

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH GROUP

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH EXTRA
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THE MAKING OF THE ENGLISH LANDSCAPE

This title, alone, will alert many readers to the subject of this note, for it appeared on the spine of W G Hoskins' most celebrated popular work, which has brought a whole generation closer to lanscape understanding.

In an atmosphere of celebration uncommon in academic circles, the Department of Continuing Education at the University of Oxford recently presented a day school on 'W.G.Hoskins and the English Landscape'. It brought together many former students and colleagues from Oxford and Leicester as well as an audience which reflected Hoskins' influence in local history, landscape studies and far beyond.

Joan Thirsk chaired the day with great skill, and established the undercurrent of reappraisal when she stressed how important it was to know **who** were the instigators of landscape change - a theme underplayed in Hoskins' work.

The contributions fell under two major headings, those focusing on Hoskins' work and development and those drawing on his major themes and these were used to introduce more recent studies in local history and cognate fields.

Charles Phythian-Adams of the Local History Department at Leicester University made it clear that 'landscape was but a part of a wider approach to the past' which focused on a search for local culture and for the home-made civilization of rural England. Notebooks from Hoskins' early period at Leicester suggest the strong influence of Lewis Mumford, especially with regard to the contemporary transition from 'qualitative civilizations' aimed at perfection, to 'quantitative civilizations' devoted to power. **David Hey's** paper on the place origins and localism of family names was a solid reminder of the human stories behind landscape change and not surprisingly provided the focus for most of the closing discussion.

Roy Millward, Leicester geographer and editor of the county series which sprang from Hoskins' classic, added much detail to Hoskins' period at Leicester, revealing archive background to the twenty-nine publications on the county which appeared between 1935 and 1958. He described an academic world, now lost, where the college principal (F L Attenborough) became Hoskins' companion and photographer, where Extra-Mural courses provided the vehicle for field exploration, and radio and publishers were eager to support the growth in landscape understanding.

Hoskins' approach to landscape study, whilst achieving primacy through his adept bridging of academic and popular circles, was very much of its time - a period of post-war re-birth, of valuing survival, and re-stating national identity. It was also firmly grounded in documentary research:

"For my own part (wrote Hoskins) I am not much interested in surface impressions. The three visible dimensions of a building or a landscape are not enough: they may entrance for the moment but they make no abiding impression on the mind. One needs the fourth dimension of time to give depth to the scene; one wants to know as much as possible about the past life of a place, about its human associations, and to feel the long continuity of human life on that spot before it can make its full impression on the mind." (in Preface: **Midland England**, Batsford, 1949)

A most instructive insight into Hoskins' garnering of skills was provided by **Michael Havinden** who has reviewed the exchange of letters between Hoskins and the acoustic architect Hope Bagenal, a partnership which lasted from 1947-1976, and one which introduced Hoskins to building technology and the reading of buildings.

Michael Laithwaite, who as a graduate student, had been charged by Hoskins to examine the building history of Totnes, is still at the task. He

exemplified the development of a methodology which links painstaking documentation to the American insurance lawyer's zeal for buildings revealed through damage or alteration.

Hoskins' strategy for the analysis of local landscapes was best illustrated by **Trevor Rowley**, drawing on material from his unpublished Herefordshire contribution to the county series. But as Rowley showed so clearly, aerial photography has added immeasurably to our recognition of what Hoskins was probably the first to term "the landscape palimpsest" (in the preface cited above). With regard to the topography of towns, a present but secondary theme in Hoskins' work, **David Palliser** also showed how the techniques of urban, - largely rescue archaeology had developed our understanding over the past thirty years.

Fortunately there was room for some critical reappraisal of Hoskins' contribution. This came more forcefully from **Christopher Taylor** of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. Whilst citing Hoskins' pioneer role in presenting the totality of landscape he suggested that Hoskins was a 'terrible fieldworker'. Noting the 1948 gathering near Leicester which initiated 'lost village' studies, Taylor said that the site chosen by Hoskins for the inauguration shows scant evidence of any such village. He acknowledged, however, that analytical fieldwork as now practised owed its impetus to Hoskins and others of his generation.

Drawing his examples from St James Park, Hampton Court and Windsor, **John Steane** showed the significance of the Crown in shaping a landscape which Hoskins had, perhaps too often, credited to the common man. This paper, together with 'The concluding reappraisal of Hoskins' identification of 'The Great Rebuilding' by **Malcolm Airs** suggested the diversity of approaches which have built from his work.

Landscape research has developed from forked roots to several original stems. Hoskins was described as being concerned with the totality of landscape and the great generaliser. Since his first major impact on historical and geographical research and more public visions of landscape through to the 1970's, it is inevitable that a generation of students has probed deeper and, in passing, sub-divided the field still further. Whether in doing so they have lost touch with Hoskins' vision of the landscape as a manuscript to be enjoyed is an open question.

What is clear, is that Hoskins' approach to the historic landscape influenced a very wide range of observers and interpreters engaged in the preparation of guides, waymarked walks, visitor centres and the hardware of interpretation. Unlike those who preceded, and succeeded him, Hoskins



developed a questioning and attractive method of looking at the commonplace which is now embedded i education and in the way which many choose to use their leisure.

If as is to be hoped, this day course is repeated, it would be profitable to draw on a wider range of professionals who have developed their own paths from Hoskins work and who have taken account of his influential attitudes and questioned them further.

Brian Goodey
Professor of Urban Landscape Design
Oxford Polytechnic

RIGHT PROFILE PLEASE

The journal **Landscape** (Issue 31/2) has put out an invitation to its readers for photographs of 'The Back of Things' and as preface to comments on the wider subject of the less well known I reproduc extracts from their request, it goes: "readers of Landscape know from experience that our themes essentially are the ordinary unspecial run of the neighbourhood aspects of the landscape. We contend that the unglamorous parts of the human scene are more revealing, more interesting even than the flashy and unusual parts....The editors have been thinking about a feature for the future (or is it a future for the feature - Ed) entitled something like 'The back of things'. We invite you the reader to send us photos of the unnoticed parts of common or uncommon sights. Requirements.....

