

LANDSCAPE ISSUES

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Foreword 3

Editorial

Respice, Aspice, Prospice 4

Articles

Invisible landscapes (Melanie Clemmey) 7

Sacred place: a personal reflection (Paul Foley) 26

Making landscapes as if people mattered (Martin Spray) 49

Landscapes of the dead: places for the living (Jane Fitzgerald White)
62

Reports

Putting the drones to work: landscape survey and analysis with
remotely-controlled quadcopters (Robert Moore) 74

Conservation of Churchyards: Design & Management (Bodfan
Gruffydd) 86

Notes and Reviews

The poetry of place of Ivor Gurney 90

Claire Morgan: Gone With The Wind (Robin Snowdon) 93

Information

FOREWORD

In the mid 1980s the landscape architecture course, then housed in the Oxstalls campus of the Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology, was seeking degree accreditation. To promote the research profile of the school *Landscape Issues* was launched setting out with limited objectives – to focus on design theory, computer use and rural matters – but from the first issue it stimulated research from students as much as from staff. In the first decade of *Landscape Issues* it is worth noting that close on 30 contributions from students were received and published. After an interval of 20 years and thanks to student encouragement, the journal is to be revived and republished both as hardcopy and in online format. It is axiomatic that research underpins all landscape architectural projects, and this is no less true of student projects but most of it goes unnoticed except within the educational institutions. A selection of imaginative material produced by the staff and students in the University of Gloucestershire is posted on the course blog at <http://gloscape.com> but it tends to be short pieces often with a pedagogic or vocational content. We intend to use the new *Landscape Issues* as a forum for disseminating staff and student research more freely to the landscape profession and with more discursive content. One model of research enquiry we are keen to foster is ‘Practice as Research’ involving collaborative projects with local as well as international partners, both academics and practitioners. But we will start in a modest way and see what develops. We hope that readers will find it relevant and rewarding, whether in education and training, whether in practice or even those in the wider community with just a general interest in landscape and landscape issues. If it stirs you to make a contribution then it will have succeeded.

Robert Moore

RESPICE ASPICE PROSPICE*

Mindful of the history of the Cheltenham course, the 50th anniversary of its foundation having taken place in 2011, the editorial team has decided that the theme of this issue of *Landscape Issues*, the first since 1996, should reflect something of that history. Despite the vicissitudes of higher education over the past half-century, the changing government policies and directives, the restructuring of courses, the introduction of student fees and the metamorphosis from college to university, it is remarkable that the landscape architecture course in Gloucestershire has come through successfully, let alone survived, such a transformational period. Both the course and the students have shown great flexibility and resilience in a changing world and a changing profession.

To summarise the history, Bodfan Gruffydd, together with Stuart Sutcliffe and Reginald Dent, developed ideas for the first full-time landscape architecture course in England in 1961. Initially Bodfan, a landscape architect involved in Harlow New Town among others, had been invited to contribute to the Cheltenham architecture course housed in Pittville Pump Room – specifically to offer a landscape perspective to architectural design. His view of landscape was organic, building on landform and climate, with a sound knowledge of plants and creating places of aesthetic quality. From this innovative approach, architects could learn through landscapes. Equally, they thought that landscape architects could share the same opportunities – so why not establish a full-time landscape architecture course? So the nascent course grew from an integration of architecture and horticulture with the second year students spending a residential year at the local Pershore College of Horticulture where planting design and soil analysis were taught. This dynamic symbiosis of art and ecology was central to Bodfan's view of what landscape architecture comprised and he can be credited with founding Britain's first under-graduate course in the subject.

Gordon Patterson (ex-Stevenage New Town) was appointed to take charge of the course and John Ingleby, a landscape architect in private practice, was appointed part-time and soon the originally-conceived three-year course had become a four-year diploma programme. With an initial intake of 14 landscape students, demand quickly expanded to 24 by 1970 at

which time Bodfan had been made President of the Institute of Landscape Architects. Bodfan had many years of direct contact working with the course as advisor, practice consultant and visiting lecturer, an interest he maintained into the 21st century.

The landscape course's first decade was one largely characterised by the breaking of fairly new ground, pioneering efforts involving passions rather than theories, cross-disciplinary experimentation rather than narrow disciplines. The 70s were marked by consolidation and stabilisation, greater autonomy and a more rigorous curriculum, reflecting the Institute's directives. The next decade saw the course develop towards and achieve CNAA degree accreditation and it was then that the first incarnation of *Landscape Issues* appeared. The 90s were marked by a restructuring of the course into a modular format, not always an easy fit for a design course. The last decade or so has seen a drive for greater efficiency in teaching (through staff and budgetary cuts) while still maintaining high quality, indeed with some notable successes in student achievements.

Half-way through the second decade of the 21st century we find that the role of landscape architecture is expanding as we face the global challenges of climate change, environmental hazards, increasing population and the need for sustainable living. All these concerns are reflected in the course vision focusing on the creation of landscapes for the health and well-being of people and the planet. From the students' perspective, their own varying interests coupled with the extensive curriculum provide a dynamic atmosphere for study; their diverse backgrounds and cultures mean they respond differently to the variety of subjects on offer. Some lean towards one particular specialism, whilst some students position themselves firmly in the middle and develop a broad portfolio of skills. Either way they know that their education has enabled them to embark on the career path of their choice.

But it is not all work and no play. This current academic year (2014-5) has seen the start of the university's Landscape Architecture Society run by the students, for the students. Its initial reception was very encouraging, with 46 members signing up at the launch night, and, although still in its 'beta' phase, events run by the society have been a huge success. The launch of the society marks a turn in student attitude. They are now more able to take charge of their university experience, to meet like-minded students, to include those who may feel on the fringe, to take time off work

together, to give feedback on academic issues and to make changes around the studios: their main working environment. The outcome from this can only be positive as it forms the glue that bonds the course together, whilst adding another element to the package we have on offer for future students.

Now based within the School of Art and Design, an affiliation which supports a very strong identity, the course aims to emphasise sustainable design principles allied to, and underpinned by, the exploration and encouragement of artistic creativity. This approach to our teaching and learning is producing exciting and innovative work at all levels and collectively student outputs are proving to be appealing to prospective students and employers alike. We are beginning to see an upturn in student interest in the course, after a period of low recruitment over the last few years of economic austerity.

Our focus on sustainability will remain a key part of the course as environmental designers, planners and place-makers grapple with the future challenges of climate change, water, food, energy and waste issues plus the desire to create more attractive and liveable spaces. Concomitant with this approach will be the emergence of a much stronger research culture within the course and already we see a significant increase in students wishing to develop personal research beyond the post-graduate diploma via the Masters route and a substantial increase in landscape-based PhD registrations. While involvement with practitioners remains a cornerstone of the course we are also now collaborating with local community groups to further energise our teaching and the student experience.

Further afield and looking to the future, we will be seeking to promote opportunities in terms of international student and information exchange and joint research projects. The course leader's recent trip to China and Hong Kong has already generated a healthy level of interest in our pedagogy and course philosophy. Our desire as a course is to influence change and to create the next generation of creative thinkers who are able to inspire and deliver innovative design within every field of environmental development and thereby to strengthen the reputation of a course founded over 50 years ago.

*** Remember the past; consider the present; look to the future**

A JOURNEY INTO THE INVISIBLE LANDSCAPE OF MEMORY AND EXPERIENCE

Melanie Clemmey

Introduction

The need to develop new uses for post-industrial urban land has become a world-wide preoccupation. Industrial restructuring, global shifts in manufacturing and technological changes have left a legacy of abandoned sites, decaying structures and contaminated environments in their wake. (Fig. 1) Governments face the challenge of delivering housing, transport and employment to an increasingly urbanised population, creating intense pressure on land use and resources. An international debate around the concept of sustainability challenges planners to consider the environmental, social and economic consequences of development, whilst studies of people and society increasingly confirm that emotional as well as physical needs must be met to enable a healthy and contented population. Understanding the relationship between people and place is therefore more important than ever in delivering successful urban regeneration.

The context

Post-industrial urban areas are often characterised by fragmented landscapes, remnant buildings, poor quality infill and a sense of disconnection with the past. The imprint of huge structural changes in the economy is left in the landscape, a physical reminder of redundancy, depopulation, and decline.

In England, these issues have coalesced since the 1980s into a regeneration policy for so-called 'brownfield sites'. The National Planning Policy Framework includes as a core principle "the effective reuse of land that has been previously developed, called brownfield land", adding that this approach "contributes to community wellbeing by bringing underused or derelict land back into use" (Homes & Communities Agency, 2008-14).



Fig. 1 Abandoned factory, Kidderminster

The impact of industrial decline on communities is well documented. The English Indices of Deprivation, last published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in 2011, show that many of the most deprived areas are urban districts suffering from the decline or total disappearance of their industries. These indices “are central to the evidence base for regeneration policy in England” (DCLG, 2011, p. 18).

For landscape architects, urban design projects—including the regeneration of urban areas suffering from decline – have become a significant area of work. Wall and Waterman (2009, p. 8) point out that “Landscape architects are often called upon to lead projects in urban design, given that their training gives them exceptional context and sensitivity.”

The invisible landscape

With their historic uses no longer relevant, these landscapes nonetheless contain within them stories and experiences which have shaped the lives of the people living and working there and the development of the landscapes themselves. This invisible layer is evident in the physical traces which remain in abandoned places:

The people who worked are ghostly presences signified by overalls, hob-nail boots, gloves, hardhats and the vestiges of the things that passed between them, the material exchanges of their relationships. (Edensor, 2002).

Yet, as Alice Mah points out in her book *Industrial Ruination, Community and Place* (2012, p. 3):

Despite their state of disuse, abandoned industrial sites remain connected with the urban fabric that surrounds them: with communities; with collective memory; and with people’s health, livelihoods, and stories.

Those whose lives are bound up with disappearing industries (Fig. 2) continue to experience the post-industrial landscape as “a lived process” (Mah, 2013) although not necessarily one which can be recorded visually or numerically, or mapped using conventional techniques. Exploring and mapping this invisible landscape of human experience, and establishing its possible uses for the landscape architect involved in urban renewal projects was the purpose of this investigation.

Measuring: a professional perspective

A review of professional perspectives on the urban environment revealed a shift in emphasis from the physical setting to people, community and cultural values. However, this changing focus has not yet been matched with suitable tools for documenting intangible landscape values.

Community consultation recognises the importance of the relationship between people and place, but its purpose is to gather responses to proposed changes where a range of options already exists. It sets out to obtain a measurable insight into current views and opinions (Consultation



Fig. 2 Entrance to abandoned carpet works, Kidderminster

Institute, 2010, p. 2), not the more elusive values and experiences that underlie the connection of people with their landscape.

Asset-based approaches to sustainable community development highlight the role of intangible ‘capital’ (social, human, cultural and political) in complementing the more familiar tangible assets. (O’Leary, Burkett, & Braithwaite, 2011, p. 2). However, in practice the focus tends to remain on ownership and management of tangible ‘assets of community benefit’, rather than intangible aspects of place (O’Leary et al., 2011, p. 31).

The ideas expressed by writers such as Jane Jacobs, Kevin Lynch and William Whyte have influenced the modern placemaking movement, which draws inspiration from their observational approach and emphasis on everyday life. However, there is a tendency to rely on toolkits and diagrams (PPS, No date), which promote standard, replicable techniques and risk inhibiting the aim of creating unique places.

Former manufacturing buildings and districts increasingly play a role

in “creating a sense of place and destination”. (English Heritage, 2013, p. 7). UNESCO emphasises the importance of both intangible and physical heritage, describing urban landscapes as “the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes”. (2011, I.8). Mapping and interpreting these cultural associations requires new research and training (Council of Europe, 2005, Article 13).

Landscape architects employ a range of site analysis tools to understand the landscape as a preliminary to design. This analysis provides detailed information about the possibilities and constraints of the landscape, which informs decision making and may also generate creative ideas for design and placemaking. The data may include social and economic statistics and historical factors, but guidance for landscape architects on site inventory and analysis concentrates almost exclusively on the physical, visual and tangible aspects of a site (Waterman, 2009, p. 57).

Delving: a search for understanding

In Thwaites’ and Simkins’ book *Experiential Landscape* (2006), they assess the “defining characteristic of contemporary landscape architecture” as a “focus on site-based problem solving activity” (p. 9) – a process in which “the collection and analysis of data by rational procedures” appears more highly valued than the designer’s creative insight (p. 11). Insights from other disciplines, and innovative ways of recording memory and experience, suggested possibilities to introduce creative insight into the analysis and design process. However, these methods are not specifically adapted to meet the requirements of the landscape professional.

Human geography suggests that an understanding of both physical and intangible elements of a landscape is desirable for the management and design of successful places. (Relph, 1976, p. 44). For Relph, place is “a phenomenon of the geography of the lived-in world of our everyday experiences” (pp. 6-7). This invisible realm of experience gives meaning to a place. (p. 47).

Cultural heritage researchers draw attention to landscape values and identities, and the need for new tools to map and interpret them. Archaeologist Tadhg O’Keefe (2007, p. 7) points out that a focus on intangible heritage raises issues of judgement and interpretation. If “all landscapes are social-ecological, and all landscapes qualify as

somebody's heritage" (pp. 9-10) then landscape management requires an understanding of how identities are inscribed in landscapes, including mundane ones (p. 10).

South Africans David Gibbs and Liana Müller advocate a cultural landscape approach to design education for landscape architects. They argue that "Often it is the intangible values – the stories, rituals or other meanings attached to a place – which contribute most significantly to its worth" (2011, p. 9) and that effective mapping of the cultural landscape is a powerful tool for successful landscape design (p. 18).

Individuals, artists and activists demonstrate innovative approaches to exploring, collecting and mapping responses to the landscape. Map Your Memories is a collaborative art project started by Becky Cooper in 2007. Participants filled in blank maps of Manhattan with their memories and posted them back to her, resulting in a collection of "improvised personal maps with narratives and revelations about love, childhood memories, hopes and emotional confessions" (Popcheva, 2013).

Many researchers emphasise the depth of experience to be found in ordinary places and people. The writer of Spitalfields Life, a social history blog recording local people and places, declares an intention to write:

... at least ten thousand stories about Spitalfields life... I do not think there will be any shortage of material, though it may be difficult to choose what to write of because the possibilities are infinite." (The Gentle Author, 2009).

Such projects have in common an intention to explore invisible aspects of the landscape. They engage directly with people, map responses in unexpected ways, embrace subjectivity and value memories that may be unreliable and subject to bias. They are not intended to form a basis for decision making or to influence a design.

