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FOR THE LOVE OF TREES

Rearranging my bookcase in anticipation of using it as a backdrop in my next Zoom staff meeting, I happened on a book I last read many years ago. Because *The Man Who Planted Trees* by Jean Giono is not a long book I decided I would dip into it again to satisfy my morning's self-isolation in the garden. The Covid-19 crisis seems to have coincided with a spell of pleasant weather, April 2020 having been (provisionally) registered as the sunniest and driest on record, and during enforced lockdown what better way I thought to catch up on holiday-style reading.

Elzéard Bouffier, the illiterate shepherd of Giono's story, sets out to replant the slopes of his Provençal homeland with oak, beech and birch, slopes which had been deforested and degraded by former charcoal burners leaving them vegetated only with degenerate garrigue scrub. The simple story of how he decides to reforest the land by selecting 100 acorns to plant each day is captivating but the narrative goes much deeper: it's to "make people love the tree, or more precisely, to *make them love planting trees*", as Giono later revealed in an interview.

Trees have been very much in my mind this past year. I've always been very fond of trees. Many people are. But last year the headlines were screaming about the global loss of trees. We were used to hearing about the shrinking Amazon rainforest as land was turned over to cattle ranching, coffee and soya bean production or mining. Then there were the Brazilian and Australian forest fires in 2019 possibly started naturally, more probably deliberately through 'slash and burn' or picnicking activities respectively. Either way there is no escaping the relationship between the continued destruction of the forest world-wide with the intensification of a global rise in temperature or what we might now call a climate crisis.

Extinction Rebellion, the environmental pressure group, came to prominence over a year ago with an aim to urge the adoption of a climate emergency strategy by prioritising global warming and biodiversity loss, since "the challenge of our civilisation and the extinction of much of the natural world is on the horizon", to quote David Attenborough. The media is awash with solutions, ranging from eating less meat, flying less frequently, walking and cycling more, to planting more trees. Even political parties in anticipation of the UK general election in December last year were pledging target plantings in millions. All very laudable but unfortunately now relegated to the back burner during the current pandemic, although arguably also being brought into focus because of it.

While Britain has had an enduring love affair with trees, compared with other countries in Europe the proportion of trees to the total land area is surprisingly small: 13% vs the EU average of 35%. There has been a long



Scots Pine named European Tree 2020, Dam Vír, Czech Republic (treeoftheyear.org)

history of deforestation in this country. However there is no shortage of new initiatives to plant more trees to try to increase the percentage cover to 17%, most notably the proposed Northern Forest which would stretch from coast to coast. The year 2020 has been designated the *Year of the Tree*. Birmingham has been honoured with the title *Tree City of the World*. Exhibitions have focused on trees: the Hayward Gallery's *Among the Trees* opened in March only to be closed soon after owing to the coronavirus emergency public space ruling. (A virtual tour led by the curator is available online).

Then on a smaller scale there are local interventions which should not be undervalued, not only in the countryside but also the towns. Urban forestry (www.gov.uk/guidance/urban-forestry) brings many benefits in addition to carbon capture: economic, social and environmental, according to this government website. Trees are vital in producing O₂ and absorbing CO₂ from the atmosphere, a gas driving global heating. Since approximately half of all carbon that is extracted from the atmosphere is done through the process of photosynthesis it seems logical therefore that tree planting is a climate change solution that doesn't require President Trump to immediately start believing in climate change. President Bolsonaro of Brazil might need more convincing.

To engage the landscape architecture students with this plethora of tree publicity in the media, it was decided earlier in the academic year to target the sustainable technology module project on how a small town like Cheltenham could rise to the challenge. Cheltenham Borough Council being mindful of the current media focus on climate change and loss of biodiversity

PROPOSING A MORE SUSTAINABLE TEMPLATE FOR UK BURIAL GROUNDS

Sam Collins

“There were 533,253 deaths registered in England and Wales in 2017” (ONS, 2018). This is the highest number of deaths since 2003 (ibid). The population of the dead is rising alongside the living and, though this may seem like it’s ‘freeing up space’ for the living population, UK citizens still require a plot of land in death. By law, an individual doesn’t own this plot, but only the right to be buried there for 75-100 years, depending on how precious space is locally (House of Commons Library, 2017). Couple this with the growing number of deaths and the lifespans of national burial grounds are shortened with every year.

But what will the UK do when space runs out in traditional burial grounds? How will dead citizens be accommodated? Traditional landscapes of the graveyard, cemetery and even crematoria are becoming redundant. A new space-saving alternative must be found, yet which still respects the dead. This paper will briefly summarise the evolution of UK burial grounds before outlining the issues of the contemporary template. A selection of innovative burial landscapes and body disposal systems that address current issues will be introduced and evaluated according to possible questions such as feasibility, relation to context, relative cost and social impact. Case studies will be chosen to reflect a narrative of traditions and practices through past, present and future examples.

A summary of burial ground evolution in the UK

The earliest known evidence of a UK burial ground dates from 33,000BC, discovered in South Wales. This human skeleton, likely a tribal chief or another important figure, was dusted in red ochre and ceremonially buried inside a cave (Funeral Zone, 2017). The Neolithic Period (c4000 – 2500BC) introduced imposing stone structures: ‘long barrows’ and ‘dolmens’ – large stone slabs lying on several upright stones, as at Stonehenge (Funeral Zone, op cit).

Roman (43 – 410AD) burial practices weren’t too dissimilar from those of today. Evidence shows the most common practice was cremation, but also burying the dead on their backs in coffins of wood or stone (Dunning, 2017). In the Medieval Period (410 – 1550s) burying people was a temporary measure. The dead were left to decompose in a grave *sans*-coffin for a few



years, after which the bones were removed and the grave re-used. The bones were stored in a 'charnel house': a vault for skeletons (ibid).

Protestantism prevailed in the Post-Medieval Period (1550s – 1850s) and the dead were revered and memorialised with coffins, gravestones and monuments. However during the Great Plague of 1665-6 graveyards filled up too fast and most people had to be buried in large pits on the outskirts of cities (ibid).

In 1831-32 the first cholera epidemic hit Britain and killed around 52,000 people. Church graveyards were overcrowded and a threat to public health. Whilst cemeteries did exist at this time, they were owned by shareholders and only the wealthy could afford to be buried there (Darlington Historical Society, nd). Throughout the 1840s, support was rallied for more cemetery-building in urban areas by these shareholder-owned companies. These were predominantly informal in layout but adhered to a grid pattern for burial plots (ibid). In 1848 the second cholera outbreak killed 60,000 people in the UK, which led to even more overcrowding of cemeteries. The pressure provoked relatively fresh graves to be broken into while new ones were being dug and corpses were dismembered to make room for more. Body snatchers made a living by exhuming and selling corpses as 'medical cadavers' on the black market (Dunning, op cit).

From 1852-57 a series of 'Burial Acts' were passed to establish a national system of public cemeteries, as dissatisfaction with shareholder-owned cemeteries grew. Burial boards were appointed by the parish vestries to inter the parish's dead, manage the cemetery and its income. These cemeteries had unconsecrated and consecrated sections in their grounds (Darlington Historical Society, op cit) and were located on town/city peripheries (Dunning, op cit). The development of cemeteries at this time reflected a change in attitude towards burial grounds. Former inner-city graveyards had a stigma of being overcrowded, disrespected and disease-ridden. New outer-lying cemeteries commissioned leading architects and designers to lay out the cemetery landscapes and build chapels, lodges, gates and walls. These esteemed public spaces were part of the park family and served as a place for burial, promenading and visiting (CABE, 2007; Historic England, nd). Large tombs and memorials became more common and affordable with provision of more burial space. The turn of the 20th century demonstrated a simpler and more uniform taste in memorials (Historic England, op cit). The 1900 and 1902 Cremation Acts allowed the public to be cremated and the first municipal crematorium was opened in Hull in 1901 (Darlington Historical Society, op cit).

Contemporary issues of the burial ground template in the UK

Some cemeteries have already run out of burial space, e.g. London boroughs of Hackney and Islington. Local residents are forced to bury their loved ones increasingly farther from the community they once lived in (CABE,



Grave memorial monuments lining Central Avenue, City of London Cemetery, Newham. Photo © Acabashi, Creative Commons Attribution.

op cit). This isn't confined to London, however, as 358 local authorities nationwide have told the BBC they wouldn't have any more room for burials for a decade. The most affected areas are small rural councils such as Bicester, near Oxford. This town is due to double in size over the next decade with the development of 12,000 houses. Officials have to expand the local cemetery onto a neighbouring sports field to accommodate future demand. Increasingly cemeteries are having to dig up their car parks, paths and floral display areas to accommodate demand (Strangwayes-Booth, 2013). Additional soil is occasionally brought in to raise the level of the site for more burials above the existing graves (Rugg and Holland, 2017). The pressure on space was instigated by 19th century burial laws, which ban exhumation (De Sousa, 2015). This makes it extremely awkward for cemeteries to re-use graves and meet demand for new space, especially as burial records are rare and seldom indicate where remains are positioned (Hansen, Pringle and Goodwin, 2014). Careful planning and precise records are compulsory if such laws are to be sustained, as even gravestones are not reliable documentation – they may have been moved or rotated for optimum viewing from paths (ibid). Due to the marriage of 19th century burial laws to poor infrastructure planning, cemeteries are financially unstable and thus require subsidies from the UK government (Rugg and Holland, op cit). Local authorities need these grants to economically sustain their burial services. Legally they could close their existing site(s) and withdraw from cemetery provision if needs must (ibid).

Maintenance

Cemeteries count as public space, eg over 60% of Newham's in London is formed of cemeteries. Yet little care goes into their general maintenance, creating a draining effect on the surrounding community (CABE, op cit). But whilst a churchyard or cemetery could seem unmaintained, the 'Living Churchyards Project' endorses a relaxed approach to maintenance by not using pesticides and only mowing the grass once a year (ibid). Cemeteries are also garnering increasing Health and Safety concerns with the dangers of falling masonry on children. Several deaths have occurred over the past few decades, prompting headstones and memorials to be force-tested for safety. If found to be unstable, they are removed or laid flat. Most of this faulty masonry is actually from recent times, due to poor design or faulty workmanship (ibid).

Environmental impact

Graveyards could be seen as a type of landfill, considering their commonalities with 'dilute and disperse' municipal waste landfill sites (Fiedler, Breuer, Pusch, Holley, Wahl, Ingwersen and Graw, 2012). Human remains are composed of both organic and inorganic matter. Decomposing bodies can release gaseous products such as carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and methane; as well as liquid products such as cadaverine, putrescine, ammonia and nitrate. Over their lifetime, the person may have acquired

substances and artefacts due to food consumption, inhalation or therapies (such as amalgam dental fillings, artificial joints and pacemakers) (ibid). The burning of dental fillings in cremation currently contributes 15% to the UK's mercury emissions (De Sousa, op cit). Advances in medical care and life expectancy over the coming decades could see more artefacts and chemical residues carried into the grave soils (Fiedler et al, op cit). Even the embalming process contributes to leaching of chemicals such as arsenic and formaldehyde into the soil, as the body decomposes. The coffin is treated with preservatives such as polyvinyl chloride, creosote or insecticide. Metal fittings on the coffin might contain heavy metals and the fabrics used to clothe and bed the deceased could be made of barely degradable polyester, treated with chemical moisture binders. It is unknown how long these materials outlive the body's decomposition (ibid). Such synthetic barriers contribute to adipocere formation. This is the result of 'anaerobic bacterial hydrolysis of fat', essentially interrupting the decomposition process and delaying the release of elements. Surrounding planting however has been observed to catalyse the decomposition of adipocere through dehydration and oxygenation (ibid).

Finally, cremation currently accounts for 72% of all disposals (CABE, op cit). This process takes 2-3 hours at 1500F, which, over thousands of cremations annually, releases millions of pounds of carbon dioxide and pollutants into the atmosphere (Burton, 2016; Meier, 2015).

Burial history has demonstrated that every time national cemeteries had a space crisis, short-term and subsequent longer-term solutions were found to address the issue. Contemporary issues have resulted in short-term solutions of subsidies and maximising the existing landscapes. A long-term solution is now required for a sustainable template for burial grounds of the future.

Re-using graves

The City of London Cemetery (East London) has already re-used 1,500 graves. This is usually done by deepening the grave and placing the original remains lower down to allow for a fresh burial above them. The graves re-used must be at least 75 years old and will have a notice attached to the headstone for 6 months prior to works. If there is any objection, the grave will be left undisturbed. If not, a new inscription is written on the rear and the headstone reversed, preserving the old inscription. This cemetery is a Grade 1 listed landscape and holds the remains of 780,000 people; however, it must accommodate 1000 new burials each year (Carrington, 2016). This is an excellent space-saving solution for large cemeteries such as The City of London, which have ample plots to rest each grave for 75 years, but what about smaller cemeteries? This idea wouldn't be possible as the resting time for each grave would outweigh the demand for plots – and that's without anyone objecting to their re-use. Also, the City of London Cemetery is bound to increase its intake, unless it were more selective – although

unlikely as their website says “anyone may be buried here irrespective of City connections or religious beliefs” (City of London Cemetery and Crematorium, 2012).

Natural burials

The grounds for natural burial can exist in either private ownership, a charitable trust or the local authorities’ (often within an existing cemetery) (CABE, op cit). They may be in a meadow or a woodland, with the deceased buried in biodegradable shrouds/caskets of cardboard or banana leaf (De Sousa, op cit). The absence of a headstone and increased rate of decomposition might leave the gravesite with no obvious trace of the person once interred there. A solution to this is to bury the dead with a GPS tracker, so that the family can visit the site (ibid). As much as I like the low impact of this burial type, the GPS tracker leaves behind non-recyclable waste within an otherwise natural site.

Subscribe

Re-using graves could make burial space more affordable as space would be at less of a premium (Rugg and Holland, op cit). In some London Boroughs, the burial alone costs around £4500 and rising. Those who can’t afford this are buried in multiple layers of graves. With no long-term solutions at this time, local authorities could end up outsourcing the problem to private companies, who’d see this as a ‘lucrative’ opportunity (De Sousa, op cit). The future potentially could see vast, private cemeteries on the outskirts of cities which rent the graves to their family members as through a subscription; those who can’t pay could have their loved ones separated from their families, or moved to a less desirable location (ibid). Subscription services are quite common nowadays – just take Microsoft Word as an example. Software that you used to be able to pay for in one package has been transformed into a subscription-based service which essentially makes more money. This marketing transformation could make cemeteries far more financially stable and they wouldn’t require subsidies, but it would come at an ethical cost: the dead would only get to ‘rest’ if someone can foot the bill.

Columbaria and ‘Floating Eternity’

Cremation is a strict cultural norm in Kuala Lumpur and several Asian cities; however, the lack of space for burials and/or places for people to mourn has led to the innovation of large mechanised columbaria: large vaults where urns can be stored and retrieved by the use of an electronic keycard. These are oversubscribed and more are planned to meet demand (De Sousa, op cit). Though this alternative saves some space, a city may not have space for even these; consider Hong Kong. A proposed development for an offshore columbarium island called ‘Floating Eternity’ could hold 370,000 urns at sea (ibid) and dock at Hong Kong during annual ancestor

worship holidays (Matchar, 2016). Yet this is still finite space. It would cost far more to have ashes stored on this megastructure than a land-based columbarium due to the incredible amount of maintenance and technology involved to keep it afloat. Fashion changes – columbaria rely on cremation and they will disappear along with it.

