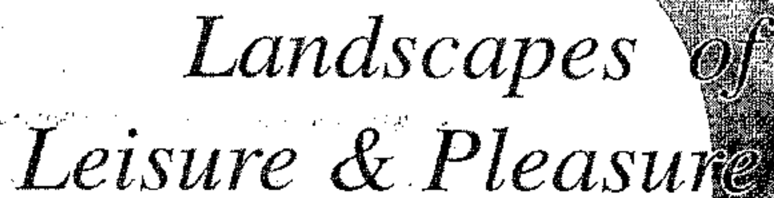

Landscapes of Leisure & Pleasure

Bull Hotel, Peterborough
19 & 20 November 1996
Joint Annual Conference of the
LandscapeResearch Group and
the Countryside Recreation Network

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March 1998

Landscapes of Leisure & Pleasure

Proceedings of the 1996 Joint Annual Conference of the
Countryside Recreation Network and the
Landscape Research Group,
held at
The Bull Hotel, Peterborough
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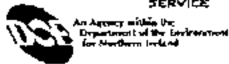

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Day 1

1130 Registration

1230 Lunch

1330 Welcome and Introduction

1345 Love of Landscapes, Landscapes of Love
An examination of people's attraction to landscape as a source of contemplative leisure and sexual pleasure.

Dr **Jane** Howarth explores the aesthetics of landscape and pleasure;
Dr David Matlass looks at moral geographies of landscape in mid-twentieth century England,

1515 Tea

1545 Hormones and Hi-jinks – 'Macho landscapes'
An analysis of the motivations which have led to demands for active sport to be located in natural landscapes.

Derek Casey considers
'Principles of managing the countryside resource – the magnificent seven'
Graham Cox looks at
'Unspeakable pursuits; the good, the bad, and the ugly in the countryside'

1730 Close

1830 Dinner

1945 Debate:

"This house considers that public policy towards the development and management of sport and outdoor recreation in the UK is unnecessarily restrictive"

Chaired by Robin Grove-White
Speakers for and against the motion:
Prof. Philip Lowe, Prof. Terry Stevens, Eric Bettelheim, Neil Sinden

Day 2

0900 **Conflict Resolution in Countryside Recreation**

A role play coordinated by Roger Sidaway,
Real-life conflict situations provide the inspiration for groups to:

- raise awareness of problems; and
- provide the means to work out solutions.

Delegates will play out the roles of those involved: sports managers, tourism entrepreneurs, conservation societies, landscape managers......
To help focus on the task, each group will be overseen by a leader:

New Forest – new threats from cycling: Richard Broadhurst
Conflict resolution or cheque book diplomacy? – the development or Rainham Marshes: Jacquie Burgess
A Gap too far – four whell drive in the countryside: Martin Fitton
A new culture – raves and festivals: Dr Phil MacNaghten

1130 Coffee

1200 **Role play: Recommendations drafted**
Action points will be typed and presented to the conference

1245 Lunch

1345 **Role play: Recommendations presented**
Leaders collectively provide a summary.

1500 **Leisure Landscapes of the Next Decade**
Sean Browne provides an Irish and wider European perspective on where we go from here.

1530 Concluding remarks

1545 Tea and depart

Love of Landscape and Landscapes of Love

by Jane Howarth
University of Lancaster

Our theme is the conflict between different kinds of leisure interest in the countryside or landscape. I shall focus initially on the conflict between noisy leisure pursuits and the search for tranquillity. I do not have a resolution to that conflict. Indeed much of what I write might lead the reader to suppose that there is no resolution to be had. I shall propose a general principle or criterion and discuss some examples of how it might be applied. However, the real virtue in exploring what is involved in each side of the conflict is, I believe, that some ground might be gained towards more fruitful negotiations and communications between the two parties. They might come to understand each other and even themselves and their own pleasures rather better, even come to share their interests and pleasures with each other. In trying to highlight what the conflict is about at a deep level, both aesthetic and ethical, I am offering a framework, a discourse which might facilitate that communication, and serve to replace or enrich the arid economics-based decision procedures prevalent in our society which disguise and ignore the true issues involved.

One aspect of our environmental problems is an aesthetic one. There is less nature than there was and less natural beauty. We still have many Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; but the fact that these need to be designated as such indicates that they are, or would otherwise be, under threat. There are, as I write, only three areas of tranquillity left in England.

Philosophers who specialise in aesthetics, aware of this practical problem, have turned their attention once again to natural beauty as opposed to the beauties of art. But the focus there is very much on visual appreciation rather than on the aesthetics of sound. This is hence a very welcome opportunity to give sound a hearing, so to speak. What is the role of what we hear in our overall appreciation of what we are doing? How does what we hear affect what we see? How do sounds affect our overall state of well-being: our moods, emotions, spirits, and especially our bodies?

Let us acknowledge how acute the conflict is. First, tranquillity is fragile; in a free-for-all, noise is bound to win since noise destroys tranquillity and not vice versa. Second, noise is not easily avoidable. Hearing is the most inescapable of the senses. One can close one's eyes or turn one's head away from an eyesore. We cannot close our ears or turn away from sounds. They are all around us. They attract, even demand, our attention. Nor is it a problem confined narrowly to sound. Sound contributes to and influences sensory experience from other senses. The experience of throwing a pebble into water is unsatisfactory, incomplete without the distinctive plopping sound. Hearing does not work independently of the other senses. We have all experienced the way that TV looks weird with the sound turned off. In a similar way, a loud noise which drowns out familiar sounds of nature can disorientate all our senses, make us lose our bearings. Sounds indicate what is there to be seen: the bird call is very often the first indication that there is a bird to be looked for. Hearing is also arguably the most affecting sense. Sound has strong influences on emotion, hence the enormous emotional power of music. It can send tingles down one's spine, move one to tears or to joy. Sudden loud noises are one of our three primary fears. Sounds can cut through one like a knife, grate, jar. They can be blood-curdling or they can stimulate, excite, overwhelm. They can bathe, encompass, lull and soothe. They can have powerful bodily effects: making one tremble with fear, start with surprise or dance with delight.

It is unlikely that we can find a technological solution to the conflict between noise and tranquillity. Silencers for speedboats and earplugs for ramblers would not do the trick. This is not because we lack the technology. Ear plugs would block out all sound. Tranquillity needs the natural sound that goes with other sensory input: the bird calls, the rustling of leaves underfoot, the sound of the raindrops. Similarly, noise is not just an accidental and unfortunate byproduct of noisy pursuits, it is an integral part of the excitement and the fun. The sound of a speedboat's engine not only gives vital information to its driver, that might be amenable to a technological fix, but, as any enthusiast will recognise, it is itself exhilarating, thrilling, part of the sense of power. So the opposition looks more extreme than the way it is sometimes presented.

It is hard to put the conflict in quantifiable terms, though people will try. We are very much a quantifying culture, a culture of counting. The attempt will be made to measure in decibels the noise of engines, measure in decibels the noise of gulls in a storm and 'establish' that since the engine makes no more noise than the gulls, it no more threatens tranquillity than the gulls do. This is surely patent nonsense. We

would never suppose with music that volume is all. Similarly with the sounds of nature or the sounds of human activities, it is the quality not just the quantity of sound which is significant.

What is it which we value about noise and about tranquillity? First, it must be emphasised, it is not a matter of volume. Rain falling through a forest can be very noisy, but it does not destroy tranquillity. The whirring of a camera is very quiet but can intrude on tranquillity. The experience of sound involves interpretation. Often, if we interpret the sound as natural, it does not intrude on tranquillity. If we interpret it as having an artificial or mechanical source, it does. But it is not always the case that sounds interpreted as having a natural source do not impinge on tranquillity while those interpreted as having a human, artefactual or mechanical source do. The sounds of sailing, the flapping of sails in the wind, are man made but can contribute to rather than destroy tranquillity. The insistent cooing of a collared dove or tapping of a woodpecker is natural but can be irritating, intrusive, destructive of tranquillity. The difference lies not in the source of the sounds but in their character or quality.

What is the difference between the character of sounds which intrude on tranquillity and the character of those which enhance it? To explore this difference, let us look at the language we use to describe the different sounds. Sounds which contribute to the experience of tranquillity tend to be all around, they encompass, envelope, bathe one in sound. Sounds which intrude upon tranquillity tend to be more directional, they pierce, cut through, penetrate the calm. They are also spoken of as destructive: they shatter the peace, break the silence, assault the senses, are deafening. We describe mechanical sounds as we describe wild, ferocious animals: engines roar, growl, spring to life, kick into action, throb, screech to a halt. Nor is it only engines: for example a runner's feet pound the earth. Such sounds are presented as aggressive, violent and intrusive. They are also, of course, exciting and exhilarating, at least for those who are in control of them and so may hear them rather differently. Of course, nature can sound violent too. The wind howls, the waterfall roars, the waves crash onto the cliffs, the storm rages, the shriek of the owl is piercing. These sounds too can be either frightening or exciting. The language of tranquil, natural sounds is much gentler, more playful; the murmuring of the breeze; the lapping of the waves on the shore; the sighing of the wind through the trees; the rippling or babbling stream. They are termed rhythmic, soothing, or even comforting.

I should note here before anyone else does that we appear to have a stereotype gender difference. The first set of sounds are all stereotypically very male, aggressive, penetrating, even rapacious and lusting. The tranquil sounds are stereotypically female, calm, encompassing, even loving.

This division between aggressive and gentler language goes over from sound into certain outdoor pursuits. We speak of nature as a challenge, as full of danger. We grapple with natural forces, battle against the elements, face its hazards. We speak of conquering, mastering, overcoming, dominating the forces of nature. Even in a seemingly calm pursuit such as photography, the language is of capturing, shooting, getting, aiming, pointing. The gentler pursuits in nature, are in contrast, described in terms of oneness with nature; of being in harmony with it; of having attunement and sensitivity to it. A receptivity to its moods. Having respect for nature as it is.

This division is not new. Within our tradition, it has both an aesthetic and an ethical history. Take first the aesthetic. In the eighteenth century, the philosopher, Immanuel Kant distinguished two aesthetic categories: the beautiful and the sublime. Beautiful things are typically small and smooth. Kant was perhaps thinking of flowers, of calmly flowing streams, of meadows bathed in sunshine or gently rolling hills. Sublime things in contrast are large and rough: craggy hills, gnarled trees, turbulent seas and skies, storms.

Kant then asked of each of these features why they give us pleasure. His answer, in a nutshell, was that the sublime pleases because it is essentially frightening, hostile, threatening but, regarded at the appropriate distance for aesthetic appreciation, it gives us an opportunity to master that fear, to come to terms with the vast forces in nature which threaten us but which we, as humans, can comprehend. We do not have to be overwhelmed by them or do battle with them. In comprehending those forces, we better comprehend ourselves, learn to control our natural terrors. We appreciate nature as other than us, alien.

We derive pleasure from the beautiful because it invites us to cease our normal purposive everyday struggles. As Kant puts it, the will is put in abeyance, we cease to endeavour to impose ourselves on the world. We learn simply to appreciate the way it presents itself to our senses. We wonder at the mere fact that the world is intelligible to our senses. It is our home. The sublime is male. The beautiful, is of course female!

Both these elements came together in Romanticism, but it was the beautiful which predominated. The Sublime, or some version of it, came back with certain kinds of country pursuits other than wandering lonely as a cloud.

The sublime was always noisy: storms, seas roaring, waves crashing on cliffs, wind howling. The modern version of the sublime is just as noisy, but more mechanical, and the domination of wild forces, the conquest of fear much more bodily and interactive. The similarities are still striking. Speedboats may be a new phenomenon; pleasure derived from conquering one's fear is not.

The traditional aesthetic appreciation of nature, in England at least, is not without its comic aspect. There was an apparent uncertainty about the distinction between art and nature. Tourists would go out equipped with Claude glasses to adopt standpoints facing away from the picturesque scene which they then viewed through the glass which transformed wild nature into something much more to their taste; a scene in the style of a painting by Claude Lorrain. The modern camera-carrying tourist should think twice before laughing too loudly at this.

Landowners had the regions of their estates visible from their mansions transformed into 'prospects'. The aesthetic criteria of landscaping were largely drawn from visual art. In so far as landscape art drew its inspiration from nature, the artist having an eye for the picturesque, literally would make a beautiful picture; this may seem a reasonable improvement to make to one's view. However, some features of landscape paintings had a purely artistic rationale. The tower or spire in the middle distance gave the painting depth, solved the problem of representing the middle distance, translating a three dimensional scene onto a two dimensional canvas. For landowners to imitate art by inserting towers into the middle distance of their already three dimensional estates might seem to be based upon a confusion. It is the same confusion which Oscar Wilde wrote of as nature imitating art, lampooning those who saw in a dramatic sky merely a 'rather poor Turner'.

It may be a confusion which we are still prey to. We, certainly in our tourist literature, speak of the picturesque, the viewpoint, the vista, the scenery, the landscape. All highly visual, all derived from the language of painting. Landscape, like painting, puts the viewer outside nature. You cannot walk through a landscape. Landscape is the bit you haven't got to yet. We speak also of the countryside. Why do we emphasise 'side'? By this do we mean outside the town or on each side of the motorway? On the very edges or fringes of our live? To be viewed from the safety

of the car, not to be smelled, touched, engaged with? Is there perhaps, embodied in this language, an implicit domestication of nature, a lack of respect for it as it is in itself?

At roughly the time Kant was writing, the English were regarding nature as having a restorative influence. Industrialisation and commerce were growing apace. Industrial towns and cities, over populated and polluted as they were, were not especially healthy or happy places to be. Those who could afford to, retired to the country for holidays and in their old age. The country was regarded as not just physically restorative (which it doubtless was) but morally restorative. The attendant evils and corruption of politics and commerce which tainted the character could be washed away; one's sins cleansed, one's spirit re-invigorated by the purity of the countryside, and the goodness of nature. By taking one's place in the harmonies of nature, as opposed to the battles of business, one came to terms with oneself and one's place in the world, in the great scheme of things. The striving for power, influence and money could be put into proper perspective by the contemplation of the insignificance of human worldly powers in comparison with the greater powers of the natural world. It was in this context that Wordsworth wrote of nature as our moral educator and inspiration. We can gain moral strength from contemplating the strivings and struggles in nature. We can realise our moral potential, live the good, fully rounded life only if we appreciate nature as constituting our proper place, as shaping and moulding our own natures. There is something in nature which feeds the spirit, inspires, invites our wonder and our love.

In modern life there is another way which Wordsworth did not intend, and doubtless would have deplored, in which we regard nature as a kind of moral educator. The outward bound training course is deemed character building. It involves rising to the challenges which nature offers. One has to fall back on one's own resources, one learns teamwork under stress and comes to value one's fellow humans in the face of the threat to one's survival in nature. One comes to recognise, to respect and thereby to conquer nature's superior forces.

Underlying these aesthetic and moral appreciations of nature, there is a metaphysical level. Nature is both other than us, different, alien, and also our natural home, congenial, welcoming. Our primordial awareness of, and contact with nature contains both these aspects. This is our fundamental relation to nature; but it is extraordinarily fragile. By overstressing nature as home, we risk domesticating it.

By recognising its otherness, it is all too easy to focus on the alien character and seek to conquer, to tame it. Both these courses risk turning nature into an artefact, with human footprints everywhere. The rambler may do so more quietly than the water skier or climber; but information boards and protective fences are just as obtrusive marks of the domestication of nature, as pitons and traces of oil on water.

The difference between nature and artefact may not be a clear-cut one. Is a cairn an artefact? Is a sheep track, a horses hoof-print, a tyre track, a footprint? Is an Andy Goldsworthy restored sheepfold? In some senses, they all are: none would be there without people. But that may not be the relevant criterion. Perhaps some of the things we do in nature, to nature, may enhance its quality as natural, may bring out its dual characteristics as other and home, may allow nature to show itself. Others, in contrast, might tame or domesticate nature, disguising rather than enhancing its true character.