Nonetheless, the creative individual may have considerable influence on our perception of place. In *Space and Place* (1977) Yi Fu Tuan writes that "deeply-loved places are not necessarily visible, either to ourselves or to others" (p. 178) but that writing, art and architecture can bring places to life. "Identity of place is achieved by dramatizing the aspirations, needs, and functional rhythms of personal and group life" (p. 178).

Revealing: an invisible layer

A range of case studies was examined to explore how research into the invisible landscape can influence landscape design and management in practice. The case studies demonstrate a role for memory and experience in consultation, strategy and design, revealing some of the risks and difficulties of the approach. These examples also highlight the need for new skills and strategies and the absence of practical guidance on using the invisible landscape in analysis and design.

Australian landscape architects working in sensitive settings are developing an approach to site analysis which recognises the complexity of meaning embedded in such landscapes. It requires understanding and respect for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal values and an awareness of a diverse cultural history. This informs the analysis and design process for individual projects ranging from strategic planning (AILA, 2012) to the design of island walking trails (Ecoscape Australia, 2008).

Selecting appropriate ways to connect intangible narratives to the visible landscape raises questions about the relationship between them. An innovative theatre project used wireless technology to deliver the stories of local women to walkers in the Shropshire landscape (Eldon Lee, 2013). This creative presentation of memory and experience enabled a dynamic connection to be made between the physical and invisible landscape, with no permanent impact on the place itself.

As well as requiring investigative skills to uncover stories, the concerns and interests of different groups may have to be balanced in deciding how to tell them. The discovery of the African Burial Ground in Lower Manhattan raised issues of conflict and complexity, so that the desire to commemorate the site became part of "a larger struggle of descendant communities to reclaim their heritage" (Harrington, 1993).

The evidence reviewed presented a convincing case for investigating memory and experience as part of analysis and design work. A small experimental case study was undertaken, to investigate the practical challenges of incorporating this approach into site analysis and design and draw on some of the ideas encountered.

The research setting

The setting for practical research was Kidderminster, a town which has experienced acute decline in recent decades. A textile producing town since the middle ages, Kidderminster became famous worldwide for its carpet industry which developed rapidly from the early eighteenth century. At its peak in the post-war years, the industry employed approximately 15,000 workers (BBC, 2013) and it was common for whole families to work in carpet making.

From its origin as a cottage industry to the era of huge industrial mills, carpet making took place in the heart of the town and shaped its landscape. However, in recent decades this industrial landscape has been subjected to brutal intervention. As manufacturing declined, abandoned sites in the town centre were cleared to make way for large retail units and surface car-parking. Industrial and heritage buildings have become increasingly isolated in a confusing, vehicle-dominated and undistinguished landscape (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Kidderminster's fragmented and vehicle-dominated landscape

Kidderminster is in Worcestershire Council's most income-deprived local authority, with 9.5% of households on a low income in 2013. (Worcestershire Council, 2013). The Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (KCAAP) produced by Wyre Forest District Council identifies improvements to the public realm as essential to tackling these environmental, social and economic challenges (WFDC, 2013, pp. 46-48).

Exploring and mapping the invisible landscape

Starting with an 'empty landscape' (Fig. 4), personal observation, research and meetings with local people in Kidderminster were used to develop an analysis of the site from the perspective of memory and experience. Further insights were gained from conversations with people experienced in collecting, interpreting and using intangible information as part of the creative process. Different techniques for mapping the findings were incorporated throughout.

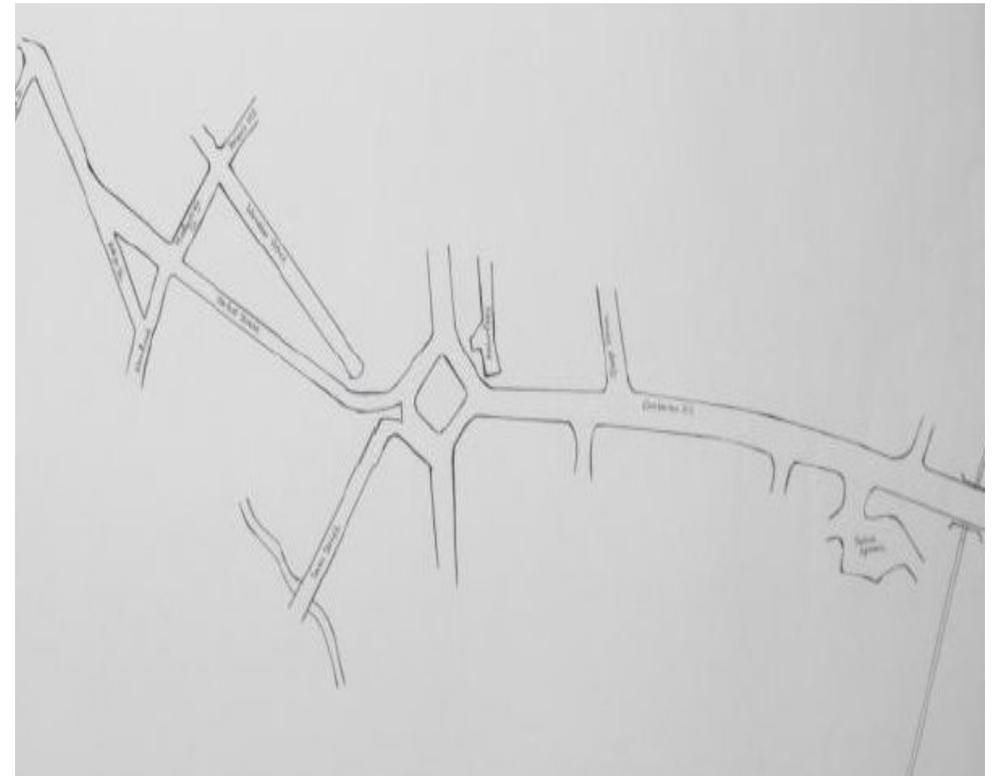


Fig. 4 Sketch of the streets in Kidderminster's 'Eastern Gateway'

Starting out: the first mapping

Initial investigation of the area was carried out on foot, using sketchbook and camera to record first impressions. The physical landscape appeared to contain little of significant interest. However, as photographs, sketches and notes were reviewed a narrative direction began to emerge (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5 First impressions (A1 sheet)

Following clues: the second mapping

Three strands selected from the first mapping formed the starting point for research. Clues from the physical landscape and the process of “drifting” through texts and images revealed new ideas. Each strand proved to be a rich source of material. Inspired by a conversation with Andy Thomson of BCA Landscape (2014), A1 sheets documenting areas of interest were produced. (Fig. 6). These would form a starting point for people to contribute their own memories and experiences.



Fig. 6 Kidderminster Colours, one of three A1 sheets produced to explore strands of the invisible landscape

Listening: the third mapping

Staff at the Museum of Carpet in Kidderminster organised a drop-in morning for volunteers to share their memories and experiences. The sheets produced from observation and research were popular with visitors, reminding people of places and events and stimulating conversations. Although their personal contributions record a direct relationship between memories and physical landscape, many of the places and experiences described were swept away by the ring road. In memory and imagination, however, everything is still connected.

Inspiration for mapping this damaged landscape was drawn from the work of artist Chris Kenny (2011) and from psychogeographic maps. (Debord, 1957). The map explored the impression that the ring road shattered the heart of the town, but that everything is still connected in people’s minds and memories. Fragments of maps from the 1880s, 1930s and 1960s are linked by bridges of torn maps suggesting the lost connections (Fig. 7).

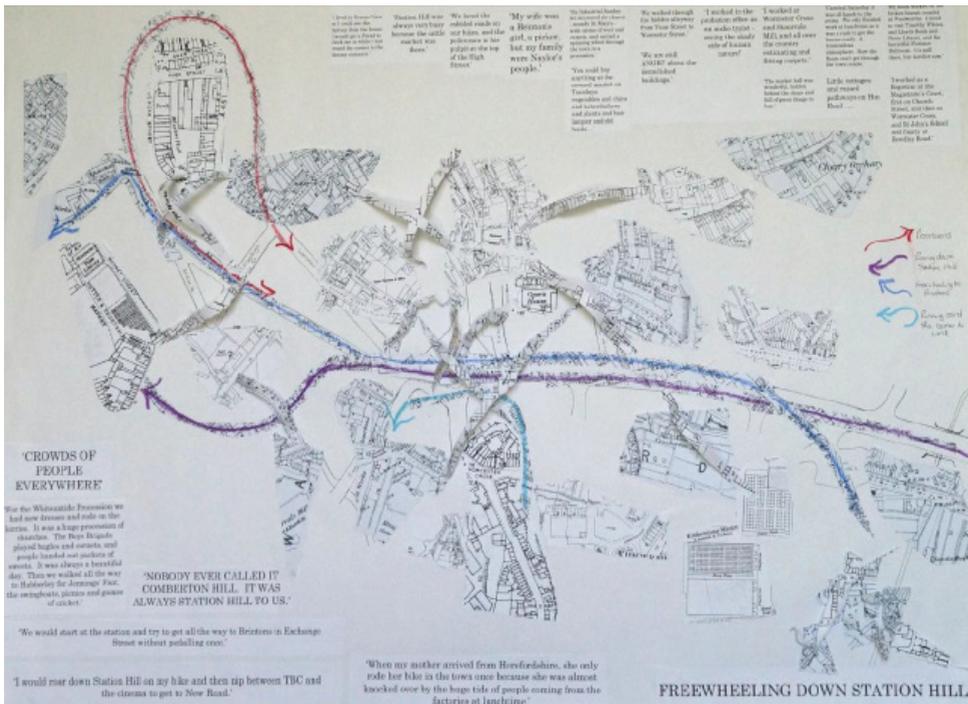


Fig. 7 Freewheeling down Station Hill – a response to the memories of volunteers

The museum staff carried out a database search using the strands of enquiry identified during the first mapping. This material was collected together for research and photography in the archives. Old photographs, theatre programmes, books and magazines provided a visual complement to the recollections of volunteers.

In exploring the link between archive material and the landscape of Kidderminster today, a map of Kidderminster town centre in the 1880s was overlaid with archive photographs and images of the town today. (Fig. 8). The visual reality of the modern landscape is acknowledged, but the crowds and activities of the past are also present in an imaginary walk through the streets.

Patterning: the fourth mapping

Mapping the responses from observation, research and meetings concentrated on recording information and responding to impressions.

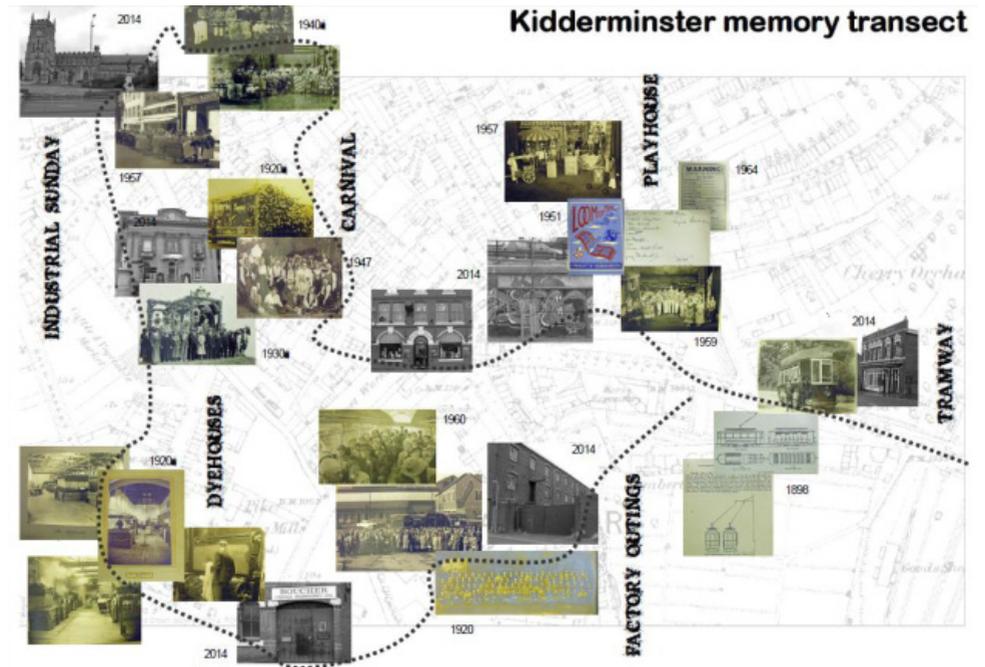


Fig. 8 A Kidderminster memory transect

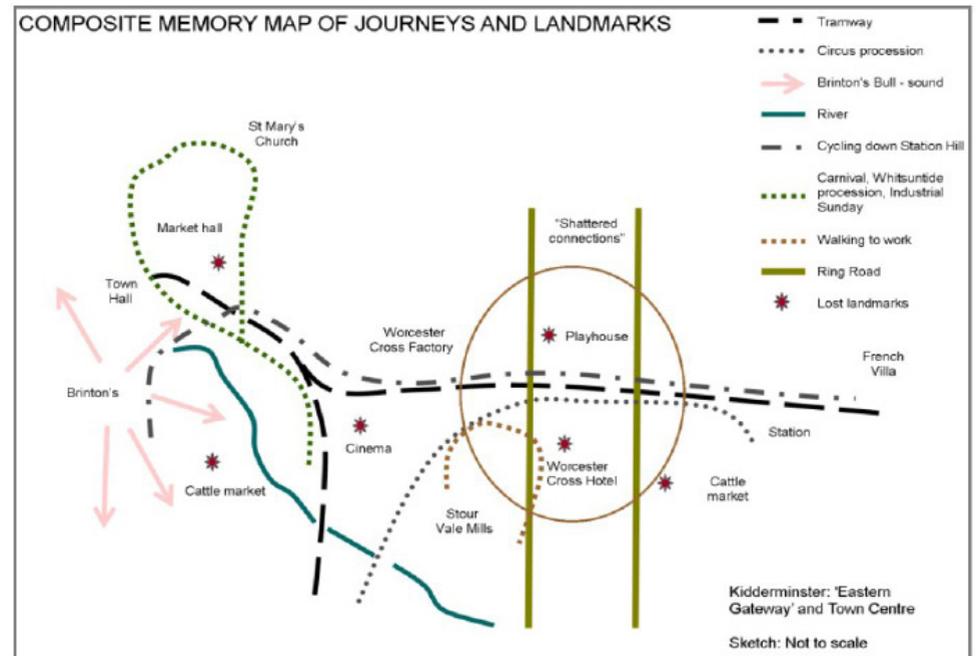


Fig. 9 Composite memory map of journeys and landmarks

To interpret and organise this material for use in site analysis and design development, three different approaches to mapping were employed to draw out patterns, themes and relationships.

