Perceptions of Water in Britain from Early Modern Times to the Present:

An Introduction

Karen V. Lykke Syse & Terje Oestigaard (eds.).
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Acknowledgements

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Karen V. Lykke Syse & Terje Oestigaard
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Introduction

Karen V. Lykke Syse and Terje Oestigaard

The overall aim of the research group ‘Understanding the Role of Water in History and Development’ was to consider why the initial phases of the Industrial Revolution (c. 1760s-1820s) took place in Northwest Europe in general and in England in particular. With the Industrial Revolution, the ‘West’ established an economic lead that has shaped the world ever since. At the outset, however, it was not at all inevitable that the Industrial Revolution should have originated in the northern reaches of Europe rather than in, for instance, China or India (Tvedt 2010a, 2010b).

The analysis of water systems in general and during the Industrial Revolution in particular can be understood to consist of three interconnected layers. The first layer can be understood to address the physical form and behaviour of actual waterscapes. This can include precipitation, evaporation, how rivers run within the landscape and how much water they contain at a given time of the year, the relationship between rivers and the sea, and the development patterns to which these physical structures may give rise. Historically, variations in physical space have been of the utmost importance where development is concerned. The second analytical layer addresses human modifications and adaptations to the actual water-worlds. The ways in which people in different societies have utilised water in the creation of social opportunity, and how modifications have limited the physical constrains of scarce water resources, have at all times structured societies and their future development. The third and final analytical layer addresses cultural concepts and ideas of water and water systems. Management practices, control of water and ways in which humans engage with their water-worlds are intrinsic aspects of culture and cosmology. As a result, perceptions of
water influence the technological use and development of water systems (Tvedt 2010a, 2010b). The first two layers relating to complex and multifunctional water systems are not the main topic of this book; here, it is mainly the third level that will be addressed: perceptions of water in Britain from early modern times to the present, spanning the era in which the Industrial Revolution took place.

All societies and social systems have a hydraulic dimension, and water has been and still is an integral part of social interactions and perceptions of worldviews and religions, but few works have been published on the ideas and perceptions of water. Cultural and religious ideas about water structure society, technological developments and understandings of nature. The world people live in, adapt to and exploit, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the physical restrictions and ecological limitations they face can be understood as different water landscapes. Scenarios in which there is too little or too much water, when the seasonal rains arrive (or fail to), and different climatic zones such as deserts, savannas and arctic areas, all present different waterscapes where the water itself is in constant flux (Tvedt & Oestigaard 2010).

Society is structured, therefore, by varying perceptions of different waterscapes, and a range of cultural understandings relating to the potential use, adaption and change of various water-worlds, given the technological know-how available in different time periods. Because of this, history's development narrative should by rights pivot around water. Water played a fundamental role in the initial phase of the Industrial Revolution in England and Western Europe during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Thus, one may put forward a new and opposite theory of social development: 'the more humans seek to control water and socialise it, the more power water and variations in the water landscape will exercise over societies' (Tvedt & Oestigaard 2010:10).

Water is always located in time- and space-specific contexts and although from a hydrological point of view the very same water is used for steam production, bathing and baptism, ideas of
water are context-dependent. Water’s cultural manifestation and incorporation within society and religion are outcomes of what were seen to be its specific characteristics at given times and places. This makes it important to analyse why certain water categories have been assigned particular characteristics and qualities at different times in history (Tvedt & Østigaard 2010).

The specific water-world within any given historical context transcends dichotomies such as culture-nature or society and religion. All over the world, from everyday activities to religious ceremonies, water has been an intrinsic factor that unites and transcends societal and cosmological realms and spheres. Water is a reality, or more correctly, realities; social, natural and religious realities. A water-world is therefore a web of significance spun by people around water, transforming it from a natural phenomena to a vital aspect of culture, society and religion. It reflects diverse aspects of lives lived, where water has been used within elaborate systems of symbolism, reflecting conceptualisations of both people themselves, and the world in which they have lived (Tvedt & Østigaard 2006).

Consequently, perceptions of water in Britain between early modern times and the present have taken context-dependent forms of particular significance. With the emergence of science and modernity, social transition meant that older ideas about water increasingly came under pressure to adapt and change. At the same time, there was an enduring continuity in perceptions of and practices relating to water. In this time of syncretism, the water-world that formed the backdrop to the Industrial Revolution remained an important bridge spanning traditions.

This anthology is based upon papers presented at the workshop ‘Fluid Approaches to History’ held at the Centre for Advanced Study at the University of Oslo, January 26-27, 2009, where the aim was to present current research and discussions on the relationship between the scientific and technological developments of the period 1500-1850, and images and ideas about water during the same period. Obviously, this is only a small contribution to a research field deserving of far greater
attention; hopefully, it will stimulate more water research in these and other areas.

The chapters in this book have been ordered chronologically, beginning with the Reformation and its somewhat ambiguous influence on the decline of magic, and concluding with the extent to which pre-industrial approaches to river- and landscape management continue to shape perceptions of contemporary watercourses.

Terje Oestigaard focuses on the topography of holy water in England after the Reformation. Following the Reformation, the Church aimed to abolish all belief in the magical powers of water, its ambition being to eradicate the traditional water cult, a cult that it viewed as diabolic and a testimony to the power of Satan. However, the development of science in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries brought about an enhanced understanding of the hydrological cycle. The natural world came to be seen as a reflection of God's master plan rather than something dangerous, diabolic and controlled by the Devil. Where religion was concerned, water played a dual role in the creation of a topography of holy water that remained highly significant to lay Christianity long after the Reformation and well into the industrial period.

Karen V. Lykke Syse explores ideas about water prevalent during the early modern period in England. She uses the contested and perhaps anachronistic term 'leisure' to analyse the utilisation of river landscapes. Understanding the multifarious ways in which rivers have been used and perceived throughout history is an important aspect of the analysis of the history of mentality and ideas. Might established ideas about social class and gender have been somewhat dissolved through the symbolic liminality of the river? By following the historical development of three sporting activities; angling, swimming and rowing, Syse explores the river as an arena for and boundary to enjoyment within the English riverine and riparian landscape.

Angling is a leisure activity that Richard Coopey explores with great thoroughness. Using this particular form of recreation in Britain as a starting point, he emphasises the significance of
angling to the ways in which nature has been perceived by anglers, and the extent to which these perceptions influenced subsequent environmental thought. Tracing the spatial, technological and social development of angling, Coopey notes how nature itself became controlled or engineered by the anglers. In recent times, anglers’ desire to control nature has proved beneficial to the many British watercourses that have as a result been cleaned up and restocked with fish. The visual and environmental impact of a clean river has positive repercussions far beyond the local angling club.

The problem of polluted watercourses is considered in depth by Justin Carter, who presents the aims and results of the Molendinar Project in Glasgow, Scotland. Unlike rivers that have been revitalised in the post-industrial age, the Molendinar continues to flow in murky darkness. The Molendinar Project set out to investigate the disappearance of a river at the heart of Glasgow’s early medieval history. It was an attempt to discover how and why the burn had almost completely vanished. More importantly, it was an attempt to assess the impact this loss might have had on the city and its population in the context of yet further urban development.

Finally, Jill Payne analyses the construction of Britain’s ‘wild land’ cultural identity. She argues that the backlash to the Industrial Revolution ushered in a highly romanticised perception of non-industrialised landscapes. In particular, the accelerated harnessing of metropolitan British water systems for energy and transport led to an enhanced appreciation of ‘natural’ waterscapes and geological features such as waterfalls. Payne deconstructs the emergence, within the Scottish periphery, of a British water-and-mountain aesthetic. She explores the extent to which an aesthetic response based on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century attitudes towards the place of water within industrialised and non-industrialised settings may have continued to influence ideas about hydroelectric development in Scotland well into the twentieth century.
References


The Topography of Holy Water in England after the Reformation

Terje Oestigaard

The Golden Age of Faith
In Europe, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been seen as the ‘Golden Age of Faith’. In The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Max Weber (2006[1930]) argued that Protestantism created a capitalistic spirit and that the great historic development of religions took place when magic was eliminated from the world. Magic was included in the concept of the sacramental force as a means of salvation. If Weber is correct in his thesis, then the replacement of the sacraments with predestination should be most evident in England, since it was here that the Industrial Revolution began.

Puritanism encouraged work rather than works, meaning magic, and this has a particular relevance to the idea of holy water as a sacrament. For common people, misfortunes, calamities, catastrophes, and sudden death were caused by the Devil and his malignant forces, and holy water was the solution to, and protection from, these adversaries. One of the parish clerks’ lucrative benefits consisted of holy water fees, which they collected while carrying holy water supplies to every household. ‘Holy’, or blessed, water gave lay-people a powerful religious weapon that could be used to ward off the Devil, cure illness and avoid death, as well as to protect fields, properties and husbandry. This was not ‘magic’ as such, because ‘the sacramentals were the basis for a genuinely lay Christianity, for they placed in the hands of the laity sources of holy power which were free from clerical control’ (Duffy 1993:212).

However, with the Reformation emphasising justification by faith alone, the qualities and powers of holy water became evidence of diabolic presence, which had to be combated by all means. Thus, one of the main problems for the early Protestants
was ‘that they removed magic from Christian ritual without countering the belief in magic’ (Caroll 1981:463).

**God and the Devil**

According to the medieval Church, the sacraments worked automatically (*ex opere operato*), regardless of the priest, whereas in most other ecclesiastical matters the rituals depended upon a good and moral officiating priest and a pious laity (*ex opera operantis*). The sacraments had immanent powers. In addition, former pagan beliefs and rituals such as the worship of wells, trees and stones had been modified and subsumed within Christian rites and remedies rather than abolished. In the process of this, the Church had been imbued with something of a magical aura (Thomas 1971:47-57). These beliefs strengthened the Catholic Church’s claim that it had the power to manipulate aspects of God’s supernatural power. Early Protestantism, on the other hand, ‘denied the magic of the opus operatum, the claim that the Church had instrumental power and had been endowed by Christ with an active share in his work and office. For human authority to claim the power to work miracles was blasphemy – a challenge to God’s omnipotence’ (Thomas 1971:51). The logic, as formulated in *The Doctrine of the Masse Booke* from 1554, was simple: If humans can drive away the Devil and deal both with the body and soul, what need do we have for Christ? (Thomas 1971:51).

The Catholic practice of exorcism has to be seen in this light. Satan was exorcised during the rite of baptism. Water was believed to have the power to deter Satan in both baptism and in other situations, and this belief itself was claimed by the Protestants to be the work of the Devil or even the Devil himself. This has to be understood in relation to the shift in emphasis regarding who the Devil was and what he represented.

Nathan Johnstone (2004, 2006) has argued that, in early modern England, Protestantism favoured a particular type of belief in the Devil. Although the Devil was also perceived in a personal form or body, the most characteristic feature of Protestantism’s demonology was temptation. The emphasis on
temptation was not a Protestant invention, rather the contrary, since it has been a general feature of belief in the Devil throughout the history of Christianity. Thomas Aquinas in particular focused on temptation in his works. However, where the Roman Catholic Church emphasised temptation as only one aspect or variety of the Devil's activities or character, Protestantism focused mainly or even solely on this aspect. Protestants believed that the true battle between them and the Catholic Church was between faith and sacraments, and that the ceremonies and doctrines associated with the latter had, for more than a millennium, been diabolic. This had its rationale in the Protestant understanding that demonism was an experiential reality and, indeed, one inflicted by God on His elect as a sign. Temptation was Satan's attack on individual Christians, and, although it could manifest itself in such concrete forms as lust, greed or avarice, it first and foremost took the shape of a mental and spiritual battle. Moreover, and, for the Protestants, fundamentally, God allowed diabolic temptation as a test of the faith of believers, but would not test His children beyond endurance. God had even tested Jesus. Against temptation, no holy water, bells or other remedies worked. The only remedy was prayer, which directed the devotee to God. Importantly, then, experiencing temptation was the sign that one was of the elect. Only truly ungodly humans could deny the Devil's temptations, and this could represent one of only two alternatives; either these individuals were already so corrupted that they could not recognise temptation, or they were already damned and therefore Satan was for the time being, leaving them in peace. Thus, when Catholics did not emphasise the inner struggle with the Devil as the most important aspect of the fight against Satan (fig. 1), Protestants took this to mean that they were already damned and corrupted by Satan (Johnstone 2004, 2006).

This had consequences for the sacraments and holy water. These Catholic 'magic' devices were declared to be sheer sorcery. The Edwardian Injunction of 1547 forbade the Christian from observing such practices as
'casting holy water upon his bed, ...bearing about him the holy bread, or St John’s Gospel, ...ringing of holy bells; or blessing with the holy candle, to the intent thereby to be discharged of the burden of sin, or to drive away Devils, or to put away dreams and fantasies; or...putting trust and confidence of health and salvation in the same ceremonies' (Thomas 1971:53).

Scory was one of the fix preachers and he asked rhetorically in 1543, do you think ‘that the Devil will be afraid or flee away from cross making, hurling of holy water, ringing of bells and such other ceremonies when he was not afraid to take Christ himself and cast him on his back and set him on a pinnacle?’ (Duffy 1993:213). For the Lollards, the sign of the cross could ‘avail to nothing else but to scare away flies’ (Thomas 1971:72).
**Holy Water and Sacramentals**

Where the highlighting of different discourses of belief within water culture is concerned, one group of objects of the utmost importance is the ‘sacramentals’. These objects have been used in benedictions and exorcism and represent a special category, since they have been blessed and used independently from the sacraments. From a theological perspective, the sacramentals did not work automatically (*ex opera operato*) in the way of the sacraments, which were divine *par excellence*. The sacramentals, unlike the sacraments, could be taken away from the church and the priests, and used by the commoners whenever they desired. In particular, holy water was a sacramental used by the laity in the household, in stables and on fields. When blessed items used in the liturgy, such as holy water and candles, were used outside the church by the laity, this was considered by the authorities to be misuse. Nevertheless, during the medieval period, the blessing of ‘holy water’ took place not only on Sundays, but also on numerous other occasions including certain saints’ days. Even though the church partly opposed this practice, the sacramentals were an efficacious remedy for the laity. Moreover, with regards to efficiency, the distinction between sacraments and sacramentals became blurred, and among common people it was generally believed that the sacramentals worked automatically (Scribner 1987:5-7, 39-41). The focus of the ritual relationship between the sacraments used in church and the sacramentals used by the laity concerned the application of holy water, mainly for apotropaic purposes or protective magic of two types; exorcism and the expulsion of evil spirits (Scribner 1987:36, fig. 2). There was no doubt that the laity believed that the sacramentals worked automatically and that they were effective remedies against witchcraft (Scribner 1987:262).

Thus, what characterises the belief in both holy water and the erstwhile pagan well cults is the idea that *water works*; it cured human illness and misfortune. In practice, this was operative religion working for the benefit of humans. It was divine intervention in daily miseries and calamities.
The effect was understood to be the same as if prayers had been granted, but the belief in water rituals was more explicit and direct – or material – than prayers, which were spiritual only. Holy water and water rituals in Christianity worked mainly at the mundane level, concerned with small, daily problems. Good husbandry and crops, the preservation of health and family wealth, and good fortune in daily activities were the main concerns for common people. In this respect, both the belief in and use of holy water as a sacramental were understood to be more efficacious than prayers in church. As Duffy argues, ‘the rhetoric and rationale at work in such incantations cannot sensibly be called pagan. Instead, they represent the appropriation and adaptation of lay needs and anxieties of a range of sacred gestures and prayers, along lines essentially faithful to the pattern established within the liturgy itself. This is not paganism, but lay Christianity’ (Duffy 1992:283).
**Water Cult and Worship**

Water worship remained banned into the twelfth century, but gradually, behind the anti-pagan facade, the old customs and pagan aspects of water worship began to be subsumed within Christianity. The total number of holy wells in Great Britain and Ireland amount to some 8000, and a conservative estimate for England is 2000. In Scotland, there might be nearly 1000, with another 1200 in Wales and at least 3000 in Ireland (Bord & Bord 1985:24). In the second half of the nineteenth century, the water cult and healing beliefs remained dominant within the English countryside (Hope 1893). In Wales, two-third of wells had some curative functions and, of some 1200 wells, 370 were exclusively healing wells (Bord & Bord 1985:34).

Since water was used in Christian rites such as baptism and hand-washing, well water was actively incorporated into the liturgy, and baptisteries and churches were built close to and, in some cases, over wells (Bord & Bord 1985:20). During the Christianisation of Britain, Christian ideology did not demand a total rejection of the old pagan gods. Rather, in accordance with the papal instructions to St. Augustine, pagan customs were converted ‘into Christian solemnity, and pagan temples into churches’. Missionary monks included wells in this approach (Mackinlay 1893:24-25). In the sixteenth century, European holy wells served as the centres for annual religious rites, including pilgrimages, well-dressing and votive offerings. These rites and sites were also featured in both Christian saints’ legends and folk tales of supernatural events.

The Reformation and, in particular, Calvinism attacked beliefs in holy water and wells as ‘popish magic and superstition’, with the result that holy wells became gradually relegated to the sphere of superstition (Gribben 1992:4, 16). In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Reformed Church went on the offensive, and monuments connected to superstition were put to profane use (Moreland 1973:200-201).

In 1565, Bishop Bentham of Lichfield and Coventry commanded the clergy to abolish all ‘monuments of idolatry and superstition’, meaning that the items now viewed as idols had to
be kept in secret places in the church (Aston 1988:319). 'We can only guess at the impact on their sense of the sacred when they saw the priest feed his swine from a trough which had once been the parish holy-water stoup... Elsewhere the holy-water stoups became the parish wash-troughs, sanctus and sacring bells were hung on sheep and cows, or used to call work-men to their dinner' (Duffy 1992:586).

Even though the Reformation tried to end water worship, the cult was so important and such an intrinsic part of culture and religion that it continued for centuries, with nobles and commoners alike making pilgrimages to the holy wells with the aim of attaining long life and prosperity. St Winefride's well at Holywell (Flintshire) was immensely popular. It was attacked by the Reformists, but the cult was too strong to be dismissed. In 1629, there were approximately 1500 people present on 3 November, St Winefride's Day. On 29 August 1686, King James II and his wife visited Holywell hoping that Winefride would bless them with a son (and in 1688, a son was indeed born to them). Charles I and his queen stayed for several weeks at Wellingborough (Northamptonshire) in both 1618 and 1637, so that the queen could take a treatment at the Red Well. Charles II is associated with two other wells. In 1617, King James VI ordered that St. Katherine's Balm Well in Edinburgh should be protected. During other periods, however, both the monarchy and the clergy did whatever they could to curtail water cult practices and beliefs, sometimes even resorting to outright destruction of the wells. On two occasions, the Well of the Virgin Mary at Seggat in Aberdeen was filled with stones, but the local people cleared it both times and the well continued to be a site of pilgrimage. The authorities were by no means consistent in their views towards holy wells. Henry VIII, for example, walked barefoot the last two miles to the Well of Our Lady at Walsingham (Norfolk), but subsequently took action against some holy wells (Bord & Bord 1985: 32-33, 95). This dual attitude testifies to the deep-rooted nature of the water-cult beliefs, despite Protestant damnation of the purported magical effects of water.
Thus there have been, throughout the history of Christianity in England, opposite and conflicting views of holy wells and the spiritual qualities of water. As the water cult was incorporated into Christianity, Christian festivals began to take place at the same time as many of the former pagan and Celtic festivals. These ritual dates were already sacred to devotees, and the Church therefore attempted to absorb the old religious practices rather than displace them (Bord & Bord 1985:55). The pervasive use of and belief in the waters from holy wells were integrated parts of culture and religion. The water was used for any protective, healing or curing purpose. In 1557, Cardinal Pole insisted in his Injunctions for Cambridge University that, since holy water was being stolen, the font should be locked up. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the baptism of animals such as horses, sheep, cats and dogs was attempted, since it was believed generally that animals would benefit from the rite (Thomas 1971:35‐37). According to a story from Scotland, the success of the holy well St Drostan's at Newdosk was so great that the local doctors planned to poison the well. When the local villagers heard of the doctors' plans, they came together to attack and kill the doctors. Whether or not they were successful is uncertain, but the tale testifies to the pervasiveness of belief in the curative effects of holy water (Bord & Bord 1985:46).

