




Arts and Humanities Research Council
Landscape and Environment Programme



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The Arts and Humanities Research Council
Landscape and Environment Programme

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Peruvian Landscape © Inca ushnus project team



Carrlands © Mike Pearson

CONTENTS

Page 1	Introduction
Page 2	Aims and objectives
Page 3	The new website
Page 4	The projects
Page 5	<i>Case Study</i> —Inca Ushnus: Landscape, site and symbol in the Andes
Page 6	<i>Case Study</i> —A Place Re-imagined: The Spatial Literary and Cultural making of Dove Cottage
Page 7	<i>Case Study</i> —The Cultured Rainforest: Long term human ecological histories in the highlands of Borneo
Page 8	Event—People and Place: Archaeologies of Landscape and Identity
Page 9	List of the projects



Landscape of Grasmere, Lake District © Polly Atkin

INTRODUCTION

This has been a highly successful year for the Programme in which it has established itself as the major national and international platform for arts and humanities research in landscape and environment. Its profile has been raised by intense activity within and between the full range of its projects and a new threshold of programme level activity made possible by the establishment of a new post of Programme Co-ordinator as part of the Programme Directorate. This year we have looked increasingly outward to liaise with related research beyond the Programme, both nationally and internationally, to develop the field of landscape and environment in exciting new directions. Major conference events on 'Landscape in Theory' and 'Diaspora Landscapes' have brought together Programme awards holders with fellow researchers. Emergent themes have been identified, notably that of landscape and performance which will be the theme of next year's summer conference. The Directorate has travelled extensively to liaise with project holders and promote the Programme and in Nottingham hosted one of a series of meetings in European cities which are developing a European Science Policy Briefing on landscape from a humanities perspective. Additionally the Programme is playing a major role in establishing an arts and humanities contribution to the RCUK programme Living with Environmental Change. This year has seen the Programme launch its refreshing new look web site which has a sharper design and a more topical feel to it to appeal to both the public and scholars within the field.





Epynt Castlemartin © Militarized Landscapes Team

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The emphasis this year has been on facilitating exchange between a wide range of individuals and organisations, promoting effective working between disciplines, and building new connections. These have been achieved at project level through the completion of the Networks and the initial primary research period of the Larger Projects, together with communication and outreach. At Programme level they have been achieved nationally through co-sponsored Programme conference events and collaboration with two other AHRC thematic programmes in terms of a major conference session convened jointly with 'Diasporas, Migration and National Identity'; and a planned workshop with 'Science and Heritage' to focus AHRC's contribution to the UK joint Research Councils programme Living with Environmental Change.

A major international achievement has been through the Directorate's major contribution to a European initiative, ESF/COST 'New Perspectives on Landscape Studies'. This included organising and hosting the first of five international meetings to culminate in an ESF Science Policy Briefing. The two day workshop took place at The University of Nottingham which began with a public lecture given by the Project Investigator of 'Military Landscapes' Larger Grant project, Peter Coates, and was entitled "Landscapes of violence, values and vitality: perspectives on militarised environments". This was followed by a formal dinner to welcome the European guests. The two day workshop was a lively event and the organisation of the sessions facilitated the development of themes and ideas to take forward to the next meeting.



Left to right:

(1) Group photograph of the ESF/COST Nottingham meeting (2 & 3)
Final session at The Rutland Hotel, Nottingham

Other work over this year has furthered many of the Programme objectives. The re-launch of the Programme website has helped to contribute to public awareness of arts and humanities research on landscape and environment. The website has a more contemporary look and feel and has more informative content to show the development of the Programme and showcase its achievements. Additionally many of the projects have innovative websites of their own and can be accessed through www.landscape.ac.uk.



Landscape & Environment



The AHRC Landscape and Environment website banner

THE NEW WEBSITE

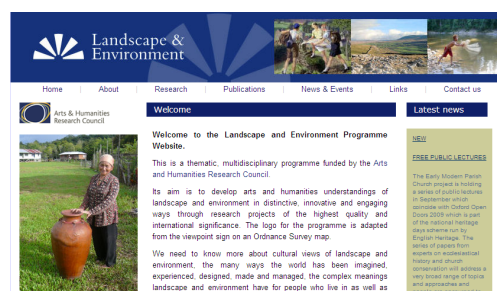
The re-design of the website has been a big change for the Programme this year. Taking the blue from the logo as a starting point the website has introduced a new branding scheme that can be used on all publications to produce a cohesive look and feel to the Landscape and Environment Programme.

