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# "Landscape History" and current trends in landscape studies

Della Hooke (pp. 33–52)

## ABBREVIATIONS OF COUNTIES AND EPNS COUNTY SURVEYS

| | |
|---|---|
| Co | Cornwall |
| Ha | Hampshire |
| He | Herefordshire |
| K | Kent |
| La | Lancashire |
| Nb | Northumberland |
| Sf | Suffolk |
| So | Somerset |
| Wt | Isle of Wight |
| CPNE | *Cornish Place-Name Elements*. |
| EPNE | *English Place-Name Elements*, Parts **1** and **2**. |
| PN BdHu | *The Place-Names of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire*. |
| PN Brk | *The Place-Names of Berkshire*, Parts **1**, **2** and **3**. |
| PN Bu | *The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire.* |
| PN Ca | *The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*. |
| PN Ch | *The Place-Names of Cheshire*, Parts **1**–**5**. |
| PN Cu | *The Place-Names of Cumberland*, Parts **1**, **2** and **3**. |
| PN D | *The Place-Names of Devon*, Parts **1** and **2**. |
| PN Db | *The Place-Names of Derbyshire*, Parts **1**, **2** and **3**. |
| PN Do | *The Place-Names of Dorset*, Parts **1–4**. |
| PN Du | *The Place-Names of County Durham*, Part **1**. |
| PN Ess | *The Place-Names of Essex*. |
| PN ERY | *The Place-Names of the East Riding of Yorkshire and York.* |
| PN Gl | *The Place-Names of Gloucestershire*, Parts **1**–**4**. |
| PN Hrt | *The Place-Names of Hertfordshire*. |
| PN Le | *The Place-Names of Leicestershire*, Parts **1–7**. |
| PN Li | *The Place-Names of Lincolnshire*, Parts **1**–**7**. |
| PN Mx | *The Place-Names of Middlesex* (apart from the *City of London*). |
| PN Nf | *The Place-Names of Norfolk*, Parts **1**–**3**. |
| PN Nt | *The Place-Names of Nottinghamshire.* |
| PN NRY | *The Place-Names of the North Riding of Yorkshire.* |
| PN Nth | *The Place-Names of Northamptonshire*. |
| PN O | *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire*, Parts **1** and **2**. |
| PN R | *The Place-Names of Rutland*. |
| PN Sa | *The Place-Names of Shropshire*, Parts **1–9**. |
| PN Sr | *The Place-Names of Surrey*. |
| PN St | *The Place-Names of Staffordshire*, Part **1**. |
| PN Sx | *The Place-Names of Sussex*, Parts **1** and **2**. |
| PN W | *The Place-Names of Wiltshire*. |
| PN Wa | *The Place-Names of Warwickshire*. |
| PN We | *The Place-Names of Westmorland*, Parts **1** and **2**. |
| PN Wo | *The Place-Names of Worcestershire*. |
| PN WRY | *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire*, Parts **1**–**8**. |

# 'Landscape History' and current trends in landscape studies

The following paper was first prepared for publication in 1981 and examines the milieu in which the new Society for Landscape Studies was established in 1979. The first volume of its journal appeared in 1980 and was reviewed shortly afterwards. This remains deliberately unaltered in order to express the impressions of the writer at that time. The second volume appeared in the following year and is reviewed separately.

## 1. The background to landscape study

There is a long-established tradition of topographical history in England. Most counties benefitted from the attentions of eminent seventeenth or eighteenth-century writers whose collections formed the most comprehensive surveys available before the more recent compilation of the Victoria County Histories.[1] But if landscape studies are firmly rooted in historical method the last few years have witnessed a growing appreciation of the need for an inter-disciplinary approach to the subject. Historical geographers have always been aware of this need but have not always in the past succeeded in making sufficient impact upon those in related disciplines. A number of outstanding names in the 1940s and 50s come to mind and the work carried out in the preparation of the various 'Domesday Geographies' under Professor H. C. Darby[2] successfully applied geographical techniques to what had usually been seen as a purely historical document. In a recent review of the series, Perry notes that 'publication of the final, survey, volume of the Domesday geography of Professor H. C. Darby and his collaborators marks the completion and climax of one of the major enterprises of twentieth-century geographical scholarship' and, moreover, showed 'how the geographer's methods can furnish evidence for the historian'.[3] By an analysis of the Domesday evidence and by using techniques of distributional mapping Professor Darby and his colleagues succeeded in identifying regions characterised by different types and degrees of development in those areas covered by the survey. This work remains fundamental to a study of regional variation within England.

