

Landscape Research Extra 90 Final Issue May 2020



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BIKING ACROSS A VOLCANIC LANDSCAPE

Just before the Coronavirus outbreak William and Kristyna Young made an excursion with others to the Island of Lanzarote. The idea was to cycle a number of routes, some in company. He was asked by the editor to record some of the landscapes which he saw and offered me the following with his interpretations, those of an educated traveller not a geologist.



Above The view east from the village of Soo. Across a very sandy valley. Sand from the hills around and also blown up from the sea/beach at Caleta de Famara by the near constant (while we were there) north westerly breeze.



Above The coast next to Club las Santa on way towards village of Caleta de Caballo. Seriously sharp volcanic rocks poking through the sand.

Below On the road through the lava field of Parque Nacional de Timanfaya.



Below Further down the same road (LZ-67) about half way between Mancha Blanca and Yaiza. Lava fields covering the valley floor/plain



Below Same valley, back towards Mancha Blanca from Yaiza. Lava (?) in foreground going to hillside in back which seems to have escaped lava flow and - excitingly - has a fog growing on it strongly encouraged by a crescent wall of lava rocks intended - I think - to act as a wind break and encourage dew capture



Large square image On the outskirts of Mancha Blanca. This is what is normal as a field - many wind breaks over black soil (though I did not dig to check below the surface and I had heard tell that the islanders cover the redder underlying soil with black volcanic ash (ash?) for why I'm not sure



A LETTER FROM 'PROF GERT'

Dear Sarah, Dear Bud,

Thank you very much for your mail and the note of the forthcoming burial of Landscape Research Extra. I wish I could attend. Alas, Covid19 shot down too many of the viabilities across the Channel.

To bury LRE feels like burying part of me. Of course, I am aware death is inevitable. With increasing age I come closer to death every hour. So be it.

Following your modified "Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears ..." as LRE burial motto -- I unearthed my copy of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* from Abbey Library, London, printed in Romania which I had bought in August 1969 and reread Julius Caesar. Act III, Scene II.

With some comfort I learned from Antonius about Caesar's will:

"Moreover, he has left you all his walks,

His private arbours, and new planted orchards,

On this side Tiber; he has left them you,

And to your heirs for ever; common pleasures,

To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves".

Still fond of the unique volume "A Bedside Landscape Reader" and with best wishes

Gert

Prof. Dr.rer.hort.habil. Gert Groening

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CHAIRMAN DALGLISH TALKS OF LRGs AIMS

A little over 10 years ago, the LRG trustees began to explore the possibilities of moving our non-journal publications from print to digital media. The



transition has been a gradual one, first involving the development of our website and then the production of an e-newsletter, the use of social media and, most recently, the creation of podcasts. In drawing up

LRG's new Strategy (approved by trustees in 2019), the decision was taken to complete the process by expanding our digital publications and concluding production of LRE.

As a Group we have two main aims:

- to advance landscape research, including through its publication, communication and exchange;
- to foster and support an active community of interest, made up of people who share our desire to see landscape research thrive and contribute fully to the attainment of justice and sustainability in the world.

Under these headings, our priorities for the coming years include:

- disseminating research relating to LRG's current priorities and broader purpose;
- directly encouraging researchers to work across boundaries of discipline, sector, nation, culture and philosophy;
- enabling landscape researchers to engage more effectively with others in the public, private and civil sectors;
- supporting people in the early stages of their career;
- providing LRG members with better and more attractive opportunities to get involved;
- establishing and supporting active networks of people who share LRG's purpose and who wish to collaborate and communicate with each other.

To achieve these things, we will continue with established activities like our journal, events programme and research grants, and we will be bringing forward a number of major new initiatives that

will provide new means of communicating landscape research and help to develop a more active LRG community with greater opportunities and benefits for members.

One of the new initiatives is *Landscape Exchange*, our new digital resource and multimedia publication. This will enable LRG members to showcase their work, share case studies and examples, and connect with one another. *Landscape Exchange* will be open access, but only LRG members will be able to submit content. Over time, we will also add podcasts, videos and other material from our events and other activities, and material produced by the research projects we fund every year. A regular multimedia publication will be curated from the diverse content held in *Landscape Exchange*, with each issue being led by a small team including guest editors and others.

With this and other new initiatives in the pipeline, it is an exciting time. It is also an emotional time as we say goodbye to LRE, which has been such a feature of LRG life for so long. As a community and an organisation with a 50+ year history, LRG has of course evolved and, from time to time, we have also acted to change the way we do things. We recognised the need for change in the 1980s – and thanks again to Bud for leading the way then and for doing so much since for LRG and our members. Now, we are working hard to consolidate the expansion of our digital communications over the last 10 years and to jump forward again through the creation of *Landscape Exchange*.

Chris Dalglish, Chair Landscape Research Group

Image below: A space filler: Rosemary and Bud Young, Editors LRExtra.



LRE NOW HISTORY

Dear Members,

Today marks a significant moment, with the publication of the final issues of *Landscape Research Extra* on our website.

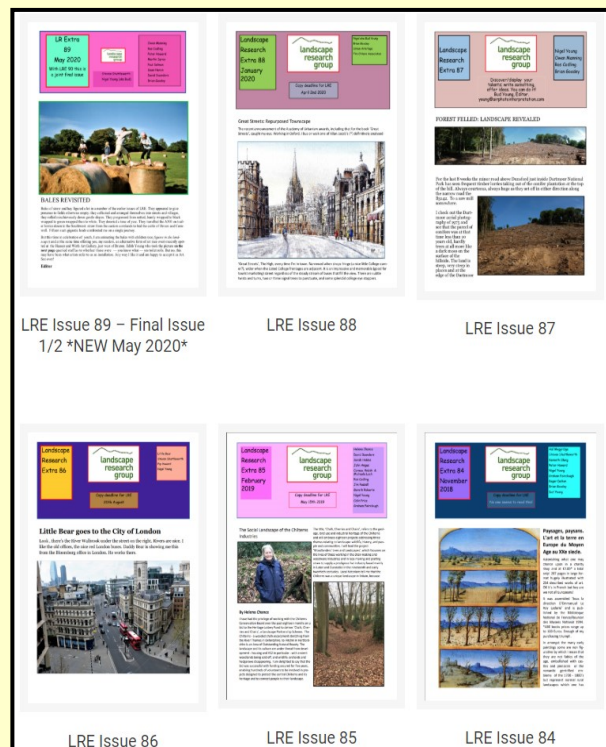
We've been publishing *Landscape Research Extra* since 1988 as an outlet for LRG news and for sharing informal commentary, thought pieces, creative work and descriptive landscape writing. Nigel (Bud) Young – LRE's editor throughout the 32 years – has been the driving force. Bud was also on LRG's executive committee from 1979 and then our board of trustees from 1983. Altogether, this is an incredible contribution to LRG's activities, recognised in 2009 when Bud was awarded honorary life membership.