Let us look at some examples of leisure pursuits with this criterion in mind. Some activities do enable nature to show itself: sailing boats make the wind, the squalls, visible. Climbers make the rock-face legible, bring out its tactile qualities. Participants in these sports have a deep sensitivity to and respect for nature. They need to be expert at reading it and moulding their movements to it, blending with nature. Other activities in contrast use nature merely as an instrument. The speedboat driver or motorbike rider, like the climber who drills permanent bolts into the cliff-face, is scarcely respecting the otherness of nature, nor letting nature show itself. They need no special sensitivity to nature's vicissitudes. Hill runners, pounding along narrow footpaths, in large noisy groups look to be dominating, rather than respecting or harmonising with nature. Even hill-walkers, with their recommended brightly coloured clothes, scarcely harmonise with the natural scene. Some activities in nature require the body to mould itself to the terrain; others involve the body itself acting mechanically in opposition to its natural surroundings.

When economists and planners address conflicts of interest, they treat them as mere differences of preference having no greater weight than the people who hold them. People do not merely prefer, to be rock climbers or ornithologists as they might choose chocolate ice cream. They have a genuine commitment to it which involves a deep and informed sensitivity to nature, and such sensitivity is an intrinsic part of what constitutes the good life for humans. To treat such values as mere preferences, as cost benefit analysis in the hands of our planners so often does, is to trivialise human life.

We might ask, of the activities which do not respect the otherness of nature; which tame; domesticate it; transform it into an artefact; present it as something we have conquered rather than somewhere we can dwell; do they need to be in nature? Why can these activities not be done in a gym, a wind tunnel, on an artificial lake or ski slope? Would the pleasure be lessened by siting facilities in already domesticated nature, near shopping or leisure complexes, factories, motorways or airports? As quarries are brought back into nature and used for fishing, so might these artificial leisure pursuits be brought back into culture. That is their proper place. Natural forces such as the weather are still there to be battled with.

If it is objected that noisy or mechanical activities are pleasurable only in unspoiled nature, a natural setting, then it is surely ia point to ask why. What is it which is being valued here? The suspicion arises that what is valued is precisely that the activities do transform nature, are destructive and rapacious. If that is so, if wanting to spoil the pleasure of others and leave a permanent discordant mark on nature is an integral part of the pleasure; if that is what pleases, then it is not the sort of pleasure which our culture generally respects or condones. We might look carefully at such activities from a moral perspective. Are they good pursuits to engage in or encourage in our children? Is there perhaps enough violence and aggression for them in other areas of our culture? Even if they spring from or satisfy a basic human instinct, it may not be something to nurture. The preferences for such activities, perhaps, should not enter into the calculation. In the same way that a preference for anti-social behaviour does not count alongside other competing preferences in social policy making.

Having revealed what is essential to these various activities, we might think twice before regarding them as simple preferences, all to be counted equally. Some involve a great commitment and sensitivity. They are not mere preferences but deeply held values. Others are preferences which ought not to count. They ought not to get onto the balance sheet at all, for they are anti-nature, as some preferences are anti-social. These are not deemed worthy of respect. The crucial first move, though, is to explore by honest reflection and careful debate what it is that we value in our leisure activities and our dealings with nature. Only thus can we resist those who would treat all values as preferences, all nature as a commodity or resource, and all people as consumers.

Moral Geographies of English Landscape

David Matless
University of Nottingham

Introduction: moral geographies

In this essay I use material from the 1930s and 40s to reflect upon the landscapes of leisure and pleasure. I will argue that thinking about such questions under the term 'moral geographies' enables us to understand some of the forces shaping policy, driving conflict and generating happiness in the landscape. My choice of historical material is not random. The 30s and 40s, particular the period of post-war reconstruction, saw a shaping of leisure which continues to influence the moral geographies of English landscape. Understanding this period is of particular significance in tracing the history of the present. That is not to say, however, that one can make easy analogies between then and now. I have tended to suggest (Matless 1996) that a key historical difference is the centrality, then, of issues of citizenship to questions of landscape. In the 30s and 40s landscape and its pleasures are set up primarily in terms of the nation; landscape becomes the occasion for national citizenship. The argument could be made that with the breakdown of the 'national consensus' from which this material had emerged and which it had helped to produce, the issue of landscape and national citizenship has subsided. Issues of citizenship and belonging have increasingly clustered around local and global environments. Now, however, as children seem set to enjoy compulsory 'civics' lessons, and as again people seem able to draw a direct causal line between something called collective values and something called individual responsibility, the matters of citizenship considered here may be becoming less distant.

The term 'moral geography' has become increasingly prominent in geographical discussion following Felix Driver's work on 19th century social science's interwoven environmentalism and moralism: "*'Moral science' was... a science of conduct and its relationship to environment, both moral and physical*" (Driver, 1988, p279, also Matless 1994, Philo ed 1991). I suggest that the 30s and 40s saw the emergence of just such a 'moral science' as a key shaping force of post war policies on planning, leisure and pleasure. My argument is that three 'cultures of landscape': the intellectual, the physical, the spiritual, offered sites whereby good citizenship could emerge. Always,

however, the good citizen made sense only in relation to a contrasting 'anti-citizen'. Policy making over leisure may be regarded as an exercise of cultural authority, assessing the kind of 'public' which should move in particular 'public' spaces. An example from wartime reconstruction debates shows how such questions of moral geography could operate.

In 1944 JA Steers addressed the Royal Geographical Society on the results of his national coastal survey for the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. Steers concluded that the role of the planner was to judge and guide pleasure and desire: *"The whole matter is basically one of geography... people have a great desire to visit the seaside, either in vast numbers...,* or in... *more manageable masses...., or as individuals on the remoter coasts. It is the last type of coastal region which is likely to become more and more popular in the right sense. Let us think of national authority as a coordinator and judge"* (Steers, 1944, p17, my emphasis). Stars of the reconstruction debate applauded Steers' moral geography. WS Morrison, Minister of Town and Country Planning, commended how Steers *"not only gives us the facts, but proceeds by his paper to 'point the moral'"* (19). For ecologist Arthur Tansley: *"Aesthetic appreciation.. is.. largely a matter of training... If we want our future citizens to value our national heritage..., it is up to us to see that the young get the necessary training"* (20-1). Planner and architect William Holford lamented the lack of coastal *"architectural reticence"*: *"that is where Mr Steers paper is peculiarly valuable. It is saying: 'You must care what you look like'"* (23). John Dower, praising Steers' ability to *"assess... misuse and disfigurement"*, commented: *"when I have been asked to explain the function of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning in which I serve, I have found the best short explanation is to say that our job is, or ought to be, creative geography"* (24-5). The task of the creative geographer emerges as being to educate in proper pleasures, channel healthy desires, and encourage a care for one's self and one's buildings. The correspondence of behavioural and architectural language: loudness, reticence, fitness for purpose, vulgarity, is no coincidence. An environmental ethos emerges which carries a model for the citizen self, indeed this self can only be adequately formed environmentally.

I have discussed elsewhere the ways in which such issues connect to current discussions of the self deriving from the late work of Michel Foucault on *"practices of the self"* and the *"aesthetics of existence"*, and from the cultural histories of Stallybrass and White (Matless, 1994; Foucault, 1986, Stallybrass and White, 1986). I return to such theoretical themes briefly in conclusion. First, before addressing the three cultures of landscape, we need to fill out the figure of the anti-citizen.

Citizen and Anti-Citizen

Between 1918 and 1939 open-air leisure in England took on new scale and scope. Urban excursions into the country were not new; people of all classes had made their way before by rail and cycle. However, as car ownership extended into the middle classes, and bus travel and communal charabanc trips were offered for the urban working class, the rural spaces of urban leisure were transformed. As Cyril Joad put it, the "*motor's capacity for ubiquitous penetration*" had "*created a new situation*" (Joad, 1934, p97).

Preservationists and planners saw the new situation as both generating citizenship and displaying its lack. Joad's 'Charter for Ramblers' suggested that: "*if our belief....in the permanent importance of right leisure using.... has any content and meaning, then we shall see in the English countryside.... an instrument, the most important we possess, for the training of the citizens of the future in the art of right living*" (Joad, 1934, p157-8). The country was also though displaying the art of wrong living. Various stock figures emerge; thoughtless middle class 'motor-picnickers' not clearing their litter, working class charabancers making a racket and leaving their empties. They were all anti-citizens against which the right leisure user could be upheld. A discourse of citizenship, mixing rights of access and obligations of conduct, depended for its self-definition on an unworthy 'other'. An inclusive national landscape emerged through exclusion (Sibley, 1995).

A distinct environmental and social geography comes into play here. Bad conduct is generally presumed to emanate from the interior of the city. Behaviour appropriate to a particular urban habitat is out of place in the English rural landscape. The anti-citizen, often labelled 'Cockney,' regardless of precise sound-of-Bow-Bells geographical origin, emerges from a particular urban social geography to produce an anti-social rural geography. The Cockney appears as an English urban cultural grotesque, to be celebrated in its natural urban habitat but labelled out of place in the country (Stedman-Jones, 1989). A wartime 'Home-Front Handbook' on 'How to See the Country', aimed particularly at those evacuees "*now living in the country for the first time, that they may use their leisure constructively for their own benefit and for the benefit of the nation in general*" (Batsford, 1946), combined helpful popular hints on seeing, with a call to send back the alien and vulgar:

"We have most of us enough city-dreading Anglo-Saxon blood to feel a rejuvenating transformation at cutting adrift from the huddle of human habitations. But by contrast, take the case of the large party, presumably from the East End, who, a friend of mine said, disgorged themselves from motor-coaches under the Duke of Bridgwater's column on Berkhamsted Common above Aldbury. They produced a gramophone, and started foxtrotting on the turf. "Why couldn't they have done that at home, Daddy?" said my friend's little boy" (Batsford 1940, p4-5).

Plans for popular citizenship reach out to the citizen yet also exclude, promoting landscape as public cultural space through rules of conduct which exclude certain members of the public. This was a moral geography posing the question, what kind of public space for what kind of public? For Joad, litter was *"a grimy visiting-card which democracy, now on calling terms with the country, insists on leaving after each visit"* (Joad, 1938, p72; also Joad, 1948). Loudness, whether in buildings or people, is condemned, Joad singling out Black and American *"alien"* noises: *"the atmosphere vibrates to the sounds of negroid music. Girls with men are jazzing to gramophones in meadows"* (Joad, 1934, p171; also Abercrombie, 1933, p243-4). The Anti-Noise League, seeking the *"conservation of nervous energy"*, encouraged *"the well-mannered citizen to become noise-conscious"*, and urged prosecution of the loud (Horder, 1938, p180-1). A codification of country manners emerges, anticipating the official 1951 'Country Code'. Regulation, punishment and education should combine such that people might be taught better:

"It cannot be said that the squalid crowding of Haytor Rocks and Becky Falls, with the legacy of filthy litter, is an improvement in the recreation of the people. The people who do these things should, in their own interests, be taught better, and when they have been taught they will derive more pleasure from their visits, for some enjoyment of natural beauty will be added to that of mere jollification" (Cornish, 1930, p45).

Regulated and educated, citizens might generate themselves a new in the country.

Three Cultures of Landscape

The figure of the anti-citizen: loud, littering, jazzing, lurks behind what follows. The open-air movement did not have the open-air all to itself. For its supporters,

however, the very constitution of that movement was significant. People walking in the country, solo or en masse, were seen as part of an orderly movement comparable in self-definition to modern movements of art and architecture: *"they have a passion for the closing of gates, hunt litter like sleuths.... They even appoint voluntary officers... to see that other walkers obey these ordinances which they have imposed upon themselves"* (Joad, 1934, p175). Open-air leisure was seen as a part of England advancing literally and metaphorically, upward and onward [1]. The advance was held to intellectual, physical, spiritual; although here I divide the discussion into three, it is important to stress that no one element was seen as independent of the others.

1. *Maps and fieldwork: the intellectual culture of landscape*

Open-air leisure shares with youth movements of the time and with the emerging discipline of geography an ethos of fieldwork and outdoor education. A succession of books gave instruction on 'How to See....'; the country, the countryside, nature, old buildings etc. Citizenship was to emerge from careful observation through eyes and map. The 'Gilcraft' scouting booklet on 'Exploring' presented *"hiking"* as *"the explorer's method above all others"* (Gilcraft, 1942, p72). 'Exploring' reads like a handbook for elementary geographical fieldwork, outlining procedure for survey and reporting: *"not only so that they may enjoy a fuller life...., but also so that they may become informed citizens"* (Gilcraft, 1942, p56) An 'Explorer's Chart' outlined how a selection of such activities might produce a citizen of "health, happiness and wide vision" (Gilcraft, 1942, p113). The map was the central document of this educational movement: *"Maps are your charter to the countryside and its innermost recesses....You need not fear to become a map-slave; the chains are light, and lightly worn"* (Batsford, 1940, p63). Map-sense could mark you as special; Batsford patronised the village pub: *"Country folk are generally not map-conscious....You can astound the company of the village bar by telling them the message of the map.... the surrounding landscape, and if you produce a map measurer you are likely to be suspected of black magic. They are.... unknown in country circles"* (Batsford, 1940, 65-6). A key text was C E Montague's essay 'When the Map is in Tune':

> *"The notation once learnt, the map conveys its own import with an immediateness and vivacity comparable with those of the score or the poem. Convexities and concavities of ground, the bluff, the defile, the long mounting*

[1] This was a movement not without internal tension, not least around the politics of access to land. Such events, which played out differently in different regions, have been discussed by a number of writers (Hill, 1980; Lowerson 1980, Rothman, 1982; Stephenson 1989), and there is not space to address them here. It is important though to stress that the moral geographies of landscape discussed here informed the whole of the open-air movement, of whatever political philosophy (Matless, 1995).

socially and spiritually. Laura Willowes moves to the Chilterns from London via map and guidebook knowledge, but her move towards an intimate local knowledge, and towards witchcraft, is symbolised by a rejection of formal geography:

> *"About this time she did an odd thing. In her wanderings she had found a disused well.... Here, one evening, she brought her guide-book and her map..... Looking into the well she watched the reflected sky grow dimmer; and when she raised her eyes the gathering darkness of the landscape surprised her. The time had come. She took the guide-book and the map and threw them in.*
> *...... She scarcely knew what she had done, but she knew that she had done rightly, whether it was that she had sacrificed herself to the place, or had cast herself upon its mercies- content henceforth to know no more of it than did its own children"* (Townsend Warner, 1993, p127-8).

By contrast Laura's nephew Titus, keen to organise the villagers into improving cultural projects, has a different sense of landscape: *"It was comfortable, it was portable, it was a reasonable appreciative appetite, a possessive and masculine love. It almost estranged her from Great Mop that he should be able to love it so well, and express his love so easily. He loved the countryside as though it were a body"* (Townsend Warner, 1993, p160).

2. *Bodies of England: landscape's physical culture*

Tucker's hikers also suggest a physical culture of landscape; of fitness, leanness, health. Inter-war public events invariably featured displays of mass physical culture; people jumping up and down, forming pyramids etc. Country walking can be connected to these bodies of England. Joad wrote of: "The Making of Whole Men and Women":

> *"the culture of the body as well as of the mind must play its part..... Whence can we derive... an education alike of body, of mind and of spirit, so happily as from Nature? The feeling of the air upon the skin, of the sun upon the face; the tautening of the muscles as we climb; rough weather to give us strength, blue skies and golden sunny hours to humanize us- these things have their influence upon every side of our being"* (Joad, 1934, p150).

Cornish outlined three *"disciplines"* in the *"cult of scenery"*; for the spirit the *"cultivation of the state of receptive contemplation"*, for the mind the *"acquisition of the*

scientific faculty,... often the hardest of all for people of emotional temperament", and for the body the *"athletic"* discipline. Cornish noted that in the *"trinity of eternal values"* of Goodness, Truth and Beauty the latter was often *"suspect on account of the opinion that the aesthetic life often leads towards sybaritic luxury rather than spiritual exaltation. But the Pilgrim of Scenery is beset by no such snare, for a Spartan habit is needed for the enjoyment of Nature in her sterner moods"* (Cornish, 1935, p ix).

