It's been wet! Where did the summer go?
Thankyou contributors for your help with the 25th issue!

Have fun studying if you are starting university or college courses. Expensive but exciting.

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH EXTRA 25
LATE SUMMER 1998

The Landscape Research Group promotes interdisciplinary thought on landscape. It has members in more than 40 countries

Landscape and photography in two exhibitions

Under the same banner ~"Photo 98" a celebration of photography ~ are two exhibitions, each nominally dealing with same subject matter ~ the landscape. And indeed the landscape in both cases is the river landscape of Yorkshire, and the limestone of the Yorkshire Dales, and yet the results could hardly be more different.

Airedale: a changing landscape." **Simon Warner Cliffe Castle Museum, Keighley** Compared with John Harper's work (see below~Ed), this is a more conventional use of photography, combining a personal response to a landscape with a documentary approach. But this is not a conventional view of a tree-lined river; this is a series of impressive views of a changing, post-industrial valley, with its wide variety of character, from wetland nature reserve, to road construction, working barges, bridges, power generation and vine cultivation.

The sequence of 33 images starts with a stark, monochromatic winter view of Malham Tarn and goes via rich autumnal colours, bright lights and misty sunsets, ending with another monochrome of a line of trees reflected in the cool, calm waters of the Aire at its confluence with the Ouse. There are none of the conventional picturesque views, like a glimpse of the sombre silhouette of the ruins of Kirkstall Abbey between trees.

Instead, the selected views identify the *lack* of coherence, the fragmentation and difference, of the river corridor. We see sewage filter beds at sunset, dramatic power stations belching out steam into a clear sky above a flat landscape, a forgotten corner turned into a nature reserve, a building site. Even the new M1/A1 link road can be seen to have its own aesthetic. Supporting captions draw attention to the policies and politics which lie behind the changes to our environment.

All this variety of activity is shown in wide format panoramas, which means that the eye has to range across each image, seeking a focus. The

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views are presented in a detached, almost clinical, but technically impeccable style. They are graphically strong, and every scene has its own distinctive sense of light, linked to particular weather conditions. The flooded fields in the valley above Keighley are dark grey, reflecting the storm clouds above. The mills in Bingley are picked out by a low evening sun, while the Embankment in Leeds is a pattern of illuminated windows at night.

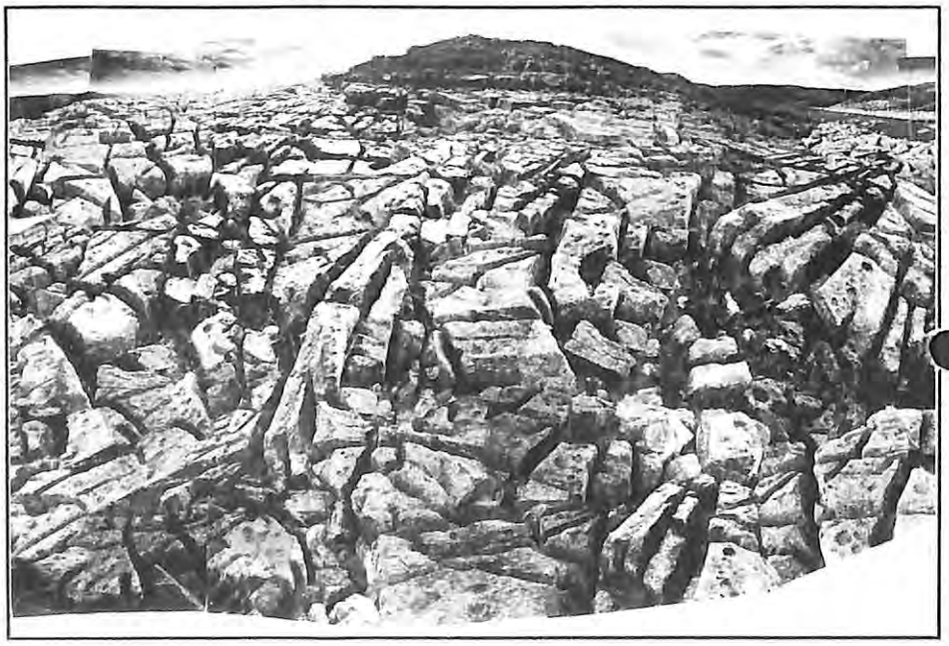
Despite the importance of weather, light and season in every scene, there is a sense of stillness and of remoteness. Shadows play their part; in one the shadows of chimneys located behind the viewer are pointed out, as evidence of an 18th century canal office - we are thus made aware of its absence, just as we become aware of an absence of people.

Simon has expressed concern that this absence might be seen as misanthropy. He has commented that his abiding memory of the project is of emptiness. It's not simply that people are absent, because they are so clearly present through their impact on the land. It's something about the way the scenes are portrayed - so carefully composed that there is an overriding sense of that composure. The selected views are scenes of such industry and activity - house building, coal extraction, docks, rescuing a jackknifed lorry - and yet there is a great sense of stillness, of calm; of capturing a moment and extending it into infinity. The theme is change, and yet the mood is one of timelessness, or rather of the constancy of change.

Anyone interested in a relatively unknown part of our landscape, and the processes of change that are affecting it, should make a point of catching this exhibition - it moved on to the Craven Museum, Skipton (6 June -18 July), then to Leeds Industrial Museum, Stourton 25 July - 20 September and is at East Riding Museum, Hull 26 September -22 November which is where you may still catch it.

John Harper at The Mappin Gallery, Sheffield I had not heard about this exhibition, so was pleased when a friend brought it to my attention. These are not photos in the ordinary sense, nor are they 'of' particular places; rather, they are about the process of *experiencing* the landscape. The starting point for the images is the Dales landscape of rivers and rocks, but these gigantic black and white compilations, 2m high and several metres long, are an experience in themselves. You walk up and down along their length, enjoying the complexity, the intricacy, the movement of marks, the swirling patterns, the glimpses.

These are rivers in all their forms - tumultuous torrents, cool calm pools, debris caught in rivulets - and all their associated elements - rocks, stones, rills, weirs, trees, reeds, detritus, sky. Their length creates a sequence of black and white - of textures, patterns, forms, light and dark, swirling movement, occasional static long views - it becomes an overwhelming experience, a re-creation of the process of following a river.



Some works are smaller (although still 2m by 1.5m); irregular in shape, it's as though you are lying on your back looking up at the sky, with cliffs or rocks creating a frame to your view. There's almost a vertiginous sense of space and sky.

The works are made up from hundreds of pieces of photo, stuck together in huge collages - the fragments of texture, light and dark, are used almost like paintstrokes. Close up they are meaningless, inconsistent and fragmented, but step back and they coalesce to create coherent and dynamic compositions. There's a strong sense of tactility, combined with an emphasis on the impact of peripheral vision. Smaller works show the original view or plot the river course, thus drawing attention to the process of creating the major works. John Harper is a painter, even a sculptor, using the raw material of black and white photographs as his basic material, to create a rich and powerful experience.

Nancy Stedman High Farnhill, West Yorkshire

THE CLAGHAN or TOWNLAND IN NORTHERN IRELAND: RURAL LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT~ CELTIC OR SAXON

Is it really a matter of taste or does culture genuinely inform public perception? Rural planning strategy in Northern Ireland has been the subject of repeated criticism. In 1990 the report by the House of Commons Environment Committee registered concern about "indiscriminate development in the countryside and lack of environmental conditions in planning consents". Again in 1996 The House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee recommends more "focused planning guidance for the countryside".

It is true that bungalow blight has affected the Irish rural landscape, and that round headed 'Dutch barns' combine with Spanish haciendas in depressing uniformity the length and breadth of this emerald isle and increasingly in areas of "high scenic value" where the revenue from tourism feeds the Celtic tiger.

Could it be said that this offence to sensibility is now starting to bite the hand that feeds the economy, or is the threat to tourism more to do with the cultural conditioning of those (perhaps by definition, vernacular outsiders) who are offended?

The explanation or excuse (depending on your perception or origins) from local politicians promoting rural development and planners defending policy in Northern Ireland, is that the traditional settlement pattern in Ireland is dispersed and not nucleated as in England. Unlike rural England, village and countryside are not separated but people traditionally live on their land in dispersed settlements, called townlands or Claghans. The next settlement up the scale is the market town where people come from the townlands to buy and sell produce ~ the whole tier of villages as in England, is entirely missing. There is no doubt that this dispersed settlement pattern is cultural, originating from the clans that controlled Ireland in pre-Plantation days, but it has also been exacerbated by land tenure and punitive laws subsequently enforced. The townland of Ardboe for example, is located on the southwest shore of Lough Neagh and has a land area in excess of 50sq km making it the largest settlement in Northern Ireland - larger even than both Belfast and Londonderry. Yet it has a total population of less than 4,000. Lough Neagh incidentally is the largest inland water in the United Kingdom.

