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# **Lottery and Landscape: Rural Development through Re-Creation of Historic Landscapes Examples from the English West Midlands**

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## **Abstract**

Environmental management and community development in rural areas of Developed Countries have frequently sought to identify particular landscape components that it is deemed appropriate to re-establish or to re-create. Hence key elements in government-supported projects have included native vegetation, cultural artefacts, historic buildings and particular elements in the landscape, such as hedges, stone walls and riparian woodland. The targeting of 'heritage landscapes' has been extended into new areas in the United Kingdom (UK) through funding associated with the National Lottery scheme, first launched in 1994. This paper examines the Lottery's contribution to landscape restoration and related aspects of community development, drawing upon two case studies in the English West Midlands.

The case studies reflect different scales at which restoration associated with Lottery funding are occurring. The Leasowes estate near Birmingham offers a micro-scale case study where an 18<sup>th</sup> century example of the English Picturesque landscape is being restored. This is essentially one individual's vision that has been resuscitated in recent years. In contrast, the Malvern Hills in the county of Worcestershire covers several thousands of ha and is a human-created landscape traceable to prehistory. Here the restoration aims to maintain landscape features dependent on longstanding grazing practices threatened by changing farm economics. Potential loss of perceived amenity associated with landscape change has driven public debate in the case of the Malverns whereas investment in landscape restoration for the Leasowes has been driven primarily by the local authority. The article highlights future research opportunities to address tensions between official views about landscape and cultural values possessed within the community.

Keywords: historic landscapes, The Picturesque, heritage lottery, English Midlands, landscape restoration

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### ***1.1 Creating Landscape***

Human impact on the environment has taken many forms over millennia, but one aspect that has been increasingly apparent in the last four centuries has been the deliberate manipulation of the environment to create landscapes deemed to be attractive on aesthetic grounds. In the United Kingdom (UK) this desire to mould

nature and make it appear attractive to the eye, as opposed to merely exploiting it to provide food and shelter, can be seen as advancing rapidly in the 17th century when there was a flowering of landscape gardening on some of the great country estates, often associated with elite and aristocratic visions of human society and nature that were “profoundly distant from the actuality of working and living in (the) landscape” (Wylie, 2007, p. 62). The visions were pre-dominantly influenced by the exposure of wealthy individuals to the cultural legacy of classical antiquity and the Renaissance gained on the so-called ‘Grand Tour’, or European tour, especially to Italy and Greece, from around 1660 onwards (Trease, 1991).

Early in the 18<sup>th</sup> century large ornamental gardens and parks were laid out in highly geometrical forms, as at Westbury Court in Gloucestershire, but later that century landowners’ tastes moved in favour of ‘naturalistic’ gardens designed by innovators such as William Kent, Lancelot Brown and Humphry Repton, “where trees, lakes, cascades, grottoes and ornamental buildings were carefully arranged in accordance with current taste and the preference of the owner” (Coones & Patten, 1986, p. 224). The impact of such designers was enormous, affecting not only the estates around the great palaces of the realm, but also smaller estates belonging to minor gentry (Hoskins, 1954). The map produced by Hugh Prince (1976, p. 129) showing ‘parks circa 1820’ is remarkable for its depiction of thousands of hectares that had been landscaped in a wholesale transformation of many parts of the countryside. In some cases, swathes of woodland were cleared to create open ‘parkland’, but elsewhere new plantings, often on a grand scale and with exotic species, were created (Prince, 1967).

Whilst explicit creation of parks and gardens reflecting particular tastes and statements by a certain designer or landowner had become almost commonplace in the English landscape by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the changes wrought by farming activity were far more widespread, and rendered the appearance of virtually all parts of the country as the handiwork of its human occupants as opposed to ‘natural’ forces. Hence English rural landscapes bequeathed from posterity are largely the product of farming activity over millennia, though with the greatest impacts dating from the last 250 years, and so reflecting the enclosure movement, forest clearance, wholesale colonisation of heaths, moors and mountains, draining of wetlands and application of ‘modern’ farming methods. Therefore some of the landscapes deemed most desirable and attractive today, as measured by visitor numbers to particular locales, are relatively recent creations, shaped by modern forces of change. Yet, despite the essentially modern creation of many valued landscapes, there have often been strong pressures to retain their existing ‘essential’ characteristics in the face of ongoing transformative processes. Indeed, many communities have objected to new road and rail schemes or new housing developments not just because this brings an undesired new element into their lives but also because it despoils the ‘historic’ landscape on which they place great value. Moreover, communities have been largely powerless to prevent ‘modern’ farming methods from removing cherished landscape features such as hedgerows and stone walls.