On behalf of LRG, our trustees and all our members: thank you Bud for your commitment, service and creativity! It's clear from the pages of LRE and from comments from members that LRE has been valued and enjoyed.

We first began publishing a newsletter, called *Landscape Research News*, in 1968. This offered "a forum for the exchange of information between all those whose work may be concerned in some way with the landscape as human environment". It was designed to inform and improve practice by providing practitioners with access to the results of research (carried out both by other practitioners and by academics). In 1976, the name changed to *Landscape Research* to reflect the evolution of the publication from a newsletter to a journal, a journey which has led to the highly successful international peer-reviewed journal of the same name that we publish today.

From the mid-1980s, *Landscape Research* was less able to serve as an outlet for LRG's internal news and for more informal writings on landscape. *Landscape Research Extra* was created to meet this need. In its 32 years, 90 issues of the magazine have been published, all of which are available on our website. In 2019, a selection of the best writings from LRE was compiled by Bud and Owen Manning with Jim Denning and published as the book *A Bedside Landscape Reader*. Whether you are new to LRE or a long-time reader, I would encourage you to read the final issues (89 & 90) and delve into the archive.

Chris Dalglish



VERY SLOW LANDSCAPES

By Owen Manning

Shall we take car, or bus, or train, or bike -- or for once just *walk* ? Recently I wrote of the benefits of this exceedingly ancient way of experiencing our surroundings, on foot at walking pace: once a necessity of life, now for most of us a matter of mere choice. More recently I discovered a way of simplifying choice down to the ancient way of our forebears: break a bone (left arm upper in my case), which together with age and other handicaps has reduced me to a crawl. Add a radical house-move from posh to an almost-poor part of town, and changes of perspective result.

Different aspects of my surroundings start to signify; scale has shifted from grand to modest, character from understated Upper to unabashed Lower Suburban.

Erstwhile neighbouring properties were large to huge, some hidden down long drives or amongst towering conifers. The local girls' school occupied a gigantic ex-hotel, a St Pancras rival once with its own station access; their sports field stretched to infinity opposite, their privileged pupils swamped the pavements. The boys' college occupied a parade of splendid Victorian Gothic (its chapel rivalling Eton's, one was told), in park-like grounds, money visible everywhere. The residential landscape around and between, seen at a vigorous stride, was one of stone walls, monumental hedges, and little variety, but splendid trees, roof-lines and views. People one rarely saw, in this motor age.

My new surroundings are refreshingly different. Here I occupy a brick 1950's council house like most of my neighbours (if not bungalows); many still rent, hence the council repair vans. Gardens are mostly open to view, privet-hedged, low-walled or fenced (get rid of that chainlink, advised a friend; nothing says *council* more clearly. Embedded in glorious Japanese quince, mine stays.)

Gardens themselves are ample but nondescript (mine won't be); gnomes crop up amongst the tulips, but cars and wheelies dominate. Trees, street or garden, are scarce – I plan as many as possible despite warnings (think of the problems you'll leave, says my friend; I couldn't care less). People conversely are not scarce; pensioners including me with their wheeled shopping bags, friends, couples, families, schoolchildren all sizes and colours; the flow is constant past my school-surrounded corner plot. Scooters abound; three in a row passed my front garden: toddler, older sister, followed (I swear) by a parent. Footballs and bikes fill the air, so surprisingly does politeness: 'Whoops' as a small

boy swerves round me on a corner; 'Sorry, my fault' floats in his wake. Parent-child relations seem impeccable; teenage obscenity is rare, litter also; vandalism also save for the Council mowing verges flat to keep the flowers down.

Between Council zone and high street shops lies an older area rich in detail inherited from the 19th century. Differences between one terrace and a neighbour may be slight – flat or arched lintels here, moulded and elaborated there, eaves varied likewise and chimney stacks if these narrow streets allowed me to see – slight but pleasing variation at my laboured pace. Mere builders' whims most of these perhaps, yet no worse than seen in estates now being thrown up at speed to meet current targets, absurdly named (Bedford, Buckingham etc) according to size, the grandest of course being 'self-detached' (a cat can walk between), yet hardly larger inside than mine. Gardens become more and box-like.

By comparison, though the grain may be tight this inner zone still allows frontages large enough for personal expression (while too small for parking, which has to be fought for), and their variety is delightful (I never saw wisteria grown as a *shrub* before). There is a richness missing in the council zone: of trees especially, crowding corners, seen over walls of older properties, for the area is part of a wider mosaic of both older and more recent development: freer altogether than Council rules allowed here. Little corner pubs appear to be flourishing; a French patisserie can be found only yards from a backyard MOT. Quirks and anomalies abound: a car parked in a garden as though for sale has garden growing through the windows, an entire house has entrances blocked by greenery, one bungalow's frontage boasts a 'national collection' of Japanese maples, another is crammed by dozens of plant pots.

Buildings are tucked in anywhere allowed by complex topography, enlivening my slow urban crawls. Best of all, the area is threaded by pedestrian alleys – that essential ingredient of a satisfying townscape, now wilfully neglected by planners (the housing ghettos spreading everywhere have none).

Scruffily casual these areas may be, but there can be beauty and even grandeur here: a row of bungalow gables and chimneys curving away into the sunset, a high street blazing with frontages, street lights and evening traffic glimpsed unexpectedly as it rose towards dark trees and the darker bulk of the Malvern Hills beyond, outlined against a vividly glowing winter evening the kind of scene that reminds an urban dweller why he puts up with the place.