The Agrarian Histories begun in the mid-1950s under the chairmanship of Professor R. H. Tawney and the general editorship of Professor H. P. R. Finberg[4] also brought together historians, geographers and archaeologists, and a number of their contributors have made a marked impact upon the study of the landscape both within and beyond this series. Professor Finberg as an economic historian successfully related pre-Conquest documents to the early landscape.[5] Professor G. R. J. Jones as a geographer has continued to make detailed studies of the impact of tenurial and territorial organisation upon the Welsh landscape[6] (although it would be unfair

to neglect the influence in this field of the late Professor T. Jones Pierce[7]), and a number of historians such as Joan Thirsk[8] continue to make notable contributions in the field of landscape studies. Professor M.W. Beresford, also a member of the Advisory Committee for the Agrarian History of England and Wales, in the 1950s began to develop the then little-trodden path of recognising the actual field evidence. Medieval England, produced with Professor J.K.S. St Joseph in 1958 and recently reissued, was amongst the first notable works to deal with 'the medieval landscape rather than the medieval economy'.[9]

One may quote other works which successfully combined approaches from a number of disciplines. As geography tends to synthesise material from a number of related disciplines it is not perhaps surprising that the move towards a multi-disciplinary approach should continue to develop in this field. The late Professor H. Thorpe produced an excellent study of the parish of Wormleighton in Warwickshire[10] which has remained a classic of its kind, and many of those active in the field of landscape studies today began their careers under his tutelage. Another notable study in historical geography was made by Dorothy Sylvester in 1969 of the rural landscape of the Welsh Borderland.[11] Professor W.G. Hoskins and his successor, Professor H.P.R. Finberg, established a school of local history at Leicester which played a pronounced part in the study of the landscape, its present members continuing to make eminent contributions in this field.[12]

One of the most successful areas of enquiry to combine the geographical and historical approach was an enquiry into the development of field systems. Published in 1973, Studies of Field Systems in the British Isles, produced under the editorship of A.R.H. Baker and R.A. Butlin,[13] gathered together the results of research by a number of scholars analysing the evidence in different parts of the country. Studies in the north of England were made by G. Elliot, R.A. Butlin and J.A. Sheppard, in the Midlands by B.K. Roberts and J. Thirsk, and in eastern and southern England by M.R. Postgate, D. Roden and A.R.H. Baker. Field systems in other parts of Britain were studied by G.R.J. Jones, M. Davies, G. Whittington and R.H. Buchanan. All successfully combined geographical and historical methods to examine this aspect of landscape development, not failing to include amongst their sources of evidence those derived directly from the landscape itself, such as field patterns, the evidence of ridge and furrow and field morphology.

Another branch of study contributing its skills towards an understanding of the English landscape has been that of toponomy. The expert analysis of place-names county by county began in 1924 under the auspices of the English Place-Name Society[14] and inevitably the close relationship between such names and the historical landscape was increasingly revealed. Distributional mapping of selected terms began to play an increasing part in this work and the later volumes show how place-names provide evidence of regional

variation in the landscape throughout the historical period and also give some insight into the factors leading to the diversity which is one of the attractions of the English countryside.

The concept of the landscape itself as a prime subject of study was not, however, the dominant theme in such work. Perhaps the general climate of landscape appreciation had to be awakened at the popular level before there was sufficient impetus for this to stimulate widespread academic research in this particular field. Here the debt is most surely to Professor Hoskins, a local historian who has not flinched from popularising a subject he obviously loves sincerely. Others have followed in his steps but The Making of the English Landscape, published in 1955,[15] remains the 'bible' of many landscape historians. It has been followed by numerous county volumes which are indispensable to the serious student. Some of the early volumes have subsequently been labelled with the epithets 'simplistic' or 'superficial', but the fact remains that Professor Hoskin's work loosed a tide of general interest in landscape studies.

Since then, it is largely historians and archaeologists who must take the credit for the application of these techniques. It would not be far wrong to say that an appreciation of the actual landscape as a source of evidence has revolutionised current thinking in certain branches of these disciplines and few would now wish to return to the limitations of conventional fields of enquiry alone. The archaeologist can no longer confine himself to the physical limits of his excavation trench and the local or economic historian can no longer rest content with a perusal - however carefully carried out - of his documents. The geographer, too, cannot merely accept the role of assembling work carried out by others and converting it by some mythical 'geographical method' into a more useful product. Any student of landscape history must be entirely competent in the techniques he requires to use. The task is a formidable one and demands liaison between scholars from different disciplines. The main sources of information about the landscape are documents, maps and the landscape itself, incorporating, too, evidence which is now below the present-day ground surface. The study of documents not only demands skills in both palaeography and the understanding of old or obsolete languages, but also requires a knowledge of their historical context. Cartographic sources are more easily understood, especially as they tend to be of later origin than many of the documents, but their user must be aware of the limitations of the surveys and of the surveyors. The landscape offers up its information on historical change only to those who are trained to observe and interpret it. There are many techniques such as the intepretation of air photographs, methods of soil analysis, place-name study, botanical studies, etc., which require even more specialised skills, all of which few can master thoroughly in one lifetime. Liaison is essential and every participant, however experienced, may benefit from such intercommunication.