Pressures to retain particular landscapes or to restore a landscape to a desired state have grown alongside both the rise of mass tourism and conservation interests. The intersection of these two has produced a heritage ‘industry’ in which attempts to re-create landscapes from the past have evoked complex notions of nostalgia, tradition, conservation, preservation and the symbolic (Cosgrove & Daniels, 1988;

Daniels, 1993; Seymour, 2000). Which of these particular notions is present in any one attempt to maintain a landscape or to re-create a past landscape is a moot point, but it is clear that various organisations, including different arms and levels of government, have been willing to engage with the idea of landscape and to invest in its conservation and restoration (Johnson, 2006), though heritage and landscape re-creation are highly selective, with some types of landscape and forms of heritage attracting more attention from tourists and conservationists than others.

This article examines two examples of landscape re-creation in the English West Midlands. The uniting feature of the two is the notion of the 'picturesque' as conceived by William Gilpin in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Andrews, 1989; Gilpin, 1792), with one representing the picturesque in miniature and the other embodying one particular ingredient, namely a 'wild' or mountainous backdrop. The prime focus is on landscape on a small scale, in the rural-urban fringe, where one of the earliest examples of the Picturesque English Landscape Movement, the Leasowes, has been re-established after two centuries of neglect, during which many of the features created in the 1740s and 1750s had disappeared. Comparison and contrasts are made with a landscape on a larger scale. This relates to a dominant physical feature, the Malvern Hills, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), one of 41 such areas in England and Wales (it was designated in 1959), where long-term grazing has created distinctive 'bald' hills devoid of trees or scrub, but also with an 18<sup>th</sup> century legacy in the form of the trappings associated with 'taking the waters' as the town of Malvern became a spa town and tourist centre. The article raises issues regarding how and what landscapes are valued in contemporary society and examines impacts of one particular funding source being utilised to re-create landscapes, namely the Heritage Lottery Fund.

## **2.0 Heritage Lottery Funding**

The National Lottery in the UK was established in 1994, the first draw taking place in November that year. Of the money raised from purchases of tickets (over £20 billion by the end of 2010), 28 per cent goes to 'good causes'. From this portion of the funds grants have been awarded under four headings: Health, Education, Environment and Charitable Causes (50% of the total funding), Sports (16.67%), Arts (16.67%) and Heritage (16.67%). Initially the HLF received 20 per cent of the funds paid into the National Lottery Distribution Fund. From October 1997 this proportion was reduced to 16.67 per cent in parallel with those benefiting arts, charities and sport. The latter includes the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), which has awarded grants worth a total of £4.4 billion to over 34,000 projects (HLF, 2013) to transform and sustain the UK's heritage, including museums, parks, historic places, archaeology, the natural environment and cultural traditions. Awards are made from eight different programmes within the HLF (Table 1), with money allocated to various types of heritage (See Table 2). It is difficult to directly link the categories shown in Table 2 to landscape, but the closest ones are 'public parks', 'nature conservation' and 'world heritage sites' which together account for 18% of all projects and 22% of funding. There has been an attempt to spread grants around the country by allocating around 60 per cent of the available funding to regions on a per capita basis, and then targeting local authority areas which previously have received little of the Fund's grant. However, overall there is considerable regional variation, reflecting the volume and type of applications received. So London has the most funding, both on an absolute and per capita

basis, whilst the South-East has received the least on a per capita basis and Northern Ireland the least in absolute terms (NAO, 2007, p. 4).

Table 1: *Programmes within the UK's Heritage Lottery Fund*

Type	Description
Heritage Grants (Grants above £50,000)	The main programme for grants over £50,000 for all kinds of heritage that relate to the national, regional and local heritage of the UK. It is open to all not-for-profit organisations.
Your Heritage (£3000 to £50,000)	The general small grants programme for all types of heritage projects. It is a flexible programme particularly designed for voluntary and community groups and first-time applicants.
Young Roots (£3000 to 25,000)	This programme is for projects led by young people. It aims to involve 13-25 year-olds in finding out about their heritage, developing skills, building confidence and promoting community involvement.
Townscape Heritage Initiative (£500,000 to £2,000,000)	This Initiative makes grants that help communities to regenerate Conservation Areas displaying particular social and economic need.
Parks for People (£250,000 to £5million)	Parks for People is for whole park projects that support the regeneration of existing designed urban or rural green spaces, the main purpose of which is for informal recreation and enjoyment.
Landscape Partnerships (£250,000 to £2million)	This programme supports schemes that are led by partnerships of local, regional and national interests, which aim to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character throughout the UK
Skills for the Future (£100,000 to £1million)	Skills for the Future-funded projects provide paid training placements to meet a skills gap in the heritage sector, and fully support trainees to learn practical skills.
Repair Grants for Places of Worship (From £10,000 to £250,000)	Funding for urgent, high-level repair work to listed places of worship. The scheme is managed separately in each of the four countries of the UK.

