Encountering Landscape: Travel as Method

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Abstract
In a world of acceleration and consumption, where the small screen often has greater appeal than the real world, society is becoming increasingly detached from the landscape and the places within it. Yet 'modernity is society on the move', and in an increasingly mobile world, travel provides new opportunities for distinct types of encounter. Based on the pace, rhythms and rituals of each, this paper examines how different modes of transport afford distinct opportunities for travellers to see and read the landscape and to better understand the processes of change that have shaped what we see today. In this paper we explore these distinct opportunities, presenting the idea of travel as a methodology that affords unique and significant ways of documenting and understanding landscape, and in particular its character and its dynamism.

Introduction
Humans experience the physical world through a combination of direct and indirect forms of encounter. The former comprise opportunities to see and feel for oneself, while the latter might include reading or hearing descriptions of other people's experiences of landscape such as stories or memories about a place or a journey, or seeing their visual representations of it. Taken together, such experiences are universal amongst human societies (e.g. Aldred 2014; Bell 2020; Leary 2014) as are the social mechanisms that ensure experiences and knowledge of landscape are passed on through oral or written tradition. With new opportunities provided by mechanisation over the past 200-300 years, through the preponderance of motor cars, trains and aeroplanes, the range and character of these direct and indirect encounters have transformed as travel has become increasingly quick and efficient, comfortable, and accessible, and ubiquitous (in the sense that most people can and do travel). As Lash and Urry (1994: 252) describe it, 'modern society is a society on the move'. A decade ago it was estimated that 23 billion kilometers were being travelled globally each year (Elliott and Urry 2010: ix) while technology has now also created the possibility of virtual travel experienced from the desktop facilitated through satellite imagery, with the Internet providing infinite detail for every place encountered on any journey anywhere in the world (an opportunity whose potential was realised when actual travel became impossible during the current COVID-19 lockdown scenarios, e.g. Chen 2020).

Notwithstanding the opportunities of virtual travel, the view through a windscreen and at ever-increasing speed has largely replaced more traditional forms of encounter, notably by walking (see Bell 2020; Leary forthcoming). For researchers of landscape, this might be a cause for concern. In some ways, it is a concern we share. As archaeologists, we have both undertaken conventional extensive surveys on foot at landscape scale (e.g. Schofield 1987; Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru 2020) and may once have agreed that the way to conduct such investigations is always on foot (see Leary 2014; Bell and Leary in press). Certainly, mechanised transport has created a growing sense of detachment between people and place: train carriages and aeroplane seats have become work

spaces, and cars a home from home (Graves-Brown 2000); travellers watch movies, listen to the radio and switch off (and see Jain and Lyon, 2008 and Lyon et al., 2007 for examples of initiatives that encourage them to do so). But in this paper we argue that these different views of landscape through various types of windscreen in fact present new opportunities to see and to better understand what passes us by (both literally and in the sense of 'going unnoticed'). For archaeologists specifically, there is opportunity to devise and undertake new types of surveys, using new recording methods and modes of perception, leading to new understandings of landscape. In short we use this paper to counter the argument that the best way to conduct an archaeological survey is always on foot.

Before illustrating this proposition through four key modes of travel (walking, driving, taking the train and flying) we first examine briefly some broad principles by way of a framework for the examples that follow. The framework comprises a short discussion of: 1) the prescription of travel routes; 2) the degree to which travellers have control over their journeys (what we refer to as 'consumption'); and 3) the significance of scale. These relationships and their impact on the various modes of transport are summarised in Figure 1.

[Fig 1]

First, **prescription**. This refers to the extent to which journeys are constrained, whether by specific routes and pathways, or by timetables and scheduled stops. Prehistoric encounters with the landscape would have been less prescribed than they are now, although some degree of prescription is likely. Certain parts of the landscape may have had restricted access to people with age- or gender-related privileges, for example, while some journeys would have been constrained by physical barriers and territorial boundaries. Equally, routes may have simply made sense, for example following paths of least resistance (although it is worth noting the suggestion that humans may have first walked upright in steep rugged terrain, landscape to which 'scrambler man' needed to urgently adapt, Winder et al. 2013).

The relationship even between prescribed pathways and the landscape is an ambiguous one however. For example, there is often an abstraction of travel routes from the underlying structure of the landscape. Whilst historically routes may have respected the grain of a landscape (e.g. roads that follow earlier field boundaries), this is often no longer the case. Railways and canals, like Roman roads, will now typically cut across the grain, following a straight and level course, with cuttings and embankments smoothing the impact of terrain. Aeroplanes travel with virtually no respect to the landscape over which they pass, with the exception of using landmarks for navigation and avoiding both mountain ranges (a 'fixed constraint') and areas of political instability (being more 'fluid'). Unsurprisingly therefore, the different modes of transport offer very different perspectives influencing which parts of the landscape travellers see, and which parts they do not.

Whilst from a traveller's perspective routes are prescribed, there are usually options, depending on how quickly people wish or need to get from A to B, or how radical they are prepared to be in getting there (see Graves-Brown 2007; 2014). This degree of choice also varies between modes of transport. In walking or driving for example, travellers have some control of the route (in the sense that they might, for example, 'take the scenic route', rather than the quicker alternative), whereas on a train or bus journey, they cannot - they go where the driver takes them, on a route that is fixed and unchanging. This then links to questions of '**consumption**'. In open country and the urban

environment, the active walker can choose a precise pathway, select particular views to dwell and reflect upon, carefully select the subject of photographic images or sketches and paintings they wish to make, and choose whether to read notice boards along the way, more than the passive passenger who cannot. This choice between modes of transport determines how far one can 'dwell on' and potentially understand a place and the wider landscape in which it sits. For example, regional variations in architectural form will not be easily visible through the window on a high-speed train journey, although broad variations in landscape character will be discernible. A slower rail journey with frequent stops will allow the more detailed (e.g. architectural) observations yet the broader changes in landscape character will be harder to grasp.