In the 1950s and 60s the relevance of techniques aimed directly at recording and interpreting landscape features had become obvious in all of these studies, but the compilation of data over extensive areas had frequently been a much-neglected aspect. Fieldwork in Medieval Archaeology by Christopher Taylor,[16] published in 1974, helped to put field survey work on to a more scientific footing and the results of this improved approach have clearly been effective in many subsequent studies. In particular, the Archaeology in the Field series published by Dent, with such contributors as Christopher Taylor, Oliver Rackham, Trevor Rowley, Michael Aston and James Bond[17] have found their way on to the book-shelves of most landscape historians, each volume dealing with some specific aspect of landscape study. Dent have also published Margaret Gelling's excellent book Signposts to the Past, which relates place-name evidence to the history of England and contains much which is of value to landscape scholars.[18] In recent years, other specialisms have contributed their experience and techniques to the field of landscape study and the study of vernacular architecture and of industrial archaeology is, for instance, now an integral part of such work. The popularity of the subject is immense, but it is also now seen as a serious branch of academic study.

## 2. Practical developments in landscape study

Thirty years ago landscape historians were just beginning to realise that the 'lost' settlement sites revealed in historical documents could still be identified on the ground. Even in the 1970s the list of known deserted medieval village sites in Worcestershire, for instance, contained no more than seven entries.[19] Largely due to the activities of a small group of historians and geographers, followed by an ever-growing band of competent amateurs, the number has been increased until recorded sites in this county number over eighty.[20] The establishment of the Medieval Village Research Group in 1972, with the active participation of M.W. Beresford, J.G. Hurst, H.C. Darby and others, provided a centre for co-ordinating such work. In many areas most of the major medieval settlement sites which show earthwork signs of desertion or shrinkage have now been identified. Attention can now be given to the recognition of minor settlement sites of all periods which have often left much less substantial evidence in the landscape. Only when extensive areas have been studied, using documentary, cartographic, photographic and field evidence, can a reasonable evaluation be made of the changing settlement pattern and its relation to the area economy. At present, the picture is very incomplete for early periods in particular, and in many areas such as the West Midlands the early medieval period is still represented by a gap in the field evidence.

Moated sites also received similar attention with the establishment of the Moated Sites Research Group in 1972. In the Midland area B.K. Roberts[21] attempted a simple classification of such sites in 1962 and F.V. Emery[22] commented upon the distri-

bution of such sites in England in the same year. Studies have become increasingly sophisticated since that date and allied features such as dams and fishponds, etc., have not been neglected.[23] Most recently, a survey of surviving medieval ridge and furrow has been initiated by the M.V.R.G. which intends to pay special attention to this type of earthwork evidence before it is eradicated for ever. No one, however, would pretend that such studies can stand in isolation. Increasingly, attempts have been made to analyse the data in two ways - firstly, systematic studies have concentrated upon a more scientific evaluation of the evidence, and, second, the documentary, cartographic and field evidence has been co-ordinated within specific areas in an attempt to examine the total historical landscape. While increasing attention is being paid to the refinement of classifications, causal factors, etc., these are being tested more thoroughly on the ground than ever before.

Many centres are involved in field study. Such work was long dominated by the fairly restricted activities of small numbers of university teachers and students, but has now seen a much wider application in the educational world. Attached often to museums, and frequently given the backing of the Department of the Environment, numerous archaeological units have been able to give increased time to the compilation of detailed Sites and Monuments Records. The amount of data available for study has increased dramatically, augmented by that known from air photography and other more specialised sources. Some of the wealthier units have been able to carry out extensive regional studies but in the present economic climate many of these have unfortunately been curtailed. The listing of sites must always remain a superficial exercise unless the results can be correlated into a more detailed analysis of historical sources, together with the production of detailed maps and surveys. One of the most recent comprehensive surveys of this nature is that produced in West Yorkshire: West Yorkshire an archaeological survey to A.D. 1500.[24] It is to be hoped that entire landscape studies of this nature will always remain the ultimate aim of such recording work. The information available for detailed systematic studies of particular features or aspects of landscape archaeology can then be viewed in relation to the whole landscape and an evaluation made of the role of individual features in an area at a given time.

If work throughout the 60s and 70s had to concentrate upon collecting the basic data to fill the long-standing gap of 'what' and 'where', current trends are rightly returning to the problems of 'when' and 'why'. Settlement patterns are again coming under scrutiny and age-old concepts of village oirigins are being questioned. A colloquium held at the University of Leeds in 1974 focussed attention upon this aspect of study with the subsequent publication of a remarkable book edited by P.H. Sawyer, Medieval Settlement, continuity and change.[25] Ideas have continued to evolve and village plans are being analysed and elements of deliberate design are being

recognised.[26] Perhaps in time the wider application of these techniques will cast more light upon the difficult problem of how the present settlement pattern came into being and what factors were instrumental in causing change.[27] The origins of village field systems have also been the subject of further recent investigation. Models have been proposed and tested against the known evidence,[28] and recent evidence, or 'old' evidence approached in a new way, has been intensively studied by scholars from a number of different disciplines.[29] Both of these studies must benefit from approaches fostered under the guise of 'landscape history' and are likely to make notable strides in the next few years. Both require something more than a gazetteer of sites upon which to work – they require the recognition of features which are not always obvious in the landscape and a fresh and critical evaluation of historical sources.

