landscape research extra 66

July 2013

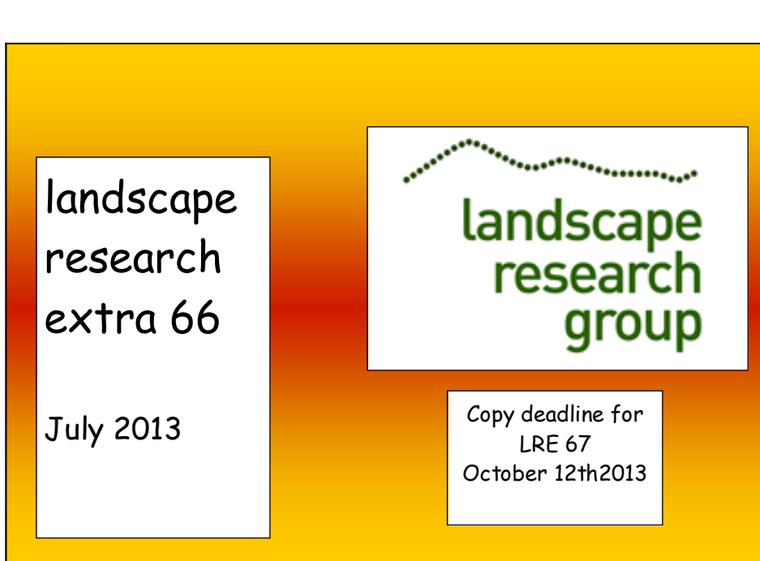
landscape research group

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Transitions in Landscape and Land Use, VOLANTE and University of the Aegean PhD Summer School, 12th-18th June, Lesvos, Greece. Maggie Roe reports.

I have recently been reading Alan Thomas's (1969) collection of Lawrence Durrell's writings, many of which are about the Greek landscape, inspired by his life in the Mediterranean and Aegean islands. When I was asked to contribute to a PhD Summer School at the University of the Aegean on Lesvos, instead of taking the usual travel guide, I took this small book along. Of course the most famous piece of Durrell writing linked to this area of the world is 'My Family and Other Animals' written by Gerald Durrell, Lawrence's younger brother. I still have the ancient and somewhat yellowed paperback edition of this, read more years ago than I care to try and remember. Many of the essays in the elder Durrell's book have the same ability to impart the smells and sounds of the landscape, the character of the inhabitants, and to express the connections between landscape and people. As Thomas (1969) suggests, '*it was not only the lyrical beauty of Corfu and the prismatic clarity of Greek light that appealed to Durrell; nor even the eternal legends handed down from classical times but intimately wedded to the landscape of today; there were qualities in the character of the modern Greeks themselves which struck deep chords with his own nature; so that Greece and the Greeks have formed one of the major influences on Durrell's life and writing'* (p.27). The Durrells were not the only writers of this period whose works infused the spirit of the landscape within their own experiences of people and place; think of Patrick Leigh Fermor and Rose MacAulay, both of whom were visitors to the Durrell household. Dipping into Durrell's book made me reflect that what seems to have been forgotten in the recent reporting of the Greek 'problem' is the astonishing richness and diversity of this landscape and the resilience of its people; a feeling that was only emphasised by my recent visit to Lesvos by reading the contributions in another, more recent, book edited by Thymio Papayannis and Peter Howard (2012).



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Lesvos is the third largest of the Aegean Islands and one of the most remote from the Greek mainland. It clings to the Turkish side of the Aegean with its strange amoeboid outline and remarkable cultural landscape. Rocky slopes surround two large eutrophic lagoons and, as described on the field trip that was part of this PhD summer school, the extraordinary geological character and location, alongside the long term management of the landscape, has provided the conditions for the development of a rich ecology and the island's role as a bird migration hotspot. Just from the bus, I saw storks, bee-eaters, flamingos, swallows and many other species.

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The summer school was organised by Professor Theano Terkenli (Professor of Geography - Landscape, Cultural Geography and Tourism - at the University of the Aegean) and Professor Bas Pedroli (Senior Researcher at Alterra Wageningen UR and Associate Professor at Wageningen University Land Use Planning Group), under the auspices of the VOLANTE project (http://www.volante-project.eu/ . The main VOLANTE partners met following the workshop, but bringing a number of experienced researchers and teachers to Lesvos for the meeting provided a wonderful opportunity to develop a PhD workshop associated with that group. The workshop sessions included insights from collaborative landscape planning projects in Denmark from Jorgen Primdahl, and a modelling workshop using interactive visioning computer-based methods with Joske Houtkamp from Alterra, the Netherlands. One would have thought the attraction of a week on a Greek island and a remarkable array of contributors would have meant this summer school would have been oversubscribed, however this was not the case. Perhaps this says more about the present financial difficulties of students around Europe and the relative remoteness of Lesvos than a lack of willingness to attend. However, a positive outcome of the small number of attendees meant that more attention could be given to those who did attend. The result allowed focussed discussion within a relaxed atmosphere; the good interaction which was certainly enjoyable from a lecturer's point of view.



I was asked to talk about developing and publishing scientific papers, based primarily on my experience as Editor of *Landscape Research*. I was greatly helped in thinking about this by speaking to past editors of the journal and other editors working on the *Journal of Environmental Management and Planning* (also published from Newcastle University). During the three days I attended the workshop, the students presented their own draft papers in sessions interspersed between those of the invited discussants. It was good to see such enthusiasm relating to this key area of landscape research (transitional landscapes or landscape change studies). We discussed a wide range of methods including quantitative land-cover change investigations and qualitative models to examine social and cultural transitions. The subjects presented by students included the take-up

of land as a result of the meat production industry in Finland, flood alleviation modelling in urban areas of Bangladesh, the development of a theoretical model of 'landscape conscience', and landcover change modelling in an urban fringe area of Athens. The papers stimulated lively discussion, and comment was provided on both presentations and written paper submissions.