Resomation

Also known as ‘alkaline hydrolysis’, this process digests tissue by placing the body into a water-filled tank along with alkali. Pressure and heat dissolve the organic matter and leave the inorganic matter like implants, etc. These can be given to the families of the deceased as a relic. The organic biofluid can be sent to the waste recycling plant or it can be used as fertiliser (Troyer, 2014). This disposal method seems to be an environmentally-friendly and sustainable approach to disposal, although it may take a while for society to accept this as ‘normal’ and fine to use as fertiliser for edibles.

Promession

The body is frozen to -18°C in a normal mechanical freezer and placed into liquid nitrogen to freeze it further to -196°C. The body is then vibrated, causing it to break down into an organic powder. The dry powder is then placed in a vacuum chamber to evaporate all liquid and passed through electrical currents, extracting any metals (which are recycled). The remaining dry powder can be placed in a biodegradable coffin and buried. A tree might be planted to feed off the nutrients and become a new representation of the deceased for their families (Orbitas, nd). This disposal method is also eco-friendly and encourages the plantation of trees to in order to use the deceased’s nutrients.

Urban Death Project

A concept, whereby the dead are decomposed within a 3-storey structure similar to livestock composting practised by US farmers. The bodies are wrapped in a shroud of simple linen and placed into a mixture of woodchips and sawdust; the body decomposes into energy and nutrient-rich humus over the following few weeks as new bodies are laid onto the system. Finished ‘compost’ is extracted at the lower level and raked out onto the soil surrounding the site, or taken to the community of the deceased to be used in parks/gardens (Meier, op cit). As another eco-alternative to sustain plant life with the dead, these ‘urban compost heaps’ would take up more space than resomation or promession disposals and the process take considerably longer. Society may also not feel comfortable with their loved ones being stacked like dead cattle.

Virtual graves

In Japan and Hong Kong, a network of virtual graves has been created,

intended for families who want to pay their respects without the travel, or have no physical place to mourn, as cremation is mandatory in Hong Kong (De Sousa, op cit). Facebook might become one of these internet graveyards: in 2065, the social media network is projected to have more dead users than living (Troyer, op cit). It is also possible to put someone's entire digital footprint into an 'online cemetery' (ibid). A combination of all three may signal the future, especially as urban development fans out into any available open space.

Conclusion

People have a strong desire to leave behind a landmarked place to be mourned at; often creating a tangible presence such as an 'X' on the spot where their remains once lay. This physical item, perhaps as small as a GPS, could remain long after their mourners have also passed away. Sometimes a collection of these physical remnants (e.g. gravestones) creates a place of great historic value, such as in The City of London Cemetery; other times it leaves behind nothing of social, economic or physical value: emissions or 'bio-waste' that hinder the burial of others in that place. Graves and cremation will soon be a clunky antiquity of the past, with burial grounds, crematoria and even columbaria only kept as historical reminders of the old ways. Technology's fast development over the past few years has demonstrated that things are getting smaller, more convenient, compact. I think in the future, in order to sustain sentiment and conserve space, we must separate the ideas of (i) decomposing bodies and (ii) visiting their final resting places. I believe the future lies in a dual approach: (i) decomposing bodies in the most eco-friendly process available; converting them to nutrients for sustaining future lifeforms, such as plants and crops, which in turn sustain humans and wildlife. This might involve resomation, promession or 'urban composting', but greener alternatives could emerge in the future. (ii) Mourners have the right to pay their respects, yet space could become too precious for a landscape to be reserved for that singular purpose. The solution therein must be space-saving and flexible to change. Currently, a 'virtual grave system' fits this description. A viable way to finance this would be a subscription-based service (being a current trend) which could vary the realism/experience of the grave according to cost. It is an extremely different template to the current one, but if we wish to keep memorialising the dead, the template has to change, as it has done time after time through history. Currently we live in the 'Digital Age'. It aligns with our era to digitise the dead.

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Biographical notes

Sam Collins is completing his degree in Landscape Architecture at the University of Gloucestershire. This article is an edited version of the essay submitted for the Historic and Contemporary Landscapes module in which he investigates the past, present and future of burial grounds in the UK; how these landscapes are not sustainable yet needing to evolve soon in order to alleviate pressures on urban space and the environment. Sam's interests range between horror and fantasy; grand gardens and architecture, and he's hoping some combination might guide him to the right career path.

AN EXPLORATION OF DIVERSE COMMUNITIES AND THE ROLE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Kim Barton

We are all different. We all have our own story. Our own unique experience – as unique as our DNA. Our differences can be our greatest strength. And our most valuable asset when adapting to a rapidly changing environment. But being different can also bring tension. Fear of the unknown can make us anxious and defensive. It can be the source of conflict and isolation. As we reach a global population of 7 billion, we cannot let fear and segregation undermine our greatest strength. We can not let inequality damage our underpinning humanity. As landscape architects, we have an opportunity to create spaces where people can interact and appreciate differences. We cannot solve the world's problems, but we can create the context where people can develop a common bond. An understanding that despite our differences we have far more in common than that which divides us. We must put people and their experiences at the centre of our approach. Design to emphasise the human story as well as at the human scale. Say no to exclusion and ensure our designs promote equality and humanity.

Diversity is widely recognised as a benefit. In ecology, it demonstrates the health of communities; it is something that we treasure and work to protect, restore and encourage. Businesses are increasingly understanding the value of diversity, with many producing reports and setting targets. The benefits of a diverse workforce include increasing innovation, creativity and ultimately the success of a company. To demonstrate, on release of its 2018 Diversity Report, Facebook stated: "Diversity is critical to our success as a company. People from all backgrounds rely on Facebook to connect with others, and we will better serve their needs with a more diverse workforce." In 2002 the Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) report recognised that although a diverse workforce can encounter more communication problems and conflict, it can also generate more innovative products and services. But what about the value of diversity in our cities and communities? Since the turn of the century in the UK, there has been much discussion about 'mixed developments' being a way to address poverty and social exclusion (Atkinson, 2002). However, the scenes of Grenfell Tower burning, in one of the most affluent boroughs of London, brought communities with high levels of income and cultural diversity into the spotlight.



Notting Hill Carnival (photo Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution)

Notting Hill and Ladbroke Grove demonstrate both ethnic and income diversity. Notting Hill Carnival brings people from all over the country, if not the world, to the area. The markets on Portobello Road are always a hive of diverse activity, a mix of cultures, food and music. In 2006, the first official ONS diversity index calculated that two strangers bumping into each other by accident in Kensington and Chelsea (London's most prosperous inner-city authority) have a 68% chance of being from different ethnic backgrounds (Carvel, 2006). In addition, the area has also always been a mix of classes, as biographer Alan Johnson described it from his childhood in the 60s: "It's true to say that walking up 'the Lane', as we called it, was a stroll through the English class system even then as one progressed towards Holland Park. Notting Hill didn't become gentrified – it always was".

But as the UK becomes an increasingly unequal society (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009), long-term diverse areas such as the Notting Hill and Ladbroke Grove are experiencing increasing tensions and instability. Emily Macarthur (2018) writes about her upbringing in the borough: "The Kensington and Chelsea I was raised in felt like it celebrated and championed equality and diversity. Today, I feel like I live in a shameful borough, but alongside a community which will continue to stand its ground." So if one of the country's most high profile diverse communities is suffering are they even feasible in an increasing unequal society?



Portobello Market (photo Arpingstone: available public domain)

"The change began in the mid-80s, when the first yuppies moved in – but it took the superrich surprisingly long to prefer this area over Chelsea, Hampstead or Kensington. Richard Curtis's soppy film did no good, and by the turn of the century bankers had arrived in force – attracted, ironically, by the peace they shattered and architecture they wrecked" (Vulliamy, 2013).

Studies in the US indicate that despite a typical American city having an increasingly diverse population, there are still few diverse neighbourhoods (Peterman & Nyden, 2001). It is suggested that diverse communities are usually little more than fleeting occasions that denote a period of neighbourhood transition as they move from one type to another (ibid). One such transition can be caused by 'gentrification' a term coined by 'Marxist' urban geographer Ruth Glass in the 1960s to describe the transition from a working class to a middle class neighbourhood (Atkinson, op cit). The causes and impacts of gentrification have been the subject of significant debate and research, with both supporters and critics of the process. Some see gentrification's economic benefits as the answer to inner city problems, while others see the huge social costs of moving the poor and damaging social networks (ibid). In an extensive review of related literature, Atkinson found that perceptions of gentrification are closely linked with political standpoint, for example the political right see the market salvation of the inner city, and the political left see the damage of displacing the poor.

A review of US and UK research on gentrification found numerous studies that recorded negative changes in the neighbourhoods affected. Overwhelmingly the evidence relates to displacement of low-income residents and their problems socially, psychologically and economically. Benefits of gentrification are identified more often in non-research literature and have been less of a focus for researchers. It's also noted that many of the perceived benefits, such as increasing house prices, have negative benefits for some stakeholders (eg renters) (Atkinson, op cit).

Gentrification is now described as a global phenomenon, with some seeing it in the context of 'colonialism' with its privileging of whiteness (Atkinson & Bridge, 2005). It is referred to the white anglo-appropriation of urban space, and at the neighbourhood level, poor and vulnerable residents often experience gentrification as a process of colonisation by more privileged classes (ibid).

The gentrification process is described as 'capital capturing culture' as people and investment are attracted to diverse and vibrant areas, which then result in the displacement of the very elements that attracted people in the first place (Zukin, 1982). Jane Jacobs described the impacts at a neighbourhood level (prior to the gentrification term being coined by Glass) in her iconic *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Jacobs (1994) described the impact of rehabilitated high rent buildings on her community when recounting how the community dealt with a distressed child:

"Throughout the duration of the little drama, perhaps five minutes in all, no eyes appeared in the windows of the highrent, small apartment building. It was the only building of which this was true. When we first moved to our block, I used to anticipate happily that perhaps soon all the building would be rehabilitated like that one. I know better now, and can only anticipate with gloom and foreboding the recent news that exactly this transformation is scheduled for the rest of the block frontages" (pp 50-51).

Jacobs is describing the process of gentrification and how an influx of 'high-rent' people to a neighbourhood undermines security and diversity in the community. A similar story is described in recent media coverage



Graffiti fighting gentrification. Photo Flickr: Creative Commons Attribution

of gentrification of the St Pauls area of Bristol. A local resident is reported describing how life is changing at the street level:

"In the last four years, she says, her weekly rent has gone up from £100 to £160, and she says she has no hope of buying a home. In her street, she says, five new people have recently moved in, all from London. "They're professional type people," she says. "They socialise together; they don't socialise with the rest of us" (Harris, 2015).

However, at the political and national level, this 'move back to the city' is seen as a positive transition. In the same article the mayor at the time, George Ferguson, gave his perspective:

"The good thing that's happened in Bristol over the last 30 years is people coming back to live in the city centre," he says. "When I first came to Bristol, there were probably half a dozen people who did that. That's definitely a move in the right direction" (ibid).

This perspective is reflective of the UK policy push to revitalise the urban centre and stem the impacts of urban sprawl. Increasing populations and environmental constraints have made the Government's focus on enhancing liveability in the towns and cities (Atkinson, op cit). The New Labour government set up an urban taskforce, which reached a number of conclusions based on encouraging the middle classes back to the city (Rogers, 1999).

The resulting policies also aimed to blur the lines between market and social housing, creating higher density socially mixed neighbourhoods and mixed tenure developments (Atkinson, op cit). Paul Cheshire (2007) argues that creating mixed neighbourhoods treats a symptom of inequality not the cause. Cheshire identifies the problem as poverty – what makes people poor and keeps them poor – not the type of neighbourhood they live in.

The difficulty of implementing mixed communities (or the lack of political will to enforce policy) is shown in a study of new developments in Bristol. The infographic figure (Ware & Saelens, 2015) shows on the following page how developments throughout the city consistently failed to deliver targets in affordable housing. In London, social housing residents in private developments have been told that they cannot use the same facilities as renters or owners in the same development, leading to accusations of social cleansing (Booth, 2018).

In the US, it is a similar story, where class is now seen as more of a divider than race. A study of homeowners in a racially integrated neighbourhood in Baltimore, Maryland, found that while many supported more racial integration, most rejected class integration in the neighbourhood (Rich, 2011). A study of Detroit showed how a 'silent social revolution' in the early 20th century created urban worlds defined more and more by class (Zunz,



Failing to deliver housing targets (Ware & Saelens, 2015)

1982, cited in Talen, 2008). Both in the UK and US, cities have experienced increasing segregation based on class and income over the same period as their societies have become more unequal (Wilkinson & Pickett, op cit). This evidence suggests that ‘mixed’ communities are less and less likely to occur the more unequal our societies become. The conviction is that a ‘mixed community’ is better for poor and disadvantaged people than living in a poor and disadvantaged one, and that tailoring policy accordingly interrupts patterns of social segregation. However, it has been observed that in most cases, it is only the homogeneity of poor areas that are identified for mixing rather than the many middle and upper class monoculture communities (Atkinson, 2006, cited in Wood & Landry, 2008).

It is clear that stable diversity will not happen on its own and needs to be supported by a range of policy instruments, political and community will. So what are the benefits of diversifying our communities? Why should we not live in enclaves based on our income?

Jacobs was a great advocate for diversity in cities, seeing it as the foundation of a city’s success and sustainability. Jacobs understood cities as living beings that change over time in response to how people interact with them. This analogy with ecosystems may explain why she inherently understood the importance of diversity.

Jacobs (op cit) identified four key elements to create diversity (mainly focusing on economic diversity but resulting in a valued social diversity): multi-functional uses, short connected blocks, mix of building age stock and



Racial injustice has roots in enslavement. National Memorial in Alabama. Photo: Soniakapadia, Creative Commons Attribution License

high densities of people. She states “The necessity for these four conditions is the most important point this book has to make. In combination, these conditions create effective economic pools of use” (pp 196-7). Lewis Mumford (1938, cited in Wood & Landry, op cit) considered social and economic mixing in the urban environments as creating more possibilities for ‘the higher forms of human achievement’. Mumford’s ideas were influenced by Patrick Geddes, additionally seeing cities as a way to accommodate the “the essential human need for disharmony and conflict” (Wood & Landry, op cit). Research also indicates that diversity and immigration make cities more productive. A study that compared a range of US cities found that US-born citizens earn more and are more productive in cities that receive high numbers of immigrants than those that do not. The study established that this was a causal relationship not just a correlation. (Ottaviano & Peri, 2004, 2005, cited in Wood & Landry, op cit). Both Jacobs (op cit) and Raskin valued diversity as an alternative to monotony and dullness. This quote from Raskin, and quoted by Jacobs, is a good summary of their view:

“They are full of people doing different things, with different reasons and different ends of view and the architecture reflects and expresses this difference – which is one of content rather than form alone...it is the richness of human variation that gives vitality and colour to the human setting.” (Raskin, cited in Jacobs, op cit, pp 298-9).

