



Landscape Research Group Ltd

Directors' Report, 2008

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

6 May, 2009

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH GROUP LIMITED

DIRECTORS' REPORT, 2008

1. INTRODUCTION

The Directors are pleased to present their Report and enclose Accounts for the twenty-sixth period of business of Landscape Research Group Limited, from 1st January to 31st December 2008. 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 George Revill	(Chair*)
Prof. Catherine Brace	(Vice Chair*; and Deputy Editor)
Dr Steven Shuttleworth	(Company Secretary*; and Treasurer*)
Dr Ian H. Thompson	(Editor, Landscape Research; and Chair of the Editorial Committee*) (to 31 December 2008)
Ms Maggie Roe	(Deputy Editor, Landscape Research, to 31 December 2008; Editor from 1 January 2009)
Mr R.N. (Bud) Young	(Editor, Landscape Research Extra; and Chair of the Research and Networking Committee* to 31 December 2008)
Prof. Peter J. Howard	(International Officer)
Prof. Kenneth R. Olwig	(Associate Overseas Editor)
Prof. Ken Taylor	(Associate Overseas Editor)
Prof. Tim Collins	
Mr John Gittins	
Prof. Brian Goodey	
Dr David Matless	
Dr Malcolm Miles	[to 3 December 2008]
Dr Antonia Noussia	
Mr Gareth Roberts	
Prof. Paul H. Selman	[to 28 May 2008]
Dr Susanne Seymour	
Ms Nancy H. Stedman	[to 28 May 2008]
Mr Paul Tabbush	

The posts shown with an asterisk (*) are the Officers of the Group who comprise the Executive Committee.

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

The Executive Committee and Board have progressed six key issues that affect the long-term direction of the Group during 2008. These relate to:

- the future of *Landscape Research*;
- preparing for a likely significant change of officers in 2009 and the need to appoint new Directors who would bring fresh capacity, skills and perspectives to the Board;
- the long-term strategy for *Landscape Research Extra*;
- the effectiveness of the Research and Networking Committee.
- the implementation of the European Landscape Convention; and
- possible collaboration between the Group and the Arts and Humanities Research Council's *Landscape and Environment Programme*;

In relation to the future of *Landscape Research*, last year's report noted two key decisions – the appointment of a successor Editor with effect from January 2009, with a phased transition to be implemented by the editorial team during 2008; and the timing of expansion of the journal to six issues a year, which was agreed should not take place until January 2010 at the earliest, primarily to allow the new editorial team to establish itself. This transition has been successfully completed during 2008, and the editorial team is firmly planning for an expansion of the journal from 2010. During 2009 the Executive Committee will therefore extend the existing Editorial Support Agreement with the University of Newcastle and later renegotiate its terms, to maintain existing and then provide increased support to come into effect during the year.

The likely change of officers in 2009 and the need for new Directors became apparent at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May 2008. The Chair George Revill indicated his intention to resign from the position, having served for ten years; Bud Young indicated his intention to resign from the positions of Chair of the Research and Networking Committee and Editor of *Landscape Research Extra* after he had completed issue *LRE50*; and, as noted above, the Editorship of *Landscape Research* changes in January 2009. The AGM and Board recognised that it was sensible to consider the mix of future Directors as a result of those changes. The Board had previously recognised the

importance of analysing Directors' skills, to identify any skills gaps that ought to be taken into account in electing new Directors, and then addressing such issues. This work was in hand at the time of the AGM, which agreed that it was premature to appoint new Directors then. The initial analysis was completed in autumn, following which the Board agreed a 'job description' for the role of Chair. At the end of 2008, discussions were in hand to enable election of a new Chair early in 2009.

These discussions have now (May 2009) been completed. With effect from 9 February 2009, the new Chair is Ian Thompson. His first key task, with the Board, was to identify potential new Directors for possible election at the AGM during 2009. A second key task will then be to organise a training event for the new Board, an investment not previously made by the Group. It is intended to build on the above work to ensure the Board has a clear and shared sense of future strategic direction; develops an action plan to implement it; and to ensure that all members of the Board commit to helping to deliver the action plan. Such a training investment is, in the Executive Committee's view, long overdue. It will help the Board to shape future work to meet the Charity Commission's expectation that trustees are suitably skilled and active in achieving their charity's objectives.