The Spartan suggested environmental exposure, a sense of more-than-observation, an elemental physicality placing great store on skin and lungs, rain and wind. GM Trevelyan's essay 'Walking' was a key rain-and-wind text: *"The fight against fierce wind and snowstorm is among the higher joys of walking, and produces in the shortest time the state of ecstasy"* (Trevelyan, 1930, p18) [2]. RG Stapledon connected the low *"coefficient of ruralicity"* in England to *"the precise extent to which a people as a whole have direct contact with nature"*. Walking, as part of a dietary and environmental bodily regime, could help:

> *"The extent to which they breathe uncontaminated air, the extent to which they eat unprocessed foods, and, for example, the chances open to them of getting a wet shirt in either their work or their play. It is a depressing thought to contemplate that there must be millions of people in England to-day who have never experienced the exhilaration of a thorough good drenching, and whose individual coefficient of ruralicity must be practically nil"* (Stapledon, 1935, p4; on diet see Bishop, 1991).

Such arguments connect to campaigns in the late 1930s for 'National Fitness', for 'A1' rather than 'C3' citizens. In 1937 the National Fitness Council (NFC), set up under the Physical Training and Recreation Act, instigated a National Fitness Campaign, aimed particularly at the young. Youth was a key word of the time, suggesting energy, vigour and the future. Inspired in part by a parliamentary report on the German 'Strength Through Joy' movement (Jones, 1987), the Council made films, organised 'mass physical culture' demonstrations, and gave grants. Gymnasia, swimming baths, youth hostels, all modern sites for modern bodies, were favoured. Publications showed people striding outdoors or synchronised in exercise: *"It is everybody's duty as a citizen to be as fit as possible"* (NFC, 1939, p8). Walking took

[2] Trevelyan is here conspicuously not in a mass rambling party. His language, full of Wordsworth and especially George Meredith, subject of a Trevelyan biography, is classically romantic. An individual romanticism is to somehow translate to popular walking, raising those of a lower physical and spiritual culture into whole men and women, yet without disrupting the order of things. On the political tensions of such mass romanticism, and of the uncontrolled hedonism also seen as a risk in such bodily practice, see Matless 1995.

place in a larger scheme of things. E P Richards wrote of the open-air movement as *"a coming chief antidote in Great Britain to city, office, shop and factory confinement; to cancer and constipation, nerves and tuberculosis....to 'Three C-ism' in all its senses: physical, mental and higher"* (Richards, 1935, p2). Regular bodies inhabited the new country, walkers moving in a national health service, body and landscape in functional harmony. In Harry Roberts' 'The Practical Way To Keep Fit' open-air movement forms one element of a body culture of diet, rational clothing, good posture, sports and holidays, medicine, town planning for air and gardens, and emotional education: *"I look upon the enthusiasm for hiking as one of the most important things that has happened in England for many a year. From a sane philosophic and hygienic point of view, it is perhaps the most significant social phenomenon since the foundation on a world scale of the Boy Scout movement"* (Roberts, 1942, p140). Roberts' frontispiece, 'Towards a Healthy and Contented Life', shows a walker pausing in a bracing breeze on a hill over a valley, a church-gathered village below.

In the NFC we find the harnessing of such themes into state service. The German inspiration for such movement could however generate cultural and political tension, a tension I have argued runs through much of the planning and preservation movement of the time (Matless, 1995). To take one example, in a special fitness feature in 'The Nottinghamshire Countryside', journal of the Notts. Rural Community Council, we find an anonymous article headlined 'Strength Through Joy: Suggestion For a Rural Fitness Policy'. A Nazi slogan appears as a banner in a local English magazine. The author suggested a *"national rural fitness festival"* in every village, with competitions including No.7 Gymnastic Displays, No.11 Folk Dancing, No.12 Volleyball, No.18 Relay Race for Parish Councillors, No.19 A Series of Purposeful Games: *"Can Notts. villages give us....just that experience in practice that will enable us to plan a modern 'Merrie England' along the lines of Strength Through Joy?"*. A Nazi ethos could be locally reworked: *"While continental countries achieve fitness by discipline imposed from above, Britain plans to succeed with fitness schemes that appeal because they come from a self-imposed discipline generated in the heart of the individual"* (Strength Through Joy, 1939). The author tries to detach the slogan from its country of origin, freeing it for Englishness.

3. 'Pilgrims of Scenery': the spiritual culture of landscape

As we have seen above, bodily experience and spiritual uplift could be connected. Trevelyan, warning of *"breeding a race apart from nature"* (Trevelyan, 1929, p22), suggested that *"Without vision the people perish, and without natural beauty the English*

people will perish in the spiritual sense" (Trevelyan, 1929, p19; Trevelyan, 1931). Cornish termed himself, and anyone who might follow him, a *"Pilgrim of Scenery"*. English landscape could be a humbling arena preventing *"our people"* from losing *"that sense of the true proportion between civilisation and the cosmos which is essential to the religious welfare of a Nation"* (Cornish, 1933, p323).

National Parks are proposed at this time as national spiritual spaces. Cornish, the leading parks campaigner in the late 20s and early 30s, presented parks as sanctuaries where *"the urban population, the majority of our people, can recover that close touch with Nature which is needful for the spiritual welfare of a nation"* (Cornish, 1932, p13). National social and spiritual development required popular access to *"the untouched elemental prospects which are unrivalled in their power to impart a reverent conception of the Universe"* (Cornish, 1946, p78). National Parks would be one element in a new nation made under a new cultural authority:

> *"The National Parks which we constitute now will, it is reasonable to suppose, endure as such for centuries. The present careless indifference of the town tripper in his charabanc will, I believe, be replaced by a different mood in the succeeding generations. The faculty of appreciating beauty is latent in the generality and merely requires educating......Within a time which will be short compared with the secular life of the National Park we shall be an educated people, the leaders of thought will lead all classes, not merely an educated minority"* (Cornish, 1930, p9).

As zones publically regulated, though not publically owned, the proposed National Parks begged questions of property. A particular model visitor is central to the negotiation of private rights and public control. Political, social, aesthetic and spiritual questions here become embedded within one another. The almost talismanic phrase, quoted by Cornish, Dower and others, is Wordsworth's in the 'Guide to the Lakes': *"persons of pure taste.....deem the district a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest, who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy"* (Wordsworth, 1951, p127; quoted in Cornish, 1930, p30, Dower, 1946, p19). The phrase appealed not just in its hint at public control but in its stress on taste. If *"the faculty of appreciating beauty is latent in the generality and merely requires educating"* (Cornish, 1930, p9; Matless, 1991), Wordsworth's *"eye to perceive"* might be the property of all in an educated future. For the present however the National Park and its visitors warranted regulation and education under the eye of an expert. As others were not yet finding the beautiful and mystic through their common senses, Cornish and his colleagues were required to teach them better.

Three conclusions

To conclude I would like to draw out three general themes:

1. *An ecology of pleasures*

Landscapes of leisure would seem to have been geared around a normative ecology of pleasures. The material considered here can be seen in terms of a moral geography of habitats, with the allocation of different habitats to different pleasures and to the people who take them. Zoning or banning may follow. A number of people have argued that similar processes of power and exclusion have been at the heart of recent debates over rural leisure (Clark et al, 1994), particularly in relation to activities controlled under the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (Sibley, 1994, 1995; Halfacree, 1996). For Joad's jazzing aliens read transgressing ravers, out of place in an English countryside, styled by dominant, and sometimes raucous voices, as polite and quiet. Other traditions of country leisure could of course be constructed to place such events as in rather than out of tradition. And for loud ignorant charabancers read gormless heritage consumers. There is an uncanny parallel between the frontispiece of Robert Hewison's 'The Heritage Industry' and that of Joad's 'Charter for Ramblers', showing *"The Last (Or Museum) Stage of the English Country"*. There would seem to be a continuity in both stories of erosion and modes of cultural authority.

2. *More than zoning: the assumption of unbridgeable cultures*

It is important to stress that such judgements are about more than saying that some people like to do one thing, others like to do something else, and maybe they will get along better if they don't meet. There is a deeper argument about where and how pleasures belong. To return again to post-war reconstruction. In his key National Parks report, Dower, though arguing that he was not judging according to class or education, set up qualitatively different classes of pleasure: *"it will be by no means easy... to resist the inevitable demand of the 'urban-holiday-minded' that they should have their share in the National Parks programme"* (Dower, 1945, p23). A close watch should be mounted for such thin-ends-of-wedges as *"a garden pleasure-ground (small bar attached)"* (p23) or facilities for ball-games. This is not simply a zoning of pleasures for mutual tolerance, but an assumption of an unbridgeable cultural

geographical divide whereby the 'urban-holiday-minded' person could not conceivably take meaningful pleasure in the non-urban:

> *"For all who want to spend their holidays gregariously.... National Parks are not the place. They had far better keep away, and (some of them, perhaps, after an unsuccessful experiment or two) pretty certainly will keep away - provided that any proposals to establish, within National Parks, the kinds of facilities they desire are firmly resisted"* (p23).

In the shaping of leisure policy after 1945 we have an ecology of pleasures whereby people and their practices are mapped in a necessary relationship with particular environments. Those not recognisably part of an open-air culture, not taking themselves or their practices into other environments. There they would simply offend others and be incapable of taking meaningful pleasure themselves. A principle of meaningful access implied that if one, for example, enjoyed loud music and saucy seaside humour one could not connect spiritually to a hill. There is a need for social historical enquiry into the networks of individuals and cultural practices that helped form the open-air ethos which achieved a position of significant political power during and after the war.

3. *Tensions and dialectics*

We find in this material a mix of deep and mystical spirituality, heightened aesthetic pleasure, and a consistent concern for order and control. There are tensions in this mixture, perhaps symbolised by Dower's call for *"a team of experienced landscape lovers"* to determine the classification of scenic beauty. Love and committees are to mingle:

> *"the key to success is that enough of us - and especially of those who have some relevant authority or influence as governors, administrators, technicians, and writers - should care enough about the task, and should go humbly and seriously to school with Nature herself as mistress and inspirer, and with the great minds that have been applied to the loving study of nature as guides and interpreters. It is my robust faith that, if we do this with heart and mind, it will not be long before we are sufficiently sure and united to assume a leadership which the rest of our fellow-countrymen are sufficiently ready to follow"* (Dower, 1944, pp95-6).

The establishment of a committee of lovers epitomises the dialectic of commitment and detachment, embodiment and elevation, love and science, at the heart of the social aesthetic addressed in this essay. Following Terry Eagleton's argument in The Ideology of the Aesthetic (1990), one could argue that such questions are inherent in questions of pleasure and landscape. The issue here turns upon a mutual constitution of on the one hand the aesthetic and the social, and on the other the eye and the body. In the material covered here the aim of extending visual pleasure to the people is tempered by a desire to control potentially disruptive bodily effects. If the eye is to be educated, the body is to be self-controlled. Eagleton argues that the aesthetic as a category has consistently been torn between an abstracted elevated beauty and a grounding in sensual bodily pleasure, and that such a dialectic of embodiment and elevation generates a radical danger in the aesthetic, a power to disrupt and disturb. Those considered here seek at once to extend the social power of beauty yet maintain it as a discrete category for controlled academic reflection and definition, treading carefully around dialectics of freedom and power, popular pleasure and citizenship. It could be argued that such dialectical tensions; of eyes and bodies; fieldwork and love; ecstasy and organisation; the visceral and the cerebral, are inherent in and formative of the landscapes of leisure and pleasure, always there to be carefully negotiated, stretched, stumbled over, inhabited.

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A Place for Sport in the Countryside?

By Sally Hart
Sports Council

What on earth is somebody from the Sports Council doing standing up in front of a hundred or more countryside professionals and expounding on a subject that they know backwards? This thought may have crossed your mind, it certainly crossed mine. Well, I am not here to teach my grandmother to suck eggs, but rather to explore what needs to be done to ensure that sport in the countryside is a source of leisure and pleasure, and to discuss how we can ensure that good management principles are observed wherever possible.

Last month I spent some time on the shores of Lake Malawi, among the hunter-gatherers, reading Sophie's World, and contemplating the notion of survival of the fittest. As the trees became denuded of their mangos and the fish were caught in what looked like mosquito nets I thought of man's adaptability in the face of the malarial mosquito and the marauding crocodile. There is little room for sentiment in a state of nature. But I ask for your sympathy, and hope that you will allow me long enough to present my case for sport as a legitimate and important activity in the countryside. I am of the view that where sport and countryside are concerned, there is need for a sense of balance; indeed the same might be said for other aspects of human life and experience.

I think you will agree that if we let our countryside be managed according to the principle of survival of the fittest, then mankind and his activities would swamp every other species. It is only because of a recognition of the needs of our successors that we have attained any sort of balance to date.

Turning to the theme of leisure and pleasure

Sporting experiences in the countryside can be a potent force for good and can contribute to improvements in many aspects of our quality of life. I shall touch on just a few of these aspects today.

Let me first acknowledge the consensus among the principal national agencies concerned with countryside policy. There is a clear message in their national policy statements that people, (voters and taxpayers) give us licence to operate, and for

that reason public investment must be justified by its perceived social value. I am sure that you are all wedded to the principles of good management, whether you work in forestry, landscape conservation, access and recreation provision, or species preservation. I am no exception. On behalf of the Sports Council I have to focus on the interests of sport in the countryside.

The Sports Council

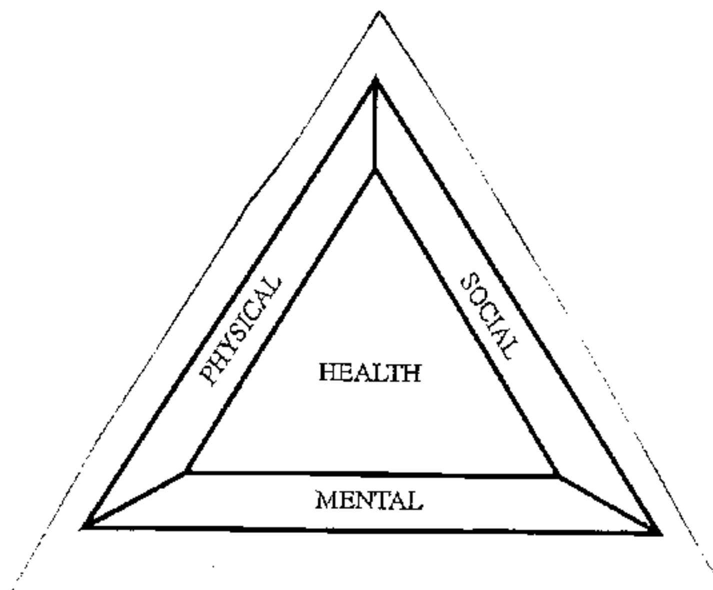
The Sports Council has recently undergone some changes, as a result of which there has been a shedding of posts from something over 700 in 1989, to around half that number in 1996. This comes despite taking on board responsibilities for distributing the Lottery Sports Fund. Inevitably at such times, organisations have to spend time readjusting and getting to know the new members. And valued friends, like yourselves, tactfully hold back until we are ready to resume our full range of contacts. Some of the countryside agencies have been observing our transformation with fellow feeling.

Very soon we expect to divide into the UK Sports Council (UKSC) and the English Sports Council (ESC). The UKSC will have a budget of just over £12 million and a small staff of 25 who will focus on issues such as: developing strategic policy for UK level sport; attracting major events to the UK; supporting the establishment of a British Academy of Sport; and promoting UK sport overseas. The main functions of the ESC will be: developing sport for young people; developing excellence in sport; and ensuring the delivery of sports opportunities to everyone through operating the Lottery Sports Fund, through providing land use planning advice and through strategic policy development.