Diversity and its effects on communities will clearly differ greatly. A number of studies show that it can be a mixed blessing, causing problems for policing, social cohesions, dissention and conflict (Skerry, 2002, cited in

Talen, 2008). The arguments in favour of upholding racial segregation in 1950s was on the basis that its dissolution might lead to social instability, conflict and chaos. In response, liberals needed to justify racial mixing, and the ‘contact hypothesis’ put forward by George Allport in 1954 helped provide the evidence needed (cited in Wood & Landry, op cit). The basis of the theory is that as majority group members come into contact with other minorities, they are less likely to hold prejudices towards them (ibid). Allport did emphasise that quality and quantity of contact, whether it is voluntary, whether parties are of ‘equal status’, whether the contact occurs in a competitive or collaborative environment, and – most importantly for landscape architects – the area or the ‘interactive setting’ in which contact occurs (ibid). Talen (op cit) noted that arguments supporting diversity seem motivated by positive, hopeful views on life in an inclusive society, and those in favour of homogeneity seem motivated by doubt, fear and even hatred. So if we accept the value of diversity in communities, as we have in business and ecology, what makes a stable diverse community and how can it be supported?

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Alabama includes 800 six feet tall steel monuments with all the names of the 4,400 recorded lynching victims engraved onto the columns. The columns represent the states and the counties these incidents took place. “For me, these cultural projects became a way to take some action, to build spaces that force us to talk more honestly about this [segregation, slavery and lynching] history.” (Stevenson, public interest lawyer and man behind the memorial, cited in Milch, 2018). In a US study of 14 stable diverse communities, two types were identified: ‘diversity by direction’ and ‘diversity by circumstance’ (Peterman & Nyden, op cit). Diversity by direction was used to describe communities that had developed a range of organisations and networks to support and sustain diversity in their communities over a long-period of time. Whereas diversity

by circumstance described communities where a range of factors, such as strength of social services, proximity to employment, mix of housing options helped create diversity. In common, all the communities had distinctive physical and environmental assets that made the communities desirable places to live, demonstrating the big impact landscape can have on supporting diversity. In addition, the importance of community organisations and engagement were identified as key supporters of diversity. If we first take the impact of landscape, one of the key ways it can support diversity is by creating spaces where people can connect. In the Design Council’s guidance for inclusion by design (CABE, 2008), a quote from the Chief Executive, Karin Woodley, of the Stephen Lawrence Trust, emphasises the role of built environment professions:

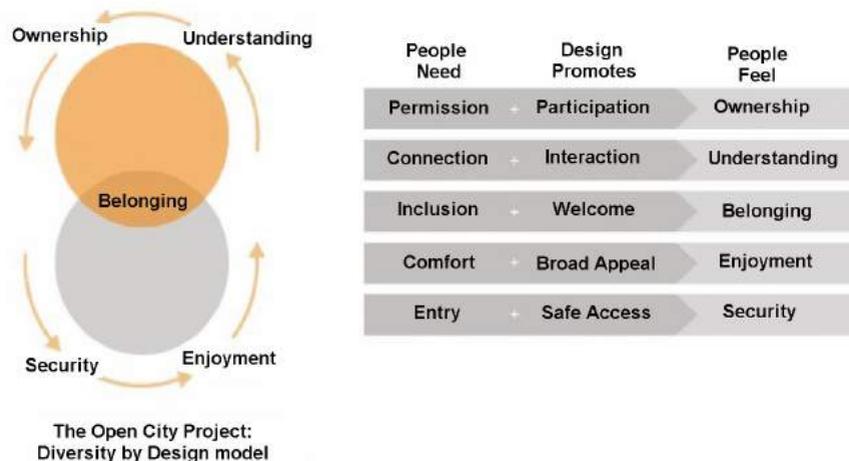
“The desire to balance demands for diversity with public values of social integration and community cohesion is a challenge for the built environment professions. The aesthetics of place need to break free from historic preconceptions that assume universal principles and homogeneous societies.”

In Jan Gehl’s *Life between buildings* (2006), the importance of low intensity interactions between people was emphasised. Creating spaces between buildings that support passing contact blur the boundaries between isolation and high intensity contact, creating the context for a more cohesive and interactive society. Similar to Jacobs, Talen (op cit) puts forward design strategies that outline three key requirements when designing for diverse neighbourhoods: mix, connection and security. The basis of this strategy is to inject design elements that support diversity, finding elements that support and preserve it, or finding what is detracting from diversity and trying to lessen the negative effect. The approach is based on intense analysis of an area to understand opportunities and constraints.

The Open City Project: Design for Diversity (2016) puts forward a model (see figure opposite) based on creating a sense of belonging, focusing on security, ownership, understanding and enjoyment. It looks at individual needs and provides design responses to meet those needs. The Open City project applied its approach to Leitchcroft Park, focusing on an intensive community engagement exercise to determine how the design could reflect the area’s diverse cultures (60% were from overseas).

“Our approach set a groundbreaking precedent for public engagement and cultural research in Markham. We are proud that our work has helped to create a culturally relevant and inclusive park. This new approach to Design for Diversity represents a shift in thinking, around how we build public space and who we build it for, providing a model for other communities to create meaningful, well-used public spaces.”

The focus on belonging is an interesting element of the Open City’s approach. And it moves us into the second area that is a key supporter of diversity: engagement. By engaging people, encouraging understanding and helping to form common bonds we can help support diverse communities.



'Landscapes of belonging, portraits of life' was the focus of an ethnographic project on the 'super-diverse' Pepys estate in Deptford, south London (Gidley, 2015). The project sought to explore the sheer variety of unique and extraordinary lives behind each window in the estate using a mix of interviews and photography (ibid). As the researchers explored individuals' stories, they came to "know the estate better too, and saw that the stories challenged residents', policy makers' and social scientists' regimes of truth about Pepys and places like it." The project demonstrates that the exploration of lives of individuals within a community helps to break down stereotypes and foster understanding. A similar project that seeks to tell individuals' stories includes The Humans of New York blog that became a New York Times bestseller. Photographer Brandon Stanton set out to create a visual census of the city. The blog has attracted millions of followers demonstrating the power of real stories about real people in engaging others. Another example of a project that aims to promote a common bond between different groups is the Danish TV 2 video, that brings people from various different ethnic social and ideological groups into a room and starts to get them interacting. The video was released on Facebook by photographer and activist Nima Y and was viewed more than 14 million times. The video, *Three Beautiful Human Minutes*, by Asger Leth, opens with: "It's easy to put people in boxes. There's us, and there's them".

These projects demonstrate the power of the human story, focusing on the individual's experiences to help form a common bond. These examples demonstrate the need to move design beyond the human scale to also incorporate the human story.

Incorporating the human story creates a great opportunity to integrate public art into landscape. An excellent example is the Witness Walls Project in Nashville, Tennessee by Walter Hood (2017). The public artwork shares the stories of those involved in the modern Civil Rights Movement (1954-64). The students of Nashville led nonviolent protest, including lunch counter sit-ins and freedom rides and their stories and images are depicted on walls outside the Nashville Courthouse. Integrating stories into our landscapes serve to reinforce our common bonds through real people and real stories. We need to find ways of valuing our differences and common spaces are ideal forums for this to occur.

Research and experience shows the value of engaging the community in design approaches. Encouraging residents to take ownership and be involved in the development of spaces can help engage diverse populations and ensure they are represented but can encounter challenges. Research on the City of Seattle's engagement approach in 'hyperdiverse' communities shows their clear intent to include representatives from all community-based groups (Lumley-Spanski & Fowler, 2017). A high percentage of residents were involved but this had the overall effect of slowing the project and exposing a diversity of views. An employee described the challenge:

"There are a lot of different viewpoints, kind of opposing. We could do something, it might help somebody. Some people might like it. Other people don't. It's hard to figure out the best action. We have our philosophy, but if we're really listening to everyone in the community it's hard to know what exactly the common vision is" (ibid).

The research demonstrates how working with diverse communities can raise challenges and complexities in creating a common vision. But although the process may take longer, the relationships built and connections with the local environment will likely help to stabilise diversity in the community and counteract any negative effects of regeneration.

A grassroots example of successful community engagement on urban space is the Better Block project which started in 2010 when a group of Dallas residents assembled to revitalise a single commercial block in an underused corridor in their neighbourhood. The group brought the community together and converted the block into a temporary destination with pop-up businesses, lighting, bike and walking areas to show how the area could be made better for the local community. The project was such a success it sparked a movement with Better Block projects popping up all over the world. The project's aim was to inspire and empower the local community and demonstrate to planners what is wanted and what is possible.



Ben Eine's mural honours Grenfell Tower's victims (2017)

The research and activities explored in this paper demonstrate that creating, supporting and sustaining diverse communities is a challenging and yet essential need in our urban environment as city populations and densities increase. One of the greatest challenges that diverse communities face is increasing inequality and risk of gentrification displacing lower income residents. As the tragedy of Grenfell Tower made painfully clear, our increasingly unequal society makes the chasm between rich and poor a division that is increasingly hard to bridge. Policies for mixed communities need to be more than a way of dispersing poverty. They need to be underpinned by values of social justice and equality. Creating urban space that uses different media to promote empathy and equality, while also finding ways to empower through engagement, can be a valuable tool to support and maintain diverse communities.

As Ben Oki alluded to in his Grenfell Tower poem, perhaps that world-changing thought is that we are all equal, regardless of our income or ethnicity, and that we should all work towards bridging divides and valuing true community diversity.

Make sense of these figures if you will
For the spirit lives where truth cannot kill.
Ten million spent on the falsely clad.
In a fire where hundreds lost all they had.
Five million offered in relief
Ought to make a nation alter its belief.
An image gives life and an image kills.
The heart reveals itself beyond political skills.

In this age of austerity
The poor die for others' prosperity.
Nurseries and libraries fade from the land.
A strange time is shaping on the strand.
A sword of fate hangs over the deafness of power.
See the tower, and let a new world-changing thought flower.

Extract from *See the tower, and let a new world-changing thought flower*
© Ben Oki, originally printed in *the Financial Times*, 23 June 2017

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Biographical notes

Kim Barton is completing an MA conversion in Landscape Architecture at this university. The article is an edited version of an essay submitted for the Historic & Contemporary Landscapes module completed during the conversion year in 2018 and in which she investigates the impact of inequality on our landscapes and how we must work to support diversity and inclusion in our public realm.

THE BIGGER PICTURE: CITIES IN A NATURAL LANDSCAPE

Callum Sinclair

Throughout human history, we have shaped cities and public spaces to suit the needs of us as a species. Landscape architecture has always been a way of controlling, or at least containing, nature to some extent. Our agriculture, construction and constant stripping of resources has led to the extinction of countless species of animals and plants at an alarming rate. This trend seems only set to continue. As professionals dealing with the design of our cities and public spaces, it seems only appropriate that landscape architects should be looking at ways to bring nature back into our human habitation, improve biodiversity globally and repair the damage that has been done. Our relationship with nature is very complex. Species are competitive, yet we cannot exist without diversity.

The History of Humans and Nature

To explore ideas for the future, it is necessary to look at our history with nature, our desire to control natural systems, and the damage that has already been caused to our planet. Ideas concerning the control of nature were prominent during the Renaissance: “the philosophy of life was simple: man was the centre of the universe” (Jellicoe, 1996, p 16), in context to landscape design. The geometrical designs of Renaissance gardens and public spaces are perhaps an obvious indication of man’s desire to control the perimeters of nature and tame the wild during this period. However, “Humanity’s confrontation with other species has been a growing disaster since even before cities appeared” (Register, 2006, pp 204-5). The reality is that whilst humans have had a largely negative impact on the planet’s biodiversity, nature is competition, and humans have simply become the most successful species. This is further developed in *Uncommon Ground* since “many modern ways of thinking about nature too easily accept the false dualism between nature and culture” (Cronon, 1996, p 459). In other words, nature and culture are not connected nearly as much as humans tend to believe; they are constructs that operate independently. “Nature is not our slave; it does not need our acknowledgement. By the same token it is not our master and cannot acknowledge our humanity” (ibid, p 436) So could it be considered that our desire to control nature is part of our own nature? Nature has continued to develop and change, whether in areas affected by humans or not. Every species that has ever existed has only done so through means of competition, but humans have been the only species to successfully dominate the planet by its own means. “Although species have gone extinct since life began, what distinguishes present-day

extinctions from those that have occurred in the past is a distinctive human fingerprint” (Chivian & Bernstein, 2008, p 29).

The reality is that nature will always exist and some of it will always find a way to cohabit with humans in built environments. The extent to which we will allow this to happen and the benefits of encouraging this to happen, however, are in our hands. Perhaps a truly wild way of living is impossible with our modern way of life since “nature left to herself becomes a jungle, and ... one of the purposes of our art to compose and order our environment to our particular requirements” (Jellicoe, 1996, p 27). This means that whilst nature is beautiful, it will always have to be contained somewhat to make it suitable for human living.

Why Nature?

Nature, and what nature is to humans, can be hard to define. Something ‘natural’ has developed with no intervention, manipulation or supplementation. A measure of nature is surely biodiversity, which can be defined simply as “the variety of life on Earth – its genes, species, populations, and ecosystems” (Chivian & Bernstein, op cit p 3). The loss of biodiversity that we have seen has had detrimental impacts on humans, not just the species lost. In the context of our cities, we can define and measure nature as a richness (or lack of) in flora and fauna and natural ecosystems.

Sustainability is a word that has driven a lot of contemporary design, and although often referred to, the aims of a sustainable landscape are often unclear or vague. Sustainability is about minimising the amount we take from the land, that being space and resources, which has the knock-on effect of decreasing biodiversity, removing links in the natural chains and polluting the environment or at least lessening our impact to the lowest it can realistically be. Sustainability does not offer an outright solution, but a practical way of thinking.

More recently, many urban landscape schemes have been focused on bringing nature back into our cities, and the effects of re-introducing green spaces and a higher level of biodiversity back into our daily lives has already been an almost entirely positive thing. Although sustainability and nature are different constructs, they should surely encourage one another. Natural ecosystems have the power to slowly heal some of the damage humans have imposed, with various benefits such as helping to create cleaner air, soil and water systems, all such systems being beneficial to the human population in cities.

The Biophilic City

The biophilic city does not just aim to develop sustainably; it celebrates the human connection with nature. Put simply, “a biophilic city is a green city, a city with abundant nature and natural systems that are visible and



Cinderford town, Forest of Dean, where wild boar, once habituated, will roam around residential streets with little fear of humans. Photo © Forester09, Creative Commons Attribution.

accessible to urbanites” (Beatley, 2011, p 17). The reality is that many modern cities have displaced nature out of convenience, “humanity [having] destroyed a large part of the natural world and withdrawn from the remainder. We have also expelled it needlessly from our daily lives” (ibid, p.xv) Terms such as *green cities* and *ecocities* stand for many of the same values, but *biophilic* design focuses on the human need for nature in life.

In the spirit of nature, it is the creation of new habitats and conditions that have forced species to change, adapt or die out. We should consider that whilst we cannot simply recover every extinct or vulnerable species, we can provide nature with a suitable environment to keep developing alongside us, introducing nature back into our lives and being rewarded by this. A city with an emphasis on green infrastructure helps to support this. As Register explains, “as we build ecocities, we should at least be able to greatly reduce our ‘collateral damage’ to nature, and that’s more than is promised by any other strategy I’ve ever heard of” (Register, 2006, p 184). Sustainability is about reducing this ‘collateral damage’; in other words, sustainability does not offer a zero-impact solution, but the solution with the least negative impact on nature.