They are looking for photographs of scenes that invade the stereotype and provide stimulus and brain food because they are not run of the mill - I use the older expression. Yet if I were to put before an editor 100 photo proofs he would I am sure narrow that down to those artistic, those in accepted conformations - in short, a short list of cliches which he knows he can publish without extensive caption, explanation or apology.

Let me go one further step albeit sideways and look at the landscapes with which we tend to be concerned. Page after page of the photographs in this issue's listings are those one would expect to find. Yet in my very extensive travels through Britain since I put together issue No 10 I have been exposed to mile upon mile of humdrumity - among which I number the unphotogenic industrial farmsteads now everywhere across the countryside, the prosaic urban edges and edge growth of most medium sized towns (one look at the date style and usage of the buildings and one can guess the distance from the town centre); the repetitive images of the motorway and monotonously repeated suburbs.

These are places that do not photograph well. They may lack any concentrated expression and produce satisfactory images only on video sequences. To capture their sense in a single photograph would require some skill; it might be hard to focus all the sense of place (or unplace) into one photograph for publication. To convey their effect one would need to show them in their endlessly repeating ordinariness. But we should have no doubt that these all are landscapes and I wonder if we pay them enough attention? In my travels I view them in passing while other people live and work in them. How do our perceptions differ?

As if to experience this ordinariness I have perched patronisingly and briefly at a small town in Leicestershire, one deserted by the shoe trade and much abandoned by hosiery. The deserted boot factory I work in is now busy with high tech mapping. It seems a spiritless town of dependent people, but I explore, converse and try to love it. It is not like south London, Reading or Savile Row, even less like downtown Beirut or Moretonhampstead where I live or any other urban environment I ever worked in.

Ironically my work there is to supervise the mapping of the urban fabric of London seen from the air, 1600 square kilometres of semi detached suburbs, terraces, turn of the century high streets, profoundly redeveloped slums (what larks!) along with an infinity of low schools and their predictable playing fields, better residential areas and their affiliate golf courses, triangular business parks and modern distribution centres (I will not call them warehouses). My remote view filters out the softer traces of humanity and leaves me the hard residues left in evidence of successive generations of builders and planners. Though my view may be remote it is still of landscape and offers a most commanding perspective against which the offerings of a thousand landscape journals seem as petty anecdotes struggling to explain the urban condition.

So, I ask, could I send **Landscape** an airphoto and claim that it shows the 'backs of things'. Well anyway, a more considered report will no doubt follow.....this subject begins to interest me.

Meanwhile.....

MAKING A MIDDLE LANDSCAPE by Peter Rowe is reviewed in Landscape Journal 11/2. Thomas Harvey begins his review "In the literature on the 20th century American suburb the built environment has received less than its share of balanced presentation and assessment. [This book] is a step towards correction; a richly illustrated analysis of post 1920 suburban morphology". And who, I ask, will look at England. If you can suggest relevant papers or texts we will print them as references in the next issue

Bud Young
Airphoto interpreter



NEW GUIDANCE ON LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

This request came to me several months ago and is now too late for effective action. LRG members may however wish to be aware of the work they refer to.

"Cobham Resource Consultants (CRC) has been appointed by the Countryside Commission to prepare new guidance on landscape assessment.

The guidance will replace CCD 18 "Landscape Assessment: A Countryside Commission Approach". It will clarify the principles and role of landscape assessment, establish a common terminology, and make recommendations on landscape assessment methods. The guidance will be published by the Commission in 1993 as an advisory document for practitioners.

CRC would like to hear from consultants, planning authorities and others with recent experience of landscape assessment. Of particular interest are worked examples which could be included in the report (acknowledgement will be given)".

You may still wish to write to Julie Martin, Cobham Resource Consultants, Avalon House, Marcham Road, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 3UG though her original mid November date has come and gone.

SLATE QUARRYING

Welsh engineering, environmental and landscape consultants Richards, Moorehead & Laing have been commissioned by the Department of the Environment to produce a report on the future of sites used by Britain's slate industry.

The department's Minerals Division wants the 18 month project to produce guidance for central and local government on the rehabilitation of current and historic slate quarries and tips. The report will also consider the environmental aspects of using slate wastes as secondary aggregates.

A SYMBOLIC AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE

This abstract is taken from Landscape Journal 11/2 and is of a paper by Ken Taylor accompanied by some stunning landscape paintings from National collections. One in particular Nullarbor Edge by Basil Hadley (1974) caught the eye as also The Purple Noon's Transparent Might by Arthur Streeton 1896.

"Images or visions of the Australian landscape have been integral to the forging of a national consciousness since 1788 when the British began the settlement of Australia. A recurring theme in Australian literature and landscape painting centers on relationships between people and the landscape. In landscape painting this theme has been both a dominant movement and a tradition. The fascination with the concept and meaning of the term **bush** has become part of an Australian preoccupation with national identity and purpose. This essay examines the Australian traditions of the rural vernacular, the bush, and attitudes towards landscape as seen historically by Australians with a predominantly British Anglo Saxon cultural background, and shows how a deep attachment to an Australian sense of place has developed as a result"

Would it in the same way be possible to develop a strong sense of place and a deep attachment to it in the drearier parts of England or France. Has Britain rejected its drearier landscapes? Are such landscapes ever the subject of landscape painting? - your views please.

WET TROPICAL LANDSCAPES ASSESSED

Tony Prineas and Paul Allen demonstrate a working method for the mapping of scenic quality in Queensland's wet tropics in Landscape Australia 1992/3. Quoting from their sub headings under 'Methodology' they list:

A universally accepted scenic quality assessment procedure was not available/ public opinion was used to determine scenic quality/ photographs were used to represent the scenes [and they explain that as opportunities for panoramic views from the few roads in the study area were limited, oblique aerial photography from a helicopter provided the only feasible means of photographing the terrain at the scale of broad landscapes]/ a scenic quality predictive model was required/ within forest scenery and small scale features were not included in the survey/ area subdivisions or landscape units needed to be defined to develop a predictive model.

What is the distinction between using oblique views from a helicopter and from high viewpoints? Is there a distinction between landscape and scenic? Is it reasonable to exclude within forest scenery? Would it have been proper to do a survey based primarily on vertical airphotography?

SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: CULTURAL ASPECTS OF LANDSCAPE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY Zd'ar nad Sazavou, Czechoslovakia 6th-11th September 1992

The conference in a House of Culture in Moravia was an unusual and fascinating venue and it was clear that the Culture and Landscape Working Group of the IALE believes firmly that landscape ecology needs an inter-disciplinary approach if it is to understand the cultural landscape. A very large number of papers were presented in English or Czech, with all the consequent problems of translating words, such as **culture, nature, landscape** that are problematic enough within one language, and carry significantly different meanings in others. There was at first a danger that the conference would become split into two parts, representing the positions of the Czechs on the one side, and the international contributors on the other - though several papers by Czechs working abroad bridged this gap. Almost all the major landscape ideas could be observed at first hand in an old Baroque market town, in its massive extensions of heavy engineering works and slab blocks, and close by in the Zdarske Vrchy Protected Landscape Area.

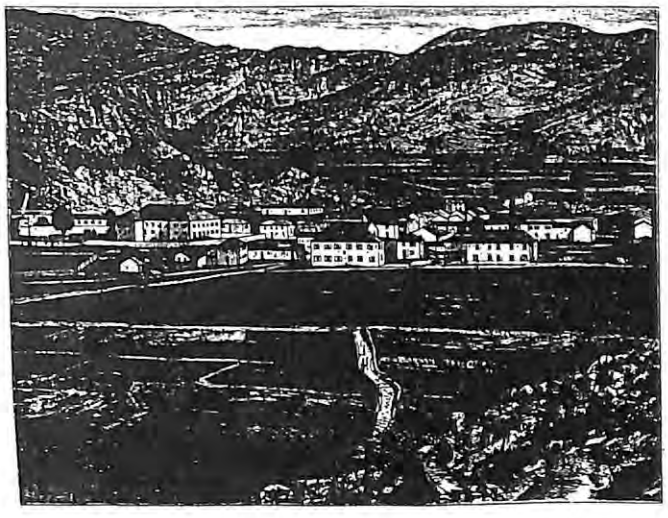
Many of the contributors came from scientific disciplines which led to a common notion that the biological sciences would automatically be the focal point to which other disciplines, from the arts, humanities and social sciences would contribute. That view is one which does not encourage a frank exchange of views, and takes little account of where research findings originate. In western studies the last decade has seen art history developing some of the most interesting new lights on the landscape problem - something which could scarcely have been prophesied a few years ago. The other result of a scientific audience is that they may romantically invest the arts with a degree of disinterested aesthetic insight which few art historians would accept.

Indeed Romanticism seemed to be the focal idea of the conference. Several western delegates on their first visit to the former Eastern Bloc, had a romantic and emotional attitude even to such features as the architectural horrors of the slab blocks in Zdar (or even worse in Brno). These at least were familiar to a generation brought up on the spy writer Le Carre and such buildings acted as confirmation of place. I for my part found myself regretting the speed with which the Czechs were obliterating as many evidences of the Socialist era as possible. A poignant part of their history is understandably being consigned to oblivion. How long it takes for the Socialist era to be converted from history to heritage will be something worth watching.

Western scholars originally of Czech or Slovak nationality have a particularly important role to play. They are fundamental in reintroducing Czech national scholars to the work done in the West. However they may have a distinctly nostalgic ideal of the land of their birth with vivid memories of what it once looked like and this may run counter to the possibilities for a new Bohemian landscape.

One found that landscape meanings could quite wrongly be transferred between cultures. The cultural and class meanings of the slab blocks of flats (panellaki) are wrongly interpreted by most westerners: in Czechoslovakian society such housing is primarily for people who move jobs, locations and occupations. Closer inspection shows that however poor the quality of building materials, the blocks are fiercely maintained and lovingly domesticated.

The Czechs and Slovaks themselves were keen to re-establish a close link with their home landscape, a link which they felt had been sundered in the last forty or fifty years. Such phrases as "People must be made to look and feel" have both an emotional and dictatorial feel - the latter perhaps a hangover from the recent past, and throughout the conference it seemed to be western papers which continually mentioned the ordinary person's attitudes to land. Throughout the conference it seemed necessary to re-introduce an emotional response to the landscape; this could be the basis for an ecological revival. The emotional response was seen as coming from three sources. A significant source is religion, and the role of the church is of great importance in current thinking. Several papers either specifically addressed religious issues, or made extensive reference to biblical and similar material. The aim appeared to be to make a close linkage between the church and ecological thinking.



Indeed ecology is the second source of emotional inspiration, specifically called on by Jaromil Krajca, and is often treated as a spiritual doctrine itself, with mystical and quasi religious ideas in attendance. The third source is art - painting, music and literature, seen in spiritual terms with very little discussion of the popular culture which assumes such importance in western work. A reliance on artists to promote the spirit of place seems unlikely to produce detailed policies for landscape conservation and might even lead to an exclusive romantic landscape nationalism. What makes the Czech landscape problem so fascinating is the opportunity Czechs now have for a total cultural change: new landscape policies for a 'new land'.

Meanwhile there are some remarkable similarities between the agricultural landscape produced by collectivisation compared with that produced by the Common Agricultural Policy; whether the vast weedy fields of Bohemia are more, or less attractive than the equally extensive weed free fields of the west must be a moot point.

Gentrification (to examine another comparison) in those parts of Moravia considered particularly attractive, seems to be proceeding at a rate which most in the west would consider alarming. The exchange rate of the Czech crown, means that property is very cheap for neighbouring Germans and Austrians. Most of the mediaeval houses in the

mountains were said to be inhabited some by 'intellectuals from Prague'.

The Czech landscape, to the eyes of a westerner on a first visit, is a nostalgic reminder of the landscapes of childhood, and the remains of the socialist landscape is being reformed with astounding speed.

The major question to be resolved is the extent to which democracies emerging from communist control can take into account and beware the wrong landscape policies made by the western countries. Western scholars and government agencies are now aware of the difficulties inherent in designating special landscape areas, of the dangers of preserving only an elitist landscape, and of presuming that all conservationist organisations are held together by a common purpose.

