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THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

JULY 1950

Juillet 1950

Le Décret sur les Parcs Nationaux et l'Accessibilité de la Campagne devint effectif en décembre dernier, et la Commission d'enquête sur les Parcs Nationaux a été constituée entretemps. THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW propose maintenant, dans ce numéro spécial, que les parties de la Tamise en amont de la marée soient mises sur la liste de priorité de la Commission. Des explications y sont fournies quant à l'importance de cette proposition, démontrant comment le caractère de la Tamise, le plus anglais de tous les fleuves, pourrait être préservé et développé en vue d'en créer un Parc National de genre unique.

Eric de Maré, à qui est attribuable le numéro spécial de THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW sur les canaux anglais, publié en juillet 1949, a écrit le texte, et pris la plupart des clichés figurant dans le présent numéro, tandis que Gordon Cullen a préparé le plan d'une ville nouvelle au bord de la rivière, à Marlow. Celle-ci, construite autour d'une lagune, formerait un centre riverain possédant à perfection ce genre d'urbanité si approprié à un tel endroit.

Les raisons avancées pour la création de ce Parc National sont les suivantes: (1) le danger de voir détruire les beautés de la Tamise est un danger très imminent; la désignation du fleuve comme Parc National serait la meilleure manière de le sauvegarder. (2) il n'existe aucun conflit quant à l'usage du fleuve qui, depuis au moins cent ans, sert de site aux loisirs et aux distractions; son utilisation en tant que parc a déjà été établie par accident et tradition, sinon de nom; cet emploi ne s'oppose nullement au but économique actuel du fleuve, qui est de servir de système d'écoulement des eaux et de pourvoir Londres de la moitié de son eau. (3) la Tamise est accessible non seulement à la population de Londres mais également à celle de tous les comtés très peuplés de la région du sud. (4) il conviendrait comme parc à cause de la beauté de ses paysages, ses associations historiques, ses villes anciennes et monuments d'architecture, et ses multiples avantages pour faciliter le sport et les distractions. (5) l'exécution de cette mesure impliquerait une dépense bien modeste et il n'y aurait aucune nécessité d'absorber ou de stériliser de nouveaux terrains.

L'auteur établit en premier lieu le caractère essentiel du fleuve qu'il s'agit de conserver et de développer. Il décrit les effets que la géologie, l'histoire, l'économie et les transports ont eu sur son apparence. Il s'entretient au sujet des maisons typiques riveraines et de l'influence bienfaisante qu'exerce la Commission fluviale de la Tamise depuis presque un siècle, surtout par ses écluses et jardins d'écluses charmants, son style d'ameublement fluvial et ses petits ponts en bois. Le plantage et les arbres mêmes sont également discutés (car 'les arbres sont en effet la Tamise'), et finalement le caractère des gens qui vivent sur et au bord de la rivière. L'analyse démontre que, tout en n'étant qu'une longue bande sinueuse, le fleuve constitue une région distincte, possédant son propre peuple, ses propres activités et ses propres lieux caractéristiques, à emprunter la trinité régionale bien connue de Patrick Geddes.

En décrivant la façon dont le caractère régional pourrait être préservé, l'auteur fait ressortir

d'abord que le parc envisagé représente une *Ligne*—ligne d'environ 216 kilomètres de long mais de seulement quelques centaines de mètres de large. Tout l'art de développement consistera à conserver le sentiment d'isolement et d'éloignement de cette ligne en la dérochant aux regards du monde extérieur et vice versa. Ceci exige une technique empirique que les illustrations, montrant ce qu'il y a lieu de faire et d'éviter, sont mieux à même d'expliquer que ne le feraient les mots.

La signification et l'importance du chemin de halage continu, par rapport au Parc National Linéaire, sont soulignées. Ce chemin représente le point essentiel du parc, car il établit et articule son unique qualité linéaire.

Le paysage le long de la Tamise est, et doit continuer d'être, un paysage *artificiel*. Par conséquent, la question se pose: quelle sorte d'artificialité est à désirer? La réponse est que nous voulons créer deux sortes d'artificialité interdépendantes, bien que se repoussant l'une l'autre, et toutes deux particulières à la Tamise. Ce n'est qu'ainsi qu'il sera possible de maintenir le sentiment d'isolement si désirable. D'un côté, nous voulons conserver l'état sauvage manifestement naturel, espèce d'Amazone en miniature au cœur de l'Angleterre, et de l'autre côté, là où les bâtiments prédominent, il faut tâcher non pas de les cacher mais de développer le style de construction caractéristique à la Tamise. Le premier de ces effets est surtout une question d'enceintes et de plantations. Pour le second, il s'agit d'adopter un style spécial et de l'appliquer sur un pied ornemental. Ceci ne veut pas dire que nous préconisons le fantasque, car il est possible de faire valoir le style en question selon l'idiome moderne, ainsi que le démontre le plan de New Marlow établi par Gordon Cullen. La transition du sauvage à l'urbain doit être quelque chose de rapide et de dramatique—effet rehaussé par la nature contournée de la ligne même.

Ce numéro se termine par quelques suggestions pratiques au sujet de l'urbanisme et du développement de la campagne.

AVIS AUX PERSONNES DESIRANT S'ABONNER A LA REVUE

Le papier n'étant plus rationné en Angleterre en ce qui concerne l'exportation, les abonnements à THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW peuvent être maintenant acceptés pour la France et autres pays étrangers.

Le prix d'abonnement, franco de port, est de £2.0.0 par an, payable d'avance, et les ordres d'abonnement peuvent être envoyés soit directement aux Editeurs, The Architectural Press, 9 Queen Anne's Gate, Londres, S.W.1, soit par l'intermédiaire des principaux dépositaires de journaux et agences d'abonnement français.

Juli 1950

Die Nationalisierung der Parks und der Zugang zum freien Lande wurde im Oktober vorigen Jahres Gesetz, und die National Park Commission wurde seitdem eingesetzt. Die ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW schlägt in dieser Sondernummer vor, dass die

Themse, soweit sie nicht Ebbe und Flut unterworfen ist, von der Kommission an allererster Stelle zu berücksichtigen sei. Sie erklärt die Wichtigkeit dieses Vorschlags und zeigt wie der Charakter der Themse, dieses spezifisch englischen Flusses, bewahrt werden kann und das Ganze als einzigartiger nationaler Park anzulegen sei.

Eric de Maré, der für die Sondernummer der ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW über englische Kanäle im Juli 1949 verantwortlich war, hat den Text verfasst und die meisten der photographischen Aufnahmen gemacht, während Gordon Cullen den Plan für eine neue am Flussufer gelegene Stadt in Marlow entworfen hat. Die Stadt soll um eine Lagune gebaut werden, auf diese Weise würde der Fluss den Mittelpunkt der Stadtanlage bilden und mit dem Stadtbild zu einem untrennbaren Ganzen verschmelzen.

Die Gründe für die Anlage dieses nationalen Parks sind folgende: (1) die Gefahr, die Schönheit der Themse könnte in allernächster Zeit zerstört werden; die Bezeichnung des Flusses als nationaler Park wäre sein bester Schutz. (2) Ein Nützlichkeitskonflikt besteht nicht, da der Fluss seit mindestens hundert Jahren ein Vergnügungsstrom ist; seine Benützung als Park ist tatsächlich, wenn auch nicht dem Namen nach längst vollzogen. Diese Benützung steht in keinem Widerspruch mit den gegenwärtigen ökonomischen Aufgaben des Flusses den halben Wasserbedarf Londons zu decken und sein Kanalisierungssystem zu bilden. (3) Die Themse ist nicht nur für die Bevölkerung Londons erreichbar, sondern in gleichem Masse für die dichtbevölkerten südlichen Provinzen. (4) Infolge ihrer landschaftlichen Reize, ihrer historischen Assoziationen, ihrer alten Städte und historischen Denkmäler und der vielen Vorzüge, die sie für Sport und Erholung bietet, eignet die Themse sich als Parkgelände. (5) Der Plan erfordert relativ geringe Mittel, da weder neuer Grund und Boden noch Sterilisierung fruchtbaren Geländes erforderlich sind.

Der Verfasser schildert in grossen Zügen den Charakter des Flusses, der bewahrt und in seinen Reizen gesteigert werden soll. Er betont die Wirkungen, die Geologie, Geschichte, Volkswirtschaft und Schifffahrt auf seine Erscheinung ausgeübt haben. Er spricht über die typischen, am Fluss gelegenen Häuser und die Massnahmen, die die Themse-Kommission während nahezu hundert Jahren getroffen hat, er betont besonders die reizvollen Schleusen, die Gartenanlagen und die kleinen Holzbrücken. Grünanlagen und Bäume werden gleichfalls erörtert (denn 'die Bäume sind die Themse') und zuletzt auch der Typus der Bevölkerung, der am Flussufer lebt und dort seinen Lebensunterhalt findet. Die Untersuchung zeigt, dass die Themse, trotzdem sie eine schmale, gewundene Strasse ist, dennoch ein bestimmter Landstrich ist mit seinen eigenen Volk-Arbeit-Wohnplätzen, um Patrick Geddes' bekannte regionale Dreiecke zu zitieren.

Zur Erhaltung des regionalen Charakters steht in erster Reihe der Vorschlag, dass der geplante Park eine *Linie* sei, eine Linie etwa 135 Meilen lang aber nur einige hundert Yards breit. Das Problem besteht darin, dass diese Linie ihre Isolierung und Abgesondertheit bewahre, indem sie vor der Aussenwelt und die Aussenwelt vor ihr geschützt bleibt. Dies erfordert eine auf Erfahrung

beruhende Technik, welche die Zeichnungen, die zeigen was zu tun und was zu lassen ist, besser veranschaulichen und erklären als Worte es vermögen.

Sinn und Bedeutung des ununterbrochenen Treidelpfades im linearen Nationalpark wird nachdrücklich hervorgehoben. Dies ist sein innerer Kern, denn er betont seine einzigartige lineare Qualität.

Die Themse-Landschaft ist eine angelegte künstliche Landschaft und muss diesen Charakter behalten. Die Frage ist daher: welche Art künstlich angelegter Landschaft ist notwendig? Die Antwort lautet: wir müssen zwei Arten von einander abhängigen künstlichen Landschaftsanlagen, die als Folie für einander wirken und die der besonderen Art der Themse entsprechen, schaffen. Nur auf diese Weise kann die gewünschte Art der Isolierung gewahrt werden. Auf der einen Seite besteht der Wunsch die scheinbar natürliche Wildnis zu erhalten, eine Art Amazonenstrom im Kleinen, im Herzen Englands, und auf der anderen Seite, dort wo Häuser vorherrschen, diese nicht zu verbergen sondern den charakteristischen Themse-Baustil zu entwickeln. Das eine gehört in das Gebiet von Einfriedigung und Anpflanzung, das andere ist eine Frage architektonischen, ornamental angewandten Stils. Die Absicht besteht keineswegs phantastische Grillen zu befürworten, es ist durchaus möglich, wie Gordon Cullens New Marlow Plan beweist, dies mit den Mitteln moderner Formsprache zu erreichen. Der Uebergang von Wildnis zu Urbanität muss plötzlich und dramatisch sein, eine Wirkung, die durch die wellenförmige Linie verstärkt wird.

Einige praktische Vorschläge für die Anlage bilden den Schluss der Ausführungen.

FUER ZUKUNFTIGE ABONNENTEN

Da Papier in England für Export nicht länger rationiert ist, können Abonnements auf die ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW vom Ausland angenommen werden.

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Июль 1950 г.

Новый английский закон, который создал, так называемые „Национальные Парки“ в местах замечательных своей красотой природы, и урегулировал права доступа публики к этим местам, вошел в силу в прошлом Декабре, и особая комиссия была со-

дана для администрации новых „Национальных Парков“. В этом особом выпуске, АРХИТЕКТУРАЛ РЕВЬЮ выставляет предложение, чтобы комиссия по „Национальным Паркам“ в первую голову принялась бы за разработку плана той части реки Темзы, которая лежит выше линии прилива. Редакция нашего журнала объясняет причины, почему она считает это предложение столь важным, и указывает, каким путем можно сохранить и развить характерные особенности, этой одной из самых типичных английских рек, и придать ей вид исключительного Национального Парка.

Эрик де Марэ, который является автором специального выпуска АРХИТЕКТУРАЛ РЕВЬЮ об английских каналах (напечатанного в Июле 1949 г.), написал текст и снял большинство фотографий, а Гордон Каллен составил схему нового города в Марлоу, на побережье Темзы, построенного вокруг лагуны, который, по схеме, должен составить лучшую часть жилищного строительства берега реки, выражающий правильный стиль городской архитектуры побережья.

Причины основания этого „Национального Парка“ являются следующие: 1) Без правильной планировки существует опасность исчезновения этих замечательно красивых мест на Темзе; предназначение этой части реки для Национального Парка было бы самым лучшим способом сохранения ее красоты. 2) Что касается судоходного движения по реке, то, по этому поводу, по крайней мере, в продолжении ста лет, не возникло никаких конфликтов. Право пользования побережьем Темзы для отдыха и удовольствий широкой публики фактически вполне установлено, и пользование ею как парком не противоречит ее настоящим экономическим функциям, т.е. дренажа и доставки половины воды Лондону. 3) Темза является доступной не только лондонскому населению, но и всем густо населенным губерниям к югу от Лондона. Эта часть реки является исключительно подходящей для парка благодаря ее прекрасному ландшафту, историческим ассоциациям, старинным городам, архитектурным памятникам и многим удобствам для спорта и отдыха. 4) Помимо того, что нет необходимости в приобретении дополнительных участков земли, относительно небольшая сумма денег требуется для этой схемы.

