WHAT MEMBERS FEEL ABOUT THE GROUP

Thirty two members have so far returned questionnaires and voiced their opinions about what we do and publish and what they would like to see. I am hugely encouraged by what I read. I myself rarely respond to questionnaires. Given this encouragement even the work-stretched among you will wish to help me out with more responses.

Well done Hal Moggridge, Brian Goodey, Will Pilfold and David Harney for getting them back fastest — 'fastest' as in Beaujolais Nouveau. Speed isn't everything!

If you have lost track of the questionnaire, it can be found as a printable pdf on our website. If you prefer to email just the numbered answers that would be a good alternative. I would not want to cramp your style.

PROPOSED FIELD EXCURSIONS AND EXPERT SEMINARS

We are at present 'cooking up' the following events and firm dates and invitations will be sent out in the next and subsequent issues:

A day led by Professor Brian Goodey in the Lea Valley, East London, to walk in a contrasting pair of modern London Parks and take a radical look at the Olympic village site around Stratford.

A day and overnight led by Bud Young in Somerset ridges and levels examining the web of landscape connections which link structure and habitat, vernacular building and history.

A day and overnight led by John Gittins and Gareth Roberts in classic glaciated mountain, landscape of Snowdonia connecting physical landscapes with art and the policies of protection.

An excursion with Dr Susanne Seymour through the Derbyshire Derwent Valley to investigate the Georgian landscape.

In addition we hope to put on an expert seminar and field meeting , about proposals for, and the start of, major peri-urban growth in greenfield countryside adjacent to the city of Exeter (Professor Peter Howard). All leaders are board members. Offers to assist?



Ripening wheat, drystone wall and blue field geraniums above Guiting Power, Gloucestershire, where there is a shrunken settlement adjacent to the church and a pretty, remnant limestone village.

The views and opinions in this publication are those of the authors and the senior 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 periodically to members worldwide as companion to its refereed main journal Landscape Research.
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LANDSCAPE RESEARCH GROUP

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Landscape survival: the quality still shows through

This note is predicated on the understanding that 'research' means new knowledge for the researcher, not necessarily endowed with the structures of RAE - the regular academic research exercise — but rather 'new' understandings, which enhance one's life, and perhaps the lives of others. In this note I am concerned with a re-visit, a new contact with places remembered.



As a novice lecturer I visited the Montpellier region of France with Planning colleagues in the 1970's. Perhaps because 'field trips'; were more expansive, more exploratory, less hemmed in with health and safety, it stuck in the mind. I remember that we met a Nottingham geography field trip in the same Montpellier lodgings and marvelled at their land use mapping as we drank, put out a soccer team against Montpellier and lost. We did not map vineyards, but did range wide into the southern French coastal zone, viewing the earliest days of La Grande Motte, the first impressive re-developments of Montpellier, and the surprise of Sete and its Venetian canals. I retained a view of the wild Carmargue, historic cities and a sense that all was about to change.

In 2006 I returned, as spontaneously as possible, a quick flight from Birmingham, an e-mail hotel

booking and four days to see what had happened in thirty plus years. I was not disappointed — although in purist landscape terms I should have been.

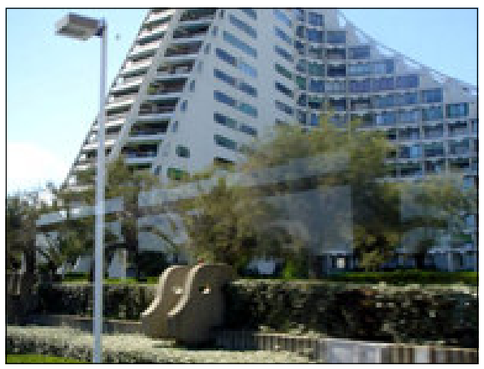
Thirty years is a long time in landscape history. Roads, new developments, but most of all the packaging of heritage and landscape were evident. The bedraggled landscape of the coastal belt had been re-assembled for visitors, a tourism development as intended. Everywhere there were signs to 'attractions', which we had viewed as merely historic places in the staid Michelin guide.

Montpellier had turned itself round — yes, the historic quarter — but with a neat trick which wrapped townscape in an acceptable parcel. An interesting city,



worth walking, and where damaged facades might have demolished the image, wall paintings which hinted at a past world. Only a few of these clever murals, but a townscape contrived for comfort. A concern here for wrapping up the visitor package: where the buildings don't speak, the artist does.

Out of town and into the tourist/retirement hinterland. La Grande Motte, a brave pyramidal resort of the 1970's, questioned at birth, is now a full blown resort town. Structures and planting mature, it is the growth pole for what was a swampy surround. Innovative structures heighten the effect. The image is secure, a



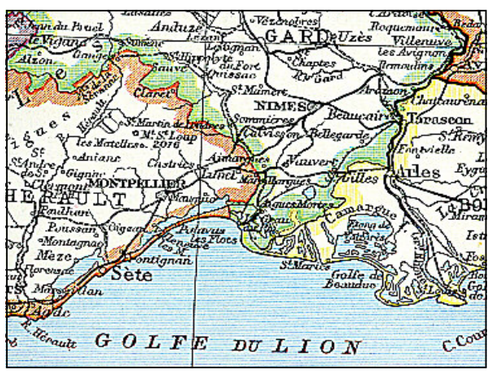
new town with imagery and a sense of place far better than most 1970s developments in the UK.



