

investor-led intervention. After the mixed-use development stalled amidst the economic crisis, new architects have now been gained but the excavated hollow still remains many months after the original demolition. Is this vacated space just a temporary, unplanned emptiness? Or more radically, perhaps fantastically, a clearance, a section of mature city razed to the ground amidst a spectral urban forest, as if making way for a new or invading civilization?

Some residents acknowledge these invasion anxieties. Griff Rhys Jones, who lives locally and is also the powerful tribal chief of the BBC architectural conservation television series 'Restoration', has publicly campaigned to influence the future of the development (particularly its name), fearing the rampant extension of Soho culture into the area. It seems that the East Marylebone Conservation Area site is more than just a collection of buildings, but a state of mind (and quiet neighbours). The modern urban dweller forever stands on the frontier of such incursions, the remaining accessible bucolic pleasures continually threatened. 'Nothing' in the city is more often than not the sign of a civilization on the march, hoarded and intensifying.

**JR**

#### Notes

1 'Noho' was coined from the notion of North Soho, and was originally used in New York to name a neighbourhood in Manhattan (North of Houston Street). London's Soho is said to be derived from a hunting cry to call attention to a hare ('Soho!'), recalling its rural past. This usage is mentioned in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.

2 Henry VIII enclosed this area of the forest and called it Marylebone Park; it was later turned over to farming after the Civil War before being used for leisure once more, eventually becoming Regent's Park in 1835.

3 When the new hospital site was acquired in 1754 it was separated from Tottenham Court Road by ponds and marshland, according to The London Encyclopedia (edited by Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert, 1983).

4 Kaupthing Bank acquired the land's full equity stake in an exchange with the Guernsey-based property development business CPC Group, which gained the bank's stake in eight acres of Beverly Hills in the financial crisis-accelerated swap.



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## Landscape Research Extra

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James Randall  
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### Some Notes from the Peninsular

by Ian Thompson

Although the house I grew up in was reputedly built of stones stolen from the ruins of Furness Abbey and while it was possible, within five minutes walk, to reach a viewpoint which offered panoramic views over Walney Channel, and the Duddon Sands to Black Combe, that southern outlier of the Lake District fells, I was conscious from an early age that I lived in an unglamorous yet paradoxical place. The ruins of the Royal Abbey of Saint Mary in the secluded Vale of Deadly Nightshade might have been well established on the eighteenth century tourist circuit and celebrated in the poetry of Wordsworth, but twentieth century Barrow-in-Furness was a music-hall joke town, as sure to get a laugh as Scunthorpe or Ashby-de-la-Zouche. It was a nuclear shipyard, stuck at the end of a thirty mile cul-de-sac. It had the biggest slag bank in Europe. The story had it that the foremen in the yard had a cupboard full of iodine pills in case one of the



nuclear subs' reactors sprang a leak. The advice to the rest of the town was to eat lots of kip-pers – a well-known folk remedy for radiation sickness. It's not surprising that Barrow is usually missed off the Lake District's souvenir tea towels, nor that when the boundaries of the National Park were being drawn up, Barrow was excluded.

Yet it was less that half an hour, in the car, to the shores of Coniston Water and I came to feel, as did many people in the town, slightly proprietorial about the Lake District fells. But did I have the right to feel this way? I might have wobbled along Strid-

ing Edge in a bicycle cape and climbed Scafell Pike during a February blizzard while still a schoolboy, but did I belong to the place and did it belong to me? Having spent the last two years working on an illustrated history of the Lake District (to be published by Bloomsbury in 2010) and having concurrently discovered

the seductive power of on-line genealogy, these questions have been much on my mind.

It was interesting to discover that many of the people most closely associated with the Lake District, culturally speaking, were what the locals would call 'off-comers'. The artist William Green, for example, moved to Ambleside from Manchester; John Ruskin was born in London and was already over fifty when he bought Brantwood on the shores of Coniston Water;

Beatrix Potter was proud of an old family connection with Monk Coniston, but she grew up in Kensington and was only able to reinvent herself as a Lake District farmer in middle-age; Arthur Ransome, author of *Swallows and Amazons*, was the son of a history professor in Leeds; Alfred Wainwright, creator of the famous fellwalking guidebooks, moved to Kendal from Sal-



ford when he was almost thirty-five. Even William Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth and spent some of his childhood in Penrith, both market towns on the edge of the District, before being sent to school in Hawkshead. He did not settle in Grasmere until he was twenty-nine. What this proves to me is that one can develop the strongest of attachments to place in the course of a single lifetime. Arthur Ransome managed to develop several – not just to the Lake District, but also to Russia and the Norfolk Broads.