Initially the Fund focused on making major capital investment in heritage assets, e.g. those managed by wildlife trusts and museums. But since 1999 there has been a greater commitment to local heritage and community-based projects. In its second phase (2002-8), the programme had three aims: to encourage more people to be involved in and make decisions about their heritage; to conserve and enhance the UK's diverse heritage; and to ensure that everyone can learn about, have access to, and enjoy their heritage (HLF, 2002, p. 5; 2007). In order to receive a grant, applicants must meet the access and learning aim and one or both of the other aims. To help facilitate this, smaller grants have become the norm, with at least

half the total value of awards going to grants of less than £1 million and no more than 25 per cent of the total value of awards to grants of £5 million and above.

Table 2. *Funding for various types of heritage 1994/95 to 2006/07*

Type	Value of Projects	Number of Projects
Building conservation	£1.38 bn	4530
Museums and galleries	£1.30 bn	2022
Public parks	£508 m	596
Churches, chapels, cathedrals	£307 m	2896
World heritage sites	£280 m	320
Archives and libraries	£252 m	811
Nature conservation	£248 m	2040
Archaeology	£139 m	717
Inland waterways	£91 m	180
Oral history	£49 m	2050
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4.554 bn</b>	<b>16162</b>

Source: Clark and Maer, 2008, 34

The prime focus of HLF expenditure has been on building conservation, museums and galleries, accounting for 59 per cent of total expenditure (to 2007) and 40.5 per cent of projects. In contrast, public parks accounted for 11.2 per cent of expenditure and 3.7 per cent of projects. Corresponding percentages for nature conservation were 5.4 and 12.6. Some of the largest grants have been for Landscape Partnerships, aimed at conserving areas of distinctive landscape character throughout the UK. Emphasis has been placed on combining the following four elements within successful applications:

- Conserving or restoring the built and natural features that create the historic landscape character;
- Increasing community participation in local heritage;
- Increasing access to and learning about the landscape area and its heritage;
- Increasing training opportunities in local heritage skills.

### 3.0 The Leasowes

William Shenstone (1714 – 1763) was an English poet and one of the earliest practitioners of landscape gardening through the development of his estate, the Leasowes (meaning ‘pasture-land’ or ‘meadows’), just north-east of Halesowen, then in the county of Shropshire in the West Midlands, about seven miles south-west from what has become the city centre of Birmingham, England’s second largest city (See Figures 1 and 2). A poet, educated at Pembroke College Oxford, Shenstone inherited the Leasowes on the death of his father in 1741 and retired there to undertake what proved the chief work of his life, the beautifying of his 35

ha property (Humphreys, 1937). This area may refer to the extent of Shenstone's original holding. Later records refer to an estate of 57 ha. The latter consisted both of running a commercial farm and transforming the local landscape. Shenstone is credited with inventing the term 'landscape gardener' (Darby, 1976, p. 45), claiming that "the landskip painter is the gardiner's best designer" (Shenstone, 1764, p. 129).

In spring 1744 Shenstone informed Richard Jago, then curate of Snitterfield in Warwickshire, "I am taking part of my farm upon my hands to see if I can succeed as a farmer" (Williams, 1939, p. 88). A few months later, Shenstone reported that he was "pulling down walls, hovels, cow-houses, etc." (p. 91) and in the same year the new farmer enthused to Jago, "My wood grows excessively pleasant ... I have an alcove, six elegies, a seat, two epitaphs (one upon myself), three ballads, four songs, and a serpentine river, to shew you when you come...I am raising a greenhouse" (p. 93). So, whilst continuing to write poetry, he was starting to transform his estate, which contained one of the tributaries of the river Stour in a steep, ampitheatre-like valley immediately west of the manor house (Kinvig, 1962, p. 275). In so doing he emulated the allegorical landscape paintings of contemporary European artists, especially Claude Lorraine, Gaspard Poussin and Salvator Rosa (Manwaring, 1925). Manicured hills, lakes and trees dotted with allegorical temples were sculpted into the landscape of the estate as he focused more attention on the physical appearance and beauty of his estate than upon farming (Reily, 1979).

*Figure 1:* Location of the Leasowes and Malvern Hills.

