



Wild Things: 'Nature' and the Social Imagination

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'SHOOTING' THE WILDLIFE

Hollywood in Africa 1947-62: Imaginative Construction and Landscape Realism

William Beinart and Dominique Schafer

Our aim in this paper is to explore representations of African landscape, wildlife and related social contexts in feature films. The scale of film-making in post-war Africa, particularly East Africa, is now being recognised. Our discussion largely covers the period from *The Macomber Affair* (1947) to *Hatari!* (1962). Especially from 1950 to 1953, feature films set in East Africa were remarkably successful. Leading directors employing stellar Hollywood actors released a sequence of productions that were amongst the top box office hits of their time. 1953 also saw the start of sustained TV coverage of natural history and African wildlife in the United Kingdom. These films both contributed to and mirrored growing global interest in African landscapes and wildlife. These films were not in our view classics, both because of their quality and their uneasy portrayal of the late colonial period from the vantage point of heroic whites. They are interesting partly for this reason, although we will not mainly be pursuing themes of empire, race and gender in this paper. Our focus is on a more specific aspect of such feature films: all were made partly on location and all, to some degree, used wildlife and landscape in their narratives. We will explore how hunting and wildlife came to be central themes.

Much of the academic literature on representations of Africa, particularly in connection with wildlife and landscape, is driven by a critique of the 'myth of wild Africa'. Authors such as Adams and McShane take issue with an Africa constructed as wild, or as empty of people, or as a figment of a rather lurid western imagination about the continent, including the right to possess its land and riches. Film is a medium which trades in illusion and - it is suggested - created particularly uneasy and imaginary worlds. Yet it is striking that Hollywood and British directors went to huge effort and expense in order to capture authentic landscapes and wildlife sequences on screen. We will argue that the films were both constructed around social practices common in East Africa at the time, and reflected a concern about 'landscape realism'.

'Hunting with the Camera': Photography, Animals and the Technology of the Chase in the Rocky Mountains

Karen Jones

This paper considers the intertwined relations between hunting, gun cultures and photography in the late 19th century by looking at the experiences of sportsmen in the American West. Of particular interest here are the processes and the nomenclature of photography on the game trail. The 'politics of reproduction' (Donna Haraway) invites commentary on themes of staging (the animal adversary and the stalwart hunter hero), colonial image capture and

the relationship between environmental transformation and technological change. Meanwhile, the language of shooting, loading and capture suggests an intriguing trajectory between the gun and the camera as active technologies wielded by the nineteenth-century sportsman. By way of conclusion, the paper will address links between hunting, animal appreciation and conservation by exploring those hunters who gave up the kill entirely in favour of a non-consumptive use of wildlife and 'hunting with the camera.'

**The Photographic Animal Portraiture of Daniel Naudé:
Natural History, Livestock Speciation and South African Identity
Amy Halliday**

From safari to sacrifice, conservation to consumption, discourses of nature are writ large on the South African landscape. Given South Africa's historical context of settler colonialism – enacted along a frontier of conflict between man and nature, and among diverse human groups competing for access to land and resources – the environment has been a significant site for the construction of complex identities. In this paper I examine the work of contemporary South African photographer Daniel Naudé, whose lavish photographic portraits of livestock are a formal and geographic re-inscription of the journey of the English draughtsman Samuel Daniell, who travelled into the interior of the country on a cattle-trading mission in the early nineteenth century, subsequently producing the natural history folio 'African Scenery and Animals' (1820). While Daniell's account focussed largely on typologies of wild animals and indigenous people, Naudé turns his lens on the domesticated species of South Africa. From Nguni and Afrikaner cattle to imported Merino sheep, and the newly rebranded 'Africanis' dog, Naudé sets these animal bodies alongside portraits of farmers, herders and hunters, illuminating ongoing human anxieties around 'indigeneity', heritage, breeding and 'race'.