Most of the papers from the west developed these ideas, most notably Gert Groening with a paper outlining the love of landscape as promoted by the Third Reich, and David Crouch with his paper singing the interest to be found in vernacular landscape. Czech scholars must be spending prodigious amounts of time reading recent scholarship in several languages, but will they succeed in preventing adoption of an exclusive emblematic, mystical and aesthetically elitist national landscape identity.

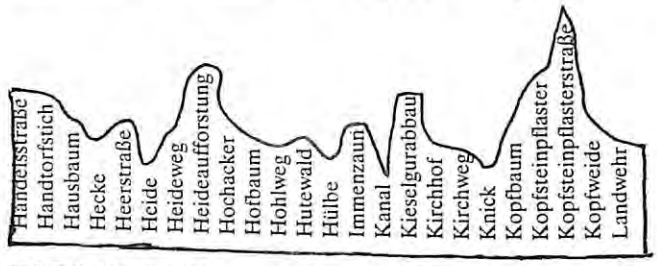
The hope, though, must lie in such events as this. If the International Association of Landscape Ecology claims a central position in landscape which other disciplines may deny it, the promotion of conferences deliberately seeking contributions from the humanities is a great achievement. That it should take place not in the wonderful surroundings of Prague, but in a typical, small town deep in Moravia, was an outstanding idea for the overseas visitors.

Peter Howard



Beispiele für historische Kulturlandschaftsteile

All from a list of examples of historical cultural landscapes presented without explanation in a paper by Hans Herman Wobse see Garten Und Landschaft 6/92...and there's more! "Historic cultural landscapes are worth conserving for a number of reasons. They provide information about the past relationship between man and nature and provide a picture of the life and environment of earlier generations thereby giving a sense of continuity with the past" - from the english summary.



NATIONALIST LANDSCAPES

In his conference report from Czechoslovakia Peter Howard detects murmurs of a 'new emblematic, mystical, esthetically elitist, national landscape identity' and sees inherent dangers. Landscape Journal 11/1 publishes a paper on the political aspects of garden culture: 'Every garden a munition plant' reads a poster caption. 'Some notes on the mania for native plants in Germany' in Landscape Journal 11/2 considers the national landscape and its link with National Socialism in 1940 along with the authors' disquiet with contemporary expressions of similar feeling regarding alien plants. It relates the following which I quote from page 122.

According to the "Landscape Rules", settlement and landscape formation were a prerequisite for the full expression of German Zeitgeist (spirit of the times). In its introduction "Landscape Rules" ascribes the destruction of landscape in the East (parts of Poland annexed by Germany) to the inability of foreign people. This inability is compared with the (culturally highly evolved) Teutonic German whose native land is proof of one's harmonic relationship to nature:

> For Teutonic German man, dealing with nature is a deep need of life. In his old native land and in the areas which he has settled and formed with the vigour of his people (Volkskraft) over the generations, a harmonious picture of farmyard and garden, of settlement, of fields and landscape has become a criterion of his being... If the new living spaces are to become a home to the settlers then the well planned and close to nature design of the landscape is a prerequisite (Allgemeine Anordung, Landschaftsregeln 1942 p51)

The elimination of foreign people is also explicitly mentioned.

It is not sufficient to settle our people in those areas and to eliminate foreign people (Volkstum). Instead the area must be given a structure which corresponds to our type of being (Wesenart) so that the Teutonic German person will feel himself to be at home, so that he settles there and is ready to love and defend his new home. (Reference as before)

A very important aspect of this planned landscape was the exclusive use of native plants.....

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Now all this is pretty strong stuff and likely to make you think of instances that merit research for example: the Blois Conference which considered national, regional landscape identity in the face of the pervasive international cultural monotone; the theory and practice of the Kibbutz settlement; 'landscape loss trauma' among people driven from their homes in Bosnia and other places; even the impact of the books about England by John Massingham and other Batsford writers in 1934-45 whose aim was to strengthen national identity based on the 'true values' of landscape and country people.

PLANNING AT A TIME OF SOCIAL CHANGE

I am grateful to Garten und Landschaft 9/92 for this english summary of a paper by Brigitte Schmelzer and Jurgen Faiss

Opencast lignite mining, power generation and the chemical industry have together turned the region to the south of Leipzig into one of the most polluted areas within the Germany's new federal states, indeed parts of this landscape have become symbols of its ecological catastrophe. But it is here, where the pressure of economic and social problems threaten to result in further burdens for the already over exploited landscape, that there is a need for an early input from the landscape planner. In autumn 1991, the authors' planning team was commissioned by four local authorities within the Borna district, some 15-25 km south of Leipzig, to prepare a landscape plan. A first visit to the study area stimulated feelings of equal disgust and fascination. But alongside the mining wasteland, some relics of the natural riverine landscape were still to be found.

Within the Leipzig region, the network of river courses and their flood plains provide the overall structure to the landscape. They have long been, not only a focus of nature romanticism but also, the carrier of the main landscape ecological functions. However, as a result of the lignite mining, river courses were realigned and massive drainage measures undertaken. Until measures can be undertaken to improve the water quality, the restoration of the landscape can be nothing more than a cosmetic measure. Although there is much nostalgia for the traditional cultural landscape, it is the question whether the approach to renewal will involve a new beginning or merely a continuation. The answer lies in finding a compromise between what is desirable, what is technically possible and what can be afforded. Nevertheless, even though the flooding of the remaining excavations may appear to be the cheapest solution, some land should be left for other solutions which provide some links with the history of this landscape. What is certain, though, is the need for afforestation. The commissioning of a group of planners from the west with preparing a landscape plan so soon after unification resulted in a number of problems. Even obtaining survey data from the various public bodies was difficult. Resolving the question of soil contamination is a still greater problem. Preparing the landscape plan has not been helped by the fact that the development plan is being prepared in parallel and realities of development pressures are threatening to overtake both.

THE DEHESAS IN ANDALUSIA

This part summary of an article in Garten und Landschaft 1992/6 illumines one of many special landscapes in Europe. My thanks to G+L. and the author Andrea Hessel. A map of the distribution of similar areas of well treed rangeland in Spain is given in the article.



