Landscape Continuity

The old Gasworks footbridge is rusty, decrepit, dangerous and inaccessible. Already one if not two generations probably do not even know it as the Gasworks footbridge because the gasworks itself was demolished in the mid-'90s leaving not a trace of the cylindrical gas holders, the offices and weighbridge, the retort house, the coal sheds and my childhood home - the rather grandly titled 'Manager’s Residence'. I have a sneaking suspicion that I invented that title to embellish an address that read 'The Gasworks, Waterside, Waterford'.

Using the bridge as my stage set, I see myself at 9 or 10 years scampering up and down its timber steps on my way to school or the local shops on nearby John’s Street or heading with happy purpose, my saved pocket money sweaty in my palm for downtown Woolworths to add some more cast lead soldiers to my little army.

...Today I lean over the builder’s fencing guarding the overbearing new flood defence wall. It is under construction to a design by someone who probably did not know the bridge had a name, a purpose and a narrative.

I call up the image of the 'bravado streetboys' on top of the high metal railing preparing to dive into the river below when it was engorged with salted waters of high tide. The same tides that told us when it would be right for swimming at nearby seaside strands (we didn’t know the term beaches then). The incoming tide was always warmer.

The sky darkens as I recall the night-time image of the 4-mantled gas lamp shedding its soft yellow light from a great up-turned glass globe at the crown of the arch on the bridge - a lamp restored for a brief few years by my father in the early '60s. I hear the crunch of our feet over sparkling frost on the steps of the bridge; it is Lent as my poor mother leads me, reluctant, to Mass as the morning dawned.

My bridge may be in its death throes, those who love it are also dying away. There is little enough left on the Waterside to anchor my Gasworks memories: without the bridge my perceptive recall capacity (a technical term!) will be increasingly challenged. I am not alone - I came across an evocative photograph on the internet that called for its restoration.

In the early '90s a namesake of mine John O’Regan painted a fine watercolour of the bridge with my childhood home in the background. I have it in a 1992 Civic Trust diary - the caption reads 'This graceful iron bridge crosses St. John’s River, a tributary of the Suir known locally as “The Pill”, from an old English word for a small tidal river. For centuries the scene of commercial and industrial activity, the Pill is now quiet and neglected and offers a golden opportunity for sensitive conservation'.

Mr Editor, pressing for explanations of my work in Kosovo (O Regan, LRE 60), will ask ‘where is the ‘rusty bridge’ of Pristina, Kosovo?’ To which I reply, “Pristina does not need bridges – it has no rivers!” What it has though, is the rich heritage of market bazaars, whose landscape continuity is thinly echoed by that grouping of shops of common purpose I spoke of in the last issue. Pristina has not restored the physical infrastructure of its markets as has happened in PrgoPod and Gjakova/Gjakovica. And as yet, despite efforts at restoration, the sense of cultural and communal continuity in FjF and GjGj has a threadbare feel.

Every landscape has its continuity, some landscapes are richer in woven strands of fabric than others and it is so easy today to wipe away such layers of narrative, those almost invisible ‘personal anchors’. Landscapes thus sterilised are the poorer for thoughtless destruction. Those who once passed by and picked up ‘the clues of context’ may be bereft, adrift at their loss. It is a challenge (let it be known!) for all who are responsible for implementing inevitable change in the landscape to manage the process in a manner that respects its continuity. It is more than a challenge, it is a civic obligation.

Terry O’Regan

“I have spread my dreams under your feet; Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.”
W.B. Yeats, The Wind Among the Reeds 1899

Ownership of England’s Forests: A Response

In LRE 60 Owen Manning asks why I don’t support land-based charities, rather than “ demonise” them. It was certainly not my intention to demonise them; my experience of them has been overwhelmingly positive, and I continue to support them strongly. I also believe that I chose my words carefully in LRE 58. Faced with government proposals to hand publicly owned land over to the charities, someone needed to point out that the institutional differences are great, especially in terms of public accountability. If the government is serious about its stated policies of sustainable land management, it should consider the golden opportunities for public access and public involvement in environmental decisions presented by the national forest estate.