**Visual Culture and Our Understanding of the 'Environment'
Joe Zammit-Lucia, Linda Kalof and Jennifer R Kelly**

Science, guilt and romantic fiction: These are the three pillars on which much of the visual culture of conservation and environmentalism has been built over the last century. This paper examines the visual culture of conservation and the potential of alternative approaches. In a modern, urban, media-dominated culture visual representations form a central element – if not the central element – in determining how we come to understand and interpret cultural concepts such as 'nature', 'wildlife', 'conservation' and 'environment'. Over the last century, three main elements have come to dominate the visual culture of environmentalism: the romantic representation of a 'nature' unsoiled by human intervention; the 'documentation' of the damage that humans are wreaking on this 'nature'; and the celebration of conservation science as the path towards protecting or re-constructing the romantic ideal. This narrative has created what we believe to be an outdated and counter-productive

dichotomy of conflict between the Human and the Natural. Despite the widespread use of visual material and its central role in the environmental narrative, there is precious little empirical work to examine its impact. We describe the results of a study documenting the changes in visitors' perceptions of endangered animals after viewing an exhibit of fine art photographic animal portraiture mounted at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris. Using a Personal Meaning Map, we found that visitors to the exhibit emerged with substantially changed cultural perceptions. Previously held views of a wildlife that is part of a wild and free nature that is separate from the Human were replaced by stronger feelings of kinship and enhanced feelings related to the need for conservation efforts.

We argue that successful conservation efforts depend on how, culturally, we choose to understand the Human-Nature relationship. We believe that visual narratives that attempt to re-discover a kinship with nature are more likely to be successful than those that create distance (and conflict) between the Human and the Natural. Our findings suggest that such visual narratives can be constructed and can effectively impact the emotional and psychological drivers of people's deeper values and motivations.

Myth Making: Commodification of Nature Through African Wildlife Imagery **Ellen Rogers**

A herd of giraffe silhouetted against a red-orange sunset.

A close up of an elephant, ears out, threatening to charge.

A leopard sleeping in a tree.

African safari tourism use depictions of wild animals and pristine "wilderness" to sell their travel services by tapping into the popular understanding of Africa as an "exotic" place with "real" nature. In doing so, they commodify animals and concepts of Nature. This paper examines the narratives or discourses embodied in imagery of animals in the so-called natural world. Pictures of iconic wildlife, elephants, lions, rhinos, giraffe, leopards, and so on, are prominently displayed, tapping into the Western expectations of Africa found in popular media, a "timeless Africa" teeming with wild animals where people do not exist. A semiotic analysis of safari tour company advertisements reveals a simplified, entertaining, Disney-fied view of the natural world.

This take on nature comes with inherent contradictions: a "human-free" landscape with wild animals in their natural environment, yet filled with tourists and their guides. In this fiction, Nature untouched by human hands comes with roads, lodges, and concession stands. Wildlife allow people to come close to watch them rather than running away at the sight, sound, and smell of humans and their vehicles. Problem animals do not exist.

In actuality, rather than the timeless pristine nature promised, the land and animals are often highly contested with recent histories of land use changes, eviction of people, and power struggles over ownership with subsequent winners and losers. The areas are changed by roads and buildings, lodges and

restaurants. Tourism requires food and water on a daily basis. Animals are habituated to people and ones that kill humans are removed. Certain species are relocated, closely monitored and guarded. In other words, these places are heavily managed to give the impression of a human-free nature. For safari tour operators, using animals in their advertising is simply a proven way of selling product. Yet, these images ignore anthropogenic changes and management practices, promoting and reinforcing Western misconceptions of Africa and the myth of Nature without humans.

FORESTS AND THE POLITICAL IMAGINATION

The Use of Historical Narratives in Ecosystems Management: The Social Construction of "Pre-Industrial" Forests in Canada Martin Hébert

Over the last decade, reforms to the forest regime of various Canadian provinces have brought a discursive construct called the "pre-industrial" forest to the fore. In this paper, we examine the institutional context in which these historical narratives about the state and composition of forests prior to the intensification of industrial exploitation are produced. We also document the role images of "pre-industrial" forest play in shaping goals for contemporary ecosystems management. Through an empirical analysis of the production and use of such historical narratives in the province of Quebec, we focus on the methodological and political issues raised by the translation of historical knowledge into technical expert knowledge factored into forestry management and operations plans. How reliable are "pre-industrial" forest portraits? In what ways do the data and narratives produced by these portraits feed into present-day power relations between a diversity of actors trying to influence decisions about forest management? We conclude that while the idea of using environmental historical knowledge to inform our management of forest ecosystems is important, we need to explore institutional, methodological and narrative avenues that would allow us to take into account a plurality of forms of historical knowledge and of relationships to forest environments in order to consider that management decision based on these narratives have social legitimacy.

