

Landscapes we like: a tale of two Macfarlanes

As scientists we often reduce landscapes to sets of figures, to data, to principal components, regression analyses and other bits of digital information. We classify landscapes into different types depending on their 'naturalness' - topography, climate, presence of rivers, woods and hedgerows, not to mention the semi-unnatural - types of agriculture, types of field boundaries, and by their scenic beauty. Landscapes are utilitarian: they are the matrix in which we move via paths, roads and railways; or by which we move our services (electricity, oil, water, etc). To the farmer, landscapes are the factory where we produce food; to the walker, they are somewhere we can stretch our legs and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the countryside; to the planner they are entities stored in maps and GIS systems about which we plan for the future. (Ecologists are now talking about ecosystem services - perhaps, as landscape ecologists, we ought to be talking about landscape services.) Yet, there is another aspect of landscapes many of us enjoy and which science is only just beginning to get to grips with: it is the sense of wonder they give us; the sense of place they engender. Whether it is the sublimity of landscapes encapsulated by Wordsworth and others in their writing, or the local view across fields glimpsed from our car on the way to work in the morning - such appreciation of the landscape is often problematic for planners and scientists to take on board. Some of these experiences are no doubt too ephemeral to capture or else we subsume such experiences into bland terms such as 'scenic beauty'. Ways in which people might capture the essence of such experiences is often through art, photography or through writing. I would like to highlight the work of two people, both (strangely enough) called Robert Macfarlane (RF), to demonstrate these approaches. One RF teaches at Emmanuel College, Cambridge and is well known as the

author of *Mountains of the Mind* and for his recent writing on landscapes in, for example, the Saturday Guardian. The other RF is a Senior Lecturer in GIS and Director of the Centre for Environmental and Spatial Analysis (CESA) at Northumbria University. Whilst one RF captures the beauty and majesty of landscapes from the feelings and majesty they invoke, the other RF captures the tranquillity of landscapes by scientific method. The beauty of the latter is that RF heads a team that uses a scientific approach that captures people's feelings. Participatory approaches are used to incorporate people's views of what contributes to, and what detracts from, the tranquillity of landscapes. Whereas, the writer expresses a sense of wonder about landscapes, the scientist encapsulates people's views into a GIS. Both approaches are equally valid and are complementary - and both approaches contribute to our sense of place and our appreciation of landscapes. However, the Northumberland study is particularly noteworthy since it expresses qualitative experiences about the landscape into quantitative measures in map form. The work of both RFs have a common goal though: whether through the sciences or the arts - what matters are the final outcomes - the urge to do something to conserve landscapes for future generations.

For more on the two RFs:

Search for 'Robert Macfarlane' at

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/>

For the other RF, check out:

http://northumbria.ac.uk/sd/academic/sas/sas_research/cesa/cesaprojects/cesatranquility/

Duncan McCollin

IALE(UK) conference 2005

This year's IALE(UK) conference will be held on September 12-16th, 2005 at University College Northampton. The theme is:

Landscape Ecology: Planning, People and Practice *The landscape ecology of sustainable landscapes*

Session topics: Planning, people, and perception – a landscape perspective; Ecological infrastructure and fragmentation; Linkages in the landscape; Hedgerow corridor networks; Regional and strategic planning for ecological infrastructure. There will also be a poster session; a fieldtrip to the Nene Valley corridor (SUDs, gravel pit restoration schemes), and a conference party with a live band!

There is still room for posters.

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For full programme and further details: see www.iale.org.uk/conference.html

Forest Habitat Networks News

Kevin Watts reports that he and his co-workers have recently finished a piece of work for the Forestry Commission Wales and the Countryside Council for Wales to assist the development of a woodland habitat network strategy for the whole of Wales. The report will soon be published as:

Watts, K., Griffiths, M., Quine, C., Ray, D. and Humphrey, J.W. (2005). *Towards a Woodland Habitat Network for Wales*. Contract Science Report No.686, Countryside Council for Wales, Bangor

Phase 2 has also been awarded to further explore these potential networks in a number of case study areas and to examine non-woodland habitat networks. A contract has also been awarded (FCGB, FC Scotland and SNH) to apply the same principles throughout Scotland.

General details of our habitat network research can be found at

www.forestresearch.gov.uk/habitatnetworks

Vice-President Nomination

IALE(UK) committee has nominated Duncan McCollin for one of the vacant posts of Vice-President on the Executive Committee of IALE International. Details of all nominations will appear in the forthcoming IALE Newsletter - see

<http://www.wsl.ch/land/iale/bulletin.php>

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Student Conference Travel Award

The IALE(UK) awards a number of travel grants to students studying landscape ecology at a UK university. The award is open to all students with an interest in landscape ecology. In general, awards are designed to assist postgraduate students to attend the annual conference of IALE(UK) and for research postgraduates to attend other meetings, including the European and International Meetings of the IALE.

Please apply to:

Dr Janet Jackson, Secretary IALE(UK)

School of Applied Science

University College Northampton

Northampton NN2 7AL

Email: janet.jackson@northampton.ac.uk

European IALE Congress 2005

Landscape Ecology in the Mediterranean: Inside and Outside Approaches, April 2005, Faro, Portugal

The European Congress of IALE was held in the resort of Faro, Portugal on the Algarve coast. With cranes nesting in the rooftops of the old town and wide views over the salt marsh to the Atlantic, it was an ideal setting for a landscape ecology meeting.