On to Aigues Mortes, castle fortress at the head of the Carmargue. Thirty years ago a crumbling ruin, easy to read as a bastide town but a heritage remnant. Today, and especially today, en fete. Full of performers, sales, shops and restaurants, a living city where the form and function are still legible. Encampments of Crusaders (strangely with multi-cultural Moors attached), music, local products, and an air of medieval fantasy. I have to admit that this experience is far better than the more solid '… follow the plan, be amazed at the fortifications …' visit of thirty years ago.

Overnight, punctuated by the integrating tramway which passed outside my window, there are thoughts as to what time has wrought. Everything I have seen is an escalation from the original. Authenticity is there, but it has been consolidated; land use is now crops, focused on sales outlets. Heritage structures are brought alive in route-attached places, the activity focused at playing and paying points.

Epitome landscapes, in the style of the American townscape commentator, Grady Clay, have emerged. Distinct stopping places near car parks now concentrate the landscape/townscape experience, distil the seeing and buying into small areas. The landscape beyond is of no concern, a cultivated/wildlife area to



be passed at increasing distance from the road. These are 'postcard landscapes' where a view is abstracted and heightened.

For the final day I decided to visit Sete, entirely ignorant of what might be going on there. Sete is a coastal town, which historically decided to 'go the Venice route' built around a sequence of canals. Slow bus through a scatter of the vernacular now surrounded by dreary resort suburbs and then into town. Strangely quiet at the bus terminus but walk on. Amazing, it is **the** day, **the very** day, when Sete does its thing.

In the central canal two boatloads of oarsmen row against each other, with a continuing supply of jousters raised on platforms above the bow with medieval trumpet blasts below. Men fall in the water, red and blue contest, in the stands red and blue bands blast out. The process goes on for hours as local marine heroes rise and fall.

This is **the** event of the year, I had read of it, seen it in the tourist brochures, and realised that this was the way in which the city should be seen, performing a two hundred year old tradition.

There seems to be no acceptable term for landscape/ townscape with event, yet this is how all landscapes are viewed. In keeping with the strong geographical tradition, we seem accustomed to conceive and analyse the landscape 'without figures'. Activity, events, sensory stimuli beyond the quiet sounds and smells liven and dominate shared appreciation. In Sete, it is this very event, which brings the townscape alive, and the expectation of which keeps the place alive throughout the year. And here I am on the very day!

I skirt the event, sketching quietly in bars and corners, simple ends of ships, facades, the static impedimenta of a living port. Then I move to view the event from a bridge, camera shots a-plenty fail to capture its essence. The admired year-round townscape, the economically active boats are overwhelmed by crowds, shifting moods, unplannable events and being-there responses.

There is one bus back, set apart from the town centre, and I retreat cowered by my inability to capture the excitement and pleasure of Sete on the day. Back in Montpellier I am challenged, I failed to communicate the rush of joy, which I experienced in seeing the event on the day, in the place. From memory I painted. (see front cover).

Landscape comes with trappings of time, place and events. Early on geographers (and here I do blame my profession), removed in situ human response and dotted quantitative presence in order to get at some sort of essence, landscape designers chose to insert their own stick figures which responded to proposal rather than situational experience, *but really most landscapes are animated rather than dormant.*

This was one of the several lessons from a spontaneous visit to Montpellier, one that I will harvest further, with less surprise but with more concern for a lifelong training as to how to observe … and its inadequacy.

Brian Goodey
Professor of urban and rural landscape
Oxford Brookes University

Philip Pacey
University of Central Lancashire

GUERILLA GARDENING

A few years ago I spent a day tidying up the neglected communal garden in Edinburgh which our son's flat overlooks. With a desperately limited supply of garden tools at my disposal, I squatted down to cut what had once been a lawn with a pair of shears, narrowly avoiding disturbing a bees' nest, and I filled a planting trough with plants purchased from the shop at 'the Botanics' (as Edinburgh's Botanical Gardens are known). With support from a passing environmental officer, I arranged for rubbish dumped by a restaurant to be removed - making the garden a pleasanter place for their cooks to chill out on summer evenings - and we lent encouragement to a hippie-style café (for me, a throw-back to '60s London) who had sought residents' approval for their compost heap. Also sharing access to the garden is a hostel for the homeless, from which a silent gentleman shuffled while I was working; I interpreted his benign presence as tacit support.

It didn't occur to me at the time, but I think I can make a legitimate if feeble claim to have been engaged in 'guerilla gardening'. Although as part-owner of the flat I was legally entitled access to the garden, I was acutely aware that what I did could be quickly undone, either by intervention or by further neglect. My fears were well-founded; in our prolonged absence, deterioration set in once again, and during our next all too infrequent visits I didn't have the time, or the heart, or indeed the tools, to have another go. Happily, this summer a resident has taken an active interest in the garden, undertaking some very necessary drastic pruning, putting down a mulch, and establishing a much greater degree of control than I could ever have exercised.