OM

THE LAND BETWEEN THE MOORS

By Peter Howard

Winkleigh, the small town where I live, is the part of Devon without tourists: a part which has been very largely 'invisible'. An upcoming book on *The Land between the Moors* (that is between the two National Parks of Dartmoor and Exmoor) will describe and analyse the area in great detail. There, as a contributor, I discuss the extraordinary invisibility of this mid Devon area, ignored by writers, artists, and the tourist industry, yet representing 40% of the most popular tourist county in England. But tourists go to the sea coast, to the cities, Exeter and Plymouth, and to sites on the two great moorlands.

Landscape quality: landscape quantity

In 1942 the prolific writer H.V. Morton wrote of the way localism was enforced by the war. He wrote: '*I, who once thought of England as a whole, and was in the habit of going to Cornwall or Cumberland on the spur of a moment, have not left my parish for months. Neither do I wish to do so; my parish has become England*'.

My limited landscape certainly makes me appreciate what I have, not only the road to Hatherleigh, but also my small garden. In times of lock down one might begin to think that 'landscape quantity' is less significant than 'landscape quality' and that idea leads to the judgement of quality. Plenty of ink has been spilt on this question, not least by myself. Although there are many definitions of landscape, quite apart from the ELC's definition as '*an area perceived by people*' there is no doubt that **landscape is a two-sided business**. There has to be a perceiver --- '*Landscape*' is what happens when we come along! So is it still there when we have left? Presumably there can be no landscape where there has never been any perceiver. Does it follow that the most significant landscapes are those with the largest number of perceivers ... does Kensington Gardens outrank Dartmoor?

Although there will be major disagreements about what represents quality in landscape, few would quibble that we should improve it, if only we could agree where the target was. Such questions have always been dominated by those who presume that improvement consists of making changes in or on the land --- to add a hedge or a well sited clump of trees? This could be regarded as the supply side of the equation; and we do need to increase the quantity of what we perceive to be good landscape. But there is a demand side also, which is very widely ignored. The reason why certain places are reckoned to be target landscapes, places to be experienced may not come from an immutable law, either of religion, or aesthetics or ecology. It comes from

education, exposure to the ideas of 'those who know'.

Over centuries people have been taught which places are attractive, taught by artists, writers, poets, even occasionally musicians, and more recently by film, television, and radio programmes. Our landscape preferences in the early 21st century are significantly different from those of the great age of English landscape painting around the time of the Napoleonic Wars. Today's preferences are not a complete break with those earlier ones, they are a development, with a few major shifts, such as in the 1870s, when at last we learned to love moorland, fen, fells, marshes, or in the 1930s when we discovered the English farmhouse and village. In recent times, habitat loss and climate change are clearly driving a huge shift in our perceptions of garden beauty: garden design at the Chelsea Garden Show points this up --- but the new garden is not merely seen as ecologically efficient --- the creative industries have now made it desirable..

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Landscape demand: landscape supply

This demand side of landscape became very obvious to me when, having studied landscape as an historical geographer I found myself in an Art School where 'landscape studies' was concerned with changing attitudes to landscapes. Painters looked at a post-modern landscape, the 'New Topographics Photographers' and a whole history of shifting preferences of landscape over 200 years and more, continually discovering new landscape attractions. I wrote about this in *An Introduction to Landscape* (see foot note reference).

Altering the demand side of landscape may be at least as effective in improving landscape quality as tree planting or reshaping slopes by shifting earth to alter the supply side. If what we actually have are mountains and lakes left by clay mining, then 'give

them a fancy title, and set up a painting and poetry competition, and before long people will love this place’.

Improving the landscape can mean either changing the look of the land or changing the mindset of the perceiver. Just as the current extraordinary circumstances have for most of us, reduced the supply of landscape to a trickle --- I am talking here of my walks along the Hatherleigh road --- so the demand side can be improved so that we learn to love that trickle, that local detail. As we emerge from this dreadful period (the Covid 19 lockdown), we have the opportunity to change the world. We have the chance to eradicate this dreadful drug of constant travel, which is endemic among academics just as it is among the tourist public. We can eradicate it just as we eradicate other addictions. We need to relearn how to read the universe in a grain of sand.

PH

THE BEIJING CENTRAL AXIS: TENTATIVE PROPOSAL FOR WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION

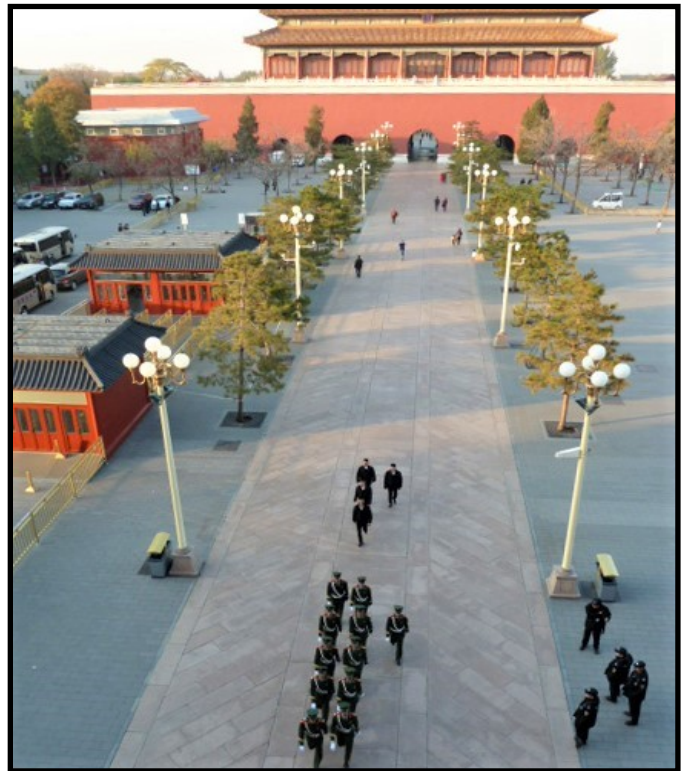
By Ken Taylor

In October 2019 Beijing Municipal Authority held a symposium with 14 invited international experts and 30 Chinese experts to discuss progress and documentation on the World Heritage nomination of the Beijing Central Axis (BJA). In effect this is a review of the city’s ancient and modern urban planning achievements from a modern perspective. Heritage components of BCA have been identified and selected based on the interpretation of their cultural values, ie their intangible cultural heritage associations rather than their materiality. Informing an overall context and theme is the compelling intangible concept of memories and emotions for ‘*it is in people’s memories and emotions that the place is constructed after repeated encounters and complex relationships*’ (Heidegger). Deconstructing the BCA as an historic urban cultural landscape is not a simple task given that a number of the building complexes are already on the World Heritage list. How do we define and fix boundaries for what is in effect a linear space and an idea reflecting a rich cultural history? Nevertheless it is an innovative proposal in the context of World Heritage language

and criteria for establishing Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).



