



F O L A R

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Issue 2 December 2015

Happy Christmas!

To all supporters of the landscape library and archive at MERL
 Keep a note of **SATURDAY 19 MARCH 2016**
 It's **FOLAR's AGM & STUDY DAY** in Reading

FOLAR STUDY DAY (19 MARCH 2016) TOPIC:

New Towns, Landscape and Gordon Patterson - Celebrating mid 20C Design

The subject of our study day is prompted by two things. The first is that the current housing crisis in the UK, and in London and the South East in particular, is turning minds again to the design of large new settlements and how sustainable design and green infrastructure can contribute to an improved quality of life for all. The second is that the landscape architect, Gordon Patterson, has recently donated his archive to the growing collections of the Landscape Institute now deposited at MERL.

Gordon Patterson was for many years the landscape architect of Stevenage New Town. Now retired, Gordon Patterson has a wealth of experience to share and it is hoped that he will join us on the day.

The study day will concentrate, as last year, on the relevance of past work and experience to inform the present. MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE DAY WILL BE ADVERTISED IN EARLY 2016



Green Park, Reading
 PLACE Design + Planning.
 Civic Trust National Award
 Winner 2014.

The landscape infrastructure was critical to creating a unique setting for this new business park with some 198,000 sq. metres of potential building development on what was formerly poor quality agricultural land. The park includes a 5ha. lake, established to accommodate flood waters with a variation in levels of up to 2.4 metres. Such potential rise and fall over time requires careful design of sustainable marginal planting as well as edge detailing of the lake itself.

MEMORIES OF SYLVIA CROWE

Ken Taylor: 'I recall in the late 1960s/early 1970s going one evening from Manchester to Preston to listen to Sylvia at a NW Institute of Landscape Architects Chapter lecture. At the opening she announced with a wry smile she was not using slides, which everyone had come to regard as de rigueur. After waiting for the muffled groan she then held the audience captive for an hour as she laid out her ideas on landscape, planning in the countryside and the opportunities waiting for landscape architecture. She was thought-provoking and stimulating. She also stressed the need for the profession to be able to work as part of a team. In her own work she had no difficulty in collaborating successfully with others. For me, she confirmed why I had left planning to take up

landscape architecture. One of her tenets that she elucidated in the lecture has stayed with me: the mark of a good landscape scheme is where you cannot readily see where the landscape architect has been at work. Years later in the mid-1980s I was reminded of this when going by taxi to do a radio talk, during Floriade, from Commonwealth Park in Canberra.

Sylvia had done the master plan for the park in 1964. The taxi driver asked me what I was doing at the park and I happened to mention the designer, Sylvia Crowe, would be delighted with the success of the park. He replied without hesitation, 'Oh I always thought of Commonwealth Park as being natural'.

I wrote to Sylvia, referring to the Preston lecture and the taxi driver's comment; she sent a charming reply and was clearly pleased with the accolade. She had a parallel canon for this: things must 'look right in the landscape' which she applied expertly to her large-scale design and planning work.'

This is an extract from a review by Ken Taylor of the 1999 LDT/LI monograph on Sylvia Crowe (ed. Geoffrey Collens and Wendy Powell). Taylor's review was first published in the Australian Landscape Review in 2001.

Ken Taylor is Emeritus Prof. of Landscape Architecture at the University of Canberra and a member of the editorial panel of the Landscape Research Group.

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REPORT ON FOLAR'S YEAR 2015



Broadwater Park, Denham
Design by Preben Jakobsen
© Image: LI/MERL Preben
Jakobsen Collection



Brenda Colvin's business card
© LI/MERL Brenda Colvin
Collection



One of 3 postcards produced by FOLAR to promote our group at the LI/MERL Annual Lecture given by James Corner in the University of Reading's Great Hall, October 2015

MERL'S Spring 2015 Seminar Series: **Discovering the Landscape** proved a great success and FOLAR members were involved in giving two of the seminars.

Deputy University archivist Caroline Gould, FOLAR secretary and landscape architect, Annabel Downs, gave a joint talk in February entitled: *From garden space to masterplan: The Landscape Institute collections at MERL (10.2.15)*

This presentation was followed in March by landscape architect, Karen Fitzsimon, who gave her talk on: *Order in the Landscape: Rediscovering Preben Jakobsen (17.3.15)*. Karen's seminar was an object lesson in how quickly even the work of a designer of the calibre of Preben Jakobsen can still be lost when development pressure and benign neglect go hand in hand.