Knowledge of the prehistoric landscape has also been revolutionised in the last ten years or so, and it is realised – but not always put into practice – that assessments must be based upon something other than mere site-analysis.[30] An examination of the general landscape and the use of improved techniques for studying it may also provide many of the answers. An extensive field survey programme in the Nene Valley of Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire and the Soke of Peterborough over sixteen years dramatically altered the number and distribution of Roman sites known in the area[31] and similar surveys of the Wessex downland produced equally impressive results, indicating many features of Bronze Age or Iron Age origin which had not previously been recognised.[32] The increasing importance of the broader approach in the field of archaeology was illustrated by a number of reports published by the Council for British Archaeology dealing specifically with the effect of man upon the landscape.[33] Environmental archaeology has also had a major role to play in the reconstruction of past landscapes.[34] Its contribution to the archaeological information available on the early urban development of York, for instance, is well-known.[35] The methods pioneered by environmental archaeologists can be used to analyse many of the less readily perceived features of the medieval landscape, providing evidence of land use not easily obtained by conventional field work methods. The analysis of the phosphate content of the soil may, for instance, reveal human and animal occupation of a site and indicate a concentration of farming or domestic activity.[36]

An appreciation of the way in which vegetation may indicate the activity of man is not, of course, confined to environmental archaeologists. As Rackham has pointed out, a study of vegetation can add 'a third dimension in a historical and archaeological synthesis',[37] and historical ecologists have been able to open up new sources of data to the landscape historian. Studies of hedge data have been in progress for many years and an evaluation made of the techniques available.[38] More recently, Rackham has extended such work to cover areas of woodland, and has himself analysed the role

of trees and woodland in the British landscape.[39]

Although some of the advances made in recent years have been due to the development of improved technological methods, others have resulted from a fresh approach to particular aspects of landscape history. Frequently the techniques of one discipline have been successfully adapted to the study of another. The natural progression of applying geographical techniques to the study of place-names and other early documentary sources has already been mentioned. Professor Kenneth Jackson's work in the early 1950s, upon the survival of Celtic river-names,[40] made a fundamental contribution to a study of post-Roman Britain and the Anglo-Saxon take-over. He was able to divide Britain into four main areas, distinguished by a westward increasing percentage of Celtic name-survival. Much of the topographical content of place-names was further discussed by Professor Kenneth Cameron in 1961.[41] The various place-name volumes have by their nature always been closely connected with the topographical character of an area and, as noted above, later volumes have utilised place-names to identify landscape regions with particular topographical characteristics. In 1976 Margaret Gelling[42] extended the analysis of the place-name data to a fuller examination of the evidence contained in the pre-Conquest charters of Berkshire. Although the choice and interpretation of the terminology used will certainly benefit from more rigorous appraisal, it has also been possible to apply geographical methods of analysis to the topographical content of West Midland charters to investigate regional variation within the landscape in the Anglo-Saxon period.[43] Dr. Gelling is currently re-examining Ekwall's collection of place-names[44] using similar methods and this again shows, as in the case of the charter material, how 'old' sources can be analysed afresh to produce more evidence of early landscapes. These, in turn can be re-examined within their historical context.[45]

## 3. 'Landscape History' and the Society for Landscape Studies

The need for a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of the landscape cannot be denied. Conventional archaeology may now appreciate the need for field survey work over entire areas and historians undoubtedly now turn to the landscape for an expression of the documentary evidence, but liaison is still difficult to establish, both in educational and research establishments and in field units. Although landscape history finds a small outlet in the conferences, journals and meetings of other disciplines it usually occupies a minority position in the time or space available. Its role in the Historical Research Group of the Institute of British Geographers, for instance was, until recent years, minimal.[45A] The need for a forum of discussion cannot be under-estimated, although exceptionally useful seminars have been organised in recent years in a number of University Extramural departments. Such seminars inevitably concern a limited number of participants and do not always fulfil the need to reach or involve a wide audience.

The Society for Landscape Studies was established to fulfil this need. It was, the editor explains, 'established to act as a forum for those interested in a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of landscape and its evolution and of the inter-relationship of man and his environment as reflected in the face of the landscape'.[46] Its journal might be expected to fill the niche not covered by those existing journals which adopt a more strictly historical, geographical or archaeological approach. The practical steps in setting up such a forum are, however, fraught with difficulties. Such a move requires the backing of a large number of professional people from a number of different disciplines, with a sound organisational base upon which to build. If a society is to be maintained for this purpose it must be able to offer in its conferences and journal positive benefits to its members by stimulating and opening up lines of research over and above those available from pre-existing sources. Such a society has an eminent history upon which to build and an established standard of work to set a goal.

4. 'Landscape History', Volume I

Landscape History, volume I, is the first issue of the journal of the new society. This volume represents some of the papers presented at the first annual conference, held in Leeds in March 1979. The theme of that conference was 'Approaches to Landscape Studies' and was an attempt to assemble contributors offering papers concerning the general techniques applicable to such a study, bringing together scholars from a variety of different disciplines.

