Environments, Spaces, Knowledges
New and Emerging Research in Historical Geography

Edited by
BENJAMIN NEWMAN, PETER MARTIN and LAURA CRAWFORD

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP
Environments,
Spaces, Knowledges
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in Historical Geography

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Laura Crawford

Cover images (left to right): view of Blackpool Pit in Cornwall’s china clay country (see page 49); extract from Guillaume Sanson’s La Sicile, used in the education of the future King George III (see page 95); preparations for observing the 1911 solar eclipse in Tonga (see page 110).
The Historical Geography Research Series is produced by the Historical Geography Research Group of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers). The Research Series is designed to provide scholars with an outlet for extended essays of an interpretive or conceptual nature that make a substantive contribution to some aspect of the subject; critical reviews of the literature on a major problem; and commentaries on relevant sources. One or two numbers are produced annually. Contributions to the series are always welcome. In addition to single or jointly-authored monographs, the Series welcomes themed conference papers or papers grouped around a topic of research relevant to the broad interests of the group.

The Series Editor for this volume was Dr Briony McDonagh of the Department of Geography, Geology and Environment, University of Hull.
# Contents

List of figures v  
List of tables vi  
Acknowledgments vii  
List of contributors viii  

1 Emergence, connections and meanings:  
   Directions in postgraduate historical geography  
   *Benjamin Newman, Peter Martin and Laura Crawford*  
   1

2 Lime, useful knowledge and the *General Views*  
   in Enlightenment Scotland  
   *Douglas Mitchell*  
   17

3 Fire and Belize’s savannas:  
   From colonial forestry to conservation  
   *Cathy Smith*  
   31

4 Presencing the past: Experiential practice and  
   archival encounters in Cornwall’s china clay country  
   *Robyn Raxworthy*  
   43

5 ‘Our true intent is all for your delight’:  
   Reawakening mobile materialities of Scotland’s  
   travelling fairgrounds  
   *Elisabeth Alice Lacsny*  
   55

6 ‘I will be mistress of my own’: Property management  
   during widowhood in eighteenth-century England  
   *Sarah Shields*  
   67
CONTENTS

7 The limits to colonisation in the Mukogodo Native Reserve, Kenya, c. 1930–1963 79
   Sipke Shaughnessy

8 A princely education in Georgian Britain: Teaching geography and culture with the maps of the King’s Topographical Collection 91
   Jeremy Brown

9 Totality in the tropics: The historical geographies of the 1911 eclipse expeditions to Tonga 105
   Rory Mawhinney

10 A cultural and historical geography of non-formal education for Black children, young people and adults in London c. 1967–1990 117
    Jacob Fairless Nicholson

11 Afterword 129
    Hilary Bishop
## Figures

2.1 Remains of a draw kiln at Loch an Eilein, Rothiemurchus 19
3.1 Belizean savanna following a wildfire 32
3.2 Contemporary prescribed fire management in southern Belize by protected area managers from the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE) 38
4.1 A view of the Blackpool Pit from ‘Jasper’s Gate’ 49
8.1 Guillaume Sanson, La Sicile, Avec les anciens noms de presque toutes ses Places, Riveres, Chasteaux et diverses observations nouvelles, Paris: Rue Froimanteau, undated [post-1692] 95
8.2 The southeast of Italy. A detail of Joseph Archivolti Cavassi, L’Isle et Royaume de Sicile, Paris, 1714 97
9.1 The instruments being landed near the observation site on Vava’u 110
Tables

1.1 New and Emerging Research papers given by year
1.2 New and Emerging Research papers by regional institutional affiliation 2012–18
1.3 Contributions by UK universities to New and Emerging Research sessions 2012–18
Acknowledgments

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Contributors

Hilary Bishop, Liverpool John Moores University

Jeremy Brown, Royal Holloway, University of London and the British Library

Laura Crawford, Loughborough University

Elisabeth Alice Lacsny, University of Glasgow

Peter Martin, University of Oxford

Rory Mawhinney, Queen’s University Belfast

Douglas Mitchell, University of Glasgow

Benjamin Newman, Royal Holloway, University of London

Jacob Fairless Nicholson, King’s College London

Robyn Raxworthy, University of Exeter

Sipke Shaughnessy, University of Cambridge

Sarah Shields, University of Hull

Cathy Smith, University of Edinburgh
Emergence, connections and meanings: Directions in postgraduate historical geography

Benjamin Newman, Peter Martin and Laura Crawford

As geographers we have become well accustomed to taking stock of our (sub)disciplinary trajectories. Indeed, we are adept at identifying and responding to the emergent trends in our disparate discipline; facilitated by journals such as *Progress in Human Geography*, *Geography Compass* and *Dialogues in Human Geography* that provide a venue for scholars seeking up-to-date reflections on the state of the discipline. The language in the titles of progress reports themselves tells us much about their intellectual endeavour. Words such as ‘rethinking’, ‘traditions’, ‘beginnings’, ‘hopes’, ‘remains’ and ‘progress’ illustrate that these reports are simultaneously about the past, present and future of the discipline.

In surveying the state of historical geography specifically, scholars have taken varied approaches. For example, Innes Keighren’s recent writing has questioned what sort of disciplinary histories we tell, emphasising how the pressures of the neoliberal academy shape our writing and dissemination of these knowledges.¹ In 2003, Deryck Holdsworth took stock of how geographical information systems provided historical geographers with new scope for ‘imaging and seeing the past’.² And later, Cheryl McGeachan discussed the use (and value) of biography as a framework that historical geographers have employed to examine ‘uncharted lives and unspoken histories’.³
Aidan McQuillan, as many others have, pointed to the ‘health and vitality of historical geography’ as demonstrated by its ‘diversity of research interests’, acknowledging that topicality ‘wax[es] and wane[s] over time as the intellectual climate changes’. Our reflections then have been diverse, from methodology and topicality, through to the intellectual conditions that inform and shape our scholarship. In sum, as an intellectual project, scoping the discipline’s trajectory in these various ways has a common and shared ambition in identifying key tropes, themes, ideas and issues, in setting agendas and priorities, and in flagging the most innovative and important work in the field.

Postgraduate work is, however, often left behind in debates about where the field is going. Most doctoral students’ work is yet to be formally published and hence obscured from the view of those penning reports on the discipline’s latest developments. This volume, as a collection of short essays from postgraduate students, provides doctoral researchers the opportunity to publish their in-progress work and lends us the opportunity to reflect on the contribution made by doctoral study to the subdiscipline. The chapters in this book are the product of conference sessions sponsored by the Historical Geography Research Group (hereafter HGRG) which offer space for new and emergent scholars in historical geography to present their research. As such, this volume allows us to consider the intellectual concerns, topics and methods of a small collection of researchers that will hopefully go on to shape the discipline in years to come. Of course, academics adapt and change throughout their careers but, like any progress report, the chapters in the book and the conference sessions from which they originate provide a platform to consider the scope, ambition and limits of postgraduate historical geography. In this book then, emergence is dualistic; it can be thought of both as the emergence of new topics, methods and concepts and as the emergence of new historically-informed geographical scholars.

As the product of an open call from work by doctoral candidates in historical geography, the chapters in this volume are diverse. Yet, it should be evident throughout that there are synergies between both chapters and sections. In this short introduction
then, it is our intention to comment upon such linkages. Using this opportunity to reflect more broadly – by seeing our authors’ work as illustrative of emergent trends and continuities in historical geography – we take these chapters to say something of the landscape of the subdiscipline’s (postgraduate) scholarship. Moments of reflection such as these, it has been suggested, are all too ‘rare within a field often justifiably caught up in the archive’.

However, as we will now demonstrate, archives can in fact be deployed so as to facilitate reflection on the nature of historical geography, rather than serve as a distraction from it. Some brief archival study has given us the useful opportunity to historicise the HGRG postgraduate conference sessions for readers who are not familiar with them. In doing so, we give context to the conference sessions that have been a starting point of many historical geographers’ careers. Later we turn to make wider reflections upon this volume. We are sure our readers will establish many more connections between our authors’ work, but we reflect here on those that were most evident and important to us as editors and to the wider discipline.

THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP AND POSTGRADUATE CONFERENCEING

The HGRG has a long history of supporting postgraduate students in historical geography. It first appointed a postgraduate representative to its committee in 1995 and has maintained postgraduate representation on its governing body since. Today, the group supports postgraduate study by hosting an annual conference (Practising Historical Geography) and financially supporting doctoral candidates attending international conferences or convening thematic workshops. In many respects, this volume dedicated to postgraduate scholarship is a further extension of the group’s postgraduate support – providing a space for publication and editing experience. In addition, one of the group’s most important endeavours is to sponsor a number of sessions at the Royal Geographical Society with Institute of British Geographer’s (hereafter RGS-IBG) Annual International Conference open specifically to postgraduate researchers.
The New and Emerging Research in Historical Geography sessions convened at the RGS-IBG’s annual conferences have become a firm favourite among delegates with historically-focused research agendas. First appearing in the conference’s programme over a decade ago, these sessions offer postgraduate students, at any level, the opportunity to present their ongoing scholarly research. As the conference programme records in more detail, the New and Emerging Research sessions:

aim to give postgraduates undertaking research in historical geography the opportunity to present at a major conference in an informal and relaxed setting. Building upon past successful HGRG postgraduate sessions, our intention is to foster a supportive environment in which speakers receive feedback from experienced colleagues on their emerging research. As such the papers presented are from postgraduates at various stages of their doctoral research and discuss initial research aim/design; engage with methodological and/or theoretical questions; and draw upon empirical findings. There is no chronological or geographical limit to papers and the sessions have been designed to encourage questions, debate, and advice.6

That the sessions are well supported by senior figures in the discipline creates a culture in which the New and Emerging Research sessions offer valuable feedback on in-progress research. A number of early career researchers – such as Hannah Awcock, Ben Garlick, Rachel Hunt and Ruth Slatter – who have gone on to make further contributions to the subdiscipline have presented their doctoral research in these sessions.7 The importance of these sessions in stimulating and developing emergent historical geographical research at postgraduate level has been recognised by Paul Griffin (editor of the Historical Geography section of Geography Compass), who, in a recent editorial, wrote that these sessions continue to ‘remain a conference highlight’.8

The recent history of these sessions tells us much about representation within the subdiscipline. The sessions are continually a firm fixture in the conference’s programme (Table 1.1), with smaller numbers of papers only in the years that correspond with
the International Conference of Historical Geographers. More specific inferences can be made from Tables 1.2 and 1.3. There is clearly a regional trend to the presenters in the New and Emerging Research sessions, with presenters from universities in England and Scotland making up 82% of all papers given. This is perhaps not surprising since the conference is usually held in London – although it should be said that contributions from institutions in Scotland seem to be disproportionally represented, owing perhaps, in large part, to the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow having strong historical geography traditions. Doctoral supervisors and the HGRG’s committee members also are important in this story in that they encourage their institutions’ students to present in these sessions and to become members of the research group (there were 118 postgraduate members in 2010).\(^9\) Also notable are the relative absences. Researchers from Wales and Northern Ireland only contributed five papers, for example, and there are low numbers of speakers from beyond the UK. Of course, certain barriers impact upon participation at events such as the RGS-IBG’s Annual Conference, but it seems like these relative contributions say something about wider involvement in the discipline.\(^10\) It is possible that these conference sessions simply reflect historical geography’s intellectual centres but, nonetheless, these clear regional trends should make us consider the nature of participation, representation and

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Table 1.1: New and Emerging Research papers given by year
inclusivity in the subdiscipline’s postgraduate community. After all, we should always take opportunities to reflect on the social, cultural and political contexts that inform and shape the demographics of the next generation of historical geographers.
The chapters in this book are categorised under their contribution to three loose themes – environments, spaces and knowledges – that are largely a product of the conference sessions from which they originate. A focus on environments is longstanding in the wider geographical discipline and, as Simon Naylor has noted, ‘research into the histories of environments and landscapes has been a mainstay of historical geography for a long time now’. The concept of space is also given a great deal of consideration in this book, allowing us to demonstrate the ways in which historical geographers are particularly adept at re-enlivening historical spaces and at finding creative ways to bring out the rich histories that are bound up within them. Our final chapters on the theme of knowledges attend to a burgeoning interest in the making and moving of knowledge and their associated spaces of practice. While these chapters speak to a wide range of trends and disciplinary concerns, their shared focus on knowledge production and circulation reinforces the important place that this concept now occupies within historical geographical scholarship. These broad themes, then, provide the formal structure for the book. However, in what follows, by introducing the book’s chapters we reflect on four crosscutting themes which draw our authors’ work together in interesting ways and allow us to consider more broadly the directions and trends of historical geography at the postgraduate level.

*Lost voices and marginalised communities*

A focus on what we might think of as marginalised communities and voices comes to the fore in a number of chapters – animating the voices of groups of people that have perhaps been less well served by the histories that we as scholars tell. Of course, such an approach has a longer tradition in the discipline: Driver’s *Hidden Histories of Exploration* project and exhibition and the Gender, Place and Memory group at the University of Hull are prime examples of work
by historical geographers in enlivening the voice of communities less represented in our scholarship.\textsuperscript{12} Nevertheless, the work presented here further illustrates the diversity of research investigating these so-called marginalised voices. Four chapters speak to this overarching theme. By focusing on showpeople, for example, Elisabeth Lacsny (Chapter 5) takes us on a journey through the ephemeral sensory spaces that are produced at fairgrounds. By combining oral histories with archival research, she is able to interpret how the embodied experiences of fairgrounds have been constructed historically across the centuries. Sarah Shields’ examination of widowhood (Chapter 6) presents us with a deeper understanding of the everyday lives of elite women. As such, her work contributes to broader geographical debates about the role of women in property and estate management. In Chapter 7, Sipke Shaughnessy analyses the historical management practices of Kenya’s Mukogodo Nature Reserve, exploring the precise means by which colonial power and governance were articulated and, importantly, resisted in the local area. Finally, discussing spaces of informal education between the 1960s and 1990s, in Chapter 10, Jacob Fairless Nicholson considers the types of knowledge that were produced in less formal settings. Studying the informal spaces of education for people of Afro-Caribbean heritage living in London, the chapter explores whether these permitted a degree of political resistance and opposition to more mainstream educational methods.

Whether it be attention to Afro-Caribbean communities, those subjected to regimes of colonial governance, elite property-owning women or travelling fair showpeople, what we see here then are attempts to disrupt hegemonic narratives by taking seriously the contribution of these groups to historical understandings of past space and place.

Knowledge and histories of science

In his recent article reflecting on historical geographical research that has featured in \textit{Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers}, Simon Naylor noted that:
There has been an up-swell of interest in the historical geographies of knowledge production and its attendant practices, with a lot of attention given to various forms of scientific activity and ideas. A focus on what we might think of as the historical geographies of knowledge clearly features in this volume yet is worthy of further attention for two reasons. Firstly, for what it reveals about historical geography’s connection to the history of science. Rory Mawhinney’s (Chapter 9) work examining the 1911 solar eclipse expeditions to Tonga is the most notable in its attention and appeal to historians of science. The chapter describes the ways in which both the ship used on the expedition and the island itself had to be adapted so as to facilitate the adequate scientific observation of the totality, and hence Mawhinney highlights the vital role that space has played in the historical production of astronomical knowledge. Moreover, in Chapter 2, Douglas Mitchell studies the hundreds of lime kilns scattered across the Scottish landscape to offer an intriguing cultural history of lime burning in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. His work shows how this natural resource enriched soils on farmland and demonstrates that the production of lime was caught up in a wider set of processes during the period that has been termed the Scottish Enlightenment. Cathy Smith’s work (Chapter 3) is another example of how historical geographers’ attention to past environments and landscapes intersects with a focus on the historical geographies of knowledge. The chapter introduces her wider research focusing on forest management policy in Belize and explores the ways in which environmental governance has to a large extent been shaped not only by science but also by successive colonial and imperial regimes. Smith explains that the use of fire has historically been a hugely important means by which local people have shaped the local environment, yet colonial actors considered such practice to be dangerous and therefore attempted to regulate its use. Both Smith and Mitchell are attentive to the ways in which the making and mobility of knowledge had direct impacts on the specific landscapes in question. It is perhaps unsurprising that our authors’ work intersects with ideas within the history of science when we consider the institutions that routinely contribute to New and Emerging Research conference sessions. With
the universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Royal Holloway home to historical geographers such as Innes Keighren, Simon Naylor and, until recently, Charlie Withers, it is not unexpected that early-career researchers at these institutions have research projects that focus on, and intersect with, the history of science.

The remaining papers in the knowledges section of the volume contribute to ‘an increasing amount of exciting work being done on the historical geographies of education and pedagogy’. An accumulation of material has focused on the development of geographical education in schools throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In Chapter 8, Jeremy Brown uses the King’s Topographical Collection held at the British Library to study the pedagogical practices that were involved in the teaching of geographical knowledge to the future King George III during the mid-eighteenth century. His analysis of the annotations and marginalia of the young Prince’s educational maps offers intriguing insights into how geography was understood among the Georgian Royal Family and how geographical knowledge was passed onto the next generation during this important historical period. If we then take Brown’s and Jacob Fairless Nicholson’s work together, we can see that the authors take this educational focus in two different, yet equally interesting, directions. They provide insights into educational spaces and practices in two very disparate settings – the regal education of King George III and the non-formal education spaces of London’s Afro-British communities – which allows for the obvious differences, and even some similarities, to come to the fore. These chapters, within a growing body of literature on education performance and practice, are evidence of the wide array of pedagogic spaces that will certainly be fruitful for further study.

**Geographies and histories of postgraduate historical geography**

The chapters in this volume demonstrate a clear regional focus, with the majority of their attention on UK domestic historical geographies. The work of Cathy Smith on Belize and Sipke Shaughnessy on Kenya stand out for their direct focus on
geographies of the Global South. Other chapters do make reference to international connections. Most notable in this respect are Jeremy Brown’s evidence of the international dimension of King George III’s map collection and Rory Mawhinney’s chapter that focuses on expeditions in Tonga (but predominantly from archives and actors from the Global North). Elsewhere, our authors deal largely with historical geographies of England and Scotland. In a climate where postgraduate research requires competitive attempts to win funding, it is perhaps not a surprise that our authors’ work does not extend too far beyond the local, given, for example, the cost of travel to non-UK archives. However, we suggest that a focus on the historical geographies of the Global South is much welcomed. Language, cultural and financial barriers aside, with the extended periods of research time afforded to doctoral students, postgraduates appear well placed to undertake work on historical geographies of the Global South. It is interesting too that both Smith and Shaughnessy make reference to, as the latter puts it, ‘historical geographical approaches’. Their historical lenses, in these cases, offer an opportunity to further consider political ecology and colonial studies. As part of wider intellectual projects that do not focus exclusively on the past, such an approach appears most fruitful.

Our authors’ work also reflects a strong emphasis on historical geographies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Sarah Shields’ focus on property management in widowhood and Jeremy Brown’s examination of King George III’s topographical education are notable exceptions for their investigation of the eighteenth century. Jacob Fairless Nicholson’s work takes us to the late-twentieth century to enhance our understanding of informal education spaces for those of Afro-Caribbean heritage. While in Chapter 4, Robyn Raxworthy transports us to the more recent past to investigate the lived heritage of Cornwall’s china clay mines. Taking us on an immersive tour of a clay pit near St Austell, she teases out the cultural histories of clay extraction that are bound up in the historical environments of Cornwall in South West England. There appears then – within this volume at least – a relative lack of engagement with the early modern period and earlier. While we cannot provide a full explanation for this temporal focus, we do offer the following
reflections. Such a temporal focus is in many ways reflective of the most recent numbers of the subdiscipline’s foremost journals – *Journal of Historical Geography* and *Historical Geographies* – where the majority of articles take the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries as their focus. If those publishing in these journals are the same scholars supervising doctoral research projects, an emphasis on the more recent past might be explained. Moreover, attention to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries may also say something of the priorities of the discipline’s funding bodies. In addition, as detailed in the following section, investigations of these historical periods are often accompanied by more complete historical records. Whatever the assemblage of reasons, it is clear that our conference sessions, and the papers postgraduate students present at these sessions, are generally dominated by historical geographies of the more recent past. Such temporal tendencies appear a worthwhile observation. There seems no doubt that the sub-discipline and its practitioners, would benefit from a broader engagement with other historical periods at the postgraduate level.

**Materials and archives**

In 2009, Hayden Lorimer noted that the wider cultural turn in the humanities had led to ‘the limits of the geographers’ archive [being] unbound.’¹⁶ In this final section then, we reflect upon the diversity of materials and archives that have been consulted for this volume. As would be expected, textual documents feature prominently. Our contributors use a range of sources in their work, from eighteenth-century legal documentation relating land ownership, to accounts featured in scholarly periodicals describing nineteenth-century expeditions to Tonga, and reports detailing education exchange programmes undertaken by London school children in the late-twentieth century. Non-textual materials also feature. Photographs, maps, artwork and physical landscapes have been examined in order to uncover the nuanced historical narratives that are bound up within them. Important too is Elisabeth Lacsny’s and Jacob Fairless Nicholson’s research that utilises oral histories as a means
of interpreting and telling the past. The sources here are diverse, interesting and utilised in differing ways by our authors.

