
English Women and the Late-Nineteenth Century Open Space Movement

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Thesis Certification

I declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of History at the Australian National University, is wholly my own original work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged and has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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Abstract

During the second half of the nineteenth century, England became the most industrialised and urbanised nation on earth. An expanding population and growing manufacturing drove development on any available space. Yet this same period saw the origins of a movement that would lead to the preservation and creation of green open spaces across the country. Beginning in 1865, social reforming groups sought to stop the sale and development of open spaces near metropolitan centres. Over the next thirty years, new national organisations worked to protect and develop a variety of open spaces around the country. In the process, participants challenged traditional land ownership, class obligations and gender roles.

There has been very little scholarship examining the work of the open space organisations; nor has there been any previous analysis of the specific membership demographics of these important groups. This thesis documents and examines the four organisations that formed the heart of the open space movement (the Commons Preservation Society, the Kyrle Society, the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association and the National Trust). It demonstrates connections between philanthropy, gender and space that have not been explored previously. The Parliamentary Archives, London Metropolitan Archives, Guildhall Library Archives and the archives of the National Trust provided a wealth of material, including minutes, publications, newspaper cuttings and personal letters.

My thesis focuses particularly on the many women activists who contributed to the achievements and philosophy of the open space movement. Unusually, women undertook significant public roles in the movement. Their participation engendered personal, professional and political advancement for their sex. My analysis illuminates the numerous motivations behind Victorian philanthropy and expands the picture of Victorian society. Further, it analyses the variety of motivations that prompted the movement's ethos, as well as exploring the range of language used by supporters in their descriptions of the 'natural' world. This research highlights a significant, gendered turning point in the appreciation of conservation, preservation and the importance of open spaces in England.

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List of Abbreviations

BCL	Bristol Central Library
BL	British Library
CLSAC	Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre
CPS	Commons Preservation Society
FCP	Forest and Commons Papers
GLA	Guildhall Library Archive
LB	Library of Birmingham
LCC	London Country Council
LMA	London Metropolitan Archive
MERL	Museum of English Rural Life
MBW	Metropolitan Board of Works
MPGA	Metropolitan Public Garden Association
NAPSS	National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences
NHS	National Health Society
NLA	National Library of Australia
NT	National Trust UK
PA	Parliamentary Archive, UK
SPAB	Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

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Introduction

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.¹

The nineteenth century saw England move dramatically from the 'green and pleasant Land' of Blake's 1808 poem to an increasing presence on the landscape of 'dark Satanic Mills'. Open space campaigners sought to create and protect parks, gardens and commons at a time when the success of the nation was predicated on the economic exploitation of domestic and imported natural resources. This Janus-like contradiction sits at the heart of this thesis. From the mid-nineteenth century, England was the most industrialised and urbanised country in the world and yet it held on to a national character which had a distinctly bucolic image. William Howitt, writing in 1844, noted the city-dwellers' passion for spending their few spare hours in the open air:

There are mechanics that, in their shops and factories, while they have been caged up by their imperious necessities during the week, and have only obtained thence sights of clear blue sky above, of green fields laughing far away, or have only caught the wafting of a refreshing gale on their fevered cheek as they hurried homeward to a hasty meal, or back again to the incarceration of Mammon, have had their souls inflamed with desires for breaking away into the free country.²

Elizabeth Gaskell, four years later in her novel *Mary Barton*, would write of a similar attachment with workers enjoying the space outside of Manchester not knowing

¹ William Blake, *The Complete Prose and Poetry of William Blake*, Ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Nonesuch Press, 1989), 375–76.

² William Howitt, *The Rural Life of England*, vol. II (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green and Longman, 1888), 319.

whether it was ‘a holiday granted by the masters, or a holiday seized in right of Nature and her beautiful spring time’.³

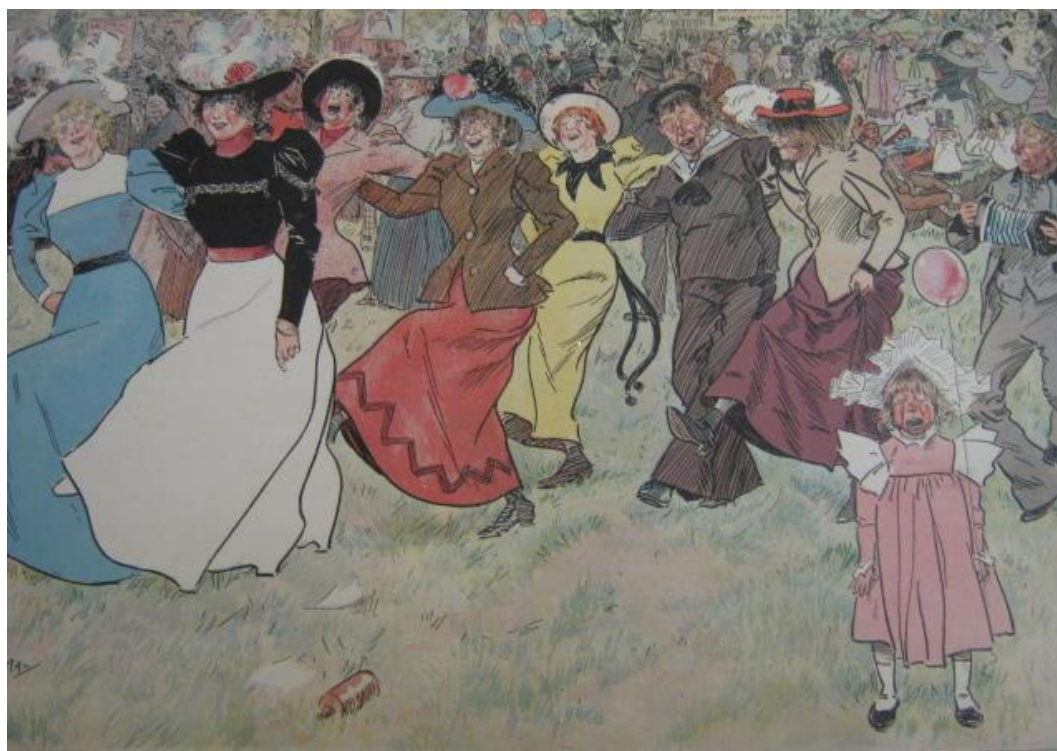


Fig. I.1: *A Cockney Carnival: Bank Holiday on Hampstead Heath* by Phil May, 1899.

Arguably as a response to modernisation, a number of groups were established that fought to preserve or create rural and urban green spaces. Often started as a limited local response to an immediate problem, these groups developed into a national movement.⁴ Notably, women played an increasingly important role in these organisations, not just as donors, but also as committee members, founders, designers, and ardent advocates. This thesis aims to explore the four, key, campaigning, open space organisations of late-Victorian England and the involvement of women as members of these societies. The work explores the intersections between the environment, women and philanthropy in the late-nineteenth century. There has been

³ Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, Orig. Pub. 1848 (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 2.

⁴ Jon A. Peterson, ‘The City Beautiful Movement: Forgotten Origins and Lost Meanings’, *Journal of Urban History* 2, no. 4 (August 1976): 416.

very little scholarship examining the work of the open space organisations; nor has there been any previous analysis of the specific membership demographics of these important groups. Thus, there are two main strands to this work. The first revolves around the foundation of the particular groups spanning the period 1865-1895; the second considers the engagement of women with the open space movement, and in society more generally.

Victorian Open Space Conservation:

In 1865, the first national organisation developed to safeguard metropolitan commons across England. The Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society, more commonly known as the Commons Preservation Society (CPS) was established in London. The aim of the society was to promote the legal protection of existing open spaces bordering the cities of England. Other organisations would follow during the next thirty years, each with its own particular goal, but essentially dedicated to the preservation or development of urban and rural green spaces. As David Reeder stated with reference to London, the creation of green space was the result of voluntary organisations and civic societies.⁵ The Kyrle Society, dedicated to the idea of providing 'beauty through art, music and access to garden space', was founded in 1875-6 following a paper given to the National Health Association by Miranda Hill.⁶ In 1878, the Kyrle Society would establish a sub-committee dedicated to the development of urban open spaces.

In 1882 the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association (MPGA) joined the growing number of organisations. According to its constitution its aim was 'the protection,

⁵ David A. Reeder, 'London and Green Space, 1850-2000: An Introduction', in *The European City and Green Space: London, Stockholm, Helsinki and St Petersburg, 1850-2000*, Ed. Peter Clark (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 33.

⁶ 'Beauty and the Health of Nations', *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 26 May 1876.

preservation, safeguarding and acquiring for permanent preservation for public use, of gardens, disused burial grounds, churchyards, open spaces, areas of land likely to be used for building purposes, strips of land adjoining roads and footpaths, or any land situated within the Metropolitan Police District or in its vicinity'.⁷ These first three groups regularly worked together and with City of London municipal government organisations.⁸ Finally, probably the most well-known of all the groups was – The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty. It was constituted in 1895 with the aim of acquiring places 'of historic interest and natural beauty', which would be held in trust for the benefit of all.⁹ The National Trust has grown to be one of the largest private landowners in the United Kingdom. Three of these four groups are still in existence today, and while their original purpose may have altered they still concentrate on the conservation and preservation of open spaces for public benefit. Together these groups formed the nucleus of the English open space movement.

For a movement that was so influential in the development of the British conservation programme there has been very little scholarly attention to its emergence. The individual groups have received some scholarly attention. However, much of this literature examines the associations as a negligible part of wider Victorian reform movements.¹⁰ The development of the open space movement as a whole, over the first thirty years of its existence, has not been fully considered to date. Additionally,

⁷ Extract from the constitution, 'Metropolitan Public Garden Association', accessed 18 February 2015, <http://www.mpga.org.uk>.

⁸ For example 'Report', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 July 1886; 'Report', *London Standard*, 11 July 1879.

⁹ 'Memorandum and Articles of Association of the National Trust For Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty', 12 December 1894, National Trust Archive.

¹⁰ See for example: J. Ranlett, "'Checking Nature's Desecration": Late-Victorian Environmental Organization', *Victorian Studies* 26, no. 2 (Winter 1983): 197–222; H. L. Malchow, 'Public Gardens: Social Action in Victorian London', *Victorian Studies* 29, no. 1 (Autumn 1985): 97–124; Peter Thorsheim, 'The Corpse in the Garden: Burial, Health, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century London', *Environmental History* 16 (January 2011): 38–68; Harriet Jordan, 'Public Parks, 1885-1914', *Garden History* 22, no. 1 (Summer 1994): 85–113; M. J. D Roberts, 'Gladstonian Liberalism and Environment Protection, 1865–76', *English Historical Review* CXXVIII, no. 531 (April 2013): 292–322.

some literature has considered significant individuals or aspects of the different groups, but again they have not been examined as part of one movement.¹¹ This thesis then, explores not only the individual organisations and individuals, but also the development of a new social movement that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century and has a continuing contemporary importance.

It would be anachronistic to call any of the Victorian campaigners considered here environmentalists or the open space movement, environmentalism. For most people today environmentalism refers to a modern movement stemming from the protests of the 1960s and characterised by organisations such as Greenpeace and the Green Party. Additionally, environmentalism encompasses a scientific discourse as the basis to its authority, as well as the conception of nature as an agent in and of itself.¹² Even the word itself was only first recorded being used in an ecological/political sense in 1966.¹³ The organisations of the open space movement did have an explicit agenda towards the preservation of green areas. Parks, gardens and commons were essential, but 'passive, a resource for human refreshment'.¹⁴ It is clear that while the efforts taking place were concerned with the development and protection of a variety of green spaces, this was primarily for the wellbeing of the nation's citizens. As J. Baird Callicott asserts preservationists and conservationists both perceived people as the only possessors of intrinsic value, whether the argument is one of romantic morality or utilitarian materialism.¹⁵ The amelioration of humanity may have been their central

¹¹ Diana Maltz, *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes, 1870-1900* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Nancy Boyd, *Three Women Who Changed Their World: Josephine Butler, Octavia Hill, Florence Nightingale* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1982); Elizabeth Crawford, *Enterprising Women: The Garretts and Their Circle* (London: Francis Boutle, 2002).

¹² Libby Robin, *Defending the Little Desert* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1998), 140.

¹³ The OED notes the first reference of the word environmentalism in the ecological context as the Washington Post, 20 May 1966 'Oxford English Dictionary - Online', accessed 1 November 2013, www.oed.com.

¹⁴ Robin, *Defending the Little Desert*, 140.

¹⁵ J. Baird Callicott, 'Whither Conservation Ethics?', *Conservation Biology* 4, no. 1 (March 1990): 17.

focus, but the open space movement recognised that the health of the population was inextricably linked with the preservation and provision of open spaces.

The CPS, Kyrle, MPGA and National Trust all formulated their rationale for open space within the framework of its benefit to the population, either current or future. Physical spaces were at the heart of their contentions, which moved between the material and the moral, but was always for the advantage it offered humankind. Peter Gould asserts that prior to the twentieth century the most significant period of environmental political action occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ One current definition of an environmentalist is ‘one who holds that damage to the natural environment resulting from human activity is so severe as to present a challenge to the survival of many habitats and ultimately perhaps to the continuance of life on Earth, and can be redressed only by major reforms of the way people live and industries function’.¹⁷ Certainly the people involved with these Victorian organisations were concerned that industrial damage was highly detrimental, although their focus was skewed towards the damage to humanity. Along with this was a desire to reform human habitation and mitigate industrial destruction of the landscape. Although not generally of the belief that there was a threat to the continuation of all life, the members of these organisations were definitely concerned that human activity was putting at risk national health and character.

The Victorian open space movement had, as does its modern environmentalist counterpart, a political aspect. Political theorist Robert Goodin, looking at ‘green politics’, has described environmental or green groups as ‘highly participatory’ and

¹⁶ Peter Gould, *Early Green Politics: Back to Nature, Back to the Land and Socialism in Britain, 1880-1900* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1988), viii.

¹⁷ *Dictionary of Ecology and the Environment, 2nd Edition*, P. H. Collin (Teddington: Peter Collin, 1992), 154.

valuing nature for its own intrinsic properties.¹⁸ His political theory also suggests that the protection of natural resources should be considered as an issue of national security.¹⁹ The necessity of open spaces for the protection of the nation's international position was certainly one that featured in the arguments of the open space movement, especially the MPGA. In the nineteenth-century organisations discussed here, it is also possible to claim a remarkable level of participation and contribution from their members. Cynthia Burek has asserted that local efforts were very efficient at driving change.²⁰ The earliest group considered, the Commons Preservation Society, brought some of the first anti-development law suits to court and became the most legally successful of the movement.²¹ At the time of their foundation, none of the organisations were particularly well-endowed financially. Much of the land that was secured by them for public use was acquired through public donation. The levels of contribution evidence the wide appeal of the movement, beyond its more limited organisational personnel.

Membership of these nineteenth-century preservationist groups did not have a broad social base. Most members were within the middle and upper-class strata of society, especially since annual subscription fees were prohibitive to lower income earners. The protection of national economic and political security can clearly be seen in the motivation of many of the members. The detrimental effect of mass urbanisation, poor housing and hours spent inside in factories on the labouring class was perceived as a threat to British industrial and military dominance. Many described the new 'race'

¹⁸ Robert E. Goodin, *Green Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 24; 169.

¹⁹ Robert E. Goodin, 'Introduction', in *The Politics of the Environment*, ed. Robert E. Goodin (Aldershot: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1994), ix–x.

²⁰ Cynthia Burek, 'The Role of the Voluntary Sector in the Evolving Geo-Conservation Movement', *Geological Society London, Special Publications* 300 (January 2008): 86.

²¹ Paul Readman, 'Preserving the English Landscape, c1870-1914', *Cultural and Social History* 5, no. 2 (2008): 201.

created by the industrialised cities as inferior to the strong yeomen of the past. Stephen Mosley has suggested that this was the case from the 1880s onwards.²² However, Edwin Chadwick described the ill-effects of industrialisation on people as early as 1860.²³ The defining characteristics of environmental politics noted above are member activism, appreciation of nature, the amelioration of the effects of industrialisation through legislative change and a desire to protect the natural landscape as a part of the national inheritance. If these are applied to the four primary groups under discussion here there is a strong case to be made for the advent of these Victorians organisations to be recognised as a key moment in the history of English conservation.

Green Philanthropists:

The open spaces organisations and their membership constituted part of the wider nineteenth-century philanthropic tradition. A significant body of work explores the history of English philanthropy. One of the best known studies is David Owen's *English Philanthropy, 1660-1960*. Owen suggested the early creation of an English national tradition of charity.²⁴ For the Victorians, philanthropy was a source of national pride, as Brian Harrison has stated.²⁵ The strong nineteenth-century position of charitable action and donation has been convincingly linked to the growth of evangelical Christianity, which began around the turn of the nineteenth century. Owen, Harrison and Frank Prochaska all assert this strong correlation.²⁶ An important feature of this form of religion was its focus on demonstrable good works. Not only

²² Stephen Mosley, *The Chimney of the World: A History of Smoke Pollution in Victorian and Edwardian Manchester* (London & New York: Routledge, 2008), 105.

²³ 'Address of Edwin Chadwick, Esq. C.B., to the General Meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science' (National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 29 September 1860), 32–33, archive.org.

²⁴ David Owen, *English Philanthropy: 1660-1960* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1964), 2.

²⁵ Brian H. Harrison, 'Philanthropy and the Victorians', *Victorian Studies* 9, no. 4 (June 1966): 357.

²⁶ Owen, *English Philanthropy: 1660-1960*; Harrison, 'Philanthropy and the Victorians'; Frank Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse: Philanthropy in Modern Britain* (London: Faber & Faber, 1988).

did one have to be good, one had to be seen to be good. Christianity and Christian mores therefore grew to be one of the major factors influencing British society during the nineteenth century. Specific denominational participation in the open space movement is an area that warrants further investigation. The membership of preservationist groups may have consisted of a larger number of 'dissenting' and evangelical church goers than those who were involved in the established Anglican Church.

One feature of Victorian philanthropy was the significance of women in charitable associations. The prominence of women suggests that membership offered more than the opportunity to act as the 'lady bountiful'. Martha Vicinus notes that charities were a popular outlet for women and Anne Summers goes further to argue for participation as a form of intellectual engagement.²⁷ Philanthropic engagement incorporated concepts of national tradition, religious sentiment and gender. This would strongly indicate that membership of a charitable organisation was seen as a feature of an individual's national identity and national citizenship. Given the limited role of women at this time in official political bodies and processes, the significance of their role within large philanthropic organisations that achieved lasting legislative change merits exploration.

Women undertook charitable activities as part of the fulfilment of their social duty. As Jane Lewis has asserted, the obligations of citizenship were gendered; caring for the home and tending to the less fortunate were a part of a woman's responsibilities.²⁸

²⁷ Martha Vicinus, 'Introduction', in *Suffer and Be Still, Women in the Victorian Age*, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1973), xi; Anne Summers, 'A Home From Home - Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century', in *Fit Work for Women*, Ed. Sandra Burman (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 33–63 passim.

²⁸ Jane Lewis, *Women and Social Action in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991), 7.

Thus, the women who operated in the philanthropic milieu were not perceived as explicitly challenging the existing socially dominant culture. Certainly, the presence of women in public philanthropic roles does not necessarily equate to later demands for votes. Notably, a number of important women philanthropists were opposed to women's suffrage. Olive Banks has argued that these active women should not necessarily be considered as feminists and the campaign for women's suffrage appealed only to a small minority.²⁹ However, women did manipulate the language of the domestic to create a more expansive role for themselves. Rhetoric used by women at the time shows that women were constructing their actions as still within a domestic sphere. They left their homes, in order to defend their homes as Suellen Hoy and Claire Midgely have asserted.³⁰ Women campaigners within the open space movement fit with this model as they were working towards the betterment of the 'national' home.

Whether or not involvement in charitable groups led to later suffrage action is an area of some debate. Prochaska drew strong links between the significant female presence in philanthropy and the political skills used by later suffrage organisations.³¹ Barbara Caine has supported this, arguing that philanthropy established a framework within which feminism operated.³² Other historians, such as Judith Walkowitz, have suggested the campaign for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act was a training ground for Edwardian suffragists, while others have stressed the role of the abolition movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as the birthplace of

²⁹ Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981), 247.

³⁰ Suellen M. Hoy, "Municipal Housekeeping": The Role of Women in Improving Urban Sanitation Practices, 1880-1917, in *Pollution & Reform in American Cities, 1870-1930*, Ed. Martin V. Melosi (Austin & London: University of Texas Press, 1980), 173; Claire Midgely, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 95.

³¹ Frank Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 227.

³² Barbara Caine, *English Feminism, 1780-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 89; 127.

early feminism.³³ This thesis situates itself firmly in the school of thought which argues for philanthropy as an intellectual outlet and field of early training for the later women's suffrage movement.

In the brief history of the open space movement above, it is evident that women played an integral role in the formation and administration of these national philanthropic organisations. Two of the groups had women as founding members and three had women officers as part of their executive management structure. This strong public role is at odds with the commonly held view of nineteenth-century womanhood. However, this view is in need of some adjustment. Summers, James Gregory, Martin Melosi and Reeder have all noted the dominant role that women had in nineteenth-century philanthropy.³⁴ The contention here is that there were specific facets to spatial philanthropy that have not been explored in these more general histories. Beyond women's suffrage, these organisations encouraged activism in areas such as education, employment and local government.

It is worth noting that in nineteenth-century Britain there was a sex-ratio imbalance which saw nearly ten per cent more women than men in the population.³⁵ This may account for higher levels of membership in some areas. However, further scrutiny has shown that a strict numerical assessment would be misleading. Prochaska's influential

³³ Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 255; Carolyn Merchant, 'The Women of the Progressive Conservation Crusade: 1900-1915', in *Environmental History Critical Issues in Comparative Perspective*, Ed. Kendall E. Bailes (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1985), 153.

³⁴ Summers, 'A Home From Home - Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century'; James Gregory, *Reformers, Patrons and Philanthropists: The Convent-Temples and High Politics in Victorian England*, Electronic Resource (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010); Martin V. Melosi, *Garbage in the Cities: Refuse, Reform and the Environment, 1880-1980* (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1981); David A. Reeder, 'The Social Construction of Green Space in London prior to the Second World War', in *The European City and Green Space: London, Stockholm, Helsinki and St Petersburg, 1850-2000*, Ed. Peter Clark (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 41-67.

³⁵ Eric Lampard, 'The Victorian City', in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, Ed. H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), 16.

analysis of women's participation in this area noted that women left a larger percentage of their estates to charity than men.³⁶ Further, Jonathan Schneer argues that at least one cash-strapped society targeted women as members to alleviate their financial difficulties, while Midgely states that women were the stronger fundraisers.³⁷ Catherine Hall and Philippa Levine have both suggested that this philanthropic dominance stems from the evangelical revivalism of the eighteenth century.³⁸ As Levine states, revivalism re-emphasised women as 'bearers of religious moral values'.³⁹ Initially, in the less formalised world of evangelical Christianity, women had a more inclusive role. Additionally, the campaign for the abolition of slavery and fundraising during the Napoleonic Wars saw women developing a more public role. That role however was couched within a socially acceptable framework of feminine virtues.⁴⁰ The position of women in the hierarchy of evangelism did not continue. As these newer religions, such as the Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists, became more established they were increasingly professionalised, thereby excluding women as lay preachers and elders.⁴¹ Consequently, it is possible to suggest that women diverted their energies to alternative charitable organisations.

Women were not only the protectors of the home, they were the moral guardians of it. The demands for education made by women during the nineteenth century were predicated on the role of women as moral reformers. The idea of 'home' was

³⁶ Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England*, 34–35.

³⁷ Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900, The Imperial Metropolis* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 120; Midgely, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870*, 52.

³⁸ Catherine Hall, 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology', in *Fit Work for Women*, Ed. Sandra Burman (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 15–32; Philippa Levine, *Victorian Feminism, 1850-1900* (London: Hutchinson Education, 1987).

³⁹ Levine, *Victorian Feminism, 1850-1900*, 2.

⁴⁰ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 260.

⁴¹ Lilian Lewis Shiman, *Women and Leadership in Nineteenth-Century England* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992), 59.

constituted in moral terms, as Caine has noted.⁴² However, this is still bound within a framework of the idealised home-maker. Using Michel de Certeau's concept of tactics versus strategies, this can be interpreted as women's appropriation of a dominant culture's language.⁴³ Mary Poovey has contended that women manipulated the contradictory domestic ideal to create scope for their own ambition.⁴⁴ In the same vein, it is possible to see women extending their role as protectors of nature. Carolyn Merchant has argued that gendered characterisations of nature saw men as exploiters and women as the protectors of the welfare of future generations.⁴⁵ The wider landscape was characterised as the national 'home', a province of women, so the responsibility for protecting and nurturing it came under their remit. The female members of the open space movement demonstrate how women manoeuvred and adapted the existing societal framework to secure their own role. This is an important area of consideration for my thesis.

Nature and Culture:

While gender was characterised with metaphors from the natural world, nature itself was anthropomorphised. During the nineteenth century, the natural world was assigned human-like characteristics. Peter Thorsheim has stated that nature, more particularly exploited or polluted landscapes, was characterised as a corrupted woman in need of rescue.⁴⁶ Rhetoric commonly created a dualistic ideology of woman/nature versus man/industry. However, as Stacy Alaimo and Val Plumwood have shown this

⁴² Caine, *English Feminism, 1780-1980*, 86; 127.

⁴³ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984), xix.

⁴⁴ Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988), 12.

⁴⁵ Merchant, 'The Women of the Progressive Conservation Crusade: 1900-1915', 157.

⁴⁶ Peter Thorsheim, *Inventing Pollution: Coal, Smoke, and Culture in Britain since 1800* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006), 40.

connection is not only flawed, it is detrimental to women.⁴⁷ Masculinity has also been associated with nature. This is especially so in the USA with the concept of wilderness and the construction of the taming of nature.⁴⁸ Utilising Thorsheim's premise of nature as the damsel in distress, in Europe one can see the construction of manliness linked to nature with the aim of protecting the weaker female/natural world. In the language of the open space movement there was an element of the rescue fantasy, with the land being saved from vandals and barbarians.⁴⁹ While some rhetoric employed this gendered anthropomorphic characterisation of nature, there was also a strand of literature underscoring the apotheosis of the natural world. Nature was a divine work, providing evidence of a higher power.

The growing link between religion and nature, almost to the point of creating a new naturalistic deity, can be seen in the language of the Romantic poets. William Cronon and Richard Altick have both stressed this reverential link in their work.⁵⁰ The open space movement frequently used Romantic imagery and poetry in the expression of the non-material value of sites. The analogous utilisation of the environment demonstrates the strong influence cultural constructs had on contemporary articulations of conservation and preservation. Cronon, while referring to the American wild, has stated that 'it [wilderness] is entirely a creation of the culture that

⁴⁷ Stacy Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space* (Ithaca & New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), 6; Val Plumwood, 'Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy and the Critique of Rationalism', in *The Politics of the Environment*, ed. Robert E. Goodin (Aldershot: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1994), 255.

⁴⁸ Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 172.

⁴⁹ Octavia Hill, 'Vandalism at Hampstead', *The Daily Graphic*, 31 January 1890, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO5, Guildhall Library Archive London; E. Ray Lankester, 'Nature Reserves', *Nature* XCIII (12 March 1914): 34.

⁵⁰ William Cronon, 'The Trouble With Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature', *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (January 1996): 7-28; Richard D. Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1973); Lynn White Jr, 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', *Science* 155, no. 3767 (10 March 1967): 1204.

holds it dear, a product of the very history it seeks to deny'.⁵¹ This is as appropriate for the English sentiment as it is for the American situation. Further, as Thorsheim has demonstrated, this cultural construction applies as much to pollution as it does to the 'pure' environment.⁵² Cultural changes had enormous implications for the natural world, as the work of I. G. Simmons suggests.⁵³ Any examination of conservation and the protection of particular sites must therefore include an appreciation of the cultural influences that pervaded society at the time.

If nature is a product of culture then the environment is more than just a physical reality. Peter Clark and Jussi Jauhiainen contend that green space is not just physical but social as well.⁵⁴ The cultural impetus behind the conceptualisation of open spaces is apparent in the changing rhetoric and symbolism that was used by the associations under consideration here. In the first half of the nineteenth century rural areas were considered uncivilised and the urban environment 'progressive'. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, this had changed, with rural landscapes offering sanctuary from urban perils.⁵⁵ In one sense the environment was being exploited metaphorically and assigned power by society to effect change. Martin Gaskell has asserted that nature was constructed as having a moral force.⁵⁶ This construction fits with the characterisation of the environment both in an anthropomorphic and a divine framework. It also provides a foundation for the conception of nature as a reformative

⁵¹ Cronon, 'The Trouble With Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature', 16.

⁵² Thorsheim, *Inventing Pollution: Coal, Smoke, and Culture in Britain since 1800*, 194.

⁵³ I. G. Simmons, *Environmental History of Great Britain: From 10,000 Years Ago to the Present* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001).

⁵⁴ Peter Clark and Jussi S. Jauhiainen, 'Introduction', in *The European City and Green Space: London, Stockholm, Helsinki and St Petersburg, 1850-2000*, Ed. Peter Clark (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 7.

⁵⁵ Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society, Second Edition* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 3; Elizabeth Baigent, "'God's Earth Will Be Sacred": Religion, Theology and the Open Space Movement in Victorian England', *Rural History* 22, no. 1 (April 2011): 35.

⁵⁶ S. Martin Gaskell, 'Gardens for the Working Class: Victorian Practical Pleasure', *Victorian Studies* 23, no. 4 (Summer 1980): 484.

entity. The perception of open space as an antidote to social issues was an important factor in the motivations of the four societies here. The desire to provide open space, according to H. L. Malchow, should be seen as part of the moral/medical reform movement of the Victorian period, seeking to control and reform the masses.⁵⁷ The power of nature was exploited to improve not just the physical, but also the spiritual wellbeing of the labouring classes. Thus, environmental social sciences became linked with reform and philanthropy. As Felix Driver has argued in relation to working-class housing reform, it 'epitomised the faith of social scientists in the possibility of amelioration through environmental reform'.⁵⁸ In this way environmental improvement bound social scientists, civic officers and philanthropists. Outside London, in Bristol and Manchester for example, there was, according to H. E. Meller, a profound relationship between civic offices and philanthropic activity.⁵⁹ Crucially, though, this relationship was directed by middle- and upper-class organisations and people towards working-class areas.

Class, Gender and Open Space:

Social class in the nineteenth century was both a significant and constantly changing relationship. Class, even the aristocracy, had a porous and mobile quality, as Antony Taylor argues.⁶⁰ It cannot be denied that the more elite in society felt a sense of superiority. The belief in the ability of all members of society to 'improve', though, was an important motivating factor for philanthropic reforms such as those in the open space movement. The tension between the middle and working classes,

⁵⁷ Malchow, 'Public Gardens: Social Action in Victorian London', 97.

⁵⁸ Felix Driver, 'Moral Geographies: Social Science and the Urban Environment in Mid-Nineteenth Century England', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series* 13, no. 3 (1988): 281.

⁵⁹ H. E. Meller, *Leisure and the Changing City, 1870-1914* (London, Henley and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), 74; 96.

⁶⁰ Antony Taylor, *Lords of Misrule: Hostility to Aristocracy in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 20.

particularly in urban areas stemmed, in part, from the unsolicited imposition of and resistance to this reforming belief. Organisations driven by a largely middle-class membership attempted to define working-class use of open space; re-purposing the space to serve a socially ameliorative function. The Victorian middle classes established their identity as superior by right of their physical courage, moral rectitude and militant Christian faith. Both Lewis and Jessica Gerard have argued middle-class authority came from its social position and the wider community adopted middle-class values and paternalism.⁶¹ Importantly, though, there was always challenge, opposition and compromise over the acceptance and/or imposition of this set of values.

Gender roles were equally formed around class. Gail Bederman asserted that the conception of manliness in the middle classes underwent massive and rapid changes during the nineteenth century.⁶² In England, this was in part due to electoral changes that allowed greater participation in national government. Caine and Glenda Sluga state that the increasing role of middle-class men in politics led to the more rigid defining of public/male and private/female spheres.⁶³ However, this separation of roles was much more a feature of the wealthier classes. Lewis notes the greater public presence of working-class women.⁶⁴ As noted above, women manoeuvred within this framework to secure their own role. Within the open space movement, women were not only creating an organisational position, they were also developing physical spaces. Despite exclusion from national government, Patricia Hollis and Levine have shown

⁶¹ Lewis, *Women and Social Action in Victorian and Edwardian England*, 13; Jessica Gerard, 'Lady Bountiful: Women of the Landed Classes and Rural Philanthropy', *Victorian Studies* 30, no. 2 (Winter 1987): 187.

⁶² Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*, 12.

⁶³ Barbara Caine and Glenda Sluga, *Gendering European History, 1780-1920* (London & New York: Continuum, 2003), 34-35.

⁶⁴ Jane Lewis, *Women in England 1870-1950: Sexual Divisions and Social Change* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1984), 75.

how women were prominent in local politics.⁶⁵ A number of women from the organisations here actively engaged in municipal government. Further, Patricia Jalland and Prochaska have demonstrated the enormous importance of these same middle-class women in philanthropy and later suffrage campaigns.⁶⁶ It must be considered that the women involved transplanted their middle-class values onto the open spaces they sought to protect.

Green spaces were constituted within Victorian middle-class values as having a social function. 'Nature' has been described as a valve to defuse class conflict, as well as an educative tool of nationhood and citizenship. Open spaces, it has been argued, contributed to the alleviation of escalating tensions between the rich and poor. Jeremy Burchardt states that during the period of the 1830s there was a high degree of social tension, particularly following the rural 'Swing Riots', and the nascent rural allotment movement was encouraged as a way of lowering crime.⁶⁷ Essentially, allotments offered working class people an experience of land ownership. In urban centres, where allotments were not initially available, this same concept was behind the encouragement of working classes to take up gardening and enjoy public gardens. People were, of course, already using existing spaces. The conception of neglect speaks more to the interpretation of the type of usage rather than the lack of it. Further, there is some evidence that working-class users of 'undeveloped' urban spaces resented the middle-class intrusions.⁶⁸ Dale Porter contends that the focus on gardens and gardening within urban centres created higher rents in the city and in fact led to

⁶⁵ Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1865-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Levine, *Victorian Feminism, 1850-1900*.

⁶⁶ Patricia Jalland, *Women, Marriage and Politics, 1860-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 2; Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England*, 228.

⁶⁷ Jeremy Burchardt, *The Allotment Movement in England, 1793-1873* (Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2002), 70.

⁶⁸ Malchow, 'Public Gardens: Social Action in Victorian London', 123.

working class displacement.⁶⁹ This displacement was not necessarily accidental and the dilution of concentrated working-class populations can be interpreted as a specific goal of the middle class. There is little evidence that the activity of groups such as the MPGA or the Kyrle raised property prices, especially as many of these areas remain in the lower socio-economic bracket today. The examination of the Victorian open space movement helps to illuminate class-based motivations for the development of green spaces. It will also show how significant these arguments were to the membership of the four organisations explored in this thesis.

As well as a relief to class tension, green space was to act as a device for assisting the working class in gaining the skills to become fully-fledged citizens. The impetus for this lay in the middle-class belief that ‘the provision of a proper environment and their [the working class] exposure to a superior example would ultimately result in the internalisation of those values’.⁷⁰ In this can be seen the efforts by the bourgeoisie at an ‘ideological’ colonisation of the working-class and the goal of social reformation according to one socio-economic group’s moral framework. Gaskell asserts that gardening developed from a passive into an active recreation during the Victorian period.⁷¹ Exposure to nature was seen as part of the preparation of the proletariat for ‘full citizenship’, that is the adoption of middle-class social values, as Meller has stated.⁷² Possibly it was not so much inclusion that was desired as the ability to control the increasing urban populations. The provision of public gardens brought not just greenery, but regulation as well. Rules for the use of the gardens and playgrounds were part of the process when creating a new space. Elizabeth Wilson and Malchow have

⁶⁹ Dale H. Porter, *The Thames Embankment: Environment, Technology and Society in Victorian London* (Akron Ohio: The University of Akron Press, 1998), 283.

⁷⁰ Gould, *Early Green Politics: Back to Nature, Back to the Land and Socialism in Britain, 1880-1900*, 484.

⁷¹ Gaskell, ‘Gardens for the Working Class: Victorian Practical Pleasure’, 479.

⁷² Meller, *Leisure and the Changing City, 1870-1914*, 12.

both argued that one motivation may have lain in the idea of opening tightly packed urban areas to surveillance and therefore social control.⁷³ This certainly fits with the increasing supervision of sports and other leisure activities. The re-constitution of open spaces was not solely a means of controlling the proletariat; it could also act as a political and gender divide, as can be seen with suburban areas.

The nineteenth century heralded the rise of the suburb. These planned developments of homes and gardens evidence the sociological function of open space and the rise of the burgeoning middle class. The new housing estates and garden cities acted as a means of separating rich and poor, work and home as well as serving as an aspirational canvas for displaying affluence. J. A. Yelling demonstrated that the value of property was highest in the centre of a conurbation and declined towards the periphery, until reaching the suburbs where prices rose again.⁷⁴ Ownership of a garden became an indicator of a certain level of wealth. The garden, as Owen noted, became a commodity. It was also possible to demonstrate one's status through planting. In his exploration of one London suburb, H. J. Dyos has shown how there was a differentiation of tree planting by class, along with the use of the front garden as a vehicle for demonstrations of social ambition.⁷⁵ With the coterminous development of underground and railway lines to suburban areas the prestige of separating home and work became a feature of upward mobility.

⁷³ Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder and Women*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1991), 14; Malchow, 'Public Gardens: Social Action in Victorian London', 97.

⁷⁴ J. A. Yelling, 'Land Property and Planning', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, 1840-1950*, ed. Martin Daunton, vol. 3 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 40.

⁷⁵ H. J. Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: A Study of the Growth of Camberwell* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1961), 188–89.

Living away from their place of business, the bourgeoisie could distance themselves from their work lives. Suburbs were constituted as a social and class barrier. As Dyos stated, 'geographical insularity was often a symbol of a more fundamental social and political divide'.⁷⁶ The middle class could distance themselves from the huddled masses, but the suburbs also acted to control the inhabitants. Wilson has argued that the suburbs served as a restrictive space for middle-class women.⁷⁷ There were limited opportunities for entertainment and the broad, open streets, filled with seemingly homogenous residents provided greater potential for surveillance. According to Janice Monk, women had a preference for urban spaces as they offered better facilities and less isolation.⁷⁸ Yet during the second half of the nineteenth century the urban landscape was being constructed as a place of danger. This change could in part have been a response to the intensification of divides between public and private spheres that occurred at the same time. Women involved in the creation of urban green spaces may have deployed their philanthropic efforts as a form of resistance. They were motivated by a desire to create socially acceptable safe sites within cities to afford opportunity for escape from suburban restriction.

Structure:

Overall, this thesis is arranged thematically to explore the creation and development of the open space movement. It commences with the broader topics of organisational foundation and landscapes. The chapters then progress to a more detailed exploration of the movement and the membership. Each new layer examines the complexities of Victorian philanthropy and the individuals who participated.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 25.

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Wilson, 'The Invisible Flaneur', in *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*, Ed. Sophie Watson & Katherine Gibson (Oxford and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1995), 61.

⁷⁸ Janice Monk, 'Approaches to the Study of Women and Landscape', *Environmental Review* i, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 28.

Chapter one begins with the emergence of the first national organisation, the Commons Preservation Society in 1865. The chapter adopts a chronological composition. It sets out the establishment of the four organisations central to the open space movement, in the years 1865 to 1895. It examines the foundation of the CPS, the Kyrle Society, the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association and the National Trust and the initial motivations behind their creation. In this way the chapter demonstrates how each new group built on the success of the previous organisations. The support, shared personnel and shared knowledge evidences the advent of a new social movement.

Following this, the second chapter sketches the characteristics of the diverse locations the CPS, Kyrle, MPGA and Trust were involved with. Each group initially formed to protect or create a particular type of open space. Consequently different places engendered different efforts. This chapter of the thesis explores the physical nature of these places, the reasons behind their existence and their development following the attentions of the open space movement. Further, it considers how the four associations protected and in some cases exploited these green oases for future generations.

Chapter three investigates the threads of connectivity, which permeated all levels of society and criss-crossed social standing, philanthropic interest, professional association and familial relationships. Because of its relatively small size, the open space movement was particularly reliant on the utilisation of networks to achieve its various goals. In order to successfully advocate legislative and social changes to the existing system it was necessary to draw help from a remarkably wide range of contacts. Through the lenses of the professional, intellectual, familial and international networks,

the formation of a modern social movement is explored. In this chapter the extensive networks provide a prism through which to examine not just the functionality of a movement, but also wider changes within the society itself and the characteristics of interpersonal relationships.

The fourth chapter delves into the individual membership of the organisations. It goes into greater detail regarding the motivations of each group and indeed how changing mentalities during the nineteenth century were responsible for the move towards conservation and the greening of cities. This chapter investigates the specific demographic elements of the societies' membership. There is also the consideration of the identification of the average member of a Victorian preservationist society. The chapter utilises detailed membership information to draw out features of class, gender and political persuasion.

Building on the previous chapter, chapter five examines in greater detail the membership and looks specifically at the women who were so important to each group. It examines not only the female membership of the associations, but their motivations and emergent professional opportunities. It investigates changing ideas around women and public space. Further, it explores the ways in which women were both writing about nature and being employed as a metaphor in contemporary literature.

The final chapter analyses the language and rhetorical influences of the four associations and their members. Each of the four exploited very similar language, although variations of language occurred between the rural, urban and semi-urban rhetoric. The nature and landscape that they spoke of was constructed within a specific rhetoric. Initially rooted in the inheritance of the Romantic Movement, these Victorian groups adapted the language and attached their own moral imperatives. The

organisations also incorporated contemporary scientific discourse. The chapter reviews the publications, organisational papers and newspaper reports of the open space organisations. Additionally, the chapter investigates the few extant private papers and diaries of individual members as well as the many literary references the groups themselves cited to survey Victorian preservationist language.

Methodology and Sources:

The two main components of this work revolve around the four principal organisations of the open space movement and the significance of women in these societies. This thesis adopts both a quantitative and a qualitative approach, including an analytical examination of data supported by the collection of specific social details. Extant information about the membership was collated for each of the associations. In particular, an analysis of the monthly minutes for the MPGA provided the full list of members from its beginning to 1895, the end point of this thesis. The combined total for the period was 1268 people. It was then possible to further scrutinise the individuals by class, address and gender. I collated the demographic evidence and for the first time, identified the average member of a Victorian preservationist society.

An examination of additional archival material, including court documents, annual reports, newspaper articles, legislation and parliamentary papers elucidated the interactions both between the societies themselves and with various external stakeholders. This made it possible to explore more fully the position of the organisations within their milieu. International exchanges further allow us to assess the global importance of the English open space movement.

Moving from the quantitative to the qualitative, the language used by the organisations and individuals within them was considered. Official papers, published works, journal

articles, letters and diaries provided examples of the motivations influencing the membership. Further, these offered a snapshot of the ways in which nature was written about. I also consider the differences in discourse between the urban and rural areas. The rhetoric employed by individuals and the associations themselves altered between the types of space requiring protection and the audiences to which the appeal was addressed.

This thesis contributes to the scholarship in environmental, women's and social history. It complicates the ways in which these areas have interacted; expanding the picture. The goal of this work is to explain why women chose to join these particular groups and why their work mattered. Further it demonstrates the agency of women in seizing opportunities and extending the realms of possibility. Women's participation in the open space movement engendered personal, professional and political advancement for their sex. The women, and indeed all of the members of these four particular groups, illuminate not just the numerous motivations behind Victorian philanthropy, but also the underlying emotional and intellectual inspiration that drew many of them to this specific arena of activism.

The members of the open space movement were reformers, very much in keeping with their time. The preservation and creation of land was an essential ingredient in their programme, which had the benefit of the people at its heart. However, as a result of their efforts, the movement changed attitudes towards open space and its importance as a public place. A close analysis of the associations' motivations and objectives shows that they were an important early step in the development of English conservation. The CPS, the Kyrle Society, the MPGA and the National Trust successfully protected and extended the green, open spaces available to the public. Societally, they fit very much within the framework of the Victorian English

philanthropic tradition. Simultaneously, they were importance early advocates of land preservation. Women as members played an integral role, not just as financial contributors, but also as administrators, organisers and campaigners. The environment itself was co-opted into the activists' programme for reform. Anthropomorphised, nature became a moral and cultural construction that was given a social function. It was conscripted into the crusade to improve the conditions of the poor and to act as a vehicle for teaching by example. The ongoing contribution of these nineteenth century groups to the current conservation programme in England also highlights the importance of understanding how grass-roots activism can result in significant long-term national and even international change.

Chapter I

Victorian Protectors of Open Spaces

The law imprisons man or woman
Who steals the goose from off the common
But leaves the greater felon loose
Who steals the common from the goose.¹

The above eighteenth-century witticism was reported in 1884 at Sevenoaks in Kent, some twenty miles south-east of London. An aristocratic landowner had placed a new gate and fencing across a bridle path on his estate at Knole Park. The incumbent lord had sought to block the traditional path and access to the estate park in order to discourage locals and London day-trippers from using the area for their weekend strolls.² This seemingly simple action provoked two nights of popular protest, several law suits and strained relations between the landowner and the town that were not resolved until his death in 1888. Supported by the legal and organisational skills of a new national organisation, the Commons Preservation Society, local protestors tore down the fencing and spent two days and nights marching up and down the bridlepath. This mass action included women, children and men dressed as women wheeling prams. All of which was reported in the local newspapers. The town was eventually successful in maintaining their traditional rights of way and use of the park.

This incident is a representation in microcosm of what was happening across England during the second half of the nineteenth century. Victorian England is popularly seen

¹ This English folk poem dates from at least the 18th century if not earlier. See Chapter 17 in Barbara Little, *Historical Archaeology: Why the Past Matters* (London & New York: Routledge, 2016).

² David Killingray, 'Rights, "Riot" and Ritual: The Knole Park Access Dispute, Sevenoaks, Kent, 1883-5', *Rural History* 5, no. 1 (April 1994): 63-79.

as industrialising, rapacious, staid and conservative. This chapter aims to, at least in part, offer an alternative image. It examines the nascent national conservation organisations of England. Many of today's urban open spaces and commons are the legacy of the Victorians. To a large extent the modern conservation programme actually owes a large debt of gratitude to the activism and energy of this period - an activism that led to the creation of public gardens, national parks and an enduring concept that no city should be without its green spaces.

Four organisations are at the heart of this work and an examination of the creation of each, in an essentially chronological order, forms the basis of this chapter. In order of their foundation they were: The Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society, The Kyrle Society, The Metropolitan Public Gardens and Playgrounds Association and The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty. Each was established with particular aims, but often with reference to one another. Each was filled with a reforming zeal that was almost evangelical in its fervour. And each sought to intimately relate humanity and the amelioration of the human condition with the landscape. These groups were founded across a thirty year period by people with a history of social activism. One by one they worked towards creating associations focused on the improvement of society, which in their opinion, had not been previously attended to. Thus, each built on a legacy of the other. It was generally the result of one, often small, event that would prompt an individual or a few like-minded individuals into action. For the earliest of the organisations here it was the introduction of a private bill to enclose a common near a founding member's childhood residence, for another it was the reading of a medical paper and for yet another it was the presenting of a paper at a social science meeting. These were all common enough activities and yet for the people at the centre of this early

conservation movement quotidian activities led to national campaigns for the protection of a variety of open spaces.

The Commons Preservation Society:

The creation of the first of the organisations began in London. London had a notable halo of green surrounding it, much of which was remarkably close to densely populated areas of the city.³ From very early in the nineteenth century, concerned citizens worried about the unplanned growth of London. In 1829 George Cruikshank satirised this expansion with his ‘London Going Out Of Town’ caricature in which the city is seen expanding towards the undefended countryside.⁴ In this case, it was Hampstead Heath near to where Cruikshank himself lived. This would be one of many large commons that developers threatened to build on.



Fig. 1.1: *London Going Out of Town or the March of Bricks and Mortar* by George Cruikshank, 1 November 1829.

³ 'Commons Preservation Society Report of Proceedings 1870-1876' (London: Commons Preservation Society, 1876), 8, CLA/078/09/001, London Metropolitan Archive.

⁴ George Cruikshank, *London Going Out of Town or the March of Bricks and Mortar*, 1 November 1829.

It was noted in 1867 that there were approximately 17,000 acres of common land within fifteen miles of St Paul's Cathedral, excluding the royal parks.⁵ Common land, importantly, was not and indeed is not necessarily public land. At this time in Britain there was no truly public land, all of the commons had freehold owners. Often the land was part of a much larger estate. Public ownership of land was not provided for in legislation until the end of the nineteenth century. The word 'common' referred to a series of rights of usage, not ownership.⁶ Land ownership and use in England was extraordinarily complex as a result of the entanglement of ownership, types of usage and perceived rights, which often dated back to the medieval period. Technically, only those who held rights of usage or commons on a given piece of common land were the commoners. Rights could relate to tenants of one village only or specific areas of the estate. In general there were six common uses that commoners – in this case those who held the rights of common on an estate – utilised the land for. These were: pasture, pannage, estovers, turbary, piscary and soil.⁷ Pasture permitted the use of common land for grazing; pannage was similar, but related to forests. Estovers and turbary involved the collection of fuel, either firewood or peat. Piscary was fishing rights and soil allowed the use of sand or gravel for building. The commons formed an integral part of the agricultural tenant economy and when a sitting landowner threatened these rights through enclosure there was a strong economic argument in defence of the open space. There were also public rights of way – footpaths and bridle ways – that crossed private land. It was the infringement of these rights that became central to the first legal suits brought to protect the open space of the metropolis and elsewhere as the cause expanded across the country.

⁵ Commons Preservation Society, *A Glance at the Commons and Open Spaces of London* (London: G. Hill, 1867), 9.

⁶ For a fuller explanation of the commons, please refer to Chapter II. Robert Hunter, 'The Preservation of the Commons' (London: Commons Preservation Society, 1879), 4.

⁷ Paul Clayden, *Our Common Land: The Law and History of Commons and Village Greens* (Henley on Thames: Open Spaces Society, 1985), 9.

Wimbledon Common is some 1000 acres of open space located in the south-west of the city. Today for most people mention of the Common engenders ideas of lawn tennis or fictional furry recyclers that burrow and collect litter. It was near here that George Shaw Lefevre, later to be the first Baron Eversley, was born in 1831.⁸ Lefevre's birthplace was surrounded not only by Wimbledon Common, but also Clapham and Wandsworth Commons. In 1864 Earl Spencer, the lord of Wimbledon Manor, attempted to introduce a private bill to Westminster that would have allowed him to enclose Wimbledon Common to create a private park as well as selling off some of the land to private developers. In response to Lord Spencer's plan, Mr Frederick Doulton, the then MP for Lambeth raised concerns about the loss of this large common. He proposed a parliamentary Select Committee be established to inquire into 'Means of Preserving for Public Use Forests, Commons and Open Spaces in the Metropolis'.⁹ In this same debate, the recently elected George Shaw Lefevre spoke regarding the importance of the commons. He stated that, in his opinion, 'one of the most important duties of the Committee [should be] to investigate what the rights of the public really were, and see whether rights which had in fact been enjoyed for many centuries could not be restored to the people'.¹⁰ The Select Committee subsequently appointed Lefevre as a member. Lefevre was only thirty-three years old at the time and had been a Liberal Party member for parliament for barely a year, following a successful by-election in Reading.

⁸ Joy Lynn Oden Wood, 'George John Shaw-Lefevre: A Liberal Reformer and Founder of the Conservation Movement in England' (PhD, Texas Christian University, 1977), 2.

⁹ 'Hansard - 21st February 1865' (Westminster, London: House of Commons, 21 February 1865), 502, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1865/feb/21/select-committee>.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 512.

Not content with merely serving on this committee, Lefevre recruited a number of parliamentary colleagues and formed the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society in July 1865. Within a few months of its creation the organisation had shortened its name to the Commons Preservation Society (CPS). It is by this name that it will be referred to here. It is still in operation today, although with another evolution in nomenclature, it is now called the Open Spaces Society. The website proudly notes it is 'Britain's oldest national conservation body' and in 2015 it celebrated its 150th anniversary.¹¹ The CPS elected Lefevre as the first chairman. He maintained this position until 1905, except on those occasions when he held a government portfolio and stepped down to avoid any perception of a conflict of interest.¹² The organisation's objective was 'organising resistance to the threatened enclosure of commons in the neighbourhood of London'.¹³ Among the early membership there was a noticeable inclusion of a number of Liberal Party MPs, including John Stuart Mill, Henry Fawcett and Charles Dilke.

Party politics at this time were not of the same ilk as they are today. Lines of allegiance and policy were much more fluid. The Liberal Party emphasised individualism and was particularly reluctant to encourage, what to some of the Liberal leadership, was perceived as pure factionalism.¹⁴ Equally, however, in many aspects, the Liberal Party at this time was the party of social reform. Liberals were strong adherents to voluntary charity over government intervention and espoused essentially middle-class reformist attitudes to citizenship.¹⁵ Thus while it would be incorrect to strictly assign reforming

¹¹ 'Open Spaces Society', accessed 18 February 2015, <http://www.oss.org.uk/>.

¹² George Shaw Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, Revised Edition (London, New York, Toronto, Melbourne: Cassell and Co., 1910), 28.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁴ Arthur Cyr, *Liberal Party Politics in Britain* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Inc., 1977), 54.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 58.

zeal to the Liberals, as opposed to the other political parties at the time, there was certainly a history of middle-class social engagement that was more likely to be found in the Liberal Party than elsewhere.

