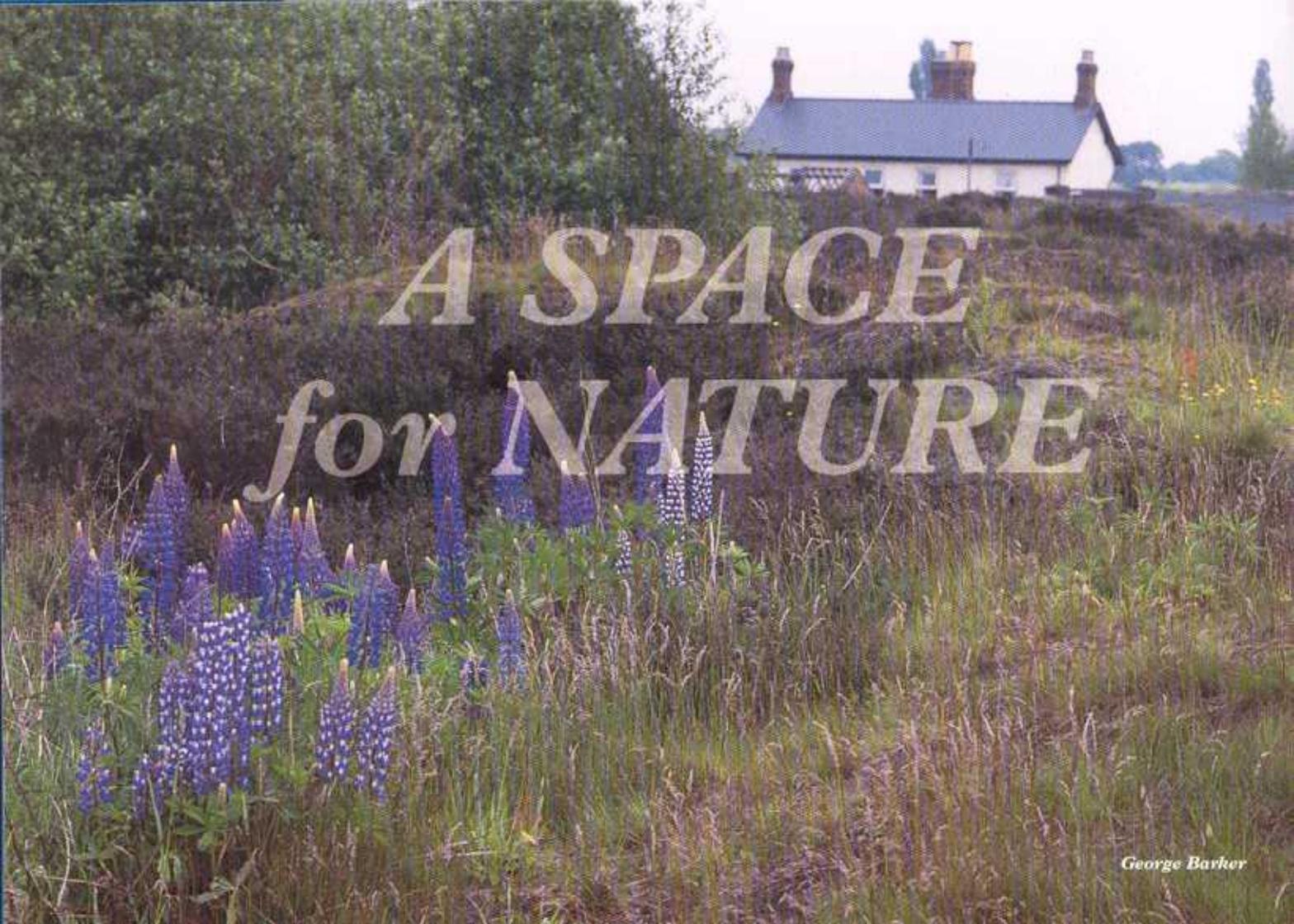




*A Space
for Nature*

Nature is good for you!



A photograph of a rural landscape. In the background, a white house with a dark roof and three chimneys sits atop a hill. The foreground is dominated by a field of tall purple lupines and green grass. The text 'A SPACE for NATURE' is overlaid in the center of the image.

A SPACE
for NATURE

George Barker

Nature is good for you!

People need nature. With all the stresses and strains of urban living we feel better for it. We are soothed and enchanted by leaves moving in the

wind; rippling water; a snatch of bird song; the colour and smell of flowers; a butterfly to admire; an ancient fossil or crystals in a rock to marvel at.