There is also something to be said here about the repositories in which these diverse materials reside, or the lack thereof as the case may be. Many historical geographers have critically reflected on the types of archival institutions that scholars have visited and about the particularities of the collections with which they have engaged.\(^{17}\) Perhaps what stands out here most is the focus on less formal archive repositories and creative practices of unlocking knowledge. Most characteristic in this sense is Robyn Raxworthy’s ethnography of the archives of the St Austell china clay pit, in which she fuses ‘memory and materials’ to illustrate the distinct assemblage of heritage spaces. It is this interplay that also shapes the work of Elisabeth Lacsny’s investigation of the memory and nostalgia at Scotland’s travelling fairgrounds. For Lacsny, the gaps in the archival records present an opportunity rather than a barrier to study, with experiential practice and oral histories blending to reconstruct the historical geographies of this travelling community. The relationships that both of these authors cultivate take time. That is not to say our senior colleagues are not engaging in such time-intensive research: for example, Joan Schwartz recently revealed that she had been on the trail of the English photographer Frederick Dally for some twenty years.\(^{18}\) Rather, our suggestion is that perhaps postgraduates students have a unique capacity – in terms of both time and energy – to foster relationships and facilitate such creative archival approaches. Further, such relationships are developed through the increasing number of researchers funded by formal schemes such as the Arts and Humanities Research Council’s Collaborative Doctoral Award Scheme, which aims to foster closer relationships between the academy and cultural institutions.\(^{19}\) Three of the chapters in this volume and the doctoral projects of two of the editors were funded under this programme. Such an observation is perhaps also a reminder that postgraduate work that can evidence impact and public engagement is more likely to win doctoral funding. It is perhaps the competitive nature of these funding streams that accounts somewhat for the sort of topics and the time periods that are prevalent in the postgraduate community.
Whilst we see the diversity of postgraduate engagement with different materials, archives and approaches as a cause for celebration, there are certainly other areas which would benefit enormously from the sustained research periods that can be afforded by doctoral candidates. Most pertinent in this regard are the opportunities (and difficulties) presented by the burgeoning wealth of digital repositories. The Royal Geographical Society’s recent project to digitise parts of its archives is perhaps a prime example. Engaging with digitalised archives may allow for wider access to collections, democratising the field, drawing in a diverse body of scholars to undertake historical geography or historically-informed research. To have postgraduate students making use of these collections and pioneering new directions in the discipline as a result can be no bad thing.

A SHARED HISTORICAL ENTERPRISE

We hope this volume displays the diversity of work being undertaken by postgraduate historical geographers and the directions in which the field is travelling. The chapters in this book are certainly more than the sum of their parts and, as has been demonstrated, they illustrate a microcosm of historical geography undertaken at the doctoral level and showcased annually at the RGS-IBG’s Annual Conference in the New and Emerging Research sessions. Despite the differences in sources, archives and approaches that have informed our authors’ chapters, the research presented here is drawn together by a collective effort to tease out wider inferences from the historical geographical narratives they discuss. Rather than simple, descriptive accounts of events that happened at different points across time and space, at the forefront of every one of the chapters is the aspiration to engage with wider debates that are taking place within the scholarly literatures so as to frame and contextualise the histories and geographies that are being told. As Robin Butlin has suggested:

As historical geographers we reflect the concerns of the times in which we live, and interpret and reinterpret the geographies of the past accordingly, though wherever possible we also attempt to view
the past through the perceptions of those who lived in the past: to understand, however hazily, their own views of place and times.\textsuperscript{20}

We need then to consider how postgraduate work can continue to contribute, inform and extend the boundaries and ambition of historical geography. We hope, as editors, this volume does at least some of that work.

NOTES

19 For more on collaboration and historical geography, see: R. Craggs, H. Geoghegan and I. M. Keighren, *Collaborative Geographies: The Politics, Practicalities, and Promise of Working Together* (Historical Geography Research Group, 2013).
By examining a series of reports published by the Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement (hereafter Board of Agriculture) between 1793 and 1816, this chapter seeks to explore the role of useful knowledge in the development of Scotland’s agricultural lime industry whilst also throwing light on the influence of the reports themselves. Useful knowledge can be defined as information about natural phenomena conscientiously gathered and shared in the belief that to do so would contribute to the material progress of society.¹ This intellectual endeavour to learn about the world in order to change it has been identified as the basis of Enlightenment’s impact on the rapid industrial advances in Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it has subsequently also been linked to changing agricultural practice in Europe along similar timescales.² By following a specific topic – the use and production of lime – it is possible to examine how agrarian ideas and ideologies were imbued with useful knowledge through the work of institutions like the Board of Agriculture, and how that knowledge was then communicated and became manifest in practice.

Lime burning – the burning of limestone in kilns to produce lime – played an important role in Scottish agricultural improvement and industrial development during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The importance of lime stems primarily from its role as a
soil additive, where it reduces acidity, improves texture and increases the availability of nitrogen for crops. This function was especially valuable in Scotland, where climatic and geological conditions meant that soils often required considerable sweetening with lime to support arable farming.³ Lime was also used in building mortar and as an industrial additive. The rapid expansion of lime production between 1750 and 1850 has been attributed to a growing understanding amongst the agrarian community of the substance’s utility.⁴

Established in 1793 by the agriculturalist, writer and parliamentarian Sir John Sinclair, the Board of Agriculture was an influential and multifaceted institution, part administrative body and part voluntary organisation, with a small membership drawn from the landed gentry and aristocracy.⁵ Its key achievement was the initiation of a national survey, made up of county-level reports (also referred to as the County Surveys or General Views) from across Britain, with the aim of recording the state of farming, making recommendations for its improvement and developing agricultural theory.⁶ Fifty-four volumes were produced for Scotland between 1793 and 1816, written by forty-three authors. Sinclair’s intention was for these reports to be widely circulated among farmers, landowners and MPs; those able to effect change and encourage improvement.⁷ Although the texts themselves might not be considered primary conduits through which practical information reached those working the land, they were held in high regard by the agricultural community and contributed to the dissemination and codification of agrarian knowledge.⁸ They also epitomise, as will be discussed below, the Enlightenment worldview that brought them into being – the notion that agricultural improvement could be achieved through the collection of data, the application of rational principles and the diffusion of useful knowledge. As Mitchison states, the Board and its work were ‘both a symptom and an instrument’ of agrarian change and thus provide an insightful case study through which to examine agrarian thought and practice.⁹

This chapter draws on a systematic review of the Board of Agriculture reports relating to Scottish counties.¹⁰ It will begin by outlining the present state of historical literature relating to agricultural lime in Scotland, before exploring recent framings.
of Enlightenment, improvement, agricultural science and useful knowledge during the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. The subject of lime within the General Views will then be discussed, before finally turning to the wider themes of the project.

**LIME, ENLIGHTENMENT AND IMPROVEMENT IN SCOTLAND**

Lime kilns and their remains, an example of which can be seen in Figure 2.1, are a common feature of Britain’s rural landscape. It is thus unsurprising that much of the research to date on lime burning has been primarily archaeological. The most substantial recent research on British lime burning has been by Johnson, whose work focuses on the Yorkshire Dales in northern England. On Scotland, Skinner’s account of the Lothians has been the de facto reference on the subject since its publication in 1969. Only a handful of academic works have subsequently addressed the history of lime in Scotland, with these tending to focus on the role of lime in regional agrarian improvement,

![Figure 2.1: Remains of a draw kiln at Loch an Eilein, Rothiemurchus.](image)

*Source: Author*
on particular kiln structures or on the history of specific lime working sites.\textsuperscript{13}

The importance of lime to Scottish agricultural improvement is widely acknowledged. Smout and Fenton, for instance, argue that understanding the value of liming at the start of the eighteenth century was ‘perhaps the most important of the innovations’ that contributed to the transformation of Scotland’s farming.\textsuperscript{14} The subsequent expansion of lime burning was concurrent with two important and interrelated intellectual-cultural phenomena: Enlightenment and improvement. Much has been written on the overlap between these concepts.\textsuperscript{15} Although Enlightenment is a multifaceted and much debated concept, the term has come to refer the progressive reshaping of civil society during the long eighteenth century, led by philosophical and scientific inquiry, to reflect the ‘modern’ ideas of reason, rationality and secularism.\textsuperscript{16} Some have argued that Scotland’s complex political and cultural history, and the intellectual vibrancy of eighteenth-century public life, gave Enlightenment’s manifestations a distinct national character – termed a uniquely \textit{Scottish} Enlightenment.\textsuperscript{17} More recent geographical analyses posit Enlightenment as a supranational phenomenon in which, Withers argues, individuals and places were linked by ‘overlapping circuits of movement and overlapping social worlds’. Within these networks it is possible to locate numerous ‘sites of endeavour’ at which knowledge was produced, shared or put into practice.\textsuperscript{18} Agricultural change thus often arose from ‘the philosophical expression of ideas in polite urban settings and their practical implementation in rural ones’.\textsuperscript{19}

Science and natural philosophy were central to Enlightenment Scotland.\textsuperscript{20} Beyond contributing knowledge in a strictly utilitarian sense, the emerging sciences changed the world view of elite society and encouraged the application of reason, experiment and experience to questions of improvement.\textsuperscript{21} Chemistry in particular, Golinski argues, was closely associated with Scottish civic ambitions and public culture, and became increasingly recognised as \textit{the} science of agriculture towards the end of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{22} Having eluded understanding despite generations of use by farmers, the material properties of lime were of significant interest to members
of the chemical faculties at the universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh as they turned their attention to agrarian subjects. Chemists such as William Cullen and Joseph Black conducted experiments, developed theories and shared agricultural ideas through lectures and their close ties to leading members of society. Their teachings were subsequently interpreted, rendered practical and widely disseminated (through networks of agriculturalists and landowners) by the work of other scientifically-minded improvers, as is illustrated by Eddy’s analysis of James Anderson’s influential *Essay on Quicklime*.  

Enlightenment’s impact on economic activity, including farming, has been increasingly framed by historians in terms of the acquisition and application of useful knowledge. This concept is advanced by Jones, who identifies the commonality of rational principles, knowledge flows and technical advance in the development of European farming during the so-called ‘Agricultural Enlightenment’. In Scotland, this period of agricultural improvement has been called ‘a revolution from above’, characterised by the role of the landowning class in driving change. Smout refines this model further, arguing that a small number of motivated and well-connected improvers were most influential in the ‘diffusion of ideas and experience’ that set a template for improvement. Such ideas, both practical and ideological, were carried between societal levels by several interrelated vessels, including agrarian societies, agricultural texts and personal relationships. Holmes has shown how farming texts, which included the *General Views*, helped spread the message of improvement and saw a growing readership in Scotland among the landed classes as well as the tenantry as the eighteenth century progressed. These literatures developed in quality and style over time, from generalised ‘encyclopaedic tomes’ often written ‘from the comfort of reading cabinets’, to more practical manuals that drew on experiential evidence and supported an established, often institutional, position on farming matters. Agricultural change in Scotland, understood in terms of the development and dissemination of useful knowledge, is thus inextricably linked to the political, social and intellectual contexts in which it took place.
The use of lime in farming dates back to the start of the seventeenth century in Scotland, only becoming widely used towards the end of the eighteenth century. By the time of the General Views, lime was considered something ‘ancient and universal’, yet also the ‘first and most important step in the new system of husbandry’. As Robert Somerville wrote in his 1805 account of East Lothian: ‘[liming] is another branch of improvement, from which immense benefit has been derived; it has been carried on to a great extent in this county of late years, and with astonishing success, but the use of it may yet be extended much further.’

Soil fertility was a matter of utmost importance to farmers and, among the various improvements recommended by the General Views, liming was almost universally encouraged. Many of the accounts also gave practical advice regarding the application of lime as it was widely used in many areas but often poorly understood. Overuse could damage the soil, while underuse meant the farmer would not reap its full benefit. Through generations of experience, farmers developed conventions around using lime. However, several authors noted a ‘difference of opinion and of practice with respect to its application’ stemming from enduring uncertainty over its nature and best usage. George Buchan-Hepburn, for example, observed in the Lothians that there was a widely held ‘fixed belief’ that lime would have no effect on land that had been limed at any time in the past. However, he noted that ‘a few experiments’ disproving the notion overcame the farmers’ reticence, resulting in wider uptake of liming and illustrating how new knowledge could lead to better practice.

Some of the General Views reveal the scientific literacy of their authors. James Headrick, who compiled the report for Angus, had a keen interest in the natural sciences and was involved with the Glasgow Chemical Society. His enthusiasm and understanding is evidenced in his lengthy and keenly-observed discussion of the action of lime. Aware of ongoing debates between agriculturalists and chemists, he made detailed and thoroughly-argued pronouncements about the present state of knowledge regarding lime and the implications of these for liming various kinds of soils. Likewise,
Charles Findlater’s account of Peebles shows a similar interest in the science of lime and he made a number of suggestions regarding its role as a soil stimulant based on his own observations. In his attempts to define the properties of lime, Findlater drew on James Anderson’s published chemical works as well as the practical experience of estate factors (or stewards), the latter of which played a crucial role in the implementation of improvement on behalf of proprietors. Indeed, many of the *General View* authors were actively engaged in formally and informally acquiring knowledge from a range of contemporary sources. Alexander Lowe, author for Berwick, attended lectures by Dr Coventry, professor of agriculture at the University of Edinburgh. William Fullarton, in his account of Ayrshire, cited chemical lectures by Joseph Black as informing his understanding of lime and soils. Anderson, who compiled a report on Aberdeenshire for the Board, trained as a chemist alongside Cullen and Black in Edinburgh. His own publications and lectures on lime and other topics were widely cited in the *General Views* – he was said to speak ‘with rapture’ about the potential for Scottish improvement.

The readiness of each county to undertake improvements was commented on in most of the *General Views*. In order to implement the programmes of liming recommended by the Board, farmers or proprietors were called upon to undertake lime burning themselves where lime was not locally available. Persuading farmers to burn lime was a matter of education and encouragement, as James Robertson observed in Inverness-shire:

Lime has been discovered in many parts of the county, but it has not been hitherto used in the cultivation of the soil, in proportion to its importance as a manure. The causes of this neglect seem to be, the want of fuel, the inattention of the common tenantry, and in many places, the precarious tenure by which the people hold their farms; but no fuel is scarce except coals: and lime is plentifully burnt in many countries by peats, and wood. The lower class of farmer must have examples set before them, to excite their industry, and leases in their pockets to ensure the fruits of their labour.

Leases in which tenant farmers were obliged to employ certain techniques were a well-documented means by which improvement
was encouraged or enforced by landowners.\textsuperscript{46} James Donaldson, for example, argued that tenants should be ‘bound by their leases to lay on a certain quantity of lime yearly’.\textsuperscript{47} Similarly, John Thomson’s \emph{General View} of Fife included an example lease in which he proposed that tenants should ‘have full power to apply a quantity of lime and marle [sic] so discovered’, with the amount of lime they could use each year restricted to avoid damaging the soil.\textsuperscript{48}

Recommendations in the \emph{General Views} extended to the practice of burning lime and an orthodoxy regarding kiln design can be seen to emerge. Draw kilns, which were typically stone built and could be continuously operated, were praised as the ‘proper’ kilns for burning lime, while James MacDonald, who surveyed the Hebrides, admired the numerous ‘regular’ draw kilns on Campbell of Shawfield’s Islay estate.\textsuperscript{49} Several of the reports included instructions for the construction of such kilns, which shared consistent features such as large rounded internal pots which narrowed at their bottom. John Smith, for instance, described the pot of his kiln as resembling ‘an inverted bottle’, while James Robertson’s is ‘the shape of an egg, with the small end downwards’.\textsuperscript{50} The influence of eminent chemist Joseph Black is evident here as well: David Ure’s account of Roxburgh included a detailed description of a draw kiln for burning marl ‘recommended by Doctor Black, in Edinburgh’.\textsuperscript{51}

Robertson, whose enthusiasm for lime is evident in each of the three reports he compiled for the Board, clearly understood both the value of knowledge for improvement and his role in diffusing it. Regarding lime kilns, he wrote in his Perthshire account:

\begin{quote}
In many instances the kilns made by country people for burning limestone to be used on their own farms, are very awkward. We ought not, however, to brand them with opprobrious epithets, nor rail at them with acrimony of language; which is sometimes done; we ought rather to be glad that they make any kilns at all, and point out to them a better form of a kiln.\textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

Not all authors restrained from criticism and many recommended that lime production be taken out of farmers’ hands altogether and centralised into larger commercial lime works. For example, Donaldson recounted with some disdain the practice in Banffshire
LIME, USEFUL KNOWLEDGE AND THE GENERAL VIEWS

of tenant farmers burning lime in ‘ill constructed open kilns’. Instead, he argued, ‘it would be ... for the interest of the proprietors, were they to erect proper draw kilns at their own expense [sic], and employ experienced persons to manufacture lime’. Similar assertions were made by William Marshall, who bemoaned the inadequacy of ‘the Highland kiln’ and recommended that the estate owner ‘establish sale lime-kilns’ in their stead from which lime could be purchased. Indeed, this model of commercial lime production conducted by landowners became widespread and accounted for the industrialisation that took place in the industry as the nineteenth century progressed.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Plainly, this short chapter has shown how knowledge held by individuals and institutions was constructed and shared and had material impacts on the development of the lime industry in Scotland: for instance, the proliferation of draw kilns or the move towards centralised commercial lime production. The case of lime illustrates how improved farming methods became refined and codified in texts around the turn of the nineteenth century, while the authorship and content of the General Views themselves also reveal some of the overlapping networks of learning, publication, correspondence and social interaction that constituted Enlightenment Scotland. By following the ‘story’ of lime as a material and practice (rather than researching a particular person, place or organisation), it is possible to interrogate recent framings of the making and dissemination of knowledge and to observe how ideas and world views became grounded in practice. For example, this chapter has touched on the important role of early Scottish chemists, whose interest in the role of lime in altering soil chemistry contributed to the development of early forms of agricultural science. As Golinski and others have argued, chemistry, owing to the social connections of its proponents and the economic role it sought to play, was an influential part of Scottish culture during the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Theoretical speculation around the nature of lime, along with its cross-
cutting importance to a range of economic activities (and actors), perhaps reveal the ways in which this public culture was constituted. This approach could be readily applied to many other overlooked landscape features, industries, materials or commodities by historical geographers.

A key aim of this project has been to add depth and detail to the largely archaeological (and somewhat sparse) history of Scottish lime burning. The overlapping interests of geography and archaeology were recently highlighted by Hill, who points to the materiality of structures, objects and landscapes as areas for fruitful conversation between the disciplines. To meet this aim, this project draws on a varied methodology that brings together a range of historical and archival sources, as well as fieldwork and spatial analysis of a geodatabase of lime-burning sites. Through analysis of sources like the General Views, it is possible to place lime kilns – fundamentally archaeological features – in their wider cultural and intellectual contexts and show how lime burning was, at least to some extent, a socially constructed exercise. As such, this work also inevitably explores how Scotland’s social and political history, along with its geological and climatic setting, gave national character to the lime industry and the experience of agricultural improvement more generally.

NOTES

6 H. Holmes, ‘Sir John Sinclair, the County Agricultural Surveys, and the Collection and Dissemination of Knowledge 1793–1817, with a Bibliography

7 Holmes, ‘Sir John Sinclair’, p. 43.
9 Mitchison, ‘The Old Board of Agriculture’, p. 41.
10 Many of these have been digitised and are available online, or else can be accessed from various libraries. For a complete bibliography of the county surveys and their availability, see Holmes, ‘Sir John Sinclair…’, Parts 1 and 2.
14 Smout and Fenton, ‘Scottish Agriculture before the Improvers’, p. 82.

27
LIME, USEFUL KNOWLEDGE AND THE GENERAL VIEWS

26 Mokyr, *Enlightened Economy*.
27 Jones, *Agricultural Enlightenment*.
33 Smout and Fenton, ‘Scottish Agriculture before the Improvers’.
42 A. Lowe, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Berwick* (1794).
43 W. Fullarton, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Ayr* (1793) pp. 50–1.
LIME, USEFUL KNOWLEDGE AND THE GENERAL VIEWS

46 Devine, *The Transformation of Rural Scotland.*
49 J. Donaldson, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Elgin or Moray* (1794) pp. 35; J. MacDonald, *General View of the Agriculture of the Hebrides, or Western Isles of Scotland* (1811) p. 34.
51 Ure, *General View Roxburgh,* p. 49.
Fire and Belize’s savannas: From colonial forestry to conservation

Cathy Smith

Belize’s coastal plain is distinguished by a savanna grassland landscape with pine cover of varying density and patches of broadleaf forest (see Figure 3.1). Fires set for hunting, access, agriculture, arson and enjoyment have been a feature of this landscape since humans settled Belize. Over the past century, however, fire has often been cast as a problem, by the British colonial state forestry department, and, since decolonisation in 1981, by Belize’s forestry department and international and local conservation and development organisations.