A memory map of journeys and landmarks (Fig. 9)

This map explored the journeys and landmarks recalled by volunteers and revealed through research. It reinforced the earlier finding that lost connections and buildings are vividly present in memory, over-riding the fragmented modern landscape.

Mapping themes and relationships (Fig. 10)

Mapping the findings using this technique reinforced the vibrant narrative of events and outings and the legacy of outstanding design, of which little trace remains in the physical landscape. Strong themes emerge to influence design development.

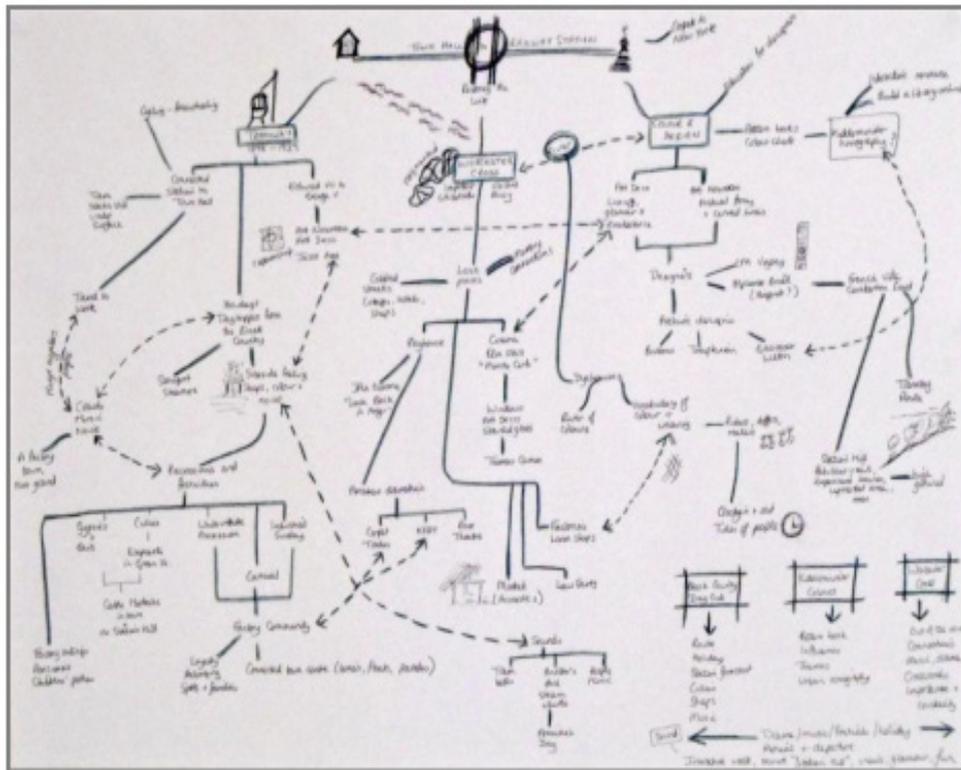


Fig. 10 A Kidderminster mind map

A Kidderminster iconography (Fig. 11)

This map recalled a ‘pattern book’, linking Kidderminster’s invisible landscape with the past and present physical environment through images. It references themes identified earlier, and reinforces the work of others in the town, in building an archive of memories, sounds and impressions.

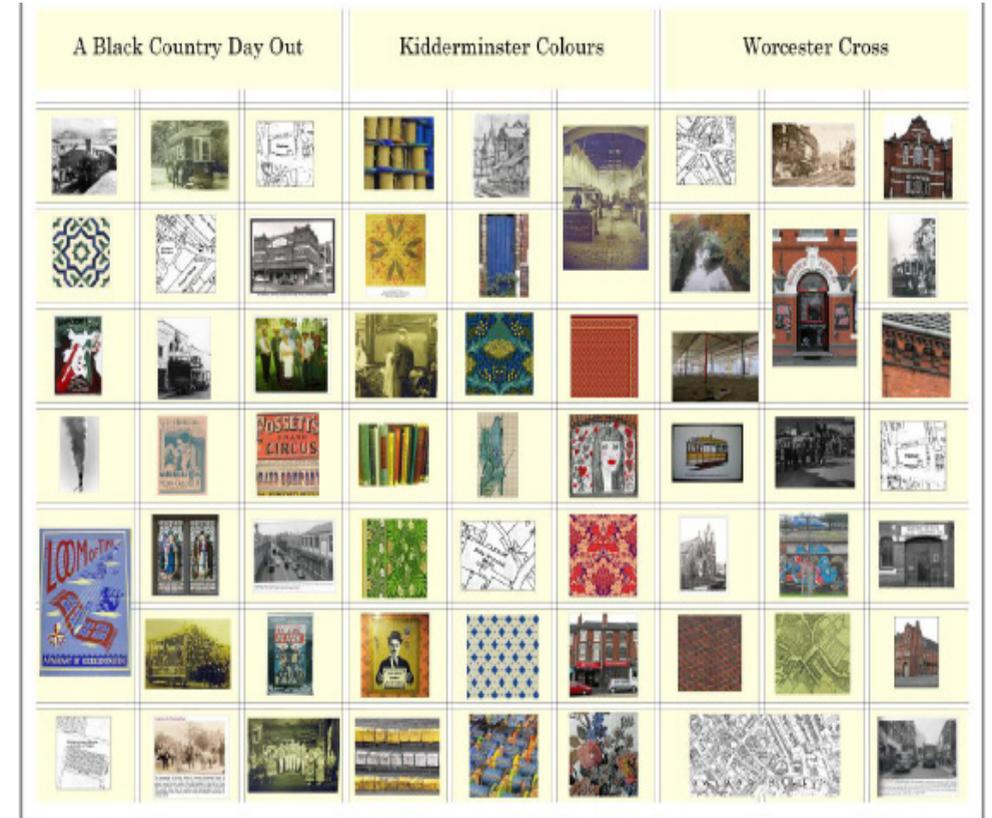


Fig. 11 A Kidderminster iconography

The urban renewal brief for Kidderminster concentrates on the physical features of the landscape. However, the process of exploration and mapping uncovered clues leading into a rich invisible landscape. Memories and experiences were strongly linked to the setting, but endure when landmarks are removed and connections broken. Different mapping techniques revealed insights which enhanced understanding of the physical landscape.

The findings

Evaluation of the Kidderminster study, together with evidence from the literature review and case studies, suggests that research into the invisible landscape offers many possibilities for urban renewal projects. Applications range from strategic planning to the development of placemaking resources, although it is also important to be aware that researching memory and experience can arouse strong feelings in the community, and is not without problems. The experience inspired development of an outline framework for investigation and some underlying principles for exploration, to provide practical guidance for future projects.

The literature review highlighted the need for new tools to document intangible landscape values, and for a creative, inter-disciplinary approach to landscape analysis and design. There is a risk that landscape architects, by concentrating on the physical, tangible aspects of places, will lack influence in a research environment where landscape has become the nexus for examining new relationships and investigative techniques.

Recognising the importance of mapping and interpreting cultural associations, and supporting research, training and practice approaches which “put people and human values at the centre of an enlarged and cross-disciplinary concept of cultural heritage” (Council of Europe, 2005, Preamble) would reflect the capability of landscape architecture to take a central role in this field.

Biographical Notes

Melanie Clemmey graduated from Oxford University with a degree in English, and went on to work in finance and administration. In 2000 she retrained as a garden designer, and ran her own design consultancy and garden products business before returning to further study as a landscape architect. She was recently awarded a Masters degree from the University of Gloucestershire. This article is an edited version of her Masters dissertation, in which she investigated the relationship between memory, the landscape and site analysis. Melanie can be contacted at melanieclemmey@yahoo.co.uk.

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SACRED PLACE: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

Paul Foley

Abstract

The notion of the “sacred” for humanity is a difficult concept to analyse empirically. Yet, even in an increasingly secularised world, there seems to be a continuing desire to enter states that go beyond the mundane. Humans have always ascribed significance to certain places as being of particular spiritual value and entry points to a sense of transcendence. These may be on a grand landscape level, more intimate places of groves, gardens or springs or human constructions in the form of temples or churches. It may be possible to define certain elements of place that help to induce such transcendent feelings in humans and relate these to landscape architecture.

Introduction

We live in an increasingly fast-moving and stressful world where moments of contemplative release seem to be more difficult to attain. ‘Sacred’ place may be defined on many different scales. In this short investigation I intend to look at how place can aid us to achieve such transcendent states and what implications there may be in how, as landscape architects, we proceed to design space.

Definition

“Sacred” is a word loaded with meaning and requires further exploration in this context. Words such as ‘contemplative’ and ‘transcendent’ were considered, and rejected, as alternative descriptors of the essence of the adjective. ‘Sacred’ was chosen over the others as it is widely used in academia in fields such as theology, ecology, human geography and, to a lesser extent, architecture. ‘Place’ is used as I wished to explore the human experience in differing environs from all-encompassing landscapes to more intimate localities, gardens, buildings and caves.

A ‘sacred place’ therefore is an environment or space that leads to some form of human transcendence, a sensation of leaving behind or going beyond the commonplace. This could imply a religious experience; whilst

not excluding this, I am interested in the experience which is common to all of humanity whether conventionally religious, self-declared ‘spiritual’ or avowedly atheist. All these adjectives are in themselves problematic as they may mean different things to different people. Such experiences by their very nature are personal, instinctual and beyond the intellect. For this reason they are difficult to examine empirically although new research is aimed at recording not just physiological but also neurological reaction to transcendent space (Olszewska et al, 2014). We may have to somewhat ‘feel’ our way through the subject.



Fig. 1 A sacred place ...engenders a sense of going beyond the mundane

Karen Armstrong has usefully re-emphasised the distinction between human experiences of ‘logos’ and ‘mythos’ as ways to obtain ‘truth’ (Armstrong, 2010). Logos deals with external conditions and helps us function in the world. But logos cannot deal with the more elusive aspects of human experience. This is the role of mythos which helps us make meaning of life. Her contention is that classical myth was not something

to be believed in but rather a metaphor which inspired “a programme of action” (Armstrong, 2009). Spirituality was not about doctrine but about practical implementation much as swimming cannot be mastered from a manual but requires full immersion. The scientific revolution of the Enlightenment engendered an effort to ‘prove’ the existence of God and so shifted the spiritual into the area of logos. Religion became defined by belief in something rather than the practice and experience of life.

This distinction seems sensible but means that an examination of sacred place and people’s reactions to such places may have to slip off the edge of conventional academic research which deals primarily in the world of logos. Yet, surely, we all know the world of mythos. Experiences such as grief, falling in love, awe and wonder, a sense of beauty, empathy and compassion, these are concepts familiar to us all. Difficult to define, yes, but not difficult to experience. We cannot think ourselves into such states, we must feel them instinctively.

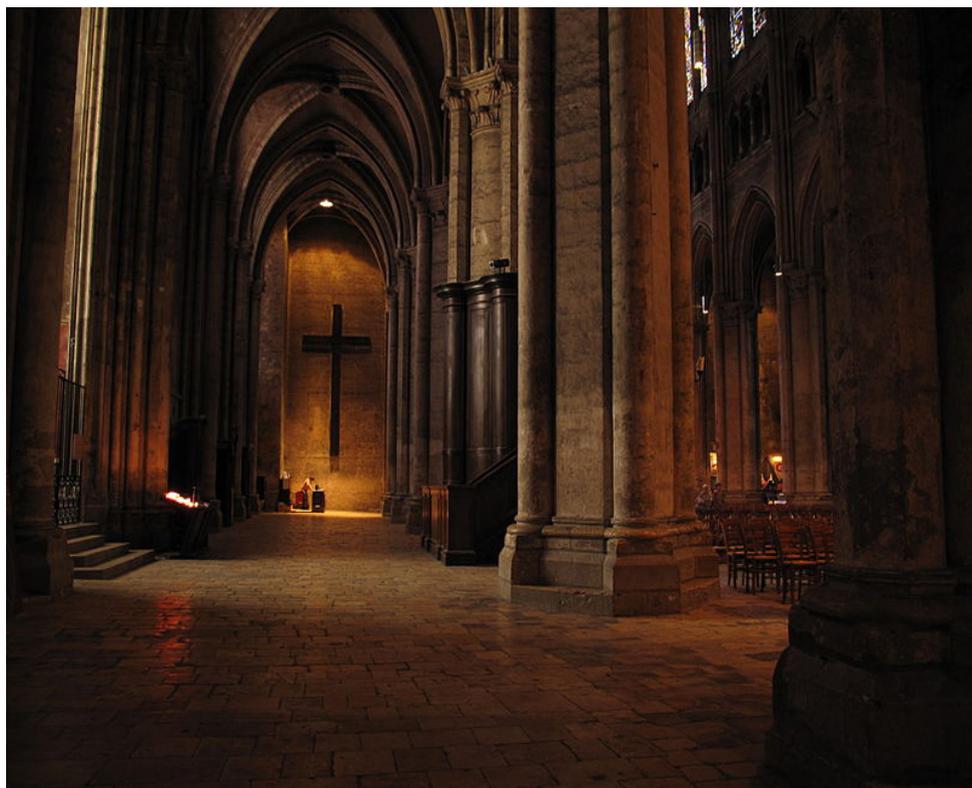


Fig 2 The strange change in atmosphere on entering a quiet church

A ‘sacred place’ is an environment that engenders a sense of going beyond the mundane. It helps to unshackle ourselves from life’s worries, if only temporarily. It quiets the mind in order to experience life in other, more intuitive, ways. It may have restorative actions on a physiological level but here we are more concerned with spiritual well-being. It is where we can quiet the mind or, at least, have more control over thought.

Secularism and the sacred in the developed world

The perceived decline of organised religion and the rise of atheism in Western countries has long been noted. The reality is probably far more nuanced and is too complex a subject to investigate in this paper. Indeed the division between atheist and believer does not neatly coincide with notions of logos and mythos. John Gray (Gray, 2002) has argued that Western religions’ concentration on belief following the Enlightenment implied their eventual downfall: either you’re in or you’re out with no room for flexibility. Armstrong contends that modern Western religion concentrates excessively on logos with little room for mythos (Armstrong, 2009). Perhaps this part of our psyche is no longer served by organised religion. Eastern religions, less obsessed with ideas of belief, seem to have better survived the supposed onslaught of atheism. Indeed renewed interest in ‘spirituality’ in the West is often based on Eastern philosophies: well-stocked shelves in bookshops’ self-help sections are testament to a growing interest in a transcendent aspect of life. Whilst this can take the form of a rather gooey new-ageism it is indicative of an innate human need for the sacred.

In any case the increasing rejection of organised religion to be seen in Europe is not mirrored in the United States (Gallup, 2014). Religious observance seems to be increasing in the developing economies with Islam particularly resurgent. Notwithstanding these differences I believe a human being seeking moments of transcendence may find them in similar places, whether they are conventionally religious or not, and that such places may be deemed ‘sacred’.