In the first volume this discussion of available techniques and their application in the field of landscape history successfully unites a series of papers which differ greatly in scope and subject matter. The majority of papers each present a particular technique or set of techniques which has been utilised by its author, discuss some of the problems encountered, and indicate the conclusions reached. Since most writers have special skills to impart, their cautionary advice is of great value to others who must also master a multi-disciplinary approach for the study of such a subject. The plan of the first volume seems to be largely successful, including an additonal group of area studies illustrating the application of some general techniques within specific regions. The journal contains much useful information which makes it of interest to both the general and the professional reader, although on balance one is forced to conclude that if one is well read in this subject there is only a limited amount of material which may be considered fresh and stimulating. The editor tries to avoid too insular an approach by including papers dealing with areas beyond Britain. This is to be welcomed, although the papers dealing with areas distant from Britain do not always fit so readily into the established pattern of the volume.

It cannot be denied that the papers are of variable quality. This may be due to the attempt in this first issue to cover a wide range of difficult material but may one make a plea for stricter

editorial control or guidance? An abstract or summary of the content of each paper would also be beneficial. Some biographical information about the individual contributors would also be welcome. Given the cost-limitations of producing a journal of this nature the typewritten format is attractively produced, although it is not possible to produce by this means the appearance of a professionally printed page. The maps in particular reach a most satisfactory standard and the cover design used by the society enhances the general appearance of the journal.

Nine of the papers presented at the conference are included within this volume. David Michelmore's paper deals with the evidence available in Northern England for the reconstruction of the early tenurial and territorial divisions in that area. It offers useful comparative data for those examining similar material in other areas. The writer stresses the care which must be taken to avoid assumptions which have often invalidated such work in the past and has ably used local detail to illustrate the wider theme. The limitations of early documents as sources of information for both settlements, estates and boundaries cannot be over-emphasised, for minor units could exist in apparent oblivion if they formed part of a larger territory. Mr. Michelmore avoids laying too much credibility upon the permanancy of the pre-Conquest estates as they appear in the earliest documents, noting how estate composition could be changed by tenurial ownership and administrative policy. In contrast, he discusses the more permanent role of the township unit and the relevance of this in the agrarian peasant economy. As a discussion of current ideas the paper is of considerable value, even though leaving the reader with the inevitable conclusion that 'the precise period at which this unit of peasant organisation came into existence must await further research'.[47]

This paper highlights one of the foremost themes confronting landscape historians at the present time. The observation that settlement groups could be both mobile and impermanent features of the landscape has led to a closer scrutiny of the boundaries of territorial units as 'one of the most permanent and ancient features in the English landscape'.[48] Perhaps of greater importance is the realisation that boundaries, even of a similar nature, could be drawn up at widely differing dates, with amalgamation and subdivision expressing the particular tenurial and social systems prevalent at a given time. Particular area studies in this field provide welcome data upon which to base further analysis of this aspect of landscape study.

A very different type of evidence is discussed by James Pickering, who writes upon the impact of aerial archaeology upon landscape studies and, more particularly, upon 'Aerial Archaeology and the Prehistoric Landscape'. As a technique, air photography is complementary to archaeological excavation but itself underlines the necessity for a wider approach to archaeological interpretation. The survival of cropmark sites may often be due to discontinuity of land

use, implying that such sites need not be typical of the general settlement or field pattern, for continuity permits little surface indication. Site survival may also be affected by subsequent land use, while some features, such as vegetational changes and hedgerow growth, give rise to little readily observed photographic or surface evidence. Observed sites are in any case merely elements within landscapes. On the positive side, Mr. Pickering is able to present impressive evidence of early field systems covering immense areas which are virtually unknown from conventional archaeological methods. The extent and nature of these systems is such as to indicate early widespread clearance and also suggestive of social control organised over very large territories at an early date. Mr. Pickering is forced to reiterate his views upon the narrowness of much modern archaeological technique: 'it has become a dilemma of archaeology that the evidence sought by its standard excavations does not investigate the main body of unexamined material available to it'.[49] While concentrating upon the perfection of techniques for the recovery and identification of detailed material evidence from a limited number of sites, archaeologists are in danger of ignoring the wider context of their work. Few situations argue more powerfully for the necessity for an inter-disciplinary approach to landscape study.

Richard Smith's paper 'Environmental Issues in Landscape Studies' spreads its theme much further afield in discussing the influence of environmental control upon the landscape. The effect of climatic conditions upon health in the modern world is cited as an example, but the role of environmental factors as over-riding causative agents in the origins of agriculture-based civilizations is strongly questioned, where the influence of leadership may have been an equally important cultural factor. Unfortunately the argument, which is weakened by illogicalities and an excessive use of clichés, is not always easy to follow. The danger of accepting archaeological plots at face value is outlined, using the distribution of megalithic monuments in Britain and or recorded Mesolithic sites as examples: 'the relationship between distribution and environment will at best be blurred and it is doubtful whether general supposition from distribution patterns has any final validity except as one enters the historical period'.[50] Yet in continuing to assess the role of environment and cultural factors Dr. Smith has no hesitancy in accepting and using a number of specific patterns of distribution: 'Climatic and other forms of environmental change may be registered on the landscape by distributions of early occupation sites'.[51] One hopes that those chosen are totally reliable. The final part of the paper involves a description of techniques available for environmental analysis (in effect, methods of soil analysis) and follows on somewhat disjointedly from the previous discussion. It concludes with a plea for the use of less conventional methods in archaeology - notably dowsing.