Fire suppression was instigated in Belize in the 1920s as a method of ‘scientific forest conservation’. Belize’s wildland fire policy still speaks of fire management on a foundation of ‘sound science’. Fire management in Belize over the past century has been influenced by broad trends and discourses from forestry, ecology and conservation. Fire was the scourge of European forestry, which became a distinct science and taught profession in eighteenth-century Germany and France. To protect plantations from human fire, forestry science developed systems to divide landscapes with firebreaks and to watch for and fight fires. In the early twentieth century, after Clements’ influential 1916 theory, savannas were considered to be in natural succession to ‘climax’ equilibrium forests: (human) fire was seen as exogenous. This perspective, in combination with forestry or nature conservation objectives, supported the exclusion of human fire use from savannas. Since the 1950s, however, mounting evidence
of the negative effects of fire suppression and the emergence of a new paradigm in ecology have altered fire management approaches. Contemporary ecologists understand savannas as disequilibrium systems, in which fire is an important agent. Human fire use is thought to have influenced the evolution of these systems. Although fire suppression policies have been retained in many parts of the world, a small number of savanna managers now use prescribed fire as a tool or make efforts to understand and support indigenous fire use. If we accept the ecological and evolutionary importance of fires caused by human agency, the implication is that savanna fires should be understood as a form of political-ecological hybrid.

This chapter examines the ramifications of the treatment of fires in Belize as a problem to be managed by scientific expertise and universal methods. It draws inspiration from work in historical geography that has examined forest management and the practice of forestry science in particular contexts and that has explored the
articulations between science and colonial power. What follows examines elements of work of the colonial Forest Department in Belize from 1920 to 1938 as it attempted to prevent savanna fires. It explores how one scientific expert understood fires in Belize as an apolitical, material problem. This perspective commanded the authority to instigate state-led fire management, not because it drew upon science in the form of induction from systematic data collection, but because of a social context that valorised scientific discourse. By drawing upon evidence relating to a series of fires in 1933, the chapter demonstrates that the Department was ill equipped to manage fire as a complex of social, political and material relations specific to this locale. The conclusion addresses issues of contemporary fire management in Belize and points towards future articulations between political ecology and historical geography.

COLONIAL FORESTRY EXPERTISE AND FIRE IN BELIZE, 1920–1938

By commission of the British Colonial Research Committee, German forester Cornelius Hummel wrote a report on the forests of Belize in 1921. He recommended that a state Forest Department should be established, and that it should, as part of its work, adopt fire suppression to ‘regenerate’ pine in the savanna. In line with equilibrium ecology, his report held that a treeless savanna was ‘subnormal’ and fire an exogenous and destructive force:

On large areas the destruction is so far advanced that the former forest can no longer be classed as a ‘forest’; it is now poor grass savannah with some pine trees on it ... It is easy for anyone to see this effect of the destruction by fire, and everyone who has been with me in the pine forests (educated people and uneducated labourers) saw and realised the above facts quickly when their attention was drawn to it.12

In 1922, the Belize Forest Department was founded, and, with Hummel as its first ‘Conservator of Forests’, it began to attempt to suppress savanna fires.
Hummel did not base his recommendations for fire suppression on scientific data systematically collected about savanna fires. His fieldwork consisted of conversations with local people, and of a ten-day inspection of remote areas of savanna, largely unseen by administrators in Belize City. In the field, Hummel made deductions from scientific theory learned during his training in forestry at Aschaffen in Germany and from employment with institutions that had developed systems of fire suppression: the Bavarian Forestry Department, and the British colonial Forestry Department of the Federated Malay States.

Earlier, in 1878, a visiting forestry expert had recommended the institution of a state Forestry Department in Belize, and, in light of the Government’s hope that a pine industry would be established in Belize, the Director of the Botanical Garden had previously noted that fires were a problem in the savanna. These calls had gone unneeded, but, because of a changing socio-economic context that gave authority to his expertise in forestry, Hummel’s report carried more weight with the British Colonial Office. After 1900, British colonial policy increasingly conflated state-led development with the application of utilitarian sciences such as forestry. Britain sought ‘complementary development’ in its Empire, enabling the exploitation of raw materials in the colonies by private capitalist interests to create opportunities for the export of manufactured goods from Britain. Science’s technical problem-solving and universal theories were held to align with this. State forestry ‘stood for’ colonial development; ‘progress’ enabled by capitalised resource extraction and state revenue collection, and sustained by conservation measures such as fire suppression. Hummel’s report aligned with the Colonial Office’s vision for a universal British ‘Empire Forestry’ reflected in the establishment of the Colonial Research Committee in 1919, Imperial Forestry Conferences from 1920 and the Imperial Forestry Institute at Oxford (which gave special training to foresters entering the colonial service) in 1924. That Hummel, a forester, was directed to write not only ‘in the interest of the local Government, but also in the interest of the Imperial Government’ and to focus principally on ‘economic questions of forest development’ reflects these wider changes in colonial development discourse.
authority drew from what James Scott has termed an ideology of ‘high modernism’:

a strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and, above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws ... High modernism must not be confused with scientific practice. It was fundamentally, as the term “ideology” implies, a faith that borrowed, as it were, the legitimacy of science and technology.²⁰

Hummel’s 1921 report proposed these solutions to the fire problem:

a proper system of protection from fire, as in other countries ... with systematically laid out fire lines under the control of a qualified forester, and with a special staff for patrolling during the dry season. A Forest Ordinance will also be required for this purpose.²¹

This statement reveals two assumptions: that Belize’s fires were materially no different to fires faced by foresters elsewhere and so could be prevented using universal methods; and that forestry qualifications and expertise were sufficient justification for a programme of fire suppression in Belize. Hummel’s report did not place fire users in their social or political context and assumed that forestry experts would have the authority to convince fire users in Belize to change their behaviour. His limited perspective – that forestry expertise and the fire problem were apolitical – would be the source of the failure of fire management in later years.

State forestry called for regulation of private enterprise, which did not sit easily with the unofficial majority in Belize’s Legislative Council. Before 1931, the Governor of Belize and the colonial officials in government had relatively little power over those white settlers who represented major landowners and merchants in Belize.²² Fearing state interference in their mahogany operations, this group sought control of the Forest Department’s finances (which had initially been ‘divorced from politics’ by delegation to
a separate body, over which the Governor had control) and, with the press backing them, argued repeatedly for the Department’s retrenchment or abolition. The high salaries and ‘intellectual pride’ of the Department’s technical staff also cultivated public dislike. It proved difficult to change the fire use behaviour of hunters and agriculturalists by attempted means of legislation, signage, newspaper articles extolling the virtues of forestry and, even, a special fire-related postage stamp. There was no single social class or ‘race’ to whom the Department could target measures: white settlers, former enslaved people and indigenous groups all used fire to clear land for agriculture and for hunting.

A hurricane in 1931 compounded the impact of the Great Depression in bringing severe financial hardship to Belize. In 1932, Governor Harold Kittermaster begged the Colonial Office for permission to retrench or close the Forest Department:

Is Reason to be the only guide or is Sentiment also to be allowed to exert an influence? ... when my people come to me clamouring for bread and I am fain to offer them a tree, Sentiment intervenes.

The Department remained in existence in this period only because it was awarded a Colonial Research Grant. There was little direct economic rationale for fire management, given a failure to attract capitalist investment in a pine industry in the savanna. Lacking funding and political support, the Department’s fire management was restricted to one area, the Belize Pine Reserve. Using systems of fire lines and direct attack on fires, it was unable to prevent even this single area from burning in 1927 and again in 1933: the area was de-reserved in 1934.

The inability of the Forest Department to prevent the fires of 1933 reveals some of the ecological and political dimensions of Belizean fire that Hummel had not anticipated. The direct cause of the fires may have been local agricultural fire use, but the destruction of the reserve was also attributed to the build-up of debris from the 1931 hurricane. The particular, local, feedback between hurricanes, vegetation and fire was not something that forestry’s universal theories or methods were prepared
These agricultural fires were also, in part, the result of an irreverence toward the Department’s ‘expert advice’ amongst other Government officials, who had opened up the Belize pine reserve for agricultural holdings. Ironically, the area had become valued for agricultural leases, precisely because the Department had built new roads to enable fire suppression. As Neil Stevenson, then head of the Department, noted in 1938, there was a significant gap between the Imperial Forestry Institute’s universal visions and the reality of forestry in Belize:

The new standard statistical forms for the annual reports of Colonial Forest Departments are used for the first time and the prominence given to progress in reservation, demarcation, working plans, concentrated regeneration and afforestation draws particular attention to the minute and spasmodic progress in these necessary works made in recent years in British Honduras.

In its work, the Department faced a complex of social, political and material relations specific to Belize. Yet, as Stevenson’s words reveal, it continued to cling to a vision of universal and imperial forestry, valorising technical methods and treating fire as an apolitical issue.

**CONTEMPORARY FIRE MANAGEMENT IN BELIZE: UNITING POLITICAL ECOLOGY AND HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY**

In 1997, an area of coastal savanna became a National Park under co-management by a local non-governmental organisation, the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment (TIDE), and the Forest Department. TIDE developed a programme of fire management in response to training by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) under its Global Fire Initiative (GFI) (see Figure 3.2). TNC’s training and policy materials reflected the mainstreaming of prescribed burning in the USA and a paradigm shift in ecology: away from the model of succession towards a view of ecosystems as disequilibrium systems in which fire can be of ecological necessity. In TNC’s texts, fires caused by human agency can be accepted and fire management should be
‘integrated’ with ‘socio-cultural realities’. Belize’s latest national wildfire policies were influenced similarly by TNC.

I have worked for the past three years with TIDE, as it implemented a UK Government-funded community-based fire management project. My doctoral research has added ethnographic insight and oral history interviews to the archival evidence cited here. One element of the work – in bringing together the insights of political ecology with those of historical geography – is to consider the implications of recent national policies that draw upon disequilibrium ecology and call for the integration of socio-cultural realities. These policies and recent fire management projects have been supported by international development funding and involve foreign consultants, whose credentials rest upon technical expertise.
in fire management and ecological science, rather than in detailed socio-political understanding of Belize. Can these ideas simply replace scientific notions that were earlier politically embedded in this historical and geographical context? Are these notions compatible in practice with planned fire management, which still privileges control by institutions that are assumed to have particular scientific or technical expertise?

While political ecologists examine colonial science, ‘science is portrayed in most political ecology as brought to the field site already finished, rather than constructed there through embodied practices designed for use in live scientific debates’. Some political ecology may thus ascribe too totalising a power to scientific discourse and, in doing so, fail to question the authority science derives from making ‘rules, technics or institutions appear separate from the apparently material world they govern’. This chapter has used a historical geographical approach to demonstrate that colonial forestry science was, in practice, relatively powerless to control fire in Belize because it failed to understand forestry expertise and fire as political. This establishes a base from which to question not only the flaws in previous scientific understandings of fire and savannas, but also the core assumption that they can be planned or managed by scientific expertise at all. The case of Belizean forestry and fire management demonstrates the value of bringing political ecology and historical geography into closer conversation.

NOTES

1 This research has been funded by a UK DFID/DEFRA Darwin Initiative Project. I am grateful to Charlie Withers, Janet Fisher, Joel Wainwright, Henry Peller, Rick Anderson, Neil Stuart and Mary Alpuche for their comments on earlier drafts.
3 ‘The Value of Forestry’, The Clarion Newspaper, 12 February 1925.
4 O. Sabido and E. Green, Wildland Fire Management Policy and Strategy for Belize (Belize Forest Department, 2009) p. 13. I use the term ‘fire management’ to denote any form of fire suppression or use in pursuit of particular environmental management objectives.


14. Correspondence between Darnley and Prain [Kew Gardens Archive, MR/641, FO80-82].
15 E. D. M. Hooper, *Report upon the forests of British Honduras* (Collectorate Press, 1887); Memorandum of Campbell (who was, as Director of the Botanical Gardens, the only scientifically-trained official stationed in the Colony prior to Hummel), enclosed in letter from Cork to Colonial Office of 4 February 1904 [TNA, CO 123/246, despatch 169].
24 Letter from Burdon to Colonial Office, 11 August 1926 [TNA, CO 123/324].
25 Letter from Hummel to Colonial Secretary, 30 January 1923 [Belize Archives and Records Service, MP149/1923].
26 Letter from Kittermaster to Colonial Office, [TNA, CO 123/339/9].
30 Memorandum of Stevenson, enclosed in letter from Burns to Colonial Office, 1 October 1936 [TNA, CO 123/360/19].


Presencing the past: Experiential practice and archival encounters in Cornwall’s china clay country

Robyn Raxworthy

Picture, if you can, what 150 years of change and transformation might look like as we enter the Blackpool pit at the north end, through what has become known as ‘Jasper’s Gate’. As you breathe in the crisp spring air imagine those that stood here before you. Can you taste clay dust in the air, the way they would have, clay in their lungs as well as in their veins? Now start walking, your feet in heavy steel capped boots following the winding path which bisects the main waste tip, rising to 1000ft above sea level. Surrounding us is waste granite blasted away to get at the china clay that forms beneath in the fissures of the rock. Below is bright blue water – up to 200ft deep – full of floating clay particles that catch and diffract the light. Now in your mind turn back the clock to November 2007, imagine the moment the final night shift workers arrived to run the pit down into retirement. Now go back in time further. See the clay workers, first in bulldozers and cranes – hard-hatted and remotely operating powerful water hoses – ‘winning the clay’ from the hard granite. Then, as time continues to elapse, exposed in flat caps and heavy lace up boots manually scraping away at the ‘overburden’ with nothing but a pick axe tool (known locally as a ‘dubber’). Consider how once this expansive pit was a hive of activity, made up of several smaller competing pits operating cheek by jowl and quarrelling over boundaries. Imagine a
The short imaginative extract is a reconstruction of a walk around a non-operational china clay pit located in the heart of Cornwall’s china clay country, a region of roughly 25 square miles just north of the town of St Austell. The following pages tell the story of how, building on recent work on collecting and archiving in cultural and historical geography, I found myself leading a group of students and artists around this clay pit and how in the process I came to understand more about the making and remaking of heritage in Cornwall’s china clay country.2

THE CHINA CLAY INDUSTRY IN CORNWALL

Although kaolin – or china clay as it is known in Britain – can be found across the world, the deposits along the granite belt of Devon and Cornwall located on England’s South West peninsula are unique in both quality and quantity.3 Almost every South Western granite moor has produced some quantity of china clay since its discovery in 1746. Today, however, only the area around St Austell in Cornwall and the western edge of Dartmoor National Park at Lee Moor in Devon continues to be involved in production.4

China clay is extracted from the surface in opencast pits rather mined from underground. Whilst there were once over one hundred smaller pits being worked in the region, as the industry grew these smaller pits were subsumed by larger pits which could be worked more effectively and on a much larger scale. Despite reaching a peak in the late 1980s, the industry in Cornwall experienced a slow decline throughout the 1990s. In 1999, English China Clays International, the principal producer of china clay in Cornwall, was bought by the French company IMERYS, an action which changed the dynamic between place, industry and history.5
In this contribution, I approach heritage as ‘a distinctive assemblage’ which is made, and may subsequently be remade, by individual actions, policies, skills and techniques.6 Heritage approached in this way is styled as a process, often messy and unfinished.7 In the case of china clay, where the industry itself is still active, associated heritages are mutable and multiple. One expression of this heritage is mediated through the Wheal Martyn Trust, a charitable organisation which includes the Wheal Martyn Museum and incorporates the China Clay History Society (CCHS) archive. The original Wheal Martyn Museum was established in collaboration with the china clay industry in 1974. CCHS, however, was formed in a more tumultuous period. In 2001, concerned local historians and former clay workers came together to salvage historical records which had been deemed expendable during the IMERYS takeover of English China Clays. These archival rescuers, in their own words, ‘ransacked’ empty offices and sifted through skips until they were satisfied that the material traces of the historic industry had been sufficiently rescued.

Building on archival work in historical geography that explores material relationships of the past in the present, such as Rose’s examination of the Victoria and Albert Museum’s photography archives and DeSilvey’s memory work in a deserted Montana homestead, I will show how entanglements of people and materials relate to the assemblage of heritage spaces.8 I also draw on collaborative and participatory relationships in archival research, such as those explored by Ashmore, Craggs and Neate through the practices of ‘working-with’ archival owners.9 Similarly, DeLyser has advocated for participatory work in historical geography, and that even primarily historical studies should, where possible, strive ‘to work with, give back to, and forward the agendas of the people whose lives we study’, which often can be achieved through participating in process of building of the historical archive.10 Practices of gleaning and notions of value as explored by Cresswell and Hoskins in relation to the Maxwell Street Market and Angel Island Immigration centre attest to the highly personal relationships that are often found in amateur archives, often when they are threatened or deemed
PRESENCING THE PAST

expendable by outside parties. Additionally, Flinn’s exploration of the relationships between amateur collecting and professional practice highlights the tensions which often exist between communities, the material record of their pasts and the professional archive sector and the need for sensitive professional engagement with community archives to ensure their survival in the future. As shown by Craggs, Geoghegan and Neate, balancing amateur enthusiasm is, for many professionals, a key concern alongside bridging the divides between the professional and amateur communities. Enthusiasm can also be seen as positive motivator, however, prevalent across many aspects of professional conservation practice and, like in Cresswell’s study of Maxwell Street Market, processes of salvage and gleaning combined with intimate first-hand knowledges can be seen to contribute to the making of future heritage in the clay country. Drawing on Lorimer’s method of telling ‘small stories’, these situated and personal stories feed into wider debates around the production of geographical knowledge and heritage practice.

SMALL STORIES FROM THE ARCHIVE

In order to better understand the processes implicit in the making of heritage in the clay country, I embarked on a one and a half year period of participant observation with the Wheal Martyn Trust where I documented the everyday actions of staff and volunteers and the material relationships that contribute to the ‘distinctive assemblage’ of heritage. In doing so, I began to construct an ethnography of the archive as it is experienced and understood in the everyday lives of those who ‘live [it] out’, where material interactions were as important as the interpersonal connections.

Past relationships are rekindled in the archive, between ex-colleagues, old friends and neighbours and the memory of many others contained in the countless photographs and documents held in the collections. For example, a favourite pastime among the archival volunteers is to gather around old photographs and ‘tell the tale’. Telling the tale is not as simple as just identifying people or places in photographs; to tell the tale involves an audience and a
lively discussion regarding who someone is, who their families are, or where someone worked, often with multiple disagreements and contradictions. Only once the person or place had been correctly identified (and agreed by the group) can ‘the tale’ even begin. Engaging in this type of memory work and remembering, prompted by the archival material, is as important to heritage-making as the physical care of the materials themselves.\textsuperscript{18}

Talking and ‘working-with’ were also a key part of establishing a participatory relationship. Investing in relationships with collectors and their collections leads to ‘conversations, divergences and stories emerge[ing] that would otherwise remain hidden and in turn feed back into understandings of archival material’.\textsuperscript{19} During one of my many conversations in the CCHS archive it became apparent that some research carried out on the Blackpool Pit, a prominent non-operational pit that was closed in 2007, would be of interest to the society. I began to research Blackpool Pit almost exclusively during my weekly archival sessions, sifting through the historic archive documents to try and piece together the early history of the pit and the relationships between china clay companies, clay workers and local landowners contained within it. By interviewing current members of the History Society who had known the Blackpool Pit in their working lives I was also able to supplement the historical research with personal first-hand experiences.

In many ways, this additional historical element to my work legitimised my presence in the archive, something conducting an ethnography would not have achieved alone. It also gave me an opportunity to be an active participant in furthering the aims of CCHS. As my research on the Blackpool Pit became more entangled with my ethnographic methods in the archive, I began to view the archive through a new lens, one of autoethnography. I came to china clay as a researcher, a visitor, to the archive. In observing my own position in the archive, I started question not only how heritage is being made but also by whom. I observed other visitors come and go, drawing information from the archive for their own personal studies or enjoyment; however, the regular volunteers added new information to the archive and museum collections every week. The
more I researched the Blackpool Pit, the more I was able to contribute to the archive, and I began to trace my own, albeit blurry, progress from uninitiated visitor towards a contributing volunteer.

The messiness of this journey from visitor to volunteer can be illustrated by an interaction that took place during November 2017. The standard sign-in sheet, which had only required a name and times in and out, had been recently replaced. The new sign-in sheet required a self-identification of ‘visitor’ or ‘volunteer’. The new form forced me to confront the nature of my relationship to the archive and the work that I was doing. To identify as either one or the other felt unnatural, so in the weeks following the new form’s introduction I had been, as de Certeau would say, subverting its authority by ticking neither box, instead marking my identity on the line between the two. This particular morning as I was signing out, one of the archive committee members approached me:

He says to me: ‘You’re supposed to tick that you’re a visitor!’ He takes my wrist and raps it like I’m a badly behaved child; luckily I know him fairly well by this point and know to take this act as affectionate rather than anything untoward. So I reply, ‘Well I did, but I’ve been ‘visiting’ one day a week now for the past year’, ‘Oh well’ he replies, ‘you’re a volunteer then!’ he says leaving the room.

Ultimately it was the Blackpool Pit (see Figure 4.1) that had put me in this position of slipping through the cracks, of being both a visitor and a volunteer. A turning point came, however, when I was given the opportunity to ‘take the archive for a walk’.