In December 2011, the “Independent Forestry Panel” published its interim report: http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/files/Independent-Panel-on-Forestry-Progress-Report.pdf. According to its website: “The Independent Forestry Panel was established on 17 March 2011 by the Secretary of State, Caroline Spelman, to advise government on the future direction of forestry and woodland policy in England. The Panel is chaired by the Right Reverend James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool, and members have wide experience, knowledge and interests in the economic, social and environmental aspects of forestry and woodlands.” It is notable that no one from the Forestry Commission sits on the Panel, presumably underlining the government’s intention to “reduce the role of the state”. Although the Chief Executives of the Rambler’s Association and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (for example) are panel members, and no doubt are doing their best to represent a broad range of opinion, there is no process specifically designed to analyse and take account of the fierce groundswell of public opinion that caused the government to step back from its privatisation plans. There is surely a democratic deficit here; how is the public interest to be accounted for?
On the other hand, perhaps in response to this deficit, over 42,000 “heartfelt and articulate” responses were received by the panel, and there is an interesting account of these at Annex 1 in the interim report. The report appears to be well-balanced, and is well worth reading. It makes this important statement in its introduction:

“Whilst the work and organisation of the Forestry Commission are covered later in the report, we want to make an important point upfront. The net public expenditure on the public forest estate, some £20 million this year, appears very modest and delivers benefits far in excess of this. This level of funding is small in government terms and, to us, appears to represent very good value for money. For comparison, £250 million was recently allocated by the Department for Communities and Local government to support weekly refuse collections.”

While the panel has been deliberating, Forestry Commission England has lost about 20% of its staff, and finds it increasingly difficult to maintain access to its woods on anything more than a care-taker basis. Reduced resources are inevitably concentrated on a few well-visited forests that already have a range of facilities, while opportunities to develop access to woods where it is most needed, for example in sparsely forested areas near deprived communities, are being missed.

In summary, then, I am among those who wait with nervous interest to see how the work of this panel progresses, in the hope that public ownership of woodlands will be seen as an important opportunity, rather than as a political embarrassment. It seems that the panel does see the public forest estate in this light and thinks that the Forestry Commission should be encouraged as an innovator and exemplar to other woodland owners. A key issue is not only what the panel recommends but to what extent the government will take account of this in the coming months.

Paul Tabbush

VICTORIA DRUMMOND ON STONE WALLS

Dry stone walls are historic elements in our rural landscape. They not only serve as boundaries for farmers, they shape our landscape and provide important habitat for wildlife. It is estimated that over the past 40 years, 7,000 km of dry stone walls have been lost from upland landscapes; 50% of the remaining 112,000 km have become derelict and are no longer stockproof, and a further 46% are in need of some restoration (Pretty et al, 2000). Unlike their counterparts, hedgerows, dry stone walls are offered no formal legislative protection. Agri-Environmental schemes offer some aid, however, budgets are stretched by numerous and ever increasing demands. The aim of the dissertation was to examine the current methods of preserving dry stone walls as a rural commodity, and investigate how they can be improved.

The research involved several visits to the uplands of Wales and England to interview people involved with the day to day maintenance and protection of our walls. Policies and other legislation were reviewed to examine the exact level of protection afforded to these walls. Valuable evidence was gathered from those involved with Agri-Environmental Schemes, which have offered funding for both the maintenance and restoration of dry stone walls. The study found that there is a genuine need for better monitoring, investment in training, historical data capture and education. It was also recognised that there has been a severe lack of research into the historical and landscape value that dry stone walls provide.

The dissertation was conducted at a pivotal stage regarding Agri-Environmental Schemes: the funding for dry stone wall capital works (restoring/rebuilding walls) had already ceased in Wales, and assessments indicate that England will follow suit, due to the pressures on the economy and the implications of diverting funding to mitigate climate change. This could mean that dry stone walls are left with very little funding or legal standing. Therefore it is important to seek alternative means and more efficient ways to offer protection to this valuable commodity.