Both of these factors (prescription and consumption) relate also to **scale**. As Edgeworth (2013) discusses, there is an 'archaeological knowledge' to be gleaned from the nanoscopic structure of silicon chips and the macroscopic views of earth satellites. But, as he also suggests, there may be a fractility in such shifts in scale, such that patterns are reiterated at different levels of analysis (see also Brown et al. 2005; Zubrow 1985). For example, as Song dynasty artist and scientist Shen Ku'o said, '[T]he method of landscape painting is to see everything small with a big eye, as if we are looking at a miniature rock garden' (quoted in Wong 1991: 75). Equally, and at times, one's legs ('Shanks's Pony') are not enough. In 1999-2000 a Countryside Commission of Wales LANDMAP survey of the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot, covering an area of 442 km^2, was undertaken by one of the authors (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru 2020). This was a form of historic landscape characterisation (or 'HLC', being a high-level rapid assessment of the essential character of areas that renders them distinctive), but at an even larger, coarser scale. Having done the desk-based assessment, this project required what in the USA is termed a windshield survey - a term that dates back to at least the late 1960s and public health studies (see e.g. Hodge 1963) and refers unsurprisingly to a type of survey conducted by driving around an area. Significant here is the observation that a windshield survey must be a dérive if it is to be effective. The idea of a dérive originates with Debord (1955) and the field of psychogeography, being 'an unplanned journey through a landscape, usually urban, in which participants drop their everyday relations and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there'. The principle is that, whilst restricted to passable roads and tracks, the need to understand broad-scale transitions in landscape type requires one to drive almost aimlessly, allowing the landscape itself to dictate direction. And, as Edgeworth suggests (affirming our earlier point highlighting different perceptions from high- and slow-speed train travel), what results is a fractally larger scale of what one might see from a conventional archaeological site survey: areas of commonality and difference, boundaries, transitions and the liminal. Whilst speed in a sense blurs the detail it also reveals the larger-scale patterning of landscape and of the character and impact of structures and megastructures that humans have inserted within it.

To summarise, it is not our purpose here to question people's motivations for how they use their travel time, or to suggest that archaeological surveys should not be undertaken on foot. Rather, to emphasise first, that travellers will inevitably and unavoidably absorb information about the places they encounter by passing through or over them, whatever mode of transport they use; and second, that what can be learnt will depend on the mode and speed of transport. To examine these ideas more closely, we undertook a study of the Chiltern Line (Figs 7-9), the railway line that runs

between London and Aylesbury (Buckinghamshire, UK), where we prototyped a leaflet to inform rail passengers about the landscape they were travelling through. We will return to this example in the section on train travel. In the sections that follow we also explore three other modes of transport, their forms of encounter and the factors that determine their potential for reading and learning more about the character and dynamism of landscape. We focus in particular on the speed at which people pass through landscape, the distances (and thus diversity of landscape types) they will cover, the degree to which travellers can directly and physically encounter the landscape they pass through, and the control they have over decision-making during the course of their journeys. Each of these sections (on walking, driving, train travel and flying) includes either biographical or literary examples to emphasise the intimacy of these encounters. Through this analysis we present the components of what we refer to as 'travel as method' (building on and giving an archaeological dimension to the social sciences mobility turn and referring indirectly to authors including e.g.: Adey 2017; Büscher et al. 2010; Fincham et al. 2010; Boase and Humphreys 2018; Merriman 2009), to determine how people learn about landscape from simple and sometimes distant or fleeting observation. We begin with a discussion of the slowest, oldest and most direct and tangible form of encounter: walking.

Walking

Walking barefoot, we literally feel the earth beneath our feet. Even with shoes we can feel the terrain, the geology and the topography, the stickiness of soil; the slipperiness of wet slate; the steepness of a slope. Direct evidence for humans walking across landscape extends back 3.66 million years with the survival of fossilized footprints at Laetoli in the Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania (Hay and Leakey 1982, and Figure 2). These may be the earliest, but many other examples of prehistoric footprints are recorded around the world, each set of prints representing a moment in time, an everyday encounter between people and their landscape; people who would have felt the landscape on which they walked. Boot prints in cement represent a modern equivalent (Figure 3).

[Figs 2-3]

Archaeologically, walking is the basic modality by which the site and the off-site are conceived. Fieldwalking (or 'surface collection') is a technique widely practiced by archaeologists to get a sense of presence for people whose past activities occurred maybe thousands of years ago in the same location and whose traces have been brought to the contemporary ground surface, usually by ploughing (e.g. Schofield 1987). More recently, the idea of surface collection as a metaphor (Harrison 2011) has contributed to understanding the significance of the visible surface in archaeologies of the contemporary past, helping to articulate why buried surfaces (and thus excavation) may not always provide the staple of 'real' archaeological enquiry (a point not entirely unrelated to the one we make here). Archaeologists also use what is often termed the walkover survey. This is different, being more closely aligned to the practice of psychogeographers and flâneurs, ever since Baudelaire explored the streets of Hausmann's Paris in the 1860s (and see for example Coverley 2010; Nicholson 2011; Papadimitriou 2013; Sinclair 1997; Smith 2014 for a further discussion of this and related points). In all of its various forms, archaeological survey traditionally involves gaining a close familiarity of landscape, creating overview, sensing presence

and character, usually (but not always) ahead of more detailed ground penetrative work.

Yet in archaeology at least these walkover surveys, the basic 'level 1' of archaeological practice (Historic England 2017a), is hardly theorised, and it is rather in Debord's (1955 and above) concept of the dérive that we get any sense of what it is about. Specifically, and unlike the usually systematic transect-based method of fieldwalking, the walkover survey is often directionless; it is necessarily a wander, and indeed Historic England (2017a: 8) come close to Debord in their own description of the method:

> It is good practice to walk over [note the earlier version of this document (English Heritage 2007) used the word 'perambulate'] not only the site but the surrounding area; this will ensure that its full extent can be determined and its landscape context established. The archaeological hinterland can often reveal as much evidence for interpretation as the site itself.

Perambulating is more than just walking, however. As Nicholson (2011: 53) says, quoting Ian Sinclair: 'As well as hoovering up information [walks are] a way of actually shifting a state of consciousness and you get into things you didn't know about.' Or as Graves-Brown (2000: 1) has suggested previously, it makes 'the familiar unfamiliar'. It is also somewhat different to what Ingold (2010: 126) calls wayfaring, where the 'concern is to seek a way through: not to reach a specific destination'. The walkover is about being in one place, but not retaining a fixed vantage point. Walkover surveys undertaken in archaeological research can be tightly constrained however, by specific research questions or a prescribed study area (e.g. an area earmarked for future development). Yet even with constraints, the survey can be active rather than passive, the researcher asking their own questions of the landscape and the features in it, looking for signs of things and then following them along, testing out ideas that may not have previously been considered. A useful parallel here is the hunter, not knowing in advance what he or she will encounter, looking for and following tracks and other signs, interpreting them in the moment and adapting the strategy accordingly. Building partly on Csordas's (1995) idea of the body as the existential ground of culture, we might also helpful recall archaeological examples of applied phenomenology, not least Tilley's (1994) walk along the 10 km long ceremonial Neolithic Dorset Cursus, during which he encountered, experienced and thought through the folds and pleats of this rolling downland landscape and the views revealed and hidden along its length.

