quality landscape, but also of managing water quality and flooding, as well as mitigating climate change and biodiversity loss. Green infrastructure is, hopefully, not just another piece of jargon, but a major advance in the way that people and places are joined-up in all sorts of functional ways. Another example is the Wildlife Trusts' 'Living Landscapes' programme, taking landscape-scale approaches to reconnecting communities, water and land in numerous schemes across the country. There are major opportunities for using the landscape as a context for social learning in order to build our resilience to future change. Potentially this could raise the profile of landscape art – including dance, poetry and prose – as a medium for discovery. A couple of years ago I was a 'reconnection' sceptic; now I am persuaded that it has real merit as a basis for landscape research and practice.

If you want to take it further – some key readings

- Graham, H., Mason, R. and Newman, A. (2009) Literature Review: **Historic Environment, Sense of Place, and Social Capital.** Commissioned for English Heritage.
- Landscape Institute (2009) **Green infrastructure: connected and multifunctional landscapes. A position statement.**
- Lawton, J. (Chair) (2010) **Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network.** Report to DEFRA.
- Mitchell, R. and Popham, F. (2008) **Effect of exposure to natural environment on health inequalities: an observational population study.** Lancet, 372, pages 1655–60.
- Wheater, H. and Evans, E. (2009) **Land use, water management and future flood risk.** Land Use Policy, Volume 26, Supplement 1, Pages S251-S264.

PS University of Sheffield

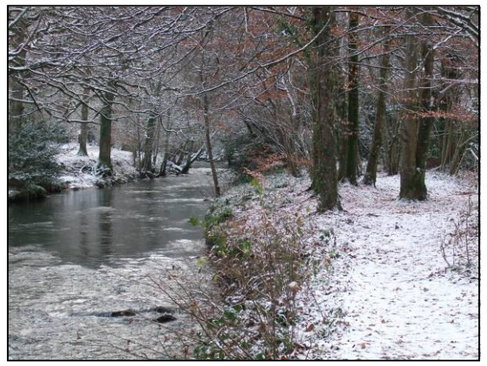
***Note**:The 'frieze' image hints at Dearne Valley residents connecting with their river landscape through community art; the water body is an example of the 'original' green infrastructure (green necklace) as conceived by Olmstead in Boston; Lindisfarne is an example of spiritual connection.*

FRUITFUL AUTUMN INTO SUDDEN WINTER

It has been a specially productive year for nuts, seeds and berries. We were then plunged unseasonably into one of the sharpest early frosts for years; I record minus 10 degrees centigrade last night (December 2nd). A month ago I chanced on what is a fairly new crop for England — Blueberries. On class 4-5 land at Lustleigh, Devon they occupy 16 acres in four plots and here show their autumn colour (slightly enhanced) . They require a huge investment in supporting poles and deer fencing. And then today in



the Dunsford Reserve (River Teign, Devon) a hoar frost-hollow where one instantly expects to meet the Snow Queen from Narnia and that fearful little troll sleigh driver.



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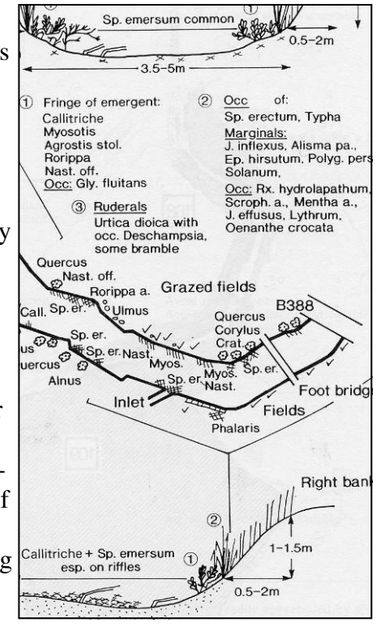
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landscape research group

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The Unnaturalness of Nature Reserves

They are building a new nature reserve near to where we live. I choose the word 'building' deliberately - in its current state much of it seems, and some of it is, a building site. There is heavy plant everywhere – big diggers and massive dumper trucks with huge wheels have been churning the ground into deep ruts; concrete mixers await their turn to discharge their contents. A cavernous hole has been excavated, to provide sufficient depth of water on which a visitor centre will float. Land is being levelled for a car park. 'Scrapes' have been scraped, and channels dug, linking artificial lakes and enabling water levels to be controlled. It's an object lesson to anyone who thought that nature reserves are natural.



In fact, the site was anything but natural before the diggers moved in. It is a former gravel works, bounded on the west by the M6. After crossing the Ribble the motorway rises on an embankment to cut its way through the wooded escarpment which constitutes the northern boundary of the site. The sound of the motorway, carried across the site by the prevailing winds, is a constant irritant; although one can get used to it to a degree, even when the wind carries the sound the other way the endless motion of vehicles remains as a kind of visual pollutant, like a small child tugging for attention, distracting one's peripheral vision, a despoiler of stillness. Spotters of Stobart lorries (I'm told there are such people) will be able to infiltrate groups of 'twitchers', clad alike in anoraks, following their prey through binoculars, burdened with tripods.