Автор раньше всего устанавливает главные характерные черты реки, которые, по возможности, должны быть сохранены и выдвинуты. Он рассматривает в общих чертах эффекты, которые, геология, история, экономика и транспорт, положили отпечаток на вид реки. Описывая типичные дома речного побережья, он говорит еще и о том, как Общество Охранения Темзы (организация, ответственная за управление реки), в продолжении почти целого столетия, пользовалось своим благотворным влиянием для сохранения природной красоты побережья реки. Автор особенно отмечает очаровательные шлозы с окружающими их садами (основанные Обществом Темзы), речные оборудования и маленькие деревянные мостики. Растения и деревья тоже входят в его описание (выражаясь словами статьи — „деревья

составляют суть красоты Темзы“), и, в заключение, он описывает тип людей, живущих по берегу реки и кормящихся ею. Анализ показывает, что не смотря на то, что река представляет собою длинную крутящуюся линию, тем не менее, она составляет совершенно отличный район со своими собственными типичными местными характеристиками, как в отношении привычек населения, так и в отношении их занятий.

Первый пункт указывает, что для сохранения местного характера реки, предполагаемый парк должен иметь форму Линии — около 135 миль длинны и только несколько сот ярдов ширины. Все искусство создания этого парка будет состоять в сохранении чувства уединенности и обособленности этой Линии, защищая ее от внешнего мира и, в свою очередь, защищая внешний мир от нее. Это включает эмпирическую технику, снимки которой, показывая, что нужно делать и, что нужно избегать, объясняют лучше, чем слова.

Значение и важность непрерывной дороги вдоль реки особенно подчеркнута автором. Это является сущностью парка, так как она устанавливает и подчеркивает исключительное достоинство линейного характера.

Ландшафт Темзы искусственный; таким же он и должен остаться. В виду этого встает вопрос: Какого рода искусственности мы хотим? Ответ, предложенный нашим журналом — создать два сорта искусственности — каждый зависящий от другого, и каждый подчеркивающий эффект другого, и оба приносящие характеру Темзы. Только таким путем можно сохранить желаемое чувство уединенности. С одной стороны, мы хотим сохранить видимую природную дикий, нечто в роде миниатюрной Амазонки в середине Англии, а с другой стороны, там, где доминируют постройки, не упускать их, а развить характерный стиль построек Темзы.

Первый вопрос это — об окружении и насаждении деревьев. Второй это — об особом стиле украшений. Это не защита экстравагантности, а вполне выполнимо в рамках современного стиля, как это показано Гордоном Калленом в предполагаемой схеме для Марлоу. Переход между дикостью природы и застроенной частью должен быть быстр и неожидан — эффект, который усиливается волнистой природой самой линии реки.

Этот выпуск содержит некоторые практические советы по планировке.

ОБЪЯВЛЕНИЕ ПОДПИСЧИКАМ

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July, 1950

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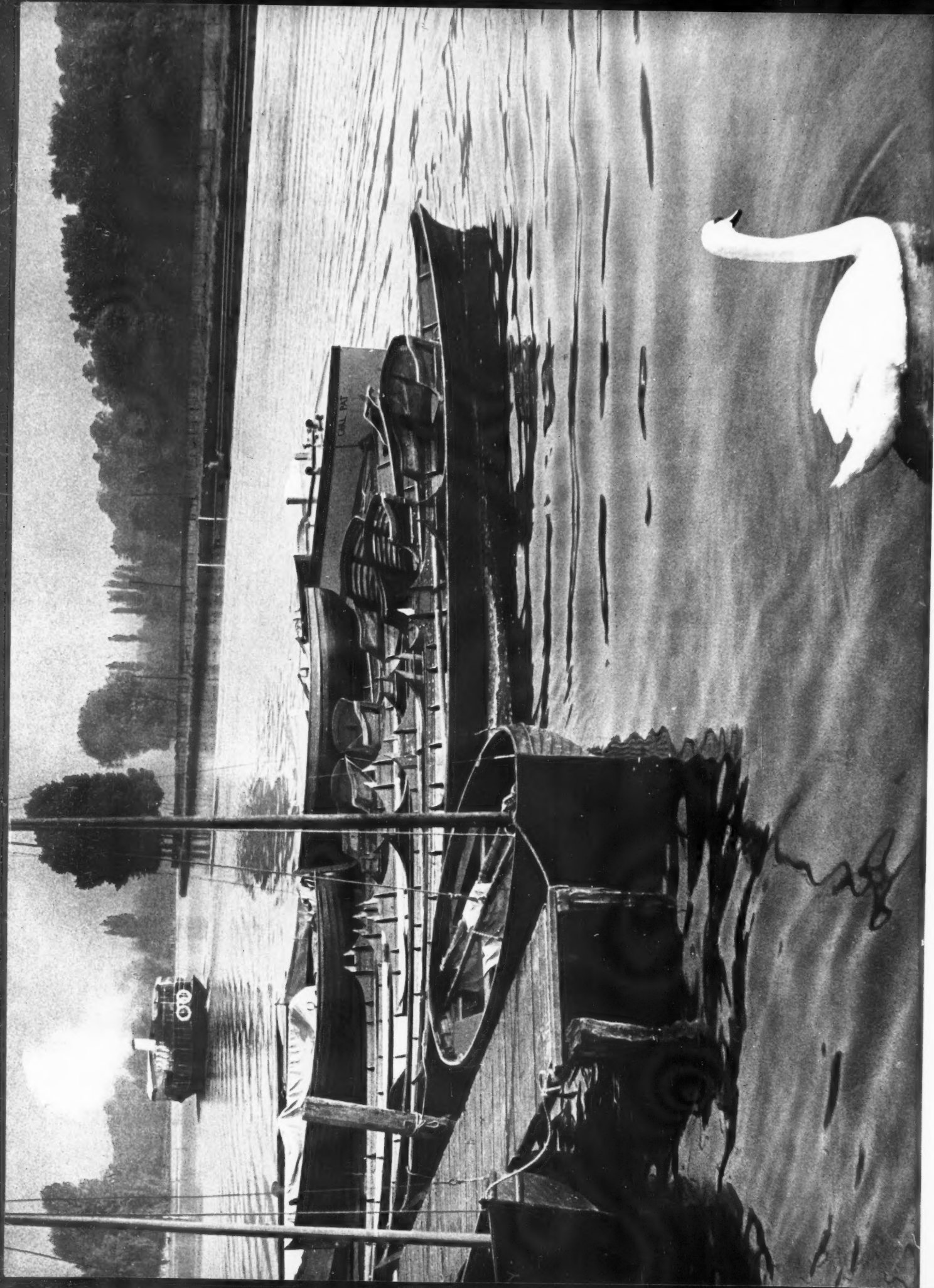
The Cover shows a detail of the lovely little Swan Monument at Bisham Church, which lies on the Thames above Marlow. Not only does the swan itself symbolize the Thames as a typical river sight, but its neck takes on the form of the graceful, winding river line, an appropriate section of which is included in the cover design. The monument, too, represents the many fine national helmloms lying along the river banks which add to the value and pleasure of the Thames as a National Park. It was erected in the sixteenth century by Sir Edward Hoby in memory of his wife Margaret.



The Author of this special number is Eric de Maré, who also prepared the special number on canals a year ago. Now he presents another study of water in the English landscape, again illustrated mainly by his own photographs. Trained at the AA, he worked for four years with the Architectural Press but is now freelancing as an architectural writer and photographer. His stated objective: to create a new civilisation based on full unemployment.



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landscape—just below Henley Bridge in early summer. The river steamer, decorated with rows of lifebuoys and a white plume of smoke, churns by at a gay speed but leaves behind a harmless wash in which the small craft moored at the landing stage lap with a soothing rhythm. His Majesty's swan turns defiantly as the steamer rounds the bend into the Mile towards the distant lombardies and the haze which veils the woods behind Temple Island. As the sun warms, a puff of wind comes downstream, apparently from the cherub carved on the rudder post of *Der Bries*, a fine, fat botter from Rotterdam lying above the bridge—the only alien note in a region that is at once unique and typically English—a region whose significance is examined on the pages that follow.



This Special Number is written by Eric de Maré, who also took most of the photographs

1

preface The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Bill became an Act last December. Now the National Parks Commission has been set up and has already designated three areas as National Parkland—Snowdonia, the Lakes and the Peak District. In preserving and developing these areas and the others which will follow, the Commission will have before it this well-known, official definition of a British National Park:

'An extensive area of beautiful and relatively wild country in which, for the nation's benefit and by appropriate national decision and action, (a) the characteristic landscape beauty is strictly preserved, (b) access and facilities for public open-air enjoyment are amply provided, (c) the wild life and buildings and places of architectural and historic interest are suitably protected, while (d) established farming use is effectively maintained.'

In some cases the reconciling of the second of these aims with the other three will present difficulties which can only be rightly resolved if those who apply the new Act accept planning as a flow in which Place and Time are interrelated and so avoid an artificial sterilization of economic life.

How the conflict between the Practical Man and the Beauty Spotter can be resolved and what our attitude towards landscape should now be was suggested in the REVIEW last June by Lionel Brett. He wrote:

'To the classical mind the tamed landscape was lovely, the wild hideous; to the romantic the wild was splendid, the tamed—tame. . . . One uses the past tense, although patently the romantic attitude is still going strong. . . . But while Romanticism flourishes, we ought not to overlook a third attitude, which for the moment we can only call Modernism. There is order, there is picturesque disorder, but thirdly there is chaos. The twentieth century's despair of science, the despair of Kafka and Picasso and Sartre, is beyond romanticism. The attitude to landscape is that beauty is neither man-made nor God-made, it does not exist Under the landscape-painter's leadership we rightly throw overboard the facile Victorian distinction between beauty and ugliness. But in so doing we deprive the landscape architect of his standards. . . . It is not surprising to find the officials, in whose hands the future of our landscape inescapably rests, a little hazy about their objectives. . . . A dose of functionalism is probably the cure. . . . But it is functionalism of a rather sophisticated kind. It is what Repton called "a just sense of general utility"; what

Dudley Stamp . . . calls the Principle of Multiple Use. . . . The solution lies in the one word "grading". . . . What was wrong with the Hobhouse Report was not that it graded the landscape, but that it graded it in terms of Beauty. Once we accept multiple use as a principle (as well as an inevitability), the problem is simply to establish a grading system whereby in a given locale one type of use will have precedence over another. This is, of course, a flat denial (with the modernist) of inherent Beauty. . . . In the last resort the planner will be judged . . . by his capacity to create out of the reconciliation of rival contacts a visible harmony, in short, a landscape, urban or rural, it matters not which. A harmonious landscape, a *characteristic landscape* . . . the outward and visible sign of an inward adjustment.'

The Norfolk Broads have already been analysed from this aspect.* Now we turn to the Thames as a region presenting a very special case in that the inward adjustment creating the characteristic landscape has already been achieved—and without deliberate, over-all control. Here at hand is a potential National Park which poses no major conflict of use. Chance, time and tradition have already graded it for us. Its priority is unequivocal for has it not been popularly known for many decades as the Stream of Pleasure?

The Thames as a Park is therefore already in the bag. But the danger of its destruction is ominously near and this threat is already evident in many places. That is why establishment as an official National Park is so urgently needed. It is surprising that, although the development of the towpath as a continuous Riverside Walk has now been accepted by all the authorities concerned, the idea that this walk should be considered as part of a larger whole—the Thames Linear Park—has not been officially mooted. The Riverside Walk *per se* is surely not enough. It forms the necessary backbone to the Linear Park but the spinal cord in the form of the river itself and the flesh to clothe the whole cannot logically be separated from it.

That is the reason for a special issue on the Thames above Teddington considered as a complete park. First the special characteristics of the region are dissected and the problem of providing amenities are considered. Next the case for regarding the Thames as a National Park is presented and then the case for the towpath as the core of that park. Finally the character of the Thames landscape is analysed and the technique for preserving and enhancing that character is outlined. This section is extended to consider, like a detail drawing, one aspect of this character applied to a new typical riverside town—a site at Marlow being selected to illustrate the application of the technique proposed. An appendix is added which contains some practical planning suggestions on the river as a whole.

This is a holiday month but that alone is not sufficient cause for devoting a whole number to a holiday subject. What does make the Thames of particular importance is its easy accessibility to the metropolis and the southern counties and its considerable attractions for open air recreation. Because its primary use for pleasure is well established and unassailable and because its character is threatened with destruction, it is essential that it should appear on the priority list of the National Parks Commission.

* *The Broads as a National Park* by John Arrow. *Architectural Review*, August 1949.



2

character of the region Between Teddington and Cricklade the tideless Thames winds for 135 miles between the boundaries of eight counties. All the way with towpath and enclosing belt its width is only a few hundred yards. Nevertheless it has the right to be called a Region for it has its own special character and pattern and its own distinct culture and traditions. That is the first point to establish here.

This character has been created partly by nature working on her own but mostly by man working with nature, because, however far back one goes through the centuries, the river seems always to have been under some degree of human control. It is essentially domesticated, tamed, artificial as every point shows from the prehistoric earthworks on Sinodun Down to the Home Guards' pill box on the bend at Kelmscott, from the ancient stone arches of New Bridge to the modern concrete span above Iffley, from the great park of Nuneham Courtenay to the ten square yards of lawn and pergola at 'Beggar's Roost', 'Sans Souci' or 'Wyworrie' which dip to the water at Penton Hook.

