

landscape
research
extra 70
August 2014



Copy deadline for
LRE 71
October 12th 2014

Contributors

Maggie Roe
John Randall
Jan Woodstra
Philip Pacey
Anna Jorgensen
Nancy Stedman
Ros Codling
Owen Manning
Paul Tabbush
Gareth Roberts
Bud Young

SEA STORIES: CULTURE, COMMUNITIES AND LANDSCAPE

By Maggie Roe, Newcastle University

There is a growing interest in landscape research in relation to the sea and marine landscapes, or seas-apes. As is suggested in a new book 'Underwater Seasapes' (Musard et al, 2014), the underwater can be understood and described as 'landscape': the European Landscape Convention identifies land, inland water and marine areas as landscape for consideration under its Articles. My own interest in the sea has grown over the years through work on the Northumberland coast and an association with the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership. The coast in Durham is now well-known in landscape circles as the winner of the UK Landscape Award 2012 and gaining special mention at the European awards for its work in restoring a landscape formerly blighted by the coal industry.



The East Durham LEADER project is another in a long list of community-based projects building on the cultural heritage and coastal opportunities in this area that Niall Benson (Durham Heritage Coast Officer) and the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership has facilitated. The recent community consultation project meeting reflected the enormous capacity of the communities in the North East to value their landscapes and bounce back after economic decline. The new emphasis on using arts-based methods to explore and understand the relationship that communities have with the coast and the sea has been used by the Partnership in various activities including the performance of *'We all go back to the Sea'*, written by Steve Percival to celebrate the transnational element of the LEADER funded Nature Tourism Project. The song, which has been performed with local choirs, is described as *'a meditation on our lives in the natural environment and the influence that one brings to bear on the other. The song also celebrates the triumphal return of flora and fauna to the once industry-blasted shoreline, and the denes and fields of the East Durham Coast.'*

In a conference at the RWA, Bristol on 12 May, academics and others interested in things maritime gathered to consider the cultural significance of the sea since 1800. Subjects ranged from literatures of the sea and representations in literature – such as John Masefield's *Sea Fever* – to the discussion of the theory of maritime space and considering contemporary sea travel. An exhibition presently being held at the RWA, 'The power of the Sea: Making Waves in British Art 1790-2014', provided context for this one-day conference. The exhibition is well worth a visit; it has contemporary works as well as historical pieces on loan from other institutions. Janette Kerr's *Holding my Breath II* and Maggi Hambling's *Wave Returning* are amongst the first pieces to meet you, and are some of the most engaging; managing to capture the 'living mass' that is the sea, and the ever changing nature of seascapes. A pen and watercolour, *Fakenham Salt Marshes*, by the artist Simon Read, who lives and works from a 100 ft barge on the Suffolk Coast, is inspired by his exploration of and understandings of coastal change.

My own (MR)'s relationship with water and the sea is continuing through a new AHRC-funded research project 'Towards Hydrocitizenship'. I am lucky to be starting work with Simon and a number of others on this three-year project to explore people's relationship with water using Arts & Humanities methods and working with four case study communities in Yorkshire, Wales, London and Bristol.

M.R.



Kynance Cove

By John Randall October 2012

Sometimes when you approach this place, the sea won't let you in.

The crash and swirl of waves tell you, 'no chance today'.

But this time the sky was clear, the tide low enough

To permit the climb down to the beach without fear.

Sun burst into the rock garden in an explosion of haloes.

To say that serpentine is green misses reality by a long way.

The light picked out greys, reds, pinks and purples too,

A paint box in stone, a mosaic too subtle for description.

Holes in the cliff lured us in, tempting us to explore their secrets,

Formed windows to frame the sea beyond.

But this day one cave was special, almost magical.

Sun's rays on shallow pool, cupped in sand, threw shimmers across rock,

A brilliant conjunction of today's light meeting

Colours formed in furnaces millennia back.

It was a glimmer of glory.

On another day, at another time, at another tide

We would have missed it. The paint box would have been closed.

Yes, the tide flowed in again, the moment was gone.

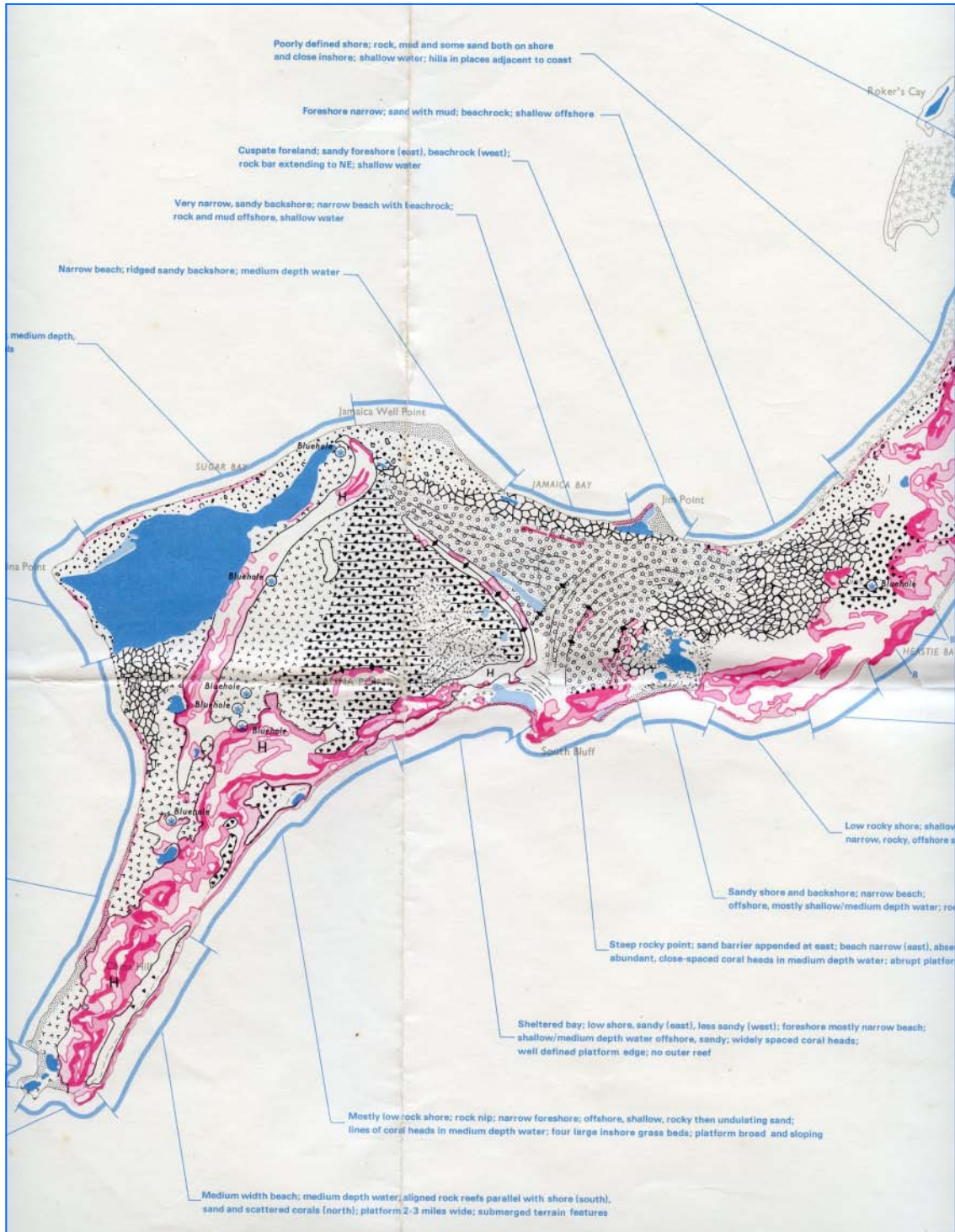
But today we saw a glimmer of glory.