With so much human and mechanical activity, you would think that any wildlife would have fled, and that it would take years to lure it back again. But no. Hares run across disturbed ground. Deer emerge from the woods and leave clear footprints in the mud. Webbed feet of various sizes also leave their mark. Geese, ducks, coots, swans and herons visit the lakes. Buzzards spiral overhead.

I said '*They* are building a new nature reserve', using 'They' in the way we do when we feel that our lives are being manipulated by vague, unidentifiable, Kafka-esque higher authorities. - or when we are looking for an excuse for choosing not to engage. In this case I chose my words badly. I should have said '*We* are building a new nature reserve'. The project is being managed by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust, a band of friendlier folk you couldn't hope to meet, with help from their many volunteers, myself included. In truth, our efforts so far have been mostly of a marginal nature – litter picking (lots of it blown from the motorway); breaking up the massed ranks of young trees planted in rows by contractors; pulling up ragwort before it runs to seed (but leaving some for the caterpillars of cinnabar moths); collecting seed from bullrushes; cultivating rushes in seed trays, planting them out and fencing off the young plants to protect them from being gobbled up by ducks and coots. Most remarkably, some of us have been trained as 'lookers', qualified to keep a watch over a herd of Hebridean sheep employed for 'conservation grazing'.

There can be no doubt that this nature reserve – perhaps more, or more obviously, than most – will be highly artificial. 'Manmade' it clearly is. Arguably, it will offer wildlife more of a 'holiday camp' in which their every need is catered for, than a truly natural environment in which they have to fend for themselves. A bank has been raised and shaped for sand martins, drilled with holes to encourage them to nest. A telegraph pole studded with nest boxes is a high-rise for hedge sparrows. Is there any danger that our cossetted wild birds will forget how to build their own nests? Visitors likewise will find that their requirements are more than met. This will be bird watching made easy, from strategically placed, comfortable hides – a playground (and one of my volunteer colleagues feels strongly that children are being overindulged with too much play equipment in too many locations).

But unnatural? Perhaps we need another, more positive word – 'supernatural' has already been taken – to represent human endeavours to mend damaged environments, to care for all forms of life, to create new landscapes – to act, that is, as a highly evolved species should - given a capacity to stand outside Nature with powers to do good and harm? A word for our nurturing of Nature, for embracing Nature within culture without taking the wildness out of it.

PP

Illustration (fragment) from River Projects and Conservation, a manual for holistic appraisal. Edited by John L Gardiner. Published by Wiley 1991

MAGGIE ROE REPORTS ON A UK LANDSCAPE CONFERENCE.

8 & 9 November, 2010 Liverpool.

This conference run jointly by the Landscape Institute and Defra was a refreshingly lively affair, primarily as a result of the engagement of **Quentin Cooper** (BBC R4 Material World) as compere and interviewer. The conference kicked off with the UK Landscape Award Dinner in the monumental setting of St George's Hall. This was an enjoyable and exciting evening with short videos giving a flavour of the projects and **Merrick Denton-Thompson** and **Alistair McCapra** (Chief Executive, Landscape Institute) warming up the audience prior to the presentation of the awards themselves. The high quality of the candidate schemes meant that it was difficult to identify a clear winner prior to the judges' announcement, but of course as a long-term supporter of the regeneration work being carried out over many years on the



Durham Coast, I was absolutely delighted when the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership (who supplied the image above) won the 2010 award.

This project will now go forward to represent the UK in Strasbourg. The project has completely transformed the 'Get Carter' coal-blackened and largely ignored landscape* into a resource that is now recognised as having considerable social, economic and ecological local and regional value and significance. The Awards evening was an upbeat introduction that set the tone for the conference as a whole. The main events the following day were held in the Crown Plaza hotel on Liverpool's waterfront. Although not brimming in character, the conference location was good and the facilities worked well. Delegates were given the opportunity to get out into the landscape on a boat trip around the Mersey Estuary on the final day. This trip clearly revealed the contradictions between heritage value and development demands that many such landscapes face.

During the conference uncertainties were evident over the future of some of the important bodies involved in landscape policy and, following the change of government, the push to implement the ELC in the UK. The demise of CABE-Space was noted in particular and changes in HLF (Heritage lottery fund) funding reflect present economic difficulties.

Rene Bihan from the San Francisco based SWA Group gave a modest account of his practice experience while focussing on the thorny issue of landscape and politics. His underlying view was that Landscape Architects often do not communicate well and need to be more **P**olitical in order to help create understandings of the political infrastructure holding the landscape together and provide clearer messages to those outside the profession. Other speakers provided useful information that was picked up and discussed in the excellent opportunities provided by the conference timetable for audience participation facilitated by Quentin Cooper.