The core area of Beijing old city has a symmetrical layout, guided, controlled and created by a base line running through the main hall of the palace city. It



has undergone more than 750 years of evolution, surviving from the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties to this day. It has a total length of 7.8 kilometres, stretching from the Bell and Drum Towers to Yongdingmen.

In constructing Dadu, the Yuan capita in 1267, a location was chosen on the northeast bank of Jishuitan lake as the capital’s centre, where the Central Platform and the Central Tower were built. This location was also the northern tip of Dadu’s central axis. From this central point, the capital’s central axis extended southward to reach the tree (known as

“General Tree”) outside Lizhengmen Gate. The palace city was constructed on the central axis. Later, the outer city’s four walls were positioned, with the Central Platform as the central point. When the outer city was completed, locations of ancestral temples, ceremonial altars and government offices were determined and neighbourhoods and streets demarcated. Planning the new capital’s layout and central axis by establishing the tree as its benchmark had a symbolic meaning to expect peace and prosperity. In overview the following are the historical markers.

1267 Construction of Dadu.

1407 The inner city constructed.

1420 The Forbidden City constructed.

1529 The Jiajing emperor re-established the ritual system of offering prayers to Heaven and Earth at separate locations and ordered the construction of the Altars of the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth outside of the city.

1553 The outer city constructed and the central axis extended to Yongdingmen.

1749 Hall of Imperial Longevity built in the central north of Jinshan Hill and the Five Pavilions built on hilltop the next year.

1914 The Altar of Land and Grain opened as a park and the Thousand-Step Corridor area opened as a citizen square.

1915 The wengcheng barbican of Zhengyangmen removed and construction of modern traffic network accelerated

1949 The ceremony for the founding of new China held at Tiananmen Square.

1958-1959 Tiananmen Square underwent renovation, with the construction of the Monument to the People’s Heroes in the centre and the Great Hall of the People, the Museum of Chinese Revolution and the Museum of Chinese History constructed on either side.

2004-2005 Yongdingmen Gate Tower reconstructed.

idea lies in its associated rituals, memories, identity, cultural values and meanings. It is a cultural landscape place of urban memory with some focus on collective memory and Chinese interpretations of this. Personally I found it inspirational in all its rich mosaic of intertwined meanings. What will be interesting is to see how it fares in its bid for World Heritage recognition.

I am conscious of the fact that trying to cover something like the BCA in a brief overview is difficult to say the least. Nevertheless I hope it gives food for thought, not least on the often felt tension between aspects of the tangible and intangible in landscape discourse.

KT

COLOUR AS A DOMINANT FACTOR IN LANDSCAPE ART

By Margaret Garlake

Dear Editor

Some time ago you asked me to send you a paragraph; I wrote one & if you still want it, here it is. If it's too late, no matter.

When one can fly in a few hours from chilly winter London to an African beach, it's very easy to forget the distance one travels, not only in miles but culturally and environmentally. We have managed to shrink the world's landscapes to the extent that almost anywhere we go (I exclude both poles) can appear superficially familiar. As an art historian I am convinced that artists can help us to see the familiar in very different ways, so that we are able to reinterpret it.

The painters who lived and worked in Cornwall in the 1950s and '60s -- I'm thinking of Peter Lanyon, Terry Frost, Ben Nicholson among others -- gave us a new visual vocabulary in which colour was the dominant factor. Lanyon's paintings especially evoke that scrubby green grass interspersed with small, hazardous rocks, a wider landscape in which nothing much will grow but an area of enormous beauty as well as considerable poverty. Lanyon, who lived all his life in the county was all

In the site visits prior to the symposium discussions it became clear that a critical element of the BCA



too well aware of its dependence on tourism, which he deplored but no doubt acknowledged as essential. No other painter has reproduced the green of Cornwall's grass, the grey of the ubiquitous granite outcrops or the constantly shifting skies with such extraordinary accuracy, yet all his work is more or less abstract; only his colour 'represents' what we see.

I wonder then, are our visual perceptions of landscape essentially extended by factors that often have little or nothing to do with sight? Sitting in my very comfortable basement in central London and gazing at two large dustbins and a spectacular scarlet tulip, I know that this is so and that my personal urban landscape has been rendered unfamiliar by a disturbing lack of sound, even of footfall. No cars, no people, not even an occasional dog.

The unfamiliarity is interesting but I am looking forward to the return of urban complexity!

Best wishes,
Margaret Garlake, Art Historian and Author

Painting "St Just" Tate Britain. by Peter Lanyon.

LANDSCAPE LESSONS FROM A GASHOLDER!

By Terry O'Regan

The more visually dramatic features of our cultural landscapes evolved in a series of phases or eras over centuries past – a visual timeline of the progress of civilisations. Those that come readily to my mind

might include the eras of water-mills, windmills, tower houses, walled towns, canals, railways and more. The era of gasworks probably does not immediately come to mind for most landscape folk, despite the fact that gasworks were part of the fabric of most European cities and towns from the early 1800's until the mid to late 1900's (there were 125 on the island of Ireland in the early 1900's). They even figure in some well-known song lyrics – Ewan McCall's 'Dirty Old Town, David Bowie's 'Uncle Arthur', Boomtown Rats 'Rat Trap' and most poignantly for me Phil Coulter's 'The Town I

Loved so Well'.

The absence of landscape recognition for gasworks may have had a little to do with the fact that they were typically located on the edge of urban areas, close to rivers, often in industrial zones and they were perceived as being smelly, noisy and dirty!

Visually they were defined in the landscape by their gasholders – massive cylinders constructed to store coal gas – the gas initially fuelled street lighting – on January 2nd 1829 the mile long Quay was the first street in Waterford City to be lit by gas light, provided by the newly formed Waterford Gas Company. The report in the Waterford Mirror on the 9th January 1826, *concluded by saying the effect was nearly like that of public illuminations, we heard nobody complain of the smell.* Later coal gas would progressively fuel cooking, heating and industrial processes.