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A highlight for me was the field trip around the island led by Thanassis Kizos, whose research paper *'Instead of 40 sheep there are 400': traditional grazing practices and landscape change in Western Lesvos, Greece* is to be published in the August Special Issue of *Landscape Research*. Sixteen years of involvement in the research of agro-landscape issues on the island has given Professor Kizos a wealth of experience and expertise which he imparted while bounding around the rocky olive groves.

Lesvos is perhaps best known generally as the birthplace of Sappho. In relation to landscape research it is a wonderful example of a cultural landscape moulded over thousands of years by peoples' interactions with the natural processes of the island. There are many relics of past habitation including the prehistoric site of Thermi on the east coast of the island which lasted a period of approximately 1,200 years (3200-2000 BC) and has been described as a prehistoric 'city' with houses organized into blocks, peripheral roads, and workshop and storage spaces (see www.visitgreece.gr). Olives have been cultivated for many years in a way similar to that still seen today. Management of the olive forest is variable. Where fields are semi-abandoned a rich understory of Mediterranean shrubs and herbs has grown including the rock rose, *cistus spp.* and wild pistachio. The style of the stone terraces provides an indication as to whether they were built to create arable fields, or were primarily established to allow for the planting of olives. There are reputedly over 11 million olive trees on the island. Sweet chestnut trees are found on the upper slopes, and the native Mediterranean pine areas have traditionally been managed for both timber and non-timber forest products, although such use is now largely



restricted. Near villages the vegetation includes numerous fruit trees; fig, apricots, almonds, plums, walnuts and pistachio, from which the ubiquitous *mastica* is derived and a kind of sweet white goo made, much loved by small children in Greece. Pistachio leaves are rich in tannins and the leaf galls caused by an aphid parasite are used in leather tanning. Larger individual trees seen in the landscape such as the Cypress are often regarded as sacred indicating a church or path.



The whole island was declared a UNESCO Geopark in 2011. The geological richness was wonderfully brought to life on the field trip by Professor Irwin Novak, who spends several months a year on the island and the rest of his time at the Department of Geosciences at the University of Southern Maine. He has used satellite imagery in his research to interpret the geology of the Greek islands of Lesvos and Chios. Livestock are ever present within the cultural life of Lesvos; both sheep and goats have an enormous impact on the landscape and their meat and milk are the raw materials for many of the traditional meals. The famous Lesvos sardines and anchovies are on every tavern menu. The owner of a small tavern we visited for our summer school dinner is perhaps typical of many on the island; not only does he run an excellent restaurant, he is also a fisherman and farmer, growing and supplying much of the fresh produce eaten in the restaurant.

As Durrell suggests, one of the reasons why so many people are attracted to visit this part of the world is the '*unfailing sense of continuity with which it invests the present……nothing [here] can change for it is landscape-dominated: its people are simply the landscape-wishes of the earth sharing their particularities with the wine and the food, the sunlight and the sea'* (Thomas, 1969 p.371). I have to admit that a few days spent warming my bones in this landscape, with good company and the prospect of stimulating discussion was impossible to resist and I certainly hope that students will be given another such chance in years to come.

MR
Newcastle University.

Notes

Durrell, G. (1961) *My Family and Other Animals*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
Papayannis, T. and Howard, P. (eds) (2012) *Reclaiming the Greek Landscape*, Athens: MedINA.
Thomas, A.G. (ed) (1969) *Spirit of Place: Lawrence Durrell Mediterranean Essays,* London: Faber and Faber.

MORE THOUGHTS ABOUT SOUND IN THE LANDSCAPE

A letter from Ros Codling

My earliest thoughts about soundscapes date from late August 1989 when I received a letter from an architect/ planner friend:
"Autumn is here ... and once again I am aware of the autumn sounds in the countryside - tractors ploughing and perhaps grain driers drying! Nostalgia - back to school - back to college - prospect of winter – melancholy."

It occurs to me that not only are the sounds different because of the agricultural seasons but the echo-reverberation time of the landscape will differ greatly with the seasons as crop cover reverts to ploughed ground etc etc. Is this a further subtlety on top of the natural differences between valley/flatland acoustics and woodland/beach acoustics. Is it 'naturally melancholic'?! If the ploughed ground is more sound reflective than the stubble, we probably hear more distant sounds immediately after ploughing? The town dweller missed these seasonal fluctuations. And then what about the weather - cloud cover versus clear sky etc?"

Many questions, no immediate answers, but here I am another person who recognises the importance of sound in the landscape. Reading Owen Mannings's response to bells is interesting for I do not often hear them from the church's surroundings as I am a ringer and therefore active on the end of a rope, rather than being able to listen outside.

PS
BBC Radio 4 today (July 20th) ran an article on noises of summer with all windows open.

ANTHOLOGIA ACOUSTICA

Echoes within a huge landscape: geographical observations by the famous explorer of the American West JW Powell.1895.

Great hollow domes are seen in the eastern side of the rock, against which the Green (river) sweeps; willows border the river; clumps of box elder are seen; and a few cotton woods stand at the lower end. Standing opposite the rock, our words are repeated with startling clearness, but in soft mellow tone, that transforms them into magical music. Scarcely can one believe that it is the echo of one's own voice. In some places two or three echoes come back; in other places they repeat themselves, passing back and forth across the river between the rock and the eastern wall. To hear these repeated echoes well, we must shout. Some of the party aver that ten or twelve repetitions can be heard. To me, they seem rapidly to diminish and merge by multiplicity, like telegraph poles on an outstretched plain. I have observed the same phenomenon once before in the cliffs near Long's Peak, and am pleased to meet with it again.