It was decided that the website should have a contemporary look and create an informative platform for visitors. The index page introduces the Programme and gives details of both forthcoming events and any current news items that may be of interest. The navigation of the site has changed with the main difference being the link for all research. This page then gives the four options of larger, smaller, network/workshop or studentship research grants. A page for all the projects are listed and can easily be found.

Each project page has been redesigned with images in the left column giving a flavour of the research. To reduce text on the page there is a link to a pdf document that summarises the projects' aims and objectives. This allows the main text to review the on-going activities of the project giving emphasis to the highlights and findings of each year.

All publications are available to download from the website including those that the projects have been featured in such as the AHRC quarterly PODIUM magazine. Programme Annual Reviews and newsletters can also be found under 'publications' and downloaded in pdf format.

There is a comprehensive list of links from individuals, research councils, stakeholders, charities etc. that have an connection with landscape and environment research. There are also contact details and information on the Directorate and the AHRC staff involved with the Programme.



Index page



About page



Research page



A project page



The Peruvian Landscape © The Inca Ushnus project team

THE PROJECTS

All of the Network projects drew to a close this year leaving the Larger Grants and Collaborative Studentships running. All the Larger Grants have now completed fifteen months of their duration and are progressing across the considerable range of their activity. The PhD studentships attached to eight of the projects are continuing to build on their research and will be giving a presentation of their work to date at the Postgraduate Conference next year. The first seasons of fieldwork have been completed and have already yielded some important findings. Examples include the discovery of sculpted sacred stones found below the platform of one of the Inca Ushnus being researched in Peru by the project of the same name. This finding is of great significance for Andean archaeology and further information can be found on page 5. Also, preliminary research by the project 'Tales of the Frontier', which is researching Hadrian's Wall and its landscape as both monument and icon through history, has revealed a wealth of evidence representing the presence of non-native and non-Roman individuals on the Wall that include individuals from the near East and North Africa. This discovery will form part of an exhibition to be held in 2009.

The projects are delivering for the Programme in terms of conferences, papers and articles. There are also examples of public dissemination already being generated by the Larger Grant projects. For instance 'Contested Common Land' organised an event which involved talks to local history societies about their research and 'The Early Modern Parish Church' project delivered a series of public lectures in Norwich and organised a Church Open Day in conjunction with the Heritage Open Days programme in Norwich. This was very popular with the people who visited and a similar event will be organised in Oxford in September 2009.

Many Larger Grants are establishing links with non-academic stakeholders. Examples are 'Contested Common Land' who are in talks with Natural England, The National Trust, and the Federation of Cumbria Commoners. The project is flagged on the DEFRA website under "current research" on its commons pages. ' Militarized Landscapes ' operates with two non-academic stakeholders which are the Ministry of Defence's Environmental Support Team and Icon Films, a Bristol-based independent documentary film making company. Another Larger Grant ' Popular Muscapes ' has engaged in extensive collaboration with colleagues at National Museums Liverpool and currently have an interactive museum installation entitled 'Mapping the Beat' installed as part of a major National Museums Liverpool exhibition 'The Beat Goes On.'



