

Experiencing Landscapes: Towards a judgement-making framework for ‘cultural services’ and ‘experiential qualities’

Annex B

First published 06 December 2011

Annex B: Depth Interview Pen Portraits

Annex B: Pen Portraits

Introduction

This section of the report contains summaries of the post-experience depth interviews. There were two interviews carried out within each NCA.

In these summaries, respondents' real names have been replaced with fictitious ones throughout.

Arden 1

The Taylors were from Coventry and went for a Sunday walk to Corley Rocks (in the parish of Keresley) that has an historic landscape dating back to the Anglo-Saxon period.

The family group included their two young children (7 and 5) who also love the outdoors. They enjoy their time together at weekends and make sure that they go away either somewhere in their caravan or at least locally for a short breath of fresh air.

We like to have an objective, we like to walk to something or from it. Part of the journey that has to be at the end of it. Not accessible by car. To us that is part of the attraction. We prefer to go off the beaten track.

The family enjoyed living on the edge of the town, safe in the knowledge that behind them was nature reserve. This hopefully meant the land would not be built on as their house is the closest to rural living as they can afford.

The husband works in the automotive industry and claim that the outdoors is the only way he knows how to get rid of stress.

Locally they enjoy Binley Woods (just outside the NCA) and Crackley Woods (inside the NCA) where they are involved in the scouting movement. The kids also go to Brandon Marsh (a SSSI just outside the NCA) with the school, where they go pond dipping to find out about the wildlife. In the Arden area they go to the canal towpath at Southam and Hatton Locks.

Further afield, they go to Shropshire, the Peak District, the Lakes, Northumberland, Cornwall and Devon very regularly.

We look at leisure time as getting away from all the distractions and you don't have any family time together. Away from the hustle and bustle. We tend to take the Caravan away to a farm with maybe five caravan. A tranquil view there and they can play in the fields.

The older daughter wants to learn to rock climb when she is older like her Dad and so they went to some rocks where he used to go as a child.

Although they could hear the M6, they enjoyed the fresh air and openness. The children were very excited, climbing gates and then the rock and finding a cave, which they drew a picture of. These elements all provided learning and a sense of discovery. They were also very taken with the farmers' fields, wondering what food crop was being grown and wishing they could have a horse.

My sister and me were excited and Mum and Dad were calm because it was quiet.



The adults wish they could live more rurally but, for now, they enjoy the open fields and the occasional important oak tree, which is particularly meaningful for them. They worry that Coventry will eventually join up with Birmingham and they will lose these spaces.

There is an image of the old English tree and to me that is the English countryside a proper spreading mature tree and I feel drawn to it. I feel the need to stand by it. Dad



They wondered why the rocks (which, they discovered, had been in an ancient fort) were not better kept and saw rubbish, graffiti and cans thinking it might be a teenager hang out.



Overall the key benefits they obtained were the peace and the ability to de-stress by having good quality time together.

I felt more happy when I did the walk because I did a bit of climbing and I was excited. I told my teacher on Monday. Eldest daughter

The eldest daughter drew a picture of the field with the crops (cabbages) growing.



The younger daughter drew a cave up by the rock site, which she thought was very exciting and brave to go into, although she wasn't frightened!



Arden 2

Mr & Mrs Notgrove are retired and live on the edge of Redditch in a house they bought when they moved out of Birmingham twenty years ago to escape 'the rat race'. Roger is an ex-policeman and enjoys having the countryside on his doorstep. They use the countryside between them and the village of Beoley, which they love a lot and attend the local church there. They also walk a lot around Tamworth-in-Arden, Lowsonford and Earslwood Lakes. The countryside is important to them because, in their own words, the house is 'nothing special', although it suits the two of them. The surrounding landscape seems to act as compensation.

They have recently bought a caravan and have used it to do the four-hour trek down to Devon and Cornwall. They love going to coastal campsites with coastal paths and rugged cliffs to do walks and read their books. They realize that now they are older they appreciate such things. They also intend to explore Wales and Scotland with the caravan.

Locally, for them, the fields and rural lanes with oak trees are the most important 'natural features' they enjoy. In summer, they are also to be found taking picnics and sitting in fields reading their books.



