UNITED NATIONS YEAR OF THE SOIL

landscape research extra 73

May 2015

landscape research group

Copy deadline for
LRE 74
July 30th 2015

Contributors

Tim Harrod
Tim O'Hare
Nancy Stedman x2
Peter Howard
Paul Tabbush
Steven Shuttleworth
Brian Goodey
Bud Young

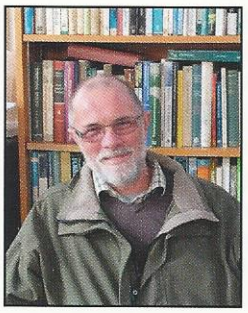
cultural landscapes at local scale,
identify adequate areas of activity to protect and manage landscapes of historic and archaeological value,
define the necessary process steps to implement good landscape practices on the ground,
evaluate the promises and pitfalls of various landscape practices, and
appraise the effects of landscape practices on landscape functions, services, and values.

WP8 focuses on the *'Implementation of good landscape practices on the ground'*. A key objective is to create well thought out guidance for those involved: this would aim to identify and to stimulate traditional skills and knowledge within those involved with cultural landscapes. Work to date includes completing the first series of planned stakeholder workshops (held in Spain, England, Lesvos, Estonia and France); testing and demonstrating the Knowledge Hub with stakeholders; and completing two public cultural landscape days one in France and one in England. Among many emerging lessons from this work, it has become clear that local people do not want more 'landscape policy'. Instead they want dynamic practical advice on what works in terms of practical landscape conservation.

WP9 comprises *the 'Design of recommendations for landscape policy and practice, communication, and dissemination'*. As noted in LRE 68, LRG's formal role in HERCULES is as part of the WP9 team. Work to date has focused on developing a stakeholder engagement strategy to disseminate findings at EU level through a series of workshops in Brussels (the first one, at which LRG's Peter Howard was a keynote speaker and Laurence le Du-Blayo made the closing remarks) was held in May 2014. A second focus is to create communication tools – the HERCULES website and social networking tools which operate with the Knowledge Hub. Inevitably, much of the rest of WP9's work will be in the later half of the project.

The project has also developed a Blog site at www.hercules-landscapes.eu/blog.php. Blogs are added regularly, and we notify these on the LRG website 'News' page as they are released. The blogs are intended to stimulate debate on cultural landscape issues, and you are invited to read them and respond if suitably provoked! Topics include 'Sustaining Cultural Landscape Values'; the need for a mature ecosystem services approach'; 'What is historical ecology?'; 'What causes rural land use change in Europe?'; 'The human element in cultural landscapes'; 'landscape and heritage – two opposing systems'; 'European wood pastures as cultural landscapes', and 'Recent heritage in the Alatskivi municipality, Kodavere parish, Estonia'. A good place to start, so go on – read some of them, be provoked, and react by adding comments to the blog!

SS



WHO FILLS IN THE GAPS?

By Peter Howard.

My concern with this problem has a long history. Fifty years ago I was required to write a dissertation as an undergraduate geography student at Newcastle University. I had been very impressed by H.E. Bracey's book on *Social Provision in Rural Wiltshire*, in which he had produced a score-chart for various facilities to establish urban status. A bank and a cinema were certainly regarded at the top end, a telephone kiosk and postbox at the bottom, and you could easily deduce a score for any settlement. I suggested that I should follow this methodology for my home county of Somerset, but I was clearly told that the dissertation was supposed to break new ground, with new ideas, not simply extend what someone else had done. So I shelved that idea, but not without wondering who, if not academics as lowly as undergraduates, might extend the idea to the rest of the country? I am still wondering.

Thirty years later I was in the Czech Republic assisting the validation of their Institute of Terrestrial Ecology. I discovered that a major concern of the department was the compilation of an Atlas of Fish in Czechoslovakia. I was surprised as well as pleased, because in the UK such a straightforward objective seemed no longer to be considered as serious research in our universities. Regrettably, in the years since the re-integration of Europe, this interest in such research projects seems to have declined as those countries adopt western practices. This type of work may today be achieved by the use of citizen science and by NGOs — the recent production of the *Bird Atlas 2007-11* by the British Trust for Ornithology is an outstanding example, listing more than 40,000 names of the birders who took part, (including mine!)

Of course, in a long career I maintained the 'academic position', firmly encouraging students at all levels to produce **new areas of thinking**. This certainly seems entirely proper for the student's benefit. An insistence on always questing after something new is surely the very foundation of senior level education, and the real test of an educational programme must surely be to measure its effect on the students, rather than its impact on the ground. However, this does leave those **disciplines based on area** with a problem of case studies. The world is full of research case-studies, most of which are completely isolated from each other, and by no means easy to discover when working on a particular area.

