Late publication but you may not have noticed. Apologies from the editor. Delayed by exhausting work on an urban land use analysis. Best New Year wishes to you who read this and to your families. The days are growing longer, roll on springtime.

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH GROUP

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH EXTRA 27 SPRING 2000

The Picturesque Railway

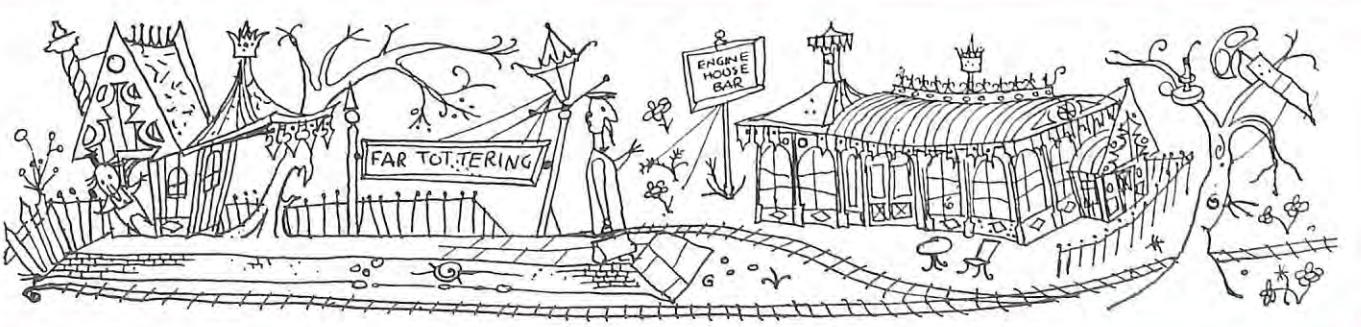
Not long ago, in a bookshop in Lille, I picked up a book called *Le Chemin de fer pittoresque*, or something very similar. It is perhaps no wonder that the title caught my eye; on the one hand I am interested in landscape and in the history of human perception of landscape; on the other I am excessively fond of trains, and above all, country branch lines and narrow gauge railways - railways which blend into their landscape: exactly the kind of railways portrayed in this book, largely, as I recall, through old picture postcards. Such is my enthusiasm for railways in the landscape that I have built a model railway in our partly wild garden, and I may be about to borrow the title of one of LTC Rolt's marvellous volumes of autobiography, *Landscape with trains*, for a second time. Like some of the railway photographers whose work I most admire, I like to step back from the lineside in order to see a train in its surroundings, and I'm unwilling to study a railway apart from its landscape (the opening chapter of my forthcoming book on the railways of the Baie de Somme will be accompanied by a geological map).

The word 'picturesque' isn't commonly applied to railways. Those who, in the 18th century, conceived and promoted the notion of the 'picturesque' would surely have been as horrified as was Wordsworth by the invasion of the countryside by railways. Yet railways settled into the landscape; in some instances, as in the case of narrow gauge railways (more usual in the French countryside than the English, and commonplace in many other countries, not least those featuring difficult terrain) the invasion was more of an infiltration, adopting the easiest route, following the contours, winding around obstacles, for reasons of economy laying the lightest possible burden on the Earth. And the railway came to be seen as part of the scenery; indeed in time it became well established enough, old enough, even decrepit enough to play an equivalent role to the original props incorporated in picturesque landscapes -ruined castles, classical temples, a bridge, a cottage, suggestive of an ideal, hospitable landscape, long inhabited but never spoiled. Not only railway buildings but also railway rolling stock provided suitable structures to fulfill this purpose; in England, the country branch lines operated by Colonel Stephens took a 'make do and mend' policy to the limit, patching up, buying-in diverse and curious second- and third-hand locomotives or carriages from various sources at bargain prices, making no apology for the make-shift and even bizarre apparitions which resulted. And of course with the passing of time the compass of the word 'picturesque' was stretched to include almost anything that was quaint or 'olde-worlde'.

Contributors

Philip Pacey, George Revill, Jan Woudstra, Antonia Noussia, Eleanor Young, Catherine Brace, Paul Selman, Peter Howard, Brian Goodey, Nancy Stedman Bud Young

The views and opinions in this publication are those of the authors and the editor individually and do not necessarily agree with those of the Group. It is prepared by Rosemary and Bud Young for the Landscape Research Group and distributed thrice yearly (dv) to members worldwide as a companion to its refereed main journal Landscape Research. It can be found on the internet at www.landscaperesearch.org.uk Enquiries to the editor at Airphoto Interpretation, 26 Cross Street, Moretonhampstead Devon TQ13 8NL. Emails to byoung@landscapeapi.demon.co.uk



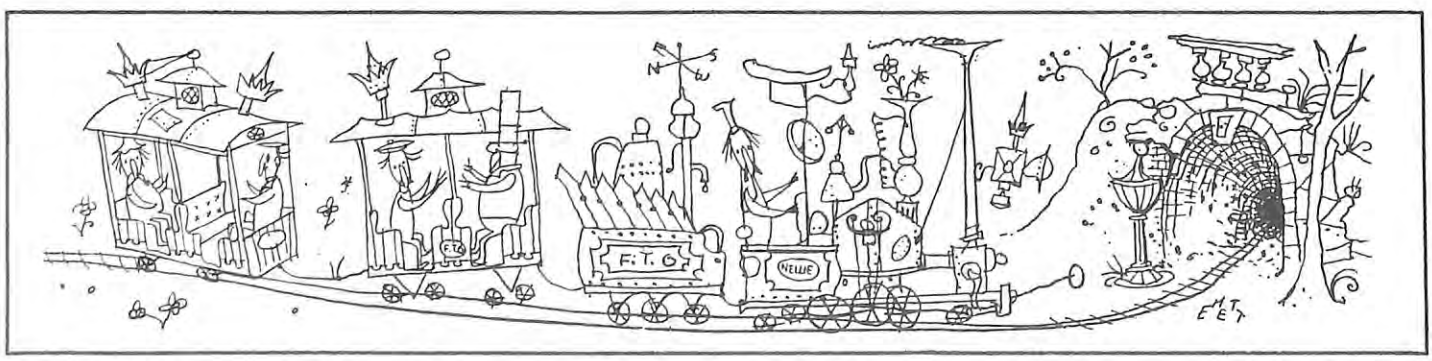
Meanwhile landscape painting had moved on; railways came on the scene too late to be included in the mainstream 'picturesque' landscape tradition - except in America, where the exploration and taming of the vast, wild landscape nourished landscape painting through the 19th century. Here the railways were very much part of the changing scene; they carried artists, among others, to the frontiers of the wilderness, and were themselves depicted, if often as tiny details in the far distance, in canvases by such artists as George Inness, Jasper Francis Cropsey, Asher B Durand and Thomas Moran, composed according to 'picturesque' principles though the landscapes tended towards the 'Sublime'. (Cole's *The Oxbow* uniquely divides the canvas into





"You know, Fred, I rather enjoy the lodging turn."

two halves: wild and sublime on the left, pastoral, but with plumes of smoke, on the right; in the artist's words, the imagination can scarcely conceive Arcadian values more lovely or peaceful'. George Inness's *The Lackawanna Valley* presents a tamed landscape, an authentically American pastorale; at the foot of a typically picturesque tree at the left, a seated figure in a field of treestumps - which at first glance can easily be taken for stooks - watches a train approaching from the distant town in the evening light). Back in Europe, railways had to wait to be admitted into the realistic (in their own terms) rather than picturesque landscapes of the Impressionists. Not until the 1950s do we find images of the picturesque railway in literary and artistic essays in nostalgia and English eccentricity. The 'picturesque' had always been a recreating of a 'Golden age', now it was itself recreated in a harking back to an ideal of a former England, not quite pre-industrial but scarcely industrialised. In a short story by 'Q' called 'Pipes in Arcady', included in Charles Irving's collection of railway stories, *Sixteen On* published in 1957, an idyllic, pastoral landscape, peopled by naked, rustic figures, is glimpsed from a passing train. John Hadfield's *Love on a Branch Line*, published in 1959, features a privately-run branch line, saved from the Beeching axe, serving the extremely eccentric inhabitants of a country house standing in archetypal picturesque grounds complete with ruined tower and classical temple. The New Zealand-born artist Felix Kelly, who came to Britain in



the later 1930s or early 1940s and became part of the 'neo-Romantic' movement, liked to incorporate fanciful steam trains, archaic electric trams, or bits and pieces of machinery, into fantastic 'picturesque' compositions; certain of his paintings, such as 'Miniature Railway, New Orleans', and 'Old Private Railroad Car', depicting steam trains in the wooded grounds of mansions, are (despite

the American context) close to the spirit of *Love on a Branch Line*: he was an inspired choice of illustrators for the dust-jackets of all three volumes of LTC Rolt's autobiography, the last of the three featuring the Talyllyn Railway. But perhaps the master of the art of the English picturesque railway - or at least the one who stretched the genre to its most exaggerated, comic extreme - was the cartoonist Roland Emmett, who brought his drawings to life in the form of the 'Far Twittering and Oyster Creek Railway' in the Pleasure Gardens at Battersea Park created for the 1951 Festival of Britain.

Picturesque railways are things of the past, axed by Beeching, or dieselised, modernised, vandalised, transformed by the transformation - if not urbanisation - of the surrounding landscape. Their memory continues to inspire modellers (some of whom are undoubtedly artists). A few remain; preserved or re-created; sources of fun and pleasure and still, for some, a delight to behold. I work on one most Sundays; significantly, I never tire of taking photographs of it. Though susceptible to mockery, the picturesque railway served local communities, was at ease with its society and an integral part of the landscape; very often, it made connection with and complemented the main trunk routes. As I was writing this essay (on 22nd June 1999), one of *The Guardian*'s Country Diarists, John Vallina, began his piece by observing that 'It is easy to see the trains that puff cheerfully across green acres in old railway posters as a welcome part of the traditional, rural environment...', but then went on to point out that main lines in particular bludgeoned their way through country towns and villages; at Pitcombe, inhabitants of 'a lovely range of old cottages', exiting by their front doors, 'come face to face with a gaunt and brutal three-arched railway viaduct which towers above all the dwellings'; at Templecombe a railway bridge 'blocked the view by the church'. Today's high speed lines, slicing through the landscape with no respect for locality, take the different aesthetic of the express train to its extreme. The aesthetic of speed, which can be enthralling, is an aesthetic of contrast, the contrast of Edward Thomas's 'Adlestrop' turned on its head: the blur of the train seen against the stillness of the places it passes by, the roar of the train silencing the singing of the birds of 'Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire'.