Delving into my own family history I discover only a slender connection to the Cumbrian dalesmen of old, through a great-great grandmother from Kendal. For the rest they were economic migrants, a tin miner from Somerset, a coal miner from Wigan, a mould-maker from West Lothian, all attracted by the opportunities offered in the Klondike-like tumult that was late nineteenth-century Barrow-in-Furness. By the time that John Ruskin bought Brantwood, Barrow's population had passed 19,000 on its way to 42,259 by 1881. The gloomy sage swore that he would have to leave if the smoke from the foundry chimneys ever became visible over his beloved Coniston Fells. So how has all this shaped me? Living between the slagbank and the fell farm certainly heightened my awareness of landscape aesthetics. How could such different places exist within such a small compass? It is not fanciful to say that I absorbed the Romantic

aesthetic at my mother's knee, or at least padding along beside my parents in my vibram-soled boots, because they were both keen members of a walking club, a branch of the great Nonconformist rambling tradition of northern England, which derived its aesthetics from Wordsworth and its ethos from the environmentalism and proto-socialism of Ruskin. I grew up accepting the need for landscape conservation and tending to sympathise with the Wordsworth-Ruskin-Rawnsley values that led to the creation of the Friends

of the Lake District and the establishment of the National Park. At the same time, I believed fiercely in access to the countryside – and still do.

But as to the desirability of change in the landscape I've become more sceptical and agnostic. Perhaps more liberal too. If landscape aesthetics are, at least in part, social constructions, then they are malleable. And I always saw beauty in cooling

towers and shipyard cranes as well as mountain tarns and rocky crags. One of the sanest voices I encountered during my Lake District research was that of Nella Last, who might be known to you as *Housewife 49* in the recent television dramatisation of her wartime diaries. She was a Barrow housewife who became a Mass Observation correspondent. She must have lived within half a mile of my childhood home. After the war she reported that there were more tourists in Bowness and Ambleside than she had ever seen previously, but she had none of Wordsworth or Ruskin's misgivings about sight-seers. 'My deep love of the Lakes,' she wrote, 'never makes me want to shut out trippers... come and share it. Hold up your arms to the everlasting hills and draw their peace and beauty and healing calm into your tired minds'.

Nella's husband's grandfather had been brought up on a lonely sheep farm and could not read until he was eighteen. In her fair-minded and level-headed way, she was concerned that the benefits of progress should reach the dales and this put her at odds with her uncle, 'a rabid "Friends of the Lakes"' man. *'He would put a wall round if he could, so high that no one could see over. I would be very stern with people who wanted to build jerry houses, make wide motor roads, build factories or works, or run a railway through, but I don't understand or agree with him in other ways. People who are shut in ugly soulless towns need our lakes*

and fells.' Nor would she 'tear down ugly pylons as he and his friends would', if it meant that farmers had to live like mediaeval peasants without access to modern amenities. She worried that she was being inconsistent; in fact she was stoutly grappling with competing and incommensurable virtues. It is the very stuff of politics, planning and landscape management, and it can be agonising. It is, in fact, the sort of thing I think about, much of the time.

#### Notes

Photo: the Thompson family car, somewhere in the southern Lake District in the early 1960s.  
Engraving: Honister Pass. From a nineteenth century print after Thomas Allom.

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## IS THE CONFERENCE SEASON UPON US THEN?

The following announcements (some events having now past by) came to me via JISC Mail (landscape). In LRExtra we do not have the capacity or the issue frequency to publicise all of these and indeed they are being widely circulated without our help. If you wish to sign up to JISC Mail it is easy enough to do so: go to [www.jiscmail.ac.uk/](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/) and look for your interest category. Very suitable for saddos who otherwise receive no email. Is this me!!

Out of this list I could not help but select a few lines of near incomprehensible conference puff: *"Performance is increasingly regarded not only as a creative practice and mode of representation but also as a vital means of embodied enquiry and as analytical trope."* My first instinct is to suggest "get real man" but that would be unfair and I have used a fair amount of the jargon of the day (carbonates) in my time. The conference description begins with:

*Landscape and environment are currently of compelling cultural significance: as fields of scholarly research, sites of artistic endeavour and arenas of public concern. As both imaginative representations and material realities, they are the site of negotiation for the expression of complex ideas and feelings about beauty, belonging, access to resources, relations with nature, the past and the future, making sense of the world and people place in it .....*

.....Well yes of course, and nicely put.

But back to the list. How about the following? I list these to show what a range is on offer.