The third key issue considered by the Board relates to the future of *Landscape Research Extra* in view of the intended resignation of Bud Young as Editor. Bud has edited the newsletter since its inception in 1988. The Board is agreed that it has provided a highly distinctive and valuable part of the Group's activities, and that such a 'sister' publication to *Landscape Research* is an important part of the Group's duty to encourage interest in and exchange information about landscape. The Board is considering whether a future publication should be entirely web-based (ie as a .pdf newsletter or e-journal), and is therefore acquiring a web domain name to facilitate this option.

Fourthly, the Board has given some thought to the structure and effectiveness of the Research and Networking Committee. As noted below, the Committee is responsible for developing and implementing the Group's programme of activity in all areas other than publication of *Landscape Research*, and for formulating and recommending on related issues of strategy and policy. A key measure of its success is its effectiveness at spending the resources allocated to it, so as to achieve a broad balance of income and expenditure. Over the past two years, the Committee has been successful in developing a range of ideas and putting many of them into effect, by expansion of events, international activity and the prize scheme. This represents a significant improvement in the scale of such activity compared to before 2006. However, the Committee has not had the capacity to put all its ideas into effect.

The Board recognises that it is vital for the Committee to function effectively and have sufficient capacity if the Group is to successfully continue to expand its activities. It will therefore review the scope of the Committee's remit and its membership next year, together with the need to appoint a new Chair, by when it is hoped that there will be new Directors with the capacity to contribute actively to its work.

The final two areas of Executive Committee and Board focus have related to external activity. The Group's involvement in European Landscape Convention (ELC) matters continues to dominate its approach to this, especially in terms of international activity and events. The Group has been active in its promotion of the ELC, and links with many of the 'expert advisers' brought together at the Sheffield seminar (November 2007) have been further strengthened during the year. In February 2008 Peter Howard attended the inaugural meeting of CivilScape, the network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) actively working for the implementation of the Convention, and Gareth Roberts attended the 7th Workshop on ELC Implementation convened in Piestany, Slovakia in April 2008 (see 'International Activity', below). During the year Gareth and Maggie Roe were also nominated as advisers to RECEP/ENELC, the network of local and regional authorities active in ELC implementation.

Finally, with regard to links between the Group and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), a start was made in examining opportunities for collaboration in terms of work related to the European Landscape Convention, future conferences and publication of AHRC material. An initial result was the Group's support for a seminar organised by AHRC on "Landscape and Theory", held in Nottingham (see 'Events', below).

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 2008, 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, arrangements for the changeover of Editor from January 2009 and future expansion of the journal have progressed smoothly.

Five issues of the journal (comprising Volume 33) were published during the year. The contents were as follows:

- (i) The **February** issue contained six varied papers. They include an assessment of the heritage of the productive landscape, looking at landscape design for rural areas in the Netherlands, 1954 to 1985; the role of landscape architecture as an expression of nationalist identities, using the example of Israeli-occupied Palestine; the role of natural settings in crisis rehabilitation; tools, principles and methods for evaluating landscape, with reference to the shared values underlying the European Landscape Convention; the links between landscape aesthetic theory and visual character as measured by visual indicators; and the delivery of national green space and planning policy in regional spatial strategies. The issue also contained several book reviews.
- (ii) The **April** issue was a special issue containing six papers, together with a supporting editorial. The editorial and five of the papers were drawn from the "Landscapes, Lifestyles and Livelihoods" conference at Melbourne, Australia in October 2006. The papers included a study of translating landscape policy into rural land health by community land use decision-making in Australia, in particular in Victoria; the balancing of state regulation and management versus private property rights in ecosystem management in Victoria, Australia; assessing the importance of regional variation in applying landscape management policies, using the example of rural land use and landcare in Australia; future investment in landscape change in southern Australia; and the ecological and cultural complexity of Aboriginal land management in

Tasmania. The final paper explored the German 'MULBO' model for multi-criteria landscape assessment, and its use in supporting spatial land use decisions. The issue also contained two book reviews.