In his speech during the Conference dinner, **Simon Sharma**'s flights of fantasy and reminiscences of characters who have influenced his own thinking in his book Landscape and Memory were entertaining and clearly emphasised his identity as the eccentric academic. In contrast, the tasters shown by **Professor Iain Stewart** of his new BBC series 'Making Scotland's Landscape' at the Awards dinner reminded participants of the realities of the physical landscape and the issues faced by those managing and living within it.

While it was good to see a wide range of representatives from practitioners, policy-makers and funding bodies, there were disappointingly few members of the academic community and LRG presence was low. One of the other speakers also expressed surprise at the lack of representation of disciplines such as ecologists and archaeologists. In future years it would be good to see attendance of disciplines other than landscape architecture encouraged and perhaps the range of speakers and involvement in the organisation of the event could help encourage this.

*cult film starring Michael Caine and Britt Ekland

MHR

ANTHOLOGY

We have the good fortune to live in an unenclosed parish, and may thank the wise obstinacy of two or three sturdy farmers, and the lucky unpopularity of a ranting madcap lord of the manor, for preserving the delicious green patches, the islets of wilderness amidst cultivation, which form, perhaps, the peculiar beauty of English scenery. The common that I am passing now – the lea, as it is called – is one of the



loveliest of these favoured spots. It is a little sheltered scene, retiring, as it were, from the village; sunk amidst higher lands, hills would be almost too grand a word: edged on one side by one gay highroad, and intersected by another; and surrounded by a most picturesque confusion of meadows, cottages, farms, and orchards; with a great pond in one corner, unusually bright and clear, giving a delightful cheerfulness and daylight to the picture. The swallows haunt that pond; so do the children. There is a merry group round it now; I have seldom seen it without one. Children love water, clear, bright, sparkling water; it excites and feeds their curiosity; it is motion and life.

From pp 42 & 42 'Our Village' by Mary Russell Mitford publisher George G Harrap & Co Ltd London 1947 a late collection of her writings to the Lady's Magazine in the early 1800s. Wood engraving by Joan Hassall. The village of Three Mile Cross is on the south outskirts of Reading. More than a pretty description if you read between the lines. Perhaps more truly landscape than the cascade of intellectually contrived derivative 'landscapes.' Are we becoming too abstruse in our cleverness or using 'landscape ' as a convenient catch all?

VISIONS OF RINGWAY 1: TRACING THE SPACES OF A MODERNIST APORIA*

By Alan Gillingwater, University of Sheffield

This dissertation was judged worthy of first prize as the best MA (academic) one submitted to LRG judges.

The Westway (as pictured, p4) is one of the most (in)famous landmarks of a concrete modernism that pervades London's landscape. However, this impressive mile-long elevated structure was originally only designed as a feeder road into a much grander urban motorway system, designated 'Ringway 1'. Representing one of the most ambitious urban construction projects ever conceived, this urban motorway was planned to track all the way round a densely built up

inner London, creating one continuous orbital route; elevated as it went, supported by hundreds of immense concrete buttresses.

I decided to explore the various plans of Ringway 1 in order to find out something more of the vision behind



it. The project emerged out of modernism, a long fermenting intellectual and artistic movement that spectacularly exploded into the twentieth century. Affirming the creative potential of human beings to remake their surroundings, modernism was deeply imbued in the production of urban space; built environments were to be improved and remade according to the valorisation of human reason. Ringway 1 represents one particular instance or trajectory (I take an iterative approach to the plans that originated in the 1940s and evolved up until the 1970s) of this translation of twentieth century modernism into the production of urban space.

However, today of course, only the Westway stands – just one fragment of a far grander plan seemingly shipwrecked into a present day landscape. The Ringway 1 plans failed to be translated to reality. So, it may well be asked, why choose to study a project that ultimately failed? I would argue that failed or incomplete projects such as Ringway 1 can in fact offer a unique space in which to explore the *vision* of the city which underlined and informed modernism's architecture and planning. Furthermore, it affords an interesting vantage point from which a particular conjecture in the history of modernism – a moment of aporia or point of rupture – can be envisioned.

I found that the plans had a fascinating genealogy, originating in Abercrombie's great plans for London in the early 1940's. It soon became apparent that the crude analyses, so commonplace in architectural and planning critiques, of modernism as simply a brutal concrete aesthetic rooted only in a cold, mechanical and detached rationality (Le Corbusier as the measure of all things modernist) was inadequate. Abercrombie's vision was inspired by poetry as much as logical calculation. Interestingly, I found it also to be couched in a peculiarly English tradition of organicist-empiricist urbanism; Abercrombie's desire for the production of new, ordered and rational spaces in London was complexly and intricately modulated through an organicist gaze where the empirical knowledge of existing cities and their communities was crucial to their re-composition.