No doubt there have been many instances of unauthorised 'guerilla gardening' dating from before the term was coined, apparently in the 1970s. It has been suggested that gypsies planted vegetables here and there, returning to harvest their crops; what evidence there is for this I do not know. Certainly modern day guerilla gardeners can claim ancestry with the Diggers who began communal cultivation of waste land at St George's Hill near London in 1649, and whose leader, Gerrard Winstanley, argued that *'True freedom lies where a man receives his nourishment and preservation, and that is in the use of the earth'.*



Today's guerrilla gardening movement was begun by Liz Christy, who dropped 'seed bombs' on vacant lots in the Bowery neighbourhood of New York City. Since 1973, 'Green Guerillas', based in New York, have helped thousands of people turn vacant lots into community gardens. Their achievement and continuing activities are recorded on their Web site, www.greenguerillas.org

In England, Richard Reynolds began undertaking 'solo missions of horticultural regeneration', usually under cover of darkness, towards the end of summer 2004.

Subsequently he has sought to involve others in enlarging the scope and extending the geographical reach of guerrilla gardening; his website www.guerillagardening.org encourages would-be guerrilla gardeners to 'enlist', to receive newsletters, and if so minded, to join a 'troop'. A map shows where acts of guerrilla gardening have taken place around the world, and many examples are recorded. A typical example begins:

'My mother and her friend, The Brigadier, spotted a sorry bed where old evergreen bushes had been felled to help crime prevention. Nothing had been put in their place, so we struck. Mother gathered a team of fifteen locals aged 9 to 67, many bearing plants for their garden…'

Reynolds says 'I cannot deny that the mischief of being an unofficial gardener, a vandal with plants, is part of the fun for many of us'. An obvious comparison can be made with graffiti, in that a place is modified (perhaps enhanced, perhaps not) unofficially if not illegally. Graffiti may be a response to a blank surface, or to a dull environment, or to the ugliness of commercial advertising. Guerilla gardening is a response, not so much to uninspiring official planting as to the absence of any planting, to urban deserts, and to the potential which is wasted by wasteland; for some, guerrilla-grown vegetables, along with those from back gardens and allotments, are a gesture against the control which capitalism exerts over the food we eat.

Guerilla gardening excites me not least because it represents a way of living without belief but with a kind of faith. (I have tended to think of belief and faith as the same thing; a recent television tribute by Gryth Rees Jones to John Betjeman recently brought home to me that they are not, that faith is *in spite of* doubt; that it does not banish uncertainty). Guerilla gardening *accepts risk.* The guerrilla gardener willingly engages in planting, knowing that the plants may be ripped out, the soil removed; he or she tries to do good, with no guarantee of lasting success; invests in the future knowing that there may not be a future. Guerilla gardening *defies despair, subverts nihilism,* and *creates value;* it demands to be recognised as worthwhile. Furthermore, guerrilla gardening is often a *gift to a community*, and it may be the *nucleus of a community*. But not least, it's tremendous fun.
Note Image from UK website cited with acknowledgements.

ANTHOLOGY
from Charlotte Bronte's book "Jane Eyre"

A production of Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte appeared on UK television last month. Though purists will say that half the magic was lost, this viewer who found the book riveting when he read it some years ago, found the programme unbearably romantic. Unbearable is good Aaargh! And the plot though intricate holds together very well indeed. In these extracts, Jane's moods of delight, exultatation expectation and black despair are expressed by a series of landscapes and how she as the narrator voice expresses them.

From Chapter 12 of the third edition 1848 of Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte.
It was a fine calm day though very cold; I was tired of sitting still in the library through a whole long morning: Mrs Fairfax had just written a letter which was waiting to be posted so I put on my bonnet and cloak and volunteered to carry it to Hay; the distance, two miles would be a pleasant winter afternoon walk……..

The ground was hard, the air was still, my road was lonely; I walked fast till I got warm, and then I walked slowly to enjoy and analyse the species of pleasure brooding for me in the hour and situation. It was three o'clock; the church bell tolled as I passed under the belfry: the charm of the hour lay in its approaching dimness, in the low-gliding and pale-beaming sun. I was a mile from Thornfield, in a lane noted for wild roses in summer, for nuts and blackberries in autumn, and even now possessing a few coral treasures in hips and haws, but whose best winter delight lay in its utter solitude and leafless repose. If a breath of air stirred, it made no sound here; for there was not a holly, not an evergreen to rustle, and the stripped hawthorn and hazel bushes were as still as the white, worn stones which causewayed the middle of the path. Far and wide, on each side, there were only fields, where no cattle now browsed; and the little brown birds, which stirred occasionally in the hedge, looked like single russet leaves that had forgotten to drop.
Jane here has settled in to her post as governess — 'the promise of a smooth career' but as yet has not found the love for Mr Rochester that inspires the next extract. She is balanced and stable but discontented with the even tenor of her existence and reflects on the limited opportunities given to one of her sex. She takes a walk. She is observant and the 'utter solitude and leafless repose' reflects the tranquillity and unwanted quietness of her life.