The pedestrian gaze is the fundamental mode in which humans have always perceived what Gibson (1979) calls the optic array. By moving relatively slowly through the world people see the relationships between the elements of any place or landscape; its shapes and vistas, superposition and parallax. But with the advent of coach travel in the late 18th century, the train and bicycle in the 19th century and cars and buses in the 20th, the majority of people have begun to find other ways of perceiving their surroundings, a gradual acceleration of movement through the optic array such that the kinds of 'information pickup' (Gibson 1966; 1979) are subtly altered. We might also add horse-riding to this list, a mode through which the traveller sees the journey and the landscape partly *through* the horse, and vice versa.

Recently completed by one of the authors, the 640 mile South West Coast Path in SW England, from Minehead in the north to Poole in the south has been subject to critical reflection, Wylie (2005) and Blacksell (2005) commenting for example on the 'affinities and distanciations of self

and landscape emergent within the affective and performative milieu of coastal walking' which thus enables, 'critical engagement with current conceptualizations of self–landscape and subject–world relations within cultural geography and spatial-cultural theory more generally' (Wylie 2005: 234). This author's experience of the Coast Path (Figures 4-5) was both affective and performative, and facilitated critical engagement with self, others and landscape in many and diverse ways. Most obviously, the path gave proximity to and affinity with a combination of places, some heard of but never visited, some visited long ago and either forgotten or partly remembered, and others (mostly coastal fortifications and promontory forts) specifically related to previous heritage employment which required many visits to the coastlines of SW England. Sometimes these Coast Path encounters were anticipated, the location noticed from a familiar depiction on the Ordnance Survey map. But often the encounters came as a surprise, the familiarity or significance of a place gradually dawning only on approach or arrival - memories that emerged slowly and unexpectedly out of the landscape - not so much 'information pickup' as 'information re-found'. Either way, walking allows pauses to reflect on such encounters, to study the map, to scan the horizon, and even to go online to check the meaning of a place-name, or consult the Historic Environment Record entry. Walking highlights terrain, geology, the impact of changing weather, the sounds and smells of landscape, and its history. Walkers can choose their schedule, how long to dwell on a place, how quickly to move on, and whether to detour. Walkers are low on speed, but they are in control. They feel the landscape and come close to becoming a part of it - finding place and often also finding themselves through this slow and intimate form of encounter (e.g. Strayed 2012; Sinclair 2005; and for a broader discussion see Solnit 2014).

[Figs 4-5]

We now turn to consider those modalities that are more recent introductions. As we have seen, with the exception of the bicycle, car and the windshield survey (see also below), most modes of travel are constrained such that one cannot freely perambulate. This is crucial in understanding the nature of different modalities as ways of reading the landscape. The train and bus offer a kind of programmed encounter, for example, a journey in which the route is a preordained narrative. However, in what follows we want to emphasise that these modalities need not be simply, 'transport … to get from A to B, ideally in as short a time as possible' (Ingold 2010: 126); rather that such journeys can be just as embodied an experience as walking and need not be 'strategic' or a 'lateral displacement' as Ingold suggests. Indeed he himself hints at this, by stating that, 'in practice … pure transport is an ideal that can no more be actualized than can the dream of being in two places at once. Time passes and life goes on, even while the passenger is in transit' (Ingold 2010: 127).

Driving

As previously mentioned, roads relate in different ways to the landscapes through which they pass. Roads can shape landscape (e.g. Ruiz et al. 2015) just as there are many early examples where 'roads' (more accurately earlier tracks or routeways which later became roads) either circumnavigate earlier settlements and respect existing field boundaries, or cut through landscape to reduce journey times, improve efficiencies and reduce risk. The motorway is a clear example of efficiency - A to B, as fast as possible.

What can be seen from the car is determined by the route and the places it passes through. Technology also shapes experience. A car journey 100 years ago would have been very different to those of today. Cars were far noisier. Ascents would have been a struggle. According to Mate and Pocock (2018), changes in transport infrastructure have led to 'starkly homogenous journeys devoid of character that result in a loss of experience and place' (ibid.: 374) while cars have distanced drivers and passengers from historic meaning in the landscape, isolating them from its textures and temperatures (ibid.: 374-5). In that sense at least, cars and trains are not dissimilar. Both are now air-conditioned and flatten the landscape through their efficiency; the vistas and visual experiences can often be the same where railways and arterial roads follow the same topographic course from city to city. With coaches and buses, one often has the option of an upstairs seat, providing the opportunity to see over the hedgerows and ribbon development to the less developed landscape beyond. Double-decker trains exist across large parts of mainland Europe, providing this same visual advantage over car travel.

It was earlier suggested that 'windshield survey' (also known as 'whirlwind surveys' and now presumably 'armchair survey' using Google Streetview) provides a legitimate form of archaeological method, highlighting the virtues of visual inspection and the speed at which assessment can inform understanding and build knowledge of place and landscape, in advance of development proposals for example. A very rapid 'windshield' assessment of the Anfield district of Liverpool (Figure 6) formed part of a 'Level 2' study of the area by English Heritage staff in the early 2000s (summarised in Historic England, 2017b: 18; see also Menuge, 2008) with the purpose of mapping landscape character within a tight-knit urban area to help determine the significance of the built heritage and future priorities for development. The timescale precluded a longer and more detailed ('Level 3') analysis while arguably the rapid assessment, which quickly mapped broad variation in building types, their spacing, and condition largely by simply driving around, produced exactly the results needed in this situation.

[Fig 6]

While accepting Mate and Pocock's (2018: 374-5) viewpoint that, 'cars have distanced drivers and passengers from historic meaning in the landscape, isolating them from its textures and temperatures', similar themes can be recognised between official 'windshield surveys' and any car journey during which the driver or passengers take notice of the landscape. For example, on journeys in an unfamiliar landscape they may be alert to interesting or unusual landmarks. In these situations they are less likely to identify subtle variations in landscape character as they pass between one area and the next. But in a more familiar landscape in which landmarks are taken for granted, more subtle variations will become more noticeable - a gradual increase in the amount of woodland, or smaller field sizes, or a greater density of nucleated settlements, for example. And once this variation is noticed, people might begin to ask themselves, 'why?'. Although not an immersive experience, it is an experience nonetheless.