The Blackpool Pit walk was undertaken in May 2017 in conjunction with my PhD supervisor, Caitlin DeSilvey, and the Cornubian Arts and Science Trust as part of a programme called Groundwork. The walk, with a group of fourteen students, artists and heritage professionals, was an artistic exercise in filling in the blank spaces on the map with the history and stories preserved in the archive. As a methodology, walking offers corporal experiences in place which allow novel expressions of place-making, belonging and navigating.

For me, the Blackpool Pit walk was not only a suitable outlet for all of the historical information I had been amassing in and from
the archive, but also a way of experiencing the china clay landscape for myself and a way to gain a hint of that first-hand knowledge of ‘the clay’. By leading the walk, I was also now responsible for passing the archive on to others, participating in the perpetuation of the small stories I had come to the archive to trace. Archival tales of boundary disputes, of strike and hardship, combined with personal stories from the present, stories of work, redundancies and deep personal connections, where the pit was described as ‘one of the family’, coming together in a sort of historical ethnography of the 150-year working life of the pit.24

Figure 4.1: A view of the Blackpool Pit from ‘Jasper’s Gate’
Source: Author

MAKING HERITAGE SPACES

Through historical research on the Blackpool Pit, I was able to achieve a deeper understanding of both the history of china clay and the processes that the archival material had been subjected to in
the storerooms. What became apparent in the clay county was that human/material interactions were bound up in two distinct ‘modes of ordering’ and engagement practices. I have begun to term these modes of ordering as ‘passion’ and ‘purpose’.

‘Passion’ is enthusiastic. It is often associated with personal connections to the china clay industry, it is evident in ‘telling the tale’, and a desire to keep all traces of the historical archive and pass them on to future generations; it thrives on good will and volunteerism. ‘Purpose’, on the other hand, is bound up in a sense of stewardship; it is careful and professionally mediated and requires knowledge of best practice for properly conserving the historical material. Planning and management are key tools for enabling the very best version of the collection to be passed on.

Whilst researching Blackpool Pit, I was able to be more attentive to the differences in archival and museum practices across the Wheal Martyn Trust by comparing the CCHS archive and the Wheal Martyn Museum. As modes of ordering, ‘passion’ and ‘purpose’ are not mutually exclusive and the line between the two is not always clear cut: however, in terms of the collections they can produce, they can sometimes be in stark contrast. A collection solely driven by passion is messy and unruly, it is profuse and unmanageable, but can also be vibrant and inviting. Purpose, when taken to extremes, does the opposite. In its well-managed, perfectly catalogued state, to some it can seem sterile and impenetrable at worst or, to a lesser degree, ‘static’. The practices of both the Wheal Martyn Museum and the CCHS archive contain elements of ‘passion’ and ‘purpose’. However, whilst ‘passion’ was perhaps dominant for many years, ‘purpose’ is now taking the lead in order to help the Wheal Martyn Trust better understand the needs of the CCHS archive and to achieve a sustainable future for the collection. With formalisation, however, comes new ways of managing and appraising the collection which may necessitate a reassembling the collection and the relationships between people and objects.
CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Blackpool Pit in many ways was a facilitator for my archival encounters. It gave my research direction. Without it I would never have been able to truly appreciate the complex intermingling of relationships between people and objects which continually makes and remakes the archive. Heritage is a complex and messy assemblage, but being attentive to the ways that people, places and objects come together in ‘small stories’ can make it easier to see how ‘small heritages’ may one day become part of something much larger.29

Much thought has been given to the political nature of the way archives and museum collections have been assembled and used in the past. However, outside of the archival and museuological disciplines, less attention has been given to the way archives and historical collections are being assembled in the present.30 The china clay landscape itself is an integral part of the heritage assemblage of mid-Cornwall and, through an autoethnographic methodology of practice and participation, I have been able to observe the relationships between people and objects in the present that are manifested in the valuing of a past industry and landscape. Furthermore, through active participation in the archive, I have been able to contribute to the heritage-making practices of both the CCHS and the Wheal Martyn Museum.

More attention to how different practices shape collections is paramount to understanding how heritage is made and remade. Through the identification of two different modes of ordering – ‘passion’ and ‘purpose’ – I have shown that considering personal connections and professional affiliations to an industry and a landscape is a key part of understanding how the past is recognised in the present as heritage. Passion-led collections are often unsustainable. For the CCHS, many of its members are well past the age of retirement and, with fewer new members joining each year, it will eventually fall to the professional staff at the Wheal Martyn Museum to care for this collection in the future. Caitlin DeSilvey’s study of the Montana homestead explored how, in curation, profuse personal collections undergo a ‘kind of semiotic thinning’ in order to be stabilised.31 This contribution builds on these themes and posits that in professional appraisal, profuse passion-led collections loose some of their richness
in order to be purposely stabilised as heritage objects. This is not a critique of professional curators and archivists. Rather, this is a wider observation about the nature of heritage management and the challenges involved in deciding what has value when materials endure but people do not. The hope is that through purposeful retention, new passions and material relationships can be made in the future.

NOTES

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4 C. Thurlow, China Clay from Cornwall and Devon: An Illustrated Account of the Modern China Clay Industry (Cornish Hillside Publications, 2001).

5 I. Bowditch, IMERYS: The Essential Component in all our Lives (IMERYS, 2000).


PRESENCING THE PAST

17 Interview with Malcolm G, 03/12/2016.
21 Field notebook 15/11/2017.
28 DeSilvey, ‘Art and Archive’, p. 880
The focus of my research is uncovering untold accounts of the travelling fairground in Scotland. These are stories that showcase the life, industrial heritage and cultural memory of Showpeople and fairgoers through time, examining the complex working culture of Scottish Showpeople as a way to broaden understandings of this community, their lifestyle and tradition, in a historical geographical context. Informed by recent work on material geographies of lived spaces and sensory atmospheres, this chapter considers the emergence of Scotland’s modern travelling fairgrounds as places of memory and heritage. Focusing on early-twentieth century oral histories of fairgoers and Showpeople, it draws on nostalgia to consider how the travelling fairs’ mobile, material history is curated to embody and materialise versions of the past, which are vital to its continued survival. Following Natali, I argue that in the fairground context, nostalgia is not a replacement for history or memory, but rather an important eidetic narrative. This chapter therefore outlines how show-spaces create embodied historical accounts of material and memory, wherein lived experiences shape nostalgia, thus forging a distinct connection between historical and present-day realities. While geographers have provided in-depth insights into peripheral communities, and historical geographers have opened up expos, world fairs and pleasure gardens, it seems the world of Showpeople remains
'OUR TRUE INTENT IS ALL FOR YOUR DELIGHT'

largely overlooked. Publicly, Showpeople have followed the same fate as other travelling communities – they are often disregarded and tend to suffer by association. Thus, I ask of you, let yourself be transported into the wonderful world of the fair, and see the true potential of the Show-world.

DELVING INTO HISTORY

Recall a place perpetually in motion and transition, one where memories are made in intensities of sound, smell, colour and taste; and the affective experiences of laughing, shrieking, crying, and even feeling nauseous, generate nostalgia – Scotland’s travelling fairgrounds are all this and so much more. Originating in twelfth-century English trading markets, Scotland’s travelling fairs reflect a substantial heritage of innovation and development. During the late-eighteenth century, bioscope shows, and ground-breaking rides, used colour, light and sound to provide a taste of modernity, a glimpse into the future. Run by family firms spanning multiple generations, their arrival remains a staple feature of annual civic festivities in towns across Scotland. The traditional array of amusement rides, stalls and food concessions that make ‘all the fun of the fair’ combine to tell a story of industrial heritage, cultural memory and nostalgia. This much-loved atmosphere is dependent on the manufacture and design of movable machinery that magically transforms into spinning, looping, whirling and flashing objects. Before the show can begin, lorries and caravans are pitched, and rides are rigged up, and checked for safety; when the show is over, the same process happens in reverse. Everything has to be collapsible, folding away and fitting together perfectly – function and utility in design are essential. But funfairs are also places of aesthetic allure and decorative art – a combination of lighting, visual imagery and sound, and fast moving mechanisms, produces style and affect to whisk the fairgoer into a world of wonder. Historically, innovation and creativity have played an important role in the show scene. Thus, a critical aspect of the fairground’s survival is its ability to combine the past, present and future in its everyday manifestations.
Due to a distinct lack of archival evidence relating to Scottish fairgrounds, a methodological approach was adopted that looked to capture the historic, atmospheric and material geographies of the fair. Ethnographic and experiential field visits to numerous Scottish fairs between April 2016 and April 2018 allowed me to experience first-hand the electrifying hustle-and-bustle of fairground atmospheres. Whether by soaring high on the chair-o-planes, indulging in food, such as candyfloss and toffee apples, or partaking in numerous sideshow attractions, I immersed myself into all aspects of the fairground. In addition, thirty oral histories and interviews were also carried out. Focusing on Showpeople’s family histories, daily lives and fairground anecdotes, fairgoers’ experiences and memories, and enthusiasts’ general knowledge of working fairs allowed me to explore past perspectives of fair life and introduced me to different approaches and experiences. Finally, visits to archives, libraries and museums were undertaken to familiarise myself with the [im]material record that exists on this community. While the National Fairground and Circus Archive at the University of Sheffield provided a wealth of information on the trade more generally, the majority of my archival information was sourced from the families that I interviewed. They provided photographs and copies of documents, as well as family histories in Scotland, to aid the historical aspects of my research. These records, photographs and oral histories were gathered in order to reconstruct the geographies of a celebrated, though often maligned past.

(Re)Collection of Memory, Nostalgia and Material

Materiality has indirect ways of telling us stories ... about power, agency and history that we could never grasp through more direct forms of representation.

As spaces of work, amusement and domesticity, Scotland’s travelling fairgrounds truly encompass past and present experiences. Packed with material objects, such as rides and stalls, travelling fairgrounds
'OUR TRUE INTENT IS ALL FOR YOUR DELIGHT'

cultivate a sense of nostalgia through affective encounters with material.⁹ As ‘productive forces that spark interaction between materials and memories through meaning’, fairground rides and stalls reflect past lives, creating nostalgia by conserving those memories bound to material: ‘bits and pieces ... still have some identity because they can be traced back to their origin’.¹⁰ Thus, a sense of nostalgia is generated, when ‘object-related histories’ stimulate emotional memories.¹¹ As the ‘evocation of a lived past’, nostalgia permits fairgoers and Showpeople alike to recall and reflect on memories intrinsically entwined with particular objects; twisting and turning rides, flashing game stalls and mouth-watering treats all have the capacity to generate unforgettable experiences, both positive and negative.¹² Thus, nostalgia is fundamentally integral to understanding the connection between fairgrounds and people.

Fairground objects embody experience, knowledge and modernity, conveying emotional memories of encounter and action into the present. Scotland’s travelling fairgrounds are constantly in motion; every aspect of their trade is mobile, from historic travelling patterns to ride motion, fairgoers to showmanship. Memories and related sensory encounters encourage relationships between materials and atmosphere that substantiate the travelling fairground within site; the material objects become an integral part of nostalgia, reliant on the capacity of human and non-human actors to participate and engage, thus mobilising space.¹³ Within the fairground context, space and affect blur, generating a symbiotic experience, temporarily altering the fairgoer’s understanding and awareness. Individual experiences become shaped by perception: ‘the fairground ... connect[s] local life and memory, and offer[s] potential to develop links between past and landscape’.¹⁴ Scotland’s travelling fairgrounds foster a unique association with fleeting pleasure, indulgence and excess; they fashion atmospheres that serve to recreate memories for Showpeople and fairgoers alike. As such, the fairground itself becomes a site within which nostalgia, enchantment and culture come to life.
EMBODIED MATERIAL, MEMORY AND NOSTALGIA

Findings from this research reveal that (1) show-spaces and show-identities are memorial sites within which nostalgia shapes experience, (2) fairgrounds create deeply embodied connections between material and memory, and (3) they permit the recreation of lived experiences.

*Show-spaces as memorial sites*

When a fairground rolls into town, everyday atmospheres are thrown into disarray: ‘the existing town patterns are forgotten and surroundings are thrown into shadow as the dream intensifies.’ A place previously defined by its ordinary existence transforms into a site of wonder and amusement, reliant on its [im]material atmosphere to create this phenomenon. Memory and place challenge notions of history, by evoking emotional responses to site. Reflecting on the transitory nature of the fair, Sam Davis, an avid fairgoer and keen fair-history enthusiast, recalls an experience of awe and wonder from 1942:

One minute it was there, and the next ... gone. Such a fleeting phenomenon ... you never knew it was going to disappear, and eventually all that was left: circles in the grass. At the time it was like magic – you couldn’t imagine it.

This fleeting [im]materiality resonates as nostalgia – a yearning for a time when the fair represented a mysterious modernity. Momentary pleasures and indulgence generate a site within which enchantment, and nostalgia, are central. For Sam, the fair has always been a place of mystery, somewhere not quite settled, not quite understandable. These visceral experiences formed lasting impressions that today provide powerful glimpses into the past atmosphere and excitement of the fairground.

The potential tober (the lot or site) of the fairground creates a unique experience; this phenomenon of transforming an ordinary space into ‘a site of joy and excitement, of insatiable curiosity, and less often of remorse and grief’, is commonly referred to as a fairground
miracle. Heritage and history, coupled with sensory experience, become the key proponents in shaping atmosphere. Place-related nostalgia, in particular, generates an emotional response that forms connections and identities. The atmosphere of the fair space reconnects past and present in its very existence. In 1943, fairgoer Alan Phillips was only nine; growing up in the shadow of World War II, for him the travelling fairground brings back fleeting moments of pleasure during an otherwise tragic time:

I never felt so scared as I did during the war. But you know, the fair still ran. Everything was dark, and no music, but the rides and games – they were still going ... It was its own world away from [pause] everything ... That's why I still come ...

For Alan, the travelling fairground brought elements of freedom, pleasure and escape in an otherwise heartbreaking time, thus momentarily alleviating pain, tension and fear. His response highlights the fair’s capacity to become a site within which nostalgia alters place-dependent memory; sight, sound, smell, taste and emotion become tied to experience, and generate feelings of nostalgia, as well as place-related memories. Thus, as the repeat fairgoers in this study explained, stepping into the bustling fairground landscape made them feel removed from aspects of daily life, and experience deeply embodied connections between site and memory.

**Embodied material and memory**

A connection between material and memory in situ permits an accurate recreation of space that generates nostalgia. As lights pulsate, music booms and rides loop, frequent fairgoers experience deeply embodied physical and emotional affect, generated by material objects. Material and site connect relationships, people and place, while physical items hold the capacity to permeate places and situations, altering the way these are experienced and understood. When asked to reflect on a particularly memorable ride-associated experience, Jane Dee, an annual fair visitor, recalled the Kirkcaldy fair of 1943:
I met my husband – we went on our first date and rode the merry-go-round. The lights, the music – everything glowed. The horses, so beautiful – it’s my history. [My husband’s] passed now [pause] but I still go every year. It was our tradition … it connects us – he’s there with me.\(^{24}\)

Jane’s memories are inherently dependent upon her experiences of site-related material; these memories are projected through the fair’s materiality – in this case her love of riding the merry-go-round with her late husband. These material objects reflect the personal and cultural memories through which they are experienced and lived; transmitted through sensory engagement and experience, these materials have different meaning for each individual.\(^{25}\) James Green’s reflections on a particularly memorable Waltzer ride in 1951 further highlight the connection between rides and atmosphere:

It was spinning faster and faster – everything around blurring. It was amazing, the music, the lights, the colours – all just one big haze. I clung onto the seat for dear life, the longer it went round, the more I felt lost … like it wasn’t the same place.\(^{26}\)

A teenager at the time, James’s reflections highlight the importance of corporeal experience. What makes fairgrounds inherently unique is their capacity to fashion distinct atmospheres and experiences through sensory ‘transportation’ that introduce ‘more-than-representational’ experiences in their sensory capacities. Their abilities to transform and enchant fairgoers generate atmospheres removed from everyday reality. Scotland’s travelling fairgrounds manifest these in their experiences daily, generating sites of engagement to stimulate, capture and enhance the fairgoer. Visits to the fair have historically brought change that has transformed, and will continue to transform, the fairgoers’ experiences for generations past, present and future.

*Stories of lived experience*

The travelling fairground environment is dependent on the artistry and craft of Showpeople, who are deeply entangled in the world of
‘OUR TRUE INTENT IS ALL FOR YOUR DELIGHT’

amusement. Their heritage has moulded their creative art form, and consequently shaped the way fairgoers experience and encounter every aspect of this atmosphere. Performances are continually transformed through acts of invention by Showpeople’s materials and memories. Their daily routines reflect memories of purpose and motivation. Fifth-generation Showman Simon James continues to be influenced by his ancestors’ early-twentieth century innovations:

In 1917 my great-grandfather put on a show outside the bioscope tent to draw customers in ... doing magic ... He would often film local people and include them in feature – that way they would come to the show. I learned from him ... always include your audience.27

The lived experiences of Simon’s ancestors continue to influence how he uses the carnivalesque, to forge connections between the modern fairground and the history on which it is dependent. It is this very phenomenon that exposes this relationship between the modern fairground and the history on which it is dependent. Historically, and developed over time, fairgrounds illustrate an array of intricate designs and artistry that represent development and innovation. Changing facades and themes have generated unique experiences and associated memories. Reliant on its mechanisms, and movements, the fairground continues to enchant and enthral its audience year after year, generating new memories for Showpeople, fairgoers and enthusiasts alike.

CONCLUSION

The travelling fair’s mobile, material history is vital to its continued survival. In the fairground context, nostalgia is not a replacement for history or memory, but rather an important eidetic narrative that allows Showpeople and fairgoers to reflect on embodied historical accounts of material and memory.28 Show-spaces and show-identities have become memorial sites within which nostalgia shapes experience, with fairgrounds creating deeply embodied connections between material and memory. Specifically, they permit the recreation of lived experiences, thus shaping nostalgia as an important tool not only for
preserving the travelling fairground’s past, but also for ensuring its continued survival.

The future scope of this project is to create a sensory ethnography that has wider applications within mobility and material studies, as well as historical geography. The sensory ethnography offers a window into the emotional past of our participants and subjects, often difficult to surmise from archival work alone. Thus, the project aims to popularise and inspire a different method of research by utilising theory grounded in nostalgia, memory and landscape to inform future work in historical geography. What this project seeks to achieve more generally is the creation of a story of the fair that showcases the life, industrial heritage and cultural memory of Showpeople through the ages; a story that examines the complex working heritage of Scottish Showpeople, generating a more accessible and knowledgeable understanding of this community, and their lifestyle and traditions, in a historical geography context. Although a cohort of scholars has published work on Showpeople, it is my hope that by creating a sensory ethnography, more historical geographers will realise the significance of Scottish Showpeople and continue to engage with this important community.

NOTES


3 For geographical engagement with peripheral communities, see: T. Neat, *The Summer Walkers: Travelling People and Pearl-fishers in the Highlands of Scotland*
‘OUR TRUE INTENT IS ALL FOR YOUR DELIGHT’


4 Dating information sourced from author’s oral history collection: Interviewee A (John Scott), 29/05/2017.


7 The archives visited included local and national archives in Scotland and were primarily chosen for the quality of their Scottish collections. The National Fairground and Circus Archive in Sheffield housed the most abundant official collection of material, although most of the material used within this chapter, and within my thesis, is based on the oral histories and archival collections of the Showpeople.


‘OUR TRUE INTENT IS ALL FOR YOUR DELIGHT’

15 Braithwaite, Fairground Architecture, pp. 21–22.
17 Interviewee G, 29/05/2017. All participants have been provided with pseudonyms for their privacy.
18 Gregory and Witcomb, ‘Beyond Nostalgia’.
19 Braithwaite, Fairground Architecture, p. 21
21 ‘Snap-shot’ interview from author’s collection: Interviewee B, 22/04/2017, Kirkcaldy Fair, Kirkcaldy.
22 J. Wylie, Landscape: Key Ideas in Geography (Routledge, 2007).
23 J. Duncan, ‘Sites of Representation: Place, Time and the Discourse of the Other’ in J. Duncan and D. Ley (eds.), Place/Culture/Representation (Routledge, 1993).
24 ‘Snap-shot’ interview from author’s collection: Interviewee C, 15/08/2017, St Lammas Fair, St Andrews.
25 Kwint, Breward and Aynsley, Material Memories.
26 ‘Snap-shot’ interview excerpt from author’s collection: Interviewee D, 21/12/2017, SECC Glasgow Irn-Bru Carnival.
27 Oral history from author’s archive collection: Interviewee E, 29/02/2017.
28 Natali, ‘History and the Politics of Nostalgia’.

65
‘I will be mistress of my own’: Property management during widowhood in eighteenth-century England

Sarah Shields

No sooner was his father’s funeral over, than Mrs John Dashwood, without sending any notice of her intention to her mother-in-law, arrived with her child and their attendants. No one could dispute her right to come; the house was her husband’s from the moment of his father’s decease; ... and her mother and sisters-in-law were degraded to the condition of visitors.

Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility, 1811.

Jane Austen’s novel Sense and Sensibility, published in 1811, begins with the death of Mr Henry Dashwood. His estate of Norland Park in Sussex descended by entail to his son John from his first marriage. The story follows the subsequent impact of these events on the residential situations of his second wife and their three daughters: from the removal of the Dashwood women from Norland to their settlement at Barton Cottage in Devonshire. No more can Mrs Dashwood call herself mistress of Norland. Upon her husband’s death, that title falls to her stepdaughter-in-law, the odious Fanny Dashwood.

Laura Fairchild Brodie has noted that each of the numerous widowed women in Austen’s novels ‘conforms to the demographics of her society’. The death of a husband was a life-course event
which many women experienced (or could expect to experience) in the eighteenth century. It has been estimated that by the mid-eighteenth century, widowed women made up to eight or nine per cent of the population of England, and this is only the women who never remarried. The precarious residential and financial position of the Dashwood women would therefore have been all too familiar to contemporary readers.

This chapter examines the impact of the death of a spouse upon an elite woman’s experiences with and relationships to property and land in eighteenth-century England. It examines the immediate aftermath of a husband’s death, arguing that property was a key concern – if not the key concern – for these women at this significant moment in their lives. Some women found themselves facing an imminent removal from their marital homes; some found themselves with a whole range of new responsibilities towards properties and estates. This research is considered in the light of recent work in historical geography by Briony McDonagh on elite eighteenth-century women’s land management and influence over the landscape. McDonagh’s research has demonstrated that such women were not only engaged in domestic management but could wield significant power over the wider estate and landscape: bringing about enclosure; estate account keeping; championing innovative farming methods; and remodelling landscape parks.

The research in this chapter is part of a wider thesis examining how elite women’s relationships with estate and property were affected by events in the life-course, such as inheritance, marriage, widowhood and motherhood. Life-course events such as marriage and widowhood often led to a change in residence for women. Elite families had relationships with multiple properties and a wide geographical network of social connections and estates. The research for this paper was undertaken using archives situated in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. It examines correspondence, wills and account books to understand how a spouse’s death impacted upon a woman’s relationship with property. Archival catalogues were studied in conjunction with genealogical histories to target sources that dated from the time of a woman’s widowhood, for example, letters written by women immediately after a husband’s
death. Sources intrinsically linked to life-course events, such as wills and marriage settlements, were also utilised. A particular attention has been paid to women who have not been studied at all, or in little depth, in existing literature in order to retrieve more women’s voices from the archives. While legal and economic documents such as wills and accounts offer quantitative evidence of land owned and managed, women’s correspondence has been particularly fruitful in reconstructing women’s voices.

Recent geographical research has studied residential mobilities within the framework of sociologist Glen H. Elder’s ‘life-course paradigm’.6 In their 2016 article, Coulter, van Ham and Findlay argue that adopting the life-course approach allows us to ‘rethink’ residential mobility through the principles of ‘linked lives’ and historical time and place. They explain that residential mobility ‘ties people into kinship and social networks extending beyond the household unit’ as well as ‘connecting the life courses of individuals to the enabling, directing and constraining influences of structural forces’.7 Adopting the life-course approach has enabled human geographers to think more critically about the influence of power relations on residential mobilities. This chapter is influenced by the latest research and examines the mobilities of elite widowed women in the context of the trajectory of their life-courses.

Several historians have recently criticised the life-course model (as it has been used in historiographical research). Amy Harris has noted that:

The problem with life-cycle-based analysis is that it often depicts men and, especially, women as moving from one family niche to the next without any connection between stages. ... At any one time an individual woman could be a daughter, a wife, a mother, a sister, an aunt, a niece, a cousin, and so on while also participating in larger social and communal activities.8

Katie Barclay in her study of eighteenth-century elite marriage has commented that ‘marriage has been treated as one step in the life cycle’ and criticises this as ‘overly simplistic’.9 The terms ‘life-course’ and ‘life-cycle’ in historiography have been conflated to describe ‘stages’ of a life – for example, marriage or parenthood. Elder’s life-
course approach, however, analyses ‘life-course’ events in the context of life-trajectories. Events such as marriage or widowhood do not necessarily create a new life-stage, but they do have a significant impact upon the trajectory of a life-course. This chapter follows this framework: examining widowhood as a ‘life-event’ – the death of a spouse – which impacted upon a woman’s property situation in various ways. Once the immediate upheaval of new widowhood was over, life began to settle into a new normal for the woman. If she was able, she could exert her agency to oversee the entire family estates and take a significant role in land and property management. This chapter includes examples of widowed women who seized this new opportunity and took control of estates, and of older women who wished to retire from estate responsibilities.

A HUSBAND’S WILL

Once a woman was widowed her legal relationship to property changed. During marriage she was under coverture – any property she owned previous to the marriage that was not protected by a separate estate became a part of her husband’s estate and her legal identity was subsumed under his. As a widowed woman, she was now outside of coverture and was a legal being again in her own right, no longer ‘covered’ by her husband in the eyes of the law. A husband’s will could offer other changes in a woman’s legal state. She could be named executrix of his will, a trustee of a young child’s estate or a guardian to minor children. She could be bequeathed a property of her own if it was in the husband’s power to do so.

Sir Richard Cust, a Lincolnshire baronet, died in 1734. In his will, he appointed his wife Lady Anne (née Brownlow) guardian of their nine minor children (including the eldest son and heir) and sole executrix and trustee of his will. Sir Richard advised his wife to consult with her brother and brother-in-law with regards to her management and commended her ‘experienced Goodness and prudence’. A letter written in September 1734 to Lady Anne from her solicitor – less than two months after Sir Richard’s death – reveals that she did indeed take advice on how to manage her new
responsibilities. Mr W. Gylby, the solicitor, advised her how to keep the accounts for herself, her eldest son and younger children, and how she was to receive rents from their estates. Sir Richard’s account books show that he purchased a house in Grantham in the year of his death. While the family did move en masse to Grantham after his death, Lady Anne did not have to contend with setting up a new household in her time of grief. As the guardian to the minor heir, the entire household moved to Grantham House along with her. The family remained at Grantham House until Lady Anne inherited her brother’s estate of Belton House in 1754.

Lady Anne may not have had to set up a new household, but she did have to adjust to her new legal, familial and business obligations. As executrix, trustee and guardian she had a whole host of new responsibilities. One of these was to consult with her solicitor about what she could and could not do with the estates in line with her husband’s will. Sir Richard’s will had directed that any money left over from the estate profits after every necessity was paid was to be invested in mortgages or government bonds and put towards his children’s fortunes. Lady Anne clearly sought to increase her children’s fortunes and estates, as demonstrated by her correspondence and accounts. In a letter written from their solicitor a year after Sir Richard’s death, it becomes evident that Lady Anne wanted to purchase more land and extend the family estates herself:

But if mortgages are not conveniently to be had, and Government security seems to you to be precarious, or likely to fall in Value, I don’t see any inconvenience in laying out your money upon a purchase.

Her accounts show that it was around this time she purchased estates at Saltfleetby and Boston to go towards her children’s fortunes.

Lady Anne did not remarry and outlived her husband by forty-five years. It is likely that her material circumstances upon widowhood certainly influenced this decision to not remarry. She was given free rein to remain in Grantham House after Sir Richard’s death and she inherited Belton House from her brother in her own right in 1754. She had a good relationship with her eldest son and
'I WILL BE MISTRESS OF MY OWN'

benefited from his care and protection. She also had a healthy jointure (an annuity owed to a woman settled at marriage to be paid out of the profits of designated estates) of £600 a year. Sir Richard had given her status and managerial responsibilities, which, according to his will, would have passed to trustees if she had remarried. By remaining his widow, she retained control over her own and, crucially, her children’s estates and fortunes.

TO STAY OR GO?

A completely different trajectory is seen in the life-course of Lady Anne’s sister-in-law Elizabeth (née Cartwright), the Viscountess Tyrconnel. Lady Tyrconnel’s husband (Lady Anne Cust’s brother) died intestate and childless in 1754. As he had no children from his marriage, his landed estate – which included Belton House in Lincolnshire – descended by entail to his sister, Lady Anne Cust. The administration of his estate legally fell to his widow, but for reasons unknown (although probably related to his large debts at his death) Lady Tyrconnel gave over administration to Lady Anne. As a widowed woman with no children, Lady Tyrconnel was legally only entitled to her jointure and half of his personal estate. A quitclaim left in the Lincolnshire Archives shows that Lady Tyrconnel relinquished her rights to her share of the personal estate in return for £3,000 paid to her by Lady Anne in August 1754.  

The timing of the viscount’s death in her life, especially their childless state, meant that Lady Tyrconnel had to make a quick exit from her marital home of Belton House. If they had a child, the estate would have passed to the child, and it is possible Lady Tyrconnel would have been able to stay, taking over the management had the child been in his or her minority. As it was, the stipulations of the entail created by the viscount and Lady Anne’s uncle meant that the estate passed to Lady Anne. The surviving correspondence between Lady Anne and Lady Tyrconnel shows that by April, two months after the viscount’s death, the two women were negotiating the division of chattel goods from the properties at Belton and London. Lady Tyrconnel asked to have a bed, one of the Alderney cows, and a
'I WILL BE MISTRESS OF MY OWN'

Horse called Piccadilly. In another letter written a couple of months later, Lady Anne wrote that she:

... desire your Ladyship will chuse [sic] any of your things left down in the inventory either at Belton or London & you shall have them at your appraised price.

Furthermore, she wrote:

I understood by your letter you liked to have all your things in Arlington Street, for which reason I have not used any of it.

The circumstances of Lady Tyrconnel's life thus far, including her familial relationships, the legal status of widowed women at the time, the settlement made on her husband's estates in the previous generation, and the timing of her husband's death in her own life-course, all contributed to her experience of widowhood and the impact that it had upon her relationships with property. Unlike her sister-in-law, she had little control over her residential mobility, let alone her marital home.

Removals from marital homes could be swift or protracted – ranging from mere weeks, as in the case of Lady Tyrconnel, to years. Lady Lettice Wendy (née Willoughby) lost her husband Sir Thomas in 1673. She too had no children, and had to make way for the heir after her husband's death. However, her husband's estates were not entailed so he had the power to settle them as he wished. It is evident that Lady Wendy and her husband discussed which residence she would like upon his death. She chose her jointure house to be the estate at Wendy, and not the marital home of Haselingfield. The reasons given behind her choice were emotional – she had lost ‘him that makde [sic] all places sweete to me [sic]’.

Her niece, who would become Duchess of Chandos, wrote in the family history that:

... my aunt desired him not to leave her Haselingfield, the house which she had lived in happily with him, but should she out live him that house would be more dismall [sic] to her than any other.
Emotions and memories could be powerful motivators in the decision to stay or leave the marital home (if, of course, there was a decision to make), and Judith Lewis has written about the power of ‘home’ in women’s lives and the emotional ties that were created towards specific houses. Indeed, Jane Austen’s Mrs Dashwood soon desires to leave her marital home of Norland Park, as:

… to remove for ever from that beloved place would be less painful than to inhabit it or visit it while such a woman [Fanny Dashwood] was its mistress.

As a wife, a woman experienced a degree of authority over her marital home, as Amanda Vickery has discussed at length. The prospect of being shunted out of this role, and yet remaining in the house, was not relished by many widowed women. As one widowed woman wrote:

I know what it is to be mistress but how may I like to be under my son’s government (for it is very fit every one should be master of there own [sic] house).

MANAGERS

Martha Baker (née Mellish), the woman quoted above, was from a Nottinghamshire landed family. She had an astonishing seventeen children with her husband, Daniel Baker, before he died in 1727. While Martha initially stayed in the marital estate of Penn in Buckinghamshire after his death, she soon sought to sell the estate to raise the portions for her children which were stipulated in her husband’s will. Martha wrote to her brother Joseph Mellish that:

It would be very agreeable to me to live in a more private way of life, the farm is a burden to me which I only kept for the advantage of selling the Estate.

Martha certainly did not relish the idea of estate management, writing that ‘[before] Deare [sic] Mr Baker’s death ... I was not concern’d with these affairs and indeed never liked it.’ Aged nearly sixty, she clearly did not see remarriage as an option, and with seventeen children to
provide for it was certainly not likely. Martha’s desire was retirement in this relatively late stage of her life. Nevertheless, circumstances required her to become a capable manager, and she fiercely protected her own interests. When her son Daniel interfered in her jointure estates by marking wood to be cut, she wrote to her brother to express her displeasure:

I think it is very odd he did not acquaint me with it, for while I live I will be mistress of my own, tho I may do much to oblige him in every thing that is reasonable.27

Martha instructed her brother to visit the man who had marked and valued the wood, to say that, while she understood he was following her son’s orders:

... as it is my Joynture [sic] no wood must be cut down without your [her brother’s] knowledge & my consent.28

In spite of her complaints about her new responsibilities, Martha took a hands-on approach to land management, visiting neighbours ‘who grow every thing’, presumably to share and compare farming methods. When she finally found herself free of Penn and acquired a London house for herself, she did not enjoy a comfortable financial position for someone of her status. With seventeen children this was an impossibility, for ‘how can I live but at the outmost stretch’.29 Therefore, it is perhaps unsurprising that she continued to oversee and endeavoured to prosper her own jointure estates. Lady Anne Cust and Martha Baker prove that ageing did not necessarily lead to retirement for a widowed woman whether they wished it or not – not when there was a family to manage.

CONCLUSION

This chapter – and the wider research from which it stems – utilises previously unpublished archival sources to study the impact of life-events on elite women’s relationships with property across the long-eighteenth century in Yorkshire and the East Midlands. Through
the examples of the women discussed in this chapter, it can be seen that the life-course event of widowhood had a significant impact upon a woman’s relationship with property. The consequences of the death of a spouse altered the life-course trajectory of a woman – not just where she resided, but who she lived with, her daily life and how she lived. This research is part of a growing literature on the role of women in estate and land management. The focus upon life-course events is deepening this research and archival evidence from key events in women’s lives is enabling a fuller reconstruction of those lives. It would be beneficial for this approach to be expanded both chronologically and geographically to draw a bigger picture of women’s engagements in property and estate management and how this altered over time. This would contribute to the redefining of estate management as a significantly masculine sphere – a notion which is questioned throughout this chapter.

NOTES

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4 Fairchild Brodie, ‘Society and the Superfluous Female’.

5 B. McDonagh, Elite Women and the Agricultural Landscape, 1700–1830 (Routledge, 2018).

‘I WILL BE MISTRESS OF MY OWN’


10 Will of Sir Richard Cust of Leasingham, Lincolnshire, 22 August 1734 [The National Archives, PROB 11/666/359].

11 Letter from W. Gylby to Lady Anne Cust, 13 September 1734 [Lincolnshire Archives, BNLW 4/1/30/4/1].

12 Sir Richard Cust’s account book 1731–1759 [Lincolnshire Archives, BNLW 4/6/19/5].

13 Letter from W. Gylby to Lady Anne Cust, 3 August 1735 [Lincolnshire Archives, BNLW 4/1/30/4/2].

14 Sir Richard Cust’s account book 1731–1759 [Lincolnshire Archives, BNLW 4/6/19/5] (N.B. Entries after his death on 25 July 1734 are made by Lady Anne Cust).

15 Quitclaim. Viscountess Tyrconnel to Lady Anne Cust. All rights, interest, etc. in the personal estate of Viscount Tyrconnel, in recognition of Lady Anne’s having given her £3000 out of his estate 1 August 1754 [Lincolnshire Archives, BNLW 4/1/40/2].

16 Letter from W. Cartwright to Sir John Cust, 11 April 1754 [Lincolnshire Archives, BNLW 4/1/40/5/1].

17 Letter from Lady Anne Cust to Viscountess Tyrconnel, n.d. [Lincolnshire Archives, BNLW 4/1/40/5/6].

18 Letter from Lady Anne Cust to Viscountess Tyrconnel, n.d. [Lincolnshire Archives, BNLW 4/1/40/5/6].

19 Letter from Lady Lettice Wendy to Lady Emma Child, 29 December 1673 [Nottinghamshire University Library, Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, Mi Av 143/36/21].


‘I WILL BE MISTRESS OF MY OWN’

24 Letter from Martha Baker to Joseph Mellish, 17 May 1729 [Nottingham University Library Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, Me C 12/7/16].
25 Letter from Martha Baker to Joseph Mellish, 19 June 1727 [Nottingham University Library Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, Me C 12/7/1].
26 Letter from Martha Baker to Joseph Mellish, 27 July 1728 [Nottingham University Library, Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, Me C 12/7/11].
27 Letter from Martha Baker to Joseph Mellish, 30 December 1727 [Nottingham University Library, Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, Me C 12/7/5].
28 Letter from Martha Baker to Joseph Mellish, 26 January 1728 [Nottingham University Library Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, Me C 12/7/6].
29 Letter from Martha Baker to Joseph Mellish, 17 May 1729 [Nottingham University Library, Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, Me C 12/7/16].
The limits to colonisation in the Mukogodo Native Reserve, Kenya, c. 1930–1963

Sipke Shaughnessy

INTRODUCTION

The field of human geography, alongside academic knowledge production more generally, has in recent years faced amplified calls for its decolonisation. Decolonisation involves ‘rethinking’ the world outside of metropolitan centres and from post-colonial, indigenous and other marginalised spaces. This rethinking further involves scrutinising the ways in which ‘knowledge production and everyday relations are informed by European colonial modalities of power and propped up by imperial geopolitics and economic arrangements’. Moreover, it demands that we examine the extent to which the Western academy’s positionality underscores its understanding of and claims regarding modernity and universality. To be successful, such a project of decolonisation must therefore be predicated on a thorough understanding of the logics and operation of colonial power, including where and by whom colonial ideas, epistemologies and ontologies were generated, the directions in which they travelled, and the extent to which they were received, accepted and internalised by colonised peoples and imperial agents alike.

In this chapter, I argue that historical geographies of colonialism are well placed to contribute to such an understanding. Historical geography has been particularly adept at looking beyond
simplistic narratives in which a reified West conveys a uniform colonial-modern agenda to supposedly gullible colonised populations in (largely) the Global South. Such insights can be of benefit to decolonial theory and praxis. While much of the current decolonial literature focuses on the pervasiveness of colonial modalities of thought and power, both within and outside of the academy, this chapter draws on historical geographical approaches to colonialism in order to identify some of the limits to colonial power. In doing so, I do not deny the problem of enduring colonial relations and systematic white supremacy, nor the brutality of past empires. Rather, I regard these ‘limits’ to colonial power as starting points for exploring alternative avenues for decolonial praxis by highlighting where colonial power is weakest and how these weaknesses force colonial regimes to rely on certain governance strategies rather than others.

I begin by discussing historical geography’s contributions to understandings of colonialism and how these might be wedded to decolonial theory. I then draw on a case study from my own research into the colonial administration of Mukogodo, Kenya in order to illustrate how the implementation of administrative policy was often (if not always) the product of compromise and frustration. I do not mean to suggest that this case study is typical of colonial power. Indeed, colonial regimes across former empires and in contemporary settler colonies were and are configured in radically different ways. However, rooting understandings of colonialism in the material, social and symbolic practices of actual colonial regimes is essential if we are to avoid giving explanatory weight to colonialism as an agentless abstraction. Therefore, an ability to move between the particular and the general is crucial if the study of contingent ‘colonial situations’ is to inform decolonial theory. I therefore end the chapter by discussing ways forward for a dialogue between historical geographies of colonialism and the decolonial movement.
THE LIMITS TO COLONISATION

(DE)COLONISATION IS NOT A METAPHOR

In calling for the decolonisation of geography as a field of knowledge production that privileges (largely) Euro-American perspectives and authors, decolonial scholars have drawn attention to geography’s epistemological collusion in enduring patterns and relations of colonialism and white supremacy. Owing to the varied and interconnected ways in which colonial power permeates geographical knowledge production, the objectives of decolonial scholars are manifold. For some, decolonising knowledge means rethinking the world from the plural vantage points of colonised and post-colonial spaces. For others, decolonisation must bring about ‘the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted’. As Tuck and Yang argue, this is critical if we are to avoid using decolonisation as a metaphor – a significant risk when decolonising language is divorced from the priorities of the colonised, even with good intentions.

It is to this concern – that decolonisation be rooted in and directed towards real instances of colonisation - that I argue historical geographies of colonialism could speak most productively. Cooper notes a tendency in discussions on colonialism, ‘coloniality’ or ‘colonial-modernity’ to treat colonialism as an agentless abstraction, ‘separate to what anybody did in a colony’. This further encourages use of the term to describe non-colonial forms of domination and exploitation, which risks exhausting the concept of its analytical force. Historical geography, meanwhile, has tended not only to study what Cooper refers to as ‘colonial situations’ – instances of colonial power situated in real time and space – but also to theorise continuities and disaggregations in the exercise of colonial power across different scales. In other words, it has sought not only to understand the operation of colonialism in particular places, but also to situate the particular in the greater whole of imperial projects, and to theorise the role of colonial situations in the formation of colonialism as a modality of power.