It is Treddypits lane, I loved that. The trees stood out more silhouetted on the snow.

It is also clear that they are very attracted by the history of the area, talking a lot about the history of the church, the local hall and 'Icknield Street', an ancient Roman road. Beoley Hall they say goes back to Henry the VIIIth.

It is nice to see something of interest. It is steeped in history. The trees in the grounds of Beoley Hall are massive.



We love living in rural surroundings and it is nice to walk in the countryside whenever .

The only point they worry about is the fast moving traffic along some of the lanes, especially the lorries coming from the local chicken factory (which they regard as the local ‘eyesore’ – “monstrous lorries from all over the continent, you take your life into your own hands”). They think there could be better marked footpaths so they don’t have to walk on the roads.



The main benefits they received from their experience was:

peace and a feeling of open space away from the crowds. Lots of fresh air and invigorating exercise. We felt loads better. I felt fully exhilaration when we came back.

They love the view from this field and the fact that there is a Roman Fort around the corner in a copse.



They think their area seems to be quite well protected in terms of change but they are worried about the amount of traffic going through eastwards.

The local architecture reminds them of home. This is one of their favourite cottages.



Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands 1

Mr and Mrs Thomas have lived in Eynesbury for 40 years. They bought their house new when there were fields out the back and brought their children up there. There are 3,000 houses built now, but the river is still out the back and they built a lake there to help with flooding when the local Tesco was built.

The husband (73) is a retired factory fitter and likes to spend most days going outdoors which he does locally, but also to indulge in his interest of birdwatching. He particularly likes Paxton Pits where he goes to spot nightingales. His wife is still working part time as a receptionist and is less keen on walks in the countryside but likes her holidays (eg in Devon). They recently enjoyed a holiday in Woolacombe where she sat on the beach whilst he explored Exmoor. Also, a trip to Kielder Forest was enjoyed earlier in the year for the walking and the history (an ex-POW camp).

He likes the local nature reserves and also thinks that the council does a great job signposting walks for everyone. You couldn't get lost, he says. Whilst there aren't any hills, he likes the farmland mainly but also visits various protected sites such as Warseley Woods (Woodland Trust) and Houghton Meadow (Wildlife Trust) for the wild flowers and the history. He says there are lots of remnants of small ancient woods around but they are mainly 2-3 acres only. The wife says the countryside here is just flat and muddy but the organized reserves are good and help to think of where to go. It is not just open to walk around but her husband disagrees.

I would describe the countryside as flat. You've got bird sanctuaries but the point is that it is laid on for you. It is not life as it is.

It's a variety, you've got rivers, lakes and nice country walks well signposted the Council puts the sign up and the farmers are good they will leave three metres. It keeps me fit. I am pretty fit for my age and touch wood I haven't got nothing...It calms me down a bit.

The walk they chose was further North where their daughter lives in Sawtry. There is a marked walk but it has variety with open field and woods with medieval history. Unfortunately they did not get to the woods because it poured down at the end and they had to take shelter. They were fascinated by the farm machinery and the hay bales in the barn where the walk started.



Then the adventure of a long track heading off into the distance, which gave them a sense of anticipation and adventure.



They were looking forward to the woods but on the way they enjoyed seeing two fields of sheep. This is unusual for their area, which is mainly arable land. The husband was happy because he spotted a skylark, two partridge and two long-tailed tits.

I thought the woods were very attractive. It is not a big woods. It was a slight hill. It is not that steep.



At this point they turned back. Otherwise, they were slightly disappointed to see lots of litter, leftover cans and a spot where someone had had a fire in a ditch. Their other negatives were seeing wind turbines and the tops of the lorries on the A1 in the distance.

Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands 2

Andrew and Lucy live in a new complex of flats built on the outskirts of St Neots. They are in their early twenties and have a young child and a baby on the way. She works in Tesco and he is an engineer. They both grew up locally but don't have much time to follow outdoor pursuits anymore. They have a yearly holiday for one week in Hunstanton or occasionally, Cromer, Sheringham etc. They love the way it doesn't change and that everyone is so friendly. It is busy, but quiet.