- (iii) The **June** issue was a special issue on "Landscape as a resource for regional and local economies", comprising seven papers and an editorial. The issue is drawn from papers presented during the workshop on "Landscape Economics" in Montpellier, France in June 2007. It aimed to draw together material from various economic trends that are affecting landscape, pointing out that the economics of landscape is emerging as a new field of research after a period of relative neglect. The first paper, 'Landscape Economics at dawn: an eye-witness account', provides a review of the development of techniques for valuing landscapes from the 1970s. The other papers covered a study in valuing the social benefits of underground cables versus overhead power transmission lines, based on a study area in Norway; the impact of agricultural subsidies on rural landscapes, and an assessment of the rationale for using subsidies to promote environmental objectives in the European Union; landscape preferences in the cork oak montado landscape of Alentejo, Portugal; the role of economic criteria in promoting urban green spaces, with case studies drawn from France and the United States; farmers' participation in rural landscape conservation schemes in Piedmont, Lombardy and Alto Adige, Italy; and an assessment of the links between landscape elements and the representation of landscape in terms of their role in selling 'protected designation of origin' products, using the example of Saint-Nectaire cheese produced in Cantal and Puy de Dôme, France. The issue also contained two book reviews.
- (iv) The **August** issue contained five papers and a short communication on varied topics. They included an appraisal of contested public space development in low income neighbourhoods in Xalapa, Mexico; a study of the museum landscape of Meiji-mura, Japan; the influence of built heritage on the sustainable development of landscape; landscape preferences and local views about the industrially harvested peatlands, and their after-use, in Counties Longford and Roscommon, Ireland; and a study of spatial topographic modelling of the floodplain of the Sacramento River, California, and its applications for the study and management of riparian landscapes. The short communication reported a study on residents' attitudes to the landscape and ecology of idyllic housing sites in South Korea. The issue also contained two book reviews.
- (v) The **October** issue included a special section of four papers on "Recovering Landscape as a cultural practice" introduced by a short editorial, together with two general papers. The special section papers included a study of biographies and narrative in the historic landscape; the spatial dimensions of the way primary school-age children experience place; the role of perceptions expressed in the 'culture-nature divide' in shaping the approach of research to landscape erosion and archaeology in Mediterranean landscapes, using case studies from Provence, France; and the contribution of green political theory in shaping the ways land and landscape are conceived. The two general papers examined the relationships between environmental values and the acceptability of mobile telecommunications development in a protected area, the Peak District National Park, England; and the influences on people's willingness to discuss local landscape development, based on a case study in Switzerland.

The Board wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the continued commitment of *Landscape Research's* Editor, Deputy Editors and Associate Editors – Ian Thompson, Catherine Brace, Maggie Roe, Kenneth Olwig and Ken Taylor – and their supporting editorial team for their work during the year. The Board has formally recorded its thanks to the Editorial Assistant – Rosemarie Gilbert – for her excellent support to the editorial team, since Rosemary has left that role to move to the United States. The new Editorial Assistant is Crista Ermiya.

An important area of development for *Landscape Research* during 2008 has been the work of the two overseas Associate Editors, Kenneth Olwig and Ken Taylor. As reported last year, these

appointments were made in late 2006 to enable the expansion of the journal. Their role is to secure more overseas material. Kenneth Olwig is responsible for Europe and North America and Ken Taylor for the Asia-Pacific region. In their second year of work they have supported the editorial team on papers originating in those areas; and have promoted the journal, secured more papers and started to develop special and theme issues.

(iii) Research project, University of Newcastle

One element of the Editorial Support Agreement negotiated with the University of Newcastle in 2007 was the provision of a small grant (£2000 annually) to promote landscape-related research at the University. This grant was provided to recognise, in a notional way, the large amount of time spent by the Editor in producing the journal.