The Hercules programme of the EU (see Steven Shuttleworth's account in this issue) with which LRG has been much involved, is a classic exemplar of the problem. A critical element within the Hercules project, indeed perhaps its fundamental purpose, is **knowledge transfer.** The idea is, not only to do new research into heritage and cultural landscape, but to get that knowledge to the practitioner level, the people who will have to implement any policy decisions.

University style education has in-

creased to such an extent that finding new ideas and unexplored areas inevitably becomes more esoteric as time goes on. Researchers are committed to going forward, and their interest drops away quite rapidly after they have successfully discovered that for which they were searching, or when the money runs out. For some of us, even completing the work by pushing forward to a properly peer-reviewed article is an effort, because our interests have moved on before the reviewers' comments have arrived. I am sure I am not alone having seen some article of mine hot off the press and realise that it represents my thinking of perhaps two years previously which I had almost forgotten. Then spending more time trying to publicise this material in a way which would be accessed by, and be accessible to, the practitioners on the ground, or indeed simply to the people in the place I had studied, not only fails to grab my interest, but also demands skills that I do not have, even if I am sufficiently arrogant to assume that the public really want to know.

Clearly the NGOs might be part of my answer, and those employed in landscape authorities might be another part, but there remains out there an **ocean of case studies difficult of access by local people** — studies not applied outside the original research area.

PH

'HIGH LINE' A CELEBRATION OF 50 YEARS OF THE PENNINE WAY

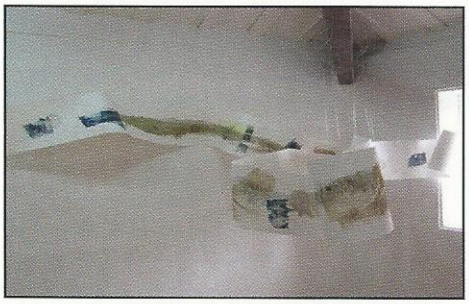
An exhibition in Thornton, Bradford 4 April – 24 May 2015

Nancy Stedman reports.

Fifty years ago, in April 1965 the Pennine Way was the first Long Distance National Trail to be established. It arose from the campaigning of indomitable Tom Stephenson, who first launched the idea in 1935, following the mass trespass on Kinder Scout when working men demanded the right to walk the uplands. Since then, hundreds of thousands of people have walked all or part of the 268 mile long route, following the 'spine' of England, and experiencing an often challenging but inspiring walk through rugged and spectacular landscapes.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of this achievement, South Square Centre, a volunteer led arts and community centre in Thornton, west of Bradford, decided to hold an exhibition of contemporary art work presented as 'High Line'. Artist / photographer Simon Warner and I installed 8 artworks, by 9 artists, and in a range of forms from tapestries, prints, books, photographs, sculptures and videos.

What comes over very strongly in much of the work is the sheer physical effort and endurance of doing the walk, but combined with the exhilarating, challenging and constantly changing experiences of weather and views. For instance, in 'Pennine Odyssey' **Jennie Crawford** has suspended a long paper strip that twists and turns, a metaphor for the endurance and resilience needed for the long journey. The piece can only be appreciated by walking around it, and as one does, detailed photos and prints reveal glimpses of views, and traces of peat, snow melt and footprints connect to the physical process of walking, as well as to her companions on the walk.



In a similar feat of endurance, **Mita Solanky** went on 24 walks to gather material for her 'Spine Walk', a compilation of cyanotypes of fragments of vegetation, using light and water, with *frottage* of rocks using graphite, all gathered from each walk. This material is presented as a spinal cord, the core of the sensory exchange between our bodies and the environment as we walk.

In a more gentle way, **Alison Carthy** has observed the richness of the history and wildlife encountered along the Way, and has used tapestry, a slow, thoughtful process that echoes the rhythm of walking, each step making a connection with the land, to capture the distinctive colours, textures and materials of the different upland landscapes – Cheviots, North Pennines, Yorkshire Dales, South Pennines.

Edward Hurst explores the loss of magic and mystery in Western civilisation, and, using the legend of Orpheus, who was forbidden to look back when retrieving his beloved Eurydice from the underworld, has created a powerful 4 hour video of the walker unable to hear or look back to their companion cameraman following on behind. This is much more engaging than it might sound!

Melissa Burn's reconstructed trig point brought home to me that trig points, those familiar landmarks in the uplands, and monuments to the huge endeavour of surveying the land, have now lost their purpose and have become strange sculptures in the landscape. They are now locations to be achieved, for those who 'collect' trig points. She will be logging it on www.trigpointing.co.uk, thus creating a new destination for 'trig pointers'.

On the anniversary date itself, 25 April, there is to be (as you read this it has been) a performance by 3 dancers, a musician and a video artist. They will walk a local section of the Pennine Way during the day, and improvise a shared experience and re-imagining, accompanied by a live musical soundscape and video clips. The 5 collaborators will respond to and challenge each other during the 40 minute performance. For more details about all of this, see www.southsquarecentre.co.uk

NS