SHORELINE MAPPING.

As we are talking about coast and sea as landscape what about this approach. Found in an archive of the Bahamas Government it depicts the south tip of the island of Acklins a little north of Cuba. The analyst used aerial photography and diving experience to define sections of shoreline (backshore, foreshore and offshore ie.underwater). An important scenic resource for those islands and what we now call ecosystem services. The onshore land is defined by surface type (symbols) lesser ridges by line symbols and slope steepness (red and pink).

Landform and shoreline types compiled by RN Young from airphoto interpretation and field work 1972



‘Caring for the Land: Places Practices Experiences.’

An international conference held at the Benetton Foundation, Treviso, Italy, 20-21 February 2014.

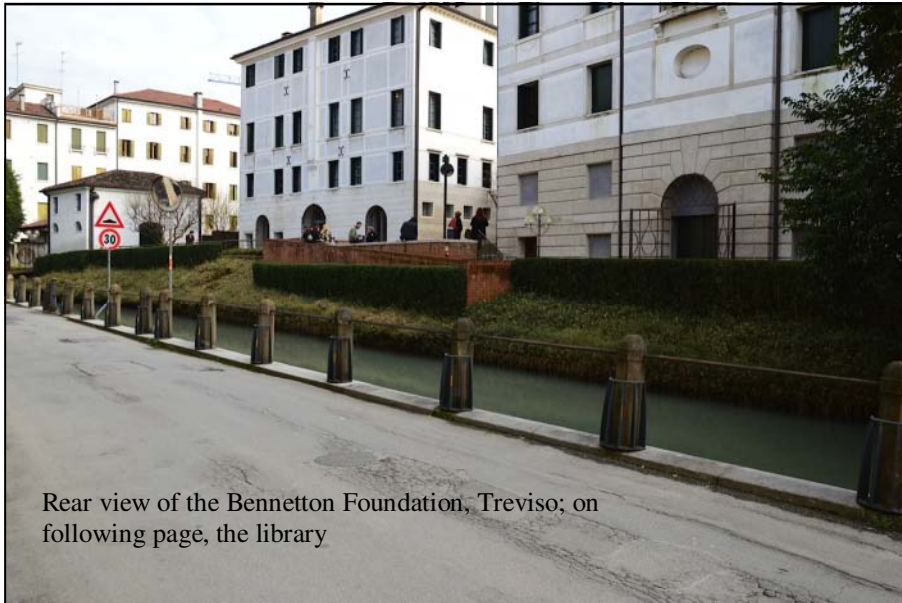
By Jan Woudstra,
Sheffield University

main objective. He envisaged this through creative engagement, in which he foresaw a fusion of culture and nature that was to continue indefinitely in time and space. In his projects Le Roy exposed the political flaws that hindered this engagement, writing about them in an entertaining and highly critical way. Fifty years later however the environmental issues about which he was concerned are just as urgent; large

not have any utopian ideals, and generally continue to practice there today, promoting a ‘slow attitude’ and ‘slow food’, while enjoying the same commodities that are available in urban environments, now simplified by internet connections. Nogué’s observations suggest that New Ruralism has been strengthened through communication networks by elevating them out of isolation and making them part of a wider social and cultural movement that demands a new way of caring for the earth.

The reasons for moving to the countryside were most evocatively explored by the ethnographer and documentary maker **Marco Romano** who selected clips from two of his films *Cheyenne, trent’ anni* (2008) and *Piccola terra* (2012). One demonstrated a young shepherdess grazing her sheep in a valley of the Trentino region to uncover the old roads and preserve the hillsides in the Alps by grazing of a landscape she loved. A second set of clips showed a middle-aged couple in Val d’Ossola (Piedmont) who had adopted an area of abandoned agricultural terraces that had become overgrown with trees, showing the hard work of grubbing up the roots. The concept of adoption was used here to demonstrate the association of love and care and that of custodianship, the fact that we would only be able to care for a limited period. This was reinforced with clips from a 1963 film in which a similar couple toiled to construct terraces anew under what were very different socio-economic circumstances. A modern clip showing a French family repairing terraces in Italian countryside further highlighted the blurring of boundaries in this issue.

These cases provided good examples that in order to make an impact globally, it is important to act locally, whereas **Benno Albrecht**, professor in architecture and urban design at University of Venice, provided examples in which there was a necessity of acting globally. He concentrated on twentieth and twenty first century tree planting schemes of walls of trees that had featured and dominated policies in the dustbowl of the USA, the USSR, China and sub-Saharan Africa. These schemes serve for propaganda purposes but can also make a significant impact in recovering land for cultivation. However it is



Rear view of the Benetton Foundation, Treviso; on following page, the library

When the Benetton Foundation dedicated its 2014 conference ‘Curare la terra. Luoghi, pratiche, esperienze’ - translated as ‘Caring for the land. Places, practices and experiences’ - to the memory of the Dutch artist and ecotect Louis Guillaume le Roy (1924-2012) they clearly had a wider perspective in mind than might be suggested by the title, which might be more narrowly defined as ‘caring for the earth (or Earth).’ This duality in meaning was exploited by various speakers at the conference and workshop, which as a result touched on a wide range of issues, but provided a basis for and opened the topic in what is intended to be the first of a series of conferences.