Continuing the above theme, Oliver Rackham in his paper 'Documentary Evidence for the Historical Ecologist' reminds the reader that ecology must consider the inter-relationship between man

and Nature. He offers a very useful list of documentary sources which are of value to the historical ecologist and ably comments upon some of the pitfalls which surround their use. Dr Rackham rightly notes the problem presented by terminology and translation. He criticises those studying the pre-Conquest period for their use of the word 'forest', a word of Norman introduction which was applied to areas under special law. He is probably correct in his criticism, although the modern meaning of the word often implies no more than 'an extensive tract of land covered in trees and undergrowth...' (OED).[52] The Old English word *fyrhð*, *fyrhðe* which appears to have described 'wooded countryside'[53] now 'frith', seems to have gone out of common general usage, except in the adopted form of Welsh *ffridd*, where it has undergone a change of meaning and is usually applied today to relatively open ground.[54] Unfortunately changes in meaning can apply to almost any word which has remained in use from Old English into modern usage and even the terms 'wood, grove, copse', etc. are overshadowed by specialised modern meanings which may differ radically from those originally intended.[55] The tendency for topographical writers to stress 'the unusual rather than the ordinary'[56] is well known. It can, for instance, be particularly misleading to those compiling climatic records from such sources, while, as Dr. Rackham points out, the articulate documentation of the Stuart and Georgian periods has frequently led readers to underestimate the amount of work carried out in the landscape at an earlier period. Above all, most written records – including the Domesday Book – were compiled for a particular and limited purpose which inevitably influenced their content.

Margaret Faull's paper ably makes use of a detailed area study to illustrate both the value and the problem of utilising place-names for a reconstruction of the historic landscape. In 'The Use of Place-Names in Reconstrucing the Historic Landscape; illustrated by Names from Adel Township' she picks out pertinent points which may be well-known to place-name scholars but which often provide pitfalls for those less familiar with the interpretation of place-name data. It is seldom possible to determine whether a name was first applied to a settlement, an estate, or to a number of related settlements, and the earliest recording does not necessarily indicate its date of origin. The meanings of many terms are not properly understood, and even when their meanings are well known it is important to realise that the names may have been coined over a very long period of time, referring to a continually changing landscape. While names are a valuable source of evidence, Dr Faull also shows that a familiarity with the historical landscape obtained from documentary, cartographic sources and field evidence must be combined with the study of field- and place-names if such evidence is to be utilised to its fullest extent. Name collection in itself can be a valuable linguistic exercise but it is only when it is integrated with other forms of evidence into a wider study that it becomes a purposeful tool in

landscape reconstruction.

Stephen Moorhouse presents an excellent paper entitled Wakefield during the Middle Ages' in which he outlines the use of the manorial court rolls as sources of topographical information. The first of the area studies to be included in the volume, this paper also deals with a particular source of data. In a paper of this length only a summary of Mr. Moorhouse's work could be given but he is able to whet one's appetite for the fuller analysis which is still in preparation.[57] He provides a clear and full outline of the region's economic development, settlement pattern, routeways, etc., as provided by this rich mass of evidence. Valuable details of minor farm buildings and enclosures, fish traps etc., rarely available for most other regions, are known from this source. The paper is illustrated with particularly fine maps. Mr. Moorhouse has fewer problems to recount in the use of such data but unfortunately this is of no great encouragement – his paper makes one only too aware of the dearth of such information available for many other regions.

James Bond's paper is also an area study, dealing with 'The Reconstruction of the Medieval Landscape; the Estates of Abingdon Abbey'. It also, however, demonstrates the use of particular techniques insofar as it illustrates the combined use of documentary and field evidence in such a study and the interdependence of these sources. More specifically, it sets out to review the 'impact of monastic organisation upon the landscape' on the estates of Abingdon Abbey.[58] Primarily based upon material collected for the County Sites and Monuments Record the paper is illustrated with the superbly designed and executed maps and diagrams one has come to expect from Mr. Bond. There is a useful list of the landscape features known on selected demesne estates giving the actual source of evidence for each feature. The percentage of sites known from both documentary and field evidence, or from one of these sources alone, is given, and provides useful comparative data for other workers carrying out similar studies in other regions.

Solve Göransson deals with 'Regular Settlements in Scandinavia; the Metrological Approach'. Mr Göransson investigates the metrological aspects of settlement planning, with a critical appraisal of former work on the subject. While much of the work relates specifically to Scandinavia the appreciation of deliberate design in settlement planning is making increasing headway in this county and Dr. Brian Roberts discussed some of his own research in this field at the Society's annual lecture in 1980. Students in this field must obviously be aware of the continental evidence, for an understanding of the types of plans found in this country and on the continent may ultimately provide valuable evidence of settlement origins and subsequent development.