Sport in the Countryside

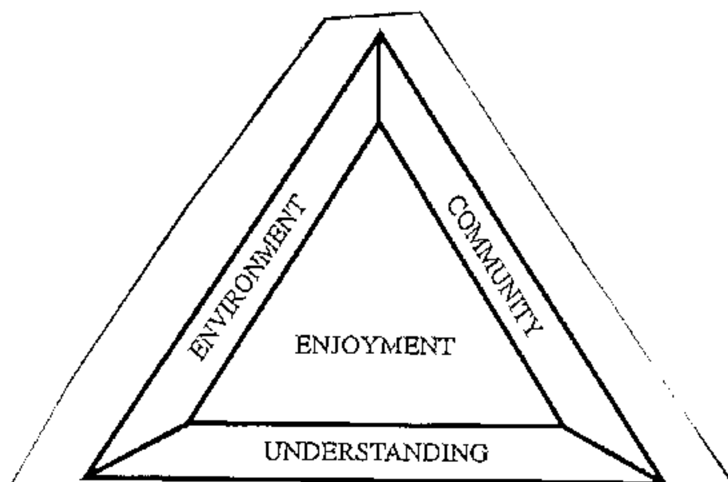
Sport is an important component of a healthy and balanced lifestyle and can contribute towards personal contentment. A healthy person, in the widest sense, has achieved a balance between the physical, mental and social aspects of life. Sport and physical recreation contribute to all three aspects and provide a key to social opportunity (see figure 1).

Figure 1.



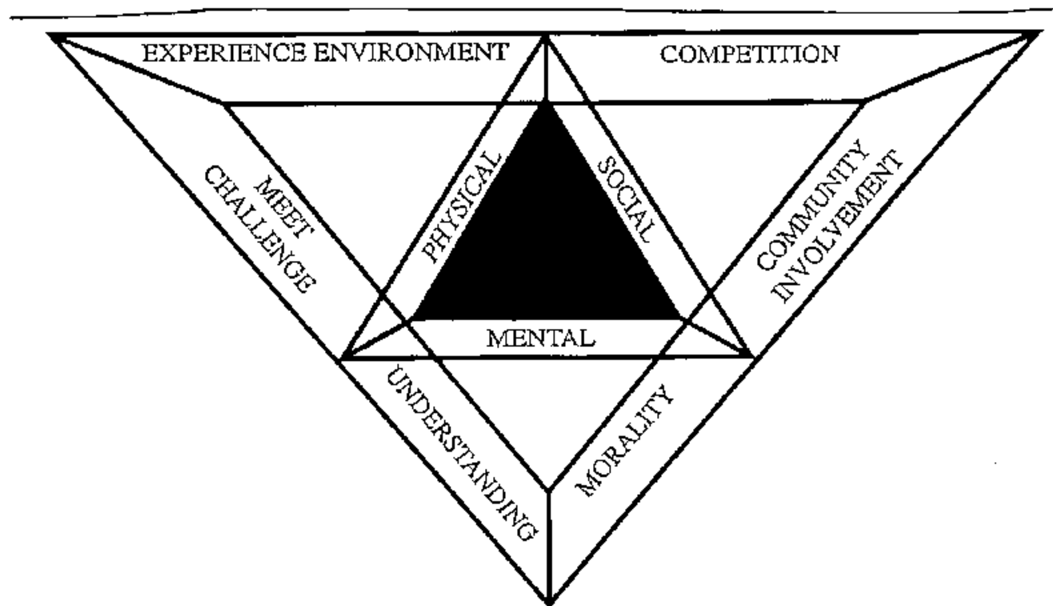
I was struck by the similarity between this notion and that put forward by the Countryside Council for Wales in stressing the link between enjoyment and environment; between enjoyment and understanding; and between enjoyment and local community. A similar diagram can show this (see figure 2). We can extend this idea a little further to encapsulate the essentials of quality of life which contribute to a balanced and healthy society (see figure 3).

Figure 2.



I believe that it is possible to identify a few key measures on each of these scales from which we can monitor the health of our policies, and to demonstrate where there is likely to be substantial overlap and interdependence. As an example, the incidence of repeat criminal offences could feature as an indicator on the social side of the triangle in figure 3. Research has shown that this can be reduced by controlled exposure to challenging activity in a different environment.

Figure 3.



Many probation officers are convinced of the reforming influence of exposure to challenging environments and therefore the need for appropriate investment. How much better it would be if we could promote more widely in society a balanced approach to life, so as to avoid the need remedial expenditure.

Any management principles must, in my view, recognise the interdependence shown above (figure 3) and acknowledge the responsibilities which those involved in sport have towards the countryside, and the responsibilities which countryside organisations have to provide opportunities for society to achieve a balanced lifestyle. As I said, I think that most of the strategies and policies of the national public agencies reflect this philosophy.

When it comes to sport and recreation in the countryside the people who really matter, the people who make the management principles work, are political and voluntary activists. They pursue their interest, their cause, with a passion. Managers are faced with the challenge of creating an environment in which the political and voluntary sectors will make the difference, by espousing and living by the principles of cooperation and consensus. To what extent are people willing and able to adopt these principles?

Volunteer activists, administrators and organisers are the catalysts who can ensure that consensus rather than conflict is the order of the day. So we must ensure that consensus and good management will be more enjoyable, more satisfying and more stimulating than conflict and competition through litigation. But what hits the headlines? What gets the most publicity for lobby groups? I sometimes wonder whether the buzz which people get from scoring points against the opposition and

from winning battles for exclusive use almost raises this activity to the level of a blood sport. I would like to hear more cases of management virtue and cooperation being rewarded in terms of public recognition and investment.

The advent of the National Lottery has given an incentive for people to develop good quality, sustainable plans for many countryside-based sports, both on land and in water. It has brought to the fore the crucial role of the voluntary sport sector as spenders and shapers of sporting opportunity. We have successfully allocated £305 million to 1500 schemes costing over £600m. Figure 4 gives an idea of how some of the money has gone to activities that may be of interest to you. Missing from these figures are details of expenditure on pitch and indoor sports and multi-sport schemes.

Figure 4.

Activity type	No. of schemes	Expenditure
Angling	15	£0.5 million
Canoeing	13	£2.6 million
Equestrian	14	£0.8 million
Golf	16	£2.7 million
Mountaineering	10	£1.6 million
Rowing	23	£10.5 million
Sailing	57	£10.8 million
Skiing	2	£0.3 million
Water skiing	3	£1.1 million

In just 19 months the Lottery Sports Fund has distributed around 280 awards (amounting to just £100 million) to a variety of countryside-based sports. This compares favourably with the combined grant-in-aid of several of the national agencies concerned with sport and recreation. If you add to this the funds attracted from the Millennium Commission and the other Lottery distributors you can begin to appreciate the scale of change and the shift in power that is putting resources into sports clubs and local organisations. Some of these clubs and institutions will be acquainted with the best management principles which CRN agencies have been advocating in recent years; others will be less informed. This places an enormous responsibility upon the strategic policy framework within which all this money will be spent. Are we satisfied that it is comprehensive and cohesive?

The Environment Select Committee and others have drawn attention to the need to chart the respective responsibilities of national agencies – it would be tragic if this wave of new money was not spent as imaginatively or as flexibly as it might have been because of any policy voids or lapses in the planning framework Working with colleagues in other agencies a draft memoranda of understanding is to be drawn up, the aim of which will be to identify who is doing what in policy terms, and to highlight what is not being done.

There is no doubt that voluntary bodies will be major partners, and increasingly leaders, in many future initiatives. The Sports Council has recently published the most extensive research ever undertaken into the value of volunteers in sport and has also launched a project to provide them with further support. Sport accounts for more volunteers than any other sector of community life, including religion. Nearly 1.5 million people give an average of 2.5 hours a week for 48 weeks a year. In simple economic terms this amounts to something over £1.5 billion a year – enough to buy every player in the football league.

Vast armies of volunteers underpin all major sporting events and they assume many different roles: translators, runners, bag carriers, drivers, officials, statisticians, marshals. But most of the commitment is at club level – week in, week out. In order to play their part in the countryside they will have to develop more skills as negotiators, planners, and advocates – skills which environmental volunteers have in abundance.

Changing employment structures are inevitably affecting the profile of volunteers and their availability. The way that services are managed and marketed inevitably has an impact on public expectations of the standards offered by sports and leisure opportunities, and this has a bearing on the use of volunteer labour.

Recruitment, retention, management and valuing of volunteers are vital to ensure that sport survives and prospers in this country. We have embarked on a support programme, together with Barclaycard, which will offer a wide range of courses, an advice hot-line, and recognition awards. Some of the programmes, such as that on managing volunteers in sport, may be of interest to some of you.

The challenge is to facilitate the work of this huge but fragmented band of people to equip them to take the huge range of responsibilities expected of them, whilst at the same time taking care not to diminish the pleasure which they derive from giving freely of their time. By focusing on the needs of sport and undertaking to offer

sports organisations even more support services the Sports Council is putting some of them in the embarrassing position of having to select some and reject others for fear of volunteer overload.

If you want to tap into Sports Council money or the Lottery Sports Fund it is increasingly likely that you will be working in partnership with a sports club or governing body of sport with an agreed development plan. Sorry to draw your attention to yet another set of plans. In your world there is already a plethora of plans and designations. Have we got the process right for contributing to these – neither the Countryside Commission nor the Sports Council appear to have the resources to contribute to every development plan so why should we suppose that voluntary bodies have?

Every organisation seems to announce its intention to develop a new land use or management plan covering areas of their interest by asking for information tailored to their requirements. This puts a tremendous strain on the average sports organisation. Is it right that they should have to dance to the convenience of the professionals in attending meetings, expressing their needs, and putting their case? There has been a huge growth in the size of the environmental pressure groups who have an enviable cadre of voluntary and professional expertise. Sports organisations have not benefited from such development and can rarely draw upon people from within their membership who have the necessary time and expertise. Why can't we all get together with the different sports and agree one way in which they can present their needs; a way which suits them and which planners and land managers can understand. I therefore welcome the *'centre of expertise'* proposals of the Countryside Commission which aim to gather information of use to public and partners. Can we help sports organisations list characteristics of a sport or event and the known impact in different environments under varying conditions. Are sports organisations equipped to present their case effectively to local planners? Very few local plans have general and specific policies for sport and recreation in the countryside and the urban fringe or for specific countryside sports. These are clearly issues worthy of consideration.

Principles for managing countryside recreation

If we wish to ensure a balanced and equitable recreational use of the countryside, I believe that we need to adhere to a number of key management and planning principles; these are outlined briefly.

1. Accepting the principles of a managed approach

Does everybody accept that good management can usually offer the best way forward for the accommodation of most pleasures in the countryside? I think and hope that most people do. I am sure that visitors and sports users appreciate the benefits of a managed approach which demonstrates an understanding of their needs and responsibilities. Once people can associate better experiences and access with better management then you have committed customers who will enjoy and understand the environment you manage.

2. Assessing the scale of the problem

The House of Commons Environment Select Committee demonstrated that the oft quoted erosion and disturbance effects of sport are exaggerated and are mainly local, temporary and manageable. Does this mean that people exaggerate to make their point or are they afraid of what they do not know.

The jury is still out on a number of sports and their attendant resource requirements. The proliferation of golf courses for example; is this environmentally destructive or does it improve environmental quality? There is certainly evidence to suggest that the rough areas of golf courses can provide a more ecologically attractive alternative than certain other land uses. Caving is an activity which has accepted the limits to development set by the ecological capacity of the cave system and which does not promote further participation. Participation in motor sports activity has been rather static in recent years. It is ten years since the Sports Council and Government recommended local authorities to make provision for motor sports schemes, but very few have heeded the advice in their own backyards. The sports which are growing quickest in popularity tend to be fitness oriented, non-competitive, individual, activities which fit with a flexible lifestyle (e.g. walking, swimming, cycling). The National Junior Sports Programme aims to develop a lifelong interest in sport among our young people. I wonder how closely countryside managers can work with the Programme in the face of losing many local education authority outdoor centres. As a result of a declining commitment of resources towards such activities it is frequently up to voluntary and commercial bodies to provide the necessary facilities and opportunities.

Turning to the post-school age group, and bearing in mind the theme of the conference, we are told that the leading edge, risk sports, the extreme sports, have a growing following. These sports have developed a niche in the magazine market

(there are over a dozen titles covering sports activities such as snow-boarding, mountain- biking, para-gliding, power-boating, wind-surfing, downhill skiing). You can see the list in the exclusion clause on any travel insurance form. Even so they are probably a less hazardous way of getting a buzz than chemical alternatives.

The pursuit of hazardous adventure has its own language, hardware and culture. This exclusivity creates a potentially profitable market. Overall we have an ageing population in the West and I wonder if there will ever be an overwhelming demand for dangerous pursuits.

3. *Appreciating the stance of the other party*

Local pride in a place and enthusiasm for it often motivates people to want to recreate there. It is important that all parties understand the feelings of others as well as the physical impact of their own activities. It is also important that people are prepared to take responsibility for their own safety and understand the costs involved. At the same time managers must ensure that measures and controls are appropriate to the scale and type of demands being placed on resources.

If we can get sporting, community and environmental agencies to talk constructively about planning for sport in the countryside there will undoubtedly be major benefits for all those concerned. Sports' governing bodies and the Sports Councils, interested in finding appropriate sites for sporting use have had to communicate with the Environment Agency, where water is concerned; the Countryside Commission and local authorities about rights of way and community forests; and on occasion the National Park Authorities. It is imperative that all parties involved in such discussions have a clear understanding of the others' priorities and concerns. Only then is real progress achievable.

4. *Providing the facts*

Here I go back to welcome the Countryside Commission's intention to boost the information available through a *'centre of expertise'*. Who will bite the bullet for a sites database? Is this something for a private finance initiative or should we agree an overall framework and move towards it incrementally each at our own pace? Are we using the available resources for measurement to best effect? Does everyone always appreciate that the scale of impact may be related to numbers and the unstructured nature of activity rather than the formality of it?

5. Undertaking consultation and facing the customer

I will touch on these only briefly. When sport is the customer it is wise to consult before developing charging policies. Evidence of reinvestment of income in restitution and maintenance, for example, may well command a higher premium since the sports representatives will have some expectation of future sustainable use.

6. Taking a long term view

The English Sports Council will continue to have a planner in every region contributing model advice and guidance as appropriate. Structure and local plans and district and countryside strategies have, in the past, focused overwhelmingly on informal recreation and conservation. This has provided a framework for extricating grant from the Countryside Commission. Evidence of inclusion in such strategies, as well as good management plans, must be a prerequisite for Lottery awards.

How many development plans do you know that identify a range of opportunities and allocations for sport and active recreation development? Do they acknowledge the presence of sports sites of more than local significance and seek to enhance or promote their potential? Take Windermere or any area near you where water-based motor sports take place, has there been any attempt in a plan to promote the development of a counter attraction? How are these cross plan issues tackled at present? Regional recreation strategies have in the past provided some contextual information for developing sporting opportunities in the countryside. However, these have been criticised for lack of conformity and for tending towards policy advocacy rather than land use advice. Of course, their future style is a matter of much debate since the demise of the regional councils for sport and recreation. Some of the new independent regional sports for a have chosen to adopt the strategies of the former regional bodies.

Many of you will have seen our statement of priorities for applications for Lottery Sports Fund support for countryside and water projects. Good planning is a prerequisite for a Lottery award. For example, it is important that rights of way planning and management should be linked to planning permissions for stables and livery in urban fringe areas. The provision of local riding and cycling networks around the national rights of way network is also important, and their sporting value must be demonstrable. We have policy guidance coming out of our ears. Is it of use? Have all the discussion documents on policy offered evidence to support the need for the measures they are advocating?

Unspeakable Pursuits: the good, the bad and the ugly in the countryside

by Graham Cox
University of Bath

Introduction

"One half of the world cannot understand the pleasures of the other"
Jane Austen's Emma

I want to speak in positive terms about field sports, and particularly gameshooting. It would be hard to imagine a less propitious time for such an enterprise: to say anything at all in their favour in the present climate of public concern is to risk appearing at best foolhardy and at worst perversely insensitive. And yet that same debate imposes an obligation to make certain key points and bring relevant evidence to bear. That is what this paper seeks to do. But it does so in full recognition that, in this area perhaps more so than in any other, there can be no possibility of a neutral discourse (Cox, 1993).