Before the Romans came to the Iberian peninsula the landscape was characterised by dense oak woods which stretched from the Pyranees to Gibraltar. During the course of the centuries the more or less intensively managed cultural landscape of the dehesas developed out of this woodland. The dehesas represent a highly stable and productive mixed-use modification of this mediterranean evergreen broadleaved woodland with its characteristic tree the holm oak (Quercus ilex). With an average density of 30 to 40 trees per hectare they also provide sufficient space for extensive grazing as well as small scale arable use.

During the sixties the dehesas suffered a deep-seated economic crisis as a result of a combination of various social and economic factors. Because the economic significance of the activities which created and maintained the dehesas was lost, many were abandoned and left to their own devices. Many were converted into commercial forestry plantations, while those which continued to be managed were "modernised" with the help of state subsidies.....

CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL PARKS 1st OCTOBER 1992

A conference on the history of the London royal parks was held in the Royal Pharmaceutical Society Hall in Lambeth. The event was organised by the Garden History Society in association with NADFAS and was attended by about 150 people. **Keith Goodway** of the Garden History Society introduced the conference as being "timely" in view of the current period of change in management of the royal parks. **Dame Jennifer Jenkins** chairman of the Royal Parks Review Group introduced the topic and she was followed by papers dealing with different aspects of park history and a landscape consultant's strategy for future use of parks based on surveys of Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park.

Jennifer Jenkins paper formed the key to the whole day. She described how the Review Group had been set up in 1991 by the Department of the Environment to assess the present and future role of the royal parks. The Group consisted of eleven persons from different walks of life: it included architects, town planners, a former writer on the Guardian, a BBC controller, a member of the British Tourist Board and one from the Sports Council and a number of horticulturalists. Notably absent from the group were landscape architects (with experience in dealing with public open space) and a landscape historian. In their report (see page one of our last issue) the Review Group concentrated on Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens and came up with 79 proposals, of which all were adopted except for two which related to dogs.

Although Jennifer Jenkins continually referred to the **historic** aspects of the parks and their **historic significance** she made no indication as to how these might be accomodated or historic conservation attained.

The Group had not only surveyed and analyzed the problems and addressed the strategy but had also made detailed suggestions such as the redesign of gateways and paving. There were proposals to reorganize Speakers Corner and erect memorial gates for the Queen Mother. Since the historic design of the parks had not been addressed, it is impossible to see how these new proposals could respect the integrity of the site (in fact, even these decisions seemed somewhat ad hoc embellishments).

Unfortunately it appears that the present Review Group proposals which are said 'to have respect for the historic design of the landscape' as a guiding principle may only be in place to silence a potential pressure group rather than to be applied. The reference to historic design would seem to sanction the design of new landscape elements such as neo-Georgian park entrances and neo-Victorian memorial gates without reference to an historic masterplan.

It is my opinion that the Royal Parks Review Group has been over-ambitious believing that it could tackle a most complicated landscape issue without expertise in landscape architecture and landscape history. And one notes that a landscape architect is to be employed subsequently to deal with the detail design! It is therefore a sad day for landscape architecture here - after 60 years it is still is not recognized as equal amongst town planners and architects. It is also sad to see that the Garden History Society has had no impact: their conference on the history of the royal parks seems to have come a little to late.

Jan Woudstra, Dutch landscape architect studying at University College London.

MICHAEL DOWER

Straight words in an editorial from the Director of the Countryside Commission

"I remember being offended, as a young planner, by the ponderous wording that we would use to defend our refusal of a planning application - it would, we said, be "detrimental to the amenities of the locality". I used to write, instead, that it would "spoil the look of the place" - and I did so, not only for love of plain English, but also because I cared about the look of the place and I believed that the public cared too. The job of the Countryside Commission is to care for the look of the English countryside, to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. We do so not as a bureaucratic drill, but for the sake of a public that cares"... and in the same editorial:

"The delightful candour of children shines through a story of tree-planting by a school group in the Peak District. Emma Farren, age 7, wrote: 'The TV camera came late. We had to dig a tree up. Then we planted it back in, so he could put us on TV.'" Children, and the media, are natural allies of the Commission and its partners in the never-ending effort to protect and improve the look of the place.

Michael Dower

HOW GREEN THE NEXT VALLEY?

The opening of the Welsh Garden Gestival at Ebbw Vale in May provided the biennial opportunity for landscape and events experts to remind the British public how we got it terribly wrong when it came to the Garden festival ideal. To the images and long-term planning associated with the German and Dutch events, we can now add a number of consultant reports, including that by PA Cambridge Economic Consultants, which suggest that the British version of the garden festival is ... actually ... a positive contribution to regeneration. More than a shame, then, that having gradually learned a local garden festival vernacular in Liverpool, Stoke, Glasgow, Gateshead and Ebbw Vale, there will never be a Belfast festival (though what a positive venture it could have been), and neither will there be the innovation which a festival linked to an area of rapid agricultural change might bring.

A first visit to Ebbw Vale suggests some of the lessons which might be picked up by a pioneer new urban authority in 1994, perhaps effecting a major link with European twin towns. The first lesson must be to choose the right setting. In terms of landscape design, the visual contrivances which traditionally make Britons believe they are part of a grand environmental ceremony, Ebbw Vale offers few such delights, either blatant or subtle. The random view achieved through the Optrex sponsored eye is typical. But at the superhuman scale nature provides a superb valley, stepped in the bottom and colour graded on the slopes. By allowing for this retrieved site to speak for itself we have a new standard for any further event. In future a coastal site, possibly in the suburbs of a mis-guided seaside resort, cries out for a festival (calling Skegness, Southend or Weston-super-Mare).

The second lesson would seem to be that you make do with a minimum of gardens. Ebbw Vale certainly had feature planting (notably the hillside rainbows and the carefully presented lakeside) but I heard several older visitors reflecting that "although there aren't many gardens, it's all great fun", although there were certainly some disappointed at the thin planting. The 'fun' obviously comes from events, exhibitions and rides, but I suspect, also from gardens which are not recognised as such, imaginative planted and hard landscaped places where the occasional idea may travel home to a suburban plot. Without going over the top, Ebbw Vale tries to nudge popular garden design and plant choice into the next century.