*****

From Chapter 23 of the third edition 1848 of Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte.
A splendid Midsummer shone over England: skies so pure, suns so radiant as were then seen in long succession, seldom favour even singly, our wave-girt land. It was as if a band of Italian days had come from the South, like a flock of glorious passenger birds, and lighted to rest them on the cliffs of Albion. The hay was all got in; the fields round Thornfield were green and shorn; the roads white and baked; the trees were in their dark prime; hedge and wood, full-leaved and deeply tinted, contrasted well with the sunny hue of the cleared meadows between.

The previous chapter ends with the words "Never had he (Mr Rochester) called me more frequently to his presence; never been kinder to me when there — and alas! Never had I loved him so well.

*****



From Chapter 28 of the third edition 1848 of ***Jane Eyre*** *by Charlotte Bronte. A distraught Jane Eyre flees from the house of Mr Rochester for whom she had conceived an overwhelming love and sense of being loved and of a family.*
Whitcross is no town, nor even a hamlet; it is but a stone pillar set up where four roads meet: whitewashed, I suppose, to be more obvious at a distance and in darkness. Four arms spring from its summit: the nearest town to which these point is, according to the inscription, distant ten miles; the farthest, above twenty. From the well-known names of these towns I learn in what county I have lighted; a north-midland shire, dusk with moorland, ridged with mountain: this I see. There are great moors behind and on each hand of me; there are waves of mountains far beyond that deep valley at my feet. The population here must be thin, and I see no passengers on these roads: they stretch out east, west, north, and south – white, broad, lonely; they are all cut in the moor, and heather grows deep and wild to their very verge. Yet a chance traveller might pass by; and I wish no eye to see me now: strangers would wonder what I am doing, lingering here at the sign-post, evidently objectless and lost. I might be questioned; I could give no answer but what would sound incredible, and excite suspicion. Not a tie holds me to human society at this moment – not a charm or hope calls me where my fellow-creatures are – none that saw me would have a kind thought or a good wish for me. I have no relative but the universal mother, Nature: I will seek her breast and repose. ….I struck straight into the heath; I held on to a hollow I saw, deeply furrowing the brown moorside; I waded knee-deep in its dark growth; I turned with its turnings, and finding a moss-blackened granite crag in a hidden angle, I sat down under it. High banks of moor were about me; the crag protected my head: the sky was over that.

From this low point she is rescued and lives for a period with two sisters (not her own) while teaching at a small charity school. As things fall out and most ingeniously too, she returns in love to Mr Rochester rich and part of a rediscovered family..

FINIS

Martin Spray

FEELING A BIT NEEDLED

Since I wrote (see *LRE* 40) about the 'early imprinting' (our dear editor's apt term;) of my 'anchorage' on the far-out city boundary of Sheffield, and about my recent second-hand virtual experience of it, I have been there again – again virtually. And this was at least ***as odd*** an experience, and a little unsettling, too.

Actually, it wasn't the same place. Let me explain. Remembering that it was a while since I tried to catch up with any news about this area, I googled (delicious word!) the relevant place-name. Inevitably, there was much more on the web than previously. Inevitably, too, parts of the electronic record had gone, though the source of my previous jolt was still there. My screen was dominated by 'results' from the rock-climbing fraternity. Theirs is a world I know only the frontier of. I happened on several galleries of photos of climbers on a freestanding rock pillar called the Needle. This stands just off a sometime-quarried millstone grit edge (locally called a rocher) on the other side of the valley from My Place, and slightly upstream of it. Some of the photos showed the view across to My Place. I was surprised. I learned several things.

First: I had not appreciated how much denser the woodland now is in this part of the valley (which is just short of the moorland edge and of the Peak Park) than a few decades ago. What had stuck in the gallery of my memory was a pastoral valley floor, flanked by thin, scrubby woodland, with rather bleak rectilinear-walled cattle-pasture on the plateau on one side and rather brave Suburbia looming on the other. Downstream was a modest water treatment works and upstream two charmingly-matured Victorian reservoirs with their backdrop of planted woodland that fringed the heather and bilberry moors. What I saw on my monitor's screen was a reservoir, and water-works, patches of fields, advancing Suburbia and retreating moor, but most of the view was a tree'd landscape.

Truly a 'landscape' – indeed, a *prospect.* This was the valley --and My Place in it -- as seen from the top of a needle of rock standing above the tree canopy.... *my* landscape as I have never seen it. When I *knew* the place, that part of the valley was (so far as I know) out of bounds. A few years ago I found and enjoyed a recently-made path through it, skirting the Rocher, and rising to the Enclosure landscape, but the Needle I still knew nothing about. How could this be?... Of course, the Needle wouldn't have shown to someone nosing around for bugs or bilberries on lower ground.

As I ponder these pictures of valley, trees, rock, climbers, and an ironing-board, I *imagine* My Place – my anchorage. But of course *it isn't there.* GPS might find the location for me – and my feet might remember some of the shapes of the ground – but the habitat has changed. The *scene* has changed – and it seems to be in a different play. My place is no more.