The Exploration of the Colorado River and its Canyons pages 167-168. Author: JW Powell. Dover Publications 1961 Inc New York republished from Flood and Vincent 1895.

Sounds in an urban landscape: an evocation by Graham Greene 1935

After the canal, the rustle of water at the edge of the grass banks, the whisper of men and women sitting on benches in the dark, the suburban road with no one passing, a limping procession of sounds came around the corners; not music, but as if the tuner were touching the keys of a piano, one after another in no particular order in a house a long way away. ……

A rocket spat and flared and failed to burst in the middle of the square. An empty switchback shot above the roofs and out of sight, whining like a spent record. In the booths beyond, ragged firing squads shot off their pieces. …..

Where ever you moved, through pink or green courtyards, through carefully contrived darknesses, you heard beneath the music and the firing, the sizzling of the great concealed lights and saw the moths flock past to shrivel against the burning concave glasses.

From pages 30-31 *England Made Me by Graham Green*. Published by Penguin Books in association with William Heinemann Ltd 1935. A sound scene at the Tivoli Gardens, Stockholm.

'Tranquillity' who wants it? Margaret Drabble's sound of the Great North Road 2009

This was the legendary route of the legions, and on it stood Ferrybridge, Wetherby, Doncaster, Grantham, Newark, Stamford, Biggleswade, Sandy and Mill Hill. Bryn (our house) was situated right upon it, hence its positional role as a tea garden and bed and breakfast stopover. Long Bennington has now been bypassed, but in those days the road flowed right through the whole length of the village. There was a wide grass verge separating the road from the pavement, but we could see and feel the traffic pouring unceasingly northwards towards Scotland, and southwards towards London.

…It seemed important to us to be there, in that very place on this major route. Lorries, cars and coaches swished by rhythmically, endlessly. All night long

they journeyed and I would lie in bed listening to the swish and boom, the swish and boom, as they came and went, as they came and went. I loved that as a child in bed trying to sleep, but the road was awake and alive with travellers and therefore you were not alone and life had not come to a grim halt.

From pp 32-34 *The Pattern in the Carpet: a personal history with jig saws*. by Margaret Drabble, published by Atlantic Books, London 2009.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Bud
Latest copy of LRE received - as always, very enjoyable.
With reference to your note about hedges: I attach a scan of plate 8 from *Utilisation of hazel coppice, Forestry Commission Bulletin no 27, HMSO, 1956, price 10/-*. The booklet was even printed on paper made with equal amounts of hazel and softwood pulp. No such illustration was included in the later FC coppicing publications that I have. I wish we had the patience to utilise material as shown.

Yours Ros (Codling)

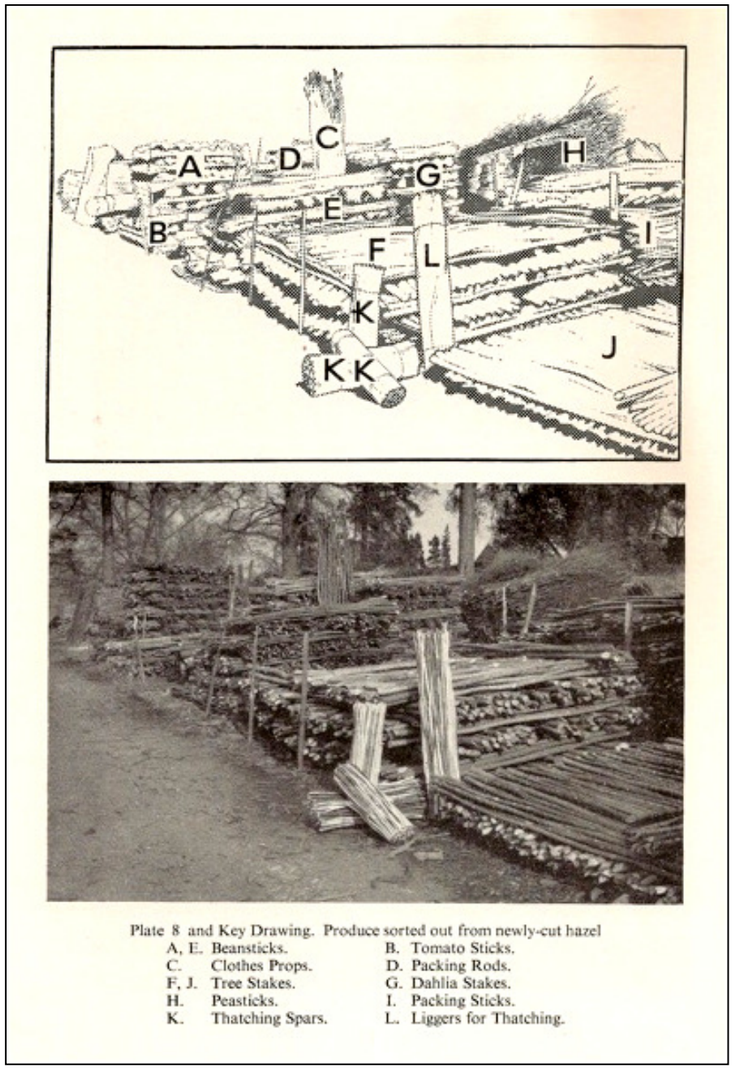


Plate 8 and Key Drawing. Produce sorted out from newly-cut hazel

A, E. Beansticks.	B. Tomato Sticks.
C. Clothes Props.	D. Packing Rods.
F, J. Tree Stakes.	G. Dahlia Stakes.
H. Peasticks.	I. Packing Sticks.
K. Thatching Spars.	L. Liggers for Thatching.

