



Landscape Research Group Ltd

Directors' Report, 2007

Landscape Research Group Ltd:
a company limited by guarantee (Registered No: 01714386) and registered charity
(Registered No: 287160)

16 May, 2008

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH GROUP LIMITED

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Directors are pleased to present their Report and enclose Accounts for the twenty-fifth period of business of Landscape Research Group Limited, from 1st January to 31st December 2007. The company (referred to below as "the Group" or "LRG") was incorporated on 12th April 1983 as a company limited by guarantee (registered number 1714386). The objects for which the Group is established are:

"to advance education and research, encourage interest and exchange information for the public benefit in the field of landscape and any related fields".

The Group is a Charity registered with the Charity Commission (number 287160). It is also recognised as a Charity by the Inland Revenue for taxation purposes.

2. DIRECTORS, BANKERS, AUDITORS AND SECRETARY

Directors who served during the year were:

Dr G. Revill	(Chair)
Prof. C. Brace	(Vice Chair; and Deputy Editor)
Dr S. Shuttleworth	(Company Secretary; and Treasurer)
Dr I.H. Thompson	(Editor, <i>Landscape Research</i>)
Ms M. Roe	(Deputy Editor)
Mr R.N. Young	(Editor, <i>Landscape Research Extra</i>)
Prof. P.J. Howard	(International Officer)
Prof. K.R. Olwig	(Associate Overseas Editor)
Prof. K Taylor	(Associate Overseas Editor)
Prof. T. Collins	
Mr J. Gittins	
Prof. B. Goodey	
Dr D. Matless	
Dr M. Miles	
Dr A. Noussia	
Mr G. Roberts	
Prof. P.H. Selman	
Dr S. Seymour	
Ms N.H. Stedman	
Mr P. Tabbush	

All Directors are British, except Dr Noussia who holds Greek citizenship, Prof. Collins and Prof. Olwig who both hold United States citizenship, and Prof. Taylor who holds dual British/Australian citizenship.

Bankers are: Lloyds Bank plc, 34 Moorgate, London EC2R 6PL.

Reporting Accountants are: Hepburn and Co, 89A The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1QE.

The Company Secretary is: Dr Steven Shuttleworth, 4 Gwyns Piece, Lambourn, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 8YZ.

3. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(i) Role of the Committee

The Committee is responsible for managing the day-to-day affairs of the Group, except insofar as they are delegated to other committees; for coordinating the work of all committees; and for formulating and recommending on all issues of strategy and policy to the Board.

The Committee comprises the Officers of the Group, namely the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Company Secretary, Editor of *Landscape Research* (ie the Chair of the Editorial Committee) and the Chair of the Research & Networking Activities Committee.

The Committee's Chair is the Chair of the Board, George Revill.

(ii) Business Strategy and related Board decisions

Last year's report noted that the Board had completed a series of major strategy reviews to identify how best to expand activity to ensure a proper use of the Group's funds to help promote its overall charitable objectives. It agreed a budget strategy for the period 2007 to 2009, which will be rolled forward each year; negotiated and agreed a new seven-year Publishing Agreement with Taylor and Francis Ltd which will result in significantly improved income to the Group; negotiated and agreed a contract for support to the editorial team with Newcastle University; and appointed two Associate Overseas Editors, with financial support for their work.

Key issues for consideration during 2007 related to the future of *Landscape Research*. The first was the timing of any further expansion of the journal, to six issues a year. On the advice of the Editorial Committee, the Board concluded that – having expanded the journal to five issues with effect from January 2007 – it was premature to consider further expansion until January 2010 at the earliest. The second issue was the need to appoint a successor Editor, Ian Thompson having indicated that he would wish to stand down after five years in role from January 2004. The Board has appointed the current Deputy Editor Maggie Roe as Editor with effect from January 2009, with a phased transition to be implemented by the editorial team. The Board recorded its gratitude to Ian, and his supporting editorial team, for the progress made in developing the journal over the period of his editorship.

The final major issue considered by the Board during the year related to possible collaboration between the Group and the Arts and Humanities Research Council's *Landscape and Environment Programme*. The Board agreed that there are potentially valuable opportunities for collaboration, in terms of work related to the European Landscape Convention, future conferences and publication of AHRC material. These opportunities are now being examined in detail.

4. EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

(i) Role of the Committee

The Committee is responsible for producing *Landscape Research* on behalf of the Board, and ensuring the journal maintains standards appropriate to a respected international academic journal; and for formulating and recommending on related issues of strategy and policy to the Executive Committee.

The Committee comprises the Editor, Deputy Editor(s) and any overseas Associate Editor(s) of *Landscape Research*; two other Board members not directly involved in *Landscape Research*

production, responsible for ensuring that the editorial approach to the journal meets the Group's wider charitable objectives; and on an *ex officio* basis the Chair and Treasurer of the Group. The Committee is also empowered to co-opt up to two additional members from the Board as it sees fit, to add to the breadth of its expertise, and a representative(s) from Taylor & Francis Ltd. The Chair of the Committee is the Editor of *Landscape Research* – during 2007, Ian Thompson.

(ii) Landscape Research

The key responsibility of the Committee continues to relate to maintaining *Landscape Research* as a respected international journal, and ensuring the continued effectiveness of the Publishing Agreement with Taylor & Francis Ltd. Feedback from various sources indicates continued success in these areas.

As noted above, the Editorial Committee considered two key issues during the year, and the Board has agreed its recommendations in relation to future expansion of the journal and the changeover of Editor.

Five issues of the journal (comprising Volume 32) were published during the year – this being the first stage of expansion following the new Publishing Agreement agreed with Taylor & Francis Ltd in December 2006. The contents were as follows:

- (i) The **February** issue contained four varied papers covering landscape issues in Europe. They include a paper assessing the importance of rural-urban fringe landscapes in England; the reconstruction of past patterns of tilled fields using historic maps in western Norway; an exploration of the way 'temporary solutions' are used in open-space planning and sustainability in Germany; and the use of bird species groups to help select nature reserves and promote nature conservation in fragmented landscapes in Italy. The issue also included a review paper on preserved and remnant natural vegetation in cities; a short communication on the monitoring of small landscape elements in the Netherlands; and various book reviews.
- (ii) The **April** issue contained four papers and short communications, together with a supporting editorial, on transitional landscapes in Eastern Asia. The four substantive papers explored the growth of Japanese-style gardens outside Japan and Chinese-style gardens outside China, and the reasons for the preponderance of the former; combining remote sensing and anthropology to trace historical land-use changes and facilitate better landscape management in north Thailand; the importance of Dazhai village in Shanxi, China in providing the model for agriculture and landscape value in the Cultural Revolution; and the recreational use of public landscaped cemeteries in Taiwan. The four short communications covered the post-traditional landscape identity of Hong Kong; a case study of sustainable residential landscapes from Guangzhou, China; the impact of China's very rapid growth on urban landscapes; and the concept of landscape in the Japanese language and its implications for landscape research.
- (iii) The **June** issue contained four papers on varied topics: a multi-functional approach to restructuring post-industrial landscapes; the importance of gardens in shaping Hebrew women's influence on the landscape of early 20th Century Palestine; changes in planning attitudes and ways of design in the 20th Century landscape of the Netherlands; and landscape change in Norfolk County, Ontario, Canada. The issue also included a short communication about attitudes to native and non-native plants in Nazi Germany, together with various book reviews.
- (iv) The **August** issue contained six papers on varied topics. They included an appraisal of landscapes of value in the work of Alfred Wainwright (1907-1991); a study of local landscape character assessment, with reference to community-led schemes in Cheshire; an exploration of the origins and development of responses to contemporary urban landscapes, and the importance of urban wilderness; a theory and method for historical landscape analysis, based

on research in southern Norway; a study of how cultural and natural components of landscapes interact in the context of environmental change and pollution, based on a case study in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina; and the impact of organicist concepts of urban landscape in German planning after the Second World War.

- (v) The **October** issue was a theme issue, exploring “Justice, Power and the Political Landscape’, again supported by an editorial. Six papers examine: the geographies of a more just food system, and the impact of changes in the cattle and beef industry on rural communities in South Dakota; the transformation of landscape in and beyond the Imperial Valley in California; the idea of a ‘law of landscape’ and its influence on landscape architecture and planning; the practice of landscape conventions as a means of understanding the perception and meaning of landscape in relation to law and justice, with reference to the European Landscape Convention; the implications for policy-makers and administrators of introducing public participation in landscape protection, management and planning in accordance with the European Landscape Convention, using examples from Norway; and changing Western thinking about landscape as the place for settlement and occupation and as scenes of spectacle.