They enjoyed their 'landscape experience' locally but found that to make it interesting they preferred to drive around to various different locations and then get out at each place for different viewpoints. They went around Wyboston, Renhold and Tempsford.

Once you get into the back roads it is actually quite hard to find stuff. So we decided to drive around here and there rather than just take pictures of hedges. We went to three or four places.

Andrew's job is very noisy and he has to wear ear protectors, so he enjoyed the quiet of the experience 'you could hear a pin drop'. The quality of their experience was marred slightly by a lot of fly tipping and the difficulty of walking through muddy fields.



The couple used to go out cycling a bit but, since having children, the opportunities to go out have diminished and they use the outdoors fairly rarely. They admitted that they partly don't know where to go for open countryside in the area and wished that there was more publicity for their age group and better pathways.

Because Andrew is an engineer, he finds historical mechanical objects quite interesting.



They found the locks at Tempsford to be a very accessible walk along the river with nice bridges and they were able to use the pushchair to hopefully get their son to sleep.



It was very peaceful where the water was and the lock as the sounds of the moving water were very calming

They also use Paxton Pits and are amazed at how “you can feel in the middle of nowhere but there is a working quarry there.”

They were attracted by some farmland with horses and then a village with an old church in Renhold. “It was amazing to get this scene around here with nothing but nature.”



They felt that there is not great access to the countryside in their area and that people are abusing it by leaving litter and sofas, which they took a picture of. They thought that there were not many woods or hills, or good footpaths. For these reasons they are not regular users of the landscape but are protective of it because they think that new housing developments (not unlike the one in which they live!) are “*making the countryside smaller*”.



The Fens 1

The Davies live in Ely and are now retired. They are very proud that both their families have been born and bred in Ely for generations and, in John's case, he can trace his history back to Cromwellian times. He held various senior positions in the legal profession and calls himself a "countryperson". They raised their two children there and are founts of knowledge about the rural history of the area.

We are essentially country people living all our lives in Ely and have a strong connection with the river and its surroundings. We love peace and quiet and both love watching birds and other wildlife.

In times gone by they used to get the Motorail from Ely to Inverness and spend holidays there but when that stopped and the kids got older it was mainly the Norfolk coast. Now, since they have retired, they go on cruises.



John likes fishing and they both fish as generations of their family have before them. They feel extremely connected to the river, which is just on their doorstep. They are full of nostalgia for where they grew up and the protection of the river and rural (farming) life which they feel is disappearing.

Their landscape experience was taken from a very regular route of theirs which they say they do every day in summer. We can see where John fishes, and spots along the route where they stood or played as children. Part of the area by the river is an SSSI and they are keen birdwatchers. During their time out in the open, they documented and logged every fish caught and every bird or train number spotted! During their walk they spotted 21 bird species.



They are extremely proud of the farming heritage and the fact that they see the landscape as ‘an industrial landscape’. Taking away land that produces food, John feels, is morally wrong and something that people will regret after he has gone in the light of climate changes and reducing food miles. For this reason he is against the Wicken Vision and the Great Fen Project.

We have got an interest in what goes on in the landscape. People make jokes about us and call us the Turnip Taliban. But the fact remains it is a working landscape, which some people don't appreciate. Fenland is an industrial landscape. It is man-made and man-maintained.

They are constantly inspired by the wildlife around them, the water and the ‘big skies’. The regular sunsets and the changing cloud patterns generally fascinate them and they spend hours watching them. They are unsure about too much tree planting in the wrong places because they feel it upsets the big open views and can present a feeling of danger for lone females (a local copse has been planted that does this).

I love the big skies. My favourite ride is from here to Mildenhall what I call the back way. And you feel very small and I think that is why Norfolk people like sailing.

They recall a bygone era of industries such as the local brewery, the beet factory, various small dairies and milk being delivered from the back of a cart. They talk about the dray horses, cattle going to market and the local eel catcher.

This next photo embodies the life of the river where it used to be busy. They enjoy seeing the different boats.



They relate very strongly to the cathedral as a focal point and also toward points south of the NCA, including Cambridge. Wherever, they are in the landscape they spot the cathedral as a measure of how far or close they are from home. John loves this tree near the Cathedral because he used to climb it as a kid.



