La Gomera – cut, read and burn

In February this year, I spent a week with my athletic husband walking on the unique and beautiful island of La Gomera, the second smallest of the Canary Islands, situated in the Atlantic off the northwest coast of Africa. The climate is warm all year round and it is relatively unspoilt by tourism, reached only by ferry from nearby Tenerife. It is roughly circular and about 22 km in diameter, with a surface area of 378 square kilometres and a population of about 22,000. The island is volcanic, rising to nearly 5000 feet in the centre. Two million years of erosion of the volcanic forms has resulted in the formation of deep ravines (in Spanish ‘barrancos’), which radiate from the centre, branching down to the coast, where the flat land has allowed for the development of the island’s major settlements.

These facts and figures do little to convey the quality of the landscape. To travel on foot over the island surface is challenging; usually involving a steep climb up a barranco towards the centre of the island and a steep climb down another, so that it may take most of a day to cover only a few miles as the crow flies. However, the beauty and variety, the distant views of the sea and lush unusual vegetation makes walking a pleasure.

In contrast to the normal way of things, the highest part of the island is not rocky and barren but cool, misty and covered in dense vegetation. This is the Garajonay National Park, an atmospheric place which has retained its original flora, a luxuriant evergreen forest, known as Laurisilva: this is a magical place, quiet, mousy and timeless. From the small clearing at Alto de Garajonay, the island’s summit, a break in the cloud reveals spectacular views of El Hierro, La Palma and Tenerife. If one needs help understanding this, there is an excellent interpretation centre at the edge of the National Park.

‘Roques’, are an exciting feature of the area; they are tall rock outcrops which are the chimneys or vents through which volcanic lava escaped and solidified; they are later revealed by erosion of softer material around them.

Although the seasons are less differentiated than in the England, we were just too early for most spring flowers. Trees were beginning to blossom and we saw large cacti and palm trees giving the place a sub tropical feel. And there is a delightful cultural landscape — the small farmsteads, and villages are surrounded by terracing, some overgrown as many of the population have left the island or found employment in tourism. Bananas are grown in plantations for export and vines are grown for wine for home consumption. Farming was the main activity until the 1970’s.

The Gomerans were (and still are) a resourceful and hardworking people: the remains of old water courses still cling to the sides of the ravines and there are settlements in the deepest and steepest of places. Coming down to Santiago on the coast, from Chipude (the highest village on the mountain), a section of our route followed an old mule path cut into the side of a deep vertical ravine. An enormous effort of mind over matter got me through, but it was an amazing experience to look back on.

Since Romans times, it is said, Gomerans have used a special type of whistled speech, known as Silbo, to enable communication across the barrancos. The local government now require this language to be taught in schools to prevent it dying out. We didn’t hear ‘Silbo’ across the ravines but we did see zip wires strung across them, buckets attached, for taking building materials. One of them was fixed up with a seat — for a thrilling shortcut home! Some of the smaller ravines above the coastal settlements have been blocked by dams to form reservoirs. Near to the coast, development remains low key — roads are quiet but well maintained and tunnels have been built recently for some of the more important ones. Whist the past is evident everywhere, La Gomera has moved into the present with pride, care and respect for its own unique character: it would be a crime for this Island to lose any of its specialness, so may I suggest you destroy this article after reading it as I myself will definitely be returning to what is probably the best island in the world.

Jan Goddard.

‘Keen Dartmoor walker stepping out’

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Rosamunde Codling’s fascinating piece on Norfolk runways prompted the following reflections.

The first, entirely unhelpful, is that although as a child in Thetford in the war I must have been surrounded by airfields, I never saw one of them, let alone a runway, since they were of course forbidden territory and anyway no-one went anywhere during the war. I remember Americans vaguely (even a black choir who amazed a local audience in the town hall), and planes definitely, especially the dark horde of heavy bombers low above our garden on their way to pound German cities. But the first airfield I ever saw was probably in the opening shots from an under-rated post-war film “The Way to the Stars” (forget the cut-glass ac-
cients: actually a damned good film), when signifi-
cantly it appeared already a ghost, a sad derelict haunted by memories of the men who had flown from
there, on missions from which many did not return.