There were sessions on: Mediterranean coastal habitats under pressure; theoretical approaches to European landscape ecology; disturbance, biodiversity and function in Mediterranean-type ecosystems; land degradation and desertification; the landscape ecology of the Mediterranean mountains; change in land use, biodiversity and cultural landscape character; conservation of Mediterranean landscapes; landscape values, perceptions and aesthetics; local management, policies and stakeholder involvement; landscape ecological monitoring in the Mediterranean and modelling. In fact, something for everyone with an interest in the important, diverse and threatened landscapes of the Mediterranean. Marion Potschin also organized a Master Class in Landscape Ecology for research students, a well-attended and successful event in its own right.

The natural setting of the location was used to good effect, with two field days to alternative locations including the coastal region and the hills. Under the careful guidance of the former Chair of IALE(UK) and current Chair of IALE International, Bob Bunce, we were guided through the intricacies of BioHab, a scheme for the classification of European habitats based upon plant life-form analysis.

An important issue at the meeting was to discuss the idea of the formation of IALE Europe. The meeting was convened by Mark Antrop (Ghent) and Jasper Brandt (Roskilde) to canvas views on the desirability and possible structure for IALE Europe. Most of the arguments are set out in the last two issues of the International Bulletin (see <http://www.landscape-ecology.org/> under 'Publications') but, essentially, hinge on whether IALE Europe should supersede the national chapters as an entirely new organisation with its own administration and funding or whether it should provide an umbrella and stimulus for the individual country chapters. Members with views please contact either Jasper or Mark, copied to me if possible. There were a number of other 'fringe' meetings including an ECOLAND meeting convened by Bob Bunce, Mark Metzger and myself to discuss a working paper on the scientific basis for the selection and location of sites under the Natura 2000 framework. A working paper is expected shortly.

Altogether a very good meeting about an interesting and important part of the world with its rich cultural heritage and astonishing landscape diversity. Many thanks for all the hard work from the organizers for making this a memorable meeting.

Geoffrey Griffiths
Chair IALE (UK)

Recent Contents

Landscape Ecology

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- Garcia-Quintana A, Garcia-Hidalgo JF, Martin-Duque JF, et al. Geological factors of the Guadalajara landscapes (Central Spain) and their relevance to landscape studies. Vol. 69 (4): 417-435 OCT 30 2004

Diary

IALE Meetings:

- 2005 Landscape Ecology: Planning, People & Practice. The landscape ecology of sustainable landscapes. Annual Conference of IALE (UK), September 12-16th, University College Northampton. See www.iale.org.uk
- 2005 Africa Chapter of International Association of Landscape Ecology (Africa-IALE) 1st Regional Biannual Conference. Elmina, Ghana (19 - 23 July 2005). Changing Landscapes of Africa: A Common Approach to Diverse Challenges See: <http://snr.unl.edu/africa/>
- 2006 Water in the Landscape: the landscape ecology of freshwater and marine environments. Annual Conference of IALE (UK), September 2006, Oxford Brookes University Contact Bella Davies: Bella Davies: 01206487@brookes.ac.uk
- 2007 World Congress, Wageningen, The Netherlands. 25 years Landscape Ecology: Scientific Principles in Practice. See: <http://www.landscape-ecology.org/>

See <http://www.landscape-ecology.org/events/regional.htm> for diary of future IALE events.

Other Meetings of Interest:

- 2005 NIEeS Workshop Activating Metadata: The role of metadata in effective spatial data exploitation 6th - 7th July 2005 National Institute for Environmental eScience, Cambridge. Further details: Dr Lex Comber, Tel +44 (0) 1902 693129 Email lex.comber@adas.co.uk
- 2005 Assessing biodiversity changes in British woodland 1971 - 2001 July 13th 2005 English Heritage Lecture Theatre, Saville Row, London enquiries: Rebecca Isted on 01733 455248 or email rebecca.isted@english-nature.org.uk
- 2005 EurEco 2005 'Ecology without Borders' 10th International Ecological Congress. (Includes landscape ecology as a topic) Pine Bay Holiday Resort Kusadası, Turkey. November 1-6, 2005. Contact: Prof. Umit Email: erdem@ziraat.ege.edu.tr
- 2005 BES Annual Meeting 5-7 September, University of Hertfordshire.
- 2005 2005 World Conference On Ecological Restoration Zaragoza, Spain, 13-17 September 2005. See: <http://www.ecologicalrestoration.net>

- 2005 20-24 September 2005 Ioannina, Greece to mark the end of the EU FW5 project BioScene there will be a conference: "Biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in mountain areas of Europe: the challenge of interdisciplinary research". See: www.bioscene.co.uk
- 2005 RGS/IBG Annual Conference session on Landscape Ecology, Remote Sensing and GIS: Monitoring Ecosystem Response to Landscape Change. The session is being organized by the Biogeography Research Group and the Geographical Information Science Research Group. Aug 31 - Sep 2nd. London. See www.rgs.org