In fact, having just checked in W.A. Poucher's 1966 *Peak and Pennines* walkers' guide, which I've had for years, I have to admit to seeing a photo of the Rivelin Needle several times – but I hadn't "taken it in". It stood 20m bold and tree-free when I was innocently mooching in the area. But it wasn't on 'my' side of the valley. Now it's quite famous. My loss!...

So much for being knowledgeably concerned about the landscape.... I didn't think, however, that it was so much more a selection of bits of the land rather than the whole 'scape that was important to me. It may be so; for while I occasionally watched some of the trees, the wood itself was easing back into position. I seem to have failed to appreciate how much, but how subtly, an imprinted landscape changes, and how narrowly focused our interest can be in what we might think of as 'The Whole Damned Thing'.

Oh, the ironing-board? While googling, I also learned that there's something called Extreme Ironing. I'm *sure* there wasn't in my day.... *(Find 'Extreme ironing' and 'Rivelin Rocks' in Wikepedia).*



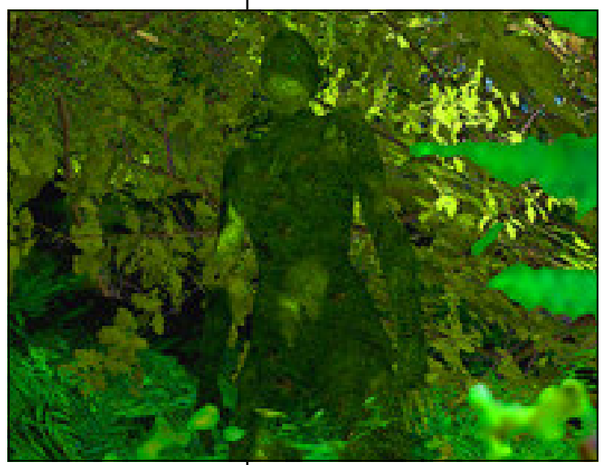
Ian Thompson

IMAGINED LANDSCAPES

A SEMINAR AT THE CUMBRIA INSTITUTE FOR THE ARTS, OCTOBER 2006.

Since this was Cumbria, a sort of Holy Land for those of the Romantic sensibility, more than one speaker made a passing nod to Coleridge and Wordsworth, though the presiding spirit at this seminar should probably have been that even more local boy, William Gilpin, who was born at Scaleby Castle, not far from Carlisle. It was Gilpin's published tours of the more mountainous areas of Britain, complete with advice on suitable subjects for brush and pencil, which did so much to generate the Picturesque enthusiasm of the late eighteenth century. Gilpin's central interest was the visual representation of landscape and that was the also a main thread here, though paint had to give way to pixels, and the Claude glass (1) to the Virtual Reality headset.

Gilpin infamously suggested taking a mallet to the ruins of Tintern Abbey to make them yet more Picturesque. He was satirized in his own day and nowadays gets a bad press because the Picturesque has become the whipping boy of landscape theory. The degenerate Picturesque has become the chocolate-box twee, but the whole idea of evaluating landscapes on the basis of their suitability for painting is also now derided. Doesn't the Picturesque deny other sensory inputs: sound, touch, small and the kinaesthetic sense? Isn't it inevitably distancing, setting up a picture frame between the world and the viewer? Isn't it politically and socially deplorable to gaze with purely aesthetic intent at the poor or their dilapidated hovels?



At the seminar these criticisms never seemed too far away. One of the benefits of Virtual Reality (VR), it seems, is its immersibility. In other words, once you have got yourself wired up into the gloves and the headset, there is no longer any picture frame. You are *there*, surrounded, enveloped in the imagined digital environment. Of course, there are only any poor people to worry about if you put them there, and none of these artists did.

For the Canadian artist **Char Davies**, this experience of VR immersion has profound implications. Eschewing the kind of photographic realism which many VR designers (and computer game developers) often strive to achieve, in *Osmose* (1995) and *Ephémère* (1998) she created translucent environments where the boundaries of objects became blurred. In *Osmose*, the traveller in this virtual world (digi-naut?) could follow the traces of minerals as they were absorbed by the roots of a tree, soar among the branches or even enter the structure of a leaf. According to Davies, one such voyager, who had a fear of drowning, almost succumbed to a panic attack while wearing the head set, before being advised to breathe deeply and yield to the experience. Davies's VR worlds were more *Blair Witch* (2) unnerving than she perhaps intended, but perhaps this had much to do with the horror movie noises she programmed into these imaginary spaces.

Of all the speakers, Davies seemed to have the clearest conception of what she was doing and why. Starting her career as a painter, she had begun to use digital media as a way of exploring her relationship with the natural environment. At some point she began to read Heidegger and recognised that her concern was with Being, the very *is*-ness of the world, though I was also struck by parallels with the deep ecology of Arne Naess, whose thought was influenced by reading Spinoza. Naess's philosophy, like Davies's art is about breaking down the boundaries between objects and recognising our connectedness. Immersion in a VR world is one way of doing this, but it should be possible in the real world too. For Naess it is ridiculous for humans to harm nature because they are harming themselves. Davies did not say as much, but I imagine she might feel the same way. Certainly, having moved back into working with real landscapes (she has bought some land), she feels a great sense of responsibility, thinking long and hard before she so much as shifts a boulder.