But a more cheerful reflection was prompted by Cod-
lings account of the screen planting imposed on Ber-
nard Matthews turkey factories, which reminded me
immediately of the large-scale landscape work im-
posed on various Electricity Generating Boards by
Brenda Colvin in the 50’s and 60’s, including swathes of
screen planting to frame their new power stations
as well as policies for proper use of vast areas of
farmland the boards had acquired with little idea
what it was for.

I was Brenda Colvins assistant, running her London
branch (half of one room in Sylvia Crowes office)
and visiting these huge projects for her (zooming
across England eating 100 mph breakfasts in British
Railways first high-speed Intercity trains). On one
occasion I was confronted by a blunt Yorkshireman,
Brenda Colvins favourite site-manager, who just said
“Can you ride a bike?” — which I then did, in a dark
suit, in a snowstorm, all round the largest power sta-
tion of them all. I came to realise something which
her power generating clients perhaps did not recog-
nise: that this great lady was using their pet projects as
an opportunity to establish powerful landscapes; and that these might far outlive the power stations them-

It was a wonderful notion which has inspired me ever since. Was something of this kind in the minds of the
gallant landscape team dealing with Bernard Mat-
thews and those derelict airfield strips, so full of asso-
ciations (where not full of turkeys); and how far has it
been successful?   Yours sincerely
Owen Manning

Editor’s Note
For those who do not remember Brenda Colvin and Sylvia Crowe you may wish to look first at:
Sylvia Crowe The Landscape of Power, Publisher
The Architectural Press: London 1956
Brenda Colvin Land and Landscape: Evolution,
Design and Control, Publisher John Murray 1947
enlarged and reset by John Murray 1970. My copies
were picked up second hand — one from the British
Council Mexico City in 1976. Interesting to older
Landscape Professor Emeritus at Berkeley University.

THE OWNERSHIP OF ENGLISH FORESTS
By Paul Tabbush
Opposition to forest privatisation may not only be
about access as has been reported in the press. It may
be also about public perceptions of the landscape, which
is nowadays defined not just in terms of aesthetics,
but of sustainability, recognising social, cultural, eco-

conomic and environmental dimensions of a range of
ecosystem services”, in the language of
economics. Inasmuch as these services are provided
free of charge, they can be described as public bene-
fits, and the government has been keen to emphasise
its commitment to protecting these benefits. Benefits
deriving from forest land include the aesthetic (visual
and sensory) and cultural landscape, but also health
and well-being including psychological effects deriv-
ing from a sense of identity and belonging; non-
timber products like berries and mushrooms, and also
the largely unexplored world of educational and cul-

cular benefits.

The Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA),
which is responsible for forestry matters in England
through the Forestry Commission has backed down on
its plans to sell of the publicly owned forests, in the
face of massive public opposition. In Scotland and
Wales, forestry policy is the responsibility of the de-

veloped administrations, so that the privatisation plans
apply only in England. Although the government has
now removed the forestry clauses from the public
bodies bill, it has set up an independent panel, repre-
senting a broad range of interested groups, to consider
the future of the Forestry Commissions holding of
publicly owned woodland in England. This amounts
to some 18% of Englands woodland, but 44% of its
accessible woodland, according to the Rambles As-

sociation.

The government believes that there are other sec-
tors of society which may be better placed to own or
manage the public forest estate (as stated in its con-
sultation), and is/was seeking to sell the land to the
private sector, or to transfer it (for nothing) to chari-

ties like the Woodland Trust or the National Trust.

The environmental crisis has led to an understanding,
at least in academic circles, that land ownership is
about stewardship, and it is axiomatic that land is not
‘owned’, to dispose of at will, but held in trust for
future generations. Why are people so concerned to
support national land ownership, rather than owner-
ship by private trusts and charities? Do these organi-
sations hold the land in trust for future generations, or
for the benefit of their members in pursuit of their
charitable aims?