By the 1960s, although the plans for the Ringway remained much the same, the modernism of the vision behind it had changed. A vision animated by the idea of planning as an art of expansive will and the creation of a new poetics of space was replaced by the ardent faith in a technical fix to urban problems that galvanised a new breed of GLC planners.

Ultimately, of course, the project failed; the doubt surrounding it became unsustainable and the plans were erased as the 'not-yet' became the 'never-yet'. Nevertheless, traces of this modernist dream (such as the Westway) have been deposited in the built environment, and to conclude my research, I explored the ways in which the after-life of Ringway 1 gently resonates in the (both material and imagined) contemporary landscape. As such, an understanding of modernism, more sensitive to its so often occluded fragilities, was elicited.

AG

* In the 'Dictionary of Difficult Words'!! **Aporia** n. (pl. -as, -ae) rhetorical device of pretending not to know what to do or say; passage expressing a doubt or difficulty. But there are other meanings such as ' In classical rhetoric, aporia means placing a claim in doubt by developing arguments on both sides of an issue. Readers probably knew that, I did not. Is this good communication? Ed

SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPES, BERLIN

15-16 June 2010

The protection, management, and planning of cultural landscapes has attracted broad interest from scientists, policy makers, and the general public. As a consequence of widespread agricultural intensification, land abandonment, and urbanization, many cultural landscapes all over the world are facing fundamental changes. The effects of these dynamics and possible ways to guide them or adapt to them are addressed by two rather distinct research communities: One uses the concept of "cultural landscapes" (understanding landscapes as an arena of social and ecological processes and focusing on the values evolving within it), the other the concept of "resilience" (focusing on landscapes as coupled social-ecological systems and aiming to maintain the functioning of these systems). A workshop on "Social-ecological resilience of cultural landscapes" at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities aimed to merge these two

complementary analytical perspectives. The three workshop objectives were to scrutinize the application of resilience thinking on cultural landscapes, to achieve an improved understanding of drivers and thresholds of landscape change, and to provide insight for the management of resilient cultural landscapes. Forty scholars from Europe, North America and Australia gathered in Berlin to discuss the application of the resilience concept on cultural landscapes.

As the case studies from different cultural landscapes revealed, the resilience conceptual framework has proven as very helpful to understand ecological systems and their dynamics across scales. The presented cases stressed the importance of global forces, either economic or social, that are increasingly shaping cultural landscapes. The participants concluded that the resilience and the landscape concepts should be enriched with a multiplicity of theoretical, conceptual, and methodological tools, e.g. from political ecology and historical ecology to comprehend these forces. The insights on landscape resilience will be developed further in an edited book, planned to be published in 2011 or 2012.

Kathrin Trommler, Claudia Bieling, Tobias Plieninger.

The following papers were presented and seem worth repeating here

Keynote papers

- (Re)Conceptualising the human in cultural landscapes and social-ecological systems **(L. Head)**
- The European rural landscape among globalization, identity and sustainability **(M. Agnoletti)**
- Two approaches towards understanding agricultural landscapes **(M. Widgren)**
- Resilience and regime shifts in cultural landscapes: Assessing cascading effects **(Ann P. Kinzig)**
- A heterarchy of knowledges: Re?-assembling a global conscience **(Carole L. Crumley)**

Session I: Conceptualising landscapes as social-ecological systems

- From cultural landscapes to resilient social-ecological systems. Transformation of a classical paradigm or innovation of a novel approach? **(T. Kirchhoff, D. Hoheisel & F. Brand)**
- On the suitability of resilience and system concepts when analysing landscape dynamics **(M. Stenseke, E. Slätmo & R. Lindborg)**
- Analysing resilience – Comparing an expert driven framework for analysing resilience with a case study in an Italian cultural landscape **(I. Soane, A. Gretter, R. Scolozzi & C. Orsatti)**
- Relationships between path dependency and resilience of cultural **landscapes (A. Röhring & L. Gailing)**

Session II: Driving forces of landscape change at various spatial-temporal scales

- Challenging the driving forces framework: Contrasting conceptual land change studies with empirical findings **(M. Bürgi, F. Kienast & A. Hersperger)**
- Resilient basic structures and transient contents of cultural landscapes: An empirical review of historical landscapes as an aid to landscape system analysis **(R.C. Zimmermann)**
- Landscape asymmetry as an element of agro-ecosystem resilience **(D. van Apeldoorn)**
- Landscape dynamics in the dehesas of Sierra Morena (Andalusia): A political-ecological



analysis of driving forces and land-use decisions in a European agrosilvopastoral system **(C. Schröder)**

- Landscapes in Eastern Germany at a turning point – population decline and the development of land consumption **(M. Moorfeld)**