In the English countryside, the water cult and healing beliefs prevailed into the second half of the nineteenth century. This was not simply restricted to the laity. The fellows of New College in Oxford were reported to have worshipped at St. Bartholomew's Well every Holy Thursday (Hope 1893:124). Moreover, belief in holy water and the magical powers of wells in England have persisted into present times. When Veronica Strang conducted anthropological fieldwork amongst the inhabitants of Dorset and investigated their relationship with water, she found that the water cult was still strong, and that even non-Christians used words like 'aura' or 'mystical power' to describe holy water. Holy water was used on a number of occasions, including in funeral rites and, occasionally exorcisms (Strang 2004:93). Hence, in England, Christianity has been
closely connected to and defined by the water cult. Water was Christianity in practice, and the wells had in particular an important role.

**Nature as the Work of the Devil or God?**

Although the Protestant Church eliminated water beliefs as a positive manifestation of Christian belief, it was nonetheless still understood that they existed in the hands of the Devil; the history of malignant waters is long. Old Church fathers such as Origen, Jerome and Chrysostom believed that nature and all external materialities were diabolic and in need of combating. In the words of Chrysostom, one had to bring 'the beast under control' by 'banishing the flood of unworthy passions'. Aquinas, too, preached the necessity of human domination over the rest of the world (Harrison 1999:91). Tertullian, a third-century Church father, believed that water was highly attractive to demons and the Devil (Jensen 1993). Traditionally, water was seen as horrifying and dreadful; the repository of dangers and demons. The sea was seen to be evidence of the unfinished nature of creation; a primeval remnant engendering a strong sense of repulsion. In particular, Thomas Burnet’s *Theory of the Earth* (1681) had a special significance where this perspective was concerned, and was referred to throughout the eighteenth century (figs 3a & 3b). The sea was seen as the most frightful sight that nature could offer, and the seashore was considered nothing but the ruins of the world. The ocean was an abyss of debris (Corbin 1994:2-4), and the demonic nature of the sea justified exorcism. During the sixteenth century, sailors immersed relics in the waves (Corbin 1994:7). The sea was also seen as a purgatory and perceived to be an abyss of fire.

Nature was, therefore, understood to be a terrifying place. However, this view had its contradictions; on the one hand, nature was believed to be unfinished and literally the Devil’s place, but, on the other, the world was also seen as God’s perfect creation, with the latter perspective represented first and foremost by the hydrological cycle.
Natural theology was crucial to the process of erasing the earlier understanding of nature as repulsive; as it is written in Psalm 52, ‘The Lord is admirable in waters’. Natural theology marked a fundamental change in attitudes towards nature. Physio-theologians saw the external world as a spectacle gifted by God. One of the most popular books of the period was Theology of Water, or Essay on the Goodness, Wisdom, and Power of God published in 1734 by the German professor Johann Albert Fabricius (Corbin 1994:25). God had created a perfect external earth which ever since the Flood had been stable. The physio-theologians rejected the idea of a world in decline, allegedly the consequence of human corruption and sin. The main goal of natural theology was edification, underpinned by the concept that possession of the five senses had enabled humans to understand God’s work. It was possible to discern the religious meaning of the world through investigations of the workings of nature. Linnaeus’ systematic classification was based upon such a vision; one which revealed the plan of Creation. Hence, ‘a close link developed between the collector’s patience, the scholar’s curiosity, and the Christian’s piety’ (Corbin 1994:24).
Philosophers of the Enlightenment viewed the life-giving properties of water as a sign of God's love (Krolzik 1990). During the Enlightenment, water became the 'fountainhead' of spiritual knowledge and wisdom (Strang 2005:106) and the new understanding of the hydrological cycle in particular became the catalyst for a shift in attitudes towards nature. From being a dangerous and Devilish place, it came to be seen the place where God's master plan and perfect logic were revealed. During the period between ca. 1700 and 1850, the concept of the hydrological cycle was therefore a construct of natural theology rather than natural philosophy. The relationship between religion and science was intimate and structured around water (see Farnsworth 2010). Yi-Fu Tuan provides a detailed analysis of the development of the notion and understanding of the hydrological cycle in *The Hydrological Cycle and the Wisdom of God: a Theme in Geoteleology* (Tuan 1968). Scientists believed that by understanding nature they could obtain knowledge of the wisdom of God. Pierre Perrault's *Treatise on the Origin of Springs*, presented in 1674, was a hallmark in the scientific consideration of the hydrological cycle. According to Perrault, the water that falls to earth as rain and snow is both the cause and the origin of springs. Another key figure in this scientific progress was John Ray, who published *The Wisdom of God* in 1691. The work was highly successful. It was reprinted twelve times, most recently in 1827 (Tuan 1968:7). The hydrological cycle explained the occurrence of all geological and topographical features. The rivers were fed by rain, which also explained the existence of mountains, in that these enabled the waters to flow down to the fields and back to the sea. Floods were also necessary, in order to return surplus water to the sea once the earth was sated with rain (Tuan 1968:14).

Thus, following the Reformation and the emergence of natural theology, nature came to be seen as the product of God's wisdom, rather than the work of the Devil. This had severe consequences where the subsequent domination of the world by humans was concerned, for which the religious rationale was the need to reconstruct paradise on earth – in other words, to
perfect nature. The Protestant work ethic in particular highlighted the need for the Garden of Eden to be understood as an actual garden in which Adam had carried out agricultural work. Thus, as pious devotees, humans had to work, and the paradise God created was by its very nature a paradise that needed to be worked. God had made men, according to Bishop Lancelot Andrews (1555 –1626), ‘to labour, not to be idle’ (Harrison 1999:99-100).

The domination of the earth was therefore conceptualised as a recovered or restored domination, and thus closely related to the idea of the Fall. The world inherited by Adam and his descendents was not the earth in a natural state, but a suffering and cursed earth. Harrison argues that ‘the infertility of the ground, the ferocity of savage beasts, the existence of weeds, thorns, and thistles, of ugly toads and venomous serpents, all of these were painful remainders of the irretrievable loss of the paradisal earth’. Consequently, human ‘dominion is held out as the means by which the earth can be restored to its prelapsarian order of perfection’ (Harrison 1999:99-103). The infertile and cursed earth was a natural world lacking life-giving waters. God was the provider of water and divine penalties were effected through droughts, famines and catastrophes. Although the earth was created by God, it was, following the Fall, a harsh place that nevertheless revealed the wisdom of God. As faithful devotees, humans had a moral obligation to perfect nature by working towards returning it to its original state. The domination of nature was not embarked upon in the interests of exploiting resources. Rather, it was intended to erase the scars which humans had inflicted upon the earth as a result of the Fall. Bacon wrote that the aim was to ‘recover the light over nature which belongs to it by divine bequest’, and John Flavell wrote in 1669 that the aim was ‘a skilful and industrious improvement of the creatures leading to a fuller taste of Christ and Heaven’ (op. cit. Harrison 1999:99-103). However, Protestants also favoured the view that the natural world, albeit the lost Eden, was also the means by which, through floods and other natural disasters, God intervened and punished wrongdoers.
Disasters as God’s Penalisation and Baptism of the World

Although it was understood that the original Deluge annihilated humanity, it came to be seen not only as a hostile and destructive force, but also as the ultimate baptism that saved the world. This view was common in the writing of the early Fathers. After the Flood, the world emerged purified and free from sin. Cyprian made this comparison explicit, referring to the Flood as ‘that baptism of the world’ (fig. 4).

The equation of the Ark and the Church is also reflected in the Anglican rite of baptism (Book of Common Prayer, p. 323). Thus, with a basis in the Bible, major catastrophes and disasters were commonly seen as God’s response to and penalisation of sin, and consequently, human misfortunes were linked directly to the environment in which they lived and the catastrophes they faced. In the Homilies, penury, famines and death were caused by God’s anger and wrath, and the Bible showed that God sent plagues and misfortunes as punishment for collective sin. This was a belief shared by commoners. In 1653, Zachary Bogan published A View of the Threats and Punishments Recorded in the Scriptures, comprising over six hundred pages of calculations of appropriate punishments for every possible sin, including adultery and blasphemy.

The underlying belief was that obedience to God’s commandments would ensure wealth and prosperity. A female secretary is reported to have confessed during the Interregnum that she became depressed when she saw that her neighbours were more prosperous than her, concluding that they had prayed more than her (Thomas 1971:88). ‘This general assumption that virtue and vice would gain their true deserts acted as a powerful sanction for the morality of the day’ (Thomas 1971:92).

This is in accordance with Weber’s thesis that elect status was reflected in success and the accumulation of wealth (Weber 2006). However, Weber did not pay much attention to the implicit consequences at the other end of the social and religious scale.
'The course of worldly events could thus be seen as the working-out of God's judgements. This was but a refinement of the more basic assumption that the material environment responded to man's moral behaviour' (Thomas 1971:89).
Fig. 5. The devastating 1607 flood at Burnham-On-Sea and the Bristol Channel. The commemorative plaque in entrance to the All Saints Church, Kingston Seymour, Somerset, reads: ‘An inundation of the sea water by overflowing and breaking down the Sea banks; happened in this Parish of Kingstone-Seamore, and many others adjoining; by reason whereof many Persons were drown'd and much Cattle and Goods, were lost: the water in the Church was five feet high and the greatest part lay on the ground about ten days. William Bower.’

Hence, while true Christianity was evident in wealth and economic success, calamities and human suffering reflected moral disgrace and the sinful state of communities afflicted in this way.

The clergy identified scapegoats responsible for the communal experience of plagues, storms, floods and fires (Thomas 1971:83-87). A prostitute was blamed for the plague of 1665 at Hitchin. Catholics blamed Reformers for misfortunes and plagues. The 1666 Great Fire of London was seen by the clergy as a punishment for sins conducted by, and harming, most citizens. The Dutch, then at war with England, saw the fire as a divine judgement imposed upon their enemy, and the Spanish emphasised that a Catholic chapel in the Strand had miraculously
not been burnt, which clearly showed that the fire had had the sole purpose of penalising Protestant heretics. Moreover, the fire was also seen as a sign of the onset of Doomsday and the start of a new millennium; the year contained the number of the Beast – 666 (Thomas 1971:105, 141). In the seventeenth century, floods were seen as God’s chosen instruments for cleansing the corrupt earth (fig. 5) and it was claimed locally that the area beside Dagenham near the Thames was the site of the original Deluge. Also implicit in the concept of holy condemnation was the idea that the uncorrupted would not be harmed (Ackroyd 2007:355).

Conclusion
Although Weber may be correct in arguing that the Protestant ethic created a spirit of capitalism, his premise that magic, including the sacramental force as a means of salvation, was thereby eliminated from the world, does not stand in the case of England. To the contrary, even though the Church tried to erase all belief in magic in general, and in holy water in particular, the water cult was so strong that it persisted alongside Protestantism and capitalism, and, furthermore, one may argue that it defined lay Christianity. The Protestants developed a coherent theological system whereby salvation was to be attained by justification alone; the Devil and his forces were for the most part inner temptations, and, consequently, rites and rituals, including the belief in the efficacy of holy water, were the work of the Devil. This belief system did not go far enough towards meeting the religious demands of the laity, which faced misfortunes, calamities and sudden deaths amongst itself and its animals. These were seen as the works of an external Devil, against whom holy water was understood to act as an apotropaic device. When nature began to be viewed as the original Eden in a deteriorated condition, it is arguable that this led to the domestication and industrialisation of nature in the interests of perfecting God’s creation. Regardless of whether they are God- or Satan-inspired, these worldviews are religious ones. According to Weber’s argument, fortunate and prosperous capitalists may have been able to perceive themselves as the elect of God, but for
common people the opposite was the reality – a point with which Weber did not engage. Even when it was believed that the world was the unfinished product of the Devil, the implication was that the non-elect – the victims of floods, plagues and other disasters – were being penalised by God for their sinful behaviour. It is arguable, therefore, that the Christian water world of pre-industrial England became more sacralised when the natural world came to be seen as God's original Paradise on earth, and belief in the magical and healing qualities of holy water remained fundamental to lay Christianity long after England’s industrialisation.

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Ideas of Leisure, Pleasure and the River in Early Modern England

Karen V. Lykke Syse

Introduction
From the earliest stages of human development, rivers have been central to the way in which we perceive life. From the Ganges to the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates, rivers have been worshipped and venerated. Civilisation has grown up around rivers, tied societies together and kept cultures apart. Rivers have always been highways and frontiers. They have had, and continue to have, multivariate uses. They are sources of water and energy, and the basis of social power. Their importance as networks for transport and travel is undisputable. Although the actual materiality of the river has always been useful to humans, rivers are also associated with a rich symbolism. Rivers have been used as metaphors for most aspects of being human. They symbolise birth and rebirth, life and death, the passage from life to death. Rivers are borders, not only material borders between properties, counties or countries, but also borders between life and death. In western mythology, the river Styx is perhaps the best known example of this. The river is a body of water that is forever flowing and never the same; as such, it is the embodiment of liminality. In many cultures, rivers are divine. In Britain, the Druids worshipped rivers, something which has been noted by historians like Gildas as early as the 6th century (Gildas, 1841:355-360). In Celtic culture, the river deities were often female. The Anglo-Celtic goddess Latis was associated with water. She was originally a lake goddess who fell passionately in love with a salmon.

Most Gallic rivers are named after mother-goddesses, and most Celtic river names are also female (Rekdal, 2006). Other British rivers, like the Thames, for instance, were male deities. As such, British rivers are also liminal with regard to the gender
with which they are associated. The rich symbolism and liminality of rivers can be used to explain why, historically, they have played such interesting roles as venues for leisure. Beyond this, the leisure activities particular to the vicinity of rivers had many unique characteristics. For example, leisure centred around rivers involved more fluid borders between class and gender than that which one would otherwise expect to find in early modern England (Walton, 1983).

During early modern times, rivers were considered dangerous. If the role of water in everyday life is taken into account, this is not surprising. People needed to be in direct contact with rivers, streams and other open sources of fresh water in order to carry out their daily activities. Buckets and tubs of water were needed for animals to drink, and for various household chores in and around the house or farm. Children were warned to stay away from rivers and their treacherous currents; the risk of drowning was great, making riverbanks dangerous places. Coroners' records from the sixteenth century show that as many as 53 per cent of all accidental deaths were caused by drowning (Towner and Towner, 2000:102-105). Rivers themselves gave rise to damp chills, vapours and fog, all of which were considered unhealthy and dangerous. Flood records show that even meandering rivers, although most of the time fairly benign, could suddenly swallow up fields and houses and tear away bridges (Ackroyd, 2007:183 and 221). People who worked on rivers were also considered dangerous. Not only did they occasionally master something that frightened other people, but they also had the river as an arena for their everyday lives. The ferryman, although engaged in a most practical job, was also a symbol of the crossing from the land of the living to the land of the dead. River people knew where the treacherous currents were, and they had the power to extend or withdraw services on which many people living by the river were dependent. Bargees, watermen and river gypsies existed as a separate and exclusive caste, which, to outsiders, had a reputation for violence and theft. Their members married and intermarried. They were known for their unconventional fishing practices, they knew where
medicinal plants grew along the riverbeds, and were often referred to in the same way as witches. Perhaps this was because they held knowledge about the river that most people feared as an unknown entity.

The river was physically unstable, and it eluded social control. An example of this lack of social control is that on the river everyone felt free to swear, and a term for swearing was actually ‘water-language’, comparable to ‘gutter language’ — another metaphor linking class and water. One of the best-known references to the river’s questionable effect on one’s vocabulary is perhaps in Jerome’s Three Men in a Boat:

‘The mildest tempered people, when on land, become violent and blood-thirsty when in a boat. I did a little boating once with a young lady. She was naturally of the sweetest and gentlest disposition imaginable, but on the river it was quite awful to hear her’ (Jerome et al., 1998:151).

Although the river was perilous, it was also purifying; not because its water was necessary for washing, but in a more spiritual way. During witches’ trials, it was widely held to be possible to assess whether or not the accused was guilty by seeing whether she would float or sink when thrown in the river. It is perhaps less well known that the river was also used to purify bad language. A so called ducking chair (fig. 1) was attached to a rope, and any foul mouthed ‘scold’ would be tied to the chair and ducked in the water three times to ensure her purification (Fletcher, 1995:273, MacFarlane, 1847:68).

Even if the river was, in this sense, considered purifying and sometimes benign, it was mostly regarded as hazardous, and the people who mastered it were viewed as disreputable (Wigglesworth and Foot, 1992:43). There was, however, one exception; lock keepers were looked upon as jovial and amicable characters. During the early period of industrialisation in Britain, in cases where the river was directed, held, sluiced and thereby tamed, it became less dangerous, and the people responsible for harnessing it were similarly considered less threatening. This
might also be connected to the period in which the river became an important arena for leisure in early modern England.

Although use of the concept 'leisure' in pre-modern historiography is contested and often referred to as an anachronism (Burke, 1995, Rabinow and Rose, 2003), the first definition of leisure is actually to be found in the early fourteenth century. It had the same meaning as today, which is freedom from work. Furthermore, the term 'weekend' entered the English language as early as 1638 (Merriam-Webster, 2004). Even if many people had little freedom from work, if any at all, Sunday had more or less been a day of leisure since Christianity arrived in England in the third century. If we take a long-term perspective, we can in fact see the slow evolution of leisure-consciousness emerging amongst the privileged classes sometime between 1300 and 1800. This development might be related to social control and civilising processes (Elias and Howell, 1999). Whatever the fundamental dynamics might be, there were undoubtedly a range of specific arenas in which leisure activities began to take place. The special lure of riverine and riparian landscapes was clearly evident from the medieval
period onwards. Although Britain is an island, more people had access to its rivers than its ocean. River swimming was well established before the growth in resorts and spas by the sea (Hembry, 1990). Certainly, benign rivers were necessary for these early leisure pursuits. What happened when the river became an increasingly popular venue for recreation, and what kinds of recreation evolved? Below, I present three leisure activities conducted alongside the river, on the river and in the river.

**Angling**

Perhaps the most well known recreational pastime undertaken alongside the river is angling. The first significant surviving work we know of in relation to angling is the *Treatyse of Fysshynge Wyth an Angle*, purportedly written by Dame Juliana Berners in 1496. The book contains beautiful illustrations of tackle, and a sharp woodcut of an angler using a rod with line and float, which is probably the first British illustration of the sport. Contemporary sources argue that Dame Juliana did not write the text herself. Even so, this is the first work that is a real manual with detailed instructions on all the important aspects of making tackle as well as using it. There are instructions on bait, hooks, floats, and on the construction of lines and rods. She even provides templates from which to make flies associated with the different months of the year. Although Dame Juliana’s authorship is questionable, her name is associated indisputably with this first record of British angling (Radcliffe, 1921).

There are other works on fishing, such as John Dennys *Secrets of Angling* (1613) and Gervase Markham’s section ‘The Art of Angling’ in *Cheape and Goode Husbandry* (1614) but, nevertheless, the most significant early modern book about fishing is Izaak Walton’s *Compleat Angler* (1653). In fact, well outside the angling community, *The Compleat Angler* is considered to be one of the most important English books ever written; only the Bible has been published in more editions.