The virtual worlds of **Anouk de Clerq**, a Belgian artist raised by 'Buddhist psychotherapists', were much more sparsely furnished, even minimal. The first we were shown was little more than a horizon in front of which little dalek-like objects or creatures whizzed about. The next, which was introduced as a sort of secret garden, was undulating and dune-like, with odd little structures and, at one point, stands of vertical lines that looked like the worst sort of Forestry Commission plantation. All of this was accompanied by a soundtrack of harsh mechanical noises. De Clerk described these virtual places as Wonderlands (drawn in some way—like the landscape designs of Geoffrey Jellicoe—from the Jungian collective subconscious) and she was clearly very pleased to be able to share them with us, although I was relieved when each clip came to an end. The artist saw herself within the Romantic tradition, but using virtual worlds rather than nature to express something of her inner self.

The day's presentations seemed to split along gender lines. The two just described were essentially meditative and inward-looking. The second session began with the work of **Jorn Ebner**, a German artist presently based in Newcastle, who is concerned, amongst other things, with the idea of territory and settlement. While on residence at Grizedale he developed a portable kit for the creation of a mobile settlement, and he does similar things on game-like webpages, where hunter-gathering visitors can move virtual objects around to make places. There were resonances here with the sorts of drawings architects and landscape architects make in AutoCAD before they start to change real places, but it was difficult to know whether Ebner was being critical or ironic.

The same difficulty attended the presentation by Italian 'games-artist' **Damiano Colacito**. His work does highlight the tension between VR and the real world. We may become fantastically good at creating virtual environments, but it seems unlikely that they will ever be mistaken for reality. And even if this were possible, we might wonder what the point would be—just as people began to question those Picturesque gardeners whose gardens looked just like bits of nature.

Participants in the seminar got to try VR for themselves in the evening. The **artists' collective "Igloo"** had assembled their installation *Summerbranch* in one of the studios. Upon entering the space, where two walls were covered with images of woodland, it only gradually dawned that one of these was a film of real woodland while the other had been created using the games-engine from *Unreal Tournament.* I might have seen nothing more, if one of the artists concerned, Ruth Gibson, hadn't told me that she was hidden somewhere in the real image, wearing a sniper's camouflage suit. Similarly there were camouflaged creatures—well, graceful furtive women actually—hidden away in the virtual image and with the help of the joystick provided, you could track them down. I enjoyed this interaction, though I'm not sure what any of it meant or proved. After a couple of minutes the initial confusion between real and unreal worlds is over.

Landscape architects have been using virtual reality for at least as long as artists and perhaps to more purpose. We have a student, for example, who is using similar software to that used in *Summerbranch* to model a landscape of growing trees. This will be used by the Great North Forest as a tool for public participation, as it will allow people to see views with change in a developing woodland. But all of the day's presentations held some interest and I was sorry that I had teaching commitments that would not let me stay for the second day.

Notes
Ian Thompson is Editor of Landscape Research and teaches at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, University of Newcastle.
The Claude Glass *Manufactured in England in the 18th Century, was standard equipment for Picturesque tourists, producing instant tonal images that supposedly resembled works by Claude. It was a tinted convex mirror. You turned your back on the subject. (Bit like a wing mirror, John!!)*
Blair Witch. *A hugely successful, low budget American horror movie of the late 1990s which aimed to blur the difference between reality and fiction as students investigate a witch within a forest and themselves fall victim to magical disappearance.*

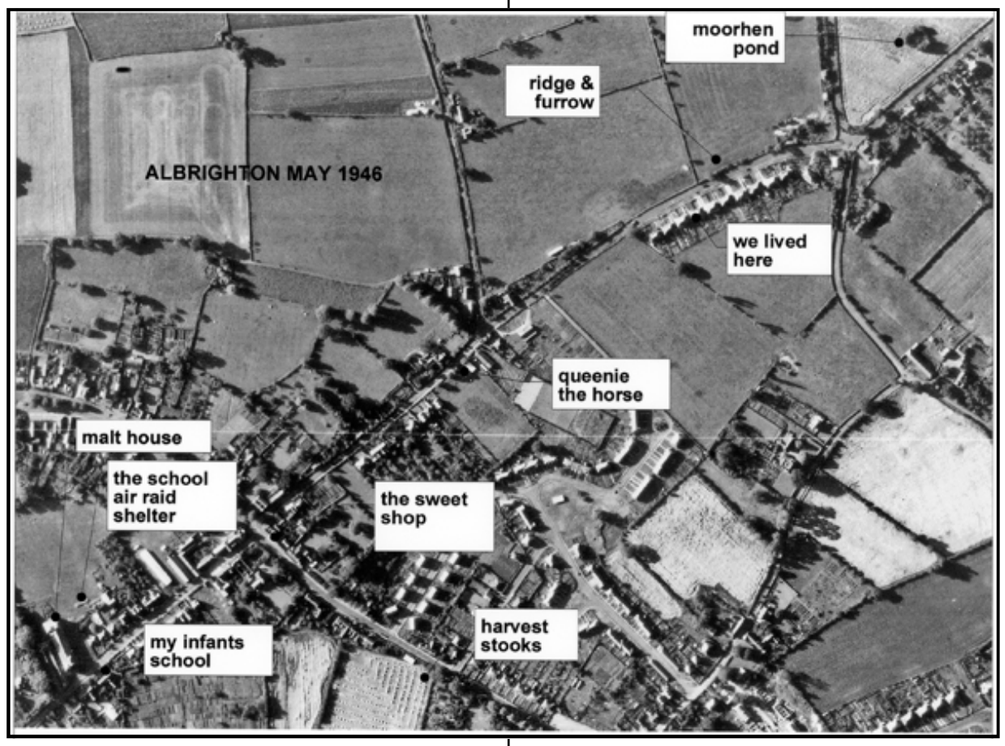
OUR WOLVERHAMPTON MEETING AND URBAN INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE THOUGHTS