What attracted me to this topic was the strange change in atmosphere that accompanies the moment we walk into a quiet church. Not professing any religion, I nevertheless sense a change in psychological perspective in such a place. This could be a reaction purely to the dynamics of the space. Or it could be due to the cultural baggage of the historical



Fig. 3 *Gravel raking ... is itself a form of meditation*



Fig. 4 *The near-religious atmosphere in a football stadium*

meaning of Christianity in Europe. Professor Grace Davie of Exeter University has posited the notion of a ‘vicarious religion’ whereby an emaciated remnant of European Christianity provides us with what she terms “the persistence of the sacred in contemporary society despite the undeniable decline in churchgoing” (Davie, 1994). State-funded churches in Scandinavia and Germany provide prime examples as does the use of churches for weddings and funerals by parties with no other active adherence to a church.

Indeed some have philosophised that parallel to the world of the ‘sacred’ is a system of the ‘profane’ with similar structures expressing similar innate needs (Brown, Phillips and Maheshwari, 2009). Examples might include the way brands are “revered and treated with the utmost respect” or the near-religious atmosphere in a football stadium. Manchester United had to dispense with allowing the scattering of deceased fans’ ashes at the goal-mouths as it inhibited grass growth excessively (Thorley and Gunn, 2007). The transcendent even extends to the dance floor as exemplified by the song ‘God is a DJ’ (Faithless 1997).

Even those who have explicitly rejected the notion of religion are fully conscious of this transcendent side of reality and are unafraid of using overtly sacred terminology. “God used beautiful mathematics in creating the World” avowed the atheist physicist Paul Dirac (Farmelo, 2010). The artist Georgia O’Keeffe, speaking about Pedernal, the New Mexico mountain that inspired her, said that if she painted it enough God might give it to her (Lane 2001). Alain de Botton (de Botton, undated) has suggested, perhaps slightly tongue-in-cheek, that modern psychotherapists might replace the functions of the priesthood. In line with this it seems that sacred places, not overtly linked to established religion, are still required to replace or complement the temples and churches of old.

The sacred and the profane

Mircea Eliade, the Romanian philosopher and historian of religion, proposed that for religious man space is not homogeneous (Eliade, 1959). The sacred is real and the profane is chaotic and lacks structure. An act of manifestation termed ‘hierophany’ reveals this sacred space to man. The original act of revelation establishes a fixed point of sacredness, called the axis mundi around which man may anchor himself.



Fig. 5 Designated places as being in some way extra-ordinary

Eliade's theories refer to religious man. Nevertheless the title of this exploration implies a duality between a place that is sacred and one that is not. All human societies seem to have designated places as being in some way extraordinary. Australian aboriginal belief as well as that of North American indigenous peoples hold that the entire landscape is imbued with spirit; however certain places are deemed to be especially important. Even the many strands of Buddhism and Hinduism that propose the unitary state of all of existence will have places that are differentiated for their contemplative, transcendent or 'sacred' qualities. However as Belden C Lane (1992) points out: "a theology of transcendence will never be fully comfortable with place"

Why should this differentiation exist? What factors differentiate a traditionally sacred place from the profane (or less sacred). Often a prominent geographical landmark is deemed special, witness the dominance of Mount Fuji in its environment. Other times the choice of sacred place is less obvious. Mount Kailos on the India-China border is sacred to a number of religions yet it is dwarfed by many mightier Himalayan peaks in the area. Its pyramidal shape does, however,

distinguish it. Uluru in Australia is massive, iconic and visually imposing; other sites sacred to Australian aboriginals may appear insignificant. Equally why was one particular cave chosen by cave painters at Lascaux for special attention from the many that exist in the area?

Here we must acknowledge a striking difference between our Western, Cartesian view of sacred places and the traditional view. In Europe a sacred site is clearly delineated: church, temple, cemetery etc. distinguishable from the 'profane' world outside it. In traditional societies the entire landscape is imbued with spirituality with certain points representing an outflowing or concentration of its essence. Western eyes have not entirely lost this view (Thorley and Gunn, 2007), the neolithic landscape of Avebury, for example, being seen to this day as an important context for the stone circle.

Dynamics of a sacred place

Is a place intrinsically sacred or do we make it so with cultural attributes assigned to a *tabula rasa*? In order to explore this we may need to set aside some of our Western logical attitudes and adopt an attitude aligned to the mythos. Belden C Lane (2001), a theologian with an academic interest in landscape and spirituality, writes: "A sacred place is necessarily more than a construction of the human imagination alone". In this notion of what he terms 'dynamic reciprocity' he echoes the theories of Eliade (1959) who says "man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as something wholly different from the profane".

Guthrie (1993) views this attribution of agency to landscape as a useful human evolutionary strategy in uncertain times in order to provide solace and security which ultimately is deemed superfluous as the land is seen as being inanimate. However a body of work is now suggesting that landscape may have powers of agency on people without having the ability to see, think or smell, just as inanimate sleeping policemen may have material effects on us, obliging us to conform to certain norms (Knappet, 2002).

Is a sacred place intrinsically special or only so through cultural construction? Undoubtedly place will become 'sacred', even in the non-religious sense when we give it meaning. A stretch of flat Flanders landscape will have little meaning for the outsider. The meaning and

significance increases significantly when we are aware that it is the site of a First World War battle, even if it otherwise remains visually unremarkable. This increases further if it is the site of a war cemetery, the rows of identical headstones working a spatial magic added to all the cultural implications of burial places. Equally we may personally be attracted to places that are otherwise unremarkable such as a copse of trees or a corner of a park. Whether this is place speaking to us or some unconscious throwback to a childhood experience or a socially prescribed idea that such corners should be 'special' is difficult to disentangle.

Next I intend to explore sacred place in terms of differing scales and how such places might affect us. From the landscape level we move to more intimate places such as clearings, copses and gardens. Thereafter I will look at enclosed spaces such as churches and caves, etc.



Fig. 6 Uluru is massive, iconic and visually imposing

Sacred landscape

Most indigenous peoples view man and landscape as essentially one. As previously noted the landscape has a spiritual element intrinsically intertwined with man's spirit with certain nodes of the greater landscape accorded special significance. This accords with Eliade's notion of the 'axis mundi'. Thus, although the entire Australian landscape is deemed sacred, Uluru is deemed particularly important by the local Anangu people. Also, it would seem, to visiting tourists. It is hardly coincidental that visitors are often referred to as 'pilgrims':

A visit to 'Ayers Rock' is like a secular pilgrimage, paying respect to the Rock by capturing it on film or – the ultimate test of faith – the Climb. The Rock is part of the 'new world' tourist experience – it is a place of natural wonders, discovered by each of us as though we are the first (du Cros and Johnston, 2002).

Is the experience transcendent? We can assume that the rock cannot fail to impress in view of its colour, mass, shape and situation rising from the flat terrain. But as secular pilgrims our relationship with the rock is not based on generations-old mythical narrative. Rather:

What people gaze upon are ideal representations of the view in question which they internalise from post-cards and brochures (James, 2007).



Fig. 7 Mastery over the landscape and insignificance within it

The most controversial aspect of the visit is whether to climb the rock, or not. The Anangu, who recently reclaimed ownership of the rock, are opposed; however climbing is still permitted. Can an experience be transcendental when we are at odds with the wishes of the local people whose relationship with the rock goes back thousands of years?

Curiously Hueneke and Baker (2009) note that climbers experienced a sense of “higher purpose served by the challenge ... and found personal and spiritual meaning in completing it”. Interestingly, only 2% of interviewees would not have visited had they been denied the option of climbing.

So, does the experience of a transcendental landscape differ when we attend as a pilgrim-tourist as opposed to being a religious pilgrim? Mount Kailash may offer some answers.

Mount Kailash in Tibet is sacred to four religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism and Bön (the pre-Buddhist shamanic religion of Tibet). The peak has never been climbed. Mount Kailash is not on the tourist route in the same way that Uluru is. It is remote and difficult to access; the harsh conditions and altitude cause hardship. To visit the mountain presupposes a devotional determination, whether religious or secular. Veteran travel writer Colin Thubron (2001) joined pilgrims and witnessed testimonies of hardship, sickness and death. Such dangers and the possibility of death must, surely, make the experience of such a landscape more profound despite the presence of the crowds that gather for the annual pilgrimage. Perhaps the common purpose of pilgrims creates a special atmosphere, different from that of tourist-pilgrims who are less united by a shared ideology.

Sara Wheeler (1997) has written extensively on the Antarctic. Antarctica has never been permanently occupied and has no indigenous people to have created a mythological framework for the landscape. Yet Wheeler is not alone to have found the continent transcendent. The vast panorama, the absence of human presence, the solitude, the harshness yet beauty of the environment contribute to a changed perspective. This she has contrasted with “the complicated life-infested North” (Wheeler, 2010). Perhaps the landscape contributes to a sense of the ultimate simplicity of life. Antarctica, seemingly, simplifies. She writes of how explorer Apsley Cherry-Garrard endured unimaginable hardships during the Terra Nova

expedition to the continent (Wheeler 2002). On returning to England he fell into a prolonged depression but never forgot the special calling of the polar landscape.

Deserts are also harsh landscapes that offer possibilities of transcendence. In the Biblical Book of Numbers (Numbers 10 onwards) the desert is seen, perhaps metaphorically, as a place of punishment for the Israelites. However in the New Testament both John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1) and Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11) spend time in the desert for spiritual replenishment. Author and conservationist Terry Tempest Williams opines that deserts turn us into believers (Bell, 2013). The desert is a ‘Fierce Landscape’ (Lane, 1992) which, metaphorically, offers us nowhere to hide. Like Antarctica it is a fearful place: aptly named Death Valley is infamous yet the Spanish named it ‘La Palma de la Mano de Dios’ or the Palm of the Hand of God, suggesting a place of transcendence. Silent, harsh, awesome, simple and beautiful, deserts mirror the Polar wastes in their ability to redeem us. When Georgia O’Keeffe expressed the hope that the human race might

find something wonderful in the formal arrangement of the New Mexico landscape, she spoke to the possibility that her ability to open herself to the desert and thus gain redemption could extend to people who saw it, like she did, as sacred ground (Goodman, 2010).

Perhaps the magic of the desert could function, vicariously, through her paintings.

These engendered feelings of awe, majesty, danger, and astonishment are akin to the philosophy of the sublime as articulated by Edmund Burke and Emmanuel Kant. Burke saw terror as the core element of the sublime (Byrne, 2006). The core effect of the sublime is astonishment accompanied, to a lesser degree, by admiration, reverence and respect. These are adjectives of religious power but used in a non-religious context, usually as a reaction to the sublime in nature. The sublime leads to the effect that

the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that which employs it (Byrne, 2006).

Such an experience recalls the Eastern philosophical idea of living in the

moment and direct experience with no window of cultural interpretation between the subject and the object. The Romantic movement of the early 19th century embraced the philosophy of the sublime enthusiastically in painting, literature and art. William Wordsworth wrote in 'The Simplicon Pass' (Heaney, 2011):

*The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light
Were all like workings of one mind*

Romantics craved solitude to experience this transformation in the landscape. Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* epitomises such a scenario. However as John Lewis Gaddis (2004) has pointed out: "We see no face so it is impossible to know whether the prospect confronting the young man is exhilarating, or terrifying, or both". He also considers the painting to be contradictory as it implies both mastery over the landscape and insignificance within it. Perhaps this reflects our conflicted European relationship with the landscape.

Intimate place: groves, springs, gardens

The majestic peaks of the Alps and other landscapes may inspire awe in all of us but they are readily accessible to few. Mankind, however, has long found transcendence in more intimate small-scale landscapes. Henry David Thoreau acknowledged the power of the mountains:

You must have been enriched by your solitary walk over the mountains. I suppose that I feel the same awe when on their summits that many do on entering a church. You must ascend a mountain to learn your relation to matter, and so to your own body, for it is at home there, though you are not (Thoreau, 2008)."

Yet he is best known for his ruminations whilst living a life of spartan simplicity at Walden, Massachusetts. Thoreau lived for two years in a

one room cabin by Walden Pond, representing "universality frozen in microcosm" (Lane, 2001). Perhaps his greatest contribution to philosophy is the idea of awareness of environment and nature. Of "looking...at what is to be seen"(Stanford, 2014). This could be an observation of the behaviour of ants or of a dead fish in water. This is seeing the sacred in the mundane in an intimately known and familiar place. Such a place does not have the awe and drama of landscape and thus requires a conscious will to become aware within it. For him perception was subjective and this is our only access point to experiencing the world. "The universe is built around us and we are central still" (Stanford, 2014). The disciplined effort to become aware of what is likens his outlook to many Eastern philosophies.



Fig. 8 Almost inaccessible caves were differentiated for their acoustic qualities

Zen, the austere strand of Buddhism that evolved in Japan, is particularly famous in the West for its intimate small-scale gravel gardens. Societal changes in mediaeval Japan led to a reduction in size of courtyards and gardens to the compact and enclosed *karesansui* (Nakagawara, 2004). Unlike the panoramic gardens of old, the entire space is now visible in one sweep but this means that "the knowledge of the whole precedes the knowledge of the parts". These contemplative gardens are not meant

to be entered but to be contemplated upon, except for maintenance and gravel-raking which is itself a form of meditation. These places are the antithesis of the sublime Alps in being simple, small-scale, quiet and secluded. But the intended effect is similar: a one-pointed concentration leading to a quietening of the mind and a direct experience of what is. Just as Thoreau experienced, intention is vital in smaller spaces. ‘Fierce’ landscapes almost force us into the direct experience; with gentler, smaller space we have to work more to achieve the same effect.

Sacred groves abound in all cultures (Sonntag 2014). The ritual setting aside of a copse of trees or a space within a forest imbues the site with significance to such an extent that such sites are preserved when undifferentiated woodland is felled (Ray, Chandran and Ramachandra, 2015). Such groves are often associated with water; sacred springs also constitute a worldwide phenomenon. Here the sublime gives way to the intimate within the natural environment. Holy wells abound in Ireland but their siting is almost invariably nestled into the landscape. No shock and awe here, rather the quiet milieu draws the visitor into the contemplative state. Repeated use from antiquity gives such places particular significance yet, one may ask, why was the site originally set aside as being ‘sacred’?