- *Local Implementation of the European Landscape Convention LRG is involved.*
- *Conservation of historic gardens and cultural landscapes*
- *Living landscapes*
- *Performance, landscape and environment*
- *Whole Life Urban Sustainability and its Assessment*
- *Ecological networks science and practice*
- *First World Conference "Volcanoes, Landscapes and Cultures" Catania 11-14 November*
- *Routes roads and landscapes*
- *Landscape workshops*
- *LCN workshop from historic landscape to future landscape*
- *Eucaland Project: European Culture expressed in Agricultural Landscapes*
- *Forest landscapes, Besancon*
- *Symposium: Creating a new prosperity: Fresh approaches to ecosystem services and human well-being and Identity.*
- *Arts and Humanities Research Council: Landscape and Environment Programme Conference 2009..*

This list may well conceal some gems so forget what I said about academic pretension or marketing puff. Get connected!

*Note though one of our own*

**"Local Implementation of the European Landscape Convention"** in *Nove Hradky*. Places are very limited now so book quickly if you plan to come. Website with the final programme has now been revised — check it out.  
<http://www.landscapeconventionconference.com/program>

**FRUIT OF THE ROCK...  
... beneath the Herefordshire  
landscape**

By Jim Denning

A couple of years ago we bought a house just outside Ledbury, Herefordshire, on the west flank of a wooded hill known as Frith Wood. As the crow flies (certainly not by road) our house is about three miles west of the southern landmark of the Malvern Hills known as the British Camp or the Herefordshire Beacon. It didn't occur to us that the steep land behind us (more hillside than garden) might be part of the Malverns formation.

Then two things happened. In the course of repairing a barn, we had a digger bite into the slope to create deeper footings, and to our wonder there came to light an inclined plane of shaly limestone, at about 45 degrees. We had already come across a parallel but lower reef of rock running across the floor of the barn.

Meanwhile I called on Keith Smith, Ledbury's antiquarian bookseller, and there found, and bought (paying the handsome sum of £30), an entertaining work with the short title 'Pictures of Nature... around the Malvern Hills,' by Edwin Lees, published 1856.



The author writes on page 76 '... the beds are nearly vertical, consisting of solid limestone with shale and nodules. These beds continue along the high ridge of Bradlow Hill and Frith Wood...' And our author quotes his eminent contemporary, Sir R. I. Murchison, who remarks that this kind of rock "is the most interesting of the divisions of the Upper Silurian group, as it is the oldest band in which any remains of fishes and land-plants have been discovered."

Well, since the 1850s the fossil record has been pushed a lot further back in time. But it is nice to think that in the decade of the Great Exhibition our back garden would have been in the Victorian Book

of Records. Alas, our house then was a cowshed or tannery.

So we scraped and cleaned and examined our newly exposed limestone slope, solid in places, shaly in places, and in places... sporting clusters of six or more eggs – rounded lumps on the rock, up to six inches across. You could declare the rock was bearing fruit. One or two detached and rolled down, like flattened cannonballs. The long pressure of the ancient earth...

One of the Tuesday lot in the local pub is a geologist; I told him of our delectable discovery. "Oh, yes," he said casually, "Silurian limestone, calcite nodules aggregate in it. Break one open with a hammer."



I thought nodules occurred on vocal chords and glands. Next day I took a club hammer and a nodule and tapped it. It took heavy repeated blows to knock pieces off. At last a large flake came away – and there, gathered round the rim, a ring of tiny fossils of marine creatures, the size of the nail on your little finger. Three hundred million years old. Before the dinosaurs.

**JD  
Ledbury**

**And by way of explanation from an excellent landscape primer AE Trueman "Geology and Scenery in England and Wales"**

Published by Penguin Book—Pelican A185 1949 (and later revised by J Whittow once of LRG) at page 263 of the former.

The region immediately west of the narrow Malvern ridge includes a small area of sandstone hills and shale valleys just east of Eastnor, which are based on Cambrian rocks. West of these come the outcrops of Silurian rocks (for as in much of England the Ordovician is unrepresented), consisting of sandstones, limestones and shales comparable with those of Shropshire and forming a similar series of parallel wooded ridges and fertile valleys. Dipping towards the west, these Silurian

*rocks disappear at Ledbury, and from that town there stretches a great expanse of undulating country of which Hereford is roughly the centre, extending northwards beyond Leominster, westwards by Hay and Brecon, southwards to Monmouth and Newport.*

Exhibition Review

**THE GREAT BRITISH  
LANDSCAPE**

at Denbies Vineyard, Dorking, and RHS Rosemoor, Great Torrington, January – March 2009, and on-line at [www.greatbritishlandscape.co.uk](http://www.greatbritishlandscape.co.uk)

Reviewed by Peter Howard  
Bournemouth University

There is so much comment in landscape circles about landscape artists of the avant garde, and of the great names of the past, that it is a relief to discuss contemporary works exhibited in a commercial venue, and indeed selling rather well. At such shows one can see where landscape taste is really being negotiated in a market situation, without the interferences caused by the entry of investors or galleries. Surely the landscapes exhibited here will be the time-honoured picturesque corners of England (for we are talking very largely about England here, despite the title)? But it seems that some people's walls will be exhibiting

rather newer ideas shortly.