Part of the good we get from the natural world is because it is unpredictable, vital and uncontrolled yet steady and lasting. It manages to bob up again and again in spite of all we throw at it in urban areas. But this can be alarming too! Though these places are natural, people need to see that society cares for them. Well-kept entrances and paths,

seats to rest on, and information about the site help people to feel safe and secure there. Local people need to be involved in site management to allay fears.

Children are main users of natural spaces, even very small ones near their homes.

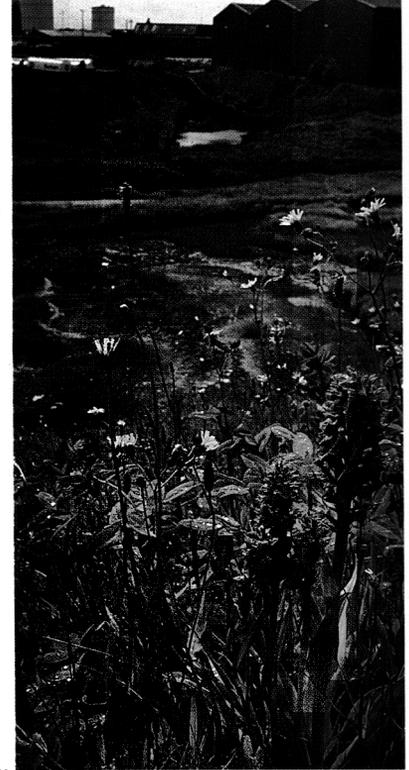
They value things which adults see differently. There is a real risk that children

lose what they need for mental, physical and social development when places are tidied up by adults. Since children and wildlife often value the same features and details, what damages the interests of one

will affect those of the other.



Phil Belden



George Barker

Cover photos not credited elsewhere:
middle left and bottom
right: Judy Ling Wong,
top right: Phil Belden

A mosaic of little gems

In towns and cities are woods, fields, lakes, heaths, old quarries and other large natural spaces good for wildlife. In their river valleys and along old and new transport systems there are important green corridors. But there are also lots of small places. A rich mosaic of these little gems is needed if some of the rarer or more spectacular species are to survive and if all residents are to have a chance to see them and enjoy them.

The bigger a natural open space is, the more kinds of plant and animal it is likely to hold. However, especially for small sites it is their history, the way they are used, whether there are hummocks and hollows, the variety of soils and the way in which trees, shrubs and other plants mesh together which is more important than their size.

A mosaic of different types of places for plants and animals to live in is a feature of towns and cities. This variety explains why urban areas have so many different species. Variation within individual spaces is important too. In their life cycles many animals need different things at different times and it is helpful if all of these are close together, however, trying to make any natural space too varied can damage it badly. The moral is to think long and hard before making changes.



Judy Ling Wong

Many industrial cities are where they are because of the minerals found there. The remnants of the mines, quarries and transport systems which they hold are a treasure-house for geologists as well as industrial archaeologists and naturalists.



Learning Through Landscapes



Peter Wakely



George Barker

What is accessible natural greenspace'?



George Barker

Accessible natural greenspace is land, water or geological features which have been naturally colonised by plants and animals and which are accessible on foot to large numbers of people.

Access means certain rights of approach, entry or use that are legally defined or hallowed by custom. Accessibility is the extent to which these rights can be enjoyed. Accessibility is affected (amongst other things) by: how far the place is from home; whether there are barriers in the way such as busy roads; and how far different groupings of adults or children are able to - or are allowed to - walk by themselves. It is also affected by social and cultural matters, including how safe people feel travelling to and wandering over the place concerned.

If people cannot reach a place, are afraid of it, or just feel uncomfortable visiting it then it is not accessible to them. What a healthy man finds easy to use may be out of the question for a mother with toddlers, a lone woman, old people or people feeling threatened by racial abuse. The needs of the whole community must be considered. People must feel at ease before a natural space is called accessible.



Peter Wakely

Something for everybody



Peter Wakeley

English Nature believes that:

- *everyday contact with nature is important for well-being and quality of life;*
- *everyone should be able to enjoy this contact, in safety, without having to make any special effort or journey to do so;*
- *natural greenspaces in towns and cities can play an important part in helping safeguard our national treasure of wildlife and geological features;*

- *accessible natural greenspaces give everyone an excellent chance to learn about nature and to help protect it in practical ways.*