Apart from the drama of the chalklands at Cliveden and the Goring Gap, its country is always quiet and modest, with its rich meadowland, its deciduous woods, gentle hills and tranquil, though never turgid, stream. Its homely villages, towns and structures, while being peculiar to the region, epitomise the history of England for, as Hilaire Belloc says, 'England has been built up upon the framework of her rivers, and, in that pattern, the principal line has been the line of the Thames'. Except for the modern developments near London, at Reading and Oxford, there exists no other thickly populated landscape in the country which has changed so little in its natural features as the Thames Valley. The whole is as arbitrary, informal, restrained, variegated, romantic and as shy of rigid trammels as the English character. It is the most English of English rivers and the most English of English regions. Yet as an entity it is unique.

What influences have created this peculiar, agreeable and—considering the general besmirching of the landscape elsewhere—relatively unspoiled character of this region which has been for nearly a century the Thames of the pleasure boat, the public Stream of Pleasure?

Nature on her own has provided the land formation. Above Oxford most of the valley forms part of the Vale of the White Horse—wide floodlands floored with clay whose tame contours are relieved below New Bridge by the rag of the Berkshire Ridge with its dominating Wytham Hill. At Oxford an area of gravel rises only a few feet above the flood level. From Wallingford to Maidenhead the river crosses the chalk belt with its beech-covered downland and its swampy terrains. Here the finest scenery is found. Sometimes it even approaches grandeur—the two mounds of Sinodun (which may at one

time have stood out as islands in a great inland sea), the hill at Streatley (which rises above the gully where a few million years ago the Chilterns joined the Berkshire Downs), the lovely slopes of Hart's Wood, the wooded declivity at Park Place and then the grand climax at Cliveden. From Maidenhead towards the sea come the more prosaic effects of gravel and clay if we except Cooper's Hill behind Runnymede and the chalk bluff on which Windsor Castle stands.

On this geological basis humanity has formed the river pattern. Little is left now that is pre-mediæval for prehistoric man, the Celt, the Dane, the Roman and the Saxon preferred the dry uplands for their lines of travel. Only in mediæval times did the Thames become an important means of communication; the whole valley was, indeed, mainly the creation of the Middle Ages.

Above Oxford, except that the river is now narrower and the land less marshy owing to land drainage, and except for the modern locks and the heedless march of the pylons, the river has barely changed at all through the centuries. 'If a man wishes to recapture a scene of the Middle Ages', writes John Buchan, 'there are two at hand to choose from. One is Merton Street in Oxford in a snowy winter twilight; the other is some stretch of the river in June above Godstow, where it twines brim-full, like a stream in a missal, with on each side miles of waving grasses, and in the distance a wild hillside and the spire of an ancient church. In such a landscape you can cheat the centuries, for all that is presented to your ear and eye is what mediæval England heard and saw.'

Below Oxford some mediæval marks still stand—defensive positions as at Wallingford and Windsor, the University at Oxford, monastic and conventual establishments as at Godstow, Bisham, Medmenham and, the most powerful of all, great Abingdon Abbey. All are now in ruins and merely suggest how much the Thames lost at the Dissolution, for of the others—the Priors of Cricklade and Lechlade, the Abbeys of Eynsham, Osney (with its fine bell tower, seven storeys high and crowned with a spire), Streatley, Reading, Chertsey, Cholsey, the Nunneries of Burnham and Little Marlow, virtually nothing remains.

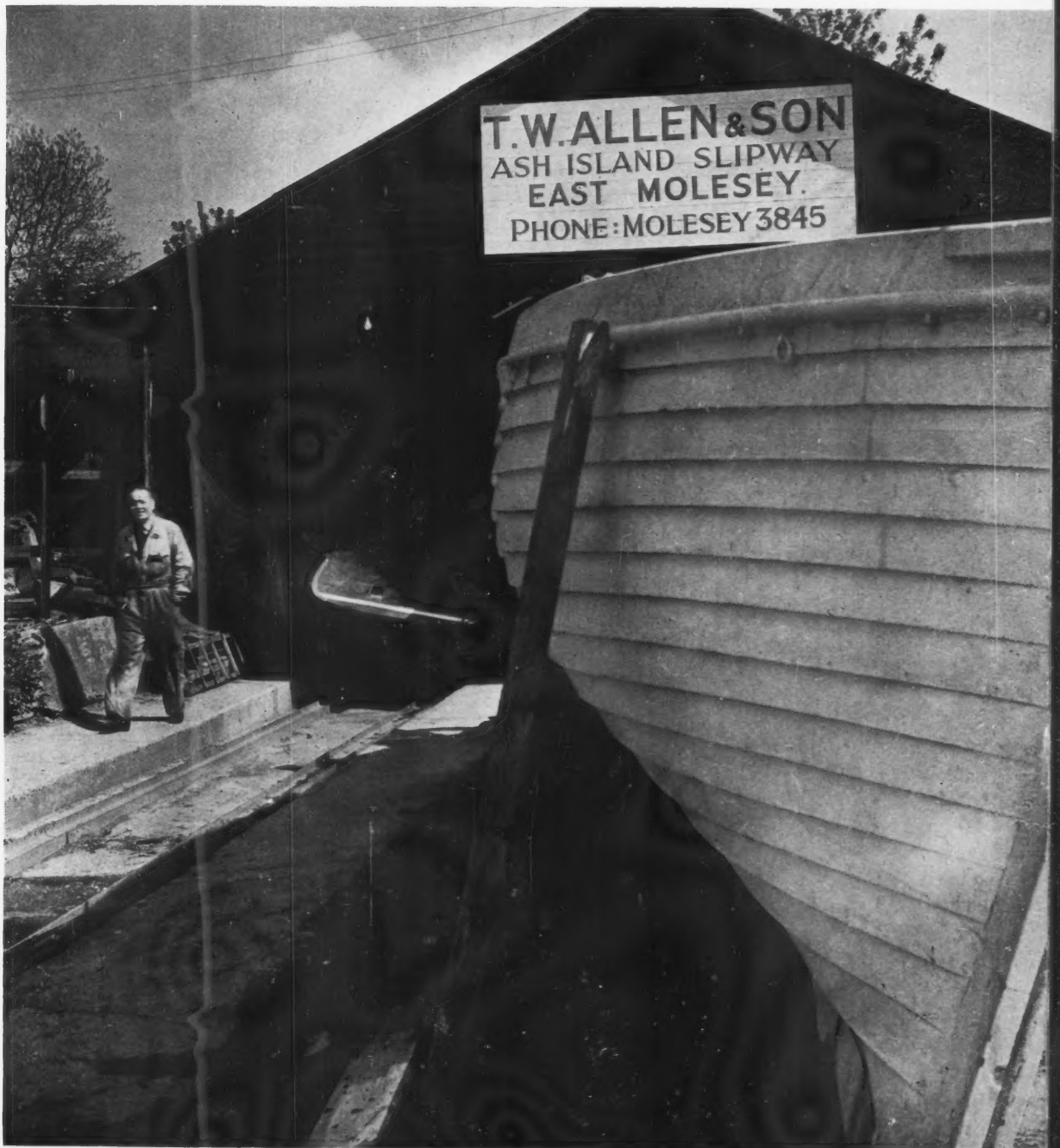
From Oxford down to Marlow the eighteenth century is most in evidence, not only in the farming landscape which, as throughout England, was the creation of the revolutionary Enclosures Act, but in the many aristocratic mansions standing on the slopes and framed in their picturesque and bosky parks—Capability Brown's Nuneham Park, Howbery, Mongewell, Carr's Basildon Park, Coombe Park, Park Place, Harleyford Manor. The eighteenth century has given much, also, to the many pleasant riverside towns whose foundations go far back in time—least perhaps to Abingdon, that peer of Thames towns and to Ruskin the most beautiful in Europe, much more to Marlow and Henley, Wargrave, Sonning, Goring and Streatley, Wallingford and Benson.

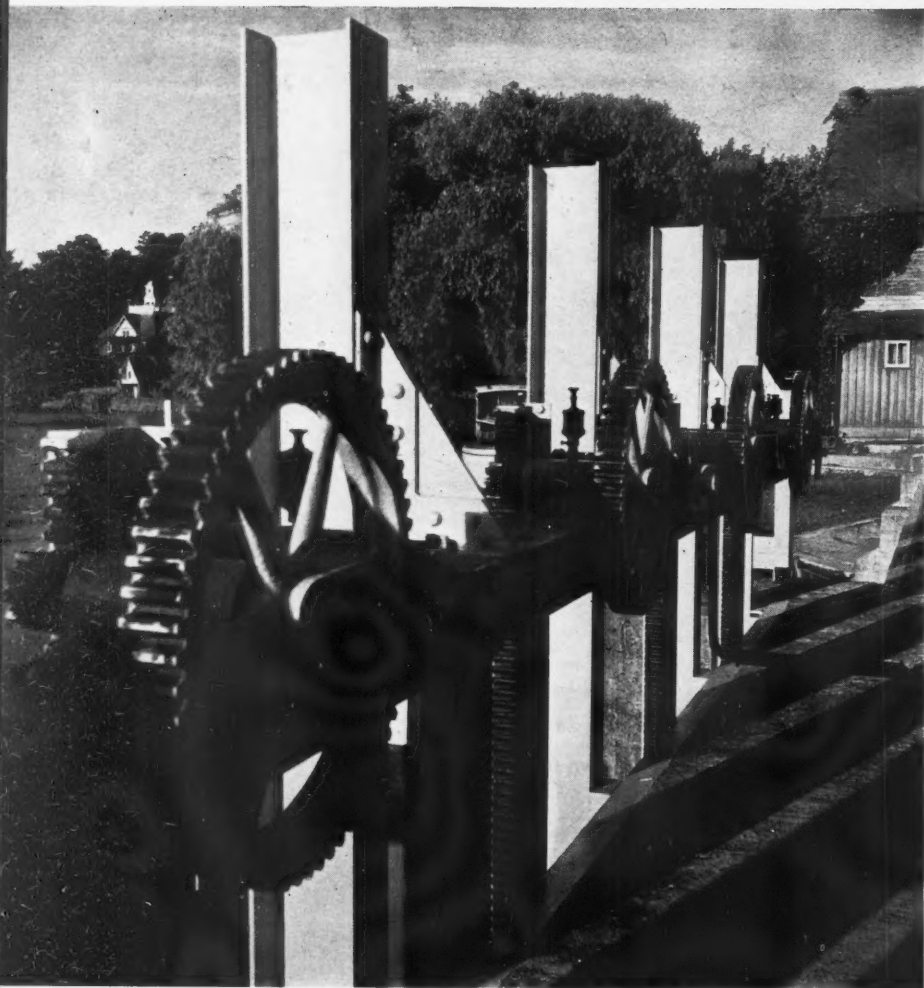
These towns have all borrowed something from each other and yet remain individual. They have a quality of their own which distinguishes them from all other towns in the world. They are self-centred, market towns, yet, on account of their commercial water-link in the past with the metropolis, possess a certain air of sophistication and even to-day retain their urbane, Georgian character.

The eighteenth century has left many fine bridges, too (the finest,

(contd. on page 9)

character of the region Most of the pictures throughout this issue indicate the general character of the tideless Thames, a character which in its variety is so consistent all along the line that the river can justly be called a region. If it is to become a National Park this character, composed of Folk-Work-Place, to use Sir Patrick Geddes's well-known trinity, must be preserved and enhanced. Today work deals with river control for drainage and water supply and with catering for pleasure boating. Below is an expression of river work, a typical small Thames-side boat yard with its shed and hard, its slipway and timber store.





3

work



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The gearing of weir paddles at Goring by which the lock keeper controls the flow of water, 3, a piece of purely functional engineering but incidentally also a good piece of landscape decoration with its regimented row of white stanchions and rhythmical line of geometric cog wheels, which provide a foil to the rich foliage around and the formless turbulence of white foam in the lasher below. Such examples of the vernacular of the Thames Conservancy form a valuable and essential part of the regional character. 4, an apprentice shapes a blade in Mr. Collar's workshop by the river at Oxford, where most of the oars and paddles of the small craft of the Thames are made.

perhaps, is Swinford Bridge) and here and there a Roman temple or some little garden gazebo peeping through the trees.

That a great deal of this eighteenth century and Georgian influence is left can be seen by comparing the actual river scenes of to-day with the engravings and aquatints in the topographical works of Ireland, Boydell, Ackerman and Tombleson. If anything the growth of trees since their time has often improved the landscape.

Though the river has been used to some extent as a pleasure resort for at least three hundred years, it remained, right up to the early part of the nineteenth century, the Silent Highway of London and during the canal era, when the Oxford, the Grand Junction, the Thames and Severn and the Kennet and Avon Canals were built, the traffic on the river must have been considerable. Yet, surprisingly, little now remains to show the importance of the river either for commercial transport before the railways came or for the other two main economic purposes—milling and fishing. The former importance of fishing for the Friday fare is remembered only in place names and even the rows of eel bucks which our fathers saw exist no more. Some mills remain however; a few of them still grind corn and stand as pleasant features in the landscape with their square lanterns and white weather-boarded walls—as at Hambledon, Marlow Lock and Sonning.

The towpath is the most obvious relic of the days of commerce on the Upper Thames and to the proposed Linear Park it is of the first importance, as we shall see. Most of our rivers were without horse-towing paths till the early part of the last century and before the continuous towpath came to the Thames it was common to see a score of men hauling at a barge along the riverside meadows. The Thames towpath is thus not very old and its useful service lasted only a few decades. Its present legal position is confused and as a whole the public has no clear right to use it except for towing—a position which has to be cleared up before the proposed Riverside Walk is established.