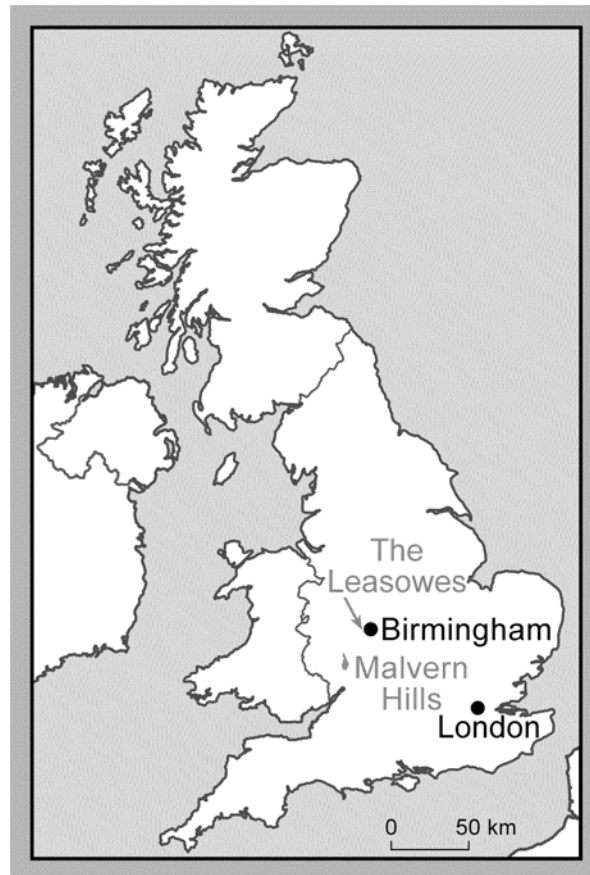
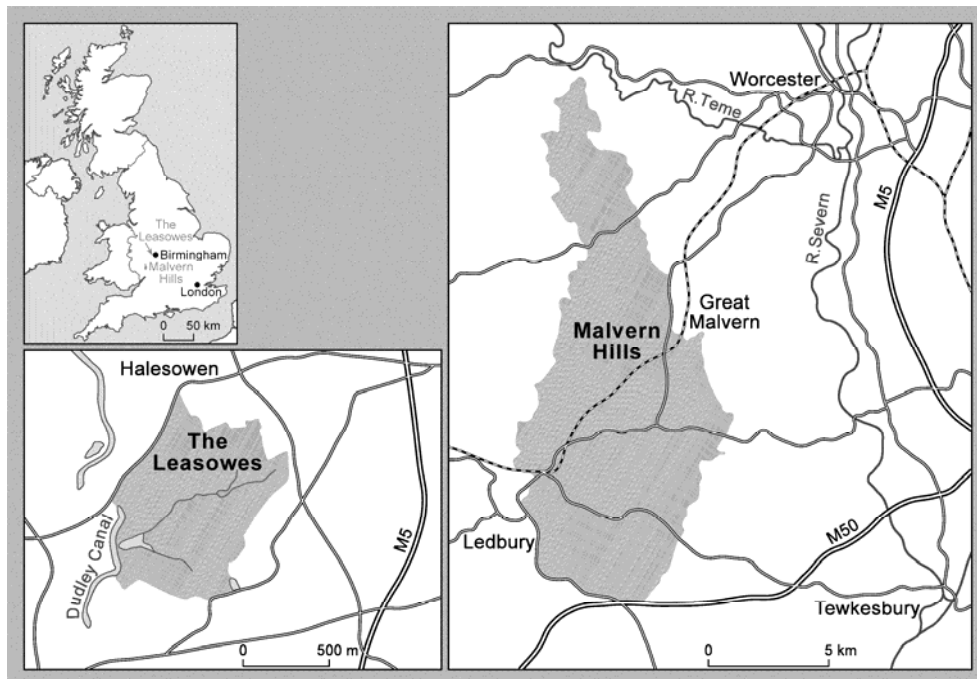


Figure 2: Location of the Leasowes and Malvern Hills.



A prominent visitor to the estate was Dr. Samuel Johnson, who commented, “to point his prospects, to diversify his surface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters; which he did with such judgment and such fancy as made his little domain the envy of the great and the admiration of the skilful; a place to be visited by travellers, and copied by designers” (Johnson, 1783, p. 359). He was just one of many notable visitors, many after Shenstone’s death, including Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Oliver Goldsmith and John Wesley (Goldsmith, 1773), as Shenstone created his gardens from farmland, forming a diverse landscape of wooded valleys, open grassland, lakes and streams. This was a creation he called his ‘ferme ornée’, literally meaning an ornamental farm. It was one of the first ‘natural’ landscape gardens in England, and it represents the very beginning of the Picturesque English Landscape Movement (in which the word ‘picturesque’ was taken from *pittresco*, the Italian for ‘in the manner of a painting’) (Linden, 2007).

At the time that the Leasowes was created, gardens elsewhere in Britain were still being created in formal designs that copied either the Italian Style (with grand steps, terraces and water features) or the French Style (with formal and geometric avenues of trees and regularly shaped flower beds). In contrast, at the Leasowes, Shenstone broke away from this fashion and established instead a landscape that attempted both to reinforce some of the natural characteristics and to enhance nature. Indeed, lack of funds forced him to break away from pursuit of a formal design and to pursue a new type of landscape that more closely respected and utilised the natural landscape. Perhaps this approach was also more in keeping with sentiments expressed in his poetry (Symes & Haynes, 2010, pp.137-189).