The Forestry Commission, as a Department of Gov-

ernment, is charged with managing the land in the

public interest, if not explicitly, then because it oper-
ates on behalf of an elected government that itself is
supposed to govern in the public interest. It would be
possible to have a long debate on whether or not this
is the case. Governments do get it wrong as the envi-
ronment minister has now freely admitted; there never
was a democratic mandate of any sort for the sale of
publicly owned land. Many will remember that the
Forestry Commission, in pursuit of government poli-
cies, has also been on the wrong side of public opin-
ion, in fact for much of the last half of the 20th cen-
tury. The unacceptable face of commercial afforesta-
tion (uniform ranks of dark softwoods planted in regi-
ments ignoring the lie of the land), and the landscape
that produced, famously in the Lake District, was
the result of a top-down national policy based on the
urgent need to be self-sufficient in pit-probs for coal
mining so that coal could be extracted and energy
supplies safeguarded in the event of another U-boat
blockade. Once it was clear, that with the advent of
nuclear weapons, this was unlikely, a new top-down
policy was brought in, based on the achievement of
economic targets (based on discounting and Net Pre-
sent Value). This resulted in more problems for the
landscape, including the poisoning of large areas of
young oak in Northamptonshire, so as to replace them
with “economic crops” of Norway spruce.

More recently, policies of multiple purpose forestry
and Sustainable Forest Management have been pur-
sued, by a generation with a tendency to the post-
modern, post-utilitarian (Williams, 2002) or post-

enlightenment turn. This reform may not be complete,
but the Forestry Commission has shown itself to be
much more communicative than in the past, and
through its commitment to sustainable forest manage-
ment, much more aware of public benefits and public
interest. On the other hand, I can see land-based chari-
ties repeating the old mistakes. A (modernist) top-
down policy of allowing only “native” species, some-
times from only local seed-sources, (in which scyu-
more has been constructed as an “undesirable alien”)
by creating lowland heath habitat according to a
supposedly repeatable recipe whenever the opportu-
nity arises, and whatever the locals think — is no
more likely to result in a sustainable landscape than
the economic policies of the 1960s. Why then should
we imagine that transfer of land ownership to charities
will be in the public interest? It seems to me that the
Forestry Commission has proved itself competent to
broker environmental decisions, in communication with
local and national stakeholders, and so to estab-
lish what is most likely to be in the public interest.

The countryside charities, on the other hand, have to
pursue their charitable aims and please their members,
and have no need to consider the public interest. This
might be fine for the conservation of particular wood-
lands, but is unlikely to make for a more inclusive and
accessible countryside. Of course, private owners and
charities have to work within an environment of regu-
lation, but regulations are blunt instruments and ex-

pensive to police.

The extraordinary map published with the consulta-
woodlands could be described as "purely commercial" in the present century. As an example, let me take, for instance, the "small commercial" woods surrounding the Dorset town of Blandford Forum. Focus groups were conducted in 2004 in Blandford Forum, drawn from the local population (Tabbush, 2004). According to one male respondent: "I'm keen on exercising like walking, running, camping or whatever it is and I think that in the present day and age we read about obese children and obese adults and I think to get people out in to the fresh air is very good. Therefore I think we should use the forest more but I've lived in Blandford since 1967 and I can't remember seeing any leaflets or anything that would encourage me to go and walk in the forest or where it is around Blandford."

The message from this is one of high demand for woodland access, including positive encouragement of access through information, signage and arranging activities. Forestry Commission resources have been limited, and with the present round of cuts will be even more limited, it has not been possible to make these provisions in small woods like those around Blandford to the same extent as in the larger forests. However, the categorisation of "small commercial" certainly does not do justice to these woodlands. The need to provide and positively encourage access to woodlands in all parts of the country, especially by under-represented groups, has never been more pressing. The public forest estate offers this potential.
the bare distant moorland that tells me that I live at the margin of agriculture (reasoningly next to Waste — no people, no menace). The changed horizon is only a matter of a few degrees of elevation, for the Moor is three miles distant but it matters hugely to my mood. Cloud obscured, this view is so ordinary, not the kind of place I chose to live in.

Is it worth extending this observation to think of ‘mountain men’ who have to raise their heads as much as sixty degrees to take in the view; whose dawn or sunset is delayed and their days made shorter because of their mountainous horizon; who view the land surface inclined to them like a book held up to the face; whose legs develop one longer and one shorter to cross the slopes!