In the late 1960s Le Roy had started the first of his experimental projects in Heerenveen, The Netherlands, which recycled demolition materials and created these into intricate ecological networks. This involved the local residents and this pioneering in public engagement provided an interesting perspective as it was involvement in caring for the wider environment that was his

scale monocultural practices and policies have further diminished small scale farming, and marginal farmland has been left unviable and untended as younger generations have moved to the cities.

With Flower Power and other similar protests in the late 1960s there were the first signs of dissatisfaction with the changes that were forced upon the citizens. **Jean Nogué**, a professor in human geography at the University of Gerona, Spain, has studied the different generations that have moved back to the land and their reasons in a talk focussing on ‘New Ruralism’. Those who moved to the country in the 1960’, early 1970s did so primarily from ideological perspectives, often in communes and they generally have not lasted, with over 95% having disappeared. However from 1975 a new wave of young people moved to the countryside, particularly in areas of Central Spain and Massif Central in France that followed examples in North America. These were less radical, did

also clear that without engagement of the population in order to maintain and care for them, such large-scale schemes can be rather unwieldy, as they are prone to fail through lack of long-term political commitment.

Politics and landscape are closely associated and the instance of a UNESCO project at Battir, Palestine by the architect and landscape architect **Giovanni Fontana Antonelli** illustrated some of the issues there. The area near Jerusalem, occupied by Israel since 1967, consists of a rich cultural landscape with ancient and classical archaeology overlaid by agricultural terraces. This continues to be lived in by some 22,000 Palestinians, whereas encroaching developments house some 50,000 Israelis. The threat of the proposed West Bank barrier would greatly affect movement and trade of produce and also damage the landscape by inevitable further urbanization. The project engaged locals to survey the cultural assets of the area and with help provide guidelines for the management and conservation of the landscape. These in turn have become a tool not only in defence of livelihood, but was also recognized to provide a strategic tool in the defence of human rights that in 2011 was awarded the Melini Mercouri International Prize for protection and management of cultural landscapes.

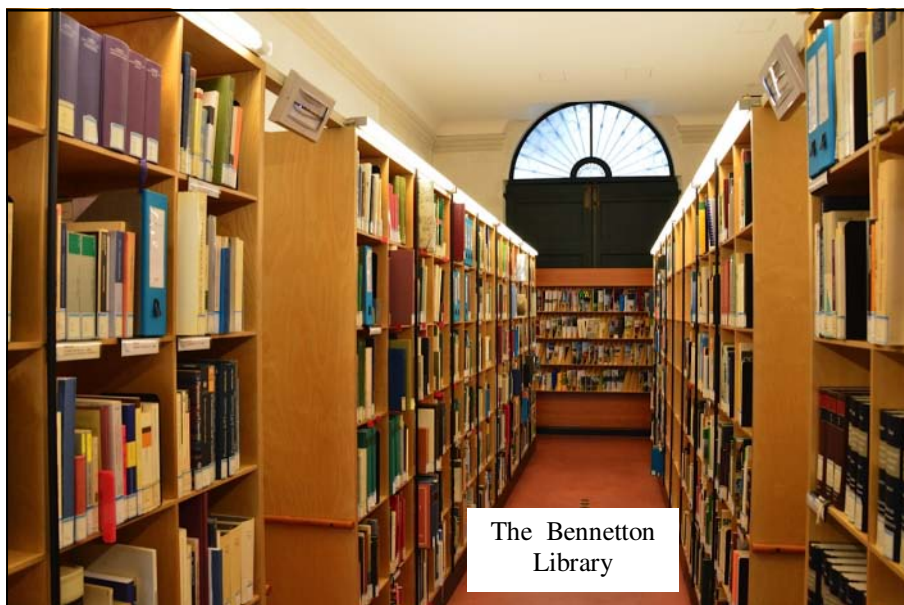
countries by climate change with over fifty per cent projected to disappear under water within the next half century. Rising water has already brought a surge in demographics with cities growing exponentially, with extensive slums. These consist of standard stilt houses constructed of bamboo standing over rubbish filled fluctuating waters. One of the projects by landscape architect **Ashar Masha** was to encourage appropriation of the higher ground around the buildings for purposes of cultivation of vegetables and fruit, and to provide a bamboo platform that could be used as a common space, for play and recreation aimed at children. He also provided a small library, encouraging learning and changing behaviour and attitudes towards the environment generally.

Whereas this example was initially met with limited opportunities, it is clear that who we are is determined by our environments, and urban landscapes are often determined by a multiplicity of spaces. **Anna Lambertini**, landscape architect and author of *Urban Beauty: Aesthetics of resistance* (2013) took up the issue through Italo Calvino's lens of so-called 'common-place landscapes', exploring issues like common spaces for daily life, public and private, real and imagined nature, etc. Her concern was how to interrogate the ordinary and

theme restoring a sense of connectedness and belonging.

The ensuing discussions to the conference highlighted the belief that it was not ethical to leave the agricultural landscape unattended, that there is a responsibility to care and maintain it, and that it cannot be left in an overgrown state. This differs remarkably from the attitudes in northern European countries where return of nature is generally accepted and actually encouraged, with 'new nature' and 'wilding' being well accepted concepts. It appears that this has much to do with the belief expressed in the 1950s that 'Italy will remain beautiful as long as it is poor.' Another concern was that the landscape is now dominated by fences everywhere, in contrast to Scandinavia for example. It was hoped that the Year of Family Farming 2014 would draw attention to the issue and highlight the need for caring for the land.

The conference was well organised by **Simonetta Zanon and Luigi Latini** of the Fondazione Benetton Studi Ricerche, who also chaired various sessions. Others who explored themes on caring for the land were **Laurence Baudalet**, an ethnographer in charge of communal gardening in the Paris region; **David Haney** on Leberecht Migge's contribution to the self sufficiency movement; **Paulo Bürgi** on his project decorating reclaimed agricultural land at Mechtenberg near Gelsenkirchen, Germany; **Dominico Luciano** who spoke out on care of places in the Nordic countries; and **Miguel Vitale**, who demonstrated that the concept of place in Argentina continues to be dominated by complicated philosophy rather than the nature of the site. The conference was properly underpinned by philosopher **Masimo Venturi Ferriolo** and art historian **Hervé Brunon**, who provided appropriate references combined with some interesting observations. **Jan Woudstra** provided the keynote on Louis le Roy. The conference was conducted in the native languages, supported by competent simultaneous translators.



how to make this visible, and encourage engagement. She illustrated this with a series of projects by avant-garde landscape architects, which ranged from left over spaces, car parks, and roundabouts, which all had as a central

Another example of how small interventions can make a difference and encourage a rootedness was illustrated in a report by **Anna Magrin** in Bangladesh. This is one of the most threatened

JW

A COMPANION GUIDE TO LANDSCAPE RESEARCH VOL 39/ 3: Papers and Themes

From LR Editor Anna Jorgensen

Whilst the following papers were allocated to this issue based on the order of their acceptance - in a sense randomly - they explore some common themes at a range of scales from the national, through the regional level and right down to the scale of individual urban sites, namely a historic landscape, a derelict site and an urban park. The common cross-cutting themes include landscape characterization, landscape values, landscape and memory and the conflicts between landscape values and sustainability.

