gathered into neat folds in the window. Around the lawn was an eight foot high deer fence, canted outwards at the top in the manner of defence establishments. I have no doubt that the owner's reponse to living in a tropical rain forest would have been to replace the deer fence with a snake trench and possibly add a verandah!

To attribute cultural courage or bravado to the owner would, however, probably be quite unfair. The owner surely had the house built as he knew houses should look. It expressed in bricks and soft landscape the way of life which he espoused. And architects and planners hanging on to ideas of regional variety may be disappointed that his lifestyle is now normal throughout Britain. And yet people in remote rural areas who are denied their share in the suburban way of life often aspire to it.



Hauser's studies of the history of art proposed a **rigid difference between the vernacular and the popular arts.** The vernacular was self-made, representative of highly localized customs and skills. It was characterized by lack of self consciousness; its artefacts had authenticity and were worthy of serious attention and praise. By contrast popular arts were usually industrially designed and produced; they were often regarded as spurious artefacts, not worthy of serious attention and could safely be derided.

Such distinctions are no longer valid. The original vernacular traditions of building in this country represent a local tradition of craftsmanship within isolated rural societies that no longer exists. Over large parts of southern England vernacular villages refurbished by incomers now look as false as stage sets.

It is housing estates that represent where Britain 'is now'. Designed, if that is the right word, by property companies they are much altered and customized by DIY and gardening. We should hasten to accept them into out culture, and offer them some serious study. This unfortunately will remove from them one of their most appealing features - their lack of self-consciousness. They were called into being by a national culture, and are peculiarly British. Will they become relics of Britishness in a new Euro-lifestyle, or will they be Britain's great contribution to the new Europe?

Peter Howard

WHAT AM I OFFERED FOR THIS PLEASING 19th CENTURY CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT?

Dr Diane Relf, an LRG member in Blacksburg Virginia who is organising a conference on how horticulture affects human well being sent us an article entitled "The landscape: its underlying value" from a commercial publication "In-site the source for progressive landscape managers"

Of course we know that buildings and businesses set in attractive grounds, settings or landscapes are likely to command high rents or cost more to buy. But this article makes it all very explicit. One might even feel it was an invasion of professional decorum to talk in the way that they do. Not quite British! To quote 'The dollars sacrificed for an attractive landscape design and proper maintenance are more than made up in rents". Do english landscape architects speak like that? Do they think like that?

To quote a few more snippets:

the following about a 45 acre family entertainment complex in San Francisco (pier 39) 'The landscape is intensive and seems to be a very complicated aspect of the property. That intrigues investors;'

later speaking of the retail sector 'Curb appeal (what!) is important for attracting desirable tenants' ...and 'a good landscape maintenance programme is an essential part of a tenant retention plan.'

The article goes on to refer to using landscape to market and promote colleges and universites. A reputable survey of those about to leave school in 1987 showed that the campus appearance (buildings, trees, well maintained lawns and side walks) exerted the greatest single influence on where people chose to go to continue their education. No doubt those reading the 'writing on the lawn' will be quick to engage a landscape architect.

Meanwhile how fares thoroughly urban Columbia University, what about building beleagured London School of Economics to name two at random. Should we read into this that they provide better than average teaching?

Having graduated from Oxford nearly 30 years ago my best memories of that campus/town are the Botanical Gardens down by the river before Finals and the charm of dun coloured limestone in the windowless medieval buildings along New College Lane. Now let me recollect the teaching programme and the staff.... um..... .

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

25 April **Farming and conservation management - putting new ideas into practice.** Environmental Research Fund and Farming and Wildlife Trust conference at Robinson College, Cambridge. Contact Dr Roy Hewson Tel King's Lynn (0553) 841581

27 April **New housing in the countryside** Conference, Cavendish Conference Centre, London. Royal Town Planning Institute, 66 Portland Place, London W1N 4AD Tel:01 580 5533 Contact Debbie Garritty, Press Officer

8-11 May **The Authentic Garden** International Symposium, Leiden, Netherlands. More information from; Leiden Congress Bureau, PO Box 16065, 2301 GB Leiden, The Netherlands