THE PONTFADOG OAK

By John W. Gittins of Wrecsam.

The Pontfadog oak was the oldest of the old, revered, loved…and now mourned.' Quoted by John Vidal. Early on the morning of the 18th April 2013, Huw Williams wasn't too worried when he was woken up at about 2.20am by a mighty crash. The old oak had stood behind his farmhouse 'Cilcochwyn' above the village of Pontfadog, near Wrexham for over 1200 years. To Huw, it was nothing more than that another branch had been blown off the tree by the powerful gale. However, when he went out of the farmhouse in the morning he found the old tree had been blown down. The tree – a sessile oak (Quercus petraea) - which has overlooked the Ceiriog valley for so many years, had survived high winds, battles, fire and the threat of run-off in times of heavy rain for more than forty generations, as well as being regularly cut in the past for wood to fuel the farmhouse fires and for use in buildings on the farm.

However, this was no ordinary tree. It is deemed to be the oldest tree in Wales and the third largest oak in Britain and one of the oldest in Europe. It has a girth of 42ft 5in (12.9m). In 1881 it had a reputed girth (even greater) of over 53ft. Since 802 AD the tree has been valued by local people, celebrated on the badge of the local school and visited by walkers. For us in Wales, the Pontfadog Oak is our national tree and its place is at Cilcochwyn in the community/parish of Pontfadog in the Ceirog Valley. The tree is some six miles from the Pontcysllte Aquaduct & Canal which as an interesting parallel has been designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

Its hollow bole is said to be large enough inside to seat six people around a table; in the 19th Century a bull hid inside it for two days and it was very popular with Victorians who posed for photographs beside it. It is reputed that two gold chisels were hidden there in the past!

The tree with its significant history is said to have been a rallying point for Welsh Princes, including Owain Gwynedd who it is said to have met his troops under the oak in the 12th Century before defeating King Henry II of England in the Battle of Crogan in 1157.

Crogan is about two miles to the east of Cilcochwyn the home of the oak. Legend states that the tree was spared when King Henry II had his men cut down the Ceirog Woods in 1165. For many years the tree was regularly pollarded, with its branches and leaves being cut to feed livestock and to build fencing on the farm.





When it fell, the oak, with its massive hollow bole crushed a metal gate and the tips of the branches which were about to burst into leaf, were resting lightly on Cilcochwyn's slate roof. One cannot but smile at the comment of Huw Williams, who is reputed have said, *'it's a pity it did not do more damage to the roof, which could have resulted in us having a new roof.'*

Huw's wife said that in the evening thirty local residents from the valley gathered around the tree, to hold what amounted to a wake. The tree she said has been a part of family life for at least five generations and has a particular fascination for children. It played a key role in the Annual Pontfadog Easter Day fox hunt and marked the start of the event. Local brownies used to make their promise there.

To date no decision has been made as to what to do with the tree beyond moving it off the farmhouse roof. When I visited it on the 6th May it was bursting into leaf and was certainly very much alive. There have been proposals to resurrect it as a monument or even to make a bardic chair from some of the wood, however, I'm at one with Huw's wife, Dianne Coakley-Williams, and she is adamant that it should not leave the valley. "It has lived here and it will stay here. Its place is here - in its 'Cynefin' (home place) - on the farm known as Cilcochwyn where it has lived for 1200 years."

The Ancient Tree Forum in 2012 visited the tree and seeing that it was in danger of being blown down in a high wind, put forward a list of actions valued at £5700 to safeguard it. Despite a petition of 6000 signatures to the Welsh Assembly, no money could be found. The Ancient Tree Forum and the Woodland Trust (Coed Cadw) and others believe that the case of the Pontfadog Oak illustrates how we are failing to provide adequate protection for our ancient trees at present. Is it not about time the UK and Welsh Governments brought forward legislation to protect ancient trees? There are precedents in Eastern Europe trees of ancient or historical importance being designated as 'National Treasures' suitably signed to mark the fact. In my opinion they are national monuments and part of our cultural heritage and should be recognised as such in legislation.

JG

Notes: The quotations come from John Vidal writing in The Observer on 28th April 2013. Coed Cadw/The Woodland Trust also issued a press release about the tree on 18th April 2013. The Pontfadog Oak is on private land and visitors should ask at Cilcochwyn farmhouse for permission to see the tree.

TWO RESEARCH GROUPS COLLABORATE AT EXETER UNIVERSITY'S TREMOUGH CAMPUS, FALMOUTH

By Graham Fairclough and Pete Herring

The Landscape Research Group (LRG) frequently sponsors conferences and workshops, and many have been described in the pages of past Extras. Recently, wearing our LRG Directors' hats, us two organised one in Cornwall, at the University of Exeter's Cornwall Campus, at Tremough, Penrhyn on the outskirts of Falmouth. We were able to do so thanks to the recently established inter-disciplinary Centre for Environmental Arts and Humanities (CEAH) which is a part of the University of Exeter's Environment and Sustainability Institute, and which generously provided facilities and hospitality free of charge, as part of their programme of outreach and research. For this we have to thank particularly our friend and colleague Dr Nicola Whyte, for her enthusiastic support both in logistics and in helping us to devise, and indeed contributing herself to , the event's scientific programme. CEAH aims, *inter alia*, to offer 'support for collaborations within and beyond the arts and humanities,' a good mirror to LRG's own goals, and the Centre's objective to 'create opportunities for shared investigation of the complex relationship between the environment and the human imagination' is surely a good enough summation of some of the things landscape is about.