Session III: Resilience-based perspectives on landscape change

- The sugar-cane cultural landscape of the Caribbean Islands: Tracking a social-ecological system from the 16th to the 21st **century (W. Found & M. Berbés-Blázquez)**
- Local land-users' perception and impacts of land use and management changes in two cultural landscapes: a comparative case (N of Spain and N of Argentina) **(A. Rescia Perazzo, M. Pérez-Corona & J. Dover)**
- Offshore wind farming on the West coast of Schleswig-Holstein: A shift towards a new cultural landscape? **(K. Gee & B. Burkhard)**

Session IV: Social capital as source of resilience and adaptation in landscapes

- Desirable states: The politics of resilience thinking **(B. Beymer, T.J. Bassett & I. Bryceson)**
- Using Social-Ecological inventory to identify ecosystem services of traditional rural biotopes in South-West Finland **(T. Birge)**
- Explaining high institutional persistence in East German recreational fisheries governance after the disturbance of the German reunification in 1990 **(K. Daedlow, V. Beckmann & R. Arlinghaus)**
- Social-ecological resilience and transhumance landscapes in the Mediterranean: Learning from the past, looking for the future **(E. Oteros Rozas, J. González Nóvoa, B. Martín-López, C. López & C. Montes)**
- The role of homegardens in strengthening social-ecological resilience: Case studies from Cuba & Austria **(C. Van der Stege, B. Vogl-Lukasser & C.R. Vogl)**

Session V: Adaptive management of cultural landscapes

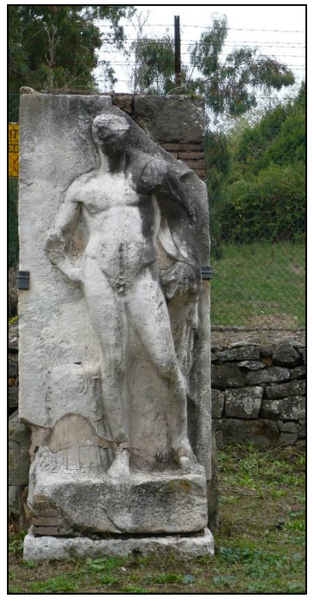
- Using ecosystem services as a framework for causality and the matching of social and ecological scales **(M. Tuvendal & T. Elmqvist)**
- A resilience perspective on stocking-based recreational fisheries management in cultural landscapes **(M. Schlüter & R. Arlinghaus)**
- Social-ecological factors of landscape planning in Germany **(W. Wende)**
- Collective efforts to manage cultural landscapes **(K. Prager)**

All abstracts of the workshop presentations can be found at http://www.ecosystemservices.de/news/resilience.

LANDSCAPE OF THE LIVING DEAD — QUERY

by Terry O'Regan

Panoramic landscapes do not figure much in my childhood memories, but my brain shelves are stacked with catalogued memories of narrow roadscapes on hot summer days radiating out from Waterford City in the southeast of Ireland leading to local seaside destinations. Packed into the backseats of Morris Minors we stared excitedly between our parents' heads at the 'road movie' unfolding before us frame by frame counting down to that final glimpse of the sea glinting like an inviting light at the end of a green tunnel. Roadside pubs, twisty bridges, sharp bends, big house entrances, farm gates with whitewashed pillars, water-pumps and the odd white horse supplemented the scarce stone milestones and helped to distract us from the onset of car-sickness.



There were few monuments on those roads, though an occasional longer trip to Fermoy took us past the monument to Master McGrath, a renowned greyhound! Other roads featured very occasional monuments to those who died in the ambushes of The Troubles and the civil war. There were even fewer long straight sections of road, so much so that my father told me that the two very long straight sections in neighbouring Wexford were known as 'Tramps' Nightmares".

Others I recall include the Old Bog Road, Route 66, the Silk Road, that '24-hour-road-to-Tulsa' and the Appian Way.

What route did the Appian Way take to arrive on some shelf in my memory – was it the story of Saint Peter 'meeting' Jesus as he ran from Rome, or did the horrendous image of Marcus Licinius Crassus crucifying 6000 rebellious slaves, supporters of Spartacus, all the way from Capua to Rome figure in my Latin classes; maybe it appeared in the 1951 Hollywood version of 'Quo Vadis'. I travelled via Rome to Florence for the 10th anniversary of the European Landscape Convention, and ….



I resolved to give the Via Appia a reality check, concentrating on the stretch south of the San Sebastiano catecombs said to have temporarily accommodated the remains of Peter and Paul. But I had little interest in catecombs – I was only here for the Road. 'The Eyewitness Guide suggested a 90 minute walk would take me as far as the Via di Tor Carbone, where the Via Appia still stretches out ahead of you in a straight line'. I regretted bypassing the Church of Santa Maria in Palmis also known as 'Domine Quo Vadis' in memory of the question (latinised) addressed by St. Peter to the vision of Jesus – "Lord, where are you going?"