There emerged a well supported interest in urban fringe landscape and its post modern theory/practice. Wolverhampton and the Midlands conurbation was in the thick of this, and so were hundreds of communities with a potential interest in their changing landscapes. Landscape research it was proposed must serve communities at all levels not forgetting 'ordinary people' as well as development and policy. The group was in favour of grass roots work, perhaps in liaison with other grass roots group. Particular interest was expressed in post industrial landscapes. We should explore links to achieve this. See also page 12 'proposed excursions'. We would value your feedback — to me please.

Bud Young

DO LANDSCAPE PREFERENCES BEGIN IN CHILDHOOD?

Should we believe, do we credit the idea that we carry early preferences for landscape from childhood? Our analytical thoughts of 20,50, 60 or even 70 years ago were at best naively formed. But our uncomplicated response to landscape as far as we could envision the notion (and recognising it only as outdoor play space) may perhaps provide a fundamental imprint.



Reflecting on my past memories of place, I have recently been able to take a new, but contemporary to the time, look at my childhood home of 60 years ago. It is contemporary because the area was photographed from the air in 1946. The place is a village (Albrighton, near Wolverhampton, Shropshire) where family tradition tells that we went in 1941 to avoid the bombing that was affecting Liverpool. I find from these 1946 airphotos that the house was a mere six fields from a very active RAF (royal air force) aerodrome and major depot. Do I have a recollection of the movement of warplanes? Hardly. Did I ever see the aerodrome? Never. What was the far radius of my explorations? About four hundred yards in one direction, two hundred in the others and as far as the primary school 900 yards to the east. Our car was garaged for the duration of the war. It smelled of leather and coldness inside the unlit garage. We didn't travel.

I recall going on an adventure (one of several to this place) across the fields which faced the house. I had a 'stout pole' and it was a great delight firmly imprinted on my mind that I used this to leap over a number of wet channels in the pasture. I know that they were channels because they were filled with clear water. Examination of the contemporary airphotos shows that we lived opposite a field of medieval ridge and furrow and the channels were not channels at all but rain-filled furrows.

There was a little mere (a small tree girt pond) where we walked out, balancing on willow trunks which lay flat close to the water and there is where the moorhens made their nests. As a little band of children, none more than eight years old we were birdnesting. My brother pulled me out one day covered in black mire with green duckweed spots. I was alarmed. At my most intrepid I went with two others (such is my recollection) into a very small field and caught two sticklebacks from a pond with

grassy margins. My mother said they were sticklebacks. Another day there were swans on the pond and we were alarmed enough to get out quickly. The smallness of the field and the grassy edge to the pond have imprinted themselves.

My landscape memories (edited, abbreviated) of those six years, however limited, are strong in my mind and affect even now my affection for various kinds of landscape. I love ridge and furrow, level wet landscapes, am fearful of tree girt mires, love strongly enclosed spaces, red sandstone outcrops, and sandstone walls around the garden parks of the gentry. My village school had a sandstone wall and Patshull Park. a park wall.

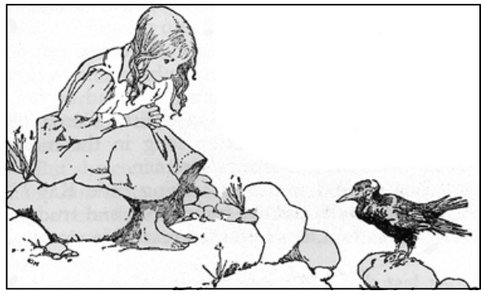
Later in family camping holidays around Europe before I was 17, I developed a series of other 'best landscape types' outstanding among which was that abrupt transition from level cultivated plain to steep hill front. In my mind nowadays this mimes the glorious lines of a reclining woman's body but at the age of 15, I was innocent of such delights. In our car journeys, for all our journeys were by car, I thrilled to foothills and the sense of having arrived in the zone of change. All of a sudden there was more to see. I loved the limestone structures of the Jura Mountains. Alps were sensational but impersonal but alpine meadows hummocky moraines (as I now recognise them) dotted with chalet farms were idyllic. The resinous scents thin soils and quick lizards of sparse Mediterranean shrubland were intriguing, here were plants growing in observable isolation and it delighted me.