10 May **Landscape Planning for our Urban Future** The Institution of Mechanical Engineers, 1 Birdcage Walk, London SW1H 9JJ Contact Elizabeth Ollard, Committee Sec, The Landscape Institute, 12 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH

10-12 May **Inspiring Intepretation: Countryside Change and the Arts** Lynton, North Devon Contact CEI, Manchester Polytechnic, St Augustine's, Lower Chatham Street, Manchester M15 6BY Tel:061 228 6171

6-17 May **Development versus environment - how to strike the balance** Mercury Hotel, Inverness Contact Ms Cathy Pearcey, Conference Organiser, Town & Country Planning Association, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AS Tel 01-930 8903

22 May **Environmental education and urban greenspaces** The Brunel Hall, Rotherhithe Civic Centre, Rotherhithe, London SE16 A conference organized by The Trust for Urban Ecology, PO Box 514, London SE16 1AS

27 May-1 June **Architecture 1990** Montreal Int. Union of Architects XVII Congress Cultures and Technologies

30 May **Planning gain and nature conservation - opportunity and challenge** Gallery Seminar Suite, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham Contact Carolin Tidbury, Continuing Education Unit, Oxford Polytechnic, Gipsy Lane, Headington, Oxford, OX3 OPB Tel: 0865 819412, 0865 819436 (Answerphone)

1 June **Environment and Play** Copthorne Hotel, Birmingham Contact: Alison Millward, Earthkids, c/o 18 Brookside Avenue, Birmingham, B13 OTJ
021 444 6426 (Alison is an LRG member)

6 June **Landscape and the conservation of meaning** Lecture, Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce, John Adam Street, Adelphi, London WC2N 6EZ Tel:01 930 5115

30 June **Landscape and Literature** Contact Dr Graham Sumner, Centre for Australian Studies in Wales, St David's University College, Lampeter 0570 422351

4 July * change of date * **A brief for the countryside in the 21st century** Future Countryside Conference, Regent's College, Inner Circle, Regent's Park, London NW1 4NS

6 July **A balance of views** LRG Environmental Assessment and Landscape Contact LRG at secretary's address on page 12

8-21 July **11th International Seminar on Environmental Impact Assessment and Management** University of Aberdeen

30 August - 1 September **International Federation of Landscape Architects** 27th World Congress, Bergen, Norway Contact George Anagnostopoulos, IFLA, 30 Rigilis Street, 106 74 Athens, Greece (1) 7224 281

8-9 September **Landscape, Heritage and National Identity** Nottingham University. Papers are invited: send proposed title and 100 word outline to - Pyrs Gruffudd, Dept of Geog, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD

10-14 September **Conference on the Literature of Region and Nation** Echternach, Contact JJ Simon, Dept of English, Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg 162A, Avenue de La Faiencerie, L-1511 Luxembourg

22 September **Territories, estates and manors - the evolution of the Wessex landscape** University of Southampton The 11th Annual Conference of the Society for Landscape studies. Further details from Mike Hughes, County Archaeologist, The Castle, Winchester, Hampshire.

JANE - WILL THIS NEWS COME TOO LATE?

Jane says that the International Public Art Symposium which will take place in Birmingham on 27 & 28 April 1990. will be relevant to all those with an interest in landscape and will take as its theme 'Collaboration and Context' with the intention of making a rigorous contribution to the debate surrounding the role of art, architecture and landscape design in public places. Jane Kelly, Conference Organiser,Public Art Commissions Agency,Suite 22, Guildhall Buildings,Navigation Street,Birmingham B2 4BT Tel: 021 643 4407 Fax: 021 616 1286

The following regularly run courses in landscape:

Peak National Park Centre, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire S30 2WB Tel 0433 30373

Ironbridge Institute, Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Ironbridge, Telford, Shropshire TF8 7AW

Department for Continuing Education, The University Wills Memorial Building, Queens Road, Bristol BS8 1HR Tel 0272 303629

School of Continuing Studies, University of Birmingham, PO Box 363 Birmingham B15 2TT

Department of Planning & Landscape, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL Tel 061 275 6890

Centre for Conservation Studies, Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York, The King's Manor, York YO1 2EP Tel 0904 433963 Fax 0904 433949

CREATING LIVEABLE CITIES, TRUST FOR URBAN ECOLOGY CONFERENCE, 2/3 March 1990

The Guildhall in Bath was possibly not the most appropriate setting for this TRUE conference on urban ecology and development. David Goode in the opening pages set the global context: there are now 50 cities in the world with over 4 million inhabitants; as the population explodes, by 2025 there will be 135 megacities of over 20 million; and he compared the modern city to a huge, filthy, palpitating organism, engulfing resources and vomiting waste. As he did so, Bean Nash, in a portrait over the podium, looked down his long fastidious nose with singular distaste.