Nature, Culture and Rubber in Colonial Southeast Asia Corey Ross

The history of the rubber industry in Southeast Asia, from the early years to independence and beyond, was profoundly shaped by the relationship between large (mostly European) estates and indigenous or Chinese smallholders. Despite the various advantages bestowed upon estates via research priorities and trade policy, smallholders generally produced at lower cost and gradually

came to dominate production in most areas by the 1940s. The political preference shown to estates and the corresponding neglect/discrimination towards smallholders is often seen as a reflection of the power of the plantation lobby on colonial administrations or, more generally, as a result of modern states' greater capacity to 'see', control and generate revenue from large, concentrated estates than scattered smallholdings. This paper argues that cultural predispositions were equally important: namely the ideological devotion to plantation systems that powerfully coloured perceptions of smallholders and estates and for many years hindered a clear analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of different production systems.

Sacred Spaces, Political Places: The struggle for a Kenyan sacred forest

Dr Lotte Hughes

Forests have long been a site of struggle and contestation, both across empires and in the postcolonial world. In colonial Kenya, Mau Mau fighters based in the Aberdare forests were famously denounced as "debased creatures of the forest" by settler politician Michael Blundell. This paper draws upon new research findings to describe the ongoing struggle by a local community to conserve Karima Sacred Forest in Othaya District, former Central Province. Gikuyu people living around Karima – who include many former Mau Mau – have been mobilised by a Kenyan NGO, with funding from 'green' western donors, to assert their rights to community ecological governance of the forest, and to wrest control from the local town council which officially owns and manages Karima. 'The community' (a problematical construct, of course) argues that the forest belongs not to the state but to four clans which claim historical ownership of this sacred space. The paper will explain why this claim is problematical from an historical point of view. Citizens appear to be using the tropes of environmentalism and indigenous rights to reify ethnic identity, and to conflate ethnicity with territory, in order to lay claim to land. In so doing, they are reiterating claims to land ownership and 'belonging' that were made in the early 1930s to the Kenya Land Commission. The wider context is the flourishing of community-led heritage activities across rural Kenya, some of which directly challenge hegemonic state-led national heritage management. This phenomenon can be read as a renaissance of civil society activism around new forms of struggle.

The 'Cult of the Tree' & the Troubles of a 'Neo-Colonial' State (1960s Madagascar)

Dr Karen Middleton. Abstract not available.

The Nature of the Nation. Imagined Landscapes of the 'German Forest' 1800-1945

Johannes Zechner

"Even if we were not in need of wood any more, we still would need the forest. The German people needs the forest like the human race needs wine." This much-cited statement by the German writer Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823-1897) points to the methodological core of my paper, combining approaches of environmental and intellectual history: landscapes are cultural and symbolic phenomena at least as much as they are natural and material ones. Referring to Benedict Anderson's work on 'imagined communities' and Simon Schama's concept of 'nature as imagination', they may also be conceptualized as imagined landscapes. These could serve as projection screens for manifold cultural constructions, political agendas, and public perceptions, in each case reflecting particular historical contexts and intellectual developments.

Considering modern German history, the prototypical imagined landscape is arguably the 'German forest'. From around 1800 onward, painters and philologists, poets and propagandists established it as a main symbol of German identity, envisioning a special relationship between the people and the forest since prehistoric times. Thus, its encompassing nature should overarch and overcome the reality of territorial and political fragmentation by providing the metaphorical rootage for the coveted patriotic unity. The intellectuals perceived the forest's alleged principles of stability, hierarchy, and inequality as antipode and antidote against the ideas of the French Revolution. Following WW I, the 'forest as an educator' turned into a seemingly natural, but in fact Social Darwinistic paradigm for polity and society. Forest imaginations were increasingly linked to myth-conceptions of belonging like national identity and racial purity, stereotypically contrasting the German 'forest people' with a rootless Jewish 'desert people'. Thereby, the 'German forest' could function as the token for a broad set of anti-modernist, biologist, nationalist, and racist patterns of thought: as the opposite to progress and metropolis, the role model for social order, the ideal of native nature, and the origin of a purebred people. My paper will delineate the intellectual processes in which the natural phenomenon of the forest became such a suitable projection screen for these political doctrines.