Enclosed space: buildings and caves

Whilst an investigation of the sacred in landscape terms might exclude the built environment, a brief assessment of enclosed buildings is pertinent. Nowhere is the transition from the “profane” to the sacred more evident than when entering a building. Depending on the building, the element of awe can be re-introduced. Julio Bermudez, who has a long-standing interest in sacred space, opines that silence is essential, light should be treated in a particular way and vertical space is highly altered so that the attention is focused upwards towards the sublime – or heaven. (Coll Freeman, 2012). He also believes that it is precisely because architecture can affect consciousness that we construct buildings (Bermudez, 2014). Chartres Cathedral in France complies with these criteria. Additionally Chartres is constructed upon a stream, perhaps a throw-back to an earlier sacred space, Christian sacred buildings often replacing earlier pagan sites.

Buildings offer another dimension to the sacred in the form of sound. It is certainly noted that acoustics phenomena are less controllable in the open

landscape but can be manipulated indoors to add to the sacred experience. Susan Elizabeth Hale (2007) is a singer who investigates the effects of singing in sacred space like Chartres. Whilst her analysis is personal and largely non-academic (permissible in this context) her contention that a space and its resulting acoustics are important elements in creating a sense of the sacred have some validity. She has been given permission to sing in the original Lascaux cave to assess the acoustics; on a more scientific footing Professor Iegor Reznikoff (Reznikoff and Davois, 1988) has identified the importance of acoustics in points with a concentration of paintings and surmised that these almost inaccessible caves were differentiated for their acoustic qualities: ancient man sang to commune with the sacred. The importance of sound echoes the significance of chanting in Buddhism. The choice of a sacred place in the greater landscape may also be related to its acoustic qualities, an element largely ignored in contemporary landscape architecture.



Fig. 9 Fantastic tree and rock formations in Puzzlewood

If the shape of an interior space is a fundamental factor in embedding a sense of the sacred then so too is the embellishment of the space. Museums are often said to have replaced religious buildings as secular temples but the atmosphere in many seems far from transcendent. A surprise hit

exhibition at the National Gallery in London in 2000, ‘Seeing Salvation’, saw religious artifacts arranged, not chronologically, but thematically. The outcome, represented both by the number of visitors and the visceral effects upon them, was striking. The curator, Neil McGregor, received an unusually high number of letters, many expressing the sensation of entering a cathedral or feelings of awe and wonder (Barrett 2009). From a largely secular British population 350,000 people visited the relatively modest exhibition. This may hark back to Davie’s idea of vicarious religion but it is also pertinent that the thematic presentation, imbuing a space with ‘meaning’, seems to have had a more profound effect than the dull chronology of standard museums.

Conclusion

This paper represents an initial investigation into the field of sacred place. Although the intention was to try to examine the role of the sacred in a largely secular West, it is impossible to avoid notions of religiosity or remnants thereof. Big landscapes seem to have demanded deeper investigation. Interiors may not seem to be the realm of the landscape architect. However Luís Barragán’s oft-quoted maxim seems relevant here: “I do not divide architecture, landscape and gardening. To me they are one” (Brainyquote, undated)

Perhaps we can extract some initial elements of space that either force us into a transcendent state or invite us contemplatively towards a going beyond the ordinary and mundane:

- majestic terrain, ‘ferce landscapes’, that overwhelm or induce feelings of shock and awe
- distinctive terrain features, often assigned cultural or spiritual significance
- shared purpose, such as pilgrimage
- intimate space, removed from the everyday world
- silence, solitude and serenity
- light. Luís Barragán gave particular importance to light levels as an aid to contemplation (Sanchez Jaime and Lau 2012)
- natural elements – trees, caves, streams as focus
- simplicity, whether on landscape level, architecturally or in small enclosed spaces
- acoustics
- sharp delineation such as transition from the street to a church
- awe-inspiring architecture that engenders silence and wonder

Debate remains as to whether, in our secularised world, the duality of sacred versus profane has any contemporary relevance (Mueller-Jordan, 2009). This ties in with its almost polar opposite, the notion in Eastern philosophy that everything, at its core, is sacred and without differentiation. Yet it seems to be in our human psyche to ascribe meaning to particular place, whether religious or secular. Our increasingly frenetic lifestyles would seem to only increase our need for times of withdrawal, contemplation, serenity, transcendence, call it what you will. This ‘it’ may be difficult to define but we know what it is. New strands of research are neurologically evaluating the effect of place on our brain patterns (Bermudez, 2008). Perhaps landscape architecture can increasingly provide us with the spaces to help us access this elusive state, seemingly so essential to humanity beyond physical and psychological well-being.

Biographical notes

Paul Foley hails from Ireland and, following a career change, is currently studying for a Post-Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture at the University of Gloucestershire. He is particularly interested in how contemplative spaces can be integrated into the fabric of modern cities.

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Fig 1 Hiroshige snow. <http://free-photo.gatag.net/en/2010/11/18/050000.html>. Wikipedia Commons: Public Domain.

Fig 2 Chartres Cathedral by Rama. Wikipedia Commons: Public Domain.

Fig 3 Image:kyoto nanzen-jihoujyo garden. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported licence.

Fig 4 Anfield Panorama. Wikipedia Commons. Licenced under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic licence.

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MAKING LANDSCAPES AS IF PEOPLE MATTERED

Martin Spray

What is landscape architecture for?

Let's look at this critical question backwards: Landscape architecture is primarily the designing and making of environments for animals known to science as *Homo sapiens*. It is also sometimes carried out primarily for the sakes of other species of animal, or for plants – though very seldom for the likes of fungi, and never (I think...) for protists, bacteria, or anonymous slimes.

As Geoffrey Jellicoe clearly showed by the title of his most famous book, landscape architects make *the landscape of man* [1]. So: what is landscape architecture for? Despite eulogies from some senior figures of the profession, much 'landscaping', here and in many other countries, is little more than cosmetics, and is perceived by the public as such. If it is perceived at all... It is sad that for many people this is the only connotation, because landscape designing is an important matter – or, rather, it could be. As one enthusiast tells us, "our work has weight and consequences – ecologically, historically, socially – that are dangerous to ignore"; and as another one says, it is about those very important things ecology, community, and delight [2]. The conscious making of landscapes is a vitally important cultural activity; and landscape architecture has a very important, but undervalued, cultural 'mission'. As an art, that is its first justification. It is primarily as an art that it continues to be seen by the public.

More than art

But its second mission is a long-growing one. It is (or could be) a significant part of the 'green' movement, and can play an important part in helping rebuild and sustain the ecological systems on which we depend. This is fostering our ecological wellbeing. By now we ought to be able to take

the environmental mission for granted, though very often we cannot [3]. For an environmentalist, this is annoying.... But besides this general ecological need we require sustenance in two other respects. There is a need for ‘physiological wellbeing’ – we require an environment that continues to provide food, fuels, construction materials, and so on; and there is a need for ‘psychological wellbeing’ – which I prefer to characterise as a need for things to admire: to wonder at and be inspired by; things that are interesting, beautiful, or awesome. However, my concern here is with a third mission for landscape architecture, developed from our physiological and psychological, as well as ecological, needs. I suspect that, although art is a part of it, it often tends to run counter to the cultural – ‘artistic’ – mission.

Landscape architects work for people – *Homo sapiens*. This would seem to imply that designers need to know quite a lot about the biology and ecology of the naked ape, and how this manifests as behaviour in the landscape – masked though it may be by a particular culture. This appears to imply a partial but significant difference between what the designer conventionally does and what we need from our environment. Perhaps a better way to put this is that there may be significant differences between what the designer provides – to a brief, of course, and for a cultural purpose – and what we ought to have *biologically*.

The human environment

What does *Homo sapiens* require of its environment? What do we do there? If one thinks of oneself (regardless of what else one might think of mankind) as animal, it is fairly easy to list our biological requirements. I want to look at the conventional list, but also to consider one or two other factors that seem worth adding.

The first thing to list is usually food and water. Here in the West we are so used to finding our food ready at table or on supermarket shelves that the fact that most of our food (still) grows – lives and dies – is a little wasted on most people. They have no involvement in its getting, beyond working for money with which to buy it. Yet, some of us (still) feel the need for an involvement in the getting and production processes: want some contact, that is, with *productive* landscapes if only the veg plot. For many, this is an important part of the ‘contact with nature’ that is said to be so good a thing.

There is something deeply satisfying about landscapes that appeal not only to the eye, and which offer ‘pickings’ to their users. A good riposte to the praise “That looks nice!” would be “But does it taste right?”[4]. Landscapes can be for more than seeing and being in: the ‘edible landscape’ could be a new form of art [5]. It is the possibilities of the wider landscape that interest me, however; such as the landscape of the Cotswolds, where in the autumn a short walk would yield a bag full of blackberries, hazel nuts, feral apples, wild gooseberries, bullaces (like sour damsons), rosehips, and a tasty, leafy salad – all without trespassing. These, usually washed, we ate. Alas, spring and stream water was usually deemed unclean.

The critical point here may be the one made by a number of recent commentators: that for most of its evolutionary existence *Hom. sap.* has been hunter and gatherer, and latterly grower, and, though customs and population size are against it, our behaviour still enables us to function ecologically in this way. There may be aspects of our behaviour that are indelibly those of a hunting-gathering social anthropoid. We may need space in which to manifest some of this behaviour.

Shelter is usually listed second. This is only part of a complex need. We return, sometimes “come what may”, to a home base, or at least, in nomadic cultures, to ritually important places. We have, both as individuals and as groups, a need for a certain privacy: privacy from the elements, and from other parts of our society. We have a need for some space (places, indeed) in which to “do our own thing” – again, individual or collective. That, of course, can have awful consequences when We don’t like what They do....

We not only feel a need for a place that is ours; we also have a loyalty to that place. And with that loyalty often goes a defensive pride, not the least important aspect of which is not mere occupancy or ownership but the personal involvement of effort and creativity. Some of us want, in some parts of our habitat, a greater prospect of experiment (and therefore quirkiness – *and* failure), a greater freedom for D-I-Y. We thus want the ‘deskilling of society’ to go into reverse.

We would like to see a bigger range of ways in which, as ‘clients’ or ‘end-users’, we can be helped by professionals. In particular, there seems a greater prospect for not only more ‘user consultation’, but also more

‘mutual aid’, in which we work together rather than one party for (or against ...) the other. It would be nice to see less stuffing (as someone deliciously put it) of your genius into other people’s loci.

We seek a degree of privacy, and individuality; but also community. We are a highly social species, with needs for community life and communal territories with human-scale groups and structures, and opportunities for cooperation. There is often a very demonstrable group loyalty to place, which can be seen as nimbyism, but is a part of *Hom. sap’s* normal behaviour.

The landscape architect perhaps finds three points of reference here. There is, first, the warning that professionals do tend to impose on the laity. This is not simply because ‘professionals’ are the experts: it is also because the rest of us are not supposed to try – or even be trusted with expertise. The slight move towards community projects was a move towards allowing more of us to try. Which points up the second reference: that professionals, and not least landscape architects, can do much to foster these nebulous things called ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’, partly by, in the fine-grain of their work, producing more homely landscapes, partly by facilitating a community’s use of its own skills to achieve at least some of its *own* aspirations. But the third point is that word ‘community’: it should be ‘communities’, for our large and complex societies are multicultural not only in the ethnic sense but also in terms of age, class, recreational interests, income, sex and gender, and so on. Each may be a group seeking its own territory and destiny. That needs to be recognised, as well as the commonality that holds societies together.

Designing against taboo

The next facet of human behaviour that usually appears on the basic list is subject to a web of taboo. However, sex is as critically important for *Hom. sap.* as for any other animal. Sex (including gender; the word is shorthand for a complex of reproductive, ‘recreational’, and social behaviour and needs) seems hardly ever tackled head-on as a consideration in landscape architecture. How often is it discussed by designers? ...

Often – but with depressingly predictable lubricity. Indeed, apart from asides about bushes or vague references to ‘meeting places’, remarkably little consideration is given to how designed landscapes might facilitate

courtship and enhance sexual experiences. Not all courtship need be an indoor activity. We (and it is far from only adolescents) could greatly benefit from more conducive surroundings, with the right sort of atmosphere, privacy, and security. “Love, work and knowledge are”, says Wilhelm Reich, “the wellsprings of our life. They should also govern it” [6].

The recent deluge of cases of abuse, rape, and forced prostitution warns us that this is difficult territory. The perception of danger may be much greater, in many cases, than the reality of danger, but knowing that is of little help if you are afraid. This is a huge problem society has to tackle. Tabooing (or rather trying to ban) ‘sexual activity’ would appear to be part of the problem, not of the solution – but it is widespread.

Much of courtship and recreational sex is playful. Much of the rest of life is also playful. *Homo sapiens* has, in fact, been called *Homo ludens* – the ape that plays [7]. Play is central to our lives. We are said to make our lives, including our work, as playlike as possible. “Man only plays”, says Schiller (he of the ‘Ode to joy’), “when in the full meaning of the word he is a man; and he is only completely a man when he plays”. So, play is, or ought to be, the concern of more than the child (and a few adults); and we are not here concerned (merely) with games and sport. Play is in the *attitude* more than the action. “It is only in playing that the individual child or adult is able to be creative, and to use the whole personality” [8].

Design for the whole personality

One of the sadnesses of life is that landscape architecture does not often go out of its way to help people use the whole of their personalities. It could greatly help here.

There is a theory that our perception of and response to our surroundings is in terms of the opportunities it offers – the ‘affordances’ [9] – for food and drink, shelter, ‘prospect-and-refuge’ [10], and so on. I would add ‘playability’ [11]. Part of our psychological wellbeing is catered for by having things to admire. Part of it is supplied by acting with these things. We are after all *Homo faber* – the maker.

Another theory looks relevant here: the one about ‘loose parts’ [12]. If play is indeed something kept, however rudimentarily, throughout life, this theory of ‘how *not* to cheat children’ would seem to have wider application.

The point is, that some adults feel cheated too. If objects to move around and make things with, and places to *make* their own are important for children, so too are they important for adults. The bracken thatched, fir branch den I made in the woods was intended for our young daughters, but I guess I used it most, occasionally sleeping in it. Here is wonderful opportunity for the designer (a player *par excellence*?) to help the rest of us be creative, to carry out our natural behaviour, to express more of our personalities and hopefully to offer more to society. I was delighted to have my picnic lunch disturbed, during a visit to Chatsworth, by a student who should have been studying the finer points of aristocratic design. Instead, he examined the trees in front of me, stopped at a fallen one, and discovered it still had ‘bounce’. He climbed onto it, walked along until he found an especially bouncy bit, stopped, and jumped up and down until satisfied. I think he left Chatsworth a better designer.... Towards the end of last century, there was a very interesting, encouraging movement to provide children with more creative opportunities for play. They were a bit messy by art-aesthetic, adult, standards, but adventure playgrounds offered hope. Unadventurous adults won [13].