In 2007 the Editor (and Deputy Editor) spent some time exploring the possibility of funding a collaborative studentship by ESRC/CASE. However, LRG did not meet the criteria of the ESRC/CASE panel because it was not considered a coherent and formal enough organisation in administrative terms. As a result an alternative approach has been adopted, to provide support in two main areas: support for research student development, and for development of research themes (in particular ELC implementation and green infrastructure planning, the latter including strengthening the links between the University and practice, as well as reflecting a key focus of LRG's research and networking activity).

In most cases the funding for both areas has focused on supporting individuals to attend conferences and seminars, particularly to give papers that furthers their own research and that of the University's Landscape Group. Development funding for these kinds of events is always a problem in the university system since it may not be attributable to a funded research project. However, it is of considerable importance in research development, in raising the profile of the individuals and the group, and in networking generally. These activities are designed to lead to further research projects and/or publications. The support arrangement requires the individuals to provide a short report on the activity and/or provide the paper presented.

The University plans to continue to use the funding primarily for pump-priming/exploratory activities in particular areas that reflect the Editor's and Deputy Editor's research interests, as well as continuing to support research students. In addition to continuing support for ELC implementation research and green infrastructure planning, the funding will focus in future on new cultural landscapes and heritage values.

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, up to his resignation in December 2008, was Bud Young.

Activities undertaken in 2008 are reported below.

(ii) Landscape Research Extra

Landscape Research Extra was published three times in 2008 (issues 45 to 47).

Issue 46 was a special 52-page issue of the papers and discussions, together with short biographies of the participants, from the major seminar on *Implementing the European Landscape Convention*, held at the University of Sheffield in November 2007. The seminar was reported fully in last year's Directors' Report. The issue was distributed to all conference attendees and the Group's members, and copies have been circulated at various international events (see 'International Activity', below). Production took a significant amount of editorial time by Bud Young and Peter Howard, provided on a voluntary basis, to condense the thirty-seven summary reports down to a manageable level. The seminar and the special issue have received much positive feedback from the recipients, especially overseas participants, who were strongly supportive of and grateful for the work involved in collating the reports.

Issues 45 and 47 totalled 28 pages of illustrated two column text. As in previous years, the editorial team aimed to present short pieces written in a clear style, seeking to stimulate readers with a very wide range of landscape topics and issues, and to provoke thought about them.

Both issues included colour print illustrations, with a range of reviews and short features. Key ones discussed the North Wessex Downs woodland archaeology audit; measuring up our landscape, and the Rathbarry/Castlefrecke landscape circle in West Cork, Irish Republic; the cabanons of old Marseille, France; and the silence of the lanes, a study in birdsong in Devon. In addition there were reports of the seminar held at Lille, France in April 2008, jointly organised by Cemagref (the research arm of the French Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development) and the Group (see 'Events', below); the "Landscape in Theory" seminar held in Nottingham in June 2008 (see 'Events' below); and the launch of the Landscape Europe publication *Blueprint for Euroscape 2020: reframing the future of European landscape* at Stresa, Italy (see 'Website and Information Activity', and also 'International Activity', below). Issue 47 also included a wider review of landscape issues across Europe.

The two issues also contained notices and reports of various conferences, exhibitions and courses – notably the Art Biennale in Venice; and the Group's "Recording Wildest Wales" event held in partnership with the Snowdonia Society in October 2007, reported in last year's report. Other articles included notes about sounds in the landscape; a related review about sounds in the Dartmoor landscape; a review of a landscape history and walks booklet on the Pang Valley, West Berkshire; a short feature on villages on the Wiltshire-Hampshire border; and a 'letter about landscape and resource use in a journey through Texas'. Finally, the issues also included short reviews of two books on the English semi-detached house and an archaeology of England's landscape.

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. Notable among the latter is Philip Pacey, who has contributed a steady stream of quality articles over the years.

(iii) Events

The Group has not directly organised any events held during 2008, although it is progressing plans for 2009 and 2010.