They feel that the future for the Fenland is to still be a highly managed and productive landscape. They believe that we need to produce our own food and biofuels to help with climate change and the Fens is the best place for it. Where there are nature reserves, they feel a balance should be struck between making them accessible for “townies who leave rubbish” versus cocooning them and fencing them off (a perceived WWT policy) never to be seen again.

On their walk they were very negative about the dog mess and litter left by the river.

Their landscape experience gave them relaxation and a sense of calm:

We felt relaxed. However mad the world is the river still flows the birds still fly and the trees and flowers go through their seasons.

They love the sunsets they get due to the big skies. They say the sky is why Norfolk men make good sailors:



The Fens 2

Jane is a single mother of two children, living in Spalding in a new development on the edge of town. Her children are 9 and 12 and she finds that they both love getting out into the open.

As a family, the three of them love going to various places for a day out because this means they all get on better and actually communicate with each other – finding out about school and what has been happening to them.

Often they are cooped up especially in winter with one in her room, the other on the Wii and, in the end because of boredom, they can end up shouting at each other.

Jane has recently gone back to work part time as a lecturer in travel at the local College. On the whole the kids badger her to take them out at weekends, so they love going cycling (mainly in the summer) to Bourne Woods, which is part of the Forestry Commission's Esteven Forest.

Ferry Meadows is a Country Park on the edge of Peterborough, which has lakes and sports and a café. They like it here because there is more to do and they can feed the ducks. Further afield they go to Rutland Water, which takes about 45 minutes and Talington Lakes on the way to Stamford. The latter is when they are being quite active, with watersports etc.

They seem to mostly use quite organized sites and it is easier for Jane if there is something energetic and active for the children to do. They tend not to use the more natural spaces as much because there seems to be less to do and she regards the countryside as extremely flat and a little inaccessible.

They do tend to drive for about an hour for their days out and in the summer they go to the coast regularly: Skegness and Hunstanon mainly. The latter does not have many indoor activities so it has to be a nice day.

Their choice for the landscape experience reflected their need and attitudes towards the countryside. They first chose a walk around a park in Spalding but were later asked to supplement this experience with another outside town, so they also went to Baston Fen. Both experiences show a bit about their dilemma in using the local countryside.

The family's first walk was in Ayscoughfee Gardens. Jane spent much time here with fellow mums when the kids were younger and before they went back to work. Their children love it there for several reasons. They enjoy the water and the large stretches of grass for having a picnic. There is also an area of ancient yew hedges, which fascinated them because of the shapes and the twisted bark.

The bark is incredible we think they are really magical, you couldn't draw it like this. The bark has got all sorts of nooks and crannies.



Also, there is an important war memorial where they go every year for Poppy Day with their father, who is in the RAF.

There is also another magical place in the gardens where they play hide and seek. Some trees enclose an old ice house and they have fun making up scary stories about this, which is a mythical local historical feature. Jane also thinks the area is amazing because it remind her of a story called the Faraway Tree by Enid Blyton.

Jane tells how the children loved the holly everywhere and got very excited about Christmas coming up (*I think maybe they didn't realize it actually grows somewhere!*)





The children took many photos of little ducklings and also wrote a poem together, as follows:

*Through crunchy leaves and an old shoe lace
We find ourself at this secret place
There are no monkeys or waterfalls, just plain old Ayscoughfee Halls
My name is Ayscoughfee come and visit me!*

*The day we went it was freezing cold but still there is a story to be told
Hiding behind the leaning trees, falling over and getting mucky knees.*

This experience was much valued by the family.

We actually talked to each other. It was relaxing, peaceful, calming family time.

The second landscape experience was in Baston Fen within part of Langtoft Fen. They don't go here very often but enjoyed the walk nonetheless. They really enjoyed talking to each other and the peace and quiet away from the MP3 player and the X-box. Jane enjoyed the isolation and the quiet, which she found to be very calming. It allowed her to have some thinking time, whilst the children were chattering away.



They appreciated the ‘well-kept’ farmland, tidy hedges and perfectly formed trees. It was nice, they thought, not to see any litter. The walk was pretty flat but Jane managed to find some undulation to photograph. The overall scene she thought was quite bleak and barren, but she knows it looks prettier in the summer and earlier when the daffodils come out.