These recollections got me re-reading "How I Made the World" by Jay Appleton. If anyone reading this piece or going to Jay's book, wishes to jot me a note about his or her early landscape experience I would be delighted to publish it.

Reference

Appleton, J ***How I made the World: shaping a view of Landscape*** *University of Hull Press 1994.*

Acknowledgment to NMRC, Swindon for permission to print this aerial photograph.



"What shall I read, dear Crow?"

George Sheeran **Patriotic Views: Aristocratic Ideology and the Eighteenth-Century Landscape.** Landscapes 7/2
David Hey and John Rodwell Wombwell: **The Landscape History of a South Yorkshire Coalfield Township** Landscapes 7/2
Richard Purslow **What Landscape Means to Me.** Landscapes 7/2
Mary Catherine E Garden **The Heritagescape: looking at landscapes of the past** International Journal of Heritage Studies 12/5 ….2006 pp 394-411
Ulf Strohmayer **'Urban design' and civic spaces: nature at the Parc des Buttes – Charmont in Paris** Cultural Geographies 2006 13 pp 557-576
OLA Soderstrom **Studying cosmopolitan landscapes** Progress in Human Geography 30/5 2006 pp 553-558.
Kevin P Stannard **Lost in Translation ? Towards a comparative interpretation of Italian urban form** Geography 91/3 pp 241-261
Gaelle Gillot **Du Paradis a Dream Park, les jardines dans le monde arabe: Damas, Le Caire, Rabat** Ann Geo No. 650/2006 pp 409-433
Marine Linglart, Patrick Blandin **La biodiversite des petits bois 'anthroposystemes insulares' dans les plaines de grandes cultures: L'example du Gatinais occidental** [Forest patches biodiversity in open field landscapes] Ann Geog No. 651/2006 pp 569-596
Gary Brierley, Kirstie Fryirs and Vikrant Jain **Landscape connectivity: the geographic basis of geomorphic applications [NZ and Australia]** Area 2006 38/2 pp165-174
David JA Evans, Stuart B Wilson and Duncan FM McGregor **The 'Kaims' (kames) of Bedshiel. Scottish Landform 37** Scottish Geogr Journal 122/1 March 2006 pp76-83
James D Hanson & Stewart Angus **Machair of the Western Isles**, **Scottish Landform example 36** Scottish Geogr Journ 121/4 pp 401-412 (with colour aerial oblique illustrations)
Claire Morgan-Davies, Tony Waterhome, Meg L Pollock and Karen Smyth **Local area farming plans - A common reality for farmers and conservationists in the Scottish Highland** Scot Geog Journ 121/4 pp 385-400.

Alex Albans

RESURRECTING THE SKELETON

"All landscapes hold their own secrets. Layer on layer, the past is buried beneath the surface. Seldom irretrievable, it lurks waiting for human agency or meteorological accident to force the skeleton up through flesh and skin back into the present." McDermid, 2006

This quotation neatly describes the topic of research I am currently undertaking at the Birmingham Institute for Art and Design -- part of the University of Central England (UCE).

Within contemporary landscape architecture, there is a design approach which sees some designers replicating the outlines and traces of buried landscape features. It is as if these landscape architects are looking at old maps, and putting back onto the site what used to be there, or in McDermid's words: *forcing these skeletons up to the surface*.

One striking example of this design approach can be found in the recently completed Phoenix Initiative in Coventry. Partly built on the site of a long-since-destroyed Benedictine Monastery, the designers, Robert Rummey Design Associates (RDA) have taken the outline of the Priory Cloister and re-interpreted it as a courtyard fronting onto the visitor's centre. This 'new' cloister is defined on three sides by a high sandstone wall (the fourth side being the glass front of the visitor's centre) into which a second square of pleached limes has been placed.





In another part of the Phoenix Initiative, RDA has interpreted the line of the culverted River Sherbourne with a water feature and a line of blue bricks set into the paving. In other parts of Coventry, the line of the former City Wall has been traced using a change in the paving material.

I am trying to see why this design approach came into being and is practiced. In addition to studying the theory behind all this, I am also looking at the impact that public policy, guidance and funding issues have had on this as a design phenomenon. And does the re-introduction, albeit in an often much modified form, of a former landscape feature, stimulate the elusive sense of place. Does the resurrection of formerly buried landscape features have any bearing on the experiential interest that a user perceives? In short, does a line of blue bricks in the paving mean anything to the average user who has no idea that there used to be a river there?



To explain my background I graduated in geography at Aberystwyth where I specialised in historical landscape studies and surveying. Working first as a land surveyor then at the Land Registry I then re-trained as a landscape architect at UCE.

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Reference: McDermid, V **The Grave Tatoo** London 2006 : Harper Collins.



Note: Alex explains that his main research interest is in the theory of landscape architecture and how it impacts practice - particularly associated with engendering experiential interest and the role of aesthetics, when the term is used to cover all of the senses rather than merely visual. He is also interested in how landscape architecture is used to develop a sense of place/ the genius loci. He would be very interested to hear from anyone who shares an interest in his research topic.