Historical geographers have done so by drawing attention to the co-constitution of metropole and colony. This problematises
‘the image of an overarching metropolitan representation of other places and peoples, or a uniform European agenda’, as do studies that highlight the particularity of colonial practices in colonial situations.\textsuperscript{11} This is crucial for how we theorise the link between colonial practices and the ‘colonial’ epistemes that inflect knowledge production today. If imperialism as a metropolitan agenda was founded on and written into notions of the universal, this universality failed to permeate the practice of governance in colonies, which often emphasised exclusion and segregation based on ethnic and racial difference rather than shared universal ideals and values.\textsuperscript{12} Another critical contribution, meanwhile, is the recognition of how non-human or more-than-human agency in colonised spaces, such as landscapes and disease vectors, both enabled and frustrated colonial governance.\textsuperscript{13} This recognition further calls into question the possibility of tracing a direct line of causality from colonial effects back to the intent of agents of metropolitan power.

In reading decolonial accounts of knowledge production, one is struck by the purposive, pervasive and capillary nature of colonial ontologies and epistemologies. Some accounts do acknowledge the limited reach of colonial ontologies, particularly in the identification of ‘border’ or ‘southern’ thinking in ‘socio-spatial relations that have not been entirely defined by Euro-modernity’ or where Euro-American frameworks have been vernacularised to produce ‘southern theory’.\textsuperscript{14} However, owing to the need in decolonial thinking to determine the reach of colonial power in academic knowledge production, its limits are often left either unexamined or underemphasised. Historical geographies of colonialism, meanwhile, frequently highlight the hybridities, the compromises and the disaggregations that characterise the exercise of colonial power. This scholarship has a direct bearing upon how we formulate prescriptions for decolonial praxis, because it signals that colonial ‘ontologies’ rarely travelled unchecked or unchanged from metropolitan centres of knowledge production to the colonised spaces. We can therefore make the assertion that colonial power was limited in its ability to convey the intentions of those at the core of metropolitan power.\textsuperscript{15} In what follows, I will examine how colonial power within a semi-autonomous colonial space – namely, late colonial Kenya – was
THE LIMITS TO COLONISATION

limited in its ability to translate policy (or ontology) into action in a wholesale manner.

ONTIOLOGICAL CONTESTATIONS IN THE COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION IN MUKOGODO NATIVE RESERVE, KENYA, 1930–1963

It has been well established in both historical and geographical studies of colonial Kenya that the governance capacity of the colonial administration was hampered by internal contradictions. By ‘the administration’, I refer to the provincial bureaucratic structure in Kenya’s colonial governance, which Cheeseman and Branch have described as a ‘bureaucratic-executive state’, in which power is primarily centralised in the hands of an executive (the office of the governor) and enforced through an extensive administrative bureaucracy with outposts in each of the colony’s districts. These districts were organised primarily along lines of race and ethnicity, with most of Kenya’s African population sorted into discrete ‘native reserves’. One of the main challenges faced by the administration was to police and maintain this racialised political geography. According to Berman and Lonsdale, its ability to do so effectively was constrained by contradictions which arose from a simultaneous need to assuage ‘the competing and sometimes conflicting demands of metropolitan and [white settler] interests and ... the material and political needs of effective control over the African population’. For example, these contradictions were manifest in the colonial government’s pursuit of land alienation for European settlement in spite of Colonial Office directives calling for the reservation of larger tracts of land to accommodate a growing African population. As Overton argues, these contradictions were not merely the product of institutional tensions or personal conflicts within colonial institutions, but rather this interpersonal and institutional incoherence was itself the manifestation of policy contradictions. It was at ‘the interface between ruler and ruled’, at the level of provincial, district and subdistrict offices, that the crises of the colonial state were most apparent. It is one such interface – the provincial and district
offices tasked with administering the Mukogodo Native Reserve (MNR) in northern Laikipia, Kenya – that will now be considered.

The MNR was a parcel of land set aside in 1934 for Maa-speaking pastoralists in the north eastern corner of the Laikipia plateau in north-central Kenya, following the settlement of most of that plateau by Europeans from roughly 1911 onwards. Prior to colonisation, the plateau had been occupied by various Maasai and Maa-speaking sections until their expulsion under the second Anglo-Maasai Treaty in 1911. During these expulsions, several groups of stockless pastoralists, identified by the administration as ‘Wanderobo’ or ‘Dorobo’, were allowed to remain on the plateau. Following the Kenya Land Commission report in 1933, the administration set aside a space of roughly ‘540 square miles’ for these ‘Dorobo’ groups to inhabit, which was then administered as a native reserve with a special ordinance preventing anyone from entering or leaving the reserve without permission. Six months of fieldwork was carried out in the former MNR, during which oral histories were conducted that focused on various aspects of the colonial period. Particular focus was given over to the marketisation of the livestock economy. This fieldwork data was then supplemented by archival research conducted in Nairobi, London and Oxford, which provided an account of the colonial period in this region from the perspective of colonial administrators.

To a large extent, the oral histories I encountered emphasised the distance between the administration and the inhabitants of the MNR. The reasons for this were varied. Initially, the MNR was administered remotely from nearby Nyeri town and rarely visited by colonial administrators, with day-to-day governance carried out by local ‘chiefs’ who had been appointed by the administration (as part of a strategy of ‘indirect rule’). During the early period of colonial rule in Mukogodo, effective governance was thus limited by stretched human and material resources. It was only in the aftermath of the Second World War that the administration began paying closer attention to what was happening in the reserve, by appointing a District Officer in 1948. Even with an expanded bureaucratic apparatus, the administration’s ability to implement its own directives was constrained by several factors. This involved resistance and ‘foot-
dragging’ on the part of locally recruited officials, trespassing and rampant cattle rustling, all of which occupied a considerable amount of the administration’s time and resources.\(^{27}\)

With so much of its energy consumed by local crises and resistance, it seems that administrative policy in the reserve rarely followed any ‘predetermined master plan’.\(^{28}\) Instead, it ‘evolved in response to internal crises or external dictates’.\(^{29}\) From 1947, however, the provincial and district offices began to prepare a major development project for the reserve that chimed with emerging policy themes throughout the post-war British empire, and which, had it been implemented, could be argued to have constituted a local implementation of an imperial directive rooted in metropolitan values, trends and ontology. However, it was only ever partly implemented, failed in its key objectives, and is barely remembered by the MNR residents alive today. As will now be discussed, despite its resonance with empire-wide developmentalism, the project in fact emerged in response to conflicting roles and prerogatives within the administration.

By 1947, following lengthy discussion among administrators, the development project in question had been dubbed the Mukogodo Betterment Scheme (MBS). The MBS was, essentially, an attempt to reduce the number of livestock in the Mukogodo reserve in order to mitigate what was perceived by the administration to be severe overgrazing, particularly in the forested areas of the reserve. However, the destocking effort was bundled in with a variety of other ‘development’ measures, including infrastructure projects and the attempted marketisation of the pastoral livestock economy.\(^{30}\) Impetus for the scheme began earlier, following the demarcation of Mukogodo Forest Reserve (MFR) in the east of the native reserve by the colony’s Forest Department in 1936.\(^{31}\) The MFR was largely forgotten until 1944, when a visit was made by the assistant conservator of forests for Nyeri district, Douglas Leakey (younger brother to the celebrated palaeontologist and archaeologist, Louis Leakey).

Owing to what he perceived as severe overgrazing both within and outside of the forest reserve, Leakey’s visit brought about a sudden sense of urgency regarding the forest’s conservation.\(^{32}\) With the backing of the Conservator of Forests, Leakey called
upon the administration to expel all pastoralists from the forest and to restrict grazing within the reserve, leaving behind only ‘true Dorobo’, who were to be identified through their keeping of honey barrels. Ontologically, Leakey’s proposals are of particular interest. He suggested that one of the resident groups – known as the Mukogodo or Yaaku people, a once hunter-gathering people with a totally separate language to that of Maasai – could be encouraged ‘to revert mainly to their old jungle habits’. This was because, as ‘genuine Mukogodo Dorobo’, they could be imbued with ‘a true forest sense’, which would make them ‘value the forest & help us & indeed work for us’. Leakey’s assumption was that, as former hunter-gatherers, known primarily for their beekeeping, the Mukogodo’s natural or cultural inclinations towards forest conservation would make them ideal candidates for what he called ‘forest citizenship’. Leakey therefore saw the possibility of continuity between certain cultures and certain natures – a notion which is at odds with the sort of Cartesian dualism that is often described as a hallmark of Western ontology, even if this divergence from a Cartesian nature–culture distinction was only ever selectively applied along racial lines (particularly to those styled as ‘noble savages’).

This ‘ontological’ flexibility contrasted the attitude of the district administration, which regarded people and ‘nature’ to be controlled separately to one another. In response to Leakey’s concerns, the District Commissioner Nyeri pointed out that the reserve had experienced locust infestations several years in a row, which had put unusual grazing pressure on the forest (which is used as a dry season grazing zone by the region’s pastoralists even today). Moreover, the district administration pointed out that many of their new boreholes had been placed within the forest, which increased pressure on the forest during periods of drought even further. As the discussions around how best to protect the forest reserve continued, the climatic situation worsened, with another year of failed rains in 1946 contributing further to grazing pressures. As well as being cognisant of these extraordinary climatic and ecological events, it appears that the administration was also aware of the reserve’s inadequate size, even seeking to expand the reserve by acquiring land from the neighbouring Northern Frontier District.
as they were, with keeping order among the reserve’s pastoralist population, the district administrators were annoyed by, and highly reluctant to give into, the Forest Department’s demands. Desperate for a compromise, the administration set about convincing the Forest Department that the best way to prevent further overgrazing in the forest would be to launch a major destocking programme. This destocking programme gradually became packaged together with a host of other development schemes, such as the building of roads, livestock markets, medical dispensaries, schools and boreholes, until becoming officially designated the MBS in 1947.

CONCLUSION

The above account of the MBS affirms and expands upon much of historical geography’s contributions to the study of colonialism. In the second half of the twentieth century, the administration in Mukogodo had begun to adopt the language of development, undoubtedly influenced by an emerging imperial discourse associated with the ‘second colonial occupation’ of Africa. If this empire-wide discourse helped to frame the objectives of the MBS, the scheme itself was the product of highly localised crises and debates and conflicting roles within the provincial administration. This points to a paradox in the operation of imperial power – namely, the propensity for colonial policies to appear as if they fall in line with global or imperial discourses and logics, whilst simultaneously being entirely reactive to local problems and trends. One could make the argument that imperial discourses facilitate the unconscious permeation of a certain ontology, which then provides the underpinnings for colonial practices. However, to the extent that we can ascribe ‘ontologies’ to the officers of the Mukogodo administration, these varied quite substantially and were arguably a matter of political expediency. Moreover, while decolonial literature often takes aim at colonialism’s espousal of a singular universality, in the case of Mukogodo, the universalist language of development was only applied in order to sustain a policy of segregation based on notions of fundamental cultural difference.
THE LIMITS TO COLONISATION

What remains for historical geographers is to integrate such insights into a roadmap for decolonial praxis. In the above account, I have claimed that the reach of colonial or imperial ontology was and is limited in myriad ways. Delineating the strengths and weaknesses of colonial power in colonial situations is, I argue, critical for grounding decolonial thought in the real experiences and struggles of colonised people. However, owing to the necessity of situating grounded research approaches in spaces of particularity and contingency, further synthesis is needed in historical geography, with a view to augmenting future debates on decolonisation.

NOTES

1 This research was funded through a studentship from the UK’s Economic and Social Research Council and funding from the Department of Geography, University of Cambridge. Special thanks go to my supervisor, Liz Watson, to my friend and assistant Shadrack Noah ole Kuraru and to my partner, Sophia Peacock. I am also grateful to all involved in editing and contributing to this volume, as well as the organisers of the HGRG panels at the 2017 RGS-IBG Annual Conference.
5 Cooper, Colonialism in Question, p. 16.
9 Cooper, Colonialism in Question, pp. 17, 25.
THE LIMITS TO COLONISATION

12 M. Mamdani, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism (James Currey, 1996).
15 Of course, many colonies themselves enjoyed a considerable degree of political autonomy and continue to do so in contemporary settler colonies.
22 Kenya Land Commission, Report of the Kenya Land Commission, September 1933 (London, 1934); Conservator of Forests, Letter to Member of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Nairobi 1946) [Kenya National Archives (KNA) file no: VQ/9/6]; Interview 3: elderly Maasai man from Ilnyangusi age set, born approximately 1910; Interview 15: Maasai man from Ilseuri age set, born 1936 (approx.), son of colonial-era chief; Interview 18: Maasai man from Ilkishire age set, born 1943 (approx.).
23 These consisted of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with residents of the former MNR who had been alive during the period of colonial rule. Participants were selected using a snowball sampling method. Some were selected for their involvement in governance or relation to officials. Interviews focused on the experiences of pastoralists under colonial rule, including their relocation to the MNR and their interactions with the provincial administration. Most interviews are anonymised due to sensitive content and the wishes of participants.
24 Official archives consulted were the Kenya National Archives (KNA) in Nairobi, the National Archives in Kew, London, and the Oxford Colonial Records Project in the Weston Library, Oxford. In addition, I drew on archived documents in police posts within the MNR, Kenya.
25 R. E. Wainwright, Memoirs, Weston Library, Oxford, Manuscript Collections no. 629 (date unknown), p. 84. For a full discussion of the role of colonial chiefs.


30 District Commissioner, Nyeri, *Mukogodo Betterment Scheme*. Nyeri, 9 September 1947 [KNA file no: BV/14/113].


33 District Forest Officer, Nyeri, *Letter received by District Commissioner, Nyeri*. Nyeri, 5 April 1946 [KNA file no: VQ/9/6].

34 District Forest Officer, Nyeri, *Letter received by District Commissioner, Nyeri*. Nyeri, 5 April 1946 [KNA file no: VQ/9/6].


36 District Commissioner, Nyeri, *Letter Received by Provincial Commissioner, Central Province*. Nyeri, 12 November 1945 [KNA file no: VQ/9/6].


39 District Commissioner, Nyeri, *Letter Received by Provincial Commissioner, Central Province*. Nyeri, 12 November 1945 [KNA file no: VQ/9/6].

A princely education in Georgian Britain: Teaching geography and culture with the maps of the King’s Topographical Collection

Jeremy Brown

According to your orders ... [I] have purchas’d the Maps of Cantelli, Magini & Ameti.

Richard Dalton to John Stuart, 3 March 1759, Rome.

Touring Italy during the Seven Years’ War, royal librarian Richard Dalton was mindful of his most important commission: to purchase books, maps and works of art for the British monarchy. He had been ordered to obtain specific items by John Stuart, third Earl of Bute, who from 1755 had been in charge of the education of the Prince of Wales – future King George III (1738–1820). Indeed, Bute was still overseeing the twenty-year-old prince’s studies in late 1758, as revealed in a letter to the earl. Having access to a special fund from the Privy Purse, Bute also directed acquisitions of the Royal Library on behalf of George throughout the late 1750s. Dalton’s letters document the beginnings of a process of map collecting that continued apace after George became king in 1760. Over the course of his reign, the King’s Topographical Collection grew into one of Europe’s major cartographic repositories; it numbered over 40,000 items by the time it was promised to the nation in 1823. Despite being housed
in the British Library, the King's Topographical Collection remains a relatively unexplored resource. Based on new research into the Italian cartography of the collection, this chapter will demonstrate how maps were used as pedagogical tools in the eighteenth century. Bringing to light two printed maps of Sicily inscribed with manuscript annotations, it will also showcase an exemplary episode of princely education.

In recent years, critical cartographers have contended that maps are ‘always of-the-moment, brought into being through practices (embodied, social, technical, political) ... Maps are transitory and fleeting, being relational and context-dependent’. But whilst this post-representational conception of cartography is frequently used to make sense of contemporary or digital examples of mapping practices, its application to historic examples is seldom highlighted. Drawing on recent work in book history and the history of education concerned with marginalia, this chapter proposes that marginal dialogue offers one way of recapturing transient cartographic interactions from the past. In her work on textual marginalia, Heather Jackson has highlighted the frequently personal and idiosyncratic nature of readers’ responses. Much like texts, maps are also received differently from individual to individual, situation to situation. By attending to the annotations on the two printed maps, this chapter describes how the maps were transformed into a lesson in Sicilian geography and sets this process within the wider context of eighteenth-century education. Finally, having taken into consideration the content of the marginalia, it speculates as to the identity of the author and recipient of these instructions, with the weight of evidence pointing equally to the Swiss scholar Johann Caspar Wettstein (1695–1759) and Prince George.

What emerges is a contextual response to the maps, one that highlighted elements of the geography of Sicily according to the desires and expectations of the teacher and the pupil. This cartographic learning exercise, as will be demonstrated, communicated specific cultural and geographical knowledge that was appropriate not just for a typical Grand Tourist, but also for the Prince of Wales himself. George himself was a lifelong map enthusiast; in two early portraits he was depicted sitting alongside
cartographic material. Yet his passion went beyond the mere ownership of maps. When describing the daily routines of the king and his family, one contemporary noted:

Topography is one of the King’s favourite studies; he copies every capital chart, takes models of all celebrated fortifications, knows the soundings of the chief harbours in Europe, and the strong and weak sides of most of the fortified towns.  

George may have developed this habit of copying out maps and plans to learn about the world from his education, and there is little doubt that George handled the Italian material arriving in the Royal Library. Since he never travelled abroad on a Grand Tour of Europe, unlike so many of his peers, it was through maps and other geographical material – not travel itself – that George experienced the world beyond the shores of Britain.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY EDUCATION

Britain under the Hanoverians saw a raft of profoundly significant developments regarding both general and geographical education. Almost every aspect was affected: children were disciplined less harshly; educational facilities multiplied; curricula were re-examined; costs fell; specialised didactic literature appeared; and novel educational toys became commercially successful.

Despite these changes, the primacy of Classics in the education of royal and upper-class children remained relatively constant throughout the early modern period. For instance, in the late 1760s, timetables show that fourteen-year-old boys at Eton had around 80 per cent of their scheduled class-time devoted to Classics. Although geography was not a separate discipline, either at school or at university level, the subject had been approached for a long time through classical texts, such as those by Ptolemy and Pliny. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, mathematical geography became increasingly valued as a vocational pursuit in commercial schools. Geographical knowledge was deemed a necessary skill for a cultured gentleman throughout the early modern period. To be expert was
thought beneficial both to the state and to the individual, but to be ignorant was to open oneself up to criticism and ridicule.\textsuperscript{15}

Since at least the end of the fifteenth century, maps had been recognised by educators for their ability to convey and enhance a variety of lessons, such as in history or religious studies.\textsuperscript{16} But the middle decades of the eighteenth century were particularly significant in this regard, as maps were variously and innovatively reinvented.\textsuperscript{17} In the 1750s and 1760s, geographical board games and jigsaw puzzles appeared on the market as educational toys.\textsuperscript{18} On the other hand, in schools map drawing and map embroidering flourished from the 1780s as exercises that taught not only geography but also either penmanship or needlework.\textsuperscript{19}

In terms of teaching methods, documentary evidence from the long eighteenth century suggests that rote and fact learning were the most commonly deployed. However, Matthew Grenby’s analysis of extra-textual marks in children’s books found that the rhetoric of instruction often had little bearing on the realities of everyday usage.\textsuperscript{20} Grenby and others argue that by focusing on annotations and marginalia we can gain a better understanding of how children’s educational materials were received and used by individual teachers and students. It is with this focus in mind that we turn to the two annotated maps of Sicily in the King’s Topographical Collection.

**MAPS AND MARGINALIA**

George’s copy of Guillaume Sanson’s *La Sicile* (Figure 8.1) is remarkable not for any particularly novel representation of the territory of Sicily, which was broadly the same as Sanson’s father’s design of 1647, but for the annotations added on the margins.\textsuperscript{21} These marginalia were written in French by someone trained in early-eighteenth-century French cursive, which incorporated ornate, curling majuscules, seen here in the ‘C’s and the ‘M’s.\textsuperscript{22} Translated, the note reads:

You should write the names of the seas I have circled in pencil on the maps that you are working on. It is necessary that each quarter bears two names of its sea: for example, ‘the Sea of Sicily formerly the Ionian Sea’ should be written on the map where Messina is,
Figure 8.1: Guillaume Sanson, *La Sicile, Avec les anciens noms de presque toutes ses Places, Riveres, Chasteaux et diverses observations nouvelles*, Paris: Rue Froimanteau, undated [post-1692].
Source: The British Library Board. Maps K.Top.84.15
likewise for where Syracuse is, etc. I am sending the quarter where Messina is for that reason, as well as the general map so you can put the matching names of the seas onto it. I am looking forward to it all. I am also sending a map made up of two sheets so you can put the names of the seas there. Don’t forget above all to mark the Lipari Islands.23

As the inscription suggests, the various seas surrounding Sicily are circled in pencil; the author of the note even repeated the exact wording that was printed on the map: ‘Mer de Sicile autrefois Mer Ionienne’. The marginalia thus appear to be the rubric of a map-based learning exercise. Reflecting the contemporary emphasis on the learning of facts, the objective with this map was to learn the names of maritime features around Sicily. But the instructions called for a more creative response than straightforward memorisation by rote: the pupil was asked to reproduce the highlighted features on a separate map. In this way, map-based learning became an embodied act.