The main event activity during the year was to provide support for a seminar organised by the AHRC on "Landscape and Theory", held in Nottingham on 26 June 2008. The seminar was for an invited group of fifty researchers, and the Group's contribution was to support attendance by postgraduate

students and provide two of the speakers. The seminar was to report on current progress in landscape theory to the UK research community, and is one of a series that will emerge from a major research programme on "Landscape and Environment". A full report is provided in *Landscape Research Extra 47*. It is intended that papers from the programme will appear in a future special issue of *Landscape Research*. Attendees reported that the event was very successful

Looking ahead to 2009, preparatory work has been undertaken to organise a conference to be held on 27 to 30 May 2009, in Nove Hradky, Czech Republic on "Local Implementation of the European Landscape Convention". This event will be a collaboration between a range of partners from the Czech Republic and Italy, and will coincide with the Czech Presidency of the European Union and European Landscape Convention and with the 60th anniversary of the Council of Europe. The Board has agreed to sponsor this event and to provide speakers and/or facilitators. Next year's Directors' Report will provide an update.

Finally, the Group plans to organise a conference or seminar on aspects of "Romantic Landscapes" in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, to be held in 2010.

(iv) Website and Information Activity

Last year's report noted that initial work to enhance the website had been undertaken in 2006, by reviewing good practice from the sites of other bodies similar to the Group, with the intention that the site should be upgraded, to make the site more interesting and interactive to enable it to be used to circulate information to members. The Committee had not been able to take forward this plan during 2007, although *Landscape Research Extra* continued to be published on the site in .pdf format. The Board is pleased to report that good progress has been made in 2008. The website's format and content have been revised; and Tim Collins has taken on the role of website editor *pro tem*. It is intended that from now on the website will be a lively and active site, eventually with keyword function and hyperlinks to and from relevant sites.

The Group has made a contribution to international landscape information activity by providing financial support for the Landscape Europe publication, *Blueprint for Euroscape 2020: reframing the future of European landscape*. Landscape Europe was founded in 2001 to address the lack of research into landscape, and has links to associated universities around Europe and also groups such as *Cemagref* as well as LRG. It aims to co-ordinate research between similar groups and also to influence policy development, the research agenda and exchange of data management (e.g. GIS databases) which is important because many institutions hold data that cannot readily be shared. Landscape Europe organises meetings, publishes a newsletter *Landscape Europa* and has recently published a book on *Europe's Living Landscapes*, which focuses on the challenges associated with managing Europe's diverse cultural landscapes in keeping with the expectations of the ELC. It plans to work closely with other networks such as *UniScape* and *CivilScape* (see 'International Activity', below). The Group has offered to support Landscape Europe's future work by providing publishing expertise.

The Board has also agreed in principle that it might be desirable to re-publish the report *Development of the European Landscape Convention*, originally published following the 1992 conference at Blois (France) on "Landscapes in a New Europe: Unity and Diversity". That event and document were instrumental in starting the processes that led to the signing of the European Landscape Convention in 2000. The report was published jointly with the French group Paysage et Aménagement which has now dissolved, so that the Group now owns the copyright. The Board considers that re-publication and a new supporting editorial that brings together a progress report – thus reinforcing the findings of the Sheffield seminar on *Implementing the European Landscape Convention* as reported in *Landscape Research Extra 46* – would be welcomed internationally, and would contribute to the European debate on landscape conservation. However, before a final decision is made to proceed, it will first be necessary to establish the availability of sufficient up-to-

date and new material to warrant re-publishing, the likely demand for an updated publication, and the practicality of doing so.

(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 2008 prizes were awarded for both undergraduate and graduate (Masters) work, in a range of landscape-related fields. The judges were Susanne Seymour, Tim Collins and John Gittins.

To encourage further excellence in the field, the prizes were increased in 2008 from £100 to £250 for a first prize and from £50 to £100 for a 'highly commended'. All prize winners also continued to receive a year's free membership of LRG.