Through his main character, Piscatore, Izaak Walton conveys Renaissance ideals built on the concept of the pastoral. Piscatore,
Izaak Walton’s angler, approaches the river as both a philosopher and scientist. One of his many philosophical contemplations lingers on the pleasure and importance of leisure. ‘Twas an employment for his idle time, which was not idly spent’ (Walton, 1653:33) . The ideal angler is a wise man, just as Bishop Joseph Hall describes in 1631: ‘he is both an apt scholler and an excellent master; for both everything he sees informs him, and his mind enriched with plentiful observation, can give the best precepts. His free discourse runs backe to ages past(...)’ (Joseph Hall after Røstvig, 1954:159). For Walton, angling was not only the idle pursuit of catching fish. Rather, it was an occasion for contemplating nature, and obtaining supporting evidence for observations and reflections on nature through engagement with the natural sciences. Nature, as God’s creation, was explained to the reader through science. This connection between the theology of nature and natural science makes The Compleat Angler particularly interesting; understanding nature was an acknowledgement of the significance of God’s creation (Mostue, 1999:53). As such, engaging with the river and explaining it through natural science became both a pleasure and a calling. Walton also justifies angling as a form of idleness that can be justified as contemplation as well as food-gathering. Following this, we might ask who is going fishing, as the constituency for the book in class terms is evidently Izaak Walton’s circle of literate contemporaries rather than one of fishermen or milkmaids. Walton’s choice of genre reflects his own and his reader's social placement and literary knowledge. It is perhaps fitting that he uses the pastoral genre while explaining how a utilitarian task such as fishing for food can become the epitome of leisure. Izaak Walton regarded angling as the perfect compromise between the social need for peace and civility, and the individual need for excitement and fraternity (Franklin, 2001). This perfect compromise is conducted beside the water but nonetheless involves significant interaction with it (fig. 2).
Although the gendered term `fraternity' was often used in texts, angling was considered a suitable riverside pastime for both men and women. Even if the early literature on angling only hints at this, there are several other sources that emphasise female
participation in angling in Britain from the early seventeenth century onwards. This is discussed thoroughly in Nicholas D. Smith’s article ‘Reel Women: Women and Angling in Eighteenth-Century England’ (Smith, 2003). Smith’s historiography of female anglers extends back to mid-seventeenth-century England and offers the basis for an understanding of the social milieu of eighteenth-century angling culture. Smith’s work demonstrates the existence of an essential ambivalence regarding the social and cultural position of female anglers. He argues that the legitimacy of angling as a leisure pursuit for women began to be questioned towards the end of the eighteenth century. The questions that evolved related to the idea of humanity towards animals and whether women in general ought to partake in cruel amusements. Sentiments like this were, according to Keith Thomas (1984), part of the transition to a more modern perception of nature. Without dismissing either questions of sensitivity towards nature or the evolving differences between ‘suitable’ leisure activities for men and women, it is possible to argue that, through angling, the river was mastered by both sexes in early modern England, and that female angling has been common for a long time (Smith, 2003). As discussed, it is accepted that the river has long been a place for food gathering by different classes and both genders. However, early modern sources also demonstrate how the river became an established venue for contemplative leisure in pre-industrial England.

Swimming
Learning how to swim was another leisure-time way of mastering the river. In the present, swimming is an activity readily associated with sunny holidays and rural venues. In what ways were rivers used for swimming in the past? Sources that might help unveil the cultural and social history of swimming in pre-industrial England are difficult to locate. This is surprising, because swimming is such a widely practiced activity. In an attempt to remedy the situation, the historian Nicholas Orme conducted some impressive ground research in 1983 with Early British Swimming (Orme, 1983), but few others have been
inspired to augment the historiography. The next major work on swimming was Christopher Love's *A Social History of Swimming in England 1800-1918*. Although Love fills in many gaps in our understanding of swimming during this later period, the swimming habits of the English during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are still relatively unexplored.

Early literary sources such as Ovid and Cicero describe swimming as a healthy and manly activity, and a pleasurable way of passing time (Orme, 1983:5). Anglo-Saxon and Viking sources show that the Roman tradition of swimming continued to be practiced in England. However, by the medieval period there was probably a decline in the number of people who mastered the skill. Throughout this period, it seems as if swimming was mainly a male activity, even if there are occasional references to female participation. In the sixteenth century, the Renaissance stimulated interest in swimming, and it is in the same period that we get the first treatises on swimming (Orme, 1983:6-40).

Swimming techniques and venues did not seem to change during the centuries that followed the Roman period, but the interest in swimming grew. According to Orme there are three reasons for this new interest. One was biblical scholarship, which allowed more people to understand and interpret biblical references to swimming. Secondly, overseas expansion leading to contact with cultures and nations where swimming was practised also supported the new interest in mastering aquatic skills. Finally, and probably most importantly, classical studies reemphasised swimming as a skill one ought to master (Orme, 1983:51). Heroes swim, and warriors swim. In *Utopia* (published 1516-17), Thomas More refers to the armour of Utopia’s soldiers, which was so light and strong that it was possible to swim in it (More et al., 1852:168). Only two years later, the headmasters of Eton and Winchester published a series of sentences that were considered easy for boys to translate to Latin; one of them was *Children do learn to swim leaning upon the rind of a tree*, and another was *learn to swim without a cork* (Orme, 1983:51). The River Thames was probably the closest venue for teaching young Etonian boys to swim. Later, during Tudor times, the tutor Sir J.
Elyot advised young boys to take part in various forms of amusement including tennis, wrestling, running and swimming (Thornbury, 1856:402).

Nevertheless, the earliest swimming manual written in English is by Everard Digby who wrote *A short Introduction for to learne to Swimme* in Latin in 1587. An English translation followed in 1595 (Digby, 1587, Digby and Middleton, 1595). For the purposes of this chapter, the beautiful and at times amusing illustrations and commentaries in *A short Introduction for to learne to Swimme* are perhaps just as interesting as the actual swimming instructions themselves. In all of the plates, the venue for swimming and swimming instruction is a river. In fact, there are no references to the sea at all. Digby is exhaustive in his explanation of the ideal place in to learn to swim:

'In the place is two things especially to be respected. First, that the banks be not overgrown with rank thick grass where oft-times do lie and lurk many stinging serpents and poisoned toads; not full of thorns, briars, stubs or thistles which may offend the bare feet, but that the grass be short, thin and green, the bank beset with shady trees which may be a shelter from the wind and shadow from the parching head of the sun. Next, that the water itself be clear, not troubled with any kind of slimy filth which is very infectious to the skin; that the breadth, depth and length thereof be sufficiently known; that it be not muddy at the bottom, lest by much treading, the filth rising up from the bottom thicken the water, and so make it unfit for that purpose' (Digby and Middleton, 1595:15-16).

Digby's riparian venue is also the pastoral ideal. Indeed, the illustrations show both men in ruffs pulling off their garments and cattle grazing along the riverbanks.
Fig. 3. Swimmers from Percey's *Compleat Swimmer* in 1658.
In the seventeenth century, judging by the number of sources that mention swimming, it seems as if the delights of the river were becoming increasingly popular. Digby's *A short Introduction for to learnne to Swimme* was in part plagiarised by William Percey, who published the *Compleat Swimmer* in 1658, an unacknowledged English translation of Digby's manual that included some of Percey's own comments (fig. 3):

‘To proceed to declare the ends of swimming, they are many: some delight herein, to cool themselves from the parching beams of the Sun, to clearifie their bodies of sweat, to whiten and purifie the skin: others use this excellent Art for the delight and pleasure of the exercise, others practise this Art to fortifie themselves for the danger of waters (...)’ (Percey, 1658:3)

The passage above identifies three aspects of the river (and of swimming). Firstly, there is a recreational value associated with delight, pleasure and exercise. Secondly, that the clearifying, whitening and refreshing water itself has purification qualities, and finally, that it is dangerous. However, Percy also shows how, if one follows the rules set out in the book, it is possible to conquer the dangerous aspects of the river. These rules include timing; only swim during the months of May, June, July and August (ibid:9) and only swim during daytime ‘because the Devil lurks in deep waters, and other dangers do also occur’ such ‘as fumes and thick poisonous vapours in the Air by reason of the absence of the Sun’ (ibid: 11). One must not swim every day, nor when it rains. The days and hours of the change or new moon are also particularly bad for swimming. Like Walton before him, Percy conveys how natural science, and acute observation of one’s surroundings, can be used to understand and overcome the dangers of the river.

Percy also emphasises the importance of finding the right sort of riverbanks. He argues that they should be of gravel rather than sand or mud, which was dangerous, and that they should preferably be adjacent to pleasant meadows of green grass. This is because after one's swim, it is beneficial to run around in the
grass while chewing on a piece of bread to satisfy the hunger one always gets from swimming. The text conveys how 'many things may be done in the water, that cannot be performed on land'.

Fig. 4. Paring ones toes in the river. From Christofer Middleton's 1595 translation of Everard Digby's De Arte natandi (1587).
The author has tried to kiss his toes while standing on the land and found it impossible, yet he claims it can be done with ease in the water. This is depicted, along with instructions on using the river as a place in which to cut toenails (fig. 4):

'holding a knife in your right hand, lift up your left leg, and with it draw your foot to your right knee: being thus ordered, take hold of it with your left hand; and being thus held, take hold of your Toes with your right hand; touch them and handle them as you please, and pare them at pleasure; for you may safely do it, and without danger' (ibid:62).

Although Percey’s swimming was a leisure activity, the action described above also integrated an aspect of utility. Water was an aid to cleanliness and hygiene in a hands-on, practical way. Moreover, the passage above reflects how the art of swimming provides total control of both the element and the body. Reading the Compleat Swimmer shows how the river has been used as a place of enjoyment by children and adults unable to swim, but nonetheless able to bathe in it. Although we have no statistics of swimming ability in early modern England, it was arguably not general knowledge. Texts like the Compleat Swimmer and the Art of Swimming contain the first written traces of an ideology aimed at physically mastering nature. Swimming was literally a full immersion of the river. Such immersion was also considered beneficial to health, and so the history of swimming cannot be isolated from the ongoing discourse regarding the benefits of water in general.

The physician Sir John Floyer (1649-1734) recorded the remedial use of certain springs by the countrymen in his neighbourhood, and explored the history of coldwater bathing. In 1702, he published Psychrolousia, Or, the History of Cold Bathing, both Ancient and Modern. Interestingly, the book makes a rational connection between religious ideas of healing and evidential science, tracing the history of both medicinal and magical, or sacramental, healing to ancient times:
‘Natural Religion, invented by our Rational Faculties, and grounded on the Vertues of Cold Immersion, which might by some accident be then discovered; the use of Water being so frequent, and the most natural and easy Method for cleansing of the Body, and that was thought by the Common People to cleanse away Sin; but by the Philosopher to represent and produce an inward Purity in the Mind; for which reason all Mankind used to wash themselves before their Sacrifices, and both Religious and Medicinal Immersions must be as ancient as Sacrifices themselves’ (Floyer and Baynard, 1715:2).

Floyer’s evidential historiography became popular. Within a few years, the book ran through six editions. Other writers continued the tradition. Dr John Summers of Bath wrote *A short account of the success of warm bathing in paralytic disorders* (Summers, 1751). Dr John Fothergill set up his *Rules for the Preservation of Health Being the Result of Many Years Practice* (Fothergill, 1762). Dr James Currie (1756-1805) of Liverpool followed with his *Medical Reports on the Effects of Water, Cold and Warm, as a Remedy in Fevers and Other Diseases* (1797). Currie also discussed scientifically the benefits of water. Societies to promote the benefits of water immersion were by this point being formed across Britain. Hydrotherapy became highly popular, and, in the eighteenth century, a vast number of water-based health regimes evolved. Whole towns were erected on the basis of the health-giving properties of water, most of which were located in southern England. Epson was highly popular between 1690 and 1710, as was Tunbridge Wells. Scarborough and Bath came into vogue in the 1720's (Hembry, 1990:355-360). A series of spas were established in the early eighteenth century, with sea-bathing emerging as an elite practice in the 1720s (Pimlott, 1947:51-52).

By the end of the seventeenth century, even the philosopher John Locke could extol the health benefits of swimming in terms of its provision of exercise and exposure to the open air (Locke, 1693). During the early eighteenth century, practical and scientific discussions on the benefits of swimming were coupled with a new literary interest in the ‘noble savage’ living in barely
explored territories across the globe (Orme, 1983). By the early eighteenth century, the river was well established as a place for bathing and swimming, with bathing stations and bathing machines easing access from the riverbanks. The fashion-conscious had followed the river's current out towards the seaside resorts, and swimming in the sea became all the rage. The health benefits of salt water lured the leisure-seeking public towards the coast, while rivers, if not polluted by industry, remained a venue for bathing, dipping and swimming for a cross-section of social classes. Water was now controllable not only by the human mind, as with the building of bridges, mills and canals through engineering, but by the body. Previously, most bathing had been passive ducking, but through swimming the element was more actively embraced. On entering the liminal element of the river, one showed full mastery of the natural world. English rivers seemed perfectly suited for swimming, and perhaps this is why swimming as a sport was first established here. In the nineteenth century – the high period of sporting development – formally organised swimming emerged in England ahead of any other country. As early as 1837, the first swimming competitions were established (Love, 2007). The first Women’s Championship was instituted in 1901, and, in the 1912 Olympics, female swimmers competed for the first time. Women's swimming did much to advance women's rights, as many early female swimmers set overall world records, overtaking their male counterparts in terms of both speed and distance, something that put extra emphasis on the question of equality of the sexes.

**Rowing and Sculling**

The first reference to a ‘regata’ appeared in Venetian documentation; Venice’s dependence on water transport provided a natural venue for the evolution of medieval and Renaissance water festivals. By 1315, the Venetian regatta included boat races amongst other forms of aquatic display and entertainment (Dodd, 1992). Although a great number of rivers intersect England, and although these rivers were imperative for transport in mediaeval and early modern times, boating for
leisure was established later than either angling or swimming. In other words, rowing for leisure differs from the two other activities described above. Although both angling and swimming were useful activities of sorts, they did not develop out of a profession. As explained above, angling was a well-established pastime in the late fifteenth century, and swimming and bathing were relatively common pastimes in the late sixteenth century. Yet it was probably not until the eighteenth century that rowing emerged as a leisure activity, certainly in terms of being organised in any formal way (fig. 5). Rowing was an activity connected to transport (and fishing) across the sea and on rivers. There are several references to such transport in English history throughout Roman, Saxon and Viking times. King Harold’s defeat at Stanford Bridge is well known, and in later sources there are many references to the importance of rowing.

In the sixteenth century, the inland waterway trade was already thriving, and extra navigation channels had been cut to ease access throughout the island. London’s river-based transport system was expansive in comparison to other British cities. It was the biggest city in Europe, a Venice of the North. The River Thames had its own estuarine peculiarities. Even so, the technology and usage that developed here was not isolated from the rest of the island. Samuel Pepys’ diary shows how the Thames was used as a highway; there are more references to Pepys ‘going by water’ than by coach on his various businesses. On the 1st of May in 1664 he wrote:

‘(Lord’s day). Lay long in bed. Went not to church, but stayed at home to examine my last night’s accounts, which I find right, and that I am 908l creditor in the world, the same I was last month. Dined, and after dinner down by water with my wife and Besse with great pleasure as low as Greenwich and so back, playing as it were leisurely upon the water to Deptford, where I landed and sent my wife up higher to land below Half-way house. I to the King’s yard and there spoke about several businesses with the officers, and so with Mr. Wayth consulting about canvas, to Half-way house where my wife was, and after
Samuel Pepys and his contemporaries were utterly dependent on the watermen and barges for transport. Even so, we hear of no recreational races in the late sixteen hundreds. However, in 1715 Thomas Doggett established a race for watermen on the Tideway in London, with a prize of a coat and a special badge (Halladay, 1990:8). The race established by Doggett was for the professional watermen themselves to participate in, in competition against each other. 'Dogget's coat and badge race' is still held annually. Not until 1775 do we find sources that refer to a major water festival and regatta in England. This first formal regatta with open participation for amateurs took place in 1775, and the participating boats were referred to as 'vessels of pleasure', which means that these were not working boats (ibid:254). In 1793, the first recorded Procession of the Boats
was held at Eton College, and the custom of organizing groups of boys from the same master’s house to obtain a boat for pleasure, exercise or to compete with another house, was institutionalized. Rowing races became festive occasions and rowing itself became a spectator sport. The Henley regatta, established in 1839, is perhaps the best known of these races. Since the amateur rowers had no chance of beating the professional watermen at racing, they formed their own clubs, excluding those who performed manual labour. Although class bias excluded watermen from participating in these particular races, they still raced against each other, as they could not be excluded from the river itself. 'Wager' racing could supplement a waterman’s income, and as they were paid about the same as household staff, they would supplement this income by extra gratuities for fast passages (Wigglesworth and Foot, 1992:17).

As early as 1814, only 40 years after male amateurs started competing formally, a regatta held in Chester included a race for women. The following year, the first college boat club was organized at Oxford University, and in 1829, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge began to compete against each other. By 1839, the Henley Regatta was formalised by the newly-established Amateur Club. (Wigglesworth, 1986:205).

Interestingly, these amateurs ‘took on’ the suspect and dangerous element of the watermen, and began to master the danger of the river while at the same time pursuing what had now become a laudable pastime. Rowing and sculling was healthy for body and soul, and did not involve drinking or other vices. In 1886, F.J. Furnivall founded the Hammersmith Sculling Club for Girls and Men due to his belief that ‘the exclusion of women from aquatic sport was pernicious’. He encouraged working-class women to row, and espoused the merits of sculling over the moral perils of alternative pastimes such as gambling (Wigglesworth, 1986:107). In 1880, Lady Grenville believed it ‘essential that every English girl should learn to row since now that everything is changed it is seen to be the very best thing for her’ (Grenville, 1880). The date 1880 is significant, because women’s intellectual and political emancipation had
started to emerge in the 1870’s, most notably with the Women’s Property Act of 1870 and the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1878 (Wigglesworth, 1986:107). Even though it is easy to trace women’s entry into the sport of rowing, it is also easy to distinguish the prejudice and exclusion flagged up by the standpoint taken by various amateur rowing clubs. Nevertheless, women elbowed their way in, thereby challenging the biased ideological status quo.

**Conclusion**

With respect to leisure, the river has been a site of special social significance in many ways. However, it has been of particular importance where ideas of gender are concerned. A point worthy of consideration is that of the river’s symbolic liminality and its ‘otherness’, which might have served to enable its use as an arena for leisure across established social structures. The river was, and is, the front to another world, a world where social class and gender are differently ordered. The river was central to the way in which the idea and ideologies of leisure unfolded in Britain from the 1300s onwards. This has not been sufficiently recognised, and the omission needs rectifying, particularly since the examination and contemplation of the extent and nature of river-based leisure activities can shed new light on the wider socio-cultural landscape of Britain.

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A River Does Indeed Run Through It: 
Angling and Society in Britain Since 1800

Richard Coopey

Introduction
Angling, it is often noted, is the most popular participation pastime in Britain. This chapter will examine the nature of angling as a sport or leisure activity, tracing both its growth and importance, and the changing nature and meaning of angling to those participating. We will establish the fundamental point that there are, and have been, ‘many anglings’ – that the sport has taken on a wide variety of forms, and has appealed to a very varied cross-section of society, each of which has imbued it with a complex range of meanings. The chapter will also reprise the recent trends in the history of British society and the history of sport and leisure, locating the history of angling among the central debates. The history of sport and leisure has expanded considerably in the last decade (see works by Richard Holt, Jeffrey Hill, John Walvin and John Walton, for example) and much has been made of debates over social control, rational recreation, class, professionalisation, and the role of the media. Angling, however, has been very poorly served by this expansion of interest, with only John Lowerson's articles carrying scholarly weight. (Lowerson, 1988, 1989) Within a general social history of angling in Britain, issues raised in this chapter will include class and gender, regionalisation versus national standardisation and homogeneity in angling, the urban-rural divide, and angling and nature – particularly attitudes towards the environment and environmentalism among anglers and the ways these change over time. The chapter will also introduce key hypotheses, notably the trend towards the industrialisation of culture and recreation in Britain, and the place of angling in the shifting relationship between human society and an understanding of nature in the modern world.
There are broad phases identifiable within the history of angling, and the identification of these establishes a new outlook for the study of sport and leisure. The chapter will demonstrate that angling as a sport and pastime, with its range of varieties, methods and constituencies, was established in its modern form by the early part of the 20th century. Methods, rules, technologies, organisations and cultural boundaries were all fixed by the end of this period. There then began a period of conservatism, constructed nostalgia and tradition, which lasted until roughly the end of the 1960s. This was subsequently replaced by a new dominant paradigm, based partly on changes in technology, but also part of a mental re-alignment in British society, which reshaped concepts of nature, leisure and, above all, class aspiration. Notions of affluence, the commercialisation of many aspects of leisure fishing, and the drive for a post-industrial existence drove increasing numbers of anglers to identify themselves with a new concept of angling involving the quest for separateness, and specialisation. This reshaped the nature of both game fishing and course fishing in profound ways and set the scene for the further development of angling in the 21st century. These new trends also saw a re-emphasis on angling in rivers.