Philip Pacey
University of Central Lancashire

George Revill of Oxford Brookes is new chair of LRG

I asked George to tell me a little about himself and his views on landscape at the moment that he takes on the leadership of the Group. George is now 38 and read for his first degree at Nottingham. He then did a PhD at Loughborough followed again at Nottingham by an MA in Local and Regional History. I am pleased to print this thoughtful personal and academic response.

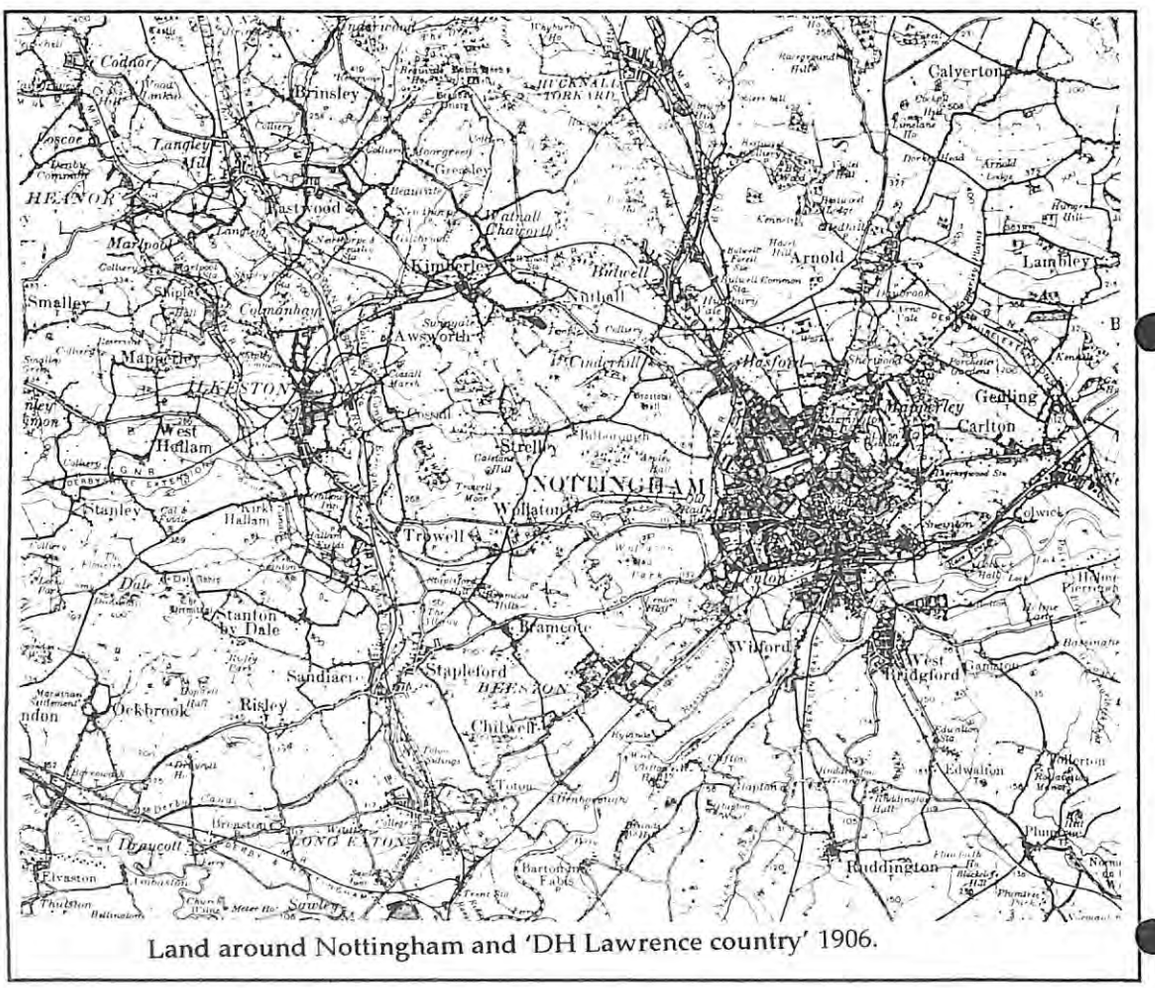
My first encounter with the Landscape Research Group was at a conference on Landscape and Englishness at Nottingham University in 1989. I was a postgraduate in historical geography writing about the community of railway workers in the railway town of Derby during the 19th century. Like many just completing a PhD. thesis, I was desperately looking for something more interesting to study. I offered a paper to the conference on landscape and politics in the work of the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams. The paper seemed to go well and I soon got big ideas about organising a conference on music and landscape. I approached LRG and was invited to describe my ideas to the Board. I did not know what to expect but was more than pleasantly surprised to meet a group including planners, artists, environmental scientists, landscape architects, historians and geographers. They listened, they were open minded, they did not necessarily know much about musicology or music history but sitting round the table discussing the idea they could see a whole range of connections between landscape and music, theoretical and practical. We talked about issues of landscape and heritage interpretation, planning policy and noise control, the subjectivities of environmental experience and the politics of its cultural representation. I attended a number of meetings and eventually they asked me to join the Board...

What I found in the Group was a genuine sensitivity and commitment to interdisciplinarity, something which I value very highly. Yet we are often told that interdisciplinarity is nothing but an academic myth propounded by liberal academics in the 60s and 70s. It is argued that conferences and research projects can be multidisciplinary in the sense that lots of people with different competencies and agendas come together, but the result is that they just talk past each other without ever finding common ground. There is some truth in this assertion and I have certainly attended events where this appears to be the case and have often left feeling very frustrated. Yet for me the value of landscape as an organising idea in teaching and research is precisely its ability to facilitate the connections between different subject areas. I believe that this is more than an uncritical restatement of naive platitudes. On the contrary, I think it is grounded in the very nature of the

term landscape and its multiplicity of historical usages just as it is in the diverse ways in which we all experience landscape; as travellers, dwellers, workers, tourists, in artistic representations, material objects and physical activities.

My interest in landscape came from an eclectic set of interests and personal circumstances, a childhood aptitude for painting and drawing, parents seduced by the dream of self sufficiency in the 1970s, long holidays with relatives on the Suffolk coast, walking in my home area (the old coalfield of the Notts/Derbys border) and in the nearby Peak District, to name just some of these influences. The old industrial landscapes of Derbyshire proved particularly important, in that it helped me to forge the imaginative links between geology, morphology and the layers of settlement, agricultural and industrial history. Happening across an old stone barn, a derelict mine, a weed choked canal or an abandoned packhorse road you just had to imagine why these things were there and what it must have been like when they were in use. I came to know many of the attractive hidden bits of countryside around the Erewash and Amber Valleys. Here neglect and local indifference had transformed the scars of seventeenth and eighteenth century mining into pockets of country rich in wildlife. Yet, it was this same apparent indifference which seemed to pose the greatest threat within the ever encroaching suburban sprawl of the East Midlands. I felt I could understand something of both the affection for, and revulsion against the countryside around his native Eastwood which D.H Lawrence had experienced, and which caused him to rail against its despoilation. Landscape is for me, therefore, essentially interdisciplinary because it addresses a range of senses and faculties, it is seen, felt, smelled and heard, it requires a rational attention, demands practical action and provokes a passionate response.

A concern for interdisciplinarity was something that I found also in 1991 when I went to work in the geography department at Oxford Poly, (now Oxford Brookes University). There I encountered a geography degree programme based around environmental issues at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. The first premise of teaching was that all environmental issues and problems have causes and consequences which are both physical and social. Environmental understanding and management requires an understanding of both the human and physical world and how they interact (so the departmental propaganda goes...!). Thus courses are frequently hybrid and thematic rather than based on strict subject specialisms. Though my teaching interests are in the historical and cultural geography of landscape in the UK, in the history of environmental thought and in art and environmentalism, I often find myself team teaching with soil scientists and climatologists working together in class and co-developing teaching materials.



Land around Nottingham and 'DH Lawrence country' 1906.

Eight plus years of teaching in this interdisciplinary environment has led me to the belief that such an approach does not result in an easy life. One is

constantly required to defend one's own particular perspective and show its relevenace to the topic in hand. Rather than just absorbing the ideas of others, mediated by some 'caring-sharing form of togetherness', my experience has been that one encounters and engages with the approaches and specialisms of others in a constant process of trying to clarify what one knows oneself, why it might be on the one hand interesting on the other useful. For me it is the contested nature of knowledge rather than its passive acceptance that leads to some degree of mutual understanding and some form of profitable engagement with other disciplines. I find ideas of landscape crucial to this process.

Landscape is a highly contentious concept with a multiplicity of meanings and usages both in the past and present. Rather than their creating a problem I believe that the diversity of meanings which accrue to the term landscape can be used constructively. In teaching we use landscape to try and help students understand attitudes to nature and environment across a range of historical time periods and cultures from Renaissance Italy to the Australian outback. In one particular exercise we send students out to evaluate a section of the landscape of the River Cherwell near Oxford. Each group has a different brief including criteria setting out the particular approach to landscape they will use. This might be any perspective on landscape from 18th century picturesque theory to quantitative landscape assessment, or prospect and refuge theory to Bhuddism. In class, students are expected to present an interpretation of landscape from their given perspective and asked to comment critically on the values and assumptions which underlie this approach. This forms the basis for a class discussion on the relative merits, ethics, potentials and practicalities of these values and assumptions. Used in this sense landscape becomes what the anthropolgist James Clifford calls a 'translation term' a metaphor which enables comparison, defining without essentialising, opening possibilities rather than closing them down. My own current research work for example looks at representations of landscape in the history of English music. In order to do this I am trying to trace the ways in which the pastoral ideas derived from classical Greece via the Italian renaissance, inform changing conceptions of nature and national identity in music. The pastoral is important because it connects a wide range of activities brought together through the medium of landscape, including for example, landscape gardening, agricultural improvement, architecture, natural science, poetry, painting, dancing and theatre.

In my own sub-discipline of cultural geography, landscape has taken rather a back seat in recent years after a period in the mid to late 80s in which it was a dominant influence. Yet, a cursory glance at developments would suggest that issues of landscape should be central to current debates. At the intersection of human activities and the sentiments and values invested in place, landscape is singular in its hybridity. It provides a powerful medium for exploration of the theoretical rapprochement between the imaginal and the material, an idea which many find compelling in contemporary theory. Landscape should also be key to an enriched cultural environmental history. This is a subject area in which geographers have, for instance, made relatively little impact to date. It is a key idea which enables one to connect geography's undoubted strengths in critical cultural analysis and in environmental reconstruction. One only has to look at the way in which landscape has been taken up within environmental anthropology to recognise the relevance of landscape in this regard. Lastly, as researchers and practitioners we are seriously concerned with environmental awareness and wish to encourage all to take an active and engaged interest in the world. We have in landscape the ideal medium to raise for all of us the relationship between our own actions and our impact upon the earth.