Finally J.C. Nwafor discusses 'Approaches to Landscape Studies in Tropical Africa', showing that even in that continent the present landscape clearly reflects the activity of man. Settlement

patterns in particular reflect the cultural history of the area but the impact of agricultural activity has further made drastic alterations to the natural landscape, even to the extent that man must be seen as a geomorphological agent. In some ways this paper fits less happily into the planned scheme of the volume but, although it deals specifically with a part of the world which is very different to Britain, it also serves to remind the reader that there, as elsewhere, 'since the present landscape is a reflection of a past situation, we can only understand contemporary landscape if we are aware of its historical roots'.[59] This is presumably what the Society for Landscape Studies is all about.

In one volume it is not possible to present a discussion of all of the techniques currently in use by the landscape historian. The journal has succeeded in illustrating a representative number of these and in showing their application in the field of landscape study. The majority of contributors use their methodology to explore avenues of enquiry which are of some significance in the study of landscape development at the present time. If subsequent volumes of the journal can present papers of a more uniformly high standard it may provide a useful arena for discussion. Above all, some attempt must be made to discard work which is derivative and available (often in a more useful and detailed form) elsewhere. Unfortunately the Society does not yet appear to have a clear idea of the nature of its audience. A paper presented at a conference may be of considerable general interest without being suitable for written presentation in a journal. If the journal is to be a success and is to compete with others already in existence the editor must take care to include good, original material. Some of the papers in the present volume achieve this standard but others do not. One wishes the editor every success with this venture and one awaits the second volume with interest.

5. 'Landscape History', volume 2

The second volume of Landscape History became available in 1980. It may lack the unifying bond of the first volume, which presented the papers of one conference and contained items more or less linked by a general theme, but it undoubtedly reaches a higher standard. Many of these may still be said to develop the discussion of relevant techniques applicable to the study of landscape history but, above all, the majority of the papers individually make a substantial contribution in their own field as well as to the general literature of landscape studies, helping to bridge further the gap between different disciplines. Most of the weaknesses observable in the first volume appear to have been overcome. The format is greatly improved and the maps of high quality. Notes upon the contributors have been added which provide useful information about their respective interests and activities. Reviews of detailed studies will help to bring these to the attention of a wider audience and hopefully provide indications of their usefulness.

The first of five contributors, Peter Reynolds offers a valuable paper entitled 'The Working Agroscape of the Iron Age'. This paper heralds the general trend noted in this volume of the journal to include papers which are of foremost importance rather than mere comments summarising the present state of affairs in the subject under discussion. The writer is concerned with the development of the practical approach as an aid to understanding the evidence of the prehistoric period and reports directly from primary sources of evidence obtained by direct experimentation. A review of the deductions which can now be made upon the nature of Iron Age agriculture, the paper is based upon the results obtained over the last nine years at the Butser Experimental Farm in Hampshire. Here hypotheses can be effectively tested as part of a long-term programme and modified in the light of the results obtained. An example is an investigation into the presence of carbonised seeds on Iron Age sites which may have been produced during the preparation of straw for thatching. Comments upon the interpretation of plough marks in buried soils and a discussion of the types of plough available are based upon experimental work carried out on a wider scale. With sufficient data now available to suggest that crop yields were surprisingly high and could be sustained over long periods the writer is able to suggest that 'In the later Iron Age and the Romano-British period agriculture in this country reached a peak of achievement which was not surpassed until the present century'.[60]

Margaret Faull and Richard Smith contribute a paper 'Phosphate analysis and three possible Dark Age ecclesiastical sites in Yorkshire'. While making basic assumptions about the meaning of the Old English **eccles* term, which could perhaps have benefitted from a more searching enquiry,[61] the paper represents a welcome instance of the use of archaeological techniques to investigate sites of potential but incompletely understood significance. This is ultimately, however, a test of the efficacy of the techniques themselves and it is difficult on the basis of this study to avoid asking whether the results contributed much additional useful information. Certainly a concentration of phosphates in the subsoil noted on one of the sites investigated confirmed the presence of former occupation on a site already known from aerial photography, but little further information appears to have been forthcomning concerning the actual nature of the site. It would also have been of value if the authors could have commented upon the general nature and number of sites known from cropmarks in the region, in order to permit an evaluation to be made of the role of this particular feature. While the results obtained must obviously be taken into account in any subsequent enquiry of this nature the lack of any significant results from two of the three *eccles* sites examined is as intriguing a problem for place-name scholars as the site noted in Stanbury, Haworth, which did produce evidence of occupation but of which the true nature remains unknown.