The problem is more to do with how to control the quality of development in a dispersed settlement pattern so as not to change it. Traditionally, careful thought was given (and modified over generations of use) to the siting, design and subsequent improvement of rural dwellings. A saying goes that a man would stand on land he had acquired (without a dwelling) and throw a stick into the air on a blustery day, ~ where it landed, he starts to build his house. Obviously he built it from locally sourced materials so that not only would it fit the site in terms of orientation, topography, prevailing wind etc but the dwelling would appear to literally rise out of the ground so good was the 'fit' ~ constructed as it was from the stone on which it was founded.

Today a bulldozer can level a hillside in an afternoon - something that would have required a generation of family labour. The problem is not that people use bulldozers but that what they create exhibits a degree of thought or more often, lack of it. Promoting sustainability is now a strategic aim of the DOE(NI). Perhaps our ideas of progress have come full circle.

Mansil Miller
Principal Landscape Architect, Construction Service, DoE (NI) Hyde Bank Belfast

ROSE TINTED VERNACULAR AN ILLUSTRATION FROM CALABRIA, ITALY

On a few occasions in recent years I have bumped into the contemporary vernacular ~ landscapes being built largely by amateurs for their own purposes, and without benefit of planning, building regulations, or much legal authority. This happens only rarely in Britain, where control of the environment by authority is fairly complete, although there are places in inner-cities, as sometimes in remote rural areas, where the writ of the planning office scarcely runs, or where it is overwhelmed by rapid and often destructive changes. Mansil Miller addresses such development problems in his article about Ireland.

In Calabria it is different. South of Reggio, the maps are of little use. The steep mountains may not have changed, with ancient villages clinging on to rock faces, where Greek is still spoken, though written in a Roman alphabet. But many such villages are now empty, and their one time inhabitants have built themselves other houses and blocks of flats nearer the coast. So have many others, and about 100,000 people live in "the town which seems-not to exist" (officially). Perhaps surprisingly, these are mostly in blocks of apartments,

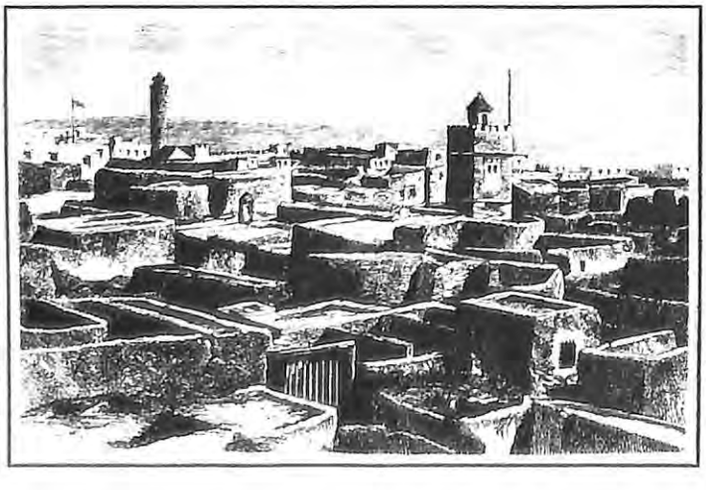
currently four or five stories high, but as they all have scaffolding poles sticking above them, and no roofs, the eventual or intended height is a matter of speculation. Even a police station is housed in such an uncompleted block, situated like so many in a field. For this is a loose and open-ended town, with crops and orchards interspersed with the residential blocks.

Occasionally there are smart, modern (usually modernist) public or commercial buildings, though these seem to have little purpose and little connection with the surrounding area. They represent the success of the region in obtaining funds for public projects from outside sources, national and European.

My guides, architects from local universities, were most apologetic, and drove very fast. Their concerns lay in the future uses of the abandoned hill villages, not in the modern self-help housing. I was reminded of Polish geographers politely drawing the curtains on the coach to prevent us from seeing the results, manifested in new housing under construction, of the newly acquired wealth of local farming families. The roofs made of plastic sheet and the full-size plastic sculptures, had again been built without benefit of planning and zoning laws. Of course such European examples are very minor, for self-built housing is the norm in many parts of the globe, including many of the largest cities.

What is the perceptual history of such places? In the case of people outside the main social convention, it seems that time and distance lend enchantment. The people who paint 'landscapes with bandits' do not usually have to live with bandits. Elizabethan footpads are picturesque, modern muggers are not. Gypsies in Slovakia, viewed from England, seem to be victims, whereas New-Age Travellers where we live, 'are nothing but a nuisance.'

Is the vernacular landscape similar? Can we only appreciate the self-built landscapes of previous ages, and of other cultures? Will we always denigrate those under our noses? Certainly, unplanned English villages only became a national icon in the 1920s, and before 1800 were widely regarded by the gentry, including professionals, as ugly hovels. Similarly artists visiting Egypt and north Africa frequently produced loving depictions of densely-built, dirty and ill-kempt quarters of towns, of the same kind that they most studiously avoided at home.



In the case of professional architects, geographers and planners, is it our own inability to control that causes the difficulty? At home, in our own time, we may be ashamed to admit that some things happen, some places are made and buildings erected, without our permission, and without our control. When we look into the past, or to societies elsewhere, we are glad that their planners did not *have* control. Thank goodness that not all old English villages were designed by architects and squires; that parts of foreign towns are simply built by people with whatever comes to hand. We do not have to live in the concomitant insanitary conditions, nor is our own lack of control brought into question. We can afford to love that which is distant.

Peter Howard
Plymouth University at Exeter

LOWER GUINEA

"Under this name we pass another stretch of the dismal West African coast, not differing much from that which has already been described, extending 1,500miles from north to south, from the Bight of Biafra to Cape Frio. Off the northern part of the mainland, opposite the high peaks of the Cameroons, are four islands in line. Fernando Po belongs to Spain. It is wooded to a height of 10,190 feet, and Clarence Harbour is noted as one of the most beautiful spots in West Africa. It is also one of the most unhealthy; though, were the mountain cleared and houses erected on the top, it could be made almost a sanatorium". Wonderful idea though: "clear the unhealthy mountain and make a sanatorium." Splendid view Ponsonby Fane! How's the blackwater fever? The description goes on then to portray the inhabitants in an un-complimentary, racist and politically unacceptable piece of 19th century self conceit (as we now believe). This, you have been spared.

This little piece from **The Countries of The World** Cassell Petter Galpin and Co (c1890) refers to an island where the editor once worked for a fascinating seven weeks and which he even now holds dear. The island has some of the most splendid cover of tall tropical forest one could ever encounter in Africa or South America.

MEETING THE LRG BOARD: CATHERINE BRACE & MATTHEW GANDY

Dr Catherine Brace, lecturer at the Department of Geography, University of Exeter

For a long time when I was a child the word "landscape" was synonymous with "countryside". Although born in Coventry I was brought up in what was then a village over the county border in Warwickshire and then later another village near Rugby. I have disliked cities for as long as I can remember. Colleagues will attest that when I go to London I seem to lose my wits completely and have my A-Z open at all times. Apart from living near woods, fields and rivers in rural Warwickshire, my attraction to rural landscapes also developed on holidays. Our parents took my brother and me on fantastic holidays in Cornwall, rural Wales, Scotland, the Lake District and other wild places all over Britain when we were growing up. My earliest experience of being moved by the beauty of the landscape was on one of these trips when we stayed on the banks of Loch Tay and explored the wild countryside in the mountains and glens beyond.



Because of these early experiences of landscape it is possible that I might have become a physical geographer if only it hadn't involved any science. Being able to describe and explain topography was one of the best things about A-level geography. I thought rivers and glaciated valleys were much more interesting than Christaller's models (I still do). However, when I got to Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education to do my degree I was introduced to historical geography - something which I hadn't encountered before. I thought it was great! Paradoxically perhaps I focused my attention on the historical city-building process, and especially on public health and public works. I went to the University of Toronto to write an MA thesis on such issues. Whilst in Canada I started to learn more about cultural geography and how landscape could be understood through its symbolic meanings. I also realised that "Landscape" is not synonymous with "Countryside"! On a great trip in western Canada with my Dad I found the seemingly empty, rolling prairies around Calgary in stark contrast to the lovely mountain scenery of Banff. It was then that I started to realise that landscape can elicit quite different emotional responses.