Our conference was itself collaboration, being organised jointly with a 'new' partner, the Medieval Settlement Research Group. We say 'new' with diffidence, because, first, Peter Herring was (until 2010) and Graham Fairclough is (since 2011) on the MSRG's committee, as we are on LRG's; second, whilst MSRG took its present form only in 1986, it was originally founded as long ago as 1952 as the Medieval Village Research Group, best known perhaps for its 50 year long research programme in the Yorkshire Wolds landscape around Wharram Percy. Like LRG, MSRG aspires to interdisciplinarity, like LRG it organises conferences and workshops and publishes a journal, Medieval Settle-

ment Research. And it is more concerned with the idea of landscape and with landscape research than its name might imply, because some of its roots lie in W.G. Hoskins and Maurice Beresford's brand of landscape history, and the attempt to develop understanding of the patterns, nature and history of medieval 'settlement', with its inclusion of land use and human interactions with past environments, clearly and unavoidably implies landscape research.

When we realised that one of us had been asked to organise an LRG conference and the other an MSRG conference, a joint event seemed the obvious goal, not least in sharing the effort but primarily to bring together the two organisations and some of their members. We have in fact been surprised – naive to the end, as always - by how little knowledge each Research Group has of the other, despite some overlap of membership.

Our joint conference capitalised on this similarity of interests, and brought representatives of various disciplines into a more integrated dialogue. We addressed ourselves to historical geographers and medieval-period landscape archaeologists, to local historians, cultural geographers, ecologists and other landscape specialists, who in their different ways all know the relevance of 'landscape-focussed ways of seeing' to understanding and appreciating our world, past and present. One of our aims indeed was to explore precisely that distinction – if distinction it is – between past and present in landscape. It is too easy – it is one of Hoskins' less useful legacies - to study past landscapes as objects, investing them with materiality and recognising their 'time depth', but forgetting the layers of symbolism, representation, embodied action and perception which are embedded in them, forgetting that they were once someone's landscape in the ELC sense of an area as perceived by people, forgetting that medieval peasants for example lived in their own historic landscape.

The concept of landscape has a prehistory as well; despite what the OED appears to say, 'Landscape' was not invented by Dutch or Italian painters and their patrons but has probably always existed in human mentality with one label or another attached to it.

Perhaps we can argue that using mental, cognitive, experiential constructs to find a collective and shared way through the world in space and in time is an essential aspect of being human. So the conference was designed to explore in the context of Cornwall (and Devon, and also further afield too) how medieval and early modern people created 'landscape' through their perceptions of the world, and how we might be able to excavate, uncover or recover past perceptions, and thus 'see' our predecessors' landscapes as well as 'preceding landscapes'. We hoped to open windows on the further study of landscapes' past, not merely in terms of landscape history but in terms of the layers of perception and appreciation through the generations.

GF/PH



Fairclough and Herring lounge amiably against Godolphin's medieval doorway.

'HOW DID PEOPLE IN MEDIEVAL CORNWALL PERCEIVE THEIR ENVIRONMENT?'

An LRG / MSRG joint workshop
Falmouth 2013, April 25-26

The day was introduced by our chair, Paul Tabbush and one of our recent Directors, Catherine Brace Leyshon (University of Exeter) opened and chaired the morning session. Two past presidents of MSRG, Paul Everson and Paul Stamper, respectively opened and chaired the afternoon session and rounded off the day at the end. Within that framework we heard seven papers from a variety of disciplinary standpoints. It is quite clear that the terms that different groups of scholars use – landscape, settlement, in this case, but we can all think of many others) simply disguise the great commonality, transcending disciplinary boundaries, of our interests.

The lectures were;
Morning session, chaired by **Catherine Leyshon**:
Not past versus present, but different ways of seeing: landscape as shared interdisciplinary commons - **Graham Fairclough** (LRG, MSRG, Newcastle University):
Senses of place, senses of time: recovering non elite perceptions of the landscape from the archives - **Nicola Whyte** (University of Exeter)
The wild in Cornwall: a bit of an outlandish landscape history - **Sam Turner** (Newcastle University):
From Myth to Maps - the Cornish coast and changing ideas of place at the time of the Reformation - **Philip Marsden** (recently Writer in Residence at Falmouth University College)
Afternoon session, chaired by **Paul Everson**
Medieval Cornish hamlets, fields and commons **Pete Herring** (LRG, EH):
"Reliques of an olde forte raysed of earth, litle rounde hills wherin mens bones have bene founde": prehistory in the landscape in medieval and post-medieval Cornwall - **Graeme Kirkham** (CCHEP):

A medieval landscape: our view, their view - **Barbara and John Torrance** (the Branscombe Project):
We cannot here describe all these – we hope to find some way to bring them to wider publication, whilst maintaining their essential nature, nor the vigorous discussions they prompted, so we'll content ourselves with mentioning three very distinct presentations in more detail.

Nicola Whyte (University of Exeter) in '*Senses of place, senses of time: recovering non elite perceptions of the landscape from the archives'* took us to the manorial documents, to see how landscape was held in memory, as revealed by study of manorial court papers concerning land use disputes, common land agreements and the like. How it is that people remember landscape and what this means for the village cultural group. A key marker in one village landscape was a large elm tree *(see also John Gittins note on revered trees and Bud Young's 'Death of a village marker).*

Midway through the day, to introduce the afternoon session, we were offered not a medieval peasant's perception of the landscape *per se*, but a modern archaeologists engagement with landscape. **Paul Everson's** method has always involved the close walking of landscape; he is a field archaeologist, an archaeological surveyor, and his form of archaeological engagement with the land, is through observation and recording – and thus interpretation and perception –is as much a form of landscape construction, indeed of performance, as any other form of embodied and enacted landscape, for example the currently fashionable practice in geography of constructing landscape through walking or activity. The relevance of Paul's contribution to the conference was also that his examples sought to use understanding of visible remains of past landscapes to understand how medieval people moved through them, used them, and interacted with them, whether the different, status-reflective, approaches that were deliberately engraved into the landscapes around castles, as at Leeds Castle, Kent, for example, or using his work at Barlings, Lincolnshire, the manner in which medieval abbeys through land-based actions and policies created social, economic as well as ritualistic landscapes in their neighbourhoods, which often still today shape the landscape.