WILDLIFE BIOGRAPHY

No tears for the crocodile: a history of hatred and attempted rehabilitation in southern Africa, c.1947-1980

Simon Pooley

This paper examines the complex of factors and actors contributing to the call to exterminate all crocodiles in Zululand, South Africa, in 1957/58. These included the crocodile leather industry, commercial hunters, traditional use of crocodiles for medicines, the environmental impacts of farming on Lake St Lucia and the effects on crocodile behaviour including attacks on humans, on recreational use of Lake St Lucia vs wildlife conservation, public and expert ignorance about crocodile behaviour, and the politics of land in Natal Province in the period. This is set in the wider context of prejudices towards and knowledge/ignorance about crocs in Africa in the period. After the 1957/58 crisis, conservationists realised public and expert ignorance about crocs was a serious liability for attempts to conserve them, and from 1966-80 there was a concerted programme to remedy scientific ignorance and rehabilitate crocs in the eyes of the general public. The paper includes a brief review of how media coverage of crocodiles changed in the period.

History 'read' in tooth and trotter: comparative species history in the Ligurian Apennines 1516 to 2011.

Robert Alexander Hearn

Based on information collected during extensive fieldwork and archival research in northern Italy, this paper presents a cross-disciplinary comparative species history of grey wolves and wild boar in the Ligurian Apennines since the middle ages. Drawing on fields of research as diverse as anthropology and zoology, this presentation seeks to accurately identify and reconstruct the various historical relationships between the human and faunal populations in the province of La Spezia, principally by examining the socio-cultural history of wolf and wild boar hunting and management in the Val di Vara from the 16th century to the current day.

Due to changes in population dynamics of the Ligurian human population, both the wild boar and the grey wolf disappeared from the Apennines during the course of the 19th century, returning in the 1960s and 1990s respectively. Since the return of the species through both natural recolonisation and human reintroduction, both species have become highly politicized, immediately becoming prominent figures in various environmental discourses, their discussion provoking significant debate with direct social, political, cultural and economic applications in contemporary society.

In addition, through integrating archival, archaeological, aesthetic, scientific and literary sources with those derived from a series of interviews, it is hoped that this presentation exemplifies how oral histories are vibrant repositories of historical knowledge all too often underutilized in human-animal studies, an

important means by which to gain many new, fascinating insights into the complex and constantly changing relationship between human societies and the furred, feathered and finned faunal protagonists with which they share environments. In doing so it becomes clear that the metaphorical connotations attributed to the species have changed significantly over time, from the wild boar as a noble beast of the chase being supplanted by its perception as the nemesis of the agriculturalist, and the wolf, once a byword for the diabolical, the faunal representative of untamed nature, having now become a talisman for the environmental movement.

A Field Guide to Southern African Wildlife 'Histories', 1915-1975. Ed Teversham

The field guide to local wildlife has been an essential tool for many visitors to African National Parks where the searching for animals and birds is one of the primary leisure activities. This paper explores the evolution of the form, from its early beginnings as a hunting aid to its later manifestation as a series of zoological snapshots, as well as the various alternatives that fell in between. The paper argues that the field guides were shaped by other technologies around them, reflected wider concerns within conservation, and were a useful instrument in the propaganda campaign to readjust how people saw wildlife in Southern Africa.

CONSTRUCTING NATURE

Building a Scenic River: Nature and History on the Columbia River Highway, 1913-1916 Tyler A. Cornelius

In 1916 workers finished the construction of the Columbia River Highway, one of the earliest paved roads in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. Designed to offer automobile tourists a 'scenic' experience with no equal, the new route featured beautiful views of the spectacular Columbia River Gorge—literally 'paving the way' for nature oriented automobile tourism in the region. After its completion, most visitors experienced the Gorge's landscape by road, and the highway quickly became the most common way residents experienced the river. But in shortening the temporal distance between city and river, the highway also reduced the cultural distance—re-scripting how most middle-class urbanites envisioned their relationship to the river and the surrounding hinterlands. As previously un-named river spaces were transformed into discrete natural places, the "nature" of the Columbia's landscape began to change shape. By emphasizing both the timelessness of the scenery and the modernity of those who looked upon it, the Columbia River Highway offered its visitors specific ideas about 'what to see, and how to see it.' This paper

examines those ideas to explain how a road could change a river, and how that river then helped to change popular understandings of nature and modernity in the early 20th century American West.