The exhibition consists of up to a dozen works by each of 13 artists, with a bias towards residents of south west England. Most are painters in oil, water-colour or acrylic, though there is pastel artist (Norman) an etcher (Hicks) and a textile artist (Sharman). Her small pictures are beautifully worked, often of flowers in natural settings, ox-eye daisies, rape, ladies smock and marsh woodwort, but I am never quite convinced that there is a point beyond the technical ability to represent such things in embroidery. Of course, perhaps the same argument could be employed, in these days of colour photography, against oil paint and water colour as well.

But her subjects do represent the common feeling around the walls of this exhibition. Fields and flowers are in. The most obvious case is Mulcahy, whose large oils are of fields of buttercup, of cotton grass bogs, of bluebell woods, or heather moor and hazel scrub – a real homage to the semi-natural vegetation ecosystems of England. And this taste is comparatively new; the fascination for the geometric pattern of the English landscape is rare before 1900 and this interest in the content of the fields is almost a century later. No-one is at work in these fields.

There are plenty of more traditional scenes as well; Norman's pastels of Devon scenes including Haytor



and Sidmouth were selling very well, **Newbery** exhibits cathedrals from Oxford, Wells and Norwich, while **Noble** has views of Southwold, Mousehole and other maritime glimpses. Many of these are preferences which can be dated, though few are timeless. The love of the Cornish fishing cove is not older than 1850 while **Rigby's** moorland scenes were first acceptable material around 1880, though few painters reached Uist then. **Williams'** views of creeks may not be a new landscape taste, but he clearly does them while lying flat on the ground – so unexpected that it takes some minutes to realise what is happening.

But there are two more traits which are comparatively new. **Woollacott, Thorn and Hicks** illustrate the untidy landscape very well. There is usually a hedge, or what once passed for a hedge, for it is no longer stock-proof, but it is now growing out and over the lane or the field. The lanes are boggy and weedy and floods are common. Whether done in Woollacott's sombre hues or the sparking brightness favoured by Thorn, or Hicks' coloured etchings, this is not the well-kempt, neat and tidy landscape favoured by posh landowners and the National Park authorities.

Along with these very vernacular landscapes are very vernacular people, typically attending the county agricultural show (**Allbrook**) or on the beach (**Brown and Norman**). Oddly the two do not seem to go together. The old tradition of the 'peasant in a red coat in the middle distance' seems to have died, and the countryside itself is depopulated. The truth of course, is that it simply reflects reality, and people (as distinct to tractors) in the rural landscape are few and far between. Without a car the lanes are far too dangerous

The artists are Colin Allbrook, Stephen Brown, June Hicks, Paul Lewin, Bruce Mulcahy, John Newberry, Keith Noble, Michael Norman, Chris Rigby, Ann Sharman, Richard Thorn, Tony Williams and Mike Wollacott.

**PH**

**Exhibition leaflet image** courtesy of the exhibition organisers. Flower image: *Clematis montana 'Freda'* from Rosemary Young's garden.



## ON WRITING A FRESH NEW 'NEW NATURALIST — DARTMOOR'

by Ian Mercer

Some 25 years ago Radio 4 devised a series called Hot Air. It involved taking a quasi specialist over a landscape that he or she probably thought they knew well, in a balloon. The stated object of the exercise was to see how it looked from there, whether or not the victim was surprised – and inevitably to provide a commentary in flight. The 'specialist' bit was to allow a different discipline to be exposed in each programme: planner over Reading, archaeologist over Dartmoor for instance, and me, a mere geographer, over the South Hams, the southernmost district of Devon. It's another and wholly different story, but the feeling after starting to write a whole book about a landscape you think you know well, because you were asked, and flattered to be asked, is remarkably similar. Innocence and ignorance are exposed to one in equal measure, and just as the fascination of 'balloon ride for the first time' distracted from that job in hand, so did the discipline of writing a whole book, compared with the odd chapter for someone else's.

The landscape in question is Dartmoor; the flattery is 'we want a new Dartmoor volume, it is said you could do it'. The 'we' is the New Naturalist Library (Collins), now over a 100 volumes, the year is 2002. After working with Dartmoor on and off for forty odd years by then, it ought to be a doddle was the obvious thought. I had taught it — on the ground for the Field Studies Council, for a decade in the sixties; returned to it as an amateur administrator — or National Park chief officer — for another two, until 1991; had given a scatter of field courses 'til now; and of course I live in it.