At the end of the day, what all the papers had in common was brought together in an effective dual presentation by **Barbara Bender and John Torrance**. Their account of the reconstruction – cerebral but also real, in the presence of the present day population – of the medieval 'beating of the bounds' in Branscombe, a small parish in South Dorset, when the landscape – and knowledge of landscape – was almost literally beaten into people by ritualistically walking its bounds, touching the marker stones. This project is part of a much larger landscape project, which draws the modern community into a close engagement with its local landscape both in its present day from and through its past layers. Here we have landscape actively being created through the use primarily of history as land, as place, as memory, as activity, above all as community and as memory and history. This is what **Sam Turner** was seeing in his initial exploration of the experienced landscapes of the medieval, and what **Graeme Kirkham** saw in his exploration of medieval and early modern peasants coming to terms with - using, reusing, honouring, destroying –the historic landscape that they had inherited from their predecessors, just as we struggle to come to terms with the past landscapes we have inherited.

On the second day a field excursion to Godolphin, guided by Peter Herring and the house's past owner, **Mr John Schofield**, gave everyone the opportunity to think about these questions on the ground in the context of a late medieval and modern Great House, and – more importantly for our theme – its associated landscapes of complex medieval settled and farmed land, of upland grazing commonlands, of sub-medieval deer park and warren, of tin-mining and quarrying, of (re) designed landscape. A cold (as April days are these days) but bright and stimulating day.

Report by Graham Fairclough and Pete Herring.

DEATH OF A VILLAGE MARKER

The village gathered around the fallen elm over a period of two days marvelling that a marker at the churchyard gate could so precipitously have fallen. It evoked talk. 'It was 200 years old' 'it was here all my life'. People regretted. Some spoke of the parallel with our span on the earth. We were close to the recent graves of forty five neighbours. The chainsaw work had added a new dimension almost excitement as what had been an old friend became a scatter of billets and cross cut rounds — tablets. Privately one hoped for a suitable resting place — some perpetuation — pub tables for example.

BY



PETER BEZAK AND THE LANDSCAPE EUROPE NEWSLETTER

Bezak's newsletter is of great value and recommended for those who want to combine research facts, events and book announcements with the softer discursive articles that they will find in LREXtra. I imagine he would be pleased to add you to his email list. You would then receive his bulletin updates every 2 months or so. Peter hope this is OK with you!

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BANGED UP IN THE BANLIEUS

Landscapes of suburban Paris
Gareth Roberts – March 2013

Landscapes reveal a lot about the places we visit and the people that live there. But to get the most from such visits we need to be prepared to spend time to study them carefully for it is only then can we really get to know them and discover clues that help us better understand why they are as they are. Such effort can be very rewarding, thought provoking and memorable especially when subtle secrets about the character of places become clearer to us. Such revelations are not only those commonly associated with archaeological discovery and past cultures but those which tell us more about contemporary society.

This Easter along with tens of thousands of others I visited Paris. I was not one of those looking to enjoy a springtime sojourn on the banks of the Seine but to learn more about the *banlieus*, the predominantly high-rise cluster of settlements that have sprung up on the city's suburbs, beyond the *peripherique* and the Isle de la Cite where visitors throng and affluent Parisians live.

I had planned to visit Sevran Beaudottes, one of France's most deprived communities. I was prompted to go there after being shocked to read an article in *The Economist* (23rd February 2013) which said that of 40 unemployed youngsters from Sevran invited by the director of the local job centre to a museum trip to Paris only 5 of them had ever visited a museum in their lives and even more astonishingly 15 of them had never before travelled outside their community.

The Arc de Triomphe and the star burst of surrounding boulevards that make up the central focus of Haussmann's grand design for Paris, one of the world's most notable planned urban landscapes are barely 20 miles from Sevran. The Louvre, and other museums of central Paris holding some of our civilization's most prized cultural heritage all lie within a 30 minute train journey of one of France's most deprived communities.











Unwittingly I must have travelled through Sevran many times on my way from Charles de Gaulle airport to central Paris. The TGV and the frequent RER trains linking the airport and the city centre streak though Sevran at breakneck speed. Locals have to wait for the inconsistent and slow metro services. When I travelled back out from the centre on a crowded commuter train there were few passengers left by the time it reached the dimly lit Sevran Beaudottes metro station. I emerged via the ticket barriers into Place Mandela, and the recently completed glazed mall called 'Beau Sevran' where a variety of halal meat outlets, rotisseries and couscous food outlets were crammed in cheek by jowl. The Mall is almost exclusively taken over by food businesses set up to cater for the large number of ethnic minorities who live in Sevran. It also proves shelter for the many who now sleep rough in Paris The Mall was completed in 2010 but the hoarding advertising the start of the work and how much EU funding support it had received, still remained. Pasted onto it were posters advertising 2012 New Year alcohol free celebrations and other Maghreb soirees catering primarily for the Muslim community. Those looking for more hedonistic and risqué entertainment could opt for a place called 'Dallas' where (last New Year's Eve) men for a cover charge of 40 euros and women for 30 could partake of a buffet, a giant barbeque and a champagne breakfast. Described as '*soiree extraordinaire a la chichi'*, the poster paradoxically contained an image of a *chicha,* the hubble-bubble pipe smoked at cafes throughout the Middle East and Maghreb together with a wine bottle overprinted with an Ace of Spades.