Severus Lenticular bust—one of the Roman emperors who helped to reconstruct Hadrian's Wall © Spatial Imaging



The 'Early Modern Parish Church' public lectures



An Inca Ushu © Inca Ushnu project team

Inca Ushnus: Landscape, site and symbol in the Andes

This project examines how the Inca Empire (c. AD 1400 - 1532) met the challenge of appropriating and modifying the Andean landscape to enhance its productive capacity and exert the political power to create the largest native state in the Americas. To address the relationship between landscape, site and symbol in the Andes the project is studying a specific kind of Inca architectural construction known as the ushnu. 'Ushnu' is a Quechua term that encompasses the idea of a restricted, sanctified space reserved for use by the Inca king and Incas-by-privilege. The form of the physical ushnus range from conspicuous, stone-faced stepped pyramids and platforms located in the central plazas of regional administrative centres to smaller constructions placed at prominent points in the landscape that command unsurpassed visibility. The platforms were used as public stages to conduct ceremonies and for redistributive rituals enacted as shows of public generosity to bind the people to their rulers. An Inca or his representative would stand on this platform on these special occasions in order to assert the supremacy of the Inca state and affirm its divine authority to rule. Ushnus were therefore invested with profound symbolic significance and served as pragmatic instruments of administrative control to regulate daily life and assert Inca dominance over subject populations and resources.

The project, working in collaboration with The British Museum and the Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga in Peru, aims to understand the practical and symbolic principles underlying the construction of the Ushnu, the reasons for their placement and function within the landscape, the activities that took place on them together with their associated artefact assemblages. The study focuses on the hinterland surrounding Vilcashuáman that once lay at the geographical centre of the Inca Empire in the Peruvian Central Highlands.

Among the key discoveries of the project are a recognition of the use of structured fills in the construction of the main body of the platforms; their association with native ethnic boundaries in the landscape as well as the fact that the layout of some sites was planned to enhance the audible range of sound in the surrounding landscape.

A striking discovery was made when excavating at the site of the ushnu of Incapirqa Waminan. At the base of a very narrow, deep and steep sided shaft, which penetrated through the platform fills descending further and deeper, was a circular cut, which had been carved into the underlying bedrock. Positioned here was a group of three carved conically shaped rocks, placed in a tripod configuration, with their tips resting against one another. Two were sculpted in red andesite, and the third was of a white variety. Holes in the bedrock are known to have been thought of as eyes into the world of the ancestors, the world below. Stones were also widely seen as being charged with sacred essence, to represent embodiments of ancestors and deities. Key ethno-historic sources links stones of the size and shape found here with one of the principal functions of ushnu platforms, their role in Inca sun worship. This finding has international archaeological significance for Andean archaeology. It is believed that this is the first discovery of its kind and is a particularly inspirational outcome both for the project and for the Landscape and Environment Programme.



The project team by an ushnu



Excavation of soil layers



Grasmere, Cumbria © Polly Atkin

A Place Re-imagined: The Spatial Literary and Cultural making of Dove Cottage

One of the Programme's five collaborative studentship awards is based in the Outstanding Area of Natural Beauty of Cumbria at Dove Cottage, The Wordsworth Museum & Art Gallery in Grasmere. Dove Cottage was the home of William Wordsworth from 1799 to 1808, which have been said were the main years of his supreme work as a poet, the house is also the home of The Wordsworth Trust. The project 'A place re-imagined: The Spatial, Literary and Cultural making of Dove Cottage, Grasmere' is concerned with how meaning is created around place through different media, and how those meanings are perpetuated or modified over time. Place is explored through the specific example of Dove Cottage, Grasmere; the media include various literatures, visual art, museology, tourist activities, homing processes, and creative processes. The project student, Polly Atkin, states that "developing an understanding of the complex functionalities of spatiality and temporality in Grasmere are as important as developing an understanding of the Wordsworth's lives and writings made there, which in turn are as important as examining the ways in which visitors use and construct the site today, or how it was recreated as a museum and literary shrine by the nascent Wordsworth Trust in 1890."

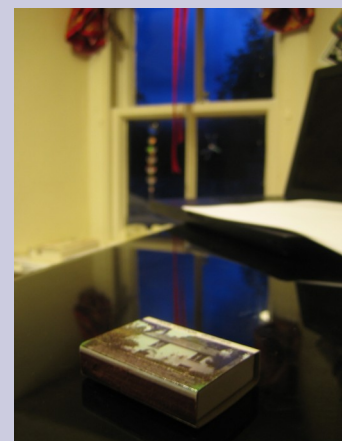
Polly Atkin became involved with the project in 2007. The position involved moving to the countryside and offered the opportunity to become embedded in a rural community. As part of the project Polly was expected to spend up to a year working at the Trust and living in a Trust house on site in the hamlet of Town End. While she was there she worked part-time as a volunteer, which allowed her unprecedented insider-information about how the Trust worked, and how visitors responded to it, by acting as a participant observer while she conducted her research. Living and working in the Town End community had a great affect on Polly and her new way of life which in turn resulted in the creation of a poem that won first prize in the Troubadour Coffee House Poetry Competition.