The curious case of the otter in Britain. **Daniel Allen**

In twentieth century Britain the otter was persecuted as a fish-killer, valued as a source of sport, respected as a quarry, represented as a victim, transformed into a popular literary character, and threatened with extinction. Today the animal has a thriving population and is widely admired for its beauty, mysterious ways, and capacity to survive. Despite these dramatic changes, which are specific to this animal, many aspects of the otters' past have been widely forgotten. The biography of the otter has essentially been sanitised for modern eyes.

One reason for this is hunting for sport only started receiving serious scholarly attention in the past decade. Historians and geographers previously ignored them (Hoyle, 2007), and such practices no longer appealed to the majority of the British public. Most current debates on hunting, and the animals involved in such activities, have therefore been taking place in a 'historical vacuum' (Tichelar, 2006). This paper approaches the otter as a cultural object around which people formed arguments, practices and identities. By focusing on the views of otter hunters, anti blood-sports campaigners, popular writers such as Henry Williamson and ecologists, the paper traces different versions of human-otter; revealing how people styled themselves in relation to this particular animal, and providing an uncensored historical biography of the species in Britain (Matless, 2000; Allen, 2010; Alberti, 2011).

Recreating the Nature: Underwater Laboratories, Ecology and Outer Space **Sven Mesinovic**

This paper examines the underwater laboratories Tektite (USA) and Helgoland (Federal Republic of Germany), underwater house projects build in the 1970s, as attempts of recreating the natural environment. These underwater laboratories provided specific atmospheres, adapted to the pressure in the sea, for those living in. The aim of the underwater laboratories was to bring "the experiment to the sea". At the same time, the scientists themselves turned into "guinea pigs" in the laboratory, observed and watched by other scientists from outside who wanted to find criteria to properly select crews for further space missions. At the end, the laboratory itself became an experiment of creating an artificial environment. However, on the first aquanaut mission in the German underwater laboratory, problems such as ear infections (caused by the humid atmosphere) were observed in the aquanauts. Apparently, the idea of recreating an artificial environment beyond the Earth entails basic problems related to human adaptation to an artificial

atmosphere. If our understanding of the environment is circumscribed within the biological, chemical and physical habitat of Man, the case study of the underwater laboratory then begs the question of how culture and Man's nature interact, and is affected by habitat.

NATURE AND ENGLISH PASTS

The management of environmental resources in the four millennia before 1100AD and the origins of English political identity Susan Oosthuizen

It is generally accepted that rights over land, especially rights of pasture, were fundamental to the formation of the political identities of the multitude of early Anglo-Saxon 'folk-groups' which later coalesced into (or were absorbed by) the five great kingdoms of middle Anglo-Saxon England. This speculative paper argues that Anglo-Saxon political identities may at least in part have been founded on ancient traditions of collective governance and regulation of common environmental property resources over the four millennia preceding the Norman Conquest.

Late Medieval English metaphors for climate anomalies Linnéa Rowlatt

This presentation scrutinizes metaphors used by the late medieval English in order to explore the cultural response to climate anomalies of varying severity prefiguring the Little Ice Age. The thesis indicates that changes in these cultural expressions marked a transformation in late medieval English writers' conceptions of the natural world and their relationship to it. The central hypothesis is that repeated, long-term unreliable and uncertain weather conditions, and the resulting material insecurities and losses, stimulated a fundamental cultural response which reconfigured the metaphors used for the natural world. Although the representation of nature is inescapably an act of imagination, metaphors and metonymies for nature will be identified in the medieval creative literature, as well as the proto-scientific study of weather, and, in the context of the socioeconomic metabolism model, be brought under the light of conceptual metaphor analysis for elucidation.