The physical and social isolation of Sevran Beaudottes is palpable. Over 70 different nationalities and many religions are to be found here, in this one of France's poorest areas. Unemployment, especially among the young is four times the national average. People resort to advertising their availability for work on lamp posts, others scavenge bins for food, drug taking is rife and despite the replacement of high rise tower blocks with low rise housing and projects such as the Mandela Mall, as one comes away you cannot help but see that the *banlieus* are clearly a world apart and places that tourists rarely see. Out of sight and out of mind.

Last year Stephane Gatignon, Sevran's Green Mayor pitched his tent outside the French Parliament building to draw public attention to the plight of the banlieues and the need for more investment in environmental improvements. He was successful in securing more money for the cause of his town and I am impressed by what is already being achieved. A campaign to raise environmental awareness among the young is being supported by schools and focuses on litter prevention and civic pride. Large illuminated posters on roadside advertisement hoardings call for people to keep their town clean. '*J'aime ma ville. Je la garde propre*'

I am glad that I visited Sevran this Easter. The experience was richly rewarding. It helped to reinforce my belief that the European Landscape Convention's challenge to signatory states to '*raise the quality'* of all landscapes has to be the principal objective. All citizens deserve to live and work in attractive environments.

My 'Rough Guide' to Paris is silent about the banlieus. I shall be writing to the Editor to propose the next edition actually says something.

GR

LANDSCAPE OF PRIMARY COLOURS

Blocks of colour in the field landscape astonish me for a brilliant moment. I was crossing Salisbury Plain in the south of England. I was travelling too fast to stop and capture it or stand and stare, explain (or grow weary of its beauty). Fields of gold patchworked with white and perhaps a pale green block , and then the intensely deep green of a woodland, roots deep in the earth at the edge of a shallow valley. A startlingly sharp landscape where fields show as vivid rhomboids of colour, woodlands take the nature of raised relief. Nothing to do with Constable or boredom or soft, celebrated pastoral greenness. Not polite but quite the opposite : startling! arresting! dramatic! exciting! In your face! Bold art in nature.

Note

And where? Perhaps at Cow Drove west of the River Wylie. But the colours were just so much more dramatic that this earlier season image. It is nearly harvest and England is heading for drought, no rain and intense sunshine for the last 2-3 weeks.

BY

July 19th 2013



FARMING THE PHOTO VOLTAIC WAY

Lots of these power stations around and any of which could be mistaken at a distance (or at speed) for crops shrouded in plastic or polytunnels. They are quite complicated steel structures super habitat for weed growth. So how do they control weeds? Chemically perhaps. Nice. Here's an advertised advice list. Does it fit your paddock! My sister in law's property ticks every box pylons included..

I quote from an advertised source: "for solar parks to be competitive and therefore for us to be able to rent, we need sites that conform to the following":-

6 acres per megawatt, so preferably >12 acres

Not in AONB/SSSI or other special landscape areas.
Not crossed by footpaths or bridle ways.
Not grade 1 land.
Flat or gently (south) sloping land.
Not shaded by woods or buildings.
Power lines (11kV or 33kV) running overhead or nearby. [Increasing distance increases costs and reduces rents].
Not unduly overlooked.
Free draining, non-rocky soil.
Available for 20 years minimum.

Are they any more intrusive than covered crops or polytunnels? Are they innocuous in the landscape? Highly acceptable perhaps? Do they offer a feel good benefit to the Planet Aware: 'energy self sufficiency = good'. Do they trump windfarms in popular opinion? Are they yet another nail in the overburdened pylonic landscape which has always attracted unsightly uses and secondary ugliness?

BY



Dear Readers

It sometimes happens that the Editor has a bit of space left over and so it is today. It therefore seems a good idea to invite the readership to emerge from the shadows/ come out of the woodwork/ step up to the plate and take any other actions in a scriptive kind of way to express themselves — as a collective noun 'readership' — and contribute from what is likely to be a deep well — or a multiplicity or array of deep wells — of bottled up wisdom.
Book and art exhibition reviews; poetry; notes on landscapes and *Landscape Research*; reflections on theory; notes on notables; image breaking comments; letters.

Something to do before you give your next lecture, bid your next contract; die; design your next greenspace; write your next book; plan your next expedition or nip out to become intoxicated with a selection of your charming old buffer (gender neutral) friends in a retirement kind of way; which I do not.
You know you can do it? What? Why, write to me!

The Editor.

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A MIND FOR PLACE-MAKING

By Brian Goodey

It was hardly a willing admission that I had gradually become disabled. A non-driver who thrives on public transport, urban and rural walking, I had gradually become limited in movement over the past two (the family would say longer) years. Urban detours between meetings became cab rides, rural exploration car stops, and the spontaneity of exploring, learned long before formal education, ground to a halt. The long-term implications were frightening – I couldn't just train or bus to a discovered Pevsner nugget, exhibitions became a series of hops between seating, and the panoramas of new places enticingly proposed in travel catalogues were rationalised out of order. As a landscape historian, urban designer, painter and explorer I was grounded.