A sense of familiarity becomes heightened on routes that are frequently travelled. Here even the variations in character can eventually be taken for granted. In these situations travellers may notice how the landscape along a particular route is changing, these routes effectively becoming transects through which travellers witness the subtle, piecemeal process of landscape change played out at local scale; a sample of wider regional or national socio-economic trends. Take the B1119 road,

from Stowmarket to another small market town in Suffolk, Saxmundham (UK). One of the authors first took this journey as a passenger with his parents in 1975, and has been making the same journey regularly (if not always frequently) ever since. He has stories he can attach to this road - things that have happened, things he knows from what friends told him, as well as memories and aspirations to further explore the landscape's known unknowns ('I wonder what is down that lane?'). Now, based on this experience, whenever he travels this particular fifteen miles across Suffolk, he will immediately identify any change, whether to the roadside (trees that have fallen) or to the buildings that adjoin it (a house extension or a new barn at the farm). He has known the road under all weather conditions, and at most times of the day and night. He knows every camber, every hazard, every blind corner. Where a persistent pot-hole has been repaired, or a fallen tree cleared, a form of muscle-memory causes him to avoid it, even though he knows the hazard disappeared many years ago. He still remembers the barn owl he saw one evening (and looks to the empty space in the sky), and always notices the place where his father lost the corner and drove off the road. This is a place where the road dips down into a wooded valley, with two sharp corners, only to reappear on the other side of the valley half a mile further on. His father had already playfully named this place 'Dead Man's Gulch' (Figure 7). The family still calls it that. He feels as though he knows this landscape intimately, yet he has never stopped the car and taken a walk here. He has only ever experienced this landscape through his car window, detached from it yet somehow closely connected to its rhythms and its moods.

[Fig 7]

In this example, car travel is about familiarity and how memories contribute to the understanding of place (and for another example of memory and landscape through road travel, see Schofield 2007). Here, on this very ordinary road, in an area of country where it seems nothing much changes, there is close awareness that it does and of what this process of change actually looks like. As this example shows, regular travellers repeatedly following the same route can become attuned to landscape; they come to know a place even though they may never have stepped foot in it. Interestingly, this was the criticism once levelled at HLC: how could one characterise a landscape for which the researcher did not have an intimate understanding? The answer of course is that the comparison is a false one - the modes of perception and the scale are not the same. We return to HLC again later.

Taking the train

Whilst train travel shares aspects with the windshield survey and is revelatory of larger patterns in the passing scene, it cannot except in the very coarsest sense be a dérive. Changing trains is not as simple as changing direction. Yet as Schivelbusch (1980) suggests, the sense that the landscape can be conceived of in terms of broad panorama owes a lot to the developing perception of rail travel in the mid 19th century, at the same time as the flâneur was discovering the city. The train carriage frames the landscape and encloses the traveller. It is a little alienating, but this distancing also allows for a closer understanding of what *is* (see Graves-Brown 2015). It can also, of course, be a context in which this alienation leads to an abstraction predicated on the nature of the journey:

> Of all the modes of transport, the train is perhaps the best aid to thought: the views have none

> of the potential monotony of those on a ship or plane … at the end of hours of train-dreaming, we may feel we have returned to ourselves - that is, brought back into contact with emotions and ideas of importance to us. (de Botton, 2002: 56).

While the passenger gets to see what Iggy Pop referred to as the 'city's ripped backsides' (Figure 8), it is perhaps too simplistic to reduce the train passenger to a mere dupe of the spectacle. At one level, whilst the railway was initially seen as intrusive and set apart from its landscape context, time has facilitated its permanent way into the landscape – nature has come to an accommodation with it; plants colonise its boundaries and mammals use it as a route to travel and an opportunity to access and occupy new habitats (e.g. Morelli et al. 2014; Moroń et al. 2017). The railway often takes the traveller to places, or at least offers perspectives, that are denied to those on foot or in a car. For example, railway cuttings once allowed the unique opportunity to see *into* the landscape by revealing, 'geological strata at the same time Sir Charles Lyell was popularising interest in geology. It was at the leading edge of science, and could now be seen first hand in railway cuttings' (Bell and Lyall 2002: 101) whilst the shifted sense of scale resonated with the 'discourse of the vastness of geological time' (ibid.). According to Freeman (1999: 55) the railway offered a 'spy-hole into a distant and shadowy past which descended beyond the Flood, and grappled with the murky science of evolution'. In a sense, the railway tames the vastness of space and time, or as Freeman (1999: 103) goes on to say, 'rail technology also worked to diminish the components of sublimity'.

[Fig 8]

Further, and arguably as significantly, the railway has a history closely entwined with film (Kirby 1997; Larsen 2001). Thus the train journey becomes a proto-cinematic experience, a fact emphasised by the relatively constant speed of rail travel (unlike pedestrian or car journeys). Hence its revelation of the panorama, as the traveller's perspective pans smoothly across the vista. In the authors' study of the Chiltern line between Marylebone and Aylesbury, one obstacle to 'fieldwork' was the frequency of railway cuttings and lineside vegetation which obscured views of the historic landscape, notably its field patterns and farmsteads. Yet in a sense these obstructions, like the framing of the carriage itself, are part of the railway of seeing; they are the jump cuts of its proto cinema. This is not a trivial point. If the psychogeographer's stroll is about shifting a state of consciousness (e.g. Sinclair 1997), the jump cuts of rail perception can, as in the case of film, serve as a kind of *Verfremdungseffekt*, a way of distancing the traveller from the narrative of the landscape in order to be a more critical observer.

In terms of the specifics of our Chiltern Line study, two aspects (one urban, one rural) stand out as being both closely aligned to the history and significance of the railway, and evident from the railway, as one travels today from Marylebone to Aylesbury (see Figures 8-11). Firstly, on the urban aspect, as John Betjeman discussed in the seminal (1973) TV documentary, *Metro-land* (building on an earlier film of 1910, and see Forrest 2015 for a retrospective view), the journey offers a vivid insight into the growth and scale of suburbia. A product of the development of the railways, the sprawl of Greater London can often be lost in the specifics of streets of semis and the patchwork of town centres subsumed within their matrix. Initially running in a tightly confined corridor between buildings and then a tunnel, the line emerges in the suburbs at Wembley, heading

north west. The journey time and its route provide a vivid sense of the scale of the suburbs, and in particular the extent of suburban development in the 1920s and 1930s. During the most intensive period of house building in British history, an enormous area of previously farmed countryside was filled in. At its peak in the early 1930s, over 80,000 new houses were being built in Greater London per annum (Cheshire et al. 2015). Hence one can see how the earlier often 19th-century cores of towns and villages such as Harrow and Ruislip, themselves the product of earlier railway development, became totally engulfed within a landscape of semi-detached houses and the new shopping streets of the 1920s and 1930s, with a final infilling in the post-war period which, while peaking in the late 1960s, never equalled the earlier building boom.