Dig for Victory: the wartime garden in national myth and memory Franklin Ginn

Myths, histories and memories of Dig for Victory, Britain's wartime domestic food production campaign, continue to circulate widely in the cultural imagination. Increasingly, parallels are drawn between wartime thrift and

present-day efforts to mitigate environmental risks through domestic food cultivation. After outlining the national narrative of Dig for Victory, this paper proceeds to examine what exactly is being remembered and what is being forgotten, and why, when the Dig for Victory mythology is mobilised, focusing on the suburban garden. It does so in three parts. First, it examines how government propaganda, including posters and leaflets, was based in the presumption that the populace lacked expertise, and was received rather less warmly at the time than the is popularly supposed. Second, it argues that wartime government statistics have been badly mis-interpreted; the use of wartime statistics on domestic food production says more about the need to believe in a fixed reality anchored in pedagogical facts about the nation's past, than about accurately measuring vegetable growth. Third, it examines the class basis of Dig for Victory, suggesting the differentiated experience has today been sanitised in the figure of the consensual 'national citizen'. The conclusion reflects on the wider ramifications of this re-interpretation of Dig for Victory.

Richmond Park: Conservation area or ecological building site? John A.W. Lock

In 1938 the eminent ecologist Sir John Elton described London's Richmond Park as the product of 300 years of conservation. Seventy years on Richmond Park has an iconic place in the consciousness of the capital as a pristine natural wilderness set in a sprawling metropolis and as such it is stoutly defended against all comers by local and national interest groups who seek to promulgate this image. The Friends of Richmond Park who lobby on various issues celebrate their 50th anniversary this year but they are not alone: such lobbying has been going on over 300 years on the behalf of one or other group of animals. Concerted modern campaigning has led to the park being accorded SSSI status, designated a National Nature Reserve and a Special Area of Conservation under the EU Natura 2000 initiative yet despite this recognition Richmond Park has remained resolutely outwith the academic purview.

ECONOMY AND NATURE

'Animal Commodities: The changing nature of the animal resource at Bristol Zoological Gardens, 1836-2000' Andrew J. P. Flack

During the nineteenth century, the rise of the British Empire and the development of industrial worlds led to an increased human ability to manipulate the non-human natural world. Moreover, the prevalence of animal collections in Europe ensured that there was an increasing market demand for exotic animals, to display in menageries, to study and exhibit in zoos, and to

maintain as pets. These factors combined to facilitate the systematic extraction of animal resources from distant regions in order to satisfy the demand for the possession of individual animal commodities. This paper will examine the mechanics of this process within the context of Bristol Zoological Gardens: the world's fifth oldest zoo. Specifically, it will examine the extraction of the animal resource and the translocation of animal commodities from native habitats to the domestic spaces of the Empire and, in so doing, will illustrate the way in which these objects of desire were involved in an extensive commodity network which involved indigenous peoples, diplomats, animal dealers and menageries and circuses, regional animal collections and the Zoological Society's shareholders themselves. Moreover, it will show how animals were not simply commodities to be brought 'in' to the Zoo. Frequently, they retained their value and were fed back into the market from which they were purchased. Indeed, animal commodities were often purposefully generated by the Zoo, to be fed into the market as fresh commodities.

The paper will culminate in the examination of the transition from the commodification of individual animals as representatives of species to the reification of the genetic material held within the fleshy bodies of individuals. This will illustrate that the animal commodity in the zoo of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries is the species as a whole rather than individual, disposable, animals and that the rhetoric of possession, crucial to the commoditization of exotic animals has been replaced with a discourse of stewardship: a mentality that is no less imbued with ideas of human mastery.

Guide to the Natural Thames: A project to show the improvement of the River Thames as a chain of wildlife habitats
Dick Mayon-White

In the last 60 years, the value of the River Thames as a chain of wildlife habitats across Southern England has been recognised and increased. This is largely due to the actions of charitable voluntary organisations, which have defended green spaces from inappropriate development, and have improved the habitats that they own or manage. Two of these organisations, the River Thames Society (RTS) and the Thames River Restoration Trust (TRRT), are interested in the whole of the river, from its sources to the sea. The two bodies are working in partnership to make a guide to the Natural Thames, to inform the public of all the wildlife habitats that they can visit. The guide will list all the places that are managed to conserve wildlife and biodiversity, close to the river and open to the public. The guide will be freely available on the RTS and TRRT websites (www.riverthamessociety.org.uk and www.trrt.org.uk). There are more than 100 sites, managed by a wide variety of organisations, ranging from major national charities, through local authorities to small family trusts. In preparing the Guide to the Natural Thames, the project will seek to record the history of how the many organisations have developed the sites for which they are responsible. The history of the cleaning of the Thames in London in the 19th Century is well-known. The improvements of the environment of the whole river made in the second half of the 20th Century make a story that is