In relation to the undergraduate competition (2008), seven entries were received for best dissertation based on original academic research and showing conceptual sophistication in the study of landscape (Category A), and seven for best dissertation addressing a practical problem or landscape design issue (Category B). The fourteen dissertations were from students at eleven institutions. The standard was high in both categories. The judges awarded five prizes: two first prizes of £250 and three 'highly commended' prizes of £100 (all including a year's free membership of LRG). The winning entries covered a wide variety of issues within the themes of paraglacial landscape evolution, ditch ecology and environmental change, modelling coastal vulnerability, wind energy generation in industrial areas and urban regeneration design. The first prize winners were – for Category A – Georgina Bennett (Geography, Durham University) whose dissertation was entitled *Periglacial slope adjustment, landform succession and landscape evolution following the recent glacier retreat, Sandfellsjokull, Iceland*; and – for Category B – Sharon Spratt (Environmental Science, University of Ulster) with a dissertation entitled *A study of how the ecology of man-made drainage ditches on Ballynahone Bog, County Londonderry, changes with environment*.

With regard to the Masters' prize (2008) two entries were received for best dissertation based on original academic research and showing conceptual sophistication in the study of landscape (Category A), and three for best dissertation addressing a practical problem or landscape design issue (Category B). The five dissertations were from students at five different institutions, representing a strong field of entries. The judges awarded four prizes: two first prizes of £250 and two 'highly commended' prizes of £100 (all including a year's free membership of LRG). The winning entries covered a range of issues, including street art, strategic ecological network design, urban greenspace quality assessment and free energy urban design. The first prize winners were – for Category A – Evelyn Owen (Geography, Queen Mary, University of London) whose dissertation was entitled *Banksy in the City: Re-placing Street Art*, and – for Category B – Sharon Whiting (Planning, Oxford Brookes University) with a dissertation entitled *Strategic Ecological Networks: Opportunities for Enhancement and Creation of New Habitats through Development*.

(vi) International Activity

In the past two years the Group's profile as a leading institution in landscape policy and research circles is widely appreciated and understood across Europe. LRG is an official observer at Council of Europe Committees responsible for implementation of the European Landscape Convention; and it now features as a link on wide variety of websites of Landscape Observatories, research institutes and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) associated with landscape matters throughout Europe.

In this context, the Group has continued to fund a range of networking visits by Peter Howard (in his role as International Officer), Gareth Roberts and others 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. The year's activities were unfortunately disrupted by Peter's illness, but there were also some events of significance.

The Group was represented at the inauguration of CivilScape in February 2008 in the Medici Palace in Florence, at meetings of RECEP/ENELC in Barcelona in February 2008 and in Mallorca in October 2008, and at the 7th Workshop on ELC Implementation convened in Piestany, Slovakia in April 2008. CivilScape and RECEP/ENELC are two of three organisations put in place to further the work of the European Landscape Convention. CivilScape covers the voluntary sector; RECEP/ENELC covers the local and regional governmental sectors; and UniScape covers the academic sector. The details of these meetings were reported to the Board meeting in May 2009, with the advice that the Group keeps in close touch with CivilScape, but that it might not be the appropriate organisation for LRG to join. In many ways the Group's work would fit more neatly within Uniscape, but that organisation's membership is currently limited to universities and similar institutions. As noted above, during the year Gareth Roberts and Maggie Roe were also nominated as advisers to RECEP/ENELC.

An important event during the year was the Euroscape 2020 Conference in May 2008 at Stresa, Italy, to launch the Landscape Europe publication, *Blueprint for Euroscape 2020* (see also 'Website and Information Activity', above), attended by Gareth Roberts. The conference focused on identifying research needed better inform EU policies. It is widely recognised that the EU has a huge impact on landscapes yet little competence in landscape matters. The Board recognises there is considerable scope to muster the collective skills and expertise of LRG members to help meet this need and thereby better support the planning, management and protection of European landscapes. The Board has since begun to consider research opportunities and needs, and how it might support new projects and then help implement the resulting research findings.

The International Officer attended an inaugural meeting in June 2008 concerning landscape and heritage interpretation, at the Council of Europe's offices in Paris. This should result in a regular forum at Brussels into such matters. The Board has agreed that LRG should be associated with this forum. We are still awaiting further developments.