“Visitors to the Leasowes would take the famous ‘circuit walk’. This path led around the garden allowing every aspect of the design to be fully experienced and appreciated. Walkers would be led past seats and urns carefully positioned to enhance a scene, or to allow the opportunity to rest and admire the carefully created views. Many of the features also bore poems placed by Shenstone to evoke



a sense of mood; some of the seats and urns were also dedicated to Shenstone's close friends. Water was of great importance in the design of The Leasowes and whilst walking around the garden the visitor would be constantly aware of both the sound and sight of water as it flowed through the valleys and rushed over cascades to plunge down into pools" (DMBC, 2013). The latter appear to have been created from existing fishponds, whilst his erection of a 'ruined' priory (which housed a tenant!) was perhaps a direct invocation of the ruins of Halesowen Abbey, less than a mile from the estate (Gallagher, 1996, pp. 202 and 211). The presence of the ruined priory parallels the observations made in 1770 by William Gilpin (1800), the 'high priest' of the picturesque, with respect to the ruins of Tintern Abbey and his celebration of both the wild and ruined buildings in the landscape along the River Wye. However, Shenstone also planted large numbers of trees and shrubs, including Lombardy poplars, beech, oak, alder, willow, yew, hazel, hawthorn, crabtree and elder (Williams, 1939, pp. 207-8).

Some of Shenstone's many elegies contain his own visions of the rural idyll, expressing the view that the virtuous, wise man will choose a simple, pastoral, yet cultured, life in the country, rather than live in the corrupt and corrupting city. There are a number of references in his writing that suggest the woods, natural springs and streams to which he referred were to be found among Shenstone's own hills and valleys at the Leasowes (Burns, 1970; Dodsley, 1765a; 1765b; Shenstone, 1764). Moreover, a recent analysis by John Archer (2002) claims that "by laying out his estate architecturally and horticulturally as a series of objects and stations concatenated in a linear sequence along a circuit path, each designed to cue certain ideas, memories, or feelings, Shenstone afforded himself a ready itinerary replete with orchestrated opportunities for intellectual, emotional, and physical engagement" (p. 145). Hence this was the creation of an emotional landscape intended to reflect not only the man himself but also to engage visitors' physical, intellectual, and emotional faculties. In this sense it was a very particular interpretation of landscape and the rural, and therefore can be placed alongside both earlier and contemporary creations in the UK, e.g. Alexander Pope's garden at Twickenham near London (Mack, 1969), in which individuals developed landscaping as a private narrative but in so doing shaped something regarded as valuable by a much wider audience. In Shenstone's case the narrative was emphasised in his circular walk, one of only a handful constructed in 18<sup>th</sup> century England—other notable contemporary ones being at Stourhead, Hawkstone and Painshill (Schulz, 1981).

Yet within 37 years of Shenstone's death, the Leasowes had passed through eight different owners. During this time the gardens rapidly declined and by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century little remained of the famous 'ferme ornée'. The construction of the Dudley No 2 Canal, an extension to the Birmingham and Worcestershire Canal, opened in 1797, reduced the extent of Priory Pool, created by Shenstone, and associated embankments have actually blocked some of the views across Halesowen towards the Clent Hills (Miller, 1847, pp. 152-169). The Canal itself is now itself the subject of a restoration campaign (LCRT, 2013), which re-emphasises the point made earlier about landscape and heritage restoration being selective. Most of the ornaments and the water amenities disappeared. Shenstone's house was rebuilt in 1768, and was being used as a girls' school around 1900, and shortly afterwards in 1906 an 18-hole golf course was laid out by Halesowen Golf Club who bought parts of the site. However, the Golf Club allowed Halesowen Council to purchase the Leasowes in 1934, though the golf course still remains

today with the land now owned by the Council and leased to the Golf Club. Today's owners are Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council. It was as recently as the 1960s that a number of the features from Shenstone's time were pulled down, including the ruined priory and gothic stables (Pevsner, 1968, p. 182). However, Shenstone's walled gardens were used as the headquarters of the parks department of the local council, with flowers supplied from the glasshouses to public buildings throughout the borough. This began an involvement of the Leasowes with civic horticulture that remained until 2007 in the form of a horticultural training unit of Stourbridge College. Under Council ownership the Leasowes became a public park, acting as a green barrier between the abrupt southerly ending of the densely settled Midland plateau and the industrial Black Country of Halesowen, and being used for various recreational purposes, including jogging, fishing, golfing, bird watching and walking.

Despite the centuries of neglect, today the Leasowes remains of major historic significance, ranking in importance with garden landscapes such as Blenheim and Stowe, and being listed as Grade 1 on the English Heritage 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England'. In large part, though, this reflects Dudley Council's recent attempts to restore the landscape and to recreate Shenstone's gardens. In so doing the Council has drawn heavily on Heritage Lottery Funding, thereby participating in a major modern phenomenon, namely the contribution to 'good causes' by funds derived from the general public's gambling habit.