Some people retain the childish ability to find things of interest wherever they are. So often these are little things. And little things, wrote Edward Shanks [14] –

Little things, ridiculous things, shall move me
To smiles or tears or verse.

Answers in the details

Another sadness about landscape architecture is that it so often colludes in stealing the interesting little things. It tends to smooth away details. It forgets that the essential prerequisite for playability is serendipity – the happy accident, the stumbling on things by chance. These things – a branch to swing on, a butterfly or flower to admire, a patch of mud to jump in, a ‘lucky’ stone to take home ... – *have to be there* if they are to be happened upon. So often, alas, they are not.

Let’s go back to ‘ecological wellbeing’ for a moment. Those little and ridiculous things we never see and seldom think about include many that are utterly, categorically, necessary to ecosystem functioning. If they do come to our attention, it is usually as pests and diseases; but from insects

to bacteria and viruses, and probably beyond, many appear to be essential ecological components. And most are very, very small. Biologists barely know them. Landscape architects barely know of them. The truth is that we simply don’t know more than the Noddy version of their biology [15].

Is it because – at all scales – landscapes tend to be over-designed, and then over-controlled, to suit a culture-art philosophy, that serendipity – the happy stumbling on things by chance – is a little scarce nowadays? And something else is in danger of becoming scarce: *danger*. Not that contemporary landscapes are especially safe. Far from it: by encouraging urbanisation, by catering for the car, and by developing selfish lifestyles, we keep our lives troubled. Yet at the same time we do our best to remove risk: by filling in ponds, erecting barriers, lopping branches, fitting handrails, and so on, with the excuse of Health & Safety and the pressure of litigation. In so doing, we remove the very challenge that people, the young at least, need. Which, indeed, *they will put back*.... It is well enough known that where danger is apparently lacking, it will be sought *and* found. It is not uninteresting to note, moreover, that young males tend to court danger in order to court females. It is sad when a society gears everything to bravehearts, though it is important to remember that “Faint heart never won fair lady” is a poetic way of expressing a common zoological situation.

It is doubtless still true (the age may have fallen a little) that “modern landscapes seem to be designed for forty-year-old healthy males driving cars” [16] – for whom serendipity could be an unfortunate thing indeed... The trouble here is that we are about forty for only a part of our lives. And we ought to note that an inordinate proportion of our population is not exactly healthy, and cannot behave in the landscape as perhaps they might wish – though I do not read that to mean we shouldn’t be encouraging by providing appropriate ‘affordances’; nor that it is right to assume that everyone wants to be busily active ...playful, gathering lunch from the hedgerows, or living in self-build bowers.

A feminine landscape

The Chinese not long ago had a saying: “Women hold up half the sky”. It was not true. Women hold up somewhat more than half, although looking around the world one would not know it. From looking at landscapes, designed or otherwise, one usually can’t tell either that women are the

majority of the ‘users’, or that a healthily high proportion of landscape designers are female. Femininity does not seem to show much in landscape architecture – at least philosophically. There seems little agreement yet on how it manifests in the actual landscape. It is, however, a fair bet that the tendency towards Lenôtrine megalomania might be less, and that – amongst other things – the needs of children might feature a little more [17].

Although, of course, it does not follow that a design by a woman will express a popular take on a feminist attitude (for instance, Martha Schwartz declared “I am an artist. ... I see the landscape as a vehicle for self-expression, I wish to leave a mark”), it is frequently argued – and not only by women – that a greater expression of the feminine side of all of us would be healthy for both society and environment – not least, perhaps, because there might be more direct contact between professional and user: more working with (not just for, and certainly not so often against) people.

Ecological sustainer; biological provider; cultural facilitator

Landscape architecture, like all arts, is a cultural activity. Its manifestations vary from place to place, from culture to culture, and with time. Its ‘cultural’ mission – not merely its artistic one – is probably foremost. It is, above all, a widening of that mission that some of us are looking for. It is most important to understand that people – *all* of us – should be able, collectively and individually, to do something to influence, to alter, to make, their places.

Moreover, there is a further potentially important prospect for the makers of landscapes. Anthropologist Margaret Mead has somewhere argued that our lives do not include enough activity that is ceremonial. All cultures, all societies, and I guess all groups, include what can be called ceremonies and *rituals* – any formal actions that follow a set pattern and through symbols convey a shared meaning. These are commonly place-associated, and ours include civic (e.g. Black Rod striking the door of the Commons), military-centred (e.g. at the Cenotaph, and flag-draped coffins of war-dead), academic (e.g. colourful robes and the doffing of caps), and religious ceremonies, and less formal ones such as Christmas lights and New Year festivities, and various manifestations at football matches. Yet, ours do not take so central a place as they do in some other cultures.

We get close, perhaps, with a landscape as memorial: “a landscape of tremendous cultural significance. It reinserts sacred stories into public open space: stories that reveal and heal” [18]. Maybe landscape architecture should be more aware of the possibility of making places for ceremony and ritualistic activity: not necessarily grand events; perhaps just places that help small groups or individuals perform simple acts that are significant to *them*. Some places at least should be able to ‘show’ us what to do there, and make us feel comfortable doing it.

I realise that major ceremony is usually a Status Quo re-asserting its priorities, not necessarily shared by anyone else. And much minor ceremony is a form of pretentious entertainment. For example: every October, the solicitor to the City of London, dressed in his resplendent black gown, demonstrates the bluntness of a billhook and the sharpness of an axe, then pays them as rent for a piece of Shropshire the Corporation rented 700 years ago, the location of which is long forgotten [19]. It is more the humble and everyday situation – the gnarled tree everyone hugs, the cairn walkers add a stone to as they pass, the performance of an English picnic, or the steel sculpture that willy-nilly becomes a gong – I am thinking of.

We appear to be close to play again. We are certainly close to recognising the need to respond ‘spiritually’ to things and places in our environments: the ancient tree that invites a hug; a pattern of stones or trees that suggests a particular route through, although it may not be the obvious desire line; a place a family or a couple returns to because *for them* it has gained a special meaning. Some ritual behaviour seems especially restricted place-wise, and is very building-oriented in our culture. Although there are both cultural and climatic reasons why *rites of passage* are commonly performed indoors, they might be more landscape-oriented than they are. Marriage, perhaps (though one of my daughters recently went to a friend’s wedding on a Scottish beach); childbirth, certainly, but its celebration need not be. Nor need the rituals that are associated with social recognition or initiation of a new member of a community be. We have, of course, the post-mortem places of burial, scattering, and remembrance. But generally it is as though we spend as many as possible of the important bits of our lives shielded from – shunning – the outdoors. That means shielded from and shunning the landscape. Birth, marriage, and death, and the initiations of youth, are some of our lives’ critical points. The landscape architect does not seem to do much for them.

If I am right – and some of these are dilettante thoughts – would a few changes to landscape education be useful? Of course, more than a few would be needed to society, too! And there might be a lengthy list of courses / modules / units to add and few to subtract; but how about?:

Wind and rain, snow and sun
The role of the microcosm
How to listen to the land
Being civilised but human
Helping people make places
The playful adult
A child's place
Designing for intimacy
Non-professional landscapes
Designing landscapes without art
Making landscapes edible
Landscape architecture as poetics
Putting challenge back
Serendipity [20]

Biographical notes

During the nineties, landscape architecture students in Britain organised several successful 'springschools', which brought together members from the various courses (and a few from different subjects), and selections of landscape tutors and others. They offered workshops, lectures, panels to question, or just places to fraternise in. I was honoured to contribute to several of them. This paper is a revision of a talk given at Sheffield University in 1992.

A botanist and plant ecologist, I taught first in the Landscape Architecture Department of the Gloucestershire College of Art & Design, and lastly, after several amalgamations, in the Environment School of the University of Gloucestershire. I took medical retirement from there in 2003, since when I have largely lost contact with the L.A. world, but have increased my involvement in the world of nature conservation and environmentalism, and retain an interest in biology in general.

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'Man' is still English's main collective term for *Hom. sap.*, but I think it is correct to put a gender limit on it here. L. A. has long been favoured by women practitioners, but if one looks (say) through Jellicoe's book, or present-day websites, it seems fairly clear that most of the designed landscapes represented – *and* most of those that are not designed, by professionals or otherwise – are of a masculine nature. This is germane to several points stressed in this paper.

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PLACES OF THE DEAD, LANDSCAPES FOR THE LIVING

Jane Fitzgerald White

“Places of the dead are pivotal landscapes, places where life and death, past and future, the material world and the spiritual world are held in balance” (Worpole, 2003).

“Well managed cemeteries are places where people, nature and history meet” (Parliament, 2001).

Last year’s centenary of the commencement of World War One drew international attention to the memorial landscapes associated with all those who fought and died for their respective countries. War cemeteries, such as those scattered throughout the Somme and at Passchendaele, became pivotal places where the living gathered to silently remember the dead, reflect on their great sacrifice and contemplate its meaning for our own generation.

Yet the value and significance of burial landscapes extend beyond that of their primary role as memorials and physical resting places for the dead. Churchyards and cemeteries are culturally and historically important, can be a rich educational resource and are becoming widely recognised as possessing an important role in the support of biodiversity (Parliament, 2001; Cabe, 2007). In addition, they make a significant contribution to the provision of green space within the urban environment, often presenting one of the few opportunities for metropolitan inhabitants to experience the natural world. In the past, the design of cemeteries was as much about being a public landscape, attractive in its own right, as it was about functioning as a place for burial.

There are an estimated 12,000 burial sites in England and Wales, covering an area of over 7,000 hectares (English Heritage, 2007). These sites include 3,500 historic cemeteries (pre-1914) and 6,000 churchyards, maintained as distinct ecosystems (Cabe, 2007). Public awareness is growing concerning the value of these burial landscapes and secular authorities are working towards their protection and preservation, with historic cemeteries included on English Heritage’s Register of Parks and Gardens (English Heritage, 2010) and a number recognised as sites of

ecological interest. Yet concerns have been raised regarding the current, poor condition of many burial grounds (Home Office, 2004; Parliament, 2001), with CABE (2007) observing that the perception of such landscapes as valuable green spaces has disappeared from most authority strategies.

Burial Landscapes – Their Distinctive Character and Identity

Churchyards and cemeteries are the most commonly identifiable forms of burial landscape within the UK, with natural burial sites becoming an increasingly popular alternative, due to their progressively improving sustainability and ecological credentials. The distinguishing features of these three forms of burial landscape primarily concern physical characteristics, ownership, meaning and the site’s relationship to community identities and sacredness (Rugg, 2000).



Fig. 1 St Peter’s Churchyard, Leckhampton, Cheltenham

Churchyards

Traditionally churchyards are consecrated burial land connected to churches either physically or through their ownership by the Church of England. Their use has been recorded since the seventh century (Ariés, 1983). Churchyards are often small in extent, centrally located within communities and “*have evolved and matured over centuries*” (Fidler, 1984). [See also Bodfan Gruffydd’s article on Churchyard Conservation in this issue. Ed]

Cemeteries

J.S. Cure (1999) defines a cemetery as a ‘*burial ground*’, especially a large landscaped park or ground laid out expressly for the interment of the dead. Often interdenominational and partially consecrated, these burial landscapes are customarily located on the outskirts of settlements, and



Fig. 2 Tyne Cot Cemetery, Passchendaele, Belgium

come under the ownership of parish, local or district councils, with some being privately owned or governed by specific denominations. Cemeteries became common from the 1820s onwards, in response to the growth in population during the Industrial Revolution and the lack of available burial space in local churchyards. With an average size of 5-10 acres (2-4 ha), many cemeteries were designed by the same famous landscape designers who created public parks, the intention being not just to form a place for burial, but also a tranquil place attractive in its own right. They differ from churchyards by being ‘*instant creations*’ (Fidler, 1984), often intentionally designed as landscapes.

During the 19th century, a specific aesthetic and design concept dominated the cemetery landscape, influenced by John Claudius Loudon, a prominent landscape designer of that era. He developed what became known as the *cemetery style*, a spatial layout characterised by formal avenues of evergreen trees, which reached its peak popularity during the Victorian era, influencing the design and layout of many well-known cemeteries (Worpole, 2003).

But Loudon’s exploration of burial landscapes extended beyond the social enrichment offered by their pleasing park-like aesthetic and well-designed layout. Whilst commenting that “*churchyards and cemeteries are scenes...calculated to improve the morals and the taste, and by their botanical riches to cultivate the intellect*”, he further recognised their service “*as historical records...[t]he tomb has, in fact, been the great chronicler of taste throughout the world.*” (Loudon, 1843). An analysis of any burial landscape can reveal valuable information about a specific era, a country’s turbulent history and provides an engaging insight into contemporary cultural attitudes towards death.

Natural Burial

Ann Sharrock and Ian Fisher describe natural burial as “*a process whereby bodies or ash from cremation are interned in the ground to allow the remains to recycle naturally*” (2014). In 2014, there were 270 registered natural burial sites in England, owned and managed by a variety of private individuals and companies, trusts and local authorities. Commonly located on the edge of settlements or within the countryside, natural burial sites are less accessible to urban inhabitants.

The character and design intention of these sites differ from those of the religious association and enclosed, segregated quality of churchyards and cemeteries, described by Ken Worpole as “*forbidding walled and gated world apart*” (Worpole, 2003). The more sustainable interpretations



Fig. 3 Dereliction at Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol

are designed to form an integral part of the landscape, removing the impression of boundary or separation and intrinsically connecting the land of the dead with that of the living. Frequently located within meadows or developing areas of woodland, sites situated within active agricultural land aim to create burial places that act as a “*future asset, not a future liability*” (Leedam, 2009). Once their function as active burial grounds cease, these landscapes continue as farmland or develop into permanent woodland, becoming multi-functional, biodiverse landscapes, with their additional identity and role of memorial.

‘A Place Apart’ – The Diverse and Valuable Ecology of Burial Landscapes

It is becoming widely recognised that burial sites, especially churchyards and cemeteries play an important role in the support of biodiversity (Parliament, 2001; Cabe, 2007). “*The very factors which govern the nature of a churchyard, that is, its setting for what is usually the oldest and most significant building in a community and its function as a safe resting place for the bodies of the dead, are the same which provide the necessary continuity and natural respect to allow a wide range of*

interdependent flora and fauna to develop and survive.” (Burman and Stapleton, 1988). This view is supported by botanist David Bellamy, who describes churchyards as ‘*islands of hope*’ for the future of the country’s wildlife: “*they are refuges and have been refuges throughout history for grasses, mosses, lichens and flowers as well as a wealth of animal and bird life*” (Garman, 2006).