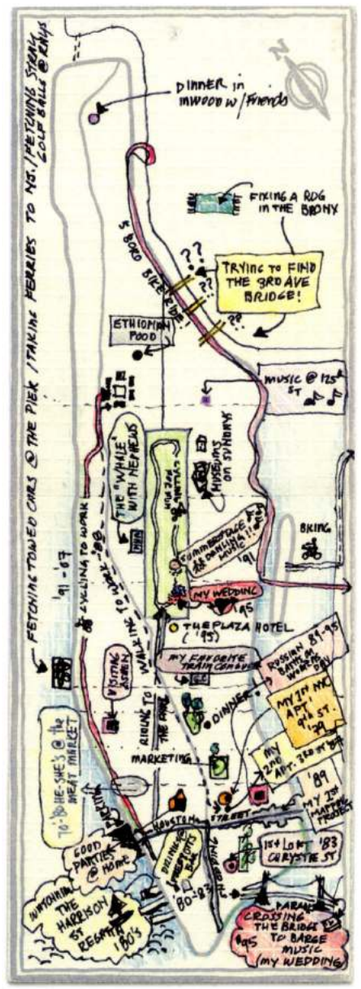
I write as the second knee is slowly accepting replacement, only now do I realise how much of me was tied up in the ability to walk and experience. There are brighter prospects, but during one of the non-sleeping experiences which are inevitable in post-op rebuilding I tuned in, once more, to the random scatter of discussion on Five Live (BBC) Half awake, I heard a New York voice explaining her new collection of maps of Manhattan. A cartographer who had developed a project in which New Yorkers filled-in a blank map of the city with their own geographies – no holds barred.

In semi-doze I gathered my images of the first visit to Manhattan in 1963. Landing from a 'Queen Mary' which had endured a very rough passage, I survived the customs wharf, explaining that the geography books in my luggage were not directed at the overthrow of the American Empire, and dived for a flop-house hotel previously booked. Then, a long-held dream come true. In one night Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and the Gerry Mulligan Big Band at Birdland AND Red Allen and Gene Krupa small groups at the Metropole. Pause for images, sounds and fulfilment. The next morning off to Indiana by rail – 'BG' never to be heard of again. Subsequent visits to NYC are all marked by music; I've never been up the Empire State, but I *have been* to Richie Havens, Max Kaminsky, Illinois Jacquet. Most recently a mixed Country and Blues concert with Ralph Stanley closing. *My American maps, probably all my maps, are mainly music.*

Now to Becky Cooper's '*Mapping Manhattan : A Love Story in Maps*' for it was she on late night Five Live. ……'Lincoln Centre Best Concert Ever' inscribes one of the contributors to Becky Cooper's map. A connection. The elegantly bound book is a collection of 75 mappings, over a frame provided by the author, of Manhattan. It is a joyous outpouring of places which mean something to individuals; different experiences, different styles, few contained or restricted by the structures but rather a geography of emotions ('fear-relief' shades one contributor) and experience. Far from the required 'place-making' of urban design practice, this is place capturing.

These are, I suppose, the 'mental maps' so well known to design and planning students today… but with a profound difference. We track the drawing of such 'mental maps' back to Kevin Lynch in the early 1960's *Image of the City* which still provides – however shaky the initial premise- a simple analysis of the popular view of urban places as consisting of nodes, landmarks, districts, edges and routes. In my own experience of provoking the production of such maps as evidence of the popular view of urban form, I have realised that the urban design setting and language of the usual taught exercise have always served to exclude expression of emotions and responses to sensory awareness. even in such informal maps. The student's responses are to be expressed in terms of morphology and built form.

Totally incorrect to suggest that others have not realised that such mental or cognitive sketches of place do not include responses outside of the built form (look at the work of Lynch's followers in the USA); but professional purpose usually demands that the 'mental map' response is in physical and morphological terms, thus reinforcing the significance of the urban designer and planner in manipulating the sense of a place.



Cooper's book serves to torpedo this approach. Here is a cartographer seeking and compiling popular views; non-judgemental she arranges responses and recognises that 'New York may always be just over there, but what you know is *yours*… and these tiny, invisible cities are what make up Manhattan.'

At its most frightening, 'place-making', which is a strong current theme in official British urban design practice, consists of superficially understanding the essence of a place, mapping development with this superficiality to the fore, and marketing a new development with stylistic tags that suggest rootedness. What Cooper's revelation tells us that it is the myriad of human experiences, seldom built-form-related, that make those places which we share in conversation (and on these maps) with others. It is these rather than the clean-limbed images of a new morphology.

But, hey, this is a 'landscape' journal! Well to me townscape is another part of landscape and the lessons here may well apply to broader landscape thinking. Formally those in the know can map and describe the key morphological features of the Peak Park or the structure of the Lea Valley, but what of the events, emotions, arrivals and media-generated activities with which we might populate the place if caught 'off-duty'? The Olympic Park, yes a clever event compilation of valley landscape, but hell knees or not, I made it, and a good meal too.

Training, the profession, the 'discipline' and the specific contract all require that we sift our experiences and images in a certain – often unconsidered – way. For the sake of blinkered objectivity we exclude the much wider range of qualities which we experience, or have experienced, in the place considered. It's worth remembering that there are many types of blinker, even other memories that might be considered.

For me it may be Banbury and Oxford no longer identified in terms of smooth pavements, easy road crossings, available bus stops and the absence of steps. Vancouver, Anchorage and Fayetteville, Arkansas await.



Notes

Becky Cooper *Mapping Manhattan: A Love (and Sometimes Hate) Story in Maps by 75 New Yorkers,* New York: Abrams Image, 2013.
Cooper has also expanded her work to Cambridge, Mass. (Kevin L might well have been pleased) and to Portland, Maine. Contribute and catch up on www.mapyourmemories.com.
Permission to display maps applied for.

landscape research group

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