The encouraging reality is that cities already are biodiverse and have the potential to be even more biodiverse – we simply need to lessen our strain and take less from the environment perhaps. As noted in *Ecocities*, “cities can be good halfway houses en route to some species re-establishing

themselves in nature” (Register, op cit p 205). Monbiot also emphasises this point to some extent, observing that “in a bushy suburban garden anywhere in Britain ... you are likely to see more birds, and a wider range of species, than you would walking five miles across almost any open landscape in the uplands” (Monbiot, 2014, p 69).

However, ecology is complicated: “urban biodiversity can be deceptive, trading higher local diversity for lower worldwide diversity” (Register, op cit, p 205). It is apparent that whilst cities can be successful strongholds for nature, the damage on global biodiversity is not simply replaceable. However, that is not to say that we shouldn’t focus on biodiversity in our cities: the creation of new natural systems is surely an entirely positive trend, even if it is too late to repair much of the damage that has been done. The biophilic city does not offer outright answers, like sustainability. However, the philosophy behind a biophilic city helps a landscape architect create successful and meaningful spaces within our cities.

Back to the Wild

Rewilding is another term often driving contemporary landscape projects; it is very much focused on the idea of re-introducing natural systems, although the methods and aims can vary drastically. According to Montbiot, “[t]he main aim of rewilding is to restore to the greatest extent possible ecology’s dynamic interactions” (op cit, pp 83-4). A rewilding scheme “sees dynamic ecological processes as an essential, intrinsic aspect of healthy living systems” (Houlston & Shepherd, 2016, pp 9-14). Rewilding offers some ideas towards connecting our cities and further protecting our cities using nature. In the UK, areas that are candidates for rewilding are often disconnected from our cities, but rewilding offers a solution that does not trade high pockets of diversity in cities for a bleak and unproductive countryside. Rewilding aims to combat the issue of the loss of global biodiversity, creating systems that allow nature to take control again.

Rewilding and the extent to which it is possible within the UK have been discussed at great length and is a vision shared by many landscape professionals, planners and ecologists. “Whilst in the UK we understand the importance of nature and landscape to our quality of life, our experience and knowledge of what most people consider to be the natural world is based on our highly managed countryside or urban green spaces and nature reserves” (ibid, pp 9-14). It is certainly worth consideration that most town and city dwellers have limited experience connecting with truly wild landscapes and nature, being used to only human-influenced countryside.

Rural rewilding schemes that have been considered successful in the UK have already happened. *Trees for Life*, a grassroots organisation aiming to restore huge areas of Britain’s native Caledonian woodland, have bought a 10,000 acre Scottish estate and planted millions of native trees with the end goal of creating a new natural ecosystem (Trees for Life, 2019).



Peregrine falcons, charismatic species, have made their homes in many cathedral cities, such as Salisbury. Photo: www.salisburycathedral.org.uk.

Whilst schemes like this may at first seem only indirectly related to the creation of biophilic cities, it should be considered that the restoration of natural landscapes and the creation of new natural systems is the only way we can make these available to the public. These areas will be key in educating future generations and celebrating the human love of nature. We cannot expect nature to move through cities if our countryside remains as unproductive farmland.

In *Feral*, Monbiot discusses the vague end goals of rewilding: “Rewilding, unlike conservation, has no fixed objective: it is driven not by human management but by natural processes. There is no point at which it can be said to have arrived” (Monbiot, op cit, p 83). This is an interesting point and highlights the fact that it is hard to determine whether a landscape focused on rewilding has been successful or not. This is also not to say that Monbiot is opposed to rewilding as a concept, as he proposes a solution: “not seek to control the natural world, to re-create a particular eco-system or landscape, but – having brought back some of the missing species – to allow it to find its own way” (ibid, p 83). I think that this response to rewilding is both pragmatic and achievable.

Monbiot’s argument for allowing species to find their own way in our new human landscape is a persuasive way of thinking for the future, especially when rewilding as a concept is linked to our cities. We simply need to give nature the tools and breathing space to thrive. Rewilding as a concept should be driving modern design, as it focuses on the bigger picture of natural systems and how people interact with these systems, rather than simply trying to boost diversity in pockets of our cities. “We need to think

less about putting nature into cities and instead should realise that cities exist in nature” (Houlston & Shepherd, op cit, pp 9-14).

Designing for Nature

Whilst it seems almost obvious that we should embrace nature in our cities, the extent to which it can drive future design is debatable. Register proposes that we “[b]uild the city like the living organism it is”. This is an interesting view, especially from the point of planning, as we should be viewing a city as a living thing, a museum of that area’s local history, and a celebration of diversity – this is what the most enjoyable urban spaces are, and architecture and urban design that is sympathetic with nature respects this. “Understanding the natural history of a city helps us see cities as ever-changing, ever-evolving palettes of life” (Beatley, op cit, p 18). Beatley here gives the idea that a city itself is like a natural lifeform, ever-changing, but in doing so giving it character and a rich unique history. Perhaps we must approach a city as we would approach a truly wild landscape, with thought and care for every species already established there and with encouragement of further species.

On a more practical and perhaps less abstract level, introducing nature into our cities and seeing the benefits of doing so, can be as simple as adding trees and water to our streets: dense green and blue corridors. In the UK, “rewilding may involve removing drainage and fences, reducing stocking densities, managing the return of one native species or fulfilling the role of keystone species where these haven’t yet returned” (Houlston & Shepherd, op cit, pp 9-14). In order to let nature establish natural ecosystems we must first give it the breathing space. We must accept that cities are part of our entire landscape.

Building ‘green cities’ can be a costly endeavour; however, it should be noted that in the longer term, structures that minimise their impact upon the environment can make shrewd business sense. “Green building strategies ... [promote] economic savings through reduced operating costs, by improving health and safety for occupants and visitors and by enhancing the quality of life in local communities” (Edwards, 2005, p 98). Nothing in nature is planned, so perhaps we should design in this spirit and let nature design its own environments where possible.

Final Thoughts

Whether planned or not, nature will find a way to make life in a human habitat. Cities are already biodiverse, and species will continue to adapt. Rewilding our land is hard to monitor and control, but that is not to say that we shouldn’t be doing it – and ecosystems can flourish in human environments. We need to rethink the way we place all new structures into the living ever-changing landscape.

Simply trying to place nature into cities is not the answer. We need to think about the bigger picture and remember that every town or city has been placed into a natural landscape. We need to embrace nature as a beneficial force and allow it to move through our cities. We should reconnect with natural systems and restore land so that nature can resume. Rural land should become wild again. Urban design should never block nature; if anything it should offer opportunities for more nature to move in. Viewing our cities and our countryside as separate entities is outdated. The city should be part of the ever-changing, diverse landscape, a human habitat offering a rich environment where other species can thrive.

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Biographic notes

Callum Sinclair is currently completing his Master's in Landscape Architecture at the University of Gloucestershire. His essay for the Philosophy and Creativity module reprinted above aims to encourage readers to reimagine how built landscapes, placed into an already living landscape, should not disrupt the flow of nature. Inspired by George Monbiot's book *Feral*, it also raises the point that whilst rewilding is something better trusted with conservationists, much of the philosophy behind rewilding should be embraced by designers.

MAPPING HUMANITY: THE IDEOLOGICAL PLACEMENT OF PEOPLE ON LANDSCAPES AND THE DESTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY

Ally Mountain

I have developed an interest in the ways that the powerful control and manipulate society using the landscape. Lines on maps are constantly shifting, borders are changing, place names are mutable, urban and rural landscapes are transformed as populations are shunted around or obliterated, like the pieces on a Monopoly board, to serve the ambitions of politicians and corporate greed. Our sense of place has become unstable and our concept of community vague.

Today, the world is looking in on itself. Trump's isolationist policies and Britain's Brexit debacle are duplicated at a human level as loneliness and mental illness spread like a virus. The UK is undergoing an unprecedented constitutional crisis revealing the deep divisions within society. Mapped into regions which are exclusive and designed to group together economic classes, we only listen to assenting voices, a tendency which is exacerbated by social media algorithms that tell us only what we want to hear.

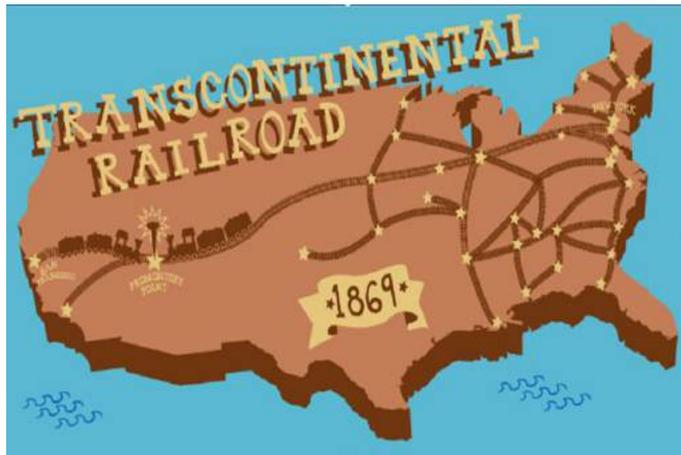
This paper examines some root causes of the destruction of community from the global to the local and seeks to answer the question: how did it come to this and is it possible to take back control of this human cartography in order to restore all that we have lost: our communities, our love for each other, and our respect for nature and the planet?

Resistance is Futile¹: The assimilation of the indigenous populations of North America

They made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one; they promised to take our land, and they took it. (Red Cloud, c1890)².

¹ Brannon Braga and Ronald D. Moore *Star Trek Generations*, Paramount Pictures, 1994 (cited with reference to notions of space as 'The Final Frontier' and how this evokes the ideology of Manifest Destiny).

² Chief Red Cloud of the Lakota Sioux cited in Dee Brown, (1970) *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (London, Vintage, 1991).



In 1869, the final railroad link joining the east and west coasts of the USA was forged. When the Kansas Pacific Railway Company completed their branch across the Great Plains, the railroad ran straight through the middle of 'Indian Territory', the last bastion of the indigenous tribes of America. It had taken just 42 years to carve a line through a continent, thus laying the tracks for the USA to become the 'greatest' industrialised nation on earth by the end of the century.

A look at the states maps of the USA from its formation in 1773 to its mainland completion in 1912 tells a now familiar story of the voracious pursuit of land and the displacement of its people. The legislation that supported this was enacted in 1887. The Dawes Act set out to assimilate the indigenous tribes by annihilating their cultural and social traditions in order to establish domination and control over the 'others' who did not share their values and ambition.



John Gast (1872) "American Progress"³

³ John Gast "American Progress". Image available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Progress, accessed 9/12/2018.

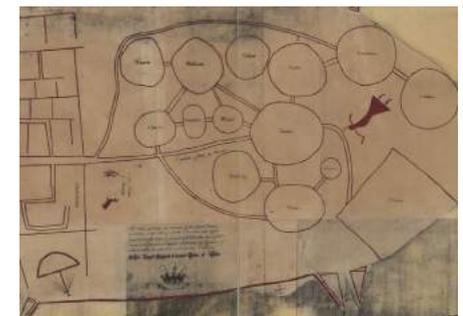
Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with which to shape it⁴. Gast's polemic landscape depicts Providence (aided by the technology of the railroad and telegraph lines) guiding Americans towards their 'Manifest Destiny': the endless expansion of its territory in order to accommodate its 'yearly multiplying millions' (John Gast, 1872, *American Progress*).

Carved into the landscape of South Dakota are the stone faces of four dead presidents. Beneath the frozen gaze of Theodore Roosevelt lie the former territories of the Sioux nations who were massacred at Pine Creek. This president had no love for indigenous tribes. With one hand, he signed a document to protect 230 million acres of the USA's natural landscape. With the other, he signed away the last land rights of the tribes who had lived at one with that nature in order to allow the incorporation of the state of Oklahoma in the former 'Indian Territory'. I doubt he recognised the irony implicit in his actions.

In 1912, the white spaces on the map⁵ of North America had 'got filled'⁶ with the straightedged geometry of the Western states' borders. The cartography itself is an imposition of order on to the 'chaos' of wild landscapes and signifies the mapping of people according to the needs of the dominant capitalist ideology. What followed was a century and a half of continued attempts by Western countries to repeat the process.



In 1783 the USA was formed (above). The white space on the map was unincorporated territory inhabited by indigenous peoples. Prior to the completion of the railroad (top right), the lighter-shaded area consisted of unadopted territories inhabited only by indigenous people and pioneers. The deer-skin map presented by a native American to the Governor of South Carolina in the early 1700s shows (right) no lines, only circles denoting locations and trade routes of tribes now extinct. In 1912 the final states joined the union and the land grab was complete.



⁴ Attributed to Bertolt Brecht

⁵ Maps published in *A Territorial History of the United States*. See website citation.

⁶ Joseph Conrad (1899) *Heart of Darkness*, London, Penguin, 1995 p 22 (on Africa).

Hell is the impossibility of reason⁷: War and the destruction of shared memory

“Until an hour before the Devil fell, God thought him beautiful in Heaven”⁸.

In 1950, America lost its reason. McCarthy’s communist ‘witch hunt’ dragged many of its people before the House of Un-American Activities Committee and accused them of being communist sympathisers. Although few were ever prosecuted, many were ostracised from their workplaces and communities, their lives ruined by these largely unsubstantiated claims. This tendency to demonise opposing ideologies had begun with its indigenous people. This time, it led to a stand-off between opposing world powers which would threaten the destruction of humanity. A nuclear arsenal with the power to destroy the planet many times over was amassed. The world had descended into darkness. A place where only fear existed.

The US and the USSR were at deadlock. But the US, in its arrogance, was to root out these ‘commie bastards’⁹ from somewhere and so began the horror of the Vietnam War and the deaths of thousands of American troops.

The Vietnamese people had been plagued by foreign occupation for over a thousand years. First, by the Chinese, then by the French, who in 1887 dug up all the rice fields and replaced them with rubber plantations. When the bottom fell out of the rubber market, most of the French left and, with no job or rice fields to feed them, many Vietnamese were starving and chose communism as a solution. As had happened in Korea just 12 years earlier, a line was drawn on the map of Vietnam separating the North from the South and the US intervened in a local dispute between the Communists in the North and the Vietnamese powers, propped up by French interests, in the South.

The North Vietnamese army fought hard for their independence. America lost the war; its manifest destiny to overstretch the globe was temporarily halted. But for the Vietnamese people, it was a hollow victory. Millions of acres of land and the rural communities who lived there were destroyed. Denise Levertov captures the destruction of Vietnamese communities and the theme of memorial in her 1966 poem *What Were They Like*¹⁰. Each stanza begins with a question followed by an attempt at an answer. But there are no answers because the memory of these communities was wiped away by the war.

⁷ Arnold Kopelson (P) and Oliver Stone (D) (1986) *Platoon* (Motion Picture), USA.

⁸ Miller, A (1953) *The Crucible*, London, Bloomsbury, 2015, p 67 cited in A to Z Quotes available at www.azquotes.com, accessed on 9/12/2018.

⁹ Stanley Kubrick (1987) *Full Metal Jacket* (Motion Picture), USA. “I love these commie bastards, I really do”.

¹⁰ Denise Levertov (1966) in *Poems: 1960-1967*, New York: New Directions, 1983.

Q: *Did they distinguish between speech and singing?*

A: *There is an echo yet
of their speech which was like a song.
It was reported their singing resembled
the flight of moths in moonlight.
Who can say? It is silent now...*

Slicing through the landscape of Washington DC is a darkly beautiful arrow head of black granite. Carved into its surface are the names of the Americans who died in Vietnam. The monument is unadorned. Just the lines on the landscape and 58,220 names. When asked what her inspiration was, the designer Maya Lin referred to names she saw being carved into the alumni memorial at Yale University. “I think it left a lasting impression on me...the sense of the power of a name”¹¹.