#### **4.0 Restoring the Leasowes**

In 1991, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council formally endorsed a proposal to restore William Shenstone's design. A programme of woodland management was commenced and restoration undertaken, with the thinning and replanting of woodland in the valley to the west of the house (between two of Shenstone's creations: Virgil's Grove and Beech Water) (Gallagher, 1996, p.219). However, in 1997 the Council's wish to restore the Leasowes was brought closer to fruition when the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) awarded £1.3 million for the restoration work. Further funding from the Council itself, and in 2003 from the Liveability Fund of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, created a total budget of £1.75 million for the Leasowes Restoration Project. Since this original award from HLF the scope of the project has undergone careful re-evaluation, with an initial intention to complete the restoration of a section of the North Valley, which Shenstone had named Virgil's Grove. This work formed Phase 1 of the Restoration Project involving re-creation of a two large pools, restoration of a dam and cascades, archaeological investigations, footpaths laid out as per Shenstone's original design, removal of some paths and bridges of later construction, and new tree and shrub planting to reflect the historic planting as originally laid out by the poet. Work on the project was completed in early 2009.

The result of the restoration is that Shenstone's original circuit walk has been substantially re-established, with certain features, notably the cascades, dams and pools once more prominent within the confined wooded valley. The popularity of the circuit can be attested by the numbers of walkers who frequent it. There have also already been some positive environmental outcomes created in the form of evident enhancement of the estate's wildlife. In particular, the re-creation of pools in the landscape has attracted kingfishers, herons, goosanders, cormorants, little

grebes and great-crested grebes (BBC News, 2011). This reflects the re-establishment of safe havens and attractive habitat for wildfowl and other birds, including migrating birds.

Yet the cost of the project has attracted criticism locally. Informal interviews conducted by the author with a cross-section of park users reveal ambivalence towards the restorations. Most notable in terms of criticism are concerns about the cost, with a strong view that the expense was not justified. Many were unaware that the project re-created a landscape established in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, nor were the majority able to name Shenstone as the originator of the features being re-created (though this depended on the distance of the residence of the interviewee from the park; ‘locals’ being more knowledgeable). Concern about the expense largely related to a view that “the money could be better spent on other things” and that “this money should go to hospitals and schools; we don’t need more trees here”. Indeed, even regular users of the park were inclined to think that large-scale landscape restoration was unnecessary because the park’s environment was already attractive and, with a significant area covered by a golf course, it was not a ‘natural’ environment anyway. The author’s own view when walking the Leasowes pathways, echoing Wylie’s (2005) personal observations on ‘encountering’ landscape, is that the restoration has not fundamentally altered the character of the park. It is separated into three distinct areas: the golf course, woodland containing paths (some of which comprise Shenstone’s circular walk), and open higher ground commanding splendid views of the Clent Hills, but only as they rise above discordant modern high-rise flats near the centre of Halesowen. The woodland walks provide a degree of tranquillity and opportunities to commune with nature, but the recreation of certain features from Shenstone’s times have not all been successful. The lakes have attracted wildlife, but the streams barely cascade because higher levels of maintenance are needed to remove weeds and silt from the watercourses.

This brief taking of the pulse highlights potential differences between opinions expressed by local residents and users of a particular landscape and those of officialdom. ‘Gatekeepers’ within society may have one set of views about what constitutes heritage, and therefore what constitutes something that should be preserved or restored. But others in the community may have different views. This possible mismatch needs further investigation, especially with respect to focusing on how decisions about heritage are taken, what input there is from the local community (as opposed to representatives from particular community organisations) and the users of the landscape. These considerations will form part of further research by the author, which will also include more systematic analysis of environmental impacts, interviews with key informants such as officials in the council, those charged with managing the park (e.g. park wardens), systematic surveys of local residents and users of the park. This research will also consider the multiplier effect linked to the restoration process in terms of the impacts of park-based recreation on the local economy and cultural life.

## **5.0 The Malvern Heritage Project**

In October 2000 the HLF awarded £770,000 to Worcestershire County Council (WCC) for its Malvern Heritage Project (MHP). Located on the borders of Herefordshire and Worcestershire (See Figures 1 and 2), the Malvern Hills are advertised locally as the most popular free tourist attraction in the West Midlands,

receiving 1.25 million visitors per annum. Since 1959 they have been protected as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (covering 40 square miles). The AONB is governed by a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) and managed by the Malvern Hills Partnership (MHP) comprising a partnership of five local authorities. "The AONB is unique in England and Wales because the high hills and associated common land (about 11% by area) has long been managed by a separate conservation organisation, the Malvern Hills Conservators (MHC). This body was constituted under the 1884 Malvern Hills Act primarily as a response to urban encroachment and piecemeal erosion of common land by enclosure at that time. The role of the MHC is complementary to, but separate from, that of the AONB" (Evans and Connolly, 2006, p. 5). The MHP has recognised the need for urgent repair and restoration of both habitat and historic buildings, especially to prevent encroachment by 'scrub', or in other words to control natural revegetation that occurs when livestock grazing is prevented.