When I got back to England I decided to do a PhD combining historical geography, cultural geography and my interest in rural landscapes. I was drawn towards the writing that was around in the early nineties on symbolic landscape and identity. My PhD looked at how the landscape of the Cotswolds has been represented as quintessentially English from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. My main interest was in how rural landscapes in the interwar years were used to define and construct a sense of Englishness. I was using a wide range of sources including non-fictional rural writing, tourist guides, poetry, architectural writing, fiction and fine art and illustration. My combined honours Geography and English Literature BA has stood me in good stead!

I am continuing with research that explores the relationship between landscape and English identity in the first half of the twentieth century. When I got my job at the University of Exeter I also decided to set up a new strand of research on Cornwall and I am currently working on the representation of landscape and Cornish identity in the work of Arthur Caddick, a poet who lived and worked in Cornwall amongst the artists of the St Ives movement for forty years. I also teach a course on Landscape and Representation. I hope that this course makes our undergraduates think more critically about the landscapes around them and about why they are meaningful to individuals, groups and the imagined community of the nation.

Co-incidentally, I have just reviewed Denis Cosgrove's excellent book *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* for Landscape Research. Having re-read this book (for the umpteenth time) I am struck again by how complex and demanding our relationship with landscape is and how crucial it is to pursue inter-disciplinary

research on the subject. Rural landscapes have been important to me all my life and I am fortunate that through my research I am able to try to make sense of them for myself, and I hope, for others!

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MATTHEW GANDY

I was born in Islington, North London, in 1965. In pre-gentrification days Islington was a very different place to what it is today. There was still a fair amount of manufacturing industry and the landscape was a patchwork of bomb sites which by mid-summer wore a distinctive purple carpet of willow herb. As a child I was always fascinated with the place of nature in cities - even to the extent of running a mercury vapour moth trap in my back garden (much to the irritation of our neighbours). In my teenage years I drifted into the study of geography largely through the inspiration of a radical Marxist teacher who made the subject alive with political and philosophical possibilities. But geography also appealed to me because it enabled me to combine my interests in nature and society into a novel kind of synthesis which seemed quite different to other subjects.



From 1985 to 1988 I studied for a BA in Geography at the University of Cambridge and further developed my interest in environmental issues. Having graduated though I was very unsure what to do next. I had become very interested in the emergence of green politics in Europe and decided to learn German as a pretext to studying for a PhD. I eventually settled on a topic -urban environmental policy in London and Hamburg - which I completed at the London School of Economics in 1992.

After a strange interim period working for an engineering company in Croydon I landed my first university lectureship in the School of European Studies at the University of Sussex. During my time at Sussex I was fortunate to have the opportunity of being a visiting scholar at Columbia University, New York. The experience of living and working in the USA fundamentally challenged many of my preconceptions about urban form and environmental history and has been the focus of my research activity in recent years. Since 1997 I have returned to London as a lecturer at University College London and I now live in Stoke Newington - a rapidly changing part of London reminiscent of Islington in the 1970s.

My current research interests fall into three main areas. A first theme is the interrelationships between processes of socio-economic restructuring and environmental degradation. This has involved analysis of the historical and political dimensions to environmental management through analysis of water, sanitation and public health. A second theme is the impact of the postmodernity debate on philosophical developments in the sciences, the social sciences and the humanities. This has involved an exploration of contemporary thinking surrounding the relationship between science and society. And a third theme concerns cultural representations of nature and the geography of modernity. This strand of work has involved a close engagement with film studies, art history, literary theory and related disciplines.

Landscape has been a recurring focus of research interest in two main ways. Firstly the creation of landscape provides an insight into the way in which nature is both a physical artefact and an expression of culture. I have explored the production of specific landscapes such as urban parks and the underground topography of cities in order to understand how nature becomes transformed under the impetus of modernity. As a second thread to my research, I have investigated the aesthetics of landscape and its reproduction in the visual arts in order to provide a unique window through which we can examine the relationships between nature, ideology and society. I have been interested in developing the idea of landscape not as an object held in some kind of distant stasis, some remote unchanging condition, but as a dynamic component of human life which is intimately bound up with processes of social and historical transformation.

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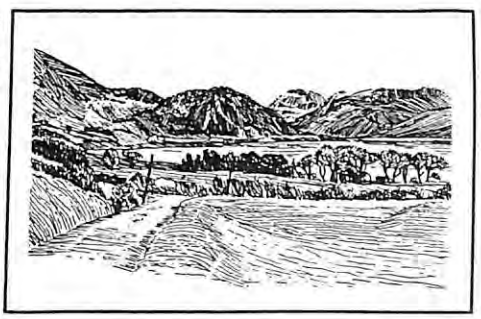
STEEP LANDSCAPES, BIG SKIES, TRA-LA

There must have been a lot of analysis about the visual differences between steep and flat land, land of the plains and the mountains. Yet as I drive along in my car wondering about the landscape I get these Little Ideas (as Winnie the Pooh about clouds*) and feel unashamedly that I must tell someone (another Pooh Characteristic with a big C).



My way to Exeter is hemmed in by hillsides, some slopes in excess of thirty degrees. My views from the car where I have to maintain a fairly steady gaze through the windscreen, intercepts land, land and more land with occasional sky that one might call horizon. above or within larger bays between hills. I am enclosed. Most of the land that I see, I see front on, not in pure plan but well enough inclined as to offer an oblique view of the details of its land use, not much foreshortened. Elsewhere the converse, as the road crosses a hillside and I look out over unseen land and the tops of trees into thin air where the horizon ten miles away barely registers. Exposure and prospect, but nothing to do with refuge except in the psalmic reference to hills: Psalm 121 "A song of ascents".

In places I am dazzled by sunshine as I change direction but spend some of my time in deep shadow. The slopes either side of me may be sunny or sombre, and in the morning and the evening which is when I usually drive, the low sunlight moulds hills and hollows most intriguingly.



By contrast the land beyond, say across the Somerset Levels on my way if I go north to Bristol Airport has a consistency of proportion of land and sky, a level horizon, a proponderance of horizontals. My road is straight and all my views look out at land from the edge of itself, in perspective, with distance foreshortened in ultimate convergence. I cannot understand the patterns of vegetation as I would in a vertical view or in my front-on experience within the hills. My mind is entertained by the continous movements of the foreground against middleground and background. Light and shadow contrasts are meagrely provided by woodlands or a tall hedge. A very different experience.

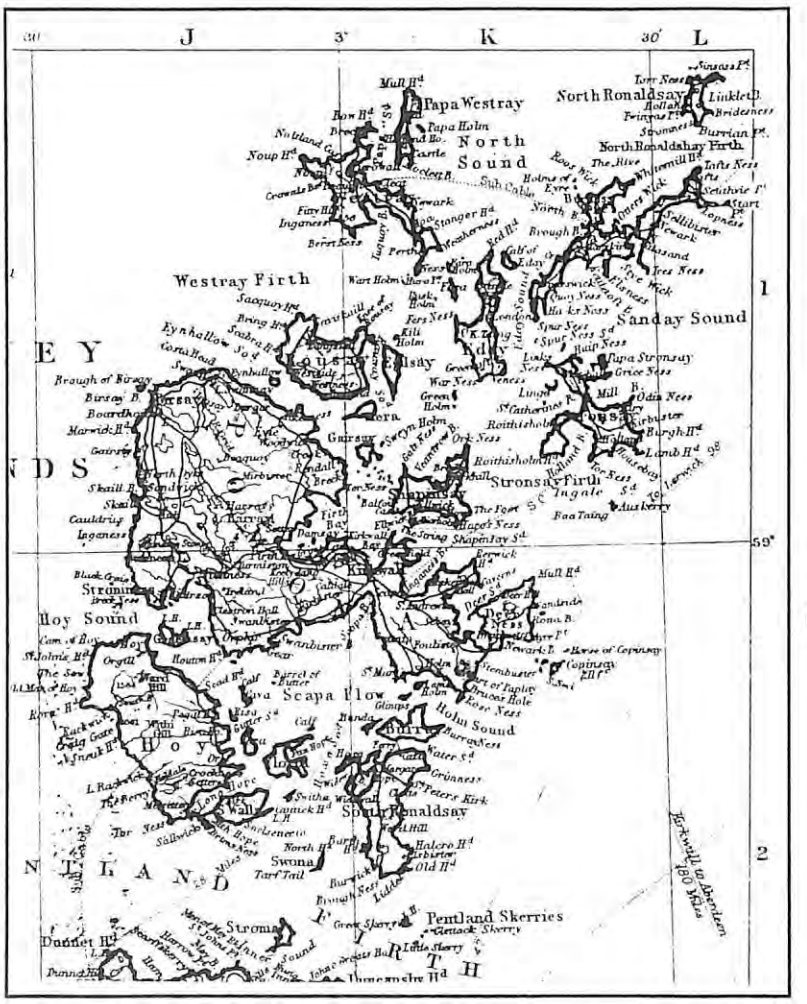
Good though to know that we can all do 'Something Useful' as we drive along humming little songs. One of my correspondents tells me he does his best thinking at the top of a ladder.