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At FOLAR's AGM and study day in March there were two talks based on the archive, now at MERL, of the landscape architect and founder member of the Institute of Landscape Architects, Brenda Colvin.

The first of these talks was given by Caroline Gould of MERL. Using the Brenda Colvin collection as a case study, Caroline spoke of the archival challenges of landscape architects collections. Given that there are roughly some 400 landscape practices in England alone, it is clearly neither practical nor desirable to collect everything and so the questions remain: Which papers?

Which repository?

As she explained, at the present time MERL staff are, of necessity, reactive rather than actively seeking to acquire collections.

All archivists are only just starting to get to grips with the question too, of how to deal with digital archives, particularly early digital format material, and no one has the complete answers to this quite yet. The subject of digital asset management is of particular relevance to the output of landscape practices who were, from the late 1980s onwards, producing material that is now known as 'born digital' ie a drawing, a written report, an image or a website that never started life as a physical object.

The second talk of the day was given by Hal Moggridge who, on behalf of Colvin & Moggridge, donated the Brenda Colvin archive, accompanied by a detailed catalogue, to the Landscape Institute collection at MERL. It was a privilege to hear Hal talk of his working relationship with this complex, sometimes fearsome, but deeply thoughtful and always committed landscape architect. Colvin, as we learnt, was a life long supporter of the Institute (of Landscape Architects/later Landscape Institute) that she had helped found back in 1929. Yet, unlike Sylvia Crowe and Geoffrey, later Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, Colvin was never accorded the same international honours as they were. Why this should be is a matter of speculation but what is not in doubt is that Brenda Colvin sits

alongside them now as one of the great 20th Century pioneers of British landscape architecture. The landscape archive at MERL is enriched by having acquired her collection.

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The final 'event' of the year was FOLAR's participation in a full day at MERL which included, in the evening, the MERL/LI joint annual lecture in the Great Hall at the University given by the internationally renowned landscape architect, James Corner.

For a good account of the whole day as well as the lecture in the evening, you can read MERL's own blog *Our Country Lives/ Discovering the Landscape # 20* on the MERL website. It was written by MERL's librarian, Claire Wooldridge. As well as having a display banner printed for the occasion, FOLAR had three different postcard designs printed for handing out on the day, to encourage new members to join us in supporting the library and archive at MERL. FOLAR, with MERL's help, put on another successful duplicate book sale in the Great Hall in the afternoon raising £177 for MERL funds.

Particular thanks must go to Annabel Downs and Helen Brown for taking a day of their busy work schedules to travel to Reading and work on pricing up these duplicate books on MERL and FOLAR's behalf.

A Geoffrey Jellicoe scheme in the North West

Former LI archivist, Annabel Downs, writes: 'I was doing a school job in Leasowe on the Wirral and was waiting at Moreton station to get back to Liverpool mainline station. While there I took a bunch of photos of the canal on the road frontage of the Cadbury factory next to the station as I thought it was really lovely – and the building too with its curly roof.'

A few months later Sheila, the LI librarian said to me one day I should look through the Susan Jellicoe photos. They were in a fragile state so not many folk were offered the privilege of looking through them. I nearly fell off my seat when I saw Moreton in there. It was so exciting.

I then got in touch with Ed Bennis who asked if there were drawings. So I got in touch with the factory and was put through to a manager, who said he would look for drawings if I got him some information on Geoffrey Jellicoe.

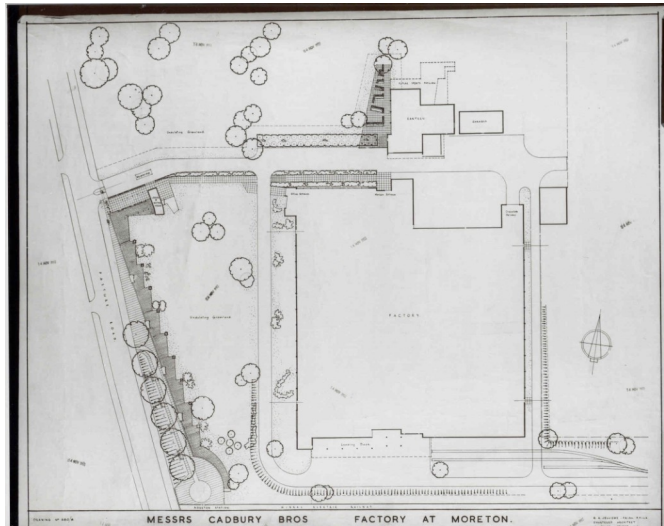
Ed and I went to the factory to collect the drawings and some tins of chocolate biscuits!