The Royal Town Planning Institute offered advice as to how protective legislation could be extended to include dry stone walls. However, the main concern is not the destruction of walls but their decline into dereliction. A pragmatic approach to resolve this would include these measures:

- Develop a robust means of identifying and recording walls of historic and landscape value.
- Encourage amendments to planning policy to provide legislative protection regarding the removal of walls.
- Appreciate that farming practice is moving away from enclosures, so not all boundaries will endure.
- Fund an in-depth archaeological survey of dry stone walls.
- Utilise Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) to identify walls of a high landscape value.

The incorporation of LCA in spatial policies has the potential to map the character of walls in more detail, and moreover, to stimulate targeted approaches to wall restoration so that funding can go to the walls which provide the greatest value. Further work and research is required to offer adequate protection for this often overlooked but idiosyncratic, highly-functional and sustainable element of our magnificent rural landscape.


Letter from Victoria Drummond, Dissertation prize winner.

Dear Mr. John Gittins,

I am writing to thank you for the commendation for my dissertation regarding Dry Stone Walls in the uplands. The news came as quite a surprise and gave me great gratification. I was honoured to be commended for something into which I put so much effort.

Since I wrote the dissertation my interest in landscape and rural planning has amplified. I have completed work experience with a company called ‘Countryside’ where I undertook work primarily involving Landscape Character Assessment. I hope to continue in this field of work.

Thank you once again for your kind commendation; it makes all the hard work worthwhile.

VD

JOHN MUIR, WHO HE?

Edward and Eleanor Young

Dad and family – Just wondering if you’d read any/much John Muir. I’ve decided to write a paper on him (for my Pollution Analysis class) and I love how he sees God in nature (pantheism as I’ve since learned!). A few passages I particularly like... 

Good advice for me:

“Everybody needs beauty... places to play in and pray in where nature may heal and cheer and give strength to the body and soul alike.”

Good advice for raising kids:

“Let children walk with Nature, let them see the beautiful blendings and communions of death and life, their joyous inseparable unity, as taught in woods and meadows, plains and mountains and streams of our blessed star, and they will learn that death is stingless indeed, and as beautiful as life.”

GOOD ADVICE FOR ALL CITY DWELLERS:

“Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity...”

Edward Young MBA student Massachusetts Inst. of Technology.

In reply Eleanor Young wrote:

“Very interesting. God, nature and wilderness: the main subjects of the LRG annual lecture by David Lowenthal. He called it From Eden to Earth Day: Landscape Restoration as Mission and Metaphor and quoted a beautiful verse (to make a point about gardenesque wilderness) … "Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough/ A Jug of Wine, a Book of Verse - and Thou/ Beside me singing in the Wilderness - /And Wilderness is Paradise enow.” Omar Khayyam, Translated by Edward Fitzgerald.

Editor

In defence of my son’s apparent ignorance I had not heard of John Muir either! Or that he founded the Sierra Club. Obviously I did know about pantheism!!

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Jenny Roe & Peter Aspinall

Over a six-month period, the emotional responses to a forest setting were observed in boys aged 10-12 with extreme behaviour problems. The significance of this paper is two-fold: first, it extends research in restorative health by showing how forest experiences may help to meet the needs of an offenders population; second, it illustrates the potential of the Forest School model as a core element of restorative justice.

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settings can, in a rehabilitation context over time, offer opportunities for long-term ‘instoration’ in boys suffering from autism. Indeed, it is a first attempt at integrating affect within the affordance perception framework providing a conceptual model which can be expanded upon by future researchers.

Local Settlement in Woodland Birds in Fragmented Habitat: Effects of Natality Territory Location and Timing of Fledging

Jolyon Alderman, Shelley A. Hinsley, Richard K. Broughton & Paul E. Bellamy

Factors such as early fledging and natality territory location have been shown to influence dispersal and settlement success of woodland birds. Early fledging allows for earlier dispersal, increasing the chances of an individual locating good quality habitat. However, for birds in fragmented woodland, the advantages of early dispersal may be modified by natality territory location in relation to the availability of suitable habitat in the landscape. Connecting habitat corridors may promote dispersal, and connectivity in landscapes is usually considered to be a strategic solution for safety in urban parks, with habitat quality, habitat size, and habitat configuration being important factors. The author explores similarities and differences between urban parks and natural landscapes and the importance of understanding these processes together with the traces of human intervention intended to direct or respond to them provides access to the cultural history of landscapes.