Editor

*With acknowledgements to AA Milne's character Winnie the Pooh, whose mild little exploits are deeply ingrained in many English children's memories.

LOW PROFILES IN THE ORKNEYS

Where are the modest landscapes of the world? Where are the places that may have grandeur but no aggrandisement, that have eminences but no pre-eminence, that harbour pride but not the the proud? They must be the *gemeinschaft* landscapes, where decisions are made locally, where people meet face-to-face, where power and especially the symbols of power, are restrained. In the industrialised western world they have either disappeared or remain as pockets, or they are on the peripheries, the 'Celtic fringe' or, even, beyond.



I like to think that Orkney lies beyond. Over time it has probably moved, back and forth, within and without, or perhaps I should say outwith, the 'Lowlands beyond the Highlands', islands of low profile. Grandeur in Orkney arises from the sheer physical presence of the natural: in its west facing, gale-facing, sea cliffs vertical for over a thousand feet on Hoy, way overtopping its Old Man; in its vast shallows of aquamarine in the Bay of Pierowall in Westray, in the perils of the Pentland Firth and the scale of Scapa Flow.

If you want to imagine the horror and the sublime you only have to think of the crossings made by the men, women and children who settled the Knap of Howar in the almost unbelievably early 3800BC or the village of Skar Brae on the Bay of Skar a few hundred years later. Everyone who came to Orkney, every invader, every "ferrylouper" had to come to the shore first - Neolithic farmers, the unknown builder of the brochs that stand at the edge of the biggest sandy bays, the Norse, first with their vikings, then with their Earls, and finally, of this century the speakers of the Orkney Norn, their direct descendants; they kept their low profile.

The modesty of this landscape is reflected in and is a reflection of Orcadian ways. There can be few parishes in the United Kingdom that cannot and do not claim a famous son or daughter, or page in history whereas Orcadians seem to distinguish themselves by what would be taken elsewhere as under achievement. John Drever, writing in 1950 about the island parish of Stronsay says:

> 'No outstanding events during the past century have focussed the eyes of the world, or indeed of Orkney, on us in Stronsey'

And Elsa Rendall, writing in the late 1970s about Westray, having researched the last three thousand years of her island history in some detail:

> 'As far as I can find, Westray can boast of no eminent authors, sculptors, poets or musicians. Her people tend rather to have been men and women of solid worth, living their lives in quietness and obscurity, seeking not the limelight, but rather to do good in their own little sphere, unheeded and unsung."

How is this landscape today? The low is kept very low. To George MacKay Brown the smooth contours of its sweeping hills are 'like sleeping whales'. The ground is so swept by the wind that trees which might obscure or enhance the view, huddle only in sheltered spots. The most remarkable feature of Orkney to the visitor is the sheer visibility of the place. Particularly striking is the intervisibility from farm to farm or hill, from island parish to island parish. Any mark on the ground is open to observation. From almost half a mile away you can count every cow, even every sheep, in a field. Each farmer knows precisely how even his distant neighbour is progressing in ensiling grass, putting up hay or how well his newly-acquired Limousin bull is doing. Anything over five feet high makes a contribution to the scene: the observer is observed, contributes to and has a landscape presence that produces a new self-consciousness, one not felt elsewhere.

The most dramatic aspect of keeping the low low is mowing. Yes, the lawns surrounding the Earl's Palace in Kirkwall are closely mown and would compete with the manicuring of any English Heritage site. The mowing 'sets off' the building, which even though a palace, is but a three storey ruin. What is more remarkable though in this intensively grazed grassy and green scene is the mowing around farms and houses everywhere, vast lawns of plain grass, setting off the buildings, strimmed right up to the walls. And of course up against each and every war memorial easy to understand this, making such modest columns as proud as is permissible in a modest society. But how to explain big beautiful lawns around little electricity sub-stations? a wonder to behold!

The most recent developments in the Orkney landscape involve oil, supermarkets and ships. Big new things. But all still at sea level. The oil industry which is financing new industrial parks and modern community centres has been kept to the low isle of Flotla, and what's more its massive storage tanks are semi-subterranean and 'landscaped in' to the point where they barely impinge on the island's skyline from across Scapa. But there is a flare which must have inspired Mackay Brown's Greenvoe that lividly illuminates the night sky right across the Flow.

The brilliantly lit colourful, big new Kirkwall supermarket is like a ship, come from a distant place, moored against the shore. The supermarket, like the cruise-liner, has brought the outside world in, but the outside world of course is here to stay, in the supermarket.

And finally to the things that do stand high. After the Flotta flare the tallest structures in Orkney are its lighthouses and the Kirkwall cathedral. These too are moored to the shore. While St Magnus' Cathedral may have been modest compared with its twelfth century rivals at Dunfirmline and Durham, it too is a lighthouse, literal as well as metaphorical. A beacon cannot be low-profile and a beacon it remains. From Rapness in Westray it takes an hour and twenty minutes on the *Earl Thorfinn* car ferry to Kirkwall. As one comes in, the entire town of Kirkwall, built around its bay, is below the horizon ~ except for the beacon like tip of the spire.

Bob Webster
University of Central Lancashire

AA GARDEN CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER



The main article in this Newsletter is a fascinating piece on Le Vesinet, outside Paris, by Laurence Pattacini, and she thoughtfully includes information on how to visit this utopian development dating from 1859. The last issue was devoted to part of the work of the Garden History Society. Space did not permit the whole story to be told and this newsletter aims to complete the picture, as far as it is possible, starting with a description of the very beginnings, related by Kay Senecki, who was very much involved as the first Secretary, it also has an account of the considerable conservation work achieved in Scotland from Christopher Dingwall, the Scottish Conservation Officer, and a piece from Douglas Wilkins, the immediate past Chairman of the Garden History Society's Activities Committee on the organising of visits and tours which form such an enjoyable and informative part available to members of the Society. I am only too aware that these two Newsletters have only skimmed the surface of the incredible work that the GHS does. As Chairman of the London Historic Parks and Gardens Trust, I have found the support, help and advice, so freely and willingly given has been, and continues to be, most valuable and generous. I can only repeat what I said in the last Newsletter, if you are not already a member of the Garden History Society, then you jolly well ought to be. You also should be supporting your County Garden Trust. If you need the address, I can supply it.

As most of you will know by now, the AA is holding an important international symposium on Garden Conservation in England, Germany and Austria since 1930 from the 12th to 14th June where many speakers of international repute will be speaking. It promises to be a most rewarding occasion.

Pamela Paterson for the Architectural Association, 25 Jermyn Street London SW1Y 6HP



LOOKING AT NATURE THROUGH THE LENS OF MODERN AESTHETICS

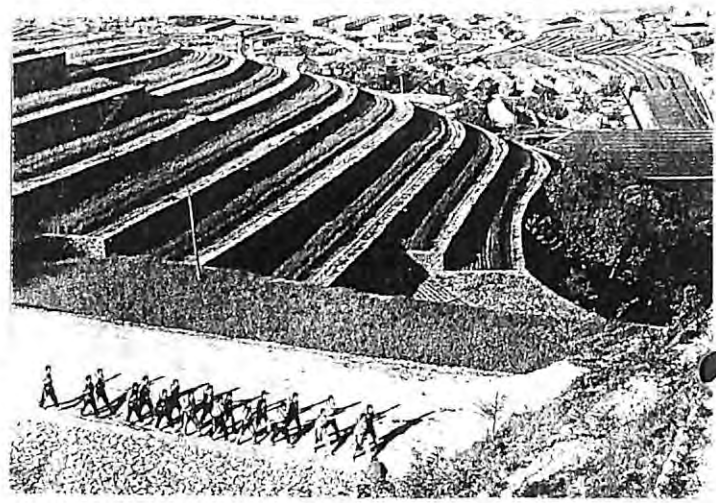
The following comes from Matthew Gandy and Mark Bassin at UCL. Matthew is a Board member of LRG. He writes as follows.