Her monument is polished like a mirror. When visitors gaze on to its surface, they see their faces reflected back. The public becomes the personal. It is only when you identify tragedy with individual experience that you begin to understand the true devastation of war. This is reinforced by Nick Ut’s 1972 photograph¹² which revealed the human cost of the conflict in Vietnam and which is credited with turning the tide of the war.

There are approximately 2 million names missing from Lin’s memorial. The exact number of Vietnamese killed by the US is unknown. For many communities, there was no one left to count the dead. In the words of Levertov, “It is not remembered”.



¹¹ Maya Lin quote plus photograph above: an aerial view of her v-shaped design of the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial (Photo: USGS Public Domain, Wikipedia Commons). The Remarkable Story of Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial available at www.biography.com accessed on 9/12/2018.

¹² Ut Nick (1972), *Children fleeing an American Napalm Strike* from History As it Happened: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/expatpicturegalleries/8502342/History-as-it-happened-the-photographs-that-defined-our-times.html?image=9> accessed 9/12/2018.

The names of the powerful adorn maps and history but the story of the individual lives and communities which they devastate are not remembered. The author Michael Ondaatje views the power of names in a different way to Maya Lin. "I believe in such cartography – to be marked by nature, not just to label ourselves on a map like the names of rich men and women on buildings. We are communal histories, communal books. We are not owned or monogamous in our taste or experience. All I desired was to walk upon such an earth that had no maps"¹³.

For the countless individuals touched by war, world events become unimportant, whose side you are on irrelevant, nationality insignificant. Only when we rediscover love for our fellow human beings, our neighbours, our friends, will we understand the true price of war and learn to take a different path.

A clinical arrangement on a dirty afternoon¹⁴: Thatcher's class war and the destruction of working class communities

Gerald Scarfe's *Hammer Time* (1979) depicts an Orwellian landscape which embodies Thatcher's tyrannical style of government¹⁵. Marx put forward an economic theory whereby the people who produce the goods which drive the economy should benefit equally from them. This was anathema to a grocer's daughter from Lincolnshire. She believed in the free market; if people could make as much money as possible without interference from government, everyone would benefit.

In 1979, Margaret Thatcher became Britain's first female prime minister. From a feminist point of view, she certainly exploded the myth of women as 'the gentler sex'. She embarked upon a vicious campaign against socialism and the working classes it protected. This came to a head in 1984 during the miners' strike at the 'Battle of Orgreave' in South Yorkshire. Historian Tristram Hunt MP described the confrontation as "almost medieval in its choreography... at various stages a siege, a battle, a chase, a rout and, finally, a brutal example of legalised state violence"¹⁶. Thatcher famously said that there was no such thing as society. What she did that day was to break the social structure of the UK.

With 3 million unemployed and the manufacturing economy destroyed, the Labour movement which had protected the working classes from the worst excesses of Capitalism for 100 years, was defeated. A new mantra appeared,

¹³ Michael Ondaatje (1992) *The English Patient*, London, Picador, 2002, p 279.

¹⁴ John Cooper Clarke (1980) *Beasley Street* poem and audio track published by Sony. Available at www.lyrics.com, accessed 9/12/2018.

¹⁵ Gerald Scarfe (1979) in Pink Floyd's *The Wall* (Album Art) Harvest Records available at www.pinkfloyd.eu, accessed 9/12/2018.

¹⁶ Tristram Hunt quoted in David Severn *The Battle of Orgreave* available at www.davidsevern.com, accessed on 9/12/2018.



Greed is Good, chanted by the sneering voices of a new social class: the yuppies (young, upwardly-mobile, professionals).

Many dividing lines were drawn on the landscape of Britain during Thatcher's reign of terror. Picket lines, the front lines of the Falklands War, people queuing outside Job Centres, to name but a few. The North-South divide split the country into two economic sectors. The North with its heartlands of the Labour movement was poor and neglected, its mines, factories and docks shut down. The South was enriched from the growth of service industries, investment in infrastructure and rising property values caused by high employment levels and increased demand from beneficiaries of the 'right-to-buy' scheme.

In 1985, a detour through Glasgow on the way home from a Scottish holiday revealed a social tragedy. Driving slowly along the road bordering the docklands of the Clyde, one noticed the total devastation of a city landscape stretching to the horizon. Mile upon mile of empty houses, boarded-up shops and businesses. An almost complete absence of human beings. In the car was only silence and a father's eyes glistening with unshed tears.

Across Britain, a generation grew up who had never had a job. Crime and drug addiction was rife. The once carefully tended council houses of the proud working class fell into disrepair. The raw squalor of the forgotten communities of Britain was made apparent in the 'punk poet' John Cooper Clarke's prescient poem *Beasley Street* in which he alludes to the purposeful social mapping of the Thatcher era,

Far from crazy pavements
– the taste of silver spoons,
A clinical arrangement
On a dirty afternoon.

His caustic tone and plain-speaking style confronts the unpalatable truth of the geographic inequality and the suffering of a broken working class¹⁷.

Thatcher's government came to a close in 1990 following the Poll Tax Riots. There is talk of building a monument to her in London. Perhaps it would be wiser to leave it until the lost generation of the late 1970s are all dead.

And yet her legacy thrives in secret – hidden from view by the insidious mapping of the working classes enabled by a complacent and affluent majority who no longer need to face the fact that Britain is not, and never was, a classless society.

They paved paradise and put up a parking lot¹⁸: Urban planning and the destruction of communities

When *New Labour* came to power in 1997, they embarked upon a programme of renovation and slum clearance. At last, things would apparently change. The poor communities would have somewhere decent to live. Working class pride would be restored. Clarke's Beasley Streets were demolished. Everything was shiny and new. But beneath the polished towers of gentrified Britain lies a tale of the end of community. Industrial landscapes were gradually transformed into upmarket apartments and bistros and the proud history of these manufacturing communities was scattered to the winds, along with the families and friends who had supported each other through the hell of Thatcher's Britain. Many had been guaranteed homes in the new developments, only to find that the costs were prohibitively expensive. There was no room at the *Slug 'n' Lettuce* for them.

In 2014, Robin McKelvie wrote a city guide to Glasgow. Referring to the 'regenerated' docklands area around the Riverside Museum he writes "Finnieston was once just a port of call for dockworkers in search of less salubrious entertainment"¹⁹. The dismissive adjective slipped into this sentence speaks volumes about the new disdain for the working classes. This was 'just' the loss of a way of life for thousands of ordinary people.

The museum, completed in 2011 is itself is a beautiful building (see photo). Designed by Zaha Hadid Architects to reflect the context of the river, the design does achieve an ebb and flow of fluid lines. But like so many other gentrified docklands, nothing visible remains of the community it has replaced. McKelvie remarks that, in the 'sparkling' new museum, you can visit 'a full sized recreation of a Glasgow city street' complete with a pawnbroker's shop, probably the last type of business to close on Clydebank in the 1980s. Patronising to the extreme, a visit to this museum is surely as



insulting to an ex-dockworker as it must be for an Apache or a Sioux to pass a *Geronimo's Disco* or *Sitting Bull Steakhouse*.

Ironically, McKelvie goes on to remark that "The word you keep hearing here is *community*. But the real community had vanished from the streets of Glasgow's docklands and was rehomed in purpose-built red brick warrens far away. The Glasgow planners "simply wrote off the intricate, many-faceted, cultural life of the metropolis"²⁰, dismantled it and scattered its pieces to the winds.

In her celebrated critique of town planning in the US, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jacobs described slum regeneration in Homeric terms as, "... not the rebuilding of cities. This is the sacking of cities". In her chapters on sidewalks, she showed remarkable insight into how the organically grown communities of a city develop their own support structures and crime controls in the form of homes built close to pavements with windows looking out on to the street which are intermingled with plenty of bars, shops and restaurants. The result is a landscape where there is nowhere to hide: no dark corners, alleyways or unpopulated open spaces where crime or suffering can fester unseen. This book is even more relevant today than when it was written in 1961. Jacobs taught us that one man's slum is another man's paradise by recording the voices of people who were never asked by planners what they wanted and were uprooted from vibrant city neighbourhoods and relocated to places with no culture or community facilities.

²⁰ Jane Jacobs (1961) *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, London, Penguin, 1994, p 29.

¹⁷ Cooper-Clarke (1980) *Beasley Street* poem and audio track published by Sony.

¹⁸ Joni Mitchell (1970) *Big Yellow Taxi* (song lyric), Reprise Records.

¹⁹ Robin McKelvie, A Day in Finnieston: Glasgow City Guide, *The Guardian*, 9/2/2014, available at www.theguardian.com accessed 11/12/2018.

The words of T S Eliot (1917) echo down the ages, "...Streets that follow like a tedious argument of insidious intent...There will be time to murder and create". Sadly, the manipulators of landscapes ignored Jacobs' vision, perhaps because it opposed their hidden agenda of divide and rule.

C'mon baby and rescue me²¹: Landscape Architecture and a new cartography

Looking out on the world today, all we see is division, suspicion and anger. The world is looking in on itself. Divide and rule is the order of the day as governments instigate isolationist policies which are duplicated at a human level by economic inequality and a housing market which doesn't serve the needs of the people or foster community awareness. Loneliness and mental illness spread like a virus.

The mapping of humanity continues unabated. Millions of refugees have been displaced by wars, many caused by American demonisation of the 'other'. Walls are springing up everywhere. The Berlin Wall has been replaced by Trump's Wall, the West Bank Apartheid Wall, Orban's physical barrier round Hungary, the invisible wall of the UK Border Agency. Another Tory government is stamping on the rights of the working classes and with the introduction of zero-hours contracts and no right to unfair dismissal in the first two years of an employment contract. At a local level, Battersea Power Station (visualisation shown below), which employed more than 500 workers in the 1970s, was sold for £1.6bn and is in the process of gentrification with homes for the mega-rich already on sale. Glass palaces and water gardens for the rich.



²¹ Fontella Bass, R Miner, CW Smith (1965) *Rescue Me* (song lyric), Chess Records, Chicago.

Like the interlinked circles drawn on deerskin by the first Americans, it is time to erase the rigid lines of division and draw our own maps. Politics and history have failed to offer us solutions to the dangers we now face. The only way we can achieve change is on a local level. We could start by designing landscapes that foster mutual understanding of the needs of our neighbours and the planet. Places where people of differing economic classes meet in bars and cafes. Places where communities take responsibility for each other and their landscape. Places where we can again look out on the world. But what will those places look like and how will they be organised? As Jacobs remarks, "There is nothing simple about that order itself, or the bewildering number of components that go into it". To find the answers we must understand what a socially cohesive space really is by living and walking amongst the communities that it will serve and by observing and listening to their needs. This, in itself, is an enormous challenge. But throw in the complications of the cash nexus and the *nimbyism* of people who simply do not want to share their space with 'people like that' and we have a seemingly insurmountable problem.

Perhaps resistance to the power of the planners and the politicians, the mappers and the murderers is, after all, futile. At the end, all that landscape architects can do is use their voice and hope that someone, somewhere will put their hand in their pocket to pay for them to draw the dream.

The lamp is gone now and I'm writing in the darkness...(Zaentz, 1996)

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Biographical notes

Ally Mountain is completing her Master's in Landscape Architecture at the University of Gloucestershire. This article is an edited version of an essay submitted for the conversion year module Historic and Contemporary Landscapes. In it, she investigates the relationship between landscape and power using a cross-disciplinary approach which draws upon her previous study of British and American History and Literature. The essay was written in response to the conflict of interest that arises between attempts to design sustainable, equitable landscapes and the cash nexus.

THE FRAGILE CHORDS OF MEMORY

Colin Young

“À la recherche du temps perdu” is, I understand, profound, long and widely acclaimed but none of these qualities are necessary ingredients of the everyday memoir of everyday events by an ordinary individual. As everyday events recede in the popular memory with the passage of time they sometimes gain in interest for those of a younger generation. Here is one such glimpse into a past that has both familiar and antique aspects to it.

In the summer of 1953 I excitedly received the news that I had been offered a place on an architectural course at an art school in Kent¹. I don't recall attending an interview for this place nor, more certainly, sitting an exam – just submitting a few freehand sketches. Of the sketches I remember just one, of a bungalow where I had spent a summer holiday on the south coast, which I doubt showed potential for any career much less one in architecture. That didn't matter; on the basis of such flimsy evidence of competence I was there and eager to fulfil an ambition that, at that time, imagined a future of glittering prizes and thunderous accolades of one kind or another.

The student intake for architecture that year was tiny – probably no more than eight. Being so small we got to know each other fairly well and to realise, all too acutely, one's position in the 'pecking order' of achievements. To my advantage, all my colleagues were better than me in all areas, and I was able to learn as much from them as from the staff (they were all male). There were some superb draughtsmen (again all male) and imaginative designers whose stellar productions eclipsed mine with frustrating regularity.

Another regular challenge was the three-hour daily commuting time, five and a half days a week. Studio time lasted from 9 till 6, followed by an hour of lectures before I had to endure the train journey home. Because it was the 'fifties everything appeared dull, adventitiously vegetated bomb sites and emergency water tanks still littered many towns, power cuts still occurred and (looking back) winter seemed to push the equinoxes off the calendar. However, there were glimmers of hope, and the one that permeated architectural thought at that time was the design aspects of the Festival of Britain. Even as a schoolboy I had been impressed by the new post-war vision of the South Bank exhibition (and never imagined that I would one day work for the firm that produced the iconic Skylon).

Entertainment was limited and, concomitantly, distractions few. The

¹ Now absorbed into the University of Creative Arts.

cinema provided one such² but the cost-free homemade entertainment of the departmental jazz band and skiffle group³ was the greater draw and the hilarious pantomimes written and produced by a frustrated thespian lecturer⁴. Being a fairly sporty schoolboy, I was disappointed that there were no pitches, courts, tracks or gymnasium in or on which to burn off some of the energy that I still had in the first year.

The curriculum was founded on studio work that consisted of sketch designs, projects and RIBA Testimonies of Study. The first were rendered in pencil⁵ and wash on cartridge paper and took two or three days. A varied menu of subjects included, I recall, a bandstand, a space station (pre-Sputnik 1957), a catafalque for a hero, a shelter to be built from a crashed aircraft and a hop-pickers hut. Among the projects were a farm and a small museum while the last included constructed perspectives, sciagraphy, illustrated history and constructed Roman lettering all drawn in pencil with water colour wash on laboriously stretched hot-pressed Whatman. Tracing paper was unknown on the course and therefore printing impossible. Use of ink⁶ was forbidden until the third year, mastery of the pencil being considered fundamental to sound draftsmanship.

Drawing was deemed the bedrock of the curriculum and to that end a term of life drawing was considered a useful addition outside the discipline imposed by the tee square. Watching how art students drew and what they could produce was a useful experience. Saturday morning sketching further encouraged observational acuity, a favoured subject being various parts of Rochester Cathedral. A facility in model-making was thought desirable to the extent that a time was spent in the workshop of a neighbouring technical college making model balsa wood roof trusses of one kind or another and testing them to destruction. Similar work (beam and column) was later done with concrete. In all there was an echoing mix of Beaux Arts and Bauhaus but without any overt philosophy or theory.