George Revill
Chairman LRG

ENGLAND OF THE REGIONS

Editor regrets late publication of this information

The annual conference of the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers has just been held at the University of Sussex, Brighton between Tuesday 4th and Friday 7th January 2000. The conference has sessions of interest to geographers and non-geographers alike, and two sessions that might appeal to members of LRG are outlined below. More information can be found on the official website: http://geosun.geog.susx.ac.uk/RGS-IBG/

England is often perceived as a homogeneous and hegemonic whole, but has long possessed strong regional distinctiveness based on persistent economic and cultural differences. To be born and bred in Yorkshire, Kent or Dorset was and is important to people's identities and life-experiences. Recent developments such as RDAs and the mooted regional councils serve to re-emphasise the deep-rooted regional geography of England.

This session offers an opportunity to discuss English regions and regionalism in an historical and contemporary context.

For more information, contact the convenors: Jon Stobart, Division of Geography, Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2DF j.stobart@staffs.ac.uk

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FRENCH GARDENS AND THEIR CONSERVATION

an International Conference held at the Architectural Association in London, 4-6 June 1999

Since the competition for Parc la Villette in 1982 the French have gained an international reputation for park design. This was strengthened by the various new municipal parks of the Grand Project, which were often created by French designers of hitherto little repute, and include Parc Bercy, Parc Atlantique and Parc Andre Citroen. Over these last 17 years or so the French have often been thought of as leading the way in modern design. The three day conference at the Architectural Association set out, not to survey the state of modern design, but to look at the French approach to the conservation of historic landscapes parks and gardens. This area has had little exposure, by contrast with the many studies of modern parks,

From the mid-19th century the French pioneered restoration of buildings and gardens. For many years the architect Violet le Duc was champion of the 'restoration' of French castles and cathedrals, in which they were transformed into fairy tale buildings. At the same time from the 1850s onwards garden restoration with a similar philosophy was pioneered at places such as Vaux le Vicomte, which preceded a whole generation of restorations of French formal gardens. This reconstruction movement led by garden architects such as Achille Duchene finally halted after the Second World War.

Many gardens, including those in public ownership were in real crisis during the 1980s. This is probably best demonstrated by Versailles, which has since become exemplary of a shambolic conservation treatment. Forced by political pressure, and a committee of civil servants without particular credentials, the *architect en chef* feels obliged to recreate a pastiche of the former gardens, rather than an accurate reconstruction of what was there. Versailles has complied with none of the recommendations regarding research, documentation and procedure, recommended in the *Florence Charter* (1982), which was written specifically with monumental gardens such as Versailles in mind. The ongoing work at Versailles was one of the projects which led to the organisation of the conference, but unfortunately none of those involved were prepared to present the project here.

Like French Society, projects as this one are enveloped by a tightly knitted bureaucracy with specific procedures and understanding, generally presided over by a powerful director. Historic buildings and their gardens generally reside under an *architect en chef*, who has been left a considerable amount of control and freedom. Criticising someone in this position would ruin anyone's career prospects, and it seems more important to keep friends, than even discuss conservation approaches. The Architectural Association attempted to provide neutral ground.

French procedures, traditions and bureaucracy were the subject of one of the initial talks by **Marc Schoellen,** who in a humorist manner managed to illustrate the garden conservation world in France, with its in-talk and many abbreviations. Schoellen a former student at the Architectural Association's postgraduate course Conservation of Historic Landscapes Parks and Gardens and of the French equivalent at Versailles is probably the best qualified to assess the comparisons and contrasts between the French and the British system. This talk formed a good introduction to the understanding of the rest of the conference.

The bureaucratic aspects were further illustrated by talks by **Olivier Choppin de Janvry, Louis Benech and Brian Dix.** Choppin de Janvry is the present owner of one of France's most remarkable 18th century landscape garden. He described his discovery of the dilapidated site in the early 1960s, his struggle to achieve public and political interest of several Ministers, finally followed by its acquisition; his attempts to restore the garden, and the securing of governmental assistance.

Brian Dix, an English archaeological consultant talked about an important 16th century garden at Vallerie, where he had carried out investigations. An *architect en chef* due for retirement had invited Dix to see whether there were any surviving remains of the garden, expecting him not to find much. The intention had been to reconstruct the garden according to a 16th century plan, but when Dix found significant indicators and evidence, the ideas for this reconstruction gradually ground to a halt.

Louis Benech told the conference how he and some recently graduated colleagues won a competition to redesign the Tuileries. In a charming, but unconvincing way he delivered the design proposals, which removed the slope from the former palace into the gardens and rearranged the fountains on a more level plain. It had been envisaged by President Mitterand that this young team would be incorporated in a team led by the

Belgian designer Jacques Wirtz, who was working near the Carousel in front of the Louvre. The political wrangle ended in a rather dissociated design with no connection between the two sections.

The lack of an equivalent to the National Trust was well illustrated by **Emmanuel Duchamps** who talked about the creation and regeneration of the gardens at Le Bois du Moutiers, a creation by Edwin Lutyens at the turn of the century with some planting by Gertrude Jekyll. Forturnately much progress has been made these last couple of years with regard to garden visiting, and there are now popular attended schemes of the equivalent to Garden open Today in France.

Even more encouraging and one of the high points of the conference was the presentation by **Pierre-Antoine Gatier,** *the architect en Chef des Monuments* for the park of St Cloud, at the edge of Paris. His talk showed the approach taken in surveying and recording of the important Le Notre landscape, and the analysis in order to formulate a clear conservation philosophy. Inspired by results in the United States by Kelso and others at Monticello and by the archaeological approach at Hampton Court's Privy Garden project, he managed to set an example in conservation terms, which yet retains its touch of Frenchness, with good new design where old fabric has been irreparably destroyed. This enlightened approach is exemplary and will hopefully come to fruition over the coming years.

The last day of the conference was spent exploring some of the French influences in England, and with an eye on next year's Le Notre celebrations this concentrated on the garden design of his era. **Laurence Pattacini** talked about the creation of the St James garden by Andre Mollet in the 1660s, which was an important example of a hybrid flower and fruit garden associated with the palace. It was first removed in the 1720s by a design by William Kent and was finally built over with the present Carlton House terrace. This talk was followed by one from **David Jacques** who discussed the partially executed Le Notre design for Greenwich Park, of which the earthworks and some of the treeplanting survive. The main focus of the design however, a grand parterre associated with the Queen's House was never executed. The area was turfed over and as such became a prototype for a new generation of earthbank and turf gardens, such as Claremont. A walk across the earthworks at Greenwich concluded the conference.

Jan Woudstra
Department of Landscape
University of Sheffield

LATE CONVERT

I have always disliked coastal paths leading me a captive route between farm land and cliff edge. I have disliked the pointless and tiring ups and downs and the feeling of being offerred a treat (organised by an authority I once worked for), being led where others would have me go. Yesterday though I changed my mind, It was entrancing. An experience to recall.



I was with family and old friends who know the area around Polzeath and the North Cornwall Coast Path. Out through an unpromising National Trust Farm, as messy as many, alongside a field of ripe barley and past some tamarisks to a gate leading to the natural vegetation of the cliff top. Cliffs sensational and varied, sea blue and green and gray towards the clouds, flowers mostly over but yarrow, and squill harebells and ladies slipper still in bloom, wild thyme and cushions of thrift on the ledges. Out beyond the immediate giddy cliffs, a cliffy hilly yet lawn like almost island called the Rumps. Green of flat top lawns and grey green of coarser grass, dark grey of wetted slate slipping to the tide line, white froth over aquamarine of the surging waves. Distinctive facets occupied by these distinctive colours and textures. The precision of a windhover motionless in a stiff breeze, a grey squall, a shower curtain, isolated in its wet progress across an otherwise sunlit sea.

Editor

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PUBLIC URBAN SPACES

Eleanor Young, returning from Barcelona which won the Royal Institute of British Architect's Gold Medal for Architecture, reflects on how this Catalan city has created public urban spaces.

"The citizen became the pedestrian," says a caption at the Barcelona Centre for Contemporary Culture. The issue at stake in the replanning of cities is the ownership of public places. The exhibition, 'The Reconquest of Europe', traces the decline of roads as places of public interaction and how to stop fast traffic throughput becoming the dominant force in urban space. The exhibition shows a variety of schemes across Western Europe where city authorities are attempting to reclaim an area back from the car.

Barcelona is a city that has concentrated on its identity, commissioning such high profile architects as Foster and Partners to create city landmarks in amongst the everyday paraphernalia of the modern city (I am thinking of its telecoms tower). But it has also put a great deal of energy into the creation of urban spaces and has been praised for the way it links them to create a 'whole city'. The most obvious example is the way in which the traditional centre of the Catalan town, The Ramblas has been linked to a newly developed port area. The shaded business area of The Ramblas opens out to a view of Mediterranean ferries, waterfront bars and restaurants framed by a bridge whose delicate line of lights mirror the dislocation of the bridge as it swings open to allow boats in and out.

The city has a good historical basis of public urban space to build on. The old town's dark passageways are interspersed with small squares. The noise of glasses and the light chatter is only occasionally broken by the buzz of a scooter, though at night the passageways may echo with the sound of the dustbin lorry.

Many of these squares have been preserved by careful restrictions: heavy metal bollards that disappear into the ground to allow only authorised access. Other areas, however, have not escaped. Placa St Jaume has become a dropping off point for coach parties which invade the peaceful cathedral en masse. Placa Catalunya, at the top of The Ramblas, remains a huge traffic island despite attempts to link its central fountains to the busy shopping and tourist areas. The Placa is built on a grand scale and the pavement cafes cannot diminish the visual force of grandiose buildings such as the monolithic grey Cortes Ingles department store.

These areas are, however, hubs, gateways to the 'joined-up' city centre and the sheer number of people on these streets goes some way to undercutting the primacy of cars and coaches. People flow from the metro in streams, coursing through the old city, breaking up into little rivulets, creating a pool in a shopping street or little eddies around an entertainer.

Outside the city centre the areas between tower blocks can end up being the only public spaces, areas where fuming torrents of traffic carve up the city's *Barris*. But Barcelona follows the well established Spanish model in creating usable outdoor space, whether from an old factory site or somewhere bigger and more dramatic. Just below the fun-fair-style landscape of Gaudi's Parc Guell, planners have achieved something which is even more spectacular: a green oasis over a four lane carriageway.

Reclaimed land along the shore is delineated by old and new architectural markers. The upright chimneys of old textile mills in the Poble Nou are echoed along the shore of the recreated city beaches by vertical pillars. The brisk lines of city paving become gentle ripples under the feet of the idle wanderer walking down to the sea. The decking of the rejuvenated Port gives it a beach-side texture while little brick hummocks for palm trees create a more informal atmosphere in the Placa del Puerto. Pieces of art act as a focus, the watery reflection of Miro's sculpture in Park Miro bring the square pool to life.