We are setting up an interdisciplinary research project "Between Prometheus and the Pastoral" which addresses the depiction of nature and landscape in twentieth-century art. We are interested in exploring the way in which cultural representations of nature have the capacity to illuminate a series of tensions and ambivalences running through relations between nature and society under twentieth-century modernity.

Our title refers to the issue we would like to place at the centre of our investigations. From the mid-19th century, one of modernism's key distinguishing aspects has been its insistence on the power of human rationality to affect and ultimately overcome all conditions of human existence, be it through science, technology, or a Nietzschean will-to-power. Chief among these conditions to be overcome is the natural world itself, and thus modernism is thought to represent a sort of ultimate expression of the Promethean urge for human society to master the natural elements as a whole and bring them under its control. While not at all denying this Promethean impulse, we take as our point of departure the suggestion that it was exceptionally porous and incomplete. Modernist views of nature, in other words, were in fact profoundly ambivalent, a circumstance that can be appreciated through even a cursory consideration of such quintessentially modernist ideologies as marxism or fascism. Alongside the determination to "conquer" and control the natural world there was a parallel pastoralist urge, not only to celebrate this same natural world but somehow to recapture an organicism through which a society alienated from nature could be reintegrated back into it and operate once again in tune with its elemental rhythms. We find this perceptual ambivalence to be fascinating in its own right, but beyond this we are convinced that it bears a key significance for understanding the culture and mentality of the modern world.

The cultural and symbolic articulation of nature is now emerging a vibrant focus of scholarly inquiry which powerfully connects with a series of interdisciplinary themes in contemporary western thought. In our project we intend to approach these questions through a consideration of the perception and representation of nature in modernist art. Our intention is to organise a collaborative effort between geographers and art historians. The recent work of scholars from these two fields - for D Cosgrove, S Daniels, WJT Mitchell, R Golan, A Bermingham, and numerous others - demonstrates that a shared vision is emerging. We want to assemble a group which will be able to develop this vision and to benefit from the special intellectual energy, stimulation, and insight that come from meaningful interdisciplinary work.

The goal of our project is to produce a major collection of



essays on the problem of nature in modernist art. As a first step, we are convening a special session devoted to this theme at the annual conference of the Institute of British Geographers to be held in Leicester from the 4-7 January 1999. So far there will be papers by **Erik de Jong**, Free University, Amsterdam, **David Matless**, University of Nottingham, **Charles Harrison**, Open University, **Pyrs Gruffudd**, University of Wales Swansea, **Mark Bassin**, University College London, and **Alison Sleeman**, Slade School of Fine Art, London.

My contact address is Dept of Geography University College of London, 26 Bedford Way WC1H OAP Email: mgandy@geog.ucl.ac.uk

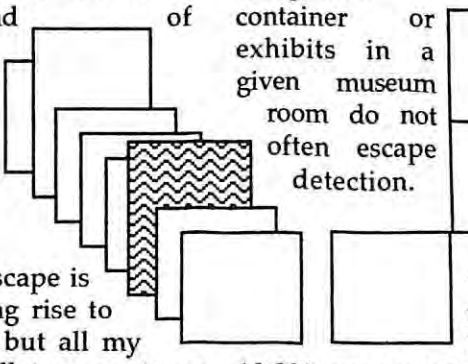
TOWNSCAPES CONFUSE: PROPOSALS FOR A SYSTEM OF URBAN ORIENTATION

Either you know your way about an urban locality or you do not. It's obvious, but there is a distinction, Catherine Brace with her A-Z in London will tell you so.

Those who do know, have a personal navigation system a bump of direction, which has been much investigated. Perhaps because the brain works at incredible speed the exact nature of the system remains unclear but its key feature is a very large number of memorised cues (flower shop, archway, fire station) which predict on the next route section. We like to think that aboriginals have

the instinct but then they don't have the towns.

Those who do not know are at a disadvantage first because for them the townscape is uninformative. What might otherwise serve as a cue is meaningless and street names do not appear as required. And then, the abundance of high verticals shuts out the rest of the environment and presents the wrong kind of information. Arguably the townscape throws up an opaque barrier that defies the best navigational efforts even of those whose powers of inference have been sharpened by the daily delivery of goods.

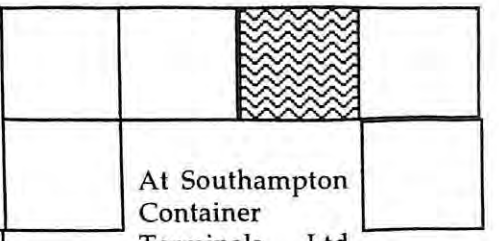


A case can even be made that the townscape is *in itself* oppressive and affective, giving rise to confused behaviour. Alain ('I am sane but all my main characters are mad") Robbe Grillet suggests as much quite disturbingly in "Dans Le Labyrinthe" but empirical confirmation has not appeared.

Even so newcomers to town, provided they set a destination in context before setting out to it, should come through satisfactorily if armed with a street map. Not everyone succeeds on the day, and townscape barriers with their implied conflict between the horizontal plane of the map and the perceived vertical plane lead to some surprising failures. Admitting this, many local authorities have adopted signposts which work well in the Vatican Museum or in hospitals but which in towns do no better than waft visitors vaguely in the right direction. Council Offices, Shopping, Museum, Quay, Toilets. Disorientation, meantime, is supposedly stress free fun and does not really cost money.

My system Marram (which stands for map as raster: raster as map) is a raster type model (as is a chessboard). Cells in this raster are identified on the ground by free standing locational plaques A1, J5 etc. These coded squares are 100x100 metres, one hectare in extent. Such an area is small enough to make a building relatively large within it and can to be scanned quickly. Critically to the scheme the plaques must all face south. Given their constant facing, the plaques have the full value of memorised cues in the personal navigation scheme or so called cognitive map. The traveller standing in front of a plaque, now has an approximate travel vector and can follow whatever routes offer regardless of street names. He or she is provided with an automatic continual route check from successive plaques. If a destination is not found at sight, a search for it with the help of existing street names promises to be brief. (In an emergency it is permissible to ask at this last stage!) Each location code predicts on the eight adjacent by columns and rows and on all others in the grid: for example from K22, M19 will be southeasterly or right-and-back some 400 metres off while J29 will be 700 metres off north by west, left of straight ahead. You will see this better with a numbered chess board sketch. Location codes would be carried on tourist and other literature.

Comparable systems, freight consignments in a designated container or exhibits in a given museum room do not often escape detection.



At Southampton Container Terminals Ltd "landside operations" deal with numbers and a budget beyond a Hollywood epic. There are over 10,000 twenty foot equivalent units, "teu", (but actually container sized objects or spaces for them) present at a given time and throughputs of 3000 such objects occur in 24 hours. The whereabouts of every container is crucially important whether for customs purposes or for prompt loading onto the right ship. Their three dimensional position is fed into a computer, so that the straddle carrier knows exactly where to go to pick up. It's glitch free! So it could be with coded locations in a city area. A great saving on time and in frustration. The 3D component would hardly be necessary here.

Whether this system works or not, the scheme's derivation from theory may appeal to environmental psychologists. Equally, deprecatory headlines such as *"Urban map baffles astrophysicists"* can be guaranteed at some stage.

Rowland Cameron
Southampton

CONTENTS OF LANDSCAPE RESEARCH 23/2 July 1998

The journal reflected well the variety of topics which are unified by the theme of landscape, and the diversity of papers which the journal is now attracting . Andrew Williams, Stephen Essex and Andrew Pollard of Plymouth University commence the issue with a paper on the 'Ecological and Landscape Effects of Afforestation at a Second Rotation Plantation: a case study of Fernworthy, Dartmoor'. A major landscape change in upland Britain (and also in many lowland areas) will be the

creation of 'second rotation' forests as the earlier plantations, established hurriedly in Britain as a post-war, strategic expedient, start to reach maturity. There are massive ecological and landscape opportunities associated with these second rotations, but also the risk of repeating the limitations of the original designs. This paper is one of the few studies so far to analyse the actual changes which occur in replanted forests following extensive felling and, equally importantly, it places these changes in the context of national park objectives. The authors' detailed ecological evidence will be invaluable to policy-makers seeking to secure benefits from future forest design plans.