The concept of Home at Grasmere became the main focus of Polly's research, tracing it from the homeliness created by Wordsworth himself in his Grasmere poetry. Other writings informed the research such as Dorothy Wordsworth's private journal which records her life at Dove Cottage where she was left alone for weeks at a time by William and charts the comings and goings of passers-by during her time there. This links into the theory and practice of tourism and those who visit Dove Cottage and the Wordsworth Museum. Polly's research was concerned with how the place operates for them, what it means to them; their reasons to visit and their reactions on visiting.

Polly's research concludes that there are two essential modes of being in Grasmere – resident, or itinerant - which constantly inform and create each other which come together in the building now known as Dove Cottage.



Dove Cottage in the snow



'Dove Cottage' souvenir matches in Polly's cottage



Harvesting rice growing in a wet-rice field © Monica Janowski

The Cultured Rainforest: Long term human ecological histories in the highlands of Borneo

The aim of The Cultured Rainforest project is to investigate long-term and present-day interactions between people and rainforest in the Kelabit Highlands of central Borneo (Malaysian Sarawak), so as to better understand past and present agricultural (Kelabit) and hunter-gatherer (Penan) lifestyles and landscapes. We are attempting to understand the nature of cultural and ecological relations in the present and recent past, and to use this as a starting point for understanding the deeper past. The project has three main strands. Anthropologists are using anthropological and ethnohistorical methods such as oral histories to collect information on present-day forest life and the past as people remember or imagine it, on how objects are used today and (using museum collections) in the recent past. Archaeologists are conducting surveys and excavating selected monuments to reconstruct the lives of past forest dwellers. Palaeoecologists are studying fossil pollen in sediment cores and associated with archaeological sites to document the long-term history of the rainforest and human impacts upon it.

The charcoal samples taken in the 2007 fieldwork season provided the first scientific evidence for the potential antiquity of human-landscape interactions in interior Borneo. The earliest date obtained from this analysis is c.4500 which was from the base of the Batuh Patong pollen core and is likely to be reworked charcoal that might relate to a natural forest fire, but it does hint at the potential antiquity of human activity in the Kelapang basin. The dated excavations and pollen cores show that there was widespread riverside settlement and agriculture through the past 500 years, and ridgetop settlement through the same period, considerably earlier than reliably predicted by folk memory.

One aim of the project is to try to identify and understand past and present transitions and relationships between different ways of relating to and manipulating the landscape and living things within it. Findings of human presence on the landscape such as old settlements, cemeteries, megaliths and earthworks have provided fertile ground for linking past and present. The project team is able to make clear links between many of these places in the landscape and focal and apical ancestors/culture heroes among the Kelabit, as well as both differences and parallels between their relationships with the forest and the landscape and those of the Penan. Certainly the inscription of human presence on the landscape is a means of generating social ties and status among Kelabit rice-growers. The Penan foragers aim to 'leave only footprints' in the forest, but it seems likely that the sago groves they 'manage' today may be a potential signature of past forager presence that can be identified in the palynological cores.



The Cultured Rainforest Team at Batu Patong



Coring for pollen

All images © Monica Janowski



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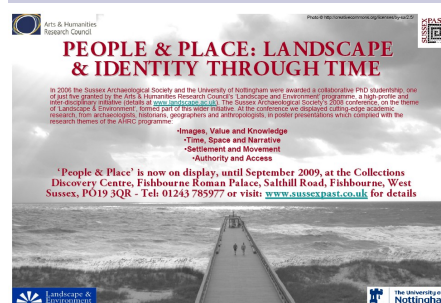
'People and Place: Archaeologies of Landscape and Identity' by Martyn Allen