It is possible to argue that this increase in the dominance of the middle class had developed as a result of the expansion of enfranchisement. The mid-nineteenth century saw the English polity undergo fundamental change.¹⁶ In particular, the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867 extended the vote to hundreds of thousands of men. At the time of the establishment of the CPS, the Liberal party was led by the highly aristocratic Lord John Russell, son of the 6th Duke of Bedford. It was Russell who proposed many of the changes that would eventually be included in the 1867 Act. These changes split the Liberal government at the time and Russell resigned as a result in 1866. Despite the fall of the Liberal government there was enough popular pressure behind the reforms to ensure that the succeeding Conservative government introduced an electoral reform bill of its own, which passed into law the following year. In the general election of 1868 that followed the passage of the bill, the Conservative government lost power. The newly elected Liberal government, led by the very middle class William Ewart Gladstone, would maintain its dominant position for the next thirty years. Consequently, the CPS emerged at a time of growing national social consciousness and among people who had a strong sense of private social responsibility.

Although Wimbledon Common was the initial motivation for the founding of the CPS, and there was further action on this, it was not to be the group's first legal challenge. The first legal defence mounted by the CPS was for Hampstead Heath. Ironically, in

¹⁶ Gary W. Cox, *The Efficient Secret: The Cabinet and the Development of Political Parties in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 169.

the same year as Cruikshank etched his attack on sprawling urbanisation, Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson prevailed upon his cousin Spencer Perceval, the MP for Newport, to introduce a private bill to allow the building on and enclosure of any part of Hampstead Heath within his demesne.¹⁷ This as Lefevre wrote later 'caused the greatest alarm'.¹⁸ While this and subsequent bills were defeated, Wilson would make attempts on the Heath until his death in 1869. Following the findings of the Select Committee on Open Spaces in 1865, Wilson once again announced his intention to build on Hampstead Heath. It was in protest of this that the CPS swung into action for the first time. The tactics the organisation adopted for this case became the blueprint for future actions. As the organisation itself had no legal standing to bring a legal suit, a local resident with commoner's rights was recruited and donations secured to fund any action.¹⁹ In this instance the key local figure was one John Gurney Hoare. Not only was Hoare a Hampstead resident, family connections related him to an extremely wealthy banking family with a history of non-conformist Quaker views and abolitionist activism.

In December 1866 Hoare wrote to Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson ostensibly to avoid having to proceed to court:

My neighbours, as well as myself, much regret that you have commenced building on the Heath. Several gentlemen interested in the matter met last night and were advised that the only course open to them was an appeal to law. I can assure you that they will do this with reluctance, as they have no hostile feelings toward you; and it would give great and general satisfaction in this place if you would consent to stay all proceedings and to obtain a legal decision on the

¹⁷ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 35.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 36.

real or supposed rights of yourself and the copyholders by an amicable suit.²⁰

The letter received a speedy, if somewhat terse and extremely brief, reply. Wilson's response was one line: 'Take your own course'.²¹ Consequently, a suit was filed in the Court of Chancery, which was probably what the CPS desired from the outset. No legal judgment would, however, result. Wilson died in 1869 and his successor concluded an out-of-court financial settlement with regard to Hampstead Heath. The London Metropolitan Board of Works took control of the common with the passing of the 1871 Hampstead Heath Act. Eversley wrote later that the 'result of the case, therefore, was a substantial victory for the views put forward by the Commons Society; though it would have been preferable, in the interest of all the other cases that the suit should have been brought to issue, and a judgment given on the rights of the Commoners'.²²

Less than twenty years later, the CPS was called on to protect the Heath again, and by this time the Kyrle and MPGA were involved as well. The common abutted private open land that was in danger of being sold off for building purposes.²³ The Hampstead Heath Extension Committee, with George Shaw Lefevre as the vice-chairman opposed Sir Spencer Maryon Wilson, the heir of the previous incumbent, and Lord Mansfield. The original purchase of land was 220 acres, although this was bisected by roads and private land. The extension would see the Heath nearly double in size.²⁴

²⁰ John Gurney Hoare, 'Letter from John Gurney Hoare to Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson', 6 December 1866, FCP/1/64a, Parliamentary Archives.

²¹ Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson, 'Letter from Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson to John Gurney Hoare', 7 December 1866, FCP/1/64a, Parliamentary Archives.

²² Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 38.

²³ 'New Park for North London: A Plea for the Extension of Hampstead Heath and the Preservation of Parliament Fields' (Hampstead Heath Extension Committee, July 1885), FCP/1/40-1, Parliamentary Archives.

²⁴ C. Edmund Maurice, 'Open Letter: Extension of Hampstead Heath' (Hampstead Heath Extension Committee, February 1884), MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

The management of the existing Heath had been handed over to the Metropolitan Board of Works. It was they, along with two neighbouring vestries, under pressure from the Extension Committee that would resolve this latest threat. A financial settlement again proved to be the solution.²⁵ Over the next forty years, the Heath gradually grew to its current size of 790 acres.²⁶

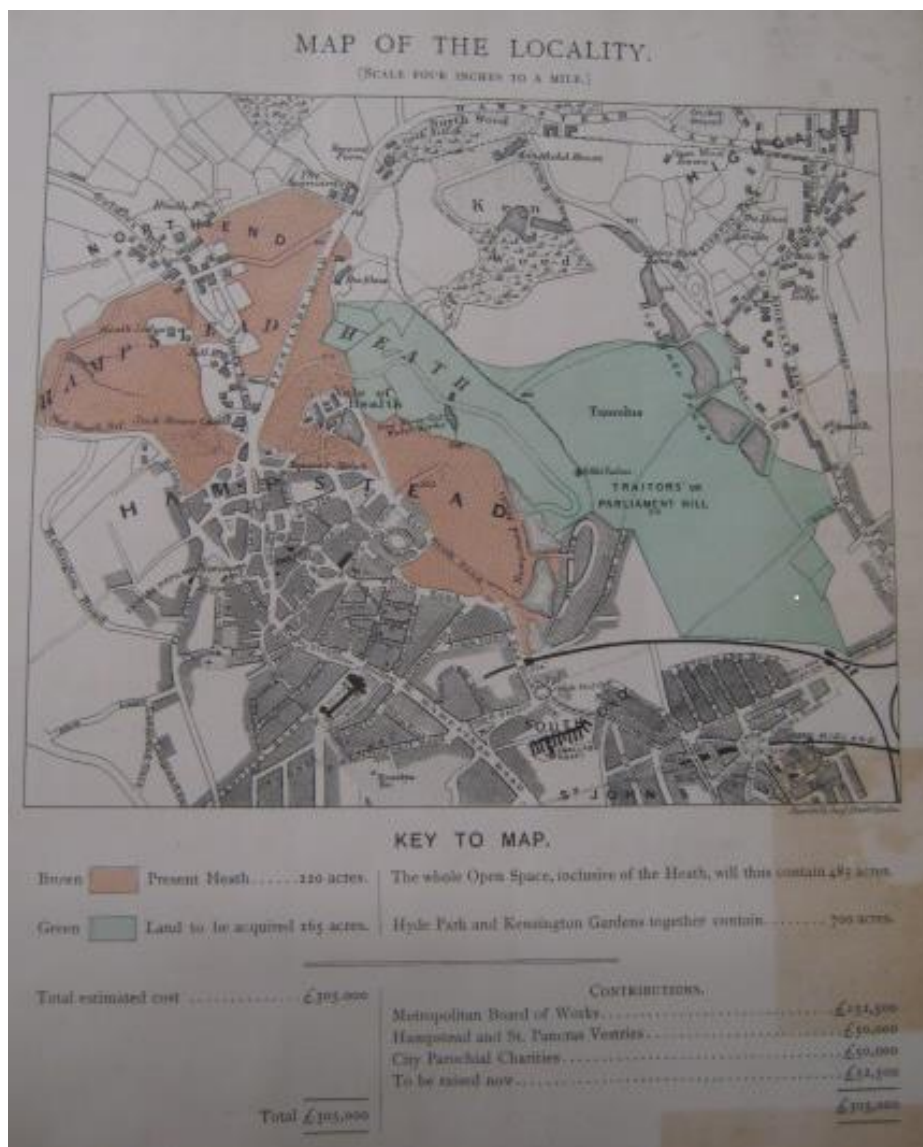


Fig. 1.2: Map prepared for the Hampstead Heath Extension Committee, 1885.

²⁵ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 40.

²⁶ 'Hampstead Heath Management Plan' (City of London, November 2007), 9, <http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/hampstead-heath/wildlife-and-nature/Documents/Hampstead-heath-management-plan-2007-2017.pdf>.

The CPS would sponsor numerous legal cases across the country and on some occasions resorted to direct action to ensure the continuing rights of the commoners. One well known occasion was at Berkhamsted Common. Augustus Smith instigated the action to defend the common from enclosure by the 2nd Earl Brownlow. In 1866, following the erection of a fence by the land owner, labourers, employed by the CPS's local agent, Smith, were transported to Tring, Hertfordshire by train at night. From there they walked approximately five miles to Berkhamsted and took down the iron fencing.²⁷ In *Punch* magazine the 'Battle of Berkhamsted' became immortalised in the seventeen verse 'Lay of Modern England':

There, miles of iron railing
 Scowled grimly in the dark,
 Making what once was Common,
 The Lord of Brownlow's Park:
 His rights that Lord asserted,
 Rights which they hold a myth
 The bold Berkhamstead Commoners,
 Led by Augustus Smith.

Bold was the deed and English
 The Commoners have done,
 Let's hope the law of England, too,
 Will smile upon their fun.
 For our few remaining Commons
 Must not be seized or sold,
 Nor Lords forget they do not live
 In the bad days of old.²⁸

²⁷ In Fakenham a similar fence removal was termed a 'riot'. Henry Nash, *Reminiscences of Berkhamsted* (Berkhamsted: W. Cooper & Nephews, 1890), 103–4; 'Enclosure of the Commons Riotous Proceedings', *Norfolk News*, 30 July 1870.

²⁸ The stanzas here are only two, #9 and #17, of the full seventeen stanza piece. 'Lay of Modern England', *Punch*, 24 March 1866, 125.

Repeating these techniques of court action, direct protest and public relations across England and Wales many of the commons were saved from development. In Scotland, due to that country's governmental position within the structure of the confederation that is Great Britain, land regulation emerged on a somewhat different path that due to space limitations is not discussed here. In an introductory note to the 1910 edition of Eversley's brief history of the CPS, E. N. Buxton and Robert Hunter noted:

It is not suggested that the Commons & Footpaths Preservation Society is directly the author of all these movements, though it has played an active part in most of them. But it may be doubted whether the Kyrle Society (which aims generally at bringing beauty home to the poor), the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, or the National Trust, would have come into existence so soon, or in quite the same way, had not the Commons Preservation Society insisted on the necessity of Open spaces to secure the health of towns and the reasonable enjoyment of life by those who live in towns.²⁹

The society itself certainly had an awareness of its own importance and of its place in the burgeoning preservation movement.

The Kyrle Society:

Some ten years after the founding of the CPS, the second of the organisations under consideration here was established – The Kyrle Society. Once again, this group initially had London as its focus, but again the group would spread and establish branches throughout England. However, unlike the CPS, which mentioned only one woman committee member, the Kyrle would be instigated by women and dominated by their drive. The one woman who participated in the CPS was the renowned Victorian reformer Octavia Hill. In Eversley's history of the CPS she was noted as one who 'in

²⁹ Eversley wrote his first history *English Forests and Commons* in 1894. It was revised in 1910. Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, vi.

early days took an active part'.³⁰ This was her only mention. It was Octavia Hill's sister, Miranda, who in 1875 presented a paper to the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences extolling the virtues of bringing beauty to the homes of the poor.³¹ This was to be the starting point for the foundation of the Kyrle Society, which was at some point in either 1876 or 1877.³² The Kyrle adopted the motto 'To the Utmost of Our Power', which would appear to be drawn from ancient Greek literature. Further distinguishing the Kyrle from the CPS was their methodology. While the CPS focused on securing the protection of open spaces through formal channels – the law courts and parliament – the Kyrle sought to work directly with the population of the poorest and most densely populated areas of London. The society's stated goal was 'to bring Beauty home to the people'.³³

The Hill sisters were born during the second half of the 1830s in Cambridgeshire into a family replete with socially aware reformers. Their maternal grandfather was Dr Thomas Southwood Smith, a staunch utilitarian and close friend of Jeremy Bentham. He was an associate of both Edwin Chadwick and the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury.³⁴ As a physician, he worked for the Central Board of Health and the London Fever Hospital. He was responsible for a number of sanitary reports and contributions to government commissions on improvements. The mother of the Hill sisters was his daughter Caroline Southwood Smith, who wrote on educational reform, married James Hill in

³⁰ Ibid., 28.

³¹ The paper's full title was 'The Influence of Beauty on the Life and Health of the Nation'. In it M. Hill referred to the 'improvement of the health and moral tone of the people resulting from a knowledge of the beauties of nature'. 'Beauty and the Health of Nations'.

³² Later annual reports note 1876 as the founding year, however Peter Thorsheim's research noted that earlier reports had the later year. 'Kyrle Society Annual Report' (London: The Kyrle Society, 1912), London Metropolitan Archive; Thorsheim, 'The Corpse in the Garden: Burial, Health, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century London'.

³³ C. Ernest Kelly, 'The Kyrle Society - Winding Up Report' (The Kyrle Society, February 1922), 1, A/FWA/C/C/13/001, London Metropolitan Archive.

³⁴ 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography', accessed 18 February 2015, <http://www.oxforddnb.com>.

1835 and educated all of her children at home. James was a proponent of the early socialist thinker Robert Owen. Thus the girls grew up in an extremely liberal, active household. Even when, due to financial and health circumstances, Caroline moved her children to live with her father, there was still an environment of social responsibility and activism.³⁵ In Southwood Smith's home the children encountered numerous important people. As teenagers, Miranda, who was the elder of the two, and Octavia were encouraged further by friendships with the influential art critic John Ruskin and the prominent theologian F. D. Maurice. It would perhaps have been more surprising if the Hill women had not engaged in social action and while Octavia became the more famous and significant of the two, Miranda was a strong supporter to her sister throughout their lives.

John Ruskin was not merely an art critic; arguably he was the arbiter of cultural taste in Victorian England for more than twenty years. He was to be an extremely important influence on Octavia Hill. Born in 1819, Ruskin published his seminal work *Modern Painters* in 1843.³⁶ He was just twenty four years of age. This, and the second volume, with the same title, secured Ruskin's position. He was a prolific writer and there would be works on aesthetics, architecture and political economy, along with his own literary creations. Ruskin was heavily influenced by his mother, Margaret, who imbued her son with her strong evangelical beliefs, which in turn would underscore his aesthetic values. As George Landow has noted, Ruskin believed that 'beauty was a reflection of God's nature in visible things'.³⁷ For Ruskin, beauty was not simply a surface characteristic. There was also a relationship between beauty, morality and spiritual nature. In his *Modern Painters* Ruskin wrote that '[i]deas of beauty are among the

³⁵ Gillian Darley, *Octavia Hill* (London: Constable, 1990), 30.

³⁶ Joan Evans, *John Ruskin* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1970), 94.

³⁷ George P. Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 91.

noblest which can be presented to the human mind, invariably exalting and purifying it according to their degree; and it would appear that we are intended by the Deity to be constantly under their influence'.³⁸ He further noted at the end of Chapter V that '[i]deas of beauty, then, be it remembered, are the subjects of moral, but not of intellectual perception'.³⁹ In 1853, Octavia and Miranda Hill met John Ruskin at Southwood Smith's home. Two years later, Ruskin would offer the seventeen year old Octavia employment as a copyist.⁴⁰ Ruskin and Octavia would remain friends – despite a rift, which was not healed for a decade – until his death in 1900.

Frederick Denison Maurice was a controversial theologian who moved from the non-conformist Unitarian Church to the established Church of England. He was instrumental in the founding of the Christian Socialist movement and held a ministry, along with a professorship, in London.⁴¹ He too made appearances at the home of Dr Southwood Smith. In 1849, Maurice established the Working Men's College, which the following year also held classes for women.⁴² Like many of the reformers of the period, Maurice held views that were both conservative and progressive. He advocated the transformation of humanity through Christianity as a means of transforming society. Maurice combined his religious beliefs with his education theories. As Olive Brose argued, Maurice was 'preoccupied with education as a divine and human principle...Fundamental to his theology was the conviction that a Divine Spirit awakened all man's faculties'.⁴³ However, the application of Maurice's transforming

³⁸ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Second Edition in Small Form, vol. I (London: George Allen, 1898), 31.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Darley, *Octavia Hill*, 52.

⁴¹ Olive J. Brose, *Frederick Denison Maurice: Rebellious Conformist* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1971), 157.

⁴² Ibid., 199.

⁴³ Ibid., 168.

vision was not universal. He opposed secular education and favoured a strictly defined Christian education that differentiated knowledge by class.⁴⁴ Thus while he encouraged working-class education, it was to be modified by both theology and social position.

Both sisters, but particularly Octavia, fell under Maurice's sway. When once again, financial difficulties threatened the family, Maurice offered Octavia a paid position as secretary at the Working Men's College.⁴⁵ Despite being the younger sister, Octavia was perceived as the stronger, more intense personality. However, Miranda would work with her sister until her death in 1910 and the sisters were remarkably close.⁴⁶ For the Hill sisters, even more so for Octavia than Miranda, Ruskin and Maurice were fundamental to their developing views. One of the other Hill sisters – Emily – would eventually marry a son of Maurice.⁴⁷ According to Miranda writing about her sister, 'It is impossible to realize how much of what her life is due to their help and influence'.⁴⁸ Equally therefore, in the foundation of the Kyrle Society, three key elements were central: the aesthetic taste of Ruskin, the socially responsible Christianity of Maurice and the Hill familial support and sense of duty.

The combination of these features can be seen in an article reporting on Miranda's presentation. Her paper reported that there would be an 'improvement of the health and moral tone of the people resulting from a knowledge of the beauties of nature'.⁴⁹ The goals of the Kyrle were focused in four main areas. A committee oversaw each

⁴⁴ Ibid., 170.

⁴⁵ Darley, *Octavia Hill*, 54.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 113.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 70.

⁴⁹ 'Beauty and the Health of Nations'.

of these functions, which included the provision of open spaces, the distribution of literature, assisting with decorations of clubs and hospitals, and the performance of music.⁵⁰ Further, the Kyrle added its voice to the smoke abatement debate as well as the publication of inexpensive pamphlets on art.⁵¹ The small society covered a considerable range of causes. Elizabeth Crawford suggests that the over-commitment and disorganisations of the Kyrle was a significant factor in limiting its success.⁵²

The Kyrle's diffuse goals and aesthetic focus also aroused some derision. C. Edmund Maurice, writing his biography of Octavia Hill, noted with regard to the foundation of the Kyrle that 'if mockery could have stifled a movement, this one would have been nipped in the bud'.⁵³ In particular he referenced the comic and society papers. Certainly, *Punch* satirised both the recipients and the donors of the Kyrle's attentions on more than one occasion. In one 'ballad', the male Kyrle visitor directed the 'labourer, brawny and coarse' to:

Take a sniff at this Lily, or only a look, –
We can *live* upon looks, if directed aright.
I will leave it you, friend, with Miss Hill's little book.
What you want's mural paintings, and Sweetness and Light.⁵⁴

In another 'air' a family was brought to destruction by the ministrations of the society:

They never dreamed of the Weird Intense,
Though a family of undoubted sense,
Till a Kyrle Man came with his lyre and lily,

⁵⁰ 'Kyrle Society Annual Report'.

⁵¹ *Descriptive Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Smoke-Preventing Appliances* (London: W. H. & L. Collingridge, 1881); Mary Logan, 'Guide to the Italian Pictures of Hampton Court (Kyrle Pamphlet No. 2)' (A. D. Innes & Co, 1894), 07813.aa.7, British Library.

⁵² Crawford, *Enterprising Women: The Garretts and Their Circle*, 220.

⁵³ C. Edmund Maurice, *Life of Octavia Hill as Told In Her Letters* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1913), 316.

⁵⁴ 'Beauty Not At Home: A Back-Street Ballad, Dedicated to the Kyrle Society', *Punch*, 12 February 1881, 71.

And drove that unfortunate family silly.

The eldest daughter – a work-girl plain –
Would touzle her hair and wear gauze in the rain;
Caught cold, sought cure in a peacock's feather,
And died of High Art and the state of the weather.⁵⁵

It is interesting that in both examples, the representative of the Kyrle Society was a male and characterised as somewhat effete and out of touch with the reality of life among the poorest. It was far more likely that the visitor would have been a female, who was already working in the area and thus cognisant of general living conditions.

In London there were few available plots of land and so the Kyrle aimed to enhance the few small courtyards and windows that were available to those living in the densest parts of the city. They were also early proponents of the conversion of disused burial grounds into parks. Within two years, an article about the Kyrle in the *Woman's Gazette* reported the planting and furnishing of open spaces, choir performances of Bach and Mendelssohn, club rooms decorated with frescoes and trips for children to parks, museums and the zoo.⁵⁶ Through its close ties to the CPS, among other organisations, the Kyrle continued to advocate the necessity of open space in London. Philanthropists elsewhere in the country would introduce the work of the Kyrle to their cities, including Nottingham, Bristol and Liverpool.⁵⁷ In Bristol the Kyrle's president was Miss Mary Clifford, who while not of the same national standing as Octavia Hill, was very much of the same mould. She worked tirelessly for the benefit

⁵⁵ 'A Kyrley Tale', *Punch*, 19 February 1881, 84.

⁵⁶ A Member of the Kyrle Society, 'The Kyrle Society', *The Woman's Gazette*, June 1878, archive.org.

⁵⁷ 'Kyrle Society Annual Report', 84.

of the city of Bristol for most of her life. The Bristol Kyrle would transition into a civic association, which continues to exist today.⁵⁸

The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association:

As noted above, within the metropolitan area there were few plots of land available to create inner-city open spaces. With this in mind, the presence of hundreds of disused burial grounds in the city proved an attractive target to green space activists.⁵⁹ These cemeteries had fallen out of use following the passage of the 1853 Burial Act, which legislated that ‘for the Protection of Public Health the opening of any new Burial Ground in any City or Town, or within any other Limits...should be prohibited, or that Burials in any City or Town...should be wholly discontinued’.⁶⁰ As a result, these spaces had been left undeveloped and often untended. Peter Thorsheim has argued that in part the transformation of these areas was made possible by changing mentalities around the natural processes of decomposition.⁶¹ This change, though, was just one in a society that was experiencing wider adjustments. The expanding metropolitan railway network, as well as housing developers also looked toward these sites.

The CPS and the Kyrle continued a protracted campaign to prevent any building on these vacant sites. However the CPS was focused on the protection of the commons and the Kyrle had neither the funds nor the degree of membership to fully pursue the

⁵⁸ ‘Bristol Civic Society’, accessed 15 February 2015, <http://www.bristolcivicsociety.org.uk>.

⁵⁹ Isabella M. Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on Their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: T. F. Unwin, 1896), 21.

⁶⁰ *The Burial Act, V.R. 16 & 17*, vol. CAP CXXXIV, 1853.

⁶¹ Thorsheim, ‘The Corpse in the Garden: Burial, Health, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century London’, 39.

case for re-purposing burial grounds.⁶² Several acts of parliament had procured a degree of protection for some open spaces in the metropolitan area and surrounding commons. The Metropolitan Board of Works took over management of several commons, including Hampstead Heath and Blackheath in 1871, and in 1877 the Metropolitan Open Spaces Act provided for ‘facilities for making available the open space in and near the metropolis for the use of the inhabitants for exercise and recreation’.⁶³ It was at this juncture that the Metropolitan Public Garden Association emerged.

The Metropolitan Public Gardens, Boulevard and Playground Association (MPGA) held its first meeting on the 20th of November 1882.⁶⁴ It very soon removed the boulevards and then the playgrounds from its appellation. At the inaugural meeting there were twenty-eight people present, a third of whom were women. Lord Reginald Brabazon, who became the first chairman, stated that the organisation’s ‘main object [was] the giving of the people gardens and the children playgrounds’.⁶⁵ Further in the same meeting, his lordship ‘alluded to disused burial grounds and closed churchyards’. These areas became the primary focus of the organisation. The group quickly began its campaign. In June 1883 the MPGA published a pamphlet entitled ‘The Value of Disused Burial Grounds’.⁶⁶ In this the MPGA promoted the health benefits of greenery as well as pointing out that it was ‘not generally known that a recent Act of Parliament...affords facilities for thus utilising disused burial grounds and attention is

⁶² A Member of the Kyrle Society, ‘The Kyrle Society’ According to the report the Kyrle had only £65 for its work in 1876/7.

⁶³ See for example: *Hampstead Heath Act*, V.R. 34 & 35, vol. Local Act LXXVII, 1871; *Open Space (Metropolis)*, V.R. 40 & 41, vol. CAP XXXV, 1877 This Act would be further defined in 1881.

⁶⁴ ‘Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association’ (Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, 20 November 1882), 1, London Metropolitan Archive.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁶ ‘The Value of Disused Burial Grounds’ (The Metropolitan Public Gardens & Playgrounds Association, 5 June 1883), MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

therefore drawn to the provisions of the Act which are especially applicable to such open spaces'. The pamphlet goes on to urge 'Incumbents and others who have Disused Burial Grounds under their care, [and emphasise] the desirability of availing themselves of the provisions of the Act referred to'.⁶⁷ Beyond their own function, the MPGA also supported existing groups. It worked with both the CPS and the Kyrle. On occasion it granted funds to the Kyrle, to assist with similar projects.⁶⁸ Given the stature and wealth of its membership, the MPGA rapidly achieved success. Within two years, the MPGA had completed sixteen gardens and playgrounds, totalling more than fourteen acres.⁶⁹ The work of the association attracted support from the highest levels of society. The first site opened was a playground over the former Horsemonger Lane Gaol. The opening ceremony was accompanied by a musical programme and officiated over by Mrs Gladstone, the wife of the Prime Minister.⁷⁰ Later projects would be ceremonially opened by members of the royal family.

The MPGA was essentially the brainchild of Lord Reginald Brabazon. In his opening address at the first gathering he stated that he had 'been actively concerned in commencing the meeting with a view to establishing an association for promoting the laying-out for the benefit of the people of the metropolis every morsel of land available for the purpose'.⁷¹ Lord Brabazon was the forty year old heir apparent to the Earldom of Meath, a member of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and former member of the diplomatic service of the British government. During his diplomatic service, Brabazon

⁶⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁸ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association' (Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, 2 October 1883), MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁶⁹ 'Programme for the Opening of Barnsbury Square Public Garden' (Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, 30 April 1891), MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO5, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁷⁰ 'Opening of the Playground at Union Road, Newington' (Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, 5 May 1884), MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁷¹ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 20 November 1882, 2–3.

worked with and was a good friend of Lord Sackville, the owner of Knole Park.⁷² Following his resignation from the Foreign Office, Lord and Lady Brabazon threw themselves into philanthropic efforts.⁷³ In his 1886 book *Social Arrows*, in which Brabazon discussed his views on improving society, his sense of responsibility was set out in the opening dedication to his father:

I dedicate to you this small volume, which would never have been written had not my thoughts been turned toward the duty of working for others by the example which in your person, since my earliest childhood, I have ever had before my eyes.

Your simple piety, your attachment to duty, your energy and untiring labours in the service of others, have been my admiration; and my ambition is to be able to follow in your footsteps.⁷⁴

Following the death of his father in 1887, Lord Brabazon became the 12th Earl of Meath and would take a seat as a member of the House of Lords.

Initially, the Brabazons focused on hospitals and convalescence societies. However, in 1880 Lady Brabazon formed ‘a small Committee in connection with the Kyrle Society, in order to provide musical entertainment in hospitals, workhouses, and similar institutions’.⁷⁵ This was not to be the last association between the Brabazons and the Kyrle. Later in 1880, Lady Brabazon sought to establish a society that would ensure ‘country air for town girls and women’ again with the Kyrle.⁷⁶ In the following year a public garden in Hoxton was paid for and opened to the public by the Brabazons.⁷⁷ It was only a few months later that the MPGA was founded. Lord and

⁷² Reginald Brabazon 12th Earl of Meath, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century* (London: John Murray, 1923), 147.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁷⁴ Lord Reginald Brabazon, *Social Arrows* (London: Longman Green & Co, 1886) Dedication.

⁷⁵ Brabazon, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century*, 220.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 223.

Lady Brabazon were both in attendance at the first meeting, along with seven reverends and the heir to the Coutts fortune.⁷⁸ The establishment of the MPGA was by the elite of society; certainly of a somewhat different social class to that of the two earlier organisations, due in part to the founding chairman. However, it was not limited to the aristocracy and there were many who joined who, while they could be considered elite, were not aristocratic.

The first vice-chairman of the group was Dr Ernest Hart. Hart was the editor of the *British Medical Journal* and was credited with the transformation of the *BMJ* into an extremely successful, well-respected medical journal, as well as the improvement of the standing of the British Medical Association.⁷⁹ The *BMJ* ran a number of articles supporting the work of all three societies. Other early members of the association included Frederick Mocatta and Lady Louisa Goldsmid, both prominent members of the Anglo-Jewish community, Stephen and Alexander Ralli, wealthy Anglo-Greek businessmen, social activist Walter Besant and Miss Lankester, daughter of a public health reformer and sister of the director of the Natural History Museum.⁸⁰ Thus the membership while formed of the higher echelons of English society was also diverse with regard to religion and ethnicity. In 1884, the *BMJ* reported that the association has ‘a large and influential list of members’.⁸¹ Many of the MPGA were participants in a number of charities, but all evinced a deep concern for the wellbeing of metropolitan inhabitants. This concern should not be considered entirely altruistic. There was often a noticeable correlation made by many of the members between public health, ‘race’ degeneration and potential loss of empire.

⁷⁸ ‘Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association’, 20 November 1882.

⁷⁹ ‘Oxford Dictionary of National Biography’.

⁸⁰ Names of new members were listed on the monthly minutes of the MPGA. The names from each month were correlated and a detailed analysis of all those who joined between 1882 and 1895 was thus possible.

⁸¹ ‘Sanitation by Open Space’, *British Medical Journal*, 4 October 1884.

The power and energy of a nation depend upon the power and energy possessed by the units which constitute that nation, and if individual energy is sapped...by lack of physical strength...the work of that nation will be lacking in excellence...and it will have to take a lower rank in the world's hierarchy.⁸²

This was one of the main motivations behind the Brabazons, as indeed it was for many members of the MPGA, for creating public parks and playgrounds.

There can be no doubt that as a result of the organisation's endeavours a considerable number of open spaces were created and preserved. The motivations of the MPGA were by twenty-first century standards more related to the improvement of certain populations of the metropolis than the environment. As important as public health was in the mindset of the MPGA membership, there was also some concern for the aesthetic appearance of London, the imperial capital. Comparisons between London and other continental and American cities featured in the press. 'While Continental cities have their boulevards and public gardens, the greatest city in the world is allowed to be blocked up with high buildings and rows of monotonous streets, unbroken by pleasant and shady trees'.⁸³ Following his appointment as the Chairman of the Open Spaces Committee of the London County Council, Lord and Lady Brabazon undertook a trip to the USA.⁸⁴ Subsequently, Brabazon would write of his findings in the British press. 'The Americans are a wide awake people...they are endeavouring, and with no small success, to create parks for the people which shall rival the famous royal and aristocratic "pleasaunces" [*sic*] of the old world'.⁸⁵ The MPGA played on

⁸² Brabazon, *Social Arrows*, 44–45.

⁸³ 'The London County Council and Open Spaces', *British Medical Journal*, 19 January 1889.

⁸⁴ Brabazon, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century*, 259.

⁸⁵ Lord Reginald Brabazon, 'Open Spaces A Lesson From America', *The Graphic*, 1 April 1890, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

the concern of the English of being bested by both European and upstart American cities in terms of the health of its citizenry and the physical appearance.

In little more than ten years more than sixty gardens and playgrounds had been opened, including the largest disused burial ground in the city.⁸⁶ Victoria Park Cemetery was over eleven acres and located in the East End of London. It was opened in 1894 by HRH the Duke of York. The London County Council requested permission to change the name as a tribute to both the MPGA and its founder. The park became known as Meath Gardens; the name these gardens bear today.⁸⁷



Fig. 1.3: The entrance to Meath Gardens, Tower Hamlets, London. Photograph by author, 2014.

The successes of the MPGA were internationally acknowledged. The *Detroit Free Press* waxed lyrical about the change to Dicken's London as early as 1888.⁸⁸ The majority of

⁸⁶ 'Programme for the Opening of Barnsbury Square Public Garden'.

⁸⁷ 'Twelfth Annual Report of the MPGA' (Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, 1894), MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁸⁸ Luke Sharp, 'Poor Jo's Ground', *The Detroit Free Press*, 18 February 1888.

the gardens created by the MPGA still exist today. Meath Gardens is still surrounded by high-density housing in a poorer area of the city.⁸⁹ However, today the housing is high-rise apartment buildings and not tenement slums as they were at the time the garden was originally created. The association itself is still operating and offers grants ‘to those who share with us a desire to improve the environment and thus the quality of life for the local community’.⁹⁰ The MPGA predominantly concentrated on improving London. In other metropolitan areas in England, organisations based on the MPGA arose to replicate their work. The projects undertaken were often small and generally quite localised. It was arguably this localisation that made the group such a success. Members and the general public could relate the activities to a very specific space, often within sight of their homes. It is also noteworthy that given the sheer number of projects completed, the MPGA created a vast network of green spaces for London. In his memoir Lord Brabazon recorded:

[The MPGA] laid out between 1884 and 1922, 120 parks, gardens and playgrounds, covering 162 acres, at a cost of £46,140, and assisted towards the acquisition or formation of 57 parks and spaces covering an area of 2,047 acres at a cost of £12,488...in addition to the purchase of thousands of trees and seats for the enjoyment and comfort of Londoners.⁹¹

Clearly the Earl, now an eighty-two year old widower, felt an immense sense of pride in the work his organisation had done.

The National Trust:

Of the four organisations under consideration here, the National Trust is probably the best known. It has been the subject of several books as well as publishing its own

⁸⁹ ‘London’s Poverty Profile : Tower Hamlets’, accessed 18 February 2015, <http://www.londonpovertyprofile.org.uk/indicators/boroughs/tower-hamlets/>.

⁹⁰ ‘Metropolitan Public Garden Association’.

⁹¹ Brabazon, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century*, 227.

range of guides, gardening and cooking books.⁹² It has become one the wealthiest charities in England. According to the Trust's website it currently has 'over 3.7 million members... [We] protect and open to the public over 350 historic houses, gardens and ancient monuments... We also look after forests, woods, fens, beaches, farmland, downs, moorland, islands, archaeological remains, castles, nature reserves, villages - for ever, for everyone'.⁹³ If the groups examined here were ranked on acreage of land protected then without doubt the National Trust would come out on the top of the list. It is also the youngest of the groups. The Trust or to give it its full name, The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty, was first proposed at a meeting in London in July 1894.⁹⁴ There had been some preparation for this meeting, as in March of that same year a request was made to the MPGA for the names of 'any likely to be interested'.⁹⁵ Where the MPGA focused its formidable membership on the urban, which both the CPS and Kyrle had essentially done, the Trust targeted the rural. Today the popular image of the Trust is as the protector of its many historic buildings and formerly aristocratic mansions. This is a distinct contrast to its originating ethos. In the establishing memorandum of association, five of the twenty objectives listed reference open space and the importance of recreation.⁹⁶ Even the monuments of importance to the Trust were outdoor sites, located in rural areas. The Trust from its inception concentrated its efforts on protecting landscapes, both beautiful and historic, and providing access for the public.

⁹² For an example of a somewhat laudatory history of the Trust see: Paula Weideger, *Gilding the Acorn* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1994) There are innumerable books by the Trust covering a huge range of material as demonstrated by the Trust's online shop page.

⁹³ 'The National Trust', accessed 18 February 2015, <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk>.

⁹⁴ 'A Proposed National Trust', *The Times*, 17 July 1894, National Trust Archive.

⁹⁵ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 7 March 1894, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO5, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁹⁶ 'Memorandum and Articles of Association of the National Trust For Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty', 5–6.

Many of the individuals behind the establishment of the Trust were from the CPS, the Kyrle and the MPGA. The people at the heart of the National Trust were very much of the same character as those who were instrumental in the creation of these two earlier groups. Brought together by Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley a Lake District minister, Robert Hunter of the CPS and Octavia Hill of the Kyrle joined together to propose the new organisation. At the inaugural meeting Hill proposed the first resolution: 'That it is desirable to provide means by which landowners and others may be enabled to dedicate to the nation places of historic interest or natural beauty, and that for this purpose it is expedient to form a corporate body, capable of holding land and representative of national institutions and interests'.⁹⁷ From the very beginning, the Trust wanted to take ownership of sites in order to preserve them. In order to do this it had to incorporate itself as a non-profit company. This was achieved in January 1895.⁹⁸ Before the Trust had even received the certificate of incorporation, there was the promise of a piece of coastal property.⁹⁹ In large part, all the circumstances that created the Trust were a consequence of John Ruskin's influence. Ruskin had tutored Rawnsley at Oxford and had introduced him to Octavia Hill.¹⁰⁰ Presumably, Ruskin's opposition to railway development in the Lake District encouraged Rawnsley's own preservationist ideals.¹⁰¹ As previously noted, Octavia Hill was an early participant of the CPS, of which Robert Hunter was the honorary solicitor. The first property offered to the Trust was a cliff above the town of Barmouth in North West Wales. The donor was Mrs Fanny Talbot. She was a friend and correspondent of John

⁹⁷ 'The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty', *The Times*, 17 July 1894, National Trust Archive.

⁹⁸ 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the Provisional Council of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty', 16 January 1895, National Trust Archive.

⁹⁹ Fanny Talbot, 'Letter from Mrs Fanny Talbot to Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley', 23 October 1894, National Trust Archive.

¹⁰⁰ 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography'.

¹⁰¹ Harriet Ritvo, *The Dawn of Green: Manchester, Thirlmere and Modern Environmentalism* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 81.

Ruskin.¹⁰² As will be discussed in chapter three, these familial and friendship networks were of huge importance among Victorian philanthropists.

Following the acquisition by donation of Dinas Oleu, as the hillside above Barmouth was known, the Trust suffered some setbacks.¹⁰³ Perhaps the most notable of these was the failure to protect the Falls of Foyers. Despite a protracted campaign against the aluminium company which had purchased the estate and planned to divert the water flow to a smelter, the Trust was unsuccessful. The Executive Committee stated that ‘this is the first instance of the destruction of a British waterfall for commercial purposes, and it is hoped that the public will be on the alert if overtures are made for water power by Limited Liability Companies in the future’.¹⁰⁴ Other areas of deep concern for the Committee by mid-1896 were ancient monuments. In the same report the condition of Stonehenge and the Wall of Antoninus (a Roman earthwork north of Hadrian’s Wall) were discussed. One of the first societies that the Trust resolved to appoint a nominated member from was the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, so concern over these sites, and others like them, was perhaps not too surprising.¹⁰⁵ Peer pressure aside, this concern over the loss of the Fall of Foyers and the condition of Stonehenge prompted the appointment of a special committee to investigate the possibility of legislation for ‘the better protection of places or sites which...are of national importance’.¹⁰⁶ Within five years of the Trust’s incorporation,

¹⁰² John Ruskin, *Dearest Mama Talbot: A Selection of Letters by John Ruskin to Mrs Fanny Talbot*, Ed. Margaret Spence (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966).

¹⁰³ Dinas Oleu translates as city or citadel of light. Translation with thanks to H. Griffith.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Interim Report of the Executive Committee’ (The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest and Natural Beauty, 31 March 1896), 4.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Minutes of the First Meeting of the Provisional Council of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty’, 6.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Interim Report of the Executive Committee’, 7.

there was enhanced legislative protection for ancient monuments and in 1907 the National Trust itself received legislated powers.¹⁰⁷

Despite the Trust's deep connections with previous English preservationist groups, one of the most surprising aspects of its establishment was the choice of model. The initial constitution of the Trust was built not on a British example, but an American one. During the initial meeting, where the creation of the Trust was first proposed, Canon Rawnsley spoke of how 'a like attempt had been successfully started and done good work in Massachusetts'.¹⁰⁸ The Massachusetts General Court passed the *Trustees of Public Reservations* in 1891.¹⁰⁹ This provided for the 'acquiring, holding, arranging, maintaining, and opening to the public...of beautiful and historical places and tracts of land'.¹¹⁰ The legislation listed Charles S. Sargent, the professor of arboriculture at Harvard University as one of these trustees. In the first meeting of the provisional council of the Trust a number of societies were named that were to nominate members to the council. One, as noted above, was the Society for the Protection of Ancient Monuments one other was the 'Massachusetts Society'.¹¹¹ Four months later, Professor C. S. Sargent was a nominated member of the Council, representing the Trustees of Public Reservations.¹¹²

There were continued links between organisations in the USA and the English association. The American ambassador was invited to the annual general meeting of

¹⁰⁷ *Ancient Monuments Protection Act, V.R. 63 & 64*, vol. CAP XXXIV, 1900; *National Trust Act, 7 Edward 7*, vol. CAP CXXXVI Local Acts, 1907.

¹⁰⁸ 'The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty'.

¹⁰⁹ *An Act To Establish the Trustees of Public Reservations, Massachusetts General Court*, vol. Chapter 352, 1891.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the Provisional Council of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty'.

¹¹² 'Interim Report of the Executive Committee'.

the Trust and a few months later, Professor Henry Winchester Rolfe was appointed acting honorary secretary for the National Trust of America.¹¹³ Members of the Trust would visit the USA on more than one occasion. Canon Rawnsley himself would visit in the second half of 1899. Charles R. Ashbee visited the USA on behalf of the Trust in 1901. The trip's objective was 'not only to make known the historic and aesthetic side of the work of the National Trust of England, with a view to winning American sympathy and support, but to find out what similar activities were in existence in America, and to see whether something could be done towards bringing these into touch with the English organisations'.¹¹⁴ Thus from its inception, the Trust, while concerned with the maintenance of traditional English landscapes, was outward looking and willing to follow successful international examples. It is possible that this was one of the fundamental reasons for its continuing achievements.

Emerging out of Rawnsley's desire to protect his beloved Lake District from development, the National Trust acquired a decidedly rural or certainly non-urban character, although the contemporary image is more stately home than heathland. The three people generally credited with the formation of the Trust had all long been active in other conservation or preservationist causes. They had even worked together previously on various projects. As Lefevre suggested, the existence of the Trust was in part a consequence of the earlier organisations and had built on those experiences in creating the new association.¹¹⁵ Whereas the MPGA arose from a more elite membership, the Trust followed the earlier model of the CPS, along with the Kyrle, to

¹¹³ 'Minutes of the Executive Committee of the National Trust', 20 March 1899, National Trust Archive; 'Minutes of the Executive Committee of the National Trust', 12 February 1900, National Trust Archive.

¹¹⁴ C. R. Ashbee, 'Report to the Council of the National Trust of Visit to the United States in the Council's Behalf' (London: The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest and Natural Beauty, March 1901), 3, General Reference Collection C.104.i.1, British Library.

¹¹⁵ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, vi.

centre itself in a middle-class milieu. The first president of the Trust was the Duke of Westminster; however, the majority of the executive committee was not of a similar rank. It was also a group that from the outset had a very clear understanding of the need to hold ownership of land in order to protect it. This differentiated the Trust from the previous groups as well as defining the courses of action taken from inception. Incorporating the aesthetics and influences of Ruskin, the Trust broadened its approach to preservation by utilising suitable examples, wherever they emerged from. It adapted American legislation as the foundation of its constitution and established close ties with many trans-Atlantic luminaries and organisations. The introduction and increasing rate of inheritance tax in Great Britain almost certainly prompted many estates to consider donation to the Trust and helped to overcome the slow start made by the group. However this was not the only basis for its success. The objectives and programme of the Trust, along with legislative force, made it an attractive and powerful body.



Fig. 1.4: St Botolph-without-Aldersgate (Known as Postman's Park), London. Photograph by author, 2014.

Conclusion:

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the four organisations examined had engendered legislative and ideological changes that led to wider protection for England's 'green and pleasant land'.¹¹⁶ The CPS had contested and won judgment in numerous court cases over common rights around the country. Utilising the legal expertise of men like Robert Hunter, who received a knighthood for his efforts in 1909, the society had protected and in some instances, such as Hampstead Heath, increased the acreage open to the public.¹¹⁷ Taking a differing approach from the CPS, the Kyrle Society founded by the energetic Miranda and Octavia Hill undertook direct action to bring the countryside to the city. Although the Kyrle would not continue beyond the 1920s, civic associations emerged out of this group and continue their work.¹¹⁸ The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association had overseen the re-purposing of disused burial sites around London, establishing a patchwork of green spaces across the city. Playgrounds and gardens now existed in some of the poorest areas of the metropolis. Of all the associations here, the most influential today is the National Trust. A major landowner in Britain, it is affluent and has an extensive membership. Emerging at the end of the nineteenth century, the Trust had a very clear conception of its aims from the outset. The Trust utilised an overseas model as its basal constitution. Initially pursuing corporate status, the Trust succeeded in inducing legislation that empowered the group with statutory status.

¹¹⁶ Blake, *The Complete Prose and Poetry of William Blake*.

¹¹⁷ 'Report and Balance Sheet of the Committee Formed For Securing the Extension of Hampstead Heath', March 1889.

¹¹⁸ Kelly, 'The Kyrle Society - Winding Up Report'.

Through the interweaving of motivations, personnel and desired goals these four groups began a movement that instigated the reassessment of the importance of conserving open space in England. The valuing of nature for its own intrinsic qualities was not perhaps the main motivator, but certainly these associations understood that open spaces were a necessity to a population's wellbeing. The brief organisational histories recounted above focus primarily on only one or two significant people. None of these associations could have thrived, however, without a broader appeal. The following chapter will examine in more detail the sites that were the subject of protection and creation by the four associations.

Chapter II

Urban Gardens and Cultural Landscapes

Therefore, ye blessed and eternal twain,
At whose deep founts unebbing joy runs o'er,
Sweet Poesy and Nature's charmed reign,
Loved for yourselves, I love ye now the more;
For ye can quell the dragon-rage and roar
Of Mammon's rabid and tumultuous crew;
Can teach our tempted spirits still to soar
Above the worldly mind; to still pursue,
Proudly, that heav'n-lit path yet bright'ning on our view.¹

William Howitt, author of the above poem, considered the English especially sensitive to nature.² England had long seen itself as exceptionally fortunate in terms of its natural environment. One need only think of John of Gaunt's speech from Shakespeare's *Richard II*, referencing the 'sceptred isle' and 'demi-paradise'.³ There was, however, a tension at the heart of the Victorian adoration of nature. As can be seen in Howitt's verse, Nature's charms are contrasted with Mammon's avarice. Economic and imperial dominance was predicated on the exploitation of the natural world. For all of the groups of the open space movement, it was essential to understand this contradiction. The Commons Preservation Society, Kyrle Society, Metropolitan Public Gardens Association and the National Trust each selected differing locations as the focus of their attentions. In selecting the spaces that they

¹ William Howitt, 'The Influence of Nature and Poetry on National Spirit', in *Time's Telescope*, Orig. Pub. 1826 (London: Forgotten Books, 2014), xxxviii, http://www.forgottenbooks.com/readbook/Times_Telescope_1000634265#1.

² Howitt, *The Rural Life of England*, II:1.

³ Act II, Scene 1, John of Gaunt's speech. William Shakespeare, *Works of William Shakespeare*, vol. 4 (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 26.

did, the associations defined the areas they deemed necessary and worthy. Conversely, this meant that the opposite was also true. There were spaces not valued, or at the very least, the organisations were willing to sacrifice them to development and progress.

This chapter focuses on the motivations for and the characteristics of the areas chosen by the individual organisations, as well as the factors that influenced those choices. These sites were places of contestation and tension. Usage, economics, science, citizenship and patriotism were all deployed both for and against preservation of open spaces. The specific sites nominated by each group will be examined here, with regard to all of these arguments. Each group initially formed to protect or create a particular type of open space. There were occasions when they worked together and supported one another, but their organisational objectives highlighted particular areas of interest. These sites ranged in size from a window box to vast rural landscapes; and in nature from metropolitan common to disused burial grounds. Consequently different places engendered different efforts. Complex English land ownership and conveyancing laws ensured that every preservation attempt demanded extensive input. The reasoning behind the selection of each place was a crucial touchstone for the groups.

Equally it is necessary to explore the physical nature of these places and whether they were pre-existing open spaces, modified spaces or newly acquired. The land itself was imbued with a variety of cultural constructions. Felix Driver contends that Imperial London was an articulation of modernity, a cultural geography.⁴ This cultural geography is as applicable to ‘natural’ landscapes, which were assigned cultural representations. The cultural interpretations assigned to these spaces are important

⁴ Felix Driver, ‘Heart of Empire? Landscape, Space and Performance in Imperial London’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16 (1998): 11.

factors in an examination of these locations. Much has been written about the link between nature and culture, often defining the two in opposition to one another. However, as Tom Griffiths and Tim Bonyhady assert, these two concepts are imbued with meaning by each other.⁵ The division is particularly tenuous in England, where there was no space that could be imaginatively constructed as ‘wilderness’ or ‘virgin soil’ as was the case in places such as America or Australia. All of England was marked by the human/cultural relationship with nature/environment. As Simon Schama has noted, nature and culture emerged in interaction.⁶ The associations considered here defined a particular culture and utilised open spaces in order to emphasise this, thus shaping those spaces. In their cultural construction of the sites, the importance of the spaces being kept open had to be addressed in terms that responded to alternative demands on the land. A balance needed to be struck between exploitation of natural resources for national economic benefit and aesthetic, recreational appreciation of the landscape. The CPS, Kyrle, MPGA and National Trust each achieved this balance using a variety of approaches. Beginning with the commons, the location of choice for the first of the organisations established, the type of space selected will be considered, following the chronology of each group.

‘Frauds of the Land-Gentry’ – The Metropolitan Commons:

It is easy to form the impression that the use of the word ‘common’ when applied to a piece of land equated to that land being public. This was not and is not the case in England. In fact, for the Commons Preservation Society, the eponymous preservation referred not to land at all. When speaking before the Kyrle Society in 1879, Robert Hunter explained it thus:

⁵ Tim Bonyhady and Tom Griffiths, ‘Landscape and Language’, in *Words for Country: Landscape & Language in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2002), 1–13.

⁶ Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), 143.

Now, it may, perhaps, surprise you to hear that the legal meaning of the term “Common” is not land at all, but what is popularly understood by a *right* of common, viz., – a right of taking a part of some product of land, the soil of which belongs to another person—as, for example, the right of taking a portion of the feed of land, or the trees, furze or bushes growing upon it.⁷



Fig. 2.1: Hampstead Heath, 2015. Photograph with thanks to M. I. Longden.

Over time people adopted the term to indicate the land over which the rights were exercised. The Metropolitan Commons Act of 1866 thus defined the term ‘common’ as ‘[l]and subject ... to any Right of Common; the Term “Commoner” means a Person having any such Right of Common’.⁸ The land in question was in private, predominantly aristocratic hands. The commons, or wastes of the manor, were uncultivated parts of a manorial estate. This land was often of poor quality and unsuitable for arable farming. Nor were commons the only type of shared land. Lammas lands or half-year lands provided grazing generally from the 1st of August (Lammas Day) until the end of March (Lady Day).⁹ The land itself belonged to the estate owner, who conferred rights of usage on individual tenants or residents of

⁷ Robert Hunter, ‘The Preservation of the Commons’, A Paper read before the Kyrle Society, 6th March 1879 (London: Commons Preservation Society, 1880), 2, W70/9584, British Library.

⁸ *Metropolitan Commons Act*, vol. V.R. 29 & 30, 1866.

⁹ E.C.K. Gonner, *Common Land and Inclosure* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1912), 13.

specific villages. The allocation of rights was not a broad confirmation. It was possible for the rights of common to apply to a very small number of particular tenant farmers in a given area. By no means did all the residents of an area have equal or indeed any entitlements. Rights could include, among other things, collecting firewood, grazing livestock, fishing and peat cutting.¹⁰ The lord of the manor could award one or all of these. Assignment of the rights was then recorded in the rolls of the manor, which were essentially ledgers of activities. Manorial rolls, in some cases, stretched back to the medieval period and were important evidence utilised by the CPS to support their legal actions. Common land was not public and commoners were not the general population.

It should also not be assumed that the restriction of the commons by enclosure was a modern challenge. The threat of commons enclosure and the loss of rights of usage was not new to the nineteenth century. Uncultivated land was constantly under pressure, especially when advances in agricultural techniques made the previously unusable land viable. As far back as the thirteenth century, legislation gave landowners power of enclosure. The 1235 Statute of Merton is the oldest example of this.¹¹ Thirteenth-century aristocracy established their rights to enclose manorial wastes, thus enabling them to bring more land under cultivation. Importantly, though, they were obliged to ensure that there was sufficient land to fulfil the rights of common. The Commons Act 1236, as the Statute of Merton was officially recorded as, while allowing manorial lords the right to enclose the waste of the manor, enshrined protection of the tenants' rights as well. The use of the statute by landowners fell out of practice and its utilisation became extremely rare. Most probably this was the result of the dramatic

¹⁰ Clayden, *Our Common Land: The Law and History of Commons and Village Greens*, 9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

decline in population following the Black Death in the fourteenth century.¹² Interestingly, as the population recovered in the sixteenth century, so too did the use of the statute. Tentative estimates of the land enclosed prior to the mid-eighteenth century, however, suggest that there were still considerable tracts of open land before the modern era of parliamentary enclosure.¹³

From the middle of the eighteenth century the character of enclosure changed dramatically. Enclosure of land now required an act of parliament and the requirements of a rapidly industrialising nation demanded new resources. In the next one hundred years there would be over 2500 enclosure acts, accounting for approximately four million acres of open land.¹⁴ By the middle of the nineteenth century, though, a number of concerns were being raised with regard to the loss of open space. Partly to streamline the process the 1845 Inclosure Act was passed.¹⁵ The act legislated for the introduction of commissioners to review and approve proposed enclosures. Section XII noted that ‘no Waste Land of any Manor on which the Tenants ... have Rights of Common...shall be inclosed under this Act without the Authority of Parliament’.¹⁶ Further, the Act required the commissioners to ensure the allocation of land for both allotments for the labouring poor as well as exercise and recreational acreage. Arguably, while this act made enclosure easier it also provided the framework for future legal challenges based on common rights. A select committee investigated the act after it had been in operation for nearly twenty-five

¹² Alan Everitt, ‘Common Land’, in *The English Rural Landscape*, Ed. Joan Thirsk (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 220.