So, the third lesson, and one developed steadily through the festival sequence, is that contemporary sculpture and art in the landscape can be accepted and enjoyed if they seem to belong to the setting. Most previous festivals have 'labelled' and catalogued their art in such a way as to distance the casual observer from the object. Whilst the range at Ebbw Vale was as good as Gateshead, the quality is not, but it was more accessible ... and enjoyable to a wider range of visitors.

The fourth lesson may be one forced by economic necessity, it is one of balance, between sponsored interiors, and site as a whole. Ebbw Vale settled down to a comfortable pattern of often visually dissonent corporate displays which offered relief from walking and the elements, as well as a range of media experiences. The mixture tastes crossed between a bumper agricultural show and a modest visitor attraction. Spaces for movement were usually generous (but perhaps not when the crowds appeared) and there was a wide variety of sitting spaces and seldom the feeling that one was being pushed through a show at the organisers' pace.

Whilst a long way from the high-minded horticultural display, Ebbw Vale continually re-inforced the feeling of a well managed day out away from pressure to spend more than the entrance fee or pressure to maintain an unhealthy level of awe over what was presented. In doing so it clearly touched age and income groups not normally drawn to either landscape or arts innovation.

At the time of my visit in May there were still things to be ironed out and some which required immediate attention. I am not convinced that those with mobility problems can enjoy as much of the site as the organisers' claim. Paths, edges and access points needed attention a month into the season. The biggest letdown is with orientation: access from parking, and the entrance are poorly combined and the glamour of frequent map panels, repeated in the handout maps on entry, rather fades when you try and use them. A convoluted game of themes, colours, symbols and images is played out in two languages to the obvious confusion of most visitors - English or Welsh.

After my May visit I decided to go again, to pick up on new planting, to visit whole areas missed through mapped confusion, but most of all, to take in images which I may have to live off of for the rest of my years. After all, it was a very long gap between the Festival of Britain and the Liverpool Festival, a gap when there were few opportunities for landscape celebration and learning. Let us hope that some cities or towns have recognised an opportunity and will claim the 'Garden Festival' title and the popular enthusiasm that can be drawn to it.

Professor Brian Goodey

ANTHOLOGY

"I had arrived. I got out, to find that we had climbed to the top of a hill and that a cold wind was blowing over it, bringing dust and grit and filthy bits of paper. On one side was a stretch of high brick wall, which some posters told me was a sports ground. On the other side were some patches of waste ground and some decayed allotments, where the last green rags of gardening were shivering. Further along was a yard filled with rusted parts of motors and scrap-iron. I walked to the end of the brick wall and saw below and afar the vast smoky hollow of the city, with innumerable tall chimneys thrusting out of the murk. The wind dropped, and all along the edge of the pavement the filthy bits of paper settled for a moment before beginning to rustle uneasily again. A tram came making its ponderous moan, and I signalled it like a man on a raft seeing a sail."



"The scenery of the palmar when first viewed produces a powerful impression, a certain weirdness and loneliness peculiarly its own, and accentuated by the mournful rustle of the dry palm leaves shaken by the wind. It is seen at its best in the early morning when the atmosphere is intensely clear and transparent, when there is not a breath of wind and the rays of the rising sun illumine the palm tops with a rich golden light. Then indeed the palm forest assumes an ethereal and almost fairy-like beauty. On the other hand a dark and gloomy winter's day when the sky is of lead, when the grass is withered or burnt by Indian fires, when the cold and biting south-west wind hurries across the plain - knocking the palm-leaves together and emphasising their dismal rustle - then the picture is bleak and depressing."

"Once we halted and began to feel that a great depression lay in front of us; but not till two in the afternoon after we had crossed a basalt outcrop did we look out over a trough fifteen miles across, which was Wadi Hamdh, did we realize that we had escaped from the hills. On the north-west spread the great delta through which Hamdh spilled itself by twenty mouths; and we saw the dark lines, which were thickets of scrub in the flood channels of the dried beds, twisting in and out across the flat from the hill-edge beneath us, till they were lost in the sun-haze twenty miles away beyond us to our left, near the invisible sea. Behind Hamdh rose sheer from the plain a double hill, Jebel Raal; hog-backed but for a gash which split it in the middle. To our eyes, sated with small things, it was a fair sight, this end of a dry river longer than the Tigris; the greatest valley in Arabia, first understood by Doughty, and as yet unexplored; while Raal was a fine hill, sharp and distinctive, which did honour to the Hamdh.
Full of expectation we rode down the gravel slopes, on which tufts of grass became more frequent, till at three o'clock we entered the Wadi itself."



"One must say right away that in England, no matter what part one is exploring, nearly everything - except some industry and some industrial towns - is on a very small scale. Particularly is this true of the hills and the country landscapes as a whole. Visitors from more spacious lands must acquire a new scale of measurement in England: they must look for depth, rather than grandeur of height or breadth of scene. There are, indeed, views of tremendous extent to be had, even from the modest Midland hills, as from the edge of Malvern, or from solitary Bredon Hill in Worcestershire, or from the western edge of the Staffordshire moorlands: but in the main the beauty and the interest of the English scene - town or country - lies in its quality rather than in its size."



"More ethereal than the grid towers can ever be, because they are free from the weight of transmission wires, the slender masts of television and radar are things purely of the sky. In themselves they are entirely lovely, and only the little huts and fences at their feet are tiresome in the landscape. They do not overpower either the humanized countryside or dwellings, and an occasional mast rising alone from the wild landscape is exhilarating."