It is not simply about textural details. Pedestrians are given an almost equal status to the slow moving traffic, with relatively car-free inner-city streets and frequent crossings on the larger roads.

Yet the creation of the successful public urban space in Barcelona is due only in a small part to thoughtful design and grand city visions. These facilitate a greater achievement and it is people that really create public space. Sometimes they go to eat and be entertained as with the cinema and eateries at the Port. Sometimes they just go 'to see'. The Ramblas is full of tourists strolling and looking (as the mime artists appreciate). But in a place like Barcelona, where the climate allows, and the enclosed flats encourage it, it is people who just want 'to be' that turn an open space into a public area.

An example: The Raval is a working class district, civil unrest and, later, drugs, meant it would always be a target for redevelopment and improvement. To give the area a boost it was decided to site MACBA (Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art) there. Now its vertical white curves and gleaming glass wall rise above a plain, solidly slabbed plaza. Tourists concentrate on the building; they have plenty of space to stand back and take in the full view, there are few things breaking up the emptiness; a few steps up to the museum, a simply built ramp, a long low wall on one outer edge.

But move closer and you see the white walls are marked by many series of small hand prints. Come back in the warmth of the early evening and it is a different square. It would be impossible to capture the movement in a photo: paths cross in a sympathetic complexity, a football match, two small boys in kneeling positions as they whiz down steps on roller blades, a skateboard stunt failing on the edge of a ramp, teenagers swinging their legs as they spot friends, sari-clad mothers chatting happily on a long wall, their children playing around them. And the hand prints? Two roller blading boys, playing follow-my-leader, place their dirty hands on the white of the building curve before speeding down the line of the glass frontage. Spaces, humanity!

Eleanor Young
London

FAVELA AS URBAN VERNACULAR LANDSCAPE

Squatter settlements are a common phenomenon in rapidly urbanising countries. Especially in Latin American cities, Barriadas or Favelas located around the edges of cities house a significant proportion of the population. In the case of Rio de Janeiro, the Favelas are integrated throughout the urban fabric. They have grown organically in pockets within the city and in areas too difficult to develop like the slopes of steep hills.

In May I went to Rio to join a ten day workshop organised by the Housing Department of the City Government and the Masters Programme in Housing and Urbanism at the School of Architecture of the Federal University. The aim of the workshop was to reflect on the strategies for design of public spaces in Favelas in Rio and to discuss the implementation of an intervention programme called "Favela-Bairro". The purpose of the programme is to support the integration of favelas into neighbourhoods through the provision of public and social infrastructure. Therefore the workshop focused on the use of public space as a primary tool for the spatial and social integration of favelas into the wider context of the city.

The landscape of Rio is a unique interweaving of nature and human action. The city has been moulded by its topography. It sits on the shoreline of a landlocked harbour within the magnificent Guanabara Bay. The topography of the landscape determines the form and distribution of the urban space. A range of mountains on the one side and the sea on the other side impose a linear form to the city. The mountains also divide the city into zones, the south, the north and the original nucleus the centre situated between them.

This landscape creates a powerful image. The predominance of the mountains, hills, and urban forests in close proximity with the water in the form of sea and lakes determine a strong visual character. Clinging to the sides of Rio hills, the favelas appear from a distance like medieval settlements well integrated within the natural surroundings.

The favelas started off with constructions of cardboard boxes and plastic sheeting which are converted as rapidly as possible into brick and concrete permanent structures. The houses are built as a dense and complex network allowing little open space and this is highly organised in terms of use and economy. Major physical problems are the lack of infrastructure, (water, drainage, sewage systems), the areas are prone to landslides and flooding and there is no access to public services. The underlying political problem is the lack of legitimate title leading to exploitation by illegal activities particularly drug dealing. So, the Favela-Barrio Programme is planning to deal with all of those different levels of problems.



The general perception of a favela as a chaotic and unorganised area is not accurate. To the contrary they are highly organised invasions of available land where thousands of people live together in the close proximity which ensures social cohesion and encourages sense of community.

The favelas have important spatial and socio-cultural qualities which fortunately the Housing Department has appreciated and respects. Unlike other previous policy makers Favela-Bairro Programme recognised that the favelas have been fundamental for the housing provision of the city. People have been effectively housing themselves for a long time, in some cases more than 50 years. Without sounding overly romantic I would like to remember Paul Oliver's definition of the vernacular architecture: architecture of the people, by the people, for the people.

Antonia Noussia
University of Plymouth at Exeter.

Rural landscape histories:dead or alive in research

The history of the landscape was of central importance to many British human geographers for much of the twentieth century. In recent years, however, it could be argued that the landscape has become increasingly peripheral for historical and rural geographers. Yet, it is equally possible to assert that landscape has never been more relevant to studies within historical and rural geography. Landscape has proved to be a valuable conceptual resource in much current writing in ecological and environmental history, archaeology and anthropology. Landscape is a key idea in terms of contemporary theoretical interests in human geography, providing as it does a way of examining the relationship between the material and the imagined which has excited writers working on a wide range of issues from the sociology of science and technology, to work practices and identity politics. This session will explore the contemporary relevance of landscape within historical and rural geography in the light of its empirical relevance, theoretical force and historical currency within the discipline.

§ What is the current value of those areas of academic interest traditionally thought of as the domain of landscape studies within historical and rural geography? Do formerly key areas of research such as field patterns and systems; rural settlement; and land use change remain of interest to academic geographers, or are these now seen as the concern of landscape and local historians?

§ To what extent are new histories of the landscape, informed by ecological, environmental and cultural history, stimulating exciting new research agendas for rural and historical geography? Is research in this area driven by the availability of new sources and new theoretical perspectives?

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THE BESPOKE COMMUNITY

New Towns were a significant element of the syllabus for a geographer trained at Newcastle University in the 1960s. Several were under construction in the local area, Aycliffe, Peterlee, Washington in County Durham and Killingworth and Cramlington north of the Tyne. They made interesting visits, sometimes shared with architects and town planners, and there 'we saw the future'. We had very little doubt that the future would indeed resemble partly what was going on in those New Towns, and partly what was going on in the City of Newcastle itself with its developing motorways and comprehensive redevelopment. We were assured that these new towns were the heirs and successors of the Garden Cities, though they didn't look much like them. No one asked us whether we actually liked them. For my part, newly from deepest Somerset, and in the north east for the first time, the idea that industry might connote more than a single factory building was new ~ such was the rather elegant establishment of Frys near Keynsham my nearest experience. New towns certainly looked quite efficient, but from a Southwest perspective they represented mostly an academic interest.

Now, youthful arrogance behind me, I find myself living on the very edge of a proposed development that for a time called itself 'a New Town'. As it is more or less contiguous with the City of Exeter, and makes no attempt to include employment, and has only the most basic facilities, the honourable concept of the New Town as I had absorbed it in the 1960s seems to be seriously undermined. However notice has been taken of such objections in the revised Structure Plan (Devon Spring 1999) and it is now a "bespoke community", though bespoke by whom remains in doubt. The capacity of developers to build not only houses but homes and even communities suggest....to the cynically inclined... abilities which are badly needed in Kosovo and now Chechenya.

What of its setting? The landscape in question is not the finest that East Devon has to offer. It is largely flat and contains a rather higgledy piggledy collection of buildings left over from the airfield of the last war (now Exeter Airport) and from various industrial enterprises which once trailed alongside the main road. But this old route of the A303 is simultaneously to be sidelined in favour of the new dual carriageway which opened in the summer for the Eclipse Traffic. The quality of the landscape, not being designated, has scarcely figured in the debate. The one time A303T will now provide easy access to jobs in Exeter four miles away. Having been a straight road since the Romans built it, it is now to be improved with some elegant curves, introduced ~ and I say this with exasperation ~

because residential roads in the latter half of the twentieth century are curved. The comparative poverty of the landscape does not prevent there being a major dispute, focussed though, on the transfer of land from rural landscape to urban place.

Some very strange notions have been stirred by the debates. When eco-campaigner Swampy and his friends occupied their trees and tunnels in a vain attempt to stop the building of the road, the local newspaper reported that the City of Exeter needed two motorway-class roads, because that is what important regional centres deserved. This, with weary cynicism, suggests to me a new classroom exercise, mapping cities with one, two or more motorways. Later on, as the housing development loomed over the horizon, it was explained that people coming into the south west wanted to live 'in the countryside', so that was why there was a need for a new town (!!). At the same time, of course, many rural villages, even within a ten-mile radius, were losing schools and shops as population fell below a level needed to sustain them. A conundrum!

The debate scarcely touched on the future landscape. What the new settlement is going to look like, let alone sound like or smell like, seems to interest nobody. The developers put together an exhibition of vernacular housing, the pictures taken from many parts of the country, though all with trees and most with water. The artist's impressions depicted splendid gardens and ivy clad houses, all apparently inhabited by attractive young women with well behaved children idly chatting under the summer sun. The bespoke community may not be a New Town but it is definitively urban, and more precisely suburban. With some garden cities, and some suburban estates there may be an attempt to bring rural concepts into the town. Today the opposite holds true. There is nothing rural in new places such as this: mini-roundabouts abound, street widths are standardised, so are kerbs and curvatures. Garden sizes all relate to each other, and restrictions are enforced on tree size. Street lights stand at metricated intervals.

The building materials will not of course be local. The place will though, be an entirely authentic representation of how we live as one or two car households, living in a rural area and working in the nearest town, perhaps in a home office, with an appropriate sized garden, kitchen and enough rooms for each family member to have a bedroom. There will neither be a church nor any shop other than a local grocer/newsagent. There may be a pub and there may even be a village hall. It is of course entirely efficient, and much thought has gone into the detail.

The rural dream will be re-created. Those who move in, those agents of change who really can create communities out of bricks and mortar, will create a village rather than a town in their heads. They will surely form a Women's Institute not a Townswomens Guild; the cricket, rugby and soccer clubs will compete in the village league; they will go down to the village shop. What looks like Noddy's Trumpton will actually live in their heads as a village. Villages, like nations are imagined communities, bearing little resemblance to the outsider's description. Before long residents will return from DIY shops and garden centres and turn both house and garden into something much less efficient and much more humane. It may not be rural, but it *will become* bespoke.

The proximity of the new place to the City may have a cryptic advantage, as Exeter has been refused the status of a single-tier authority in the last round of local government reorganisation. In a few years it might extend its boundary to absorb the bespoke community, which might increase the city population to a level needed to become a unitary authority. Of course, no such Machiavellian political outcome is intended, but no doubt the Bespoke Residents, when the time comes, will object as violently to the ruination of their rural idyll as present residents do as they contemplate its creation.