Then came the revelations. Teaching a landscape week-in week-out blurs first and second hand information thoroughly. 'I know that well' but have I ever been there? does it still look the same? Who did I read on that theory? Who wrote that phrase about that tor? Where did the word 'ait' come from? Who invented 'oldlands'? Is there a newer general pollen diagram as instructive as the 1964 one? Have 'pyramids of numbers', 'structure process and time', 'live as though you'll die tomorrow, 'farm as though you'll live forever' been superseded? Is the only formula to write a thousand words a day, leaving the last sentence unfinished? Does the fascination of trying to be different overcome the chore? What dare I miss out?

That last one bugs you, and despite the reassurance by respected professionals that 'it's your version, no

one else's'. For, in case the reader of this piece is unaware of it, there is a vast Dartmoor literature – the Dartmoor Bibliography of 1992 has over 7000 entries. While thin and often negative ('this waste or desert') from Domesday until the nineteenth century, it burgeons as Victorians added Dartmoor in their new-found leisure to the 'landscape-collecting' occupation. In the late twentieth century it divides into two great groups. Scientific analysis is only matched in volume by popular guidance to and display of natural and cultural phenomena on the other. This ranges from re-publication of Dartmoor classics, such as Crossing's Guide, to a guide to 3000 'letter boxes' on the other. Between those two well filled categories of publication there is a thin procession of general 'statements of their time'. It starts with Worth's Dartmoor, edited after his death in 1941; then the first New Naturalist in 1953 by Leonard Harvey and D. St Leger Gordon. In 1964 the Devonshire Association published Dartmoor Essays edited by Ian Simmons. In 1970 Crispin Gill edited Dartmoor – a New Study and in 1974 Harvey added two chapters to the 1953 New Naturalist published then as a paperback. Eric Hemery's High Dartmoor of 1983 (a meticulous guide to the high ground, catchment by catchment) deserves its place in the list despite its stated outer boundary, as does the bibliography already mentioned.

I guess I hope that my attempt will join that procession, however briefly it stays at its head. But as well as a huge literature there is a huge army of Dartmoor aficionados with the same interest span as the publications. It ranges from those stamp collecting letter-boxers to academics writing in a language which only their subjective peers will de-code. Between them they promote in this writer an anticipatory nervousness in writing about their stamping ground and this is at once unjustified but inescapable.

The questions loom in the small hours! Why no legends? No mention of rock basins? Do the solid geology, the archaeology or the tourist trade get too short a schriff? Do the birds outweigh the mammals? Has familiarity bred too much contempt only to be exposed in too brief a telling? Comforting myself, I have to hope – that these are the anxieties of all who

dare put pen to paper at this length and for the first time to chronicle a widely known distinctive landscape. I claim to myself that all that I have included pertains to the landscape for its own sake and assumes that its denizens are summed in its wholeness.

And of course that which may not be neglected in a 21<sup>st</sup> century discourse about any temperate landscape unit is whether or not its contemporary management is right for it, and if it is, is it sustainable? (yes, the



word has to come in somewhere!) So moorland management looms large, practice and politics – or more properly eco-administration – has to be analysed. And there's the rub! What price a single monolith (I speak of the National Park Authority) meant within itself to integrate the functions of biodiversity and landscape conservator, agricultural and recreational adviser, national park overseer and adviser to government on all three, acting as enforcer of management practice. The moorland practice which

had produced a state of affairs warranting designation as national park (first) and three great SSSI's after that, had evolved over 5000 years (or 7000 if you're a Mesolithic hunting-land manager devotee) — so would it not be as well to leave it evolving? Or am I too confident in the resilience of hill farmers and their landscape and too bothered by youthful eco-police?

**IM**

**Moretonhampstead**

## COSINESS IN ARCHITECTURE AND THE PROSPECT-REFUGE THEORY

**From Jay Appleton to Eleanor Young**

[As explanation the editor's daughter is executive editor of the RIBA Journal and had published a discussion among architects about Cosiness in Architecture.] I have the permission of both my daughter and Jay Appleton to include this longer piece which was condensed to fit the letter page of the RIBA journal.

The discussion article on 'cosy', in January's RIBA

*Journal*, touched so often on my theory of environmental aesthetics, (See 'Prospect-Refuge Theory on the web), originally set out in *The Experience of Landscape* (1975), that I am tempted to make a few comments. Two salient features of the theory are (a) that 'taste', 'preference' and notions of 'quality', far from being inexplicable expressions of arbitrary fashion, are rooted firmly in the biological sciences, and (b) that our responses to environmental stimuli are prompted by inherited instincts conducive to ensuring our survival, the driving force of which is the pleasure which comes from following these instincts, whether or not they prove effective in any particular case. One of these instincts is the urge to explore and thereby build up a reservoir of environmental information on which we may draw later when responding to unforeseen crises. Environmental perception is an absolutely central part of our survival behaviour. Two facets of this behaviour are of particular importance, (1) seeing (**prospect**), and (2) hiding or sheltering, (**refuge**).