Jane described to her children that there were some fields nearby that flooded every year for ice skating competitions. She doesn’t know much about Fenland as a landscape type but she knows the names of all of them around locally. She is more interested in what landscape can give them as an activity, which in this case was limited – a little bit of cycling, but nowhere to have a picnic because they had to stay on the lanes. She also didn’t enjoy not seeing any wildlife or colour at this time of year.



This was just like a child would draw

The Dark Peak 1

In his day, Mr Wright had been an engineer and a builder. He used to travel quite a bit but, in the sixties, bought his house off the builder because of the amazing views of Kinder Scout. To this day he enjoys watching the hills and the changing weather crossing them. To his mind there is nothing better than hills and views:

I was in Leicester and one of the chaps there was a bricklayer and he did the same as me, bought a plot off the builder and I was with him one time and he was looking across and there was just a field and he said look at that view and I thought he doesn't know what a view is because it was dead flat, he should come up to New Mills and we've got spectacular views here.

Ken has always been a keen walker and has been a member of mountain rescue in his time. Now he has several hobbies that he enjoys in his retirement, all taking him out and about in the 'Dark Peak'. The first hobby is astronomy and he goes out in the dark on a new moon to plot the stars; he finds that the light pollution from Stockport and Sheffield has got worse over the years but he can still find spots on the moorland where the skies are clear.

Secondly, he loves and researches the old WW2 air-crash sites. With the advent of GPS he can just plot the co-ordinates and go off onto the Peak to find the old wreckage. He is fascinated by finding the old artifacts and feels he is a bit of an adventurer.

Finally, he has owned an MG for many years and belongs to various clubs going on runs around Derbyshire. He feels that the lanes were made for cars like his before the motorway and likes the nostalgia of going around the villages or visiting industrial heritage sites.

Ken clearly enjoys the outdoors and relishes a rugged landscape but the walk he chose, partly because it was winter, was somewhere he has never been but always wanted to go because he used to drive through it on the way to work. When he first arrived he saw a multitude of birdlife which flew away before he could capture it, so we have the blue tits instead.



The Woodhead Pass – he was always intrigued by the chapel by the Woodhead Tunnel that commemorates the people who died making it. He was interested in the engineering but also thought it was quite a spiritual place.



To his surprise he found some memorial woodlands planted there on the Longedale Trial and he got quite emotional there.



He enjoys the walk because it gives him a sense of history but he also feels uplifted by being able to see the hills all around as well as the water.



He liked the different types of tree planted by the reservoir, but made negative comments about the traffic on the Woodhead, and the pylons.

The Dark Peak 2

Jane and Fred live on the edge of New Mills. They have one son but are now separated, though still go for walks together. They were both born and bred in the area, Jane grew up on a remote farm while Fred grew up in New Mills.

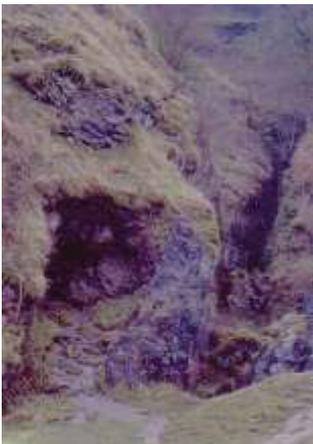
They know the area very well and feel part of the countryside and love it, though they say they take it for granted a little. Still it all feels part of their heritage and they are very proud.

Wherever you look there is always hills everywhere you look. For me it has got to have hills to be spectacular view, unless you are at the seaside or something.

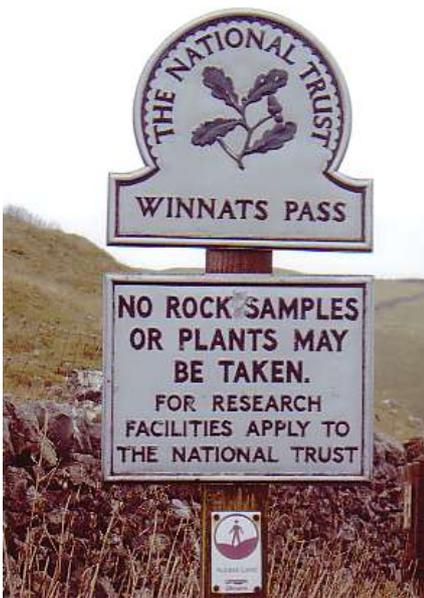


Round this area there is a lot of stone walls. To me countryside IS with stone walls. Down south they don't know about stone walls. I did a bit of stone walling in the earlier days and it did fascinate me.