Growing up in the 1950's on the Waterford City Gasworks I little realised that I was part of the end of an era that was to become part of the landscape lyric of my life. The City of Waterford Gas Company celebrated its centenary in 1958 having been incorporated on the 28th June according to the Journals of the House of Lords, Vol 90, the City of Waterford Gas Act was passed on that date – *an Act for incorporating the City of Waterford Gas Company; and for authorizing them to acquire the existing Gasworks at Waterford; and to supply Gas, and for other purposes.*

That centenary was celebrated in 1958 in Waterford, its significance passed over my young head at the time; but in a few short years coal gas production would be replaced by oil gas and by the 1980's natural gas would end the era of gasworks as we had known them. They would be demolished and decontaminated - few traces remaining in the landscape with the exception of a few street names and artefacts such as the gasworks footbridge that fea-

tured in my earlier article (see *A Bedside Landscape Reader*, 2018).

The Waterford gasworks in various ways marked out a life-path that I only comprehended in later years drawing on recollections of simple family interactions with the workings of the enterprise and more tangled engagements with other players and stakeholders in a landscape closer to Lowry than Constable.

With the benefit of hindsight I can now see that whilst my early years in and around the Waterford Gasworks opened doors and offered crossroad



Children of the family in the early 1960s with huge gas-holder over the wall below this text. The author crouches in the middle of the group

choices that stimulated my perception and awareness leading me to wonderful landscapes in Ireland and across Europe; the experience also kept me well grounded in the realisation that the everyday landscapes that provide the life stage set for most of us are every bit as important as the pretty scenes that decorated the covers of chocolate boxes and fill tourism brochures.

How the Gasholder called the shots on Christmas Day.

One of my memories of 1950's Waterford City Christmas Days was the sound of the cap guns in the streets from early morning as children played cowboys with their presents. The cap gun was popular and came with a red roll of percussion caps.

As the morning advanced the sound became more sporadic as the caps ran out and children were called in home for Christmas dinner. The said dinner in the majority of households in Waterford was cooked in a gas oven. The gas was produced from coal at the Gasworks on Waterside adjoining a small tributary of the River Suir known as 'The Pill'. Our father Joe O'Regan was the manager at

the time and we lived on the gasworks with the gas-holder at the end of the garden. Town gas was manufactured from coal in a retort house – a dramatic if dirty process of fire, smoke, steam and noise. Each night the stokers toiled under difficult hot, dusty conditions to fill the gas holder to supply the city's cooking and industrial fuel needs the following day. We lived with a moving landscape!

Christmas day was the one day in the year when everyone cooked at the same time and crucially cooked for many hours steadily emptying the gas holder. Our father would be up much of the night checking with the stokers that the plant was working at full capacity. From mid-morning on Christmas Day the gasholder would begin to drop and the constant refrain in the house was '*how high is the holder over the garden wall*'. The hope would be that everyone's Christmas dinner would be cooked before the holder dropped below the top of our garden wall. If the phone rang there would be an immediate sense of tension in case it was a report of 'no gas' on the streets at the 'top' of the town.

We ourselves did not sit down to dinner until late in the festive day when the peak demand had passed and the holder had begun to stabilise. Other children had their cap guns but in our house the gas holder called the shots on Christmas Day!

T O'R

LANDSCAPE IN LOCK-DOWN

By Brian Goodey

As the editor has come to expect, this text is a late arrival. The lock-down actually encouraged an earlier submission which reflected time day dreaming landscapes from music selected at my desk. The editor suggested that the esoteric range might mean rather more to me, than to the reader; try it on at close below.

Far from closing down the mind on landscape and space, enforced home based life brings into focus images and experiences sidelined by electronic momentum. This is not to say that these retrievals are better, or even deserve retention once a new 'normal' is achieved.

The first is that with very limited views from the window, gardening and the occasional walk, the **insistent dominance of the natural world returns**, not the least in patterns of viral spread and distribution. Wayside plants re-assert themselves, through dominant calls, bird behaviour, as distinct from mere 'spotting', requires understanding, and the availability of water, light and air quality are noted.

This is a world I recall in immediately post-war visits to family seniors in Essex, where the essential vegetable garden was both eaten and admired.

My neighbour spends much of the day on his nearby allotment, combining exercise with a **quiet place (1)**; I make do with top of the garden spots. On walks we find solitaires resting, evasively, in out of the way corners, drawing strength from commonplace views which take on new value. I have not acted on the impulse to sketch in a county where draconian police powers are promised although I have not seen a police presence in this village for over a year.

I have re-discovered the pleasure of **knowing rather than going to** a place. Earlier LRE contributions have largely reflected on land- or townscapes discovered after substantial journeys. Being space-restricted has represented a substantial change in habit, but a combination of the local 2 ½ inch map and sorting books at the back of the cupboard has helped. Field paths good/stiles bad but a chance to work out why paths exist and how they relate to an earlier working landscape. Encounters with W.G. Hoskins and Jack Simmons helped **(2)** but it was the spasmodic availability of flour in the local shops that began the enquiry.

Most local footpaths hereabouts spread from the village focus to isolated farms and in Christaller-like webs to neighbouring villages. Soon, however, you realise that the mill, whether hilltop or water-side, was another major goal. But where was 'our' mill? Delving into the early map file, I realise that we have recently passed its site and that relic planting may help us with location.

Another book from the cupboard was Ford's *The Landscape of England* published in the Batsford 'English Life' series in 1933 **(3)** and representing an holistic view of regional landscapes and scenery before quality designation and professional subdivision of our subject. It marks the transition between often idiosyncratic, pen and ink sketchbook volumes and the view-defining photographs that came to dominate newspapers and magazines until television followed on. Ford recognised this transition - a critic of his manuscript had described it as 'England from an aeroplane' and the author admitted that what was lacking is 'leisurely description and personal impression.'

The '**leisurely description and personal impression**' were exhibited in the same year's publication of Donald Maxwell's *A Detective in Essex: Landscape Clues to Chapters in our Island Story (4)* in which he describes a carrier, Tween, who offering a personal service for any item needed in Chelmsford by those in one of my ancestral village of Good Easter. The service seems once more familiar. In my area of south Northamptonshire, the journalist

Byron Rogers, has continued this tradition of local insight. **(5)**

Popular local stories and rumour continue to embellish life in landscapes where the walls of stone, planting, distance ... and 21st century security ... mark out fame. Notoriety, class and privilege. Was Ginger Spice a nearby local resident? How has the nearby motor racing industry of Silverstone shaped the restoration, garaging and landscapes of major houses, and what is the substance behind rumoured drug barons and musicians?