SHOULD YOU READ

* Daniel D Arreola **Plaza Towns in South Texas** Geographical Review 82/1 1992 56-73
* Larry R Ford **Reading the skylines of American Cities** Geographical Review 82/2 1992 180-200
* A E Mosher & D W Holdsworth **The meaning of alley housing in industrial towns: examples from late 19th and early 20th century Pennsylvania** Journ of Hist Geography 18/2 1992 174-189
* Mona Domosh **Controlling urban form: the development of Boston's Back Bay** Journ of Hist Geography 18/3 1992 288-306
* Deborah A Howe & William A Rabiega **Beyond Strips and Centres: the ideal commercial form** Journ of the American Planning Assoc 58/2 1992 213-219
* Sherwin Greene **Cityshape: communicating and evaluating community design** Journ American Planning Assoc 58/2 1992 177-189
* **Our Town** [photographers and writers consider the idea of community in the USA today] Aperture 127 Spring 1992
* Liz Bondi **Gender symbols in urban landscapes** Progress in Human Geography 16/2 1992 157-170
* Jon Caulfield **The imagined cities of three Canadian painters** Urban History Review 20/1 1991 3-14
* Jay Appleton **The Symbolism of Habitat. An interpretation of landscape in the Arts.** Seattle Univ Washington press 1990 ISBN 0295-969407
* B J Hudson **Hunting or a sheltered life: prospects and refuges reviewed** Landscape and Urban Planning 22 1992 53-58
* Nathan H Perkins **Three questions on the use of photo realistic simulation as real world surrogates** Landscape and Urban Planning 21 1992 265-267 the whole issue concerns data visualisation in environmental management
* H D Shang **A method for creating low cost landscape architecture simulation combining CAD with computer video imaging techniques** Landscape & Urban Planning 22 1992 11-16
* James Corner **Representation and landscape: drawing and making in the landscape medium** Word & Image 8/3 1992 243-275
* W M Adams, NAD Bourn & I Hodge **Conservation in the wider countryside, SSSIs and wildlife habitat in eastern England** Land Use Policy 9/4 1992 235-248
* Annelise Brasnaes **The landscape of agriculture planning and regulation of agricultural landscapes in the European Community** Landsape and Urban Planning 22 1992 17-30
* Pascal Blondeau **L'avenir des vergers de La Sarthe (The future of orchards in the Sarthe)** Norois 154/39 1992 131-144
* Vincent Dubrenil **Typologie des paysages ruraux de l'Ouest de la France a partir de classifications d'images due Satellite NOAA (essentially land use in 19 types)** Norois 155/39 1992 pp?!
* Alan Cooper & Ronald Murray **A structural method of landscape assessment and countryside management** Applied Geography 12/4 1992 319-338
* Richard Prentice **The Manx National Glens as treasured landscapes** Scottish Geogr Mag 108/2 1992 119-127
* Herbert G Kariel **Alpine huts in Canada's Western Mountains** The Canadian Geographer 36/2 1992 144-158
* David Wilson **Crop circles and the archaeologist** Archaeology Ireland Vol6/3 Issue 21 1992 22-24
* John Sheail **The Amenity Clause: an insight into half a century of environmental protection in the United Kingdom** Trans Inst Brit Geogr NS17 1992 152-165

GARDEN LITERATURE A NEW QUARTERLY INDEX

We have been sent a complimentary copy of Garden Literature: An index to periodical articles and book reviews. I am told by my senior editor Peter Howard that this is an extremely valuable/important publication and so it looks. The compliment slip from Sally Williams says 'We are a small start up operation. Any mention of us to your readers would be greatly appreciated'. It indexes over 100 English language periodical titles - journals, magazines, newspapers, newsletters and annuals which it lists under a wide range of subject headings. The listings appear to contain additional explanatory detail which will be very helpful. Printed on recycled paper it has a nicely leisured old fashioned feel to it and could double as the ideal Christmas subscription as well as a serious tool for research for those who need to know. Volume 1 No 1 comprises 189 large pages in three columns listing papers etc and 31 pages separately listing reviews.



For further details contact Garden Literature Press, 398 Columbus Avenue, Suite 181 Boston, Massachusetts 02116-6008 tel (617) 424-1784 and fax (617) 424-1712

TOPOS

Topos is a new European Landscape Magazine which describes itself as for landscape architects and planners. The first issue introduces examples of 15 examples of modern landscape architecture from around Europe. It advertises itself as having 156 pages, being a quarterly publication, bilingual throughout in English and German with an annual subscription of DM 206. Enquiries to Topos, Postfach 80 04 09, Callwey Verlag, Streitfeldstrasse 35, D-8000 Munchen 80

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

Professor John Aitchison, at the University of Aberystwyth, Wales is the Director of the above centre which is now issuing a 12 page newsletter 'Protected Landscape'.
Contact the Centre at Unit 8, Science Park, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3AH

EDGE CITIES

The following extracts appeared within a much longer article "No particular place to live" in the Independent on Sunday Review 15th November 1992. The feature is attributed to John Lichfield.

"Welcome to Edge City, a phenomenon defined in various ways, but mostly recognisable by its lack of definition. Edge cities are suburbs with more jobs than commuters; countryside with better and bigger shops than large towns; cities with no streets.....There are more than 200 edge cities in the United States, most created in the last 12-20 years. They contain two thirds of all America's office space (much of it empty). Superficially they resemble new towns.....Refusing to accept they are a community, edge cities frequently have no generally accepted name. Sometimes, they are known by the name of the shopping mall at their centre (such as Tyson's Corner near Washington DC). This edge city, 40 miles to the west of Manhattan, is one of 12 amorphous, overlapping suburb-cities in New Jersey alone. Its dimensions are uncertain, sprawling over the official boundaries of 30 or more municipalities and three counties". [Another is called by the numbers of nearby interstate freeways 287-78]

"Will there one day be a 287-78 Philharmonic Orchestra" - he goes on.

Many of our readers will be well read in this area and may wish to offer a view and substantial research references. I particularly invite comments from 265-80 - or have I mispronounced it?

ANTHOLOGY: THE ANSWERS

English Journey J.B Priestley Heinemann 1934 in the chapter "To Coventry and Birmingham" referring in this extract to a tram ride out from the centre of Birmingham. How often do we read of the urban and suburban landscapes in which we live?

Radiate intergrowth of plagioclase and augite in dolerite, Ingia intrusion West Greenland From an original in colour in Longman 1982, Atlas of igneous rocks and their textures by W.S.MacKenzie, C.H.Donaldson and C Guilford. A source of artistic inspiration. Equally valuable in describing the texture of the built enviroment as seen from the air.

A Naturalist in the Gran Chaco Graham Kerr Cambridge 1950. He makes several very small descriptions of landscape and observations about soil and habitat as it affected them as travellers in this book which focuses particularly on species: an exciting diary of travels made in 1889-90.

Seven Pillars of Wisdom T E Lawrence New edition Jonathan Cape 1940. Another of those books that delight those interested in topographic detail (one could almost map the type of land he travels), not to mention the grandeur of the vision and the views.