[Figs 9-11

Moreover, the character of this sprawl, and its abrupt termination with the outbreak of war in 1939, is underlined by the equally abrupt transition to the open country of the Colne Valley as one approaches Denham. As elsewhere on the fringes of London, the Abercrombie Plan of 1944 (Abercrombie 1945) and the subsequent *Town and Country Planning Act* of 1947 meant that the edge of urban development was sharply defined by the provision of the Green Belt. And as one heads out further still, the landscape returns to one of agricultural land peppered with relatively small, clustered urban nodes such as Amersham. Indeed *Metro-land's* closing scene shows Betjeman eating a sandwich at the final station of the Metropolitan Line (Quainton Road, Figure 10), where the urban railway was planned but never implemented.

The second (rural) aspect of the study is the noticeable large scale transition between the landscape character of the Chilterns and that of the Thames Valley floodplain when the line reaches Princes Risborough (see Figure 9). Here, for a variety of historical reasons, the Chilterns have retained much of the earlier enclosure pattern of medieval and earlier field systems, ancient woodlands and assarts. Yet north of West Wycombe one begins to see a transition to the economic demands of agriculture, with increasing numbers of large 18th- and 19th-century parliamentary enclosures which then become ubiquitous as one leaves the Chiltern ridge. This transition reflects the fact that parliamentary enclosure has its focus in the Midlands (Mingay 1997) with Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire having much higher levels of enclosure than Buckinghamshire (see Roberts and Wrathmell 2000). But this pattern may itself be a secondary result of the social and economic gravity of London; landed estates, such as West Wycombe and particularly former prime minister Disraeli's home at Hughenden, mark the desire of the wealthy to be both outwith, but within easy reach of the City, thus helping to protect the rural landscape from all-out industrialisation. One might add that this 'leisure' role of the landscape is reflected in the orbital ring of golf courses that surround greater London, here instantiated by Denham Golf Club.

These variations in landscape character are interesting in and of themselves, demonstrating how physical traces within the landscape align with and contribute to historical narratives, social, cultural, economic and political. That these traces are visible and - in many ways - obvious, is one thing. The fact they can be witnessed and understood from a passing train is quite another, an observation that has received some initial recognition within heritage practice. In summarising the results and significance of a national project on medieval settlement in England (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000), Stocker (1995: 17) described the diversity of forms and regional variation from

the perspective of a ‘practised’ rail traveller:

> Practised travellers on the railway lines of England can glance at the landscape flashing by and, from a quick assessment of the shape and size of a passing settlement, its building types, and the pattern of its fields, make a good guess at where they are. Along the East Coast Main Line, for example, there is a marked difference between the heavily wooded country of Hertfordshire, with its small fields and scattered brick buildings strung out along a maze of lanes, and the more open limestone upland north of Peterborough, where villages, surrounded by big rectangular fields, are larger and more concentrated, often around large medieval churches, and are fewer and farther between.

Alison Light (2015: 252) makes a comparable observation in her popular study of genealogy, describing the moment she had the inspiration to focus attention on her own family. It came while,

> I was on a train ride between London and Newcastle, glancing out of the window across the wide, open fields of Lincolnshire. The fields were empty, not even a solitary farmer on a tractor, and suddenly I had a sense of how crowded and peopled those acres would have been in earlier centuries.

Coincidentally both of these observations align with a recent study by the rail company that operates this route, London North Eastern Railway (LNER 2020). In a survey of 600 passengers by Ipsos, the question, ‘Thinking of a typical long-distance train journey, how do you prefer to spend your time?’ saw a majority 71% of respondents answer, ‘Looking out of the window’.

Thus train travel, perhaps uniquely, provides the time and space to observe the landscape, and to reflect upon it at a pace and scale conducive to revealing for travellers its geographical and architectural diversity, its character (see also Lyons et al. 2007; Jain and Lyons 2008; Watts 2008 for ways of using train travel time).

Flying

In Bruce Chatwin’s (1982) novel *On the Black Hill*, twin brothers occupy a remote farm on the border of England and Wales. Their entire lives are centred on this farm, and their intimate and claustrophobic relationship to this small area of landscape is a central theme of the novel. Late in the story, and as old men, the Jones’ brothers receive the birthday gift of a flight over their familiar landscape, a flight which reveals new perspectives on the familiar:

> By the time Benjamin opened his eyes again, the plane had climbed to 1,500 feet. Down below there was a field of mustard in flower. A greenhouse flashed in the sun. The stream of white dust was a farmer fertilizing a field. Woods went by, a pond coated with duckweed, and a quarry with a team of yellow bulldozers. He thought a black car looked a bit like a beetle. … The pines on Cefn Hill were blue-green and black-green in the varied light. The heather was purple. The sheep were the size and shape of maggots, and there were inky pools with rings of reed around them. The plane’s shadow moved among a herd of grazing ponies, which scattered in all directions. (Ibid.: 252-3).

In many ways flying is the ultimate example of the way in which a change in modality can radically alter perspective (and see Aldred 2020 for further reflections on this point). From the early work of OGS Crawford and others (Bowden 2001) it became apparent that by seeing landscape from above, archaeologists and landscape historians could perceive aspects that were not apparent on the ground, be they ancient field boundaries or buried remains that appear visible on the surface only from above, as crop- or soil-marks. Drawing on techniques developed by the military to detect what was hidden or camouflaged in the landscape, archaeologists found new ways to find traces of the past. In particular stereoscopy provides a three dimensional view of landform from photographs. LiDAR now extends these principles even to hidden landscapes under woodland.

However, although increasingly common due to reduced cost, flying for most people is still not as familiar or everyday an activity as walking, driving or travelling by train. When people do travel by air it is usually in an airliner with most of the journey at 40,000 feet, from where one can see little else but clouds or ocean. Whilst we can appreciate the potential of an aerial view peeking out of the window as the plane takes off and lands (Figures 12-13), or by viewing the abundant satellite coverage of Google Earth, there are both challenges and opportunities in our relative unfamiliarity with flying. In Ingold's (2010: 126) words, air travel is largely a matter of transport rather than wayfaring; it is, 'a lateral displacement rather than a lineal progression'. The danger is that we see the aerial view as a map rather than an experiential domain, and as Korzybski (1933: 58) pointed out, '[A] map is not the territory it represents'. According to Campana (2017) the use of Lidar and photogrammetry in conjunction with drones can obviate these pitfalls, placing the recording and interpreting phase at the end of the process; in effect letting the drone be the experiencing observer in place of the archaeologist. But one might wonder if there is ever an alternative to actually seeing for oneself.