BY

AN HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE JOURNAL — MANY REVIEWS

You say you are interested in landscape and so am I. You are interested in esthetics and I revel in the cultural use of land. Others look at the middle land-scapes of mining and still others (bless them) in homonastic pricing. So many facets to this subject of ours! It is delightful that those who study, follow, walk in and endow the landscape are all part of this remarkably wide brotherhood. The editors of Landscape History kindly send me their journal (that of the Society of Landscape Studies). Many of its titles are very much landscape ones. Here is a list. What do you think? I note in passing that Hugh Prince (UCL) was until retirement a valued Board member of LRG.

ARKAEOLOGY OF TOWN COMMONS

Mark Bowden, English Heritage

The presentation will discuss research from the recent book An Archaeology of Town Commons in England: “a very fair field indeed” by Graham Brown, Nicky Smith and Mark Bowden. This is the culmination of a 5-year study. Town commons have been largely disregarded by historians and archaeologists (with a few honourable exceptions, such as French 2000, 2003; Giles 1950; and Hammond 1931). The few remaining urban commons are under threat and are not adequately protected, despite recognition of their wildlife and recreational value. In 2002 English Heritage embarked upon a project to study town commons in England, to match its existing initiatives in other aspects of the urban scene — EH had highlighted in Power of Place (HERSG 2000) and other policy documents an emphasis on issues of urban conservation and regeneration — as a matter of high level government strategy. The aim of the project was to investigate, through taking a representative sample, the archaeological and cultural history of urban commons in England, and to prompt appropriate conservation strategies for them. The objectives were to research and survey a representative sample of urban commons in England, to make available the results of that work in the most appropriate ways to the widest constituency, and if possible to promote local community conservation initiatives.

MB

From Aspects of Commons and Cultural Severance in the Landscape Conference, Sheffield Sept. 2, 2010

A RECIPE FOR LANDSCAPE

Æbleflæsk: a Landscape Recipe

By Kenneth R. Olwig

A movement at the very grass roots of landscape is taking place which, for want of an official name, I have elected to call “Eat The Landscape” (ETL), or “Apple and Danish Landscape” (ÆDL). This movement is taking place in various fora. It ranges from home kitchens to local food fairs, and from the Italian based slow food movement (which has inspired many local restaurants), to the ethereal level of international gourmet eating, as represented by the Copenhagen Hagen Restaurant Noma that sends staff out into the landscape armed with GPS devices and cameras in order to locate the best sources for wild edibles.

Noma won first place in the S. Pellegrino World’s 50 Best Restaurants 2010. Evidence of ETL can be found in recent books ranging from Duncan Mackay’s Eat Wild to Elena Konstontsukovich’s Why the Italian’s Love to Talk About Food. ETL might be called a recipe for landscape because there is a growing recognition that both biodiversity and landscape character are dependent upon the heritage of human use which helped create many of our richest landscape environments, but this unfortunately is a heritage which is losing out to agricultural specialization and monocul- ture, on the one hand, and the building industry on the other. Apple is the archetypal character of the landscape: “use it or lose it” or “eat it or deplete it,” because if people do not make use of its variety of produce, both wild and domesticated, the motivation to care for and nurture it will disappear, and other interests will be free to exploit it. In order to exemplify the way ETL can provide a recipe for landscape I will here present a recipe for a Danish landscape dish called æbleflæsk.

Æbleflæsk means apple pork, but the most felicitous translation is probably apple bacon, even if the cut of pork used can be fresh, and need not be smoked and cured like bacon. I have called this a landscape recipe because the exact character of the recipe is determined by the landscape itself, not by an expert cookbook writer. ETL is therefore dependent on other landscape traditions and trends and future research directions.

Jordo Boulios. Landscape formation in a Mediterranean country of the middle ages: change and continuity in Catalonia between the sixth and fifteenth centuries.

Invold Oye. Settlement patterns and field systems in medieval Norway.