To-day the river above Teddington Lock—that part now administered by the Thames Conservancy Board—is essentially a pleasure resort, its chief economic purposes being to supply more than half London's water supply and, of course, to assist land drainage. Commercial transport is negligible though even now a tug and barges can sometimes be seen as far up as Reading. Most traffic ends at Shepperton Lock where it turns off on to the Wey, and the total merchandise carried in 1949 was a mere 281,000 tons, at least half of this being coal for the Kingston Power Station. As for the other modern economic purposes of the river, all come under the heading of catering for recreation and refreshment—boat building, repairing and mooring, cafés and inns, river steamers and fishing rights.

In the middle of the last century the Great Western Railway came to the Thames Valley. Its effects on the river scene have been considerable. The direct ones are the least and consist mainly of bridges across the river—Brunel's three noble brick aqueducts at Basildon, at Moulsoford and at Maidenhead (which has a fascinating echo and the two widest brick spans in the world) and the eight others which are not in the least noble (bright paint of good colour might help them). The indirect effects of the railway are profound for it brought the river within reach of the whole London populace.

While bringing great changes, at the same time the railway helped to preserve the river character in that it stifled water transport. Industrial development kept away from the banks which remain largely free of industrial blight except at Staines, Oxford and Reading, that ancient town "mong other things so widely known for biscuits, seeds and sauce." Above Marlow the changes are less noticeable than below it where the first innovations were the large Victorian bourgeois mansions with their dark romantic gardens. The Gothic fantasy of Oakley Court below Bray and the castellated pile of Danesfield silhouetted against the sky on the hill above Hurley are typical. But there are not many such and most of the larger riverside houses belong to the Edwardian era of which typical examples lie below Maidenhead, Bourne End and Marlow, with their confusion of turrets, gables, verandahs, balconies, white fretted railings and barge boards set behind luxuriant gardens and ornamental boat-houses. Until the war and the Treasury brought the stealthy liquidation of their owners they were always superbly maintained, but to-day too many show signs of neglect. Once we fumed at these fantasies, then we tolerated them, now we regard them with affection, sometimes even with respect (yes, even the Seven Deadly Sins above Pangbourne) and always with a certain reactionary nostalgia for the departed Forsytean culture they express.

Steam plus petrol brought the bungalow suburbia of the Little Man and this most affected the reaches below Staines. But it is far more pleasing than suburbia proper, partly because water, with its moving reflections, mitigates all ugliness and partly because so many of these bungalows have a certain home-made charm. Far too many, of course, are merely squalid shacks (there is a bad outcrop by Walton Bridge), but many, as Barbara Jones described them in an article in the *Review* for December 1948, are 'nautical and snug, shipshape dolls' houses,' individualistic yet somehow homogeneous in their gay 'fluvial manner' with their jumble of tiny gables, long verandahs with white fretted fronts—oriental, Art Nouveau, baroque and curly, plenty of fresh, white paint and small sloping gardens ending in a drooping willow, whitened steps and verges and landing stages of infinite variety. All add to the pleasure and interest of a river journey. We should not scorn these amateur architectural expressions for they are a kind of modern folk art, the crude but spontaneous origins of a culture which the limited spare time by the leisurely river has nurtured and which only more and more spare time can encourage and develop.

What other influences have been at work to create the visual character of the river? Among the most important is the benevolent one which the Thames Conservancy has exercised for nearly a century. The river has gained much by its charming locks and furniture which, with their firm, solid forms painted in the T.C. 'house colours' of white, pale grey and black create such perfect foils to the foliage around them and provide such enjoyable interludes on a river journey. The Conservancy has developed an excellent vernacular of its own which has its roots in the nautical tradition. Most notable are its small engineering structures—lock gates, weirs, and, in particular, its small timber foot-bridges. The style is quite unselfconscious and belongs to that timeless functional tradition whose existence the *Review* has already revealed. Some of the lock cottages are over a hundred years old and possess the pleasing patina and proportions of their age; others are relatively mod-

(contd. on page 13)

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people

5, Bill Brown, who, between wars in which he fought alternately as soldier, sailor and marine, has worked on the river all his life, latterly as ferryman at Molesey, where he is a renowned local character. 6, Mr. Page, lock-keeper at Grafton Lock above Radcot, born and bred on the river. 7, a young lock keeper at Bell Weir above Staines. Those who work on the river form a regional type created by inter-

marriage among the old river families, by climate, by the kinds of work the river provides and by the cheerful genius of the place; boats of all kinds create part of the river pattern, such as the long, shallow, trippers' steamer seen at Bray, 8, the rowing boats in the Goring mill stream, 9, the houseboat above Datchet, 10, and the sumptuous sea-going cruiser, moored at Marlow, 11.

boats

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9



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11





The character of the Thames region has already been established; it lies mainly in the sharp contrast between the rustic and the urban, between the apparent wildness of a miniature Amazon and the decorative buildings with their distinctive Thames flavour. The towns and villages of the river have a quality all their own, receiving much from their Georgian buildings, and much from their old inns and pubs. Least altered by the eighteenth century is Abingdon, at one time a great monastic centre when the Thames formed an important mediaeval highway; because it is served only by a branch railway line, it has retained a great deal of its former charm. 12, a view of Abingdon's East St. Helen's Street. Below, some pubs of the region: 13, *The Talbot* at Swinford Bridge, with its stone walls and pair of bays lying snugly below the level of the road: 14, *The Castle* at Benson, with its Georgian brickwork and details, once a posting house; 15, *The Bull* at Sonning; 16-18, *The Angel* at Henley—from the north-east, from the bridge and from the bar inside.



12



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ern but always designed with a certain care. Their gardens are beautifully kept by the lock-keepers, who are stimulated by annual competitions among themselves. Each lock-keeper has power in his small kingdom and gives to it something of his own personality. Every lock thus has its individual stamp, but at the same time continues the universal, basic forms of granite edging, heavy timbered gates and beams, smoothly sculptured bollards and whitened steps.

Last but not least the trees. These grow luxuriantly and form an æsthetic bond along the whole length of the river. The trees *are* the Thames. In the gardens, the weeping willow and the weeping beech, the acacia, the chestnut and the occasional cedar; in the countryside the common beech, the elm, the pollard willow, the black poplar (lovely when seen shimmering against blue sky) and, dominating all, the ubiquitous lombardy, especially telling when it forms a punctuation to the horizontal sweep of the river bank. These trees are never regularly disposed and it is this informality, this apparent naturalness, of the planting which is so characteristic and so well worth preserving.

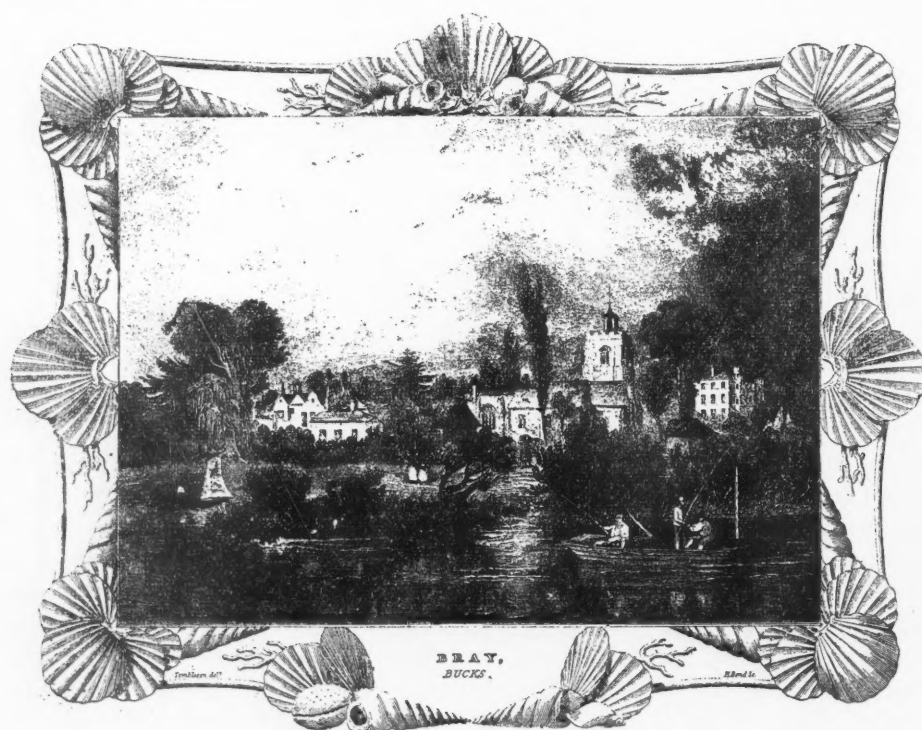
The Thames Regional Style, diverse yet unified, runs, then, all the way from Teddington to Lechlade. Yet the river can be divided into three distinct sub-regions. First the river suburbia up to Staines, less built-up and lined with more vegetation than one would suppose, for there are extensive open spaces at Hampton Court, Shepperton and Laleham. The suburban effects can be seen as far up as Marlow, the first real riverside town. Secondly comes the stretch from Staines to Oxford with its Home County look, containing the finest scenery of the river—the quintessence of the Thames. After the sordor of Oxford's back yard (which must be thanked to some extent for acting as a kind of protective barrier to the far solitude) comes the third sub-region, the Mediæval Thames which has already been described. Here industry obtrudes only in the form of a Victorian paper mill at Wolvercot, a sugar beet factory at Eynsham and a regrettable neo-Georgian waterworks at Swinford. Though scenically unexciting it has its own special charms which are at their best in the late spring when the river still runs high and the meadows are green and succulent. Its remoteness and meandering tranquillity are its chief attractions and away above the floodlands lie many delightful villages with their ancient manor houses, inns and churches, most of which deserve a visit—Wytham, Cumnor, Stanton Harcourt, Appleton, Northmoor, Cote, Bampton, until at Kelmscott and Lechlade one is in the Cotswold country with its fine local stone; above Lechlade, lie Kempsford, Castle Eaton and finally Cricklade, where the river becomes a mere trickle by mid-summer.

So much for Work and Place. What of Folk, the third of Geddes's Regional Trinity? Something, too, has been said of them—of the floating population, the week-end and summer immigrants from the metropolis, the urban shuttlecocks seeking refreshment by the water—upper middle at Goring, Shiplake, Maidenhead, lower middle anywhere below Staines. These, as we have seen, have contributed largely in their fashion strange to the Thames fabric. But what of the indigenous folk—those who live on and by the river—the lock-keepers, ferrymen, mill workers, inn keepers, villagers, tradesmen, riverside farmers, the few surviving toll-bridge keepers, and the men of the boat-yards? Do they make up a regional type? It is always dangerous to generalise but roughly speaking they do. It is one that has been formed

by intermarriage among the old river families, by climate, by the kinds of work the river provides which swing with the soothing rhythm of the seasons, and by the cheerful genius of the place. The type is physically well set up, parochial to the river, solemn, contemplative, quiet—sometimes almost to moroseness—but kindly and welcoming as the summer's flow; easy to rouse to a quick resentment as the winter's torrent. It is the air of languor which most marks it—like the languor of a swinging punt in the brooding warmth of a summer's afternoon. The river seems always to be reflected in the eyes—flowing on smooth and endless. The type is in sharp contrast to that found on the estuarial river and at the Port with its cosmopolitan, maritime alertness.

Proud of their riverside crafts, delighting in a well turned out boat and in the study and domination of the water, the men of the river scorn the clumsy, modern tyro; especially so the older ones who remember the easy, shining days of the bourgeois river cult with its steam launches, parasols, ornamental house boats, the Three Men and champagne at Tagg's, when to embark on any sort of craft without white flannels and rubber-soled shoes was to be banned from Society as being 'not quite the clean potatoe,' not of the 'real river people.'

These folk and their place make the Thames Region. The object must be to preserve and develop its character as a National Linear Park. Already there is too much blight. The time has come to look to our Thames, for, as Soames reflected on his return to his riverside home at Mapledurham after a trip abroad: 'Have they such a river as the Thames anywhere out of England? Not they! Nothing that runs so clear and green and weedy, where you can sit in a punt and watch the cows, and those big elms, and the poplars. Nothing that is safe and quiet, where you call your soul your own and think of Constable and Mason and Walker.'







villas and cottages



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22



23



24

The Linear National Park

19, the Temple in the garden of Garrick's Villa at Hampton, built to house a statue of Shakespeare by Roubiliac, is now the central feature in a public park and closes the vista along the reach from Tagg's Island. 20, lock cottage at Hurley. 21, almshouses of 1830 by the churchyard at Henley. 22, one of the earliest lock cottages, built in 1814 at Penton Hook. 23, middle class riverside dwelling below Marlow, a type which only the Thames could have produced. 24, another early lock cottage at Cleeve Lock above Goring. A diverse and variegated collection of small buildings yet they somehow possess a Thames style which is definite yet difficult to define. The verdure and the trees help the unity but this is perhaps mainly created by the ubiquity of white paintwork, by simple, functional trim such as the fences and by a similarity of scale which is always at a homely, human level.