Andrew Butler and Ulla Berglund review public participation in a sample of UK Landscape Character Assessments (LCA), in the light of the European Landscape Convention's requirement 'to take into account the particular values assigned to ... [landscapes] by the interested parties and the population concerned'¹ in landscape assessment. More specifically they investigate how public involvement has been handled through the mechanism of LCA, using a phenomenological perspective of landscape as lived experience. The study found that from 52 UK LCAs from 2007 to 2011, around half included some form of stakeholder involvement, though only 14 of the assessments addressed the opinions of 'the population concerned' as opposed to planners and other 'expert' stakeholders. Furthermore whilst the professionals in these 14 cases all addressed their respective communities at some stage during the LCA process, only two of the LCAs sought input before the desk study stage, and only one used a method that was able to capture landscape as lived experience.

Interestingly, the next paper addresses similar issues, this time from a bottom up perspective. **Ryan Hennessey and Karen Beazley** look at the capacity needed for community collaboration within a nature conservation project in the context of Brier Island, Nova Scotia. Whilst a number of island residents were already involved in the manage-

ment of the Brier Island Nature Reserve, implementing a management strategy had proved difficult due to their understandable reluctance to police fellow residents' environmentally damaging activities such as using All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs) and gathering firewood. The authors examined local values, place dependence and place identity and community motivations and incentives for activities using a qualitative approach. They concluded that the focus should be expanded from ecological values to a broader spectrum of values attached to place, including instrumental and cultural values. By recognizing this, approaches could be developed to engage a wider range of residents in the management plan e.g. the creation of OHV trails or ecological restoration initiatives around places of particular cultural or heritage significance.

The next paper in this collection also deals with the cultural values that are inherent in landscape and the specifics of place, but from a very different perspective. **Danielle Drozdowski's** paper examines the remains of Plaszów concentration camp - a 'sacred' landscape - in its everyday urban context in the outskirts of Kraków, Poland, and reflects on how memories of the death camp are articulated in the landscape and experienced by visitors and local people. Plaszów is described as an 'untended and unmarked green space' with few material remains, in which only a handful of monuments bear tangible witness to the 9,000 people murdered there. The author questions whether this apparently empty space can be a memorial to the dead and the manner of their dying, despite its qualities of annihilation and nothingness. This question becomes all the more pressing given that Plaszów is the largest unregulated green space in the city of Kraków and is being squeezed by the commercial development of its immediate surroundings, in which everyday life continues regardless, or perhaps in spite of, the terrible history of the Plaszów site.

The next paper also touches on landscape and memory: this paper by **Anna-Liisa Unt, Penny Travlou and Simon Bell** finds that the absence of memory enables younger users - who

have no memory of the Soviet era or the scramble for commercial development in its immediate aftermath - to appreciate the sublime qualities of urban wilderness at the former fishing harbour in Tallinn, Estonia. The authors assess whether the theoretical claims that these sites exhibit qualities of sublimity, temporality and wilderness can be substantiated in the context of this site and find that these characteristics are indeed highly important aspects of the ways in which the site is currently used and appreciated. They conclude that such sites have clear benefits for users and city dwellers but should not be viewed as substitutes for formal public space.

The penultimate paper by **Tali Hatuka and Hadas Saaroni** poses the question of whether, when climate change is a widely accepted phenomenon, special efforts are being made to plan and design public open spaces to mitigate the impacts of the changing global climate. Exploring this question in the context of the Jaffa Slope Park in Jaffa Israel, the authors specifically ask what issues were taken into account in the design of the park, how the public have responded and go on to suggest ways in which climate-aware design can be promoted in the planning and commissioning of public open spaces. The authors found that whilst climatic factors were considered, the main design goals were image, aesthetics and accessibility. However, visitors criticised the lack of shade, trees and drinking water. Paradoxically they also supported the introduction of extensive lawned areas even though these areas require the use of scarce drinking water for their irrigation. The authors suggest that the neo liberal planning framework militates in favor of reductionist design strategies and the adoption of global cultural symbols such as extensive lawned areas even though these are neither local to such areas nor sustainable. They recommend the adoption of human comfort design codes for public spaces, focusing on four key related issues: shading, vegetation, water use and materials.

The final paper by **Ana Belén Berrocal Menárguez a and Pedro Molina Holgado** revisits landscape characterization, and proposes a novel method of characterizing the contribution made

by public infrastructures such as bridges to the fluvial landscapes of the Tajo valley, as part of an overall characterization process. The criteria used were grouped under five dimensions, namely integration, value, conservation, technical-aesthetic coherence and symbolic value. An expert-based Delphi-style approach was used to weight each criterion's contribution to the landscape value of the public works in question and assess the actual values attributed to each item. This paper provides an interesting counterpoint to the paper by Butler et al, in which the need for public involvement in landscape characterization was the focus. In contrast, in Menárguez and Holgado's paper the assessment was conducted entirely by experts, and the majority of the criteria used seem to relate in some way to the visual or aesthetic aspects of the structures in question and not to the 'lived experience' of local populations. It is interesting to speculate as to whether public involvement in LCA will become the norm, or whether individual approaches will continue to vary according to their purpose and context.

AJ

Note

1 Council of Europe (CoE). 2000. *European Landscape Convention. CETC No. 176*, Florence and Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

LANDSCAPE WITH ORCHIDS

By Philip Pacey

Only in the last few years have I become aware of just how 'common' Common Spotted Orchids are. Where they occur at all, they tend to occur in numbers. If not like Wordsworth's famous 'host' of golden daffodils, and unlike buttercups, which can saturate a field in yellow, they are not sufficiently numerous to lay down a dominant colour. Rather, they are scattered randomly; punctuation scattered across the page. Some may be lurking among longer grass. But they are not overcome; they retain their uprightiness. I know of one location where the orchids almost resemble players on a stage.