From Volume 31 Issue 1 2010

Helena Hamerow The development of Anglo-Saxon rural settlement forms

Patsy Dallas. Sustainable environments: common wood pastures in Norfolk

David Johnson. Hedges, delfs and river stony- alternative methods of obtaining lime in the Gritsone Peninnes in the early modern period

Hugh Prince. Land use and land ownership: a recent history of parks in Hertfordshire.

Both issues contain long book review sections — 38 reviews in vol 30/2, 19 reviews in vol 31/1. An attractive way of getting a handle on another branch of the subject and worth browsing or the subscription just for that. Recommended.

BY

7

threat, with acres and acres of traditional variety rich apple orchards in northern regions and uplands (e.g. Scandinavia and parts of Britain) being cut down and ploughed-under during WW2, the household pig was commonplace in Scandinavian and parts of Britain being cut down and ploughed-under to be replaced by mass production in apple plantations with few varieties (basically red or green) grown in places with milder climatic condi- tions (e.g. France). This development is not just prob- lematic for the landscape, but for the taste of apple itself. Apples grown in colder environments taste of more than just one variety, whereas apples grown in warmer environments taste of more than those grown in mild environments, which, as a friend of mine once put it, "taste like sticking your tongue out into the window.”

The problem, however, is that the apples grown in the colder northern and upland environments also are more susceptible to various maladies that can reduce production and raise costs. The consumer can help counter this tendency by demanding locally grown varieties from traditional apple growing regions, but one can also short circuit the system by going from being a consumer to being a producer oneself. It is a relatively simple matter to plant apples, or restore an older tree through pruning, then one has a ready supply of apples of the variety of one’s choosing. If one plants apple trees, however, one will soon discover that one is likely to have more apples than one normally would consume, and this is where heritage dishes like æbleflæsk come in. Dishes like this have come about because the landscape in- volves not just scenery in space, but place and season, and when things are in season you are likely to have an abundance of them that cay out to be either con- sumed or preserved (e.g. as cider). Æbleflæsk is the sort of dish that is made to order for the time of year, the autumn, when most apple varieties are in season. Autumn officially ends with the winter solstice, and with proper storage the apples will last until the end of this season, thus making æbleflæsk a popular candi- date for the customary Danish Julebord or Yuletide Table. The main...
UK. In CZ there is a big day when the whole village gathers to slaughter the pig, and the whole pig must be eaten during the day—— lots of chitterlings, black pudding etc. Washed down with Czech beer and slivovice.” Most of us today do not have the space, or zoning permission, for a household pig, but it is possible to buy pork from pigs that have been raised organically and which are thus still likely to contribute to a multi-functional and bio-diverse use of the landscape.

Preparing Æbleflæsk
To prepare Æbleflæsk for about four persons I use two skillets. There should be enough bacon, cut into relatively thick slices, to cover the bottom of both frying pans. When the bacon is fried crisp and brown it is placed over low heat in one of the frying pans. The fat remaining in the other skillet is then be used to fry some sliced onions (optional) until they are clear (the amount of onions used is a question of taste, but I usually use half of a medium sized onion). The onions are then transferred to a separate dish. The apples, depending on the size, should be cut down the core into about eight boat shaped slices like those of an orange, and the core should be removed. The pan is filled up with several layers of apples and the apple sections are fried in the remaining fat until they are soft and tender, but still retain their recognisable shape. They must be turned regularly so as not to burn or stick to the pan, and they should not become apple sauce. If you think you need more fat, so as to avoid them sticking to the pan, you can pour some from the pan with the bacon. Once the apples are soft you can mix in the optional onions. It is also possible to stir in fresh thyme (optional) at this point. You can use any variety, or combination of varieties, of apples to make this dish, but if the apples are very tart you might want to add some sugar (optional) to the dish. The Æbleflæsk is served with the bacon on top of the apples. Enjoy!

