

10 May 2020



Chair's letter to accompany LRE 90 (final issue)

Dear member,

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.

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.

LRG has 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*.

Yours,

Chris Dalglish

Chair, Landscape Research Group