The theory was essentially about landscape, but in 1991 Grant Hildebrand in *The Wright Space: Pattern and Meaning in Frank Lloyd Wright's Houses*, argued cogently that it was equally applicable to architecture, (See Richard Maccormac in para 1 of the discussion). In 1999 Hildebrand extended his argument to a wider field in *Origins of Architectural Pleasure*. Let me take just a few of the many phrases in the RIBA article which clearly invite links with Prospect-Refuge Theory. (*E of L* = the revised, 1996 edition of *The Experience of Landscape*).

p.27

*Womb with a View*. The ultimate exaggeration and polarisation of Refuge and Prospect. Absurd enough to be memorable!

*Children arranging chairs and tables*. cf. Susan Isaacs, quoted in *E of L*, p.138).

*Little booths in Citty of York pub*. Best of both worlds; communal association is maintained but privacy of personal space protected.

cf. also *peripheral carrels in the British Library* (p.27) and *convivial space and refuge* (p.28).

*Attic-tower-cellar*. 'Seeing without being seen'. cf. submarine periscope.

p.28

*Cats and dogs drop defences but still look out*. P-R Theory is not exclusive to *Homo sapiens*. I believe it is in Switzerland that a recent law requires goldfish bowls to have part of the sides opaque to ensure a measure of visual privacy to meet the psychological needs ('cosiness') of the fish!

p.29

*Opposites*. (*Treehouses, &c.*). Perhaps a more appropriate word is 'complementary'. (cf. *Windswept*

*dunes versus inglenook*, p.29) The Palladian Mansion and its surrounding park are the linear descendants (at some remove!) of the nesting-place and the foraging-ground, both essential to the survival of the individual and the species. The blackbird must be attracted to the privacy of the one to sit on her eggs but to the opportunities latent in the other for finding her food.

p.30

*Can exteriors of buildings be 'cosy'?* Certainly, though I wouldn't see it in terms of straw bales or acoustics so much as apparent accessibility. (Follow 'penetrability' in the Index of *E of L*). Apertures in walls, doorways, windows (especially when open), porticoes, outside staircases, &c., suggest opportunities for 'refuge'. Even shadows from overhanging eaves, buttresses and recesses or peripheral vegetation may soften the interface between 'outdoors' and 'indoors'. Some buildings say 'Keep out!'. Those which are 'cosy' say 'Come in!'

*Peril, exposure, vulnerability*. This is what I mean by **hazard**, (*E of L*, Chapters 4 & 5), and what in the 18th Century they found in 'The Sublime' and was eagerly taken up by The Picturesque. Our fascination with dangerous places is an expression of our need to find out the boundary between safety and danger and therefore crucial for our survival. This may be less important in architecture than in landscape, because buildings, being usually symbols of refuge, are places of protection against hazard, though Hildebrand had special praise for *Falling Water*, a house which actually incorporates a substantial waterfall!

*Railway stations* are perhaps too capacious to be 'cosy'. Too much space, too many people, (maybe pickpockets), and not much to hide behind.

'*Cosiness*' for me is a kind of mental condition achievable in places where we can lower our level of concentration on the potential threats to our security which are always around us. This allows us instead to concentrate on other things like conversation, reading a book or making love. Lower the level a little further and we feel safe enough to switch off our warning mechanisms altogether and, though even more vulnerable, go to sleep in comparative safety. Sundown may now be associated with partying rather than with going to bed, which is the natural response to the light going out, so the archetypal biorhythms may have to be re-arranged, but they will not disappear altogether. There are still times when our bodies tell us we need 'cosy' and others when we don't. Can the architects cater for both? Of course they can!

**JA**

Jay Appleton  
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## ANTHOLOGY

With the mind's eye, however, we could follow it still as it broadened into a desolate estuary on whose saltings, among the mauve sea asters and withering thrift, small flocks of curlews and oyster-catchers and restless congregations of great gulls awaited the turning of the tide. Not many weeks before, on a summer expedition, we had followed the last sinuous mile through acres of flowering sea lavender and grey sea purslane, pocked with pools of shining mud which, bare of all vegetation, reflected the sky on their glistening surfaces. At first the same grey muds, silted into banks four feet high, hemmed in the waters of the brook—now grown into a river—but where the sea tides met the current, the river's walls were flattened into greasy plains of ooze where grew miniature forests of marsh samphire whose erect branches seem jointed like wooden toys and have the colour and polish of jade. The jointed appearance is given by the pairs of succulent, almost translucent leaves which, fused together by their margins, form a series of tubes around the stem. Glasswort is another name for this plant, for its tissues, rich in soda, were once much used in glass making. The samphire plains were bounded on the seaward side by banks of shingle through which our stream broke its way at last to the sea.