The Board wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the continued commitment of *Landscape Research*'s Editor and Deputy Editors – Ian Thompson, Catherine Brace and Maggie Roe – and their supporting editorial team for their work during the year; and to thank the Editorial Assistant – Rosemarie Gilbert – for her excellent support to the editorial team.

An important area of development for *Landscape Research* during 2007 has been the work of the two overseas Associate Editors, Kenneth Olvig and Ken Taylor. As reported last year, these appointments were made to increase the capacity of the Editorial Committee to enable the expansion of the journal. Their role is to secure more overseas material. Kenneth Olvig is responsible for Europe and North America, and Ken Taylor for the Asia-Pacific region. In this first year of work they have supported the editorial team on papers originating in those areas; and have begun to promote the journal, secure more papers and start to develop special and theme issues, with the intention that this will lead to a wider range of material that facilitates expansion of the journal to six issues each year in due course.

5. RESEARCH & NETWORKING ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

(i) Role of the Committee

The Committee is responsible for developing and implementing on behalf of the Board the Group's programme of research and networking activity in all areas other than publication of *Landscape Research*, and for formulating and recommending on related issues of strategy and policy to the Executive Committee.

The Committee comprises the Editor of *Landscape Research Extra*, the International Officer, and seven other named members of the Board; and on an *ex officio* basis the Chair and Treasurer of the Group. The Committee is also empowered to co-opt additional members from the Board as it sees fit to add to the breadth of its expertise and capacity to implement the activities programme. The Chair in 2007 was Bud Young.

Activities undertaken in 2007 are reported below.

(ii) *Landscape Research Extra*

Landscape Research Extra was published three times in 2007 (issues 42 to 44) and totalled 36 pages of illustrated column text. As in previous years, the editorial team aimed to present short

pieces written in a clear style, aiming to stimulate readers to a very wide range of landscape topics and issues, and to provoke thought about them. All issues included colour print illustrations.

The issues included a range of reviews and short features. Key ones discussed what we mean by a sustainable landscape; what if sustainable landscapes aren't beautiful; aesthetics and the Antarctic plateau; and South Africa's fenced landscapes. Various articles explored the landscapes of specific areas. In the United Kingdom the articles considered the St Pancras area of London; landscape interpretations of Essex; a feelings for home-range in a parish in Montgomeryshire; and Rosemoor Garden in Devon. In Europe, the articles covered Liverpool, a town in Sweden; the Calvaire des Marins (Picardy, France); landscapes of agriculture and 'ghosts of war' in northern France; and the unusual sandstone tor landscapes of Fontainebleau.

The issues also contained notices and reports of various conferences, exhibitions and courses – notably *Renoir's landscapes*, a review of the exhibition at the National Gallery (February to May 2007, and also exhibited in Ottawa and Philadelphia); The *Skulptur Projekte* at Munster (throughout 2007); and the Europarc Seminar on the European Landscape Convention in Derbyshire (December 2006). Other feature articles included several anthologies in relation to landscape; more in the series 'Meet the Board'; and notes about mapping ancient sites in woodland and soil formation. Finally, the issues also included a 'should you read' listing of some of the more significant or provocative papers landscape-related papers abstracted from a range of journals in the fields of geography, land-use planning, ecology, landscape design, art, psychology and countryside recreation.

The Board wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the continued commitment of *Landscape Research Extra's* Editor Bud Young, Rosemary Young, and the varied correspondents (both overseas and domestic) who supply much of the source material.

(iii) Events

As reported last year, during 2007 the Group planned to run field excursions to the Lea Valley Olympic site, the Derwent Valley (Derbyshire) and Snowdonia, and an event in Sheffield in relation to the European Landscape Convention. The first two events had to be cancelled due to lack of effective publicity, and thus low levels of interest. The Committee then intended to hold the Derwent Valley event in late summer/autumn 2008 and the Lea Valley Olympic site excursion later in the year, but has now decided not to go ahead until the Group has a better advertising strategy especially via the website. The second two, summarised below, proceeded very successfully.