The Northern Marsh Orchid is similarly

profuse in these parts (I'm thinking of Lancashire, Cumbria, and Northumbria, close to Hadrian's Wall), but has a deeper, darker, purple hue, not unlike vetch or red clover both of which may be growing nearby. I've come to think of both of them as 'poor man's orchids', not in the sense of their not being genuine orchids at all, but because, although spectacular and exotic, they are not treasured or sought after. But *en masse* they can take your breath away!



It was four or five years ago, wandering in a field close to home, where we were participants in a community orchard project, that we stumbled on a group of orchids – one or two, half a dozen, more and more, not all visible at once but concealed in longer grass – until we had counted over a hundred. Most were Northern March Orchids but Common Spotted were also present. How is it that we hadn't seen them before? We have lived here since 1975. Had we never been to this corner of this field at just the right time in June? Or could the orchids somehow have come from nowhere? The grounds had been disturbed several years previously. Could this have been a factor? Many years ago a bird-watching uncle had taught us to recognise the Early Purple Orchid with its spotted leaves. Had we been seeing other Early Purple orchids as well, because we knew we not learned to see these others in the same way in which trained or focused eyes readily identify the 'jizz' of a bird? Or are they on the increase, a symptom of climate change?



This time last year (I am writing this — of course — in June) I was walking towards Dubs reservoir, from a favoured spot near Windermere, along the path which becomes the Garburn Pass, when I became aware of Common Spotted Orchids growing on the verges on both sides of the track. This year I took members of our family to the same spot. Needless to say, when we got to where I

thought they had been, no orchids were to be seen. Were we too soon? Or too late? Had I imagined them? Suddenly, and absurdly, I realised that I was treading softly – as nearly as possible walking on tip toe in heavy walking boots – so as not to frighten off any orchids there might have been! By way of explanation for this bizarre behaviour, I can only claim that a few moments earlier I had been in listening mode, when my son asked me to pick out the notes of a willow-warbler's song. (That I could do this was a pre- that same — a cry from good as an attention to one! And then another, and another, and there they were, just as last year, lining our route, watching us go by — if that could be — as if we were the last stragglers in a race; the tail end of a procession.



PP

Letters to the Editor

From Ros Codling

Dear Bud

Your comments about Breckland are interesting! Your piece made me look at the material I have to hand. Our bookshelves contain a volume *In Breckland Wilds*, first published by Heffers of Cambridge in 1925 but then extensively revised in 1935. Its author was W G Clarke, a local journalist and the revision was made by his son, Roy Rainbird Clarke, later curator of the Norwich Museums. Despite its rather exotic title, the book is a serious study of the area. On occasions the prose may be a little lyrical but the content is of a similar standard to later area studies in the New Naturalist series.

As to the origins of the name - the two Clarkes suggest that during the mid-19th century the area was known as the Breck district and it was in 1894 that Clarke senior altered this to Breckland. Even in this present era of suspicion about journalists and their actions, I find it difficult to agree with you that this name is "cosy nostalgia".

The linear tree belts, usually of Scots

pine, are certainly characteristic of the area. Faden's map of Norfolk (1797) shows a few linear plantations but Bryant's map of 1826 offers far more. A strong structure is present, especially around of Kilverstone and to the north of Santon Warren. Writing about the planted belts, the Clarkes suggest: "the first clumps of Scots pine were probably planted during the late eighteenth century ... either in rows known as belts or artificially dwarfed for hedges. ... It is only since about 1840 that trees have been planted in enormous numbers." (p 97) Wade Martin dates the increased planting slightly earlier, around the 1810s (p 30).

The map extract you printed centred around Elvedon, once the home of Maharaja Duleep Singh, who had been exiled to Britain in the 1850s. The estate passed into the hands of a branch of the Guinness family who became the Earls of Iveagh. I cannot quote the source, but I heard the story that one Earl said he inherited so many thousand acres of land and "two rabbits fighting over one blade of grass". Certainly by the last quarter of the 19th century, "on the poor Breckland soils, sport was now more profitable than agriculture." (Wade Martins, p15) Nowadays there is a further type of 'sport' that came because of the forestry plantations. Your map extract shows much of the Elvedon Warren Plantation immediately to the east of the village and this is now the home of Center Parcs 'Elvedon Forest'. In its way, it is another form of 'high tech cropping'.

Heath remains on parts of the land covered by your map extract, and elsewhere in Norfolk and Suffolk, albeit not in the quantity of earlier years. So perhaps the small part of Breckland shown on your map extract was 'transformation ... wholly within [your] lifetime' but that leaves substantial areas that were patterned with pine belts much earlier. I raise a query. On occasions, the pine planting is in wide belts which I've never paced but guess they may well be a chain wide as you say. In other places the planting is more like a hedge and could well have been started on that scale rather than as a distinct belt. Might it be that when young, these rows were not mapped, even though present? In places, age has

now given them a similar visual effect to the wider strips.

These jottings are offered as additional material to your study. My only dispute with you relates to the naming of the area. I shall happily continue to call it Breckland, and shall carry on cringing when seeing Ye Olde Tea Shoppe (and similar variations) but in my mind there will be no linkage between the two!

Good wishes, Ros

Notes

Bryant's map of Norfolk. Introduction by J. C. Barringer. 1998. Guist Bottom, Dereham, The Larks Press.

Clarke, W. G. 1925, revised 1935. *In Breckland Wilds*. Cambridge, W. Heffer and Sons.

Faden's map of Norfolk. Introduction by J. C. Barringer. 1989. Guist Bottom, Dereham, The Larks Press.

Wade Martins, S. 1988. *Norfolk: a changing countryside 1780-1914*. Chichester, Phillimore.

Dr Rosamunde Codling
Wymondham NR180PH

rjcodling@gmail.com

From Nancy Stedman

Hi Bud

Yet another interesting issue of LRG Extra, thank you! But I noted that you referred to the old Natural Areas in your item on Breckland. **And I found that a bit disappointing**, as Natural England has invested a huge amount of time over the past 3 years in writing profiles for all the National Character Areas across England (I was leading the programme across the north of England) - see the press release issued recently to mark the publication of the final profile.

Kind regards,
Nancy.

Nancy much involved in the process adds the following (Editor's headline).