¹³ It is suggested that at the turn of the eighteenth century, only half of the total arable land was enclosed and that approximately a third of England was still manorial waste. Ibid., 222; W.G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), 177.

¹⁴ Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, 185.

¹⁵ *Inclosure and Improvement of Commons Act, V.R. 08 & 09*, vol. Cap. CXVIII, 1845.

¹⁶ Ibid.

years. It found that of the estimated figure of 368,000 acres that had been enclosed, a mere 3965 acres, a little over one percent, had been appropriated for allotments or recreational land.¹⁷ Several of the members of the select committee were active participants of the newly formed Commons Preservation Society. Significantly, the importance of the commons was for both self-sufficiency and relaxation.

The commons fulfilled two important functions for residents. Both of these roles appeared prominently in the literature of the CPS. First, they formed an essential element of pre-industrial pastoral and economic life. As an uncultivated site, they provided valuable means of surviving through the winter, as well as alternative resources by which residents could earn additional income. The economic benefits of the commons were repeatedly offered as evidence by witnesses to select committees and in the legal cases brought by the CPS. In Fakenham, Norfolk, when the local lord applied to enclose the common, a letter advising of the damage to those at the bottom of the social scale highlighted the usage by commoners.¹⁸ The letter advised Sir Willoughby Jones of the labouring poor who derived additional income selling kindling, as well as poor widows who kept themselves supplied with fuel. The less than subtle point the correspondent made was that in each of these instances enclosure would preclude these activities and throw the poor onto the charity of the town. Even with those commons located near to the metropolitan district of London, the necessity for use of the resources by the poor was emphasised. Within thirty miles of London commoners still exercised their rights. Chobham Common in Surrey frequently had peat, an important source of fuel, cut, while on Blackheath Common grazing was still

¹⁷ MPs William Cowper, Henry Fawcett and Henry Peek were all involved with the open space movement and served on the committee. 'Select Committee on the Inclosures Act' (The House of Commons, 7 July 1869), iii, FCP /1/5, Parliamentary Archives.

¹⁸ James Flaxman, 'Letter from J. L. Flaxman, Chairman to Sir Willoughby Jones, Lord of the Fakenham Lancaster Manor', 26 December 1866, FCP/1/40-1, Parliamentary Archives.

utilised.¹⁹ The CPS framed the common as essential to the financial independence and self-sufficiency of the poorer members of the community. This in turn saved money for the wealthier residents, who were responsible for the costs of local workhouses.

The second function highlighted by the preservationists for the commons saw them described in publications as the chief recreational spaces for the residents. The use of the space for walking, drill practice and cricket was regularly advanced as an important purpose. The commons represented some of the earliest examples of working-class, or more accurately, unclassed open space. Along with so many other aspects of Victorian life, concepts of recreation and leisure were changing. Clearly, the transformation of working patterns had an equal effect on non-work life. The political struggles of the organised labour movement in the second half of the nineteenth century saw new regulations emerge around the limitation of working hours. One consequence of this was most people being able to enjoy their spare time at the same time. Outside of the supervisory control of the factories, people could choose how and where to spend their non-working hours. As Robert Storch noted, 'the corollary of free labour was free leisure'.²⁰ Added to this was the introduction of a growing public transport system and eventually statutory holidays. The commons, particularly those close to metropolitan centres became popular destinations for workers to relax. Well before the birth of the CPS, industrial workers were taking advantage of available open space. In 1844, William Howitt wrote:

See how the multitudes of our large manufacturing towns, and of London spend their Sundays. They pour out into the country in all directions... They have been planning, day after day, whither they

¹⁹ Commons Preservation Society, *A Glance at the Commons and Open Spaces of London*, 10; 24, PAM 5709 Guildhall Library Archive.

²⁰ Robert Storch, 'The Problem of Working-Class Leisure, Some Roots of Middle-Class Moral Reform in the Industrial North: 1825-50', in *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain*, Ed. A.P. Donajrodzki (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 142.

shall go on Sunday. To what distant village; to what object of attraction...They will take angle and net... and in other seasons, mushroom gathering and nutting, and all kinds of what is called Sabbath-breaking, come before them with an unconquerable impetus. For to their minds – neglected, but full of strong desires and pent-up energies – nature’s delights, wild pursuits, bodily refreshments, and the enjoyment of one day’s full freedom from towns, red walls, dry pavements, shops, masters, and even wives and children, are mixed up into a strange, but wonderfully bewitching excitement.²¹

Importantly, the enjoyment of the commons by the populace was at this stage not subject to any regulation or attempted regulation. The usage was described as recreational and not leisure space. During the course of the late nineteenth century the emphasis in motivation moved from economic to recreational; then from recreational to leisure and regulated sports.

Conversely, those in favour of enclosure had a different view of the commons. For the landowners and their supporters the land was under-utilised and unprotected. Both of these reasons would be used as justification for enclosure. In 1866 the CPS reproduced the reports of earlier select committees that had examined the enclosure acts.²² The description of the land in these reports was explicit in its view regarding the commons. The first report from 1795 considered ‘the means of promoting the cultivation and improvement of Waste, Uninclosed and Unproductive Lands of the Kingdom’.²³ Given the country’s involvement with recent international conflicts at that time, it should not surprise that the security of the food supply was a priority. The ability to increase the amount of agriculturally productive land was frequently put

²¹ Howitt, *The Rural Life of England*, II:313–20.

²² ‘Inclosure of the Commons - Reports of the Select Committees, 1795, 1797, 1800’ (Reprinted by the Commons Preservation Society, 1866), P2/A/1, Museum English Rural Life.

²³ Title page of 1795 Report, *ibid.*

forward as the counter argument in support of enclosure of common land.²⁴ However, as the nineteenth century progressed this became less of a pressing issue and the argument for enclosing common land moved to the protection of the landscape for the public good.

As noted above, people were increasingly making use of open spaces for recreational purposes. Landowners contended that this use was detrimental to the land. They argued that the land was being damaged and that by enclosing the commons they could better care for the space for the benefit of all. Earl Spencer, owner of Wimbledon Common, initially proposed the idea of enclosure to create a public park to protect the area from encroachments and nuisances, as well as improving the drainage.²⁵ His scheme was to be subsidised by the selling of approximately a third of the existing space. Equally, with Knole Park in Kent, the lord of the manor sought to block access to public land. He expressed concern over the number of day-trippers from London availing themselves of the railway links to travel out to the countryside.²⁶ Ironically, the rationale advanced for enclosing the commons seemed to demand protection from the general populace for the greater public good. In advocating this reasoning, landowners were, ironically, supporting the notion of the land as public domain. This sowed the seeds for the construction of the land as no longer private property with some common rights, but as communal space all had an interest in.

The movement of the land from agricultural resource through to public common ground became evident with the settlement of a number of longstanding court cases.

²⁴ 'Second Report to the Select Committee on Open Spaces (Metropolis)', 20 June 1865, v, FCP/1/5, Parliamentary Archives.

²⁵ Minutes of Evidence, 'First Report to the Select Committee on Open Spaces (Metropolis)', 3 April 1865, 19, FCP /1/5, Parliamentary Archives.

²⁶ Killingray, 'Rights, "Riot" and Ritual: The Knole Park Access Dispute, Sevenoaks, Kent, 1883-5', 66.

The CPS, fronted by a local resident with legal standing, introduced law suits in defence of tenants' rights of common. Land disputes were brought before the Court of Chancery, the highest civil court in the country. It was here that the Master of the Rolls, as the presiding judge was known, adjudicated on the legality of both the application of rights and authority of landowners to enclose their land. The lengthy determinations of the court, made notorious in Dickens' *Bleak House*, could take years.²⁷ In the case of Epping Forest, it took over ten years for the settlement to be reached. Not all suits introduced were as lengthy. Judgment on Earl Brownlow, in the case of Berkhamsted Common, was handed down in January 1870, a mere five years after the initial dispute.²⁸ The eight-page judgment based on manorial rolls dating back to 1661 found in favour of the tenants. It noted the historic struggles of the residents to maintain these rights and judged them fully proved.²⁹

The CPS was remarkably successful in its law suits. The Society proudly reported in 1868:

In no case where an appeal has hitherto been made to the law has it been unsuccessful; and the Society consider that the proposition with which they set out has been established, viz., that no legal inclosure of these places, which have never in the history of this country been inclosed, can take place under the Statute of Merton.³⁰

The rights associated with these lands had been enjoyed without interruption by the tenants. Changes in the population distribution had seen a drop in the number of those who held such rights, but regardless of this there were still those who held them.

²⁷ Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, Orig. Pub. 1852 (London: Wordsworth Classics, 2001).

²⁸ Lord John Romilly, 'In Chancery: Smith Vs Brownlow - Judgment of the Master of the Rolls' (Rolls Court Chancery Lane, 14 January 1870), FCP/1/48, Parliamentary Archives.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 5, 7.

³⁰ 'Memorandum' (Commons Preservation Society, 1868), 7, PAM 123, Guildhall Library Archive London.

The evolution of these sites from economic to recreational public land was not out of keeping with the historic usage of the space. Despite the legalities over ownership, the commons were also traditionally perceived as a social space. The metropolitan common land of England was a relic of an antiquated manorial system. Part of that heritage was the engagement of the community in outdoor gatherings on these sites. The commons embraced a spatial representation of an archetypal English sociability. Prior to the nineteenth century, a whole variety of formal and informal gatherings occurred outside.³¹ Although some of these meetings moved to more structural surroundings during the Victorian period, others continued to take place outdoors. Many of these sites were not heavily wooded. They were often poorly drained and supported shrubbery rather than large trees.³² This meant that the common was generally a large open space that lent itself to fairs and markets. The recreational utilisation of the commons was largely unregulated. The development of more regulated outdoor leisure-time pursuits was a feature of the latter part of the century, which will be examined shortly. The commons encapsulated an historic social space, which may have been more localised in a pre-industrial period, but was expanded to incorporate the wider public during the Victorian period. The CPS's actions on behalf of the 'commoners' ensured that these spaces were saved from the developers. Further, the society began the process that would lead to the creation of public ownership of truly common land.

'Outdoor Sitting-Rooms' – Window Boxes and Parks:

Of all the associations considered here, the Kyrle Society was the least concerned with outdoor open spaces. This does not mean that they were uninterested, but their spatial

³¹ Leonore Davidoff, 'Gender and the "Great Divide": Public and Private in British Gender History', *Journal of Women's History* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 14.

³² Everitt, 'Common Land', 215.

focus was more diverse. The outdoor committee of the society was only one of four arms of the organisation. At least initially though, they were the only group interested in the internal as well as the external. The work of the Kyrle was split over four (later five) sub-committees, only two of which – decoration and open spaces – touched on the spatial. The open spaces sub-committee had a self-explanatory name and was entirely supportive of the efforts of the Commons Preservation Society, with which it often worked. However, as will be discussed shortly, the Kyrle had its own distinct agenda. The decorative sub-committee had a more aesthetic role. This branch of the society undertook the artistic improvement of school rooms, parish rooms and hospital wards.³³ There were a number of well-known artists involved with the group who provided paintings and decorative features for the various beneficiaries, including Edward Burne-Jones and George Frederic Watts.³⁴ In addition to the introduction of works of art in internal spaces, the Kyrle provided pot plants, cut flowers and window boxes. It was the open spaces committee that undertook this work.

The Kyrle Society dedicated itself to the diffusion of beauty – artistic, literary, musical and natural. Equally, it recognised the fact that those in the inner city did not necessarily have the opportunity to avail themselves of open spaces existing near to the metropolis, such as the commons saved by the CPS. The alternative was to bring nature and beauty to the inner city. Lucy Hewitt rightly argues that the dominating ethos of the Kyrle was improvement of the landscape.³⁵ However, the size and scope of the landscape was both mutable and mobile. The Hill sisters' association overcame lack of access to open space in two ways. In a precursor to the work of the MPGA,

³³ 'The Kyrle Society', *The Queen*, 19 April 1890, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

³⁴ Edward Burne-Jones and George Frederic Watts, 'The Kyrle Society', *The Artist*, 1 August 1890, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO5, Guildhall Library Archive London.

³⁵ Lucy Hewitt, 'Associational Culture and the Shaping of Urban Space: Civic Societies in Britain before 1960', *Urban History* 39, no. 4 (November 2012): 593.

they repurposed disused space in the high-density urban slums and, secondly, they distributed plants and flowers. The Kyrle utilised Octavia Hill's housing workers as a distribution network. This 'machinery' enabled to them to bring flowers 'into the homes of those who for various reasons are not going to school, chapel, or mission-room'.³⁶ These flowers and cuttings were donations by those were unable or unwilling to enter the 'dusty alleys' of the cities.³⁷ In this way, the society altered the urban landscape with an inclusion of non-urban elements.

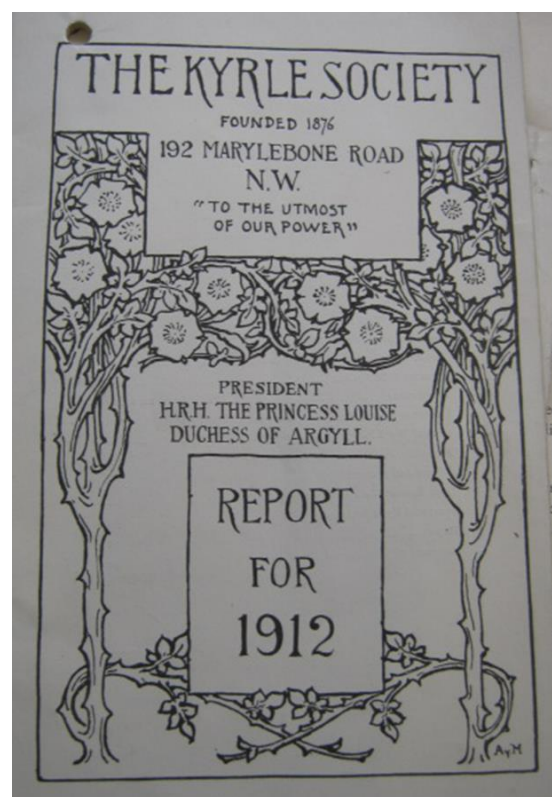


Fig. 2.2: Title Page, 'Kyrle Society Annual Report' (London: The Kyrle Society, 1912), London Metropolitan Archive.

Beyond the introduction of floral colour to homes, workhouses and hospitals, the Kyrle, and in particular Octavia Hill, aimed to provide 'small, central spaces as public gardens'.³⁸ This contrasted with the CPS, who were focused on the larger metropolitan

³⁶ Octavia Hill, *Colour, Space, and Music for the People (Reprinted from the Nineteenth Century)* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, 1884), 5.

³⁷ 'Correspondence', *The Woman's Gazette*, May 1878, archive.org.

³⁸ Octavia Hill, *Our Common Land and Other Short Essays* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1877), 105.

commons. While Hill and the Kyrle supported and contributed to the CPS's cause, there was also a need in their view to create space where possible in the high-density centres of the cities. By 1878, two years after their foundation, the society had planted and added seats to three inner-city sites.³⁹ Hill personally believed firmly in the ameliorative benefit of open spaces. If the inner-city dweller were placed in a 'colony with wood, or heath, or prairie' a better 'man' would emerge.⁴⁰ She was also enough of a realist to understand that large spaces were not available or easily accessible for all. She pragmatically accepted what was there. 'There are...little spots unbuilt over...capable of being made into beautiful out-door sitting-rooms'.⁴¹ The Kyrle was successful in a much more localised, domestic sphere, possibly because of the use of women members who had an entrée into this space.

The Kyrle had been founded on the premise that the natural world was both physically and spiritually beneficial to humanity. Nature, in all its many forms, became a moral and cultural construction that was given a social function. It was conscripted into the crusade to improve the conditions of the poor and to act as a vehicle for teaching by example. Numerous historians have demonstrated the paradigm of nature as a reformatory entity.⁴² This would certainly fit with the ethos of the Kyrle Society. Additionally, there was a sense in which the 'landscapes' that would improve the populace were mobile and capable of being brought to the inhabitants of the cities. Matthew Newsom Kerr has articulated the Victorian public health dynamic of circulation and movement in regards to the removal of waste and diseased bodies away

³⁹ A Member of the Kyrle Society, 'The Kyrle Society'.

⁴⁰ The text makes reference to 'man, woman, or child', but continues on with the masculine pronoun. Hill was no doubt following the Victorian practice of using 'man' as the form when discussing all humanity. Hill, *Our Common Land and Other Short Essays*, 111.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² See for example, Malchow, 'Public Gardens: Social Action in Victorian London'; Driver, 'Moral Geographies: Social Science and the Urban Environment in Mid-Nineteenth Century England'.

from the city.⁴³ This premise may be taken a step further with the ingress of ‘natural’ and ‘beautiful’ elements to replace, or at least mitigate, the unhealthy. In this way a cyclical sequence replaced the undesirable with the desirable. Rather than protecting an existing site, elements from the country or those sites deemed health-giving were transported into the impoverished cities. The mountain came to Mohammed. Plants from outside the city, via donation and collection, were presented to the inner-city denizens. Evidence of the reception, however, has not been found. The donors wrote of the pleasure taken by the beneficiaries in the flowers and green spaces, although it is impossible without surviving evidence to assess the genuineness of this reaction.

Along with their more mobile pieces of art and nature, the Kyrle repurposed existing urban spaces. In a similar fashion to the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, although not to the same degree, the society identified sites in the centre of cities, such as disused burial grounds or factories and repurposed these into small gardens. They recreated a version of the commons and rural landscapes within the sphere of urban residents. Here too, mobility of landscape was a feature as the top soil of renovated land was replaced with better quality soil from outside the city.⁴⁴ One of the grandest schemes undertaken by the Kyrle was the creation of the Red Cross cottages and gardens. This scheme exemplified the combination of the internal and external that was the mark of the society, as well as the re-creation of a romanticised rural settlement. In 1887, in the Southwark area of London, the association acquired land that had formerly held a hop warehouse and paper factory.⁴⁵ The garden was constructed first,

⁴³ Matthew L. Newsom Kerr, “Perambulating Fever Nests of Our London Streets”: Cabs, Omnibuses, Ambulances, and Other “Pest-Vehicles” in the Victorian Metropolis’, *Journal of British Studies* 49, no. 2 (April 2010): 283.

⁴⁴ Not only was soil imported, plants for urban amenity horticulture schemes had their nurseries based outside the cities, which enabled the replacement of varieties that didn’t cope well with pollution. Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on Their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 242; Mosley, *The Chimney of the World: A History of Smoke Pollution in Victorian and Edwardian Manchester*, 39.

⁴⁵ Maltz, *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes, 1870-1900*, 62.

followed by an architect-designed community hall and six cottages. The cottages, which still exist today, have a quaint almost Alpine appearance, with the adjacent garden surrounded by wrought iron railing. This urban village was very much in keeping with Octavia Hill's housing philosophy. There was both beauty and nature brought into a dense inner-city area.



Fig 2.3: Red Cross Cottages and Garden, May 2011.

The ethos of the Kyrle Society was most eloquently demonstrated in the numerous writings of the co-founder Octavia Hill. In her works there was an undeniable sense of nostalgia and, given her move to London, a romanticised view of rural living. This was evident in her conception of the relationship between landlord and tenant, as well as her writings on open spaces. Diana Maltz makes an excellent case for Hill as a missionary aesthete; a strong adherent of Ruskin's teachings, which she combined with a utilitarian background.⁴⁶ Maltz, however, neglects Hill's sentimental childhood attachment to the countryside and how strong this was in her open spaces work. Hill's philosophy, not only in her re-creation of the rural village in the city, but in the basis

⁴⁶ See Chapter 2, 'Octavia Hill and the Aesthetics of Victorian Tenement Reform' in Maltz, *British Aestheticism and the Urban Working Classes, 1870-1900*.

of her interaction with her tenants, was from a bygone age; possibly even a mythical age.

Naturally a resident landlord continually riding about his farms would not suffer the cottages to fall out of repair, whilst the tenantry for their part, treated considerately, would not dream of dodging payment.⁴⁷

In her 1884 essay *Colour, Space and Music for the People*, Hill evinced a certain wistfulness when she wrote: 'Think, those of you who have had any country life as children, how early the wild flowers formed your delight'.⁴⁸ She also frequently put forward children as a primary reason for providing open spaces. In her impassioned 1887 plea for opening West End squares, she referenced the frail child, the sick child and the sturdy urchin.⁴⁹ Her own association of childhood with open space was clearly an important foundational experience for Hill. The undertone of this nostalgia was present throughout her work and formed a strong element within the Kyrle Society.

Allied with the aesthetic and nostalgic characteristics of the Kyrle Society's evaluation of open spaces, there was the strongly held belief that exposure to nature was an ameliorative counter to the degradations of modern urban living. For Hill and the Kyrle, these small green spaces would help the poor to become better citizens, morally and civically. Whereas the CPS was, certainly initially, very much focused on legislative endorsement of common rights, the Kyrle invoked a moral imperative for their sites. In part playing into the fears of the upper classes about political radicals and the urban residuum over-running the country, British civic society responded in a variety of ways.

⁴⁷ Ellen Chase, *Tenant Friends in Old Deptford, with Preface by Octavia Hill* (London: Williams and Norgate Ltd, 1929), 10.

⁴⁸ Hill, *Colour, Space, and Music for the People* (Reprinted from the *Nineteenth Century*), 2.

⁴⁹ Hill, *Our Common Land and Other Short Essays*, 135.

For reforming associations, such as the Kyrle, this meant assisting people ill-equipped to deal with the obligations of that citizenship to become good citizens.

By the time of the foundation of the Kyrle in 1876 parliamentary reform had quadrupled the voting population. Following further reforms, by 1890, nearly sixty percent of men could participate in elections.⁵⁰ While full universal suffrage would not happen until 1928, there were increasing numbers of the working class who had an interest in politics and elections. Women, while denied full suffrage, actively deployed their moral authority to demand social improvement through philanthropic works. Towards the end of the century women were becoming increasingly involved in local government. 'Local government ... permitted the pursuit of good causes, temperance and liberalism, moral and social purity' as Patricia Hollis has asserted.⁵¹ Arguably one of the reasons women became so active in philanthropy was to create a space for themselves in civic issues. This was the great age of parliamentarization, as Charles Tilly has argued, when there was an expanding category of people exercising the rights of citizenship, as well as mobilizing to exert pressure on parliament.⁵² Not individually, but as part of an organisation, women generated a significant degree of political influence.

Open spaces, they thought, were a necessity for the education and improvement of these new citizens. Octavia Hill gave evidence before the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Class in 1884. She insisted that 'instilling civic consciousness and "public opinion" in the minds of tenement dwellers was a far more serious and

⁵⁰ 'Reforms after 1867', *BBC Bitesize*, accessed 6 February 2016, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/higher/history/democracy/changes/revision/2/>.

⁵¹ One of the first women elected to local government, Emma Cons, was a member of the Kyrle Society. Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1865-1914*, 7.

⁵² Charles Tilly, 'Parliamentarization of Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834', *Theory and Society* 26 (1997): 249; 270.

urgent problem than the problem of clean air'.⁵³ That being said, the open spaces of the Kyrle Society sought to achieve both objectives. It was not the case that the Kyrle was unconcerned with the wellbeing of the slum dweller, but that in true Victorian utilitarian style there was the desire to achieve more than one function with the same resource. Land ownership conferred social status and had been one of the few qualifiers for suffrage until the latter nineteenth century reform acts. Consequently land represented political power and status. While many of the newly enfranchised men did not own land, Hill among others believed they could be brought to feel invested in the national land via access to smaller open spaces and allotments.⁵⁴ She evoked this attachment of the native to their country for both large and small spaces. In her defence of West Wickham Common, she envisaged the land bringing a district together and in the urban centres the lack of space making a man 'so little what he might be'.⁵⁵ Patriotic affection for the nation, and presumably a desire to act in the appropriate way, the Kyrle Society contended, could thus be instilled by open green spaces.

The Value of Disused Burial Grounds:

If the Kyrle Society employed sites for their aesthetic and patriotic value, then the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association argued a more scientific line. Although the MPGA did not replicate the smaller domestic efforts of the Kyrle Society, they did emulate their repurposing of disused urban spaces. In this regard they were far more successful than the Kyrle in the redevelopment of the many disused burial grounds

⁵³ Jose Harris, 'Between Civic Virtue and Social Darwinism: The Concept of the Residuum', in *Retrieved Riches: Social Investigation in Britain 1840-1914*, Eds. David Englander and Rosemary O'Day (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), 82.

⁵⁴ Burchardt, *The Allotment Movement in England, 1793-1873*, 199–200; Gaskell, 'Gardens for the Working Class: Victorian Practical Pleasure'.

⁵⁵ Octavia Hill, *Preservation of Commons. Speech of Miss Octavia Hill at a Meeting for Securing West Wickham Common* (London: Kent and Surrey Committee of the Commons Preservation Society, 1892); Hill, *Our Common Land and Other Short Essays*, 111.

that were to be found in London and other metropolitan centres. In its first two years of operation the Kyrle undertook work on three sites. By contrast, the MPGA completed work on sixteen sites, totalling some fourteen acres, in its first three years.⁵⁶ As previously noted, the principal aim of the MPGA was to provide open space in the high-density inner cities.



Fig. 2.4: John Rocque's map of London, completed 1745 – British Library Print.

Isabella Holmes was primarily responsible for identifying many of these sites. She noted in the introduction to her book *The London Burial Grounds* that: 'In looking one day at Rocque's plan of London (1742-5) I noticed how many burial-grounds and churchyards were marked upon it which no longer existed'.⁵⁷ Holmes made a study of these grounds and the results were printed in the first annual report of the MPGA in 1884. She would go on to refine this information using council returns, government reports, later maps and books, finally undertaking physical exploration and what she referred to as 'graveyard-hunting'.⁵⁸ The London County Council would assign its

⁵⁶ 'Programme for the Opening of Barnsbury Square Public Garden'.

⁵⁷ Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on Their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 13.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

Parks Committee to make a return of all the existing burial grounds in London in 1894, and it was Holmes who would complete this work in 1895.⁵⁹

Somewhat ironically the first site redeveloped by the MPGA was not a former cemetery, but a place involving a distinctly different sort of death and misery – Horsemonger Lane Gaol in Southwark, London. Charles Dickens famously described the scene outside the prison at the public execution of Mrs Manning and her husband:

Fightings, faintings, whistlings and imitations of Punch, brutal jokes, tumultuous demonstrations of indecent delight when swooning women were dragged out of the crowd by the Police with their dresses disordered, gave a new zest to the general entertainment.⁶⁰

The gaol was closed in 1878 and the building demolished in 1881. Negotiations for the open space adjacent to the former Horsemonger Lane Gaol began within three months of the establishment of the MPGA.⁶¹ By January 1884, terms had been agreed with the Surrey magistrate. Approximately one and a half acres were leased for conversion into a children's playground. It was opened on the 5th of May 1884.⁶² Noticeably the chief purpose for the space was as a recreational area for both boys and girls. The MPGA mentioned neither public rights nor aesthetic beauty. The goal was simply to create as many open spaces as possible, as easily as possible.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 20–21.

⁶⁰ Charles Dickens, 'Capital Punishments (To the Editor of the Times)', *Dundee Courier*, 21 November 1849, 1, www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk.

⁶¹ The February minutes reported that Lord Brabazon had begun correspondence with the Magistrates to obtain the site and turn it into a recreational area for local residents. 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association' (Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, 13 February 1883), MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁶² 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 6 May 1884, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.



Fig. 2.5: St Bartholomew's Churchyard, Bethnal Green, work completed by the MPGA in 1885. Photograph by author, 2014.

Of the first sixteen gardens or playgrounds developed by the MPGA, from its inception at the very end of 1882 to the end of 1885, only around fifty percent of them were actually former burial grounds or churchyards. The rest, with the exception of Horsemonger Lane, were former private residential squares that were improved, redesigned and opened to the public.⁶³ None of these first spaces was particularly large. The largest was East London Cemetery, now Shandy Park, in Stepney, which was around two and a half acres.⁶⁴ Seven of the gardens were located in the south of the city, six in the East End and one in the north. The remaining two, Wilmington Square Garden and Red Lion Square Garden were technically in the West End. However, the former is in Clerkenwell and the latter is in Holborn, both of which are adjacent to the centre east of the city. Importantly, it was only in the second half of

⁶³ 'Programme for the Opening of Barnsbury Square Public Garden'.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

1884 that the legislation to prevent building on disused burial grounds was finally passed under Prime Minister Gladstone's government.⁶⁵ Unsurprisingly, between 1886 and 1889 the number of grounds developed by the MPGA increased markedly to forty one in four years, of which nearly seventy percent were former churchyards or cemeteries. The push for this statute was prompted coincidentally by another Hampstead. This time it was the disused burial ground attached to St James' Church on Hampstead Road in the parish of St Pancras.

Expansion of the railway network across the country was one of the many competing demands on the land during the Victorian period. Disused burial grounds and commons offered an easy option for railway companies. At the beginning of the 1880s the London and North-Western Railway Company proposed to appropriate a large part of the disused burial ground of St James' Church in order to expand their Euston station.⁶⁶ Unfortunately for the railway company, the MPGA and its supporters opposed the action. On the 10th of May 1883, Mr John Hollond, Member of Parliament for Brighton and one of Gladstone's Liberals, rose in the House of Commons and stated the following:

The question at issue really lay in a nutshell. It was simply this—whether the House would adopt the policy of preserving, as far as possible, for the public all the open spaces which remained to them in London, or whether they would allow those open spaces to be gradually filched away from the people under one pretext or another?⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *Disused Burial Grounds Act*, V.R. 47 & 48, vol. CAP LXXII, 1884.

⁶⁶ 'Proposed Appropriation by the London & North-Western Railway Company of a Portion of the Disused Burial Ground of St James's Church, Hampstead Road' (Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, May 1883), MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁶⁷ In his memoirs, Meath referred to 'Mr Holland, M.P., a member of the M.P.G. Association, supported by other Open Spaces Societies, obtained the passage through Parliament of a Bill...' Presumably this is the same Mr Hollond who spoke so eloquently against the railway company plans. In the membership records located, however, there is no Mr Holland. There was a Mr Holland, but he had different initials and was not specified as an MP, which was noted for other parliamentarians. The use of the term 'filched' in Mr Hollond's speech implied a casualness around the theft of land.

This would lead to the introduction of the 1884 *Disused Burial Ground Act*, which the Earl of Meath would later consider the ‘Palladium’ of the MPGA.⁶⁸ Not quite a statue of Athena, but, at least in the Earl’s opinion, a safeguard for the city. Unlike the CPS or the Kyrle, the MPGA on the whole resisted analogies of moral and aesthetic values of open spaces. The only exception to this was in the comparison of the appearance of London to its international rivals. The association relied much more on scientific reasoning from the very outset. This was to counter the economic arguments of corporations, such as the railway companies, as well as to counteract the miasmatic theories of decomposition.

The organisation imbued their chosen sites with a profoundly rational purpose. This reflected the growing dominance of scientific methodology over the more religious constructions. This is not to suggest that the religious feelings of philanthropists ceased to be a motive, but that a newly powerful paradigm was emerging to justify the creation of open spaces. Throughout 1883, the MPGA’s preoccupation appeared to be with the prevention of loss of further burial grounds to the railway companies. The Inspector of Burial Ground made a report to the Secretary of State regarding the St Pancras site. In the report two issues were addressed – first, the importance of open spaces in the large cities and secondly, the danger to public health in the moving of corpses.⁶⁹ The MPGA would frequently respond to these same two topics. In their pamphlet put out in June of 1883 opposing the above railway extension, the association

Remarkably this would be mirrored seventy years later and ten thousand miles away when the women of the Australian Labor Party made a similar demand that ‘no further parklands...shall be filched from the people’ unless breathing space was first provided. ‘Hansard - 1st May 1883’ (Westminster, London: House of Commons, 1 May 1883), 1546, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1883/may/01/consideration>; Brabazon, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century*, 226; ‘Meeting of the Labor Women’s Central Organizing Committee May 1953’ (South Australian Labor Party papers, May 1953), SRG73/55/6 Vol. I, State Library of South Australia.

⁶⁸ Brabazon, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century*, 226.

⁶⁹ Dr H. W. Hoffman, ‘Disused Burial Ground, Hampstead Road’ (London: Home Office, 4 May 1883), <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk.rp.nla.gov.au>, National Library of Australia.

referred to the value of trees and plants in removing pollutants as well as producing ‘the life-renewing element – pure oxygen’.⁷⁰ Notably in this pamphlet, doctors were named as the source of the information. Hilary Taylor contends that gardens were a metaphor for a rational society.⁷¹ More than just a metaphor, gardens also provided a means by which medical and botanical experts could spatially demonstrate their knowledge. In a subtle way, the knowledge leaders were setting themselves up as an alternative to the ironmasters, and public gardens provided a space of contention.

The public gardens that the MPGA created represented a sanitary, idealised vision of the city. As previously mentioned, one of the leading members of the association was Ernest Hart.⁷² Hart was a surgeon, the editor of the *British Medical Journal* (*BMJ*) and brother-in-law to Henrietta Barnett. As a result of Hart’s profession, the MPGA received regular support in the *BMJ*. Sanitation by open space became a popular theme. According to Hart’s editorialising articles, not only was a lack of space detrimental to the public’s health, but ‘as the Government of this country became more democratic by the widening of the suffrage, so Parliament would be compelled...to devote more consideration to the health of the people’.⁷³ Here it is possible to see the links that were being drawn between conceptions of open spaces, health and citizenship. There were many other articles, by other medical men, in other journals and newspapers. Most emphasised the necessity of breathing space to the health of the people. Following this line of thinking, it was not long before the argument turned from the positive benefits to the problems arising from neglect. If the availability of land offered improvement, the lack of space resulted in degeneration.

⁷⁰ ‘The Value of Disused Burial Grounds’, 3.

⁷¹ Hilary A. Taylor, ‘Urban Public Parks, 1840-1900: Design and Meaning’, *Garden History* 23, no. 2 (Winter 1995): 204.

⁷² ‘Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association’, 20 November 1882, MS 11097/1, London Metropolitan Archive.

⁷³ ‘Sanitation by Open Space’.

Darwin's evolutionary theories were swiftly applied to humanity and Chapter Four will explore this application more thoroughly. Additionally, with the gradual adoption of germ theory during the nineteenth century, environmental purity became an important feature of the healthy home. The combination of the two saw a belief in the centrality of the body to space and space to the body. Kristen R. Egan contends that: 'Both sanitarianism and environmentalism require the ecological understanding that humans affect their environment and are affected by their environment'.⁷⁴ The Victorian public gardens were a physical representation of this. They offered an antidote to the unhealthy body and the polluted space. Social crusader, Walter Besant, encapsulated the nineteenth-century conception of this link in his article 'The Social Wants of London' written for the *Pall Mall Gazette*.⁷⁵ He declared that gardens and playgrounds were a matter of national health and further, without them: 'There will grow up among us strange and monstrous creatures, whom it will be shame and disgrace to call men and women of the good old English stock'. Besant was an early member of the MPGA, having joined in January 1883. In his article there is a clear link between the environment and the degeneration of the population. But, as Thorsheim has argued, as the century drew to a close there would be an evolving debate between the physical and the genetic – the eugenic versus the environmental.⁷⁶ The MPGA strongly advocated the ameliorative ability of a suitable environment to correct perceived damage. However, their focus on playgrounds and equipment for young people suggested a belief that there was a point at which it was not possible to recover from environmental harm.

⁷⁴ Kristen R. Egan, 'Conservation and Cleanliness: Racial and Environmental Purity in Ellen Richards and Charlotte Perkins Gilman', *Women's Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2011): 79.

⁷⁵ Walter Besant, 'The Social Wants of London', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 18 May 1884, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁷⁶ Thorsheim, *Inventing Pollution: Coal, Smoke, and Culture in Britain since 1800*, 71.

Long-term physical damage may have been irreversible, but mental relief was a distinct prospect for all ages. An idyll was needed, where calm and quiet were possible in a seemingly chaotic city. Not only were the health benefits of the open spaces regularly highlighted, but also the relief from the noise of the city was a frequent motif. The gardens were islands of quiet, which offered a balm against noisy urban streets. They provided ‘quiet healing’ and soothed ‘the nerves and temper’.⁷⁷ Elizabeth Baigent asserts that during this period the natural world became a substitute for organised religion.⁷⁸ It is certainly possible to see church-like characteristics, such as quietude and tranquillity, being applied to the precincts of the gardens. Holmes was quite blatant at times. In one edition of *Eastward Ho*, she directly compared a personal visit to a quiet country churchyard with the grounds being opened by the MPGA.⁷⁹ Holmes made no specific religious connection, but the implication was easily discernible. Urban open spaces provided a place of quiet contemplation that were an alternative to the noisome homes and streets in much the same way as churches were. In the same vein, these sites were open to all, every day of the week.

The open spaces provided breathing space and quietness; they were also centres of recreation. The right to recreate on the commons was repeatedly mentioned in court cases by the CPS. The testimony of copyhold tenants of Hampstead Heath recorded that from time immemorial they had enjoyed the right of ‘carrying on lawful sports, games and pastimes thereon’.⁸⁰ Recreation appears to have included walking, driving

⁷⁷ Hill, *Preservation of Commons. Speech of Miss Octavia Hill at a Meeting for Securing West Wickham Common; Park and Playground Vs Gin Palace and Prison*, *English Woman’s Journal* 1 (July 1858): 306–17.

⁷⁸ Baigent, “‘God’s Earth Will Be Sacred’: Religion, Theology and the Open Space Movement in Victorian England”, 33.

⁷⁹ Isabella Gladstone, ‘Eastward Ho - Monthly Record of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association’, *Eastward Ho*, June 1886, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁸⁰ ‘Hoare V Wilson - Minutes of Evidence Taken In Chancery’, 24 June 1868, FCP/1/64a, Parliamentary Archives.

a carriage and riding on horseback. However, as a number of historians of leisure have explored, this was a period of enormous growth in participation along with the development of formalised regulation of sport.⁸¹ This regulation of leisure has been taken as evidence of middle-class social control in action. Conversely, historical studies on the formalisation of sport have seldom referred to the agency of the participants and the long-standing traditions of engagement. An exception to this is Hugh Cunningham, who asserts that the working class happily accepted middle classes rules and financial support without necessarily adopting any ideology.⁸² The MPGA, as part of their drive to improve the health of the nation, perceived physical activity and active leisure as a means of ensuring this. The MPGA's 1883 pamphlet *Young London* bemoaned the lack of facilities for swimming, cricket and athletics in the capital and they worked to correct this.⁸³ Even in more rural areas, limited open space opportunities were a potential problem. William Howitt was concerned that football had declined due to the enclosure of the commons.⁸⁴ From the outset open spaces were utilised as places of recreation, amusement and sport. Regardless of any new sporting rules, witnesses in early Chancery cases argued for a tradition of expectation of physical enjoyment of commons, which expanded during the second half of the nineteenth century to include parks and gardens. However, the smaller size and urban location of the MPGA sites necessitated greater regulation to allow multiple uses of the space.

⁸¹ See for example: Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution: C. 1780-1880* (London: Croom Helm, 1980); Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); Meller, *Leisure and the Changing City, 1870-1914*; Gareth Stedman-Jones, 'Class Expression versus Social Control? A Critique of Recent Trends in the Social History of Leisure', *History Workshop*, no. 4 (Autumn 1977): 162–70.

⁸² Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution: C. 1780-1880*, 127–28.

⁸³ 'Young London' (Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, 19 September 1883), 4, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁸⁴ Howitt, *The Rural Life of England*, II:274.

The National Trust - Champions of the Historic and Interesting:

If the Kyrle Society cultivated the smallest sites, then the National Trust was the polar opposite. Their places of historic interest or natural beauty tended to be large in scale. Several of the commons that would eventually be protected by the CPS would run to hundreds of acres; the largest being Epping Forest, which is currently over six thousand acres. These spaces would pale in comparison to some of the holdings of the National Trust. The Trust, according to its website, is currently responsible for over 600,000 acres of countryside and 775 miles of coastline.⁸⁵ The Trust maintains whole villages and ecosystems. This was and is done for the benefit of the nation.⁸⁶ When they first opened properties, they were free to the public to visit. The Trust did not argue for rights of access, morality or health; its paramount purpose was protecting sites in the national interest. Yet its first acquisitions were quite modest in contrast to the vast estates that it now manages.

The first property donated to the newly formed trust was only four acres. It was offered to Canon Rawnsley, a founding member of the Trust, in October 1894 by Mrs Fanny Talbot.⁸⁷ Talbot was a landowner and philanthropist, who lived in the village of Barmouth, in north-west Wales. She was, she wrote, 'anxious to hand over to the Trust, the face of the Cliff above the town of Barmouth, that it may be preserved in its natural state for the enjoyment of future generations'.⁸⁸ She was also adamant that the site should remain as it was, with no building or quarrying permitted. This would set the tone for all later donations. However, the acquisition of future sites was slow.

⁸⁵ 'The National Trust'.

⁸⁶ 'Memorandum and Articles of Association of the National Trust For Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty'.

⁸⁷ This site would later be extended with land purchased, with Mrs Talbot's assistance, from Baron Harlech. Talbot, 'Letter from Mrs Fanny Talbot to Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley'; 'Minutes of the Council of the National Trust', 19 November 1895, National Trust Archive.

⁸⁸ Talbot, 'Letter from Mrs Fanny Talbot to Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley'.



Fig. 2.6: Dinas Oleu, Barmouth, the first donation to the National Trust. Photograph c1890.

The second property purchased by the Trust was not land, but a building. In early 1895, the Reverend F. W. Beynon approached the Trust with the proposition of transferring to them Alfriston Old Clergy House, a fourteenth-century farmhouse.⁸⁹ He assured the executive committee of the Trust that the transfer would include access on all sides of the property, however permission for the transfer would be required from the ecclesiastical authority. The house was eventually bought for the nominal sum of ten pounds, although Rev. Beynon's original assessment of £150 for repairs proved quite inadequate.⁹⁰ It would be nearly a year between the acquisition of the first and second properties.

In the following year the Trust purchased another coastal property, Barras Head in Cornwall. The Trust had around six thousand acres by the end of the First World

⁸⁹ 'Minutes of the Executive Committee of the National Trust', 19 February 1895, National Trust Archive.

⁹⁰ The repair estimate submitted was £350. 'Minutes of the Executive Committee of the National Trust', 9 June 1896, National Trust Archive.

War. Its fiftieth anniversary saw the Trust control over 112,000 acres and ninety-three historic buildings.⁹¹ Although in that time several legislative changes would make donating to the Trust a far more attractive prospect, just as certain statutes had made land acquisition easier for the MPGA. In 1907, the Trust was enshrined in legislation that gave them the ability to make property inalienable, essentially protected against future sale, claims or mortgaging except by parliamentary declaration.⁹² Despite the inability to acquire sites quickly, the Trust showed interest in a range of places from its launch. Apart from the three listed above, there were thirty two subjects of interest listed by the Trust in its first eighteen months.⁹³ Five of these potential sites were projects considered in cooperation with other bodies and two were sixteenth-century buildings that had been offered for sale to the Trust. Of the building possibilities under consideration by the Executive Council, there were homes of significant people, such as Turner, Coleridge and Cowper, as well as churches, Roman ruins and one castle; outdoor sites included waterfalls, ancient monuments and open spaces.

The council membership certainly contained a great deal of expertise that would prove to be extremely useful to the National Trust. In the first few years of operation this knowledge was more about assessing properties offered rather than selecting sites to pursue. Each property acquired necessitated a financial appeal, so while the organisation was able consciously to choose which places it accepted and indicate those it was likely to have an interest in, it did not have the resources to actively initiate proceedings. Thus the price for the Roman Villa remains in Kent was prohibitive, Turner's house in Chelsea was deemed not suitable and West Hill in Hastings was

⁹¹ Weideger, *Gilding the Acorn*, 41.

⁹² Other statutes would follow, in 1919, 1937, 1939 and 1953, as well as inclusion in a number of finance acts. *National Trust Act*.

⁹³ 'Report of the Council of the National Trust' (The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest and Natural Beauty, July 1896), National Trust Archive.

‘thought to be rather a case for local efforts’.⁹⁴ Along with increasing its own holdings, the Trust also sought to influence the nation’s heritage possessions.

The Trust may not have had the funds to enable it to proceed as it wished, but it did maintain a level of presence in the media and with civil authorities. When the British Aluminium company obtained the Falls of Foyers, in Scotland, to power their new smelter, there was a sustained newspaper campaign. The opposition failed to protect the waterfall from this ‘piece of vandalism’ and, as had been the case with Thirlmere in the Lake District, arguably reinforced the Trust’s resolve against later threats.⁹⁵ Having been unsuccessful against a large commercial enterprise, the organisation sought to improve governmental efforts to secure the nation’s heritage. The Council produced a memorandum, which it appended to its annual report in 1897. The ‘Memorandum as to the Steps Taken in Various Countries for the Preservation of Historic Monuments and Places of Beauty’ directly examined how Great Britain compared with its neighbours and rivals in its active efforts to safeguard significant sites.⁹⁶ On the whole, the comparison was not a favourable one. Of the thirteen countries considered, only two – Holland and Germany – had no mechanism for the state protection of historic monuments. All the other countries had protections and funds available to care for the nation’s heritage. Great Britain’s monuments were under the care of the Commissioners of Her Majesty’s Works and Public Buildings, and had been voted ‘very trifling sums’ for maintenance.⁹⁷ The Trust focused

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ ‘Loss over Foyers Falls’, *Morning Post*, 22 October 1895; ‘Letter Calling for Protection of Foyers Falls’, *Manchester Courier & Lancashire General Advertiser*, 17 May 1895; ‘Report of the Council of the National Trust’, July 1896; Ritvo, *The Dawn of Green: Manchester, Thirlmere and Modern Environmentalism*.

⁹⁶ The countries in the report were Ireland, France, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland Holland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Spain and Canada. ‘Report of the Council of the National Trust’ (The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest and Natural Beauty, July 1897), National Trust Archive.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

attention on the government's responsibility for historic monuments and places, as well as positioning themselves as arbiters of what constituted this 'heritage'.

There is not the scope here to incorporate the vast range of ideas that have emerged around the term heritage. Certainly, the politics of heritage and cultural memories attached to a landscape have generated a burgeoning literature, which explores the myriad of layers that attach themselves to space and place.⁹⁸ Brian Graham has defined heritage as having a variety of forms that alter across time. As he states, 'heritage is more concerned with meanings than material artefacts. It is the former that give meaning...to the latter and explain why they have been selected'.⁹⁹ The Trust was judging what elements of history and natural beauty were worthy of inclusion in the category of heritage. This is not to say that they were or would be the definitive authority, but they would not have shied away from this role. The landscapes considered by the Trust were primarily chosen based on the aesthetic values of the Council. Their initial list of buildings and monuments appeared to fall into three categories: literary/artistic homes; churches, and distinctive period properties. The site selection spoke of the characteristics that the Trust wished to exemplify as the shared inheritance of the people of the state. This was their view of the national community's attributes.¹⁰⁰ In this case the organisation sought to reflect the creative abilities, piety and longevity of the nation-state. This was, in part, a demonstration of the popularly perceived stability of Great Britain in comparison with its many European and American rivals.

⁹⁸ See for example: *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, Eds. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Aldershot: Ashgate ebook, 2008); David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998); Kynan Gentry, "'The Pathos of Conservation': Raphael Samuel and the Politics of Heritage', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 21, no. 6 (2015): 561–76; Brian Graham, 'Heritage as Knowledge: Capital or Culture?', *Urban Studies* 39, no. 5–6 (2002): 1003–17.

⁹⁹ Graham, 'Heritage as Knowledge: Capital or Culture?', 1004.

¹⁰⁰ Kenneth Olwig, "'Natural" Landscapes in the Representation of National Identity', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, Eds. Peter Howard and Brian Graham (London: Ashgate ebook, 2008), 73.

Within the literature of the Trust, there was no specific political ideology expressed regarding the sites. These places though did evince a particular view of Britain and Britishness. David Matless has described this as the 'geographical self'.¹⁰¹ It is also possible to consider this associational perspective as unconscious in some regards. The Trust always believed that their work was in the public interest. The National Trust collaborated regularly with the CPS, Kyrle and MPGA, as well as having a number of shared personnel. The Trust was a keen advocate of open spaces for the public. In February 1897, all four groups proposed the creation of a Queen Victoria Commemorative Open Space.¹⁰² There were in the proposal obvious arguments from the other groups, such as lack of urban space for the growing population of city dwellers and the lack of playgrounds for poor children that supposedly led them into trouble. Noticeably, however, two reasons given for the new potential park clearly demonstrated the Trust's motivations. First, the Trust promoted the idea of the shared nature of open space; that is non-class based accessibility. Secondly, the Trust was very aware of the longevity of use of place:

Places dedicated to public recreation afford the largest social range of enjoyment. Not the poor only, but all classes; young, old, rich, poor, ailing, well, good and bad, can enjoy a common ground. That is very fitting for a National Memorial.

Memorials in this shape also afford a greater chance of permanence in point of time...It is difficult to look forward to a time when an open space or some feature of natural beauty will not be a valued possession.¹⁰³

It was possible to see with the CPS the utilisation of an historical fiction to create a tradition of public ownership that enabled the preservation of the land. The Trust

¹⁰¹ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, 14.

¹⁰² 'Report of the Council of the National Trust', July 1897, 16.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 17.

accepted this fiction as reality. It then went slightly further. It aimed, within a particular set of mores, to create a unifying landscape for future generations.

Conclusion:

The four organisations considered here adopted differing places as well as differing conceptions of space. Each fostered particular ideas around the land that they sought to protect. Consciously or otherwise, each of the individual associations articulated a unique framework for their sites; a construction that spoke to both the history of the land and the present population that used it. The Commons Preservation Society was the most obvious utiliser of the land's history. In essence, the CPS deliberately invented the notion of publicly owned land. Although framed around an economic argument, the foundation for this was in feudal practices that were not actually public. Usage rights were frequently associated with the phrase 'time immemorial'. Witnesses interviewed in Chancery cases repeatedly used this term to give traditional practices a longevity of use that may in fact have only been sporadic. Additionally, the importance of the land as a central recreational and social space was emphasised. The commons were, they said, important to the community as a whole. The metropolitan commons were a feature of life for all who used them, or at least that was how the CPS defined the argument. These spaces were not to be owned by one person, but belonged to all. The CPS thus introduced to the Victorian populace the idea of public places and ownership.

Building on this, the Kyrle Society and the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association adopted the idea of public open spaces to evince views of the public citizen. The Kyrle became missionary aesthetes. Harnessing notions of natural beauty, the Kyrle firmly believed that exposure to this would improve the civic responsibility of the increasing number of active citizens. While their opinion of what this should be may not have

been to everyone's preference, the society was genuine in its desire to improve densely-populated urban areas. The value they put on open spaces was driven in large part by the nostalgia that the leadership of the society had for childhoods spent in rural locations. The MPGA eschewed the moralising tone of the Kyrle in favour of a scientific one. Employing contemporary medical expertise, the MPGA rationalised open spaces as necessary to the health and wellbeing of the expanding citizenry. Although they too sought to improve the working-class public morally, it was the physical aspect of this that ranked as the most important. Gardens and parks were crucial to a vigorous national population. Green space, healthy people and patriotism were inextricably linked together.

Moving from the historical to the contemporary, the National Trust was more concerned with protecting the landscape as inheritance for future generations. It was as much about the future as it was about the past. Selection may have initially been limited to what was available cheaply or for free, but this did not stop the Trust creating a role for themselves as definers of the nation's heritage. The Trust purposefully developed a council populated by experts from a number of different fields. This enabled them to establish their credibility in a newspaper campaign over governmental efforts in the area of conservation and heritage. The Trust's actual estate slowly developed, but their public influence was significantly greater due to the strength of their media efforts.

All four of the organisations exploited the land as a material base for their own particular biases. The land spatially represented common ownership, moral rectitude, healthy citizenry and exemplars of all that was best about Britishness. Even in the twenty-first century these ideas are still drawn forth as reasons to protect the

countryside.¹⁰⁴ The open spaces of Britain were never perceived as unpopulated and cannot be separated into the easy dichotomy of nature/culture. Landscapes, urban and rural, were constructed in a dialectic with the people living on and with them. Conservation, preservation and exploitation were and are a persistent tension in the understanding of Britain.

¹⁰⁴ Poet Laureate Sir Andrew Motion condemned current British planning laws in an interview. ‘Wordsworth “Would Be Having Fits over Our Countryside Building Plans”’, *Daily Mail*, 26 April 2014.

Chapter III

Family Ties and Social Networks

Hopes what are they? Beads of morning
Strung on slender blades of grass;
Or a spider's web adorning
In a strait and treacherous pass.¹

Victorian society operated through a series of interconnected networks, much like the spider's web in William Wordsworth's poem. The hopes and aspirations of philanthropic groups were achieved through the exploitation of these remarkable connections. The open space organisations considered here exemplified this in microcosm. There was, of course, the fabled 'old boys' club', but there were other multitudinous links, which extended further than simple collegial attachment. The threads of connectivity permeated all levels and crossed social standing, philanthropic interest, professional association and familial relationships. Perhaps the weaving metaphor of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott* would have been a more appropriate opening passage.² Within the extensive tapestry of affiliation, there were bright silks shot through that stood out. There were 'superstars', people like Octavia Hill, who appeared to be everywhere and involved in so many charities one loses count. Even here though, the standouts were only able to do so by a strong reliance on existing social relationships that supported their endeavours.