The Hills are also well known for their spring waters, which initially were made famous by the region's many holy wells, and later through the development of the 19th century spa town of Great Malvern (Osborne and Weaver, 2001). Medicinal waters at Malvern Wells were discovered in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but they were not popularised until a publication by a local doctor in 1756 on the properties of the waters. A guide for visitors was produced in 1796 and in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century several hotels, a pump room and baths were built. Malvern became a fashionable place to 'take the waters', with Princess Victoria visiting in 1830 (Pevsner, 1968, p.158).

The origin of the place-name Malvern is disputed, but it may be derived from the Welsh *moel bryn*, meaning 'bare hill'. Indeed the hills have long been bare of woodland, and dominated by a coat of acid grassland. What remains of that grassland today supports a number of rare plants and a threatened butterfly, the high brown fritillary (*Argynnis adippe*). But gradual cessation of the grazing of livestock on the hills in recent decades, reflecting changing practices of livestock management by local farmers, has meant that the grassland has become increasingly colonised by bracken, gorse and birch scrub, especially in the southern part of the hills.

The MHP was launched in 2000 as a £0.9 million project to reintroduce grazing animals to the Malvern Hills, as a means of scrub management, and to restore several water features, including the historic network of water spouts. The project was led by the Malvern Hills AONB Service, in partnership with 22 agencies including WCC, Herefordshire Council, Malvern Hills Conservators, Malvern Spa Association, English Nature, the Countryside Agency, the National Trust and English Heritage. However, members of the public were quick to express concerns that by erecting temporary fences on the Malvern Hills, the MHP, and especially the Conservators, would be straying from the core duty of keeping the Malvern Hills unenclosed as open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the public (Hurle, 1984). Although the local conservation officer said any enclosures would be small and temporary, there were worries that leisure activities that could be affected and that "the feeling of freedom associated with 'just being' on the Malvern Hills" could be lost (Malvern Gazette, 2002).

The Heritage Project has emphasised the need for improved stock management, largely to encourage landowners to allow sheep and cattle to graze widely across their land so that they will eat into overgrown scrubland. In effect, this will replicate the traditional form of environmental management and will re-create the

longstanding 'bare hills' that characterise the Malverns. This is expressed by a project officer for the AONB as, "Malvern Hills are famous for being 'bare hillsides', but there has been a gradual change over time as trees have grown everywhere, spoiling the views. [...] This work maintains the landscape people come here to see" (National Lottery, 2013). So the proposed restoration is in direct opposition to 'natural' re-vegetation and re-colonisation of native trees and shrubs. It is a direct re-creation of a landscape created by long-term removal of woodland and a pattern of management traceable at least to the medieval period in the form of livestock grazing on common land (Bowden, 2005). The Project includes employment of a shepherd, both to manage cattle and to provide information to visitors on grazing and other conservation topics. According to Anne Jenkins (HLF Regional Manager for the West Midlands), "we want to make sure that the Hills' stunning features are preserved long into the future for everyone to enjoy" (National Lottery, 2013). This approach has been extended to other landscape features, with renovation of nine distinctive water features, 17 water spouts (Garrard, 2006), installation of new cattle grids to assist livestock management, and ongoing collaboration between the AONB, local conservation and voluntary groups.

Evidence of opposition from residents to the landscape restorations and/or to the expense involved, as evidenced for the Leasowes, can be found from some recreational users of the Hills, though what appeared to be a concerted opposition group organised via Facebook, appears to have been largely the work of one disgruntled dog owner concerned about losing the 'right to roam' across the Hills following fencing off of some areas for conservation purposes (Facebook, 2013). Nevertheless at a local public meeting in October, 2010 concerns were voiced about the use of fencing to control livestock and impacts of temporary stock control measures upon public access and use of footpaths. Concerns about cost are put into context by a remark from the Conservators' director that "the cost of the cattle grids, over their 50-year life span, is a lot less than the cost of cutting scrub every year" (Malvern Gazette, 2000). Moreover, use of goats to eat bushes and scrub was described positively by the Conservators: "you are actually improving public access" (Malvern Gazette, 2000). Overall, the project aims to keep 350 grazing sheep and 140 cattle within the boundary of the commons while encouraging nesting of a variety of birds and rare wild flowers and to encourage re-growth of the acid grassland. The intention is that no more than one cow or seven or eight ewes with lambs per hectare will be allowed. Maintenance of trees and hedgerows, including tree surveys, pollarding and the erection of fences to separate woodland and grassland are also part of the project.