We need no detection to continue to enjoy, on permitted exercise walks, the treed landscape developed by Lord Heseltine at nearby Thenford. Here a public footpath crosses the property and his unique contemporary arboretum is normally open to view. But the 20th century pattern of local big houses, interlinked families and activities beloved of popular rumour, still provides room for enquiry. In completing a monograph on the now demolished Victorian manor house opposite, I was recently told that during World War II De Gaulle held secret negotiations there. A 75 year old story still in oral tradition has led to De Gaulle's chef d'equipe and a political divorce, does it lead to more?

Desk research and reading stimulate thought, but there still remains **the thirst to experience the landscape**, restricted at present and, possibly, a warning as age presses on. Both the shortlist of local town spaces and regular railside views is a reminder of weekly routines broken. It has taken a local landscape architect to remind Banbury, its Council and this writer that Dame Sylvia Crowe was born there and that several of her local design schemes deserve conservation. I need to see them.

Yes, there are photo files and film media to carry me further with mental re-enactments to populate the scenes. There are new landscapes and ways of looking at landscape contrived by innovative film technicians and producers. For enveloping me in the concept of landscape as actor, I would nominate the 2018 South Korean film '*Burning*'. For introducing a new landscape and jolting unwarranted stereotypes, the Kluisbos Forest in the Belgian Ardennes, scene of the Flemish series *Thieves of the Wood* on Netflix, joins the bucket list.

The bucket list of landscape context visits was the theme of my initial playlist and the interplay of music and landscape memories cannot be ignored here – there will and should be more rainy days!

I previously laid out the link in a note on the Hill country of Texas and the non-town of Luckenback **(6)**. The most potent links remain those between American vernacular music in place. Far from conjuring up the implied horse farm territory of Kentucky, 'Bluegrass' as a specific string music style takes me to Brown County, Indiana. It was there

that I first heard the music's inventor, Bill Monroe, perform to local Sunday crowds in a wood surrounded barn. The music's now ebbed and flowed for three generations but the image remains.

I also achieved my teenage wish to get to New Orleans by the early 1960's and experienced the end of a musical era which, though revived in the 1940's, involved musicians from the effective 'beginning of jazz'. New Orleans moves with the times, but both city and surroundings are punctuated by the places and spaces of music making.

Like music, writing styles rise and fall in fashion, losing publishing favour, re-evaluating, finding new audiences. Whilst the 'leisurely description and personal impression' of LRE may flout the professional rigor of academic enquiry, it may, at this enforced time of reflection, offer much to an emerging audience. See you sometime, somewhere ... and the setting will always be –scape.

BG

Notes and references

1. Didn't get the exposure when published. See the 'Quiet' city series e.g. Sibhan Wall *Quiet Paris*, Frances Lincoln, 2013. Series includes landscapes and townscapes in London, New York, Amsterdam and Los Angeles.

2. To be specific, W.G. Hoskins, *The Face of the Parish* The Countryman XLIX (1) Spring 1954, pp42-46 & Jack Simmons, *Parish History* in *Parish and Empire : Studies and Sketches*, London : Collins :1952, 115-127

3. Charles Bradley Ford *The Landscapes of England*, London : B.T. Batsford,1933

4. Donald Maxwell *A Detective in Essex: Landscape Clues to Chapters in our Island Story*, London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1933

5. Byron Rogers *The Green Lane to Nowhere : The Life of an English Village* London: Aurum:2002

6. Brian Goodey, 'Little Big Land : The Hill Country of Texas.' In *A Bedside Landscape Reader*, Ed. Bud Young & Owen Manning, Oxford : Landscape Research Group, 2019, pp 45-9.

Pictures from the top downwards

1 Preservation Hall, New Orleans 1963. Where old musicians meet, still the same in 2018.

2 A jam session in the 'town centre' of Luckenback, Texas, late 1980's.

3 Parade musicians lining up for a Funeral, New Orleans, 1963.

4 Bill Monroe & his Bluegrass Boys, Beanblossom, Indiana c1964.



PATHS

By Eleanor Young

Do you remember that weekend before lockdown kicked in? It is hard to remember when it was, days are telescoping now. But it was glorious. And it felt like the last chance, though we didn't know how long for. There were hundreds of people on the paths around the city, thronging the canal tow path and river walks.

We struck out to climb the hills that surround Bath, stretching our legs alongside grander Georgian houses and villas. We followed fields bordered by springtime suburbia along the contour, fragrance of *Daphne* wafting on one side, on the other, leaves urging themselves towards pushing out of their buds.

And after an aerobic climb, the stiff-kneed descent, back towards the city. We find an old drungway, part the enclosure of a green lane and part alleyway, cutting through fields and the soft limestone walls of old cottages. And time telescopes again as I imagine geese being driven to Fair from the country. Or the returning traveller with familiar river bends now in sight, slowly joining other travellers in the market day crowd.

Now I have walked more, my rationed daily exercise outing taking me on the back ways used to join more ambitious routes in my guide, Andrew Swift's *Country Walks from Bath*. Onto the ancient green of Bathampton Down thinking of Mesolithic arrow heads and Bronze Age barrows. And finding new lines of descent, zig zag paths borrowing the line of the inclined plane, the small tramway that once brought stone down from quarries above, to build the city as it now stands.

Picking though the jungley limestone undercliff of creepers and sudden drops I wonder whether a virus wiped out the dinosaurs, I think of the black death and biblical plagues no longer as a story but as people's reality. But most of all I think about the hills, the smells and sights of this landscape as spring flowers burst into life and of the people who have made their paths here before. People separated by time but in the very same place, less than the required 2m away.

Eleanor Young writes on architecture, and is Editor of the RIBA Journal

Image: The remains of an inclined plane tramway that brought stone down from the quarries, Bathampton. Cross refer to Bath Stone and the Urban Landscape, LRE 76.



LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN THE ARCTIC

By Janette Kerr

In 2016 I travelled to the High Arctic on a tall ship. This winter I spent 6 weeks living in the remote and rural town of Skagaströnd in northwest Iceland. The opportunity to draw and paint in landscapes of vast granite mountains, snow and drifting mist, is compelling. It doesn't do



to be too prescriptive about what might emerge during such trips since place, weather, and circumstances encountered are all factors in development - which is how it should be on an art residency, a degree of chance-taking.

While in Skagaströnd I start to re-read Nan Shepherd's seminal book *The Living Mountain*.¹ She talks about initially being obsessed with reaching

peaks and summits, not considering 'What more there is [that] lies within the mountain'. Skagaströnd lies at the foot of the mountain ridge Spákonufell, the summit tantalizingly near yet so far at the time of year I am there. There are tracks up accessible in summer months, and there are discussions about maybe walking part way up, but I'm not sure of the need or even if it's wise to even try. Plus there is so much else below it to explore, so much within the surrounding landscape below. Shepherd also writes of walking amongst the elements, of how the elements are ungovernable, unpredictable. Here in Skagaströnd, as in the high arctic, weather changes so fast you just don't mess with it. Looking up at this mountain is enough; it's different everyday, cloud and snowstorms changing its shape and angles, sometimes it disappears completely. The wind's intensity varies — it too comes and goes, mostly it's there, I go to sleep and wake to the sound of it. I realise how tiring this weather is when I'm out drawing. Maybe it's the combination of the constant sound of wind blowing and buffeting me — its relentlessness together with the intensity of the cold. There is so much snow.

Travelling through a white landscape — snow covered, snow blowing horizontally, no horizon, no way of telling scale, apart from when I look at the road, and even that is disappearing. My eyes searches for anything that might give some clue. A paler shade of white suggesting the edge of a hill, a glow that might be the hidden sun; a darker shade of white — maybe a rock face, or just a bit of grass poking through the snow. I wonder about what it's like to walk in this, about the difference between a snowstorm and a blizzard. It's unnerving, a kind of blindness, a day whiteout. Walking along the beach beyond the town, striking inland away from the sea across large snow-covered areas, it's hard to focus if I just look into the blank white expanse around me. Yet the more I walk here the more I start to read the snow. I notice faint changes in the surface; lines and ripples where blown snow forms ridges making blue shadows, smooth flat areas where snow is thick and deep and I sink up to my knees. A sparkle as snow turns to ice with a harder crusty surface where it's safer to walk; tufts of pale grass and dark rock sticking through soft snow where it's shallow; smooth shiny translucent bluish areas of ice where my feet will slip if I'm not careful, de-

spite my crampons. Sometimes there are footprints — animal, bird, human; often there are none.

Change seems so fast here, or maybe it's just that I'm really looking and noticing — the constant freezing and unfreezing and re-freezing, the cracking and groaning of ice, the silent shifting, slippery softness, slushy thickness, thin, hard, transparent, translucent, opaque, the shiny, hard rock over soft snow, black brown earth mingling with ice.

I pack my sketchbook and head along the sea wall to the bridge and the beach. Snow streams across the path in front of me. Inhaling freezing air makes it difficult to breathe; snow driving into my face hurts. I pause; the wind is so strong that maybe this is not a wise thing to be doing. I can hardly see across the beach; already I've disappeared from view into clouds of snow. So I sit on the edge of the bridge beside a mass of strewn blocks of ice lying in heaps on the beach, and attempt to put something down on the paper.

Attempting to capture such a landscape is challenging. From first mark to last - a mark put down rapidly, then another, and another; wind blowing paint, water freezing on paper, icy grit blown and mixing with drawn marks. Time passes; marks piling up over each other, contradicting, obliterating, destroying, complimenting, and reinforcing each other. The act of drawing — paint and charcoal moving across the page - marks present becoming marks past, marks past overlaid fusing with marks present, anticipating future marks.

How long have I been drawing — a few minutes, half an hour, an hour? I draw until I'm so cold I have to stop, until everything starts to disintegrate. I seem to be stirring paint around on the paper - a bit like painting with cottage cheese. This is completely madness - my hands are numb, paint running everywhere then freezing despite vodka in the water (maybe I should just drink it). In a strange way my drawing reflects what is happening in the landscape. Time to quit while I can still move. Between gusts I struggle back to the studio singing loudly to myself, remembering all those explorers who suffered far worse conditions (some survived). I stride into the wind, head down, eyes and face stinging as hard snow hits me. It's exhilarating; at this moment I wouldn't be anywhere else.

Out there, as William Hazlett² suggests, ‘*we can experience the new, even if such knowing means only to touch at nature’s vast strangeness*’.

JK

Notes

1 Nan Shepherd, *The Living Mountain: A Celebration of the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland*. 1st published by Aberdeen University Press in 1971, (recent pub. Canongate Books).

2 William Hazlett *On Going a Journey* in Essays of William Hazlett, pub 1822, p 92

About the author. For the last 10 years, Janette Kerr has focused on Shetland and the far north. Kerr is not somebody who makes meticulous studies of landscape. Beyond mere topography, but with a nod towards the Northern Romantic tradition in landscape painting, her practice remains contemporary and experimental. ‘*Walking and making work en-plein-air is integral to my process of making work – observing, recording, and collecting images is a kind of slow filming*’.

BRYN MELIN LANE

by Colin Price

There were four lanes running from our village – the Llanrwst–Abergele road apart – dividing up a land-use patchwork: green sheep pastures, hedgerows, spinneys, fields of tillage; a work of gentle nineteenth century art for aesthetes’ abstract praise, yet seldom seen.

Seat-a-Lane had wooden seats! it climbed a shoulder on the straight and scenic townward line; Farm-a-Lane split Dyffryn Aur’s collective barns and sheds; Telegraph Lane was wooden-poled, a route to far-away, or to define with Cae’r Ceiliog Farm the day’s objective.

Bryn Melin Lane took off below the chapel (where each Sunday I was sent to sing not clearly understood, but well-remembered hymns in Welsh); traversed a bank of bramble-dappled hedgerows, skeins of cobbles covering its rutty surface, down to a brooklet’s brims.

Beyond the shallow, picturesquely rippled ford, the lane went north towards Llanddoget, situated distantly outside our village curtilage; it rose across a copiously sheep-stippled sward, on which the white woodcutter’s cottage cogitated at our customary landscape’s very edge.