¹ William Wordsworth, *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, Ed. William Michael Rossetti (London: Ward, Lock & Co., c1870), 334.

² *The Lady of Shalott, Part II*, "There she weaves by night and day, A magic web with colours gay". Alfred Tennyson Lord, *Poetical Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1909), 28.

The open space movement was particularly reliant on the utilisation of networks to achieve its various goals. On the whole, these were relatively small pressure groups. This chapter investigates four particular aspects of networks: intellectual, familial, gendered and international. It examines how the organisations maximised connections of this sort and exploited them. Each of the groups here combined all four of these elements of networks, but for each there was one that was stronger than in the others. Despite their relatively small size, the level of change spearheaded by the open space movement was considerable.

To be part of a network one need only know or have knowledge of another. By contrast, a social movement utilises a network to engender some form of active societal change. Analysing the different types of networks demonstrates how social movements achieved change and manifested themselves. Social capital offers a prism through which to explore the nature of the open space organisations' networks. It provides a methodology to investigate the ulterior motivations of the membership of a philanthropic associations beyond that of the more recognisable monetary kind. Additionally, the appeal of the associational ideologies of the open space groups is evaluated. This was of equal importance in maintaining and expanding the networks further than their initial starting point. This combination of elements – networks, capital and ideology – suggests that the open space societies were more than just networks of acquaintances; they were a newly emerging social movement.

The Nature of Networks:

All humans form connections with other humans. These are not limited to kinship ties, but include those unrelated, such as friends and colleagues.³ The cooperation and

³ Coren L. Apicella et al., 'Social Networks and Cooperation in Hunter-Gatherers', *Nature* 481, no. 7382 (July 2012): 497.

interplay of those ties creates networks of association. Now as then, these networks are essential to all aspects of human interaction. John Ruskin asserted in 1862 that '[g]overnment and co-operation are in all things the Laws of Life'.⁴ The open space movement was an exemplar of Ruskin's view and the operation of networks. The four major associations examined here regularly supported each other, referenced one another's efforts and assisted in publications. Beyond this, these groups and the members drew on professional networks in their foundation and to accomplish their aims. Interwoven with all of this was a vast range of social and familial connections. Organisers brought in family and friends to increase membership and help with the management of work. In order to successfully advocate legislative and social changes to the existing system, it was necessary to draw help from a remarkably wide range of contacts. There was a significant degree of cooperation between the various organisations of the open space movement. Not only personnel moved between the groups, there was also the sharing of ideas, financial aid and projects. The extent of the networks was not limited to Britain. Members of these associations found help, information and occasionally competition from across the globe. The CPS, Kyrle, MPGA and National Trust demonstrated the breadth of Victorian networking skills.

The open space movement was a network of networks. David Reeder contends that for London it was a combination of philanthropic groups, local government and professional institutions that resulted in the expansion of open space.⁵ This was true up to a point, however it belies the proactive engagement of the open space organisations in promoting themselves and recruiting important members. Further, the initiative of the groups to demand legislation and install their members into

⁴ John Ruskin, 'Qui Judicatis Terram', in *Unto This Last*, Orig. Pub. 1862 (London: The Electric Book Company, 2001), 61.

⁵ Reeder, 'London and Green Space, 1850-2000: An Introduction', 33.

municipal positions suggests that the increase in open space was much more a consequence of volunteers pressuring municipalities and institutions than informal cooperation. With the exception of the Kyrle Society, each organisation considered itself the instigator of a piece of important legislation that served to protect open spaces.⁶ Additionally, members of the societies held official positions arguably as a result of their interest in open spaces rather than as a mere by-product. Thus, the Earl of Meath was elected to the London County Council and appointed first chairman of its Open Spaces Committee in 1889, by which time he had been the chairman of the MPGA for well over six years.⁷ Whether through his own machinations or the recognition of his interest, it seems likely that the appointment was a result of his philanthropic interests.

As the first to be established, the CPS drew on a tight network of personal acquaintances, as will be discussed shortly. Included in this first clique were those who would take the lessons of the CPS and expand the scope of the movement by establishing other groups. Octavia Hill, the Duke of Westminster, Robert Hunter and the Earl of Meath were all adherents of the CPS.⁸ Family members were linked across not just the open spaces associations, but other philanthropic and scientific groups as well. Miss Lankester, a member of the MPGA, was also the secretary of the National Health Society (NHS).⁹ She was related to E. Ray Lankester, the zoologist director of the Natural History Museum, and presumably Arthur Lankester, a member of the CPS.

⁶ The publications of the associations were self-laudatory over the following statutes. In order, the CPS MPGA and National Trust claimed a considerable degree of credit for: *Metropolitan Commons Act*; *Disused Burial Grounds Act*; *National Trust Act*.

⁷ Brabazon, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century*, 257–58.

⁸ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 327–30.

⁹ Miss Lankester was a sister to E. Ray, as the Countess of Meath noted in her diary, and perhaps a cousin to Arthur. ‘The National Health Society’, *London Daily News*, 31 January 1877, 2; Mary Brabazon Countess of Meath, *The Diaries of Mary, Countess of Meath*, Ed. Reginald Brabazon, Earl of Meath (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1928), 33.

The NHS was also the forum in which Miranda Hill presented her paper that led to the foundation of the Kyrle Society. In the conclusion to his history of the first forty-five years of the CPS, Lefevre referred to the four associations as the ‘leading open space societies’.¹⁰ He went on to acknowledge how well the associations worked together and complemented one another. The networks had networked to achieve their goals.

Descriptions of the Victorian age often highlight the growth of capitalism, with much emphasis placed on the domination of financial capital over all other forms. Arguably, other forms of capital, the social, symbolic and cultural, were derived from older societal forms such as aristocratic position or religious authority. Social networks are strongly linked to varying forms of capital.¹¹ Philanthropy provided a means of exploiting networks to generate alternative forms of capital for individuals. Within the open space movement, it is particularly important to consider other forms of capital aside from the financial, especially as there was no direct monetary gain for members. Indeed the reverse was more often likely. The interaction between members of strikingly different social classes offered the opportunity for development of differing kinds of social capital. For the middle class the connection with the aristocracy enhanced their social position, while for the upper class it improved their democratic credentials.¹² The philanthropic networks engendered an exchange mechanism of non-economic capital.

¹⁰ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 326–27.

¹¹ See for example: Diane Reay, ‘Gendering Bourdieu’s Concepts of Capitals? Emotional Capital, Women and Social Class’, *Sociological Review* 52, no. 2 (2004): 57; Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups’, *Theory and Society* 14, no. 6 (November 1985): 723–44; Steve McDonald, ‘What’s in the “Old Boys” Network? Accessing Social Capital in Gendered and Racialized Networks’, *Social Networks* 33 (2011): 317–30; Robert D. Putnam, ‘Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital’, *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 1 (January 1995): 66–77.

¹² Thomas Adam, ‘A Rich Man’s Guide to Social Climbing: Philanthropy as a Bourgeois Behavioural Pattern in Nineteenth Century New York’, *Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 15.

Victorian culture marked social cooperation as a desirable attribute. The CPS, Kyrle, MPGA and National Trust understood this. They worked well together to effect what Lefevre called a 'revolution' in appreciation.¹³ Certainly the extension of the franchise had empowered a larger number of people and the growth of a capitalist economy had seen a shift in social dynamics. Philanthropic networks offer an example of the interactivity of nineteenth century society. Further, the open spaces organisations in particular provide evidence of the development of an emergent social movement.

The CPS and Intellectual Activism:

There has been much written on the emergence of a British intellectual clique during the Victorian period; a network of inter-related people who dominated political and cultural life.¹⁴ Certainly a number of the characteristics of an elite faction can be seen in the open spaces groups. It would be impossible to argue that the membership of the CPS, Kyrle, MPGA and National Trust were representative of the majority of the English population at the time. Membership fees and subscriptions precluded access to these groups for most. The groups emerged from a shared cultural background. Necessarily then, a consideration of the communal experience is crucial. Of all the associations here, the CPS was the one most firmly rooted in the shared educational and professional milieu of its members. The initial formation of the group, along with its associational ideology illuminates the shared backgrounds and common values of those who joined it.

¹³ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 330.

¹⁴ The seminal text is Annan's, which as Whyte points out has broken all citation records. Whyte's article is only one of the more recent to respond to and expand on the idea of an intellectual aristocracy. N.G. Annan, 'The Intellectual Aristocracy', in *Studies in Social History: A Tribute to G.M. Trevelyan*, Ed. J. H. Plumb (London, New York, Toronto: Longman Green & Co, 1955), 243–87; William Whyte, 'The Intellectual Aristocracy Revisited', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 10, no. 1 (2005): 15–45.

Some of the first seeds of a British *intelligentsia* and popular social movements can be seen in earlier groups such as the Clapham Sect, with its focus on the anti-slavery campaign in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth century. It was, however, during the late Victorian period that university-educated intellectuals came into their own. Michael Roberts referred to this elite section of society as the public intellectuals who were ‘convinced of the inevitability of political democracy and of the obligation which this imposed on the intellectual elite to foster the social advancement of the enfranchised’.¹⁵ The Commons Preservation Society’s membership was an example of this, with their focus on the protection of commoners’ rights. Further, the members of that group were, on the whole, a product of the undeniable desire by universities and public schools to ‘create a caste of educated, active citizens’.¹⁶ The assumption that the CPS was constituted solely of intellectuals though would be to misinterpret the activism, both mental and physical, that typified the association. Indeed, one of the most notable attributes of all the groups considered here was their practical and vigorous engagement with the protection of their chosen spaces.

George Shaw Lefevre, founder of the CPS, met many of the descriptors of a nascent intellectual. He was from a political and literary family; his sister became the first principal of one of the first Oxford colleges for women.¹⁷ He attended Eton before going up to Trinity College, Cambridge and then into practising law. When his attention focused on the establishment of a society to protect the metropolitan commons, he turned to those he knew. In his history of the CPS written in 1910, Lefevre, now Baron Eversley, discussed the birth of the society. In Chapter III he

¹⁵ Roberts, ‘Gladstonian Liberalism and Environment Protection, 1865–76’, 303.

¹⁶ Whyte, ‘The Intellectual Aristocracy Revisited’, 23.

¹⁷ ‘Oxford Dictionary of National Biography’.

recorded his determination to organise ‘resistance to the threatened enclosure of Commons in the neighbourhood of London. I invited a number of those interested in the question, mostly my personal friends, to meet for this purpose’.¹⁸ In the first two pages of the chapter, Lefevre goes on to name twenty-six prominent early members, of whom twenty-five were men – Octavia Hill was the only exception. Fourteen of the men were members of parliament; all but one represented the Liberal party. Sixteen of the twenty-five had attended either Cambridge or Oxford University. Cambridge fellows, from Lefevre’s alma mater, dominated this group slightly, with ten members. There were also a number of legal professionals and civil servants. These were the people from whom Lefevre would raise the bulk of the Society’s initial funding.¹⁹ With the exception of two of those listed, all intersected at one point or another through these spheres.²⁰ Based on the above assessment, the CPS was, on a superficial level, a group of like-minded, similarly educated professionals interested in publicising the threatened enclosure of open spaces.

The key word in Lefevre’s ideology was resistance. From the outset, the CPS was not limited to a group of friends theoretically opposed to development of metropolitan open spaces. The CPS recruited interested local individuals into their network. In this way, regional groups developed as offshoots of the central organising committee. The Epping Forest Preservation Society, for example, was originally the East London Committee of the Commons Preservation Society.²¹ During the campaign for Epping Forest the committee called on the ‘co-operation and aid of all classes of people to

¹⁸ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁰ The two exceptions are Octavia Hill and a Mr Burrell, who has not been specifically identified, but may be a member of the Burrell manufacturing family.

²¹ Apart from Epping, district committees emerged in any area of dispute. There were committees established in Kent, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, etc. ‘Save the Forest’, *The Woodford, Buckhurst Hill & Loughton Advertiser*, 19 October 1867.

enable them to rescue these public lands from the illegal inclosures [*sic*] of private individuals...'²² The members were prepared to undertake action to prevent enclosure and restore open land where attempted enclosures had taken place. Legal injunctions were sought to prevent proposed enclosure, but this was not the limit of their work. The CPS also supported physical protest; the 'Battle of Berkhamsted' in 1866 being one of the most well-known occasions. It is true that the first members of the CPS shared the common acquaintance and background of Lefevre. There was also a shared sense of social obligation and activism. In some ways, the CPS appeared more of a social movement and less philanthropic in nature than the later organisations.

The earliest of the open spaces groups, the CPS, offered a direct challenge to the most powerful landowners in the country and yet was able to gain public access and protection of private land. Historically, confrontations between aristocratic landowners and the wider public had not ended favourably for the latter. The ability of a social movement to contest land rights peacefully are thus a manifestation of broader social changes. It represents the growing acknowledgement of the importance of public opinion, by a more inclusive government. The CPS, for all of the privileged position of its founding membership, was at the vanguard of a new social movement. It was a collective of concerned individuals who joined together to effect an important change in their society. Steven Buechler contends that social movements were a distinctively modern form of collective action.²³ Building on this contention, the organisations examined here were not only an example of the modern, but also only made possible by the political modernity of Britain during the second half of nineteenth century. The increased franchise created a greater need for politicians to

²² Ibid., Front Page.

²³ Steven M. Buechler, *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5.

have a more widespread appeal. Championing the rights of the commoner and challenging dispossession served as a means for some to broaden their appeal. The CPS exploited the growing need for political popularity to advance their programme. These open space groups were at once a product of, and producers of, the changes to the 'traditional' that occurred.

The CPS, along with its contestation of traditional landownership, was an inventor of new traditions. The primary basis for the lawsuits was the assertion of public rights to common land. To establish this defence the CPS had to produce evidence firstly, of the nature of the land and secondly, of the assignment of rights. In the case of Banstead Common in Surrey, just south of London, the evidence for the latter used the often-repeated phrases: 'From time immemorial the freehold and copyhold tenants of the manor have been...entitled to the following...rights and privileges in and over the common and waste land of the manor'.²⁴ This was then generally followed by a list of the specific rights that had been assigned. In order to identify the land, the claims then recounted the history of the manor to the present, where known; with Banstead the initial entry was from the Domesday Book. Importantly, not all tenants of the manor were freehold or holders of common rights and those who were could sell those rights back to the lord. Regardless of the number of actual right-holding tenants, the CPS maintained the legal protection of each tenant to freely exercise their rights. Furthermore, in doing so, the society prevented the enclosure of the land and thus reinforced the fiction that the land was available to all. This conception of 'public land' would be an important assertion for subsequent open space organisations.

²⁴ 'Amended Statement of Claim: Robertson vs Hartopp. High Court of Justice - Chancery Division', 13 January 1885.

Britain is often used as a case study of modernity, as ostensibly it was the first country in the world to undergo this transformation. Substantial changes in population demographics, industrial reorganisation, economic innovations and political institutions, all contributed to the reformation of the society. This aligns, up to a point, with James Vernon's conception of the 'attempts to reembed social, political, and economic relations in the local and personal'.²⁵ Vernon proposes that modernity was the result of three factors: an increasing, and increasingly mobile, population; individualistic challenges to all forms of societal conduct; and attempts to create new forms of collective interaction in social life.²⁶ The four open spaces organisations were motivated by the first two of these factors and exemplified the third. Burgeoning populations in urban areas were a major consideration for them; as was the re-establishment of public engagement with nature. The importance of the individual within these groups was of much less concern. Yet the harnessing of individual power in order to achieve the aims of the organisations was crucial. However, this was generally to front legal action for the purposes of the collective and not as a means of expressing any form of sole authority. To the contrary, more than anything the open space movement promoted shared ownership and investment in the environments with which it dealt.

The Commons Preservation Society exemplified both the response to a growing population and the re-creation, possibly the invention, of social engagement with the commons. The very reason for its inception was the pressure to develop the major commons abutting the metropole. It is important to note though that one of the reasons for the success of the CPS was the modernisation of the British electoral and

²⁵ James Vernon, *Distant Strangers: How Britain Became Modern* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2014), 14.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

legal systems. Without the ability to engage in parliamentary discussion, legislative change and judicial challenge the work of the CPS would not have succeeded. As Roberts convincingly argued, central to these early open space challenges was ‘the legitimate role of the state, the rights of property and the right of citizens to expect state protection of communal and, perhaps “national” environmental heritage’.²⁷ Even more than this, the CPS was able to operate because it was formed in a modern state. Further it contributed to the continued modernisation of that state by encouraging the disenfranchised to question traditional positions of power.

The utilisation of an individual for the benefit of the organisation was also apparent with the CPS. This was principally a necessary legal fiction. In the defence of Hampstead Heath, local resident Mr Gurney Hoare was persuaded by Lefevre to take the lead in protecting the common.²⁸ The Hoares of Hampstead were a wealthy Quaker banking family that would eventually become part of Barclay’s Bank. For Banstead Common there was Mr James Nesbit Robertson, who acted for the CPS; in Plumstead there was John Warrick, and so on.²⁹ While it is possible to find what appeared to be individuals demanding traditional landownership rights, they were figureheads for organised collective action. These early court cases, and in some instances physical demonstrations, differed somewhat from Vernon’s hypothesis. A single figure was consciously chosen by a social movement to represent the core of the case and to sue the defending landowner on behalf of the public interest. This individual was not undertaking the lawsuit unaided or, on some occasions,

²⁷ Roberts, ‘Gladstonian Liberalism and Environment Protection, 1865–76’, 292.

²⁸ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 36.

²⁹ ‘Amended Statement of Claim: Robertson vs Hartopp. High Court of Justice - Chancery Division’; ‘Observations for the Hearing. Warrick vs Queens College, Oxford. High Court of Justice, Chancery Division’, 2 August 1871.

unprompted. The CPS was effectively the plaintiff and although not an individual, they did contest existing societal norms.

The invented tradition of public rights became the *de facto* principle until eventually legitimated in statute. Many organisations exploited this fiction. The National Footpath Preservation Society noted in one pamphlet:

The present generation are custodians of the ancient rights preserved to them by the past generation, and on all moral points are trustees for the generations to come...These rights are not ours to give away or allow them to pass from us through neglect.³⁰

The same pamphlet goes on to note that: ‘Attempts to impair or extinguish public rights frequently lead to illegal acts on the part of the people; a society such as this will render riotous proceedings unnecessary’. The invention of public rights to open space was adopted with alacrity, but this was only achieved because of the initial efforts of the CPS to reify what was a legal illusion based on medieval manor rolls as a credible narrative.

The conscious appeal to patriotic altruism, as well the attempt to engender a particular national character were a distinct element of the extant records of all four of the organisations under examination here. The CPS, in its defence of the commons from aristocratic enclosure, consciously called on ideas of noble obligation, social responsibility and community cohesion. When Fakenham Common was threatened, the local mouthpiece, Mr James Flaxman wrote the following to the landowner, Sir Willoughby Jones: ‘The vested Rights of Britain are held sacred; how then without the poor man’s own consent can the thought of justice to him enter your mind, Sir, to take

³⁰ ‘National Footpath Preservation Society Pamphlet’, c 1890, Guildhall Library Archive London.

away from him what he has possessed for centuries'.³¹ In Flaxman's memorial, the enclosure of the Common creates 'strife between rich and poor'. This 'bad policy' it is suggested may have revolutionary consequences with movements such as Fenianism, which Flaxman states is 'rife in Ireland through discontent'. James Flaxman goes on to attempt to shame Sir Willoughby Jones into ceasing his action to enclose the Common. He asserts that the addition of a few more acres of land to an already large estate would be poor compensation for the:

Desponding looks, murmuring language and revulsion of feeling toward you, Sir, of Bone and Sinew of your neighbourhood through the proposed Enclosure cannot satisfy your generous nature...The poor, Sir, have as much claim to 'God and their Rights' as their beloved Sovereign. Your Memorialist appealing to your conscience remind you, Sir, kindly The Judge of all Earth will do Right, He will Review this in the Last Day.³²

Flaxman and through him the CPS were not creating an economic argument, their petition played on Willoughby Jones' social and symbolic status and how this would be irrevocably damaged by his actions against the community. The memorial also evinced the emergent national culture of the great British yeoman and his importance to the nation. Flaxman referred to the classes that 'till, sow, watch & reap the soil, Man the Fleets, Defend Old England's colonies & Homes in Blue & Red jackets, Build their Cities – Protect property and in a word make Britain Great'.³³ Fakenham Common thus became a site where the CPS called on 'old' traditional aristocratic obligations to the community and the 'new' tradition of common rights.

³¹ James Flaxman, 'Memorial from James Flaxman to Sir Willoughby Jones', 21 June 1870, FCP/1/40-1, Parliamentary Archives.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

Turning once again to Lefevre's history, his conclusion noted the 'Revolution which has been effected in the relations of Lords of Manors to their Commoners and to the public'.³⁴ The CPS emerged from a network of intellectual and professional colleagues. It quickly developed into an expansive social movement prepared to undertake physical protest to achieve its aims. The politically astute association of mostly middle-class, university-educated solicitors and bureaucrats challenged the land-owning status quo. By exploiting personal and professional contacts, not only did the CPS succeed in introducing legislation that began the protection of the metropolitan commons, but they also publicised the idea of public land. They were challenging one set of traditions while introducing another set. In part this was achieved through appeals to non-economic benefits; that is social capital. Local prestige and public opinion were the assets to be gained or lost. While it was not a perfect example of the *intelligentsia*, the CPS and its network of members was a model of intellectual activism.

The Kyrle Society and Familial Networks:

The most basic of social networks is the family. Victorian society was replete with kinship networks in politics, business and society. Philanthropy was no different. As the power behind a particular association perhaps no group demonstrated the interplay of familial networks and philanthropy better than the Kyrle Society. It had the most obvious kinship connection having been founded by two sisters, Miranda and Octavia Hill. It was their networks that formed the basis for the organisation. Beyond the two founding siblings, other members of the extended Hill family were active in their participation. In 1872 Emily Hill married C. Edmund Maurice, the son of Frederick Denison Maurice.³⁵ The elder Maurice, one of the leading Christian Socialist advocates

³⁴ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 330.

³⁵ Darley, *Octavia Hill*, 114.

of the day, had been a theological mentor to Octavia Hill. His son would be both honorary secretary to the Kyrle and later Octavia Hill's biographer.³⁶ For the Hills, the family working together was a pattern that had been established in their childhood.

The Hills were not alone in familial philanthropic endeavours. Extended family networks were an essential part of Victorian charity, on small and large scale. In a society with little to no state protection, the family was the essential safety net in difficult times.³⁷ Indeed while the Hills became renowned for their philanthropy, they had, at one stage, depended on the charity of relatives for their livelihood. Their grandfather had supported his daughter and her children following the financial and health difficulties occasioned by James Hill's business failures.³⁸ In all probability, this experience was a major motivating factor behind the Hill sisters' later work. In addition to this, both Octavia and Miranda had worked with their mother at the Ladies Guild, a Christian Socialist cooperative started in London in 1852.³⁹ Through the Christian Socialists and familial connections, the Hill family would directly interact with other notable philanthropic families and individuals. As a consequence of this extended family network, the Kyrle was able to punch well above its weight in the society of the time.

Even before the establishment of the society, the embryonic network beginnings can be seen in the professional lives of the Hill sisters. Shortly after the opening of the

³⁶ C. Edmund Maurice, 'Letter to the Editor', *London Daily News*, 25 September 1879; Maurice, *Life of Octavia Hill as Told In Her Letters*.

³⁷ Donald Cox and Marcel Fafchamps, 'Extended Family and Kinship Networks: Economic Insights and Evolutionary Directions', in *Handbook of Development Economics*, Eds. T. Paul Schultz and John Strauss, vol. 4 (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2008), 3714.

³⁸ Darley, *Octavia Hill*, 30.

³⁹ The Ladies Guild was a co-operative founded to train women in various handicrafts that would enable them to provide for themselves. It lasted until 1856. *Ibid.*, 41.

Ladies Guild, a young Emma Cons also joined the cooperative.⁴⁰ Octavia Hill and Emma Cons were only a few months apart in age, both in their early teens, and developed a long-standing friendship. Through the Guild, Cons would meet John Ruskin and like Hill benefit from that acquaintance.⁴¹ More than ten years after their first meeting, Hill would employ Cons as a paid rent collector in the housing scheme she had established with Ruskin. Both Hill and Cons were still in their early twenties. Cons forged her own reforming career and developed significant ties into women's education and the arts. Among those close colleagues was Lady Lucy Cavendish, a niece of W. E. Gladstone.⁴² Nor was Cons the only budding reformer to become involved with the Hill family in this way.

Octavia Hill regularly attended the services of Frederick Denison Maurice at St Peter's Church in Vere Street, London. Another member of that same congregation was Elizabeth Garrett.⁴³ With Garrett only two years older than Hill, these two extraordinary women would work together on more than one occasion. Apart from attendance at the same religious services, Garrett and Hill would work together in the 1860s as members of staff at an off-shoot of Maurice's Working Men's College, the Working Women's College.⁴⁴ Through her friendship with Garrett, Hill was introduced to her sisters, Millicent and Agnes, as well as her cousin Rhoda. Elizabeth Garrett (later Anderson) would become the first British female doctor, Millicent Garrett (later Fawcett) was the leader of the constitutional campaign for women's

⁴⁰ Andrea Geddes Poole, *Philanthropy and the Construction Victorian Women's Citizenship: Lady Frederick Cavendish and Miss Emma Cons* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 99.

⁴¹ Ibid., 100.

⁴² Andrea Geddes Poole has undertaken a full exploration of Cons and Cavendish's working relationship. Ibid., passim.

⁴³ One other attendee of Maurice's services was Louisa Twining. Darley, *Octavia Hill*, 81; Theresa Deane, 'Late Nineteenth-Century Philanthropy: The Case of Louisa Twining', in *Gender, Health and Welfare*, Eds. Anne Digby and John Steward (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 123.

⁴⁴ Crawford, *Enterprising Women: The Garretts and Their Circle*, 160.

suffrage, while Agnes and Rhoda would establish their own influential studio working as interior decorators and furniture designers. Rhoda would also serve on the committee of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.⁴⁵ Further, through her association with Elizabeth Garrett, Hill would have peripheral contact with the important campaigning women's group, the Langham Place Circle.

For the open space movement and the Kyrle in particular there was one further important introduction that would occur as a result of the Garrett/Hill association. Millicent Garrett Fawcett, writing her memoirs in 1925, noted her husband's recovery from a severe illness in 1882 thanks to the 'exertions of a number of devoted doctors and other friends'.⁴⁶ Among those friends who helped with the nursing, she named a young woman, Louise Wilkinson. She added to this, 'afterwards my sister-in-law'.⁴⁷ Louise Wilkinson would marry Fawcett's younger brother, George Garrett, in 1900. Louise was the younger sister to one Fanny Wilkinson, landscape gardener. It is almost certain that the association of Wilkinson with the Kyrle and the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association began as a result of an introduction through these social networks.

The links forged through F. D. Maurice were not just ones of religion. At Oxford University, Maurice befriended William Ewart Gladstone. It is impossible to establish whether this connection was of direct significance to the open space movement; however, a number of statutes to protect open spaces were passed during his premiership. There were one hundred and twenty identifiable members of parliament

⁴⁵ 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography'.

⁴⁶ Millicent Garrett Fawcett, *What I Remember* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), 134.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

on the MPGA membership lists.⁴⁸ The first joined in 1886; of these, a very small majority were Liberals of one persuasion or another. Additionally, the Prime Minister's wife presided over the opening of the first MPGA garden at the former Horsemonger Lane Gaol and his son Herbert Gladstone was a member of that society.⁴⁹ Maurice died in 1872, before the establishment of either the Kyrle or the MPGA, but his influence can be seen in the networks that arose out of those associated with him.

There are two further familial connections that emerged out of Hill's housing work. Each would bring Hill and the Kyrle Society further philanthropic weight during the nineteenth century. In 1869, nineteen-year-old Henrietta Rowland began working as a volunteer rent collector for Octavia Hill.⁵⁰ At a birthday party for Hill in 1870, Rowland would be introduced to the curate of St Mary's Church in Bryanston Square, Marylebone, London. A little over two years later Rowland would marry the Reverend Samuel Barnett.⁵¹ This was not to be the only link between the open space movement and the Barnetts. Henrietta's sister Alice Rowland married Ernest Hart in 1872.⁵² Hart was a very early member of the MPGA and a vice-chairman of that group. He wrote numerous articles in the *British Medical Journal* regarding the importance of open space. Henrietta, who would be made a Dame of the British Empire for her social reform work, and Samuel Barnett spent the rest of their lives engaged in working to improve social conditions. Henrietta Barnett's last project was the creation of Hampstead

⁴⁸ This figure is based on an analysis of the Election of Members recorded in the MPGA minutes from their monthly meetings from its foundation through to 1895. It is possible that this figure was higher, but only those with the designation 'M.P.' were specifically included. The names were then cross-referenced with biographical data provided by the Parliamentary Archives in London.

⁴⁹ 'Children's Playground in South London', *Illustrated London News*, 10 May 1884, Gale Group through the National Library of Australia; 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association' (Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, 3 June 1891), MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO5, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁵⁰ Poole, *Philanthropy and the Construction Victorian Women's Citizenship: Lady Frederick Cavendish and Miss Emma Cons*, 101–2.

⁵¹ Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1918), 34.

⁵² 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography'.

Garden Suburb, which she worked on with Robert Hunter, associate of Octavia Hill, solicitor to the Commons Preservation Society and co-founder of the National Trust.⁵³ A fellow Hill worker described the Barnetts as ‘a double-star-personality, the light of the one being indistinguishable from that of the other’.⁵⁴ The co-worker who wrote those words was Beatrice Potter, later Webb.

Beatrice Webb and her husband Sidney could perhaps be described in a similar fashion to the Barnetts. Webb was introduced to work with Octavia Hill by her sister Kate, who worked as a rent-collector for Hill.⁵⁵ Webb visited her sister in Whitechapel, London and would later work there as a rent-collector herself. Catherine (Kate) Potter worked in the East End even after her marriage in 1883 to Leonard Courtney, a Liberal cabinet minister. The East End Dwellings Company, whose founders included Charles Booth and Samuel Barnett, built their first model apartment block in Aldgate in 1885.⁵⁶ They named it the Katherine Building, in honour of the now Mrs Courtney. Webb began her social observation career while working there and published her ‘Lady’s View of the Unemployed at the East’.⁵⁷ A cousin to Beatrice and Catherine was Mary Macaulay, to whom Beatrice was particularly close. Macaulay married Charles Booth in 1871.⁵⁸ Webb would work closely with Booth and was clearly deeply impressed by his personality and methodology. ‘Charles Booth was ... perhaps the most perfect embodiment of ... the mid-Victorian time-spirit – the union of faith in the scientific method with the transference of the emotion of self-sacrificing service

⁵³ ‘A Garden Suburb’, *London Daily News*, 2 February 1905, 5, The British Newspaper Archive, www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk.

⁵⁴ Beatrice Webb, *My Apprenticeship* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1926), 211.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵⁶ Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends*, 1:138.

⁵⁷ Beatrice Potter, ‘A Lady’s View of the Unemployed at the East’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 18 February 1886, 11, The British Newspaper Archive, www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk.

⁵⁸ Webb, *My Apprenticeship*, 218.

from God to man'.⁵⁹ Although Webb would become disillusioned with Hill's views on charity, it cannot be denied that the Potter family were significantly influenced by their association with her.

One interesting feature of the Hill/Kyrle networks was the location where a majority of them either worked or lived. Many of the families involved lived and worked remarkably close together. Bounded by Marylebone Road in the North and Oxford Street in the south, with a distance of less than two miles across, the Hills, Garretts, Barnetts, Cons, Wilkinsons and Maurices, all lived and/or worked in this small area. Although not always concurrently, there were a number of cross-over periods. The Hill family moved to the area in the early 1850s and the Ladies Guild was established in Fitzroy Square, less than a mile from the Cons household in Torrington Square – the furthest eastern extent of the neighbourhood.⁶⁰ Frederick Maurice preached in Vere Street, approximately a mile and a half from Gower Street. Agnes and Rhoda Garrett, and Millicent and Philippa Fawcett all had residences in Gower Street.⁶¹ Elizabeth Garrett Anderson established her first dispensary in Seymour Place, the furthest western edge of the area. This was less than a mile from Octavia Hill's Paradise Place housing scheme and next to Bryanston Square, where Samuel Barnett was the curate from 1867.⁶² Much later in the 1880s, Fanny and Louise Wilkinson would live in Bloomsbury Street, very close to Gower Street. The sheer concentration of families in such a limited area is quite noticeable. Susan L. Tananbaum argues that the Victorian public sphere was not inclusive and presence in it for a marginalised

⁵⁹ Ibid., 221.

⁶⁰ Poole, *Philanthropy and the Construction Victorian Women's Citizenship: Lady Frederick Cavendish and Miss Emma Cons*, 99.

⁶¹ 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography'.

⁶² Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends*, 1:17.

group was as a result contingent.⁶³ It is possible to discern in this geographic proximity a stronger sense of security and community within a conditional public space. Family and friends were close and thus made this a safer space for those who were at a distance from some societal norms.

When the Kyrle Society was established, these familial networks became invaluable. Some of Hill's housing scheme workers doubled as agents of the Kyrle, making inspections, collecting rent, delivering plants and flowers.⁶⁴ These families were a minority within the Kyrle and although they were a tightly-knit group, from the extant membership details, they did not form the bulk of the society. As Caroline Morrell has stated, Hill's networks were wide and varied.⁶⁵ Despite the strong family connection in the establishment of the society, through the breadth of Hill's personal network, and indeed the network of her colleagues, the society expanded beyond kinship ties. Thanks to those connections, the society had a greater influence than might otherwise have been the case. Detailed subscriber lists for the Kyrle, as previously noted, have not survived. Based on snippets from newspapers and the few remaining documents, the connections that the Hill sisters and the Kyrle Society could call on were a who's who of nineteenth century reforming enterprise. In later Kyrle Society reports, two of Lefevre's sisters were committee members for the open spaces section and the CPS donated fifty pounds to one fund.⁶⁶ Independently, the Duke of Westminster donated three hundred pounds, and somewhat ironically, Sir Spenser Maryon Wilson, of Hampstead Heath infamy, gave another fifty pounds. An

⁶³ Susan L. Tananbaum, 'Philanthropy and Identity: Gender and Ethnicity in London', *Journal of Social History* 30, no. 4 (Summer 1997): 938.

⁶⁴ Caroline Morrell, 'Octavia Hill and Women's Networks in Housing', in *Gender, Health and Welfare*, Eds. Anne Digby and John Steward (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), 114.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁶⁶ 'The Kyrle Society Report for 1893', Annual report (London: The Kyrle Society, 1893), <https://archive.org>.

essentially middle-class kinship network had managed to extend its influence to the highest offices in the land to promote its manifesto of social reform.

The Kyrle's Octavia Hill was perhaps the epitome of a social capital millionaire. She was expert at converting her social networks and philanthropic prestige, her symbolic capital, into financial capital in order to further her charitable ambitions. In one letter to a friend she noted:

How strange it seems to me that the momentary difficulty is to persuade the owners that there is a chance of anyone being in the least likely to be inclined to give the money for a place which must be a blessing to hundreds now, and hundreds yet to come – a great free gift to their city, and the chief city of their country. Fields reminding men and women long lost in the whirl of London, of child days and places near where they were born; fields where little children can see the wild flowers grow as they are beginning to do once more on Hampstead Heath, but nearer their homes. I believe in the hearts of our poorer people...who will make for once an effort...to save a bit of green hilly ground near a city, where fresh winds may blow, and where wild flowers still are found, and where happy people can still walk within reach of their homes.⁶⁷

Initially it seems that Hill made a simple emotional appeal to the childhood memories of those with economic resources. In her choice of phrases such as 'blessing to hundreds' and 'great free gift' linked with the 'chief city' she was also addressing the social capital that was available to the charitable. Further, in the above passage, she suggested the importance of family life with allusions to childhood, home and children. She, thus, cleverly linked the concept of charity with that of family – a central pillar of Hill's beliefs and networks.

⁶⁷ Letter from Octavia Hill to Mrs Senior, August 3rd, 1875, Maurice, *Life of Octavia Hill as Told In Her Letters*, 332–33.

The Kyrle did not advance a particularly sophisticated ideology. Octavia Hill was the most prolific of the society's correspondents. Hill's numerous letters and pamphlets on the topic of open space were not particularly abstruse, remaining almost naïve in their tone. Arguably, they were kept deliberately simple, reflecting a more motherly turn of phrase with regard to the wants of the residents. In her 1877 essay on open spaces she wrote:

All that is strictly practical that I have to say to-day could be summed up in a very few words. I have no changes in the law to suggest. I have not thought it well to relate the past history of inclosures [*sic*]...I have but one end in view in writing this paper – the laying out and opening [of] small central spaces as public gardens.⁶⁸

She went on to note that the poorer residents of large towns have two great wants: space and beauty. This assumed artlessness can be attributed to a desire on the part of the Hill sisters to avoid replication of the work undertaken by the CPS, as well as the smaller nature of the spaces involved.⁶⁹ This attitude also evinced a domestic air, which befitted the familial basis of the charity. The Kyrle was elitist, yes, but that was not unusual for those who perceived themselves as the more fortunate in Victorian society. A maternalistic attitude was perhaps the result of being part of a philanthropic family. The Kyrle Society's achievements were a consequence of Octavia and Miranda Hill's abilities to turn relatives into resources. Of all the associations considered here, the Kyrle was the epitome of the power in kinship networks.

The MPGA and Gendered Networks:

The high level of women's participation in Victorian philanthropy has been well established. There has been significantly less work examining the interplay of men and women within charitable organisations. In the open space movement women were

⁶⁸ Hill, *Our Common Land and Other Short Essays*, 105.

⁶⁹ Darley, *Octavia Hill*, 180.

present in the management, as well as being establishing personnel of the groups. Examining how gendered networks played out in the open space movement offers a fresh insight into Victorian society. While the Kyrle Society has a stronger claim to being an organisation of predominantly women, the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, with its fuller membership lists, offers an opportunity to examine the effectiveness of women within a mixed membership organisation. Access to these groups potentially enabled women, not only to become involved with public life, but to build on their presence to encourage more women to become engaged.

The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association exhibited intellectual activism, familial networks and internationalism, but of all the groups in the open space movement it was also the most comprehensive example of a gendered network. Minutes, membership lists and a vast range of publications provide evidence of the interaction of men and women in an organisational environment. Even more than the CPS or Kyrle, the MPGA was an extremely diverse group. There were a number of subscribers from a non-English ethnicity.⁷⁰ Beyond the realms of general philanthropy and interest in the topic, those present at the first meeting were from a remarkable array of areas of Victorian society. The composition of the group reflected the nature of many social movements; initially comprised of the founder's friends and family, then broadening out to include other interested parties. The first members represented business, scientific, political, legal and religious areas.⁷¹ Included in that first meeting were nine women, of whom six were unmarried. Women, from the moment of associational establishment were crucial and seemingly welcome participants. Possibly,

⁷⁰ The membership of the MPGA was remarkably cosmopolitan as well as interdenominational. See Chapter I and IV for more information on the group's composition.

⁷¹ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 20 November 1882.

this was a particular feature of the MPGA, because a married couple were at the heart of it.

Much has been written on the differing nature of men's and women's networks. Steve McDonald argues that all social networks experience segregation along gendered or racialised lines.⁷² In the case of Victorian Britain, presumably class could be added as a factor to this analysis. On the whole, women's networks have been constructed as blending the personal and professional to a greater extent than male networks, with close friendships an essential element.⁷³ The associations considered here had a mostly mixed membership. Little scholarship has examined the dynamics in this area. One exception to this is Judith Walkowitz's examination of the Men and Women's Club founded in 1885 by Karl Pearson. In this mixed membership club, there was ostensible equality, but Walkowitz contends there was in reality an unequal distribution of voice and power between the male and female members.⁷⁴ The organisation she examines, though, was established by an unmarried man and based on his work and theories.

It was possible that an association could include women and yet not welcome them. Thus, even if the associational membership was not contingent on gender, it was still possible that internal club politics were dominated by male voices; voices that silenced the female membership. The minutes of the monthly meetings of the MPGA provide an extensive, if somewhat formulaic, record of who was active in meetings. Four women stand out in their participation levels in the MPGA: Miss Lankester, Miss Biller, Miss Wilkinson and Miss Gladstone (later Mrs Holmes). With the exception of

⁷² Steve McDonald, 'What's in the "Old Boys" Network? Accessing Social Capital in Gendered and Racialized Networks', *Social Networks* 33 (2011): 318.

⁷³ See for example Chapter 4 in Philippa Levine, *Feminist Lives in Victorian England: Private Roles and Public Commitment* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

⁷⁴ Judith R. Walkowitz, 'Science, Feminism and Romance: The Men and Women's Club 1885-1889', *History Workshop Journal* 21, no. 1 (1986): 37-59.

Wilkinson, who joined the MPGA in 1884, all were present at the very first meeting.⁷⁵

Of these women, Wilkinson and Gladstone were two of the most active, although only Wilkinson was a professional officer of the association. Despite her considerable amount of work, Gladstone was only ever an honorary office holder; her husband, Basil Holmes, would eventually hold the paid secretarial office. It is difficult to establish whether this was an associational or matrimonial choice.

What is clear, is that these women, among others, were active from the first instance. Isabella Holmes' work identifying the disused burial grounds of London was critical to the operation of the society.⁷⁶ From the earliest meetings, Isabella Gladstone spoke of potential sites and gave her opinion with regard to the association's efforts. On top of this was her sizeable public correspondence on behalf of the association. Isabella Gladstone was elected to the position of honorary secretary in May 1885.⁷⁷ Her nomination was moved by the chairman himself, Lord Brabazon. At the time of her appointment there was already a, presumably paid, secretary, Captain G. Ivan Thompson, who had been secretary from the formation of the MPGA. Nothing in the minutes explains the reason why it was felt necessary to appoint an additional unpaid secretary. Thompson would remain as secretary until March 1888 when he resigned and was replaced by Basil Holmes. Notably the minutes recorded Holmes' statement that he would 'do all that lay in his power ... to assist the Honorary Secretary'.⁷⁸ By this stage, Isabella Gladstone had married Holmes. The very next

⁷⁵ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 5 February 1884, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London; 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 20 November 1882.

⁷⁶ Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on Their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*.

⁷⁷ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 5 May 1885, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁷⁸ Thompson was never noted as honorary and the assumption is that this was therefore a paid role. 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 6 March 1888, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

month, Basil Holmes apologised for the ‘unavoidable absence of the Honorary Secretary’, one of her rare absences.⁷⁹ This was no doubt due to the birth of the Holmes’ first child in the middle of March. Isabella Holmes was present at the meeting on the 6th of March 1888, gave birth to her daughter Edith on the 19th, missed the 10th of April meeting, but was again present on the 1st of May. Isabella was clearly attending meetings while heavily pregnant and although there with her husband, she was out and about in public in the last month of her term.

Much of the correspondence from the secretary of the MPGA was written by Mrs Holmes. At meetings, responses, addressed to Mrs Holmes, were read out by Mr Holmes. This could be an indication of the silencing of women at meetings, although women did move motions and speak on other topics. There is also a class aspect. Theresa Deane, in her consideration of Louisa Twining, emphasises the class distinction between the unpaid upper-class philanthropists and the middle-class paid workers.⁸⁰ This differentiation, too, could explain the official written communication for the society undertaken by the honorary secretary versus the less formal requirements of a meeting. Evidence suggests that Isabella Holmes’ background was, although still middle-class, more affluent than that of her husband.⁸¹ She also wrote *Eastward Ho*, the monthly publication of the MPGA. In 1884, in a lengthy letter published in the *Sanitary Record*, she responded to a bill before parliament, the reluctance of vestries to convert land and the supposed dangers of tainted ground.⁸² The only other MPGA member who had a comparable publication list for the

⁷⁹ ‘Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association’, 10 April 1888, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁸⁰ Deane, ‘Late Nineteenth-Century Philanthropy: The Case of Louisa Twining’, 125.

⁸¹ Census data lists Basil Holmes’ father as a school principal. By contrast Isabella Gladstone was the daughter of a wealthy chemist. ‘1851 Census of England & Wales’, 1851, ancestry.co.uk.

⁸² Isabella M. Gladstone, ‘Some Facts Connected with the London Burial Grounds’, *The Sanitary Record*, 16 June 1884, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

association was Lord Brabazon. When a conference was held on the subject of open space, in February 1885, Isabella Gladstone was nominated as one of the representatives for the MPGA.⁸³ She was one of three women included and was only twenty-four years old at the time. Gladstone (Holmes) advised, reported and represented the MPGA. Nor should it be assumed that Holmes was exceptional.

It is clear from the evidence of the minutes that men dominated the conversation. The majority of the reported comments, particularly in the first few years of the MPGA, were by either the chairman or the secretary. Peppered throughout the minutes were motions, information and reports by a number of women. Male and female members served as representatives to other bodies and reported back to the association. There was no indication that women were derided or discouraged from their full participation in the association. Following a report on a site at Little Scrubbs by Mr Tennant, he was advised to seek the assistance of Miss Biller and Mr Aldridge for further steps.⁸⁴ Nor was this a singular event. Women provided information about land for sale, land use and the provision of gymnasium equipment.⁸⁵ The women members of the MPGA did not speak often, but they did speak regularly. The regularity with which women spoke at meetings increased as the association developed. This was particularly noticeable after Wilkinson joined as the landscape gardener and the society began to acquire more properties that required work.

⁸³ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 10 February 1885, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁸⁴ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 12 January 1883, MS 11097/1, London Metropolitan Archive; 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 11 April 1883, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London; 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 6 November 1883, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London; 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 3 October 1894, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO5, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁸⁵ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 6 November 1883.

Fanny Wilkinson initially joined the MPGA in February 1884. At the time there was another landscape gardener for the MPGA, a Mr Johnson. However, the secretary apologised at the time of Wilkinson's appointment as the second landscape gardener for not offering the post to her earlier.⁸⁶ Apart from regularly reporting on the progress of various garden projects, Wilkinson was resolute in protecting her income and career in the society. While still the honorary landscape gardener, she wrote to the MPGA advising them of her need to add a percentage onto the cost of the plans for projects to enable her to cover her own expenses.⁸⁷ The chairman in the meeting was supportive of this, the motion was passed and a vote of thanks was offered to Wilkinson for her 'invaluable service'. As part of her position, Wilkinson provided the MPGA with estimates for work undertaken. Included in these costings were wages calculations. The association frequently linked their open space projects with unemployment relief. Consequently, Wilkinson would put together estimates of how many men she could employ for MPGA projects.⁸⁸ Not only did Wilkinson complete the plans, but she also managed the projects and the male labourers. The women officers and members of the MPGA may not have been as vocal in the formal record, but based on the evidence of their efforts there appeared to be no lack of respect for their opinions and knowledge. This in itself may have resulted in inspiring women to join and contributed to the diminution of the always tenuous private/public boundaries.

The philosophy held by the MPGA flowed directly from the principles of its chairman. Following his resignation from the Diplomatic Service, Brabazon had decided to

⁸⁶ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 5 May 1885.

⁸⁷ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 2 June 1885, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

⁸⁸ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 4 January 1893, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO5, Guildhall Library Archive London.

devote himself ‘to the consideration of social problems and the relief of human suffering’.⁸⁹ He was not alone in this as his wife, Mary Countess of Meath, also initiated a considerable number of philanthropic endeavours. Brabazon described his wife as ‘one of the most remarkable and successful philanthropists of her age’.⁹⁰ The Brabazons’ marriage appeared to be a very happy union. The deep respect and affection Lord Brabazon had for his wife and her activities may well explain his comfort with working with other women. He served as an alderman with Emma Cons and worked with Octavia Hill.⁹¹ He was a supporter of women’s participation in civic life. Brabazon, now the Earl of Meath, introduced a bill into the House of Lords in 1889 to qualify women as county councillors. As the strong leader of an organisation, it would not be surprising if his attitudes filtered down or were in alignment with those of other members attracted to his organisation.

The work of the MPGA and that of the Brabazons brought them into the immediate sphere of all levels of society. All of these efforts were targeted at achieving the same purpose – the improvement of society, as they saw it. Between 1873 and 1885 the Brabazons were instrumental in founding at least eight societies and were involved in countless more. These charities had as their objectives hospitals, employment, children, working women and gardens.⁹² In 1886 shortly after the establishment of the MPGA, Lord Brabazon published *Social Arrows*.⁹³ This manifesto incorporated essays on all of the areas of interest to Brabazon, including open spaces, children’s welfare, technical training and state-directed colonisation. In the final essay of this work,

⁸⁹ Brabazon, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century*, 201.

⁹⁰ Brabazon, *The Diaries of Mary, Countess of Meath*, 9.

⁹¹ Poole, *Philanthropy and the Construction Victorian Women’s Citizenship: Lady Frederick Cavendish and Miss Emma Cons*, 96.

⁹² Brabazon, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century*, 220–27.

⁹³ Brabazon, *Social Arrows*.

Brabazon made 'An Appeal to Men of Wealth'. It was here that his philanthropic ideology was made plain:

I want you to show the poor man...that he is not forgotten by you; that you are alive to his sorrows...that moral worth is superior to all social distinction...If wealth descended oftener into the streets, there would be less animosity between capital and labour...for is it not true that separation begets ignorance, and ignorance hatred?⁹⁴

The attitudes may not have been particularly erudite, but they provided a cohesive doctrine for the organisation. Karl Mannheim posited that societal elites do not have direct interaction with the masses and that their interaction is mediated by social structures.⁹⁵ It is possible to argue that the more upper class members of an organisation utilised the more middle class as a form of social buffer. However, even this was countered by Brabazon's own work. His desire for charitable works led him into direct contact not just with other philanthropic associations, but with working-class organisers and agitators. In establishing the Hospital Saturday Committee, Brabazon wrote of his own ignorance discovering names of potential working-class associates.⁹⁶ He persevered and spent the next year attending seventy public meetings in places ranging from wagon beds to factories.⁹⁷ While this class-crossing style was not the case with the CPS, it was applicable to the Kyrle Society, whose members combined philanthropy with rent collection.

The MPGA offers a contradictory picture. Women did not speak nearly as often as men in the meetings; however the appreciation and cooperation of men and women in the working life of the group was considerable. Women published articles and wrote

⁹⁴ Ibid., 412.

⁹⁵ Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, Translated by Edward Shils (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), 96.

⁹⁶ Brabazon, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century*, 204.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 206.

letters to the press in the name of the association. Further, they initiated and responded to correspondence from other national and international bodies. On the public stage, both Holmes and Wilkinson spoke about the MPGA, while Miss Lankester, as well as being an active member, was secretary to another philanthropic organisation. Given the lengthy service of a number of the female officers and the increasing participation of women in the organisation, the MPGA looks to contrast with other groups of the time. Women, although not necessarily vocal in meetings, were most certainly very active. It is likely the association succeeded as well as it did because of the encouragement to and participation of the female members, who brought so much to the table.

The National Trust and International Connections:

Correspondence with other philanthropic associations was a feature of all of the open space groups. This communication network was not just local, but spread to incorporate international organisations. The National Trust was the most obvious in its exploitation of international connections. It took inspiration from and shared ideas with a range of contacts. Between Britain and the USA, there was a remarkably strong connection, with America frequently being referenced as an example to follow. There has been significant investigation of a number of other trans-Atlantic networks, including women's suffrage campaigners and abolitionists.⁹⁸ There has also been some work completed on philanthropic connections. Thomas Adam examined the transfer of philanthropic models using the example of social housing.⁹⁹ He argues that

⁹⁸ See for example: Bonnie S. Anderson, *Joyous Greetings: The First International Women's Movement, 1830-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Huw T. David, 'Transnational Advocacy in the Eighteenth Century: Transatlantic Activism and the Anti-Slavery Movement', *Global Networks* 7, no. 3 (July 2007): 367-82.

⁹⁹ Thomas Adam, 'Transatlantic Trading: The Transfer of Philanthropic Models between European and North American Cities during the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', *Journal of Urban History* 28 (2002): 328-51.

London's early urbanisation and industrialisation resulted in a pioneering role which saw British concepts becoming blueprints for working-class housing in other European and North American cities. Although there were some similarities with the open space movement, there were also some important differences. In these early conservation and preservationist groups there was a stronger coterminous element as well as a stronger sense of interaction and influence. Underlying this sharing of knowledge was also a degree of national rivalry. Both countries suggested to their adherents that national pride and international position would be threatened if the proper attention was not given to open spaces. Each used the other as an illustration of the achievements and on occasion the dangers that were possible in the urban environment.

Despite the fact that three out of the four organisations examined still exist today, one is undeniably dominant and generally recognised above all the others. The National Trust is one of the largest landowners in Britain. There are over four and a half million members and approximately twenty million people pay to visit properties each year.¹⁰⁰ If any of the organisations here could be considered an arbiter of the nation's culture, it is the National Trust. It has impacted on the national psyche like no other heritage organisation in the country, possibly the world. Although often associated with the middle class, there is no defining character of the membership, nor is there an enormous financial barrier.¹⁰¹ It does, however and has since its inception, decided what is worthy of conservation and what is not. To an extent all of the societies here have done that, but none with as much power as the Trust. Given the vastness of its property ownership it epitomises 'heritage' and has defined the heritage culture in

¹⁰⁰ 'The National Trust'.

¹⁰¹ A family membership starts at less than seventy pounds a year. Ibid.

Britain. The Trust personified T. S. Eliot's description of a culture-creating group.¹⁰² It was and is an organisation that took a previously existing set of cultural mores and consciously developed them, practically becoming in the process the definer of that culture.