In his spare time, the manager tried to get the pump working again. I think he had already been made redundant and then taken back on by the new owners as no one else knew how the building machinery operated.

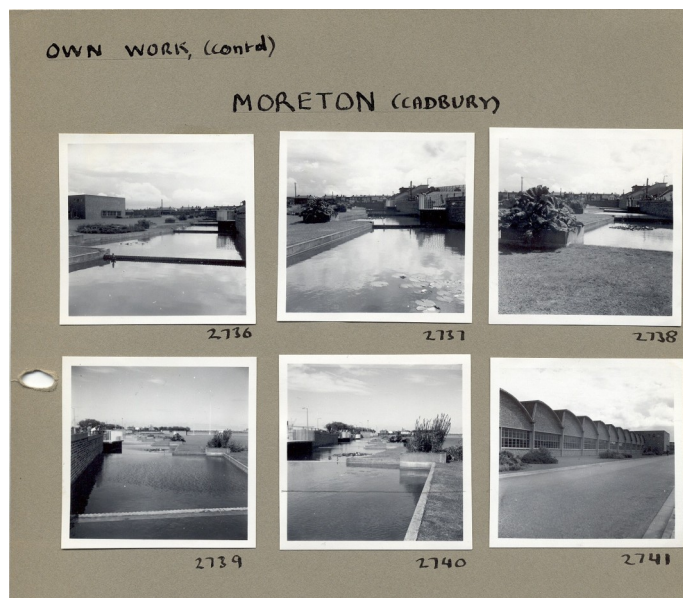
Ed and I then did some research on Jellicoe's scheme, Ed wrote an article 'Cadbury's Moreton

Memories' which is published on The Cultural Heritage Foundation's website (www.tclf.org) and Ed pulled it all and more together for the Cheshire Garden Trust.

Note: The drawings of the Cadbury Bros. factory at Moreton which were saved by Annabel and Ed, are now catalogued as part of the LI's Jellicoe Collection at MERL



Above: Plan. Design Geoffrey Jellicoe
Below: Susan Jellicoe's B&W photographs of Moreton
© LI/MERL Jellicoe Collection



Then it was the Garden History Society's AGM and Conference at Liverpool that had the visit to see Moreton, including among the attendees, Charles Birnbaum of TCLF.'

Postscript: As at May 2015 the 30 acre site of the Cadbury factory is up for sale and Jellicoe's 'canal' sadly neglected and full of phragmites and rubbish. It is hoped that the scheme will be restored by the new owners.

Below: colour photographs of Moreton site, taken May 2015)



Newsletter

Unloved Landscapes. The Bristol Schemes of S. Crowe

Wendy Tippett, CMLI, writes about her dissertation for her MSc Conservation of Historic Gardens and Cultural Landscapes, University of Bath, September 2014.

The dissertation explored the three public schemes that Crowe's practice completed for Bristol Corporation during the 1960s and early 70s. Post war rebuilding by the Corporation included major improvement works that would help modernise and develop the city. Sylvia Crowe was then at the height of her powers and prestige: a past president of the Institute of Landscape Architects and employing

Wendy Powell, FLI. In Bristol they attempted to humanise brutally engineered roads and massive housing blocks with 'ground shaping', structural tree and mass shrub planting, ample play and communal spaces and a restrained palette of modern hard materials.

Sadly, the schemes have undergone unsympathetic alterations and today, are neglected, vulnerable, and generally unloved. My research included trawling through the Crowe archive now housed at MERL, where a beautiful drawing for an unrealised park was uncovered (not shown).

Bristol City Records Office hold some drawings copied onto microfiche, in addition to some fascinating photographs that formed a useful 'before and after' comparison.

Wendy Powell was also generous in supplying first hand material.

'View from wooded hill', by Wendy Powell for Sylvia Crowe & Associates. 37167/353, Bristol Records Office. This proposal drawing was part of the Landscape Report for the Cumberland Basin Bridges and Ashton Gate Junction scheme, 1964, and overlooks an area now known as Ashton Meadows.