Official concern about the appearance of the landscape of the Malvern Hills has led to commissioned research monitoring landscape appearance (CRR, 2007). This has recognised 30 separate 'landscape description units' within the AONB (to end of 2009) and 11 distinctive landscape character types. Based on detailed photographic evidence and field survey methods (Evans & Connolly, 2006), a survey carried out in 2006 established baseline information that will enable future changes in appearance to be more readily recognised. The results reveal a diversity of landscapes within a relatively small area, including intensively cropped arable land and dense woodland (both semi-natural and introduced species). The 'bald hills' are recognised as characteristic principally only of the southern part of the AONB, and the encroachment by scrub and trees here is duly noted (CRR, 2007, pp. 8-9), including areas lying within Sites of Special Scientific Interest (p. 14). However, other problems are also recorded, including changes to enclosed

common land, incursion of bracken, and damage caused by the large numbers of visitors. Two-thirds of the area of the AONB is recorded as permanent grassland, with grass-based farming systems predominant. One-third of the area was under agri-environment schemes, mainly involving regulation of grazing practices, though more work needs to be done to assess the impact of the schemes on the landscape of the AONB.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

The vocal resistance to some aspects of the MHP and the Leasowes restorations illustrates the way in which landscape provokes intense feelings and emotions in people. When some individuals perceive that a proposed change threatens the nature of a beloved landscape, they can mobilise to oppose the change. In this case, as for the Leasowes, the opposition reflects some community values that are at variance with those of officialdom. For the Malverns the issue of access to footpaths and the right to roam across common land has collided with attempts to maintain the appearance of the landscape, not in its climax vegetation state but in the appearance that has characterised the hills for centuries. The fact that the long-term historical state of the landscape is reliant on the grazing of animals is at the heart of the ongoing debate over the ongoing management of the land as determined by the HLP. The collision between the project and the views of some users of the hills offers a rich opportunity for further research that delves more deeply into the opinions and behaviour of local residents and tourists than is represented on the Facebook site referred to here. It also offers further opportunities to address official views about landscape and the cultural values possessed within the community, or “the future challenge will be how to ensure landscape and its management are products of both expert knowledge and local cultural capital” (Evans, 2008, p. 8), especially in protected areas like AONBs.

Research by Clark and Maer (2008) has investigated the cultural impacts of over 650 sample HLF projects, examining aspects such as intrinsic values (including stewardship, heritage inputs and outputs, conservation quality and public perceptions of stewardship) and instrumental benefits (including learning, well-being, enjoyment, volunteering, self-esteem and confidence, strengthened local communities, the social benefits of place, improvements to place, provision of community focus, social cohesion, social inclusion and prosperity). Amongst the findings of their research are high levels of satisfaction expressed by visitors and locals alike for the quality of conservation work effected through HLF projects. This was allied to increased levels of volunteering through participation in projects and enhanced enjoyment of particular sites. Significantly, one finding was “that heritage projects can create stronger ties between people and the places they live” (p. 38) in part because the projects value particular localities and create a community focus. This may also reflect the impacts of some projects on social cohesion and social inclusion. For both the Leasowes and the Malverns there were local expressions of concern over whether the HLF projects represented ‘value for money’. This question was not addressed substantively by Clark and Maer who focused on administrative and operational costs as opposed to value judgements and preferences expressed by users and residents. However, they did note positive economic impacts, which the research for this article has not investigated.

There are significant questions to be answered regarding the re-creation of landscapes at various scales as illustrated by the two studies referred to above. In

both cases, notions of heritage have been invoked to justify the implementation of measures that will return a particular landscape to a desired past condition or conformation. So there are questions here about who determines just what landscapes from the past are to be valued and to what extent is it possible to re-create the past, at what cost and with what outcomes.

It is clear that the presence of the HLF, and its priorities with respect to heritage, has presented opportunities for different groups to formulate arguments for landscape restoration and to win funding. Yet, resulting actions and outcomes are not without controversy, and in both of the cases discussed here there has been opposition on various grounds, quite vociferous in the case of Malvern and more muted in the case of the Leasowes. For the latter the issue reflects a concern in the local community regarding the priorities being accorded to re-creating an 18<sup>th</sup> century vision for a particular locality, especially as that vision was only ever fleetingly realised and reflected the view of one wealthy individual. In effect, it was argued by some that there was a privileging of the past over the present, in that some locals and users of the Leasowes expressed contentment with the park in its present form or “a more natural appearance compared with an artificial creation”, as stated by one interviewee. For the Malverns the concerns of the local community have been related to issues of access, the management of livestock on the commons, and aesthetic concerns about landscape appearance.

The article highlights a need for further research, with several potential avenues of enquiry. At a local level there is a need for more systematic study of the relationship between various sets of views about the HLF projects and project outcomes. The views need to consider those of key stakeholders (e.g. conservationists, planners, council officials and various ‘gatekeepers’) as well as those of users of the landscape (recreationists and tourists) and local residents. The issue of scale of landscape under consideration is also important, with one possibility to look at landscapes intermediate between the miniature of the Leasowes and the ‘macro’ level of the Malverns. Indeed, there is an excellent example at hand, within 20 miles of both locations, in the form of Croome Park, also an excellent example of the picturesque where recent restoration has been facilitated by recent HLF investment under the auspices of the National Trust.

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