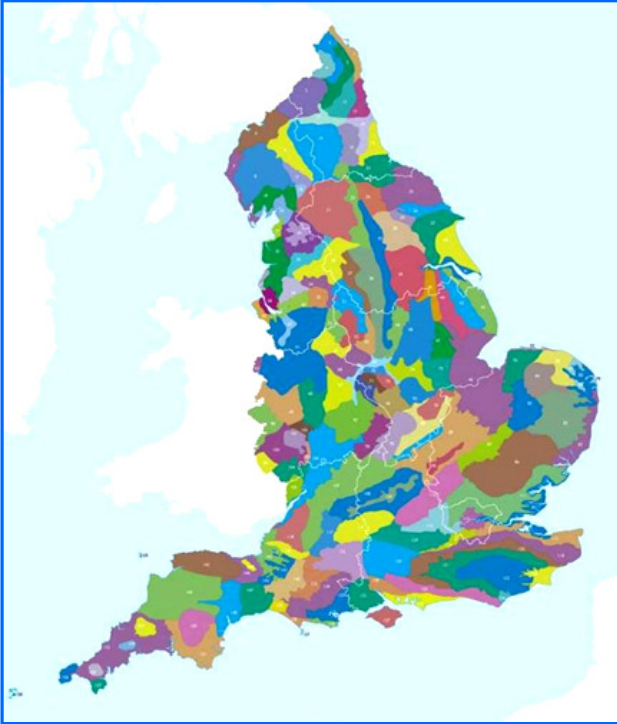
159 NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS DOES THE UK LEAD EUROPE?

Natural England has just completed an ambitious programme of expanding and re-writing profiles for all 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). The profiles can be downloaded, but they are a web based tool and the easy access format makes searching for relevant information very straight forward. For links to all the profiles, and background information, go to:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/searchpage.aspx>

The project arose from understanding the commitments of the European Landscape Convention, which had led NE to adopt the approach that all landscapes matter, and that there should be objectives for all landscapes. These objectives would define each of the diverse landscapes of England, expressing their distinctive landscape character, the qualitative, experiential aspects of place, and the more functional ecosystem services. As past Director Mark Felton said: "*We must be clearer about what we want England's landscapes to do for us. We also need to be robust so that we can defend what we say.*"

Thus we embarked upon a major 3 year project to re-write each profile, using the original Countryside Character Areas descriptions as a starting point. These descriptions were drawn up by the Countryside Agency in the 1990s, and at much the same time, English Nature was compiling its Natural Areas. Discussions between the two organisations led to agreement over what were then called 'Joint Character Areas', which subsequently became 'National Character Areas' when the organisations were merged into Natural England. Each NCA is defined by a unique combination of physical factors, notably underlying geology, soils and land cover, along with patterns of land cover, woodland and semi-natural habitats, and man-made features including field size, field boundaries and settlement patterns. Thus they follow natural boundaries, rather than administrative ones.



The format of each profile starts with sections aimed at the general public. First is a summary with a map of the area, followed by a description of the landscape, and an outline of the main historic periods that have left their imprint. The key features and elements are summarised in a list of Key Characteristics, and the main ecosystem services delivered by the area are also identified.

The Statements of Environmental Opportunity (or landscape objectives) then set out the key measures and actions that can be undertaken to strengthen the landscape character, biodiversity interest and the more significant ecosystem services. These Statements are forward looking and strategic, and are already proving to be useful tools to help inform the decisions taken by those involved in place making activities for their communities.

Behind these sections are substantial, more technical, sections providing all the supporting information and analysis. A section on landscape change addresses known recent changes and trends, and attempts to identify future pressures for change. The analysis section starts with an exploration of the key characteristics and what actions would strengthen landscape character.

and designated sites, to biodiversity, woodlands, historic features, tranquility and access provision. All this work was done by NE's own staff.

With the inevitable range of backgrounds and skills that were involved, there was a crucial role to achieve profiles that were reasonably consistent and well informed across all of NE's interests. I was engaged with the work from the start, helping to determine the structure, evidence base and content of the profiles. Then, in addition to writing some of the profiles myself, my role was to oversee the drafting of profiles across the north of England. This involved training and supporting my colleagues, checking drafts, keeping them on track, and providing advice about how to ensure that each profile 'painted a picture'. This role proved both fascinating — I learnt so much about the diverse landscapes of northern England! — and challenging, working with some 20 different

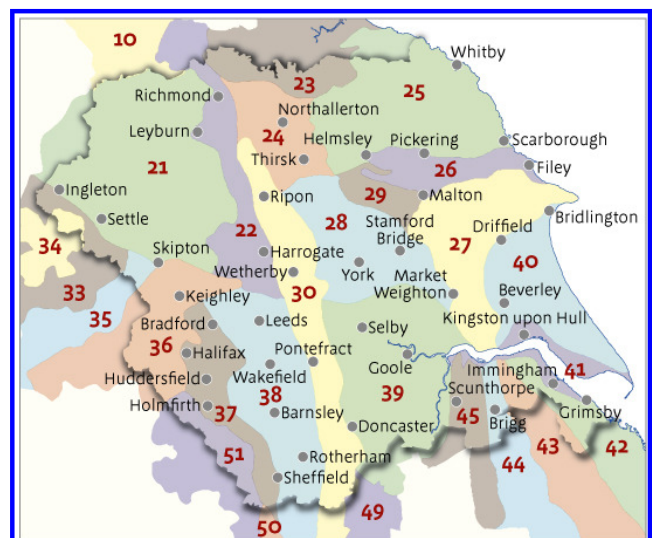
A major addition is the ecosystem approach, where we consider how effectively the area delivers ecosystem services, from provisioning eg. food, timber: to regulating eg. flood risk management, water quality; and cultural eg. sense of place, history, recreation. This analysis includes an exploration of the implications of trying to increase the delivery of each service. Finally there is an underpinning raft of key facts and data for the NCA, ranging from geology

authors to achieve high quality profiles with a consistent approach. Considerable effort was also put in to engaging with our own specialists, and colleagues with local knowledge, as well as seeking checks and inputs from local and national stakeholders as we went along.

Re-visiting these profiles (a commitment in the 2011 Natural Environment White Paper) was very timely. The National Planning Policy Framework acknowledges the importance of landscape scale conservation and enhancement, and of course the Lawton report 'Making Space for Nature' makes a number of recommendations for conserving and improving the biodiversity value of our landscapes — summarised as 'bigger, better, more and more joined up'.

The NCA profiles offer an environmental evidence base to underpin both development plans and projects addressing the connectivity of the landscape. They can also assist local authorities and others to meet their 'duty to co-operate' when working on strategic planning and environmental issues across administrative boundaries.

NCA profiles are also proving useful in supporting the work of Local Nature



Partnerships, as the profiles offer cohesive cross-boundary evidence base and guidance to inform their work and encourage collaboration. The profiles informed the recent reviews of National Park and AONB Management Plans, whilst in some instances the

reviews informed the profiles. More significantly, the profiles are now an integral part of many funding bids for environmental improvements, especially HLF's (Heritage Lottery Fund) Landscape Partnership projects. "Your NCAs directly help us support projects that will invest around £20m this year alone in landscape-scale conservation

Natural England provides a list of the NCA areas (from the Yorkshire map with this article). Each of these is separately described and there are numerous other North of England areas for which go to the website below.