25

The Thames is a museum of English history for along it lie the monuments of eight centuries punctuating the river banks. 25, Sunbury Church spire built in 1752 is attached to an undistinguished nave built a century later and happily concealed from the river by the white façade of *The Magpie*. 26, the elegant Gothic spire of Sir Robert Taylor's St. Peter's at Wallingford built in 1777. 27, the spire of St. Helen's, which dominates the right bank at Abingdon. Inside the churches are many fine



26

tombs and monuments. 28, in Dorchester Abbey Church an unknown warrior, a crusader and one of the few Dancing Knights in existence, so called because of their vigorous, undefeated attitudes. 29, at Faringdon is the



27

early seventeenth century alabaster figure of Lady Unton. 30, at Bisham, the famous sixteenth century Hoby monument and, 31, the exquisite little Swan Monument with its four white birds and its pyramid surmounted by a flaming heart (see the cover).

churches and monuments



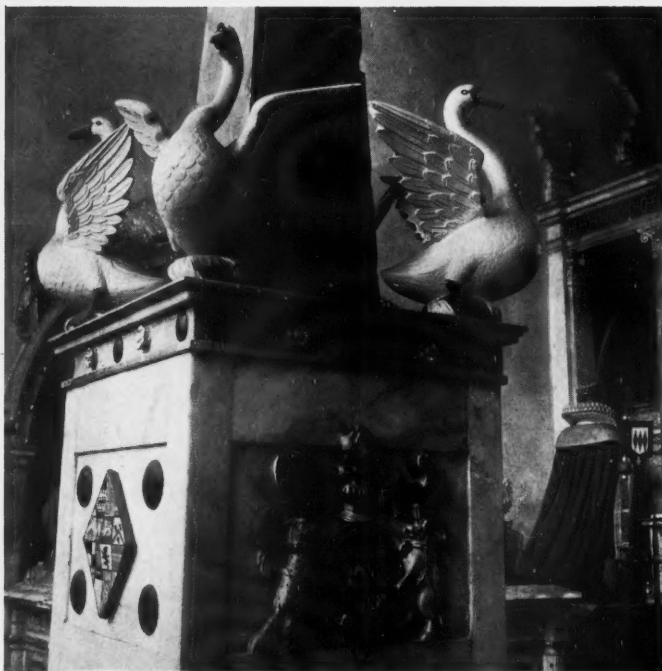
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case for the linear park As the author of the Greater London Plan pointed out, the Thames is the one great natural feature of the Greater London Region. That part of it lying to the west of the Wen, especially that above Teddington Lock, where the Thames Conservancy takes over from the Port of London Authority, satisfactorily combines the two functions of supplying London with water and of acting as a recreational strip. It is, and has been for a century, a public pleasure park in fact if not in name. Relatively little is now required in legislation, planning and cost to convert the river into a complete park both in fact and in name, and to develop and retain it as such.

The Thames provides a pleasure resort not only for Londoners but for all who live in the thickly populated area of Southern England, including those towns which lie on or near its banks such as Slough, Windsor, Reading, Oxford and Swindon. But it is not just a regional amenity; it is a national possession—almost an open-air museum of English culture. As Messrs. Salters' excellent little guide puts it: 'This is indeed the peculiar glory of the Thames. Within the small compass of about a hundred miles it shows just what is most characteristic in English scenery, history, and modern life . . . if a visitor has only four days in which to capture a true impression of this country he would do well to spend two of them in the Thames Valley.'

There has always been conflict between the various users of the river, formerly between boaters, millers and fishermen, more recently between the general public and owners of riparian property. This latter conflict reached a peak during the last century and the result was that a Select Committee was set up in 1884 'to enquire into the operation of the Acts for the Preservation of the Thames and the steps which are necessary to secure the enjoyment of the River as a place of Recreation.' What the Committee did definitely establish was that, though fishing rights above Staines were private, 'the rights of the public to move boats over any and every part of the river through which Thames water flows, as an ancient and free highway, wherever they are not of necessity and, for the time, excluded by the requirements of the navigation, should be clearly declared.' The river itself is thus by ancient right a public place and as the spinal cord of a National Linear Park it presents no legal complications.

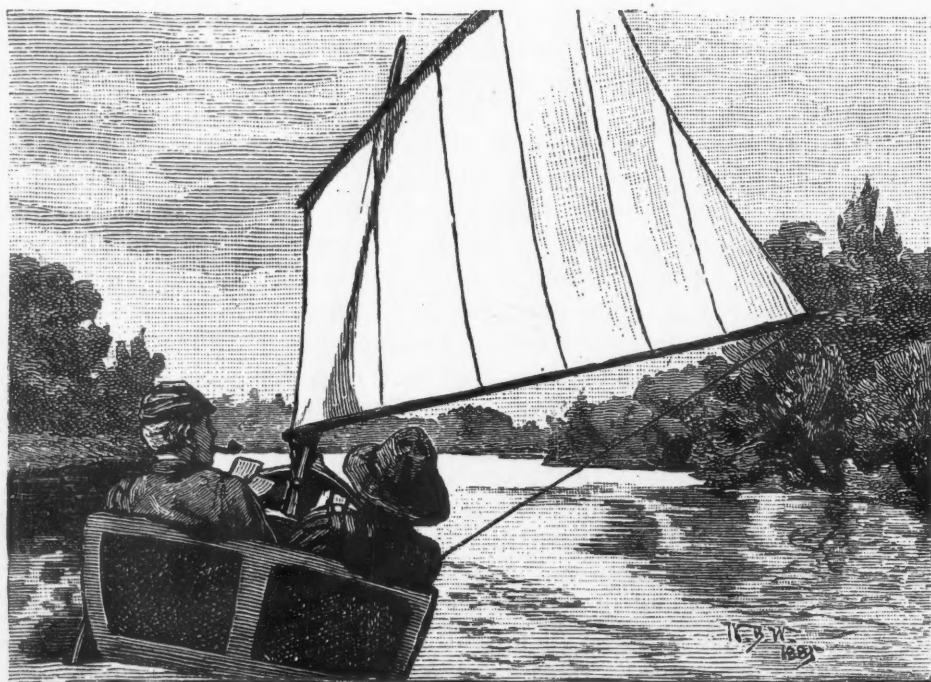
The legal position of the towpath as a public right of way is more complex and will need clearing up. The difficulties, however, are easy to overcome with the powers now available, and the new powers provided by the National Parks Act would allow the state provision of improvements and amenities for recreation on the Thames as a whole once it was designated as a National Park.

If the river is to become such a park, all these powers may have to be used and private owners of riparian land will be compelled to co-

operate. Things will go much more smoothly if this co-operation is willing and constructive, and it should be made clear to private owners by the authorities that if they have to make some immediate sacrifices everyone, including themselves, will benefit in the long run and their private battles to preserve the beauties of the river they love will have been won for them once and for all.

Mere chance is mainly responsible for the preservation of the river character up to the present time—decline of water transport as competition developed with rail and road, the fertility and dampness of the soil which produces rich vegetation, the existence of wide tracts of floodland which precludes building near the river, the curtailment of building by the War, the careful maintenance of riverside parks and gardens by their proud owners. Perhaps, too, the general attitude among all classes towards the river, as a result of its traditional use for pleasure and recreation, has produced an unconscious recognition of a River Culture which may have acted as a subtle sensitising force on the landscape.

But it is too dangerous to leave the landscape to the whims of chance any longer, even under existing planning controls, which are still largely negative ones. A dynamic, creative approach is needed to preserve and improve one of the most accessible, one of the most interesting and beautiful of large-scale public pleasure parks in England—and the most unusual. It is relatively unspoiled, it is picturesque, it can be enjoyed according to temperament either in crowded places or in remote retreat, it offers many facilities for sport and recreation in delightful surroundings at a time when leisure for all has come to stay and will steadily grow; it offers boating, bathing, walking, fishing and the pastimes associated with these activities—sunbathing, camping, exploration and the study of nature, archæology, history, architecture, sketching and painting, reading, talking, picnicking, dreaming, junketing, lovemaking—and all beside the soul's ease, the soothing, symbolic, eternal stream.



case for the linear park Being a long strip, the Thames, serving not only London but the whole of the south, is accessible to a large part of the population. Yet most of it has miraculously retained its charm of isolation. In the 135 miles between Teddington and Cricklade there is great variety within the typical character and there is space to spare. The river offers open-air recreation of many sorts and conditions for relaxation either in solitude or in a crowd. Above Godstow, for example, you can meander in mediaeval remoteness. At Runnymede, 32, you can be gregarious in a pleasant field or, ignoring the mob, just lie sprawling in the sun with your own thoughts. There are already signs, however, of a conflict of uses, or of the failure to make the right kind of provision for the various users. One example of this is given overpage, as an illustration.



facilities for bathing considered as one aspect of the case for a national
most other aspects—picnicking, parking, boating, fishing, etc.—is to provide services and amenities without

par
modif

a state of nature

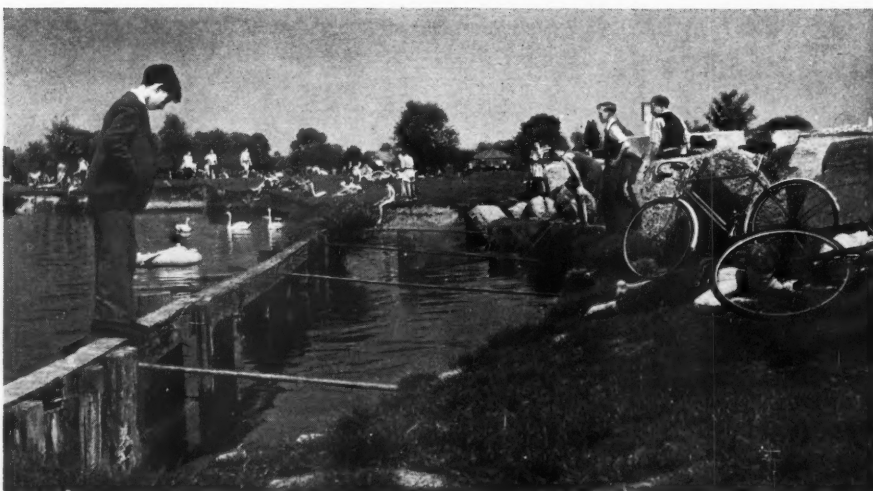
There are two types of bathing place on the river—the natural and the designed. A natural example exists at Shillingford where a road comes down to a grass patch by the water. This is an ideal arrangement, but impossible to retain where large crowds gather.



33

b deterioration through accident

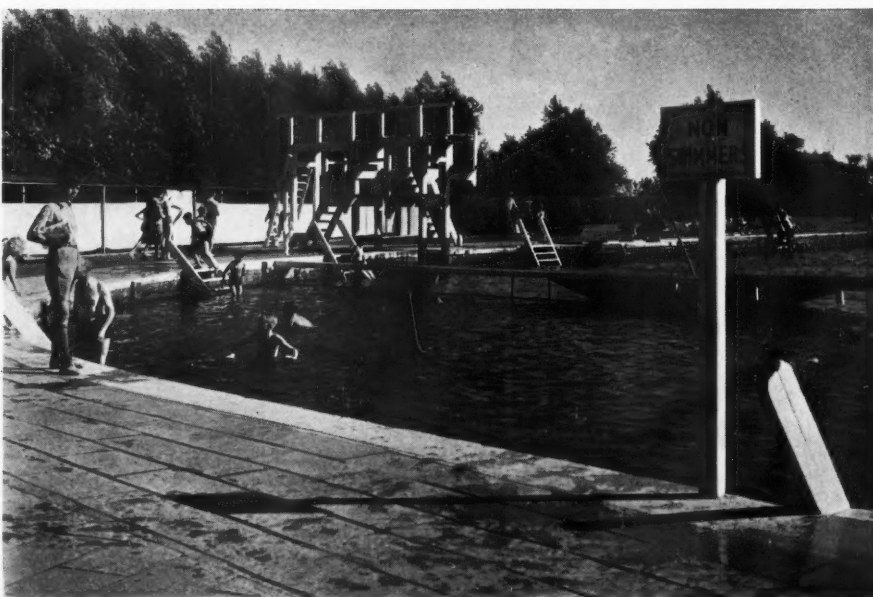
Runnymede provides an example that is neither natural nor designed, but merely careless and squalid—a case of deterioration by accident at a point where designed amenities are essential because large crowds congregate here, especially on bank holidays.



34

C deterioration through design

The public bathing place below Oxford—an example of deterioration by design. It makes a fairly good try but it does not *belong* and is cut off from the river by a dark green fence of corrugated iron—depressing symbol of insensitive municipal puritanism.



35

park—the object here, as with
modifying the character of the thing preserved.

d

solution 1

An ideal solution of the designed type owned by the Shillingford Bridge Hotel. With its generous well-kept lawn wide open to the river, its simplicity and its screen of quick-growing lombardy poplars, it belongs to the river. A brightly painted college barge, displaced from Oxford, provides a decorative point of interest, helps to wed the site to the river and is of some practical use.



36

e

solution 2

An ideal solution of the natural type by the towpath at Wallingford Bridge. Here the grassy bank extends for some way and greater numbers can be accommodated than at such closely contained spots as the one at Shillingford shown on the opposite page. Such examples need not be formed exclusively by nature but can, in fact, be deliberately landscaped in a casual and apparently natural manner.