Their walk encompassed many iconic spots, such as Wynatts Pass, Mam Tor and Speedwell Caves. They were very proud of the landscape and want to explain all about the caves, Blue John and the subsidence (The Shivering Mountain). Here is a cave photograph they took:



They also like the history of Peverell Castle and the Odines Mine National Heritage Monument.



They enjoyed the openness but recognized that, as they get older (Jane already feels this), the hills are too steep for them. Nevertheless there are plenty of places to go that are flatter, but still have good views. They found their experience very calming at times but also learned quite a lot from seeing hanggliders and watching the mist coming down.

Beautiful views stretching for mile. Very peaceful. Even in the mist the scenery was beautiful.

They were negative only about the Cement Factory and the coach party that arrived during their walk.



Lancashire Coal Measures 1

Rachel and Ian are both extremely busy. Ian works in national sales and drives around the UK; Rachel is a teacher in a local primary school. He is originally from St Helens and she is originally from Golbourne, where they now live. Their sons are 11 and 8 and they try to make weekends as active as possible. Both the lads like football and ju-jitsu.

They are trying to be outdoorsy but realize they have serious time constraints and most places need to be driven to. They use the local park and the 'Pit Bonk' which is a good high walk. In the snow the children have enjoyed the sledging.

The other places are Pennington Flash, which they use for walking around but also exploring wildlife, looking for toads and bugs. They've also used the walks at Haydock and the Three Sisters. If they were going for a 'proper' walk they would go to Rivington Pike.

They find that they feel a little starved of fresh air but they will even drive to another town for a walk, just for a change of scene.

They are annoyed about the encroachment of building and the lack of thinking with regard to green spaces within the towns.

Their walk was very varied but the best point was on the top of the hills from which they could see for miles.

Right at the top it was like being in space, there was nothing. The snow was fresh and nobody had been there.



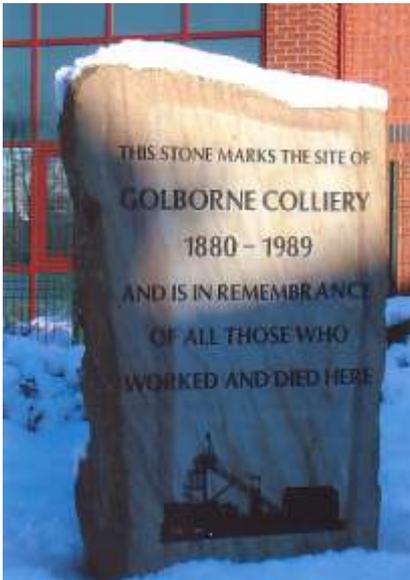
The benefit of being on top of the 'Pit Bonk' was also that they could not hear the traffic any longer and they could see all the way over to Rivington Pike. The children loved the atmosphere of all the other families up there sledging. The sociability of the experience was important to them because they thought that people were in a better mood than normal.

When you see other people on a country walk they usually say 'hello'/'how are you?' etc. – does not happen in the street.



They also were moved by the commemorative plaque, which is important historically for them. This reminded them of the colliery past:

You can still smell the coal when the wind blows



The children noticed some rabbits and a bird of prey. They wrote a poem and drew a picture. For Ben, who is eleven, the most important thing was the snow and the fun:

W hite
I cicles
N ever melting ice
T errible weather
E verlasting sun
R iding down a slope

W onderful fun
A ll different people
L ots of bumps
K eep having a good time

His younger brother's picture shows the family together and the open sky with very large snowflakes!



Overall they thought the best part of the experience was

Spending time together as a family in a healthy environment.

On the negative side, their parents were not happy with the graffiti, litter and abandoned shopping trolleys.