The "Recording Wildest Wales" event was held jointly with the Cymdiethas Eryri / Snowdonia Society on 5 to 6 October 2007, led by Gareth Roberts and John Gittins. The purpose was to visit, enjoy and share views about some of the most spectacular glaciated scenery in Eryri (Snowdonia), and learn about people who have been inspired to paint, write and in other ways record its qualities. The trip began with a visit to Cwm Idwal, the site of a glacially-formed lake and the first National Nature Reserve to be declared in England and Wales. This site has attracted and inspired scientists, artists and poets for over 250 years and is especially important for its geological, geomorphological and botanical interest.. The trip continued through the Ogwen, Conwy, Llygwy and Lledr valleys, skirting the Snowdon massif, and the Glyderau and Carneddau ranges. The group visited Ty Hyll / the Ugly House (the headquarters of the Snowdonia Society) where it met with representatives of the Countryside Council for Wales and the Snowdonia National Park Authority to discuss conservation management issues affecting these magnificent landscapes. After dinner on the first evening Gareth and John made presentations on *Eryri as an inspiration for artists* before opening a discussion. On Saturday members joined a guided walk led by the Snowdonia Society into the Gwydyr Forest, overlooking the Conwy valley. The event was attended by 32 members and guests, and was judged by the attendees to have been very successful in terms of both learning and networking.

The major event of the year was the seminar on “Implementing the European Landscape Convention (ELC)”, held at the University of Sheffield on 19 to 20 November 2007, organised by Gareth Roberts and Paul Selman, with support from several other Directors. The purpose of the event was to review progress in implementing the ELC, now that it has been ratified by 29 Council of Europe member countries and signed by a further six. The Group’s organisation of the event is highly appropriate in that the Group had also been the co-initiator of the idea that led – via the 1992 conference at Blois on “Landscapes in a New Europe: Unity and Diversity” – to the processes that led to the signing of the ELC in 2000. The Group was fortunate in securing sponsorship on a match-funding basis of its own contribution, from the Countryside Council for Wales, Department of Environment Northern Ireland, Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage – each of which contributed £2000 sponsorship, which the Board gratefully acknowledges. The seminar attracted 62 experts from 20 countries. All delegates were asked to prepare short papers on any aspect of the implementation of the ELC, and several wrote specifically about experiences in their home country. These papers provided the basis for a wide-ranging series of discussions in both the formal sessions and throughout the event. The event received excellent feedback from the delegates, and from the sponsors. The Group has now published the proceedings as a special 52-page issue of *Landscape Research Extra* 46, in Spring 2008.

(iv) Website and Information Activity

Last year’s report noted that initial work to enhance the website has been undertaken, by reviewing good practice from the sites of other bodies similar to the Group, with the intention that the site should be upgraded, to include a web-searchable index to *Landscape Research* and *Landscape Research Extra* and to make the site more interesting and interactive to enable it to be used to circulate information to members. The Committee has not been able to take forward this plan during the year, but hopes to do so during 2008.

To make the site more interesting and more interactive and lead to its use to circulate information to members, *Landscape Research Extra* continues to be published on the site in pdf format.

(v) Annual Prize Scheme

The Group has organised a prize scheme for student dissertations that contribute to our understanding of landscape issues, since 2000. The scheme was originally started on a small-scale basis to continue the work originated by the Nan Fairbrother Memorial Trust, which transferred its assets to the Group when the Trust was wound up (see Directors’ Report for 1998). In 2007 prizes were awarded for both undergraduate and graduate (Masters) work, in a range of landscape-related fields. The judges were Susanne Seymour, Tim Collins, John Gittins and George Revill.

In relation to the undergraduate competition (2007), six entries were received for best dissertation based on original academic research and showing conceptual sophistication in the study of landscape, and four for best dissertation addressing a practical problem or landscape design issue. The ten dissertations were from students at nine institutions. The standard was high, especially in the first category. The judges awarded six prizes: one first prize of £100 and five ‘highly commended’ prizes of £50. The winning entries covered a wide variety of issues within the themes of landscape and memory, landscape and the gaze, the design and management of public parks, chocolate utopias, and landscape and environmental change. The first prize winner was Ruth Judge (Geography, University College London) whose dissertation was entitled *Exploring Cambodian national identity: Angkor and Apsaras as ‘lieux de memoire’*.