**The Art of Angling in Britain**

Freshwater fishing originated as a form of cultivation for food. As might be expected, during the medieval period monasteries, and those with rights and access to them, built and exploited water resources for the propagation of fish which have since disappeared from the British diet – for instance, carp, pike, perch and eels. Rivers were universally netted for both domestic and migratory fish, including salmon, shad, lampreys and eels, under a regime of local and national rights and charters. The major conflict over river rights was unlikely to have been related to angling, but would probably have revolved around disputes between boatmen, millers and commercial fishermen, variously seeking free navigation, free flowing or impounded water for mills or the most advantageous site for fishing ‘engines’.
Fig. 1. A drawn at Somerly. From Cholmondeley-Pennell 1889.
From the early modern period the gentlemanly sport of angling, popularised by Isaac Walton (and Charles Cotton) in the mid-17th century, began to develop. Walton and his peers, with their arcane views on natural philosophy, were interested in food, but they also introduced the notion of leisure and stimulation in the ‘art’ of angling (fig. 1). In this volume, Karen V. Lykke Syse describes the development of angling in the early modern period, epitomised by Walton’s gentleman angler, engaging in a ‘sport’ only in as far as it meshed with a broader trend in philosophical enquiry. For the development of angling as a sport, with attendant methods and meanings, and relationships to other sports and pastimes, considered within the debates on ‘sportisation’ and society, we need to move forward in time, into the eighteenth and nineteenth century and begin to construct the constituency of angling during a period before the formal constructions of modern, twentieth-century leisure time.

One of the fundamental divides in angling in Britain is that between coarse and game fishing. Game fishing refers to angling for trout and salmon; coarse fish comprise all other species (fig. 2). Today this divide would be further defined perhaps into those fish which are edible, and those which are not (though this division would not pertain to earlier periods when almost all fish in rivers would have been eaten, with the exception of the chub perhaps, which even Walton found to be beyond culinary redemption). There was no game/coarse schism in the early modern period – coarse fish being referred to separately as foodstuff (white fish) but not quarry. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the ensuing division of the sport into coarse and game coincided with, and reinforced, the social division of its participants. Salmon and trout angling became increasingly the preserve of an elite in British society. This elite is most visible in the landed aristocracy, and its recruits from industry, the city, or the repatriated nabobs of the East India Company and empire generally. As the country house movement consolidated its presence in the British landscape, its Veblenite pursuits of hunting and fishing warranted considerable efforts.
Fig. 2. 'Water babies'. From Cholmondeley-Pennell 1889.
It is notable that pursuit of salmon was one of the principal sporting occupations increasingly open to elite women. (Foggia 1995) In a little studied phase of the enclosures, the rights to fishing in rivers, particularly for what was now designated the monarch of the stream, the salmon, developed into a contest between landowners, commercial fishermen, and latterly poachers. Later, transport developments meant that game fishing came to envelop the better off middle classes as the game fish – principally the trout and the salmon – developed into an elite quarry in Britain generally, and in Atlantic Britain particularly. This elite bred its own methods, rules and etiquette of fishing – centred around the artificial fly – and an ethic of sportsmanship which was aimed at equalising the contest between angler and fish. Fly fishing set itself apart as an art form – a balance of aesthetic and entomological knowledge embedded in the landscape of wild streams and untrammeled nature. (Rattler, 1850)

As the 19th century wore on, game fishing, the sport of gentlemen, settled into a hierarchy of its own. The landed elite, incorporating the new entry landowners from industry and elsewhere, consolidated their hold on the salmon rivers of England, and in particular those more productive rivers in Scotland and Ireland, and, to a lesser extent, Wales. There is an identifiable concurrent trend in the development of trout fishing. This, to some extent, became the preserve of the middle class angler. The sprawling demographic of middling businessmen, professional classes, and, as with so many leisure activities, the ubiquitous clergy, kept afloat by generous clerical stipends and with ample leisure time. There was, of course, something of the Waltonian ethic about these gentlemen of science and leisure. Fly fishing was the sole method to be employed, but was to be accompanied by the expectation of a range of etymological, biological, geological and botanical knowledge. Subtle divisions emerged in the sport between purists favouring the dry fly (usually tied in imitation of some ephemeroptera) and those wet fly fishermen, fishing downstream with the current, in imitation of larvae, or other small stream dwelling creatures. (Rowlands
Often these middle-class fly fishermen formed themselves into clubs, for conformity and companionship, but also to ensure the acquisition of stretches of the river, and to enforce the exclusion of other anglers, particularly coarse anglers, from these stretches. With the enclosure of rivers, control over the range of species in a particular river could be controlled through abstraction or stocking. Stretches were netted and unwanted coarse fish removed to be killed, or occasionally transferred to rivers controlled by coarse angling clubs. On some rivers, such as the Wye, coarse anglers were encouraged to fish during the periods when salmon were not running in the river, on the understanding that any coarse fish caught would be killed. Chub were quite prolific in the Wye and large numbers of these inedible fish were often simply dumped on the riverbank. Grayling, not quite considered to be a game fish, in spite of its good eating qualities (perhaps not favoured because of its plain, coarse-like appearance), were particularly sought after by coarse angling clubs as they were netted from the trout streams. Many grayling were transferred in this way from the natural habitats in the chalk streams of southern England, to the Severn River system in the Midlands.

One further dimension to the growth of game fishing which should be mentioned here is the development of angling within the British Empire. As an increasing number of members of the middle classes went out across the empire as administrators or members of the military, they took their sporting pastimes with them. The spread of British sports such as football, cricket, rugby, tennis and golf throughout the world is well known. Occasionally, these sports were engaged in freely with local participants. More often than not, they served to reinforce or underline the difference between ruler and ruled, and formed a bond with home rather than a bond with imperial subjects. British anglers in the empire faced two alternatives in the absence of their domestic quarry, notably the Atlantic salmon. Firstly, they could find local substitutes such as the mahseer. The mahseer fitted the bill well, given its size and fighting qualities and the fact that it swam in the wild rivers fed by the Himalayas in Northern India.
The second alternative was to re-engineer the local fish stocks to suit English tastes. To this extent large quantities of trout were shipped as far afield as New Zealand, where they went on to achieve prodigious growth levels. As with fly fishing generally, the sport-science fusion was also evident among the anglers of the empire. (Thomas 2005)

As the slow rearguard reforms of the political system in Britain in the nineteenth century ensured the continued tenure of the landed aristocracy, increasingly allied to a middle class in fear of working class reforms, so these two mutually-supporting strata of society consolidated their hold on the nation’s river angling resources. That the most prized of these were to be found in remote rural areas, or even the last vestiges of wilderness, in a growing industrial and urban nation, dovetailed nicely with the other growing passion of these classes – the romantic notions of the British landscape. The picturesque and romantic movements, and later arts and crafts Gothic revivalism, had created an ideal of Britain, and Britain’s landscape, situated somewhere between a medieval Camelot and the rugged beauty and mountain waters of the Lake District. Ironically, perhaps, the very technologies of the blighted industrial world opened up remote areas for the exploitation of this new class of romantic anglers. As the train system carved inexorably its way to the outer regions of the British Isles, it created the opportunity for many hundreds of hotels to be established, offering fly fishing breaks and holidays.

While the sport of game fishing developed its privileged base, its new methods, and its own internal divisions, coarse fishing also underwent fundamental change during the 18th and 19th century. Though many rivers were appropriated by game fishermen, there were plenty of rivers where game fish no longer thrived, or indeed had never been numerous. Salmon and trout in the Thames, for example, gradually declined with the sprawling growth of London and attendant pollution in its lower reaches. (A. Septuagenarian, 1859, pp. 123-4) The Severn, a prolific salmon river, did not lend itself to fly fishing techniques in its lower reaches given its breadth and depth. Salmon fishing on the Severn was mostly undertaken by commercial fishermen using
nets and traps. Many rivers in industrial areas suffered loss of fish, particularly of game fish, to pollution, the direct consequences of industrial growth, as in the case of the Trent and Mersey, for example. However, industrialisation created an urban middle and working class angling fraternity which increasingly looked for and gained leisure time and angling opportunities. Unlike their game fishing counterparts, this side of the sport was dominated by men in terms of participation, by women in terms of permission.

Social reformers, labour unions, enlightened employers and politicians forced or facilitated a range of increased leisure opportunities into the later nineteenth century, reflected principally in shorter working hours and consequent increases in leisure time. Coarse angling grew in line with this enhanced opportunity. Industrialisation also created new sites for angling – notably the extensive canal systems. One very clear feature of the period is the development of clubs and governing bodies, on a local, regional and national scale. (Waterhouse, 1948) Towards the end of the 19th century, there was an exponential rise of both the individual 'pleasure' fisherman and the activities and power of the new angling clubs, with their attendant regime of competition fishing, which continued up until the First World War and into the inter-war period. Clubs were based on an arrangement of networks and communities, including workplaces, pubs, local societies or city-wide associations. Within the growth of coarse fishing, distinct variations in methods, styles and customs developed on a regional basis. Nottingham- or Trent-style fishing, with longer rods and centre-pin reels, fished in the flow of the river, contrasted with the fine, sometimes sedentary styles of the Thames angler. The new world of industrial production also ushered in the first revolution in tackle, as cheap and reliable rods, reels and a host of other equipment, became available (fig. 3). Rods constructed of exotic tropical hardwoods such as ironwood or greenheart had already replaced the traditional British hickory. Now these in turn were replaced by bamboo cane rods, Tonkin cane being particularly popular. For those who could afford it, 'split cane'
rods, hexagonally constructed to reduce the weak spots in the nodes in bamboo, were also becoming available.

Coarse anglers were by no means restricted to the local canal during this period. Transport again played a part in the progress of the sport, often reconnecting the worker to the (mostly non-salmon-, non-trout-bearing) landscape. At weekends, trains packed with anglers would pour out of Birmingham bound for stations on the lower Severn, for example. Similarly trainloads of anglers would leave the steel-producing town of Sheffield and pour into the Fens of East Anglia. (Lowerson 1998) Train companies promoted this trend, offering concessionary fares to anglers, and chartering special trains for weekend trips. Tackle dealers could be found aboard these trains, dispensing tackle or bait as the latter made their way out of the city at dawn. On ordinary trains there were complaints that some were abusing the system, carrying their fishing tackle on ordinary journeys in order to claim reduced prices. The Birmingham Angling Club grew steadily from the 1890s onwards to become the largest angling club in the world.

![Fig. 3. Pike tackle. From Cholmondeley-Pennell 1889.](image)
The ethics of angling changed as coarse fishing consolidated its position as the country's most popular pastime. Around issues including the conservation of stocks, the relocation of species, guarding against pollution or netting, a general stewardship ethic began to pervade the sport as what can be identified as a proto-environmentalist anglers' movement began to take shape. (Coopey and Shakesheff 2010) The approach of anglers to the preservation of their quarry, or indeed the preservation of the river, was still fairly exploitative by modern standards. Fish were usually killed when caught, particularly during competitions. These competitions took numerous forms. As in most working class group pastimes, the competitive element was at the centre of collective leisure activity, with its attendant gambling opportunities. Competitions took place within and between clubs on a regular basis, and leagues began to appear in working class areas. Competitions took place with a fixed start and finish time, with prizes being awarded on the basis of the heaviest aggregate weight, with perhaps additional prizes for the heaviest fish of a particular species. Some of the larger clubs had separate sections for women, with separate prizes, although in the case of the BAA the women involved eventually objected to this separation and demanded to be treated equally with the men of the club. In order for the completion to be judged, all the fish caught were killed, in order to be kept until the weigh-in at the end of the contest. This practice, deleterious to fish stocks, gradually became replaced by the use of keepnets - small cylindrical nets pegged to the bank side - which were developed in the year before World War One. (The promotion of keepnets may also have been stimulated by the need to cut down on cheating in competition by bringing dead fish along hidden in the fisherman's basket. Frequently at the weigh-in anglers would be disqualified for trying to weight fish that were not 'fresh'.) During the early twentieth century, the larger angling clubs began to flex their political muscle in pursuing the maintenance of river water quality, and expanding access to water for the urban working classes. BAA representatives took up offices on the Severn River Board during the inter-war years, for example.
As noted above, game fishing had become an almost separate form of angling from the early twentieth century onwards. There were areas where these fishing cultures overlapped, particularly in the lower reaches of major rivers such as the Wye, Severn, Hampshire and Avon. Here angling tended to be more open, certainly less aristocratic, and although still an expensive occupation, still one which a dedicated general angler might afford. Often groups of anglers coexisted – the coarse fisherman useful in ridding good salmon beats of ‘nuisance’ fish. The purity of the fly fishing was also diluted by the periodic allowance of bait fishing (usually worms or prawns) or spinning, usually with the ubiquitous Devon minnow – a cylindrical, finned tube, painted in bright colours, rotating around a wire trace and three-pointed ‘treble’ hook. In the Atlantic peripheries, however, traditional methods, even extending to the 20-foot long ‘Spey’ rods, persisted, and elites continued to control an increasingly exclusive angling. We also need to recognise the different availability of fishing to local anglers in these peripheries, and the symbiotic relationships which often developed – notably in the role of the local gillie. The gillie developed as a profession comprised of men of local knowledge – essential to the tourist angler – and skills in methods and the handling of salmon. Salmon angling, perhaps more than any other branch of the sport, requires knowledge of the local conditions in the river – whether temporary, in terms of water condition or levels, lures to suit particular conditions for example, or permanent, in terms of holding pools, and casting methods. The gillie was also on hand to prepare or provide tackle, to assist in the landing of fish, or provide sustenance or refreshment to the salmon-angling consumer.

As with so many aristocratic pastimes, the twentieth century saw increasing pressure on this class, with, of course, some notable exceptions. The continuing demise of salmon in many rivers into the latter half of the twentieth century, possibly related to commercial fishing pressures, allied to the increasing affluence of a new working class, placed additional strain on this increasingly limited resource. In this atmosphere of increasing
exclusivity, new alternatives were sought. These might include overseas travel, in line with the general rise in overseas tourism brought about by the advent of cheaper jet travel, or, more likely, alternative forms of game fishing, which could be expanded to meet demand. Trout and grayling fishing on the exclusive streams – notably the chalk streams of the south, echoed salmon angling in adhering rigidly to an exclusive clientele and suffering no dilution of traditional methods. The fly-only rule persisted, although traditional cane rods and silk lines were superseded by synthetic alternatives in many cases. Fly fishing for trout expanded, however, through the stocking of reservoirs such as Chew Magna, Blagdon, Rutland Water, and the Elan Valley with factory-farmed fish. These waters also saw the introduction of the North American rainbow trout, faster growing and more adaptable that the native brown trout. In addition there were, and continue to be, many attempts to repopulate Britain's major rivers with salmon. Indeed, in rivers such as the Trent and Thames, the return of salmon has become the primary symbolic reference in terms of restored river water purity.

At the same time that game fishing underwent changes in its demographic and methods in the latter half of the twentieth century, coarse fishing also went through a period of transformation. As noted above, there was a continued growth and consolidation of angling clubs, including the politically-active larger federated clubs such as the Birmingham Anglers' Association and the Sheffield United Anglers, whose work in formulating the rules of fishing, minimum catch sizes, and close seasons protecting the angling environment, and furthering the general angling cause in regional and national politics was notable.

The participation rates of women in the sport increased throughout the 20th century, although the ratio of women to men remained much higher in the game sector than in coarse fishing. During the post-war period, in moves that echoed the activities of their nineteenth century empire angling counterparts, coarse anglers attempted to manipulate the stocks of rivers in Britain in order to enhance their sport. Sometimes these attempts were
unsuccessful, as in the case of the transplanting of the eastern European huchen into the Thames in the 1950s.

Other schemes were arguably more successful than planned. Two post-World War II examples stand out in this regard – the importation of the zander from continental Europe and the transfer of the barbel from the rivers of eastern Britain to those of the west. In the case of the zander, the fish, originally introduced into the fens of East Anglia, found its way through the connecting canals and waterways to large areas of England, including all the major river systems. With no natural predator commensurate with the growth of the species, by the 1960s there were real fears that this species would wipe out other coarse fish, particularly roach, the staple of the competition coarse angler. This has proved not to be the case. A similar imbalance has occurred in the case of the barbel. A voracious bottom-feeding fish favouring fast flowing water, the barbel was originally only found in rivers in the east of Britain, as part of a system of flora and fauna that dated back to the period before the formation of the North Sea, when the rivers of eastern England formed part of the Rhine Basin. When transferred to western rivers such as the Severn, Wye and Hampshire Avon, the barbel thrived at the expense of the indigenous coarse species. Given the powerful nature of this fish and its relatively large size – up to 8 or even 10 kilos – there has been less alarm amongst the angling fraternity over its increased numbers.

The last half of the twentieth century also saw a second major transition in tackle and technologies used in angling. At the heart of the angling experience is the notion of fairness, of some form of sporting competition with the quarry. Hence the use of the rod itself, in preference to more effective fishing methods such as the net. There was an evolving balance between more effective methods of hooking and landing fish, and the idea that angling should incorporate a level of sporting prowess and retain an element of difficulty or even luck. As modern twentieth century industrial techniques and materials were applied to angling equipment, this balance became increasingly complex. Rod and reel manufacturers developed innovative equipment
using mass production and standardisation. The fixed spool reel is one example. It promised easier long distance casting and, through adjustable clutch mechanisms, reduced the chance of larger fish breaking the line. Organic materials were replaced by synthetic-based products; as cane rods gave way to fibreglass, gut and silk lines were replaced by nylon, as were waxed coated cotton nets. In the case of rod materials, fibreglass, initially used in solid form, and later spun into hollow tubes, offered a lightness and strength greatly exceeding ordinary cane rods, again shifting the balance in favour of the angler in terms of casting and playing the fish.

Tackle manufacture itself has generated many businesses in Britain. Indeed, all leisure activity generates business opportunities ranging from the provision of facilities to equipment manufacture. An economic history of angling should encompass all these aspects, including, for example, seemingly peripheral activities such as gambling and bait provision. Anglers increasingly needed to travel. As we have seen, revenue to train companies from the late nineteenth century was substantial, as, for example, rail companies operated special trains and discount systems for anglers. Hotels and guest houses catering for angling tourism were also important from the early nineteenth century onwards.

The manufacturing and retailing of fishing tackle was also an important sector of the economy, often generating regional business clusters, such as the hook and general tackle manufacturers of the Redditch district. British manufacturers attained a global presence, as firms in the high quality sector, such as Hardy Brothers, Sharpes and Farlows combined elements of mass production with individual craftsmanship in rod and reel manufacture. Some manufacturers were part of larger general supplier and retail chains, such as Gamages or Army and Navy, catering partly for the Imperial trade. Other firms, including Alicocks, K. P. Morritt, Sealey and Milwards, catered for the general market in mass-produced fishing tackle. British manufacturing held its place in global terms, with the notable intrusion of French firms such as Garcia Mitchell and Racine, and
Swedish firm Abu, until the Japanese multidivisional firms, including Shimano and Daiwa, penetrated the British market into the 1970s. Interestingly, there was no penetration of this sector by US firms.

Retailing in the angling sector in Britain, on the other hand, at least until the 1970s, was dominated by the small enterprise - the individual tackle shop owner, sometimes doubling as a barber, or general goods retailer. Manufacturers rose and fell through a range of product innovations, as hardwood rods were replaced, first by split cane, later by fibre glass and then more recently by boron and carbon fibre. As this trend continued, the tackle industry underwent the same international competitive pressures as other light engineering and consumer goods manufacturers, initially from Japanese firms, later from other emergent manufacturing nations in Asia. It would be wrong, however, to ascribe changes in equipment as being simply pushed out into the market by increasingly sophisticated manufacturers. As we have seen, reels underwent radical changes, from the simple winch which developed into a basic centre-pin, to the complex gearing, clutch and bale arm constructions which made up the fixed spool (fig. 4). Technological development is a complex social process. However, there is a strong case for social construction of technology analysis in this sector following Weibe Bijker, Donald MacKenzie or Bruno Latour, for example. In angling, as noted above - indeed in all sport perhaps – there is a tension between technological development and tradition. A good example here would be the retention of the centre-pin style reel for fly fishing, despite the

Fig. 4. Slater’s ‘perfect combination reel’. From Cholmondeley-Pennell 1889.
technological advances available. In recent years there has also been a renaissance of the less effective, but aesthetically more pleasing centre-pin in coarse fishing: triumph of tradition and integrity over modern technological effectiveness.

When not at the riverbank, anglers have always liked to read, either for information about catches, for tips on how to fish, for guides on where to fish or for evocative accounts of angling to stir the emotions. The inception of angling has been accompanied by a growing angling literature, and in addition, more recently, a considerable angling media. This literature began very early – as Karen V. Lykke Syse has pointed out, with perhaps the first treatise on angling being written by Dame Juliana Berners in 1496. In the nineteenth century, a great many memoirs of anglers and descriptive accounts of memorable experiences and fish, began to emerge throughout Britain and the Empire. In addition to this ‘boys own’ literature, instructional and informative books have proliferated since Walton’s Compleat Angler, itself in many ways an instructional text. Some angling writing has been recognised as being of considerable literary merit. Beyond the fiction and exotic global adventuring of aficionados such as Ernest Hemmingway or Zane Grey, there are fine examples of writing relating to the common angling experience in Britain. In Rod and Line, Arthur Ransome, sometime Manchester Guardian correspondent and childrens’ author, for example, produced one of the most evocative and rich texts in the English language. Bernard Venables’ Mr Crabtree Goes Fishing is imprinted on the childhood memories of generations of post-war anglers. Both Ransome’s and Venables’ books originated in the columns of the daily press, but angling also has its own dedicated press, including the Angling times and Angler’s Mail and regional publications such as the Midlands Angler.