Peter Howard
University of Plymouth

CONTENTS OF LANDSCAPE RESEARCH 24/2, JULY 1999

The July 1999 issue of Landscape Research (Vol 24, No2) contains four main papers on varied themes. There is a welcome return for **Professor Hugh Clout,** who re-visits **the devastated landscapes of war-torn France** - this time the recovery of Normandy following the D-Day invasions and subsequent events. The extent of damage which occurred is difficult for the present day traveller to imagine, especially in view of the quality and comprehensiveness of programmes for reconstruction and re-development. Professor Clout's meticulous yet compelling text takes us through the effects of occupation and liberation, and charts the sheer quantity of labour, as well as visionary designs, which were necessary to recover the region's former character. This account provides a wealth of insights into both the urban and rural landscapes. Clout's papers are compulsory reading for anyone with an interest in landscape who travels across Normandy (as I did shortly afterwards) - one's perception of the countryside is permanently changed.

Eileen O'Rourke contributes a paper on the **Causse Mejean,** an 'environmentally sensitive' area in the Cevennes National Park. This is a searching enquiry into the ecological, social and ecological dynamics of an isolated plateau which is clinging on to agricultural survival. The area is best known for its sheep production and Roquefort cheese, but the farming economy is precarious and the indigenous population in serious decline. Not surprisingly, the conservation value is widely appreciated and many of the newcomers seek retention of past landscapes rather than agricultural modernisation. O'Rourke's paper provides a valuable account of the tensions between the maintenance of farm incomes, the perpetuation of cultural landscapes through traditional grazing practices, and social desire for 'wild' land.

Coastal landscapes receive perhaps less attention than they deserve, so **Robert Morgan's** analysis of factors affecting coastal landscape aesthetic quality assessment is a welcome addition to the literature. This original empirical piece of research entails a quantitative evaluation of the visual components, and relative attractiveness, of beaches around Wales. It thus provides a helpful and well illustrated account of beach types and their characteristics, as well as innovative methodologies for survey and evaluation. Importantly, the approach enables a range of stakeholders' views to be incorporated, so the results do not simply reflect the perceptions of landscape 'experts'.

Another relatively neglected, but hugely important, topic is that of the 'urban' landscape and the meanings which are embodied in its layout and structures. **Carolyn Cartier** unpacks **the symbolic landscape of high-rise Hong Kong** and explains the symbolic, economic, political and personal factors which have helped to drive some of the most prominent recent additions to its skyline. A key concept is that of the 'exhibitionary complex', wherein the state and elites deploy 'object lessons in power' to engender popular identification with civic and corporate interests. The backgrounds to a number of well-known buildings are analysed in this paper, perhaps most signally that of the International Financial Centre. However, as Cartier points out, the rush to build highest may now be halted by new landscape conservation legislation which seeks to limit further harbour reclamation and to protect viewscapes.

Another varied crop of book reviews (thanks to Ian Thompson and his growing band of contributors) includes *Common Place* by Douglas Kelbaugh, *Goethe's Way of Science* edited by Seamon and Zajonc, *Japanese Landscapes* by Mather, Karan and Iljima, *Stonehenge* by Barbara Bender, *Landscape Planning* by Marsh and *The Thames Embankment* by Dale Porter.

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§

During the days on our way back to Monte Carlo we were rarely out of sight of land for long. I do not think I shall ever forget the sight of Etna at sunset; the mountain almost invisible in a blur of pastel grey, glowing on the top and then repeating its shape, as though reflected, in a wisp of grey smoke, with the whole horizon behind radiant with pink light, fading gently into a grey pastel sky. Nothing I have ever seen in Art or Nature was quite so revolting.

§

Behind us, as far as we could see, the country was utterly desolate; the hillside up which we had climbed was covered with colourless sand and rock, and beyond, on the other side of the valley, rose other hills equally bare of dwelling or cultivation. The only sign of life was a caravan of camels, roped nose to tail, following us a mile or so below. In front of us everything was changed. This was Galla country, full of little villages and roughly demarcated arable plots. The road in places was bordered with cactus and flowering euphorbia-trees; the air was fresh and vital.

from: When the Going was Good by Evelyn Waugh p69 and p132

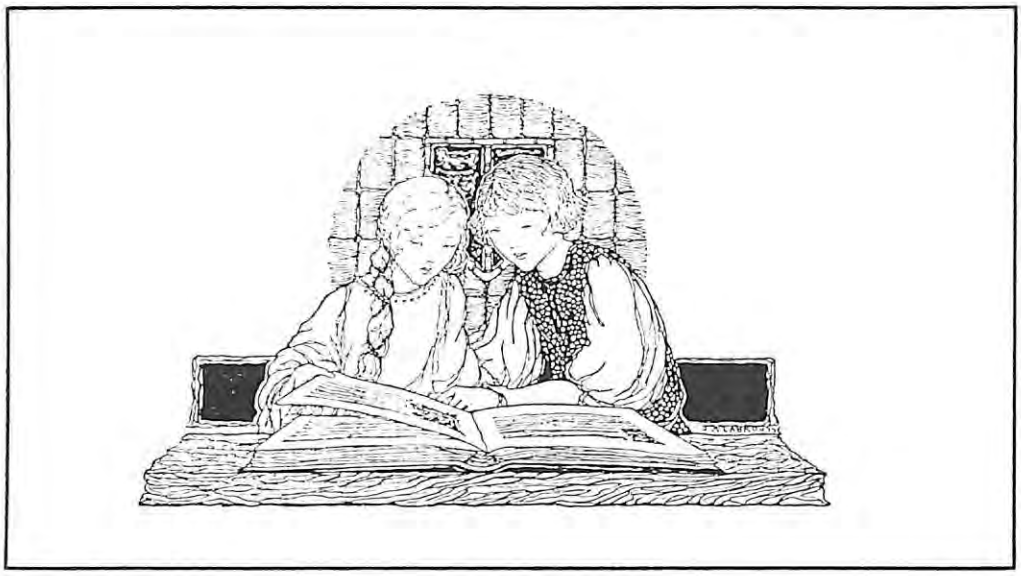
§

Before we pass from the scenery, it may be well to draw the reader's attention to one feature of its description in the Old Testament. By numerous little tokens, we feel that this is scenery described by Highlanders: by men who, for the most part, looked down upon their prospects and painted their scenes from above. Their usual word for valley is *depth* - something below them; for terror and destruction some of their commonest names mean originally *abyss*. God's unfathomable judgments are *depths*, for the narrow platform of their life fell eastward to an invisible depth; their figure for salvation and freedom is a *wide* or a *large place*. Their stage slopes away from them, every apparition on it is described as *coming up*. And there is that singular sense, which I do not think appears in any other literature, but which pervades the Old Testament, of seeing mountain-tops from above. Israel *treadeth upon his high places*, as if mountain-tops were a common road; and *Jehovah marcheth upon His high places*, as if it were a usual thing to see clouds below, and yet on the tops of hills. Joel looks from his high station eastward over the tops of the mountains that sink to the Dead Sea, and speaks of *morn above the mountains* broken and *scattered upon them* by the heavy thunder-clouds. And, finally, we owe to the high station of Israel, those long approaches and very distant prospects both of war and peace; the trails of armies across the plains in fire and smoke, the land spreading very far forth, and, though Israel was no maritime people, the wonderful visions of the coast and the sea..... [and]

§

.....The view is barer than a European eye desires, but softened by the haze the great heat sheds over all. White clouds hang stagnant in the sky, and their shadows crouch below them among the hills, as dogs that wait for their masters to move. But I have also seen the mists, as low as the land, sweep up from the Mediterranean, and so deluge the range that, in a few hours, the valleys which lie quiet through the summer are loud with the rush of water and the rattle of stones; and though the long trails of cloud wrap the summits, and cling about the hillsides, the land looks barer and more raw in the sunshine. The hills are brown, with here and there lighter shades, here and there darker.

from: The Historical Geography of the Holy Land by George Adam Smith DD Third Edition 1895 Hodder and Stoughton 27 Paternoster Row p103-4 and p121-122



SHOULD YOU READ?

Lincolnshire's Archaeology from the Air Edited by Robert H Bewley from The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, Jews' Court, Steep Hill, Lincoln LN2 1LS £13.95 + £1.75 p&p

David Whelon & Roy Dart **The Bodmin and Bowland initiatives** Countryside Recreation 7/1 Spring 1999

Arthur Keller, Scottish Natural Heritage **Jobs and the natural heritage of Scotland** Countryside Recreation 7/1 Spring 1999

Jonathan Murdoch, Cardiff University **The New Rural White Paper: What chance for a rural policy?** Countryside Recreation 7/1 Spring 1999

Katie Williams **Urban intensification policies in England: problems and contradictions** Land Use Policy 16/3 July '99 167-178

Robert Wood & John Handley **Urban waterfront regeneration in the Mersey Basin, NW England** Journal of Environmental Planning and Management 4294) 1999 565-580

Ponds and pond landscapes of Europe Edited by John Boothby ISBN: 0-9531291-1-X £15.00 Orders to: The Pond Life Project, Liverpool John Moores University 15-21 Webster St, Liverpool, L3 2ET UK

Karen E Till **Staging the past: landscape designs, cultural identity and Erinnerungspolitik at Berlin's Neue Wache** Ecumene 6/3 July 1999 251-283

Jeff R Crump **What cannot be seen will not be heard: the production of landscape in Moline, Illinois** Ecumene 6/3 July 1999 295-317

Helga Leitner & Petei Kang **Contested urban landscapes of nationalism: the case of Taipei** Ecumene 6/2 April 1999 214-233

Donald J Stierman & James E Brady **Electrical resistivity mapping of landscape modifications at the Talgua site, Olancho, Honduras** Geoarchaeology 14/6 Aug '99 495-510

Karel J Hughes **Persistent feature from a paleo-landscape: the ancient tracks of the Maltese Islands** The Geographical Jour 165/1 March '99 62-78

Brian H Luckman **Landscape and climate change in the Central Canadian Rockies during the 20th century** The Canadian Geographer 42/4 Winter '98 319-336

P H Verburg, A Veldkamp, L O Fresco **Simulation of changes in the spatial pattern of landuse in China** Applied Geography 19/3 July'99 211-233

AGRICULTURE AND THE RURAL LANDSCAPE

Conference Report

This was yet another successful day school organised by PLACE, a regional centre for research on People, Landscape and Cultural Environment.

It's a well-worn topic, but in this case, there was a heavy emphasis on the historical, and a clear focus on the Yorkshire Dales. The day started off with an erudite presentation by **Richard Morris, from the Council for British Archaeology**. He presented "Fields of Knowledge", a catechism on fields. I never thought it possible for someone to talk for an hour about fields (without mentioning field boundaries) and still keep the audience's attention...Fields encompass an enormous time range; they are everywhere at sometime or another/ fields are inextricably linked to farming, settlement patterns, and other activities of man/ they are windows through which we see other historic events/ they reveal a history of constant change, and are a source of evidence/ there has been "lightfooted change" up until the mid 20th century; now there is an exponential increase in the rate of change, and fields are disappearing at an accelerating rate.....fields are "the grammar of space" in the landscape...
He concluded that they are insufficiently valued, and that we haven't gone far enough in the 'stewardship' approach.