Paul Brassley, also of the University of Plymouth, writes **'On the Unrecognised Significance of the Ephemeral Landscape'.** He argues that the ephemeral components of the landscape have a significant, but hitherto unrecognised, effect upon the way in which it is perceived and evaluated. These components, or landscape ephemera, are those which change with the weather, the seasons, the growth and decay of plants, the choice of farm crop, and so on. Their nature is explored, and they are contrasted with the more permanent elements of the landscape, such as hedges, trees, buildings, etc. The importance of these changes is discussed in relation to landscape preference theories and the work of artists in various media. It is argued that landscape regulation and the landscape literature have largely ignored such changes, yet they may have important implications for landscape evaluation and planning.



Recent years have seen a number of innovative approaches to decision-oriented landscape mapping in Britain. Government agencies for nature and landscape conservation, amongst others, have surveyed the environment and produced dramatic new maps of landscape qualities, producing novel and challenging spatial classifications. These include the 'natural areas' of wildlife interest, 'tranquil' areas, areas of 'countryside character', maritime zones defined by 'coastal cells' of sediment transport, as well as a range of more familiar countryside designations. At present, most researchers and policy-makers are still trying to assimilate these, yet the third paper in Landscape Research pulls together several of these maps and integrates them into a policy-oriented landscape strategy. **John Handley and Robert Wood** of Manchester University, together with **Sue Kidd** of Liverpool University, write on **'Defining the Coherence for Landscape Planning and Management: a regional strategy for North West England'.** They note that the range of environmental activity in the North West of England is as diverse as its landscapes. These embrace some of the finest, but also some of the most degraded, landscapes in the UK and yet, to date, there has been no overall co-ordination of initiatives aimed at their protection and rehabilitation. The emergence of regional planning guidance, a regional economic strategy and the agenda of sustainable development demands a more integrative, strategic approach to environmental action. This paper illustrates the ways in which landscape considerations can not only be of equal importance to more traditional planning priorities, but can actually help to integrate and unify them.

If the previous paper reflected the 'modern' in landscapes, then other landscapes are lost in the mists of time. The paper on **'The Ritual Landscape Concept in Archaeology: a heritage construction'**, by **John Robb** of Bath Spa University College, furnishes a critique of recent trends associated with the identification of ritual landscapes. This concept represents a departure from more conventional studies of monuments and sites concerned with classification, dating and political territories, by focusing on 'sacred' tracts supposed to be dedicated to ceremonial purposes by an ascendant ritual authority in the Neolithic and early Bronze Age. In these 'ritual landscapes' the evidence for contemporary settlement is often sparse or absent, but that for non-utilitarian structures and deposits is abundant. In consequence, Robb considers the adoption of the concept by various interest groups and looks at the problems and possibilities it presents in relation to West Penwith (Cornwall).

Ian Thompson, book reviews editor for *Landscape Research*, makes a highly original and much-needed contribution on **'Environmental Ethics and the Development of Landscape Architectural Theory'.** He notes that landscape architecture is a profession which intervenes in the environment for a variety of social, aesthetic and environmental motives, yet the values which underlie such interventions have received little in the way of serious philosophical investigation. This paper seeks to examine the position of landscape architecture as a discipline and a profession with regard to the competing theories of environmental ethics which have emerged in the second half of this century. The main argument of the paper is that landscape design theory has been held in tension by anthropocentric and ecocentric beliefs,

that is the desire to impose human order and creativity on landscapes and the respect for the natural world and its intricate processes of renewal. The author suggests that these tensions are not incompatible, but that their reconciliation is a key task for future landscape architects.

Finally, **the journal hosts its first ever 'debate' section**, something which hopefully will prevail into the future. This particular debate concerns the 'research assessment exercise' recently inflicted on UK higher education, and its implications for departments of landscape architecture. Introduced by the editor, and having substantive contributions from **John Benson** (Newcastle University) and **Kevin Thwaites** (Leeds Metropolitan University), the section contests the view that 'landscape design is research'. In other words, some landscape academics believe that their work as designers should count alongside their more scholarly colleagues from other disciplines who publish monographs and refereed papers. Conversely, it could be argued that much design is inherently repetitive and lacks the requisite level of originality and innovation to qualify as a 'research equivalent'. This is currently one of the liveliest debates in academic landscape circles, and its resolution will be crucial for the survival of landscape architecture as an independent university subject in Britain.

Paul Selman
Editor LR

THE EARTH FROM SPACE

In his recent book *Imagined Worlds*, the distinguished physicist Freeman Dyson predicts that during the next millenium human beings will colonise the universe; that 'in the next hundred years we will probably have human settlements on the Moon and on a few nearby asteroids'; that 'Small-scale emigration may continue for a few hundred years before life is thoroughly adapted and growing wild on the multitude of worlds that are orbiting around the sun. Long before a thousand years have passed, life will have spread over the solar system.' And by that time, our human descendants will be spread out too'. And not only spread out, but genetically divided. 'Our one species will become many'. 'We may hope that one group of our descendants, those who cling to our old human heritage, those who are loyal to our natural human shape and genetic endowment, will be allowed to remain here in possession of our planet...'

Of course Dyson may well be right. But if he is, then future generations of the human race, excepting the stay-at-homes, are going to be faced with the prospect of cutting the umbilical cord which binds us to Earth. How traumatic this may be we can but imagine. Not least, we probably should not underestimate the hurt which will be sustained by human psyches as a result of being definitively separated from the homely landscapes of Earth. Of course, both on and off the surface of our planet, human beings have ventured into hostile environments, but always with the possibility of return. Many people have made their home in environments which seem intolerable to others, whether bleak natural terrains or varieties of urban squalor. But I suspect that most human beings, irrespective of their actual experience and circumstances, at least carry within them an image or images of a sustaining Earth. I have not yet seen a copy of a somewhat notorious new book, *Painting by Numbers*, by the American-based artists Komar and Melamid, but I understand that one of their findings is that for very many people, from different cultures, the ideal work of art is a landscape painting, comprising trees, a lake or a river, a distant view, corresponding more or less to the 'picturesque' formula, but with some specific features identifying the landscape as belonging to their own region and culture. This would seem to confirm a very tentative suggestion I made some years ago regarding the apparently universal appeal of just such images - images of a landscape which can only be on this planet, but which might also be Eden, or Paradise. (Anyone curious enough to want to refer to the article in question will find it in the journal *Visual Resources* vol 5 no 1 1988).

So far as we know, there are no homely landscapes elsewhere in the universe; Freeman Dyon's predictions are not based on any expectation of finding pleasant places, but rather, on human ability to transform barren land through genetically engineered plants and animals, such as for example, the 'Martian potato', a 'variety of potato that lives in places where liquid water lies deep under the frozen ground, with hardy shoots climbing up to the surface and sprouting leaves to take advantage of mid-day sunshine during the Martian summer'. Meantime, the fact that all who have witnessed it agree that the Earth looks extraordinarily beautiful from outer space is surely due not merely to aesthetic judgement, but to prior knowledge that it is a homely planet in a scary universe, and that all those colours and forms on its surface represent 'landscapes', that is, areas of land seen, identified, loved and inhabited by humankind.

Philip Pacey
University of Central Lancashire

EMERGING LANDSCAPES OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY REFORM

This is a LR Editorial article from guest editors Peter Gaskell and Michael Winter.

In recent years, the major reform of agricultural policy has become an international issue, and policy changes have often sought to reflect the ecological and aesthetic parameters of farmland as well as the production of food or welfare of farming communities. In particular, the long standing debate on the impact of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy on the countryside has spawned a considerable volume of empirical and policy related research. This issue of Landscape Research presents the findings of some of these research projects at a time when the debate on the future of the CAP is intense.

"The decision by the journal editors to devote a special issue to this topic is illustrative of the broadening of the journal's scope in recent years."

No longer is the study of the landscape confined to experts in landscape design and management. None of the contributors to this volume are landscape specialists by profession, but all have a profound concern for landscape as the outcome of agricultural, ecological, economic, social and political processes. It is our hope that the papers will stimulate all those concerned with the quality and management of landscape to reflect on the wide range of factors that interact to create particular landscapes.

"Arable set-aside a prime example."

In some instances agricultural policy has created entirely new landscape features. Arable set-aside is a prime example. For ten years now set-aside has been a feature of the European scene, particularly in the intensively cultivated and large farm areas of the Paris Basin, southern and eastern England and parts of Germany. The paper by **Crabb** *et al* presents some of the evidence on the environmental impact of set-aside in England. Also of potential direct landscape importance are the agri-environmental schemes, a key accompanying feature of the 1992 reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy. Given the UK's championship in the mid 1980s of Environmentally Sensitive Areas, a pioneer Agri-environment scheme, and the pressure extorted by HM government on other member states to embrace the UK vision of a greener CAP, **Hart and Wilson's** paper is a salutary reminder that rhetoric is not always matched by action.