The evening lectures consisted of construction and materials, structures (concrete and steel) and history⁷ but nothing on building services. There was no library, lecture rooms or canteen, just studios. It was necessary to illustrate history lectures and, because there were no slides, architectural examples were drawn on the blackboard. Our lecturer was a 'chalk and talk' maestro, a superb draughtsman producing images that we diligently copied, and as a consequence tended to remember. At no point can I recall landscape architecture being mentioned and planners were always

² 'Rebel without a Cause' was empathetic among us teenagers.

³ Lonnie Donegan and Chris Barber were very popular.

⁴ He took us to see the original West End production of 'Under Milk Wood'.

⁵ Venus the preferred tool followed some years later by the 'clutch' pencil.

⁶ Graphos pens followed by Rotring are remembered.

⁷ Text books – Mitchell (1950), McKay (1945), Reynolds and Kent (1952), Morgan (1949) and Bannister Fletcher (1950).

considered pejoratively as a constraint on creativity while Buckminster Fuller's influence was possibly responsible for the respect architectural students had for structural engineers.

Lunch was consumed at a temporary hut on a bombsite half a mile away and the standard fare⁸ had a distinct Civic Restaurant feel to it.

Design work was assessed in a Delphic way, culminating in a spoken verdict. 'Testimonies of Study' were assessed at the RIBA on a pass/fail basis with no critique. I don't remember doing any exams other than those held in the third year when we had to travel to the RIBA in Portland Place to be tested on history (2 papers + oral), construction (2 papers), structures (2 papers) and design (2 days).

I found it a struggle to equip myself with the architectural fashion of the day, namely desert boots, thick sweaters and duffle coats (preferably with 'ABLE SEAMAN JONES' stencilled across the shoulders). Only later, when I had earned some money, did I achieve an acceptably conformist ensemble albeit with a donkey jacket substituting for the duffle coat.

I remember only three domestic 'field trips'. The first was to a church that was being restored by the head of the department. It is memorable because we students were invited to climb the ladder (no scaffolding) tied to the medieval spire to inspect the weathering and stone pointing and, in this enterprise alone, I was able to demonstrate a competence (and foolhardiness) to which my colleagues were content to accede. The second is remembered because it was to a much-admired house one of our lecturers had just built⁹, and the third to the newly constructed David Greig shop in Canterbury by the head of the Department of Architecture at the Canterbury College of Art.

We went on two study tours, the first in 1954 to Copenhagen¹⁰, the second, two years later, to Venice. The department joined up with its sister department in a neighbouring college¹¹ to organise the first 'camp', as it was termed. Two coaches transported us and, unlike today's 'roll-on roll-off' practice, were *hoisted* on and off the ferries. The tragic impacts of war were still evident in parts of Holland and in particular Hamburg although a compliant Copenhagen had escaped damage and hosted some interesting modern buildings, including 'chain' housing and a town hall by Aalto, although Tivoli would appear very threadbare compared with today's theme parks. As far as I remember the two-week trip was paid for by my father, including 'pocket money' which was limited to the £10 per person allowed out of the country.

⁸ Food rationing ended in 1954.

⁹ A lecturer whom I corresponded with as recently as 2019.

¹⁰ It was the first time I had been abroad.

¹¹ Making up a 66-strong party in two coaches.



David Greig shop in Canterbury

The Venice trip was made by train and we were billeted in private houses. The cultural richness of the city, swarms of feral cats and a maze of streets made for enduring memories. Visits to Torcello to see the basilica, Murano to watch glass blowing, the Biennale site to see the previous year's national pavilions and a cicada accompanied concert by I Solisti di Roma in the cloisters of S. Giorgio Maggiore provided highlights.

Our horizons were further broadened by occasional visits to exhibitions in London but these had to be the result of personal initiatives. Those remembered were of Le Corbusier's and Aalto's work and 'This is tomorrow' exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery (1956). The following year I made a 'pilgrimage' with a friend in my newly acquired 1938 Austin 10 to the 'must see' school at Hunstanton by the Smithson's and the Boots factory in Beeston by Owen Williams.

In the summer holidays I worked on building sites¹² as a 'chippies mate' for money and practical experience. It was possible then to walk into the General Foreman's site office, ask for a job and start work the next day. I learnt a lot about site culture but less about construction¹³.

At the end of the first year our parents were sent reports on our progress¹⁴. Like most I was a beneficiary of local authority largesse in the form of a grant covering fees and daily travel over the three-year course.

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¹² A school in Norwood and housing in New Cross (S London) are remembered.

¹³ At other times I worked on a farm and on a department store delivery van.

¹⁴ Identical to a usual secondary school report.

Architecture courses were and are five years long. Having completed three years in Kent, and after a six-year gap that included work in offices, a couple of competitions, National Service and brief attendance at two architectural courses in the London area that were not to my liking, I took the final two years in central London. From a shared flat in Canonbury I took the bus to Bedford Square for lectures and studio tutorials. The 'swinging sixties' were quite different from the previous decade. Things were happening, there was optimism, something approaching vitality was in the air, much more was possible but, equally, much more was expected.

I don't remember a formal interview for a place at the Architectural Association School although I talked with Noel Moffett, who was characteristically encouraging, as was Phillip Powell, and, possibly because I was a returning National Serviceman, my application was judged sympathetically. The regime was both relaxed yet demanding. The Fourth Year numbered around twenty and comprised students from all parts of the UK and some from abroad. There was a glittering array of lecturers and 'Studio Masters'. 'Blue sky' thinking was de rigueur and exposure to broad cultural experiences such as displays of auto-destructive sculpture and poetry readings¹⁵. It was a place where eminent architects could be found and engaged in conversation, preferably in the Members' Bar.

There must have been a belief somewhere in the upper echelons of the school's management that incoming fourth year students couldn't calculate structures and consequently three structures exams (general, steel, concrete) were set as preludes to any other work.

A history essay had to be written alongside project work that consisted of an office block, a theatre and a housing development in the St. Paul's precinct. John Winter was the studio master overseeing this work but I rarely saw him. Instead he engaged a number of people who had had first-hand experience in different aspects of the projects including Duccio Turin, Gordon Pask and Bernard Miles. The first brought an appreciation of intellectual discipline, the second a glimpse of a new way of thinking through cybernetics and the last an outline of the practical aspects of theatre management. Among the glitterati Nicholas Pevsner, Arthur Korn and Paolo Soleri gave lectures at different times during my stay.

Come the final year and Peter Cook was the Year Master. My expectation of much help from him, based on his Archigram work for which I had little understanding and no enthusiasm, didn't amount to much. However, he turned out to be very approachable and, more to the point, interested and helpful in my final project – a hospital. A redevelopment of an old hospital was proposed at Pembury in Kent and I sought to provide an alternative scheme. It proved an immensely interesting challenge involving interviews,

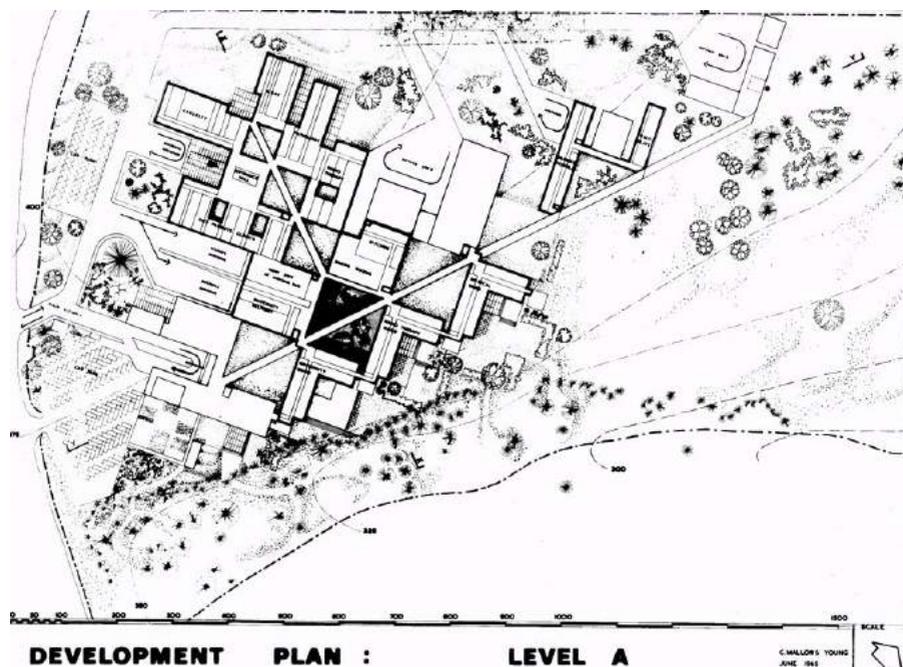
¹⁵ Allen Ginsberg gave a booming recital that was enthusiastically received by the 'Beat Generation' adherents.

absorbing government directives and codes, visits to existing hospitals, talking with doctors and nurses, endless drawing and sleepless nights but a presentation that was well received, resulting in the offer of a job from one of the jury members (Declined).

It might be expected that living and working in London would offer plenty of entertainment but perhaps I was too busy to make much use of the opportunities. An exception came about in an unusual way. A friend (Chilean) had invited Pevsner to the opera but he couldn't go so he offered me the ticket. I'd not been to Covent Garden so it stood to be a special experience – which it was as Jon Vickers was singing in *Fidelio*. Other visits came as part of the course including the Mermaid Theatre, the Royal Festival Hall, New Zealand House and the barely finished engineering buildings at Leicester University that James Stirling showed us around.

Exams were held at the end of each year in the conventional way, not at the RIBA but in Bedford Square. They were set and marked in-house and then the student had an interview with an external examiner. The AA was both a professional club and a school and as a consequence had shared facilities such as a library (including a huge slide library), a members' room, restaurant and bar. It was normal to rub shoulders with the good and the great of the architectural world – and all on a LCC grant.

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The *MS Aurelia* was an undistinguished ship tied up to a Southampton quay. It's true it sported the conventional whiteness of a passenger vessel but that belied its past as a WWII German supply ship and when under weigh it barely escaped that provenance. Noisy, rusting and cramped it was now serving to transport American students back home from a summer in Europe. It was also transporting my wife and me on a new adventure to the New World not, however, as the Pilgrim Fathers escaping oppression in pursuit of a new life, but simply a new career. I had been offered a place on the Landscape Course in the Graduate School of Fine Arts at the University of Pennsylvania. Those were the days before the commercialisation of education so, on the basis of being at that time a London resident, I was in receipt of a Greater London Council grant that covered fees for the two-year course in addition to a first year scholarship from the university.

This had come about in a rather unexpected way. Employed in a firm of architects and asked to work on the design of a new hospital in Manchester, I ultimately found myself designing the 'external works' and developing a curiosity about this thing called landscape. I was sent on a two week summer school at York under the direction of Frank Clark and while there he advised that I should try to get on to 'McHarg's course' in Philadelphia¹⁶. His enthusiasm was sufficiently infectious to propel me through the necessary (and not inconsiderable) preliminaries, persuading my wife, obtaining a visa and grant, storage of meagre property, selling my beloved Mini van and ridding myself of a dilapidated London flat off Regent's Park.

The week-long voyage proved a gentle introduction to a curiously alien culture, the familiar fusing with the peculiar, while the train journey from New York to Philadelphia proved an uncomfortable introduction to the east coast Turkish bath of a climate dressed, as I was, in seafaring warm wool.

Within a week we were installed in a ground floor flat in a residential street, attractively named Larchwood Avenue, about a mile from the university, struggling with the temperatures and the 'orientation' fortnight for foreign students. This consisted of a trip to a supermarket of New World scale, a tour round the main campus, a visit to an evening ball game between the Philadelphia Phillies and the St. Louis Cardinals (I hadn't a clue about what was going on), to the University Museum and the Independence Mall (where a guide spoke of shaking off British chains) and a bus tour of several city districts that showed, to these naïve eyes, shocking contrasts in wealth and poverty¹⁷. A certain tension followed the reported murder a month

¹⁶ I picked up the July 1968 edition of *Landscape Architecture* and learnt about McHarg's philosophy and his proposed book *Design with Nature* that made the Penn prospect an informed choice.

¹⁷ It should be remembered that the Watts race riots had occurred three years earlier and Martin Luther King had been assassinated just four months previously and everywhere there was a tangible tension not helped by the Vietnam War (I was obliged to register for the draft!).

in the block around our flat, something that might not be considered so exceptional in London these days.

The Landscape Department was housed in a newly constructed building (now called Meyerson Hall) designed by the Dean and co-housed Architecture and City and Regional Planning. Studios, offices, workshops, lecture and seminar rooms and a splendid slide library surrounded a three-storey atrium used for exhibitions¹⁸ and 'Happy Hour', a time on Friday evenings when students and faculty were able to enjoy a drink and socially 'bond'.

The fairly gloomy studios¹⁹ housed the usual drawing boards, tee squares and desk lamps in the days before computers had gained a hold.

Almost the first thing we were presented with was a reading list a yard long. It signalled a novel pressure that caused sleepless nights and demanded a degree of time management new to me and might have spawned frequent parties, some drug fuelled, all involving plentiful alcohol.



Gloomy studios

¹⁸ An exhibition by Christo consisted of the whole space being filled with oil drums.

¹⁹ Deep brise soleil kept the bright sun out.

It took a little while to get accustomed to the American academic year with its twin semester structure. The semester seemed without end and the Christmas and Spring recesses registered as a confusion. Fortunately there were a few public holidays such as Veterans' Day and Washington's Birthday that relieved the intensity.

First year studio work was dominated by a huge planning project, the Delaware River Basin project, that had been started two years previously. Five study areas, of some twenty square miles each, had been identified from the New Jersey coast to the Appalachian Mountains that were to be studied using the method described in McHarg's *Design with Nature*, then being finalised. It was an exercise involving prodigious amounts of colourful mapping but resulting in a satisfying appreciation of the landscape, its structure and dynamic; augmented by an aerial survey made in a small plane that squeezed in the twenty or so students on the project.

A second project that year, specially devised for the graduate architects, was called 'Adaptive Architecture', an enquiry into the form of buildings that took account of climatic impacts, with brief references to natural and cultural precedents.

Lectures in botany, geology, ecology, horticulture and construction were held in various locations on the 300-acre campus, the most memorable (from an architect's point of view) was the Lou Khan raw-boned medical research laboratories. The building has long been associated in my mind with academic challenge for it was there that we had our ecology lectures, given by an eminent ecologist with an intellectual/scientific strictness I'd never encountered before²⁰. Another enjoyable 'elective' series of lectures on 'Air Photo Interpretation' was given by an ex-FBI officer who, he assured us, had competence in landscape interpretation as well as missile detection.

Planting design and construction were dealt with through a flush of tutored exercises that proved a good way of learning²¹. Some really tricky topographic problems were set and planting exercises that assumed some serious preliminary reading.

McHarg offered an inspirational First Year lecture course, 'Man and Environment' to which numerous eminent contributors were invited. He was a forceful character who loved a fight over the things in which he believed, and who seemed to have singled out in print and radio the Army Corps of Engineers and their hard engineering for particularly vituperative treatment. While he generally projected an aggressive demeanour he could be very generous in his praise of his graduates and was not beyond shedding a tear while describing the social impacts of badly managed landscapes

²⁰ An essay I wrote for him was comprehensively slated in red ink, confirming a gruesome assault redolent with scientific certainty.