A TREE ARCHIVE OF LOST TRADITIONS
Rikard Andersson, Geological Survey of Sweden, Trees can preserve traces from traditional uses of forest ecosystems for centuries. In northern Sweden two main types of traces, or culturally modified trees (CMTs), have been studied: marks from bark extraction and carvings in a landscape of livestock herding. First, there was a Sami tradition of peeling and preparing Scots pine inner bark for various purposes described in written sources dating back to the 17th century. Larger sheets of inner bark were dried and ground into flour, roasted or eaten fresh. Smaller sheets were used as wrappings for smokings to keep them soft. Hundreds of peeled trees from this tradition are preserved in national parks and reserves. Second, in close relation to traditional livestock herding, it was a custom to carve text and symbols on Scots pine trees and use them as ‘notice boards’. Hundreds of these tree carvings dating back to the 17th century are preserved in managed forest landscapes along streams and close to, sometimes on, wetlands. Both these traditional practices diminished rapidly in the second half of the 19th century and have now been totally lost due to new forms of land use. Through living trees though, certain details of these customs have been preserved, which gives us a second chance to study them.

From Aspects of Commons and Cultural Severance in the Landscape Conference, Sheffield Hallam Sept. 2, 2010, with this editor’s thanks.

NUTWOOD AND BEYOND: EXPLORING LANDSCAPE WITH RUPERT BEAR
By Philip Pacey
When we arrived on an October morning the sun had probably not been high enough to shine into the village of Beddgelert but had just let us perceive the town’s layout for the first time. The town consists of a daily quota of visitors. I would have liked to linger awhile, knowing that Alfred Bestall, author and illustrator of Rupert, spent his last years here. But a walk had been planned and there was a schedule to keep to, with steam trains to observe on their passage through the Aberglaslyn Pass. Setting out from the triangular green which is dedicated to Bestall’s memory, our attention was distracted by the sound of a helicopter which we then caught sight of, hovering just above a distant peak. The quartet was probably engaged in a mountain rescue exercise but perhaps actually lifting an injured climber to safety. An intrusion which, curiously enough, would not seem out of place in a Rupert story.

As a child I loved Rupert, encountering him not in his everyday appearances in a cartoon strip in the Daily Express but in the beautifully coloured pages of the Rupert Annual; in later life I have been delighted to receive a copy of the new Rupert Annual as a gift every Christmas morning. Every story (there are half a dozen or so in each annual) is a variation on a theme: Rupert sets out on an adventure — with or without the permission of his extraordinarily laid back parents — into another land — with or without some of his friends. Meeting the inhabitants of this other place, whoever they might be, Rupert has to overcome their initial suspicions (which sometimes result in him being imprisoned or otherwise constrained). He is then instrumental in helping them out, generally through the resolution of a particular problem, symptoms of which are likely to have been evident from the beginning of the story. After which he is thanked and assisted on his way home, where his sudden return provokes no consternation whatsoever.

For me, at least, the joy of Rupert adventures arises not so much from the adventures themselves, as from the landscapes they take place in. Bestall said that his landscapes drew on favourite places — the Weald, the Severn Valley, and Snowdonia. I think it would be true to say that his landscape repertoire was nourished by all of these and also by memories of journeys abroad, while also owing a great deal to his imagination. Each adventure begins in Nutwood; each is also the occasion for Rupert to explore further afield and indeed, to enter other worlds. Nutwood, Rupert’s home, comfortable and safe, scarcely ever even troubled by bad weather, is also, paradoxically, his launch pad into all manner of strange and far away places.

Nutwood is a quintessentially, timeless (1930s-ish) English village set in a landscape of cropped grass and well behaved woodland, entirely lacking in visible agriculture. This is a landscape which is clearly pastoral; it is also picturesque, and thus it is not surprising that it is dotted with follies — the Professor lives in a crenellated tower, the Wise Old Goat rather surprisingly occupies a castle, while the Chinese Conjurer inhabits a pagoda — an exotic touch of chinoiserie! From inside these buildings trap doors and secret passages are entrances to other worlds. But also, in Bestall’s enchanted landscape (and seascape — the coast is not far away) almost anything can reveal itself as a means of transformation and travel, through time and space — rabbit holes and hollow trees conceal entrances to tunnels burrowing deep in the earth; by means of flying machines and hot air balloons, or on...
the backs of giant birds, Rupert travels through the clouds to worlds far above and beyond. How 18th century landscape gardeners such as Capability Brown would have loved to build into their landscapes similar devices! As it is they had to make do with temples and grottoes — spectacular in a limited sort of way, but not actually going anywhere.