"Level of funding pitifully low"

The level of funding of agri-environment schemes in the UK appears pitifully low in comparison with some member states, although, in truth, the proportionate importance of the schemes remains low across Europe as a whole.

"Direct payments clearly linked to upland improvements".

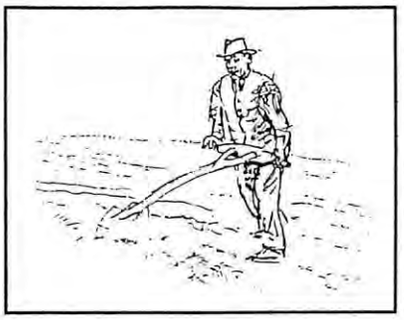
It remains to be seen whether future reforms to the CAP fundamentally shift the balance between commodity payments and agri-environment and rural development payments. **Potter and Lobley** are cautiously optimistic that the reform package which eventually emerges from the Agenda 2000 debate will move us closer to a greener policy with direct payments clearly linked to upland environmental improvements. They suggest that this will come about first in the uplands where the promise of a radical overhaul of the Less Favoured Area policy holds out the prospect of a reversal of persistent policy failures in the uplands. These failures are outlined in the papers by **Winter** *et al* on upland pasture and heath and by **Gaskell and Tanner** on the neglected dimension of vernacular buildings in the landscape, in this case field barns in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.



"Unintended consequences of policy often important"

Whilst the explicit focus of all the papers here is policy, an inescapable conclusion is that policy instruments are often blunt, with other factors also having great influence on

landscapes. The manner in which policies are translated into landscapes is heavily mediated by economic and social factors. Moreover, the unintended consequences of policy are often as important as stated policy goals and objectives. That being the case, the challenge facing European policy makers and policy analysts alike is to create policies of sufficient precision to achieve positive environmental and agricultural outcomes, but at the same time sufficient flexibility to allow for adaptation to widely contrasting local and regional circumstances across Europe.



"Official evaluative research sometimes quite narrowly defined"

The papers in this special issue examine either the *impact* of policy or policy *reform*. Such an emphasis reflects the style of policy evaluation research on which several of the papers are directly or indirectly based. Such evaluations have become a central feature of UK research activity in the 1980s and 1990s with government departments and the EU, sponsoring evaluative research of particular, sometimes quite narrowly defined, policy instruments.

As a consequence there is now a large volume of available evaluations (the **Winter** *et al* and **Firbank** *et al* papers both draw directly from such work, but there are scores of other relevant studies many of which are never published in journal outlets).

"Review of extant studies and the implication of future policy design needed"

We can draw two conclusions from this as pointers for future academic activity. First, there is a need for a more cumulative assessment of these individual studies so that the full lessons of policy impact are understood. Secondly, there is an urgent need to *go beyond evaluation* and consider the implications for future policy design. At present these are largely deliberated by civil servants. There is a role for academics to enter this debate more fully, particularly if local and regional policy solutions are to be found. Here the policy analysts need the skills of landscape specialists among others. If, as seems likely, one outcome of CAP reform is greater regional subsidiarity, it is vital that new policies genuinely promote landscape protection and enhancement. *Attention to detail from landscape and other specialists within multi-disciplinary teams will be required if this objective is to be realised.*

Peter Gaskell and Michael Winter

SHOULD YOU READ?

Planning and Policy

Margaret Hollins & Susan Percy **Environmental liability for contaminated land - towards a European consensus** Land Use Policy 15/2 1998 119-134

Landscape History

M Rosenthal, C Payne & S Wilcox (1997) **Prospects for the Nation: Recent essays in British Landscape 1750-1880** Yale University Press: New Haven and London

Ed Peter Topping **Neolithic Landscapes** Oxbow (Address below) Monograph 86 1997 187p £20.00

Ed Tim Darvill & Katherine Barker **Making English Landscapes: Changing Perspectives** Oxbow Monograph 93/Occasional Paper 3 of the Bournemouth School of Conservation Sciences 1997 120p £18.00

Ed Mick Aston & Carenza Lewis **The Medieval Landscape of Wessex** 284p (1994) Oxbow £28.00

A G Brown **Alluvial Geoarchaeology: Floodplain archaeology and environmental change** (1997) Oxbow 377p £19.95

Address of Oxbow Books, Park End Place, Oxford OX1 1HN 01865 241249 Fax: 01865 794449 E-mail: oxbow@patrol.i-way.co.uk

David K Leighton **Mynydd Du and Fforest Fawr The Evolution of an Upland Landscape** Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales 1998 ISBN 1 871184 12 6 £16.99

Ecology and nature

North West Wetlands Survey Publications: Shropshire and Staffordshire (1998) 252p £30.00
Cheshire (1997) 235p £25.00
North Lancashire (1995) 280p £25.00
Greater Manchester (1995) 188p £24.00
Merseyside (1995) 258p £25.00

MMHarvey & R L Allan **The Solway Firth Marshes** Scottish Geog Mag 114/1 p42-45 1998

Gardens

S Seymour, S Daniels and C Watkins (1998) **Estate and Empire: Sir George Cornewall's management of Moccas, Herefordshire and La Taste, Grenada, 1771-1819**, Journal of Historical Geography 24/3 pp313-351

Gunter Mader & Laila Norbert-Mader **The English Formal Garden** Aurum Press £30

Philosophy and theory

Charlotte Klonk **Science and perception of Nature: British landscape ....in the late 18th and early 19th centuries** NewHaven and London: Yale Univ Press Paul Mellor Centre for Studies in British Archt 1995 VII 198p £40.00 hardback

Landscape meaning

Bjorn P Kattenborn **Effects of sense of place on responses to environmental impacts - a study among residents in Svalbond in the Norwegian high Arctic** Applied Geography 18/2 1998 169-189

Landscape: collection of papers

Special Edition Fourteen papers on **Scottish soils and vegetation** The Scottish Geog Mag 114/1

Landscape and war

Martin J Pasqualetti **Landscape permanence and nuclear warnings** The Geographical Review 87/1 1997 73-91

American Landscape

Hugh Prince **Wetlands of the American Midwest: a historical geography of changing attitudes.** Publ. The University of Chicago Press 1997 ISBN 0-226-68283-8 Price £16.95 paperback

Alan F Arbogast & William C Johnson **Late Quaternary landscape response to environmental change in S Central Kansas** Annals of Assn of Amer Geog 88/2 1998 pp126-145

Landscape design and management

Francis Kowsky **Country Park and City: The Architecture & Life of Calvert Vaux** OUP £40 A study of the architect who designed Central Park (and others).

I Birksted **Between architecture and landscape: rethinking the architecture/landscape relationship** E & FN Spon June £27

Social landscapes

David Buisseret (Ed) **Rural Images: Estate Maps in the Old and New Worlds** (Chicago: Univ of Chic Press 1966 XII 184p $55.00 hardback

*******Impact of emparkment on the social landscape of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire from c1080 to 1760** Twigs Way, Hadrian Books, 122 Banbury Rd, Oxford OX2 7BP

Towns and urban form

Michael Barke **Retail Modernisation and morphological change: Central Malaga Spain** [Change in appearance of shops] Tidscrift voor Economische en Social Geografie 1998 9/2 pp161-177

Robyn Dowling **Neotraditionalism in the suburban landscape: cultural geographies of exclusion in Vancouver, Canada** Urban Geography 1998 19/2 pp105-122

Liz Bondi **Gender, class and urban space: public and private space in contemporary urban landscapes** Urban Geography 1998 19/2 pp160-185

Michael Dear & Steven Flusty **Postmodern Urbanism** 1998 Annals of the Assn of Am Geogr 88/1 pp50-72

Moira Domosh **Those "Gorgeous Incongruities" ...politics and public space on the streets of 19th century New York City** Annals of the Assn of Am Geographers 1998 88/2 209-226

Cultural landscapes

Jean Mottet **L'invention de la scene americaine - Cinema et paysage** Publ L'Harmattan 140francs 282p ISBN 2-7384-6567-6

Technique

Carol Briggs Erickson and Toni Murphy **Environmental guide to the Internet - 3rd Ed** Govt Institutes, Rockville Maryland USA 1997 384p Reviewed in Land Use Policy 15/2

LANDSCAPES OF DEFENCE

How it went The conference attracted forty four participants mainly from the UK but also from Israel, Denmark, Belgium and Ireland. There were three key note speakers, Andy Blowers (Geography, Open University) on landscapes of risk; Tanner Oc (Planning Nottingham), talking about his book on safer city centres, and Dave Clark (Leeds) and Marcus Doel (Loughborough) talking about risk, fear and contemporary culture. There were twelve other participants in two sets of parallel sessions in the morning and the afternoon sandwiched between the three key note speakers. The four parallel sessions were as follows: Landscapes of Fear which largely concerned papers on the perception of urban risk; Crime and Control, which contained papers on legal aspects of landscapes of defence and some interesting material on the built environment of prisons; the militarisation of space which looked at securityscapes and landscape controlled directly by the military; and controlling the residential environment, which comprised papers on both gated communities and the relationship between



planning theory and the perception of residential security.