*From Field and Forest: An introduction to the lives of plants* by Islay Manley, page 130. Published by The Batchworth Press, London 1955.

But both from a botanical and a picturesque standpoint the salt marshes near Walberswick are the most attractive on the Suffolk coast. These are of no great extent, but they possess a flora of exceptional interest, amid surroundings the reverse of desolate. An old-world ferry crosses the Blyth at Walberswick, where along the bank of the river black-boarded, red-tiled huts and shanties, in which the fishermen store their tackle, lie clustered together, while all kinds of lumber and wreckage are scattered about in picturesque confusion. Between the village roadway and the sea stretches an expanse of marshland more or less inundated at every high tide. Deep dykes, "with banks of sloping mud," intersect the marsh in various directions, spanned in places by wooden bridges of curious workmanship. A bank of shingle lies between the marsh and the sea, on which flourish many choice plants, such as the sea-spurge, the sea-holly, the yellow horned-poppy and the exceedingly rare sea-pea. The marsh itself supports a varied flora, including the majority of species usually met with in such localities. *The Salt Marshes of Suffolk. A chapter from The Music of Wild Flowers* p106 by John Vaughan MA

*Canon of Winchester. Publisher Elkin Mathews, Cork Street London 1920..*

### A note on these detailed passages

We rarely deal with coastal landscapes in these pages so the above takes a small step to redress this. Any review of what artists like to paint includes a high proportion of coast (see Peter Howard's review in this issue). But what I see in the extracts is a close attention to detail — species which define habitats rather than the wider habitat or the landscape.

Myself I increasingly see landscape as the sum of a thousand details, all of them elements at species level but not all of them plant species. And then collecting these up into a higher grouping, genera which may be of habitat or woodland edge or shaded slope or view bit or marsh; above which hierarchically whole views then landscape. Is this close detail syndrome something we may ascribe to a particular age group? Or to those who delight in detail? To the botanist/lepidopterist? To the short sighted? To those perhaps who wish to limit their adventure and live within the safe bounds of their own landscape flora? Can we see some similarity between these approaches and, in garden design, that of the 'plantsman' and the landscape 'envisioner' often called landscape architect. **BY**

## THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS REVISITED<sup>1</sup>

by Philip Pacey

Travelling by bus from Clitheroe to Preston, hazy sunshine at last breaking through in the evening of an overcast, drizzly day in early June, I caught a glimpse of the Delectable Mountains. We were running through the bustling main street at Whalley; lifting my eyes up, without any great expectation, and there, above and overlooking the town, sheep were grazing on steeply sloping meadows bounded by hedges and set among woodland in full summer foliage. In that instant I understood what the words 'delectable mountains' mean to me and why I find them so evocative.

'Delectable mountains' are high ground which has not become barren, hills which seem mountainous but which, by not rising above the tree line, raise visions of fertility to unexpected heights. Bunyan's description could hardly be clearer:

*So I went up to the mountains, to behold the gardens and orchards, the vineyards, and fountains of water. And standing by the Highwayside were shepherds feeding their flocks<sup>2</sup>.*

Samuel Palmer's drawing of 1825, 'The Valley Thicket

with Corn', shows a valley surrounded by hills which are equally thick with corn, or if not, are as fertile. Palmer's drawings and paintings of this period transfigure the real world, but at Shoreham in Kent it is still possible to see the delectable mountains which he saw.

The summer pastures to which people in mountainous regions take their animals may also be 'delectable', but, with limited fertility, and beset by rocky ridges, scree, and peaks, are perhaps not as completely so as John Bunyan's and Samuel Palmer's hills, or the slopes above Whalley. Many years ago we climbed to an 'alm' in Austria, where two friends were to spend their honeymoon a few days later. To be so high above the world, human noise and light pollution left far behind, yet to be among cattle, and in the comfort of a log cabin rather than in a tent tacked to a rockface — yes, that must have been delectable. In her book *Happy Times in Norway* (the 'happy times' being the years prior to the German invasion in 1940) Sigrid Undset evokes the 'saeter' from a cow's point of view: *From the first spring day that she is let out of the barn and allowed to graze in the field at home she longs for the mountain. There she is free to graze the live-long day in mile-wide pastures of short, sweet and juicy grass, drink from cold, clear streams, rest during the hot midday hours in some place where a breeze cools and helps to keep away the tormenting mosquito swarm.*

Since Bunyan's time we have learned to appreciate mountainous mountains; our eyes are no longer hurt by their ruggedness, and we have equipped ourselves to cope with the challenges they present. Yet there remains something especially blessed about pastures and meadows which are lifted up, as if in such places we are indeed 'upon the borders of heaven' (forgetting for the moment that on the other side of that hillside at Whalley are the borders of Blackburn): *This is Enchanted Ground. The air is very sweet and pleasant; yea, we hear continually the singing of*