Chilterns to Black Country A portrait by W G Hoskins as preface to About Britain No 5 published by the Festival of Britain Office by Collins, 1951.

The Landscape of Power Sylvia Crowe.1958,the Architectural Press. Not literature but firmly held esthetic opinion. Does this esthetic judgement still look good as it relates to tall slender masts - and what about the stubby little microwave jobs?



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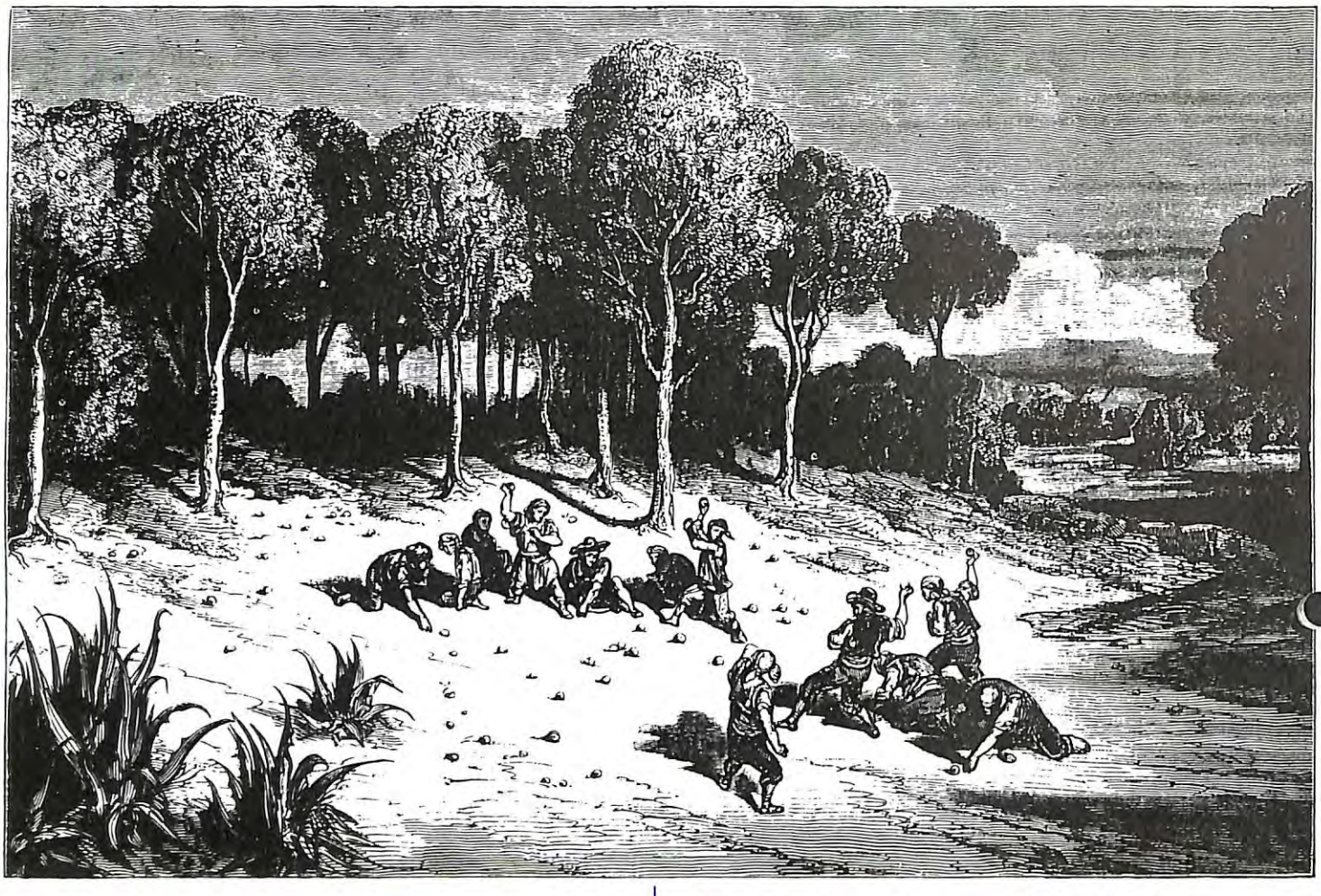
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OTHER EVENTS

11-14 January 1993 Course **Planting and the upkeep of old gardens** Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, The King's Manor, York YO1 2EP Tel 0904 433987



TWO LRG CONFERENCES YOU SHOULD NOT MISS

HURRY HURRY HURRY.will this news get to you in time!.....

16 December 1992 (10.30-4.30) **BLOIS AND BEYOND?** Dept of Geography, Univ of Birmingham. LRG are holding a one day workshop to follow up the highly successful International Conference held at Blois in October. Panel members will include Professor John Aitchison, Professor Jay Appleton, Dr Jacqui Burgess, David Coleman, Dr Peter Howard and Professor Adrian Phillips. Workshop sessions will focus on new directions in European landscape research and practice. The fee for the day is £18.00 incl light lunch, and there is still time to book.... Contact Carol Jones, School of Architecture & Landscape, University of Greenwich, Oakfield Lane, Dartford, Kent, DA1 2SZ 081-316-9100 or Jacqui Burgess, Dept Geography, University College of London, 26 Bedford Way, London, WC1H OAP Tel 071-387-7050

22-24 April 1993 **MAPPING LANDSCAPE** at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth.

The aim of the conference will be to enhance the effectiveness of professionals who are engaged in landscape issues.

The Objectives will be:

To review current thinking and practice in describing landscapes.

To introduce debate on the relative importance of different types of landscape.

To practise techniques in landscape mapping and planning.

To foster an exchange between professionals.

To understand the significance of landscapes to local communities.

There will be special attention to mapping Welsh landscape.

The conference will be spread over three days, with an opportunity for some field work or visits on the Saturday. There will however be the option to attend for one day.

For further **details** contact: Cae Melindwr (Charlie Falzon and Shelagh Hourahane),
Melindwr, Hen Goginan, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3PD
0970 84350

The views and opinions voiced in this newsletter are those of the authors and the editor and do not necessarily represent those of LRG as a Group.

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