As the last group to emerge, the National Trust, the philosophical offspring of the previous groups, could have represented the culmination of an intellectual elite. The three founders were of a very similar character. Octavia Hill had not attended a university, although both Robert Hunter and Canon Rawnsley had; the former at University College London and the latter Oxford. Hunter had acted as Hill's advisor for nearly twenty years before the establishment of the Trust.¹⁰³ Importantly, Rawnsley and Hill had both experienced mentoring by John Ruskin in their youth. Ruskin's views on aesthetics and nature were hugely influential and his impact on this association considerable. Ruskin was a significant figure in the aesthetic world, being an import figure in the USA and Europe.¹⁰⁴ He was an energetic correspondent and enthusiastic didact. He maintained a lengthy correspondence with Charles Eliot Norton, often discussing artistic and spiritual issues.¹⁰⁵ The founding trio of the Trust could be characterised as Ruskin's ideological children. Ruskin was living in the Lake District at the time of the formation of the Trust. Although not personally involved, his shadow pervaded the organisation. At the time of the Trust's constitution Ruskin was in his late seventies and extremely unwell. He would die shortly after the Trust's foundation. Those that formed the Trust were, in part, his intellectual and aesthetic legacy.

¹⁰² T. S. Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1948), 37.

¹⁰³ 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography'.

¹⁰⁴ Lawrence Campbell, 'Review of John Ruskin and Aesthetic Theory in America, 1850-1900 by Roger B. Stein', *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 2, no. 4 (October 1968): 150.

¹⁰⁵ John Ruskin and Charles Eliot Norton, *The Correspondence of John Ruskin and Charles Eliot Norton*, Eds. John Lewis Bradley and Ian Ousby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) *passim*.

The vestiges of Ruskin's teachings on the other early members of the Trust are more scattered. Certainly, there were those who would have been indirectly influenced by Ruskin, namely C. Edmund Maurice and Harriot Yorke, both of whom were close to Octavia Hill. Equally, the artistic members of the early councils would have been fully cognisant of Ruskin's philosophy, with Pre-Raphaelites Leighton and Holman Hunt having benefited from his spirited defence of the movement when it first emerged. Among the aristocratic, scientific and academic participants there is little to suggest a 'Ruskinian' attachment. Ruskin had attacked Darwin's theories and therefore he would not have found much favour with the biological/botanical sectors of the association. It cannot be denied that Ruskin had been a significant cultural authority in the mid-Victorian period. His weight in this area was beginning to wane at the end of the century and would diminish greatly by the beginning of the twentieth century. In particular, his views on beauty as a representation of both the moral and spiritual were influential, as well as being a nexus for the development of a cultural/intellectual elite, his early inspiration was important to the formation of the ideology of the National Trust.¹⁰⁶

Aside from the Ruskinian influence, the Trust constructed a provisional council that was able to present itself as expert. From the outset, the council's planned composition was international in outlook. This was perhaps the best exemplar of the public intellectual elite of all the four organisations considered here. This was not a group that was necessarily focused on political democracy, as Roberts has argued with regard to an 'academic liberal' network in the CPS during the Gladstonian period.¹⁰⁷ It was

¹⁰⁶ For example, in *Modern Painters*, Ruskin expostulated on the purifying effect of beauty. Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, I:31.

¹⁰⁷ Roberts, 'Gladstonian Liberalism and Environment Protection, 1865–76', 308.

certainly one that had tentacles extending into a variety of areas of society and was most clearly interested in the protection of the national heritage. It was also the association that had the least contact with the masses. As the purpose of the Trust was the accumulation of sites for the whole nation, its focus was understandably on those who could donate this land. This separation sees the Trust fit within Mannheim's elite paradigm more comfortably than any of the previous associations. The personnel of the Trust could be said to share the elite selection criteria of blood, money and achievement.¹⁰⁸ This was also the organisation that has had the greatest impact on the nation's culture.

The National Trust and the MPGA were particularly active in their correspondence with international colleagues. In 1893 the MPGA received a request for information from the organisers of the Chicago World Fair.¹⁰⁹ The MPGA duly forwarded copies of large plans and reports to the exhibition. Similar information had previously been provided to an exhibition in Paris. A few years later, Isabella Holmes would compile a paper for the American Park and Outdoor Art Association in Milwaukee.¹¹⁰ However, it was the Trust, which was more active in its absorption of American expertise. It would base its constitution on a piece of legislation from Massachusetts. At its first meeting Canon Rawnsley hailed the law from Massachusetts as great work, 'establishing a National Gallery of natural pictures'.¹¹¹ It would also include American personnel. Charles S. Sargent was the first professor of arboriculture at Harvard. He was a founder of the Arnold Arboretum in Boston, and the Botanical Gardens in

¹⁰⁸ Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, 89.

¹⁰⁹ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association' (Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, 1 February 1893), MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO5, Guildhall Library Archive London.

¹¹⁰ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', June 1901, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO5, Guildhall Library Archive London.

¹¹¹ 'Proposed National Trust', *London Standard*, 17 July 1894.

Cambridge, Massachusetts.¹¹² He also worked closely with Frederick Law Olmsted in Boston. Shortly after the establishment of the National Trust, Sargent was a nominated member, representing the Trustees of Public Reservations, Massachusetts.¹¹³ This was the same body that had given the Trust its constitutional inspiration.

In addition to the utilisation of American experts, the National Trust would look to exploit American resources. The Trust would send members to the USA on fact-finding and fundraising trips.¹¹⁴ Canon Rawnsley visited in 1899 and then in 1901 Charles R. Ashbee travelled to the USA on a trip organised by Professor H. W. Rolfe, the organising secretary for the National Trust in America.¹¹⁵ Ashbee's trip saw him journey extensively in the USA, from Rhode Island to Ohio. In his beautifully printed report he included an appendix of over sixty American organisations 'whose work appears to touch on the work of the National Trust'.¹¹⁶ This list ranged from forestry and antiquities groups to arts and American Revolutionary societies. He also noted the contact he had made with college settlements that were 'for the most part on the plan of Toynbee Hall, whose sphere of influence lies in the poorer districts of the great towns'.¹¹⁷ Ashbee had been a resident at the Barnetts' Toynbee Hall settlement in Whitechapel and had taught a Ruskin reading class there.¹¹⁸ International networks operated at an individual and at an organisational level.

¹¹² S. B. Sutton, *Charles Sprague Sargent and the Arnold Arboretum* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970) passim.

¹¹³ 'Report of the Council of the National Trust', July 1896.

¹¹⁴ Ashbee, 'Report to the Council of the National Trust of Visit to the United States in the Council's Behalf'.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 23.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁸ 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography'.

In August 1889, Reginal Brabazon, the 12th Earl of Meath, visited the USA. Meath was the recently appointed Chairman of the London County Council Open Spaces Committee. His trip across the Atlantic was prompted by his wish to ‘study and report on municipally maintained public gardens and open spaces in America, with a view to the improvement of the ... parks and gardens and playgrounds’.¹¹⁹ Meath was deeply impressed by the American cities and the green spaces that had been created. Forty years earlier a young American had visited the very first public park. This was Birkenhead Park, which opened in 1847. Here, the local authority used public funds to purchase land for the creation of a ‘People’s Park’. The American visitor was Frederick Law Olmsted. He described his impression thus: ‘It seems to me to be the only town I ever saw that has been really built at all in accordance with the advanced science, taste and enterprising spirit that are supposed to distinguish the nineteenth century’.¹²⁰ Seven years after his visit, Olmsted and Calvert Vaux would design Central Park in New York. Vaux was English and had moved to the United States in the early 1850s. It was he that would recruit Olmsted into his landscape design business.¹²¹ From a very early stage in urbanisation, a trans-Atlantic dialectic would emerge that would shape the open space movement

Both Meath and Olmsted were holding up urban parks as a measure of progress. Indeed, their language mirrored one another, if decades apart. As Hilary Taylor has noted, these self-consciously public parks represented the broader ambitions of society.¹²² America and Britain were industrially aspirational nations that measured achievement through economic accomplishment. These parks signified the inscription

¹¹⁹ Brabazon, *Memories of the Nineteenth Century*, 259.

¹²⁰ Frederick Law Olmsted, *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* (London: David Bogue, 1852), 83.

¹²¹ Francis R. Kowsky, *Country, Park and City* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 3.

¹²² Taylor, ‘Urban Public Parks, 1840-1900: Design and Meaning’, 203.

of certain, not contested, societal values on public space. The public urban parks of Britain and America provided a spatial symbolisation of the Victorian values of economic prudence, progress and civic pride. It was also an expression of a form of green social capital. Essentially, the wealthier in society were able to convert their economic capital into other less tangible, but still demonstrable forms of capital. The exploitation of social capital along with the international associational dialectic that these groups participated in is a continuing feature of modern conservation.

The National Trust introduced public legislation, public ownership and the concept of a public inheritance. The CPS had employed the courtroom to expand the notion of public rights to common land. This still did not make the land public, but did enshrine rights of access and usage. Theoretically, there remained the potential for the landowner at some later stage, with unforeseen future changes to legislation, to enclose and sell this land. The Trust's purpose in its establishment was the protection of their chosen landscapes from this possibility. Therefore, from the beginning the idea behind the creation of the Trust was not just public rights, but public ownership. At the first meeting of the proposed Trust one question raised from the floor was over 'whether an absolute guarantee on the part of the State could be obtained for the precious gifts which the Trust hoped to receive'.¹²³ For the Trust to operate successfully, it would require a strong legal and political framework. Initially incorporated under the Companies Act, in December 1894, it was then possible for the association to own assets and make financial arrangements as a legal entity.¹²⁴ The group would gradually acquire property. Within twenty years, the Trust would own nearly thirty properties amounting to well over a thousand acres of land as well as buildings.¹²⁵ In the same

¹²³ 'The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty'.

¹²⁴ 'Memorandum and Articles of Association of the National Trust For Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty'.

¹²⁵ See The First Schedule, *National Trust Act*.

span of time, the Trust would become protected, not just by the Companies Act, but by its own piece of legislation.

Each of the previous organisations had worked with and around existing legal frameworks. They had also promoted new pieces of legislation to preserve open spaces. The National Trust by contrast, was itself the subject of statute. The first National Trust Act was passed in 1907, a mere thirteen years after the establishment of the charity. In this act, along with conferring powers to hold and purchase property, the Trust was designated as preserving ‘for the benefit of the nation of lands and tenements...of beauty or historic interest...lands for the preservation...of their natural aspect features and animal and plant life’.¹²⁶ With the Trust the open space movement went from private philanthropy to a legal body corporate responsible for the nation’s heritage. It should also be noted that at no point in the legislation were there any definitions of terms such as beauty or historic. Thus the construction of the nation’s portfolio of heritage was left in the hands of the members of the association. It is somewhat ironic that the protectors of the nation’s heritage excelled in the integration of international networks. Perhaps their ability to look beyond their own borders enabled a more distinct opinion on the national home.

Conclusion:

Social networks are an essential feature of human society. For the open space movement, the intertwining of people was a significant feature in its success. All four of the organisations here demonstrated similar characteristics, although not in the same measure. Professional and familial networks provided the basis for each group to draw upon for its initial membership, but the associations expanded beyond this and in

¹²⁶ Paragraph 4, Ibid.

doing so promulgated their national message. They all exploited their varying networks to advance their philanthropic aims. Additionally, modern Britain had a stable, adaptable form of government that enabled social movements to campaign successfully for legislative challenges. The CPS, Kyrle, MPGA and National Trust all benefited from wider societal changes that had, at least partially, motivated their establishment in the first place.

Each association demonstrated elements of a professional, familial, gendered and international network. These network characteristics underpinned the movement's success. However, the individual organisations exhibited network strength in a particular area. The CPS epitomised the utilisation of the professional network. It was the most successful of the open spaces organisations in drawing upon professional and intellectual connections to engender a new philanthropic society and nascent social movement. It challenged the land-owning status quo and began a transformation towards approbation of metropolitan open spaces. By contrast, the power of familial relationships was a major strength of the Kyrle Society. The Kyrle was, possibly because of its female leadership, a significant benefactor of a widespread kinship network. The remarkable degree of relationships between philanthropic families across numerous charitable organisations was extraordinary, if not entirely unique to the open space movement. For a relatively small society, the Kyrle's inter-related personnel enabled a much higher profile than might otherwise have been possible.

Women were an important factor in the provision of Victorian charity, while at the same time being limited in their societal roles. The mixed-gender membership of the MPGA provides an insight into the organisational interaction of men and women at this time. Women were not a majority of the association's membership, nor were they the major contributors of comments in the monthly minutes. They were, though,

regular and respected participants. The magnitude of women's work in the open space movement cannot be overestimated. In many ways, their activities ensured the successful protection and creation of open spaces in England. While all of the organisations here made international connections, none was more effective in its use of them than the National Trust. International correspondence and travel enhanced the programme of the open space movement. Extending the influence of, and offering examples for, the societies here, international networks provided an additional justification for the aims of the open space movement. The incorporation of American experts into the council of the National Trust underlined its desire to be seen as a professional body. The Trust would become the apotheosis of the open space movement. Protected in statute, it became guardian of the nation's heritage and cemented the concept of public land begun by the Commons Preservation Society.

The open space movement was the starting point for the modern conservation programme responsible for thousands of acres of land in England. These initially small groups achieved as much as they did by learning to maximise a variety of networks. Each group, seemingly similar in character, marshalled differing strengths of connectivity to advance its manifesto and increase its influence. Often the agendas of these charities were characterised as unconventional and yet by exploiting a range of acquaintances they effected substantial social change. The investigation of these networks evidences the vast number of ways that Victorian philanthropists in general, and the open space movement in particular, cooperated to realise their goals. The following two chapters will examine in greater details the individuals who comprised the personnel of the four key organisations.

Chapter IV

Nature's Philanthropists – Members, Movers and Motivators

Universal beauty, or that which appears in all the forms of Nature, animate or inanimate, is analogically the appearance in the universe of Divine Love, which was and is constantly, exercised in creating and shaping the forms of the visible world.¹

Nineteenth-century Britain was a world in flux. From the distribution of the population to the political system; from modes of transport to the availability of education, the nation was undergoing rapid and not always welcome change. These transformations did not occur separately from one another, but influenced each other; pushing and pulling society into new patterns. As with any transition, there were tensions that pervaded and crossed the varying milieux at the heart of Victoria's empire. These stresses motivated the foundation of the four organisations considered here. The groups were established with a remarkable degree of regularity across four decades. Starting in the 1860s with the Commons Preservation Society (CPS) through to the 1890s and the National Trust, each emerged from a particular set of circumstances that resolved itself into a unique group of members and course of action. The composition of the organisations reflected the greater societal transformations that were occurring. This chapter explores in detail the changing nature of the membership of these societies and how these shifting patterns shaped the character and motivation of each group. The previous chapters have painted with broad strokes the foundational basis for the open space movement. The goal here is

¹ Stillman was an adherent of John Ruskin and wrote this article to explain the relationship of the beautiful to the sublime – both of which Stillman argued were representations of the Divine. Ruskin had made a similar argument. William James Stillman, 'The Nature and Use of Beauty', *The Crayon*, June 1856, sec. Vol. III; Part VI.

to complete the finer details of the picture. An analysis of the individuals that comprised each organisation, along with their quotidian contributions, provides an understanding of the distinctive nature of Victorian philanthropy. By investigating the complexities of individual membership, this chapter focuses attention on the composition and characteristics of philanthropic associations in nineteenth-century England.

The associations developed as a result of new pressures on land, challenges to traditional views of land ownership, scientific developments, changing aesthetic appreciation, increasing middle-class influence and evolving conceptions of religious obligation, as well as new ideas regarding social responsibility. Wider societal changes that were taking place during the nineteenth century directly impacted on the open space movement and its membership. While there have been some limited studies examining the organisations as a whole, there has been no investigation of the specific nature of the personnel. Additionally, the members of each group brought varying methodologies to the fore that inspired and encouraged the operation of the other groups. The CPS was the earliest and all of the other associations drew on and adapted the methods that it utilised to achieve similar, but distinct goals. The catalyst for each new group was the shifting social patterns and newly emergent pressures. The story of the British open space movement of the Victorian period was one of organisational inspiration and connectivity. Each new group complemented the previous and built on the efforts of their predecessors to provide and protect green areas for the existing and future population.

One Land, Multiple Demands: The Commons Preservation Society

The Commons Preservation Society emerged as a result of the competing demands on the metropolitan commons. Britain was one of the first countries to experience an industrial revolution. This term contains a myriad of complex implications and interpretations, which are outside the scope of this thesis. Simplistically, however, the transformation of technologies occurred, not just in manufacturing but also in agricultural production and transportation along with associated infrastructure. This transformation, as the name suggests, revolutionised society; the ramifications of which are still a significant part of modern life. Humanity has always utilised natural resources to supply itself with food, clothing and shelter. It was as a result of this industrialisation that utilisation morphed into exploitation. As Dipesh Chakrabarty notes it was from this point onwards that humans became geological agents shaping not just their own society, but the entire planet.²

At the turn of the nineteenth century the estimated population of England and Wales was nine million, eighty percent of whom lived in rural locations.³ Fifty years later the population had doubled and the majority of people lived in urban centres. It would nearly double again by the beginning of the twentieth century. Not only did the number of people increase dramatically, but as a consequence of the industrial revolution they were concentrated into urban locations as never before. The concentration of people for work was, arguably, one of the first and most important changes caused by the industrial revolution. It led directly to the advent of what is now called the Anthropocene – the geological epoch of humanity.⁴ Mining, textile

² Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History: Four Theses', *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 2 (Winter 2009): 207.

³ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: A Study of the Growth of Camberwell*, 19; Melosi, *Garbage in the Cities: Refuse, Reform and the Environment, 1880-1980*, 10.

⁴ Libby Robin and Will Steffen, 'History for the Anthropocene', *History Compass* 5, no. 5 (2007): 1694.

factories and foundries all required the close proximity of industrial workers. High-density populations demanded new land and resource requirements. These transformations also necessitated solutions to dealing with pollution and new social tensions.

The pressures for the same locations generated new dynamics over resource use and ownership. Industrialisation required land not just for the building of factories, but also to house its workforce. It also needed natural resources, such as water, for production, waste disposal and power; all of which created demand for what essentially was a finite supply. Most land in England at this time was owned by aristocratic families who gathered income from tenants working their property. As Catherine Hall among other has contended, during the first half of the nineteenth century English society transitioned from an aristocratic/mercantile one where land equated to status to an industrial/capitalist one.⁵ While it is inaccurate to suggest that real estate ownership lost its prestige, the burgeoning market economy saw the need for more liquid assets as well. Consequently land-rich, cash-poor landowners could be induced to sell land to developers. Thus land that had previously been undeveloped or only used for agriculture was brought into the industrial sphere. Tenants, who may have had previous rights of usage on some of this land, lost their access and resources. A piece of land that had been the 'waste' of the manor, utilised by tenants for firewood or seasonal grazing, now became a valuable asset. Further, several agricultural depressions of the nineteenth century not only undermined farming as an occupation, but also encouraged rural workers to migrate to cities for employment. Industrialists wanted the land to drive the economy. Landowners wanted the capital the land represented. Agriculturalist needed the land for food production for a growing

⁵ Hall, 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology', 18.

population. Tenant farmers needed the land for the resources it provided. Developers needed the land to build houses for the factory employees. It was this land pressure on the large open commons near London that initially inspired the Commons Preservation Society in their actions. Their methods of choice would include political pressure, legal challenges in the Courts of Chancery and physical protest.

The proposed sale and enclosure of Wimbledon Common was the spark that ignited the establishment of the CPS. According to the first chairman of the CPS, George Shaw Lefevre:

The first movement for dealing with a Common in the interest of the public arose in respect of Wimbledon Common one of the largest, most beautiful, and best valued of those in the neighbourhood of London.⁶

As noted previously, this prompted the establishment of a parliamentary Select Committee in 1865. More importantly it stimulated discussion over public access and public usage rights. This was the first of two select committees to examine the question of metropolitan open spaces. The first focused primarily on Wimbledon Common. The second Select Committee, reporting less than three months after the first, broadened its interest and reviewed the state of all the commons within a fifteen mile radius of the metropolis.⁷ Both of these reports rejected further enclosure in the metropolitan areas along with the repeal of the Statute of Merton. One argument promoted by the landowners was their inability to prevent continued abuse of the space. This included gravel excavation, the dumping of rubbish, and fires along with the presence of ‘tramps and bad characters...without interference by the police’.⁸

⁶ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 19.

⁷ ‘First Report to the Select Committee on Open Spaces (Metropolis)’; ‘Second Report to the Select Committee on Open Spaces (Metropolis)’.

⁸ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 22.

Enclosure was advocated as a means of protecting the landscape. The justifications, presented by the landowners, were both economic and legal. In the case of Wimbledon Common the cost of preserving the area would be offset by the sale of a third of the land. The funds raised would then be used to ‘improve’ the remaining space, buy out any extant rights of common, enclose it and turn it into a park. Trustees, one of whom was to be the lord of the manor, would be appointed to regulate the use of the park. The lord of the manor, the 5th Earl Spencer, also planned to construct a new residence in the centre of the park.⁹ Further, the Earl’s legal team contended that Lord Spencer was the owner of the Common and that the public had no substantial legal rights to access or to prevent the enclosure.¹⁰ To approve the planned sale and enclosure the Earl required the passage of a private bill through parliament.

The residents of Wimbledon and the CPS challenged the Earl’s contentions. The 5th Earl Spencer was a Liberal politician and a strong supporter of William Gladstone.¹¹ It is ironic that he was allied in many ways with those who opposed his scheme. Possibly this explains why Lefevre was somewhat sympathetic to the Earl’s motives in his brief 1910 history of the CPS. He described the Earl as ‘anxious...to fulfil these duties in an unselfish manner’.¹² Certainly he expressed much less empathy for both Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson, the owner of Hampstead Heath until his death in 1868 and his successor, Sir John Maryon Wilson. Lefevre imbued their characters with a venal streak that was absent in the case of Earl Spencer. The £45,000 payment in settlement of the Heath to Sir John was described as ‘excessive’ but little ‘in

⁹ Ibid., 19–20.

¹⁰ Ibid., 22.

¹¹ The Earl of Spencer was elected to a Northamptonshire seat and then, following his father’s death, sat in the House of Lords. ‘Oxford Dictionary of National Biography’.

¹² Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 19.

comparison with the sum of £400,000 originally suggested by Sir Thomas Wilson'.¹³ The supposedly tolerant attitude of Earl Spencer did not continue. In April 1865 the first Select Committee reported its findings. Enclosure and sale were undesirable; as a result the Earl withdrew his bill.¹⁴ Relations between the Earl and his commoner neighbours deteriorated in 1866. The CPS memorandum of 1868 noted that the Earl was 'commencing to make bricks on the Common, and otherwise annoying the neighbourhood'.¹⁵ In December 1866 a Chancery Court suit was filed. The Earl was not alone in his proprietorial attitude. In response to the Select Committee Report, pressure from the newly-formed CPS, and fear over potential appropriation several landowners took pre-emptive action to enclose common land.¹⁶ The stated objective of the CPS was the preservation of the commons from enclosure. With this aim, however, the upper middle-class membership of the CPS challenged aristocratic views on ownership and championed public access.

The first response of the CPS was the identification of threatened commons. A pamphlet published in 1867 listed thirteen commons near London.¹⁷ The commons were broken down by county. Starting with Surrey there was Chobham, Clapham, Tooting, Wandsworth, Wimbledon, Barnes, Peckham Rye and Epsom Commons and Banstead Downs. In Kent there was Blackheath Common; Essex had Epping Forest, while Middlesex had Hampstead Heath, Hackney Common and Down. Additionally, Berkhamsted Common, approximately forty kilometres north-west of London, was noted in the memorandum. This was the first to be in danger from fencing by its owner, Earl Brownlow, who acted to enclose around 500 acres (approximately 200

¹³ Ibid., 38.

¹⁴ 'First Report to the Select Committee on Open Spaces (Metropolis)', 61.

¹⁵ 'Memorandum', 6.

¹⁶ Ibid., 5.

¹⁷ Commons Preservation Society, *A Glance at the Commons and Open Spaces of London*.

hectares).¹⁸ By the end of 1867 the CPS had established six district societies focused on five of the listed commons, each of which had a local resident at its head.¹⁹ This was essential as the society itself had no legal standing to file claims in the Court of Chancery. The society also published maps of the commons and had run an essay competition, with entries relating to the historical and legal basis for common land.²⁰ The winning essays were published in 1867. One of the winners was Robert Hunter, a solicitor who would not only work with the CPS, but was to be one of the founding members of the National Trust.²¹ The CPS raised funds, provided expert advice and supported action; action that included physical protest and arguably property damage, as was the case with Berkhamsted.

Berkhamsted Common was adjacent to the Ashridge estate of the Earls of Brownlow in Hertfordshire. The friction that arose over access versus proprietorship in this non-metropolitan common exemplifies the degree of tension that was developing between the upper and middle strata of society in Britain at the time. Shortly after the findings of the Select Committee, a letter appeared in *The Times* alerting the public to the threat to the common that would wrest ‘most valued privileges’ from commoners and add to an already ‘enormous’ estate.²² It was signed ‘A Commoner’. The letter goes on to note:

The existence of commoners’ rights has been openly denied by his Lordship’s agents...and an attempt has inconsistently been made to induce the inhabitants to give up “certain outstanding trivial rights”

¹⁸ ‘Memorandum’, 5.

¹⁹ The six district societies were for Wimbledon, Hampstead, Hackney, Wadsworth Commons and Epping Forest, with an additional Chingford group for Epping Forest. James Hole, ‘Commons Preservation Society’, *The Woodford, Buckhurst Hill & Loughton Advertiser*, 19 October 1867, 4, Camden Local Studies and Archive Centre.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *Six Essays on Commons Preservation: Written in Competition for Prizes Offered By Henry W. Peek, Esq.* (London: Sampson Low, Son and Marston, 1867).

²² A Commoner, ‘Letter to the Editor’, *The Times*, 11 August 1865.

in exchange for a miserable 60 acres of useless swamp, to be called a “recreation ground”.²³

Within a week a response appeared to defend the Earl’s position. One William Hazell, who described himself as an old inhabitant of Berkhamsted, lamented the state of the common and believed it would be ‘a great blessing if it were at once put under the sole control of Lord Brownlow’.²⁴ Hazell was mostly likely the prosperous local grocer, who leased his commercial properties from the Earl.²⁵ It is impossible now to know the social position of ‘A Commoner’, but it is not unreasonable to assume that this was the pseudonym of one or perhaps several of the less well-to-do residents or even possibly Augustus Smith. Given the influence of the Earl, anonymity would have been required to protect livelihoods.

In February of 1866 the Earl erected fences across the common.²⁶ It was this that would lead to the ‘Battle of Berkhamsted’. The destruction of the fencing in the ‘Battle’ resulted in a court action brought by the Earl for criminal damages. Augustus Smith, supported by the CPS fought the damages charge and filed a counter-claim defending the rights of common.²⁷ Smith was from a wealthy banking family and the owner of considerable holdings in Berkhamsted. He mostly lived on Tresco Island off the coast of Cornwall, where he was the governor and former Liberal MP.²⁸ Here again, it was the affluent upper middle class who challenged the position of the aristocratic landowners, which was a repeated feature of CPS action. In an interesting twist,

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ William Hazell, ‘Letter to the Editor’, *The Times*, 17 August 1865.

²⁵ ‘1861 Census of England & Wales’, accessed 24 December 2015, ancestry.co.uk.

²⁶ ‘Memorandum’, 5.

²⁷ Ibid., 6.

²⁸ Augustus Smith also created the now famous Tresco Abbey Gardens which are renowned for their collection of exotic plants. ‘Oxford Dictionary of National Biography’.

Smith's heir and nephew, Thomas, would marry the cousin of the Earl of Brownlow in 1875.

The complete membership list of the CPS from its inception in 1865 through to the turn of the century is unfortunately not available. Extant records from several publications do record the members of the general committee of the society. Along with this, Lefevre, in his history, listed important early members.²⁹ These sources together provide a snapshot of the type of people managing the affairs of the group. Philanthropic groups at the time often sought a high-ranking member of the aristocracy, preferably a member of the royal family, to act in the, generally honorary, capacity of president or patron. This was not the case for the CPS. The 1867 general committee reported in the memorandum issued that year included forty-six names.³⁰ Of those named, only eight have titles, one of which was the Archbishop of Canterbury. Those members with titles bear further scrutiny.

Excluding the Archbishop, the highest ranking peer on the committee was the Marquis of Townshend. While the Marquis had a long and distinguished lineage, his title was from the second tier of the British peerage. The president in 1867 was the Right Honourable William Cowper-Temple. He was the son of an earl, but importantly, he was the second son and at the time held no other ranking. Cowper-Temple would eventually be raised to the rank of Baron, but this was some years in the future. Sir Edward Ryan was a judge and civil servant, who had received a knighthood for his services. The other four – Sir Charles Dilke, Sir Thomas Buxton, Sir James Clark, and Sir James Lawrence — all held the title of baronet. This can be an inherited title, but

²⁹ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*.

³⁰ 'Memorandum'.

it is not a 'noble' title and baronets are not technically part of the peerage. Each of these last five either had received the rank due to their own endeavours or came from families that had similarly earned it. Only two, Dilke and Buxton had inherited their titles and even these were not of an especially long heritage; Dilke being the second and Buxton the third baronet. This non-aristocratic pattern was replicated across the general committee until the first years of the twentieth century when there was a dramatic increase in the numbers bearing titles.

This membership pattern reflected the dominance of the upper middle class in many philanthropic organisations of the period. Participants of the association aimed to reform not only the lower orders, but those at the very top as well. In common with many other reforming societies of the time, the CPS attempted to inscribe an emergent value system on all of Victorian society. By today's standards this group may seem largely conservative, it was, to its contemporaries, a radical challenge to traditional forms and rights of land ownership. The CPS contested aristocratic obligations to the general populace as well as testing the limits of newly acquired non-hierarchical political power. In doing so, they contributed to the construction of new ideas around public access and ownership to land, which would permeate changing conceptions of the national character.

'Health to the sick and solace to the swain': The Kyrle Society³¹

In contrast with the large spaces of the CPS, the Kyrle Society aspired to bring the ameliorative benefits of open spaces into the densely populated heart of the city. The urbanisation of Britain brought with it a number of, if not new, then certainly previously unconsidered or ignored, issues. The increased concentration of people

³¹ Alexander Pope, *The Works of Alexander Pope*, New Edition Collected in part by the Late Rt. Hon. John Wilson Croker (New York: Gordian Press, 1967), 150.

saw the formation of high density slum areas. These inner city areas generally had much poorer housing, water and sewerage infrastructure, which in turn led to the greater likelihood of disease spread. Air quality was poor and pollutants built up in the environment. The disposal of human and industrial waste on the land and in the water was not just a problem for the environment. It created significant health and sanitary issues for the residents of cities. These infrastructure issues and pollutants led to a huge increase in the presence of organic diseases, such as rickets and skin infections.³² This in turn reinforced the association of the poor with disease and consequently, disease control acquired a strong spatial element.

This association of place with disease had a long history in the prevalent disease theory of the period. Miasmatic theory, or the idea that disease was the result of ‘poisonous emanations’, had a strong, although not uncontested following.³³ Rotting vegetation, it was hypothesised, particularly in swampy areas, released disease-causing agents into the surrounding air. Miasmatic disease theory had continued support during the nineteenth century. It remained a popular theory for many diseases, including malaria.³⁴ The widespread acceptance of the miasma theory and the fear of infection from working class neighbourhoods thus motivated organisations such as the Kyrle Society and the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association to aim at increasing the availability of urban open spaces.

As the granddaughters of a public health physician, it is not wholly unexpected that Octavia and Miranda Hill were deeply motivated to improve public health through the Kyrle society. Epidemic disease served to emphasise the association of poverty and

³² Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations and Its Prospects* (London: Penguin, 1961), 531.

³³ Richard Ed. Quain, *A Dictionary of Medicine* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1882), 974.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 913.

disease. Arguably, one of the most dramatic outbreaks to occur during the Victorian age was cholera. Britain experienced its first outbreak in 1832, with repeated epidemics throughout the nineteenth century. The loss of life was in the tens of thousands across the country. London was particularly affected. Cholera is a disease that thrives in areas of poor sanitation and while the transmission mechanism was not fully understood at the time, the obvious impact in cities was clear. H. L. Malchow contends that the ‘Condition of England’ debates were a result of the cholera epidemics, although it was typhus that was used as an example in the original text.³⁵ Malchow’s contention does not entirely fit with Carlyle’s thought process as his hypothesising had begun in an article published several years before the first outbreak in 1832. It is possible to believe, however, that Carlyle’s unease was given greater emphasis by the advent of the epidemic. Combining Carlyle’s work and miasmatic theories of disease transmission led to a new conception of the importance of open spaces to human wellbeing. Conditions in the slums could be improved by the ‘preservation in every district of certain open spaces to act as lungs to the neighbourhood’ as George Sims suggested in 1883.³⁶ Green oases would dissipate the dangerous gases concentrated in these places as well as providing places for residents to exercise and relax.

The Kyrle Society was founded following the publication of Miranda Hill’s paper presented to the National Association for the Promotion of the Social Sciences (NAPSS) under the ‘auspices of the National Health Association’ in 1876.³⁷ The

³⁵The ‘Condition of England’ debates were the ongoing discussions around the discrepancies between the classes in England. The phrase was coined by historian/philosopher Thomas Carlyle, who in an initial essay in 1829 voiced his concern over the growth of ‘mammonism’ and the wretchedness of the working class. Malchow, ‘Public Gardens: Social Action in Victorian London’, 97; Thomas Carlyle, ‘Past & Present’, in *Past & Present, Latter-Day Pamphlets, The Early Kings of Norway, and An Essay on the Portraits of John Knox* (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd, 1906), 1–268; Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Trans. Christopher Upward, vol. 3 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975), 456.

³⁶ George R. Sims, *How the Poor Live and Horrible London*, Orig. Pub. 1889 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1984), 109.

³⁷ ‘Beauty and the Health of Nations’.

NAPSS was one of the most notable policy-generating groups formed at the time. Its ethos was ‘to construct an informed public opinion on social questions and instruct parliament in the right course of action’.³⁸ The NAPSS’s goal was the cultivation of new government policies, which explicitly combined statistics and social/moral judgments. It has even been argued that one reason for the dearth of the academic discipline of sociology in Britain until the mid-twentieth century was the usurpation of this role by the NAPSS.³⁹ Members from all of the conservation groups gave papers, or in the case of some women, had papers they wrote presented to the NAPSS. It was the ideal forum for Miranda Hill’s paper. Lawrence Goldman states that the NAPSS had significant links across Victorian society and involved the cream of the political, intellectual and philanthropic worlds.⁴⁰ While it was not unusual for philanthropic organisations to share personnel, the extraordinary range of elite experts, including various prime ministers, made this group highly persuasive. Goldman goes on to describe the NAPSS as ‘a type of research institute attached to the emergent Liberal Party...which it supplied with blueprints for social legislation’.⁴¹ Through outlets such as the NAPSS, seemingly private philanthropic organisations thus extended their reach into the organs of state. In this way they effected legislation that promoted their ideas and morality across Victorian society.

Most of the papers of the Kyrle society have not survived. The few remaining extant publications and documents were examined for details of the composition of the officers and council. There are two surviving lists of the executive committee of the

³⁸ Lawrence Goldman, *Science, Reform, and Politics in Victorian Britain: The Social Science Association, 1857-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 15.

³⁹ For an excellent discussion of this point see: Lawrence Goldman, ‘A Peculiarity of the English? The Social Science Association and the Absence of Sociology in Nineteenth-Century Britain’, *Past and Present* 114 (February 1987): 133–71.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 136–37.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 138.

society – the 1894 council, which was printed in a pamphlet titled *Guide to Italian Pictures at Hampton Court* issued by the Kyrle, and the 1912 report of the society.⁴² The first noted twenty four members, while the second has eighty four. There were also occasional references to members in newspaper articles along with mention of Kyrle members in the papers of other organisations. Associated organisations were not only those previously mentioned here, but included several with a variety of aligned purposes. Thus, the society and its members constituted a part of the Smoke Abatement Society in the 1880s.⁴³ Although the membership of the Kyrle was predominantly middle class, there was an increasing presence of the aristocracy. The members of these executive bodies reflected Octavia Hill's national standing and the Hills' milieu in general.

Similar to the CPS, the Kyrle Society boasted entitled members, from the highest echelons of society. There were some highly prestigious members of the executive of the Kyrle Society, but these were a very small number. There are just three listed in the 1894 executive of twenty four. The rank of the titled members was greater than in the CPS, but they represented a smaller proportion, at just twelve and a half percent compared to seventeen percent. The president of the Kyrle was HRH the Duke of Edinburgh; that particular title being held at the time by Queen Victoria's second son Prince Alfred.⁴⁴ The vice-president was HRH Princess Louise, Marchioness of Lorne, who was a daughter of the Queen. But, these two first echelon peers were most definitely the exception to that of the society's management team. The only other titled member was Lord Monkswell, who was a second generation peer, his father being a solicitor and Privy Council member ennobled by Prime Minister Gladstone.

⁴² Logan, 'Guide to the Italian Pictures of Hampton Court (Kyrle Pamphlet No. 2)'; 'Kyrle Society Annual Report'.

⁴³ *Descriptive Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Smoke-Preventing Appliances.*

⁴⁴ Logan, 'Guide to the Italian Pictures of Hampton Court (Kyrle Pamphlet No. 2)'.

The Countess of Meath was also an active associate of the society in the 1890s, but does not feature in the available list of officers.⁴⁵

Less than twenty years later the number of officers had increased to eighty four and the number of titled members had increased along with this. Percentage-wise the increase was quite small, with the aristocratic members moving up to twelve in total or fourteen percent. Of those twelve titled officers, more than half were from the highest levels of the peerage. HRH the Princess Louise had moved from vice-president to president and the Earl and Countess of Meath were listed as officers. The Countess of Lovelace and the Earl of Selbourne as well as the son and daughter-in-law of the Earl of Durham were also included in the list. Of the other five peers, three were all children of high ranking aristocrats. One, Lady Murphy, may have been related to the Australian politician Sir Francis Murphy, although it was not possible to identify her definitively. The final titled officer was Sir Robert Hunter, who was knighted for his services to public office. It is noticeable that even among the social elite members of the society, women were in the majority. Victorian philanthropy has been regarded as a preserve of the middle classes. However, the significant presence of the aristocracy in the Kyrle and to an extent the CPS evidences both the growing acceptance of middle-class values throughout society and the genuine expression of sympathy felt at all levels.

By comparison with the Commons Preservation Society, the Kyrle Society represented a more equally balanced male/female membership. This may well have been a result of either Octavia and Miranda Hill's influence or the 'domestic' nature of the society's goals. It could have been a combination of both. In terms of positive media coverage

⁴⁵ 'The Kyrle Society'.

it was the women of the Kyrle who received the most attention and indeed promoted the society.



Fig. 4.1: S H, *Funny Folks*, May 2, 1891.

Newspaper articles from the late 1870s onward wrote mainly of women's contributions to the work of the Kyrle. The *Woman's Gazette*, a London-based magazine subtitled *News About Work*, regularly published articles and correspondence regarding the Kyrle. Louisa M. Hubbard the owner and driving force behind the *Gazette* was a major proponent of women's education and employment. In June 1878, sandwiched between an article on domestic hygiene and one on the Working Ladies' Guild, a member of the Kyrle reported of flowers 'carried by ladies to the very poorest districts... and [they] prove a welcome addition to the lady's visit when she collects her rent. One lady said she had given a rosebud to each little maid-of-all-work who had kept her doorstep clean'.⁴⁶ This excerpt illustrates the aim of the Kyrle — 'seeking to share a love of beautiful things with our neighbours' — as well as the fact that many

⁴⁶ A Member of the Kyrle Society, 'The Kyrle Society'.

of the members were undertaking both charitable actions and employment.⁴⁷ In this case the lady mentioned was a rent collector; most likely for one of Octavia Hill's housing projects. A month earlier, the *Gazette* printed a piece of correspondence that listed those to whom gifts of flowers and cuttings could be sent. People interested in helping the society without necessarily visiting the inner-city themselves could make floral donations, which were then distributed by the more active Kyrle members. Ten people were listed, all but one of them women. The women listed included notable reformers such as Emma Cons, Henrietta Barnett and the Hill sisters.⁴⁸ Along with the managing executive, it should also be noted that the landscape gardener of the Kyrle was Miss Fanny Wilkinson.⁴⁹ She would also work with Metropolitan Public Gardens Association and later Swanley Horticultural College until her retirement.

The executive officers recorded for the other associations of the open space movement did not show the same prevalence of female management. The fact that they were present in much greater numbers here than any of the other organisations would suggest that they were more dominant in the Kyrle than elsewhere. The composition of the 1894 executive was a fifty-fifty split – twelve women, twelve men. By 1912, the officers and council were slightly weighted towards female membership. Over sixty-five percent or fifty-five of the eighty four councillors were women. This pattern was replicated in the Kyrle Societies in Bristol and Birmingham. The Kyrle Society in Bristol functioned under the auspices of President Mary Clifford, who, to use a suitable horticultural analogy, was a branch from the same tree as Octavia Hill.⁵⁰ The Kyrle in

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ 'Correspondence'.

⁴⁹ Wilkinson was noted as the organisations landscape gardener several times in the press and publications. See for example: 'The Kyrle Society'; Logan, 'Guide to the Italian Pictures of Hampton Court (Kyrle Pamphlet No. 2)'.

⁵⁰ Mary Clifford and Professor G.H. Leonard established the Bristol Kyrle Society in 1905. Vincent Waite, 'Bristol Civic Society (Incorporating the Bristol Kyrle Society): The First Sixty Years, 1905-1965', *Reprint from Bristol Building & Design Centre Journal*, May 1965.

Birmingham began in 1880, shortly after the London progenitor. The list of thirty officers for the 1901 Annual Report showed women as forty percent of the executive, none of whom were titled.⁵¹

As with the Commons Preservation Society before it, the Kyrle Society's membership reflected the dominance of the upper middle class in philanthropic organisations. However, in the Kyrle's case, unlike the CPS, there was a much stronger presence of women and encouragement of their participation. This must be attributed to the ethos of the founding Hill sisters and their notions of employing women in socially beneficial activities. Octavia Hill, as well as Mary Clifford in Bristol, were deeply religious and firmly believed in the necessity of improving society through practical endeavours. The Kyrle Society branches around the country espoused a domestic approach to their activities and aimed at engaging with family units as the basis for greater achievement for the nation as a whole.

'The green buds on this bed of death': The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association⁵²

Three principal areas of biological study influenced the organisations considered here and their programmes. Dramatic events such as the cholera epidemics led to a number of medical and scientific advances. These were only a part of the scientific revolution that contributed to the industrial revolution. Arguably the most important of these new scientific theories was the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, as well as his *Descent of Man*.⁵³ Darwin's work on evolution inspired, and many argue was

⁵¹ '21st Annual Report Birmingham Kyrle Society', 1901, British Library.

⁵² John Keble, *Keble's Poems. Lyra Innocentium: Thoughts in Verse on Christian Children, Their Ways, and Their Privileges* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1850), 331.

⁵³ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life and The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (New York: The Modern Library, 1948).

misappropriated by, emerging social evolutionary theory. Yet even Darwin's work was only a small component of the scientific world, where key developments in fields of chemistry, physics and biology also occurred. The advent of germ theory with its implications for sanitation gained acceptance during the latter half of the nineteenth century. It completely replaced the ancient 'temperament theory', which revolved around the four humours (black bile, yellow bile, blood and phlegm) of the human body as the cause of disease.⁵⁴ Work on the nature of cells, genetic inheritance and anaesthesia, critical to human health, changed medicine from something resembling alchemy to a hard science. Finally new conceptions of disease transmission emerged from the study of urban epidemics. This last development, when combined with germ theory offered an explanation for the source, spread of, and potential public health remedy for contagions such as cholera. The work of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, more than the CPS or Kyrle, utilised the new scientific language to argue the need for urban open spaces and the amelioration of British society.

The Darwinian paradigm offered a series of natural laws to explain speciation. Darwin first published his seminal *Origin of Species* in 1859, more than twenty years after his now famous voyage on the *Beagle*. In this he argued that:

As many more individuals of each species are born than can possibly survive; and as, consequently, there is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be *naturally selected*. From the strong principle of inheritance, any selected variety will tend to propagate its new and modified form.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ William Bynum, *The History of Medicine: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 15, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/anauu/reader.action?docID=10464218>.

⁵⁵ Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life and The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 13.

Ten years later he wrote the *Descent of Man*, in which he applied his original paradigm to evolution of humans. Darwin's theories provided a scientific rationale for class and racial differences. It was this rationale that would come to be known as social Darwinism. However, it should be noted that this was not a term that was heavily used until the twentieth century.⁵⁶ The very rapidity with which his work was invoked evidences previous intellectual groundwork. As Gregory Claeys has convincingly asserted, Darwin was more the scientific articulator of pre-existing economic and social theories.⁵⁷ People such as Thomas Carlyle were already discussing issues around the fit and unfit, the deserving and undeserving for decades prior to Darwin's publications. It was the biological determinism and language of Darwin that proved most attractive to social commentators. The most renowned term associated with Darwin was 'survival of the fittest'. However, this term was, in fact, coined by Herbert Spencer in 1852.⁵⁸ In previous generations, the language of religion had framed moral argument. During the second half of the nineteenth century, biology mixed with spirituality to become the prevailing framework.⁵⁹

Darwin's key ideas of a natural competition, with survival of the fittest, provided a new language to the discourse around the self-perceived superiority of the British peoples. Conversely, it also reinforced existing concerns about those who were seen as damaging the species/race.⁶⁰ Nature was no longer a benevolent mother, but was now

⁵⁶ Thomas C. Leonard, 'Origins of the Myth of Social Darwinism: The Ambiguous Legacy of Richard Hofstadter's Social Darwinism in American Thought', *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organizations* 71 (2009): 40.

⁵⁷ Gregory Claeys, 'The "Survival of the Fittest" and the Origins of Social Darwinism', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 61, no. 2 (April 2000): 223–40.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁵⁹ Greta Jones, *Social Darwinism and English Thought: The Interaction between Biological and Social Theory* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), 195.

⁶⁰ Claeys notes that Darwin's use of race and species in *Origin of Species* was loose and interchangeable. The language used was also remarkably close to that of class. Claeys, 'The "Survival of the Fittest" and the Origins of Social Darwinism', 237.

capable of punishing underachievement. Peter Gould suggests that this moved the conception of nature from the spiritual to the physical.⁶¹ It would be misleading to suggest that there was no recognition of the spiritual within the creation of nature. It was more that nature now had a very corporeal effect on the wellbeing of humanity. As such, people were at the mercy of their 'character' and that character could damage not just the individual, but the health of society as a whole.⁶² Reformers such as Lord Reginald Brabazon, later the Earl of Meath and founder of the MPGA thus exploited the scientific rationale of Darwin's theory as a justification for a wide range of social policies.

Brabazon dominated the manifesto of the MPGA from its creation until his death in 1929. Shortly after the establishment of the MPGA in 1883, Brabazon published his work, *Social Arrows*. This book was essentially a collection of opinion pieces about British society. His adoption of social Darwinism's language and his Anglo-Saxon prejudice were quite blatant. Writing of the weakened population of London as well as other industrialised cities, he decried: '...on all sides pale faces, stunted figures, debilitated forms, narrow chests, and all the outward signs of a low vital power. Surely this ought not to be. We are not Turks, to cry out "Kismet!" and then turn on the other side'. He later concluded 'it is surely incumbent on the nation to see that every assistance is given these unfortunates to enable them to bring up their children in as high a degree of health as the unfavourable circumstance of their lives will admit'.⁶³ Brabazon repeatedly referred to Britain's European and American competitor nations as having made better provision for the health of their populations and therefore

⁶¹ Gould, *Early Green Politics: Back to Nature, Back to the Land and Socialism in Britain, 1880-1900*, 4.

⁶² Harris, 'Between Civic Virtue and Social Darwinism: The Concept of the Residuum', 67.

⁶³ Brabazon's use of the term 'Kismet' indicates his belief that 'weaker' nations simply sit back and allow degeneration to happen to them. The British, by contrast, were a nation that would actively work to improve their lot. Brabazon, *Social Arrows*, 14.

posing a threat to Britain's position among the industrial nations.⁶⁴ Unsurprisingly, Brabazon was also a strong supporter of British imperialism and emigration to expand British influence.



Fig. 4.2: Alongside Meath's article, 'Open Spaces A Lesson From America' in *The Graphic*, a number of sketches of open spaces in the USA were included.

Notably, the MPGA's approach to the management of the organisation followed quite a different model to the other groups. Established at the very end of 1882, the minutes of January and February 1883 showed an executive committee that varied between eleven and fifteen people.⁶⁵ On both occasions the committee included four women and none of those present were titled, as Brabazon was absent. There was nothing unusual at this stage. Two years later though, in February 1885, the MPGA moved to having no executive committee. The minutes noted 'There being NO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, the Members, who kindly attend, form the Council for each

⁶⁴ Brabazon on more than one occasion specifically referred to Germany, but also to Sweden, Norway and Switzerland. Ibid., 63; Brabazon, 'Open Spaces A Lesson From America'.

⁶⁵ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 12 January 1883; 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 13 February 1883.

Meeting'.⁶⁶ Copies of the agenda were sent to each member before the meeting and action was voted on by the attendees. Daily business was undertaken by certain officers. There was, of course, the energetic chairman, Lord Brabazon, who acted as the honorary treasurer. Assisting him, there was a paid secretary and an honorary secretary, an honorary solicitor and a landscape gardener. In 1894 the MPGA also documented no less than fourteen vice-chairmen.⁶⁷ There may have been no 'official' managing committee, but given the regularity with which the above officers attended the meetings and worked for the association, it would be fair to say that they formed the core management.

The MPGA, through its minutes, has left the most complete membership lists of any of the groups considered here. It is therefore possible to examine more fully the ordinary membership rather than just the executive committee of this association. Information about the subscribers to the MPGA was collected from its beginning to 1895, the end point of this thesis.⁶⁸ Given the depth of available data, it has been broken down into two periods for analysis: November 1882-1889 and 1890-1895. The establishment of a new organisation by a high profile philanthropist prompted stronger interest at the outset. Consequently, the 1880s saw the highest level of participation. The total number of members elected in this period was 878. This figure includes those who were present at the initial meeting of the new society in November 1882. In the second decade, as was expected, new membership continued, but the levels of addition declined. Membership increased by 390 from 1890 to the end of

⁶⁶ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 10 February 1885.

⁶⁷ 'Twelfth Annual Report of the MPGA'.

⁶⁸ The Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Garden Association included a section titled 'Election of Members'. New members were proposed and then elected at the monthly meetings. It was therefore possible to collect the names of any new members from each set of monthly minutes. It should also be noted that the word members was interchangeable with the term subscribers.

1895. The combined total over both periods was 1268 people. Of all the groups here, this was the largest extant sample of the membership of an open space organisation.

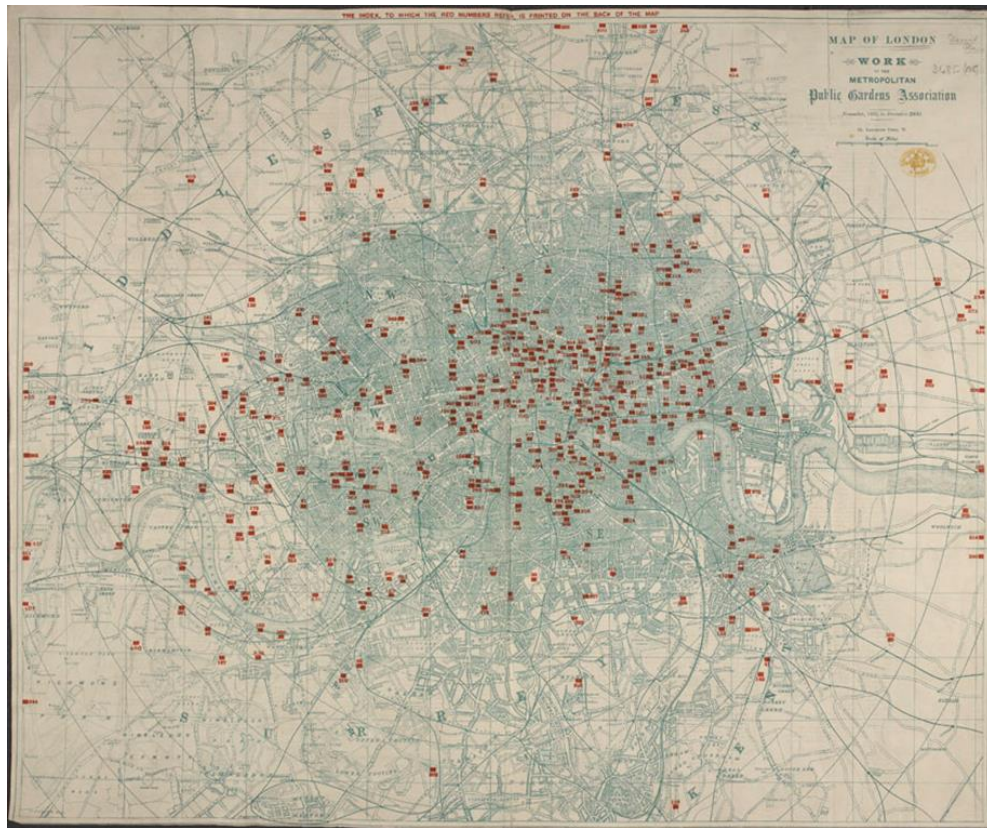


Fig. 4.3: Map of London, Work of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, November, 1882 to December, 1900. Scale of Miles, $1\frac{1}{2} = 2\frac{1}{4}$ Inches

The MPGA was the only one of the four organisation to have been created by a high-ranking member of the aristocracy. The association's upper-class roots influenced the membership to a considerable degree. The MPGA had a higher level of titled membership than either of the previous two groups. In the first years after formation, titled subscribers made up nearly thirty percent of the membership. The 3rd Duke of Sutherland was the highest-ranking member. The prevalence of aristocratic subscribers did not necessarily translate to action. While the social level of affiliation may have been significant, with the exception of Brabazon, no noble members regularly appeared at meetings. The second decade of the MPGA saw the level of aristocratic members nearly halve, with only sixteen percent of members during that

period being titled. That percentage, however, did include five dukes: the 15th Duke of Norfolk, the 11th Duke of Bedford, the 5th Duke of Leinster, the 9th Duke of Marlborough and the 7th Duke of Newcastle. The MPGA also had as patrons at this time HRH the Prince of Wales and HRH the Duke of York.⁶⁹ Tellingly, of the fourteen vice-chairmen reported, nine were titled, covering baronets through to earls. Potentially, this level of interest was due to Brabazon's efforts in recruiting similarly-minded members of his own aristocratic milieu. Equally, the inclusion of so many large landowners would have been a bonus to a philanthropic organisation that aimed to purchase and preserve open spaces. Members of the nobility would have brought not just social, but political influence with them.