The enclosed nature of churchyards and cemeteries profoundly contributes to their ecological value. “*The country churchyard is in many parishes virtually the sole surviving remnant of ancient herb-rich grassland, enclosed when the church was built or even earlier, and even the town churchyard, crowded with monuments, provides a limited haven for succour for wildlife.*” (Burman and Stapleton, 1988). Many churchyards feature yews predating the original church building, these trees marking earlier, pre-Christian burial sites (Warpole, 2003). It is estimated that many churchyard yews found throughout the South of England are over 800 years old (Fidler, 1984).

Derek Richardson, principal ecologist for the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, explains why burial places are considered important sites for biodiversity: “*As most cemeteries were laid out prior to the more industrial farming practices, they can be refuges for species that are not found in the wider countryside,*” (BBC, 2010). This may account for the biodiversity present in burial landscapes such as Arnos Vale Cemetery in Bristol, where its 45 acres (18 ha) are considered a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) (Bull, 2010; Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust, 2010). The progression from mediaeval countryside to Georgian estate to Victorian Cemetery to the present day with almost no use of chemical pesticides or insecticides has resulted in a rare urban haven for wildlife and plants.

English Heritage (2007) notes that a range of protected species are often present in urban cemeteries. These include bats, badgers, snakes, lizards and invertebrates, such as stag beetles, with veteran trees providing important habitats for many key species. Gravestones, monuments and walls provide unusual ‘*masonry habitats*’ similar to ‘*rocky outcrops*’, rare in the urban context. These allow ferns, invertebrates, lichens, fungi and mosses to colonise (Waltham Forest Council, 2008). More than 300 species of lichen have been recorded in churchyards across the country, with up to 100 in a single churchyard (Garman, 2006).

The diversity present in churchyards and cemeteries is principally attributed to four main factors:



Fig. 4 Entrance to Igualada Cemetery, Catalonia, Spain

- The variety of habitats, such as rough grassland, disturbed ground, paths, walls and monuments, areas of scrub and trees;
- Enriched soil, which may not be characteristic of the area;
- The planting of non-natives, which become established in the protected environment;
- The survival of relic vegetation, such as ancient grasslands (Fidler, 1984).

‘Special Environments’ - The Link Between Aesthetics and Ecology

“The way people feel about the resting place of their dead is in some degree related to their respect for the living. The presence of churchyards in our environment is a salutary reminder that we are all here for a finite length of time. If we leave these testimonies in a state of utter neglect we show a general lack of interest in our ancestors as well as betray a little of our feelings about the meaning of life itself” (Roberts, 1984).

Landscapes of the dead are often perceived as ‘*a place apart*’ (Worpole, 2003), and it is perhaps their reminder of the transience of human life that engenders our feelings of respect and superstition.

However, places of the dead do not exist in isolation. They are an integral part of the greater landscape. Richard Mabey (in Lees, 2000) comments *“at present, churchyards are regarded principally as resting places for the dead, where respectful, sombre tidiness, clipped of all the excesses of nature, ought to prevail. That is an understandable feeling, but in the light of our growing sense of the interdependence of life, a more hospitable attitude towards the rest of natural creation might perhaps be an apter response”*.

‘An apter response’ would balance respect for the dead, access for the living and a habitat for wildlife. Derek Richardson (BBC) indicates this is possible, commenting *“what people want when they are visiting is signs that there has been some care of the site, but that is not totally at odds with managing wildlife.”*

The achievement of balance between the primary use of a churchyard or cemetery as a burial ground and its potential role as a unique ecological habitat requires education, well considered, sensitive management. Dunk



Fig. 5 Ecological richness at Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol

and Rugg (1994) state that a very low level of appropriate training exists among cemetery managers, with the failure of higher levels of management within parks or leisure departments to appreciate that *“cemeteries are special environments”*, requiring much more sensitive, site specific management and maintenance regimes. Burman and Stapleton (1988) observe *“what is sometimes lacking...is a framework for maintenance and management which, while observing the churchyard’s primary function as a resting place for the dead, will respect and encourage the diversity of wildlife, in a place where it is entirely appropriate for it to seek sanctuary.”*

The Future of Burial Landscapes

Death is an integral part of the cycle of life. In the past, burial landscapes, in the form of churchyards and the cemeteries characteristic of the Victorian Era, were once an intrinsic part of a community, both physically and socially. Many of the existing urban burial sites are operating at full capacity, with limited opportunities for expansion, resulting in a dramatic increase in cremation and the development of small memorial gardens within existing burial sites to house remains. The current era of government austerity has left councils struggling to maintain extensive

public green spaces, depending on volunteers and amenity groups to preserve Britain’s green heritage. Churchyards and cemeteries are a valuable part of this heritage and their significance transcends that of the primary function as places for the disposal of human remains.

In the UK, there will always be a cultural requirement for burial, yet despite the severe lack of adequate space provision within the urban fabric, few councils are integrating burial landscapes into their development plans. This is a missed opportunity, as the creation of burial landscapes not only addresses a primary requirement of human existence, but in addition offers the chance to form an historic narrative of a community, to enrich the ecology of the urban environment and to establish a public green space for inhabitants to enjoy. Bernard Rudolfsky (1964) said *“no landscape can be exclusively devoted to the fostering of only one identity”*. Places of burial are memorials, *‘short and simple’* historic annals (Gray, 1750) and public landscapes, possessing a unique, often ancient, ecology.

As landscape architects, we strive to create places which engage the human spirit, yet we also have a responsibility to protect and conserve the inspirational places we already possess. We have much to learn from the professionals and volunteers working hard to protect and conserve the heritage and ecology of existing burial grounds. Our starting point, as professionals, is to seize the opportunity to cultivate respect for the primary purpose of cemeteries and churchyards, which is that of burial and as a place to accommodate grieving visitors. Yet developing this appreciation for the unique function of these landscapes must also be balanced with a sensitive promotion of their integral role in nature conservation, green infrastructure and social cohesion. We must lead the way in increasing public awareness of the ecological and historical importance of churchyards and cemeteries (Home Office, 2004) by promoting their appropriate management through assessment and the provision of Landscape Management Plans. Our engagement in the restoration, conservation and imaginative reuse of existing burial places, coupled with the inclusion and design of new burial spaces on brownfield sites within proposed urban development, will restore this unique form of landscape to its rightful position: a place which offers *“the purest of human pleasures...the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man”* (Francis Bacon, *Of Gardens*, 1625).

Biographical notes

Jane Fitzgerald White was born in Ireland, where she began working as a garden and landscape manager, specialising in planting design and historic landscapes. She graduated from the University of Gloucestershire with a Post-Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture in 2011 and was awarded the Joanna Yeates Landscape Design Prize. Her past research work includes 'The Art of Noticing', an exploration of the cultural and social significance of New York City's community gardens and she has also investigated the multi-functional character and ecological benefits of burial landscapes in the UK and Spain. Currently she works as a landscape architect for Building Design Partnership (BDP) in Bristol and is a lecturer in Landscape Architecture at the University of Gloucestershire. Jane can be contacted at jane Fitzgerald White@gmail.com.

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PUTTING THE DRONES TO WORK: LANDSCAPE SURVEY AND ANALYSIS WITH REMOTELY-CONTROLLED QUADCOPTERS

Robert Moore

In the first issue of *Landscape Issues* I wrote a short article on using a remotely-controlled model aircraft to take aerial photographs of sites for landscape architecture projects. Commercial colour photographs at that time were prohibitively expensive. Three decades later, Google Earth provides us with comprehensive digital image coverage of the globe, and it seems that obtaining baseline site data no longer presents the problems it was formerly.

Yet it is probably true to say that Google Earth (and all the other online map sources) are not the panacea often celebrated. Image resolution is not everywhere of high quality and image capture can be as much as ten years old, despite the declared aim of updating between one and three years (Google, 2015). Ironically, though, historic imagery is becoming a common feature of many Google scenes, thus enabling useful temporal comparison.

So what is the latest device that people are turning to to improve the situation? Checking through the literature, I have found that researchers have for a few years been investigating the use of remotely-controlled camera-equipped drones in a wide variety of applications; and if recent anecdotal evidence is to be believed, hobby-level drones have been topping last Christmas's gift lists (Stevenson, 2014). So with an 'entry-level' quadcopter in hand, I decided to test the potential of these model aircraft specifically for landscape architecture site survey, a particular area of the subject I have a keen interest in.

This short article reports on my findings and reviews some of the literature and web sites which discuss the technology in detail. I also visited a local model-flying club to evaluate practically more sophisticated quad- and hexacopters as they were put through their paces. I conclude the

discussion with some pointers on their advantages and disadvantages, identifying the opportunities, reviewing the legal implications and making some recommendations.

The Hubsan x4 quadcopter (Fig. 1) is quite small, only measuring 16 by 16cm including the rotor shielding. Once charged up and with the video camera switched on, I made a couple of abortive attempts to achieve lift-off, but soon learnt the controls and managed to take the copter up to 50m above Pittville Park in Cheltenham. The December day was fine, with little wind, so hovering was not a problem. Battery-life is not long so it soon returned to earth with a bump. Surprisingly robust, it suffered no damage. My only worry was a springer spaniel that ran over to its landing site but thankfully it did not attack it! Uploading the video to my PC revealed a very acceptable film, from which Figs 2-4 are individual screen shots. As can be noted in the original source file, there is some bleeding of colours and parts of the images are blurred – vibration being the main cause – but I was sufficiently impressed with the results to investigate the technology further.

Drones, UAVs and quadcopters

According to Wikipedia, drones are unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) which can be remotely controlled and they can take the form of a traditional fixed-wing or a rotary-wing aircraft (that is, helicopter or multicopter:



Fig. 1 Hubsan x4 quadcopter



Fig. 2 Pittville Park, Cheltenham (stills taken from the Hubson video)



Fig. 3 Pittville Park, Cheltenham



Fig. 4 Pittville Park, Cheltenham

with four rotors = quadcopter, six = hexacopter). Originally developed by the military and currently used by them in various operations (mainly surveillance and in theatres of war), their potential civilian use has now been realised, first as a enthusiast's 'toy' allowing amateur aeronautical experimentation at an affordable price, then as a practical means of obtaining 'difficult' film footage. For example, the aerial cinematography industry uses remotely-piloted copters to serve as camera platforms (Anderson, 2012). Non-military security work is possible such as inspecting power or pipelines in difficult terrain. Here also, forestry agencies use them to map tree health (with infra-red sensors) and forest fire incidences (Paneque-Galvez, et al, 2014).

Some farmers now use drones to monitor their crops, produce maps and compute optimal irrigation and fertiliser application (Walthall, 2011; Huang, 2013). And there is a plethora of scientific uses for drones, from studying algal blooms in lakes and oceans to measuring solar reflectivity of the Amazon basin. In conservation, habitats can be filmed and analysed: vegetation can be classified and endangered animal tracks and nests identified (BBC, 2014). In the immediate aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, the damaged areas were mapped at high resolution by remotely-controlled drones (YouTube, 2013).

Coincidentally with these practices, improvements in the actual technology are advancing at an exponential rate: performance regularly doubles while size and price decrease (Anderson, op cit) which effectively puts drones and associated hardware and software in reach of a range of users from hobbyists to scientists even to landscape architects.

Specification

As stated earlier, the choice of UAV is between fixed-wing and multi-rotor craft. While there are clear benefits from using the former (longer flying times), for the specific use of obtaining site photographs for landscape architectural projects experienced pilots would recommend the greater control and hovering capabilities of the rotor types (Van Geme, 2014).

In terms of basic equipment, a quadcopter with a good gimbal capable of holding something like an 'action' GoPro camera will provide acceptable resolution photographs and videos. You then need to decide whether you want FPV (First Person View) capability which is simply video piloting, seeing what you are filming on a ground monitor. Given that the vehicle is unlikely to go out of view, the experienced pilot can generally obtain adequate photography by careful use of the controls. FPV can mean the addition of another on-board camera which increases the payload such that it might be better to consider a larger hexacopter (fig 5) but unfortunately with an understandable increase in price (Perry, D, 2015).

Many ready-to-fly UAVs are available to buy online or in local model shops, but some also come in kits which are relatively straight-forward to build. For these models described above, you are looking at prices in the range of £500-£1000. The kits can also come with a geographical positioning system (GPS) and a flight-controller (often with greater functionality for aerial photography) so with these and standard extras (laptop for setting up, 8-channel transmitter to relay messages to the copter, batteries and chargers etc) the price inevitably increases. But is it worth the investment?

Benefits

Since the UAVs are flown within sight of the pilot (see legal requirements below), the low-altitude view of an area of interest results in much higher resolution pictures. More exact analysis is possible: plant species can be identified, micro-relief is more pronounced (better with long shadows) and 3D visualisation of the whole site from selected viewpoints can be



Fig. 5 Quadcopter (right) and hexacopter at Gloucester Model Flying Club field

specified. Compared with satellite images and manned aircraft aerial photography, this acquisition of site data is substantially cheaper. Thanks to their automatic geo-referencing, vertical photographs can be mosaicked and draped over Google Earth images or imported into geographical information systems (GISs) and accurately-scaled maps produced.

For more complex output, drone cameras can be modified to take multi-spectral images, capturing data in the (near) infrared as well as the visible spectrum, which together with image processing software provide a means of classification of species types and the state of plant health (a consequence of disease, pollution, insufficient water) (Knoth, 2013), obviating the need to invest in commercial providers such as IKONOS and QuickBird satellite data. Elevation data in the form of point clouds can be captured then resolved into 3D models compatible with a range of computer software (Lucieer, 2014).

Drawbacks

As indicated with the small quadcopter I evaluated at the start of this article, picture quality depends largely on the type of camera and the degree of vibration it is subjected to. The GoPro action cameras are the ones most recommended in the literature for this application and the preferred



Fig. 6 Gloucester Model Flying Club flying field (© D. Perry)

UAVs are those with flight control systems using levelling gyroscopes or gimbals for hovering capability with reduced blurring, underlining the truism that you get what you pay for (thebestquadcopterreviews, 2015).

Performance in terms of flight duration is determined by battery size and the better the battery, the heavier it is and the bigger the copter needs to be to cope with the increased payload. For those in the lower price range (up to £1000) flying time is measured in minutes (eg 5-10) which clearly restricts the distance that can be covered (Perry, 2015). On-site replacement or recharging of the battery is possible of course so with careful planning survey operations can be successful.

Weather conditions, however, are a serious restriction with copters more than with fixed-wing UAVs. Wind speeds need to be low (less than 5mps), gusting also is problematical, rain should be avoided (damage to electronics) and fog is an obvious impediment. Basic knowledge of meteorology is essential, according to Peter Sachs (2015). Experienced UAV operators have assured me that a short training period is sufficient for newcomers to become competent pilots, but there is a danger that

“inexperienced and unqualified operators could accidentally damage vital infrastructure” such as power transmission lines (Independent, 2015).