A key international event during the year was the seminar organised by the French government research organisation Cemagref on "Landscape and Sustainable Development", held in April 2008 in Lille. As noted in last year's report this was the first of a series of Anglo-French seminars on matters of joint concern, in particular the research issues arising from the European Landscape Convention. The Group provided some financial support for the seminar, the intention being that it will lead on organising the second event. The seminar had thirty attendees, including the International Officer and other LRG members. There were two main foci of interest. The first was the Parc de la Deule, where the valley of this river has been used as the centre of a major regenerative landscape programme in a formerly heavily industrialised area. The park has been given the French Landscape Prize, and the organisers of the awards ceremony were very pleased to make this an international event. The other major focus was the border area around Roubaix, which was a derelict coalmining area now undergoing major green development including bio-remediation. Attendees considered the meeting to be of great interest and value, not least for seeing problem areas and some innovative solutions from a different perspective. One possible result is that the French are aiming to start a similar organisation to the Group. As noted above, *Landscape Research Extra 47* includes a short conference report.

The biennial conference of the Permanent European Conference for the Study of the Rural Landscape (PECSRL) was held at Lisbon in September 2008. The conference had three themes: landscapes as a constitutive dimension of territorial identities, landscapes as development assets and resources, and landscape research and development planning and management. The Group was represented by Directors and other members, although the International Officer was unable to

attend. It is widely considered that this event has now become the most vibrant in the landscape field, and the Group considers that it is important to be involved as a key means of achieving our objective of advancing research, encouraging interest and exchanging information in the field of landscape at international level.

In December 2008 the International Officer attended a seminar in Dijon with members of the Cemagref panel on "Landscape and Sustainable Development" to review the research work so far. It was agreed that two books would be published, one of all the research projects and one more theoretical, and that these would be in both French and English. The panel agreed that the Group's support for the latter would be most welcome, and the Board will be considering this request during 2009.

In addition to the above events and activities, Gareth Roberts has also attended several conferences and events convened in different European countries during which the Group's work was promoted. These included an international European Union CADSES programme conference on cultural landscapes convened in Krakow in May, the "Eco-Museums and ELC Workshop" in the Czech Republic in October, and a conference on "Mediterranean Landscapes" in Malta in November. Meetings were also convened with some key European landscape non-governmental organisations – notably ECOVAST (Austria), Landscape Europe and Belvedere (Netherlands), Fundacja Partnerstwo dla Srodowiska (Poland), and Nadace Partnerstvi (Czech Republic).

The final area of international activity in 2008 has been the preparatory work to organise the Nove Hradý conference on "Local Implementation of the European Landscape Convention", referred to above.

6. FINANCES

The Group made a surplus for the year of £7471 (income of £40729, less expenditure of £33258). After adjustments for 2007 creditor under- and over-provisions, the Group's Accumulated Fund at 31st December 2008 was £73101 (2007, £65750).

This result was disappointing in that, while the Board did not expect that research and networking activity would be of sufficient scale in 2008 to use all the notionally available budget, it did expect such activity to use more than proved to be the case. Income increased compared to 2007 as a result of increased Publishing Agreement royalties (setting aside 2007's one-off grants associated with the Sheffield seminar and the one-off increase in gift-aid tax reclaim). The main variance from predicted income was the reduced bank deposit interest, reflecting the wider economic downturn. In relation to expenditure (setting aside the one-off high costs of the Sheffield seminar) there was a substantial planned increase in research and networking activity. This activity included the publication of the related special issue of *Landscape Research Extra* and increased international networking. However, the scale of activity overall was not significant enough to balance expenditure against income. The decrease in the annual prizes scheme expenditure reflects a one-off change in the way this is treated in the accounts. Board, Executive Committee and administration costs were kept at similar levels to last year.

As noted in the last two years' reports, the Group's financial strategy is based on achieving a broad balance of income and expenditure. In relation to prospects for 2009, the major event in the Czech Republic and the planned Board training event, both referred to above, will involve significant expenditure, and with other activity should ensure a balance (or, more likely, a deficit that will 'use' much of the surplus from last year). But looking further ahead there is clear financial scope for further activity. Expanding *Landscape Research* to six issues will increase expenditure but should also result in increased royalty income from 2010. So achieving the Group's financial strategy in 2010 and the longer term will very much depend on how successful the Research & Networking Committee is in developing and 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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