I take it as read that the objects of my concern are ineradicably moral. I want, nevertheless, to bracket such questions and concentrate instead on other features of the activities. I hope my discussion will reveal the poverty and unacceptable simplicity of the standard, pejorative, 'killing things for fun' characterisation. I just as readily acknowledge, however, that the points I make have no necessary bearing on positions which seek to question the acceptability of taking part in the activities in the first place. I relish the opportunity to consider such issues: but to do so now would be a diversion from the task I have set myself (see Dennett 1996 and Scruton 1996 for recent challenging accounts). Not all minds are made up (Clark *et al*, 1994) and there is still scope, therefore, for evidence to have some purchase. But before I present that evidence I need, albeit too briefly to do them justice, to make some preparatory comments of a very general nature about field sports.

It is not difficult to elaborate the contemplative and aesthetic elements of field sports. Here is Colonel Thornton writing in his 'Sporting Tour Through The Northern Parts of England and Great Part of the Highlands of Scotland' published in 1804: *"I conceive the great pleasure and elegance of shooting depends upon the good order in which the dogs are kept"*. To anyone who has any appreciation of the mysteries and conundrums of the language of scent the use of the word 'elegance' is anything but incongruous (Cox, 1980). Indeed, for those who work gundogs or hounds, 'style' is best characterised as being that quality of a dog's work which enables you to know what it is doing. Handlers, therefore, quite appropriately speak of 'reading' their dogs (Cox, 1987). Fishing is, of course, routinely considered a contemplative activity: making a title like 'Fish, Fishing and the Meaning of Life' (Paxman, 1994) a natural one for a collection of piscatorial writings. The important point to emphasise, however, is that it is not peculiarly so.

The cultures of field sports are, by their very nature, activist. This is not just a matter of levels of involvement. Though, as seems certainly to be the case on Exmoor and the Quantocks (Winter *et al*, 1992) they can be socially very significant (Cox *et al*, 1994). Rather, it is the fact that they offer the prospect, almost uniquely in the sporting sphere, of continued high level involvement and enhanced competence beyond the age when 'young' is an appropriate adjective. Middle age is a variable term and some sports tolerate it better than others. Few can better field sports on that score. They can offer opportunities for every age group, whether young, old or some variant of middling.

Moreover, field sports are typically seasonal in their pattern of activity and therefore in their impact on the countryside: though, again, the more important point to emphasise is that they demand active and sustainable management. They do not merely consume space and there is an inherent recognition that in order to 'take out' with any serious prospect of being able to continue to do so there has to be a good deal of 'putting in' and that remains the case whether we are talking about hunting, or lowland or moorland shooting (Vandervell and Coles 1980)

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that on both sides of the Atlantic the tradition of the sporting naturalist is still vibrant (Altherr and Reiger, 1995). Examples at different levels abound, and extend well beyond the boundaries implied by the phrase 'knowing your quarry'. It is a tradition which can be charted before and after Gilbert White and his 'Natural History of Selborne', first published in the year of the French Revolution. The sorts of shoots created, with consequent massive benefits to wildlife and landscape, at Hauxton in Cambridgeshire by Will Garfitt, and in the

same county by John Humphreys on fenland near Swaffham Lode, bear witness to a more complex set of motivations than simply a desire to shoot live game. Happy to acknowledge the advice and example provided by The Game Conservancy (Cox, 1983) both are recent winners of prestigious conservation awards, and by that token no doubt, may reasonably, be considered exceptional.

What of the generality? Game shooting in Britain is overwhelmingly dependent upon rearing, which is, to all intents and purposes, a form of farming: one which is, incidentally, less vulnerable than some others to pressing welfare concerns (Webster 1995). Can it plausibly be claimed that there is, in conservation and landscape terms, a 'rearing dividend'?

The Game Management Project

"Shooting is a great contribution to conservation"

In August 1981, as the Wildlife and Countryside Bill reached its Report Stage in the House of Commons that comment by the public affairs officer of the British Field Sports Society (BFSS) was clearly considered quirky, and perhaps even outrageous enough, to be included in the 'Sayings of the Week' column in The Observer.

Such claims are still likely to elicit only a sceptical response: but in the decade and more after the imposition of milk quotas more evidence making critical assessment possible has become available. During that period the agenda of policy making in agriculture and countryside politics has been transformed. Anxieties over the budgetary implications of the Common Agricultural Policy and the damaging impacts of agricultural intensification have been compounded by growing concerns for the welfare of rural communities, food safety and nutritional standards, pollution control and animal welfare. Being integral to the countryside, field sports affect, and in various ways are affected by, each of these concerns.

During this period I conducted, with Charles Watkins and Michael Winter, a study which examined changes in the organisation and pattern of game shooting and its relevance to key issues such as woodland management, landscape conservation, public recreation and the rural economy. Based at The University of Bath and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, the Game Management Project (GMP) enables a critical appraisal of the period during which organised lowland gameshooting and rearing have become virtually synonymous (Cox *et al*, 1996b)

Part of the research, which also included extensive interviews with 78 landowners from both shooting and non-shooting estates, was a postal questionnaire survey of farmers and landowners. The greater part of the sample was drawn randomly from the Yellow Pages (YP) in the five study areas of Buckinghamshire, Devon, Cumbria, Gloucestershire and Nottinghamshire. Also, in order to gather insights into change over time, 319 farms and estates which had been studied in the 1970s by Helen Piddington, and a further 42 in Nottinghamshire which had also been studied in that earlier period by Charles Watkins (known together as the PW sample) were re-surveyed.

The total sample size was 1429 landowners and farmers, and responses were encouraged from both shooters and non-shooters by sending two different coloured questionnaires to each potential respondent. One form was for those whose shooting rights had been used during the year 1990-1 and another was for those whose shooting rights had not been used. The technique was successful and it enabled us to make informed comparisons between the farms and estates that were shot over and those which were not.

There were 712 respondents whose questionnaires could be used, of whom 55% stated that their land was shot over. The survey confirmed clear variations in the extent of shooting. The highest proportion of shooting holdings (60%) was in Nottinghamshire and Gloucestershire (55%), while Cumbria had the lowest (38%). Response rates were very even, ranging from 58% for the PW sample to 48% in Buckinghamshire and giving a convincing 54% overall response rate. We can be reasonably confident, therefore, about the findings.

The relentless agricultural intensification and ever increasing specialisation of the post-war period had their counterparts in game shooting so that, whereas long-established principles of driven shooting persisted, the methods of producing birds to shoot were substantially transformed. In the 1960s more birds were shot than were released. Now the reverse is very much the case and it was hardly surprising that no shoots in our sample were dependent in any significant way on wild birds. Pheasants, meanwhile, constituted 83% of the game shot by the sample as a whole.

Clearly, shooting rights may be exercised in many different ways. Our sample included cases ranging from minimal 'vermin only' shooting through to the most commercial of shooting enterprises. Organised shooting, as indicated by the releasing of birds, was more prevalent in the PW sample with 23% releasing over 1000 pheasants per season, as against 5% in the YP sample. Significantly the PW sample

accounted for 73% of the 91 shooting holdings of 300 hectares or more in size, whereas, the 301 shooting holdings outside the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's largest category were more evenly distributed amongst the counties, with each having between 12 and 20 per cent of such holdings.
Amongst the wealth of data collected the evidence from the GMP relating to woodland, landscape and conservation issues is particularly clear (Short *et al* 1994). The releasing of pheasants can, on occasion of course, be accompanied by damaging environmental impacts. But in broad terms the picture is strongly positive and that is primarily because of the strong association between the release of birds and active countryside management. We were keen, to explore the ways in which game management was affecting the management of existing woodland and the extent to which it was a factor in the decision to establish new areas of woodland, particularly given the evident reluctance of farmers more generally to plant new woodland (Williams *et al* 1994). Fully 96% of the 19,099 hectares of woodland recorded by the survey occurred on shooting farms and estates; although over a third of these had no woodland at all. Just over a half of those who have woodland and shoot, use their woodland in relation to game conservation with just over half using all, rather than part, of their woodland in this way. Some 22% of those without woodland still released pheasants, but generally speaking, the more developed the shooting interest the more important the presence of woodland becomes.

Shooting holdings accounted for 90% of new woodland planting over the previous ten years and 85% of those who had new woodland had used a grant of some kind to assist its establishment. There was also a strong relationship between those undertaking woodland management and receiving grant payments. Interestingly, however, interview evidence suggested that little of this management for game was encouraged by Woodland Grant Scheme Management payments.

Our survey also considered the management of non-woodland landscape features such as hedges, ponds and marshland for game and for each feature those releasing pheasants were more likely to have made or managed the feature than those who shot but did not release pheasants. Four management tools; coppicing, ride management, choice of tree species and shrub planting, are the main forms of habitat management on farms and estates where pheasants are released. Ride management is seven times as likely, coppicing nine times and the planting of shrubs four times as likely to occur if pheasants are released.

Generally speaking, managing a woodland for game alters the edge and margins of woodlands, or leads to the creation of edge habitat within woodlands. But there

was considerable regional variation regarding 'choice of tree species' as a management tool with 35% of Nottingham respondents stating that they did so as against only 6% and 7% in Devon and Cumbria (the most and least wooded counties respectively). Over half of the respondents who released more than a thousand birds had received advice from the Game Conservancy and 17% of the total sample had sought it.

The work of the Game Conservancy Trust, which dedicates itself to 'conservation through wise use' has consistently shown that, whilst the conservation value of any game plantation or management area may in itself be low, the cumulative effects of the principal practices associated with game management increase local species richness and act as a restraint on the removal of hedgerows and small copses. Our survey revealed that game management may be the only form of management in areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and other semi-natural habitats. Commercial forestry practices, meanwhile, are often mediated by game management considerations with consequent benefits for wildlife and landscape conservation.

In the period of agricultural policy now standardly characterised as 'productivist', (Marsden *et al* 1993) other considerations were often subordinated to the imperative of increasing agricultural production, with effects on the ecology of the countryside which are now no less routinely regretted. Sporting shooting, and other field sports, have acted as bulwarks against policy-driven pressures on the countryside, and the active management of woodland and other landscape features has clearly been, on balance, beneficial. Neither can it be straightforwardly argued that shooting is especially associated with restricted access to the countryside (Cox *et al* 1996a). The claim that shooting is a contribution to conservation is substantially vindicated and, if we turn our attention to what is presently a very particular case, further possibilities become more plainly apparent.

The Allerton Research and Educational Trust

The Allerton Research and Educational Trust's (ARET) experimental farm at Loddington in Leicestershire (Game Conservancy 1996) is a meticulously monitored and extensively researched expression of the impulses which have also driven Will Garfitt and John Humphreys. Since ARET took over Loddington's 824 acres in partnership with the Game Conservancy Trust in April 1992 the farm has been transformed. No gamebirds are reared or released on the estate, so increases in populations are the consequence of habitat management, enhanced crop diversity and a well-planned programme of predation control.

Crops are now more varied and several fields have been broken down into smaller units by the establishment of beetle banks and the use of strips of permanent set-aside with game cover crops. The resulting patchwork is systematically keepered and, with farming practices modified so as to be sympathetic to game, wild stocks are building up. Flexible (or non-rotational) set-aside strips planted with seed mixtures, which provide winter warmth and brood-rearing cover in summer, complement conservation headlands and game birds are not the only beneficiaries. The count of hares in 1992 revealed seven whereas their numbers now approach 200. Autumn counts of pheasants, meanwhile, have shown a year on year increase from 126 in 1992, to 442 in 1995 and both grey and red-legged partridges have similarly prospered, rising from just 14 to 109. On neighbouring ground, still farmed conventionally and unkeepered, hare numbers have remained static (Taylor, 1996).

Neither are such improvements being effected without regard to cost. A major concern of the ARET experiment is to demonstrate that this sort of sensitive conservation management can be compatible with commercial farming. and, whilst it may not exactly be a model for other landowners, it is enabling the costs of game-friendly farming to be quantified. The total profit foregone by the farm for the entire conservation programme in 1995 was estimated at £3,825, which equates to £11.49 per ha. or 3.6% of estimated farm profit. The benefits for other species, meanwhile, are beginning to be systematically monitored. Song thrushes; a species in national decline, managed for instance, to nest five times as successfully on the keepered ground as birds outside the predator-free area.

The prospect of a more environmentally benign approach to farming which would do much to re-establish species which have been threatened by relentless post-war intensification is there before us, and as work on the Loddington Estate demonstrates, sporting interests are at the forefront in exploring paths to recovery. In the words of Lord Selborne, chairman of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee *"the best conservation happens where landowners have an interest in game"* (Austin 1996).

Conclusion

"Art, like morality, consists in drawing the line somewhere"

G.K. Chesterton

Because they involve the taking of live quarry, field sports are likely to be viewed, by those not familiar with their often somewhat esoteric character, as archetypically

macho. They may certainly, to varying degrees at different times and in different places, warrant such a characterisation. But viewed in the round, that typification seems hopelessly impoverished, for they invariably entail so much more. The impacts of their activities are, moreover, broadly congruent with other valued sensibilities towards landscape and the environment (Cox 1988, Bell 1993). It is hardly surprising that participants often feel wilfully misunderstood and unjustifiably beleaguered (Cox and Winter 1996c).

As I have suggested, viewed in the light of many criteria conventionally thought significant, field sports can indeed be viewed positively. At a time when active involvement in sporting activity is overwhelmingly associated with a youth culture and when, for women especially, sport often effectively means an introspective preoccupation with appearance pursued in interior places, field sports have a comparatively ageless character. They are, moreover, cultures which necessarily foster a relationship with nature and exterior spaces and, though essentially active, are neither purely exploitative nor devoid of any contemplative, or reflective, aspect. For reasons which it is barely necessary to recount, however, such activities, though they may well be redolent of a still dominant cultural representation, suffer in the present context, from a serious legitimation deficit (Lowe *et al* 1995).

The hope expressed in the Rural White Paper (DoE/MAFF, 1995) that greater tolerance and understanding might manifest itself, is well taken therefore, irrespective of one's scepticism about an all too simplistic counterposing of 'urban attitudes' and 'traditional values'. Not that I would want, in saying that, in any way to minimise the significance of competing mythologies and discrepant understandings. For those who see themselves as working their animals, for instance, the very use of terms like 'pet' or 'recreational' can easily be seen as indicative of a failure to comprehend not just the activity itself, but the attitude of mind which informs it (Cox *et al* 1994).

If we accept that the notion of a strong causal link between field sports and conservation is not wholly absurd (whether it be the concerns of game fishers for river quality; of hunting interests in retaining small copses and woodland; or of the shooters of game for the return of the English Partridge), what of the 'bad' and the 'ugly'? There is no shortage of candidates. If right words in right places is the true definition of style: right activities in right places is surely its countryside recreation counterpart. What we find acceptable or uncongenial is likely to be overdetermined by just the sorts of presuppositions and mythologies that I have indicated: the fact

that such typifications are increasingly likely to be bound up with the construction of identity (Grove-White 1996) simply compounds the challenge.

But tolerance needs not only to be symmetrical, by which I mean even handed as between 'traditional' and 'novel' uses, it needs to be accompanied by robust criteria of appropriateness. As we seek to accommodate 'odd' cultural uses and develop a richer and more pluralistic vocabulary of countryside recreation we must not lose sight of the fact that a genuinely inclusive approach will, on occasion, necessitate a preparedness to manage and perhaps even, in that routinely maligned word, exclude, at least from certain areas and at certain times. That field sports deserve a place in such a scheme of things should not be in question.

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The Use of Consensus Building in Planning and Conflict Resolution

A brief introduction to consensus building and mediation techniques

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What is consensus building?

Consensus building is a way of helping the interested parties involved in a conflict or a complex problem work together to find a mutually acceptable solution. The emphasis is on helping people identify common ground rather than reinforcing their differences, which all too often occurs in more conventional decision making such as public inquiries.

There are a number of advantages of using a consensus building approach:

- it increases public understanding of the issues involved;
- in the long term, it can save time and money and;
- it can improve the relationships between the interested parties, making it less likely that they disagree in the future.

Consensus building is not a universal panacea. The concept may be simple to grasp but it is not always easy to put into effect. Just how the approach is to be applied needs to be carefully planned and designed to suit each individual situation. It does encourage people to agree, if they can, and it gives them the opportunity to agree before they disagree.