Cultural Differences in Attitudes towards Urban Parks and Green Spaces

Håhil Özgüner

Understanding how different cultural and ethnic groups value and use urban environments is crucial in developing appropriate management strategies for urban green spaces. This study explores public attitudes towards urban parks in the Turkish cultural context through a questionnaire survey (n=300) carried out in two popular urban parks in Isparta, Turkey. From the results and a comparison of similar studies in other contexts, the author suggests some universal similarities in attitudes towards urban parks, as well as distinct cultural differences: for example, in contrast to Western countries where urban parks are often used for walking, dog walking, sports activities and exercise, those surveyed in Turkey were generally found to use parks for picnics, resting and relaxing. There also appeared to be a difference in the perception of parks as a place of safety in urban parks, with urban parks being perceived as more dangerous and less safe in Turkey compared to other countries. The author argues that the two fields have much to offer each other, especially when dealing with the ‘urban landscape’, which is increasingly being recognized as a site of inter- and cross-disciplinary research. The author presents a review of recent design trends in botanical gardens that are specifically geared towards improving the effectiveness of environmental interpretation. Villagras-Isas identifies four strategies of plant display, referred to in the paper as ‘pathways’, ‘icons’, ‘imitations’ and ‘manipulations of nature’. These typological categories represent recent design approaches useful for establishing stronger relationships between people, plants and associated environmental issues. The author also discusses the potential of such displays as environmental tools based on how people perceive them.

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Public Housing Landscapes in France, 1945-1975

Sonja Duempelmann

Our study ex- plores similarities and differences in the fields of landscape history and environmental history, and the current challenges and opportunities they face. Duempelmann suggests that the two fields have much to offer each other, especially when dealing with the ‘urban landscape’, which is increasingly being recognized as a site of inter- and cross-disciplinary research. The author argues that the two fields have much to offer each other, especially when dealing with the ‘urban landscape’, which is increasingly being recognized as a site of inter- and cross-disciplinary research.

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the bone and gun carriage/cart fore-ground of ‘Landscape near Rye’ (1943-45) we come to Edward Burra, British landscape artist in the 1960’s and the Black Mountains, Cornwall and ‘Sugar Beet, East Anglia’ (1973) pick up the spatial character of each area and overlay a transparent population, sinister and invading with occupying symbols. Most disturbing is ‘The Straw Man’ (1963) whose very title conjures up both ‘The Wicker Man’ and the Willow’s ‘Straw Bear’. Dark figures in urban edgeland, overlooked by a diesel train but ignored by a mother and child, they are kicking the hell out of a straw figure. With their flat caps this could just be a rural dance in an urban setting, but the energy and sinister faces suggest more. [This picture is on long term loan to the Pallant].

The second group of landscapes are views from — and views on the road, they are watercolour, yes watercolour, impressions of filmic landscapes, but with political overtones. ‘Picking a Quarrel’ (1968/89) sets mechanical yellow diggers in a Sussex landscape, but not only the title but the realisation of Mexican ‘Day of the Dead’ symbols, politises the image. ‘An English Country Scene II’ (1970) sandwiches a dark, devilish ‘bike’ between two trucks and the backdrop hills reveal a chain of chugging HGVs.

Burra is a far from comfortable artist. His work is distributed well throughout English provincial galleries and seems to fit within the figurative, early post-war sequences. But probe deeper and you will marvel at the watercolour technique, tremble slightly at the ghost figures and Harlem-style oddities dropped into the scene, and reflect on Burra’s sour realisation that landscape is only the softening setting for man’s inhumanity to man: a velvet technique with knives. Captured in an airport smoke box at Pallant was a short filmed interview with an approximately chain-smoking, Burra. He must have been the most difficult of artists to portray. He was grabby with a face weighing each carefully articulated question and implicit, and once quite overtly, suggests that the answers are in his work. Why don’t you show the pictures? I don’t know what all of this ‘personality’ has to do with it …

He had no need to embellish his personality, in a generation before ‘art celebrity’ he had no need to respond to the Royal Academy’s call. It was a singular career, running with those who achieved much more fame. But in the end his is clearer and the works he has left behind are more significant. Like the photographer Diane Arbus (with whom there is a direct image cross-reference), his work can be spotted in the experiments of following generations.