²¹ Augmented by a visit to the vast Princeton Nurseries.



Aerial landscape analysis

during the odd lecture. A further aspect of his character was revealed at a farewell dinner held for my graduating year when he stood up unannounced and unaccompanied sang a 'negro spiritual' in a fine baritone voice.

Most students worked during vacations and some part-time during semesters. I was able to avoid this during my first year but had to capitulate during the second. I got two jobs in architects' offices both giving rise to experiences I'd rather forget but which did pay quite well. Both were started in the summer vacation after we had completed the Summer School at the university's Morris Arboretum where we studied 'flower formulae' as a form of identification, presumably in an attempt to instil some botanical understanding. While this was universally unpopular²² the same professor ran a course in field research and methods through the study of published research papers. I was allotted a study of the spatial use made by the Cape May warbler of a tree (I don't remember the species). It didn't have much to do directly with landscape architecture but did instil a respect for the scientific method and an appreciation of finely observed nature.

We were taken on a variety of field trips²³ among which were those to the dunes of the New Jersey coast taking in extensive salt marshes on the way, to the 'Pine Barrens'²⁴ and Tinicum Marsh (to make a detailed ecological study), and to a research station where plant succession was being studied.

²² That led to a student revolt and a change in the curriculum.

²³ I don't recall any departmental trips to *designed* landscapes.

²⁴ A vast uninterrupted area of pigmy pitch pines and oaks in acid soils.

A never-to-be-forgotten trip to Hawk Mountain was made with a friend to witness the fall migration of raptors going south. The thermals generated by the ridge and valley landscape produced squadrons of birds, some flying barely twenty feet up, all excitedly observed by a phalanx of birders wielding a staggering assortment of optical technology. I was able to hire cars²⁵ to take us camping up and down the eastern seaboard from the cool of Maine to humidity of Virginia, from Colonial towns to religious enclaves and rocky shores to lakeland interiors.

The second year of the course was devoted to a personally devised project that, in my case, was undertaken with an old architect friend doing the urban planning course. We proposed a development plan for the 38 sq. ml. Aquidneck Island, Rhode Island. A road bridge was to be built providing a second connection to the mainland and thereby promising increased development – mainly housing. The Christmas vacation was spent becoming familiar with the area that included an important naval base, grand mansions built by the likes of Vanderbilt and Newport of Jazz fame.

It was the final project where one student was persuaded to do the mapping part of his project by computer – a brave choice because computer use was in its infancy. The experience proved interesting, firstly, because the process took longer than 'by hand' and secondly, because the bewildering array of ones, noughts and letters superimposed with crosses on the sheet was a poor representation of the landscape reality.

A back-of-envelope calculation suggests I've made about thirty student presentations and sat through many, many more. The learning potential of the 'jury system' is profound and nothing to be feared if the hours have been put in effectively and if clear objectives are set with an equally clear idea of how they are to be achieved. I've suffered two very tough ones – one at the hands of McHarg and, perhaps worse, under the later inquisition of a group of doctoral students at Leicester.

Come graduation and, with the awful realisation that we didn't have enough money to get back home, a job was urgently needed. Most of that summer was spent doing landscape work in a 400-employee Philadelphia multi-disciplinary office, that included an atrium for a new IMF building in Washington and the external works for the University of Pennsylvania hospital. It was not congenial work and the salary was insufficient to get us back home so it came as something of a relief to get a phone call one evening from the Dean of the School of Architecture at Arizona State University, asking if I would like a job there designing and delivering a landscape architecture course to undergraduate architects.

Teaching had never been an ambition but recalling a comment made on

²⁵ Having first taken a written test.

my presentation of the Cape May warbler study, namely, that I should “go into teaching”, and with no other prospects in sight, I expressed interest. The interview was held by the Dean and his offer accepted, in a grand Philadelphia hotel over tea.

We decided that by far the most interesting way of getting down to the southwest promised to be by road and for that a vehicle was obviously needed. A used VW camper van fitted our needs perfectly so, duly acquired; we set off along the route so many pioneers had taken before, across the Mississippi, through the Badlands and Yellowstone, past old mining towns, Slumgullion slide and into pueblo country. The heat built on the Black Canyon Highway from forested Grand Canyon to desert Phoenix²⁶. Signs directing to Deadman’s Gulch and Rattlesnake Canyon were not Hollywood props²⁷. Experiencing the atlas-map in this way brought home the huge scale of the country²⁸ – its landscape and cultural diversity. The ASU campus at Tempe was big, bare and boring²⁹ – the architecture department building new and cool inside. An English accent conferred a tangible social cachet, although it was sometimes confused with the Australian! Faculty members invited us to a number of social events³⁰ and went out of their way to help us find our feet – all the same, the job was a challenge.

This was a place where Paolo Soleri³¹ and Frank Lloyd Wright had influence if for no other reason that some of their work was so close to hand. Wright’s on-campus pink confection (Gammage Auditorium an old-age aberration) is no match for nearby Taliesin, or for Soleri’s earth-formed house in Paradise Valley or his concept of Arcology – a fusion of architecture and ecology.

My first responsibility was to deliver a lecture course to the second year architects titled ‘Introduction to Landscape Architecture’ and another called ‘The history of Landscape Architecture’, which, given my dependence at that time on little more than lecture-learning, was daunting. There appeared to be two expectations of me: that I would embrace the gardening ethos promoted by the Sunset Magazine and ‘make the desert bloom’ and that I would engage with the Rio Salado project.

The Dean had initiated the ‘Salt River Project’ a couple of years earlier as a departmental undertaking. The much dammed and diverted Salt River has a watershed of 13,700 square miles and in its lower reaches it is increasingly urbanised while ranching and recreation mainly affect its

²⁶ 120° F.

²⁷ A vehicle was essential but to use it I had to take *another* driving test.

²⁸ The journey west was 5,300 miles.

²⁹ Burning, glaring concrete surfaces relieved occasionally by the odd palm, olive or citrus.

³⁰ Including a party at Professor Straub’s house that had been owned by Serge Koussevitzky.

³¹ One time Professor at ASU.



“Go west young man and grow up with the country”

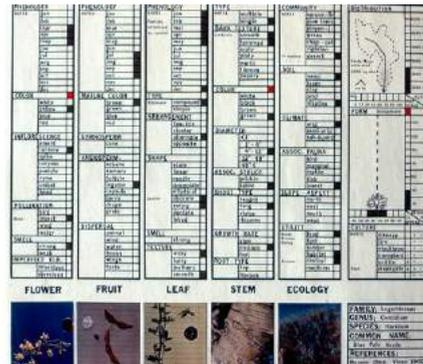
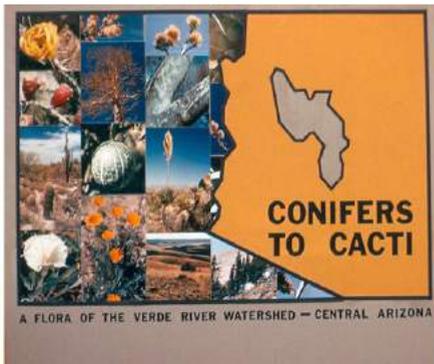
headwaters. The project was looking at these pressures in the context of a falling water table and I was invited to take some unspecified part. Feeling unqualified to commit immediately I thought that, by way of introduction, I’d first study one of the Salt’s tributaries – the Verde.

The culture of the department was that, apart from teaching, one was expected to run a practice and/or a research project – some managed all three resulting in complaints from the students that they were being short changed. I was keen to experience the extraordinary Arizonan landscape so spent weekends travelling about, and in the course of which, discovered the fascinating 170 mile long River Verde. It runs from just below the San Francisco Peaks to the Sonoran desert through chaparral, grassland and pine forest. While stunningly beautiful in most of its run there were parts vulnerable to recreational, industrial or urbanising development. The watershed was also vulnerable to fire and water – the first too frequent, the second too scarce. The needs of agriculture had made reservoirs and irrigation canals distinctive features of the landscape while forest fires in the uplands occurred regularly and often devastatingly³².

From this the Verde Watershed Project was born and became a departmentally funded research project³³ where some landscape-based development principles and guidelines were to be proposed. While there was plenty of published geologic data, there was little on native vegetation,

³² A fire in 1972 burned for a week and consumed 3000ha of Ponderosa Pine.

³³ Arizona State University faculty ‘Grant-in-Aid’.



Verde River Watershed Project

so a useful first step in compiling a development plan that took account of the sometimes fragile biota was to do a plant survey.

Most weekends were spent discovering and recording the native flora distributed in five elevational zones, from 1,500 to 10,500 feet, and covering the whole 6,600 square miles³⁴. Fieldwork was not without its anxieties, not just from wildlife but also from ‘hunters’ who on two occasions fired close enough for us to hear the bullet. A hundred illustrated plant charts were produced for teaching purposes but the size of the task, unimagined at the start, proved huge and took much longer than anticipated.

At some point I was invited to give a couple of lectures at a neighbouring college. I’ve no idea how this came about nor the fee or the subject. In my second year I found myself a member of the Curriculum Committee producing the documentation for the proposed Master’s programme³⁵. I imagine the Dean thought I’d have something to contribute but that is pure conjecture. I kept finding myself in uncharted waters but happily colleagues were very generous with their help. While much in the American academic environment was familiar there were distinct differences in culture, the paucity of cynicism being the most obvious.

The department had its own library³⁶. At some point in my first year there, the librarian asked if there were books about landscape that she needed to acquire in order to meet the needs of the proposed Master’s course. I forget my response but she nevertheless proposed that I take a flight to Los Angeles to source some rare(ish) books. The notion struck me as so extravagant that I declined, only later discovering that not only was it expected of me to agree but that it was normal to go any distance by air. So

³⁴ Wales is 8,294 sq. miles.

³⁵ I only know this long-forgotten achievement by now looking through the proposal that happily evaded my eye these last fifty years.

³⁶ 10,000 books, 180 periodicals, 15,500 slides.

normal, that one of our students, with a pilot’s license, did the site survey for his up-state project by air.

However, when we took the third year on a study tour to the Californian coast by bus I quickly realised just how arduous an enterprise that could be. Although we went by night to avoid the worst heat everyone was a little limp when arrived. Our ultimate destination was San Francisco where we spent a few days being shown new(ish) buildings in the Bay area. We spent a day at Berkeley looking at buildings but most memorably it was the garden³⁷ students had laid out as a protest, on the site where a building was intended to be built. There were two highlights: Sea Ranch³⁸ and a meal at Mingei-ya Japanese restaurant.

My Verde project remained incomplete as we launched on a two-month road trip back to New York, amassing a decent tally of National Parks and Monuments, then home on the *France*. So ended, not entirely satisfactorily, a two-year apprenticeship in higher education teaching.

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My last involvement with academia as a student was, as a part-time research student, at Leicester University concluding in 1990 with the submission of a 50,000 word thesis on the provincial Victorian public park³⁹. It was an entirely enjoyable experience involving many hours in public record offices and archives scouring nineteenth century minute books, newspapers and pamphlets and reading texts (mainly social history) that were refreshingly new to me and visiting parks from Bournemouth to Bradford and Llanelli to London. It was another kind and level of learning that generously assumed and accepted an appropriate academic and professional competence but which nevertheless took six years to fulfil. With no scheduled lectures and only occasional tutorials to attend the learning responsibility rested squarely with the individual. The experience of having a supervisor whom I could consult when I needed help and who gave of his time most generously while introducing novel concepts and stimulating insights was a delight, such that it requires little effort to recall⁴⁰.

• • • • •

One way or another, formal or casual, education is a life-long experience. Sometimes it is expressed through one’s hobbies or pastimes, sometimes

³⁷ A ragged affair that had obviously been done quickly and with no money.

³⁸ See Halprin’s “RSVP cycles”, 1969.

³⁹ An interest initiated by a Penn lecture in 1969 by Philip Hope Reed on Central Park, New York.

⁴⁰ Again, this experience would have not been possible without the financial and library support, in this instance, of the Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education.

through the friends we enjoy and the serendipity of life. In these lines I have concentrated on the formal, the conventional, that which came about through a modicum of ambition, a smidgen of determination but mainly a wealth of luck and support of which a younger generation might feel justifiably envious. But, lest I've given the impression that the part dependent on me was achieved with ease – it wasn't.

Fragile as our memory becomes, subject as it is to fragmentation, deformation, displacement and dwindle and – “Though envious years would say forget” – the recollections and reflections outlined above are the residues of that process. There is some satisfaction to be gained in committing them to print and, in effect, mitigating the degenerative effects⁴¹.

Biographical notes

Colin Young taught on the Landscape Architecture course at some of the early manifestations of the University of Gloucestershire from 1972-1997.

⁴¹ The reader may take some reassurances from the fact that documentary evidence supports much of what has been written.

ST. KENELM'S CHAPEL, WINCHCOMBE

Timothy Mellors

For a number of years students in their final term of the 4-year Diploma course in the School of Landscape Architecture, Gloucester, have been given a choice as to the major design project they undertake, in the belief that the educational value of that work is enhanced through pursuing personal interest and expertise.

Prior to the summer of 1985 the choice offered was between a number of projects set up by tutors to cover a range of topics and contexts. In 1985 that choice was broadened to include any subject identified by the students, with the one proviso that tutors had to be satisfied that the proposals were appropriate.

The objectives of extending the students' choice were threefold. Firstly, to further increase the educational value which comes through personal motivation. Secondly, to devolve to the students responsibility for outlining and developing their brief, and so completing work in this respect started through earlier projects. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, to make the students responsible for the management of their own project – making initial speculations as to content, form and timetable, and productively altering those, as necessitated by events – and so giving experience of this critical aspect of practice.

The results of this project showed that the students' work was of four broad kinds, given by two sets of two variables. The majority of students elected to pursue topics that were commonly a part of conventional landscape design practice, whilst a minority did not. Also, a majority chose to undertake and record their work in a way which closely paralleled common landscape design practice, whilst a minority did not.

Whilst there was no correlation between the grades given to those projects and the above classifications, it is possible to argue that those students who gained most educational value from this project had some degree of unconventionality to their work. Sometimes this led to a student being awarded a rather poorer grade than was their norm (achieved, perhaps, in relatively 'safe' circumstances) and sometimes grades which represented peaks of personal achievement. But either way it can be contended that those students actually learnt rather more from working in areas and/or in ways which required some original thinking.

The significance of this finding, to both education and practice, I leave for speculation, for in truth this piece is intended to do no more than introduce the paper by Tim Mellors which reports one such project. In this case, Tim set out to produce a design in which genius loci or spirit of place was of paramount importance. This he did by combining conventional site planning procedures with those of the ancient traditions of geomancy and the medieval church builders. The project also illustrates how an understanding of local history can contribute to developing the uniqueness of a place.

PREFACE by the Project Leader Alan Pinder

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To create a place of worship in the Christian tradition catering especially for ecumenical groups, local people, pilgrims and ultimately for people of any creed.
2. To endow the place of worship with characteristics that facilitate the communication between individuals and God.
3. To incorporate two disciplines with landscape architecture for the achievement of the above objectives, namely the traditions of medieval church builders, and secondly geomancy, a science concerned, especially in spiritual terms, with the selection of suitable environments and the most auspicious means of human intervention therein. To a degree these coincide in that the early church builders practised forms of geomancy.