In recent years, however, this literature has tended to be replaced by a more sensational and immediate style. If there was a ‘golden age’ of the angling narrative it has, despite spirited interventions by cultural figures as diverse as Robert Hughes and Jeremy Paxman, nevertheless faded under the onslaught of more populist, less literate styles of writing (Hughes 1999; Paxman
During the last decades of the twentieth century, fundamental changes took place in terms of angling styles themselves, available venues, and levels of participation. Such changes did not detract from the general rhythm of the pastime, as millions of individual anglers continued to fish established river venues in only slowly changing traditional ways.

One of the most notable developments of the period was the rise of the commercial fishery – venues constructed and stocked with farmed fish, aimed at a day ticket angler. Many of these had their origins in attempts by the farming community to diversify; an alternative use for marginal agricultural land was found in catering to a newly identified post-industrial or 'leisure society' (a similar, though much grander process developed in the sport of golf, which saw a proliferation of new courses during the same period). Some of new venues were later developed into multi-pool angling complexes, and several companies emerged to run chains of such enterprises, in addition to tackle development and retailing, for instance, Preston Innovations and Maver. Pools appealed to the continuing strength of the competition angling market, which remained undiminished throughout the post-war period, bolstered by manufacturers' sponsored teams. New venues dovetailed with new methods and technologies to change the face of both modern competition and pleasure angling. In pools typically over-stocked with carp, carbon fibre pole technology, \(^1\) scientifically formulated particle baits and a range of other innovations saw the intensification of the angling experience – a shift from quiet contemplation to maximisation of the catch. BAA contests of the mid-twentieth century, along the River Severn, were the largest angling competitions in the world.

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\(^1\) Pole fishing developed much earlier in continental Europe, but was greatly enhanced by the new strength and light weight of carbon fibre, which made rods of 20 feet and over much easier to handle. This method dispenses with a reel. Instead, the line is attached, via an elasticated ‘shock’ link, to the tip of the rod. The advantage of this method is the angler’s ability to dispense with casting, and to place the bait in exactly the spot required. This method is often preferred on still water, as flowing rivers require movement, or distance in the cast.
with up to 8,000 competitors fishing fifty miles of riverbank. Yet catches seldom exceeded five pounds in total weight. At the end of the twentieth century, catches exceeding 100 lbs were commonplace in commercial pools. There were still, of course, many 'anglings' during this period, including the continuation of the traditional club and individual activity. The angling community was served by a changing and expanding media during this period. Specialist papers and magazines were introduced, and, with the proliferation of TV channels, a large number of programmes and nationally recognised personalities began to emerge, including John Wilson and Matt Hayes.

‘Angling in short, is not merely a matter of skill in the catching of fish. It is participation in the life of river, lake and sea, an awareness of beauty, an understanding of the mystery beneath the shining waters. It is the quietness at the centre of the world storm.’ Thus wrote Howard Marshall, Founder of the Angling Times, in 1955. Angling is unique among mass participation general leisure activities in terms of its engagement with the environment, with the landscape. In a discussion of angling in Britain, it might be useful to take a long-term overview of the ways in which angling has coexisted with, and in some ways shaped its environment. The range of angling interactions with nature is wide indeed, from the gentlemanly entomologist on the chalk stream, to the canal tow-path angler whose interest in woodbine is limited to the cigarette brand. These extremes, contrasts, paradoxes and commonalities at the level of the individual need to be explored, and the changing balance of groups and their awareness of environmental issues needs to be charted.

Angling organisations have been prominent in their campaigning for a regulated and protected environment. From the nineteenth-century Thames Angling Preservation Society to an angling club presence on the Board of Severn Conservators, officials representing anglers have fought to stave off pollution, and to have rivers re-stocked, restored and maintained. The angler played an important part in the growing landscape and countryside movements which developed throughout the
nineteenth and twentieth century in a variety of forms. One high-profile issue is the position of angling in the general anti-hunt politics of late twentieth century Britain. The anti-hunt movement was primarily aimed at securing legislation to ban fox-hunting with hounds. This style of fox-hunting involving packs of dogs and pursuers on horseback retains strong echoes of an aristocratic past, and this, in conjunction with the violence of the kill, combined to promote a wide coalition of antipathy among social and political groups either interested in class politics or the with the sensibilities associated with conservative environmentalism or vegetarianism. The anti-hunt movement is also seen as the triumph of urban politics over the traditions of the countryside. Angling representatives, when faced with the developing power of this anti-hunt lobby, and wary that animal cruelty charges would be made against them next, face ongoing choices in the area of resistance and affiliation to pro-hunting groups such as the Countryside Alliance. In their defence, it is clear that there has long existed a delicacy and sensibility within British angling which was not replicated elsewhere in the world, at least not until the relatively recent establishment of interventionist environmental protection regimes in Europe and the North America, for example. Anglers in Britain increasingly afforded their quarry a reverence not replicated elsewhere until very recent times – in developing the use of appropriate keep nets, the returning of fish to the water unharmed, barbless hooks and the observance of close seasons.

Conclusions
In recent years, angling in Britain could be said to have become an increasingly 'Fordised' world of fishing, where venues and quarry are progressively more controlled or engineered, rather than the product of 'untrammelled nature'. Modern methods and equipment have begun to change, and the mystery and craft of angling is perhaps being replaced by the deskilled angler with the ethos of catching fish at any cost. Angling in Britain has seen an increasing number of manufactured environments incorporating factory-farmed fish, notably carp in coarse fishing,
and rainbow trout in game fishing. While the emphasis on the introduction of one particular ‘commercial’ style of fishing has never had the impact of comparable disasters elsewhere – notably the black bass crisis in Japanese angling - many in Britain see the trend as worrying. Factory-farmed fish are arguably less cautious and therefore more easily caught than wild fish. Technologies of coarse fishing in particular – electronic bite indicators, fish finders, bolt rigs which automatically hook fish, ‘method’ feeders delivering large quantities of scientifically formulated baits - increasingly ensure fruitful fishing expeditions. In fly fishing for farmed fish, the emphasis has been placed on the selection of the fly – predominantly garish patterns which no longer seek to imitate natural insects – rather than the skill in locating the fish and discerning its natural diet.

The general homogenising experience of this kind of angling has, however, produced its own antithesis in a noticeable trend for both exclusivity and nostalgia. There has in recent years been a call for ‘silver’ fisheries replacing predominantly carp stocked pools and a re-emphasis of the value of river fishing. There have also a series of trends which might be seen as an attempt to construct an ersatz exclusivity mimicking the exclusively of traditional game fishing. These include the trend towards specialisation – fishing for one targeted species only. The earliest of these specialisations began in earnest in the 1980s with the exponential growth of carp fishing, but has since spread to include pike, barbel, and even chub. At the extreme end of this trend, participants may even attempt to recreate the world of the etymologist angler of the nineteenth century. A good example of this is the Chub Study Group, who are certainly anglers, but ones who, in true Waltonian style, articulate a dedication to the natural philosophy of the chub. An alternative strategy in terms of the quest for exclusivity or individuality is to take an elite method and transpose it to a new quarry – for example the growing popularity of saltwater fly-fishing with wide arbour reels for quarry such as bonefish and tarpon in the accessible coastal waters of tourist Florida, Cuba or the wider Caribbean. Yet another strategy involves using the travel revolution of the
late twentieth century to attempt to recreate the angling imperialism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, pursuing mahseer in the Himalayan foothills, giant catfish in the rivers of the Iberian peninsula, and the giant Nile perch in Egypt. There has also been a noticeable wave of nostalgia for an imaging past, revealed in the resurgence of the traditional centre-pin reel, and wood and cork materials for rods and landing nets, all of which indicate both a disquiet with modern mass production angling, and a direct line of contact with anglers of the past, and their quest for communion with nature, the ethos of the sportsman, and the flowing waters of the river.

References
Searching For The Molendinar –
Unearthing Glasgow’s Hidden Past

Justin Carter

Introduction
In 2001 I was invited to develop a new project on the theme of water for an exhibition and conference to be held the following year. The focus of the group exhibition was the meeting point of art and ecology – seen through the lens of water. My response was to research the story of the Molendinar, a burn I had heard of but never seen. What follows is a reflection on what I discovered – not from the expert position of historian, geographer, sociologist or ecologist, but from the viewpoint of an artist working between these disciplines.

I began by locating maps and images of the Molendinar in order to build up a visual picture of Glasgow over time – from rural retreat to urban sprawl. This led to site visits and walks, remapping the course of the burn, and occasionally catching glimpses of the hidden stream. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with a number of individuals representing a range of associated groups including local residents, the Glasgow Humane Society, the National Geological Survey, Glasgow City Council (GCC), the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and Scottish Water (SW). These interviews attempted to uncover the social, economic and environmental impact of the stream’s historical shift from open waterway to underground culvert. Video documentation of these interviews, contextualized by other documents including photographs and maps, later formed part of the installation at Mile End Gallery.

What does it mean when a stream so central to a city’s history becomes almost entirely culverted? What impact does

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this physical change have on a place and its population? The Molendinar Project set out to investigate the disappearance of a stream at the heart of Glasgow's medieval past. How and why has the burn almost completely vanished, and what physical and psychological residue remains? This chapter explores the relationship between city and stream, with shifting attitudes to water over time, suggesting different notions of progress. How and why should we remember the Molendinar, and what role can art play in this process?

Historical Overview

‘The township spread from the High Kirk gate,
And grew to a city rich and great,
And the poor little burn its head must hide,
Deep in the breast of the River Clyde.
The Clyde is the river of Glasgow town.
No river could be finer;
But with fond regret we’ll pay our debt
To the vanished Molendinar.’
(Rev. Robert MacOmish. The Burgess Song of Glasgow)

Glasgow, famed for its shipbuilding in the last century, continues to construct its future identity and prosperity on the banks of the River Clyde. Mushrooiming up from the shadows of its manufacturing past, vast architectural icons to the service industries can be seen clinging to the riverbanks in the form of new museums, conference centres, hotels and media headquarters. These shimmering glass and titanium shells attempt to project an image of confidence and creativity through a who’s who of world architecture. The post-industrial wastelands of Scotland’s premier manufacturing city are being given a sequinned costume to wear on the global stage. This shimmering image is a far cry from the City’s ancient and humble beginnings on the banks of another waterway seldom heard of beyond Glasgow.
'The traditional view is that St. Kentigern or Mungo (518-603) founded a monastery on the banks of the Molendinar Burn, three quarters of a mile north of the ford over the Clyde, on land formerly consecrated by St. Ninian (360-432) as a burial ground. This soon became the seat of a bishopric, a place of pilgrimage and hence a settlement'.

There are other competing versions of Glasgow’s birth, but the Molendinar myth has such symbolic potency that it has become

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psychologically rooted. Reverend Robert MacOmish testifies to this in his Burgess Song of Glasgow. The important thing to appreciate is that with Mungo and the Molendinar, the concept of Glasgow is effectively anchored in the popular imagination. In water, the Molendinar gifted early settlers both a mythical symbol and a vital natural resource. Glasgow and its Cathedral grew out of a fundamentally spiritual connection with water.

In his book *A Tale of Two Towns*, Neil Baxter describes a city emerging with two distinct centres and two distinct forces – religion and commerce. This schism became increasingly pronounced in the industrial age, as attitudes to nature shifted. With Glasgow’s growth over the centuries, water was increasingly viewed in mechanistic terms, devoid of religious reverence. Ross’s plan of Glasgow, from 1773, shows how the ancient ecclesiastical centre around the Cathedral had by this time been superseded by a commercial centre at the intersection of High Street and Gallowgate (fig. 1).

From an industrial perspective, waterways provided a multitude of functions for an expanding population. From 1556 the Molendinar was used and consumed through its brewery, a process that made its water safe for human consumption. Importantly too, the Molendinar presented the opportunity for energy to be harnessed from the moving stream. Water mills increased efficiency for processing grain, much of it still farmed locally. Similarly, in the city's sawmill the Molendinar accelerated production to support a myriad of industries including boatbuilding, cooperage and construction. The Molendinar was particularly well suited to this purpose as it was easily breached in a number of locations. Finally, and perhaps more dubiously, the Molendinar provided emerging industry with the opportunity to convey waste effluent downstream. Possibly the most noxious example of this would have been produced by the city’s tanneries, where dung and urine were used in large quantities to prepare rawhide. Earlier still, the burn had been

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used to dispose of domestic waste, but the demands of industry were on a completely different scale that fundamentally challenged the water ecosystem.

Fig. 2. Plan of part of Glasgow and course of the burn of Molendinar, by James Barrie (1764). Used in the legal case involving William Fleming. By courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Glasgow City Council.
It is typical of a waterway with such a longstanding proximity to human settlement that it should already have been exploited in the ways described above (raw material, energy production and waste conveyance), long before the Industrial Revolution. Indeed, mills of various descriptions had been such an integral part of the burn’s early life that they effectively gave their name to the stream.4 By the time the Industrial Revolution gripped Glasgow, the Molendinar had been so heavily exploited and ill managed, due to the complications of riparian law, that its fate was effectively sealed.

A map drawn up, for legal reasons, in 1764 is one of the finest illustrations of how the Molendinar had become interwoven within the fabric of the city (fig. 2). This map charts the course of the burn from the college gardens to the Clyde, through a series of tunnels, archways, dams and sluices. Slaughterhouses, tanyards and gardens jostle for position along the banks of the burn in an increasingly dense urban sprawl. The purpose of this map is revealed in the caption, located in the top right-hand corner, which reads:

‘A plan of ye City of Glasgow and course of the Burn Molendinar leading to the saw mill erected by William Flemming Wright in Glasgow in 1750 -1751 and set going in 1752. Demolished by the magistrate of Glasgow on the 23rd June 1764 for which he then commenced a process against the said magistrate before the court of session and in consequence of a final judgement given on July 1768. Magistrates paid the pursuer on the 18th November following £610..1..4 Sterling and were also obliged to relieve him of the expense of extracting the deficit’.

Fig. 3. A view from the South on the East side of St Mungo's Church X111 (R. Paul), July 1769. From Early Views of Glasgow. By courtesy of the Mitchell Library, Glasgow City Council.
This document depicts two important issues that would be key to the Molendinar’s future. Firstly, the increased demand and strategic jockeying for land within the city centre. This impacted greatly around the site of the University, which became surrounded by dense slums. Secondly, it depicts the very process by which ownership of land, and therefore ownership and responsibility for the Molendinar, could change hands through legal process. The conflicts of riparian ownership remain to this day one of the biggest challenges of effective management. This is a point emphasized by Scottish Water: ‘In the past there has been no planning control of culverts and hence landowners have constructed them with little or no consideration for any impacts beyond their boundaries’.5

That same decade, Robert Paul’s etching of 1769 captured the Molendinar from a very different perspective – this time an unlikely meeting place for man and animal (fig. 3). As one half-bent human figure tips his water vessel into the burn, another weary-looking figure seems to meet the gaze of a cow on the opposite bank, its hoofs sunk into the water. This moment of identification suggests either deference or resignation. As the Cathedral spire slips behind the branches and wall to the left of picture, the burn is no longer an elevated symbol of life and religion, but a very grounded stage where everyday acts of survival are carried out dutifully. Ironically, this same period saw Glasgow’s fortunes begin to sparkle from the profits of tobacco, sugar and cotton brought into the Clyde from the colonies. For those who still lived and worked on the banks of the old Molendinar, such riches must have seemed but a distant dream.

In 1574 the plague descended on Glasgow, an event that became the catalyst for the digging of a new well in the Gallowgate the following year. Despite these early attempts at renewal, it took the rational pragmatism of the Enlightenment to really address the compounded problems of urban planning.

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Growing awareness of the links between health and sanitation, and perhaps a desire to live up to Daniel Defoe’s description of Glasgow being the ‘cleanest and beautifullest, and best built city in Britain’,⁶ created a renewed impetus to remove the tarnished waters of the Molendinar from public gaze. The Lady Well, still standing outside Ladywell brewery, was one of 16 available public wells in 1726. However, after the establishment of the

⁶ Defoe D. A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain. (1724-26).
Necropolis in 1831, the water was considered ‘tainted in consequence of its proximity to the graves’.\(^7\) By the late 1860’s, many of Glasgow’s wells had been superseded by the new mains water link to Loch Katrine in the rural north. During this same period, the college gardens were said to have resembled a ‘blackened waste, on which the playing of cricket was fraught with the greatest danger’.\(^8\) This was a situation that no amount of landscaping and drainage could rectify. In 1870, the whole University uprooted itself and migrated to its present home at Gilmorehill in the west of the city. This migration west was symptomatic of a psychological shift away from the encroaching problems of the past, towards the promise of a cleaner, brighter future.

With its limited capacity, perceived threats and dubious appearance, the Molendinar must have seemed all but useless to the Victorians. Their ingenuity, though, enabled the burn to serve the city in its final role, as outlet for an extensive sewage network. This relationship later became even more formalised through a series of combined sewage overflows (CSOs). The burn literally became a pressure release valve for the city sewers, preventing homes from being ‘backed up’ with sewage. Described by George Rattray from SEPA as ‘a necessary evil’,\(^9\) it is clear that the water quality of the Molendinar was now effectively at the mercy of the elements (fig. 5).

These developments did not, however, go unnoticed. Theodore Brotchie\(^10\) described this transition from ‘pellucid stream’ to performing the ‘role of ordinary city sewers’ as a ‘debasement’:

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\(^7\) Small D. *Sketches of Quaint Bits in Glasgow still standing in 1885*. p. 34. Published David Bryce & son (1887).


\(^9\) Rattray G. (SEPA) Scottish Environmental Protection Agency. Extract from interview.

\(^10\) Brotchie T. *Glasgow Rivers and Streams – Their Legend and Lore* (1914) p. 139.
'A great city is not the haunt wherein we can hope to find the wimpling burns of which poets, and artists, and wayfarers fondly dream. The arctic eye of commerce looks askance at the humbler waterways of nature, and as the octopus of industry advances over the verdant countryside she absorbs and then hides them from human ken'.

Despite its obvious lyrical appeal, Brotchie's description borders on sentimentality. The Molendinar was not the victim of industrialisation, as Brotchie would have us believe. It was the victim of a much slower death, which began far earlier (fig. 6).

11 Ibid., p. 136.
The indelible semi-rural image left to us by Slezer in 1690, of a man and his dog crossing the burn, could easily add weight to Brotchie's misty-eyed view of the past, were it not for the more candid descriptions left to us in the Guild Records of Glasgow, referred to by Dr. Patricia Dennison. One medieval citizen remarked; 12 'even a tinker would not deign to drown his dog in it'.

**Making Sense of History**

'Do you think children now would know what the Molendinar is?'
'No, they wouldn't have a clue' (Agnes Campbell, interviewed 2002).

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Today, according to Scottish Water,\textsuperscript{13} over 95\% of the Molendinar Burn has been culverted. The ancient stream can only be glimpsed in a couple of select places along its course. There appears to be a clear relationship between this lack of visibility and corresponding levels of awareness about the burn’s history. This lack of knowledge is apparent both within the population at large, and amongst those considered ‘experts’.

Whilst remaining physically underground, the Molendinar does occasionally surface in the form of street names or urban myth. Someone might tell you (as I had been told) that a river once flowed down the hill where Wishart Street separates the Cathedral from the Necropolis. You might also be told that the reason the stream is no longer there has something to do with the brewery positioning itself at the bottom of the hill. To many people, the link between brewery and disappeared burn suggests some kind of alchemical transformation of water into golden lager. Although this myth has obvious appeal and logic, the Lady Well brewery has not actually taken water directly from the burn for over a hundred years.