Lancashire Coal Measures 2

Harry is a rugby league coach who now runs his own business. He is 63 and has recently had a triple bypass on his heart. He started life in Salford and moved out to the area with his wife 30 years ago. They chose a house on the edge of the town with fields all around because they liked walking.

They have several local walks through fields that they like and go out most days. At weekends they like to travel to the Lakes or Wales for walking but more recently they have had to work. Harry wants to change this if he can but the pressure of the business prevents him.

Harry had had a long association with the landscape from the age of 13 when he started rock climbing. This continued until his early forties when he then moved into walking instead. They were pleased to have been able to climb Crinkle Crag and Bow Fell last year, 20 weeks after his heart operation. It meant a real achievement for him.

He has a feeling of exhilaration and freedom in high rocky places but at home he also enjoys the fields, small woods and the local Haydock Park.

Harry's walk was for several hours and is a regular route of his from his house. On this occasion the route was made extra special by the snow. This is his nearest country lane:



He is very proud of the first farmer along the walk who he knows because he has created some fishing ponds and a community facility; he also thinks they look pretty.



He also likes the few older types of buildings that exist, with the dark red brick that is indicative of the area:



He enjoys the fact that Viridor Woods have a footpath, although the woods themselves are fenced off. Unfortunately, on this occasion, they were taunted by a group of twenty young people drinking as they passed through, which frightened his wife.

His main likes in this type of landscape were fields and hedges because he finds it calming and unthreatening. Being a coach, he doesn't like being indoors very much and goes out regularly of an evening because the recession has meant being cooped up in the office because no-one can afford his courses.



The main highlight of the walk was the snow and the 'Keepers', which is where there is a cottage that the man who looks after the racecourse lives. More than is usual, he was inspired by the amazing photographs he could take of the snow in the trees, also the openness and the light in his photographs.

The main negative for him was the Tarmacadam factory, which pumps out very smelly fumes on a regular basis. Also the 'secret' lane is used for large-scale fly-tipping which upsets him.

Dorset Heaths 1

Andrea first moved to the area when aged 16, then moved away from Dorset for the initial part of her career, but moved back 5 years ago, recognising the benefits for her and her partner of living and working in rural Dorset. She appreciates the local area and its landscape after having been away for a few years.

She walks and uses the area's coast a lot, she swims in the sea and walks at other areas inland. She notices the scenery and the changing seasons. She is not inspired by flat land. She always feels "*it is worthwhile getting out*".

Her particular route was across Winfrith Heath, a tract of heathland in the western part of the area. She did the route by horseback with one other person. Another option of a woodland route nearby was rejected as it was so wet. She is familiar with Winfrith Heath as she rides there most weekends. It is nearby to where she lives and convenient for horse riding, and she finds much of it attractive. She sees an area from different perspectives through both walking and riding.

She found the experience beneficial in giving healthy exercise, and experiencing the elements – "*it was exhilarating in the rain*". She found it peaceful because the weather meant fewer people were out. On the downside, the dull weather meant the views were poorer than usual, and the colour was absent from the landscape, as confirmed by the photographs she took.

She takes in the landscape more as a whole. She feels the Scots Pine and heather sum up this landscape best.

The main things she noticed on the walk were:

- the overall brownness of the heath, with vibrant colours faded for the winter
- tall stands of pine trees and gorse
- buzzards. Sometimes she sees deer
- the high view from the top of the heath over surrounding land
- "*Open spaces – almost bleak in this weather although very beautiful when the sun shines*"
- "*The beautiful church and churchyard*"
- plenty of mud and puddles
- fallen leaves
- the decommissioned power station, which is "*not very easy on the eye*".

Main things she likes about the Winfrith Heath area are the fact that it is there and available for walking and riding. The ability to see deer and buzzards are important to her. She regards the tranquillity, openness and wildlife as key aspects to protect. She feels the heathland ecosystem is important, for its wildlife, including adders, to the history of the land itself – "*it allows you to imagine*". She also enjoys the area's sense of peace.

Pausing to take in the view at the top of the heath – on a clear day you can see for miles and even today the view is amazing.