Consensus building can be used in a range of situations. This brief introduction focuses on how it can be used to prevent conflict – in *participatory planning* – and to resolve conflict – in *environmental mediation.*

Public participation in planning

The consensus building approach to planning problems is based on a philosophy of planning *with* people rather than *for* them. In which case, the role of professionals is to listen and advise so that they enable people to make their own decisions on planning issues rather than deciding for them. The aim is to encourage full public involvement in decisions. There are important distinctions between *consultation* and *public involvement* which revolve around whether the public is an equal party in the planning exercise and the timing of their participation, i.e. whether they are being consulted on firm proposals that have been agreed already or whether they are to be involved from the outset before the problems have been defined.

Public consultation may be no more than the dissemination of information, good public relations or tokenism which aims at placating the public and which makes little contribution to conflict resolution. Formal consultation procedures commonly invite discussion on a draft plan in which the future options are limited to perhaps one 'preferred solution'. This often leads to resentment that the public's views have not been taken into account. The distinctions between consultation and public involvement are highlighted in Figure 1.

Public involvement is often criticised as a time-consuming process which reduces the efficiency of decision-making. But this criticism may not be valid if the time taken to implement a decision is taken into account. Without public involvement the initial decision may be taken more rapidly, but if the outcome is unacceptable there may be a prolonged period in which the decision is contested and implementation is delayed. Public involvement may delay the initial decision but if that is acceptable to the interested parties, implementation should proceed more quickly.

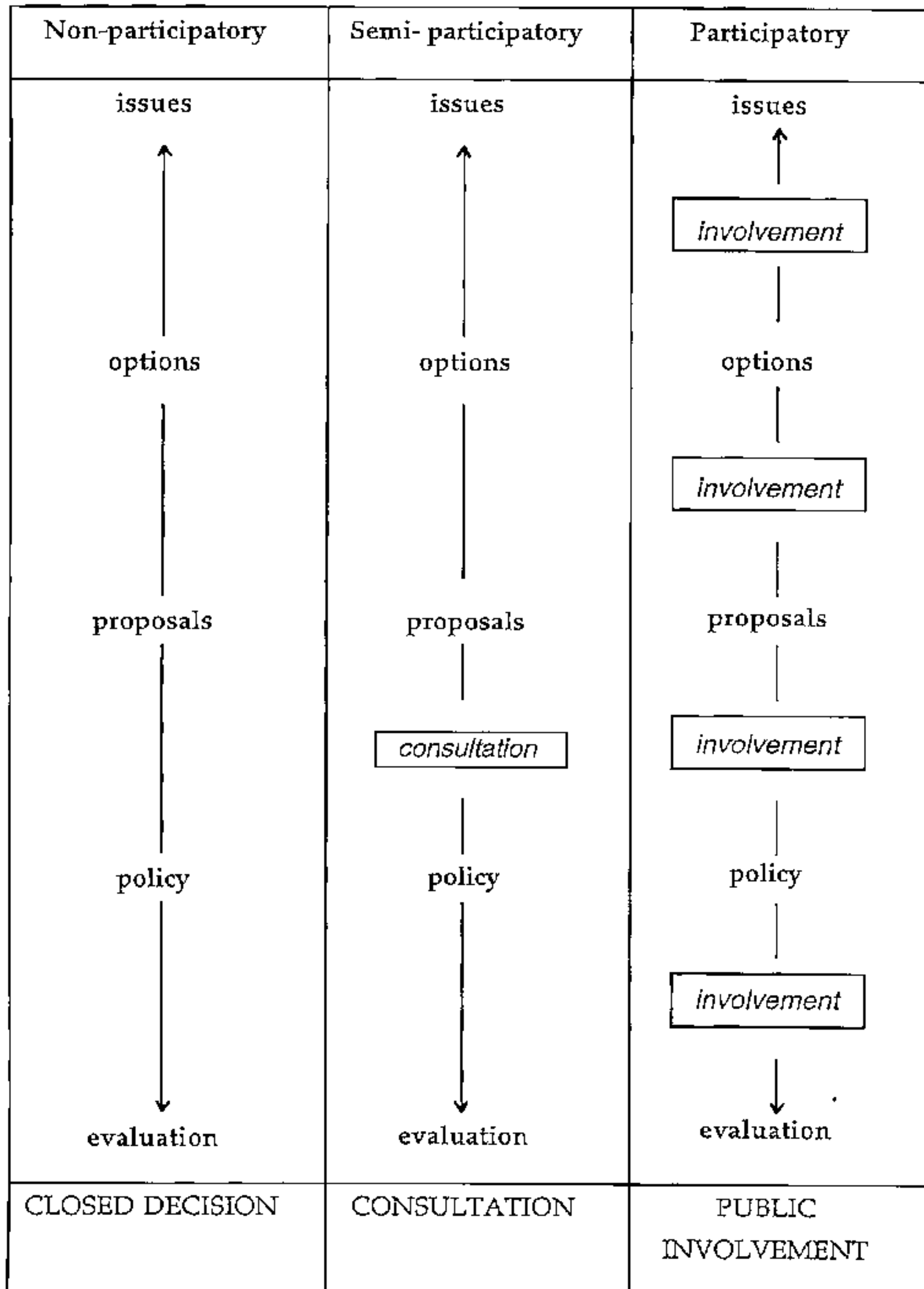
Designing an effective public participation strategy requires identifying:

- the desired *level of involvement*: who wants to know about, influence or be party to the planning decision;
- the most effective *techniques* to secure their involvement; and
- the *timing* of their involvement.

Informal techniques, such as workshops, manned exhibitions and participatory appraisal, are more effective than formal public meetings which tend to polarise views. Small scale, low profile projects are more likely to encourage participation, and recent examples include a wide range of plans prepared for Local Agenda 21,

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and estuary management.

Figure 1. Participation in decision making



Mediated negotiation as a form of conflict resolution

The range of techniques commonly used for settling disputes can be portrayed as a continuum that extends from informal discussion, through forms of negotiation and the legitimate use of power, to violent exchanges (see Figure 2). The extremes of this continuum – avoiding the issue and unilateral power play – offer the greatest loss of control over the outcome and hence the greatest risk to the disputing parties.

Figure 2. The range of dispute resolution techniques

Decision left to chance	Decision made by the disputing parties		Decision made by higher authority		Decision by direct action or force
Avoidance of the issue	Negotiation	Mediation	Arbitration	Litigation	Unilateral use of power
Parties unassisted by third party			Third party decision		Coercion
		Parties assisted by neutral third party			

Based on Moore (1986) and Slaikeu (1989).

Within this spectrum:

- the disputing parties may negotiate without assistance;
- they may be assisted by a neutral third party in the form of:
  a facilitator (who assists by suggesting procedures to establish and conduct the negotiations);
  a mediator (who takes a more active role in brokering the negotiations) or;
  an arbitrator (who, in non-binding arbitration, suggests a solution for the parties to agree;
- the decision may be made by a third party in binding arbitration or a court of law.

Mediation has been used to resolve disputes over business contracts, between

neighbours, divorce, labour relations, international relations and, to a lesser extent, environmental issues. The aim is to involve all the interested parties in negotiations on a more or less equal basis and to produce a solution which is more acceptable to all of them than one imposed by a third party.

A mediated negotiation follows a series of stages to reach consensus:

1. An initiative is taken to identify a neutral mediator who is acceptable to the disputing parties.
2. The mediator meets the parties individually and assesses whether there is a basis for a negotiation.
3. When this is the case, the mediator brings the parties together to participate in face-to-face negotiations, which are designed to be collaborative rather than adversarial.
4. The parties are encouraged to explore and understand each other's underlying interests, not to re-justify their original positions.
5. The parties work towards a voluntary agreement while also considering how it will be implemented.

The choice of mediator will depend on whether knowledge of the issues or similar previous negotiations is considered essential, and whether the parties can develop trust in the mediator. Usually the cost of a professional mediator is borne by all the parties.

Compared to legal or adversarial procedures, mediated negotiations have the advantages of:

- being voluntary and using less formal procedures to explore the problem and provide a range of possible solutions;
- developing and maintaining working relationships, while retaining confidentiality if required;
- greater flexibility in designing the terms of the settlement;
- saving time and cost; and
- providing greater control and a more predictable outcome for the interested parties.

How to judge whether consensus can be reached

In both planning and dispute resolution, very similar issues of balance, openness and

representation arise. Criteria have been set out (see figure 3) which can be used to evaluate whether the process of decision making encourages or permits a voluntary negotiation leading to an outcome that is perceived to be fair and legitimate by the interested parties.

The limitations of mediation and consensus building

The success of mediation depends mainly on the willingness of the parties to enter negotiations and this is unlikely to be the case where one party is markedly more powerful than the other. It is clear that voluntary negotiations will not solve problems arising from a radically unbalanced distribution of power. Very similar discussions occur, both in the conflict resolution and planning literature, about the propriety of professional planners or mediators who attempt to redistribute power between the parties or whether their role should be strictly neutral, leaving empowerment to political organisers.

Figure 3. An evaluation of framework for decision making

Criteria	Preconditions
Terms of reference and agenda	Is the agenda balanced to cover the full range of issues or is it pre-empted by a policy or proposition made by powerful interests?
Representation	Is the representation of interests balanced at each level of decision-making?
Power in decision making and accountability	Who holds the power to determine and/or execute decisions, and is power evenly balanced between the parties? How accountable are the representatives to their interest groups?
Information	Is information freely available to all interests? How objective is the information, i.e. has it been gathered by independent sources? Is the information coverage of issues evenly balanced?
Openness of and involvement in decision-making	Are all phases of the process open to all interest groups? What is their degree of involvement in each phase?

(Source: Sidaway, 1996.)

A reluctance to share power may inhibit the wider applications of consensus building. It is worth noting that the remit of most government agencies is to execute some aspect of public policy and as a result few are politically neutral. They are

rarely required to mediate change and many organisations appear to regard the involvement of members of the public in decision-making or the hiring of an independent mediator as threatening or an abdication of their responsibilities

Perhaps for these reasons there have been few applications of environmental mediation in Britain (compared to the range and number of applications in the USA where the procedures are better developed). One noteworthy countryside example has been the negotiations within the Access Consultative Group in the Peak District National Park which were assisted by an independent facilitator.

There is the risk that during the informal process of consensus building weaker parties may be at a disadvantage and that their basic rights may not be safeguarded. This suggests that more frequent applications of consensus building in Britain might supplement conventional procedures so that planning policies or legal agreements put into effect solutions reached by consensus and which attract a wider degree of public support.

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The New Forest – new threats from cycling

A role play led by Richard Broadhurst
Forestry Commission

Created as a new Royal hunting Forest for King William the Conqueror in 1079, the New Forest is now a much loved and very public Forest receiving an estimated 25 million visits each year. The special character of the New Forest, which visitors so cherish, rests on a blend of ancient trees, open glades, heath, mire and forest. The open character of the New Forest has been created and maintained by grazing pressure over the last 900 years from the New Forest ponies and other animals kept by the commoners. A string of national and international designations confirm the value of the area for conservation.

The Crown lands in the New Forest are managed for the nation by the Forestry Commission (FC), working in close co-operation with a wide range of other organisations. The whole area is managed with conservation and recreation very much in mind, but taking into account the needs of land managers and local communities. The area is steeped in history. The Verderers' Court is the second oldest in the land, and still meets on a regular basis and has considerable power. There are few people and organisations in the area who do not feel some sense of ownership over the Forest.

In the early 1990s mountain bikes started to appear in increasing numbers in the Forest. Before long some cyclists were taking their bikes off track and across the heaths, causing legitimate concern. The Forestry Commission then sought to restrict cyclists to gravelled tracks.

Regrettably this failed to solve the problem and so in the summer of 1994, FC published a map showing where cycling was permitted, along with a cycling code and some explanatory text. At the end of the season, after consultation, a revised map for 1995 was drawn up. At this stage some bodies made strong protests about cycling and during the autumn of 1995 a significant number of presentments were made to the Verderers Court. To prevent things getting entirely out of hand a meeting has been called by the Forestry Commission.

The roles have been written to allow them to be acted out over a very short period. Consequently this has meant collapsing roles and introducing various fictitious elements. The role play should be seen as indicative of what was in the minds of the principal actors, in the late autumn of 1995.

Role play characters

1. From the point of view of someone promoting cycling

A couple of years ago the Forestry Commission reviewed their cycling policy. Suddenly areas which had hitherto been unavailable to cyclists were opened up. This was fantastic. The best thing that happened to cycling in this area, for sure.

Forests are great for cycling because they let us get right away from motor cars and provide a network of routes with something for everyone. Those who love the Forest can cover a greater distance with more ease than ever they could on foot. Those who love cycling can find routes of all kinds. In some there are also challenging off road cycling areas.

The Forestry Commission should be applauded for opening up these forests, and should continue to do as much as it can to make these publicly owned areas available to cyclists. A selection of routes had been made available and described on a map last season but it seems that following meetings with the Verderers, rather fewer routes are to be made available this year. This is preposterous. The demand for cycling is booming and while others are working towards a National Cycling Network, here we have a public body holding back. The Forestry Commission seems not to be very consistent in its approach. You have been invited, by the Forestry Commission, to a meeting to discuss the situation, along with conservationists, the local authority, local commoners and representatives from the Forestry Commission.

2. From the point of view of a commoner

Visitors love the New Forest, to the point when the Forest is in danger of being loved to death. People don't understand that the Forest owes its character to the ways of the commoner. It is the New Forest ponies which have kept the Forest open and given it its very special character, and it is the commoners who keep the ponies. People have little idea how difficult it is to keep the old ways going, in the modern

day. The impact of the motor car, increasing levels of traffic and recreational activity have all increased the stress on grazing animals.

Enough is enough! Anyway, some of us are thinking whether cycling is an appropriate activity for the Forest at all. We have to find some way of keeping recreation in balance with the other needs of the Forest. After all, the Verderers are the guardians of the New Forest, and they should be able to ensure that commoners are allowed to continue the traditions which they have kept alive since 1079. If they don't, the Forest as we know it will die. You are aware that the Verderers (who protect the rights of commoners), English Nature and the Forestry Commission are all signatories to a Declaration of Intent, which reinforces their determination to protect the traditional character of the Forest. Further, some of the Verderers believe that FC actually has been acting outside the law in providing cycling, considered by some to come into the category of 'recreational facilities', in the Forest without the agreement of the Verderers.

You have been invited by the Forestry Commission to a meeting to discuss the situation, along with cyclists, conservationists, the local authority and the Forestry Commission. You want to leave the meeting with all the parties understanding the special role of the commoner and the need for their concerns to be given pre-eminence. Cycling should be banned or given very limited routes well away from open areas or places where people would gain access to open areas.

3. From the point of view of a conservationist

The New Forest has a string of international designations. It is a World Heritage Site, a RAMSAR site and a Special Area for Conservation, under the EU Habitats Directive. There are some rare species present, including such birds as the Honey Buzzard and the Dartford Warbler and of course many ancient trees. Of particular importance are the open habitats, the valley mires and lowland heath. Disturbance and trampling can in some instances lead to serious impacts on wildlife, and we know little about the cumulative effect of these impacts. Once a trail has been blazed across the open heath others will follow and new tracks are likely to be created, branching out until the area is criss-crossed with newly created tracks. You are very concerned about the rapid growth of off road cycling in the Forest. The New Forest cannot absorb so many visitors and such a level of activity without some risk to its conservation value. Cycling on the other hand could take place somewhere else, couldn't it?

You are representing the conservationists. You might belong to a team working for the Government's statutory advisers on conservation, English Nature, or you could be a member of any one of a number of voluntary organisations concerned with conservation and landscape such as RSPB or CPRE. It is worth reminding you that English Nature, the Verderers and the Forestry Commission are all signatories to a Declaration of Intent, which reinforces their determination to protect the traditional character of the Forest.

You have been invited by the Forestry Commission to a meeting to discuss the situation, along with cyclists, the local authority, a commoner and the Forestry Commission. You want to leave the meeting with all the other parties realising just how important the New Forest is for conservation not just for the South East, or for the UK, but in World terms! Any provision for new activities must be treated with very great care.

4. From the point of view of the local authority

You have been invited by the Forestry Commission to a meeting to discuss the situation, along with cyclists, conservationists, a Commoner and the Forestry Commissioner.