The contributions were diverse, topics ranged across such topics as nuclear power, gated communities in the US, the theoretical legacy (perceived as a millstone!) of Jane Jacobs and Alice Coleman and the implications of this for public sector housing; landscapes of Arab - Israel conflict, city centre management, urban landscapes and the threat of terrorism, implications of zero tolerance policing, British military landscapes the designed space of prisons etc. Speakers and participants came from a wide variety of backgrounds, geography, planning, law, defence studies and there were even a few landscape people.

Both the plenary sessions with the key note speakers and the parallel sessions generated good debates. As chairman for two parallel sessions I did not see all the papers but memorable contributions included **Andy Blower**'s paper on risk, society and landscapes of the nuclear industry. Also, **Becky Tunstall**'s paper on the implications of the Jacobs/Coleman thesis for contemporary ideas for social housing. In this she examined the implicit and unintended inequalities generated by passive acceptance of a heavily caricatured Jacobs/Coleman approach. Amongst many other things, she described how in certain specific examples the removal of walk ways etc in deck access housing blocks created more problems for resident communities than they solved.

Martin Phillip's paper on gated communities in North Carolina was also extremely illuminating. Martin produced some very interesting discussion of the symbolism of gated communities. He showed, for example, how many community management groups cannot afford to pay guards to police the settlement. In many of the lower status gated communities the token nature of the security cordon is tacitly accepted almost from the design stage. This is such that for many whites in particular, physical evidence of the gated community empty sentry boxes, c.c.tv cameras with no one to monitor them are sufficient ion themselves as they constitute both a symbol of social of status and a visual reassurance that a security system could be mobilised if necessary.

To these papers my co-organiser John Gold would add the following, **Peter Shirlow**'s paper on the underlying roots of loyalist fundamentalism with its characteristic expression in the urban landscapes of Northern Ireland; **Jacky Tivers** analysis of the landscapes around military camps especially Aldershot (where she was brought up); **Maoz Azaryahu** on Israeli security scapes; and an excellent paper by**Chris Spencer** in which he drew particular attention to the problems of semi-public space and the importance in child development of 'SLOAP' (space left over after planning).

The day went off very smoothly, everyone seemed to get something out of the sessions, even the food was good (this is a remarkable admission for Oxford Brookes'catering). I need to thank John Gold for doing most of the work in preparing the conference and Frank Webster (Sociology) and Byron Mikellides (architecture) for chairing sessions. It is intended that a group of papers taken from the conference will form a future themed issue of Landscape Research.

George Revill, Oxford Brookes University

URBAN PARKS FORUM

I have been sent the first newsletter of this group whose aim is to supprt the regeneration of public parks in the towns and cities of the UK by providing a forum for all those comitted to and involved in improving the quality of their care and management. *"If you are improving one of your parks"* writes Saskia Holtkott, editor, *"and would like to publicise it, then this is the perfect platform for guaranteed applause. If you have a problem in one of your parks and can't think of a solution, you can contact other Forum members and ask for help through this newsletter..."*

The steering group comprises Peter Goodchild, Jane Schofield, Alan Barber, Lynn Foord, Theresa Grant, Saskia Holtkott, Andrew Wimble/John Lochen, Martin Page, Mike Rowan, Adam Thomas.
Contact UPF Kings Manor, York YO1 7EP Fax 01904 433902 Tel 433965 Email js30@york.ac.uk

Applause, yes I think so. Ed.LRE.

The Illustrations

A number of my illustrations are again taken from books on my shelves. Notable are the pictures on page 16 and 17 which are from Country Relics by HJ Massingham copyright Cambridge University Press 1939. I include in the research announcement (Prometheus) a picture from a Chinese State photo book; from AA Milnes Winnie the Pooh (Methuen 1928) comes the small picture in Steep Landscapes." The countries of the world supplies the picture with Landscapes of Defence, – Publishers contained elsewhere in the article "Lower Guinea". I am indebted to each of these publishers, some historic now defunct for access to their pictures and invite them to contact me if they feel that payment is due. Photographs and art works are from the relevant authors with their permission.

TWO MONTHS IN DARKNESS

In the last edition of Landscape Research I wrote about my current research into the depiction of night in Western painting.

When I look at 18th and 19th century night landscape paintings, I am struck by the atmosphere of tranquillity (with a few notable exceptions) that pervades them. Moonlight predominates, with depictions of large pale moons reflected in tranquil rivers winding to a horizon. Whilst some are of specific locations, many adhere to Arcadian traditions, portraying completely fictitious settings; classical ruins by moonlit lakes, windmills, cottages, slumbering rustics reclining with their animals, and lone romantic figures gazing into darkness. Sebastian and Abraham Pether were past-masters at creating such 'picturesque' night images, as was Atkinson Grimshaw, whose use of moonlight and shadows has been described as 'mysterious and poetic'.

Yet these images are at odds with my own experience of the night landscape. The offer of a residency in the Grizedale Forest, Cumbria, provided the opportunity to pursue these ideas in a forest environment. It offered another form of darkness to explore - both by day and night, and also confirmed for me my ideas of what the darkened landscape contains - that what is missing in these paintings is the fear and ambiguity that being out in the night evokes.



In the forest, literal and metaphysical clarity fades into uncertainty. Its darkness is both tangible and sensed; there are areas with trees ripped out of the ground and left to lie scattered across the forest floor, devastated like war zones; a silence that is unnerving in its intensity as you walk through narrow tracks dwarfed by towering pine and spruce beyond which it is impossible to see. My drawings and paintings inevitably reflected the darkness beneath the trees, and the movement from dark to light to dark.

Whilst there is a peace to be found if you creep in under the canopy and sit still absorbing the silence and regularity of form, this uniformity and closeness can become oppressive; it's easy to loose a sense of direction. Looking into the density of closely packed trees the usual horizon present in most landscapes disappears. In his treatise on nature, Emerson wrote, 'The health of the eye seems to demand a horizon, we never tire as long as we can see far enough', which might explain why in the dark our eyes seek to make out a prospect, any faint mark that denotes one shape against another - the end of the land against the skyline - providing a reference point. Perhaps this is why I found it difficult not to put a horizon into the drawings and paintings, even as just an interruption to the upright. I seemed to be looking for ways out - an escape from the darkness, and a refuge from the night.

Up on Hawkshead Moor at night one is faced on one side with the impenetrable blackness of the forest and on the other with the impression of being on the edge of a dark crater. The lights from the town below provide a reference point and moving lights from vehicles suggest the reassuring progress of time and human activity. I found the darkness to be both terrible and exhilarating, a feeling which no doubt Kantian and Burkian scholars would define as the *sublime*, and a term which Norbert Lynton tartly refers to as, 'a quickly thrown up bridge linking *civilised* humanity to unreformed nature'.

The security of being on a well trodden path in the forest, yet not being able to *see* where it leads, brings a tension between the known and yet unknown that is intensified by the darkness (and by day an intangibility that is perhaps more of a psychological darkness). It is the absence of this ambiguity in those earlier paintings that I have been concerned to explore and that I have attempted to put back into paintings of the night landscape.

Janette Kerr
Department of Art, Media & Design
University of the West of England, Bristol

Printed here BW only. what the editor thinks is a brilliant painting. Why? "Night, Breasty Haw, Grizedale Forest". Oil on canvas 24"x30" 1998

MY APOLOGY TO JANETTE KERR

In the last issue (LRE 24) I made an editorial error of nightmarish quality (!) ascribing an excellent article to one of our excellent regular contributors, Paul Gough. It was in fact written by his colleague, artist Janette Kerr and came to me through him. By way of reparation I have asked Janette to add to her last piece (cunning way of getting more copy) and would ask you to annotate the article she wrote in LRE24 REPRESENTATION AND INDETERMINACY: NIGHT IN LANDSCAPE PAINTING with her name in place of Paul Gough.

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