Amy Lax, of English Heritage, followed on, with fascinating aerial photographs of features found in the countryside. Cultivation is a process that both reveals and destroys, with marks emerging through differential crop growth and ripening; but how do we intepret those marks? Local geological and soil influences have to be filtered out, and even then they can be confused with more recent artefacts such as disused military bases, branch lines...
Crop marks are unreliable and unpredictable - they don't always emerge - she cited one site that had been flown over regularly, but no marks emerged until 1991 and then not again until 1997... how can one do effective survey work in such conditions?!

After a coffee break, we heard from **Heather Beaumont** about an "amateur" project that had been carried out by the local WEA into the settlement and field patterns of Hebden, a small village in the Dales. This was an in-depth study, done to a professional standard by 12 local residents, over a period of 5 years; the sort of sustained interest that is increasingly difficult for researchers - constrained by funders' needs and deadlines - to achieve.

(And is this the strength of PLACE? that it brings together the keen and informed amateurs with the professionals - each working in different ways, but ways that are undoubtedly complementary. Are the contacts and links between the two adequate? Shouldn't there be much more "cross fertiliation" and sharing of information and understanding?)

The detailed exposition of the settlement of Hebden revealed the shift from a manorial to freeholder system. Hebden arose from the crossing points of routes, with fascinating nuggets of information, such as the rights granted c.1200 for the monks of Fountains Abbey to pass through, and to stop overnight with their stock, "outwith corn and meadow". This truly brought local history research to life! the historical research informing the understanding of the physical structures in the landscape, and vice versa.

Alison Armstrong, from the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group presented a wealth of images of "Sheephouses, laithes and hennery-piggeries in the Yorkshire Dales", using these to reveal the changing agricultural practices over time - but perhaps there was a lack of reflection on the findings, a structure, to pull the theme together.

The morning session was brought to a close by an entertaining and informed presentation by a farmer **from the Yorkshire Wolds, Richard Fuller**, who demonstrated the steps he had taken on his farm at Givendale to combine commercial farming with conservation of the landscape and wildlife. A canny use of grant and other support schemes, and slight changes to agricultural practices such as leaving stubble overwinter, enables him to conserve chalk grassland, ponds, hedges, vegetation along stream banks, and mixed woodlands. He thus enjoys snipe, waders, visiting ospreys, lapwings, curlews, reed buntings, redstarts, dabchicks, kingfishers, geese, badgers, deer, as well as a wealth of plant and insect life, on his farm.

So it is possible to combine commercial farming with conservation? ....and with that upbeat message we went off to lunch.

During the afternoon, three workshops were run twice, so that participants could attend two. The topics were apparently unrelated - local history research, environmental policy, perceptions of the landscape - was this too ambitious? too diverse? But the audience easily divided itself into three roughly equal groups, and we moved off to participate in:

"Public perceptions of agricultural landscapes" Amanda Mathews, from Harrogate Borough Council, got her groups to comment on photos of landscapes that we had each brought with us, revealing how local and specialist knowledge and familiarity affects our responses to landscapes.

"Public policy and grant schemes" Stuart Pasley, from the Countryside Agency, managed to make a potentially turgid topic interesting, engaging our attention by asking us to set out priorities for environmentally sensitive public support policies... has anyone achieved that yet? **"Resources for local history research" Heather Beaumont and Keith Harrison.** This was the one that I didn't attend, but as both sessions overran their time, and much energetic discussion could be heard, I can confidently report that they went well.

So full marks for arranging a day event that allowed for such useful participation, and also enabled members of the audience to get to know each other, and to learn from each other! Wisely avoiding the usual format, of asking "rapporteurs" to summarise their sessions, which usually leaves the audience bored and restless, the day did however lack a proper "full stop" - it needed some way of bringing everyone together again, before they drifted back into their daily routines - if only to be able to thank the organisers for a useful day.

The broad range of topics covered by PLACE seems to ensure that their conferences bring together an unusual mix of speakers and participants, of professionals and amateurs, each invigorating the other with new information and ideas. A subsequent event **"Old orchards in the landscape"**, was held at the College of Ripon and York St John in York on 13 November.

For details contact: Dr Margaret Atherden, Director of PLACE, College of Ripon and York St John, Lord Mayor's Walk, York YO3 &EX)1904 616753
place @UCRYSJ.ac.uk

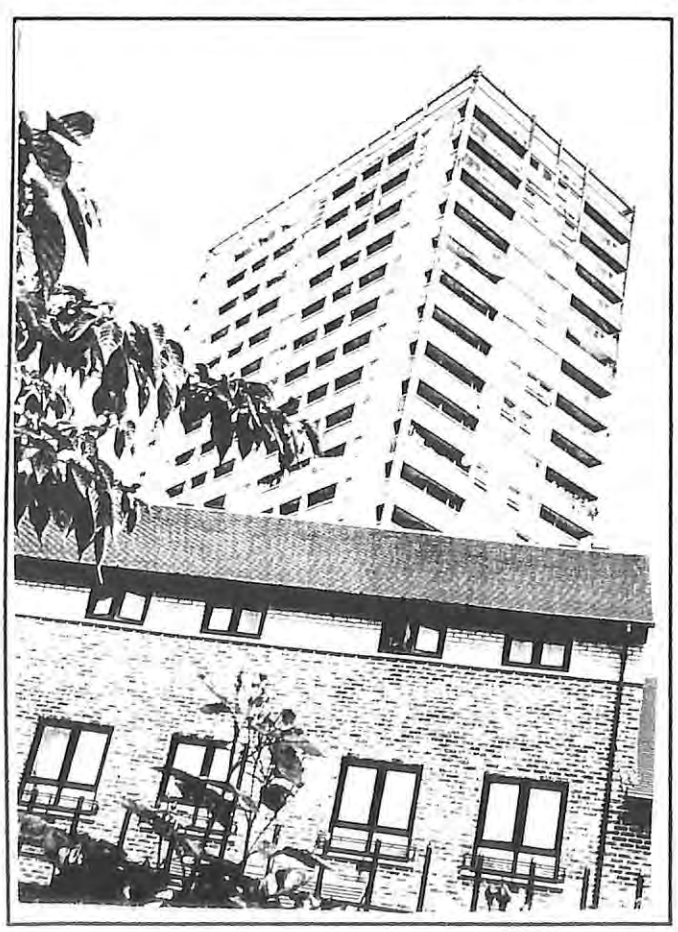
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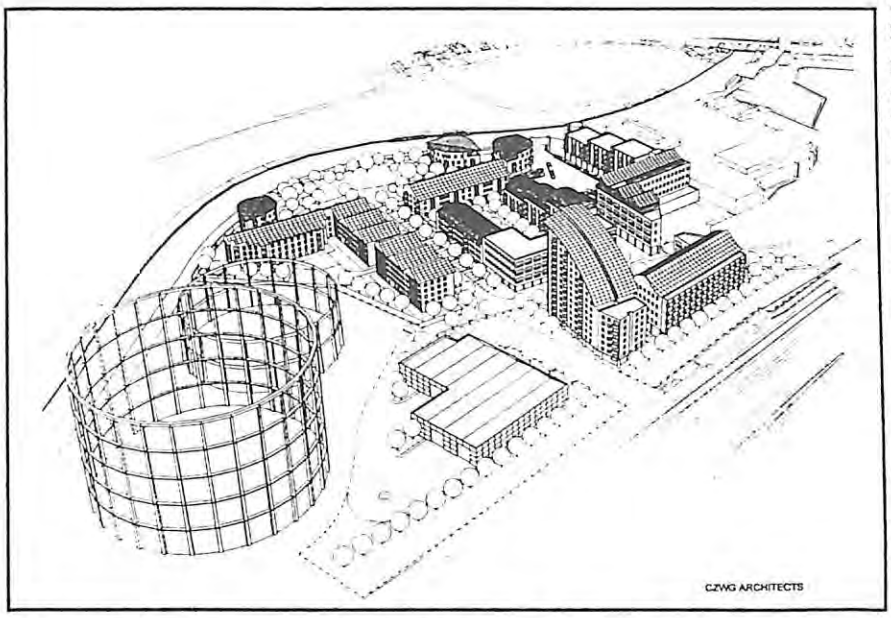
TOWARDS AN URBAN RENAISSANCE: London nights and the Rogers Report

Certainly I don't move in the right circles but I am sure that the Rogers Report should have been written up and buzzed a lot more than it has. There was a reference to to it in the Architects' Journal three days after it came out, and another in Landscape Design Extra who felt it had scarcely mentioned landscape (but what about townscape?). The Independent on Sunday, I am told, dealt with it at some length. Perhaps it was in the Guardian and neatly boxed in the Times? But perhaps it is too big, too wide ranging and too difficult to assimilate in one news article and will be referred to again and again over the years. I have therefore bought it and it looks like a jolly good read (and so proves). Will it become a set text or a reference handbook? It has forewords by John Prescott looking trustworthy and cheerful and the one time of Mayor of Barcelona, Pasqual Maragall (see Eleanor Young's article).

I justify such a purchase because we are currently busy mapping the land uses of a metropolitan borough council (air photo interpretation over digital colour imagery) and there is little in the report that does not somehow impact on the work, whether about urban densities, brownfield sites, contaminated land, urban design, property assembly or the desertion of less favoured properties. The project aims to obtain data of the type that the Rogers Report 'requires'. Unusually we have to identify some 25 residential types together with underused sites, active and older factory areas and a range of mineral restoration types. Habitat mapping is fun but I find town landscapes (the human habitat) the most fascinating environment. You can exercise mind and body in towns without getting bored, so much to see.