'the schemes have undergone unsympathetic alterations and today, are neglected, vulnerable, and generally unloved'

Wendy Tippett, CMLI



Editorial: The value of landscape archives

Several national news items which have featured either the renovation or the reimagining of 20th C. designed landscapes have appeared this year, and all have involved archival research. I am thinking, for example, of the 1970s Alexandra Road scheme, the original design by Janet Jack, who advised J. & L. Gibbons Studio on their renovation proposals. Janet Jack had deposited her original drawings at the Garden Museum in London a few years back; another example is the Hemel Hempstead Water Gardens designed by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, whose archive, alongside his wife, Susan's B&W photograph, are now part of the LI's archive at MERL.

One important role for archives wherever they are deposited, therefore, is that they can inform current and future design practice. As several of the articles in this issue remind us, archives are also a teaching and study resource. Archives play an important part in demonstrating the skills of the landscape professional. These skills can often remain hidden from public view in a way that a new building, successful or otherwise, cannot. Often the scheme is so appropriately designed that it 'looks natural' (Ken Taylor on Sylvia Crowe/ p.1) but alternatively, it can be overlooked because neglect or mismanagement has destroyed the designer's original intentions.

Here, I must make a landscape related confession about one such neglected site. I have driven past the Moreton site* on the Wirral many times (*described in Annabel Down's article/p.3) on my way to the lighthouse at Leasowe to do some bird-watching (the north coast here is bleak and windblown and perfect for this activity). Never in all those years, did I register that the landscape I drove past was designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe. This year, however, I got out of my car, walked along the factory road, and armed with the information that now sits in MERL's archive my eyes, finally, were opened.

Penny Beckett, FLI
Chair, FOLAR

THE SUSAN JELLCOE COLLECTION AT MERL

A collection of thousands of small black-and-white photographs, taken during the 1950s and 1960s by the plantswoman, writer and photographer, Susan Jellicoe, (1907-1986) and now in the archives at MERL, make a distinct contribution to the visual interpretation of the modern landscape.

The photographs, pasted by Jellicoe on sheets of brown paper, create a social and cultural perspective of the period: the public parks, urban streets and new towns, the factory and the power station, the motorway and the car park, the private garden and the children's playground. One such page of photographs illustrating a rooftop garden for a department store, designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe in the late 1950s, conveys the inspiration and optimism of the time: the abstract shapes and curving lines, the circles of stepping stones across the water and the viewing platforms from the terraces create an image of the earth as if seen from space, whilst the outdoor café, the balconies and the striped parasols echo themes from the Festival of Britain.

This unique visual archive is the focus for my research study, examining the designed landscape, and the desire for improving lives by planning of the open space. I am delighted that MERL has catalogued and made available such a valuable archive.

Sally Ingram is a garden researcher and PhD student at Birkbeck University, London

Photo page from the Susan Jellicoe collection: at MERL: Roof-top garden by Geoffrey Jellicoe for Harvey's Department Store, Guildford, Surrey, 1956-57. Photographed by Susan Jellicoe



PHOTOGRAPHS, PARTICULARLY B&W PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE 1950S ONWARDS, PROVIDE A VALUABLE RECORD WHEN THEY ARE ALL THAT'S LEFT OF THE DESIGNER'S IDEAS THAT PROVED, ULTIMATELY, TO BE EPHEMERAL AND NO LONGER FIT FOR PURPOSE

ARCHIVES: A TOOL FOR TEACHING IN THE 21st C

Tim Waterman writes: *I spent two years working regularly in the library and archive at the Landscape Institute when I was working on my first two books, and I also brought students to visit from the Writtle School of Design. Annabel Downs, who was Archivist at the time, showed us Geoffrey Jellicoe's sketchbooks and some magnificent drawings by Peter Shephard. This very much brought both the history of the profession and the need for hand drawing alive for the students. One very special memory I have is of poring over Susan Jellicoe's albums of black and white photographs - mounted on grey card with black photo corners - and the feeling of accompanying both Geoffrey and Susan on their travels that I have always relished reading and re-reading 'The Landscape of Man'. I'm immensely pleased that the archive has a good home at MERL, as it is not just our profession's memory, but a wonderful tool for teaching.*

Tim Waterman is a lecturer at Writtle School of Design and thesis tutor at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College, London. He is also the honorary editor of *Landscape*, the journal of the Landscape Institute. Tim has published two books both by AVA publishing SA in 2009: *Basics Landscape Architecture Urban Design*, with Ed Wall and *Fundamentals of Landscape Architecture*. See www.tim-waterman.co.uk