Across the first ten years of the MPGA, titled membership accounted for twenty-two percent of the total membership. Within the membership, there were, of course, other societal groups represented, which accounted for small, but important minorities. At the first meeting of the association there were seven reverends present. Clerical members in the MPGA overall were around ten percent of the total.⁷⁰ A close second to this figure were the members of parliament. In total, MPs were approximately nine and a half percent of the personnel in the group. There was also seven percent of elected members who recorded a military title. The 1880s saw the MPGA's female membership at nineteen percent. This figure increased to twenty-seven percent during the 1890s. Overwhelmingly, the members listed a London address. This is unsurprising given the location of the meetings and its founding ethos. The average member of the association therefore, was a male, with an ordinary mister or perhaps

⁶⁹ 'Twelfth Annual Report of the MPGA'.

⁷⁰ The analysis of clerical, political and military membership was based on title recorded in the 'Election of New Members' in the MPGA's monthly minutes.

esquire as his title. He would have lived in London and joined the MPGA within the first five years of its existence.

As previously noted, the MPGA quickly focused on disused burial grounds as their main target for transformation into parks, gardens and playgrounds. Although as noted earlier, only eight of the first sixteen sites secured were disused burial grounds. The percentage steadily increased following the passage of the 1884 *Disused Burial Ground Act*. Former cemeteries were not the only spaces the association repurposed. An early success was the former site of Horsemonger Lane Gaol, which had closed in 1878 and was turned into a playground in 1884. It was officially opened by Mrs Gladstone, the prime minister's wife.⁷¹ Disused graveyards did provide greater numerical opportunity. Most City of London churches had adjacent graveyards, often quite small. Following the passage of the 1853 *Burial Act*, these sites became redundant. This act legislated that 'for the Protection of Public Health the opening of any new Burial Ground in any City or Town, or within any other Limits...should be prohibited, or that Burials in any City or Town...should be wholly discontinued'.⁷² As a result, many of these spaces were essentially vacant lots. Population density and urbanisation prompted greater demand for existing land. New attitudes to death and burial played a role in the willingness of society to accept repurposing this space.⁷³ This was a new scientific approach that encompassed a view of death as a natural and necessary part of life.

However, as with most significant social changes, the repurposing of burial grounds was not without its opponents. Despite the nascent understanding of bacteriology,

⁷¹ 'Children's Playground in South London'.

⁷² *The Burial Act*.

⁷³ Thorsheim, 'The Corpse in the Garden: Burial, Health, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century London'.

the belief in miasmatic causation of disease was still prevalent in the late nineteenth century. This fear of the dangerous vapours surrounding graveyards was proffered as a reason for not re-purposing burial grounds. In June 1884, Ellis Lever argued that ‘conversion and appropriation of burial grounds to the purposes of recreation is a grave mistake’.⁷⁴ The pun may be unintentional, but the sentiment was sincere and Lever referenced a report from the USA as evidence of the noxious nature of these areas. Certainly, one of the motivations for closing these graveyards in the first instance had been the unwholesomeness of the land, which had resulted from severe over-use. Members of the MPGA quickly countered arguments such as this. Within the month, both the president of the organisation, Lord Reginald Brabazon, and the honorary secretary Miss Isabella Gladstone had responded to this. In a letter in the *Sanitary Record*, a public health journal of the period, Gladstone noted that ‘thirty-two years have not failed to do their work; the human remains have been mixing with the soil, and the ground, if undisturbed, is no longer to be dreaded’.⁷⁵ Other challenges advanced were based on economic, sentimental or class concerns, to each of which the MPGA responded. No evidence located suggests that religious feeling was proffered as an argument against the rehabilitation of the land.

The MPGA aligned an interpretation of Darwin’s work with the emerging study of microbiology and spatial conceptions of disease transmission. This amalgamation had both positive and negative results. As with other Victorian elite groups, the MPGA merged scientific and economic ideas with morality and poverty to associate poverty, dirt, disease and immorality as elements of the urban under-class. Social researchers throughout the nineteenth century had repeatedly incorporated this association into their results. Edwin Chadwick associated poverty with disease and Beatrice Webb

⁷⁴ Ellis Lever, ‘Disused Burial Grounds as Public Gardens’, *The Times*, 4 June 1884.

⁷⁵ Gladstone, ‘Some Facts Connected with the London Burial Grounds’.

wrote of those ‘born and bred in chronic destitution and enfeebling disease, the denizens of the slums [that] had sunk into a brutalised apathy’.⁷⁶ The discourse around the justification of expenditure on new infrastructure in urban centres repeatedly played on middle-class fears of disease from the unsanitary working class.⁷⁷ Importantly, the MPGA also perceived in this combination of theories material solutions to these concerns. For the MPGA the development of public parks and playgrounds in some of the most densely populated areas of the city countered all of the worst effects of urban living. While some of the motivations may be less than egalitarian, the public parks were offered as a fillip to all.

‘Saving England from the Spoiler’: The National Trust⁷⁸

Apart from the tensions over multiple uses, the increasing population also represented a significant environmental threat to the landscape. London, for example, was not just the capital, but during the Victorian period, a major industrial city in its own rights. At the start of the century it had a population of less than one million people; over the next one hundred years this would grow to over six and a half million.⁷⁹ Ignoring factory pollution, which was equally a concern, this many people in one place led to issues of clean water supply, sanitation and sewage on an unprecedented scale. Bill Luckin argues that throughout the nineteenth century the methodology for coping with the pollution problem was effectively pre-industrial, with the movement of the problem to a different area.⁸⁰ This led to additional conflicts over land usage and

⁷⁶ Christopher Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick: Britain 1800-1854* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 23; Webb, *My Apprenticeship*, 179.

⁷⁷ John Broich, *London: Water and the Making of the Modern City* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), 25.

⁷⁸ “Saving England from the Spoiler: The Noble Work of the National Trust,” *The Graphic*, September 26, 1923

⁷⁹ Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: A Study of the Growth of Camberwell*, 19.

⁸⁰ Bill Luckin, ‘Pollution in the City’, in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, 1840-1950*, ed. Martin Daunt, vol. 3 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 212.

regional tensions; the Victorian equivalent of ‘not in my backyard’. Private investors drove most of the industrial/urban development and were not inclined to spend on public provisions. Luckin further states that local governments at the time were incapable of dealing with these rapidly expanding conurbations and the resultant problems.⁸¹ It would take private philanthropists influencing local and national governments to force a resolution to this growing problem.

Water supply proved to be particularly problematic. As well as issues of pollution, there were issues of supply. On the whole, British industrial centres were unplanned. Consequently they had little in the way of sufficient infrastructure to cope with the burgeoning human and industrial requirements. As Lewis Mumford states, the new cities grew up without any municipal services.⁸² It was not just new centres that struggled though, even previously existing cities such as London suffered from the new demands made on the available sources. In the case of water, rivers that had supported the previous population were no longer adequate to the needs of industry and residents. The solution undertaken by many urban centres was to pump water in from rural areas. Clashes between urban and rural areas over the aesthetic damage to the landscape, among other more prosaic issues, would eventually coalesce into the National Trust. Many individuals who would become involved in the Trust, were involved in early conservation efforts of this sort, including Canon Rawnsley.

Rawnsley lived most of his life in the north of England and became an active opponent of the reservoir and dam scheme involving Thirlmere in the Lake District. In the late 1870s the City of Manchester Corporation proposed a reservoir and dam, in an area beloved of Wordsworth and Coleridge, to supply water via an aqueduct. The scheme

⁸¹ Ibid., 222.

⁸² Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations and Its Prospects*, 527.

would involve the flooding of the land between two smaller lakes to create a secure clean water supply for Manchester. The Thirlmere Defence Association (TDA) was formed in 1877 and it managed to delay the development for a short time.⁸³ The TDA did not succeed in stopping the scheme permanently, nor was this to be the last such case; as the destruction of the Falls of Foyer evidences.⁸⁴ Thirlmere and Foyer did heighten public awareness and bring together disparate interest groups, which lay the foundation for the National Trust.

The first meeting to establish a 'proposed national trust' was held in London on the 16th of July 1894.⁸⁵ It was resolved at the meeting to provide a 'means by which landowners and others may be enabled to dedicate to the nation places of historic interest or natural beauty'.⁸⁶ At this initial gathering, *The Times* published the names of some thirty-seven people present, twenty-eight of whom were appointed to the provisional council. The council figure is somewhat imprecise as *The Times* includes the phrase 'and other' after listing the names of the members.⁸⁷ Analysing all of the named participants in a proposed organisation that aimed to preserve land for the nation, it is perhaps to be expected that of the total, over thirty-five percent were titled; a larger percentage even than that of the MPGA. This number included two of the richest landowners in Britain at the time, the 8th Duke of Devonshire and the 1st Duke of Westminster. In December 1894 the Trust would draw up a Memorandum and Articles of Association, which would have five signatories, three of whom were titled.⁸⁸

⁸³ Ritvo, *The Dawn of Green: Manchester, Thirlmere and Modern Environmentalism*, 82.

⁸⁴ 'Interim Report of the Executive Committee', 4.

⁸⁵ 'The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty'.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ The signatories were the Duke of Westminster, the Earl of Carlisle, Lord Hobhouse, James Bryce, M.P. and Canon Rawnsley. 'Memorandum and Articles of Association of the National Trust For Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty'.

The first official meeting of the Provisional Council of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty was held in London on the 16th of January 1895.⁸⁹ Given the large number of participants at the meeting in July, the first official meeting of the newly incorporated Trust council was significantly reduced. There were only ten people in attendance, seven of whom were not listed as having been present in July.

Incorporated into the Articles of Association was a specified list of persons to act as the first governing body of the National Trust. This provisional council comprised forty named individuals. Future councils were to consist of twenty-five members elected at the Ordinary General Meeting and twenty-five nominations from a number of different organisations.⁹⁰ As with the Commons Preservation Society and the Kyrle Society, ordinary membership lists for the period are not available. Records of the composition of the initial Provisional Council, as well as subsequent councils for several years, have survived and offer a small insight into the people who established the Trust. Of the original forty-member Provisional Council, nearly forty percent of those expressly nominated to positions were titled. The Provisional Council established an executive committee of twelve members to hold office.⁹¹ This management committee was very different in its personnel to the council. Although the Duke of Westminster was elected president and the Earl of Carlisle was on the committee, there were no other high-ranking aristocrats as part of the group. Importantly, Octavia Hill, Robert Hunter as chairman, and Canon Rawnsley as honorary secretary, were present. These are the three people generally credited with

⁸⁹ 'Minutes of the Provisional Council of the National Trust', 16 January 1895, The National Trust.

⁹⁰ 'Memorandum and Articles of Association of the National Trust For Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty'.

⁹¹ 'Minutes of the Provisional Council of the National Trust'.

the founding of the Trust.⁹² Noted in the position of treasurer was one Miss Harriot Yorke. She was a close friend and companion of Octavia Hill and would remain as treasurer of the Trust into the twentieth century.⁹³ Another Hill acolyte on the committee was C. Edmund Maurice, who had married one of Hill's sisters.

Beyond the executive committee and council members, the Articles drew the Trust's governing personnel from a range of organisations. These groups demonstrated the Trust's interests across scientific, academic, historical, philanthropic and aesthetic issues. Similarly minded societies such as the Kyrle and the CPS were natural inclusions as there was considerable crossover between the organisations. By the middle of 1895, the Earl of Meath from the MPGA would also be added to the council.⁹⁴ The first three groups specified were not scientific or involved in the open space movement. The National Gallery, the Royal Academy of Arts and the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours reflected an important focus of the Trust.⁹⁵ The former two could each appoint two members to the Council and the latter one. In the initial Provisional Council six men were fellows of the Royal Academy and one was a fellow of the Royal Scottish Academy. This included Sir Frederick Leighton, who was the president of the Royal Academy. Added to this was William Holman Hunt and Albert Goodwin, not associates of the RA, but renowned artists nevertheless. This remarkable level of artistic interest in the Trust demonstrated the strong aesthetic link that had developed between the open space movement and the artistic community.

⁹² 'Report of the Provisional Council of the National Trust' (The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest and Natural Beauty, 30 April 1895).

⁹³ For Harriot Yorke's position see the various year's Report of the National Trust. Hill and Yorke met in 1877 and would live and work together until Hill's death in 1912. Morrell, 'Octavia Hill and Women's Networks in Housing', 111.

⁹⁴ 'Interim Report of the Executive Committee'.

⁹⁵ Arguably one could include in this artistic groups the Royal Institute of British Architects, which could nominate one representative. 'Memorandum and Articles of Association of the National Trust For Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty'.

From the earliest organisations' utilisation of Romantic poets through to the recruitment of prominent artists to committees, the open space movement recognised the need to appeal to an idea of natural beauty and ways to represent this.

The inclusion of the word historic in the earliest permutation of the Trust's name served to highlight the importance of heritage to its function. Within the Articles, the framers of the Trust's future path encompassed this with the incorporation of nominated representatives from the British Museum, the Society of Antiquaries and the Institute of British Architects. The Museum was permitted to send two people and the other two had the right to nominate one each. Furthermore, seven British universities could send one representative each. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge were predictable, but London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrews and Dublin were perhaps less so. In addition to nominations from academe, Sir John Lubbock was on the Provisional Council. Lubbock wrote one of the most influential archaeology books of the nineteenth century and was related by marriage to Augustus Pitt-Rivers, the renowned archaeologist and ethnologist.⁹⁶ From the outset the Trust reinforced its expert credentials with regard to the assessment of the value of sites of 'historic interest'. There was a strong inference that the Trust wanted to avoid the appearance of amateurism by ensuring it had respected authority with which to speak in its fields of interest.

As well as including archaeological and ethnological expertise, the Provisional Council included doctors, such as George Longstaff a member of the London County Council,

⁹⁶ Sir John Lubbock, *Pre-Historic Times, as Illustrated by Ancient Remains, and the Manners and Customs of Modern Savages*, Seventh Edition (London: Williams and Norgate, 1913); 'Cambridge University Press: Academic', accessed 19 February 2016, <http://www.cambridge.org/au/academic/subjects/archaeology/prehistory/pre-historic-times-illustrated-ancient-remains-and-manners-and-customs-modern-savages>; 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography'.

and appointments from three scientific organisations. According to the Articles one representative each was required from the Linnean Society, the Entomological Society and the Royal Botanic Society. The Linnean Society, which still holds the collections of Carl Linnaeus, promoted the study of biological sciences.⁹⁷ Combined with entomology and botany, the Linnean Society ensured that the Trust fully embraced all the relevant scientific avenues.

Along with the specifically named associations, the Articles made provision for ‘four additional Members to be nominated by such societies or bodies as the Provisional Council may select’.⁹⁸ In due course, the Council selected three British groups and one American group to fulfil the requirements. The County Council Association and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings were a logical presence on the committee, as was the Selbourne Society.⁹⁹ The Selbourne was a pioneer of conservation and would eventually help to spawn the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.¹⁰⁰ More striking was the inclusion of the American Trustees of Public Reservations from Massachusetts.¹⁰¹ Professor C. S. Sargent was the individual representative.

Having an American as a member of the very British National Trust may appear unusual. This was not the case in this instance. Despite the Trust’s deep connections with earlier English preservationist groups, one of the most surprising aspects of its

⁹⁷ ‘The Linnean Society’, accessed 20 February 2016, <http://www.linnean.org/The-Society>.

⁹⁸ ‘Memorandum and Articles of Association of the National Trust For Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty’.

⁹⁹ ‘Interim Report of the Executive Committee’.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Clarke, *Pioneers of Conservation: The Selborne Society and the Royal SPB* (London: Birkbeck University of London Centre for European Protect Area Research), 1, accessed 20 February 2016, http://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/8254/1/Clarke_2004_Pioneers_of_Conversation%2BFrontCover1pps.pdf.

¹⁰¹ ‘Interim Report of the Executive Committee’.

establishment was the choice of model. The initial constitution of the Trust was built not on a British example, but on an American one.¹⁰² The National Trust adapted this American legislation as the framework for its Articles of Association and established close ties with many trans-Atlantic luminaries and organisations. In 1907, the Trust would succeed in its own legislative recognition and become the first of the organisations here to be enshrined in law.¹⁰³ Thus from its inception, the Trust, while concerned with the maintenance of traditional English landscapes, was outward looking and willing to follow successful international examples.

Conclusion:

All four of the organisations examined here displayed the dominance of the upper middle class that was common in Victorian philanthropic circles. These groups also clearly exhibited the changing shape of philanthropy during the second half of the nineteenth century. In the earliest association, the CPS, there was a limited presence of the upper echelons of aristocracy. This along with its open challenge to the traditional landowning class underscored the challenge the middle class represented to the status quo. The slow imposition and adoption of middle-class values across all levels of society can be seen in the progressive changes to these charities. Following in the footsteps of the CPS, the Kyrle Society was small, but influential beyond its numbers. This was due in part to the reputation of its founders, who were then able to encourage the support of important social figures. This development continued across both the MPGA and the National Trust. Noticeably, there were few upper-class members of the various management committees. There were exceptions to this,

¹⁰² *An Act To Establish the Trustees of Public Reservations.*

¹⁰³ *National Trust Act.*

most obviously Brabazon, but on the whole the aristocracy were content to add their cachet to an association without necessarily expending their time.

Equally, these organisations demonstrated the evolution of motivations. Bound in legalistic arguments over public rights and Liberal political ambition, the CPS framed its challenges in the language of civil rights. This enlightenment inheritance was adapted by the Kyrle into a more 'domestic' construction that incorporated ideas of neighbourly concern and localised improvement. The MPGA progressed this still further by utilising ideas of legal, societal amelioration and embracing new scientific theories. With the emergence of the National Trust, all of the previous motivations were employed, along with significant exploitation of scientific expertise and aesthetic values. Each group built on the experience of the earlier model, adapted techniques and added in new elements to achieve their aims. The success of the open space movement culminated with the legal protections it engendered of both green areas and the organisations themselves.

Chapter V

Green Heroines: Gender, Philanthropy and Space

As society grows more complicated it is necessary that woman shall extend her sense of responsibility to many things outside of her home, if only in order to preserve the home in its entirety¹

Mrs Jellyby... is a lady of very remarkable strength of character, who devotes herself entirely to the public. She has devoted herself to an extensive variety of public subjects, at various times.²

Mrs Jellyby was Dickens' somewhat harsh characterisation of one type of philanthropic Victorian woman. Sketched in his 1852 novel *Bleak House*, she was depicted as having more interest in her overseas charitable activities than her own family's wellbeing. Dickens later mitigated the philanthropist in the novel by having one of the central characters of the novel offer the following opinion: "There were two classes of charitable people: one, the people who did a little and made a great deal of noise; the other, the people who did a great deal and made no noise at all".³ This chapter examines specifically the contributions of women to the open space movement. It further explores the motivations that informed women's choices with regard to the philanthropic outlet they elected to work with. None of the women who belonged to the preservationist groups considered here was a recognisable Mrs Jellyby. While a few of them had philanthropic interests outside of Britain, they were all intent on improving life at home as much. Women adopted preservationist work in order to

¹ Jane Addams quoted in Hoy, "Municipal Housekeeping": The Role of Women in Improving Urban Sanitation Practices, 1880-1917, 173.

² Dickens, *Bleak House*, 31.

³ Ibid., 87-88.

satisfy a wide array of instincts none of which can be easily quantified, but which broaden the picture of Victorian gender and space.

In three of the associations, women maintained high-profile positions and arguably were the dynamic force behind the success of the groups. Victorian women had multiple options when it came to selecting a 'cause' and the choices that they made represented not just a selection of beneficiary, but equally of effort and of allegiance. The depth of religious feeling and the sincere belief in an intrinsic social responsibility were certainly important driving forces for some. With the construction of the natural world as an expression of divine presence, the open spaces charities acted as an obvious extension of deep religious beliefs for some women. Additionally, the role of intellectual endeavour in the fields of botany and horticulture cannot be overestimated. These were areas of study that women developed a strong reputation in, even before the nineteenth century. As the century progressed, these arenas also provided new and exciting professional paths for women. The opportunity to engage in scientific pursuit, along with the possibility of financially supporting oneself, must have been a significant draw for many.

As important figures in these groups, these women and their activism contributed towards their legislative successes at a time when women had little voice in the political process. Growing numbers of women in public spaces during this period contributed towards and in turn expanded the possibilities of place for their sex. In their undertakings, the women of the open space movement engendered new urban spaces as well as contesting the construction of rural nationhood as entirely masculine. The affection for nature that many of these women expressed complicates dichotomous ideas that have emerged in recent scholarship. As Carolyn Merchant notes, the 'link

between women and nature pervades today's mainstream values and perceptions'.⁴ The conflation of the feminine with nature has essentialised women and produced reductive arguments. The variety of ways that the natural world was written about, and the analogies that were offered by women authors recasts this, offering greater complexity. Additionally, women demonstrated an intensity of emotion and nostalgia for nature. The women of the CPS, Kyrle, MPGA and National Trust elected to spend their considerable energy and resources on the protection, preservation and creation of open spaces.

Crucially, Dickens portrayed his amplified philanthropic caricature as female. Already by the mid-nineteenth century the personality of the bustling philanthropic woman was a social stereotype that an author could access. Charitable works and workers were ubiquitous in Victorian British society; predominantly the representation of the people involved was female. Previous work on Victorian philanthropic organisations evidences women's significant involvement.⁵ Although not in the majority of any of the open space organisations, women were an important minority for three of the four groups. Public philanthropy as a part of a woman's social duties encouraged women's participation in charities. However, this should not belie the existence of a strong attraction, particularly with groups such as those of the open space movement, to the practical application of scientific knowledge and professional opportunity. For some women it was the intellectual challenge that was the key appeal of a charity. Women made conscious choices that enabled them to blend social duty with a strong social conscience. This is a feature that is present in the motivations of female members of these nascent preservationist groups.

⁴ Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (London: Wildwood House, 1982), xvi.

⁵ See for example, Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England*.

Philanthropic Reformers:

Specific spaces may have been the focus of material attention, but underlying this was a desire to reform people; a quintessentially Victorian trait. Charitable bodies were an almost inescapable facet of society. Philanthropic causes expanded rapidly during the second half of the nineteenth century. As Harold Perkin estimated, in 1860 London there were 640 charitable bodies with an annual income of two and a half million pounds, two thirds of which had been founded after 1800.⁶ This figure had nearly doubled by the end of the nineteenth century.⁷ Women, thus, had an extraordinarily large range of options. Many women, as was the case with members of the open space movement, were involved with multiple charities. Often the emphasis of one charitable area impacted on another, or led to another cause. Octavia Hill's interest in the protection of open space stemmed from her desire to provide gardens and outdoor areas for her housing scheme tenants.⁸ The women of the four associations examined here aimed, therefore, to alter both landscape and society.

The biggest hurdle faced by women engaged in philanthropy and social reform was their constrained political voice. The charity work women undertook gave them, to a degree, a public role, but it was not one without restraints. In order to justify their incursions into the public sphere, women articulated their endeavours within a certain framework. Women established a role for themselves by exploiting their moral authority in 'womanly' arenas, such as motherhood, childcare and nursing. In Baroness

⁶ As Prochaska notes, the amount spent on philanthropy in London alone was larger than the national budget of some countries. Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society, Second Edition*, 122; Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England*, 21.

⁷ In the 'Statistics of Women's Work' compiled by Miss Louisa M. Hubbard she noted 1164 institutions were applied to for information. *Woman's Mission: A Series of Congress Papers on the Philanthropic Work of Women by Eminent Writers*, Ed. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1893), 361.

⁸ Maurice, *Life of Octavia Hill as Told In Her Letters*, 315.

Angela Burdett-Coutts' 1893 work, *Woman's Mission*, of the thirty-one essays, over half – eighteen – related to women, children, nursing or religious work.⁹ Charitable public work was located in the realms of the domestic. Women were still seemingly remaining in their socially-acceptable roles of mothers and carers. However, as Anne Firor Scott notes, women 'used voluntary associations to evade some of these constraints and to redefine "woman's place" by giving the concept a public dimension'.¹⁰ The maternalistic language was certainly exploited by the open space movement.

The Kyrle Society and the MPGA both strongly advocated parks and playground space as essential on maternalistic grounds. The significant influence of women in these two groups may well be the reason for this. In particular the Kyrle and the MPGA promoted the necessity of open spaces for children. Octavia Hill frequently proffered the imagery of the child at play.¹¹ The MPGA, which originally had the word 'playground' in its title, was also fond of emphasising the importance of childhood. Blanche Medhurst, a member of the MPGA, wrote:

The education, in the true sense of the word, of our nation's children – that is, the system of training by which the finest capabilities of soul, mind, and body may best be *drawn out* – ranks in the front place of ways and means whereby the country can attain its chief strength of good citizenship...Well, we can thank God and take courage, those of us who love children and desire England's chief good, that our concluding picture of the remedy is as true as that of the evil. The day is dawning when soon in our midst there will grow up no more such unhappy children; for Public Opinion is a mighty factor and the "Open Space" movement is gaining ground...It is the

⁹ *Woman's Mission: A Series of Congress Papers on the Philanthropic Work of Women by Eminent Writers.*

¹⁰ Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 2.

¹¹ See for example Hill's essay on 'Open Spaces' where the commons afford the opportunity for poor children to 'hollow caves' and which 'fair, far, still places' should be protected for 'your children, and your children's children'. Hill, *Our Common Land and Other Short Essays*.

women of England, who may best help the good cause, in whose hands we fearlessly leave it.¹²

Medhurst combined the imagery of childhood with open space, citizenship and the place of women in protecting all of these for the nation.



Fig. 5.1: Picture in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 12th November 1886

Along with a desire to facilitate a public voice for themselves, it is also possible to argue that women were more sensitive to the needs of other women than male philanthropists. In the reforming Victorian press, images related to open space campaigns frequently used pictures of women and children. This in itself evinced an extension of the domestic sphere to include outdoor spaces that were, to use Octavia Hill's phrase, 'outdoor sitting rooms' for families to enjoy. Additionally, families and

¹² Medhurst also wrote the lyrics for 'The Song of the Ministering Children', which was dedicated to the Countess of Meath and sold to raise funds for the Ministering Children's League's Ottershaw Homes for Destitute Children. Blanche Medhurst, 'Playgrounds and Open Spaces', *Women's World*, 1 September 1888, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London; J. Maude Crament and Blanche Medhurst, 'The Song of the Ministering Children' (Ministering Children's League, 1901), Trove NLA, trove.nla.gov.au/work/16432458.

women were more likely to require charitable assistance. Anne Digby's analysis shows women as the major applicants for charity.¹³ Female philanthropists, as a consequence, would have been more likely to interact with other women in the benefactor/recipient relationship. This interaction enabled the recognition of specific charitable requirements. Women were frequently the first to identify the needs of mothers and children, as Seth Koven and Sonya Michel assert.¹⁴ It is, therefore, not surprising that, given the lack of official governmental power, women turned to organisations that offered a vehicle for reform. Koven and Michel cogently articulate this, noting that with women lacking full citizenship, they 'necessarily operated in the interstices of political structures'.¹⁵ For some women, then, it was possible to capitalise on this operational grey area to provide greater opportunities for others as well as intellectual and professional possibilities for themselves.

Membership:

The four groups under consideration here were established over a span of approximately thirty years in the second half of the nineteenth century. With the exception of the earliest, the Commons Preservation Society, all of the groups owed a formidable debt to their female membership. The CPS while acknowledging the involvement of Octavia Hill, had no other high-profile women members. This is perhaps to be expected given its origins in the male-only realm of the House of Commons. The inclusion of Hill in Lefevre's 1910 laudatory history of the CPS should be considered a reflection of her previous solo efforts, personal networks and public

¹³ Anne Digby, 'Poverty, Health and the Politics of Gender in Britain, 1870-1948', in *Gender, Health and Welfare*, Eds. Anne Digby and John Steward (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), 68.

¹⁴ Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, 'Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880-1920', *The American Historical Review* 95, no. 4 (October 1990): 1079.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1077.

renown in charitable circles.¹⁶ By contrast the second group, the Kyrle Society, was founded and populated by a female membership. This brainchild of the Hill sisters was an extension of Octavia Hill's ideas with regard to urban housing and working-class conditions. Hill recruited, trained and employed numerous women to act as proto-social workers/rent-collectors in her housing projects. These women entered into the homes of tenants to collect the rents and assess the condition of the house. They also assisted in finding employment for tenants, reported about the situation of the general area and helped to fulfil Hill's goal of providing 'outdoor sitting-rooms' for the residents to enjoy. The final organisation founded, the National Trust, received its first grant of land from Fanny Talbot; an ardent proponent of conservation and a disciple of John Ruskin.¹⁷ One of the founders was Octavia Hill and it was equally indebted to the efforts of its many female supporters.

The third-established group, the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, affords the most detailed view of those who joined this type of organisation. The records of the MPGA provide a picture of their membership across the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Of the four groups, only this organisation's subscription lists were obtainable from the monthly minutes that are held in public archives; listing for each meeting attendees and new subscribers.¹⁸ The significant level of information on members enabled an examination of the demographics of the people who belonged to this particular group. The MPGA was essentially founded by a married couple – Lord and Lady Brabazon, later the Earl and Countess of Meath. From the outset, women

¹⁶ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*.

¹⁷ Talbot, 'Letter from Mrs Fanny Talbot to Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley'.

¹⁸ The minutes of the MPGA include those in attendance along with elected new members. These names, totally some 1200 people, were collated and analysed for the first fifteen years of the organisation to provide a picture of the membership. Member and subscriber were used interchangeably.

formed an integral part of the executive committee and membership list. At the inaugural meeting of the MPGA there were twenty-eight people present. Of this number, approximately a third were women.¹⁹ Lady Brabazon was present and there were among others, the daughters of prize-winning chemist, John Hall Gladstone and the daughter of the doctor/naturalist Edwin Lankester. Analysis of the membership list over the first fifteen years of its existence shows a steadily increasing percentage of female membership.²⁰ Women represented approximately twenty percent of the membership during the first five years. This grew to around thirty percent by 1895. The percentage of female attendance at the monthly meetings was regularly greater than their numbers would suggest and certainly their participation in organising the association's activities was out of all proportion to this.

The fullness of the membership lists has enabled the construction of an 'average' picture as to the type of woman who was likely to have been a member of the MPGA. Given the focus of its work, the majority of residential addresses for the members was London. There were, though, members in the south and north of England, as well as a small number living abroad. Of the female members living in London, nearly all – approximately eighty-five percent – lived in the more affluent west and south-west of the city. Where it is possible to tell from the subscription information provided to the MPGA, analysis showed that forty percent of the women were unmarried or widowed – they are listed as either 'Miss' or 'Dowager'. There was also considerable occurrence of multiple charity memberships by the women. Lady Brabazon, for example, was instrumental in the Girls' Emigration Society and Fanny Wilkinson worked for the

¹⁹ On the death of Reginald Brabazon's father in 1887, he became the 12th Earl of Meath and his wife the Countess of Meath. 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 20 November 1882.

²⁰ The membership names were collated in a spreadsheet by month and year of joining. This was then analysed by gender, place of residence, which was noted for most members, and title/rank.

Kyrle Society as well as the MPGA.²¹ Certainly, there is a substantial amount of evidence of collaboration between the CPS, MPGA, Kyrle Society and National Trust. Therefore, the cross-fertilisation and influence between these and other charitable organisations should not be surprising.

There can be little doubt that the female members of these organisations were not representative of the majority of the women in England at the time. Regardless of the opinion of the *English Women's Journal* in 1858, the middle class did not compose the bulk of the nation.²² The women who subscribed to the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association required as a minimum the means to pay for their membership. The MPGA was remarkably reticent with regard to the cost of this, choosing not to publish the subscribing qualification.²³ This amount could be a one-off donation, although minutes included reminders for members to pay annual subscriptions that were due. Based on the accounts for the year 1883, which lists subscriber income as £857, 11s, 13d, this would indicate an average subscription of nearly £13 per member.²⁴ This would far exceed the average income for the period. Presumably some subscribers offered more than others, even so this would still likely place membership well beyond the means of the majority of the population at the time.

The social position of the membership has also been explored, where it was possible to tell. Undoubtedly, the bulk of the members of the association was drawn from the

²¹ 'The Kyrle Society'; 'The Girls' Friendly Society Pamphlet', 1886, Women's Library Archive, London School of Economics.

²² This somewhat didactic article referred to a 'cause for thankfulness that the middle classes, of which the great bulk of the nation is composed' 'Park and Playground Vs Gin Palace and Prison'.

²³ The motion was passed to omit the publication of subscriber qualifications shortly after the constitution of the MPGA. 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 12 January 1883.

²⁴ Analysis of the membership noted in the minutes for all of meetings throughout 1882 and 1883, places the total number at 66. 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 5 February 1884.

middle classes. A significant proportion though came from the upper strata of society. Analysis of the membership of the MPGA from its inception in November 1882 through to the end of 1895 showed over one-fifth to have been titled. The peerage ranged from the 'commonplace' lady through to a duchess and a princess, both of whom joined relatively early in the organisation's history. As with the MPGA membership in general, this probably reflected the status of the founders. The Earl and Countess of Meath were well-connected and energetic in their philanthropic participation. It is also possible to see in the heightened levels of aristocratic membership the changing patterns of English philanthropy. As Jessica Gerard has argued the 'Lady Bountiful' estate model of the pre-Victorian period, which had reinforced social position, adopted middle-class paternalism and social values during the second half of the nineteenth century.²⁵ Building on this adaptation of the social status of philanthropy, it is possible to see a two-way exchange. While the landed gentry were absorbing the values of the middle classes; the middle classes were improving their own social status by charitable membership. Women almost certainly selected the charities to support based to an extent on considerations of social prestige and advancement.

Two women, in particular, emerged as the mainstays of the MPGA. Isabella Gladstone (later Holmes) and Fanny Wilkinson. Holmes, who was present from the very first meeting, would act as the honorary secretary of the MPGA into the twentieth century. In March 1885, Fanny Wilkinson would join as the honorary landscape gardener.²⁶ Holmes was arguably the driving force behind the success of the MPGA. Her work in identifying hundreds of disused burial grounds around London enabled the group

²⁵ Gerard, 'Lady Bountiful: Women of the Landed Classes and Rural Philanthropy', 187.

²⁶ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 3 March 1885, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

to achieve their stated aims.²⁷ She and Wilkinson were rarely absent from the meetings and appear to have worked together closely. Wilkinson was responsible for the design and installation of the new gardens. Along with planning the parks, she produced the budgets for the works and managed the labourers employed. Without the efforts of Holmes and Wilkinson it is unlikely that the work of the MPGA would have succeeded as well as it did.²⁸



Fig. 5.2: 1895 Photograph of Isabella Holmes and 1890 Sketch of Miss Fanny Wilkinson.

Along with being crucial to the success of the MPGA, Holmes offers a snapshot of a late nineteenth century philanthropic woman. She was both recognisably modern and stereotypically Victorian. Based on the above membership information, she emerges as the archetypal female member of the MPGA, and in all likelihood the majority of the organisations here. Holmes came from the family of a devout well-to-do philanthropic scientist. She was the sixth daughter of John Hall Gladstone and his first wife Jane. John Gladstone had won the Davy Medal, awarded by the Royal

²⁷ Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on Their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*.

²⁸ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 8 December 1885, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

Society for outstanding work in any branch of chemistry. Her father was no relation to the later prime minister, although he was also a firm Liberal in politics.²⁹ Isabella's mother died when she was three and until her father remarried when she was seven there were only the five surviving daughters in the household. Gladstone's second wife would die in 1870 shortly after giving birth to another girl, who would be predominantly raised by her older half-sisters. Following the death of Isabella's maternal grandfather, the family had become independently wealthy. As a consequence of his private means, John Gladstone undertook a considerable amount of philanthropy; he centred his charitable activities on education and Christian devotional groups. Isabella's young half-sister, who would eventually marry Ramsay MacDonald, received a formal education through to university level, where she studied political economy under Millicent Fawcett.³⁰ There is nothing to suggest that Isabella was any different and presumably her father's interest in educating his youngest extended to the eldest as well.

When Holmes initially joined the association in 1882, she was an unmarried twenty-year-old, who had been raised in leafy, affluent, Kensington in west London. Five years later, in June 1887, she married Basil Holmes, who was also a member of the MPGA. Interestingly, Basil appeared for the first time in the records of the MPGA in December 1886.³¹ Prior to this there was no indication of his involvement in the organisation. In March 1888, a mere fifteen months after he joined, he became the paid secretary of the association. Possibly his first attraction to the MPGA was through Isabella. There is little official record of Basil. He was born in Surrey in 1856

²⁹ 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography'.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 7 December 1886, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

and in the 1891 Census listed his occupation as secretary.³² Earlier entries have him at school in Devon and it is possible that he was abroad following the completion of his education and prior to his involvement with the MPGA. The couple would eventually have five children. As a married woman, Holmes resided in the decidedly suburban area of Ealing where she and Basil had several domestic servants, living a typical middle-class life. The area where Holmes spent her adult life was of a very similar nature to that in which her childhood had been spent. Both homes were large houses with individual gardens close to large open spaces. In contrast to this domestic idyll was the career that Holmes built for herself outside a seemingly unexceptional home life.

Holmes, along with the fulfilment of role of wife and mother, also actively engaged in a long-term professional life. Not only did she make a continuing contribution to the work of the MPGA, but she also acted as a paid consultant for the London County Council. The LCC employed her in 1894 to complete a return of all the burial ground sites in London. This task was finished in February 1895 and was submitted ‘accompanied by 60 sheets of the ordnance survey (25 inch to the mile) upon which the grounds were marked in colour’.³³ Throughout her married life, Holmes represented the MPGA on a number of levels. She dealt with a variety of enquiries for support for the organisation, attended regular meetings and addressed conferences. In 1894 she spoke at the first annual conference of the National Union of Women Workers. Here she interacted with other activist women such as Louisa Creighton, Lady Lucy Cavendish, Lady Laura Ridding, Beatrice Webb and Elizabeth Cadbury.³⁴ She physically investigated the condition of disused burial grounds, wrote numerous

³² ‘1891 Census of England & Wales’, 1891, ancestry.co.uk.

³³ Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on Their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 21.

³⁴ *Official Report of the Conference Held at Glasgow - National Union of Women Workers Annual Conference - 23rd - 26th of October 1894* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1895).

articles, published a book and worked tirelessly for the cause that she felt so strongly about. Holmes would continue her work with the MPGA through to the twentieth century. A strong supporter of the values of the MPGA, Holmes also demonstrated strong elements of the career-minded campaigner.

Motivation:

Holmes worked with the MPGA for much of her adult life. She and women like her demonstrated an enduring commitment to the open space movement. For the female members of the associations there was a wide range of motivations that underpinned their allegiance and it is worthwhile to examine in depth some of these. Although not as overt as some, it would be extremely unlikely if Holmes was not deeply influenced by ideas of Christian charity and duty. Her father was a committed Christian involved for decades with the Young Men's Christian Association. For many other members of these organisations the idea of protecting and sharing 'God's own open air' was a central tenet of their work.³⁵ From the 1880s onwards, the character of Victorian religious beliefs, with the renewed interest in evangelism, contributed to the heightened public focus on charitable works.

During the nineteenth century religious attendance and membership of religiously motivated groups exploded in the metropole. An even earlier example of a religiously-based reforming groups was the abolitionist Clapham Sect, which began in the late eighteenth century. As Catherine Hall has convincingly asserted, however, anti-slavery was not the only focus of Anglican evangelicals. Also of concern and of no less importance, was the transformation of British society. In Hall's words, 'the Evangelical emphasis on the creation of a new life-style, a new ethic, provided the

³⁵ Isabella M. Gladstone, 'Public Gardens', *Reprint from Pall Mall Gazette*, 18 April 1884, Guildhall Library Archive London.

framework for the emergence of the Victorian bourgeoisie'.³⁶ This 'first wave' of evangelism receded during the first years of Queen Victoria's reign. Religion then reasserted itself in the 1870s with a stronger significance attached to the visible performance of duty - it was this active, 'muscular', form of Christianity which achieved prominence in the Christian leprosy missions such as the Mission to the Lepers in India and the East, founded in 1874. One's duty was to the improvement of both the individual and society. Muscular Christianity influenced all aspects of Victorian society and its self-representation, including the re-conception of the military as the physical arm of a morally justified and divinely authorised civilisation. The emphasis of societal behaviour for the growing middle classes turned to the living of a 'Christian life'. Victorian society had developed its own neo-puritans.³⁷ Christianity and Christian motives therefore grew to be one of the major factors influencing British society during the nineteenth century.

Octavia Hill was the quintessential example of the active, paternalistic 'inquisatrix-general'.³⁸ She held stout views based on her deep faith. As noted in previously, Hill was a staunch follower of the theologian F. D. Maurice. In his theological essays Maurice stated: 'Charity will be the key to unlock the secrets of Divinity as well as of Humanity'.³⁹ The teachings of Maurice and the Christian Socialists were ever present in her activities. In her writings, elements of Hill's faith were most noticeable. In her 1884 publication *Colour, Space, And Music for the People*, Hill began the tract with a declaration of the importance of the 'thought of God' and blessings of 'entering into divine and human love'. On the final page, she finished with the following, 'the sense

³⁶ Hall, 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology'.

³⁷ Andrew Porter, 'An Overview 1700-1914', in *Missions and Empires*, Ed. Norman Etherington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

³⁸ 'Miss Octavia Hill', *Justice*, 29 March 1884, gdc.galegroup.com.rp.nla.gov.au, National Library of Australia.

³⁹ Frederick Deniston Maurice, *Theological Essays* (London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd, 1957), 23.

of affection and relationship between us and our tenants deepens, and out of our imperfect work our Father leads us, and all we love, onward towards His own perfection'.⁴⁰ For Hill her charitable efforts were the fulfilment of Christian duty, which was an almost corporeal necessity to her own physical and spiritual wellbeing. She advocated open spaces for residents because of her belief that these were manifestations of the Divine as well as being a key ingredient in the improvement of society. Further, in line with another of her mentors, John Ruskin, she linked aesthetic beauty with spiritual health. It was, thus, completely logical that the provision of greenery, art and music should, in her mind, be a requirement for a 'good life'.



Fig. 5.3: Octavia Hill, c1882.

While Hill may be the most renowned of Victorian social workers, she was not alone, even within the realms of the Kyrle Society. Mary Clifford, who was the driving force behind the Bristol arm of the society, held comparable views and was as influenced by

⁴⁰ Hill, *Colour, Space, and Music for the People* (Reprinted from the *Nineteenth Century*), 1; 12.

her faith as Hill. Like Hill, Clifford never married, came from a devout family and dedicated her life to philanthropic work. In 1863 she wrote: 'Can we heartily give up our life to God and still enjoy society? I think so, if we conscientiously find we can be moderate'.⁴¹ Clifford worked as a poor guardian and, in a similar vein to Hill, was interested in improving working-class conditions and behaviour. She was concerned with a number of women's causes, including the National Union of Women Workers, where she may well have come across Isabella Holmes who addressed that same organisation. Likewise in Birmingham, Louisa Ryland expressed her gratitude and faith at the opening of Cannon Hill Park, which she donated to the Corporation of Birmingham for the 'use of the inhabitants of the Town and neighbourhood'.⁴² Ryland was the only one of these three particular women who was independently wealthy. She inherited her fortune from her father's industrial exploits in the Midlands. Ryland would donate a large amount of land to the city for the creation of public parks as well as being a major benefactor of the Birmingham School of Arts. These donations included part of what is now the Edgbaston Cricket Ground. All of these women were motivated by a deep sense of religious obligation which was expressed through their work for the public and dedication to good causes.

It should not be assumed that religious motivation was the preserve of the middle class. Lady Brabazon, later Countess of Meath, was a regular attendant at church services and frequently mentions her faith in her diaries. As well as being by her husband's side at the founding of the MPGA, she was responsible for, among others, the Ministering Children's League, the Brabazon Home of Comfort and the Meath Home of Comfort for Epileptic Women. All of these charities were, according to her husband's introduction to her published diaries, 'the products of her own brain, and

⁴¹ Gwen Mary Williams, *Mary Clifford* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith Ltd, 1921), 53.

⁴² Louisa Ryland, 'Cannon Hill Park', 1 September 1873, Birmingham Central Library.

of her enthusiastic love for God and for her fellow-creatures'.⁴³ Her diaries make numerous references to nature and gardens, along with landscape descriptions of her extensive travels. She was a strong believer in the power of the open air and set aside land for the building of convalescent homes outside of London. Countess Meath's diary entries also evidence the depth of her religious sentiment. In March 1884, she noted in her diary '[I] was singing hymns early, and Reg [Reginald Brabazon, her husband] found me in tears over the verse "If Thou shouldst call me to resign what most I prize"'.⁴⁴ For many of the women of the organisations here and indeed the many philanthropic groups of the period, deep-seated faith acted as the inspirational impetus behind their activities. While the form of those activities encompassed a variety of causes, for the female members of the CPS, Kyrle, MPGA and National Trust there was a significant connection for them between spiritual values, nature and humanitarianism.

Scholars and Professionals:

Genuine religious sentiment acted as an important impulse for many in the open space movement. For others, however, it was the opportunity to enjoy a degree of organisational intellectual life that was denied in other official areas. The level of female membership and the importance of women's overall contribution to early land preservation have not been considered to date, nor has their degree of agency in the political and legislative endeavours of these organisations. Several historians have examined the increasing presence and acceptability of women in public spaces during

⁴³ The Children's League was set up to help needy children and still operates today as the charity I CAN. Branches were established in Australia, Canada and India. The Homes of Comfort were established as places of recuperation for working class women. These too, continue to operate today. Brabazon, *The Diaries of Mary, Countess of Meath*, 9–10; 'Ministering Children's League Home, Ottershaw, near Chertsey, Surrey', accessed 7 October 2016, <http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/ChertseyMCL/>; 'The Meath Epilepsy Charity', accessed 7 October 2016, <http://www.meath.org.uk/>.

⁴⁴ Brabazon, *The Diaries of Mary, Countess of Meath*, 75.

the nineteenth century, along with society's reaction to this.⁴⁵ More than this though, women actively created these opportunities and were not just reacting to availability, but were themselves engendering it. The participation of women in the open space movement acted as a means to increase women's public profile and as a means to create new public spaces.

Gardening, horticulture and landscape were of particular importance to women for several reasons. One of the most significant was the ability of women to engage with the field at a scholarly level, something they were excluded from in other arenas. Horticultural and botanical societies were some of the earliest scientific bodies to offer admittance to women.⁴⁶ This provided an intellectual opportunity for a wide range of women. In 1878, for example, the London Society of Apothecaries opened its annual botany examinations, with attendant prizes, to women.⁴⁷ Inclusion in these societies also gave these women major occasions to engage in contemporary scientific debates and influence government social policies. As with a number of other occupations, the late Victorian period also saw the growth of new roles in the botanical and horticultural world. Women seized the chance to participate in the scientific and botanical professions. It is hardly surprising that among the membership of the groups considered here, there was a significant occurrence of female relatives of Victorian male establishment scientists. Declined membership to other 'serious' scientific

⁴⁵ See for example: Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Monk, 'Approaches to the Study of Women and Landscape'; Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder and Women*.

⁴⁶ The London Horticultural Society (later the Royal Horticultural Society) admitted women members from 1830 onwards, while the Botanical Society accepted members from its foundation in 1836. Financial factors may have been a motivator, but it still provided women with an opportunity denied elsewhere. A.J. Lustig, 'Cultivating Knowledge Nineteenth-Century English Gardens', *Science in Context* 13, no. 2 (June 2000): 160; Ray Desmond, 'Victorian Gardening Magazines', *Garden History* 5, no. 3 (Winter 1977): 47; 54.

⁴⁷ 'London Society of Apothecaries', *The Woman's Gazette*, September 1878, 141, Internet Archive.

associations, women became influential in those adjacent areas that were available to them.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the professionalization of horticulture and gardening. This also opened up a number of new employment prospects for women. Social reformer Frances Power Cobbe wrote to the *Woman's Gazette* in 1877, encouraging women to consider gardening as a 'remunerative profession for ladies'.⁴⁸ It is entirely possible that this correspondence was seen by Fanny Wilkinson. Wilkinson, as noted earlier, joined the MPGA in March 1885 and was initially the honorary, that is unpaid, landscape gardener. Wilkinson had trained at the Crystal Palace School of Landscape Gardening and Practical Horticulture, completing an eighteen-month course.⁴⁹ The course curriculum included surveying techniques, design and business management. Prior to working for the MPGA, she had undertaken work for the Kyrle Society. In December 1885 the association's minutes listed Wilkinson as the landscape gardener, the first professional woman in the business in the United Kingdom.

In an interview in 1890, Wilkinson spoke of the opportunities for women in the field, including as 'market gardeners, nursery gardeners, or even retail growers for private custom' and referred to the training available at Swanley Horticultural College.⁵⁰ The interviewer quizzed Wilkinson on the 'rougher' work, her employment of men and her interaction with her clients. She replied candidly in response to this:

I employ competent men, but often my customers prefer that their own men should work under me. This is often a stumbling block,

⁴⁸ Frances Power Cobbe, 'Correspondence', *The Woman's Gazette*, January 1877, 61, Internet Archive.

⁴⁹ 'Interview with Miss Wilkinson, Landscape Gardener', *The Women's Penny Paper*, 8 November 1890, No. 107. Vol. III edition, Gerritsen Collection through the National Library of Australia.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

since the gardeners occasionally imagine they know better, and they are often stupid and pigheaded. I have great bother with them now and then.⁵¹

Wilkinson, like Holmes, would work with the MPGA into the twentieth century. When she finally resigned, she had trained her female replacement and took up a position as the first principal of a women's horticultural college in Kent. This college would produce the first two professional women gardeners to work at the renowned Kew Gardens.

It is noticeable that in Wilkinson's interview she did not evoke a particularly moral tone. She represented herself as a professional, with the attendant authority. As Angela Woollacott asserts, women entering professions were attempting to articulate 'new secular bases for women's authority'.⁵² Wilkinson explained her professional qualification and her equal financial value. She responded to a question regarding payment with the following: 'I certainly do not let myself be underpaid as many women do...I know my profession and charge accordingly, as all women should do'.⁵³ However, whether with Wilkinson's agreement or otherwise, the article still emphasised her femininity. Her flat was described as 'charming', her drawing room 'pretty', '[i]t was the home of a lady, and instinctively one feels its owner must be a woman of refined tastes'.⁵⁴ Further, her appearance was commented on; she being 'extremely nice-looking'. The interview highlighted Wilkinson as a professional landscape gardener, but it was as important to demonstrate her 'womanly' qualities as well. Philippa Levine notes a similar ambiguity with other active women, including

⁵¹ Ibid., 33.

⁵² Angela Woollacott, 'From Moral to Professional Authority: Secularism, Social Work, and Middle-Class Women's Self-Construction in World War I Britain', *Journal of Women's History* 10, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 85.

⁵³ 'Interview with Miss Wilkinson, Landscape Gardener'.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Elizabeth Garret.⁵⁵ Women entering, or in this case creating, professional positions for themselves negotiated a multiplicity of societal critiques and barriers.



Fig. 5.4: *Amaryllis Johnsoni*, painting by Priscilla Bury, engraved by Robert Havell

The influence of women in the field of horticulture and botany has a substantial history and the nineteenth century is replete with examples of women who excelled in these fields. Often associated with the creation of highly detailed botanical engravings, such as those made famous by Priscilla Bury, this was only a small fraction of the work undertaken by women.⁵⁶ Alice Hutchins was one of the first women students at Kew Gardens and went on to become ‘fore-man’ there; Anna Atkins is credited with the

⁵⁵ Levine, *Feminist Lives in Victorian England: Private Roles and Public Commitment*, 141.

⁵⁶ Edward Bury and Robert Havell, *A Selection of Hexandrian Plants, Belonging to the Natural Orders Amaryllidaceae and Liliaceae* (London: Robert Havell, 1831), <https://archive.org/details/mobot31753000797321>.

publication of the first book to contain photography, which was used to illustrate her work on algae; Ethel Sargent worked at a Kew Gardens laboratory, later lecturing on botany at University College London.⁵⁷ Margaret Benson built on her childhood training from her parents in the areas of field botany and floral watercolours to become the head of the department of botany at Royal Holloway College. She would lecture at the University of London and collaborate with Benson visiting European botanical laboratories.⁵⁸ These and numerous other women expanded the knowledge and audience in all fields of study. From the outset, early popular botanical magazines targeted a female audience and had a preference for employing women to colour engravers' prints for these publications.⁵⁹ During the first half of the nineteenth century manuals and textbooks began to emerge specifically for 'ladies' who gardened. The most famous of these was written by a woman for other women to encourage their participation in this area of study.