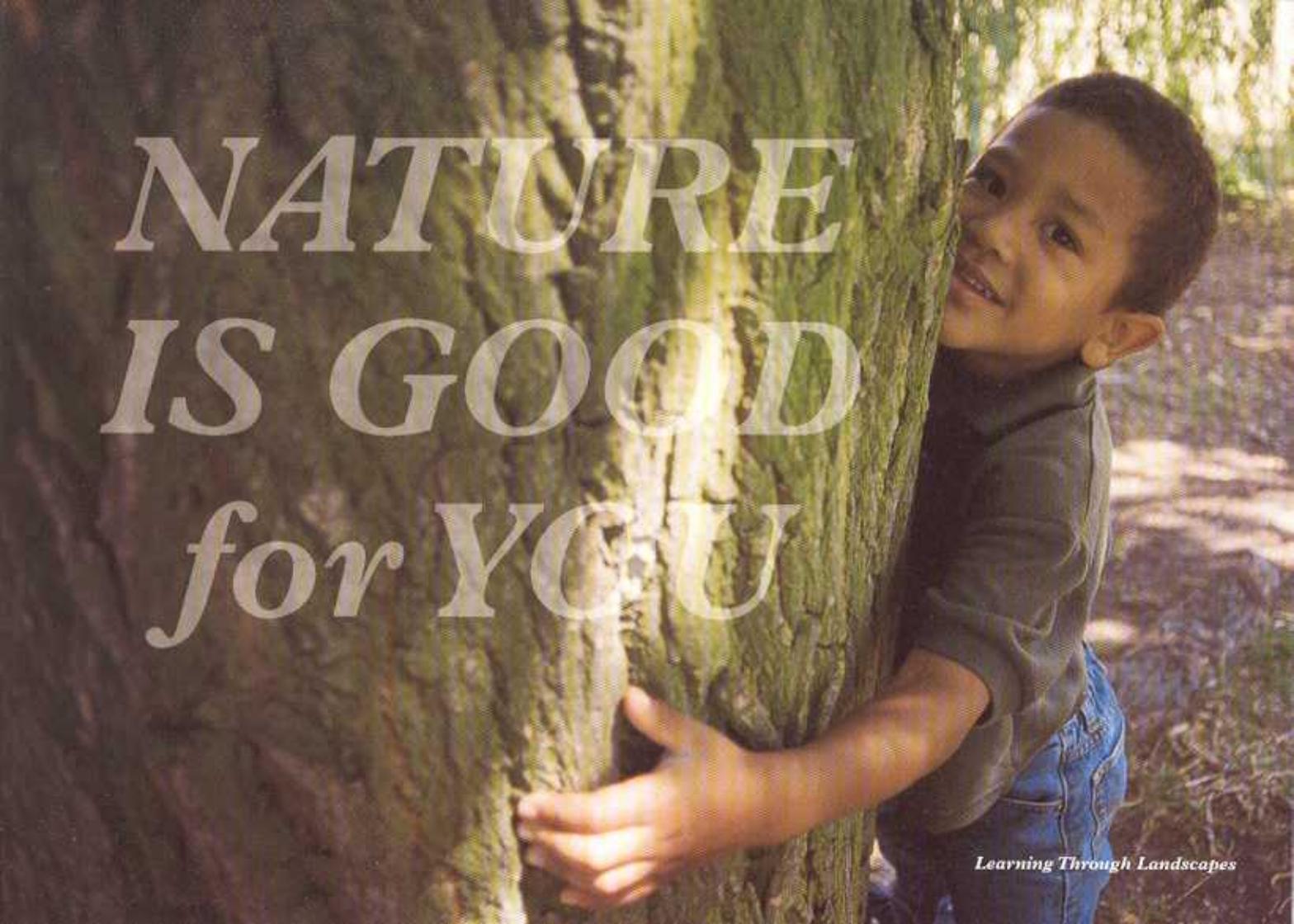
English Nature recommends that people living in towns and cities should have:

- *an accessible natural greenspace less than 300 metres (in a straight line) from home;*
- *Statutory Local Nature Reserves provided at a minimum level of one hectare per thousand population;*
- *at least one accessible 20 hectare site within 2 kilometres of home; one accessible 100 hectare site within 5 kilometres of home; and one accessible 500 hectare site within 10 kilometres of home.*

In some areas this will be hard to achieve in the short term, but it should be a long term aim.



George Barber

A young boy with short dark hair, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, is smiling and hugging a large tree trunk. The tree trunk is thick and has rough, textured bark. The background is a sun-dappled forest with green foliage and a path. The text "NATURE IS GOOD for YOU" is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white, serif font.

*NATURE
IS GOOD
for YOU*

Learning Through Landscapes

English Nature publishes a number of detailed and technical documents on different aspects of the subjects raised here. Please ask your local office (see telephone directory) for details or call our Enquiry Service on 01733-318455.



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