[10. North Pennines](#), [21. Yorkshire Dales](#), [22. Pennine Dales Fringe](#), [23. Tees Lowlands](#), [24. Vale of Mowbray](#), [25. North Yorkshire Moors and Cleveland Hills](#), [26. Vale of Pickering](#), [27. Yorkshire Wolds](#), [28. Vale of York](#), [29. Howardian Hills](#), [30. Southern Magnesian Limestone](#), [33. Bowland Fringe and Pendle Hill](#), [34. Bowland Fells](#), [35. Lancashire Valleys](#), [36. Southern Pennines](#), [37. Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe](#), [38. Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Coalfield](#), [39. Humberhead Levels](#), [40. Holderness](#), [41. Humber Estuary](#), [42. Lincolnshire Coast & Marshes](#), [43. Lincolnshire Wolds](#), [44. Central Lincolnshire Vale](#), [45. Northern Lincolnshire Edge with Coversands](#), [49. Sherwood](#), [50. Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent](#), [51. Dark Peak](#)

across the UK." Drew Bennelick — Head of Landscape and Natural Heritage: Heritage Lottery Fund.

The project was submitted for a Landscape Institute Award in 2013, and was highly commended, with the judges praising "...the integrated approach, linking environmental topics within a single spatial framework and the emphasis on linking landscape and ecosystem services thinking".

On the Natural England website you can view case studies of NCA profiles in use, register to download the NCA boundary layer from the GIS database, and access maps showing the NCAs with local administrative boundaries, Water Framework Directive catchments and protected landscapes. Natural England also welcomes feedback on the profiles, so please feel free to contact the NCA mailbox:

NCAprofiles@naturalengland.org.uk

NS

Editor's note

I had the pleasure of working for 2 years with Nancy in the London

office of the one time Countryside Commission and am delighted to see how she has been involved in such important national work. She is an LRG member and also an artist and has written previously for LRE.

SILENCES

By Owen Manning

Sounds from far and near come to my ears. Muted sounds of road-traffic, a train, a murmuring river, rise from the depths of the valley; metallic clinks of climbers on a rocky edge nearby mingle with the voices of children, parents, walkers on this Peak District trail. Comfortable sounds, and modern as they are, not so different from those of any populated landscape for untold centuries in the past: the creak and rattle of a cart perhaps, clink and scrape of tools, calls of men and women at work, children at play: the universal sounds of humanity going about its business.

Away from the path human sounds are distanced, a background now to more natural sounds: of birds, or wind through leaves or tall grasses. Higher up in these breezy uplands the sounds of a tamed countryside may be entirely blown away by the wind, while in hidden folds of land we may find suddenly an absence of almost any sound at all, not even of wind.

Yet there is always sound in the landscape, and its variations may be magical if we can quieten ourselves enough to sense what is coming to our ears: sounds almost infinitely distant borne on the breeze, barely identifiable even as natural or human; or infinitely close: a whisper of moving air, bending of leaf-stalks, quiver of soil settling. "Where noonday sleeps upon the grassy hill, the whirr of tiny wings is never still –"

A deeper silence than this may be found in the dark depths of caves, magnified by the hollow drip of water from cold wet rock into unseen pools – Gollum territory! People have had to work in such places, and we visit them in fascinated horror, but whether we might truly want such a deadening absence of so much belonging to our everyday world is another matter. Even in

our noisy modern age, it is not simple absence of sound we need, but the absence of unwanted sound, of *noise*: the constant intrusion which builds stress in our efforts to ignore it. It is *tranquillity* we need, through the subduing or distancing of traffic, roar of industry, raucous music, endless chatter – endless *everything* – to a harmless background, allowing the sounds we do want to ease our souls. Places in the landscape where this already happens are treasurable.

Two publications recently encountered have supported and extended my thoughts on all this, in vivid and revelatory detail. One is Trevor Cox' *Sonic Wonderland: a Scientific Odyssey of Sound*, an inspired account of all the ways in which sound strikes our senses. Tranquillity may indeed be the aim, he agrees, but not always and not through suppressing all intrusion: bustle and excitement are also part of human life, for we are, after all, social animals. Balance may be found by chance or design or pure powers of mind (about which Cox has much to say).

Tranquillity, inner or outer, is an entirely subjective affair anyway. There is, it seems, an official "Most Tranquil Place in England", its location protected to prevent hordes of stressed city-dwellers from noisily invading it (gleefully I imagine the shouts of joy: "MY GOD, it's so QUIET here!") – though as it lies somewhere within vast man-made Kielder Forest and requires many hours of tramping over boggy midgy terrain to reach, while possessing (as Cox reports) no virtues whatever apart from record-breaking silence, this secrecy seems uncalled-for. Even in our modern world we may find sufficient tranquillity nearer at hand: may even find the quiet known to our ancestors.....

Ian Mortimer's wonderfully detailed and scholarly romp *The Time Traveler's Guide to Medieval England*, my second revelation of the year, is bewilderingly informative (how can there be so much I didn't know about my forebears, and didn't even know I didn't know?); but especially provocative is his account of a 14th century sound-world of nearly unimaginable peacefulness. We may assume an age of noisy brutality, but no: "Listen", says Mortimer

mer: “*It is very quiet.*” Almost nothing can be heard year-in year-out but the muted sounds of people working with animals and simple tools, and the sounds of nature all around. At night there are no human sounds at all. Even in towns, the loudest may be only the calls of stall-holders, of occasional ceremonial trumpets, and the few bells ringing across the rooftops. But it is a *living* quietness in which people hear more sharply, notice more, love conversation and music – and it is everywhere.

What thoughts stirred the minds of those people embedded in that all-pervading quiet? When we do chance upon a place of such quietness as existed for our forebears, do our minds, irrevocably changed by the centuries between us and them, eternally busy, full of argument (mine anyway), experience it in any way as they did? Could we live with it? A recent experience very close to home has left me wondering.

Our Malvern Hills, though a haven of tranquillity and spiritual ease for many, are not especially quiet; it takes some prolonged exertion to reach heights at which the sound of Malvern’s traffic below is not still disturbingly present. Yet it was in a fold of these hills well below that height that on one particular day I encountered something rare.