Possibly one of the most famous Victorian 'lady gardeners' was Mrs Jane Loudon. Initially, Loudon had turned to writing fiction as a way of earning a living following the death of her father when she was seventeen. In 1830 she married the eminent botanist and garden designer John Claudius Loudon.⁶⁰ As a result she developed a strong interest in her husband's work and set about educating herself in the discipline. Loudon found the existing textbooks dense and too advanced for novices with no one to explain the detail to them. To rectify this, in 1838, she published her first work. Three years later she wrote another text — *Botany for Ladies; or, A Popular Introduction to*

⁵⁷ Lustig, 'Cultivating Knowledge Nineteenth-Century English Gardens'; 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography'.

⁵⁸ Catherine Horwood, *Gardening Women: Their Stories from 1600 to the Present* (London: Virago, 2010), 39; Mary R. S. Creese, *Ladies in the Laboratory? American and British Women in Science, 1800-1900: A Survey of Their Contributions to Research* (Lanham, Md. & London: The Scarecrow Press, 1998), 39.

⁵⁹ Lustig, 'Cultivating Knowledge Nineteenth-Century English Gardens'.

⁶⁰ 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography'.

the Natural System of Plants, According to the Classification of De Candolle. Her primary aim was to 'endeavour to explain to them [the readers] as clearly as I can the botanical characteristics of the orders which contain plants commonly grown in British gardens; and ...lay before them a slight outline of all the orders scientifically arranged, which they may study'.⁶¹ Loudon's husband died in 1843 and once again she was compelled by circumstances to support herself. Fortunately, her works had proved to be highly popular and she continued to produce horticultural and botanical works up to her death in 1858. Her texts are considered the first true gardening manuals and remained in print long after her death. She consistently sought to encourage amateurs, especially women, to enjoy gardening. It would seem likely that her work inspired many of the 'lady gardeners' that came after her.

The motivation for these women was not spiritual, although this does not negate their faith; they were instead fascinated by the botanical/horticultural world. K. D. Reynolds argues that active work was constructed as masculine, while leisure was the defining feature of middle-class women.⁶² In contrast to this though, social utilitarianism and religious obligations of the period disparaged the purely hedonistic. The women above, as well as the countless others who participated in these fields, were consciously resisting the characterisation of a leisured lifestyle and insisting on utility. Additionally, for some, there was the necessity of earning an income, which encouraged a profession. Instead of leisure, these women adapted the available options and created opportunities for themselves. The garden was essentially a part of the 'domestic' sphere, and thus encompassed by extension the natural sciences as well. In line with Poovey's argument noted above, women were able to utilise the

⁶¹ Jane Loudon, *Botany for Ladies; Or, A Popular Introduction to the Natural System of Plants, According to the Classification of De Candolle* (London: John Murray, 1842), vii.

⁶² K. D. Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1998), 20.

inconsistency around the construction of domesticity to expand vocational impulses.⁶³

This is evidenced in the work that women engaged in with regard to open spaces. The female members who joined the organisations considered here, and in particular those who assumed very active roles, grafted philanthropic duty on to intellectual expression. The open space movements enabled a rare opportunity for this blending of interests and social obligations.

Gendering the Garden:

Philanthropic involvement in the creation of green spaces contributed to the increasing number of women in public, along with the range of places that women secured for themselves. The nineteenth century was a period of growing female presence in public spaces. The urban environment and the increased visibility of women have been areas of particular note.⁶⁴ The women of the Kyrle and MPGA undertook tasks outside the home in an urban environment. It is possible to view this as not just a combination of intellectual stimulation and philanthropy, but as an active attempt by women to increase both their visibility and the opportunity for urban leisure for all women; a form of gendered domestic colonisation. While gardening in a small suburban home may be considered private, the engagement of women in public parks broached that tenuous boundary. Women, such as Isabella Holmes, located themselves at the sites. In her reports, Holmes' bodily experience of the places examined as potential parks was almost as important as the existence of the location. On one occasion she recorded: 'As I stand peeping in through the iron gates and rails I can peel the rusty metal off, like bark from an old tree'.⁶⁵ On another, 'I climbed a high rickety fence in

⁶³ Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*, 12.

⁶⁴ See for example: Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*.

⁶⁵ Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on Their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 75.

a builder's yard in Wandsworth in order to see over the wall into the Friends' burial-ground'.⁶⁶ In her book, *The London Burial Grounds*, there were over sixty illustrations and photographs of cemeteries and newly established parks.⁶⁷ In the graphics incorporating people, most have women and children as part of the landscape. Generally the people were engaged in everyday activity – walking, playing or relaxing. It was clearly important to Holmes that the significance of the space to people was portrayed and in particular that this was feminised or at least a public place that was available to both men and women. Additionally, because she physically placed herself in the locations, a case can be made for her tacit assertion of the entitlement of women to these urban sites.

Loudon's manuals firmly placed women within the botanical world, not just as admirers, but as active participants and Holmes followed this with her explorations of London burial grounds. Although Loudon's work was aimed at an entry level, she assumed that her female readers would learn, progress and undertake the work themselves. This field offered a host of new opportunities for women professionals. Many paid positions for women as gardeners, botanists and horticulturalists became available during the second half of the nineteenth century, including with the Kyrle and the MPGA; all of which placed women in the public sphere. Michel de Certeau argued that "ways of operating" constitute the innumerable practices by means of which users reappropriate the space'.⁶⁸ The 'official' strategy behind the creation of a particular public space may represent a defined usage. However, building on de Certeau's concept of strategies and tactics, the official designation and the consumers' tactical employment of that space are not necessarily the same. By engaging in the

⁶⁶ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁷ See the List of Illustrations in Holmes, *The London Burial Grounds: Notes on Their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*.

⁶⁸ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

intellectual and physical opportunities made available in the horticultural field, women did exactly this. Garden spaces were gendered and re-purposed by the presence of these women, who chose this work. Even when unpaid, women were ‘colonising’ green spaces. During a period when, as A.J. Lustig has argued, horticulture was becoming professionalised, it was also became feminised.⁶⁹ Although only a few of the female members of the organisations here were actually in paid employment, they were still able to utilise their membership for the benefit of their sex. Women exploited membership in preservationist groups to contest access to public space and public life through their engagement with open spaces.

The presence of women in public, open spaces further served to challenge the masculine construction of the social body. The CPS and the National Trust focused their work on more rural environments. The construction of these places within the popular imagination was less to do with the benefit of the residents and more to do with the health of the nation. Included in this idea was the protection of the nation’s historic wealth. Generally, this was constructed in very masculine terms. Women working for these organisations framed their arguments around the idea of the Englishman, although this may well be a result of grammar and referring to all humanity as ‘man’. Protests to protect the ‘lungs of the city’, as the commons were repeatedly described, centred on their importance to English nationhood. Campaigners represented the national character as being encapsulated in the land and those men who worked it. English victories over foreign powers, such as Crecy and Agincourt, were presented as the triumph of the yeomen who were the product of English soil. Octavia Hill, for example, utilised the association between the land and

⁶⁹ Lustig, ‘Cultivating Knowledge Nineteenth-Century English Gardens’.

the poorer male members of society in defence of West Wickham Common when she declared:

Quite as deep, though very different, is the affection which especially to the many landless Englishmen, grows up with regard to the common; its freedom, its beauty, its traditional history, the enjoyment of it which is shared by everyone whose foot is placed on its unenclosed expanse make it a sort of common possession which binds together the neighbours in a district, and attaches men to their native soil.⁷⁰

The loss of open space and the urbanisation of the population threatened the international position of the nation by diminishing its ability to engender the appropriate physique.⁷¹ This constructed character of national identity utilised by preservationists accessed a mythical medieval golden age of social village greens and yeoman harmony. Open space was pronounced essential to both the health of the individual and the wellbeing of society – what could be called the social body – and this social body was gendered masculine. Women were as concerned with the national body as men and, despite the framing of the national citizen as male, worked consistently towards mitigating threats to the imperial position as well as the expansion of the construction to include the feminine.

Lovers of the Natural World:

It is difficult to ascertain how these women conceived of nature, beyond its perceived utilitarian purpose. There was considerable reference to the benefit of open space to humanity in their writings, but the impressions of nature are much harder to uncover; even the very term ‘nature’ is contested. Words such as park, garden and landscape all seem to be interchangeable depending on who is writing and what area is being

⁷⁰ Hill, *Preservation of Commons. Speech of Miss Octavia Hill at a Meeting for Securing West Wickham Common.*

⁷¹ Brabazon, *Social Arrows*, 1.

discussed. However, when 'nature' is mentioned, there was an inference that this was less manicured and more divine. In Victorian literature, nature was personified as female, although a significant proportion of the material that has been considered was written by men. Consequently, studies have emerged that discuss this persistent linkage between woman and nature. As Merchant contends, from the early modern period, nature was portrayed as a realm requiring subjugation and control, and in much the same way 'disorderly woman, like chaotic nature, needed to be controlled'.⁷² Val Plumwood and Stacey Alaimo also examine the dichotomous construction of woman/nature versus man/civilisation; while Elizabeth Grosz argues that space was designed to control or obliterate women.⁷³ There is substantial weight to their arguments, yet there is a lacuna with regard to the conception of nature by women themselves during the nineteenth century. Women did not necessarily follow the dichotomous line suggested as the Victorian norm and many other influences appeared in their works. Not only did women write about nature in poetical and prose fiction, there are also the extant papers from a few of the female members of the preservationist associations under consideration here.

Mary Brabazon, Countess of Meath was one such woman. She travelled extensively, both alone and with her husband. She was present at the very first meeting of the MPGA and was involved with the Kyrle Society, along with numerous other charities. Following her death in 1918, her husband edited and published her diaries. Woven throughout her diary entries about her family and charitable activities were frequent references to the natural world. On occasion it was just a note of the day's weather,

⁷² Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution*, 127.

⁷³ Plumwood, 'Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy and the Critique of Rationalism'; Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space*; Elizabeth Grosz, 'Women, Chora, Dwelling', in *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*, Ed. Sophie Watson & Katherine Gibson (Oxford and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1995), 55.

but she regularly wrote more than this. As noted above, Brabazon was a woman of deep religious conviction and this was part of her motivation for her philanthropic duties. Unsurprisingly, when she expressed her views regarding the landscape, the scenery was noticeably linked to her beliefs. There is, though, more than just her religious beliefs discernible in her diaries.



Fig. 5.5: Mary Brabazon, Countess of Meath.

Brabazon's diaries also demonstrated a strong sense of the aesthetic and an enthusiasm for the natural world. In May 1882 she visited the village of Ottershaw where she was 'impressed by the beauty of the place...and thought it too heavenly...The nightingales were singing exquisitely'.⁷⁴ Her travels took her to Europe, America and Australasia and it is in the descriptions of these locations that she created her most eloquent

⁷⁴ Brabazon, *The Diaries of Mary, Countess of Meath*, 55.

entries. Brabazon was enchanted by bird life, taking pains to identify species that were unknown to her. On her arrival in Hobart, Australia, in 1892 she was clearly excited: 'I hurried up on deck, and found that we were in the midst of lovely hill scenery'.⁷⁵ Continuing on to the South Island of New Zealand, she wrote 'here we found ourselves in the Switzerland of New Zealand, rugged mountains came down to the edge of the water'.⁷⁶ She would also describe the devastation caused by imported animals such as rabbits and sparrows. In her passages about the native birds and plant life, she was particularly taken with the New Zealand native robin which she called a 'sweet, pert little fellow' noting that 'people must have hard hearts indeed, willingly to injure a feather of that graceful, confiding little creature'.⁷⁷ This and her husband's editorial note regarding his wife's affection for all animals, would seem to indicate a degree of support for the newly established Plumage Leagues, organisations that would eventually lead to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Brabazon would travel to New Zealand bush, Australian eucalypt stands and Hawaiian rainforests. She expressed her profound love of nature in her writings influenced by her overseas adventures, her spiritual convictions and her commitment to helping humanity.

Octavia Hill, who also had strong religious motivation and philanthropic dedication, was less well-travelled than the Countess of Meath. Her love of nature derived, instead, from her childhood. Hill's first home was in rural Norfolk. Then at the age of around two she moved with her family to the edges of Epping Forest. Due to the family's impecunious situation, there were several other moves before the late 1840s when the family settle in a village north of London.⁷⁸ Her grandfather's home, a second home

⁷⁵ Ibid., 133.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 136.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 140.

⁷⁸ Darley, *Octavia Hill*, 30.

to her and her siblings, was on the edge of Hampstead Heath. As Gillian Darley, one of Hill's biographers, stated: 'The campaigns that Octavia mounted in the 1870s and 1880s to preserve Swiss Cottage Fields and the extension to Hampstead Heath were given added intensity by her treasured memories of Hillside and its unspoiled rural setting'.⁷⁹ Hill referenced these childhood memories repeatedly in her calls for the preservation of open spaces. In 1884 in her pamphlet *Colour, Space and Music for the People*, Hill urged: 'Think, those of you who have had any country life as children, how early the wild flowers formed your delight'.⁸⁰ In her call for an open space for Deptford, London, she described the suggested area as being 'composed of such a slope as children love to run or roll down...Here, hand in hand, on summer evenings may the old sit and dream of their childhood's home in the country'.⁸¹ In the same year, when speaking for the preservation of West Wickham Common, she invoked the 'happy scrambles' of children.⁸² Hill's relationship to the natural world apparently developed in her not untroubled childhood. This formative affection and enjoyment manifested itself as an integral part of her adult character and her philanthropic philosophy. 'Nature' was not a place of restriction, but rather one of opportunity and potential for all. Her focus on the preservation and creation of her green spaces was driven by her desire to share this with all.

Women generated an extensive body of literature, both fictional and non-fictional, that expressed their respect and need for green spaces; not just agriculturally worthy land, but large, uncultivated places that fed the imagination. Among the Victorian poets, there is no shortage of nature cast as woman. This is true of women writers as well as

⁷⁹ 'Hillside' was the home of Hill's grandfather, Dr Thomas Southwood Smith in Highgate, London. Ibid., 31.

⁸⁰ Hill, *Colour, Space, and Music for the People* (Reprinted from the Nineteenth Century).

⁸¹ Octavia Hill, 'An Open Space For Deptford' (Reprinted from the Daily Graphic, 1 February 1892), British Library.

⁸² Hill, *Preservation of Commons. Speech of Miss Octavia Hill at a Meeting for Securing West Wickham Common*.

men. The anthropomorphising of the natural world was a common thread and arguably the feminisation of it stemmed from the classical world with the association of female deities with spring fertility. However, the construction of nature had as many facets as there were poets. It is difficult to sustain a simplistic dichotomous conception of nature within Victorian literature. Women authors, particularly, undermined any straightforward reading by the variety of their representations.

Nature and natural elements, although given a feminine pronoun, were portrayed as more than just the untamed force commonly seen. Women writers characterised nature as a solace, a companion or an analogy for loss. Charlotte Brontë wrote of autumn as a ‘silent Nun...Comrade and Confidant to me’.⁸³ This verse has no connotation of the uncontrolled female; it highlights the almost tangible emotional sustenance derived from experiencing the season. For Elizabeth Siddal, in her poem *A Silent Wood*, the forest supported her through heartache: ‘There will I ask of thee a boon, that I may not faint or die or swoon’. This restorative theme is repeated in *An Orchard at Avignon* by A. Mary F. Robinson who wrote of ‘[a] place of secret peace thou art, such peace as in an hour of pain’.⁸⁴ As with the diary entries of Brabazon and the pamphlets of Hill, nature was not conceived as one side of a battle, with subjugation and control as the antonym. Yes, this analogy had been employed, but it was far from being the only one. Women expressed a range of emotions towards the nature. The depth of their affection and the eloquence of their articulation counters a reductive assessment of the feminine in the natural world.

⁸³ Charlotte Brontë, ‘The Autumn Day’, in *The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*, Ed. Christopher Ricks (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁸⁴ Elizabeth Siddal, ‘A Silent Wood’, in *The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*, Ed. Christopher Ricks (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); A. Mary F. Robinson, ‘An Orchard at Avignon’, in *The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*, Ed. Christopher Ricks (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Conclusion:

The women members of the open space movement exploited their participation in these philanthropic organisations to advance their own agenda. They had specifically selected the associations that they wished to be a part of; consciously bestowing their allegiance. Certainly, none of the groups were a financial or temporal option for the majority of the population. To join, members required both the available time and disposable income to do so. Thus, women, who joined the organisations, were expending their resources in areas that spoke to their sense of duty, interest and ambition. Membership and motivation were intrinsically linked and fed the adoption of a cause by women.

For many Victorians, the natural world was a material representation of the divine. This expression of religious sentiment was a strong motivator for many of the women, and indeed men, who participated in the open space movement. The associations here afforded an ideal outlet for the conferring of charitable duty. The groups provided the opportunity both to inspire recipients with a divine example as well as the prospect of preserving God-given gifts. For other women, the scientific nature and potential for professional development present in the movement drove their attraction. Increasing numbers of women sought and demanded a public place. Especially in the urban setting, the open space movement offered women public places that were physical sites and ones of social position. Public spaces created by the movement provided women with accessible geographic locations for recreation and relaxation. The organisations that engendered these spaces provided a social platform from which to engage in broader issues. Further, women crafted their own role, appeared at the sites and encouraged other women's participation; creating a cycle that brought more women into this public place.

The written records left by the women members of the organisations, along with other literature of the period, speak to the strong attachment women felt for the natural world. Arguably this affection was the underlying reason for some women's initial involvement in the associations. The articulation of this emotional engagement challenged both the masculine exclusivity of the British citizen and the feminised characterisation of nature. Intellectual diffusion of ideas, opportunities and obligations combined with the preservation of physical sites to produce a new sphere for women, by women. The open space movement expanded women's position in Victorian society through the interaction of gender and space.

Chapter VI

The Voice of Nature

Divina natura dedit agros, ars humana aedificavit urbes

Varro, *De Re Rustica*¹

God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder then, that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threatened in the fields and groves?²

In the language of the twenty-first century, the world has now entered a new geological epoch – the Anthropocene. No longer is it conceivable to separate humanity from nature, to create a dichotomy; humans are generating a new environment.³ Ecological, meteorological, geological and biological rhetoric fills the media. Conversations and developments around the world reference climate change, environmental politics and the need to think ‘green’. While the specifics of the scientific language may be particular to the current period, the emergence of rhetoric to communicate views on nature and man’s effect on it has a long history. Arguably it has always been present. The dramatic contemporary climatic transformations of the current age began, it is posited, from the time of the Western industrial revolution, essentially the mid to late-eighteenth century.⁴ It was the beginning of both strongly capitalist and industrialised economies. The Victorian age was the first to be faced with the enormous changes

¹ Marcus Terentius Varro, *Varro the Farmer: A Selection from the Res Rusticae*, Ed. Bertha Tilly, PhD (London: University Tutorial Press, 1973), 109 ‘Divine nature gave the fields, human arts built the cities’.

² William Cowper, *The Task*, Facsimile of 1785 Edition (London: The Scholar Press, 1973), 40.

³ Chakrabarty, ‘The Climate of History: Four Theses’, 201.

⁴ Simmons, *Environmental History of Great Britain: From 10,000 Years Ago to the Present*, 179.

that resulted from industrialisation. The nineteenth-century press published and provoked articles and editorials on the altering landscapes. Consequently, their language expressed the hopes and fears the Victorians had for their environment. The previous chapter examined women's articulation of nature in their writing. This chapter explores the character of the language utilised by the open space movement more broadly; its influences and development.

Of the four groups under consideration in this thesis, two, the Commons Preservation Society and the National Trust, were focused primarily on what are essentially wide open spaces. For the Kyrle Society and the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association the centre of their work was within urban spaces, specifically the high-density city areas populated by the working poor. The literature of these groups showed a strong correlation between the location of their interest and the language that they used to describe their mission. There were, of course, some commonalities. The poetry and lyricism of the Romantics from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was an important influence on all four. Within the rhetoric of the preservationists, there was also a noticeable development of the language used in the thirty years between the founding of the first and last group. New conceptions of scientific knowledge informed the desire to protect the landscape. Further, existing religious and moral arguments were manifest in the publications of the associations. Alongside each of these ideas was a construction of the national character, which was exploited by the open space movement. Each of these concepts was employed to justify the creation or the continuing existence of open green spaces. The members of conservationist groups moved through a range of motivational rhetoric when engaging with varieties of place, audience and publication. It is the aim here to examine the varieties of language that emerge from the extant records and attempt to answer the questions: Was there a Victorian 'green language'? When these early conservationists wrote of

‘nature’ what exactly were they speaking off? How did nineteenth-century English people ‘speak’ to the land?⁵

Humanity has engaged in a near constant dialogue regarding its ‘place’ in the natural world. Responses to modernity arrive with modernity itself and questions relating to the Anthropocene emerge simultaneously with the epoch. Twenty-first century discussions are centred on narratives of climate change and environmentalism. Conversations centred on environmental damage and the importance of nature are nothing new. Varro writing in the first century BC argued that living closer to the land was a more wholesome life and William Cowper echoed this sentiment writing two millennia later.⁶ In the literature of the nineteenth century there was a noticeable appreciation for the non-urban environment. Many popular novels of the nineteenth century extolled the view of the countryside as better than cityscape. The literature’s implication was that the rural was something that should be considered as ameliorative for humanity; as essential to the health of the nation. George Seddon asserts that language is the crucial conveyance of culture.⁷ If this is the case, then the language of Victorian England’s open space movement evidenced their views of the natural world and of society more generally.

Romantic Landscapes:

Countryside and the divine, nature and health, virtue and landscape; the Romantic poet William Cowper sets out clearly in his poem of 1785 the importance of the natural world. These very same words were repeated consistently in the language of the

⁵ Bonyhady and Griffiths, ‘Landscape and Language’, 2.

⁶ Varro, *Varro the Farmer: A Selection from the Res Rusticae*; Cowper, *The Task*.

⁷ George Seddon, ‘It’s Only Words’, in *Words for Country: Landscape & Language in Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2002), 245.

Victorians who would seek to protect the ‘fields and groves’ in the second half of the nineteenth century. In Cowper’s work and indeed that of his contemporary Romantic poets there was a strong sense of appreciating undomesticated landscapes. Nature, just by its very existence offered a panacea to humanity’s anxieties. Coleridge in his poem, ‘To Nature’ speaks of ‘[l]eaves and flowers that round me lie, lessons of love and earnest piety’.⁸ This love of uncultivated nature may be seen as a response to the rapid changes to landscape engendered by a burgeoning industrial and urban society; a natural antidote to modern ills of sorts.

In their chapter ‘Landscape and Language’ Tim Bonyhady and Tom Griffiths note that landscape and language have, mistakenly, been seen as opposites; one being the natural world and the other human.⁹ Not only is this dichotomous relationship unsustainable, but there is a most definite cultural interaction between these two terms. William Cronon argued for a purely mythological basis of the very concept of wilderness and the same can certainly be said of the use of the term landscape in the English context.¹⁰ Authors such as Tim Flannery and Felix Driver further support the constructed nature of ‘nature’, with some rhetoric that seeks to disregard the importance of the human element as a part of the environment.¹¹ English discourse around nature and landscape did not construct a ‘fantasy’ wilderness free from human inhabitation, as was the case with the USA and Australia. That is not to say, however, that there was no construction. Stephen Mosley highlighted this in his work on air pollution:

By directing attention to both the transformation of the physical environment and the ways in which language and cultural symbols

⁸ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 429.

⁹ Bonyhady and Griffiths, ‘Landscape and Language’, 1.

¹⁰ Cronon, ‘The Trouble With Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature’, 16.

¹¹ Driver, ‘Moral Geographies: Social Science and the Urban Environment in Mid-Nineteenth Century England’; Tim Flannery, *The Future Eaters* (Sydney: Reed New Holland, 1994).

were used to rationalise, naturalise or criticise the changes wrought by air pollution, a complex web of interconnections between nature and culture is revealed.¹²

In particular, the open space movement imbued the characterisation of the English landscape with strong elements of Romanticism and anthropomorphic analogies. In a textual analysis, it is these elements which demonstrate the highly defined quality of the discourse. It was the shared characterisation that provided the consensus around discussions, the common ground of debate, which is a feature of 'popular political discourse'.¹³ The poetry of the Romantics most clearly highlighted the cultural meanings assigned to nature and it was these same poets who were continually drawn on by the open space campaigners of the nineteenth century.

The Romantic Movement covered a range of themes, media and nations. It is difficult to refine its time frame, as with most historical and artistic periodisation. One of the central themes of the movement that is of importance here is the desire of the Romantic poets to recreate the visual in language.¹⁴ Probably as a result of his association with the Lake District, one of the most utilised poets of the genre was William Wordsworth. In 1810, Wordsworth anonymously published his *Guide to the Lakes*; it would be expanded and run to numerous editions. The most famous would be the fifth edition first published in 1835.¹⁵ This combination guide book and lyrical prose appeared at a time of growing tourism and awareness of Britain's open spaces. Despite writing a guide that contained directions, tourist information and suggested itineraries, Wordsworth vigorously opposed the introduction of a railway to

¹² Mosley, *The Chimney of the World: A History of Smoke Pollution in Victorian and Edwardian Manchester*, 8.

¹³ Norman Fairclough, 'Discourse and Text: Linguistic and Intertextual Analysis within Discourse Analysis', *Discourse and Society* 3, no. 2 (April 1992): 205.

¹⁴ Frederick Burwick, 'Reflection as Mimetic Trope', in *Romantic Poetry*, Ed. Angela Esterhammer (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 2002), 23.

¹⁵ William Wordsworth, *Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes*, The Fifth Edition (1835) (Oxford, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

Windermere which would have brought more travellers to this part of the country.¹⁶ Significantly, the prose of the *Guide* contained frequent reference to visuality. In the first section, entitled ‘Scenery of the Lakes’, in one small sentence visual words are used four times: ‘For example, in the vale of Winandermere, [*sic*] if the *spectator looks* for gentle and lovely *scenes*, his *eye* is turned towards the south’.¹⁷ The author continually sought to impart a rhetorical representation of the landscape, incorporating colour, light, shadow and the remembered image. Even in his most famous poem, known affectionately today as *Daffodils*, each verse contains reference to seeing or as the last verse stated ‘[t]hey flash upon that inward eye’.¹⁸ It is also noticeable that in his guide book’s conclusion, Wordsworth is conflicted between people’s attraction to the country and the introduction of new people to the place. His guide concludes with the following lines:

In this wish the author will be joined by persons of pure taste throughout the whole island, who, by their visits (often repeated) to the Lakes in the North of England, testify that they deem the district a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy.¹⁹

It is hardly surprising therefore that Wordsworth became the adopted laureate of early English conservation organisations.

Second only to Wordsworth in rhetorical employment was Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Coleridge, considered one of the seminal members of the Lake Poets, did not reside in the Lake District for the same length of time as Wordsworth. However, he was deeply influenced by landscape and nature. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge were

¹⁶ John Edwin Wells, ‘Wordsworth and Railways in 1844-1845’, *Modern Language Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (1945): 35.

¹⁷ The italics are mine. Wordsworth, *Wordsworth’s Guide to the Lakes*, 25.

¹⁸ Wordsworth, *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 115.

¹⁹ Wordsworth, *Wordsworth’s Guide to the Lakes*, 92.

born in rural areas – Wordsworth in Cumberland and Coleridge in Devon. This early childhood exposure to rural England appears to be a feature among those who not only wrote about nature, but also became interested in protecting green spaces. In *Kubla Khan*, *Christobel* and *Frost at Midnight*, three of Coleridge’s most renowned poems, he makes continual references to nature and natural features: lakes, shores, crags, mountains, oaks, mistletoe and trees were all repeatedly mentioned.²⁰ Even in the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, arguably his most famous and, unsurprisingly filled with descriptions of the ocean, there were also frequent land-based elements: leaves, ivy, woods and rocks were but a few.²¹ Coleridge too made much use of the visual. Often there is a link between the outward vision and the inner imagination; the latter fed by the former. For example in *Frost at Midnight*:

So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!
And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book.²²

In many of his poems, scenes of nature stimulated the poet’s imagination and dreams. It is notable that Sir Robert Hunter refers to both these men in a speech pre-dating the establishment of the National Trust. In 1884, speaking to the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences, Hunter evoked the shades of Wordsworth and Coleridge to help defend the endangered Lake District.²³ Still earlier than this in 1853, a mere three years after his death, Wordsworth’s words were invoked by *Punch* to condemn Sir Maryon Wilson in his proposed enclosure of Hampstead Heath. In an

²⁰ Coleridge, *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, I:240, 186, 297.

²¹ Coleridge, *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*.

²² Ibid.

²³ Robin Fedden, *The Continuing Purpose: A History of the National Trust, Its Aims and Works* (London: Longman, 1968), 3.

article entitled 'The Hampstead Heath Monopolist' the words of *Extempore Effusion on the Death of James Hogg* are repurposed:

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,
Like London with its own black wreath
On which with thee, O Crabbe! Forth looking
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath

Now the transition from the "black wreath" of London to the "breezy heath" of Hampstead is salubrious. It is also at present easy; but it may very soon be impossible.

Hampstead Heath is in danger of being enclosed and, instead of serving as a park for the London Public, of becoming a common for the private and particular grazing of Sir Thomas Wilson.²⁴

Others of the Romantic poets were employed too, including John Keats. Keats was predominantly associated with Hampstead Heath. He had lived there from 1817 until shortly before his death in 1821, a time which coincided with his most productive poetic period.²⁵ His former residence in Grove Street is now a museum. Hampstead and its surrounds had a long association not just with the literary set, but also the artistic milieu as well. The Heath was assigned an important place in the history of the British School of landscape painters from the mid-eighteenth century.²⁶ Essentially, when the aesthetic importance of a green space was discussed the protectors of the spaces were quick to utilise the Romantic poetic imagery. The open spaces associations would develop the Romantic linguistic legacy in the second half of nineteenth century to suit their changing style.

²⁴ 'The Hampstead Heath Monopolist', *Punch*, 11 June 1853.

²⁵ 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography'.

²⁶ Thomas J. Barratt, *The Annals of Hampstead*, vol. II (London: Lionel Levanthal, 1912), 1.

Victorian Poets and Beneficial Nature:

One important adaptation between the Romantic and Victorian language was the incorporation of the utility of nature, alongside its aesthetic value. Undoubtedly, the contemporary writers of Victorian England owed a debt to the Romantics who had preceded them. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, who was the Poet Laureate for forty years of Victoria's sixty-three year reign, has often been cast as the heir of the Romantics. As Seamus Perry notes, the Romantics 'bequeathed to Tennyson's generation an immense lofty idea of Art, empowering the aesthetic with a wonderful autonomy and grandeur'.²⁷ However, as Perry goes on to argue, for the Victorians this sense of artistry was then combined with late-nineteenth century belief in benefiting the public. Thus in Tennyson, there was the repeated association of nature with amelioration of the human subject. Nature had a purpose; it was not only beautiful, but useful too. In one of his earliest poems *Ode to Memory*, past experiences are called up '[t]o glorify the present' or '[s]howering they gleaned wealth into my open breast'.²⁸ In *Edwin Morris* again there is a benefit to man from nature:

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake,
My sweet, wild fresh three quarters of a year,
My one Oasis in the dust and drouth²⁹

Nature had become an essential ingredient for humanity's wellbeing; a feature that is of importance for the advantage it imbued in humankind. In 1867, the CPS produced a pamphlet entitled *A Glance at the Commons and Open Spaces Near London*, a propaganda piece disseminating the views of the organisation. In this the importance of the commons to London inhabitants was noted:

²⁷ Seamus Perry, *Alfred Tennyson*, Isobel Armstrong General Editor, *Writers and Their Work* (Horndon, Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers, 2005), 17.

²⁸ Tennyson, *Poetical Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, 11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

Alas for the London operative! No wonder his cheek soon pales, or that he passes into an early grave. To him “the breezy call of incense breathing morn” is unknown. Opening the window in the morning may change the temperature, it can scarcely purify the air in his room. When the dull day’s work is done he is miles away from green fields;³⁰

In this call for action, the CPS was demonstrating the link between human health and proximity of open space. The MPGA replicated this in their magazine *Eastward Ho!*

In January 1888 the very first lines are:

Every year the open-space question becomes of more and more importance to the nation, for it must be remembered that considerations of health are very closely connected with it, it being impossible to separate the one from the other.³¹

The protection of open space had the severest implications for the nation’s growth and vigour, its moral tenor and spiritual disposition. The literature reveals a modification in social attitudes. As Norman Fairclough argued the texts are a ‘social barometer’, an indication of change.³² In true Victorian style, it was no longer enough to admire the landscape, the natural world now had a practical value that required protection and if possible expansion.

The change in social attitudes and language was arguably the most noticeable difference between the Romantics and the Victorians. Robert Altick suggested that it was a sense of morality that acted as a barrier between the two.³³ However, rather than morality it is possible to see this difference as one of reform rather than probity. There was a drive from the mid-nineteenth century to improve the lot of all, whether sought

³⁰ Commons Preservation Society, *A Glance at the Commons and Open Spaces of London*, 5 The reference to ‘the breezy call’ is from Thomas Gray’s *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, (Line 17).

³¹ Isabella Holmes, ‘Eastward Ho - Monthly Record of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association’, *Eastward Ho*, January 1888, 453, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

³² Fairclough, ‘Discourse and Text: Linguistic and Intertextual Analysis within Discourse Analysis’, 211.

³³ Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, 6.

after or not. The impulse to create worthwhile citizens of all the residents of England motivated a considerable number of the philanthropic organisations during the nineteenth century, including those of the open space movement.

One example of the evolution of the language towards the more utilitarian, was the gradually increasing use of biological metaphors. Analogies and examples from nature and horticulture were used to emphasise the inherent rationality of the improvement. The rhetoric surrounding social reform used the language of social science. George Godwin's *Town Swamps and Social Bridges* and William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out* were but two examples of socially conscious books from the latter half of the nineteenth century to utilise natural analogies.³⁴ Nature was not only to be physically harnessed for the amelioration of humanity, it would be rhetorically employed as well. As Driver has contended: 'Changing conceptions of the urban environment played a critical role in social science and social change during the early nineteenth century'.³⁵ This applies equally to rural landscapes, although there were differing conceptions at work. However in both cases, scientific and environmental language became a part of the reforming rhetoric.

Certainly as a part of the societal reforming nature of Victorian England, there was a fascination with the gathering and publishing of empirical evidence. The 1830s saw a huge growth in the science of statistics – quantifying and cataloguing society, both in British colonial possessions and in the metropole – with a statistics bureau established

³⁴ Booth's title was a play on Henry M. Stanley's book *In Darkest Africa* published in the same year. Booth language drew on religious literature such as Milton and Dante, as well as the scientific. For example his description of social ills, maladies and remedies. He also noted the 'disease-breeding, manhood-destroying character of many of the tenements'. George Godwin, *Town Swamps and Social Bridges*, Orig. Pub. 1859 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1972); William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London & New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1890), 25.

³⁵ Driver, 'Moral Geographies: Social Science and the Urban Environment in Mid-Nineteenth Century England', 276.

in that decade.³⁶ As early as 1832 J. P. Kay-Shuttleworth had published his *Moral and Physical Conditions of the Working Class Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester*; this was eclipsed shortly after by the work of William Farr.³⁷ Farr would be instrumental in founding the Social Science Foundation in 1857 and was associated with Edwin Chadwick.³⁸ Chadwick was renowned for his 1842 tome *The Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Poor*, which he worked on with Sir Thomas Southwood Smith, the reformer grandfather of Octavia Hill.

The inspiration for the open space movement was apparent in Chadwick's work. In an 1860 address to the NAPSS, Chadwick stated that 'the exercise in the open field cannot fail to be of sanitary advantage to our young citizens'.³⁹ He went on to condemn long working hours on the Continent, noting a correlation between this and the 'proportion of full-grown males who are unfit for military service'. Brian Harrison has suggested that philanthropic journals at the time were filled with 'righteous indignation...and not with case studies'.⁴⁰ However, this contention is negated to some degree by the popularity of works by Kay, Farr and their ilk, and the repeated use of these works by Victorian philanthropic groups. Additionally it is possible to argue the alternative, that there was an excess of social investigation. As Seth Koven notes, 'there were hundreds of private charitable institutions and agencies in the metropolitan

³⁶ John M. Eyler, *Victorian Social Medicine: The Ideas of William Farr* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 13; 37.

³⁷ James Phillips Kay-Shuttleworth, *The Moral and Physical Conditions of the Working Class Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester*, 2nd Ed. Orig. Pub. 1832 (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1970); William Farr, *Mortality in Mid 19th Century Britain*, Orig. Pub. 1837 (Farnborough, Hants.: Gregg International, 1974).

³⁸ Eyler, *Victorian Social Medicine: The Ideas of William Farr*.

³⁹ 'Address of Edwin Chadwick, Esq. C.B., to the General Meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science', 32.

⁴⁰ Harrison, 'Philanthropy and the Victorians', 366.

slums’.⁴¹ The open spaces organisations applied the language and rationale of health investigators to their programme.

Religious Nature:

A key motivator for many of the philanthropists of the Victorian period was the societal obligations that were felt to be an intrinsic element of their strongly held religious beliefs. Reform, philanthropy and social improvement became strongly linked in this period.⁴² Extending from this, or possibly existing because of it, was a deep Christian, or certainly monotheistic spiritual conviction, which was present across the rhetoric of all the open space reforming groups. Religious faith formed an ongoing reference point and source of metaphors for these activists. Contained within that religiosity there was a strong moral tone. This was not religion for the sake of religion, but a driving ambition to improve the moral wellbeing of an entire nation. It was in part a reflection of the muscular duty-orientated Christianity that was such a facet of Victorian religious life at the time.⁴³ Late-nineteenth-century, fervent evangelism encouraged concentrated charitable efforts.

The literature of the associations considered here accessed religiosity in several ways. It was used analogously, as a morality tale and as a justification for shared ownership. For the Victorian audience, religious language offered readily understood imagery. The CPS, in an 1867 publication, described London as ‘reminding us of the emphatic language employed in Holy Writ, descriptive of the dreary desolation caused by an army of locusts: “The land is as the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a

⁴¹ Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 1.

⁴² Harrison, ‘Philanthropy and the Victorians’, 356.

⁴³ Porter, ‘An Overview 1700-1914’.

desolate wilderness; yea and nothing shall escape them.”⁴⁴ While certainly emotive in this instance, the language advanced a representation of the depth of the problem as perceived by the Society. By using biblical touchstones, it was more likely to be appreciated by the target audience.

Equally, however, nature acts as a morality tale. Divine creation had the ability to instruct society in appropriate behaviour. The Countess of Meath in her diary made the following observation:

Another lovely day. It was so warm that I was almost afraid to go to Church, so we sat on Richmond Terrace, and afterwards went into Petersham Park, and read Psalms and part of the service al fresco. It seemed appropriate to have it in the open air and we quite longed to have Church services held in beautiful parks like Petersham, where there is the voice of nature to teach that which is good and holy.⁴⁵

The Countess was not isolated in her belief of the importance of nature as an educative expression of faith. In the foundation speech for the Kyrle Society, Miranda Hill asserted that ‘[i]n the earlier life of many persons a religious feeling had been awakened by a study of the beauties of nature’.⁴⁶ It is also possible with this language to perceive the embryonic stirrings of a move from an organised religiosity to a more naturalistic spirituality. Nature was moving from a representation of God towards its own apotheosis. Although the Countess held deeply Christian beliefs, there was a conflation in her writing between God and nature; one becomes interchangeable with the other. Other writers at the time also evidence the amalgamation. As one correspondent noted in the *English Woman’s Journal* in 1853:

Those who doubt the beneficial influence of Nature, and her fair and varied productions, in leading the spirit naturally, though

⁴⁴ Commons Preservation Society, *A Glance at the Commons and Open Spaces of London*, 5.

⁴⁵ Brabazon, *The Diaries of Mary, Countess of Meath*, 74.

⁴⁶ ‘Beauty and the Health of Nations’, 4.

imperceptibly, to the Father and source of all, will yet not dispute the soothing effect on the nerves and temper of a quiet walk. Physically, morally, spiritually, the value of air, space, and natural scenery, is incalculable.⁴⁷

It is possible in this passage to see the beginnings of an elision between the divine and nature. Humanity was still very much the benefactor, but the source of the benefit was moving from a deity to nature in and of itself.

In addition to their narrative and moralistic message, religious sentiment and language were used as a shorthand explanation for the concept of public rights. Something created by God was the right of all and, thus, an entitlement of all classes. Isabella Holmes utilised this analogy in her pamphlet for the MPGA.

Thousands of our fellow-creatures, for want of a place to go to are bound to stay in their wretched homes, or are driven to the public-houses. The time is at hand when from babyhood to old age the benefit of 'God's own open air' is most felt, when a shady seat away from the cares of home, is most appreciated. The young people need a place to walk in besides the flaring high streets that teem with temptation...weary men and women pine for a green and flowery retreat.⁴⁸

For the people and organisations that were working to save urban green spaces, being a divine creation justified nature's availability to all. This same rationalisation can be found when making demands on potential donors' pockets. In an effort to save West Wickham Common, Octavia Hill delivered the following in a speech:

Many a gift is sent far away, and we little know what becomes of it; here is one at your own doors, the blessing of which you may watch as the years roll on; many a gift is frittered and lost; here is one which shall endure; many a gift is useless and fruitless; here is one which as

⁴⁷ 'Park and Playground Vs Gin Palace and Prison'.

⁴⁸ Gladstone, 'Public Gardens'.

God has made sky, and trees, and earth, and flowers a blessing to men, shall be helpful while He is Lord and we His children. Which of us will not ask humbly, ‘may I share in giving this land for ever, and for all?’⁴⁹

In this last piece written in 1892, the implication was that charity was being expended abroad, whereas equally worthy causes at home were ignored. From the 1880s onwards British evangelical Christianity came to permeate many areas of medicine, charity and penal control.⁵⁰ Dramatic causes, such as that of leprosy sufferers in India, often scooped the attention of benefactors. It was essential, therefore, for English organisations to compete with this. In Hill’s defence of West Wickham Common, not only is the land a blessing that is the entitlement of all, it was the ideal philanthropic focus for patriotic Englishmen and women.

Birthplace of the ‘English’ National Character:

Each organisation incorporated a version of the idealised patriotic English everyman in its literature. The nation drew its international position and perceived superiority from the land. The fear of the dissipation of the ‘historical’ vigour of said John Bull was one stimulus behind the open space movement. The national character was intimately connected with the land and this trope was frequently replicated in the literature. As Stephen Daniels has stated, ‘National identities are co-ordinated, often largely defined, by “legends and landscapes”, by stories of golden ages, enduring traditions, heroic deeds and dramatic destinies located in ancient or promised homelands with hallowed sites and scenery’.⁵¹ England and the conservation groups considered here most definitely follow this characterisation. In a number of western

⁴⁹ Hill, *Preservation of Commons. Speech of Miss Octavia Hill at a Meeting for Securing West Wickham Common*.

⁵⁰ Jo Robertson, “The Leprosy Asylum in India: 1886-1947”, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 64, no. 4 (2009): 474–517.

⁵¹ Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 5.

countries, particularly the United States and Australia, the wilderness was constructed variously as a pure Edenic space or untouched by humanity; this could never be the case in England.

England's population had risen from approximately nine million in 1801 to over thirty million by 1901.⁵² It was a geographically small nation filled with people. In contrast to the constructed wilderness of the USA for example, English rhetoric employed a mythical golden age of naturalistic harmony; this was England's claim of legitimacy in 'naturalness'.⁵³ Be it in the countryside or the urban centres, each group referenced a mythologised conception of the English yeoman – in tune with nature; living off or close to the land; artisanal. Somehow this imagined man – and it must be noted that all the references appear to relate to men and the land, even when spoken by a woman – was superior to the new breed of worker who was associated with the industrialised landscape. Writing in 1881, Lord Reginald Brabazon, later to be the 12th Earl of Meath, opened his *Social Arrows* volume with the following:

The self-complacency of John Bull is proverbial; it is extremely difficult to persuade him that there is any quality in which he is inferior to those born on other soils than that of Britain, and if there is one quality more than another upon which he prides himself, it is his physical superiority to the men of other nations. Has he not over and over again, it is said, given proofs of such superior excellence, from Cressy and Agincourt to Waterloo and Inkermann? Did not the strong right arms and unerring aim of British bowmen scatter the chivalry of France in those victories of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries?⁵⁴

⁵² Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: A Study of the Growth of Camberwell*, 19.

⁵³ Sverker Sorlin and Paul Warde, 'Making the Environment Historical - An Introduction', in *Nature's End: History and the Environment*, Eds. Sverker Sorlin and Paul Warde (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 15.

⁵⁴ Brabazon, *Social Arrows*, 1.

He goes on to propose that this national character will be weakened by its 'crowding together of masses of human beings in extremely limited areas'.⁵⁵ Additionally, according to Lord Brabazon: 'The police records attest that the finest men physically and intellectually come as a rule from the small country towns...that life amongst the lower class presents its easiest aspect'.⁵⁶ Brabazon and others of the open space movement saw the lack of open space as a threat to the entire nation.

The idea that urbanisation was undermining the English 'race' permeated all forms of literature and was not new in 1881. The weakened city dweller was described in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* published in 1848. He was 'below the middle size and slightly made; there was almost a stunted look about him; and his wan, colourless face, gave you the idea that in his childhood he had suffered from the scanty living consequent upon bad times and improvident habits'.⁵⁷ Hesba Stretton in one of her popular, evangelical children's books, *Pilgrim Street: A Story of Manchester Life*, published in 1867, had her young hero Tom visit the countryside.⁵⁸ It was here that he found both improved health and spirituality: 'Alice, doth thee think heaven'll be like this?'⁵⁹ Removal of the everyman from his 'native' landscape resulted in the weakening of the national stock. As Linda Colley has pointed out the national stock represented the industrial labour and cannon fodder that lay behind Britain's imperial ambitions.⁶⁰ Chadwick made the most unashamed connection between militaristic requirements and the mass population. He stated: 'Our great battles have heretofore been gained by armies of the class of yeomen against the inferior refuse of other nations. But while

⁵⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 12.

⁵⁷ Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 4.

⁵⁸ Hesba Stretton, *Pilgrim Street: A Story of Manchester Life* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1867).

⁵⁹ Ibid., 153.

⁶⁰ Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, 240.

the composition of the ranks of other nations has been improved ... our army of the line has been deteriorating'.⁶¹ Chadwick blamed industrialisation and emigration as the causes, while his suggested remedy was military drill. The opportunity for people to exercise was an important facet of the CPS and the MPGA programme.

Victorian English middle-class society identified its key superior characteristics as physical robustness, a particular morality and its religious beliefs. The view advanced was that adherence to these middle-class standards were the requirements of the true citizen. Much about the reform movements in general and the conservation groups in particular was aimed at producing these attributes in all the inhabitants of the country. Martin Gaskell succinctly described middle class ambitions when he noted that the hope was that '[t]he provision of a proper environment and their exposure to a superior example would ultimately result in the internalization of those values'.⁶² The language of the Victorian conservationists made it clear that there were demands on the members of a polity. Urban green spaces offered a method of preparing the average city dweller for the role of full male citizen. Women were not deemed a part of the gendered polity and rhetoric primarily focused on the male construction of citizenship.

The ambitions of the middle class were not necessarily those of the rest of society and the seeming rejection of certain values engendered social anxieties. Couched within this language of reform and citizenship were subtle, sometimes not so subtle, indications of underlying fear and tensions. Nineteenth-century England was a society and landscape of rapid, often divisive change. Predictably this heightened social tensions across many arenas. The most obvious within the language of the

⁶¹ 'Address of Edwin Chadwick, Esq. C.B., to the General Meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science', 5–6.

⁶² Gaskell, 'Gardens for the Working Class: Victorian Practical Pleasure', 484.

conservationists was that between the working class and the upper classes. There were countless references to the 'masses', described as poor, ignorant, unhealthy and in need of assistance from their betters. Fear of growing uncontrolled urban working class populations 'permeated conservative, liberal and socialist thought alike'.⁶³ Swing riots, Chartism and the changes wrought by industrialisation all fed into the sense of threat, which challenged the already tenuous traditional values.⁶⁴ It was not only the upper classes that utilised this language.

When the poorer residents of Fakenham in Norfolk protested the proposed loss of commons during the 1860s and 1870s, they too implied that revolution was a possibility. The threat of popular violence was inherent in their language. In a letter written in 1870 to the surveyor appointed by the landowner to carry out the enclosure, the local spokesman, Mr James Flaxman wrote:

After petitioning memorializing publicly protesting and defending the peoples' rights once more assure you and the Inclosure Commissioners through you that we and they never did and never will consent to the Inclosure of the Heath Common and River with our rights to cut fuel, feed animals, fish and bathe and recreate thereon and therein and consequently your whole proceedings are and have been illegal and the above act say "you shall not proceed farther". Hereafter, Sir on you will rest the blame of misleading the allottees and if the public peace be again broken, if acting unlawfully and provoking it.⁶⁵

⁶³ Gareth Stedman-Jones, *Outcast London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 1.

⁶⁴ Wilson, 'The Invisible Flaneur', 59.

⁶⁵ James Flaxman, 'Letter from Mr J. L. Flaxman to Mr Wright', 21 June 1870, FCP/1/40-1, Parliamentary Archives.

Flaxman had previously written to the landowner, Sir Willoughby Jones and accessed ideas of potential Irish-type unrest.⁶⁶ Further physical protest did occur and were reported as a ‘Common Riot’. The local paper made note of the fact that those involved ‘sang what are termed the “popular songs” of which the special grievances of the people are the theme, gave vent to their feelings in much noise, and cried out “Roll up, roll up; down with the rails, down with the rails”’.⁶⁷ Threats to open space was in essence treated as a threat to the British way of life.

This sense of political and social stability being strongly related to the land is echoed in the words of Robert Hunter. Speaking before the Kyrle Society in March 1879, Hunter, at the time the solicitor for the Commons Preservation Society, later co-founder of the National Trust stated ‘that the inclosure [*sic*] of the Commons has...tended...to the extinction of the small freeholder and tenant-farmer, – the yeoman class, – and to the deterioration of the condition of the labourer’.⁶⁸ Access to open space had become fundamental to the maintenance of an ‘orderly’ society and this was reinforced repeatedly in the rhetoric of the preservationist groups.

Unease between rich and poor was not however the only class tension existing and often seemingly obvious allies were at odds with each other. As Eric Hobsbawm contends this was the period when the word capitalism ‘entered the economic and political vocabulary’.⁶⁹ Hobsbawm continues: ‘Behind the bourgeois political ideologists stood the masses, ready to turn moderate liberal revolutions into social

⁶⁶ Flaxman used words such as ‘Fenianism’ and discontent. Flaxman, ‘Letter from J. L. Flaxman, Chairman to Sir Willoughby Jones, Lord of the Fakenham Lancaster Manor’.

⁶⁷ ‘Enclosure of the Commons Riotous Proceedings’.

⁶⁸ Hunter, ‘The Preservation of the Commons’, 1880.

⁶⁹ E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875* (London: Abacus, 1977), 13.

ones'.⁷⁰ There was a, perhaps more restrained, but no less contentious, stress between the burgeoning Victorian middle class and the landowning aristocracy. It was during this time that middle class influence grew considerably and came to dominate much of the construction of societal norms.⁷¹ Much was made by the conservation organisations of the ownership of the land by aristocratic landlords, who were selling or enclosing the land.

For the CPS particularly, their main contestations were with the landed gentry. Fakenham as mentioned above saw the locals, with the help of the CPS, condemn Sir Willoughby Jones, Bart., but he was not alone. Sir Maryon Wilson, the owner of Hampstead Heath was the recipient of considerable vitriolic comment for his attempts at enclosure. Newspaper articles saw the hapless baronet heavily criticised. *Punch*, which seemed to have taken a distinct dislike to the man, had him as a monopolist, a smuggler and a degenerate, as well as insinuating that he sought to deprive the 'townsfolk 'scaped from smoky slums ...[forced to] dance to the hisses at my [Maryon Wilson's] feat'.⁷² Examining a similar event in Knole Park in Kent, David Killingray noted that middle-class conservationists were perceived as a radical challenge to the older, feudal rights of landowners.⁷³ In these instances, the expected alliance between the higher classes of society had been replaced by a new conflict. The middle classes had appointed themselves the champions of the lower, chastising the aristocracy and reminding them of their obligations.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 14.

⁷¹ Caine and Sluga, *Gendering European History, 1780-1920*, 34; Gerard, 'Lady Bountiful: Women of the Landed Classes and Rural Philanthropy', 187.

⁷² 'The Hampstead Heath Monopolist'; 'The Smuggler of Hampstead Heath', *Punch*, 29 July 1854; 'The Witches of Hampstead Heath', *Punch*, 29 July 1854.

⁷³ Killingray, 'Rights, "Riot" and Ritual: The Knole Park Access Dispute, Sevenoaks, Kent, 1883-5', 63.

Other conflicts over land were inevitable on such a densely populated island. Questions arose over how the land was best utilised, who should use it and who should own it. Charles Kingsley, another of those peculiarly Victorian intellectual reformers, came to consider all individual land ownership as a luxury item.⁷⁴ Through all of this discourse ran a remarkable layer of emotional attachment by people to the land. Octavia Hill, again speaking in defence of West Wickham Common declared:

As our great men, as our ancient buildings, as our national institutions, as our royal family, as our British flag, being possessions of all, unite us, so do our forests, our commons, and our foot-paths; and far may the day be when these open spaces and little threads of path wandering by brook and through meadow shall cease to be the inherited possession of the Englishman, which he receives rich with memories definite, or subtly felt, of those who in ages past have wandered by the same foot-paths, or trod the same heathery slope, or rested in the same forest glen. Let us preserve them as the common inheritance of Englishmen and women and children.⁷⁵

E. Ray Lankester, former director of the Natural History Museum, wrote in favour of natural reserves referencing the benefit these would be to future generations, who would ‘enjoy with gratitude’ the ‘overpowering charm’.⁷⁶ The English everyman may have been idealised, however, this was done within a specific landscape and his feelings for that landscape were a consistent theme.