The marginalia also mention a second map ‘made up of two sheets’. George’s copy of Joseph Archivolci Cavassi’s *L’Isle et Royaume de Sicile* (see Figure 8.2), published in 1714 by Nicolas de Fer, not only fits the physical description, but has also been annotated.24 On this map the lesson turns to the interior of the island. Some of the larger cities in Sicily have been circled, such as Syracuse and Agrigento, which is famed for its Grecian ruins, but so too are smaller towns, such as Trapani and Lentini. Each of the circled places carries a historic, literary or even mythological description. For instance, under Syracuse we can read about the protracted siege of 214–212 BC: ‘Archimedes was protected for a long time by his knowledge of mathematics against the attacks of the Roman fleet commanded by the Consul Marcellus’.25 And under Trapani, there is a reference to Virgil’s *Aeneid*. By contrast, the island’s capital city, Palermo, is not circled; the map reveals nothing more about the place than its Latin name, Panormus. Therefore, it is the descriptive information underneath the marked places that seems to have formed the basis for the highlighting. Taking in all the circled sites, a carefully selected picture of Sicily is constructed whereby places are defined by these singular episodes, and above all classical heritage is prized. Even the
fictional mythological horrors that plagued the Strait of Messina in Homer’s *Odyssey*, Scylla and Charybdis, have been marked.

**THE AUTHOR AND THE RECIPIENT**

Turning to the contents of the marginalia, what can we glean as to the identities of the people involved? At first glance, it might seem surprising that the note was written in French, but not when we consider that French was held in high esteem in Western Europe throughout the early modern period. Indeed, language learning was a common practice for royal and upper-class children. For instance,
we know that King George II had employed a French cartographer and grammarian, Jean Palairé (1697–1774), to tutor his own children, and that George III learned French, German and Latin.\textsuperscript{26} It is noteworthy, however, that the author of the marginalia used the courtesy form ‘vous’ instead of ‘tu’, an inversion of the common teacher–student hierarchy that we might otherwise expect. But this would make sense if the recipient was of such high social status – princely even – that the author had to address them politely.

As an educator of both French and geography, Palairé could have been the annotator of these maps. He produced \textit{A New Royal French Grammar}, which went through multiple editions in the eighteenth century and was in fact dedicated to his pupil, William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland – George’s uncle.\textsuperscript{27} Moreover, in 1755, Palairé published his \textit{Atlas Méthodique}, a children’s learning atlas. The \textit{Atlas Méthodique} is divided into sections of three or four maps that add progressively more topographical information about the same territory, ranging from the continents of the world to individual European countries. Had these maps been annotated by Palairé, they could have been incorporated into the King’s Topographical Collection after the inheritance of the Cumberland Collection in 1765.\textsuperscript{28}

Despite Palairé’s relevant expertise and his relationship to George II and his children, handwriting analysis leaves this supposition inconclusive at best.\textsuperscript{29} But there was another gentleman circulating around the Hanoverian royal family who had a similar interest in cartography and closer matching handwriting. That man was Johann Caspar Wettstein, secretary and chaplain to George’s father. Though born in German-speaking Basel, it is entirely plausible that Wettstein would have been taught in the French cursive style used by the annotator.\textsuperscript{30} Contextual information further strengthens the likelihood of his authorship of the marginalia. A scholar in his own right, Wettstein maintained a corresponding relationship with Swiss mathematician Leonard Euler during the 1740s and 1750s, with whom he discussed and exchanged the latest maps.\textsuperscript{31} Most significantly, a letter penned by Wettstein to George’s Swiss governess indicates that in December 1744 he sent dissected map puzzles that he had made himself to London for George’s education.\textsuperscript{32}
The annotated maps of Sicily by Sanson and Cavassi in the King’s Topographical Collection are a rare example of cartography being used in the schooling of an eighteenth-century prince. Written in French on the margins of Sanson’s *La Sicile*, the marginalia seem to be the instructions of a geography lesson on Sicily. This chapter has argued that by paying attention to marginalia, we can gain a deeper understanding of map use and education in practice. These marginalia not only reveal an interplay between educational theory and everyday practice, but also allow us to understand the types of knowledge that were thought relevant for a princely education. Looking at the translation and the circled toponyms, we can speculate as to motivations for the lesson. The use of French reflects the importance of language learning among the upper-class in eighteenth-century Britain, whilst the polite form of address indicates the high status of the recipient. An analysis of the handwriting suggest that the marginalia were written by Johann Caspar Wettstein and intended for Prince George. This is also corroborated by Wettstein’s biography and in the way in which the lesson was tailored to the pupil’s interests.

The pencil highlights on Sanson’s *La Sicile* focus on the names of the seas around Sicily, a task which broadly corresponds to the emphasis placed on fact learning in eighteenth-century geographical education. On Cavassi’s *L’Isle et Royaume de Sicile*, the deliberate selection of places that were encapsulated by single moments of classical history and mythology evoked an antiquarian geography of Sicily. The lesson thus connects the maps not only to the contemporary curricular emphasis on Classics, but even to the interests and practices that many British Grand Tourists cultivated when visiting antiquarian sites on the ‘Classic Ground’ of Italy. However, the circling of ‘C. Passaro autrefois Promontorium Pachinum’ on Cavassi’s map is an exception to this. Cape Passaro on the south-eastern tip of Sicily marks the spot where, in 1718, the British Royal Navy fought and won a battle against a Spanish fleet. Likely commemorating the location of the victory, this highlight would thus have been designed in appreciation of George’s interest in modern naval matters.
The annotations therefore guided the map-reader’s eye across a selective geography of Sicily to contemplate a predominately antiquarian landscape. Engaging spatial and embodied learning, map drawing as a teaching exercise, whilst a routine task for cartographers, was not widely adopted in schooling until later in the eighteenth century. Thus, by asking the pupil to reproduce place names on a separate map to learn the maritime and terrestrial geography of Sicily, the assignment prefigured contemporary educational practices, similar to Wettstein’s bespoke dissected maps. The transitory nature of map use makes understanding the processes involved problematic. In this instance, however, the marginalia tell one half of a map-based learning exercise: the two printed maps were in effect remade anew by the annotations, functioning as pedagogical tools in a fleeting episode of education in practice. As has been argued by Robert Kitchin and Martin Dodge, we must be attentive to how maps operate in the world, especially if we wish to avoid positivist narratives of progress in the history of cartography. In this instance, then, we gain a better understanding of how maps contributed to George’s internal image of Italy and how they functioned more generally as educational devices.

In all this we can detect the guiding hand of Bute, who was, as noted above, overseeing the acquisitions of the Royal Library through agents in Italy. George’s tutors, led by Bute, aimed to provide the prince with a broad cultural education akin to many of his peers who were preparing to undertake a Grand Tour of Italy. As it happened, George, too preoccupied with his kingly duties and later too unwell, was never to venture abroad in his life. But the maps, prints and artworks that were acquired for the Royal Library from the mid-1750s are of the same nature as those objects bought by eighteenth-century British Grand Tourists. The topographical material – his favourite ‘study’ – in the collection allowed George to become an armchair traveller, effectively standing in place of a real Grand Tour; it allowed him ‘to roam the world from his study.’

It is hoped that these two annotated maps in the King’s Topographical Collection are not isolated examples, and that future research will make similarly noteworthy discoveries. The project to re-catalogue and digitise the maps and views of the King’s Topographical Collection, which concluded in 2020, was designed
to increase awareness of and broaden access to the collection. Already over 100 online essays by historical geographers, art historians and historians of cartography have been uploaded to a website complementing the project. A similar initiative, the Georgian Papers Programme, is digitising personal letters and other documents pertaining to the Hanoverian dynasty stored in the Royal Archive at Windsor. It has so far opened up a wealth of material, including a great deal relating to the education of George III. In my own research project, I aim to relate maps in the King’s Topographical Collection to the essays written by the prince on the subject of Italy to construct a more comprehensive picture of his geographical education. But many other aspects of the private pedagogy and the networks of knowledge within the Georgian royal families are yet to be fully explored. We hope that the increased accessibility of these exciting resources will encourage a fresh wave of research into the transmission, reception and refraction of geographical knowledge in the Georgian era.

NOTES

1 I would like to acknowledge the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Library whose funding permitted the research upon which this chapter is based. I thank Veronica della Dora, Peter Barber and the reviewers of this chapter for their precious comments on earlier drafts.

2 F. Russell, John, 3rd Earl of Bute: Patron and Collector (Francis Russell, 2004) p. 223; Russell appends a selection of letters held in Mount Stuart Archive. Maps by Giacomo Cantelli da Vignola, Giovanni Antonio Magini and Giacomo Filippo Ameti are still in the King’s Topographical Collection today.

3 On George’s early years, see J. Black, George III: America’s Last King (Yale University Press, 2006) pp. 6–21.

4 In a letter estimated to date from September 1758, George wrote: ‘I therefore desire that we may regulate my studys, and that you would at least once a week examine what I have done’, see R. Sedgwick (ed.), Letters from George III to Lord Bute, 1756–1766 (Macmillan, 1939) pp. 14–15; cf. Russell, John, 3rd Earl of Bute, pp. 28–42.

A PRINCELY EDUCATION IN GEORGIAN BRITAIN


10 I. Cobbin, Georgiana: or, Anecdotes of George the Third (W. Whitemore, 1820), p. 16.


12 M. L. Clarke, Classical Education in Britain 1500–1900 (Cambridge University Press, 1959); on the education of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British princes and princesses in the liberal arts, see A. Pollnitz, Princely Education in Early Modern Britain (Cambridge University Press, 2015).


A PRINCELY EDUCATION IN GEORGIAN BRITAIN


22. I am grateful to Peter Barber for his opinion on the date and origin of the script.

23. Translations are the author’s own. ‘Il faut ecrire sur les cartes ou vous travaillez les noms des Mers quejais entouré au Crayon il faut que chaque quart porte le nom repette des Mers / exemple Mer de Sicile autrefois Mer Ioniene se écrira sur la carte ou est Messine a la SAME chose sur celle ou est Siracuse &c. J’envoye celles le quart ou est Messine pour cela et la carte generalle pour y mettre les mesmes noms de Mer. Je suis bien presse du tous / J’envoye ausy celle en deux feuilles collées ensemble pour y mettre les noms des Mers. N’oublies pas sans toutes de mettre isles de Lipari’.

24. There is no mention of Cavassi’s map among the work of Nicolas de Fer in Pastoureau (1984), pp. 167–223.

25. ‘Saragousa ou Archimede par sa Science dans les Mathematiques se defendit long temps contre les attaques de la Flotte Romaine commandée par le Consul Marcellus’.


29. Cf. BL Add. MS 38729 ff. 188–96.

30. Though not certain, there are considerable similarities in the extravagant ‘L’s, ‘J’s and ‘C’s, the angular ‘M’, and also in the writing of ‘envoye’; cf. Wettstein’s letters in BL Add. MS 38417 ff. 266–67.


33. J. Addison, *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy, &c.: In the Years 1701, 1702, 1703*, 2nd edition (Jacob Tonson, 1718) p. ii.


See: https://www.bl.uk/picturing-places [accessed 04 June 2018].

Totality in the tropics:  
The historical geographies of the 1911 eclipse expeditions to Tonga

Rory Mawhinney

The discovery of spectroscopy and its associated technologies in the mid-nineteenth century led to solar eclipses becoming phenomena of extreme importance, as each eclipse offered a chance to make detailed spectroscopic observations of the sun’s corona. The desire to view eclipses often necessitated expeditions, with the large distances, different cultures and foreign environments encountered when conducting expeditions providing interesting historical studies of this science for geographers. This chapter will briefly explore the historical geographies of the expeditions to Tonga in 1911, demonstrating that expeditions continued to be an integral part of astronomical research in the early twentieth century, involving many different people and taking advantage of commercial, military and religious networks.

Literature on the expeditionary astronomy of the late-nineteenth century is extensive, with writers such as Alex Pang looking to place such scientific endeavour within the wider cultural frameworks of Victorian science. Pang has shown how the changing technologies of astronomy in this period inspired new enquiry and the creation of dedicated eclipse-chasing groups within professional astronomical institutions. His work reveals the complex links between science, society and technology present in the work of British eclipse chasers in the late-nineteenth century and reveals the networks through which their knowledge moved and was debated.
Writing on the well-viewed eclipse in Thailand in 1868, David Aubin has described how the study of solar eclipses can tie together political power, nation building and the establishment of local scientific traditions. The expeditionary efforts of astronomers who viewed other astronomical phenomena, such as the transit of Venus in 1874, have also been the subject of attention from historians of science, including Jessica Ratcliff and Michael Chauvin. Ratcliff explores some of the cultural encounters that emerged from the expeditions that viewed the transit, identifying the production and circulation of astronomical science through imperial networks at this time, while also framing this expeditionary work within the national fervour generated by events of ‘big science’ in this period. In a similar vein, Chauvin has studied the transit expeditions through an investigation of research by British astronomers in Hawaii, attending to the scientific processes involved in making the correct observations and exploring how this science was linked to determining longitudinal values in the Pacific.

Also apparent from this literature is the significant influence that place has on the outcome of such expeditions. Focusing on this issue helps us place expeditionary astronomy within wider historiographical approaches concerned with the spatiality of science. These approaches are now frequent in studies of the history of science, particularly in light of a ‘geographical turn’ that has shown how the spaces of science lend authority to and variously enable or constrain types of scientific practice.

The total solar eclipse of April 1911 presented an opportunity for British astronomers to continue earlier programmes of research, with two expeditions, one on behalf of the Royal Astronomical Society (RAS) and the other from the Solar Physics Observatory of London (SPO), organised to view the eclipse. The primary sources of information on the expeditions are the published accounts of each party – reports written by Dr William Lockyer for the SPO and Father A. L. Cortie for the RAS. Aside from these sanitised official reports, information including personal reflections is drawn from letters sent by expedition members, held at the RAS archive in London. I discuss various aspects of these expeditions, including the role played by Jesuit astronomers, the work undertaken
to establish a viewing site in Tonga, and where the future direction of this research lies.

**PLANNING THE EXPEDITIONS**

The Joint Permanent Eclipse Committee of the RAS assigned two Jesuit astronomers from the Stonyhurst College Observatory in Lancashire to lead their expedition, while the SPO expedition was led by Dr William Lockyer. The SPO had been established by Sir Norman Lockyer (William’s father, himself a veteran of eclipse expeditions) in 1887, and focused on solar research. Of the few areas of land that the eclipse shadow would pass over, the Tonga group of islands in the Pacific provided the best location for an observation site. In his assessment of the possible locations, Lockyer identified five Tongan islands – Vava’u, Massau, Tau, Danger and Tofua – that totality would pass over and, of these, the first, Vava’u, ‘had everything in its favour’.8

*Transporting the astronomers*

The two expedition parties travelled in tandem from Britain to Tonga. For the first leg of the journey from Britain to Australia, they travelled aboard the SS *Otway*, a cruiser of the Orient Steam Navigation Company. Developed from imperial networks of travel, this company offered journeys every other week to Australia and New Zealand, as part of the Orient Line.9 The frequency of these journeys offered the astronomers the perfect opportunity to reach Australia in reasonable time, and a way of transporting their large cases of astronomical equipment. From Sydney, however, travel by commercial shipping route was not available, and the two parties arranged to use the admiralty ship HMS *Encounter* for transport to Tonga. The *Encounter* served the admiralty at Australia Station, patrolling the seas around Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific islands. After moving their equipment from the *Otway* to the *Encounter*, the astronomers left Sydney on 25 March and reached Vava’u on 2 April 1911. Stopping briefly at various points along the coastline in Australia en route had allowed the expeditions’ parties to pursue other scientific
work unrelated to eclipses before travelling to Tonga; Dr Lockyer, for example, was able to investigate a site for a new solar physics observatory north of Sydney.

*Jesuit astronomers: Men of god and science?*

The Jesuit astronomers who went on behalf of the RAS, Father Cortie and Father McKeon, offer an example of how Jesuit astronomers continued to make contributions to astronomical science in the early twentieth century. Agustin Udias writes that Jesuits were attracted to ‘frontier subjects’ such as astronomy, and that ‘Jesuits felt their responsibility to show that these apparently profane subjects could be also a vehicle to find God’, at a time when scientific study was deemed ‘alien if not hostile to religious faith’.

However while the work of Jesuit astronomers in the nineteenth century and earlier has been covered extensively by various authors, including Udias, their twentieth-century contributions are less well known. The two astronomers were affiliated with Stonyhurst College in Lancashire, a Jesuit institution which, like many others of its kind, encouraged astronomical study. With solar research being a key line of astronomical enquiry for the Stonyhurst observatory, Cortie and McKeon were prime candidates for the Tonga eclipse. During preparations, they used their connections with Jesuits in Australia to source materials for the viewing huts they would use in Tonga, and to establish contact with the crew of HMS *Encounter* prior to arrival. In Australia, Father Edward Pigot of the Riverview observatory at the St Ignatius College, another Jesuit institution, acted as a conduit whereby knowledge of weather conditions in the Pacific, arrangements with the *Encounter* and details of resources for the expeditions could be passed on to the Jesuits coming from Britain.
TOTALLITY IN THE TROPICS

TONGA AND THE ECLIPSE CAMP

While the selection of Vava’u as the most suitable island from which to view the eclipse was relatively straightforward, it was slightly more difficult for the observers to choose an appropriate location on the island itself at which they could set up camp and assemble their instruments. Lockyer admits to having spent much time at sea ‘turning over in my mind the suitability of the town of Neiafu as a spot for the eclipse camp’, concluding that this location needed inspection first, and that an Admiralty coaling station just outside the town might be better placed.¹² His instincts proved to be right – Neiafu was suffering from an outbreak of measles, and the coaling station offered a larger space more suitable for setting up an eclipse camp.

Making the eclipse camp

Early April 1911 was spent constructing the eclipse camp before the eclipse on 28 April. After transporting the equipment from the ship to the observation site, attention turned to preparing the site for observations. The site itself was overgrown with vegetation, which a small party of native islanders was employed to clear. The islanders were helpful throughout the eclipse work – for example, Father Cortie writes that during totality:

There was no noise from the Tongans, the native governor having considerately given orders that silence was to be maintained, and that no fires were to be lighted so that there should be no smoke.¹³

Preparatory work could not have been planned fully before arriving at the location of totality. It was known that much of the land on the Tongan islands was covered in vegetation, but until the final site for observing was chosen, the various eclipse parties would have not been aware of the extent of physical labour or tools required to alter the space that would be used. Such labour was often a necessity for eclipse work and having so many volunteers from the ship – all officers and 168 of the crew (even the Captain took part) eased the pressure on the astronomers to both prepare their eclipse site and then make
Figure 9.1: The instruments being landed near the observation site on Vava’u.
Source: *Nature*, 22 June 1911 p. 565
observations. Volunteers were enlisted in transporting the cases from the ship up to the eclipse camp (via a makeshift rail system to ease their passage up slopes, as shown in Figure 9.1), cutting down coconut trees to create space for the camps, and laying communications cables between the ship and the camps to aid in relaying information across the site.