37

The Linear National Park

In creating the Thames Linear Park all the demands and every taste must be satisfied as far as possible without disturbing the Thames character with its feeling of being a country on its own cut off from the rest of the world. Amenities

are needed for such recreations as long-distance walking, boating of every kind, bathing, camping and fishing. Some like to enjoy the river alone, others in congregations; both needs must, and can, be satisfied.

rowing and cruising

38



39



Some, 38, like to scull vigorously along deserted waters. Others, 39, like to sit lazily among their fellows on a river steamer. There is no conflict of use here and as it passes quickly by neither boat for long disturbs the river's sense of remoteness;

rather does it enhance it. 40, a small crowd of children at play below Wallingford Bridge where crowds tend to gather. 41, a pair of lonely fishermen at Goring Weir; though two country towns lie on either side, the sense of isolation persists.

fishing

40



41





42

sailing

To help satisfy the different needs without conflict, one part of the river can be dedicated to one kind of recreation, another part to another kind. The reach at Bourne End, for instance, is ideal for sailing for the river here is straight and broad, and strong,

steady breezes sweep across the flat land which lies on either side. Here the Upper Thames Sailing Club is established and holds an annual regatta, when you can see such typical sights as this, 42, when dinghies are preparing for the afternoon's racing.

resting

43



For quietness and ease you have the public riverside park for a minute or an hour and the eyot or riverside meadow for a day or a week. At Hampton between the main road and the river runs a municipal garden, 43, of the better sort, for here a lawn runs right down to the reedy bank undisturbed by gravel paths; planting is

44



informal and the whole is simple, unaffected and in the river style; only a poor and unnecessary railing mars this decorative picture. 44, enjoying elevenses, a holiday party is camped in privacy on an undisturbed island above Bourne End, slightly anxious perhaps that it may be trespassing. Such anxieties need removing.

camping



45

the continuous towpath is an essential basic element in the Thames Linear Park. Its variety makes it so agreeable a walk, and what it lacks in hilliness is amply repaid by the landscape effects provided by the water, and by the rapid contrast of scene. Surprises are continual as the track winds from one decorative, built-up clearing to another between the seemingly natural, but actually artificial, wildness. Here at Marsh Lock is one surprise—the path leaves the land altogether and sweeps out into the river round the weir and back again to land.









4

significance of the towpath The idea of a continuous riverside walk is not a new one. The Thames River Preservation Committee of 1884 expressed the view that such a walk was desirable and recorded the fact that a similar idea had been put forward in 1793. Now, largely through the initiative of the Thames Conservancy Board, the scheme is almost certain to go through, for on March 24 last at a meeting of the Thames River Walk Committee it was unanimously approved by representatives of all the riparian authorities interested. The idea is that the walk should run for 135 miles from the tidal limit at Teddington in Middlesex to Cricklade in Gloucestershire, which is practically at the source of the river. (The only comparable long-distance foot route is the Pennine Way.) The Walk would follow, as closely as possible, the existing towpath, much of which is in fact, if not in law, now open to the public, the worst break occurring at the Royal Home Park opposite Datchet, which is at present closed off except to (non-existent) barges and their horses. A completely new walk would have to be constructed from Inglesham, where the tow-path now ends, to Cricklade, but as this would run along meadowland most of the way it should not present many difficulties. A good deal of work is needed to repair erosion and crumbling and, according to a survey made in 1948, nearly 13,000 feet of tow-path at 42 points needs protective work. The Board has asked that a 25 feet wide strip of land should be set aside as a public open space along the towpath to prevent development which might interfere with the walk. Where the path so-to-speak crosses the river, either ferries will be organised, or foot bridges will be built and, wherever possible, crossings will be made at locks. The cost has been estimated at £50,000 a year for several years and after that a much lower upkeep cost. It is hoped that the National Parks Commission, in other words the Country, will pay the bulk of all cost and that the other authorities concerned will each pay merely a token share.

That, then, is the position of the Towpath Scheme at the time of writing. The Thames Linear Park is therefore already half way to realisation, because the path is the core of such a park, its *sine qua non*. It establishes its unique linear quality, for the river in the Thames Line can be considered in a sense as an appendage to the towpath, an ornamental lake on which one can, of course, desport oneself, but which is fundamentally a decorative feature to be seen from the land.

This is an important psychological point, a matter of feeling. Its importance can easily be grasped if one considers the towpath as being

broken and discontinuous as it is at present. The linear quality of the park is at once destroyed if the path is broken at any point.

To the atavistic being in many people, communication, travel and exploration are best carried out on foot, otherwise sensations of difficulty, and thoughts of worrying barriers to be overcome, arise. Water to their subconscious minds is a barrier and not the first choice as a means of mobility—a dug-out must be built, unknown hazards must be faced, the arms are not free for defence, for food-gathering or eating. On the other hand the forest track is familiar and there life is better understood and more easily controlled.

The towpath can be considered as a native bush track, and however attractive the water itself may be to some, to others the path is more natural, safer and easier (and, incidentally, cheaper) than the river as a line of communication. But its main value lies in its articulation of the linear quality of the whole, a quality which can be found in no other park. The path-plus-river possesses an atmosphere of remoteness, isolation, secrecy, escape which survives even where the line passes through a town or winds past some modern intrusion well screened by foliage. Mile after mile of exploration and adventure either afloat or on foot is possible in a world on its own within a world. The route is fixed and immutable and this soothes the mind—soothes but never bores for there is surprise and change at each bend of the line.

For example, to take a well-known section: at Maidenhead life is urban, lively, affluent, the outside world of cars and buses obtrudes, but only for an instant. Here the river is wide and busy and a motor road accompanies the river even beyond Boulter's Lock. Then comes the sharp contrast of a narrow, intimate, tree-lined cutting which suddenly opens out to the splendours of Cliveden Reach. On the right a great forested escarpment rises up and on the left flat, unsullied meadows stretch away to a horizon of trees. Ahead lies a cluster of floating, Turneresque eyots and far off above them stands the dramatic block of Cliveden itself, pretentious and uninspired as a building maybe, but of great value as a focus in that landscape. Then the sudden bend into the narrow, friendly approach to Cookham Lock, while the river continues up the weir stream through a superb, informal treescape where the mass of variegated 'bushy-tops' forms a foil to the powerful banners of the poplars. Beyond Cookham with its low, elegant Victorian iron bridge comes the sudden change to flat, open country reaching away to the left towards Quarry Woods, while to the right mature Edwardian gardens line the bank to Bourne End.

And so on and on, urbanity following wilderness, intimacy following the view to the horizon with exciting and startling rapidity.

But apart from the existence of this unique quality of the winding line of quick, refreshing contrasts, a very practical case can be made for the Thames as a National Park. It depends, as we have said, on the continuous towpath. To re-establish its continuity would present no great problems and could be easily and cheaply accomplished. Most of the path exists already as far as Inglesham. In addition the park will be sparing in the use of land. Almost no extra land at all is needed—not even so much as might be required along an improved road, for instance, by additions such as roundabouts. No new, useful areas need be sterilised. All that is demanded is the revival, enhancement and perpetuation of our existing native bush track and its immediate environs.





Wallingford to Lechlade



map of the non-tidal Thames Reproduction of part of the map contained in Tomblinson's illustrated work of 1834 on the Thames. The map shown here does not quite include the whole of the non-tidal river which would comprise the Thames National Park with its towpath walk. This would begin at Teddington Lock and end at Cricklade, 11 miles above Lechlade—135 miles in all. But so far as scenery is concerned it does show the most important stretch of the Linear National Park.

Chertsey to Wallingford

46



footpath into towpath

47



48



The river itself is fed by streams but the towpath also has its tributaries—tracks, lanes and bridle paths that wind down from the valley slopes and so link the towpath with the whole national system of footpaths. Here is one sequence. 46, the walk round the rampart on Castle Hill at Sinodun Down, a prehistoric earthwork. 47, the same path crosses a small valley, climbs up to the western point of the hill and thence down to Little Wittenham and the river. 48, the path reaches Laleham Ferry.

The lane that comes down from Aston Village and the Flower Pot Inn to the towpath and the ferry which takes you on your way to the main road between Marlow and Henley. Like most of the other ferries, this one also links the towpath where it crosses from one bank to the other.





50



51



52



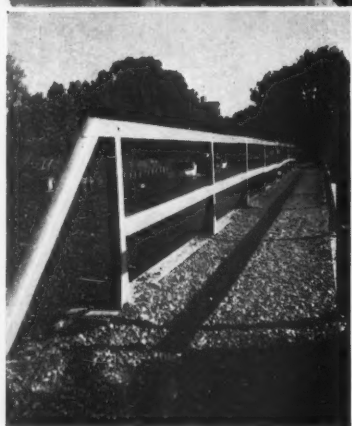
53

undulations

The idea of a continuous towpath walk is not a new one and was first mooted in 1793. Now the scheme to establish such a walk will almost certainly go through. It will take the Thames Linear Park at least half-way towards realization, for it is an essential element in such a park and establishes its unique linear quality. Most of the walk exists already though it is not legally a continuous right of way; the law will need complicated amendments but not much is needed physically to join the broken links. These pages and the few following illustrate the special quality of the towpath line as it waves along the side of the river, across the river and even occasionally along and above the river.

It sometimes undulates over bridges but mostly it goes on its horizontal way, splitting in two at lock rollers so that a part descends to the level of the water below, pausing for a moment at a lock, wandering off round a lock island to cross the weir on the other side, narrowing along a grassy, bucolic reach or widening out to gravel when it reaches a built-up clearing. Examples of the undulating line: 50, the two humped bridges a mile below Oxford. 51, the line splits off a short subsidiary track which bends down to the water at the Ifley Lock rollers. 52, it leaps across the water lane that leads to the Ifley rollers. 53, it spans the weir stream at Shiplake Lock. 54, it splits away again at Cookham

55

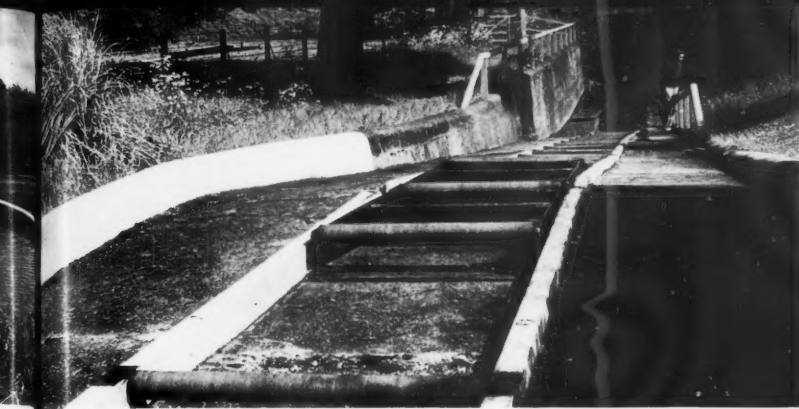


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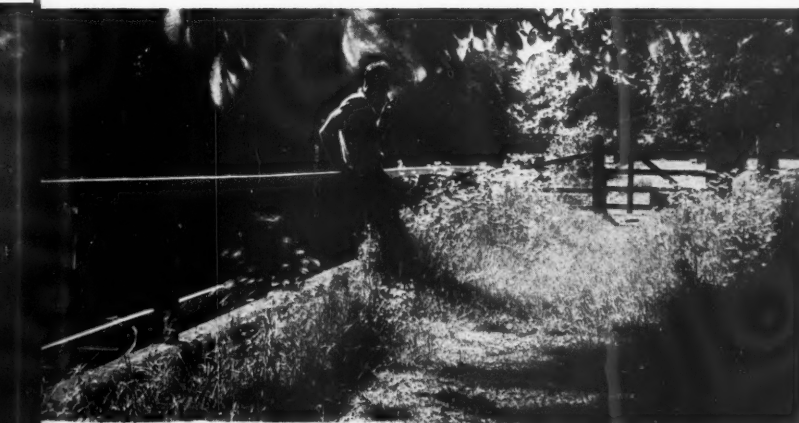
57

straight lines



54

rollers. Examples of the horizontal line, direct or winding along on the level: 55, it crosses a tributary at Radcot Bridge. 56, strides straight across the weir stream at Romney Lock. 57, sends off a shoot across the weir at Marlow. 58, runs intimately on grass at Cookham Lock. 59, opens out, wide and gravelly, to the crowds at Molesey. 60, rises on boards above flood level at Clifton Hampden. 61, the line sits down and spreads its legs at Boulter's Lock. Obstacles on the line provide breaks, add to its variety, articulate and contain its direction. 62, a white gate between meadows at Basildon. 63, steps at the offshoot across the weir at Cleeve Lock. 64, a gate near Radley. 65, another gate at Shiplake.



58



59



60

The Linear National Park

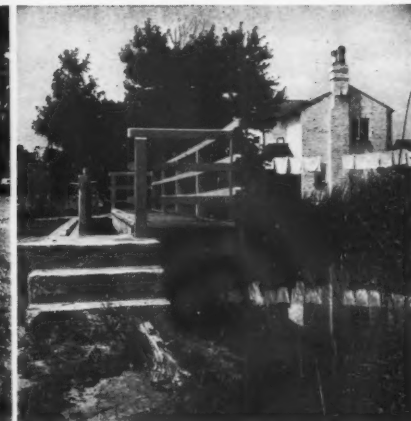
pauses



61

obstacles

62



63



64



65



66



The line as rustic idyll. 66, along Shifford Cut between banks of trees it comes to a bridge and a farm track; here the grass is long and rough. 67, the stretch between two ferries below the declivity of Cliveden Woods has a more sophisticated air with its lawn-like grass and its picturesque Victorian ferryman's cottage.