Given that the sanctity of a place is felt through its *genius loci*, the prevalence of this ambience in medieval parish churches is no chance occurrence and there are two fundamental reasons for this: firstly, the builders chose the right places to site their churches, and secondly, they constructed them in accordance with customs that might today be labelled esoteric. Such geomantic practices were drawn upon during the project, as being the most appropriate for the development of a sense of place.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION : SITE SELECTION

At the outset, geomancy was used as a site selection tool since a place to be used for religious purposes requires special characteristics, of which the most important is the *genius loci*. In the Chinese geomantic science of *feng shui*, criteria exist for the selection of an appropriate site, based on an idealized concept of perfection where the 'breaths' of heaven and earth are locked in mystical union. In common with other Chinese doctrines, *feng shui* is based on a philosophy of duality in which two opposing yet balancing forces underlie all creation. These are called *yin*, representing for example earth and the female principle, and *yang*, heaven and the male principle. The most fundamental of geomantic criteria, topographical forms, the presence and characteristics of water and vegetation, views, were included in a general list of site requirements containing the pragmatic criteria of standard landscaping procedure. Significantly, the former often coincided with the latter, illustrating that geomancy is more compatible with landscape architecture than might appear. Also important at this stage of site selection were the visits made to the most plausible of potential sites revealed by map searches, in order to assess the atmosphere of each. This was to a considerable extent a personal and subjective exercise, but as yet *genius loci* is not entirely amenable to rational appraisal. At the end of this process a site within a small valley to the east of Winchcombe (figure 1) emerged as the most auspicious. The geomantic reasons for this choice were basically (1) the 'arm-chair' topography of the valley, (2) the south-west aspect of



Figure 1

the valley, (3) *yin/yang* implications of the topography, (4) the presence of spring water and (5) a history of sanctity attached to the site. The place was, of course, not perfect, and various detrimental characteristics required geomantic treatment while others were to be redeemed by landscape procedures. Compatibility between geomancy and landscape architecture was further illustrated by some features that were designated as problems by both disciplines. For example a long, narrow plantation of mature larch stretched down the centre of the valley (figures 2 and 3). To a landscape architect this would have to be removed on the grounds that it visually and spatially divided the valley in a manner that impeded an appreciation of its entirety. The plantation itself was discordant in terms of form, texture and colour, and ecologically inferior to the surrounding semi-natural beech hanger and mixed deciduous woodland. It was geomantically inauspicious because of its linear nature: any straight line pointing at a site is believed to, as it were, 'puncture' the atmosphere of the place, allowing the beneficial 'spirit' to seep away, or worse, it may conduct noxious spirit into that place. The plantation also screened the view of the valley's stream from the area where the chapel was to be constructed, for the presence of water is vital for the geomantic health of a locality since it is closely associated with beneficial spirit.

PREPARATION OF MASTER PLAN : HISTORY

On the south slope of the valley there is a holy well dedicated to the Anglo-Saxon saint, Kenelm. Nearby once stood an Anglo-Saxon chapel



Figure 2



Figure 3

built to serve the pilgrims who, until the Reformation, had come to take the waters for their medicinal virtue. Thus the spiritual qualities of the place had clearly been recognised for centuries. Further research revealed that it must have been sanctified at an even earlier date. Analysis of the legend of St Kenelm exposed underlying elements that indicated an ancient reverence for the well-spring as a shrine to the earth goddess. The spring with its symbolic values and healing properties had not been made holy by specific association to St. Kenelm, but had always been recognized as such. The legend of St. Kenelm was merely a metaphor hiding the process of the shrine's 'Christianisation'. This was an example of a policy initiated by St. Augustine who ordered his early missionaries not to destroy pagan shrines, but to convert them – an astute political move but one that also ensured that the new churches would be built in suitably sacred places. Thus the *genius loci* had been paid homage by a dual history, each religion acknowledging the same enduring essence, and each by its reverence, adding spiritual intensity to the pre-existing ambience. In turn, the two traditions, pagan and Christian, were incorporated into the design of the new chapel. However, the design was not primarily an exercise in reconciling the two, although this has been symbolically achieved through geometry, but, by utilizing both in an attempt to express more fully the spirit of place, it was hoped also to enhance the experience of worship there.

SACRED GEOMETRY

The structure of the proposed chapel is centred on the junction of two axes (figure 4). The north-south is the earthly-related axis which is aligned on magnetic north and terminates on the existing Elizabethan well house over the spring. This follows the practice of the early church builders in aligning transepts on magnetic north. The east-west heavenly related axis is focused on the horizontal sunrise position on St. Kenelm's day (July 17th). Many medieval parish churches exhibit alignments deviating from true east-west due to this refinement of orientation towards the sunrise on the patron day of the saint to whom the church is dedicated. The earth-related axis is essentially pagan since its foci, the spring and the wandering magnetic pole are manifestations of the earth goddess. The nearby long barrow of Belas Knap, for example, is similarly planned with a dominant north-south axis. The heavenly axis corresponds to the Christian tradition of a celestial deity, which is expressed by the east-west layout of churches. Each axis is the centre-line of a *vesica piscis*: a pointed oval shape formed by two equal circles passing through each other at their centres (figure 5). It has various symbolic connotations resting, for example, in its similarity of form to the Christian emblem of the fish. In terms of sacred geometry, the vesica is of fundamental importance since it is the starting point from which all geometrical figures may be derived. It thus has a psychological basis as a symbol of perceived knowledge. Given the objective of unifying the pagan and Christian histories of the site and their respective emphasis in earth and the heavens, the irrelation of the angle of junction between the two axes was resolved by a process of 'squaring the circle'. This entailed

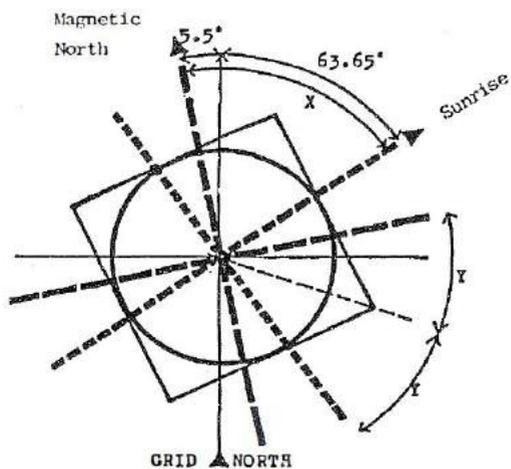


Figure 4

Reconciliation of heavenly and earthly axes

The centre lines of the two vesicas do not cross at 90°
Thus the geometric approach of reconciliation is applied

Squaring the circle

Each side of the square = 148ft
(same as radius of the circles generating the vesicas)
X = 69.15° (from magnetic north)
Y = X/2
Y = 34.575°

the production of a square, each side being the same length as the radii of the circles generating the vesicas, which geometrically reconciled the axes. The resulting squared circle, on which is based the ground plan of the seating area and the four 90° corners of the ground modelling (figure 6), acts as an archetypal image of wholeness providing the symbolic keys for the contemplation of God and creation. The same configuration is to be found in the mandalas used by oriental religions as an aid to meditation. Great importance was given to measurement during the construction of pre-Reformation churches and cathedrals, not purely for aesthetic or acoustic reasons but because numerology and measure were associated with spiritual values. This philosophy originated with the Pythagoreans who believed that a synthesis of all knowledge was expressible through

numbers. This is being confirmed by nuclear physicists who view material reality as being underpinned by laws and forces communicable only via mathematical formulae and concepts. All major measurements within the design are therefore derived from multiples of specific sacred numbers, using a basic unit of 2.72 feet, which is an approximation of the incommensurable figure 'e', the variant by which a logarithmic spiral is set out.

PLANTING

The soft landscaping over the site was dominated by three major considerations: first, in response to geomantic requirements, was to ensure that the planting was harmonious within a local context. To this end 'natural' species, especially those presently growing on site were used in the chapel area and in the belts of pasture woodland surrounding the chapel. This illustrates in passing the affinity between geomantic and ecological principles. Second, arising from the above, the management was to continue in its present form – the optimum agricultural land use being sheep grazing, thus excluding the use of any vegetation types other than grass and trees. Third, the species used within the chapel should hold some significance for worshippers and relate in some way to the philosophy behind the scheme. The source for the resolution of these conditions was the legend of St. Kenelm. In it his character emerges as a symbol of hope, self-sacrifice and purity all central to Christian theology. In accordance with this, the apple species was chosen, for in the lore of plants it was sacred to Apollo and later Christ. To the pagans the ash tree was the 'tree of life' that represented the fertility cycle of birth, death and renewal. In the legend, St. Kenelm, before his murder thrust a twig into the ground which immediately grew into an ash tree. Consequently it was his emblem, and as such was introduced as the dominant tree in the central area of the new chapel.

SUMMARY

Since geometry and measurement were particularly appropriate to convey the ideas, images and symbols so relevant to the aims of this project, they were heavily employed to imbue the chapel with spiritual harmony, archetypal meaning and a link to the elemental aspects of God and Nature. The use of geomancy ensured the most propitious place. Its use was also intended to enable fuller reference to, and enrichment of, the spirit of place by emphasising the union of heaven (*yang*) and earth (*yin*) at this specific location. In the doctrine of Chinese geomancy, spirit is concentrated wherever a junction between *yin* and *yang* occurs. If the chapel were to be built in any other place, or its purpose modified, its form, alignments etc would be irrelevant, rendering the structure literally meaningless.

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VESICA PISCIS

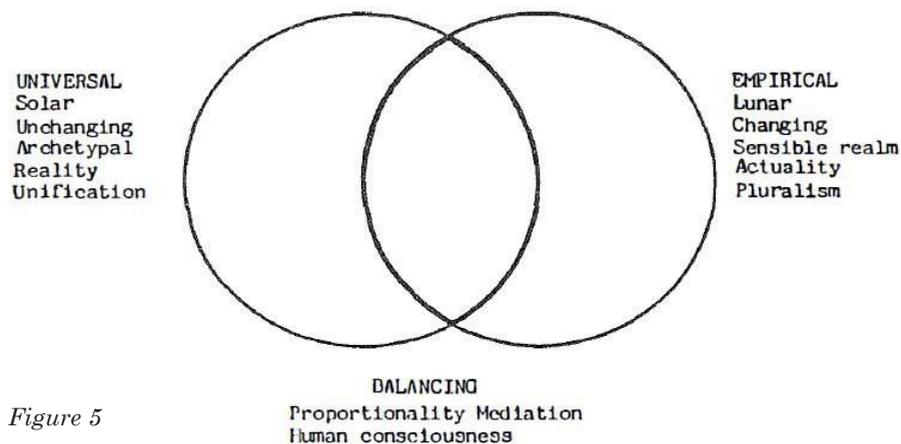


Figure 5

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Biographical notes

Tim Mellors graduated from the School of Landscape Architecture, Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology, in 1985. This article is a reprint from *Landscape Issues* 1985 volume 2 number 2 pp 20-31

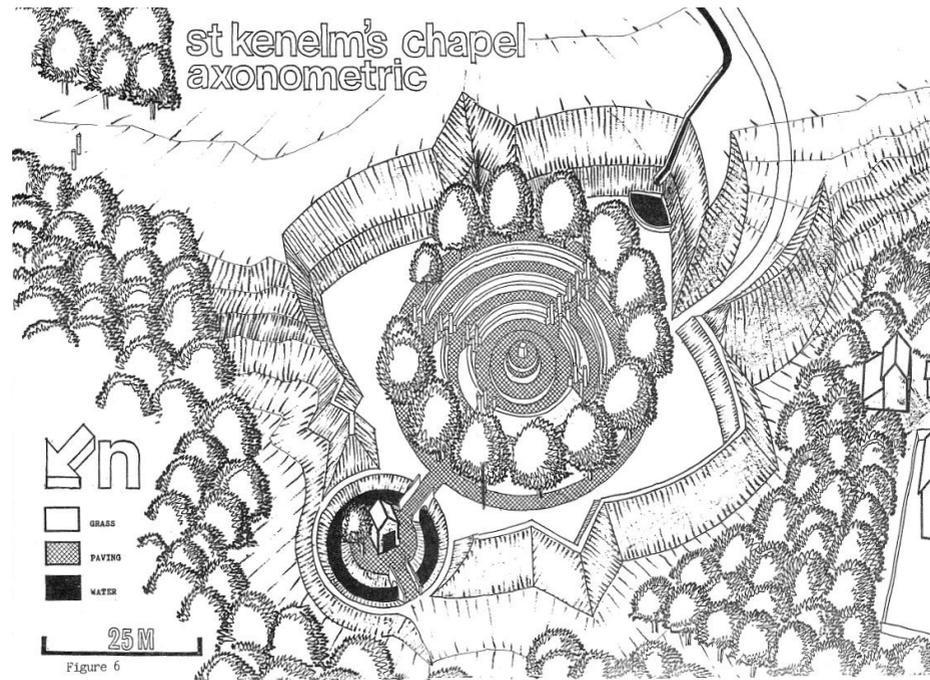


Figure 6

CHELTENHAM COURSE NEWS

Diamond Anniversary 2021

Anticipating that life as we know it might return to some form of normality in the not-to-distant future, it is worth noting that the landscape architecture course at Cheltenham was founded 60 years ago next year and we are hoping to celebrate the event with an exhibition and some activities, so this is an advance notice to that effect. When we have a clearer picture of university circumstances post-Covid-19, we will be able to start preparations and fix some key dates. Watch for announcements.

To remind readers new to these pages, ideas for the first full-time landscape architecture course in England were realised in 1961 in Cheltenham. In what was then an art college teaching architecture, Bodfan Gruffydd, a landscape architect involved in Harlow New Town, was initially invited to contribute a landscape perspective to architectural design, but he and Stuart Sutcliffe (architect) and Reginald Dent (College Principal) soon realised that there was an opening for landscape architects to share similar educational facilities – and a full-time landscape course was established and twelve students were enrolled as the first cohort that year.

Landscape Team Staffing

We are pleased to announce the recent appointment of **Jamie Liversedge** to the landscape architecture course team. Here he offers a reflection on how he was drawn to the subject and what has sustained him through his career:

As a young landscape architect I became fascinated by the concept of a single line, partly due to attending a lecture by Burle Marx and after leafing through one of Henry Moore's sheep sketchbooks, I was unsure whether it was the quality, the impact or the perceived expression contained in the line that intrigued me, or if it was the difference between drawn lines, constructed lines or those occurring naturally in nature. I have been lucky enough to work around the world on a diverse range of large projects, from resorts, palaces, cities and mountain retreats, and to work with hugely inspiring designers and academics; however this fascination is still with me. With hindsight I now know what it is – it's simple really, the line that drives me as a landscape architect is eye-level, the horizon, for me the ability to create well-designed spatial landscapes starts here. I have looked back through the 150 or so sketchbooks that have partnered me in 30 years of practice, through the small coded sketches, the scribbles that explore concepts and develop the projects' sensory experiences, and realised that that the single line, usually drawn first in any of my sketches, dominates all others, enabling me to work in 4D, to sequentially walk through my complex design ideas with a clarity of thought. Draw more, draw fast.

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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Although there is no strict limitation on the length of articles, 2000-5000 words are preferred. Reports are generally not as long and can cover matters of topical interest, short research projects or seminars. Illustrations are welcome: diagrams should be neat and clear; (digital) photographs should be at a suitable resolution for publication (300 dpi). Copyright is held by the authors of all work submitted. Any views expressed are theirs.

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