Then Nant-y-glyn: which was – or else had been – a genteel place of people who aspire to grand farm schemes, and took a leisured overview of land use, quite unlike the bustle seen

among the sties and yards of Dyffryn Aur where work was work, and leisure just a residue.

* * *

On one remembered day of spacious sun we wandered down Bryn Melin Lane: dance and dawdle, done by turn. It must have been the summit of high summer, one of childhood’s summers when it never rained, and cobbles lay encased in white clay dust.

What caused the accident, I cannot tell, but guess that I connected with the shoulder of a proud-protruding stone, and fell; one temple glanced against a laneside boulder; a second’s silence, then the pain; an older sister dragged me home, where I might yell with less disturbance of the public calm, and more effect in mobilising private balm. I owned a handkerchief, which had a kitten, blue jacketed, embroidered in one corner: some fore-telling instinct made it remedy for falls, soaked in icy water, pressed against the temple smitten by the rock, a cold compress of comfort – and that is all that memory recalls.

* * *

I once went back: Bryn Melin Lane was much like other lanes in rural Wales; unwritten in grand travelogues; unmarked, unless by people’s daily lives; unpraised – but such that cobbled farm tracks – and the cold-comfort kitten – stay embroidered on the corner of eternal consciousness.

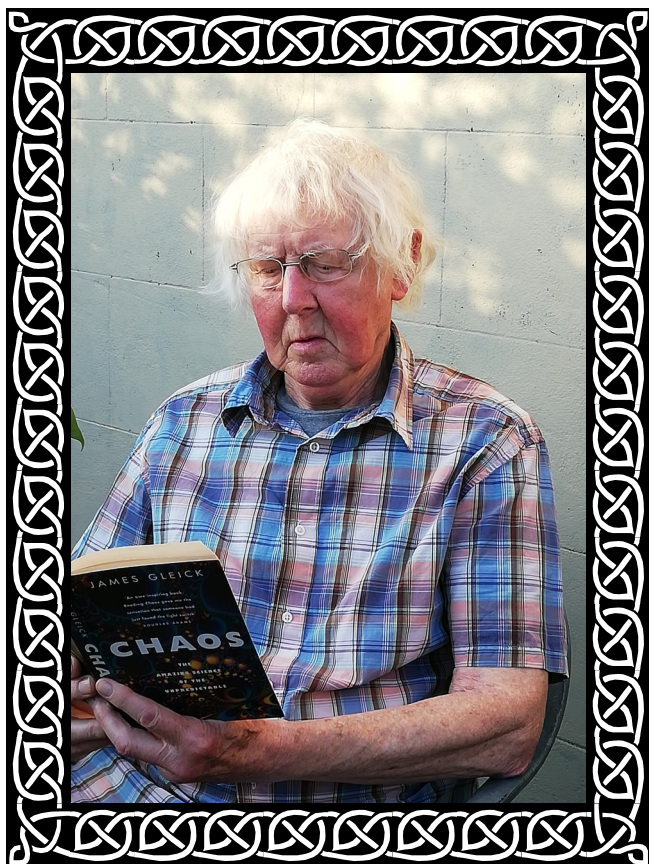
CP

Evening message to a landscape colleague. From Russell Good

Just come back from a lazy mountain bike ride on my trusted friend enriched with memorable images to store away. Beautiful herb flora that is spurging through the understorey. Grass verges dancing with *myositis*, pink campion, hatchling oaks, gorse and the deep blue sky captured by our native bells. Such detail in the picturesque. And with old tenant farms contributing to a unique vernacular comprised of iron sheet and corrugated roofs, natural stone and brick, tumbling stock fences in a quiet backwater located in this post industrial mining landscape of The Shropshire Hills AONB. Burbling brooks, lambs, and larks, there is almost the sublime. Must go and gather some wood for the multi fuel stove. Rain is on the way and wood is our only fuel for the time being.

RG

Russell Good is Deputy Course Director MA Landscape Architecture, Birmingham City University. And who is the friend? I am not referring to the bike.



Commemorating Owen Manning.

I place a complex Celtic frame around this image which gives an indication of a man always aware of ideas, places, people. A man who even a week ago had a lot of things in mind to do. A good way to go!

Owen Manning who died suddenly on May 5th became a good friend to me as we worked together for perhaps two years on that book *A Bedtime Landscape Reader*. I related to him as a layman editor to an academic, a person whose judgement I respected. More than that he enjoyed writing; he was part of the Malvern Writers Group. His last two of many articles for LRE come in 89 and 90 and in this last he showed his attractive well honed observations and more than that the delight he encountered in the council house area he had bought into. He wrote that he had ‘come down in the world’ and was full of praise for the people he met on the street, though less admiring of their front gardens. Some of his exploits involved cycling down through the Dorset countryside. He had bought himself a new bicycle in Bath and had listened to the bells there. He travelled up to Yorkshire to visit his wife’s grave (LRE 74 and ‘the book’) and wrote a delightful piece about clouds, humorous in its ending when the traffic cop proves to be a cloud enthusiast and encourages him ‘to step on it’ if he wants to see it at its best at motorway junction 27.

I see that we have been corresponding since 2011 and I shall miss that. We never met but would have done so this summer. “*Life*” as John Lennon of the Beatles commented, “*is what happens when you are making other plans*”.

BY

Friends, Romans Countrymen!

It has been my pleasure since Winter of 1988 to bring together the varied contents of Landscape Research Extra. I am indebted to the many contributors some of whom have been regulars and I mention here Philip Pacey who in the last three years was unable through illness to write for me. Some of my regulars have died, David Lowenthal, Hugh Prince, Jay Appleton, Simon Rendel, John Gittins. Some have moved on. I mention no less than forty separate writers whose work forms a collection entitled *A Bedside Landscape Reader*. There have been more than twice that number many of whom might have been included in a longer book.

I find myself astonished that 90 issues of LRE are in existence and grateful to the Group for posting all these issues on the website — q.v. I would say — alternatively in more modern idiom “check ‘em out!” Will this digital archive last for ever? If not most of the issues are in the five Libraries of Record. Steven Shuttleworth, faithful to the end, tells me that he has every copy !

To LRG’s management and Board I advocate some form of coherent publication to connect the membership. Alternatively we must watch as LRG, the group, morphs as it is doing into an academic publishing machine. **The Editor. [Swallows poison, dies].**