My daughter lives near Portobello Road (a central London address, now visible on film in 'Notting Hill'!) and revels in cycling the streets with an eye to building

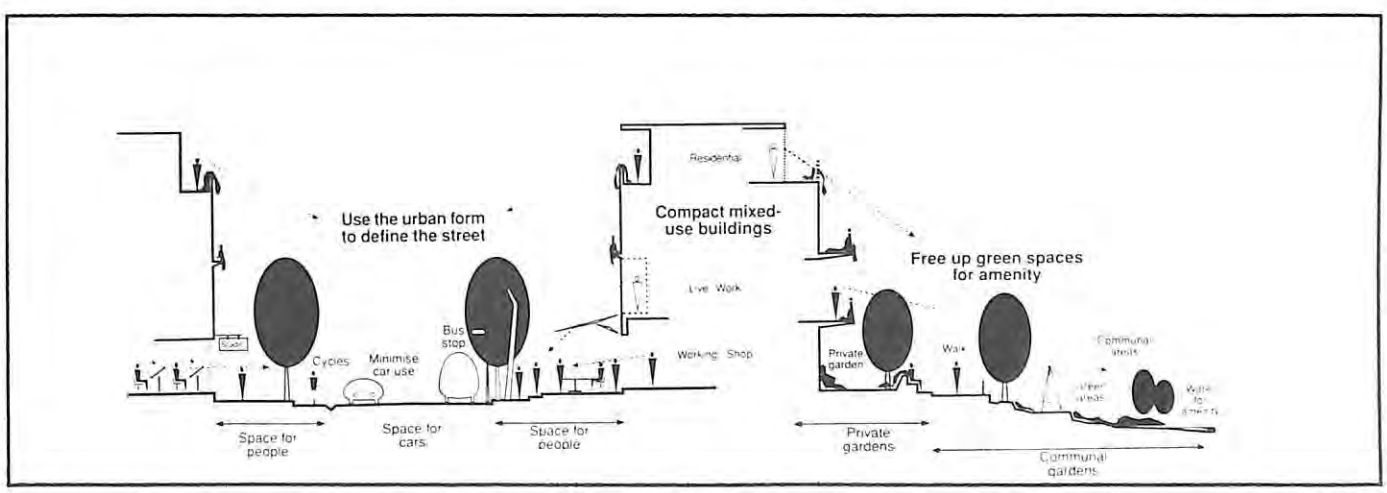




styles, canal routes greenspace and people. We walked together late of an evening in the summer and my eyes were opened to the intimate mix of social and market housing; to the bright new uses of railed gardens between four storey mansion terraces in the more spacious parts down Talbot Street towards the Portobello Road; to the enormous difference in life style and expectation between those I saw and myself. Envious? yes of course but philosophical - chewed on a straw! It was one of the specially hot nights in early August and the pub pavements were a hubbub of social intercourse.

I had driven from Cambridge (no co-driver, ergo wrong slip out from the M11, hence many miles through East !! London streets) never quite lost as the sun was setting and I experimented with the grid orientation 'three squares up two across' (Rowland Cameron LRE25) as if I were in the countryside, but always wishing that I had a safe place to stop and check the map. Felt a bit like Crocodile Dundee. I crossed famous Victoria Park for the first time on the ground (any crocs there?). Saw a lot of places for the first time (but none twice). I saw mid 19th century villas, terraces and streets, truly leafy backwaters villagey and oh so pleasant. Greenery, house style, price ladders: I could live there, but couldn't afford a view to a tree. South eastern competition starts here, desirable, very. Map the property values? Interesting possibilities. I travelled down once-wide, (once-dull) long straight, traffic calmed and car lined roads of low terraces. Unprepossessing. There would hardly have been a car on these in 1961 ~ the airphotos show so. My car though had become a safe prison and nowhere could I stop.

The Rogers report has things to say about car ownership andparking, and I'm glad my daughter only has a bicycle. It also investigates public and private investment, housing stock, urban design (37 pages), revitalisation, green routes, cleaning up the land, recycling buildings. My next holiday is a walking holiday in West London. Any one prepared to write up bits of the Report for the next issue?



Towards an Urban Renaissance: Final report of the Urban Task Force chaired by Lord Rogers. Publ E and FN Spon Crown Copyright 1999 pp328 including index, abundantly illustrated. Also on the Web under the www.detr.gov.uk/ Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. ISBN 1 85112 165 X. Price £19.99

Editor

Illustrations from the Rogers report p163 and from proposals by CZWG Architects Kensal Green Development for The Peabody Trust

TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

EUROMAN AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

'If the motorway signs are in lower case, white on blue it must be UK, or possibly the Netherlands'.....

Driving around Europe, out from airports in rented cars gives a strange dimension to national, and sometimes regional identity. The first strangeness is one of scale. For example, travelling from southwest to northwest England I now recognise just three English landscapes. As far as Strensham (Motorway services north of Cheltenham) it is very green and lumpy; thence to Preston services is light grey, urban and smelly, thereafter we get longer views, and some crags. Sad isn't it.

Many French people claim detailed differences in every *pays* in their country, but British drivers heading south know better!! As far as Bourges, except for the Breton bocage in the west, it is a flat field of wheat and sunflowers. After a lumpy bit, the landscape changes to white limestone dust which takes us to the Mediterranean. On a recent drive from Barcelona to Zaragoza I discovered that Catalonia has cliffs and pine trees, Aragon is yellowish-grey, dominated by mesas, and without habitation. That's it!

Such impressions come from the side glances one has time for as a driver. Through the windscreen, national identity is a matter of road surface, signs and paintwork. Different typefaces are on different coloured signs. The pylon shapes vary, and lamp standards have odd angles. The long miles of almost empty black tarmac on a French autoroute, with its double arrow coloured green at junctions, contrast with the concrete sections of Belgium their long lines of hedge making the central reservation ~ and the frightening habit they have there of exit lanes departing from the middle of the road, leaving from the fast lane. Trees are pruned in different ways, road signs are in different places, and do different things, so that traffic lights may or may not include amber. Most signs are entirely comprehensible. "Stop" is ubiquitous, but some are clearly designed to confuse visitors. Quite what the continental driver in England who has finally mastered driving on the left, might make of "Hard shoulder narrows ahead" can only be guessed at! Still Frenchmen get their own back with Chausse Deforme which usually means that in ten metres time they have removed the road.

And one of the most extraordinary pieces of street furniture occurs near Lerida, Spain, where the Greenwich meridian, capture and confined in a splendid arch, vaults over the motorway.

The new landscape is in its own way as varied as the old. But if European free trade allows companies from one country to seek contracts in another, are they going to take their lamp-standards and pylon designs with them? A sad loss of national identity!

No, really.

Peter Howard
University of Plymouth

Ecoplan: a new seminar group

Ecoplan is a new seminar group, supported by the Economic and Social Research Council, concerned with the practice and theory of landscape ecological planning. It aims to:

1. Provide a forum in which the findings of scientists and social scientists relevant to the conservation of the wider countryside can be exchanged and debated;
2. Debate those aspects of wider countryside policy and planning (including urban countryside and the littoral zone) which appear to require landscape ecological approaches;
3. Provide a forum in which researchers and practitioners within landscape ecological planning can meet to discuss progress and future needs;
4. Contribute to the development of research agendas and proposals to meet future needs; and
5. Encourage publication of research reviews and discussions arising from ECOPLAN meetings.

ECOPLAN encourages the active participation of new researchers and practitioners. Six meetings will be held between June 1999 and May 2001; the inaugural meeting was held in Cheltenham on 29th June, and was followed by a meeting on planning issues in Liverpool on 23rd November.

Further details from: Professor Paul Selman, Countryside and Community Research Unit, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of HE, Swindon Road, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ 01242 543313 Email: pselman@chelt.ac.uk

TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

"EN ROUTE: TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY AND SENSE OF PLACE"

is a Landscape Foundation title for a Landscape Foundation conference, as I write it was just 24 hours ago at the Stansted Airport Hilton National Hotel. No views out, but the roaring thrust of lifting cut-priced airlines over the Essex countryside. ..... 24 hours later I am at Guesthouse Fratnik in Kobdilj, near Stanjel in Slovenia. More birds than vehicles, including a worryingly vocal cock, trim vineyards tailing to scrub with just enough rock white flashes and road winding depressions to suggest karst - and to know it is the Karst, a world model, whose regional future I am here to share. I pause in Karst country after 24 hours of movement through travel places. and over the next few paragraphs I examine the reality of this movement through travel places and come back then to views of the conference.

I do this because we're still not very good at collecting and analysing the place experience of movement, the landscape of passage. If I wind back the film you see first the karst landscape, back then to the mountain sided toll road, the Alpine air approach, the angular drains of an Amsterdam touch down, the clouded rise over west London suburbs, M40 drive with the Chiltern landmark, flat Essex and the happily maturing Lea Valley yesterday - the right stuff for landscape reflection ... but the journey that cuts to these identifiable spaces is emphatically different. For the real journey in note form - wind forward, shot by shot:-

The Leaving of Stansted By bus - who are fellow passengers (temporary place), ramp/lift/escalator to platform (moving place), sign and services (invites to other places at other times). The 16.30 to Liverpool Street, but in a North-Eastern carriage (networked rail places)

Stansted to Liverpool Street The cut and dive of in-carriage conversation and random (unsigned) views - spires, structures, stations, names flash past, jogging memory of long-past references (markets in Bethnal Green), the grading of urban form from countryside to stock brick city - long view reminders of change.

The City Not a good time to walk the City. Five'ish on a Tuesday evening but the Tube choked, so aim Westwards, Bishopsgate, the cameraderie of hell-for leather-going-home, the City as Evacuation. A cab, 'Marylebone Station' sit back for £13.00 of frustration. The place here is flow, ignore the side glimpses, it's the lights, the blocks, the shuttle shift of relationships with others who get ahead or catch up, a treadmill of surges and stops.

Marylebone Heritage and the brave new world re-asserted. Peripherals include a pub, shops, phones ... a fine fringe world for the irregulars. It has changed - and will. The daily experience of thousands of commuters.

...and Home Train full. Few views, it's an internal experience, the snacks trolley, the grabbed re-cycled papers after the first stop at Haddenham and Thame 'Parkway' (an image to juggle with). The landscape could startle - histories of presence and change within my lifetime. The Chilterns the military presence at Bicester. Cathy at the station , back home say how it was. Sleep

Home, then Middleton Cheney to Heathrow out again to Heathrow, focused M40 journey Eddie Stobart lorries first spotted at 30m out. Tailback to the M25. Places tuned to traffic and time, radio and signed places rule.

.....Heathrow: static on the move Ticket at the Adria desk our 9.50 flight will go via Amsterdam to Ljubljana. No judder of joy here, Flight JP1627 will see/experience nothing of Amsterdam. The check in desk knows none of this, the tag is Lufthansa, the staffer speaks Estuary English, no sense of Slovenia in the offing. In the aircraft activities, seat pushers, trolley calls, stewardesses legs and Slovene announcements all suspended in time and place until we are decanted at Ljubljana where Slovene signs and a rapidly smartening East European style just hint at another place.

Taxi to a place somewhere Taxi hiring, some confusion as to my destination, and a ball-park figure quoted in DM's or dollars, the latter I have just changed to Slovene currency the meaning of which I do not yet know - they're numbers on the meter. Then air conditioning, smooth journey by road signs and truck name plates - Hungary, Poland, Romania, Latvia, Italy, Slovenia, short cut route. Ljubljana number plates thin out as we go east; Trieste appears on signs and, spasmodically so does Italian. I'm still in motion through places, the place is the traffic and its signals - till we get there or is it here when I can unpack and re-start.