Noise generation is another drawback. While our environment is a rich composite of sounds, some pleasant, some unwanted, we should be very mindful of adding another high-pitch noise to the soundscape. The whirring drones have been likened to “God-forsaken things appearing in the sky like demented insects” (BBC, 2014) and can upset humans and animals alike.

Legal requirements

In the UK the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) states that drones can be flown without a pilot’s licence so long as they weigh less than 7kg, stay below 122m and within visual line of sight, and are flown away from populated areas and airports. It is perfectly acceptable to fly close to buildings, vehicles and people so long as permission has been obtained from the owner of the take-off point and those directly affected have been briefed about the use of the UAV. It would be irresponsible to fly over or near members of public who are not aware of the purpose of the flight.

Pilots must be able to take manual control when necessary to keep the UAV within 500m. Good visibility is essential and they should not be flown at night. Drones must not be operated over or within 150m of a congested area or organised open-air assembly of more than 1000 people. “In short, unless you’re in the countryside, a big park or a massive garden (not royal), you’re potentially flying into trouble” (Stevenson, 2014).

Insurance and ethical issues

Currently there are two categories of insurance to cover the use of UAVs: Sport & Recreation and Aerial work. The grey area in the middle into which non-commercial, scientific (academic) research falls may be covered in a new category being proposed: Data Development and Demonstration. The British Model Flying Association is offering insurance to cover this area. There is the safety issue: safety of the general public and damage to property. There is the privacy issue and there are broad ethical considerations including noise pollution and psychological distress.

Currently there is no international guidance as each country seems to be developing its own legal framework: the USA and South Africa are applying quite severe restrictions on drone use. The British guidelines (BMFA, 2015) are fairly comprehensive and demand a common sense interpretation. “The misuse of drone technology for surveillance without acceptable transparency and communally-agreed rules of engagement could provoke severe conflicts...of privacy violations and spying” (Paneque-Galvez, 2014). In summary, there is clearly a need for the UAV industry to develop protocols, guidelines and standards (Huang, 2013). The recently-published House of Lords report on the Civilian Use of Drones in the EU (2015) argues for the Commission to take a leading role in developing safety rules proportionate to the risks presented by the various types of UAV (they prefer to use RPAS, Remotely Piloted Aerial System). They go further and recommend the creation of an online database where UAV users would post information on the purpose, location and duration of their flights in order to advise all parties who may be affected. Baroness O’Carthain, chair of the Lords’ Committee, is anxious that any rules do not stifle the new industry, to ensure Britain maintains a ‘leading edge’ in future applications (BBC, 2015).

Recommendations for use in landscape survey

The potential use of UAVs across a wide range of environmental disciplines is well acknowledged. Present research is investigating both refinement of data capture involving GPS and advanced sensors and the development of more efficient airframes allowing bigger payloads and greater flight endurance. For landscape architects, desirous of up-to-date imagery, what is currently available – the relatively simple use of drones described above – can offer acceptable photographic coverage of a site from different heights: low-level verticals for detailed vegetation mapping or higher-level total-site oblique visualisations (see Figs 7 and 8). So for basic site survey and analysis of the kind recommended for most student projects, it would seem that it is a technology worth investing in. At the time of writing, the landscape department in Cheltenham does not own a UAV but as shown in these last illustrations, winter-time is not the ideal season for vegetation identification. However we do intend to explore the possibilities in future projects and the results will be discussed in a future issue of this journal.



Fig. 7 Ground cover from low height (© D. Perry)



Fig. 8 High-level oblique (© D. Perry)

Biographical notes

Robert Moore teaches on the landscape architecture course in the University of Gloucestershire. His teaching responsibilities fall into two main areas: cartography, surveying and geographical information science on the one hand, and soil science, applied climatology and hydrology on the other. He has long researched the role of GIS and GPS technology in the education of landscape architecture students and is currently investigating the potential of intelligent data capture using quadcopters.

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THE CONSERVATION OF CHURCHYARDS: DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

St. J Bodfan Gruffydd

We should perhaps first forestall any confusion which may exist concerning churchyards and cemeteries. Cemeteries as we generally know them today are of comparatively recent date, necessitated by the concentration of large urban populations; they have their own design and management problems according to various national needs and customs. A cemetery may be designed to become a public park, as was the first public park in the United States of America, or it may be designed to fulfil the dual purpose of burial and passive recreation, as more recently in Basle and Zurich.

Here we are concerned with churchyards, usually attached to churches and having long continuity as burial grounds, reaching back to mediaeval and Roman times, and even further as archaeology folds back the frontiers of knowledge. Churchyards have unique characters which must be understood if we are to look after them properly. These special characters have to do with the spiritual as well as the visual ambience and are often best expressed by our poets.

One immediately turns to Gray's Elegy:

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.
The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. (1)

So they lie, "Earth to Earth, Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust", to join the organic stream of birth, death and renewal. The headstones, the table tombs and the elaborate monuments above them give evidence to their

silent presence; to weather slowly, as the bones below; to crumble into soil and join the cycle of continuous renewal. In this ambience,

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones. (2)

It is the sense of quietude and of the slow progression of the seasons, where nature pursues its way, that contributes to the spirit of a churchyard. It has to be sensed while contemplating the visual ambience for the *genius loci* to be appreciated. Then one understands that nothing should be done to break the bond between the living and the dead; for they are part of us; we were nurtured on their blood. As an old inscription says, "You are strong as the land which bore you, eternal as the land which covers you". Natural decay is part of the evolutionary process. The headstone totters, falls and crumbles.

Half-hidden in a graveyard,
In the blackness of a yew,
Where never living creature stirs,
Nor sunbeam pierces through,

Is a tomb, lichened and crooked--
Its faded legend gone--
With but one rain-worn cherub's head
Of mouldering stone.

There, when the dusk is falling,
Silence broods so deep
It seems that every wind that breathes
Blows from the fields of sleep.

Day breaks in heedless beauty,
Kindling each drop of dew,
But unforsaking shadow dwells
Beneath this lonely yew.

And, all else lost and faded,
Only this listening head
Keeps with a strange unanswering smile
Its secret with the dead. (3)

Thus, as slowly the stone's inscription weathers away, it does but mark the passing of another element in time, its site possibly becoming another topographical feature in our landscape as burial sites of our ancestors.

In the churchyard of Bromham the yews intertwine
O'er a smooth granite cross of a Celtic design,
Looking quite out of place in surroundings like these
In a corner of Wilts 'twixt the chalk and the cheese.(4)

Sincere dedication to this relationship of the living with the dead should ensure that the first principle in the management of churchyards is to follow the natural processes, at most easing the falling tombstones to a more comfortable horizontal position on the ground, or preventing graves being choked with brambles or ivy obliterating inscriptions.

It may be that part of the churchyard is still being used for burials or an extension for this purpose is needed. There may be some pressing reason for simplifying arrangements, for changing methods of maintenance, access or part use: then some easing of headstones from the vertical to the horizontal may be justified, always presupposing minimum possible interference with grave sites and their markers. Dame Sylvia Crowe warned me, "You be careful, Bodfan, to disturb things as little as possible, for any proposal for a churchyard raises fearful controversy!" It is the same for trees: it doesn't matter what you do to a tree, it's bound to be wrong!

Then there are the historical aspects of churchyards in recording events, akin to the parish register, reflecting changing times, changing habits, with humour and pathos:

Under bare Ben Bulben's head
In Drumcliff churchyard Yeats is laid.
An ancestor was rector there
Long years ago, a church stands near,
By the road an ancient cross.
No marble, no conventional phrase;
On limestone quarried near the spot
By his command these words are cut:
*Cast a cold eye
On life, on death.
Horseman, pass by!* (5)

Historians now and in the future will want to trace through the story of that place. We must think of their scholarship as we have regard for field archaeology in the protection of historic landscapes, and if we do disturb, leave the record of what was found.

Grave markers of good hard stone (or cast iron) retain legibility for centuries; if we do preserve, we should guard them with great care, remembering co-incidentally that continuity involves change and that the old in time, unaided, gives place to the new. The extent to which we may plan to arrest the ravages of time has to be considered in relation to other factors affecting the weathering of surrounding artefacts, for it is important to give way gracefully to the inexorable march of time.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Bodfan Gruffydd (1910–2004), Past President of the Institute of Landscape Architects (now Landscape Institute), had over forty years experience in landscape design. His practices were in London and Malvern. He was particularly noted for his research in the protection of historic gardens and parks. He also was instrumental in establishing the Landscape Architecture course in Cheltenham in 1961. This article first appeared in Landscape Issues, volume 7 in 1990, and it is reprinted in his honour.

Notes

1. Thomas Gray (1716-1771), 'Elegy written in a country churchyard'.
2. Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1992), 'In memoriam'.
3. Walter de la Mare (1873-1956), 'The stranger'.
4. John Betjeman (1906-1983), 'The burial of Thomas More'.
5. William Butler Yeats (1856-1939), 'Under Ben Bulben'.

THE POETRY OF PLACE

Up There *by Ivor Gurney*

On Cotswold edge there is a field and that
Grows thick with corn and speedwell and the mat
Of thistles, of the tall kind; Rome lived there,
Some hurt centurion got his grant or tenure,
Built farm with fowls and pigsties and wood-piles,
Waited for service custom between whiles.
The farmer ploughs up coins in the wet-earth time,
He sees them on the topple of crests gleam,
Or run down furrow; and halts and does let them lie
Like a small black island in brown immensity,
Till his wonder is ceased, and his great hand picks up the penny.
Red pottery easy discovered, no searching needed,
One wonders what farms were like, no searching needed,
As now the single kite hovering still
By the coppice there, level with the flat of the hill.



Strange Service *by Ivor Gurney*

Little did I dream, England, that you bore me
Under the Cotswold Hills beside the water meadows,
To do you dreadful service, here, beyond your borders
And your enfolding seas.

I was a dreamer ever, and bound to your dear service
Meditating deep, I thought on your secret beauty.
As through a child's face one may see the clear spirit
Miraculously shining.

Your hills not only hills, but friends of mine and kindly,
Your tiny orchard-knolls hidden beside the river
Muddy and strongly flowing, with sky and tiny streamlets
Safe in its bosom.

Now these are memories only, and your skies and rushy sky-pools
Fragile mirrors easily broken by moving airs
But deep in my heart for ever goes on your daily being
And uses consecrate.

Think on me too, O Mother, who wrest my soul to serve you
In strange ways and fearful beyond your encircling waters
None but you can know my heart, its tears and sacrifice
None, but you, repay.



The poetry of place will continue to appear in *Landscape Issues* as a regular feature and for this issue we present these poems of Ivor Gurney, war poet with a difference insofar as he frequently refers to his Gloucestershire home landscape rather than the devastated scenes of the Somme where he served as a foot soldier. According to Eleanor Rawling (2010),

in ‘Strange Service’, he explains that before the war he had felt safe and content, walking besides the river, observing the orchards and the river ‘muddy and strongly flowing’. During the war, he can still draw on these memories but, just as the reflection of the sky in the water surface (‘rushy sky-pools’) is continually disturbed by moving air, so his memories are ‘fragile mirrors easily broken’

Eleanor Rawling recently led a ‘poetry walk’ on Crickley Hill, another of Gurney’s favoured landscapes, and explained to the landscape architecture students (Innovation module) how this poet’s “deep sense of knowing and belonging to this place” is revealed in, for example, ‘Up There’, with its references to the local geology (scarp edge), archaeology (Roman villa, coins, pottery) and ecology (plants and birds).

The River Severn meadows and the ‘High Hills’ of the Cotswolds became part of Gurney’s identity so that “when he served in the trenches in the First World War, they became places of memory and longing” and “[a]lthough he could still conjure up images of the Severn meadows, his poetry reveals that his joy and creativity suffered without the reality of being in-place and, as he saw it, the place was left without a voice”.

I am indebted to Eleanor for revealing this fascinating aspect of Gurney’s work through the visit and through her book ‘Ivor Gurney’s Gloucestershire: exploring poetry and place’ (The History Press, 2011). I must also thank the Ivor Gurney Society and the Carcanet Press who hold the copyright for all of Gurney’s work (He was also a composer of much instrumental music).

Robert Moore

Rawling, E (2010) ‘The Severn was brown, and the Severn was blue’ – A place for poetry in school geography? *Teaching Geography*, Autumn pp93-5

Photographs show Crickley Hill and the River Severn at Wainlode Hill.

REVIEW

Claire Morgan **Gone With The Wind** (originally exhibited 2008, recreated 2014) *Laing Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne*.

2.2m (h) x 2m (w) x 11m (l) approx.

Wild flower seeds, a taxidermied kittiwake gull, nylon, lead, acrylic.
Commissioned for the Great North Run Cultural Programme.

Gone With The Wind is a spectacular yet delicate sculptural installation inspired by the act of running within a huge crowd. It captures a single, still moment of the individual’s journey, moving within a larger mass. Ten thousand separate wildflower seeds are suspended, appearing to float, around a kittiwake gull. Both the seeds and the bird are native to the Great North Run. The Tyne Bridge is the UK’s most inland nesting point for kittiwakes, and every year they make their journey down the River Tyne and out to the North Sea.

The work was installed in its own room at the Laing Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, the walls being painted black to allow a clear viewing of the white seeds and the bird, which are suspended on nylon wire from an overhead acrylic structure, the wire being held in tension by small square pieces of lead, tied a centimetre above the wooden floor.

The arrangement of the seeds is such that they create vertical planes on three sides of the kittiwake (front and sides) as well as a horizontal plane below. The seeds suspended on the rear face of the installation create the opening through which the kittiwake appears to have flown, and the seeds within the installation form the edges of the turbulence in the air created by its wing beats.

The effect of the installation is quite astonishing. The gull seems to be alive and still flying, the seeds marking out the traces of its movement of only a second ago. It makes the immaterial material, the impermanent permanent, capturing a sense of wonder with such delicacy that the viewer scarcely dares breathe.

“My work is about our relationship with the rest of nature, explored through notions of change, the passing of time, and the transience of everything around us. For me, creating seemingly solid structures or

forms from thousands of individually suspended elements has a direct relation with my experience of these forces. There is a sense of fragility and a lack of solidity that carries through all the sculptures. I feel as if they are somewhere between movement and stillness, and thus in possession of a certain energy.”

Claire Morgan (www.claire-morgan.co.uk)

Sometimes a work of art slices through the mundanity of our media-driven world and invites us to open ourselves to a deeper understanding of existence and the sanctity of life. *Gone With The Wind*, by Claire Morgan, achieves this sacred connection and I thank her for that.

Robin Snowdon (rsnowdon@glos.ac.uk)