I covered my selected section in a relatively brisk 120 minute return journey. The Appian Way is a wonderful landscape - long and straight with stately pines; worn pavings that talk to you; monuments that invite conversation and spirits to walk by your side. The modern developments that interrupt the historic continuity speak a different language. I may have missed the chance to commune with Saint Peter and his master but I welcomed the opportunity to pause and converse with the philosopher Seneca; I sat on the wall by his tomb across from the striking relief of a man known as the "Heroic Relief".

Seneca tutored Nero and committed suicide on Nero's orders in his nearby villa in AD 65. I respect Seneca as he knows my weaknesses too well – **'It is a great thing to know the season for speech and the season for silence'** and then **'The best cure for anger is delay'** – Seneca, old man, we are in great need of delay and responsible speech in Ireland just now!; **'All art is an imitation of nature'** and **'We learn not in school, but in life'** – Seneca, why then is it that politicians fail to learn full stop?

I am given to saying that if you do not know the history of a landscape you will walk a lonely road. The Appian Way is a linear landscape rich in the narrative of history – one of the original 'road movies'. One is tempted to call it a 'Landscape of the Dead' but surely it is a 'Landscape of the Living Dead'.

TOR

Notes

The Editor note for posterity that Ireland has just accepted a multimillion euro bail-out from the UK, the IMF and Europe..

The author notes that in the far distance a vehicle is using the Way, while in his mind's ear he heard the sound of soldiers' marching sandals.

TEN DAYS IN ISRAEL & THE WEST BANK

By John Randall[1]

There were various strands that led to our going to the 'Holy Land' this November and in a real sense we did not mean to go at all. But we did. One of the important strands was Raja Shehadeh's 'Palestinian Walks' (see the Editor's web review of this book at LRE 46). Raja Shehadeh, a Palestininan lawyer who wrote of journeys that he is no longer able to make, places that are now off limits, families and friends who are beyond easy reach. His restrained anger and grief were in my mind as we travelled. This fear to travel in our own land is something that we in England have not experienced since the English Civil War of the 1600s.

Ten days are too short a time to make large generalisations but here are a few personal reflections on this tragically fragmented landscape.

First a visit to Hebron in the West Bank (ie Palestin-

ian territory) – a large and historic Palestinian city of some 165,000 inhabitants. We walked through the market area. Constructed above the Palestinian *souq* is a metal grill that catches debris dropped or thrown down by flat dwelling Israeli settlers who have chosen



provocatively to live in the central area. They form an enclave of about 500 people protected by a large number of soldiers from the Israeli Defence Force.

We saw the 'security barrier' or Wall carving through the landscape – more on Palestinian land than Israeli– sometimes separating olive trees and farms from those who used to look after them. We saw numerous Israeli settlements, 'Facts on the Ground,' that dominate the higher ridges (see the editor's book review 'A Civilian Occupation'[2]); we saw the impressive new roads that are a hurrah for progress — provided that you possess the settlers' 'passe partout'. We stayed on the winding older road system, in a kind of physical planning apartheid. As we drove south from Galilee to the airport at Tel Aviv on our last day, we saw the security barrier, at one point skilfully landscaped almost out of sight of international travellers and tourists with no view of the deep security drop on the Palestinian side.

Shehadeh likens the disappearance of Palestinian villages to the Scottish Highland Clearances[3] – people dispossessed at the will of the powerful. Here and there is evidence of razed Palestinian villages becoming nature reserves and as we climbed up to Banias – the New Testament settlement of Caesarea Philippi – in northern Galiee with its springs and waterfall, I wondered what Palestinian history lay beneath the beauty around. Echoes of our deserted medieval villages.

We walked through part of the limestone gorge of Wadi Qelt with the dizzying drop to the dry river bed below. We strolled along the basalt shoreline of Galilee and saw an ancient boat excavated from the mud. We looked over into Lebanon and Syria from the Golan Heights (annexed to Israel in 1967) where vineyards flourish and sophisticated surveillance equipment scans the land. We visited the more authentic (and quieter) of two baptismal sites on the Jordan – the adjoining ground clearly marked 'minefield': there were two Israeli soldiers on one side and a Jordanian soldier on the other.



David Grossman's new book, *'To the End of the Land'* is a reminder of the personal cost of Israeli 'security' to Israelis themselves. Another recent publication, Raja Shehadeh's *'A Rift in Time'* from the Palestinian point of view, retraces the steps of his grief through this fragmented land. He reminds us that the geological displacement that is the Dead Sea Rift Valley is echoed in brokenness at the human scale.

Other visitors to Israel and the Palestinian West Bank will, no doubt, see and write of different things. But as I return to my job as an adoption social worker and travel unafraid across the varied landscapes of Devon, Dorset and Cornwall, I shall have a fresh sense of so much that I take for granted. I will recall those Palestinians who have no rights in their own ancestral landscape to move freely about their daily business; those who still less have a 'right to roam'. This magnificent landscape is lined and scarred by those who now have the power.