It was precisely this myth and mystery that attracted my initial research interest. When I began my search in 2001, I happened to approach Glasgow City Council and Scottish Water at a time when both they and the British Geological Survey\textsuperscript{14} were carrying out their own field research in order to bolster their knowledge of the burn. Part of their objective was to physically locate the Molendinar as it flowed beneath ground level. Joe Fisher, in his *Glasgow Encyclopaedia*, alludes to this realm of uncertainty when he refers to the subterranean streams of Glasgow:

\begin{quote}
‘The rapid spread of the city has meant that most of these burns, which once flowed through fields or between thatched wooden houses, now run obscurely underground (often no more than
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{14} Quigley S. and Fordyce F. (British Geological Survey).
Fisher's remarks are perhaps a little exaggerated when it comes to knowing the source of these waterways. However, his point does reflect the kinds of difficulties associated with managing and mapping underground streams.

There has been renewed interest in the Molendinar this century. This is partly down to the incoming Water Framework Directive (WFD) - European Union legislation agreed in 2000, and brought into force in January 2004. The aim of the WFD was to elevate the overall quality of all waterways within its jurisdiction to what it describes as 'good status'. With this in mind, Scottish Water and Glasgow City Council were both keen to learn the extent of their own responsibilities within this framework directive.

At the time of my investigation, George Rattray from SEPA had the task of monitoring water quality in Glasgow. In 2002 he described the quality of the Molendinar as 'very poor, class d'. The indicators of such quality are ascertained through measuring PH levels, dissolved oxygen levels (necessary to support living organisms) and amino nitrate levels (indicating organic pollution). Secondary indicators include the presence of sewage fungus, which lives off sewage. Despite having spawned salmon in medieval times, the Molendinar is now unable to support any substantial forms of aquatic life.

The return of salmon to the Molendinar is not likely to happen, but Rattray optimistically suggests, 'We could possibly get localised fish life and improved bird life. When a body of water has been heavily modified there will be lesser targets. We will never achieve the good status of the Water Framework Directive'. Rattray is fairly certain that in terms of good status (class a2): 'the Molendinar will not reach that target...All water in Scotland will have to reach good chemical and ecological status, I

\[16\] Video of interview included in exhibition at Mile end Gallery.
don't think that it will even reach fair (b). Under the WFD, SEPA have certain powers to sanction those in breach of regulations. However, as Neil Tytler from the Foundation for Water Research points out, 'Environmental Protection Agencies in the UK are increasingly under pressure financially to win such cases, and often only take such steps if the outcome is more or less guaranteed'.

The second major factor behind renewed interest in the Molendinar was the advent of an extreme weather event on 30 July 2002. This culminated in intense rainfall, said by Scottish Water to be a once-in-a-hundred-years event. The whole west coast of Scotland was subjected to this deluge, but it was in urban areas such as the east end of Glasgow where the impact was most acute. The flooding had its greatest impact on some of the city's most disadvantaged people. 'Many lost all their possessions because many households were uninsured'.

Scottish Water concluded in their report that 'as investigations into the flood event progressed, it became evident that there had been considerable inter-action between the sewers and watercourses at certain flood locations'. This same report went on to say that 'Safe flood routing becomes a greater problem in the Glasgow East End where over 90% of watercourses are culverted leading to increased overland flow risks and potential flooding of low lying areas'. Furthermore, where there is more detailed analysis of the factors leading to these flooding problems, a number of interesting facts emerge, suggesting an infrastructure which is unsatisfactory, overburdened, and, in places, at odds with the underlying physical geography.

As a result of this flooding, the Scottish Executive (now the Scottish Government) funded the development of a strategic

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17 Tytler N. in discussion at the International Conference on Human Ecology, Manchester University, 29th June – 3rd July 2009.
drainage plan to be co-ordinated by GCC, SW and SEPA. The overall aim is a more sustainable and coherent plan for the future of all Glasgow’s waterways. Despite the obvious attempt to develop a more ecological and sustainable outlook, the Scottish Water Strategic Response report of 2003 occasionally slips up in its thinking. ‘What is evident’, it says, ‘is that the watercourses are now an integral part of the urban drainage system [my emphasis]’. The suggestion that watercourses have somehow evolved into a useful drainage mechanism is symptomatic of the problem. In reality, a drainage system emanates from a watercourse, and is built around it. As the Burgess Song of Glasgow suggests, perhaps we are now paying ‘our debt to the vanished Molendinar’ (fig. 7).

A similar disregard for history can be seen in the approach taken by Amey Highways, responsible for much of the road network in the UK, including the M8 motorway that runs across the Molendinar, separating Blackhill and Blochairn from the old medieval centre. No doubt in the 1970’s, when the motorway was being built, engineers managing the project took this heritage into consideration. However, when Amey Highways were asked to comment in 2002, they responded as follows: ‘We don’t have any historical knowledge whatsoever – five to six years max’.20 This detached approach stands in stark contrast to that of George Parsonage from the Glasgow Humane Society,21 who has an intimate knowledge of Glasgow’s waterways – one that has been passed down through the generations. A story he recounted, during interviews in 2002, suggested that two additional factors have led to the loss of knowledge about the Molendinar: privatization and political boundary changes. These are in addition to the inevitable challenges posed by riparian ownership.

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20 Drummond G. Amey Highways.
21 The Glasgow Humane Society is a charitable organization, which polices the Clyde.
Fig. 7. The ‘Bridge of Sighs’ connecting the Cathedral grounds to the Necropolis. The tarmac road running beneath the bridge would have once been a body of water running South-West towards the college gardens. (Photographed in 2008).

When these infrastructure difficulties are considered in relation to the pressures of developers and councilors promising regeneration, it is possible to appreciate the scale of the problem. For several decades there has been a widely-held belief that the east end of Glasgow needs regeneration in order to address some of the wider social and economic issues. In the UK as a whole there is an urgent demand for new housing stock. In 2004 Gail Sheriff, development consultant with Milnbank Housing Association, discussed a £10 million regeneration project for the local area. A local newspaper reported that this would: ‘include private housing, affordable homes for rent, office space and
nursery facilities’.22 The main obstacle to such investment was good quality infrastructure. As George Rattray stated, 'The city is regarded as being blighted because its sewage system is full to capacity. Without this there is no way that there can be further development. The east end is crying out for regeneration at the moment'.

What is clear from these incidents of flooding and pollution is that the radical physical changes made to the Molendinar over the centuries have had repercussions that will be felt long into the future. The impact of climate change will bring ever more extreme and unpredictable weather. In the age of climate change we are likely to witness more frequent incidents of flooding, particularly in low-lying areas and in urban areas where surface run-off will test our resilience. If watercourses in the industrial ages were valued for their ability to provide power and transportation, and perhaps tolerated for their ability to dispose of waste effluent, then, in the age of climate change, waterways should be valued for their ability to sustain diverse forms of life, and for managing water hydrology within a drainage basin. From an ecological perspective, a waterway is water management in action.

**Green Space, Green Place**

‘In order to do anything about water, we have to talk about the earth’ (Helen Mayer Harrison)23

In *Sustainable Urban Design*, Randall Thomas reflects on the place of landscape and nature in the city:

‘Landscape design and the presence of nature are critical to the quality of our urban environment. Landscape is a fundamental element of the design process, and may even be the starting point

of design. Shouldn't the city grow from its setting rather than be imposed on it?"\textsuperscript{24}

The word 'Glasgow' translated from Gaelic (Glaschu) literally means 'dear green place'. The physical impact of human development within the city boundary has been such that this name has a certain degree of irony attached. Glasgow, though, has reason to be proud of its green heritage, boasting the world's first public green – Glasgow Green, as well as an array of Victorian parks north and south of the Clyde. Of course, Glasgow was settled by St. Kentigern 'because of the placid beauty which he found'.\textsuperscript{25} Although this aesthetic quality has been lost in the case of the Molendinar, it is perhaps worth remembering its story as an example to learn from in the future. Jack House, in his article of 1946,\textsuperscript{26} lamented this loss, putting forward a proposal he called \textit{The Molendinar Project} to clean up and reinstate the Molendinar as a way of bringing about a greater sense of connection between people and place. His proposal echoed Brotchie's earlier sentiment:

\begin{quote}
'Glasgow has changed vastly since the times when it was considered a privilege to have one's house on the banks of the Molendinar. We have polluted and then buried the historic stream and its humbler confreres: and in doing so have we not perhaps buried something else – that subtle breath which the woodland path and wimping burn give forth to all who care to woo them? However much it may represent industrial activity and commercial greatness, the evolution of a limpid stream into a foul sewer seems a questionable exchange. It is certainly far short of being either an elevating or inspiring spectacle'.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{25} Brotchie T. \textit{Glasgow Rivers and Streams – Their Legend and Lore} (1914), published by James Maclehouse & Sons. p. 139.
\textsuperscript{26} House J. 'Beauty Treatment for Glasgow's Burn', \textit{Evening Citizen} 7/1/46.
\textsuperscript{27} Brotchie T. \textit{Glasgow Rivers and Streams – Their Legend and Lore} (1914), published by James Maclehouse & Sons. p. 145.
What impact, then, did the removal of the Molendinar have on the city’s population? Lucy Lippard states, ‘sense of place is the geographical component of the psychological need to belong to somewhere, one antidote to a prevailing alienation’. Human relationships with rivers are multifaceted and complex, and in this case go back to ancient times. Emotional ties and identity are rooted in the landscape that surrounds us. Reflecting on landscapes, Paul Claval suggests: ‘as mental constructs they help people know who they are and from whom they differ’. In the interviews carried out with local residents, it is clear that what these people valued most in the Molendinar was a place to walk, a place to fish and play. Agnes Campbell stated: ‘It was absolutely beautiful when we came here. David used to go fishing with his jam jar’. Tom Elliott too reminisced about ‘catching a small bag of minnies’. Other local residents had even been known to plunge into the water. On one occasion Tom Elliott contacted me after an interview session in order to recount his dream:

‘I still refer to the Molendinar as her. I knew she had gone into the Clyde so I went down the Clyde in a boat on an imaginary trip that the Molendinar would take, wondering where it would lead to. And I discovered that it led to the Firth of Clyde and eventually into the Irish Sea and we joined the Gulf Stream which was coming from the North and working its way South. So I was quite content that this was where the Molendinar had ended; joining the Gulf Stream to wherever it was going around the World’.

Measuring this kind of connection on a scientific scale is always going to be difficult. When it comes to city landscapes, aesthetic value is not simply about superficial pleasures perceived by the human eye. Aesthetic pleasure has a deep impact because ‘the existence of landscape in the city can influence the human psyche

30 Interview with Tom Elliott, Mearnskirk House, Mearnskirk, Glasgow, 2002.
and well-being. Clinical trials have shown that hospital patients looking out over trees have a faster recovery rate, lower blood pressure and need less medication than patients who look out over paved areas’.31

‘Nature not only has psycho-social value in the city context, it also improves the local microclimate, relieves environmental pressures on the city region and provides mental relief and contrast for urban dwellers. Nature and landscape in the city are hence important for improving the quality of life in urban areas and for making those areas more sustainable in every sense of the word – ecologically, socially and economically’.32

To enable future progress in these areas, it is vital that we go beyond the notion of seeing economic gains and social benefits in binary terms. As Randall Thomas points out, ‘Nature and landscape in the city are economically beneficial because they are aesthetically pleasurable and help in the process of retaining property values because of perceived better quality of life’.33

With all of this evidence showing the potential benefits of open waterways, and with a culture change shifting towards a more sympathetic ecological register, is it now conceivable to imagine a city like Glasgow actually turning back the clock and opening up more of the burn? When I put this question to Neil Tytler34 from the Foundation for Water Research, in June 2009, his measured yet enthusiastic response was as follows: ‘If you can put forward a scheme which takes into account the three critical registers – social, economic and ecological, and in balance there are overall benefits, then there is no reason why such a plan couldn’t be put into action’. He went on to cite similar

31 Hewitt M. Can trees cut pain? Times, 4 September 2001, section 2, p. 10. Anecdotal evidence also suggests a positive impact on human behaviour: People living on tree-lined streets are less prone to show violent behaviour, take drugs and be depressed.
33 Ibid., p. 33.
initiatives on the Wandle and Fleet in London, which are moving forward by addressing the subterranean, industrial legacy of these rivers.

The most dramatic example of this type of regeneration is perhaps that of Cheonggyecheon River in Seoul in South Korea, where an 8km section of waterway was reinstated between 2003 and 2005. This action brought with it a plethora of associated benefits including reduced summer temperatures and increased breezes, as well as a significant reduction in the quantity of traffic, since people were encouraged to use pedestrianised areas. The political benefits of such an innovation were felt most acutely by the then Seoul mayor President Lee Myung-bak, who spearheaded the beautification project and was subsequently elected president of South Korea in 2007. Even the Scottish Water report of 2003 states:

‘Urban regeneration should provide opportunities for improving the environment and open watercourses should be considered as assets in this regard. A further project objective is therefore to explore the possible opportunities for “de-culverting” of watercourses. Along with other measures such as provision of attenuation ponds, this could provide valuable habitat enhancement in an area where it is much needed’.

Such measures are critical to the health and sustainability of a city and its population. Dr. Ian White puts forward these same arguments in his paper ‘The Absorbent City: Urban Form and Flood Risk Management’. White calls for green spaces to be protected and even created within the city to prepare adequately

35 Carter J. Climate Change Adaptation in Theory and Practice. Paper given at the Human Ecology Conference, Manchester, July 2009. ‘The average summer temperatures were reduced by 3.6 oC, as summer breezes were encouraged by up to 50%. In addition, Vehicle traffic was reduced by 2.3%’.
for the extremes of future weather systems. He concludes: ‘The dominance of economic issues in the development of urban form has created a legacy of exposure and vulnerability to flood risk, and a growing recognition of the limitations of this methodology has led to a desire to manage flooding in a way more harmonious with nature’38. He describes natural management as the process whereby 'land is given back for floodplain restoration, and more room is given over for rivers’,39 Glasgow - ‘Dear Green Place’ - could do worse than reflect on its natural heritage in order to prepare for its future. This point was taken up by George Parsonage in 2002:40

‘Now, how far up does the Camlachie burn back up because we've now got flooding in the basement of the People’s Palace, and we had all the flooding in Shettleston last year, or at the beginning of this year. And I do believe that it's all linked to what they've done at the Molendinar and Camlachie burns. Now if that's the case this would reinforce the case for opening up as much of the Molendinar as we can so that, I mean if it's culverted, it jams up’.

A Place for Art?
In 2001 the Molendinar Park was completed – part of a broader regeneration strategy known as the Royston Road Parks Project.41 The design brief given to Greg White of Loci Design was for the ‘Provision of a safe body of water for play and relaxation. A space to move through or stay within. Durability (provision of barriers to keep out recurring problem of joy riders dumping cars). Provision of an educational landscape’.42 White goes on to explain the rationale behind the design: ‘The watercourse forms the main structure of the park. As the only place in Glasgow where the historically significant Molendinar

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38 Ibid., p. 159.
39 Ibid., p. 152.
40 George Parsonage, Glasgow Humane Society.
41 The other major park completed was Spire Park in Royston. Both initiatives looked to the heritage and sense of place as a platform for further developing a sense of community.
Burn flows above ground\textsuperscript{43}, the aim of the design was to channel water from the existing waterfall to the culvert and provide a safe, accessible body of water (able to cope with fluctuating water flow and never exceeding 200mm depth).\textsuperscript{44} The project essentially set out to create a more manageable environment where burn and residents could co-exist.

Extracts from interviews with locals made during the opening of the park were subsequently published as a testimony to the apparent success of the scheme.\textsuperscript{45} Locals were asked, ‘What is the one thing that really has improved in this area?’ Answers included: ‘The new housing first and foremost, and the pond…I was born in the area and we used to actually swim in that pond, years ago, and then kids started throwing things in...but now its beautiful, really beautiful, and hopefully it will be taken care of – the people in the area will make sure it’s well taken care of’.\textsuperscript{46}

Despite this enthusiastic response, one of the most disappointing design elements remains its ‘greyness’; how little it resembles nature or provides hydrological attenuation. The Molendinar simply flows through a series of straight channels set in concrete. Underfoot, concrete paths direct you efficiently through the space. Durable, yes; absorbent, no. In fact, what is so striking about the design brief is the failure to represent adequately the importance of sustainability and ecology. This is a ‘green’ space of sorts, but the hard architectural edges that play such a fundamental part in the overall design create an atmosphere of management and restriction. The park is not inviting to wildlife and does not seem to represent a significant addition to the city’s absorbent skin. When I interviewed Agnes Campbell a year after the opening of the park she told me ‘I

\textsuperscript{43} This is a technical inaccuracy. At the time there were at least three exposed sections of the Molendinar and these still remain.
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Royston Road Parks}. Gardiner L. (ed.), (2002), Published by The Centre. p. 14.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p. 74.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 74 (anonymous).
would like to have seen a better idea than what they have done’.47

On returning to Molendinar Park in 2008 (fig. 8), I documented the various changes since its unveiling. Where trees had been planted in the hope of reaching maturity, unkempt foliage and broken stumps could be found. Bicycles and shopping trolleys had been discarded in the moving stream and Toby Patterson’s sculptural works had been daubed with graffiti. The park might have provided a platform for amenities such as the Molendinar Community Centre, but the design itself leaves a lot to the imagination. Are these failings those of the designers and artists, and the process they set in motion? Or, does it suggest that people’s expectations for urban regeneration are sometimes unrealistically high, given the underlying socio-economic issues? On the evening of the Park’s opening one local resident reflected: ‘There has been a lot of change in this area, for the good. It’s all very well doing up the houses but they need jobs as well’.48

Towards the Idea of a Living Monument

‘One thing that we can say motivates all of our work and it’s called bringing forth a new state of mind. Changing the way people look at the environment and their relationship to it. That is what we mean when we talk about changing the vision of place that people have from a vision of a disconnected entity that exists outside of themselves, to an entity that they are part of, that they are connected to and all people around there are connected to’.49

The discursive, inclusive approach outlined above by environmental artist Helen Mayer Harrison has many valuable characteristics applicable to the Molendinar, and there are a number of lessons that can be drawn from it.

47 Agnes Campbell, interviewed Blackhill, 2002.
48 Royston Road Parks. p. 75. Gardiner L. (ed.). Published by The Centre (2002).
Firstly, it suggests that ‘expertise’ can be rhizomatic in nature; capable of throwing up shoots of knowledge horizontally, not vertically. Local knowledge should therefore be identified, consulted, and valued. Secondly, it follows that without communal visions and imagination, future solutions will remain divisive and exclusive. Finally, this ‘new state of mind’ - the new approach - is increasingly necessary because, as Einstein famously said: ‘We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them’.

The Molendinar should be seen not as a problem, but as part of a solution. Many of the difficulties experienced in Glasgow during the summer of 2002 were exacerbated by a failure to grasp and appreciate the hidden landscape of history. The infrastructure problems facing Scottish Water and Glasgow City Council are compounded by a persistently mechanistic outlook that has disregarded the hidden benefits of nature in the city.
This has essentially stockpiled future environmental problems. If this process of removal and forgetting has created hidden dangers, then how should we remember waterways like the Molendinar in the future?

A focussed walk around most cities will reveal monuments and memorials relating to ‘notable’ events and ‘distinguished’ citizens – all of them substantiated by the dominant social and political ideologies of the time. A monument to something like a waterway is somewhat less common. To remember it you simply keep it there, protect it through legislation. So what about a river that has already disappeared? The only physical monument to the Molendinar appears to be a small metal plaque at the side of the slip road off Viewpark Avenue, heading west onto the M8 motorway in Dennistoun (fig. 9). It simply reads: 'Below this point flows THE MOLENDINAR BURN'.
The capital letters seem to denote significance to the subject, but simultaneously make apologies for excluding any further information. 'What is the Molendinar?' pedestrians might ask. To the outsider, the only clue seems to be the word 'flows'. The fundamental design flaw, however, is that to be able to read this memorial you would either have to stop your car, or else stand in the middle of the road – both of which have obvious dangers attached. This is a busy slip road with no pavements and few pedestrians. We can extrapolate from this design that it was intended to maintain a low profile for the subject remembered.

Brotchie testifies that: 'We may bury it [the Molendinar] from sight, but its memories linger forever amongst us'. If this is indeed true, then where is that lingering memory? By putting the words 'Molendinar Burn' into any well-known online search engine, amongst the references that appear are a significant number of sites either dedicated to the Molendinar Burn, or sites in which the Molendinar plays a central role. These sites link disparate communities through a fascination with the lost, the hidden and the subterranean. Many of these underground converts and psycho-geographers pay homage to history through covert expeditions into the city's sewers and waterways. All seem dedicated to the task of remembering and disseminating Glasgow's subterranean past.