[Figs 12-13]

In a famous one paragraph story, Borges (1975 [1933]) describes an empire in which, 'the Cartographers Guild struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it.' Such a map is clearly as useless as it is impossible, but it is all too easy to see the aerial view as analogous to a map, especially as archaeologists such as Crawford deployed this view exclusively as a resource for mapping. Here the fractility of landscape can deceive. One of us once visited a recorded group of prehistoric burial mounds that turned out to be geological 'sink holes' (Figure 14); someone had failed to use the stereo images necessary to distinguish the two and had performed a kind of gestalt switch. They had certainly not 'been there'. In our unfamiliarity it is all too easy to regard the aerial photograph or satellite image as an abstraction, to be mapped in the Kantian fashion described by Ingold.

[Fig 14]

It is appropriate to conclude this section, and the discussion of all four modes of transport, with the important question of maps. As others have noted (e.g. Gillings et al. 2018), encountering the landscape through maps is a kind of disembodied experience, but one that nonetheless is embodied

through the holding and engaging with paper, folded maps or the scrolling and zooming of interactive online versions. In both cases, the content transports the viewer to the places experienced. Just as HLC is effectively an archaeological approach to landscape character, which involves the metaphorical 'excavation' of the landscape's different layers, the interrogation of maps involves more than just 'looking' at landscape.

Conclusions: encountering landscape

It would be wrong to assume that flying, as with other modalities, can alienate us from embodied experience, or that wayfaring is not as viable at 5000 feet as it is on the ground. Indeed, the map can be confused with the territory at any altitude. Perhaps the use of drones may help to see the points of dissonance and connection between modes of transport more clearly. But as we suggest here, each mode of travel offers a different scale in the fractility of experience; flying is in a sense the flip side of stopping at a gate to take in the view during a walk in the countryside.

Characterisation has already been mentioned in the context of windshield surveys. Historic Landscape Characterisation (or 'HLC', see e.g. Austin 2007 for discussion and critique) provides some parallel insight, and may help better understand some of the tensions between these variations in scale, but also the opportunities they each provide. As a method designed to help inform heritage-related planning decisions, characterisation uses historic mapping to determine the character of the contemporary landscape - what makes a place distinctive, based on the unique historic processes that have shaped it. As we have seen, the criticism consistently levelled at this GIS-based approach was the lack of close detail, and the fact that mapped layers were often created without researchers ever having visited the place in question. HLC maps were based on historic maps and data, and often satellite aerial photography. This was often literally a high-level assessment of landscape, rapidly completed and sufficiently agile to be edited and updated over time. It was not intended to be a detailed survey of individual places within the landscape.

Yet in reality, and recalling the experience of repeatedly driving through 'Dead Man's Gulch', those undertaking this work *had* experienced parts of the landscape they were studying, through car and train journeys and maybe even being on flights that passed overhead. As we have shown, these different types of encounter do contribute to an awareness of the landscape, with the different modalities each adding a distinct perspective. And this isn't unique to archaeologists, or landscape historians. This is true for anyone making journeys by any of the modalities described in this paper: the overview from the air ('how green or wooded it looks'); the rapid pass by train ('how close together or far apart the villages are, and how this density changes once you get beyond X'); the view from the car ('I don't remember seeing that building before'); and on foot ('how different this place feels after it has rained'). In this sense we disagree with Bell and Lyall (2002: 188) who suggest that, '[t]he landscape is not a resource for tourists until it has meaning attached to it. The highway disassociates the journey from the landscape and from any possible attached meanings.' Rather, experience of the landscape is different with each modality and in all cases we learn something about a place, just by looking and thinking, by being present within it, or having a view of it from above.

Of the pedestrian, Ingold (2010: 127) remarks,

> It is not that he cannot see anything in the field of vision. On the contrary, since the ground is a fractal surface there is no limit to the variety it offers to his inspection. What he cannot see, however... is the overall pattern or design traced by his movement. This is due to the factor of scale. Relative to the expanse of his walking, the pedestrian's eyes are simply too close to the ground.

Yet this fractility extends outwards as well as inwards, whether removal from the ground be in a car, a train or a plane. In all cases the gaze, the field of vision, is vital yet easily forgotten.

There appears a compulsion to fill journey times with activities thus rendering them more useful and not somehow wasted. In this there is a parallel perhaps with watching television, also often dismissed as wasted time. Yet, as Marceuse (1964) admitted in the Introduction to his *One-Dimensional Man*, much of his research involved watching television, not switching off the commercials and occasionally switching channels. In a similar vein, we propose an alternate view to the idea that gazing out the window on journeys is wasted time. We propose instead that time spent observing the landscape, gazing out the window, is rarely wasted, whatever the mode of transport.

In the developed world at least, we have become increasingly disconnected from the landscape over the past century, at least in terms of what we have termed direct encounter. Here we argue that different modalities of travel offer different types of encounter, and new ways of reading this landscape and understanding the processes of change that are constantly reshaping it, on a local scale but also potentially globally - climate change or plastic pollution for instance. By moving around in different ways and at different speeds, the fractal properties of the landscape become apparent at different scales. While travelling in cars, trains and planes may seem to abstract or alienate travellers from the world around them, it is possible to engage with the embodied experience of such journeys and to 'pick up', in Gibson's (1979) terms, affordances of the landscape that are not apparent on foot.