You want to leave the meeting with all sides realising that the New Forest is a special place which (if everyone is reasonable) should be capable of meeting many varied needs. Doubtless, cycling does need to be kept away from the open heaths and wetland areas, but generally your authority is keen to promote cycling as a healthy pursuit and a very much better alternative to using the car. Your authority is keen to encourage better links between communities for cyclists and pedestrians. You are also keen that any visitors should make a financial contribution to the local area. What people have to realise is the importance of the New Forest area within the region as a green lung for local people.

5. From the point of view of the Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission manages the Crown Lands within the Perambulation, or boundary of the New Forest. In Norman times the Forest was managed with the King's recreation in mind. Now some 900 years later, FC manages the lands for the benefit of all the people of Great Britain. Sometimes it feels like all the people in the

UK decide to visit the Forest on the same day. Nevertheless, the Forest can be managed to provide for an enormous number of people and activities. FC has considerable experience in managing the area, keeping the needs of all the different groups in mind.

You have invited representatives of some of the main interested parties to a meeting to discuss the situation, including the cyclists, conservationists, the local authority and a commoner. It is worth reminding you that English Nature, the Verderers and the Forestry Commission are all signatories to a Declaration of Intent, which reinforces their determination to protect the traditional character of the Forest.

Everyone has strong views. You want the meeting to agree a way forward which gives the best solution, allowing cyclists good use of routes through the Forest but keeping them away from open heath and valley mire areas. You understand that some of the Verderers believe that FC must seek clearance from them before arranging cycling routes, as certainly the Verderers must give their agreement before any recreational facilities are provided. The issue hangs on the interpretation of 'facility'. You are quite clear that FC is acting properly and is also doing so in order to meet a legitimate demand, which can be met without too much difficulty if organisations act together. You want people to reach agreement without anyone losing face, and people to recognise that FC will have to manage whatever is agreed, so the solution must be practical.

Resolving the conflicts: a summary of the role play

Consensus building is a way to start tackling the problem, not an end in itself.
In order to resolve conflicts successfully we need to focus on some basics:

1. **Establish the framework.**

- Gather all relevant information; include all interested parties; and identify and prioritise issues and concerns.
- Is all the necessary information available? What are the costs involved in gathering more, and how do they weigh out against the costs?
  Is the quality and amount of information acceptable to all parties?
- Establish who has the authority in each situation; the right to make decisions and take responsibility for actions.
- Define the problem/problems in terms acceptable to all parties.

2. **From the outset, be really inclusive in developing the process.**

- Group members may be involved at different times.
- Who owns the process?
- Who funds it?

3. **Perceptions are important.**

- Perceived problems are as real as real ones!

4. **Use third party only as a last resort.**

- If trust cannot be built, consider using a facilitator. But must consider that this will cost a great deal of time and money. Who pays?

Conflict Resolution or Cheque Book Diplomacy? – The Development of Rainham Marshes

A role play led by Jacquie Burgess
University College London

One consequence of the growth in ecological and environmental awareness of the last decade has been renewed interest in the social meanings of nature and social practices which impinge on the natural world. In this role play, we will address one aspect of this concern; conflict over the value of habitat and wildlife which occurs when Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are subject to development proposals. There are two main objectives:

- to explore how different 'ideas of nature' are mobilised by developers, conservationists, local authority officers, and members of the general public to gain legitimacy for their cause; and

- to decide whether, and on what grounds, negotiating a planning gain agreement represents a 'fair' resolution of radically different positions.

The case study draws on our detailed research of the proposal by MCA /Universal Studios in 1989-1990 to create a 2.4 billion commercial and entertainment development on the 1200 acres of the Inner Thames Grazing Marshes SSSI in east London, known as Rainham Marshes. MCA's primary concern was to gain political and public acceptance for the destruction of approximately two thirds of the SSSI without being forced into a lengthy public inquiry which would have adversely affected their competitive position and profitability.

The nature conservation organisations' primary concern was to fight the developers in whatever way they could. The strategy which emerged was to ensure that the environmental impact of the development would receive full scrutiny through the rigours of a public inquiry. This would provide a significant cost to the developers, cause a long delay, and might frighten MCA away. The local authority was eager to find a development solution which would contribute to the economic well-being of

the locality and remove a really problematic site from their portfolio. Local residents' groups, both pro and anti the MCA proposal, put considerable pressure on local authority officials. Mrs Thatcher's handbag was also swinging ferociously.

In the role play, we pick up the story at the point when it becomes clear that a radical solution is needed to break the deadlock between the parties.

Role play characters

1. Bob Kane: the developer's agent and chief negotiator

Background: You are in your late 40s; an economist who went into planning and economic development (ex GLC); between 1981-1989 you masterminded the London Docklands boom. The MCA scheme is your first solo consultancy and you find the Hollywood glamour irresistible. You also like having private access to the Prime Minister and other very senior ministers who have assured you and your masters of their full support. You found the site, and negotiated the deal with the LB Havering/the Ministry of Defence and the private landowners. You are a tough negotiator, impatient with the wild and woolly thinking of the conservationists. How secure are the assumptions? What about the costs and benefits? In your view, there must be `good' and `bad' parts of the SSSI in terms of their conservation value. What are the facts? Money is the bottom line.

Negotiating position: MCA are putting pressure on you to deliver or they will pull out and go to their other site in Paris. There must not be a public inquiry. You have spent the last 4 months trying to talk the conservation groups round to a deal whereby they allow the development of 880 acres of the SSSI. Thus far, you have only offered a new `ecology park' which will be created on the landfill site by the river. You have managed to split the opposition because you have already got an `understanding' with Henry Willard to create a Slimbridge-on-Thames, on 180 acres of the site which is currently landfill. Only Willard knows this. This is the last throw before the LBH Planning Committee decide on the application.

The play: When Mary Mellon invites you to speak, you will deliver the benefits of the scheme in a `take-it-or-leave-it voice'. You're tired and bored; £2.4 BILLION investment; 20,000 jobs; will secure the future of the area; nature is worthless and degraded on the marshes; MCA will go to Paris if they don't agree.

After ten minutes or so of the usual confrontation, you spring a planning gain deal on the meeting MCA will give a total of £15 million to secure full co-operation. This money will go to:

- the creation of the ecology park on the landfill site; and the building of an interpretation centre;

- buy the 428 acres of wet grassland and give it to a Nature Trust to `manage in perpetuity'; and to build a scientific field station;

- buy 5000 acres of wet grassland downstream, in Essex and Kent, to prevent these areas being developed in the future.

In return, NCC and the NGOs will withdraw objections to the planning application.

2. Sue Jones: a local resident, strongly in favour

Background: You are in you early 30s; married; with two young children. You left school at 16 and feel aggressive towards all these clever people talking above your head. Your husband worked at the Ford Motor company (the main employer in the area) until 6 months ago when he was made redundant. The MCA development offers hope: new jobs, increased house prices, bringing excitement and glamour to a run-down area. You don't understand what all the fuss is about. There's no nature as you understand it down on the marshes: only rats, mosquitoes and the stench of the silt/sewage/landfill. Nature means woods and badgers and deer in the pretty countryside. You think the conservationists are middle class prats who `live in leafy parts of London' who are simply making trouble over Rainham for the hell of it.

Negotiating position: You are absolutely determined that the scheme will go through. The threat that MCA will go to Paris worries you considerably. You want the Planning Officer to understand just how important the development is for `the village'. You fairly represent the views of many people who feel that the Council don't care about Rainham and never invest in it. It's often called `the dustbin of Havering': a stigmatisation which infuriates everyone.

Fact which you might choose to reveal: You have been in contact with your Lib Dem Councillor and have just delivered a 2,500 signature petition in favour of the scheme. (2,500 represents 85% of the community).

The play: When invited to speak, you will stress how angry you all are at the interference of conservationists in `our area'; `our village'; `our marshes' and `our future'.

3. James Meakin: national NGO campaigner

Background: You graduated from university with a masters degree in environmental science in the late 1970s, and since then have worked your way up to become one of the major campaign organisers in FOE. By temperament, you prefer to be out there sitting up trees, immobilising bulldozers, having head-to-heads with construction workers. You think all developers are greedy bastards, and disbelieve any claims they make about being concerned with nature conservation or local communities. You think the local residents have been duped by MCA, and see a conspiracy between the Borough, the developer, the Tory government, and the NCC. You have become incredibly frustrated at the lack of any effective opposition from the consortium of conservation groups. Worrying ineffectually about the birds isn't doing any good. What about the 5 million extra cars the scheme will generate? What about the pollution? What about the political impact on activists' morale (locally and nationally) if you lose this one?

Negotiating position: If MCA are pushed hard enough, they will go to Paris. You want to get to a public inquiry by any means possible. You want to rile Bob Kane enough for him to lose his temper and show his real hand to the rest of the meeting.

Fact which you may choose to reveal: You have been sent documents which show that low level radio-active waste was dumped on the Marshes in the 1950s. This is just the stuff finally, to get a full scale press/media operation rolling.

The play: When invited to speak, you will attack the developer for making false claims and painting too rosy a picture. Would you buy a used car from this man?

4. Mary Mellon: Chief Planning Officer, LBHavering

Background: In your early fifties, you've worked your way up through the ranks to become a Chief Planning Officer for this outer, East London Borough. You have a quiet and authoritative manner, and are always absolutely on top of your brief. Not only do you know every letter of the relevant planning guidance, advice, and legislation, you

also have an excellent grasp of the Borough. There isn't a development site you don't know, and you have excellent working relations with all the key players in the commercial sector. You also have the interests of the Borough very much at heart. You were responsible for persuading the Council to buy 250 acres of Rainham Marsh as a development site in the early 1980s, and were then furious when NCC belatedly declared it an SSSI in 1985. From your perspective, the conservationists have a very weak case: the silt lagoons which supposedly have sufficient wintering birds to be declared a RAMSAR site are drying out, children are using the marsh for motorbike racing; the Department of Transport will reroute the A13 across the marsh and it's not even green belt land.

Negotiating position: You have a Council which is hung; Lib Dems hold the balance of power but the politics are very unpredictable. Tory members enthusiastically back MCA, Labour members aren't so sure but like the economic benefits. You have to take the planning application to committee in ten days time, and want the scheme approved. Can't a compromise be reached?

Fact which you may choose to reveal: You have it on the best authority that the BBC have agreed to move all their London-based studios to Havering. Eastenders will then be made in the East End!

The play:

You are chairing the meeting, which is the final attempt to achieve some consensus before the planning committee meeting. You will invite each member of the group to state their position briefly, before throwing the meeting open to discussion.

5. **Henry Willard: A Bird Trust**

Background: You are in your late thirties, rather quietly spoken and easy-going in company but very determined to achieve your goals. Your great hero, and the person you model yourself on is Peter Scott. You believe that people need to be shown that nature is accessible. What we want is `nature from the kitchen window'. It's a crying shame that people in Rainham don't understand the wealth of birdlife here on the marshes, and you believe passionately that it's your job to make that nature accessible. You are impatient with the painstaking science of the NCC, and its exclusivity. What the hell is the point of extolling the virtues of the divided sedge when only one or two specialists know what it looks like? You're into creative conservation in a big way.

What's needed in Rainham is a 'Slimbridge-on-Thames', and the MCA scheme could offer the possibilities of achieving that.

Negotiating position: You're just waiting for an opportunity to get into real negotiations with the developers. You understand how to do business with these people. You're fed up and frustrated by the negativity of the NGOs because they are bound to lose. Much better to stitch up a deal which might achieve something positive for popular conservation.

Fact you may choose to reveal: You have an 'understanding' with Bob Kane to create your Slimbridge-on-Thames, on 180 acres of the site which is currently landfill. MCA will finance it. But the deal depends on planning approval for the scheme.

The play: When invited to speak, you are in a slightly difficult position! You will probably want to say something about good and bad points. Things can be done but the principles of SSSI protection are important.

6. Tom Boston: scientific officer, NCC

Background: You graduated with a first class degree in biology, specialising in the ecology of wetlands for your masters degree. This is your first job and you've been working with NCC for four years now. You were the case officer responsible for determining the SSSI status for Rainham marshes. There are over 170 species of birds; over 26 Red Book species of invertebrates, and the best collection of rare and endangered flowering plants in the south of England. You could wax lyrical about the ditches; and like nothing better than to be out on the marsh early in the morning when the mist is hanging over the river. Because most of the land has been under MOD control as a firing range, Rainham is an untouched jewel in the crown of nature conservation. You are absolutely outraged that MCA dare to propose the development but being a good scientist, you don't let your feelings show too much. You are also very depressed that you don't seem to be getting very much support from higher up in the organisation. Why isn't more pressure being applied to fight the development? After all, this is the largest SSSI in London, in addition to its nature conservation value. You are beginning to have doubts, and suspect that there is a bigger political game afoot.

Negotiating position: The SSSI has been declared on the best possible scientific evidence. It is a spatial designation, so all the land within the boundaries is of equal conservation value. There may well be other wet grasslands downstream but they are not of the

same quality as Rainham. There is no scientific evidence that invertebrates/plant species can be moved successfully.

Fact you may choose to reveal: You have just received a report from the RSPB which says that the bird population has fallen below numbers needed for RAMSAR. Without an influx of money for management, urgently, Rainham marshes will lose much of its conservation value within the next five years.

The play: When invited to speak, you will briefly rehearse the reasons for statutory designation; that SSSI designation should be respected; importance of the area for science. If this is lost, what next?

Resolving the conflicts: a summary of the role play

The participants all enjoyed the role play, throwing themselves into character with commendable enthusiasm, especially when asked to play against type. The role play lasted about two hours, and tensions between the parties emerged strongly. This was helped by having, as one of the participants, someone who had been involved in the actual case!

In de-briefing afterwards, there was considerable discussion about the extent to which individuals were able to play their hidden card; the relative impotence of both the NGO campaigner and the NCC officer, and the pressure to cut a deal between the local authority and the developers. One important feature to emerge was the extent to which different value systems (especially over the significance of nature on the marshes, and their landscape qualities) made it difficult to agree a resolution to the case.

I don't think we came up with any hard and fast recommendations from the exercise, but there was certainly a greater awareness of the need for more frank and open dialogue between the parties. A number of issues emerged from the exercise, these are summarised below:

1. The group highlighted the problems of language, particularly the meaning of 'consensus' and 'conflict'. What do these terms actually mean? MCA had the resources to negotiate, in contrast with FoE who had nothing to offer and nothing to gain. As a result they were conflictual.

2. Planning for a win-win situation is very challenging. Single issue politics is all about win-lose: the fixed position prevents negotiation.

3. What about using a third party a possibility? The public inquiry is the favoured third party option, but arbitration means a series of losses among the community which can lead to acrimony. Third party intervention means that people and groups lose control and can have conditions imposed on them. Alternatively, the third party can have all the information and liaise between individuals.

4. People hide information from each other in the negotiation process. In the role play exercise, information was often only revealed piecemeal by the negotiators, as a form of exercising power. Honesty could have helped, 'but that's not the real world'. Can everyone be equally informed?

We each must have a commitment to negotiate fairly and honestly. Would an independent negotiator help here? Using an independent negotiator might, however, be a way of ducking our responsibilities as officers. Is it possible for planners to be neutral in cases of extreme conflict or are they inevitably politicised? Unless the agreement is to be binding, what's the value of negotiation?

How many of us have ever had any formal training in negotiation? Can we do the jobs we have without it? The culture is of fixed positions and adversarial models. Part of this training should be more in terms of developers and their world views; what's negotiable; how do they do deals. The developers buy in whatever skills they need, whereas the agencies have no concept of the developers world.

5. Is the entrenchment of positions inevitable? In the role play, it was the personalities of the people round the table, and the alliances between them which were especially important.

6. Negotiation and consensus building takes time and can't be rushed. So the structures need to be in place before the crisis happens. And it's a question of trust. It is vital that everyone knows the others, with a circulation of information up, down and sideways. You have to trust the other party but you don't lay all your cards on the table!

7. Do we only include stakeholders who have a tangible interest in the conflict? What about stakeholders at a different geographical scale or over a longer time frame.