This vision of secret journeys to underground streams underlines the special power the Molendinar still has. This fact supports George Parsonage's vision for the Molendinar as a civic attraction: 'I would like to see the city fathers open it up, do something with it to make it a real asset, a tourist asset. I mean Glasgow has cleaned itself up so much; it would be pretty ironic if it wasn't cleaned up. I mean every city van in Glasgow is showing the emblem of the Molendinar and what have we got to

51 Websites like urbanglasgow.co.uk www.28dayslater.co.uk www.hiddenlg.com
show for it?"$^{52}$ Similarly, Jack House laments the plight of the Molendinar by drawing comparisons with Scotland’s capital:

'I wondered what Edinburgh would have done about a burn like the Molendinar? Dr C. Stewart Black says: ‘when Edinburgh was no more than a group of huts nestling beneath a fortress, Glasgow had already a past of a thousand years’. But Edinburgh seems to make more of its past.$^{53}$

The London based artist/activist group PLATFORM (founded in 1983) has been involved in a number of ambitious and long-running projects addressing issues of social and ecological justice. In 1989, they embarked on a series of related projects exploring the River Wandle – a tributary of the Thames. The Wandle had for centuries been the center of various settlements providing water for ‘drinking, washing, cooking, for water to help grow crops; as a place to fish and hunt; to wash the newborn infant and the dead’. From the seventh century to the nineteenth century, it had been a milling river processing corn, textiles, copper and cloth. By the late twentieth century, much of the river had been covered in brick, tarmac and concrete – physically and psychologically buried. The series of interventions PLATFORM developed included a micro-hydro turbine and a large bell mounted on a sluice gate activated by the tides. The electricity generated by the turbine was used for lighting the music room in the local primary school where PLATFORM members had been resident artists. ‘The Tree of Life – The City of Life’ project lasted almost three years and involved a deep engagement with people and place. The fruits of this relationship lasted longer still in various forms such as RENUE – a renewable technology charity based in the Wandle Valley that ran from 1994 to 2002.

$^{52}$ George Parsonage, interview (2002).
$^{53}$ House J. Beauty Treatment for Glasgow’s Burn. *Evening Citizen* p. 23. 7/1/46.
Subterranean waterways have also been a point of reflection for the artist David Haley. The project ‘Unculverting the Ulverston Beck’ (1992) took a very direct approach incorporating guerrilla action as well as patient civic consultation. The project culminated in a portion of the Ulverston Beck being dug up with permission from the relevant authorities, who had never before been approached with such a request. After consulting the necessary regulations and legislation, they saw no reason for refusal, so long as the necessary safety precautions were followed. Haley likes to use the American term ‘daylighting’ to describe the process of revealing the stream. This is significant, because it is the presence of daylight that potentially allows the watercourse to heal itself. As Haley himself testifies, ‘Within a month the stones turned green with algal flow-forms, wagtails arrived, and a year later someone saw a kingfisher’. Haley’s memorial to the Ulverston Beck, was the Ulverston Beck; not a reminder of what had been, but a living monument to what could be. This vision was given permission, but created from the ground up.

**Conclusion**

Glasgow’s Clyde waterfront is currently undergoing a huge face-lift, part of a £2 billion, twenty-five year, masterplan that sees the reconnection of the river with its people as one of its principal objectives. This investment is a serious attempt to breathe life back into the void left by shipbuilding. Huge, glass-fronted apartment blocks offer the perfect vantage point for contemplating the changing fortunes of this great city – fortunes that have been tied up with its rivers and streams. The decision to locate new housing so close to water at sea-level is a confident gesture which must be reinforced by an integrated approach to the whole environment. To neglect the Molendinar and any of

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the other forgotten waterways of Glasgow would be to neglect the Clyde, because all streams flow there.

If just a fraction of the resources currently being pumped into the Clyde waterfront were made available to the Molendinar, then perhaps this investment too would pay back future dividends in terms of creating a visitor attraction, re-establishing a sense of place and, more importantly, ensuring a safe, sustainable environment for future generations. The history of the Molendinar provides a valuable lesson illustrating not just the hidden costs of treating nature mechanically, but also in terms of underlining a failed capacity for society to 'think long'.

When economic gain is achieved through environmental degradation, we need to re-evaluate the meaning of wealth. This said, there is much to be optimistic about. During field research I saw seals swimming nonchalantly down the Clyde – no doubt looking for spawning salmon. Although it is difficult to imagine the day when these same fish might return to the Molendinar, this situation does give some room for optimism. When, some months ago, a neighbour gave me a salmon steak he had caught on the Clyde, I consumed it with delight, and a very real sense of connection.

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Constructing a ‘Wild Land’ Cultural Heritage for Britain: ‘Water’, ‘Wilderness’ and Development in the Highlands of Scotland

Jill Payne

Introduction
The emergence of the ‘wild lochs, bens and glens’ Highland aesthetic for which Scotland remains known internationally was due as much to geography and the socio-political relationship between the Highlands and the rest of Britain as it was to the more general, Romanticism-inspired reappraisal of ‘wild’ landscapes that reached a high point during the nineteenth century. As the Industrial Revolution gathered momentum in Britain over the course of the late eighteenth century, various less-developed regions, including the Cumbrian Lake District, the Derbyshire Peak District and the Highlands of Scotland – all upland areas bordering the heartlands of burgeoning industrial development – garnered new social significance as visual and cultural reminders of Britain’s pre-industrial landscape (both real and imagined). Changing attitudes to water in particular lay at the core of revised perceptions of relatively remote mountainous areas like the Highlands, previously prone to dismissal by outsiders as ‘sterile’ and underutilised, but subsequently the subject of much positive attention within nineteenth-century British social, literary and artistic circles. The accelerated harnessing of metropolitan British water systems for energy and transport paved the way for the rise of an enhanced appreciation of ‘natural’ lochs and geological features like waterfalls in peripheral locations; by necessity, appreciation focused on areas not immediately critical to contemporary industrial expansion. Over the same period, Scotland’s extant historical and literary legacy – the lost Jacobite cause; the poetry of Robert Burns – was augmented by highly influential fiction; most notably that of the Reverend James Macpherson (who went
to extraordinary lengths to convince the public of the authenticity of what was essentially his creation, the works of 'Ossian', the 'Gaelic Bard'), and Sir Walter Scott. The post-1800 need to celebrate Britain's remaining non-industrialised water-and-mountain landscapes tapped into an existing Scots heritage, rich in regional symbolism, to which, whilst it lost little of its 'Scottishness', various sectors of the wider British population also began to lay claim. A very specific nineteenth-century Highland 'wild land' aesthetic came into being. It lingered on into the twentieth century (and beyond) and proved to be insufficiently elastic when it came to accommodating post-nineteenth-century development demands, particularly with regard to renewable energy. Over a century later, the tensions stemming from efforts to integrate industrial development into the non-industrial Highland landscape remain unresolved.

Constructing 'Wild Land' in Scotland

'Unspoiled' or 'natural' landscape is a cultural construct rather than a precise environmental condition, as is the very idea of 'landscape' itself. 'Wild' is a similarly relative term. Contemporary tourism brochures have a tendency to encourage would-be escapees from more urbanised areas to lose themselves in the 'natural' Highland landscape: lochs, hills, heather, birch and pine, augmented by histories and legends loaded with cultural and literary significance. However, a number of influential environmental history studies have included further analysis of the substantial level of development that has been maintained over time within the Highland region. John Sheail (2002) and IG Simmons (2001) approached the subject within their Britain-wide studies, and both RN Millman (1975) and D Turnock (1995), after WG Hoskins (1955), considered in general terms the extent of human-induced landscape change in rural Scotland. TC Smout expanded the environmental discussion he initiated in his 1990 Raleigh Lecture, 'The Highlands and the Roots of Green Consciousness, 1750-1990' (Smout 1990), in Nature Contested: Environmental History in Scotland and Northern England since 1600 (Smout
Judith Tsouvalis (2000) has investigated afforestation in Britain, and this has been augmented by Smout’s (2003) edited volume *People and Woods in Scotland: A History*. The somewhat ‘empty’ appearance of the region is the result of changes in, for example, population density rather than due to less ecological manipulation.

Academic analysis notwithstanding, the ‘wild’ Highland landscape continues to figure prominently within facets of both Scottish and British cultural identity. At the same time, while this is often alluded to, it is seldom explored in detail – in direct contrast to the expanding body of discourse linking English cultural identity and the idealised landscapes of the English countryside (see for example Daniels 1993, Matless 1998). The well-studied English attitudes to the landscapes of the south, however, form an important counterpoint to the manifestation of attitudes towards the north. The ‘outsider’ perception of the Highland region as ‘unspoiled’ developed in response to more obviously discernable changes in the south of Britain. The startling disparity between the cultivated appearance of rural England and the ‘wild’ Highlands originally overwhelmed but later gratified English travellers in Scotland during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Positive attitudes towards the landscape of the Highlands must therefore be analysed with an eye to the appreciation of the English countryside already in place. Such contextualisation allows for the acknowledgment of two aspects of the non-urban landscape ideal within Britain, with the ordered rurality of the enclosed South providing a significant contrast to the less constrained ‘wild’ places of the North.

Much analysis has been devoted to what James Hunter (1981:56) in 1981 termed, ‘the worldwide potency of all the standard symbols of Scottish identity’. These symbols – the loch, the burn, the heather, the thistle, the grouse, the red deer, the mountain peak, even the tartan – are largely elements, no matter how derivative, of the ‘natural’ Highland landscape. Powerful indicators for people removed from (and sometimes completely unconnected to) that landscape, they serve, on a global level, to
trigger memories and imaginings of the wider landscape they represent. That they became such key symbols of the positive aspects of the Highland landscape can be attributed to outside influences; the approbation of Queen Victoria, for instance. These symbols currently exist as tangible links between cultural identity and the environment, but, embedded as they now appear, they are for the most part the product of early nineteenth-century cultural consciousness.

The earliest positive comments about ‘natural’ scenery made by those visiting – rather than inhabiting – Scotland can be traced to the late eighteenth century and the influence of Romanticism. Prior to this, ‘outsider’ impressions tended to be negative. Some of the most well-known remarks are those made by Samuel Johnson in the course of his journey around Scotland with James Boswell in 1773, in which he described the landscape before him with a marked lack of enthusiasm (Smout 1983:99, 2000:12, see related commentary in Dingwall 1997:162, House and Dingwall 2003:128). However, seminal to this essay is Johnson’s emphasis that he had ‘not come to Scotland to see fine places, of which there were enough in England; but wild objects, – mountains, – waterfalls, – peculiar manners; in short, things which he had not seen before’ (Boswell 1955:81, Smout 1983:101). Boswell (1955:238) himself takes this interest in Scotland a step further: ‘the people of taste in England, who have seen Scotland, own that its variety of rivers and lakes makes it naturally more beautiful than England, in that respect’. Boswell and Johnson represent the cusp of the outsider change in attitude towards Scotland, appreciating their surroundings sometimes because the novelty of these made them noteworthy, and sometimes because they found them aesthetically appealing.

Romanticism forms the basic foundation on which most subsequent landscape appreciation in Scotland has rested. Romantic values were mediated through individuals who, through their writing and influence, succeeded in moulding the Romanticism-based appeal of history, literature and landscape into a number of enduring images that permeated ideas of Scotland throughout the nineteenth century and well into the
twentieth. Romantic ideas about landscape *per se* are generally accepted to have emerged from the continental experiences of European philosophers, writers and artists during the mid-eighteenth century. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (2000:155), remembering Paris in the 1730s, made clear the origins of his disgust for the urban environment: 'I saw nothing but dirty, stinking little streets, dark and ugly houses, an air of filth and poverty, beggars, carters, old crones mending, hawkers of herbal teas and old hats'. For him, the antidote for the malaise of urbanisation was increased interaction with the natural world:

’...the way of life I like above all others. Moreover, what I mean by fine scenery must by now be clear. A flat landscape, however beautiful, has never seemed so to my eye. I need rushing streams, rocks, pine trees, dark woods, mountains, rugged tracks to scramble up and down, precipices on either side to fill me with fear’ (Rousseau 2000:168).

Echoing Rousseau (fig. 1), new efforts to express feelings invoked by the contemplation and experience of ‘wild’ nature revolved around ideas of the ‘sublime’, the ‘terrific’, the ‘majestic’ and the ‘picturesque’. The turnabout in thinking that enabled people to see those forces of nature least controllable by humans – mountains, rivers, waterfalls and storms – as positive, meant that when they came to Scotland, they began to read the landscape differently. Significantly, they also began to visit Scotland with the specific intention of exposing their senses to these less controllable aspects of nature. By the early nineteenth century, positive imagery relating to the ‘wild’ and ‘romantic’ beauty of the Highlands had become more common, as was a concurrent interest in the links between Highland scenery and literary references and historical events (see for example Burns 2000, Southey 1972, D Wordsworth 1934, W Wordsworth 1956).
That Scots themselves viewed the landscape of Scotland in a positive light (although not necessarily the same light) far earlier than this, is a point acknowledged by both early and late twentieth-century commentators (Smout 2000:12-18). A 1926 account of Skye explained how ‘long before Sir Walter Scott inaugurated the cult of scenery-appreciation, the princely Coolins, the queenly Maidens of Mcleod and the faithful Stob-a-Stoir received the warm homage of the natives’ (Matheson 1926:220). In its Report of 1947, the Scottish National Park
Committee quoted lines from Duncan Ban Macintyre, commenting that ‘our native writers and bards have always highly praised the scenery and wild life of their country’ (Scottish National Park Committee 1947:4).

**Industrialisation and the Romanticisation of ‘Wild Land’**

Between the end of the eighteenth century and the onset of World War I, romanticised interpretations of Highland ‘wild land’ became entrenched within the broader British cultural consciousness. In the interests of burgeoning industrialisation, Britons accepted the inevitability of significant changes to metropolitan environs. Environmental historians, in their efforts to trace the emergence of ‘green’ thinking, have spent time chronicling contemporary concerns about the negative impact of the Industrial Revolution. This has tended to detract attention from the positivity and celebration of progress that characterised elite attitudes in particular towards late eighteenth-century industrialization. Samuel Johnson (1992: 366-367), for one, took great pride in the imposition of order that canalisation had, by the 1770s, brought to the water systems of the English Midlands. In July 1771, he described to Hester Thrale how he had:

> ‘crossed the Staffordshire Canal one of the great efforts of human labour, and human contrivance, which from the bridge on which I viewed it, passed away on either side, and loses itself in distant regions uniting waters that Nature had divided, and dividing lands which Nature had united’.

At the same time, it became comforting to imagine some regions remaining in their ‘natural’ state. In addition to ‘wild nature’, Scotland had one of the most clearly definable pre-industrial cultures remaining within Britain. In tandem, these two elements combined to provide a counterweight to the industrialization of the metropolitan heartlands.

Another aspect of the change in the way in which Scotland’s landscape was perceived by the outside world has been attributed to the dilution over time of the ‘Highland threat’ that
was posed by the Jacobite cause until the end of the first half of
the eighteenth century. It has been argued that the ‘Highland
threat’ of the Jacobites later gave way to the more positively-
perceived ‘Highland myth’ that romanticized the entwined
tragedies of the defeated Jacobite cause, the clearances and the
subsequent Scots diaspora – and, ultimately, the landscape of
lochs and hills against which this played out (Womack 1989). By
the 1820s, the Highlands had become a place increasingly sought
out by those in search of the romantic, the picturesque and the
sublime.

Arguably, recognised sites of historical or literary
significance within a landscape act as ‘markers’ that jog a
society’s collective memory of that landscape and enable it to
‘remember’ its socio-cultural history more easily. Christopher
Tilley (1994) brought an important new understanding to
neolithic monuments by examining various groups of these
within the context of the landscapes in which they were placed,
as well as their situation in relation to one another. He suggested
that the primary function of many of these monuments was to
act as markers in the landscape, emphasising both important
geographical or physical attributes of water and land, such as
rapids and the spurs of valleys. To contemporary societies, this
would have increased the psychological or cultural significance
of the markers. Tilley’s argument has shed further light on the
way in which prehistoric societies may have interacted with
their environments. However, his approach can also be used to
lend clarity to the understanding of attachment to landscape
within the historical period.

In terms of Tilley’s hypothesis, James Macpherson’s ‘Celtic’
verse, the first ‘fragments’ of which were published in 1760, can
be viewed as an initial catalyst for an emergent outsider interest
in Scottish landscapes that saw particular prominence given to
sites linked to Ossian (Macpherson’s largely fabricated ‘Gaelic
Bard’). Samuel Johnson was one of those who disputed
Macpherson’s claims, and the validity of the Ossianic verses was
a constant topic of discussion during his and Boswell’s Scottish
travels (Boswell 1955:43;71;115;169-70;270-2). The poetry of
Robert Burns (2000), with its continuous references to specific locations and historic events and personages, such as those relating to the Jacobite cause, is a further significant influence. Sir Walter Scott was an additional catalyst of critical proportions. Although most famously associated with the Border region, Scott was by his own admission 'a most incorrigible Jacobite' (Scott 1894:326), and a potent force behind renewed interest in landscapes linked to the uprisings of 1689, 1715 and 1745 (see for example Scott 1891). His interpretation of the life of the outlawed clansman Rob Roy McGregor (Scott 1891) meant that further attention was paid to the Trossachs area, which had already come to his readers' notice as the scene of his earlier ballad, *The Lady of the Lake*, first published in 1910 (Scott 1847). Much of Scott's work was centred (if loosely) on historical occurrences and it is most often the manner in which these generalised histories have become tied in with associated landscapes still there to be viewed that has been the foundation for lasting Romantic images of Scotland. There has perhaps been a tendency to overemphasise his role as primary catalyst of the new interest. In the 1829 preface to a new edition of the *Waverley* novels, in which he admitted to their authorship, he maintained that the positive response to *Lady of the Lake* with its 'recollections of the Highland scenery and customs' was what encouraged him to think of writing prose along similar lines (Scott 1891:4). His own explanation of his development as a writer of prose centred on this region suggests that he saw himself as a secondary catalyst; the link between the positive reception of his work and an emergent popular interest in the Highlands into which he was delighted to tap.

Late-eighteenth-century Scottish poetry and prose must be considered within the context of the wider European Romantic movement. At the same time, early-nineteenth-century tourists like William Wordsworth, his sister Dorothy Wordsworth, and Robert Southey acknowledged the extent to which their interest in Ossian, Burns and, in particular, Scott, shaped the direction of their Scottish travels. In addition, the accounts of these literary travellers' journeys provide descriptions of the growing tourist
attractions that sites associated with Ossian, Burns and Scott had become. They, and those drawn north in their footsteps, must therefore be considered key influences in the burgeoning Regency interest in the ‘controlled threat’ by then presented by both the subdued Highlanders and the landscape inhabited by them.

William and Dorothy Wordsworth visited Scotland in 1803 in the company of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (D Wordsworth 1934, W Wordsworth 1956). William was to make a second journey in 1814, and Dorothy in 1822. Subsequently responsible for widespread interest in the landscape of the English Lake District, the Wordsworths were assiduous visitors to sites of literary significance within the Scottish landscape. In the journal she kept of the 1803 tour, Dorothy described a conversation with a farmer and his workers in the vicinity of Loch Katrine, with its associations with The Lady of the Lake and Rob Roy MacGregor:

‘a laugh was on every face when William said we were come to see the Trossachs; no doubt they thought we had better have stayed at our own homes. William endeavoured to make it appear not so very foolish, by informing them that it was a place much celebrated in England, though perhaps little thought of by them...’ (D. Wordsworth 1934:240-241).

For Dorothy, ‘a range of hills’ gained in importance because they were ‘the hills of Morven, so much sung of by Ossian’ (D Wordsworth 1934:300;302). William further cemented the reputation of the Narrow Glen between Dunkeld and Callander as the resting-place of Ossian by incorporating the tradition into the poem ‘Glen Almain, or The Narrow Glen’ (W Wordsworth 1956:229). Dorothy also referred to their hopes of seeing the Falls of Bruar which they ‘wished to visit for the sake of Burns’ (D Wordsworth 1934:338). Burns had famously advised the Duke of Atholl in verse that the surrounds of the falls would be much improved by tree planting, a task duly undertaken by the Duke (Burns 2000:210-212).
With the Wordsworths as part of the (already relatively numerous) advance guard, the number of visitors to the Highlands grew exponentially over the following decades. Robert Southey’s (1972:28-29;31) comments on a carriage journey made between Callander and Loch Katrine in 1819 are evidence that road conditions of the time made access to the loch from the east most uncomfortable. However, once at the loch, he found that the local boatmen were sufficiently familiar with *The Lady of the Lake* to be able to point out to tourists such scenery as could be linked to the poem and that these entrepreneurs did not necessarily distinguish between the historical and the literary when variously recounting the stories of Robert the Bruce, Cromwell, Rob Roy and *The Lady of the Lake* (fig.2).