The landscape work towards the end of his life bridges the gap between German-derived collages (such as John Nash in the Shell Guide to Buckinghamshire) and the ‘return home’ breadth of current Hockney. There are so many lessons to learn, in watercolour technique, in the critical landscape and the ground, and in the cruel tensions that landscapes can contain.

NOTE: I realise that this review post-dates the exhibition, but no worries, as Burra is represented in many major UK collections. You trip over them in national and provincial galleries. The exhibition closes on the 19th of February 2012 but see www.pallant.org.uk for a glowing catalogue and essays in the house magazine.

BG

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE
By Owen Manning

I found myself reading Philip Pacey’s intriguing piece on children in the landscape (Landscape with Boys, LR Nov 2011) only days after presenting something on this same topic to Malvern Writer’s Circle: a pleasing coincidence. My piece, written from recent direct observation for reading aloud, necessarily differs from Pacey’s, as do my earlier memories (his disturbing extract from Orwell perhaps says more about Orwell than about how children necessarily behave), but we agree on a lot, as the following will show.

Striding out one murky Sunday and leaving my camera behind (I’d taken hundreds of shots in better light than this; there wouldn’t be anything to see) I tried not to notice, as I climbed the lower slopes of the Malvern Hills, an emerging sun, softly grilling the autumns foliage in annoyingly photogenic manner — and soon became aware of unmissable photographs all around me. The slopes were alive with people out in glorious autumn sunshine, happily enjoying the hills in their own way: singles, couples, groups, families, and children everywhere: little stick-like creatures scrambling over rocks or silhouetted baseball-capped at the turn of paths, thin arms impatiently pointing out the way to tolerant parents — but actually mostly boys.

A question: where were their sisters? Why so often in such places are girls absent, or, if present, walking quietly beside their parents while their brothers gambol freely — as did my own daughter? The cultural reasons drilled into me by feminist girl-friends and lesbian aunts may not entirely explain something noted by others also. I found where the girls were as I dropped down to St Anne’s Well later: playing with their mums around the pool. Whatever the reason, it was sons and dads I noticed on the hills-top, as so often on other hills, on other bright outdoor days. And it was an adventurous little boy who finally made me curse the lack of a camera, as he perched triumphantly atop the tall trig point, a skinny silhouette against the sun, transforming the dead concrete into a living sculp-ture as elbows out he pirouetted cheekily on its narrow top (almost falling off) then stretched his arms up and out as though to grasp the world, while accompanying adults watched wathcelfully round.

Unexpectedly I can now add a postscript which reverses that image. Last weekend, in the same Malvern Hills, I witnessed (again failing to catch on camera) a tiny girl storming up a huge slope of forbidding height and steepness, with her even tinier brother struggling below — little scraps of humanity almost lost in the vastness and wilderness of the place — eventually meeting a relieved mum on the path who clearly hadn’t seen her offspring for some time, while then heading straight up the next great slope. “It’s all right, Mummy, I’ve got our route!” chirped this five-year-old conqueror of Everest, showing her little brother ahead of her. I was impressed equally by her, and by the mother’s critical but encouraging approach, and so said “There’s no stopping her,” she said re-

1970’s. Like Pevsner spotting his build- ings, Burra was a non-driver spying out the roadside landscape, but to such ef- fect.

Brief personal note. I was engaged with and attracted by Burra’s Harlem paint- ings in the late 1950’s and with a small legacy I attended an exhibition of his then ‘new’ landscapes in the early 1980’s. I was blown away; this was contemporary landscape painting as I had never seen it. I guess I could have af- forded one then, but chickened out to my eternal regret.