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A view of reality in travel and places? How then did the Stanstead conference deal with reality? See back to the conference at paragraph one if you are feeling lost.

Approaching the year 2000 the Landscape Foundation's glance at transport places was certainly appropriate. But because, perhaps, there was an undefined and undernourished area for enquiry, too many came to the party. BAA and WAGN (they of the North Eastern carriage) were already on site and Stansted's terminal brought in Spencer De Grey from Fosters with a mid-term report on the terminal design and its consequences, Hong Kong featured large and there were fighting thoughts as to the merging of travel, movement and terminology.

Anne Boddington, an old colleague from Oxford Brookes,

now Head of Architecture and much else at **Brighton University**, tried to cram gallons of rich thoughts from cultural studies and geography into the 20 minute pint pot, raised the sort of time and space issues which Heathrow (the subject of her studies) demanded, but left them in a blur of test.

The next speakers, **Helen Jones, and David Chaloner from Conran Design Group** achieved a better pairing. Helen came over as a convincing filling station enthusiast and, at least, provided images and evidence of their growth and role in the UK. Chaloner managed to skirt round the edges of his big petrol/retail customer, but still dropped enough hints as to their future roles to stimulate antagonism from a pre-lunch audience which began to suspect, at **Chair Jonathan Glancy's** bidding, that marketing images and the sense of place did not sit easily together. With the suggestion of future filling stations as village centres, we were guided to Stansted's services which, unlike Gatwick, do not make claims to village status.

Lunch proved to be the end of the road (for some) and after a late start, this listener faded in and out of Sharon Zukin's contribution. Sharon, who is Broeklundian Professor of Sociology at Brooklyn College came with *Landscape of Power* and the *Culture of Cities* before her. American, and especially NY academic speaking patterns, resemble the public knitting of a throw rug, or afghan. The skill of patterning words - especially new patterns of words - together is impressive and some patterns emerge.... Here the transition from flaneur (a key patch of light coloured wool?) and frequent flyers (another, in novel design) was a repeated theme. The patterns woven into woolly sociology were interesting and the overall impression.... well she didn't finish the whole thing on the day ... Regrettably and before Martin Pawley, we made our excuses and left. Slovenia called.

****

And my opinions: well.....
Places of movement were hardly located at the Stansted event. The presumed relationship between cultural studies and design history preferred to pin down the ephemeral patterns and their termini, interpretation devoid of personal experience. Something of a letdown I fear.

On the day, at least it appeared that our intellectual, or partly academic, ability to pin down and structure places of movement still reflects an early 20th century world of fixed routes and termini. Even the early 1960's attempts by Lynch, Appleyard and Halprin to unravel the 'View from the Road', let alone the view from the air, have avoided extended discussion.

The experience of many places involves a new configuration of psychological and geographical conditions which are yet to be joined. The literature (if it exists) is disparate: there are nuggets in the customer care and marketing worlds, surveys galore, journalistic outings and market edicts which deserve to be captured on another day and in another place.

This 'capture' requires an honesty in reporting environmental experience which admits the dominance of the car, and attempts to capture the fleeting glances, multi-ranged observations, and invasive landmarks which dominate many of our environmental experiences. To filter reality so that it fits inadequate academic and professional frameworks does little to assist design futures.

Brian Goodey
Oxford Brookes University

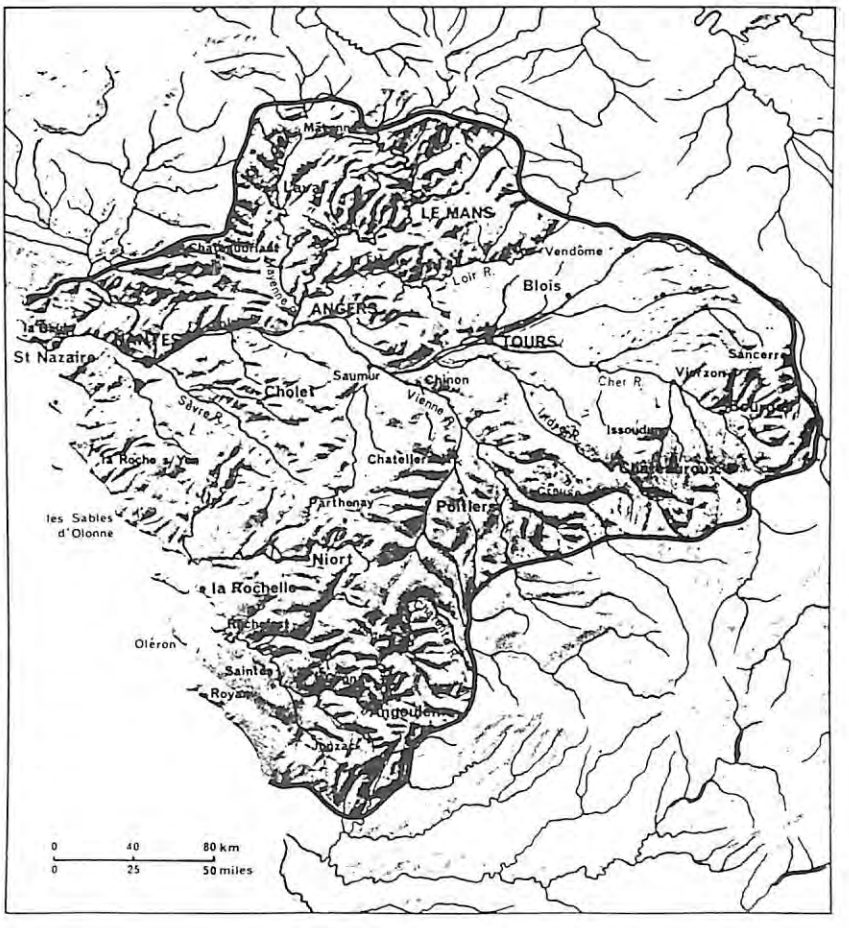
TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

MAHON~BRISTOL FLIGHT 550D NOW BOARDING

Cool and lovely in Mahon Airport, a plane every fifteen minutes to UK city destinations, no delays, great. Used to travel a lot and great distances, don't much like to now for all the reasons that Brian Goodey iterates in his article. Most particularly it is tiring uncertain and unrewarding. You can be held to ransome. You lose your nerve. I used to fly to Lebanon and the Persian Gulf. It always seemed to be daylight with clear skies and we flew lower in those days (at a mere 16,000 feet). Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean revealed themselves to this avid geographer. Instructive, wonderful. Latterly, blinds closed videopacifiers profer insignificant images, cartoons even, infuriating. At another time I remember being strapped in my seat over Lake Titicaca, Spanish airline, laden food table preventing movement. A lunatic way of travelling. Hell to the geographer.

Left Mahon yesterday with co editor Rosemary and saw the Pyrenees and their Eocene foothills in Catalonia, limestone structures, rising to a magnificent and mountainous set of tilted beds cliffed in the west, huge; aridity and heat, garrigue and sparse population (I imagined only goats) distinctly greener soil basins with grass and crops. Snow on northern summits near Andorra, lovely montane grasslands on the French side that I had visited by car a few years ago. Then the great delta shaped system of aligned valleys in the Miocene around Auch (we must have been about over Toulouse at the

time). A few years back and this area struck me as hugely interesting as I drove from Orthez to Tarbes. Its red roofed farms, its variety, its greenness, its barrel shaped ridges and shallowish valleys and its roads faithfully holding the rising ridge lines. I pause in my remembered pleasure and grace a Dieu, the plane does not.



I look out for the gathering of the Garonne towards Bordeau, whose position I have never really known. Now I do and it is imprinted in my mind ("put a dot on the outline map at the position of Bordeau and name the river that flows to it from the south"). I establish the Estuary. The dune enclosed lagoons of the Landes are in the remote distance. Text book display of the Garonne (valley widths and field patterns) meeting the Dordogne and being joined by the River Isle from Perigueux. Superb views to the Ile d'Oleron and the Ile de Re off La Rochelle. I know we have just crossed the most important vineyards in France but couldn't quite detect them (33,000 ft is a bit high). But we do see the huge Quaternary marais, marsh grazing areas around Rochefort and Marans. We see the random scoopings of shellfish ponds which scar the green of other marshes. We see the geology controlling the soil, the soil, the land use, the distribution of woodland, the field sizes.

I barely control my desire to map the area, to identify its landscapes and delve into its soils to examine its industries rising and declining and I wonder if anyone has this intense curiosity, gets that feeling? To eat its mussels (their farming described in LRE 18!). A nice lunch then before we head off to the Brest Peninsular (seen complete) is a curiously L shaped line of dense coffee coloured sediment as if a submarine had risen out of the mud at speed and turned left. Rosemary gives me the interpretation. Only two miles offshore it is a sewage lighter discharging sludge. Vive la Gastronomie Francaise.

After Brittany the cloud bank slides across like a shutter. How boring air travel can be.



Bud Young
Travelling ~the surpassing pleasure.

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHS TOURISM or BIOGRAPHY

An aged Aunt goes, I say I will take on the photos. There are boxes of Hong Kong, 1975, of Srinigar 1969, Katmandu 1968, Macau 1972 others of mountainous Austria 1967 of decorous National Trust properties, of unenventful Suffolk, of York and Kenilworth Castle. It seems she used a Rolleiflex and the large sized diapositives feel quality. A lovely photo of the Queen as a young woman visiting East Anglia, snapped through the window of the official car seems an indication of the aunt's values. To whom but the taker are these photos important? Many may reflect a relationship, a moment when the soul was stirred by the flower rich alpine meadow or the calmness of the Lake. The melancholic order of the ruins of Kenilworth may have chimed with Walter Scott somewhere within her mind. There is a suggestion that many had been shown to women's meetings locally. To the flower club? In this age of images I feel inclined to do one of two things: either to use them free of copyright to illustrate these pages, or to dump them in the bin; and yet like diaries or letters they are part of the biography a part of the person.

My sons are creating their own biographies. This last few months they have brought in magnificent landscapes of





the Tien Shan Mountains, and of extraordinarily empty China. Pictures of sensational places which, experienced not analysed, live in their minds as places of their youth. Reflections of adventure of freedom of new relationships in wild places. Tourism is too unkind a word: exploration of place and self, planned as expedition or thrown together to get away from the office in Beijing for the weekend. Formative landscape, but somehow not as DH Lawrence in Eastwood. Difficult for me the Editor toremember such casual relationships with landscape. Beijing son came back over Siberia (snow from twenty minutes out of Beijing as far as England) and went on to Connectitcut and New York for the Millenium. What images will he have scooped in ten days? How will those landcapes sit within his consciousness and affect his person? Intensity, transience, emotional attachments rich landscape baggage, Englishness?

Copyright photographs from the Tien Shan by William Young.

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