Popular fictional works at the time created a strong sense of place for their English characters. Thomas Hardy evoked the West Country beautifully and associated not only the nomenclature of the characters, but also their physical and spiritual wellbeing with the landscape:

⁷⁴ Christopher Hamlin, ‘Charles Kingsley: From Being Green to Green Being’, *Victorian Studies* 54, no. 2 (Winter 2012): 267.

⁷⁵ Hill, *Preservation of Commons. Speech of Miss Octavia Hill at a Meeting for Securing West Wickham Common*.

⁷⁶ Lankester, ‘Nature Reserves’, 34.

It was the first of June, and...the landscape, even to the leanest pasture, being all health and colour...God was palpably present in the country and the devil had gone with the world to town.⁷⁷

The dusky, filmed, chestnut roof, braced and tied in by huge collars, curves, and diagonals, was far nobler in design, because more wealthy in material, than nine-tenths of those in our modern churches.⁷⁸

Sir Walter Scott created a mythical medieval landscape in *Ivanhoe*, with ancient forests and giant oaks equating to Englishness and countering the foreign influence of the Norman French.⁷⁹ Scott's anti-French tone was perhaps to be expected, given the date of first publication was a mere five years after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Elizabeth Gaskell differentiated the North and South of her novel by reference to the environment and the characters therein being a product of such.⁸⁰ Gaskell described the southern hamlet of Helstone as a village 'in one of Tennyson's poems'.⁸¹ The south was lush and bucolic. The northern industrialised Milton, by contrast, had 'a smell of smoke... a loss of grass and herbage'.⁸² The people of these two districts were distinct as well. The central female protagonist's, Margaret Hale, first impression of Milton noted: 'People thronged the footpaths, most of them well-dressed as regarded the material, but with a slovenly looseness which struck Margaret as different from the shabby, threadbare smartness of a similar class in London'.⁸³ These were the narratives by which the English established not only their national character but their personal one as well. It was entirely necessary to place the body in a geography; to give it

⁷⁷ Thomas Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Orig. Pub. 1874 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), 194.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁷⁹ Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*, Orig. Pub. 1820 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 27.

⁸⁰ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, Orig. Pub. 1855 (London: Vintage, 2008).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 11; 69-70.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 70.

boundaries.⁸⁴ And while not all fitted perfectly into this construction, nevertheless this psycho-spatial relationship generated an environmental affection that was an essential part of the national myth.

People and the land are inextricably linked in the discourse of the organisations considered here. Sverker Sorlin has advanced the argument that the environment must include humanity; in this way differentiating the ‘environment’ from ‘nature’, which does not require people.⁸⁵ Speaking of the land for the nineteenth century open space activist could not be separated from speaking of the people; in this case a romanticised figure, more fictional than real. Here again there is a strong connection made between national character, polity membership and attachment to the land. Protest to protect these open spaces centred on their representation of English nationhood as encapsulated in the land and thereby, in a sense, created a mythical equality of ownership of the land.

The characterisation of the English citizen in the rhetoric of the open space movement drew on an idealised medieval yeoman class. The yeomanry were the ‘true’ citizens of the nation. It was this yeoman class, who in the language of a CPS campaign in Norfolk were the same that ‘till, sow, watch and reap the soil’.⁸⁶ This stereotype found expression in both art and literature, with the popularity of the novels of Walter Scott and the pre-Raphaelite artistic movement. William Morris referenced this same archetype with his idea of the independent artisan. All of these harked back to an older,

⁸⁴ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 48.

⁸⁵ Sorlin and Warde, ‘Making the Environment Historical - An Introduction’, 3.

⁸⁶ Flaxman, ‘Letter from J. L. Flaxman, Chairman to Sir Willoughby Jones, Lord of the Fakenham Lancaster Manor’.

effectively medieval, community relationship between the land and the yeoman.

Octavia Hill similarly referenced an equality of access if not ownership when she wrote:

It must be observed that the nation, as a nation, is not held to possess the open uncultivated unappropriated land of England. True, generation after generation has passed over much of it freely, but it seems that the people are not thereby held to have acquired a right to do so. Perhaps this is because such right has no money value for rights of way, rights of light, rights of possession of soil, even rights on these very open spaces of pasturing cattle, cutting furze and of playing games are recognized by law where they have long been enjoyed. Had the right to wander freely, and to enjoy the beauty of earth and sky been felt to be a more distinct possession, it may be that these rights also would have been legally recognized.⁸⁷

In a number of court cases brought by the CPS, historic material used as evidence dates from before the dissolution of the monasteries, occasionally earlier, to charters from the thirteenth century and the Domesday Book. Alun Howkins has argued that from the 1860s onwards, there was a shift from the mythical medieval ideal to a similarly mythical Tudor ideal.⁸⁸ This argument has validity when considering the later Victorian progression of English national character. However, in terms of environmental protest over open spaces, defenders still very much accessed the medieval. Possibly this is the result of the material employed, but more likely it is the result of cultural narratives that saw 'Englishness' formed in a conjunction with a relationship to the landscape in a medieval golden age.

The Shared Language of Open Spaces:

Each of the four organisations examined employed a common rhetoric. This is understandable given the close ties between the members of the groups. There is

⁸⁷ Octavia Hill quoted in E. Moberly Bell, *Octavia Hill* (London: Constable & Co Ltd, 1942), 154.

⁸⁸ Alun Howkins, 'The Discovery of Rural England', in *Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920*, Eds. Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 62–88.

considerable evidence of the shared contact between all of these groups. In one letter written in 1889, that most influential social reformer, Octavia Hill, managed to reference three of the four organisations.⁸⁹ In later publications all four associations would be mentioned together. In some instances it is also possible to discern a difference between the protectors of the rural and the creators of the urban. That being said, however, there were also commonalities in the language and themes employed. The development of a shared language is not unexpected, particularly when consideration is given to the number of individuals that moved between both the groups themselves and the differing landscapes of England.

Rural landscapes engendered language that was distinctive from that of the urban environment. With places such as Hampstead Heath and other commons that bordered large conurbations, the language of conservationists is a blend of both urban and rural, as was the space itself to some extent. Countryside landscapes, such as those in the Lake District of northern England, were valued for their aesthetics.⁹⁰ The conservationists in their publications refer to beauty, historic importance and uniqueness as reasons for protecting the landscape. Thus, in the initial meeting of the National Trust in 1894 a newspaper report noted the desire to ‘dedicate to the nation places of historic interest or natural beauty...’⁹¹ It goes on to refer to lovely views and precious gifts. Fanny Talbot, who donated the first piece of land to the Trust, wrote in her letter of October 1894 that she offered the coastal site so that it might be ‘preserved in its natural state for the enjoyment of future generations’.⁹² In this instance it is possible to see the inheritance of the Romantics’ aesthetic love of nature

⁸⁹ Octavia Hill, ‘Letter to Robert Hunter’, 16 October 1889, National Trust Archive - Collection of Letters to and from Octavia Hill.

⁹⁰ Ritvo, *The Dawn of Green: Manchester, Thirlmere and Modern Environmentalism*, 80.

⁹¹ ‘The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty’.

⁹² Talbot, ‘Letter from Mrs Fanny Talbot to Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley’.

blended with Victorian utilitarian conservation, which advantaged human requirements.

The notion of an unspoiled area of the countryside was, at least in England, a knowing conceit. In the language around rural landscapes there was an adaptation of what William Adams described as the American tradition of protected areas within this rhetoric.⁹³ People are not regarded as present in the environment; protected areas should be devoid of humanity. Certainly, when E. Ray Lankester appealed for nature reserves in the first decade of the twentieth century he referred to this conceptualisation. 'In foreign countries the government has long been active in the way of establishing reserves especially where, as in the United States, there are large tracts of uninhabited country'.⁹⁴ In the same piece, he argued for the places where 'nature is still allowed to pursue her own way without the arrogant interference of that prodigiously shameless barbarian, the "civilised" man'.⁹⁵ However, in the English landscape this was an untenable idea and the human management of the environment became an essential feature of the conservationist groups. Residents were and are a feature of numerous protected areas in England. However, there are specific occupations and methodologies that they are permitted to engage in. Echoing the national yeoman mythology, these roles are 'traditional' functions that as Wordsworth noted in his guide have 'acted upon the surface of the inner regions of this mountainous country in a way that was subservient to the powers...of nature'.⁹⁶

⁹³ William M. Adams, 'Separation, Proprietorship and Community in the History of Conservation', in *Nature's End: History and the Environment*, Eds. Sverker Sorlin and Paul Warde (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 52.

⁹⁴ Lankester, 'Nature Reserves', 34.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 33.

⁹⁶ Wordsworth, *Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes*, 61.

While it is possible to vaguely conceive of areas such as the Lake District as at least partially uninhabited environments, this was never an option for those open spaces located in major cities. The language adopted for these spaces therefore focused on an entirely different rationality. The health, physical and moral, of the residents became the primary argument for inner-city parks. The development of cities in England generally had very limited initial planning or cohesion around it. As a result, cities often developed with little or no thought to the provision of services, such as clean water or sewerage.⁹⁷ Diseases, such as cholera, reached epidemic proportions and had no respect for class difference. Campaigners for green open spaces in the city adopted a more biological language to justify the necessity of these areas. Octavia Hill promoted opening gardens as a remedy to possible infection:

I have sometimes heard it urged against opening places to the poor that there is a chance of their conveying infection to children of a higher class. Setting aside the fact that out of doors is the last place people are likely to take infection...I ask you seriously to consider who ought to monopolise the few spaces there are in this metropolis for outdoor amusements... Is it not the pale child...just discharged from hospital to whom fresh air and a little quiet are still so needful? Is it not the sturdy urchin, whose hardy and energetic spirit scorns the bounds of the narrow court? Do you really think people who live in comfortable houses can escape infection by any precautions if small-pox and fever rage in the back courts of your city? Depend on it, your best chance of escape is to make the places inhabited by the poor healthy... You never will, or can, really separate yourselves from your neighbours; accept then the nobler aim of making them such that you shall desire not separation – but union.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations and Its Prospects*, 513.

⁹⁸ Hill, *Our Common Land and Other Short Essays*, 135.

Following a visit to the USA in 1890, Lord Meath wrote of the 'healthful and pleasant' existence resulting from having wide open spaces in the city; he included a list of the hundreds of acres of park land present in the many cities he visited.⁹⁹ Octavia Hill considered plants and flowers worked to alleviate the condition of the 'sick and old in hospitals and workhouses'.¹⁰⁰ This concept of disease was also used as a counter argument by opponents of the conservationists. The Chief Commissioner of Works denied permission for park benches in Hyde Park over fear that the seats would be used by 'the vagrant class, and become infested with vermin'.¹⁰¹ John Broich has also examined the use of disease discourse that played upon the fears of the upper classes in debates about water supply at this time.¹⁰² Throughout the literature, there was a persistent association between somatic wellbeing and spiritual virtue. The underlying moral implication was that those who adhered to the socially-accepted moral norms were not prone to diseases of decadence.

Urban campaigners in creating these spaces aimed to improve not only the health but the moral condition of the working class. This combination of motivations was especially prevalent in the language relating to the protection of the commons. The rhetoric blended the desire for improved wellbeing, access to certain traditional resources and exposure to the 'moral' message that nature offered. The language used sought to demonstrate the benefit to the upper and lower classes. In one CPS pamphlet the value of the common is not merely to the 'Cockney' who has travelled 'many a dusty mile,' but also to the 'botanist and the naturalist' who may 'obtain many

⁹⁹ Brabazon, 'Open Spaces A Lesson From America'.

¹⁰⁰ Hill, *Colour, Space, and Music for the People* (Reprinted from the Nineteenth Century), 6.

¹⁰¹ 'MPGA Article', *Standard*, 1 August 1884, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London.

¹⁰² Broich, *London: Water and the Making of the Modern City*, 25.

specimens for their cabinets'.¹⁰³ The nearby city is one of 'crowded lanes and alleys...a poisoned atmosphere is a permanency. Reeking churchyards and noisome factories fill the air with foul and fetid gases'.¹⁰⁴ Health and beauty aside, the commons provided material resources for many, some of which allowed for a subsistence living. The commons in particular seem to have a much more economic argument to their protection than other open spaces. The threatened enclosure of such spaces would not only impoverish residents, it could result in them having to rely on the charity of the parish. Essentially, if the upper class took away this livelihood, then they were the ones who would have to pay to support the workhouses and charitable organisations that acted as the Victorian welfare system. This rationale was exploited in the debates around Fakenham, Norfolk, Hampstead, London and Epping Forest in Essex. In one letter alone, James Flaxman, a campaigner writing to the landowner Sir Willoughby Jones referenced the benefit or detriment the enclosure would have to the poor over ten times.¹⁰⁵ Language around the commons engaged aesthetics, health and economics. Often employed in the same document, the conservationists used every rationale they could to secure their desired objective.

Conclusion:

Each of the four organisations considered here exploited very similar language. The nature and landscape that they spoke of was constructed within a specific rhetoric. Initially rooted in the inheritance of the Romantic Movement, these Victorian groups adapted the language and attached their own moral and utilitarian imperatives. The essential feature of the Romantic poets that was exploited by nineteenth-century

¹⁰³ Commons Preservation Society, *A Glance at the Commons and Open Spaces of London*, 4.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁵ Flaxman, 'Letter from J. L. Flaxman, Chairman to Sir Willoughby Jones, Lord of the Fakenham Lancaster Manor'.

conservationists was the lyrical representation of visual imagery. The descriptive passages of the likes of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats were regularly brought forth to defend open spaces. Building on the poetic, the organisations incorporated the newly popular social science discourse of the time. Horticultural, biological and statistical metaphors were attached to the natural to reinforce the rationality of protectionism. The increase in evangelical religious sentiment during this period provided an additional feature of the 'green' language at the time. Acting as analogy, morality tale and justification of rights, religious rhetoric was a prevalent characteristic throughout the literature of each association.

A mythological John Bull character connected to the land combined with lyricism and religion to generate an enduring national character. Based in a legendary golden age of yeoman harmony with the environment, a deep affection for the landscape was engendered as a fundamental feature of the personality of English citizenry. This was a period of rapid social change and tension across societal groups was inevitable. However, it was thought possible to diminish some of that anxiety by creating and then later reifying the myth of shared ownership of, and responsibility for, open spaces. Variations of language occurred between the rural, urban and semi-urban rhetoric. Aesthetics, health and economics played more or less important parts depending on the position of the open space in relation to large population centres, although it was essentially impossible for English rhetoric to form an idea of an uninhabited wilderness anywhere in the country. Thus the rhetoric of the time merged both humanity and nature as one indivisible whole that represented a desired English environment and culture. The combination of these two was pressed into service by conservationist organisations to advance their programme.

Conclusion

These greens scattered round London help to connect the larger areas, thus forming links in the chain of open space which encircles London. The natural recreation grounds are the admiration of all foreigners, and a priceless boon to the citizens, ensuring the preservation of green grass and green trees to refresh their fog-dimmed eyes, at no great distance from the throng of city life.¹

The Hon. Mrs Evelyn Cecil embodies the period and themes of this thesis. She was born in 1865, the same year that the CPS was founded. She published her first best-seller *A History of Gardening in England* in the same year the National Trust was established.² In her *History*, she was exuberant in her praise of the horticultural achievements of England. The industrialised, urbanised nation had very nearly become synonymous with smoke, pollution and environmental exploitation. And yet, in 1907 Cecil could write about London's encircling belt of greenery.

Cecil, nee Alicia Amherst, came from a wealthy, well-connected family and grew up in rural Norfolk. Her politician father was a member of the MPGA and became Baron Amherst in 1892.³ She established a career as a horticultural author and advocate, gaining the freedom of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners in 1896. Her history of London parks demonstrated the changed attitude towards public open space that occurred during her lifetime. She highlighted the importance of all types of open space to the metropolis, from royal parks to small inner-city squares. She also recognised

¹ The Hon. Mrs Evelyn Cecil, *London Parks and Gardens* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1907), 215–16.

² The Hon. Mrs Evelyn Cecil, *A History of Gardening in England*, Third Edition (London: J. Murray, 1910).

³ 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography'; 'Minutes of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', 7 May 1890, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO5, Guildhall Library Archive London.

the influence of the open space organisations that had achieved much of this work and the value of these areas to the wellbeing of the population.

Fig. C.1: A Bank Holiday Roadside Scene – *The Graphic*, Saturday 12th April 1890

The direct causes that prompted the formation of the open space movement were products of industrialisation and urbanisation. Unrest over land use, though, did not begin in the nineteenth century. Food riots, protesting agricultural workers and early enclosure opposition had long been a feature of English history.⁴ It was, however, during the nineteenth century that political and economic changes engendered a modern, stable government along with a number of other societal developments. The transformations taking place in government and society, in turn, allowed peaceful challenges to land ownership and usage. The emergence of the first national organisation for the preservation of open spaces and its success were consequences of these social evolutions.

The organisations themselves recognised their involvement in the creation of a new social movement. Following the advent of the MPGA in 1882, the terms open space movement and open spaces organisations began to appear in the press. Members of the associations applied it consciously to the work of their groups. Further, the open space organisations were fully aware of their own impact on challenging and changing public attitudes regarding the value of parks, gardens and commons. Lefevre, writing in 1910, emphasised the forty-five year history of the movement and the revolutionary effect it had had on public opinion.⁵ The methods and motivations of the movement continually evolved over the decades, with the establishment of new groups and changing ideas. This, in turn, encouraged existing associations and prompted the emergence of the next generation of activists. The consistent ability of the movement's organisations to adapt is demonstrated by their continued importance in the English conservation programme today.

⁴ Andrew Charlesworth, *An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain 1548-1900* (London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1983).

⁵ Lefevre, *Commons, Forests and Footpaths: The Story of the Battle during the Last Forty-Five Years for Public Rights over the Commons, Forests and Footpaths of England and Wales*, 327.

Cecil serves to highlight a further key feature of the open space movement; that of the importance of women in the organisations. Women actively engaged with the open space movement, contesting ideas of citizenship and public open space. The associations all had a mixed-gender membership. Consequently it is possible to investigate in a new light the organisational interaction of Victorian men and women. The analysis of the open space movement, therefore, affords the opportunity to develop a more nuanced view of late-nineteenth century English society. By adding this complexity to the examination of an emergent social movement, this thesis highlights a pivotal, gendered moment in the appreciation of conservation, preservation and the importance of open spaces in England. The investigation of these women, and the movement that they were a part of, recasts the interaction of gender, philanthropy and space in Victorian England.

The Commons Preservation Society was the first to be established in 1865. Many of the earliest members were members of parliament and probably would not have held their positions were it not for the extensions of the franchise. The CPS came about due to threats of sale and development on the metropolitan commons. The founder of the organisation, George Shaw Lefevre, had a childhood attachment to Wimbledon Common and it was the imminent sale of this common that prompted his action. It is difficult at this remove to know how influential a role nostalgic affection played in the actions of the main actors in these organisations, but certainly all of the primary members seem to have expressed attachment to particular open spaces. The CPS took the path it knew best, through the legal system. The society brought successful suits in the Court of Chancery, advocating the protection of the rights of commoners. Their actions invented a tradition of 'public' land. Not only this, but the CPS's persistent presence in the press and in support of popular actions to protect the commons helped

to create a wider public awareness of the intangible value of these spaces. This was the first step towards the reality of public land ownership.

The successive associations built on the achievements of the CPS to both reinforce and extend ideas of ownership, value and the conception of public land. The Kyrle Society focused its attentions on the inner-city tenement areas, very much in the model of Victorian philanthropy. Open spaces were only one of its areas of interest, with the broader goal of bringing all forms of artistic and natural beauty to those they felt needed it most. It was the Kyrle, though, that first raised the issue of the repurposing of disused burial grounds in the cities. The Kyrle may have been limited in its resources, but the society had an esteemed campaigner at its head. Octavia Hill's prolific public and private correspondence repeatedly broadcast the importance of public green spaces. Further her call to reuse disused burial grounds as parks and playgrounds was an inspiration to another of her ilk. The Earl of Meath, conspicuously aided by Isabella Holmes, made the cause of creating gardens from graveyards their own with the establishment of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association. These first three organisations frequently worked together promoting the purchase and transformation of English cities. Their association with the National Health Society, the *British Medical Journal* and the National Association for the Promotion of the Social Sciences served to underline in the popular consciousness the link between open spaces and public wellbeing. When the National Trust was founded in 1895, it had a remarkable legacy available.

The Trust would move the idea of public land from invented tradition to statutory reality. Initially, it was established as a public corporation with the primary goal of land ownership for public benefit. It eventually became enshrined in specific legislation that offered protection to the land obtained by the Trust in perpetuity as part of the

nation's cultural inheritance. In this way, the open space movement, in a little over forty years, evolved from protecting nominally public land through to the legislative protection of previously private land for the populace. It advanced from promoting the concept of land for the physical health of the people to the concept of protecting the national heritage for future generations. Together, these groups formed the open space movement, a designation that all of the organisations promoted.

Each group took for its cause differing sites. In some cases, such as the Kyrle, this involved moving nature to the place where they believed it would do the most good. Sites ranged from the flowerpot and window box to commons that were hundreds of acres in size. Not only did the financial and legal requirements for the protection of these places differ, but the construction of the place made by the associations differed as well. The CPS broadened the interpretation of the commons from one of the rights of tenants to that of a social space to be enjoyed by all. The idea of accessibility was further underlined by their preservation of public footpaths and bridleways across private land.

Although they were defended as available to the public, not everyone was able to travel to one of the metropolitan commons. Bringing nature closer to the inner-city dweller was one of the reasons behind the establishment of the Kyrle. From something as small as a posy to an outdoor sitting room, the Kyrle's ethos promoted the importance of open space close to the high-density, poorer residents of cities. The society supported the CPS's programme and extended it into the centre of the metropolis. It also adopted a more aesthetic and domestic approach to these spaces. Probably the smaller scale was a consequence of limited resources, but equally, this may be due to the incorporation of the Kyrle's aims into the network of Octavia Hill's housing reforms and rent collectors. In a much more obvious way than the CPS, the Kyrle

advocated an ameliorative aspect to open space. The improvement was advanced on moral and physical grounds. The Kyrle constructed open space as a means of benefiting the health and the civic-mindedness of the nation's citizens.

The MPGA adapted the concept of the ameliorative importance of open spaces, but altered the message from one of morality to one of sanitation. Additionally, it framed open space as crucial to the nation's fitness and thus intrinsic in the maintenance of imperial standing. For the MPGA, healthy, active citizens were vital in upholding Britain's international position. The association argued from a scientific standpoint. Although it can be said that the MPGA had a middle-class, moralistic tone, it did not advance improved morality as the primary consequence of open space. Implications of the intemperance and disorderliness that might be rectified pervaded MPGA literature, but were not explicit.⁶ The space was necessary, in their view, for sanitary and scientific purposes. The inclusion of playgrounds and gymnastic equipment for both boys and girls evidences the significance the organisation placed on actively enjoying open spaces.

The patriotic and national value of open spaces was taken a step further by the National Trust. Preservation of open spaces was not only a necessity for the current generation, but also for future generations as well. The Trust assumed the task of protecting the national estate. Even more, its selection of landscapes and buildings evinced a specific construction of Britishness. This particular view was reinforced by the utilisation of experts on its executive committee. More than any of the other associations here, the Trust established itself as a source of expertise on matters of heritage; so much so that

⁶ The MPGA suggested public gardens as an alternative to the public house, while disused burial grounds were described frequently as neglected, dirty and untidy. Isabella Gladstone, 'Eastward Ho - Monthly Record of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association', *Eastward Ho*, March 1886, MSS911 COL/LIB/PBO4, Guildhall Library Archive London; Gladstone, 'Some Facts Connected with the London Burial Grounds'.

the government would cement this position in legislation. All four open space movement groups, worked together regularly, advertising and supporting one another's efforts. Together they produced a view of open space in Britain that fundamentally linked space, health, patriotism and heritage; arguments that still resonate today.

None of the sites that the open space movement protected would have been saved without resources. Their networks offered one of their most significant resources. The widespread connections between the members, other charitable groups, government and one another underpinned their success. Indeed, these networks produced a social movement that changed the way public open space was perceived. All four groups here included an array of varying connections, but each exemplified a particular style of networking.

The earliest group, the CPS, capitalised on its founder's professional and educational associations. George Shaw Lefevre exploited his collegial relationships both to initially populate and finance the society. The group, which could have been mistaken for one of mere intellectual exercise, quickly expanded to one of social activism. By utilising the skills of the members and including local protagonists, the society achieved a considerable level of success in the law courts. This success, combined with the use of physical protests over enclosure, shaped a new social movement – the open space movement. The high profile and legal precedents set by the CPS paved the way for the later associations. And these accomplishments were made possible by a network of intellectual activism that was willing to challenge the landownership status quo.

By contrast the Kyrle Society emerged out of that most basic of networks, the family. Octavia and Miranda Hill formed a society, which epitomised the kinship network. It

extended across a number of renowned philanthropic families and drew on connections of blood, religion and friendship. The differing emphasis between the CPS and the Kyrle may in part be the result of the different sexes of the primary instigators. While Lefevre was a member of parliament with links to the legal profession, the Hill sisters had to rely on more personal spheres of interest. The Hills' ability to capitalise on such seemingly limited networks to realise as much as they did, speaks volumes about the power of familial connections and the Hills' charisma. The Kyrle was more than the sum of its parts, extending to the highest in the land as well as deploying women working among the poorest communities to achieve its reforming programme.

International and gendered networks also characterised the open space movement. All of the groups had female members, some more than others. However, it was the MPGA that best exemplified a mixed-gender membership and organisation. Isabella Holmes and Fanny Wilkinson, urban explorer and landscape gardener, were the mainstays of the group. Holmes undertook much of the archival and physical research, which was the basis for the MPGA's open space efforts, while Wilkinson was the designer and project manager for many of the new gardens. Women played a limited role in the formal records of the meetings, but they were not silent. Women were not the majority of the membership, but they were very active participants and respected members. The MPGA demonstrated the ability of a philanthropic endeavour working across gendered lines to maximise the potential of all of its membership.

Victorian philanthropy has often been characterised as feminine. Women were the ladies bountiful, the charitable angels who dispensed largesse to those less fortunate. None of the societies of the open space movement had a majority of women members. Even the Kyrle Society, which was founded by two sisters and used Hill's female rent

collectors, was probably at most fifty percent female in composition during this period. Regardless of the numerical level of membership, women were a crucial force in the open space movement. The women within the movement assumed important duties that were vital to the success of the associations. Women's involvement in the CPS was extremely limited, but the other societies directly benefited from their participation. For the women themselves, the open spaces organisations offered a range of tangible benefits and they deliberately chose these groups for many reasons.

For all members of the societies considered here, there was a conscious decision to participate in philanthropy, but for the female membership there were other underlying attractions. Women, in particular, had restricted options for intellectual and public opportunities. Apart from a desire to engage in philanthropic activities, women joined the movement for the chance to actively expand their interests. The natural sciences and horticulture were early scientific arenas that welcomed women. It is not surprising, therefore, that women seized the occasion to combine an area of societal acceptance – undertaking charitable work – with one of intellectual stimulation. Further, the women of the open space movement proceeded to create new public spaces for other women. In essence, they generated an upward spiral of participation and place. Women engendered safe spaces for women, as well as fostering greater engagement in local government and public events. Certainly, female membership of the open spaces organisations steadily increased across the decades. Additionally, women had the opportunity to develop professionally, as demonstrated by Fanny Wilkinson. She carved out a career for herself, trained other women as landscape gardeners and finally handed on her position in the MPGA to another woman when she moved on to head a women's horticultural college. Women's motivations to select a cause and to participate in a particular philanthropic activity were neither straight-forward nor simplistic, as this thesis evidences.

The open space movement, as a result of its small numeric size, was quick to recognise possible new resources. It understood the necessity of exploiting materially, intellectually, and as a potential national threat, international examples. The National Trust epitomised this engagement. The Trust offers the clearest opportunity to explore the breadth of international connectivity exhibited by the open space movement. Members from the Trust undertook fact-finding missions abroad and the Trust executive committee included international experts. The Trust utilised knowledge and expertise wherever it found them. The willingness of the open space movement to exploit all the available collegial, familial and international connections at its disposal supported its efforts. For an essentially small, niche movement, the associations punched above their philanthropic weight because of their networks.

The individuals who comprised these networks were not particularly representative of the whole of English society. They do, however, offer a picture of the people engaged in philanthropy and non-governmental reform in late-Victorian Britain. The upper middle class dominated all the organisations in the open space movement. As the century progressed there was evidence of increased aristocratic involvement. The values assumed to belong to the middle class were accepted across a broader stretch of society. Aristocratic membership of the CPS was quite small, limited to the lower echelons of the titled. This changed with each new society and the National Trust had a strong appeal for the upper classes. However, with a few notable exceptions, the daily management of the societies was left in the hands of the middle-class membership.

The motivating factors behind each of the groups here overlapped, but there were also significant differences. Incentives for organisations evolved as the spaces changed.

Many of the initial impulses for the creation of each new group reflected ongoing movements within wider society. The arguments put forward by the open space movement reflected these societal concerns. The CPS, the earliest of the groups, firmly lodged its first claims around the rights of citizens and protection from exploitative landowners. At the same time, British political life debated further extensions of the franchise. It is not difficult to see how the protection of the commons was thus an extension of challenges to the existing system of political power and the power of the landed aristocracy.

Similarly, the growth of urban working-class populations, along with increased, poorly built tenement housing led to concerns over health and morality among city residents. Epidemic disease was a fact of life in Victorian Britain. Cholera, typhus and tuberculosis were all associated with the poor. Additionally, although new ideas on disease transmission were gaining ground, the popular belief in 'bad air' continued as a key feature in causal theories. The Kyrle Society and the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association both aimed to reform high-density, inner-city areas. The Kyrle's focus on the aesthetic and the spiritual as well as the physical was a reflection of the strong muscular Christian reforming strain present in its founders. The society, heavily influenced by John Ruskin, associated health with beauty, as evidenced by the title of Miranda Hill's instigating paper.⁷ Octavia Hill's housing reforms focused on providing quality homes, where tenants were strongly urged to maintain a level of cleanliness, temperance, thrift and timely payment of rent. In return, Hill's housing was well maintained and reasonably priced. Outdoor sitting rooms were an extension of this view, which had the added benefit of dispersing supposed disease-causing gases. It was thought that disease was kept at bay by the imposition of healthy physical and

⁷The full title of Miranda Hill's paper was 'The Influence of Beauty on the Life and Health of the Nation' 'Beauty and the Health of Nations'.

moral habits. In some quarters this saw Hill condemned as a ‘very dictatorial six-percent philanthropist’.⁸ The amelioration of working-class housing and life was connected to middle-class fears over disease.

Health fears were also recognisable in the motivation of the MPGA. More than individuals’ health, though, the efforts of the MPGA emphasised the necessity of maintaining the wellbeing of the populace in the interest of imperial power. The Earl of Meath perceived a threat to the international status of the nation if the health of the population deteriorated. Although the MPGA stopped short of an entirely eugenic rationale, it did highlight the importance of physical fitness and the dangers inherent in urban dwelling. The Meaths supported improving the health of the nation and encouraging emigration. The Earl was unapologetic in his expansionist imperial views. While he may have been considered as a humanitarian by his peers, he never indicated any consideration for those displaced by his encouragement of state-directed emigration. Additionally, he perceived emigration as a ‘wonderful safety valve’.⁹ His opinion suggested an underlying fear of the concentration of working-class populations in urban centres. He also expressed concern over the type of education received by the lower classes, noting at one point the schools’ ‘mistaken...wish to raise their pupils in the social scale...to turn them out better scholars than cooks’.¹⁰ In essence, he wanted to educate people to their place. The Earl and Countess were fervent advocates of empire. They wanted healthy Britons at home and spread across the globe. As an offshoot of the Earl’s ideology, the MPGA endeavoured to maximise

⁸ This article appeared in the *Justice* newspaper produced by the Social Democratic Federation. The percentage quoted referred to Hill’s belief in making her social housing produce a financial return for investors. Thus tenants were expected to pay their rent in a timely fashion, with no allowance given if the amount couldn’t be raised. ‘Miss Octavia Hill’; Maurice, *Life of Octavia Hill as Told In Her Letters*, 189–90.

⁹ Brabazon, *Social Arrows*, 259.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 261–62.

the amount of space where urban dwellers could maintain their physical fitness in order to meet the future demands of the nation.

The National Trust was perhaps the group least concerned with the individual. It was a product of a confident and affluent nation. Like an old, wealthy, privileged relative apprehensive about the distribution of her or his legacy, the Trust sought to safeguard the national heritage. The rationale for the protection of places of historic interest and natural beauty was framed in terms of inheritance for future generations. The work of the Trust centred its efforts on ensuring its construction of Britain and Britishness was available in perpetuity. While it was able to build on the work of the CPS, Kyrle and MPGA, civil rights, health and strong citizens were not its primary goals. Given the considerable holdings of the Trust today, it has achieved its founders' objectives beyond all expectation.

The initial motivations and justifications for the open spaces organisations were many and varied; they intersected, adapted and evolved. One common thread that ran through the literature and personal writings of the members was a genuine affection for nature. For many, their fondness stemmed from childhood experiences. There were innumerable charitable options available to people during the Victorian period; for those considered here it was open space that drew their attention. The Hon. Mrs Cecil, whose work began this conclusion, wrote the following in the third edition of her *History*:

A further development is the creation of "Garden Suburbs" or even "Garden Cities." The very fact that such a combination of words, which hitherto merely expressed a contradiction in terms, should have come into everyday use, shows perhaps, more than anything

else, what a necessity of life a garden is now considered by a large section of the community.¹¹

Whether a small garden, manicured park or vast landscape, the membership of the associations here chose to expend their considerable efforts on the protection and creation of open spaces. The CPS, the Kyrle Society, the MPGA and the National Trust successfully protected and extended the green, open spaces available to the public. In the process, they shared their enthusiasm for these spaces with a wider audience.

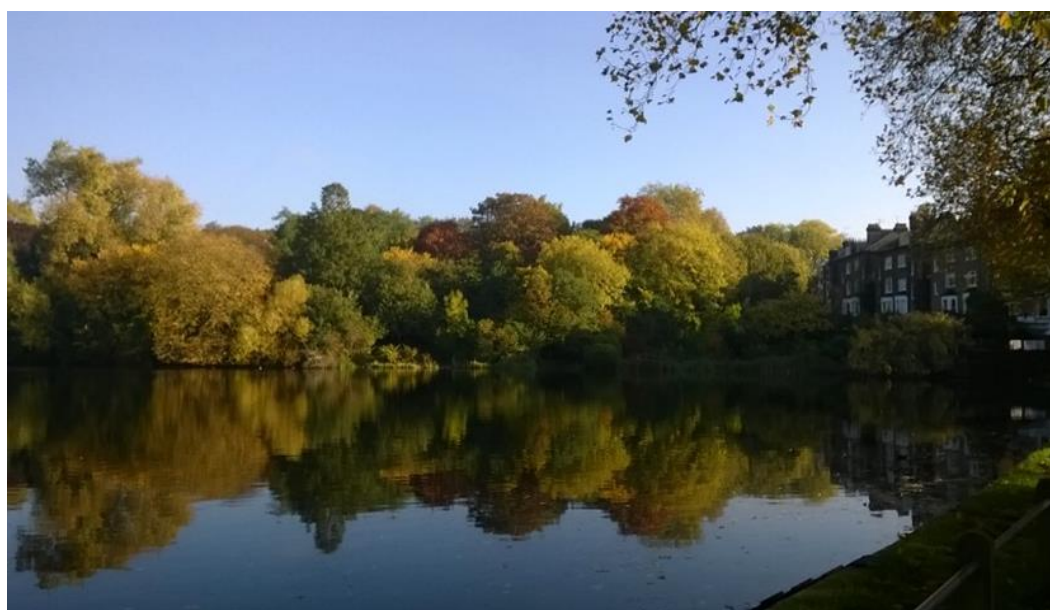


Fig. C.2: Hampstead Heath, 2015. Photograph with thanks to M.I. Longden.

This thesis then, in a specific sense, contributes to our understanding of the multifaceted character of Victorian society, along with the variety of influences that underlay early conservation. The examination of a nascent social movement, along with the organisations and people who were fundamental to it, affords a more nuanced interpretation of the period. Additionally, the evolution of the social movement and the effect this had on public attitudes over time underscore a crucial period in the development of the English conservation programme. In this way, the picture that

¹¹ Cecil, *A History of Gardening in England*, 315.

emerges offers a much broader exploration of late nineteenth century English class and gender relations and how this intersected with changing conceptions of urban and rural landscapes.

Appendix A

Members of the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association present at the first meeting, Monday the 20th November 1882

Miss Biller
Rev. W. S. Bourne
Lady Mary Brabazon
Lord Reginald Brabazon
Rev. Septimus Buss
Lord Clare-Hamilton
Mr Whateley Corke-Taylor
Miss Corke-Taylor
Mr R. H Cushen
Miss Gladstone
Miss I. M. Gladstone
Rev. A. W. Jephson
Mr S. Kemp-Welch
Mr W. Kemp-Welch
Miss C. Kemp-Welch
Miss Lankester
Rev. C. D. Lawrence
Mr F. B. T. Money-Coutts
Mr Noble Smith
Mr H. F. Pooley
Mr Stephen Ralli
Mr Alexander Ralli
Rev. R. B. Ransford
Rev. Thornhill-Webber
Capt. Thompson
Miss Vernon
Rev. G. Westlake
Miss Williams

Appendix B

Members of Parliament in the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, 1883 – 1895

Member of Parliament	Political Affiliation	Electorate
William George Ainslie M.P.	Conservative	N. Lonsdale
William Amhurst Tyssen Amherst, M.P.	Conservative	Norfolk W.; S.W. Norfolk
Llewellyn Archer Atherley-Jones	Liberal	N.W. Durham
James Bailey, M.P.	Conservative	Walworth
Lawrence James Baker M.P.	Liberal	Frome
Gerald William Balfour M.P.	Conservative	C. Leeds
Arthur James Balfour M.P.	Unionist	Hertford; Manchester
Sir Hamar Alfred Bass M.P.	Liberal	Tamworth; Staffordshire
Lord Charles William de la Poer Beresford, C.B.	Unionist	Co. Waterford; Marylebone East
Mancherjee Merwanjee Bhownaggree, M.P. C.I.E.	Conservative Unionist	N.E. Bethnal Green
Col. Henry Blundell Hollinshead Blundell, C.B.; M.P.	Conservative Unionist	Ince
Henry Cosmo Orme Bonsor M.P.	Conservative	Wimbledon
Sir Algernon Borthwick M.P.	Conservative	S. Kensington
Sir Thomas Brassey KCB M.P.	Liberal	Hastings
Hon. Colonel Francis Charles Bridgeman M.P.	Conservative	Bolton
William Leatham Bright M.P.	Liberal	Stoke on Trent
Jacob Bright, M.P.	Advanced Liberal	Manchester; S.W. Manchester
Thomas Lynn Bristowe	Conservative	Norwood
William Lehman Ashmead Bartlett Burdett-Coutts, M.P.	Unionist	Westminster
Francis W. Buxton M.P.	Liberal	Andover
Sydney Charles Buxton M.P.	Liberal	Peterborough; Poplar
William Sproston Caine	Progressive Conservative; Liberal Unionist; Liberal	Scarborough; Barrow in Furness; Bradford; Camborne
Marquis George Godolphin Osborne Carmarthen, M.P.	Conservative	Brixton

Richard Chamberlain M.P.	Liberal Unionist	Islington West
Lord Randolph Henry Spencer Churchill M.P.	Conservative	Woodstock; Paddington South
Sir Thomas Edward Colebrook M.P.	Liberal	Taunton; Lanark
Jeremiah James Colman, M.P.	Liberal	Norwich
John Corbett M.P.	Liberal Unionist	Droitwich
James Cropper M.P.	Liberal	Kendal
Baron Henry de Worms M.P.	Conservative	Greenwich; E. Toxteth, Liverpool
Viscount Hugh Fortescue Ebrington, M.P.	Liberal Unionist	Tiverton; Tavistock
Sir Henry Edwards M.P.	Liberal	Weymouth
John Edward Ellis	Liberal	Rushcliffe
Charles Isaac Elton, M.P.	Conservative	Somerset West; Wellington
Lt-General Randle Joseph Feilden, M.P.	Conservative	Lancashire; Chorley
William Hayes Fisher, M.P.	Conservative Unionist	Fulham
Sir Balthazar Walter Foster, M.P.	Radical	Chester City; Ilkeston
Sir Robert Nicholas Fowler, Bart.; M.P.	Conservative	Penryn & Falmouth; London
Alfred Giles M.P.	Conservative	Southampton
Herbert John Gladstone, M.P.	Liberal	Leeds; Leeds West
General Walter Tuckfield Goldsworthy, M.P.	Conservative	Hammersmith
Marquis Henry John Brinsley Manners Granby, M.P.	Conservative Unionist	Melton
Daniel Grant M.P.	Liberal	Marylebone
Henry Green M.P.	Liberal	Poplar
William Court Gully, Q.C.; M.P.	Liberal	Carlisle
Lord Claud John Hamilton	Unionist	Londonderry City; Kings Lynn; Liverpool; W. Derby; S. Kensington
Marquis Spencer Compton Cavendish Hartington	Liberal	N. Lancashire; Radnor; Rossendale
John Henniker Heaton M.P.	Progressive Conservative	Canterbury
Edward Brodie Hoare, M.P.	Conservative	Hampstead
Henry Hobhouse	Liberal Unionist	E. Somerset

William Henry Houldsworth	Conservative	Manchester
George Howell M.P.	Advanced Liberal	N.E. Bethnal Green
James Henry Cecil Hozier, M.P.	Conservative Unionist	S. Lanark
Edward Henry Hulse	Conservative Unionist	Salisbury
Frederick Wootton Isaacson, M.P.	Progressive Conservative	Stepney
Sir Ughtred James Kay-Shuttleworth M.P.	Liberal	Hastings; Clitheroe
John Richard Kelly, M.P.	Moderate Conservative	Camberwell
William Kenrick	Liberal Unionist	Birmingham North
Frederick Harold Kerans, M.P.	Conservative	Lincoln
Henry Kimber M.P.	Progressive Conservative	Wandsworth
William Frederick Lawrence, M.P.	Conservative	Abercromby
Henry Lawson Webster Lawson M.P.	Liberal Unionist	St Pancras; E. Gloucester; Mile End
Sir Edward Anthony Lechmere	Progressive Conservative	Tewkesbury; W. Worcester; Bewdley; Evesham
Thomas Wodehouse Legh	Conservative	Newton
Gerald Walter Erskine Loder, M.P.	Conservative	Brighton
Walter Hume Long, M.P.	Unionist	N. Wiltshire; Devizes; W. Rugby
William Malcolm Low, M.P.	Progressive Conservative	Grantham
James William Lowther M.P.	Unionist	Rutland; Penrith
Sir John Lubbock, Bart. M.P.	Unionist	Maidstone; London University
Col. William Thomas Makins, M.P.	Conservative	Essex S.; S.E. Essex; S.W. Essex
Moses Philip Manfield, M.P.	Advanced Radical	Northampton
Sir Frederick Thorpe Mappin, Bart. M.P.	Liberal	E. Retford; Hallamshire
William Thackeray Marriott Q.C.; M.P.	Liberal; Unionist; Conservation	Brighton
William Mather M.P.	Liberal	S. Salford; Garton
Alexander McArthur M.P.	Liberal	Leicester
Capt. James Martin McCalmont M.P.	Unionist	Antrim East

Lewis McIver M.P.	Advanced Liberal	Torquay; Edinburgh West
Sir Charles Benjamin Bright McLaren M.P.	Radical	Stafford; Bosworth
Charles Benjamin Bright McLaren, M.P.	Radical	Stafford; Bosworth
Robert Steward Menzies	Liberal	Perthshire East
Francis Bingham Mildmay M.P.	Liberal; Liberal Unionist; Unionist	Totnes
Sir Charles William Mills M.P.	Conservative	Sevenoaks
Samuel Montagu M.P.	Advanced Liberal	Whitechapel
Henry Lyle Mulholland M.P.	Conservative	Londonderry
Viscount Charles William Sydney Pierrepont Newark M.P.	Conservative	Newark
Sir Henry Stafford Northcote, Bart.; M.P.	Conservative	Exeter
Robert Norton, M.P.	Conservative	Tunbridge
Charles Stuart Parker, M.P.	Liberal	Perthshire
Sir Henry William Peek, Bart., M.P.	Conservative	Mid Surrey
Right Hon. Charles Pelham Villiers M.P.	Liberal; Unionist	Wolverhampton
Frederick Pennington M.P.	Liberal	Stockport
Robert Uniacke Penrose-Fitzgerald, M.P.	Independent Conservative	Cambridge
Hon. Edwin Berkely Portman	Liberal	Dorset North
Francis Sharp Powell, M.P.	Conservative	Wigan; Cambridge; North Div. West Riding;
Sir John Dickson Poynder, Bart., M.P.	Conservative; Liberal	Chippenham
Sir John Henry Puleston, M.P.	Conservative	Devonport
Pandeli Ralli M.P.	Liberal	Bridport; Wallingford
James Rankin, M.P.	Unionist	Leominster
Sir Henry Enfield Roscoe, M.P.	Liberal	Manchester South
Charles Saville Roundell M.P.	Liberal	Grantham; Skipton
Sir Bernard Samuelson	Liberal	Banbury
Col. Sir Charles Seeley, M.P.	Liberal	Nottingham
Thomas Sexton, M.P. (Lord Mayor)	Independent Irish Parliamentary Party	Sligo; Belfast N.; Kerry N.
Sir John George Tollemache Sinclair M.P.	Liberal	Caithness

Samuel Smith M.P.	Liberal	Liverpool; Flintshire
Right Hon. William Henry Smith M.P.	Liberal; Conservative	City/Strand
Hon. William Frederick Danvers Smith, M.P.	Conservative	Strand
Arthur Hugh Smith-Barry	Liberal; Conservative	Cork; Huntingdonshire
Philip James Stanhope, M.P.	Advanced Liberal	Wednesbury; Burnley
Sir Emile Algernon Arthur Keppel Cowell Stepney, Bart. M.P.	Liberal	Carmarthen
George Gabriel Stokes, M.P.	Conservative	Cambridge University
Right Hon. John Gilbert Talbot M.P.	Conservative	W. Kent
Sir Harry Verney M.P.	Liberal	Buckinghamshire; Bedford
Hon. Arthur Henry John Walsh M.P.	Conservative	Radnorshire
Sir Richard Everard Webster	Conservative	Launceston; Isle of Wight
Robert Grant Webster, M.P.	Conservative	St Pancras E
Col. Robert Williams, M.P.	Unionist	W. Dorset
Stephen Williamson, M.P.	Liberal	St Andrew's; Kilmarnock
Henry Joseph Wilson, M.P.	Radical	Holmfirth
Arthur Brend Winterbotham, M.P.	Liberal	Cirencester

Appendix C

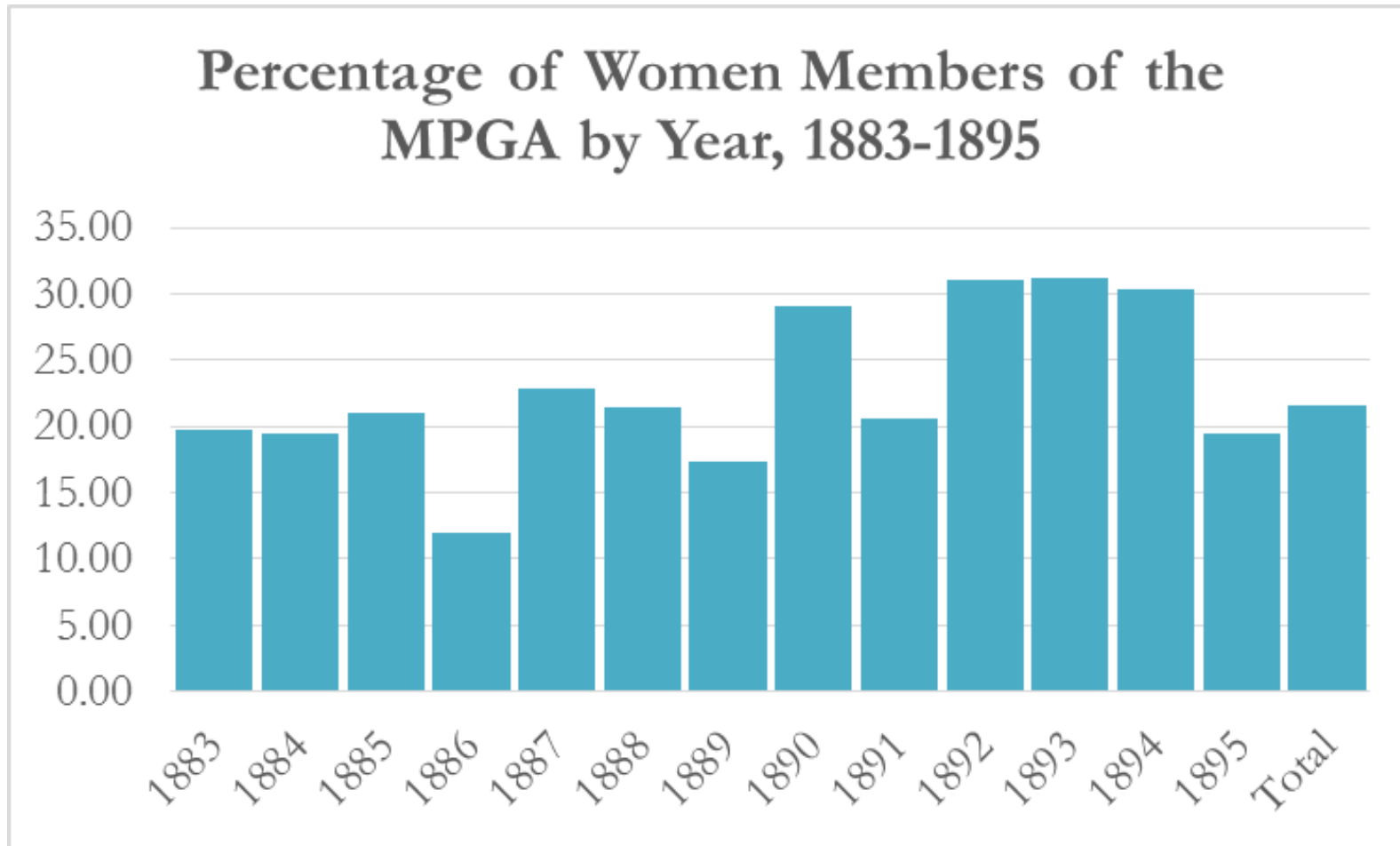
Gardens completed by the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association in its first five years.

Year	Park/Playground	Area*	Cost(£)
1884	Horsemonger Lane Gaol Playground, Newington, S.E.	1,3	350
1884	Edbury Square Garden, Pimlico, S.W.	1,0	217
1884	Canonbury Square Gardens, N.	1,2	160
1885	Carton Square Garden, Mile End, E.	0,3	175
1885	St. Bartholomew's Churchyard, Bethnal Green, E.	1,0	220
1885	Trafalgar Square Garden, Mile End, E.	1,1	315
1885	East London Cemetery, E.	2,2	470
1885	West Hackney Churchyard, E.	1,1	540
1885	Christ Church Garden, Battersea, S.W.	0,2	45
1885	Lower Grosvenor Gardens, S.W.	0,2	
1885	Northampton Square Garden, Clerkenwell, E.C.}	1,0	{1,030
1885	Wilmington Square Garden, Clerkenwell, W.C }	1,2	{
1885	St Paul's Ground, Rotherhithe, S.E.	0,2	530
1885	St Philip's Ground, Avondale Square, S.E.	0,1	50
1885	Holy Trinity Churchyard, Rotherhithe, S.E.	1,0	210
1885	Red Lion Square Garden, W.C.	1,2	330
1886	Extra Ground, St George's-in-the-East, E.	1,2	175
1886	Paddington Street Disused Burial Ground, W.	2,3	1,000
1886	Disused Burial Ground, St Pauls, Shadwell, E.	1,0	200
1886	Disused Burial Ground, Spa Fields, Clerkenwell, E.C.	1,1	250
1886	Disused Burial Ground, St John's, Waterloo Road, S.E.	0,3	33
1886	Disused Burial Ground, St John's, Hackney, E.	2,0	500
1886	Disused Burial Ground, St Mary's, Haggerston, E.	1,0	60
1886	Disused Burial Ground, St Mary-le-Strand, W.C.	0,1	180
1886	Waste Land, Hornsey, N.	0,2	145
1886	Ravensbourne Recreation ground, Deptford	1,0	635
1886	Cricket Ground, Putney Common	0,2	50
1886	Cricket Ground, Wandsworth Common	0,2	50
1886	Disused Burial Ground, St James' Bermondsey, S.E.	1,3	650
1886	Disused Burial Ground, St George-the-Martyr, Borough	1,0	100

1886	Disused Burial Ground, St Mary's, Lewisham, S.E.	2,2	450
1886	Old Disused Burial Ground, Putney	1,0	100
1887	Finsbury Polytechnic Gymnasium	0,2	500
1887	Swimming Bath, Working Lads Institute, Whitechapel	0,1	500
1887	Recreation Ground, Haverstock Hill, N.	0,2	200
1887	The Lock Disused Burial Ground, Borough, S.E.	0,2	72
1887	St Silas' Church Ground, Pentonville, N.	0,1	15
1887	Church Ground, All Saints', Notting Hill	0,2	30
1887	Disused Burial Ground, Holy Trinity, Mile End, E.	1,1	300
1887	Playground, Winthrop Street, Whitechapel, E.	0,2	250

*Area is given in acres and roods.

Appendix D



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