The Pallant exhibition, including pic- tures from public and private collections, contains two sequences of landscapes. The first of these involves the scene, the population and the spirit. Canvases of

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WALKING THE MALVERNS IN UNSUITABLE SHOES
By Philip Pacey

I had not intended to wait until my mid-60s before setting foot on the Malvern Hills. But that first visit would have been further delayed had not one of my sons and his partner proposed a day trip from their home in Birmingham, via a route they had pioneered and grown fond of. So we caught a train at the University, eventually — sooner than I would have imagined — stopping at Malvern Link and Great Malvern before burrowing under the Hills and re-emerging at Colwall. Here we alighted (we were almost if not the only passengers to do so), crossed the line and walked up gentle slopes, through quiet fields, by neglected hedgerows and trees festooned with Old Man’s Beard, meeting one another. I was at first inclined to condemn a solitary bungalow as an eye-sore, but undoubted judgement on it was to furnish our lunch. So it was here, at ‘The Singing Kettle’, that we re-joined the human race. Fish, chips and mushy peas, and a wonderful view, mollified my first impression of a building which at least maintained a low profile.

From here on we were in company for the rest of the day. It was while resting on the slopes of the Malvern Hills that I heard Langland dreamed ‘of a plain full of people’ (also translated as ‘a fair field full of folk’). Today, it was the hills which were full of people, looking out over plains too distant for figures to be discerned though clearly much changed by human labour — forests felled, land tilled, fields enclosed, field boundaries dotted with trees and bushes like musical staffs on a stave; and immediately down below, the streets and buildings of Great Malvern. It wasn’t people we could see, but showers and sunny spells, passing over the plains, avoiding us.

I had felt drawn to the Malverns often; through Elgar’s music not least; and by passing through (once) and not far away in other people’s cars which we were powerless to stop and divert from their pre-determined paths. Several times, by-passing Birmingham en route to Dore Abbey, it had seemed as if we were navigating by the Malverns, circumnavigating an unmissable landmark but it seemed — an unstable one as the Hills appear to change shape, clouds tethered to the ground, straining to be free.

Walking on after lunch, the going became steeper, a combination of clumped turf and loose gravel underfoot felt as lethal as last winter’s ice to those of us wearing town shoes with no grip. (The expedition had not been planned like a military operation; it was, rather, an opportunity that had been seized, a brief let up in a prolonged spell of bad weather). A penetrating cold wind gave me acute ear-ache in my western ear. But it passed, as we were roller coasted back below the tree level. I had the sense to pull my hood over my head before going up again. I only slid once, merely grazing the hand I grounded for support. And then we found ourselves overtaken by country runners and lots of them — strung out in an endless chain. I felt that if only I could grab hold of the beak of an eagle and fly, I would feel myself to be gaining momentum from the runners — even breaking into a jog — then straining out to see whether I could walk faster than runners run.

I couldn’t, of course. But I wasn’t disappointed, either. I had come to this place by my own choice, not to an absurd ambition, or by the absence of solitude. I hadn’t expected to have the hills to ourselves. We were following the push chairs being pushed. Queens have ascended these slopes. It would have been disappointing had the Hills been empty. As strange and mysterious in the suddenness of their eruption, the Malvern Hills are a British equivalent of Ayer’s Rock. They are descried from afar. It would have been disappointing had the hills been empty.

ANTHOLOGY
Then we climb up to the left for an hour and are 1000 feet above the river and 600 above the brook. Just before us the canyon divides, a little stream coming down on the right and another on the left, and we can look either way up either of these canyons through an ascending vista to cliffs and crags, and towers a mile back and 2000 feet overhead. To the right a dore glistening cascade area are seen. Pines and firs stand on the rocks and aspens overhang the brooks. The rocks below are red and brown, set in deep shadows, but above they are buff and vermillion and stand in the sunshine. The light above, made more brilliant by the bright tinted rocks, and the shadows below, more gloomy by reason of the sombre hues of the brown walls, increase the apparent depths of the canyons, and it seems a long way down to the bottom of the canyon gorges. Never before have I received such an impression of the vast heights of these canyon walls, not even at the Cliff of the Harp, where the very heavens seemed to rest on their summits. We sit on some overhanging rocks and enjoy the sound of the jingling listened to the music of the falling waters away up the canyon. We name this Rippington.