67

The line comes to built-up areas. 68, much of the rear of Oxford by the river is marred by industrial squalor but here, above Osney Lock, the industrialisation is not obnoxious or out of key. 69, along the verge of Andersey Island, which is itself free of buildings; the towpath looks ahead to the road bridge and across the river to Abingdon, a fine clustered composition dominated by the spire of St. Helen's. 70, at

Sandford Lock the path looks across the river to a group of buildings containing the King's Arms and centred round the chimney of a paper mill—another piece of rare industrialism that does no harm, at least on the upper side of the lock. 71, an offshoot from the line at Marlow Lock runs into private property and suggests how the line itself could sometimes for a moment run through buildings with interesting effect.

urban towpath

68



69



70



71



72

The line continues through urban parts. 72, a boulevard effect on the opposite bank at Abingdon built by the municipality. 73, at Marlow, between the lock and the town, the line wanders off behind buildings, past some Regency houses where it catches sight of the water again through willow trees, then along a twitton between high brick walls, to arrive on a road which runs straight down to a landing stage at the river's edge. 74, the line comes to a shipping pool at Folly Bridge, Oxford, where it undulates over a side stream.

urban towpath

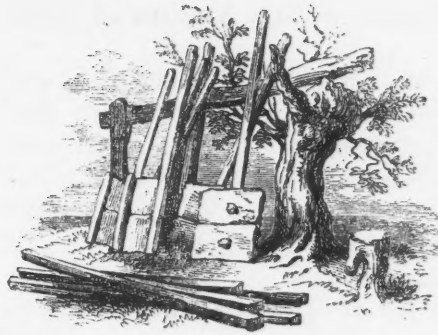


73



74





5

technique of conservation and development A point that must be reiterated before starting the constructive job of developing the Thames as a National Park is that it is a *Line*—a line some 135 miles long but only a few hundred yards wide. The whole art of development will consist in preserving the isolation and remoteness of this strip by screening it from the outside world and of screening the outside world from it.

This involves an empirical technique which the accompanying pictures, showing both what to do and what not to do, will explain better than words.

Factories and ribbon development may be near but will be hidden by trees. The reverse, too, will hold good, for where the scene opens out to encompass the surrounding countryside of copse, hills and fields, any boundaries must be concealed—an ugly fence, in the foreground, for instance, can easily ruin a five mile vista.

On account both of its innate character, which has been created through the centuries, and of its narrowness, the landscape is—and must continue to be—*artificial*. The question to be answered before refurbishing the Line is therefore: What kind of artificiality do we want?

We want, broadly speaking, to create two sorts of interdependent artificiality which act as foils to each other but which are both peculiar to the Thames and form part of its fundamental pattern. Only in this way can the desired sense of isolation (apart from certain established exceptions), the sense of a country on its own, be retained. We want, on the one hand, to create a wilderness, an apparently natural phenomenon, a kind of miniature Amazon, in the heart of England in order to form the most striking contrast possible to the outer world. We want, on the other hand, where building is dominant, not to conceal the building, but to retain and develop the characteristic Thames style of building.

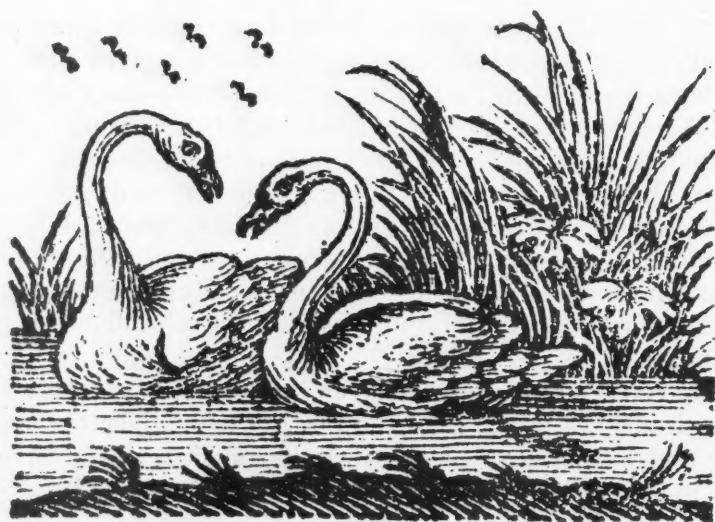
The first is a matter of enclosure and planting, of creating intimacy and seclusion. The landscape must open out only where the prospect is pleasing and even where pictures of the outside world intrude they must be made to look like part of your special landscape. Whatever buildings occur in such cases they too must form part of this special landscape or else be concealed.

The second is a matter essentially of special style and special ornament—of special trim and planting. Wherever the picture is disrupted you can either hide the trouble or you can accept it and turn it to advantage by applying a technique of ornamentation. This is not a plea for whimsy; it is perfectly possible to apply within the idiom of mod-

ern architecture as is shown in the section on New Marlow on pages 56-68.

By accepting the twin qualities of Amazonian wilderness and formal ornamentation by building—which often occur within one reach—the peculiar character of the river can be preserved and developed. The transition is swift and sudden; no gentle half-way introductions are needed or desirable. The wavy nature of the line itself with its punctuations and closed vistas creates this element of sudden change and surprise. This effect should not be softened but rather emphasised to be as thrilling as the flash of fireworks during Henley Week—suspense, shock, climax.

What exactly is meant by this special ornamentation? Again the pictures tell the story, but briefly and suggestively it means bright paintwork with white predominating, the multiplicity of widely overhanging eaves and gables, the generous supply of open-air rooms in the form of balconies and verandahs, brilliantly coloured awnings and umbrellas over well-mown lawns, special kinds of riverside plantation particularly of trees that bloom, the gay, relaxed jungle holiday bungalows where the bush track emerges from the trees into a clearing—those lively, spontaneous, fantastic, variegated, harmonious retreats of leisure. Then, too, the formal municipal riverside park in its best form, and such typical incidents as the white flag post doubled by its reflection and closing the vista in the still water ahead. The moored boats, also, with their moving reflections form decorative elements—the slim, white launches with their wicker chairs, the rows of low punts held by their vertical poles, the satisfying forms of the traditional river skiffs and randans with their seat backs of wrought-iron curlykews, their pipe-clayed fend-offs and red plush cushions, among all of which the swans of His Majesty and of the Dyers' and Vintners' Companies drift in their serene, protected arrogance.





technique 1: trim What forces have created the Thames regional character? First; natural ones of climate and geology—rich, damp soil producing verdant growth on clay, chalk and gravel formations. Secondly; man-made landscape and building—in landscape, intimate enclosure contrasting with open park and meadowland, thick growth and informally planted trees, gardens large and small; in building, distinctive riverside towns and decorative dwellings, functional bridges, the vernacular of the Thames Conservancy, typified at Romney Lock, 75. The unique characteristics of the Thames can no longer be merely taken for granted; if they are to survive they must be analysed and understood. On the pages that follow is a casebook for the planning of the Thames National Park. First comes a study of detail, or trim, some of the hundred and one things which are a necessary part of the Thames landscape and contribute as much towards retaining its character as the second category considered afterwards, the wider landscape, with problems of enclosure and exposure, of planting, of vista and concealment.



75

real versus bogus

The river character retained and rejected in buildings. 76, an unaffected cottage at Laleham ferry, a Georgian version of the functional tradition. 77, the Chequers Inn at Bablock Hythe, an insensitive modern erection with horizontal glazing bars and green tiled roof. Such buildings need not remain for ever to destroy a stretch of the river, and 78 shows how, by the addition of a balcony and roof overhang, a modification of the windows and roof, plus a few flowers and an awning, the twentieth century can make its contribution to river style, in line with its own development of the functional tradition.

76



77



78





photographs appearing on pages 39-54
in this colour indicate how not to do it.

There are thirty-one road bridges, old and new, across the river between Teddington and Lechlade and some twelve footbridges not counting the many minor bridges across the lock rollers and tributaries. On the whole their design is good. Of the eleven railway bridges only the three by Brunel have any dignity. Below are some examples of road and footbridges, most of which are worthy of the functional tradition. 79, the eighteenth century stone bridge with its toll cottage at Swinford, perhaps the finest on the river. 80, Halfpenny Bridge at Lechlade, built in 1792. 81, Godstow Bridge, built in 1770. 82, 83, 84, three examples of the small timber footbridges of

the Thames Conservancy, simple, economic, unselfconscious engineering works which approach perfection in their class and give much to the Thames regional character: 82, towpath bridge across a stream above Godstow; 83, Footbridge near Buckland. 84, bridge over the rollers at Boveney Lock. 85, the worst bridge on the river, a steel span carrying the towpath across the Thame where it joins the Thames near Dorchester, not improved by the provisional concrete embanking. 86, the concrete footbridge above Ilfley; in spite of its affected railings it has a functional beauty. The Thames landscape can assimilate new materials if used with understanding.

the functional tradition: bridges

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82

80
83

81
84



85



86

87, an intimate, secluded cutting above Shifford Lock, a case where nature should be allowed to retain her domination; here boats can tie to tree trunks and projecting roots. In built-up areas artificial moorings are needed and are now inadequate. 88, the Pack Horse at Staines at least provides a stage but it is crude and careless in design. 89, a pretentious Italianate job below Shillingford which achieves a certain surrealistic effect by serving a wilderness of bush. 90, Maidenhead Corporation provides this public landing stage; unfortunately the water here is barely a foot

deep and the design is gross. 91, the long, simple steps and floating raft at the Oxford University boathouse are in the right riverside tradition. 92, the landing stage below Maidenhead Railway Bridge (public or private? No one seems to know). It is a fair attempt but for the unnecessary row of pretentious pillars, whose tops can just be seen. 93, a heavy, messy effect at Monkey Island. 94, the right style at a private landing stage opposite Monkey Island—simple, unaffected timber work, articulated and protected by white paint. 95, another agreeable specimen above Marsh Weir.

87

88

89

moorings

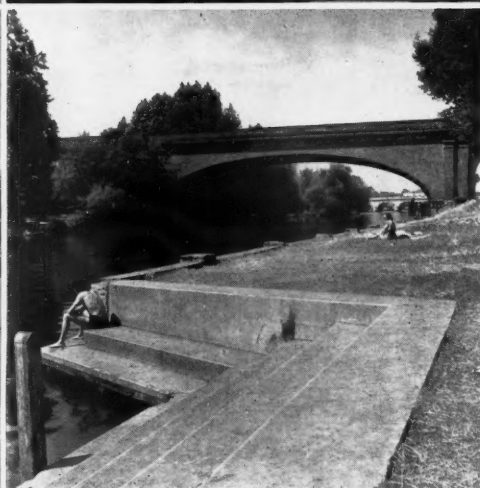
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101

96, the natural case that conforms with 87, where wild flowers and uncut grass hang over the shelving gravel. 97, the worst offence that can be committed is to cut off the land from the river by railings and fences especially those that are as ungraciously conceived as this at the rear of Oxford. 98, the tea garden above the bridge at Abingdon shows the right manner, for the lawn runs clear to the bank. 99, this strident, brutal Heil below Staines is quite alien to the Thames. 100, another good natural

example below the tow path at Cliveden. 101, sophistication at Park Place but of the right kind; here the lawn slopes down to the river and overhangs some simple timber campshedding. 102, a simple, clean, functional verge of timber along a private garden near Maidenhead, protected by black creosote below and white paint above. 103, an overdone affair near Laleham, out of scale with the bungalow behind and breaking the first rule by cutting off the river from the land with a fence.

96

97

98

banks

99

100



101

102

103

Railings should be used only where they are absolutely necessary for protection and should then be of the utmost simplicity and preferably painted white. 104, a case at the rollers at Cookham Lock, where the timber railing is both necessary in function and simple in character. 105, another good example, in this case in iron, on the weir bridge at Penton Hook. 106, a third good example at New Bridge, where white timber railings supported by widely spaced posts protect the passer-by from the steep slope which falls to the river; it incidentally makes a pleasing foil to the grey solidity of the ancient stone bridge. 107, unkempt, ornate squalor at Sonning, festooned with barbed wire; apparently it protects a

wilderness of weeds belonging to the French Horn Hotel from a threatened invasion of towpath savages. 108, more squalor behind the railway siding at Oxford. 109, the weir structure at Iffley is a tolerable piece of design in itself, but it is time to replace the temporary farmer's fencing on the right with something more seemly, but *not* with the heavy teak barrier on the left. 110, green painted iron railings cut off the town's bathing place at Wallingford; the railings themselves are simple enough but would be more Thames-like if painted white. However, the real fault is that they are there at all. 111, railings and a thick hedge form an unnecessary double line of defence for a small lawn opposite the Red Lion at Henley.