Downhill Ski Development in the Cairngorms

A role play led by Drennan Watson
Landwise Scotland

The Cairngorm plateaux are effectively tundra; adrift well south of where tundra is meant to be. The mountains are host to unusual assemblages of plants and animals which have adapted to the extreme conditions. The high plateaux are surrounded by remnants of the Old Caledonian pine forests; some wetland sites of national and international conservation importance; and important semi-natural habitats such as heather grouse moors. As well as being highly valued for conservation, the Cairngorms have also become a focus for various outdoor recreation pursuits, not least of which is skiing.

Downhill ski development started on Cairn Gorm in the mid 1950s as a way of lengthening the tourist season in the area; promoting the local tourist industry and stemming population decline in the district of Badenoch and Strathspey. To a considerable extent, it has increased employment locally, but development was surrounded by controversy from the start.

The general increase in development pressures in the area stimulated the designation of the Cairngorms National Nature Reserve in 1954. This large reserve included the highly vulnerable main high plateaux of the Cairngorms, which came right to the boundary of the ski development area. During the subsequent years until the late 1970s, downhill ski development expanded in the Northern Cairngorms, causing increasing friction between the demands of developers and conservationists. When the chairlift in Coire Cas was opened up for summer use for example, thousands of people each year were delivered directly to near the summit of Cairn Gorm. This development increased, by a factor of one hundred, the number of people walking on the vulnerable sub-arctic plateaux, and increased erosion levels within the reserve.

In 1979, the Cairngorm Chairlift Company proposed a major expansion west into Coire an t'Sneachda, Coire and Lochain, and Lurcher's Gully which would double the capacity of the ski development and, they claimed, halve queuing times at peak periods. Opposition to the proposal came from conservationists, hill walkers,

mountaineers, and cross country skiers who valued these areas for recreational, wildlife, and landscape qualities. They argued that increased use of the area, particularly that which would be brought by the planned mile long new access road to Lurcher's Gully, would be to the detriment of these other valued qualities. Support for the further development of skiing facilities came from local and national tourism interests, and downhill skiers.

Skiing development in the Cairngorms is widely regarded as a classic case study of the problems surrounding tourism development in an environmentally sensitive area. Through the role play exercise participants will be able to get to grips with the complex range of issues, and practice the art of conflict resolution.

Role play characters

1. Chairlift Company Manager.

As a representative of the Cairngorms Chairlift Company you argue that something urgently needs to be done to tackle the problem of overcrowding on the slopes. You see the only way to adequately deal with this problem is to expand the site and upgrade existing facilities. You are also mindful of the fact that further developments to the skiing infrastructure will provide opportunities for increased local employment and income. To allay the fears of the conservation lobby you are keen to reassure people that the developments will increase public use of the high plateaux.

2. Scottish National Ski Council (SNSC).

As a representative of the SNSC you are sympathetic to the claims and intentions of the Chairlift Company. You claim to speak for all skiers; downhill, cross-country and ski mountaineers, but this is disputed by many cross-country and mountaineer skiers. You point to the increasing popularity of the sport, and the need to provide quality facilities to keep the paying public happy. You claim that skiing has as much right to the hills as any other activity, and that, despite the fears of some people that skiing is 'taking over', ski development has only taken place in a very small percentage of the whole Scottish mountain area. There is concern within the organisation that whenever ski development is proposed there is opposition from conservationists. Whilst you respect the needs of conservation and the value of the

Cairngorms to other groups, you believe that the motto 'share the mountains' is appropriate in this situation.

3. Conservationists

As a conservationist you place a high value on the whole of the Cairngorms. You point to the wide range of environmental impacts which have resulted from development to date, problems such as: erosion of slopes within the ski area; massive intrusion on the aesthetic quality of the landscape; and the attraction of predators, caused by littering, into areas where indigenous birds may have little protection against them. You believe that further expansion of skiing into this sensitive area will worsen existing problems and possibly create new ones which will pose a significant threat to landscape and wildlife.

4. Mountaineers and hill walkers

As a representative of these groups you argue that further skiing development will intrude on the qualities of wildness which the area boasts; perhaps uniquely in the UK. The physical remoteness of the Cairngorms, from roads and human habitation; the strong sense of solitude, and lack of people and man-made artefacts are features of the area that you particularly value. Your main concern is over the proposed construction of a mile long road, which you feel will erode the special qualities which you value so much.

5. Cross-country skiers

The area proposed for development is an important training area for cross-country skiing. You assert that that downhill and cross-country skiing are physically, aesthetically and culturally incompatible. Downhill skiing is a mass participant sport which demands major investment in infrastructure and causes environmental disruption. It also has its own culture of flashy bright fashion and hi-tech equipment. In contrast there is cross-country skiing which focuses on the aesthetic enjoyment of wide, wild spaces in small numbers. You argue that there is already enough provision for downhill skiers and that any further development will diminish the quality of the environment for your cross-country skiers.

6. Local hotelier

As a local hotelier you find it difficult to make your business pay well in the short Scottish tourist season. The winter and spring downhill skiing are welcome extensions to that season which save you from having to close your business during winter and spring. Many of your skiing guests are increasingly complain about the overcrowded slopes and have said that in the future they will go elsewhere on the continent if they are not given better value for their money. You therefore support the proposed improvements to the resort facilities.

Resolving the conflicts: a summary of the role play

1. A logical first stage is to gather information about the existing situation; people's concerns, key issues, arguments for and against etc. It is imperative that parties should not become firmly entrenched.

2. The creation of a forum can create a positive environment for discussion and debate.

3. In order to diffuse the tension inherent in conflict situations people should be given opportunity to dump or express their feelings in a constructive manner, perhaps through the medium of a specially established forum.

4. Resolving conflicts where the issues are many and complex demands the use of a diverse array of processes and structures.

5. A key part of the conflict resolution process is to establish a common definition of the 'big problem'. It is important that this definition is not too 'narrow and encompasses the full range of interests of different groups and individuals.

6. Interested parties should agree on a range of joint tasks which will help the process of conflict resolution. Things cannot be left to one party, this is not a fair distribution of responsibilities.

7. Know when to go for LCD solutions: win - win solutions (creativity needed)

8. In order to achieve a fair and balanced discussion of the issues a facilitator or mediator should be appointed. This individual needs to be impartial (as far as humanely possible) and trusted by all parties. This person should be knowledgeable about the issues at stake.

9. Time should be taken to identify and include all stakeholders. The process will fail if people feel that they have been excluded at any stage.

10. Effective conflict resolution depends on establishing a clear plan/process.

11. The 'all inclusive' route to decision making can be time consuming and expensive. It is therefore important to know when to stop.

A New Culture – Raves and Festivals

A role play led by Phil Macnaghten,
Research Fellow at the Centre for Environmental Change

The phenomenon of raves and festivals in rural places remains a perennial problem for local authorities, rural communities and police forces. Following a number of well published conflicts, new legislation under the Criminal Justice Act has sought to limit the scope of such activities and to protect the interests of local communities. And yet, 24 hour raves and week-end festivals are a consistently popular leisure form in the countryside, especially for young people. How are we to understand such practices? As a new and legitimate form of youth culture? As a set of potential threats to sensitive ecological areas? As an invasion to rural peace and tranquillity? As symbolic of widespread resistance to the bourgeois world of 9-5 jobs and suburban lifestyles? As pure, unadulterated pleasure? Or as a new set of practices which symbolise new leisure uses in a post-productivist era?

The different meanings attached to raves and festivals shape whether people find such practices as a bonafide and acceptable use of the countryside or not. For this role play we will seek to simulate two moments in the rave/festival situation. The rave is scheduled to take place over a week-end in deepest rural England. The roles will include: a local organic farmer sympathetic to the rave; a middle class local outraged at this perceived 'invasion' of her village; a young and idealistic raver enjoying a week-end rave in the countryside; a local teenager excited at the prospect of some real action in the locality; an organiser from the festival collective; and a local community policeman.

The first scene focuses on local people digging a trench to stop the ravers from entering the common land where the rave is proposed to take place. The second scene will take place the following day and will examine whether a compromise can be reached to allow the rave to take place that evening within terms acceptable to the local population. Some of the roles will be loosely based on characters from the BBC soap opera The Archers.

Role play characters

1. Local villager – 'Amanda' (loosely modelled on Linda Snell)

You are in your 50s and care deeply about the village and village life. You are an ardent enthusiast in encouraging village events and active in the Women's Institute. Your view of the village is governed by aesthetics (beauty) and by the stability and continuity provided by respectable family life. You are a key member of the local Conservative Party but are disillusioned by the current weakness shown by present incumbents who simply are not of the calibre of 'Mrs T'. You have a sentimental view of nature and the countryside as presenting timeless values and the sense of things as they ought to be. You are especially fond of the quote by Stanley Baldwin who famously said that 'England is the country and the country is England'. Towns and city life are viewed as inauthentic, violent, and threatening.

Your instincts are to feel threatened by the proposed rave. You consider the event as an invasion to 'your' village, and sense that the rave will lead to vandalism, drugs and possibly burglary. You consider the rave as symbolic of wider changes in society that you feel intensely uncomfortable with (loss of morality especially among the young, an inappropriate desire for freedom without responsibility or duty, a disrespect for the values that make you proud to be English). In scene one you are shouting at the ravers and trying to persuade your local policeman Bill to do something.

2. **Local farmer – 'Gus'** (loosely modelled on David Archer)

You are a young and successful farmer living very much in the 1990s. You are innovative, hard working and keen to ensure that farming practices take advantage of the latest technological advances. Your view of the countryside is that it should provide us with food, and in particular, that it provides a resource to make a decent living. You find much of farming old-fashioned and have little truck with the idea that farmers should set themselves up as the guardians of the landscape. You find much of the enthusiasm devoted to preserving village life unrealistic and have had a number of conflicts with Amanda (above) over your attempts to make farming more efficient through intensification (such as cutting down hedges and enlarging fields).

You also feel threatened by the ravers and consider the rave an inappropriate use for the countryside. In particular you sense that the ravers have no right to use farming

land or indeed any part of the countryside for raves. Land is by rights made for farming. But you have more practical concerns too. You are worried about ravers camping on your land (adjacent to the proposed rave site), and about dogs worrying your livestock. In scene one you are both indignant and unlistening, physically trying to prevent cars from entering the common land site by digging a trench and blocking access with your new, technically advanced tractor.

3. Organic farmer's wife – 'Sue' (loosely based on mix of Pat Archer and Jennifer)

You are a hard working farmer helping make a go at being organic. You have chosen to be organic because you strongly feel that current farming practices are unsustainable in the long term and involve unethical forms of animal husbandry. However, you are realistic and practical in nature, and are well aware that your principles mean harder work and lesser returns. Your view of the countryside is both ethical and inclusionary. It also is one which includes a variety of uses, from farming to other quiet uses. You are even sympathetic to the idea that noisier leisure uses such as motocross and water skiing can be accommodated if people show greater mutual respect. You too have sympathy for young people (you also have teenage children) and understand how difficult life must be in a world with few jobs or prospects.

You are sympathetic to the idea of raves but feel that the ravers should have consulted the local villagers beforehand. You are a voice of moderation in the villager camp. You find the behaviour of Gus excessive and over-reactive. After the heated debate you eventually offer the ravers the use of your land to camp for one night, but only on condition that they agree not to play any music.

4. Young raver 'Justin'

You are young (about 20) and idealistic. Although middle class you have rejected the bourgeois values of your parents and have adopted a more 'New Age' outlook. You don't work on principle; you live in Hackney in a squat, and you have just returned from 6 months in India. You enjoy going to raves most week-ends in the summer and occasionally take acid and ecstasy to further the experience. You like to use the words 'man' and 'wow' a great deal. You are cynical about politics and sense that the whole system is corrupt. For you the countryside is seen as a zone of pure unadulterated pleasure, a place of self-expression where people should be free to be close to the spirits of the earth and begin to realise their true self. You consider modern farming practices to be poisoning nature and the land. You regard farmers

as reactionary and greedy, and most villagers as NIMBY short-sighted middle-class hypocrites propping up the system.

You are affronted that the locals have closed off the place, slightly confrontational, but ultimately resigned. 'Man, what do you expect from these people'. You are busy arguing that this land belongs to everyone, and why can't they just be left in peace to enjoy themselves.

5. Festival organiser 'Jed'

You are in your late 30s and have a long history of personal involvement in the underground movement and in free festivals. You were a regular of Stonehenge, partial to spending the summers in benders, and you have experienced conflict with authority at first hand: at the infamous battle of the Beanfield your van was thrashed by the Hampshire constabulary. You were centrally involved in the 'second summer of love' in 1988 when there was a coming together of travellers, bands, festivals, circuses, tribes and raves, all seeking to constitute a new alternative social space outside the market and the 9-5 world of work and corporate leisure. You helped organise the Castlemorton megarave in 1992, when for 8 days 40,000 people enjoyed free music and entertainment. You have organised this rave and expect between 2,000 and 5,000 people to attend. You have been busy and know that by not having consulted locals beforehand that you are risking confrontation.

At the entrance to the rave site you are quietly trying to negotiate with the locals. You are having no joy with Gus or Amanda. You remind Bill the policeman that they have no legal right to stop you from entering the common land, and that Gus is blatantly breaking the law. You find Sue more sympathetic and persuade her to let the ravers at least camp on her land.

6. Community policeman 'Bill'

You are the community policeman in the village. You take your job seriously and take pride that the village has remained virtually crime-free. You believe this is partly due to your own intimate knowledge of village life, including the one or two bad families in the village. You believe that people should be allowed to do what they want to do but that this should be within the law. Village life is important to you and you ensure that you don't antagonise any of the competing interests (landowners vs. villagers; newcomers vs. locals etc.)

You have been called to the proposed rave site to ensure that there is no trouble and that everybody behaves themselves. You tell your superiors that you can handle the situation and that there is no need to call in the heavy brigade (at least for the time being). You know roughly the law about common land, but you are also aware of your new powers to stop raves arising from recent public order legislation and from the Criminal Justice Act which legislates against unregulated outdoor parties unless they have a local authority licence. However, you are careful not to antagonise the situation and are hopeful for a compromise through negotiation.

7. **Disaffected young local 'Belinda'** (loosely based on Kate Alderidge)

You live in the village with dull parents, living a dull predictable life with few local friends who share common interests. Your father earns huge money from subsidies given to him for doing nothing. You find this unjust. You also hate the way in which farming destroys the countryside. You are mildly spiritual and believe that there must be more to life. You would dearly love to leave all this behind and move to the city.

For you the rave presents a wonderful opportunity, a rare glimmer of excitement and the prospect of real pleasure and uninhibited freedom. You are intensely angry with Gus and then have a huge argument with Amanda, calling her a hypocrite. You offer them the use of your father's land for the rave, but then your cousin Gus tells the ravers not to dare go with Belinda.

Resolving the conflicts: a summary of the role play

1. Voluntary negotiations are unlikely to be successful unless such events are planned well in advance. Raves are not planned well in advance. Therefore...

2. A procedure is needed for 11th hour emergency negotiations. This might involve identifying a neutral mediator; which could be difficult in practice. One possibility would be to bring in 'community workers', suitably reskilled to understand and empathise with ravers and landowners.

3. Local authorities should consider appointing 'Raves Liaison Officers'.

4. This post could be built into local authority emergency action plans.

The role play group came up with a number of general recommendations for raves:

5. Set up a small task force to embrace public agency interests (e.g. health, environment, arts and police) and 'trusted' rave mediators (e.g. editors of underground magazines, and rave organisers).

6. This task force would develop intelligence on rave culture, including research on the motivations of ravers and the concerns and experiences of landowners to develop thinking on best practice.

7. Develop a 'country code' for ravers to improve awareness and understanding. Also aim to improve relations between ravers, land owners and local authorities.

8. Produce a 'national' register of places where raves could possibly be accommodated. This could be an informal directory of public and private owners who are sympathetic to raves. This could contribute to meeting the demand for raves in an acceptable way.

9. Another key role of the task force should be to seek publicity for its work and achievements and aim to achieve a better media image for rave practices.

Landscapes of Leisure & Pleasure

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