The last few miles of the drive to Waquoit Bay on southern Cape Cod reveal an astonishing degree of development. Hundreds of homes of a post-war vintage, squat beside one another on their postage-stamp lawns, all seeming jockeying for advantageous position in relation to views south across the beautiful Long Island Sound. A little farther inland and away from the estuarine bay, several new housing developments are under construction. I leave the car and walk around a half-finished house which I recently came across outside the scrub-pitch pine forest and squeezed in between small, vernal wetland pools. Along one new access road I photograph a sign indicating a turtle crossing and scurry across the bank to see the wildlife underpass purposely created for this purpose.


Routes and roads make their way into and across the landscape, defining it as much as landscape and making it accessible for many uses and purposes. Bringing together outstanding scholars from cultural history, geography, philosophy, and a host of other disciplines, this collection examines the complex entanglement between routes and landscapes. It traces the changing conceptions of the landscape from the Enlightenment to the present day, looking at how movement has been facilitated, imagined and represented and how such movement, in turn, has conditioned understandings of the landscape. A particular focus is the modern transportation landscape as it came into being with the canal, the railway, and little and the automobile. These modes of transport have had a profound impact on the perception and conceptualization of the modern landscape, a relationship investi- gated in detail by author and editor, Per- Noh Bentheim, Sarah Bonneimaess, Tim Cresswell, Finola O’Kane, Charlotte Klonk, Peter Merriman, Christine Macy, David Nyo, Vittoria Di Palma, Charles Wither, and Thomas Zeller.

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AN UNMATCHABLE LIST
of upcoming conferences and noteworthy publications is given on the website below. Such a list takes some doing. Well done Peter Bezak!

www.landscape-europe.net

Aconite: a very early spring flower

Routes, Roads and Landscapes
By Chris Dalglish, Kenneth Brophy, Alan Leslie & Gavin MacGregor

Landscape research links knowledge and understanding with landscape govern- ance, design, planning, management and conservation. This is a world of exciting opportunities and serious chal- lenges. It is a world of problems which demand ongoing attention and the de-

transforming practice: landscape research workshops and symposium

By Chris Dalglish, Kenneth Brophy, Alan Leslie & Gavin MacGregor

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development and promotion of new attitudes and ways of working.

The philosophies and practices of landscape working were the focus of Transforming Practice: a recently-completed workshop series organised by researchers from the University of Glasgow and Northlight Heritage and funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Through six workshops in Glasgow, a roundtable session in Oslo and a two-day symposium, participants explored landscape ethics, public participation, disciplinary collaboration, the relationship between landscape’s tangible and intangible elements, landscape policy and the processes and practices of landscape planning and decision-making. Participating in the project were colleagues from archaeology, art, ecology, environmental management, geography, history, landscape architecture, language studies, law, literature studies, philosophy, planning and theatre studies, and others with broader landscape or heritage remits. Participants came from academia, professional practice and the public and third sectors in the UK, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy and Greece.

The end-of-project symposium in October was led by the Landscape Research Group – began with a day of field visits. Starting in north Glasgow, we walked along the Forth & Clyde canal; an urban wildlife corridor and place of recreation and illicit activity. We heard about recent regeneration initiatives and ongoing social concerns and discussed matters of disciplinary collaboration and social and environmental need. A short bus ride brought us to the village of Neilston to the south of Glasgow, where a local community trust has worked with the planning authority on a vision for the future of the village and its surroundings. In Neilston, we heard from community members and from the local authority about this collaborative process, and about some of the ups-and-downs experienced along the way. From there, we headed for the banks of Loch Lomond; there we listened to professional and public points-of-view on landscape planning in the recently created Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park.