Transforming the island space from overgrown coaling ground to site of controlled astronomical science was of particular importance. As Livingstone comments, the field can be an ‘inherently unstable scientific site’ that requires the ‘impromptu ingenuity’ of the scientific practitioners in order to make it suitable for their needs.\textsuperscript{14} At the eclipse camp, a large amount of sand and coral was collected to use to construct the concrete pillars for the piers, and trenches were dug around the living areas, which were completed by 6 April. Local weather conditions also influenced preparations – heavy rain several days later necessitated the digging of trenches around the instruments.\textsuperscript{15} The digging of trenches and construction of huts to cover the instruments and associated equipment is ample evidence that the eclipse party were well versed in their attempts to negate inclement conditions, and when strong winds on 15 April disrupted the telephone cable connecting the camp to the ship, a flag signalling system took its place. The clearing of coconut trees and other undergrowth also allowed the two expedition parties to be based in adjoining observing stations on the island. The close working proximity of the two British eclipse parties permitted them to share their knowledge regarding the astronomical equipment and significant co-operation took place as they sought to achieve optimal viewing conditions, with Father Cortie mentioning how his party were ‘considerably indebted’ to Mr Joseph Brooks of the SPO for assisting in determining the meridian of the instruments being used by the RAS expedition.\textsuperscript{16}

\textit{Viewing the eclipse: Secondary observations}

Aside from the primary objective of observing the eclipse, volunteers from the \textit{Encounter} assisted in secondary work observing other
phenomena in eclipse conditions. One example of such assistance came in the form of observing and identifying other stars in the region of the eclipsed sun. Maps indicating the positions of stars and planets near the sun at the time of eclipse were made at the SPO prior to the expedition. Upon reaching Vava’u, these maps were distributed to the volunteers who had undergone practice drills in identifying the stars featured. Under the supervision of the *Encounter*’s Commander Mellor, four parties of observers were distributed across the area: two on nearby hills, one at the eclipse camp and one remaining on board the *Encounter*. Mellor was also in charge of four parties stationed at these locations, who would make observations and drawings of the colours of the landscape before, during and after totality, along with parties responsible for observing the shadow of the moon as it swept across the island, and the changes in its characteristics over the course of the eclipse. Also at these locations were parties monitoring the behaviour of the local wildlife during the eclipse. Their reports mention how insects began chirping as if it was night, flowers began to close, fowls went to roost and other birds went to sleep.\(^\text{17}\) As Sorrenson has shown for nineteenth-century expeditions ships, so the *Encounter* became a critical site for secondary observations.\(^\text{18}\) Meteorological readings during the eclipse were taken from equipment on the ship, while twelve of the crew observed shadow bands by positioning three white screens, one on board and two ashore, in such a way that the bands before and after totality were recorded on them, and the space below deck was used to acclimatise some of the crew to dark conditions prior to the eclipse.\(^\text{19}\)

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH**

*Darkness, bodies and observation*

The descriptions of the eclipse camp during the eclipse reflect ideas concerning affect and how bodily performance is altered in relation to the environment in which it is positioned, and how this is affected by different levels of light. Lockyer admits that while the darkness was ‘appreciable well before 9 o’clock’ (in his experience much earlier than
TOTALITY IN THE TROPICS

was usual), it was never ‘great’, noting that faces could be recognised at fifteen yards, while on the *Encounter* there was enough light to ‘write comfortably the whole time’.\(^{20}\) Cortie described the atmosphere as totality occurred thus:

> A loud chorus of chirping crickets, as at the approach of nightfall, was raised and continued during totality. A Kanaka gave a howl and ran away frightened into the bush.\(^ {21}\)

In the moments before totality, Lockyer’s assistant Joseph Brooks remarked that the heavy cloud dominating the sky rendered the scene ‘distinctly dark … a sort of unhealthy darkness’ and that it gave a similar effect to that ‘obtained by the use of black spectacles’.\(^ {22}\)

Within cultural geography literatures, Nina Morris has written on how individuals experience the ‘nocturnal’ landscape, drawing on work that suggests that these landscapes must be activated by a physical engagement with them.\(^ {23}\) Through performing the bodily tasks and physical activities associated with creating ideal viewing conditions, the eclipse parties were engaging with the landscape and wider eclipse scene. Referencing Wylie on the narration of self and landscape while walking, Morris also notes how engaging with the landscape in this way also reveals shifting moods, colours and intensities – evidenced by the various programmes of landscape observation during the eclipse that made note of the changing colours and shadows around them.\(^ {24}\) Similarly, the concept of affect – which is described as ‘transpersonal’, drawing in many bodies while also potentially connecting them – can be discussed in the context of this work.\(^ {25}\) Applying this to the eclipse observations, we can see that the many different performative actions of the observers, including the interplay of movement in recording observations, changing plates, removing blindfolds and making sketches, represent a significant portion of activity which can be scrutinised in terms of affectual geographies. Morris argues the importance of viewing such activity within non-representational approaches to scientific study, reflecting that these ‘approaches have been successful in helping to legitimate the use of data registered by the researcher’s own body in the analysis and dissemination of their
research’. Such approaches find currency here and can be built upon in further studies of eclipse expeditions to explore the various ways that bodily movements and interactions with landscapes have influenced eclipse viewing.

The management of the island space reveals that important geographical considerations were at the heart of this scientific endeavour, and despite clouds preventing any significant observations being made, these expeditions nonetheless demonstrate that fieldwork in astronomy was contingent on many factors and remained a viable method of research in the early twentieth century. The contributions from the crew of HMS *Encounter* portray scientific activity that was not just the domain of specialist astronomers, but an endeavour that also benefitted from the networks cultivated by Jesuit astronomers. The expedition shows, too, how Jesuit astronomers maintained a critical role in expeditionary astronomy well into the twentieth century. Taking this research further, we can draw on literature relating to the geographies of darkness and performativity to help future studies in this field explore the actions of such observers in greater detail, positioning expeditions of this kind within studies of cultural geography. The bodily performance of the *Encounter*’s crew in carrying out their duties during observations was critical in producing the eclipse data and provides room to incorporate new understandings of how eclipse science in the field can be interpreted through developing perspectives in cultural geography. By looking more closely at the actions of the observers, and through previously establishing details of the astronomical work, the people and places involved, and the networks of science, commerce, politics and religion that drew them together, we can place this activity within the framework of performativity and non-representational approaches which can add to our understandings of such work.
NOTES

1 This research was funded by the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland.
14 Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place*, p. 45.
TOTALITY IN THE TROPICS

The spaces of non-formal educational that emerged and developed within London’s Afro-British communities from the late 1960s throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s – a period when public and municipal attitudes to race were undergoing rapid change – are overlooked in historical geography. Non-formal education incorporates ‘alternative’ education spaces that lack state administration, funding or control and which are usually positioned in opposition to mainstream educational spaces. It also includes ‘informal’ education spaces that can be elective, politically charged, student-led or shaped by the concerns of the users and carry no defined learning outcomes.

The chapter opens with a summary of the key discussions in human geography and related disciplines that have informed this research and signposts the new contributions it hopes to make. Thereafter I introduce a trio of case studies drawn from newly deposited and private archival collections of educational and charitable organisations and original oral history interviews with individuals that played a significant role in shaping non-formal anti-racist education in Britain. These case studies include the life work of key actors, an adult education programme and international
youth exchanges by mixed groups of young people to Black-majority countries in Africa and the Caribbean. Although disconnected across time and space, together, these early findings illustrate the empirical breadth of the project. In the concluding section, I consider the future direction of work in the area of study.

**SPACES OF EDUCATIONAL RESISTANCE**

The key imperative of this project is to elucidate the ways radical informal and alternative educational spaces and their practices shape, relate to, resist and produce social-political and cultural processes. As such, the project draws on literature by geographers interested in education and learning which consider ‘the importance of spatiality in the production, consumption and implications of formal education systems from pre-school to tertiary education and of informal learning environments in homes, neighbourhoods, community organisations and workspaces’. Historical geographers have offered key empirical and theoretical contributions to this seam of work. For example, in their edited collection on the practices, histories and geographies of informal education, Sarah Mills and Peter Kraftl provide a unique space for geographers and scholars from other disciplines to explore themes of scale, power, citizenship and nation-building in a range of informal education environments. Elsewhere, Mills has produced several historical accounts of non-formal education spaces in Britain in the twentieth century, including on faith-based identities and structures of voluntarism produced by the Jewish Lads’ Brigade and Club in post-war Manchester; the significance of adult education or ‘training’ in the educational spaces of the Woodcraft Folk, and the role of citizenship education in the British Scout Movement. Others, such as Luke Dickens and Richard Macdonald, have traced the significance of camping trips organised by the Salford Lads Club to working-class children in Manchester.

Whilst such contributions represent exciting developments in historical geography, there is much potential for research on other non-formal education spaces. Notably absent from these recent analyses are the radical anti-racist and anti-imperial educational
spaces forged by Britain’s Black communities in the second half of the twentieth century. In considering how Britain’s post-war Black migrants struggled against race and racism, my work extends the empirical scope of such debates to capture how non-formal educational spaces were constituted by and respond to cultural and racial struggles incorporating community-led action and resistance. Relevant here is a body of literature by sociologists and historians of education which has sought to elucidate the Black supplementary or ‘Saturday’ schools movement that emerged in Britain in the late 1960s. Focusing on aspects such as curriculum, the range of contrasting approaches to blackness underpinned variously by Black Power, Pan-African and socialist ideologies, as well as the differing relation with schools to formal education structures, this important body of work has brought to light the educational struggles of Black Britons as they sought to carve out educational spaces of resistance.

This project builds on this body of work in a range of ways by uncovering some of the other activities, projects and programmes that emerged out of, within and alongside the Black supplementary school movement but that have not received attention in the literature. These include supplementary school excursions and outings, as well as other educational spaces for Black children, young people and adults, such as adult education programmes, youth groups and international exchanges that were underpinned by the same Black radical ideologies and practices as the supplementary schools. My research – in addressing the educational and professional experiences of key actors, such as Ansel Wong and Bernard Coard – illustrates how non-formal Black educational spaces in Britain were influenced by formative educational experiences in other places. In so doing, I show how this range of structurally independent but politically integrated case studies of individuals and organisations combined and overlapped to form a rich cultural geography of Black education and learning in London in the latter half of the twentieth century.
‘ROOTS TO PULL ME UP’:
BLACK SPACES OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

An ideology of liberation:
The Caribbean Communications Project

Founded in London in 1975, the Caribbean Communications Project (CCP) provided written and oral communication classes as well as general advice and counselling for Afro-Caribbean adults with no formal full-time education. Founded by several prominent educators involved in organising and teaching at Black supplementary schools, and staffed by only a handful of full-time employees, CCP was funded by yearly grants from the charitable, state and non-state organisations and operated training programmes for volunteer tutors from Afro-Caribbean communities who, in turn, provided home and classroom-based reading and writing tuition to other members of the community. Its core work was two-fold: training tutors to teach reading and writing to Caribbean dialect speakers and responding to the users’ diverse needs by developing original resources, whilst improving the employment and social prospects of those learning from them. As well as serving as a catalyst to employment for newly arrived and settled Caribbean migrants living in London, the CCP also saw itself as a tool in wider Black struggle against racialised oppression. This grounding in a Black radical and anti-racist ideology of liberation is first outlined in the CCP Chairman Ansel Wong’s report from 1978, which states ‘education can be a liberating force or an agent of social control. Our task ... is to make it a tool in our struggle’. Such political vision was reinforced in the following year’s report by a militant call to arms that depicted its members in a battle against racism:

The tasks are clear.
The direction is straight ahead.
The ideology is one of liberation.
THE SOLDIERS ARE YOU!11
In 1985, just two years before the organisation disbanded amid increasing uncertainty over funds for space or resources, CCP offered an eight-week course on the history of the Caribbean that featured presentations from guest speakers on the impact of colonialism and the histories of education in the region, as well as film screenings, interactive seminars and discussions. In addition to the communication of positive Caribbean histories and geographies to participants, the course represented a space in which the postcolonial relationship between Britain and its colonies in the Caribbean (and the future of Black people in Britain more generally) could be discussed. The CCP is a significant case study for several reasons. Firstly, it illustrates the professional trajectory of the key actors who were involved in the supplementary schools movement and highlights how the activist educators and organisers who were previously involved in supporting children and young people through supplementary schooling, such as Ansel Wong, were able to respond directly to the educational needs of other actors within their community by adjusting their focus towards adult education. Secondly, the fact that the CCP operated using state grants and financial contributions, but was still able to operate an ideology of liberation founded on Black radical politics, calls into question suggestions that state funding could only mean ideological constraint for non-formal Black educational spaces. Lastly, the focus on adult education also extends existing work on the educational spaces of Black children and young people to include adult users.

Black education on the move: The Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council

In 1988, the Croydon Supplementary Education Project (CSEP), a Black supplementary school in South London, organised and conducted a four-week group visit to Linden, Guyana for eleven of its young people and two staff members. Consisting of a range of cultural visits, concerts, rap sessions and community building maintenance, the visit to Guyana – a South American Black-majority country with close political, cultural and historical links with the Caribbean –
aimed to enhance the life chances of, and provide a reference point for, young Black Londoners of Caribbean heritage. The trip was funded by a grant from the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (CYEC), a charity closely linked with the Commonwealth of Nations which was founded in 1970 to reverse the growing insignificance of the Commonwealth to young people in Britain. The records of the exchange are held within the newly deposited CYEC collection at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies library along with extensive material on the organisation’s administrative history, scope and key programmes.

Contents include a group exchange report and ephemera, as well as excerpts of written participant reactions highlighting the challenges and successes that the group experienced. As well as offering a unique insight into the idiosyncrasies of international group travel by a Black supplementary school, the exchange illustrates how the framework in which Black supplementary schools in Britain operated changed dramatically in the two decades after Bernard Coard’s call to arms for Britain’s Black communities to take education into their own hands. Specifically, CSEP broached Pan-African and colonial histories not through classroom-based, community-led map-making and reading, but through real-life interactions in a post-colonial nation funded by a charity with close links to Commonwealth ideals of citizenship and belonging.

Throughout the 1980s and beyond, CYEC provided financial support for several other international visits and exchanges for Black art associations, women’s groups and other community and local authority organisations to countries in the Caribbean and Africa. Archival records of these exchanges detail the complex and varied interactions and experiences that unfolded, highlighting particular logistical and ideological successes and difficulties. Project reports of three exchanges to Grenada during the socialist revolution from 1979 to 1983 illustrate the inimitably positive experience young Black exchange participants gained visiting an independent Black-majority Caribbean nation in the throes of revolution. One exchange, organised by the London Borough of Haringey and led by then-councillor Bernie Grant, attended meetings and workshops with several government ministers and executives from the National Youth
These experiences provided insights into the everyday workings of revolutionary politics with youth involvement. An oral history interview conducted with the organiser of the exchange in Grenada, Judy Williams, recalled the incredulity of young people of African and Caribbean heritage at seeing Black people as government ministers and in other positions of authority:

Many of them had never seen a black man as an immigration officer. I remember that very, very, very vividly – ‘What is this? What is this? The immigration officer, he is black!’ ‘What about that?’ ‘Yeah, but what level of education would he have had to have?! I mean ...’ – because this was not something they were accustomed to.17

Just as youth exchanges provided transformational moments of awakening and belonging for Black participants, they could also reinforce negative stereotypes of Blackness and provide moments of distress, loss and anger. Illustrative of these emotions are diary extracts written by participants of a Peckham-based Black women’s collective specialising in Black women’s rights – ‘Dode Akai’ – that were exchanged with Lamu, Kenya in 1988.18 The exchange aimed to provide opportunities for the group of Black young women to ‘open up further new horizons in terms of their Black consciousness, culture and history ... [and] African heritage’ as well as develop understandings of Pan-African sisterhood and solidarity.19 The lucid and powerful diary extracts, composed of poetry as well as prose, intimate an exchange characterised by an inefficient and disorganised itinerary and logistical shortcomings, which fell well short of expectations held by the majority of the group. An extract from a poem – ‘Kenya Satire’ – by Gemma illustrates the extent to which the exchange failed to live up to her impression of Africa as a Black Motherland:

*I went to Africa?*
*I was so close yet so far*
*I did not feel the beat of the drums*
*The rhythm of the dance*
*The roots which I would’ve grabbed at given half the chance*
I was in Africa?
Yet I was put down
Nuff people turned their ‘ead
And looked me up and down with a frown
They didn’t offer me no ‘roots’ to pull me up ...  

Far from embodying the ‘holiday of a lifetime’ experience one CSEP exchange to Guyana participant described, this account offers an insight into the contested visions for and of race and racism that educational international exchanges represented for young Black people. 

Transnational educational life-work

Original oral histories were conducted with key actors involved in Black non-formal education – namely Ansel Wong and Bernard Coard – in order to shine a light on the educational ‘life-work’ that informed their struggles after arriving in Britain from the Caribbean in the 1960s. Wong arrived as a student from Trinidad in 1965 and was involved in supplementary education programmes at the West Indian Students Centre and the Black Liberation Front before founding Ahfiwe, the first supplementary school funded by the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). Bernard Coard’s polemical pamphlet *How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Sub-normal in the British School System: The Scandal of the Black Child in Schools in Britain* (1971) revealed the overrepresentation of Black children in Educationally Subnormal, or ‘special’, schools and is widely regarded as a watershed moment in the expansion of Black supplementary schools across England.

The oral histories with Wong and Coard provided them with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences of travel, study and work in and between the United States, the Caribbean and Britain – the ‘Black Atlantic’ – and how this, in turn, shaped their involvement in non-formal Black education in Britain. For Wong, his experiences in Britain were interspersed with overseeing a community summer programme – or ‘communiversity’ – called *Shalom*, for children and young people in Harlem in the late 1960s. Similarly, Coard’s
experience of supplementary schooling in Britain came after a role as head tutor for the Brandeis University summer programme, *Upward Bound*, around the same time. He acknowledged that his experience of organising workshops and meetings for this programme equipped him for the significant roles he would play in educational struggles for Black people in Britain and later as Deputy Prime Minister of Grenada during the Revolution: ‘All of that shaped what I would do and what I would write’, he remarked. Though brief, these accounts provide valuable insight on the interconnected life-work of key individuals and the extent to which transnational educational experiences that played out across the Black Atlantic impacted non-formal Black education in Britain in different ways.

**CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The histories, geographies and practices of non-formal (radical, informal and alternative) education spaces – or educational spaces of resistance – that constituted the social, political and cultural fabric of London in the second half of the twentieth century provide important insights into the experiences of Black children, young people and adults as yet overlooked by historical geographers. Together, the empirical case studies introduced above provide important contributions to this lacuna, opening up three key areas to further study. Firstly, the analysis of the adult education programme Caribbean Communications Project shows how education was mobilised as a political tool by anti-racist educators to increase literacy and Black consciousness in Afro-British adults, in doing so considering an under researched group in the study of non-formal education spaces in historical geography. Secondly, youth exchanges funded by the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council to independent and revolutionary New Commonwealth nations in the 1980s, such as Grenada, demonstrate the transnational solidarities and connections that animated non-formal education spaces for Black and white youth, linking educational work in London to anti-colonial struggles in the Global South. Lastly, analysis of the ‘life-work’ of prominent educators Ansel Wong and Bernard Coard illuminates just
NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR BLACK PEOPLE

two of the numerous interconnected educational careers of key actors that often-spanned numerous projects and campaigns.

Whilst further study of all three strands undoubtedly holds the prospect of significant contributions at the empirical level, they also offer scope for significant theoretical developments in theorisations around spaces inhabited by Black subjects and communities more widely. Work by Sónia Vaz Borges on the underground schools and militant education in Guinea Bissau of the Partido Africano da Indendência da Guiné Cabo Verde (PAIGC) in their struggle for independence over Portuguese colonialism, for example, frames education struggle as an instrument of decolonisation.26 Future studies could explore the decolonising work of non-formal education spaces in London. Similarly, this work might seek to position historical geographical insights on spaces of educational resistance as contributing to work by geographers – ‘Black geographies’ – on the complex geographies produced, and struggles negotiated by, Black subjects more widely.

NOTES


8 The term Black is a conceptual framing that implies the collective political Blackness of peoples from a range of migrant backgrounds unified in their experiences and critiques of racism.

9 The records of the CCP were accessed via a private collection with kind permission from Jessica Burke Peters, chair of the CCP from 1985 to 1987. There are plans for the papers to be deposited in the Ansel Wong – a co-founder of the CCP – collection at the Black Cultural Archives, Brixton [Papers of Ansel Wong].


15 Youth Exchange Report [ICS154/9/9]; Youth Exchange Report [ICS154/29/9]; Grenada Trip [London Metropolitan Archives LMA/4550/03/02].

16 Project Evaluation Project No. 945 [ICS154/9/29].

17 Interview with Judy Williams, 6 March 2018.

18 Youth Exchange Report, 1988 [ICS154/20/21].

19 Project Report, 1988 [ICS154/26/8].


23 Coard, *How the West*.  

127
Interview with Bernard Coard, 28 February 2017.


S.V. Borges identifies decolonisation as ‘individual-collective process-response of people who, becoming conscious of racialization, dehumanization, oppression and exploitation through which they are subjugated under colonial-oppressive government(s) inside and outside their “country”, organise themselves to dismantle/destroy the institution and practices to which they are subjugated, employing for this end any means at their disposal – whether violent acts, such as the armed guerrilla struggle, or nonviolent acts, such as strikes, education projects and programs, or cultural and civil resistance, or any combination thereof’. See S. V. Borges, *Militant Education, Liberation Struggle, Consciousness. The PAIGC Education in Guinea Bissau 1963–1978* (Peter Lang, 2019).
As the new Research Series Editor of the Historical Geography Research Group, it is my great pleasure to present Volume 47 of our research series publications. As Newman et al. acknowledge in the introductory chapter to this volume, the publication grew out of postgraduate conference sessions that are organised annually by the Group’s postgraduate representatives, and they reflect a longstanding contribution to the RGS-IBG Annual Conference programme. Along with the Practising Historical Geography workshop, they demonstrate the Group’s longstanding commitment to postgraduate and early career training.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on our everyday lives and, sadly, this impact will continue to last for many. The pandemic impacted the Group’s ability to conduct business as usual and processes have taken much longer than would normally have been expected. It is for these reasons that this volume, which was due for publication in 2020, has taken longer than anticipated to publish. Despite a lengthy wait to publication, this volume makes a critical contribution to historical geography, and I thank the authors and editors for their valued contributions and immense patience.

This publication certainly would not have been possible without the valued contribution of my predecessor, Briony McDonagh, who has steered the majority of this publication. Briony herself benefitted from early engagement with the Historical Geography Research Group, including the New and Emerging Research sessions. Her first experience was presenting in the
equivalent event at the International Geographers’ Union in Glasgow in 2004, as well as attending early Practising Historical Geography workshops held in various UK universities, starting with the ninth annual meeting taking place in London in November 2003. Briony is now Professor of Environmental Humanities at the University of Hull, where she continues to support early career development through her role as Director of the Doctoral College.