In the endpapers to the annuals, which offered more scope to Bestall the artist than the cartoon strips, he sometimes portrayed Nutwood as a 17th or 18th century artist might (Claude, Poussin, Richard Wilson), with a distant, receding prospect, typically including a lake and a folly, framed by trees, or in some cases with a lonely Scots pine on one side. This landscape formula, with its balance of ‘prospect and refuge’, seems to appeal strongly to the human psyche; it is, I would dare to suggest, archetypal, an Eden, Paradise or Arcady which invites humans to inhabit it, but does not oblige them to work it. It is a landscape which accommodates human need for both home and adventure, a theme of the Rupert stories and of much children’s and travel literature. The beautiful endpapers of the 1973 annual, featuring Rupert and friends in the foreground, sitting on a fence, gazing out over a distant lake with a boughouse, is a fine example. In another of Bestall’s finest endpaper paintings, for the 1967 annual — the closest he ever got to producing a map of Nutwood — some of Rupert’s friends look out from craggy peaks in the foreground; a Scots pine frames the scene on the left hand side; we share their point of view, looking out over a well wooded landscape in which the village, the professor’s tower, the castle and the pagoda are not quite hidden among the trees. It is a classic, picturesque landscape composition. But are our eyes drawn into the distance? Certainly not at first, because — yes — that really is Rupert! in a helicopter, hovering just yards away from us.

And here’s another curious thing about Nutwood. It is inhabited; at first glance it may seem to be inhabited by human beings (they stand on two legs, and wear human clothes). But look again! Rupert is a bear, albeit with hands instead of paws. Most of his friends are animals of various kinds, though some are human, and others are mythical (Santa features on a regular basis). There are a few humans, including a group of girl guides, but they are in a minority and have no special status. Despite the existence of mischief, pardoned crime, and evil which is clearly not sustainable, Rupert’s world — Bestall’s creation (building on the work of his predecessor, Mary Tourtel, and subsequently superimposed by John Harrold) — is a ‘Peacable Kingdom’, a landscape in which the lion and the lamb lie down (and stand up) together, and nobody is threatened by the human race.

ABANDONED LANDSCAPES OF FORMER GERMAN SETTLEMENTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVENIA

Petr Mareš & Primoz Pipan. Institute For Environmental Studies, Charles University in Prague, and Robin Raisin, Slovenia

The paper presents a comparative study focused on Czech and Slovenian landscapes, where German communities used to live. Though Germans of the Czech borderland were transferred to Germany and Austria as a result of post war political development, Germans who lived in the Slovenian karst territory of Kocevje were moved by Hitler’s order to more fertile places in the Pannonian lowlands during WWI. Currently, both types of landscape are empty and abandoned, which gives them a high interest especially from an historical and environmental point of view. Another feature we followed was the long term land use development thanks to the unique historical datasets, collected and processed for both countries in fully comparable ways, were we able to catch and define those impacts that crucial political decisions can bring about to the landscape.

The views and opinions in this publication are those of the authors and the senior editor individually and do not necessarily agree with those of the Group. It is prepared by Bud Young for the Landscape Research Group.

Editorial enquiries: Bud Young
Airphoto Interpretation,
26 Cross Street Moretonhampstead Devon TQ13 8NL
or emails to: young@airphotointerpretation.com

FLOODS VARIOUS

There was a lot going on in Queensland Australia when we went to Exeter to pass an afternoon walking along the River Exe. The Exe drains hill land down from Exmoor and West Somerset and at Exeter, on a shore but horrifying for the millions of people around the World who will have watched that dramatic TV footage. A black wave 10km high, full of sediment roaring into every bay and fishing town inlet. God-awful (I say that respectfully) for the poor inhabitants. A life-changing, Nation-changing and landscape changing event. We are full of admiration for the noble fortitude of the survivors.

BY

Landscape Research Extra is published by Landscape Research Group Ltd. Landscape Research Group Ltd is a Registered Charity (No. 287610) and Company Limited by Guarantee (No. 1714386, Cardiff). Its Registered Office is at: 89A The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1QE

For disclaimer and addresses for editorial enquiries and administrative correspondence see the box on page 11.