'Farms and fields in Okehampton Park, Devon: the problems of studying medieval landscape', written under the combined

authorship of David Austin, Richard Daggett and Michael Walker, adopts a splendid, multi-disciplinary approach, drawing upon many of the varied techniques available to the landscape archaeologist today. They present a critical appraisal of the documentary evidence, also considering alternative interpretations of the data, disclosing a situation familiar to all those who attempt to correlate medieval documentary and field evidence. A comprehensive study of the historical geogreaphy of Okehampton Park covers both the early landscape eclipsed by its formation and subsequent agrarian activity following its dispalement in 1538. A landscape of farms and field was fossilised beneath the pasture of the park and excavation of one of these settlements has suggested an occupation date in the 13th century. The opportunity has also been taken to note several different types of ridge and furrow earthworks. Particular attention has also been paid to the environmental evidence, especially that obtained by pollen analysis, making this a more than usually satisfying study. Finally, the writers do not shirk from considering the wider implication of their work, which raises important questions concerning the origins of the settlement pattern observed in medieval times. While not able at this stage to present all of the answers, they are able to shed considerable light upon the 'fluctuating tide-line between moorland and agriculture'. In such an area the investigations within Okehampton Park have revealed a settlement pattern of individual farms, the development of which was arrested by the creation of the park. While many settlements on Dartmoor apparently weathered the supposedly difficult years of the early 14th century, those at Okehampton had already succumbed to the effect of a single seigneurial decision taken towards the end of the 13th century. This type of real evidence must be considered in wider ranging settlement studies and the authors are to be congratulated upon the comprehensiveness of this paper.

The final two papers included in the volume are contributions from Wales which were originally presented at the third conference of the Society held at Cardiff in 1979. Both have implications beyond the Principality. The first, 'Pioneers of topographical printmaking: some comparisons', by Austin Wilks, is based upon an inventory of Welsh topographical prints at present being made for the Board of Celtic Studies. The paper is an interesting and critical appraisal of a subject only rarely discussed in general landscape literature. Although 17th-century pictures sometimes fall into this category, the majority date from the mid-18th century when there was a greatly increased public interest and a demand for such items. Output declined rapidly following the invention of automatic production of printing plates. By analysing scenes represented in the collection the writer has been able to make a fascinating study of attempts to forge and copy and also to understand the causes of distortion in the depiction of the landscape. Such a knowledge is obviously essential before the scenes can be evaluated as possible sources of historical evidence. It is quite clear, however, that topographical pictures

provide a frequently neglected source of first-hand information of value to landscape historians.

The study of topographical pictures brings possible sources of historical evidence much nearer to modern times and the last paper in this volume, 'Landscape of the Iron Industry at Blaenafon, Gwent', by Jeremy Lowe and Martin Lawler, carries landscape history well into the late 18th and early 19th century, when the ironworks of Blaenafon were in full operation. The evidence for such a study comes largely from present-day field work combined with the use of the earliest Ordnance Survey maps. This is a highly readable paper which will delight the industrial archaeologist and also be of considerable interest to the general landscape historian. The effect of man on the landscape is traced, from the medieval period when pastoral activities were characteristic of the hill country of Gwent, and the region remained isolated and relatively undeveloped, through to the later 16th century when the expansion of the charcoal industry destroyed the woodlands of the valley floors. This industry later led to the establishment of the more carefully managed and coppiced woodlands which still partially survive in the vicinity. Working of iron-ore on a large scale does not seem to have become a major agent in landscape change before the late 1780s, but the network of mines and associated furnaces then rapidly produced the scarred landscape of mineral workings, coal-mines and waste heaps which mark the effect of several periods of developing techniques. A network of waggonways and tramroads served the industry, later to be replaced by modern roads and railways, and scattered settlements housing the workers spread haphazardly over the surrounding hillsides. Already much of the early housing has been destroyed and the writers make a plea that the area with its remaining features should be regarded as one of historical significance rather than as mere 'derelict land'.

If the forthcoming volumes of this journal continue to present items of such interest they will find no difficulty in attracting the attention of an ever-widening audience. The Society has succeeded in making an impact and one hopes that it will continue to flourish.

6. Place-names and 'Landscape History'.

Few disciplines bear a closer relationship to the landscape than the study of place-names. Sensitive indicators of man's perception of his surroundings, names of places embody his impressions of an ever-changing environment. If one is able to understand correctly the meanings of the words and terms used, place-names provide invaluable evidence of the nature of the landscape thoughout the historical period, and also convey some idea of how that landscape was viewed by those who first coined the names. What topographical features caught their eye? Why did certain plants and animals attract particular attention? Were names influenced more by the nature of the landscape than by such factors as land ownership and social institutions? Dialectal distributions offer further evidence

of regional diffusion of peoples, institutions and languages. Few other branches of landscape study express more obviously the need for participation between scholars of different disciplines or repay more satisfyingly those who master the essential skills. Few would dare venture far into this realm of study without the knowledge of or aid of an etymologist. Names do not remain static for ever and changes in the form of the language and in its meaning need to be unravelled before the evidence can be reliably used. Sometimes names are changed drastically to make them sound sensible at a given time or in a given place and dangers such as this are a common hazard to the unwary. If names are used as historical evidence knowledge is required not only of regional history but of the nature of the documents in which they are preserved. An 'eye for landscape' is also needed to relate many of the names to the actual environment. Techniques for handling names are becoming increasingly diverse, ranging from the tried and trusted methods of simple distribution maps to sophisticated computor analysis of distribution, form and morphology. A glance through the bibliography lists in Nomina[62] or this journal will reveal the abundance of recently published work on this aspect of landscape study. The examination of the names of places and fields has already engendered a number of papers in the new journal of Landscape History and will hopefully continue to play a prominent role in the future.

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