still to be written. Higher standards of drinking water, of waste disposal, and flood control were some of the drivers for change. The decline of river-side industries and better farming practices were also factors. Most important was the enthusiasm of voluntary organisations to reclaim the river for wild-life and recreation (walking, boating, swimming, bird-watching, picnics). Where river-side sites have been developed, mostly for housing, the public demand for access and green spaces has had an impact. In recording why people have conserved the wildlife habitats along the Thames, the project will build on the earlier cultural histories of the river, of which Peter Ackroyd's book, *Thames, Sacred River* (Random House, 2007) is a fine example. The first stage of the project is described.

Fish, fishermen and 'natures'. Angling and the construction of the freshwater environment in Britain 1750 – 1975.

Richard Coopey

Angling has developed over the last 250 years into one of the most popular pastimes or leisure pursuits in Britain, with perhaps as many as three million participants at times during the 20th century. It has a complex history, with a range of locations, methods, culture and meanings – indeed as the author has pointed out elsewhere, there are in fact “many anglings” in British history. One common factor in the history of angling, however, is its interaction with the natural environment – or rather a form of “environment” – and its interaction with a form of “wildlife”. We say forms of wildlife and environment in recognition of the fact that both entities have, to varying degrees themselves been constructed, either by general economic, political, cultural and social trends, or by anglers themselves, individually or collectively. This paper will consider phases in the development of angling in Britain in relationship to nature, from the early period when angling and commercial or subsistence fishery were intertwined, to the rise of angling as a mass leisure pursuit. This latter aspect needs to be understood against the rise of leisure time, its variegated class profile, and its relationship to industrialisation and urbanisation. For example, we need to understand the development of game fishing, principally for salmon and trout, from a general commercial activity, into a sport enclosed and reserved for an elite, involving increasingly arcane and exclusionist methods and rituals, and forming part of an idealisation of wild nature for both a rural and an industrial middle and upper class.

Anglers as individuals, as a class, or in a variety of organisations and institutions, have exhibited acute sensibilities to the environments that are the sites of their leisure. (These sites have been in constant flux co-existing with evolution of transport systems and accessibility, rationalisation and the development in the economic use of rivers, creation of canals and lakes, natural or engineered species development, commercial fishery development and so on.) Throughout, anglers have played an important, and often unacknowledged role in the stewardship of “nature” as it has been perceived and transformed. Game fishermen of the early nineteenth century for example

can be located in the development of the romantic or picturesque landscape movements. The mass organisation of working class anglers can also be seen to be both reacting to the creation of an urban/rural dichotomy, and actively policing and fostering the care of their natural environment. The Birmingham Anglers Association, for example, the largest angling club in the world in the early 20th century, played an active part in the stewardship of major rivers such as the Severn and formed a powerful lobby group against pollution by industry. The paper will outline and contextualise the above developments, based on research in a number of archives throughout Britain.

'The grave of the cow is in the stomach': Environment and Livestock diseases in South Africa
Karen Brown

This paper is based on field work amongst rural communities in the North West Province, QwaQwa and Eastern Cape. It deals with local knowledge and explores how stock owners understand and conceptualise livestock diseases. Although our informants attributed some animal diseases to witchcraft and offending the ancestors, the most common explanations for sickness were environmental. Ticks, worms, rotting carcasses and toxic plants parasitized the veld and made it dangerous to livestock. Stock owners also ascribed sickness to seasonal changes in weather patterns which brought on 'colds' and altered the nutrient content of the grasslands. By contrast animals in good health displayed a ravenous appetite, shiny coat, gleaming eyes and a lusty sex drive. Understandings of diet and how individual animals reacted to different ecological conditions were at the heart of aetiological explanations of infection and ill health. The paper offers a comparison of veterinary and environmental ideas from the three regions and discusses some of the implications for disease control.