JR

Editors note:

1 John Randall is widely read in the conflict between Palestine and Israel. His tour was lead by a Palestinian expert.

2 'A Civilian Occupation: the Politics of Israeli Architecture' as reviewed by the editor pp 9-10 LRE 54.

3 The Highland Clearances – from Wikepedia - were forced displacements of the population of the Scottish Highlands during the 18th and 19th centuries. They led to mass emigration.

Key Knowledge
RECONNECTING THE LANDSCAPE.

by Paul Selman .

In 1995, the American ecologist James Miller wrote about the 'Extinction of Experience' amongst urban populations (a term originally coined by Robert Pyle), to reflect our increasing disconnection from nature. He noted that most Americans can identify hundreds of corporate logos, but fewer than ten native plant species, and that adolescents in south-central Los Angeles were more likely to identify correctly an automatic weapon by its report than a bird by its call. He suggested that this situation is progressively worsening due to 'environmental generational amnesia', whereby contact with the natural environment during childhood steadily diminishes yet becomes the baseline against which environmental degradation is measured later in life. This results in a continual ratcheting down of expectations regarding the quality and biodiversity of natural areas closest to people's homes and workplaces. Relatively few urban dwellers can now share the pioneering conservationist John Muir's intuitive experience that, "When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world".

Many authors have identified disconnection from nature as a fundamental cause of environmental and landscape deterioration. We retain little sense of how landscape functions respond to human impact. Not surprisingly, there is a widely espoused view that reconnecting with nature will result in wiser care for the environment. The Coalition Government's recently launched National Tree Planting Campaign echoes this sentiment. Unfortunately, the 'reconnecting' literature is often shallow and emotive, invoking us to hug trees or restore our psychic energy by bonding with the earth. Without wishing to offend the popular 'reconnection' gurus, I am concerned to know whether there is reliable evidence that landscape disconnection is a problem, and that landscape reconnection will improve sustainability……

…. Based on the current scientific literature, it strikes me that there are three areas of substance in relation to landscape connection. First, there are issues of physical connection that include, for example, the connectivity of ecological and hydrological systems. Second there are connections between landscape and people, relating to personal wellbeing and the identity of places. Third there are connections between town and country, possibly leading to a blurring of our traditional perceptions of urban and rural landscapes…..

….. If there is a genuine foundation to these phenomena, they have tremendous significance for anyone with an amateur or professional interest in landscape. Issues of physical connection have often been identified with the topic of landscape ecology. It is widely understood that one of the major causes of declines in biodiversity, despite decades of safeguarding nature reserves and protecting landscapes, has been the loss of 'ordinary' habitat and wildlife in the wider countryside. Key species may have their core refuges protected, but they find themselves unable to fully sustain their lifecycle processes because surrounding areas contain limited opportunity for movement and feeding. This might be even more serious if species need to adjust their range in response to changing climates. Consequently, ecologists have increasingly advocated 'landscape scale' measures, aimed at reinforcing habitat in the wider countryside. Some pundits have focused on the importance of linear corridors, such as hedgerows, in creating movement routes across otherwise inhospitable territories. However, the evidence for use of linear corridors is, apart from some specific exceptions, rather fragile. The same could be said for climatically related range shifts. Even so, the recently published Lawton Review assembles compelling evidence of the need to 'make space' for nature by promoting connectivity through a more heterogeneous landscape.

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A second principal area of physical reconnection is that of the hydrological cycle. Few people can imagine how centuries of creating field and arterial drains



in the countryside, and municipal infrastructure in the towns, have systematically lowered water tables and dried out the land. In urban areas especially, to quote Wheater and Evans, there has been an 'engineered disconnection' from the floodplain. Many would argue that this is a significant contributor to recent floods and their associated damage to property. Cities have often turned their backs on rivers, resulting in both physical and psychological disconnection. However, surface and ground waters, cities and floodplains, are now being reconnected through a variety of policy and planning measures, notably Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). Both within and beyond the city, there is growing interest in a range of land management measures aimed at recovering floodplain functionality.

A less visible but highly important aspect of physical reconnection is that of airspace. The urban heat island phenomenon is well-known. It is also clear that recent summer temperature extremes in Europe have resulted in widespread heat-related deaths and illnesses, a situation which is likely to get worse in the future. Yet there is now sound evidence that large-scale tree planting and 'greening' measures in urban areas can substantially mitigate the effects of global warming. Research into urban climate change by Roland Ennos and colleagues at Manchester University has shown that even a 10% increase in vegetation cover could stabilise temperatures for the remainder of the century, especially through the installation of green roofs. Turning, to human-nature reconnection, one recurrent area of interest surrounds the notion of 'sense of place'. The existence of a 'genius loci' is widely taken for granted in policy and design circles, and there is an intuitive appeal to the idea that people attach themselves emotionally to places that are visually and culturally distinctive. However, in a world where progressively fewer people are dependent on their 'community of place' and associate more strongly with 'communities of interest', such as clubs and work, is sense of place anything more than a quaint myth? As our social and professional engagements become increasingly virtual, do most people really notice their immediate landscape at all?