With regard to the Masters’ prize (2006) four entries were received for best dissertation based on original academic research and showing conceptual sophistication in the study of landscape, and three for best dissertation addressing a practical problem or landscape design issue. The seven dissertations were from students at six institutions, representing a strong field of entries. The judges

awarded four prizes: one first prize of £100 and three 'highly commended' prizes of £50. The winning entries covered a variety of issues, including contested hazardous landscapes, physical landscape formation, and environmental landscape policy and design. The first prize winner was Delia Wendel (MSc in Modernity, Space and Place, University College London) whose dissertation was entitled *Technological topos, and the contestation of hazardous ground in New Orleans*.

(vi) International Activity

The Group has continued to fund a range of networking visits by Peter Howard (in his role as International Officer) and Gareth Roberts during the year, to raise the profile of the Group at conferences across a range of disciplines, and to contribute to the work of the European Landscape Convention. As in previous years, LRG promotional literature has been distributed at all of these events.

During the course of 2007 Peter attended meetings to develop the relationship with Cemagref (the research arm of the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development) with a view to starting a series of seminars closely connected with the research issues arising from the European Landscape Convention. Accordingly (with Bud Young and Brian Goodey) he visited Paris in March 2007 to meet opposite numbers, which has been a key step in planning the first of three seminars in France and the UK – the first planned for April 2008 in Lille.

The International Officer's other major visit in 2007 was to maintain the Group's position as an observer with the European Landscape Convention, attending the workshop in Sibiu (Romania) and assisting in chairing some of the sessions. There remains very considerable European interest in the Group, which is now clearly regarded as a major player in the academic landscape field. The International Officer was also involved with the Sheffield seminar (see 'Events', above), which both traded on the reputation of LRG for serious debate in this field and certainly extended it. As the Group's representative on the Nordic Landscape Research Network, he also attended its meeting at Oscarsborg (Norway).

Peter has put forward some suggestions for sharpening the focus of the International Officer role, which will be considered by the Board during 2008.

6. FINANCES

The Group made a surplus for the year of £4953 (income of £44713, less expenditure of £39760). The Group's accumulated fund at 31st December 2007 was £65750 (2006, £60797).

As noted in last year's report, as a result of its newly agreed financial strategy, the Group had planned to achieve a broad balance of income and expenditure by expanding research and networking activity as well as increasing the frequency of *Landscape Research* to five issues. The report noted, however, that achieving this balance would largely depend on how successful the Research & Networking Activity Committee was in delivering its planned programme. As reported above, the Committee has had very considerable success in achieving an expanded programme – but in financial terms, its success in securing significant sponsorship for the Sheffield seminar boosted income such that the Committee's net expenditure was much less than anticipated.

Apart from this unexpected bonus to income, finances were in line with expectations. Income increased as a result of increased membership subscriptions (supplemented by a one-off increase in tax reclaim, as a result of more members choosing to gift-aid their subscriptions enabling a retrospective claim); the new Publishing Agreement; and as a result of increased bank deposit interest. There was also a significant (planned) increase in expenditure, as a result of the agreed increases in activity – in particular as a result of the expansion of *Landscape Research* to five issues a year; the 'real costs' Editorial Support Agreement and related expenditure that has enabled this

expansion; a major increase in events activity (especially the Sheffield seminar); increased international activity (some treated for expenditure purposes as related to the Sheffield seminar); and a small increase in the annual prizes. Board and Executive Committee costs were kept at the previous year's level (although a small portion of the costs of the Administrative Assistant was also treated for expenditure purposes as related to the Sheffield seminar).

In relation to prospects for 2008 and beyond, the Group intends to achieve a broad balance of income and expenditure by expanding Research and Networking Committee activity, but this will continue to depend on how successful the Committee is in delivering its planned programme.

The Accounts, the Auditor's Report and the Treasurer's Report give a fuller assessment of the Group's finances. The financial reports have been prepared taking advantage of the exemptions conferred by the Companies Act 1985 on the grounds that in the opinion of the Directors the company is entitled to these exemptions as a small company.

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