The year-long discussion which was Transforming Practice has proved to be an exciting and enlightening one and, in bringing together such a range of interests to discuss common concerns, we hope the project has made a contribution to the development of those attitudes, philosophies and practices required for effective landscape working. Now, there are two tasks to undertake: first, the results of the project need to be disseminated to a wider audience – an account of the symposium is available on-line, together with notes on the other workshops in the series. A journal paper, reflecting on the discussions and the points they raise for future research and practice will follow. Second, we would wish to promote research into those problems which the workshops have identified as being of wide concern. Various proposals are emerging, and the first to be confirmed is a European Network for Archaeology and Integrated Landscape Research. Via new projects this will discuss research connections between a landscape’s past, its current problems and action to address those problems for social or environmental benefit. The Network will have members from across Europe and will involve collaborations between archaeology and a full range of other landscape disciplines. The launch meeting of the Network will be at the European Association of Archaeologists conference in Helsinki later this year.

Notes
1 www.neilstontrust.co.uk/Neilston%20town%20Charter.pdf
2 www.gla.ac.uk/schools/humanities/research/archaeology/research/groups/heritagephilosophypractice/
3 http://www.eaa2012.fi/programme/session_list; session title 'Archaeology and Landscape: Integrated Research and the Common Good'

CD/KB/AL/GM

THE LINES AT NAZCA: RITUAL OR FUN?

By Roger Dalton

It is the Peruvian Desert outside the small town of Palpa and a shallow depression displays a geoglyph in the form of a series of parallel lines connected by loops at each end while a nearby hillside is marked by humanoid figures. The former has been taken to represent shrouded movement as in weaving, while the latter the faces of the sun and the moon. But whatever the truth these impressive works are among the most northerly of the vast geoglyph complex known as the Nazca Lines which extend over an area of c 40 by 20 km some 400 miles south of Lima. Here representations of plants and animals up to 130 m across are combined with geometrical and linear forms, the longest of which extends for 10 km across the desert. The method of construction is not problematic. The desert surface of red oxide-coated pebble gravel has been removed to depths up to 30 cm and widths up to 4m to reveal a pale sandy substrate while intelligent use of poles and rope would have sufficed to guide direction and shape. Associated ritual sites with a variety of offerings have indicated that construction of the 'lines' took place over an extended period of time. The Nazca cultural area with which they are identified extended over the lower Ica and Nazca drainage basins and flourished between 100 and 750 AD. The form of the geoglyph figures is reflected in Nazca pottery and textiles but there are indicators that the making of geoglyphs was inherited from an earlier desert culture known as the Paracas which originated at about 200BC. Clearly the state of preservation of the features of the Nazca Lines indicates that disruptive earth surface processes have scarcely operated during an extended period of near permanent drought. Some 40 km south of Palpa, and adjacent to the Pan American Highway, a steel observation tower allows us to appreciate the geometric forms and a tree shaped figure; overlooking would have been preferable yet contrary to Foreign Office advice on safety, but it was observation from the air in the 1920s which revealed the extent of the Lines and led to survey and speculation. Of greatest influence was the work of the German Maria Reiche who, unable to leave Peru at the outbreak of the Second World War, devoted the latter part of her life to the mapping of the geoglyphs and the development of an astronomical theory as to their origins. She vigorously petitioned the Peruvian authorities to recognise the cultural importance of the Lines and to take steps to curtail their degradation from motor vehicles. Her pleas were taken seriously and in her latter years she was much honoured for her work in landscape conservation. Her work base has been incorporated into a small museum situated next to the Pan American Highway; it is devoted to the Lines and problems of their interpretation. In 1994 UNESCO designated the Nazca Lines as a World Heritage Site. Recent research has indicated that the Lines may have only limited connection with matters astronomical and that their origins are most likely ritual. The geometric lines often radiate from higher elevations and point towards water sources. Water as always is key to desert life and the need for ceremony to ensure the flow of rivers and springs would have been paramount. Reflecting on my brief experience of the marking of the Peruvian landscape it is the sharp contrast between linear features and representations of life forms combined with their sheer scale which stays in my mind. The hill figures of the English chalk lands are put firmly into perspective and also our summer ‘crop marks’. The latter we understand, are done for fun; so my question – did early cultures ever leave us anything that they did just for the hell of it or was life always too serious? RD