The literature here tends to divide into – please excuse the jargon – phenomenology and environmental psychology. The former approach has been championed by cultural geographers since the 1970s and offers a strong case that we acquire a sense of place through habitual uses of our immediate environment. Within this space, we often have a feeling of relative safety as well as confidence about what we can or cannot do. Perhaps the most notable advocate of this approach at present is Ken Olwig, who suggests that, like flocks of sheep, we 'heft' to an area that we habitually walk. I have a strong personal sympathy for this view, as I feel it provides a balance to our excessively 'visual' understanding of landscape – it has much to say about



the way that landscape is sensed subliminally in unconscious ways, so that seemingly commonplace elements of our surroundings imprint themselves on our memories. The alternative (but entirely complementary) approach is that sense of place can be measured through psychometric scales. Evidence from such methods does indeed suggest the existence, in varying degrees, of three distinct phenomena – place identity, place attachment and place dependence. Some people also suggest a spiritual experience of landscape, and there is growing policy interest in protecting sacred natural sites as well as a religious belief that some places are specially conducive to 'thin silence'. Even those with no religious faith can affirm the capacity of landscape to 'lift the spirit'. Helen Graham and colleagues at Newcastle University have related this to qualities of history, permanence, solitude, calm, inspiration and escapism.

A second aspect of social reconnection is that of health and wellbeing. In turn, this relates to underlying arguments for 'biophilia' – Edward Wilson's idea that, having evolved in natural settings, humans intuitively resonate with nature-rich environments. Many writers have suggested that a cause of poor health, unfitness and stress is the hard, urbanised character of our surroundings. Opportunities to reconnect with green environments in cities would, it is claimed, improve our health and happiness. Researchers have been particularly interested both in the medical evidence related to morbidity and mortality, and in the restorative effect of green environments on mood. One significant methodological problem has been the difficulty of demonstrating any causal mechanisms that link the highly diffuse concept of landscape to specific physiological processes. Hence, most of the evidence is statistical, inferring broad trends between wellbeing and environment. A recent study by Mitchell and Popham in the Lancet, for example, confirmed that levels of urban greenspace significantly reduced the health disadvantage normally associated with income deprivation. Although statistical evidence can be endlessly debated, because of the number of intervening variables that could contribute to an apparent correlation, there still seems to be good evidence that the presence of greenspace and biodiversity generally improves physical and mental health, and aids recuperation after surgery and illness. As an extension of this, the direct reconnection of urban people with land, for example through allotment gardening or participation in 'green gyms', has demonstrable benefits for health and fitness.

The restorative effects of green environments on mood and attention tend to be investigated experimentally. Typically, groups of volunteers are shown videos or slides, or even immersed in virtual reality environments, of harsh or threatening landscapes and then are similarly exposed to soothing green surroundings. Changes are measured via questionnaires or by monitoring physiological responses such as pulse rate. These experiments have been undertaken sufficiently widely to confirm that green landscape, especially in urban areas, has a valuable restorative effect that is likely to improve wellbeing and reduce stress. There is also evidence that landscape-centred experiences such as working on farms can benefit people with mental disorders, children with learning difficulties, and similar groups. Some researchers also propose a more general link between urban landscapes and social cohesion.

The final area of reconnection, I would argue, is that between town and country. I come from a generation that perceived the city as a grimy, polluted and dysfunctional place, full of squalid overcrowded slums and traffic-choked centres. We continued the 'flight from the city' that our parents had begun, to find a better landscape in the countryside. People born during the past thirty years in postindustrial countries generally have a very different view. To them, the city is an attractive, relatively clean and safe, cultural hub – a place of designer shops, pedestrianised malls, night clubs, concert venues and street cafes on rejuvenated waterfronts. It has reacquired a substantial resi-



dential population. Young people are more conscious of their carbon footprints and of the sheer cost of travel, and may be less inclined to commute from rather dull dormitory towns or spend their leisure time in distant countryside. Instead, they may expect a landscape that sweeps into the city, consisting of ecological corridors, recreational greenways, equable microclimates and functional wetlands. The urban fringe would become an attractive and diverse gateway between town and country. Indeed, the whole of our urban and rural landscape might blur in a positive way.

Overall, therefore, the idea of 'reconnected' landscapes is a strong and valid one. It has a conceptual appeal, but also a sound empirical base and some very practical implications. When we think of landscape, we often think of elite scenery and habitats, protected by agencies and nongovernmental organisations. This, of course, remains incredibly important. However, the interests of landscape research and practice will move increasingly towards the task of reconnecting natural