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*birds; the flowers appear in the earth, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land (3) In this country there is abundance, and the sun shineth night and day.*

#### Notes

1 I previously contemplated 'The Delectable Mountains' in LRE44

2 Not having a copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress* to hand, I'm quoting from the text adapted by Christopher Palmer and set to music by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

3 Here Palmer wove in words from 'The Son'. The turtle is of course the turtle dove. **PP**

**Editor's apology.** LRE48 carried a piece entitled *Railways and Gardens* which though signed off **PP**, was not otherwise attributed. It might be clear to a follower of Philip Pacey that it came from his pen. A slip of mine. Apologies Philip.

## TREES AS LANDSCAPE

by Bud Young

Ask most people and they will say that landscape has something to do with trees in the land. For many people trees may be a surrogate for landscape. Of course we have many of us served time in deserts and some in the Antarctic wastes; there are those who love the semi arid and I am one. But even in these the eye and the heart may be drawn to the tree be it even a solitary acacia in a wadi. Or a woodbe tree (sic) object relieving large tonal expanses. For the tree is a place to sit under, for shade or shelter. It is a source of firewood or of poles for the bivouac and more than all this or because of all these associations and utilities it is a friend. It has more personality than sand ripples, rock faces or boulders in a desert. And beneath it there is a place.

I was recently in Worcestershire near Eastnor and Ledbury and west of that striking line of ancient hills the Malverns. The land is complexly wooded and hilly and for me totally delightful. As it was spring, there was blossom everywhere set against the earliest of early leafing trees the strikingly delicate bronze leaves of valley bottom poplars the bright green of hawthorn and horsechestnut. Pear orchards, characteristic of the area, were froth white with blossom. For me it was overwhelmingly an approximation of Heaven.

In my spare time I lead a Scout troupe and am trying to imbue in them this love of wood: of the smell of figwood and the stringiness of hazel, the brittle quality of sycamore, the burning qualities of dry beech twigs or the slow embers of hawthorn or oak; of useful sticks for making 'tomahawk shelters', crooked sticks

## NOTHING/ .../HOARDED/... /NOHO SQUARE, LONDON

**W1** by James Randall

A city frequently appears to be built on nothing. Of course, there may be a river or abrupt hilly gradients, but often (especially to the untrained or non-native eye) urban landscape is mysteriously masked and altered by the more emphatic geometries of avenue and crescent or the massed morphologies of skyscraper and bridge, terminus and cathedral.

Instead, we may have to look immediately underfoot to find a lingering sense of the previous geography. I recall the Parisian refrain that 'beneath the paving stone lies the beach'. In London, one may more readily consider the marsh or forest floor, a sedimentary layer buried under concrete and foundations, transportation routes and decking. When this urban crust is broken, as during the aerial bombing of the Second World War, the old flora may be awoken, with seeds long buried coming to life again. And equally, when developers move in, this same sense of upheaved landscape may remind us of what was there before.

Past ecologies and geographies haunt us. Even the most developed urban morphology can recall this primeval sense of landscape. This is most evident, perhaps, when the future is at stake and the past's erasure becomes apparent. Poised for redevelopment, a large demolition site appears like a void of a city's rural memory that cannot be fully recovered. And yet voids themselves are essential to the modern city's coming into existence, in the creation of new human habitats and transport networks. Emptinesses are the missing links in the chain from wilderness to habitation, buried in street names referring to lost groves, orchards, heaths and ponds.

I contemplate this sense of voids cut into the city as I watch new building developments in Fitzrovia, that identifiable tract of central London north of Oxford Street between Tottenham Court Road and Marylebone. Just to the north is Regent's Park, the replanted leftovers of a game reserve carved out of Middlesex Forest. In Fitzrovia, the great part of the red brick Middlesex Hospital has been demolished, with just the hospital's western boundary wall and the 1891 Grade 2\* listed Italian gothic chapel remaining. The chapel survives from a previous rebuilding of the hospital in 1927, while the hospital was previously resited from a position 200 yards to the east, where there was a windmill. The signs of passing rural ghosts, or gathering urban ones?

The site's reinvention as Noho Square is now taking place under the auspices of the Icelandic bank Kaupthing and this brownfield rupture is ready for a new



for tripods and hooked sticks for pulling down fruit laden branches. We gravitate to the edges of the pasture in this stream field and settle by the trees and overgrown hedge. We look out across the grass (when not snow covered as here). We consider sticks and what we might do with them. We begin to recognise that trees offer us a relationship. **BY**

**Images.** Copper beech of great antiquity, Tewkesbury Abbey. Weeping elms and other trees Wilson's stream field, Moretonhampstead (7th February 2009)