Clambering steeply up a grassy path beside a narrow rocky scree, I suddenly became aware of an all-enveloping *silence*. It was a day, unusually, of absolutely no wind. The air was perfectly still; nothing stirred; the hum of traffic heard moments before had gone; only an irregular piping bird-call reached my ears, seeming to emphasise by its smallness the absence of other sound. The effect was strange and disorienting, like I imagine sensory-deprivation to be yet not like, for I felt all my senses to be heightened.

The merest chance of topography, and of the day’s weather, had brought this about: a change of slope blocking the sound of the road below, a steepening of slopes on either side, and no wind to push traffic noise around them. I moved up as through a tilted bowl of

silence, beneath a calm cloudy ceiling, scarcely daring to breathe in case of breaking the spell – until a sound did come at last: a little watery trickle, so delicate that as with the bird-call the silence seemed to grow, not diminish.

A tiny sound from a tiny stream flowing from a tiny leafy grove where the slope briefly eased, winding through reeds and bracken for a few yards only before diving once more to flow onward below the scree, invisible and inaudible either below or above, yet displaying in that little distance all the sounds a real stream should make. Flowing water contains in itself almost all the sounds a human can perceive and here they were in miniature, from bird-like treble to sonorous bass, endlessly varied: a toy organ playing in a cathedral. I stayed some while – time stood still in that place – held by the miraculous variety of notes, then left it to climb once more. A few paces above the little grove and the sweet sounds were gone.

Silence came with me out on to the open hillside, vast and still under the windless sky; children’s voices floated like distant bird-calls; it seemed nothing could break this immense stillness. Briefly something did: a young man passing close by speaking to his girlfriend in tones seeming shockingly loud and coarse – to be swallowed up only moments later as a blanket of silence fell once more.

So it continued for all that unreal afternoon: vast silent hillsides under a wide silent sky, till finally I descended through the curving avenue of sycamores in Happy Valley – the trees seeming even greyer and more spectral than usual in that uncanny air – till I heard the stream which emerges from the hillside here to flow fast alongside the path, displaying all the infinite sounds of its tiny relative on a larger scale till it too plunged hollowly underground – while I plunged on down to civilisation and the roar of the metropolis.

I was glad to reach it. I’d had enough of silence for that day.

OM

A DECLARATION ON LANDSCAPE FROM THE NATIONAL PARKS CONFERENCE

Letter by Paul Tabbush

LRG was recently consulted by Jim Bailey of National Parks England (NPE), seeking our views on the ‘Landscape Declaration’ made at the UK National Parks conference, North York Moors, September 2013. I think this consultation is important for us. My personal response is reproduced below (including the link to the declaration).

If you have a perspective on this consultation, please e-mail this to admin@landscaperesearch.org, and Paul Tabbush will collate views and respond again to National Parks England. Alternatively, of course, you may wish to respond to NPE directly.

Attention of Jim Bailey:

Dear Jim

Many thanks for your letter of 30 May enclosing a copy of the **Landscape Declaration**. LRG will certainly take an interest in this, and I am thinking of offering it to our newsletter Landscape Research Extra and seeking views from our members and Board. This will necessarily take a few weeks, and in the meanwhile I can only give you a personal reaction, which I hope you will find to be constructive:

I welcome the declaration as it puts Landscape at the heart of National Parks policy. It adopts the definition of Landscape adopted in the European Landscape Convention, and many ideas from the Convention. The ELC is strongly endorsed by the Landscape Research Group (LRG), and indeed we contributed to the debate that created it. I also welcome the items requiring ‘further thought’. In particular LRG has been giving some thought to the relationship between Landscape Character Assessment and decision-taking (there was a conference in Stockholm in March) and would welcome an opportunity to discuss this further.

In my (personal) view *'finding ways to help people understand and enjoy landscape'* underplays the need for increased accessibility; landscape value is principally realised through access, and *'the countryside'* is in many ways inaccessible to the 85% of us that live in cities (other than through a car or train window). Arguably it is the ranks of professionals and experts (I include myself here), and also politicians who need to learn to understand landscape, after all, landscape is created by people.

The last undertaking *'Ask our Governments to consider carefully the importance of the settings of our Protected Landscapes'* is interesting to me. I recognise the term *'settings'* from the National Ecosystems Assessment. We shall be debating the ways in which landscape might be valued at the Permanent European Conference on the Study of Rural Landscapes (PECSRL 2014) in Gothenburg in September.

While accepting that including ecosystem services in our economic sums is a step forward in that field, I don't think we should imagine that this is all that is needed to inform landscape decisions. It will probably not even prove to be the most important consideration. In other words, research into conservation policy and landscape decision-making needs to draw on a wide range of disciplines and research communities, and should not rely too heavily on economics. I hope this is helpful and we look forward to further discussions with National Parks England.

With kind regards,
Paul [Paul Tabbush] Chairman, LRG.

OUR VERY OWN MAD HATTER (GR) VISITS LUTON

The story goes:

I arrived at Luton Airport very late one evening too late to get me home to Wales that night so I booked into a

to do? It was a Saturday, clear and sunny, so I left my bags in left luggage and I sidled up to a local in the bus station. Pointing at my camera I asked about what I might usefully do in Luton over a morning, places to visit such as historic houses or parks or gardens within walking distance of the centre. He looked at me askance, grinned and said *"I'd get the hell out of here as quickly as possible, if I was you mate! There's nothing here!"*

I was shocked! Could Luton, or anywhere in the world for that matter, really be quite that bad? Also I was stuffed. I had to stay at least half a day and was desperately looked around me for interesting landmarks to prolong the conversation. What about that building over there? I asked, pointing at a Georgian-looking brick gable above the railway station. *"Oh that's Hightown, the seedy part of town, it's quite run down now"*. I politely thanked him for his time, bade farewell and made my way across the station forecourt over the ridge crossing the railway lines as words of Bob Dylan's song came to me, *'Only one thing I did wrong/ Stayed in Mississippi a day to long'*. Could Luton be my Mississippi, and would Hightown prove to be the *'wrong side of the tracks'*? — here in three of 25 street images is a taste of what I discovered.

GR

Editor's note

Gareth — mad in the nicest possible and most creative way.

Note Luton once celebrated for straw hat weaving.



simple hotel near the bus /railway station. Found myself early the next day with 3 hours to kill before my bus departed for Milton Keynes, so what

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: LRG Ltd, 1027A Garrett Lane London SW17 0LN. For disclaimer and addresses for editorial enquiries and administrative correspondence see the green box to the right.

www.landscaperesearch.org

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 Rosemary and Bud Young for the Landscape Research Group and distributed periodically to members worldwide as companion to its refereed main journal

Landscape Research.

Editorial enquiries:

Bud Young, Airphoto Interpretation,