![Image](image.jpg)

In 1822, when Dorothy Wordsworth (1934:516) was again in Scotland, she commented on the attraction that Rob Roy’s cave had become:

‘Our Highland musician tunes his pipes as we approach Rob Roy’s cave. Grandeur of Nature, mixed with stage effect. Old Highlanders, with long grey locks, cap, and plaid; boys at different heights on the rocks. All crowd to Rob Roy’s cave, as it is called...they seem to have no motive but to say they have been in Roy’s cave, because Sir Walter has written about it’.

Fifty years later, in his 1874 essay 'On the Enjoyment of Unpleasant Places', Robert Louis Stevenson expressed a similar appreciation of Scott’s influence on outsider perceptions of Scotland:

‘I suppose the Trossachs would hardly be the Trossachs for most tourists if a man of admirable romantic instinct had not peopled it for them with harmonious figures, and brought them thither with minds rightly prepared for the impression. There is half the battle in this preparation’ (Stevenson 1925:178).

Primary catalyst or not, it is difficult to overestimate the seminal influence of Scott’s scenic descriptions on people’s ideas of what constituted important Scottish landscapes during this formative period. By 1829, idealised, Scott-derived images of the Highlands were becoming entrenched. That year’s editions of the Waverley novels incorporated the artwork of Landseer, Wilkie, Leslie, Newton, Cooper and Kidd. Landseer’s work, in particular, represents a link between Scott and a new ‘layer’ of influence and cultural memory that coalesced around Queen Victoria and Prince Albert’s mid-nineteenth-century appreciation of the eastern Highlands as a landscape of exploration, sport and refuge.

The mid-nineteenth century was an important period of change, during which the visual appreciation of the Highlands became progressively more entrenched and classless in its application. Facilitated by the development of steam and rail
travel and further aided by substantial advances in image reproduction, what had been an upper- and then middle-class indulgence became accessible across a range of social sectors, ushering in an era in which, by the end of the nineteenth century, even the more affluent sectors of the working class had begun to make proprietary aesthetic claims on the Highland region (Grenier 2005), see figs. 3-5.

Critically, the democratisation of the Highland landscape lent fuel to an emergent desire for further physical interaction with the land. The tradition of appreciating the aesthetics of the land from an external vantage point, in the way that a viewer looks into a picture, was succeeded by a new attitude concerned with more active engagement within it. Walking and botanising were already relatively established, but mountaineering and cycling began to attract significant followings, with these latter pursuits linked to a growing emphasis on health and fitness, and a more integrated experience of the natural world. In some instances, class lines became pointedly blurred, as with the Scottish Mountaineering Club’s traditional emphasis on:

‘its Members frank and free,
Professors and Proctors – Divines and Doctors –
And Duffers like you and me’ (Stott 1912:151-2; Lambert 2000:168).

These changes represent a discernable shift in the insider/outsider perspective: the population of Scotland’s urbanised Central Belt began to find in the Scottish waterways, lochs and hills a visual and physical respite from the urban sprawl of its weekday surroundings. Both the scenic upper reaches of the River Clyde, and the close proximity of the Loch Lomond region, to increasingly industrialized Glasgow meant that these landscapes in particular began to assume increased significance within the cultural consciousness of an outsider group that now included Lowland urban dwellers of all classes.
The burgeoning interest in mountaineering added a further dimension to the visual appreciation of the Highlands. The aesthetic perception (see Yi-fu Tuan’s seminal introduction: 1990) of previously little-accessed (or even non-accessed) high-level sites shifted, as these places became visited rather than merely viewed from afar. Once visited, they began to serve as windows on the entirely ‘new’ landscapes that lay revealed below the viewer. These landscapes with previously little identity, in the sense that few people saw them, became highly significant to mountaineers and climbers who, as a group, increasingly sought to protect them from change.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, the impact of the Romantic movement on the aesthetic experience of the Highlands was diluted by a range of secondary influences. The actual appreciation of the aesthetic value of landscape was becoming second hand.
By 1897, the Liberal politician James Bryce was acutely aware of this change. Bryce (1897:127), a highly influential early campaigner for public access to Scotland's uplands, commented in an address to the Cairngorm Club how he had ‘often observed that out of the whole number of tourists there were a good many who were quite ready to go into ecstasies when they reached a place which the guidebook indicated as having a beautiful view,
who were perfectly indifferent to equally beautiful views that had not been mentioned in the book’ (see also Lambert 2001:60-73). The nature of scenery also attracted further interest outwith literary, artistic and recreational spheres. On one hand, this is reflected in works seeking to explain how scenery was formed, such as Sir Archibald Geikie's (1865) *Scenery of Scotland* and John E Marr's (1903) *Scientific Study of Scenery*. Marr (1903:1-7) in particular makes it clear that he is providing explanations for the evolution of scenery rather than mere topography, quoting at length from John Ruskin and William Wordsworth in his introduction. Following World War I, this scientific approach, in combination with the literary perspective exemplified by the *Scots Magazine* (*SM*), was extended to form the basis for a scientific-cum-literary idea of landscape to which general late-twentieth century perceptions retain clear links.

The *SM* was first published in January 1739, largely as a medium for political comment, but also 'That the Caledonian muse might not be restrained by want of a publick echo to her song'. The first modern edition of the *SM* was produced in April 1924, with an editorial foreword promising to fill the gap for ‘a high-class literary periodical devoted entirely to Scotland and things Scottish’. It went on to provide a lively forum for debate throughout the period under consideration. Editorial comment wavered where the position regarding the land-use/landscape protection debate was concerned. Finding a middle ground proved difficult for editors focusing on the interests of both Scotland in general and the Highlands in particular. Many of the contributors to the *SM* during the interwar period were familiar with the Scott novels in particular, and were responsible for introducing them to a wider audience (see for example Matheson 1926:222). In 1931, HR Cook (1931) enthused about the Callander region as:

*Scott country rich in story and rich in scenery. The Trossachs, Lake of Menteith, Aberfoyle, the Rob Roy country, Lochs Lomond, Tay and Earn are all easy of access and no one can fail to explore them without receiving mental stimulus*. 

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On the centenary of Scott’s death in 1932, there was an outpouring of reprints and re-editions of his work, and the SM devoted much of its September 1932 issue to aspects of his life. Even though in 1934 the editor questioned the new generation’s familiarity with the likes of Rob Roy and Quentin Durward, it was still felt that texts like Ivanhoe remained relatively well known (Scots Magazine, 1934:318-319). Other significant commentators of the previous century were given similar treatment, which had the effect, firstly, of familiarising readers with old traditions and, secondly, of providing these traditions with further layers of added significance by association, as with the following reference linking Craigellachie, just outside Aviemore, with both a Clan Grant tradition and Ruskin’s treatment of it:

‘Passing into the shadow of Craigellachie, the gathering rock of the Grants, something of the steadfastness underlying it that animated and rallied the old clansmen in battle enters into one. With Ruskin one feels:

How often the remembrance of these rough grey rocks and purple heaths must have risen before the sight of the Highland soldier, how often the hailing of the shot and the shriek of battle would pass away from his hearing, and leave only the whisper of the old pine branches – “Stand fast, Craigellachie!”’ (Mcpherson 1932:88).

The SM’s profoundly Scottish orientation makes it a valuable source by which to measure the degree of interest in landscape change and landscape protection shown by those with an avowed interest in Scotland, particularly since it consciously set out, during this period of heightened interest in emigration from Scotland, to encompass and stimulate the interests of Scots living abroad: ‘Each month as much space as possible will be specially devoted to those who have gone overseas from the old Grey Mother, but whose hearts still fondly cling to her’ (Scots Magazine 1924:2).

It is arguable that contemporary popular images of Scotland have been influenced greatly by the thoughts and writings of
émigrés nostalgic for ‘home’, a factor responsible for the emergence of an exaggerated identification with the ‘homeland’. The images of Scotland held by people living away from Scotland have as much to tell us as those of people still living there. The popularity of the SM was an important influence on the corresponding idea that there were many Scots living abroad who would potentially support schemes to protect and improve elements of Scotland’s ‘heritage’, with Alan Graeme commenting: ‘We have that immense body of Scots in other countries who would be certain to subscribe very large sums [in this regard]’ (Graeme 1929:9). There was a sound basis for the concept of outsider support for projects of this nature. The many Scottish societies emerging in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the British colonies and dominions in Africa were the subject of much publicity in Britain. Expatriates in South Africa, for example, formed the Federated Caledonian Society, an umbrella organisation linking various Scottish-interest groups across the country, and produced the first edition of The Caledonian magazine in 1922 (Scots Magazine 1935: 406-7).

The travel writer HV Morton’s lyrical and decidedly subjective accounts of his journeys around Britain and elsewhere began to attract an extensive readership during this period. His sketches of London were published in the Daily Express in the early 1920s and his subsequent publications included travel volumes on London, Britain, the eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East and South Africa (Morton 1930, 1932, 1933, 1934b, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1946 and 1948). His two volumes on Scotland, In Search of Scotland (Morton 1949) and In Scotland Again (Morton 1934a), explained the significance of sites in the Highlands and elsewhere to audiences of the interwar period and later. He laced his commentary on the scenes he visited with traditions, histories and the descriptions of earlier travellers, noting, as Dorothy Wordsworth had done, his disappointment at seeing Glencoe in sunshine and utilising an account by Charles Dickens to convey to his readers what he felt should be the true bleakness of the pass (Morton 1949:228). He was conscious of his place at the margins of the then century-and-a-half old
tradition of outsider interest in Scotland (Morton 1949:13;27;122;134) and even his volumes unrelated to Scotland contain references to Scott’s role in the generation of specific national images (Morton 1934b:188). In the 1929 introduction to In Search of Scotland (Morton 1949:vii-viii), he summarised the contribution of those in whose footsteps he followed, making a case for the origins of tourism in Scotland broadly similar to that arrived at by TC Smout (1983, 1990 and 2000) and Alastair Durie (2003). Morton could be pompous and patronising, and his writing was often highly resonant with the purple prose of an earlier age, emphasising the influence of the literary past on his perspective, as with his description in 1929 of a drive alongside the far from ‘natural’ Caledonian Canal: ‘What scenery, what primeval wildness, what splendid solitudes, what lonely mountain-crests, what dark gloom of pine and larch, what sudden bright glimpses through trees of deep water reflecting the curves of guardian hills’ (Morton 1949:182). Concentrating on the romance of the past, Morton focused his readers’ attention on the visual reminders of the pre-twentieth-century landscape. For the most part, he excluded commentary on human-engineered constructions, and did not contribute to contemporary debates over land-use.

Such imagery could not have jarred with his inter-war audience to any significant extent. By 1949, Methuen had issued a thirty-sixth edition of In Search of Scotland. Morton had also gained the approval of the SM (1933:233) which suggested with satisfaction that a high proportion of Morton’s readers were Scots (Scots Magazine, 1934:frontpiece). Such a statement is difficult to quantify, but it is certainly arguable that the work of travel writers of the inter-war years in general, and that of Morton in particular, did much to inform the view of the precise components of attractive Scottish landscape. In addition – and mirroring James Bryce’s turn-of-the-century conclusions – it is also arguable that the work of travel writers served to modify perceptions of ‘good’ landscape, with readers concluding that the mention of a particular spot in guidebooks gave it precedence over less publicised sites. It is possible that this had far-reaching
implications, impacting as it would have done on the views of people concerned with shaping landscapes and developmental policies in other parts of the world (see for example Cronon 1983).

Hydroelectric Development and the Protection of 'Wild Land'
The extent to which this Highland image had become entrenched within the general cultural mindset became apparent when industrial expansion in the form of hydroelectric development, initially in the interests of aluminium production and later for general power supply, threatened to intrude upon the cherished places associated with the 'Highland myth'. Proposals for large-scale hydroelectric development in the region emerged from the socio-economic concerns of the early twentieth century and before. Scotland had experienced a protracted period of economic decline, and the Highlands in particular lagged behind the remainder of Britain in terms of basic living standards, employment levels and industrial development. The growing power of the political left in Scottish politics during, and subsequent to, the inter-war years focused attention on this imbalance and there was a notable drive, particularly post-1942, to facilitate development in all corners of the Highlands. With the establishment of the North of Scotland Hydro-electric Board (NSHEB), an effectively state-mandated concern was created to drive through hydroelectric schemes (initially private commercial enterprises) in the Highlands. The NSHEB quickly came into conflict with core landscape appreciation/protection groups over the best use of Highland landscapes. The standoff between the two sides can be ascribed to different valuation criteria, which made compromise difficult, if not impossible. Hydroelectric development utilised two principal natural resources of the Highlands, open space and extensive water systems, and appeared to represent a viable solution to a swathe of socio-economic problems. However, many of the Highland sites most suited to this development were landscapes valued for their natural beauty and socio-cultural associations, exhibiting links to ideas of national and cultural identity and the tendency
to utopianise Britain’s pre-industrial past. Hydroelectric development was seen to threaten these landscapes with irrevocable aesthetic change. Its opposition served to articulate twentieth-century perspectives on landscape appreciation and protection, in the process highlighting the incompatibility of contemporary desires for non-modified landscapes with contemporary energy requirements. The trappings of industry, no matter how well designed, have no place within the ‘ideal’ landscapes of the Romantic mindset. Their presence may be tolerated, for a variety of reasons, but is seldom accepted as anything more than a necessary negative.

The importance of the Romantic ideal becomes apparent when addressing the opposition to hydroelectric development initiatives that were seen to threaten the aesthetic quality of the Highland landscape. Initial disquiet related to localised landscape modifications such as the diversion of water flow and the diminution of well-known waterfalls, which diluted the template Romantic idyll. By the late 1920s, critics of hydroelectricity were articulating their concerns regarding a range of more large-scale negative factors, although their misgivings were also increasingly offset by their concern not to be seen to be thwarting socio-economic projects of significant advantage to Highland communities. This opposition served to galvanise the establishment and expansion of Scotland-orientated voluntary organisations (like the Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland) and their demands for greater legislative protection for ‘cherished’ landscapes.

Water flow change became the focus of initial opposition to hydroelectric development because it led to dramatic landscape modification. The vital element in hydroelectric power generation is a steep gradient down which to channel the water driving electric turbines. Waterfalls accompany many steep gradients, and famous and much-visited waterfalls like those of Foyers, as well as Corra Linn (fig. 3), Bonnington Linn and Stonebyres Linn on the River Clyde, lost a significant proportion of their flow to diversion. In 1897, James Bryce denounced the
British Aluminium Company for the desecration of the Falls of Foyers, ‘...a perfectly unique piece of scenery, the most striking of all British waterfalls’ (Bryce 1897:129-130). In spite of Bryce’s disapproval, the Company was legally inviolate, having bought the surrounding 8,000 acre estate of Lower Foyers as well as the additional water rights it required from other neighbouring landowners (Payne 1988:5). Influenced by the late-nineteenth-century emergence of the national park system in the United States – and arguably the first person to articulate the need for broad landscape protection measures in the Highlands - Bryce suggested that one way of forestalling similar actions in the future might be to create:

‘some means of preserving for the nation as a whole a thing in which the nation as a whole had an interest, and which was part of the inheritance the nation received, and wished to hand on’ (Bryce 1897:129-130, Lambert 2001:68).

More than any other visible changes to the land brought about by power generation in the early part of the twentieth century, the drastic diminution of waterfalls engendered a significant sense of loss that began to be articulated in terms of cultural heritage. There is little direct linkage between Bryce’s suggestion and the later, more specific, calls for a National Trust for Scotland and for national parks. At the same time, however, memories of the impairment of the Falls of Foyers lingered on as a tangible example of the losses that might result if hydroelectric development in the Highlands was to proceed unregulated.

Romantic values dictate explicitly that trees complement waterscapes and vice versa; this is arguably one reason why the greatest opposition to post-World War II hydroelectric developments in Scotland arose in response to proposals centred on landscapes incorporating lochs and watercourses with wooded banks: lochs Sloy, Lomond, Tummel and Affric, rather than Glen Cannich. In the 1940s, the exigencies of war and reconstruction enabled the NSHEB to proceed with a highly-contested hydroelectric scheme incorporating lochs Lomond and
Sloy - the ‘Sloy Scheme’. However, during the 1970s, opposition groups were able to combat a subsequent hydroelectric development threat to Loch Lomondside (figs. 2 and 5) through emphasis on its iconic, romanticised status. Protestors and the media made practical use of the cultural connotations at their disposal, in a way that they would never have been able to do with NSHEB's Cruachan hydroelectric development at the relatively less well-known, but arguably no less scenic, Loch Awe. A significant degree of mileage was obtained from references to the lyrics of the song 'Loch Lomond', in which, for instance, the loch's 'bonnie, bonnie banks' were compared to a post-developmental 'Bonnie Waste Dump' (see the Stirling Observer 3/8/1977; Carson and Leiper 1978). The socially-prominent Earl of Arran referred to 'the astonishing plan of building a power station inside Ben Lomond, on the bonnie banks of the loch' and the destruction of 'Britain's number one beauty spot' (The Scotsman, 20/7/1978). In June 1978, the Glasgow Herald produced a lengthy synopsis that also played on the 'Loch Lomond' lyrics:

‘For them [NSHEB] there is no high road or low road, but only the one unavoidable road leading straight up to a savagely splendid ridge they have codenamed Craigroyston which nestsles on the broad shoulders of Ben Lomond... The rape of the loch, the destruction of Europe's greatest wilderness, the betrayal of future landscape starved generations who will be cheated out of the unspoiled freedom of Rob Roy's hills...These are just a few of the accusations levelled at the Hydro Board in their proposed 'shock assault' on 114 square miles of Scottish Grandeur' (Glasgow Herald 20/6/1978).

A statement by the Vice-Chairman of the Buchanan Community Council summarised the general mood: 'Loch Lomond, the Ben and its banks are among Scotland’s most priceless assets, known in song and story the world over' (Frend 1978).

At the same time, close inspection of opposition to the development of Loch Lomondside suggests that a significant amount of opposition was based largely on what are now
recognised as ‘not in my backyard’ (NIMBY) principles. ‘Memory tags’ in the form of landmarks of cultural significance were referred to, but their importance to heritage was seldom defined satisfactorily, with the result that ideas of public ‘ownership’ and inheritance on a cultural basis remained insufficiently clarified. By contrast, NIMBYist concerns were more explicitly noted, thus providing Hayden Lorimer and Andy Wightman (1999) with the evidence necessary to support their contention that landscape protection is traditional landownership in disguise (Lorimer 1997).

Conclusion
Following the Industrial Revolution, idealised ‘wild’ upland landscapes increasingly began to serve as meaningful points of reference for Britons intent on reinforcing their weakening ties with a romanticised pre-industrial past. By the twentieth century, the cherished ‘natural’ places on which landscape awareness pivoted, while arguably rooted in remote but nonetheless actual memory, were static scenes of the collective imagination. In terms of both significance and reality, these areas, of which the Highland landscape is a notable example, had come to be substantially disassociated from the land-use requirements of a ‘Western’ culture sustained by high-level energy consumption and the large-scale constructions accompanying it.

Intertwined ideas of water, wilderness and landscape constitute much of the core of the contemporary Highland identity. Outsider-imposed, this construct is a comparatively recent phenomenon based to a significant extent on the romanticised responses of non-Scots and Lowlanders, who, from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, went north in search of ‘natural’ scenic and cultural evocations of Britain’s pre-industrial past. By the 1900s, the lochs, glens and hills of the Highlands had become representative of Scotland as a whole, to the point where any industrial development threatening to impinge on the ‘natural’ status of specific cherished places within the region was, in effect, seen to threaten the notion of
'Scottishness' itself. As a result, the idea of hydroelectric development in areas like Loch Lomondside inevitably caused controversy. This inability to reconcile land-use and landscape was a recurring theme through much of the twentieth century, and has, in the form of the ongoing debate over pylons and wind power, continued to colour the environmental debates of the early twenty-first century.

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