September's Annual Conference, 'People and Place: Landscape and Identity through Time', proved to be a resounding success. It was jointly organised with the Universities of Nottingham and Chichester (hosts), and also became a sponsored event on the *Landscape and Environment* programme. Professor Stephen Daniels, Programme Director, gave an opening speech informing on the programme, its current work and future expectations. With *Landscape* the central theme we attracted speakers who delivered papers ranging in current archaeological research, from the Palaeolithic to today, within Sussex and beyond. The keynote speaker, Professor Matthew Johnson (Southampton University), provided an essential and thoroughly engaging talk looking at how landscape is viewed by different people in diverse ways. Importantly, Matthew introduced a theoretically complicated subject in very understandable terms. The first two papers, by Royal Holloway's Caroline Juby and Danielle Shreve, focused on the Palaeolithic, discussing how the archaeological record is currently used to reconstruct past environments. These gave an opportunity to view the world before modern humans; landscapes very different to today. Caroline's paper was especially insightful in revealing how much our understanding is based upon going back to the work of nineteenth century antiquarians and re-evaluating their accounts. Following that was my chance to showcase ideas which have developed from my research on animal bones at Fishbourne. I aimed to show how changes in animal management regimes, across the Iron Age/Romano-British transition, were embedded within local environments. As the political situation altered, these changes influenced how people, of different social backgrounds, moved through and understood their own landscape.

Lunch gave people time to view and vote on the posters, of which we had 16 presentations from archaeologists, historians, geographers and anthropologists, from as far as New Zealand. Congratulations to Richard Haddlesey (Winchester University), Robin Kim (London School of Economics) and Ramona Usher (Nottingham Trent University) for taking the top prizes. The third paper session was a medieval monopoly with, most notably, Richard Jones (Leicester University) returning to the Society where he spent 5 years as research officer. Richard's paper on fieldnames (not place-names!) of the late Middle Ages showed how peasants made their mark on a landscape which we generally associate with nobility. The final session was a light-hearted affair with Chris Lewis giving a dry-humoured account of house-names in Goring-on-Sea. The association of this area with the seaside is clear: but with house-names such as *Florida* we are reminded that people's perception of the landscape can be rather different to the reality. Finally, Professor Brian Short's (Sussex University) closing address rounded the day off, suggesting future conferences could aim, as this event did, to be more outward-looking. The Sunday fieldtrips also proved to be hugely successful, adding extra dimension to the conference. Many thanks go to James Kenny (Chichester District Council) & Matthew Pope (University College London) who gave an inspiring account of the landscape, past and present, from Kingley Vale. My Fishbourne Harbour trip, gratefully aided by David Rudkin, also provided fascinating discussion



A landscape walk as part of the People & Place Conference



The poster publicising the poster presentation following the conference



A list of all the projects

Larger Research Grants

Changing landscapes, changing environments
Contested Common Land
Inca Ushnus
Landscape, people, and parks
Militarized landscapes in the twentieth-century
Popular Muscapes
Tales of the Frontier
The Cultured Rainforest
The Early Modern Parish Church
The Future of Landscape
The Indian Ocean
The Sublime Object

Smaller Research Grants

A Transforming Landscape of Journeys
Carrlands
Goslar to Grasmere: Wordsworth's Manuscript Spaces
Landscape as conceptual art
Landscape Capital and Fragile Communities
Liquid city
Touchstone test-piece
Unlocking Landscapes in the Eastern Mediterranean
Writing everyday landscapes: narrating gardens

Networks and Workshops

Art and travel workshops
Empire and Landscape in the 18th century
Land Art and the Culture of Landscape
Landscapes beyond land
Living in a Material World
On-the-Go: Mobilities, Settlement and Performance
Perceptions of medieval landscapes and settlements
Re-enchantment and Reclamation
Technological sublime to urban pastoral
The Landscape of Inter-war England
Understanding Landscapes through Creative Auto-Ethnographies

Studentships

A Place Re-imagined: Dove Cottage, Grasmere
Animalscapes and Empire
Constructing the Military Landscape
London Before London
Reinventing the New Town