Her main positive emotions and thoughts were:

Being out cantering across the heath in the wind and the rain can be pretty exhilarating. It's so great to have so much open space to roam around.

I particularly like it when you can look in all directions and see almost no signs of human habitation.

On dislikes, she is concerned that grazing is being introduced to the heath as this might not be so good for horse riding: “*grazing is an issue for horse riders*”. The railway line cutting across the heath is another dislike.

She feels that the specific area’s landscape has not got water, many sea views, and “*it lacks a spectacular feel*”. It does have a sense of freedom, open space, getting away, and ability to experience wildlife.



“Heath” is part of the area’s identity on place names.



A tree-lined cut through path with fallen leaves and gorse bushes.



The local churchyard by the heath provides a sense of history.



The area's high views are lost in dull weather.



The decommissioned power station – a key feature, but unattractive.



The Scots Pine and heather sum up the Winfrith Heath area.

Dorset Heaths 2

David and Cathy live locally to his keeping work for a local estate. She is currently bringing up a young child and expecting another. He has worked as a gamekeeper for other estates and they both know the area well. They live in the north eastern part of the Dorset Heaths area. He is born and bred in this particular area. She has grown up and lived in the local area for 20 years.

He is able to separate his work and his non-work time in relating to the landscape, even though he is constantly immersed in the landscape. He does however still look at places such as woods and forests in relation to his own approach to land management. He senses much of the landscape in relation to his childhood experiences and is keen to still capture these memories and experiences. She finds that the landscape “*relaxes me*” in a way that being indoors cannot.

They both find monotonous landscapes too plain. They like isolation – “*your bit of space*”. They both enjoy cycling as well.

He finds that the weather and the light strongly influences his mood when experiencing the landscape.

They relate to all parts of the Dorset Heaths area’s landscape, not just the actual heathland. Much of their use and experience of the landscape comes through their need to exercise their dogs. He has working gun dogs and so needs to give them specific exercise which can be different from that of her pet dogs (setters), and so this can influence the areas they go to and their particular landscape experiences.

The walk was undertaken in a mixed forest area, mainly owned and managed by the Forestry Commission. It is local and convenient for them and their dogs, and has some good well-maintained paths, including for access with prams and pushchairs. Beyond the first few hundred meters from the main car park the area is much more quiet, which they enjoy. However, the dogs have to be watched carefully while they are close to the main road at the first point.

The main benefit of the experience was in providing for “*quality time together*”. The landscape itself was an integral part of the experience. The diversity of woodland and of grassland was particularly noted. She likes a mixture of trees, and he wonders when mature ones will next be felled. He was inspired by the nesting and bat boxes, indicating that the area’s wildlife is being considered and cared for. He was disappointed there were no log-piles, which insects especially can benefit from.

Key positive emotions included:

- the relaxing time together.
- seeing their son loving being outside.
- watching the dogs enjoy themselves.
- a highlight was parading all the dogs for a photo!

The lowlight was encountering the fly tipping, although it is not rife in the area.

The main negative feeling was dull wet weather, and frustration at the amount of dog poo (they are careful to deal with their dogs) and the patches of litter.

In terms of future change in the landscape, they wonder if and how the aggregates in the adjacent area will be extracted and the land restored.

They would also like to see even more variety of broadleaved woodland in this forest.

They distinguish landscapes through the different wildlife it harbours and through the different types of land management they notice.

They both see the landscape in a whole sense, and relate closely to the local area nearby which they have grown up in, especially as it provides for their needs in relaxing and getting outdoors – they can even do this with a disused-railway walk into the fields at the end of their road.

They believe all of the landscape is important for wildlife and for the public's amenity.



An avenue of trees, with autumn leaf fall – felt to be an attractive part of the walk.



The grasses are seen as having an interesting texture and providing an environment in their own right, their rustle in the wind has a calming effect.



Nest boxes and bat boxes in the forest – demonstrating care for wildlife.



Fly tipping is not a widespread problem in this particular area, but is still unattractive where it occurs.



Broadleaved woodland, including coppiced woodland, is liked for its enclosed feel and gives a sense of home to the couple.



A fallen tree stump adds a sense of history, especially where there are no old mature oaks