The great Master of Ceremonies may have noted further lapses in elegance and fine breeding in what followed. For though the event was organised as a kind of match-making occasion between ecologists and developers, ecology, even urban ecology, it has to be admitted, is still a bit of a rustic wench, and developers, well, they're dreadfully tainted with commerce.

The wench (not without connections of quality and rank) displayed her charms thus: ecologists have a vital role to play in the whole of the planning process, and not just in assessment (Tony Bradshaw); they plant trees, etc, that put up the value of property (everyone); they can make orchids grow on a substrate of crushed tower block (John Handley, who apologised for mentioning it once again); can make orchids grow almost anywhere

(everyone had a slide of an orchid); can bed down happily with developers, provided there are planners to make the arrangements and show them how to go about it (Mark Lintell, LUC); can even be developers, so useful do developers find them (John Newton, Rosehaugh); and..er..oh yes, they plant trees, etc that put up the value of property.

And a very pretty dimpled display of coquetry it was.

Two fine young gallants from the development industry, Hartley Booth of British Urban Development, and Rob Clarke of Royco plc, were doubtless flattered by these attentions, but were not exactly encouraging. They acknowledged the desirability, the necessity, even the economic value of ecological considerations, but there were, unfortunately, constraints. Location, said Mr Booth, was the main one, for who can afford ecology in Wolverhamapton? Mr Clarke was even more brutally honest: he was wedded already - to his shareholders. Well! However (ahem), some sort of arrangement could be arrived at. What was needed was a spot of planning, positive planning that is, with some planning gain as the result. And he described a scheme where just such an arrangement had worked perfectly - Watermead housing estate in Aylesbury, where 120 acres were included for wildlife and community benefit, with a lake for watersports, a band-stand on an island, a hill or two (the site was deemed rather flat to begin with), formal water gardens and a dry ski slope. The people who lived there felt permanently on holiday. A paradise. And everyone who'd been involved in the scheme was happy. Perhaps Mr Booth's Rainham Marshes venture will be as successful. There was a certain amount of pouting among the ecologists at all this. A marriage of convenience was one thing, this was quite another.

But conferences (like balls and soirees) have a way of exciting romantic hopes and somewhat artificial enthusiasms as well as occasionally dashing them. At this conference, for example, it seemed hardly to be questioned that environmentalism and market forces were a wonderfully well-matched pair, despite what the developers had to say. John Elkington in particular put the view that the market was far more effective than regulation in securing environmental standards in business. But 'green consumerism' is surely in the end a contradiction in terms. There was also great optimism about what the skills and techniques that ecologists have to offer can achieve. The sheer scale of the problem as outlined by David Goode at the beginning tended to be forgotten, as did the fact that cities are primarily for people rather than for wildlife.

On the second day of the conference, when greater attention was given to practical action, some of these imbalances and inflated expectations were corrected. For one thing, there was much more stress on the importance of involving people in local improvement schemes. Ecology was distinguished from nature conservation as providing a model for understanding the whole urban environment, in which people as well as plants could be an endangered species. It was also emphasized that land had a value in people's perceptions as well as an economic and development value. As might be expected the poll tax came in for a knock, for likely cuts that it would entail in public services and for eroding people's sense of community. And there was much else which time and space does not allow me to tell. In all it was a very constructive conference however bemusing it may have been to poor old Bean Nash.

John Metson

Editor's note: John Metson was in two minds about my publishing this piece as he felt it might give offence - which is the last thing he would wish to do. He is a bit of an urban green himself, and has no disrespect for women however described. As editor I feel that this report is both useful and amusing and conveys in pleasant satire the fundamental tension between ecology and development. I look forward to your letters of comment!



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