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LIST OF FIGURES

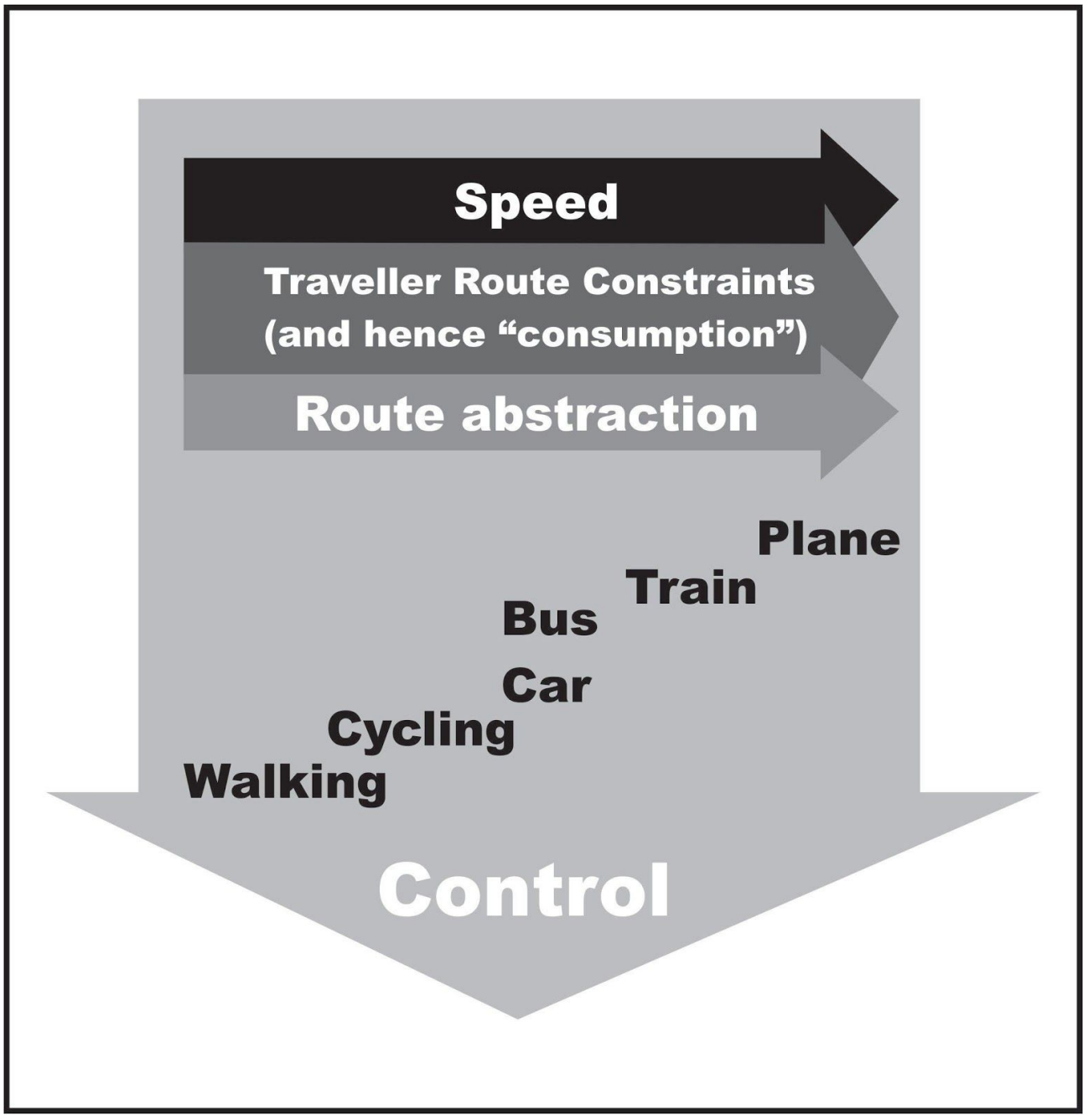

Figure 1: Speed, control and consumption: three variables that shape travellers' experience of landscape. (Image: authors' own)

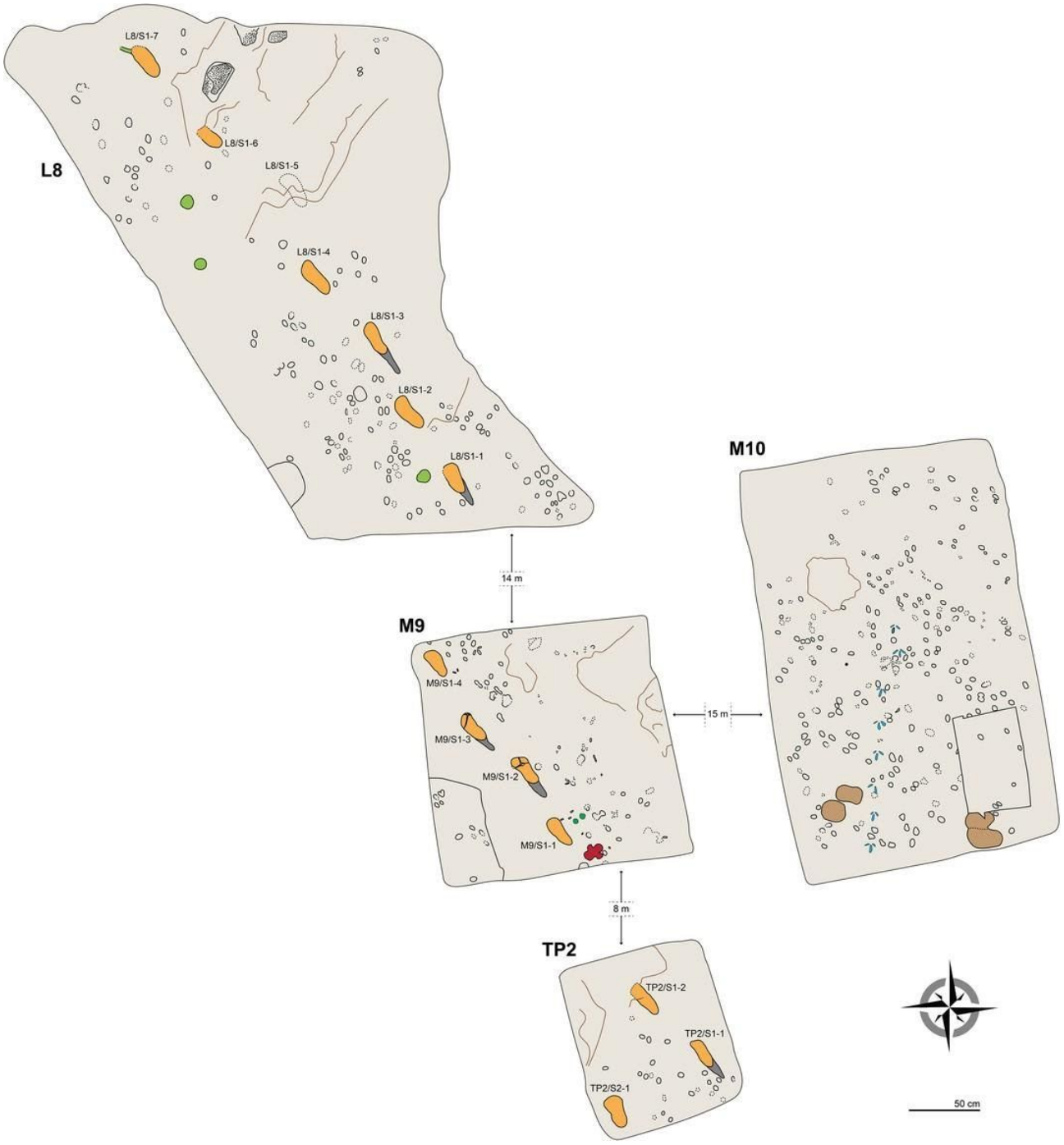

Figure 2. Graphical representation of the four excavation trenches (L8, M9, M10 and TP2) in the *S* locality at Laetoli (Tanzania) where the fossil footprints of two *Australopithecus afarensis* specimens have been found. They have been named S1 and S2. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license.