Members of the Institute of Landscape Architects in 1938

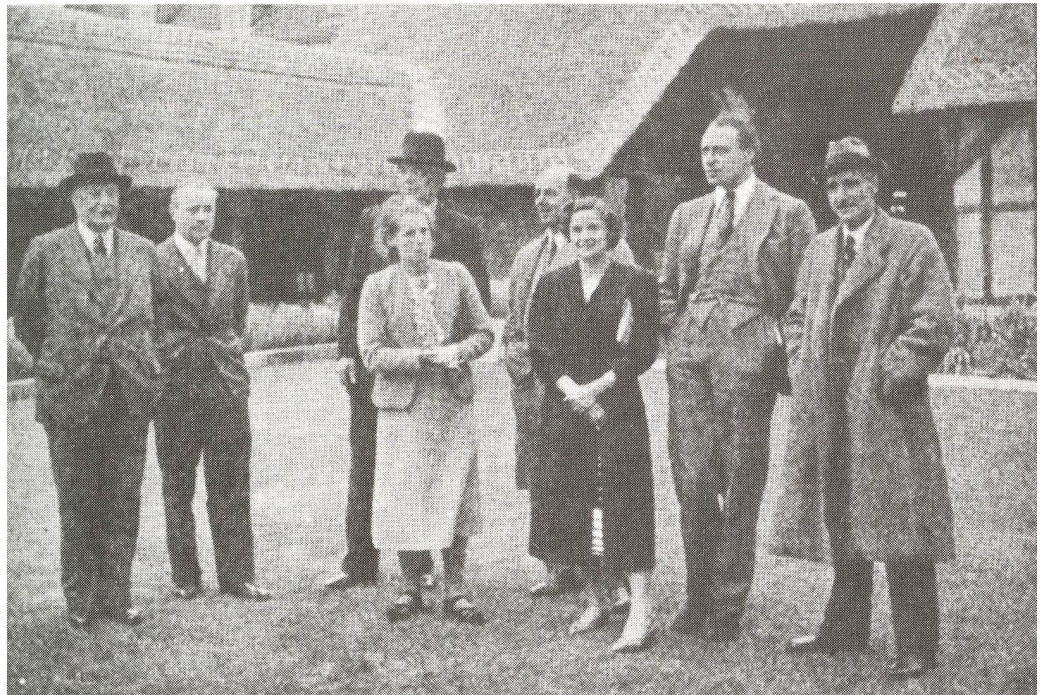
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This archive photograph was first reproduced in the Autumn 1938 issue of the Institute of Landscape Architects' Journal: *Landscape and Garden*, in an article written by Susan Jellicoe (1).

From left to right the ILA members in the photograph are:

CE Hughes (Hon Treasurer)
Geoffrey Jellicoe (Hon Sec/VP)
GH Jenkins (Past President)

Then, in front of Jenkins:

Lady Allen (VP)
Richard Sudell (FILA, *Landscape and Garden* editor)

And, in front of Sudell
Susan Jellicoe
Russell Page (FILA)(2)
Edward White (Past Pres.)
All except 'Mrs Jellicoe' (as she was described in the original caption) were also members of the ILA Council for the session 1938-1939.

© LI/MERL Collection

(1) The article was entitled *The First Exhibition and its subject: 'The Value of Design in Gardens'*. The exhibition was held by the ILA in the village of Broadway, Worcs. According to Jellicoe's article the exhibition contained '57 photographs; 2 models and an historical section'.

(2) Russell Page (see below) FILA = Fellow of the Institute of Landscape Architects

'RUSSELL PAGE:
THE MOST
FAMOUS GARDEN
DESIGNER NO
ONE'S HEARD OF'

**Christopher
Woodward**
WRITING IN THE
DAILY TELEGRAPH
gardening section
21.3.15

Russell Page Exhibition held at the Garden Museum

In March this year, the Garden Museum held an exhibition entitled: *The Education of a Gardener: The life & work of Russell Page (1906-1985)*.

The exhibition drew on paintings, photographs and drawings from Page's own archive at the Museum, the RHS collection and other public and private

collections in the US and Europe.

Christopher Woodward, (Garden Museum's Director), published an article* in the Daily Telegraph about his personal journey to find out more about Page and his work. From this account, Page seems to have moved effortlessly between one wealthy client and another at

a time when landscape architects' commissions in Britain were primarily concerned with the design of large gardens for private clients.

* *Russell Page; the most famous garden designer no one's every heard of*, The Daily Telegraph, Gardening Section, 21.3.15

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTERS of the landscape collections at MERL, University of Reading