Figure 3: Footprints made by Ecco shoes in concrete on the old quay in Govik, Lysekil Municipality, Sweden. This file is made available under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.

Figures 4-5: Walking through landscape, head down from A to B but closely aware of one's surroundings. The 'acorn' signs denote the course of the UK's long-distance footpaths, ensuring the prescribed routes are followed. (Photos: authors' own)

Figure 6: Walton Breck Road. Terraced housing on Walton Breck Road with the stands of Liverpool FC in the background. This Anfield district of Liverpool was subject to a ‘windshield survey’ by English Heritage, to gain a rapid impression of character and variation in a tightly-knit urban landscape. This image was taken from the Geograph project collection.

Figure 7: Approaching ‘Dead Man’s Gulch’, avoiding the potholes long-since repaired and the tree that fell over a decade ago. The B1119 near Hall Farm, Suffolk, where landscape history and memory come together.

Figure 8: ‘The city’s ripped backsides.’ Urban housing seen from the Marylebone to Aylesbury railway line. (Photo: authors’ own)

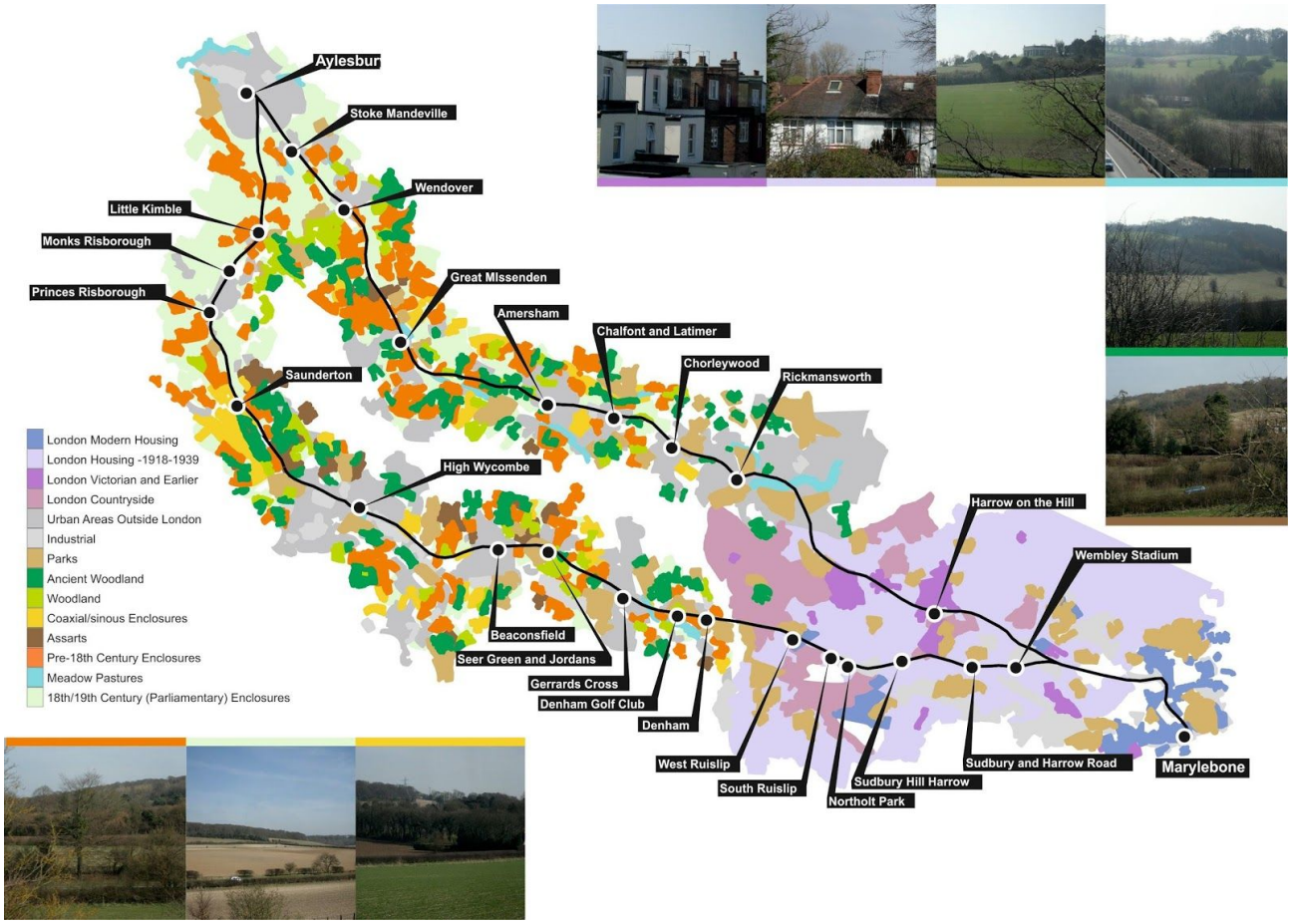

Figure 9: Extract from a draft leaflet for the Chiltern Line between Marylebone and Aylesbury, showing the routes and landscape character. (Image: authors' own)

Figure 10: Statue of John Betjeman at St Pancras Station, London. Betjeman was writer and narrator of *Metro-land*, a BBC film first broadcast in 1973.

Figure 11: Quainton Road Station, the end of the line and subject of the closing scenes of Metro-land. This image was taken from the Geograph project collection. The copyright on this image is owned by Nigel Cox and is licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 license.

Figures 12: The Forth bridges as seen on the approach to Edinburgh airport in 2016. (Photo: Author's own)

Figure 13: Minneapolis, Minnesota, as seen on the approach to Minneapolis in 2008. Already an historical image – the Metrodome (white bubble top left) was demolished in 2015. (Photo: authors' own)

Figure 14: The gestalt of barrows and sinkholes; images are no substitute for embodied experience. Sink hole Shelby County Alabama (USGS public domain image), turned upside down, and Rubin vase illusion.