104

105

106

railings

107

108

109



110

111

112

115

118

Everything about the Thames locks and weirs is in the right functional (and nautical) tradition—with their granite edges, solid timber lock gates, slim white iron railings, cast iron bollards, white and grey mooring posts and simple steps. Even the perky lock cottages of the kind built in the 'twenties, though not beautiful, have been designed with care and are always well constructed and brightly maintained. Contrasting with the plain, honest forms of the locks are the lock gardens, always well tended and planted by the lock keepers. 112, Boveney Lock with its standard toll office and timber retaining walls. 113, Bray Lock contains most of the typical lock features—generous steps, pale grey mooring posts capped

with blackened iron, small timber toll house, long, adequate notice board, life buoy stand, chain protection for the well-clipped lawns. 114, Temple Lock is renowned for its topiary; in the distance beyond the rollers is some typical river furniture, a row of white posts, caught by a gleam of sunlight. 115, Romney Lock is notable for its long granite steps. 116, Sonning Lock is famous for its prize-winning garden; here is a scene below the lock with whitened steps and pale grey timber-work. 117, a simple piece of engineering at Streatley Weir. 118, paddles and rymers at Cleeve Weir. 119, a composition of brick, concrete, timber, whitewash and garden flowers at Sonning Lock. 120, geometry at Molesey Lock.

locks

112

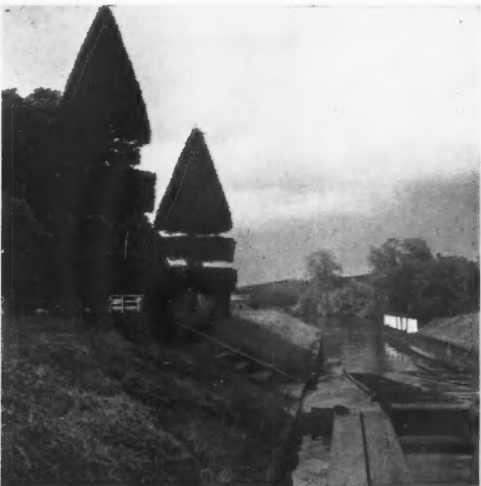
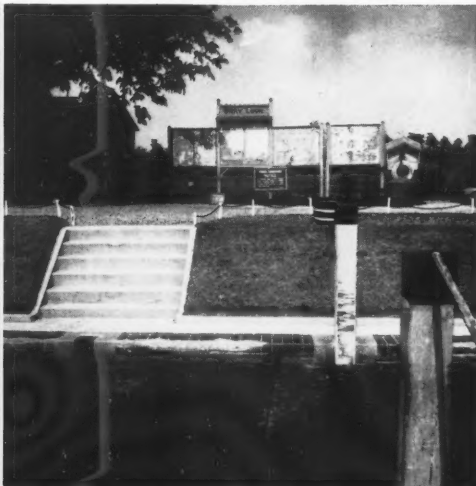
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114

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116

117



118

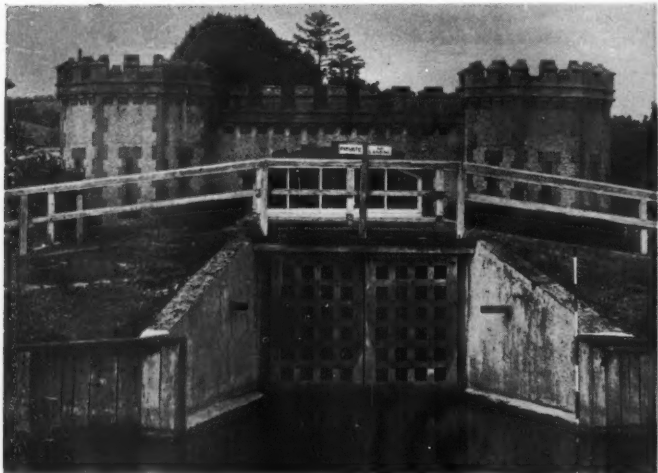
119

120

boathouses

121, a poor fantasy at Aston Ferry attempts to achieve a decorative riverside character without understanding. 122, a better and earlier try at Oakley Court. It is the

spirit of the style that counts rather than its period expression and the right nautical character can be created today in the modern idiom.



121



122

Examples neither good nor bad. 123, a well-kept garden at the Rose Revived Hotel at New Bridge, not quite in the Thames character and too suburban with its fussy rockeries. 124, a more spontaneous result at the tea garden at Romney Lock, ruined by an ill-considered

structure. 125, the Swan at Streatley has a pleasant terrace thrown out of key by unnecessary paths and pergolas. 126, the Angel at Henley also has a pleasant terrace spoiled by too many small flower beds and pergolas; the circular tree table is good, simple detail.

terraces

123



124

125



126

casual squalor

127, unsightliness below Wallingford; decaying Nissen huts in a field, provisional railings, a crude concrete hard, a stark telegraph pole, and general untidiness. 128,

concrete road blocks at Runnymede; five years in which to remove them but they remain. These are the kinds of squalor which occur when there is no control or care.



127

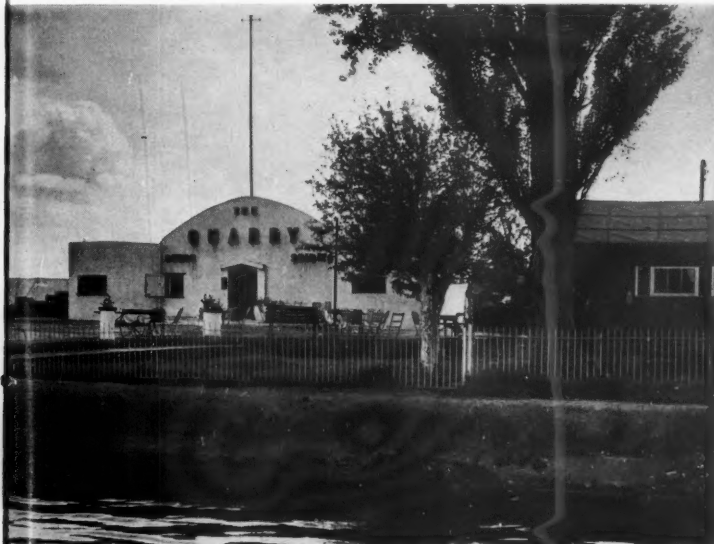


128

deliberate squalor

129, a modern pub opposite Bourne End, a very unfortunate example of contemporary building. In its callow insensitivity, a perfect cautionary example, especially when the building itself is related to the dreary railings and the shack on the right. 130, a citric acid stall with

boards spread for a feast of devitalized dough at Walton Bridge. 131, cars on the bank above Walton Bridge help to ruin the river scene; proper car parks must be provided at key points, to stop this kind of invasion. 132, another provender stall at Walton; a riverside slum.



129
130



131



132

Nautical trim, or shipshapeness, as at Oxford, 133, is an essential part of Thames character. Surprisingly little untidiness is needed to turn a scene to squalor, as at Walton, 137. But an organized attempt at tidiness, however well meaning, is not enough. 134, with its all-revealing wire basket, and arty lettering on enamel plate, shows an entire lack of understanding of the thing it is trying to save. 135, in the riverside municipal park at Marlow, is an inexcusable piece of squalor masquerading as order. The purposeless butchering of trees, as at Radley, 136, is an activity of which some local authorities are over-fond.

'tidiness'



133



134



136



135



137

technique 2: landscape *The essential style of the river to be preserved consists of its winding, linear form which makes it a unique kind of park; its sense of remoteness and escape from the outer world, whether screened by foliage like a miniature Amazon as in the scene below, or opened out to broad landscape; its sudden, swift surprises and rapid contrasts as between informal, verdant rusticity and gay, decorative urbanity, both of which possess qualities peculiar to the Thames alone.*





39

closed

The Amazonian quality again at Cliveden Woods just below Cookham Lock. Here in the chalklands is the most dramatic reach of the river and here is the supreme example of the special river remoteness, of isolation by enclosure.

open

Contrasting in rustic effect with the enclosure at Cliveden is this serene prospect below Hambleden with its rich meadowland and its distant hills rising gently from the valley. Though the picture opens out it does not admit the outer world but belongs still to the special remote country of the river; it is in a sense still enclosed.





143



140

144



141

145



142 146

settlements

Where rusticity predominates and the sense of the towpath as a native bush track is strong you come to small clearings where settlements lie enshrined in trees. 140, the sense of something round the corner. 141, Medmenham Abbey, where two lonely monks once prayed and the Hell Fire Club caroused. 142, Oakley Court, a literary romance of the nineteenth century. 143, the Temple, Monkey Island, said to be by Kent. 144, the toll-house, Boveney Lock. 145, ferryman's cottage, Cliveden. 146, boat station, Magdalen Bridge.

housing

Two reaches where the same sort of open land formation occurs. 147, at Bray where the river character has been beautifully preserved. 148, ruination below Abingdon; the trees have gone and the local housing committee, the electricity board and the War Office have done their damndest; all rusticity has departed but no attempt has been made to create the right contrast of special riverside urbanity.



industry

Another pair of contrasts in open landscape. 149, sappy *phalli* at Ifley Lock where the river country has been preserved in spite of neighbouring blight. 150, sterile *phalli* at Reading where the power station brutally shatters the river magic; an obvious case for screening by trees.





151



152

Two more examples of open panorama where the river's sense of enchanted isolation and escape from the world has been destroyed. 151, wirescape below Pinkhill Lock. 152, the panorama cut off from the river by a fence above Hambleden—an obvious case for a haha or its equivalent.

breaking the illusion

treescape



153



154

The trees *are* the Thames. They are characterised by their ubiquity, by their rich vitality, their informality of planting and their variety. They seem to fall naturally into fine asymmetrical compositions wherever you look. Only here and there as a contrast and to suit special conditions should informality be allowed to give place to regimentation—as, for instance, 153, along the edge of the royal Home Park opposite Datchet. 154, a case which is just beginning to break the characteristic Thames treescape.

treescape



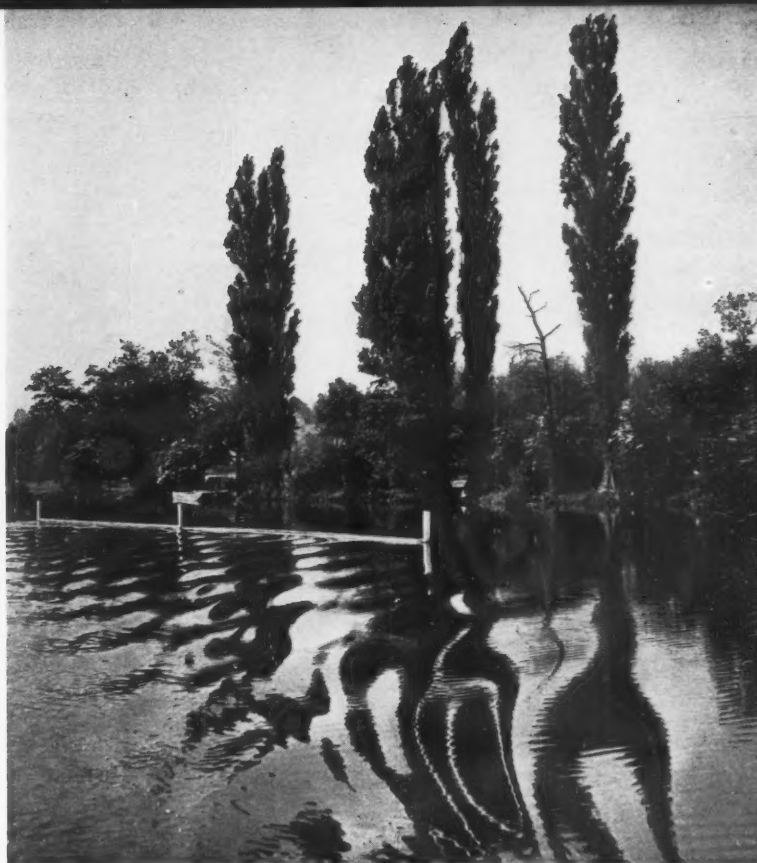
155

155, a lovely, casual treescape at Marsh Lock. A fine lombardy towers above the paper mill from which the distant woods sweep a line above the weir to a group of conifers, not characteristic of the Thames, but perfect in this particular context. 156, an informal group of lombardies, most characteristic of Thames trees, forms contorted reflections in a boat's wash below Henley. 157, a



158

line of poplars below Bablock Hythe, a bad example, both scraggy and monotonous. 158, another fine treescape near Cookham Dean punctuated by a somewhat tattered growth that enhances the quality of the picture. 159, a row of lombardies below the Goring Gap where the formality is relieved by a break in the close planting.



156

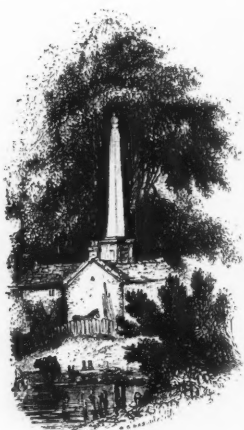


157



159

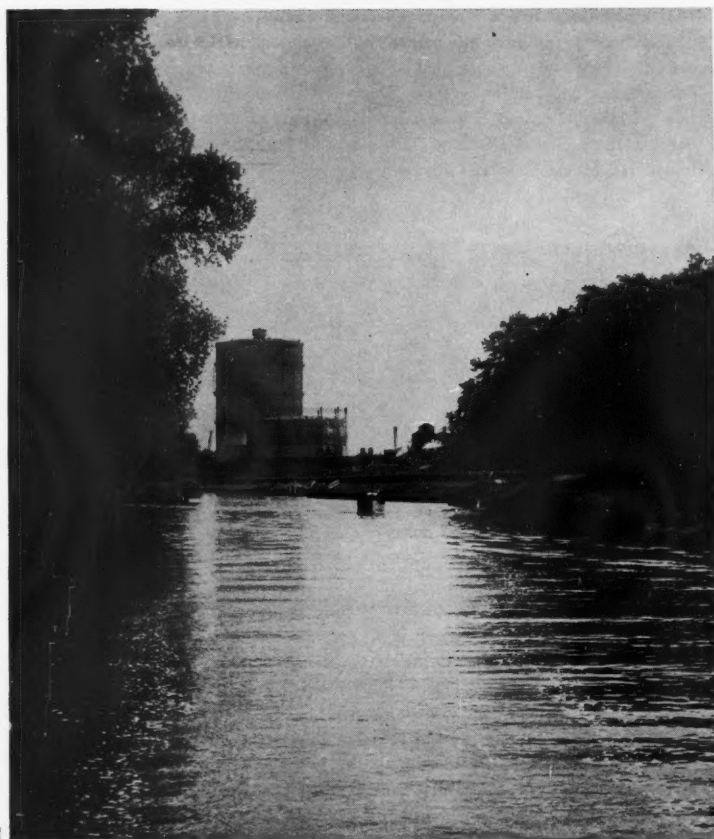
punctuation



As the river winds along, the vistas are being continually closed and punctuation, now mostly accidental, needs to be deliberately and consciously applied. 160, a perfect, but entirely accidental example of punctuation by a poplar down a creek at Benson. 161, punctuation of the wrong kind, the unfortunate example of the gas-holder at Staines; only the hypothetical removal of the whole gas works could fundamentally cure this disastrous break-through, though some screening by planting would help.

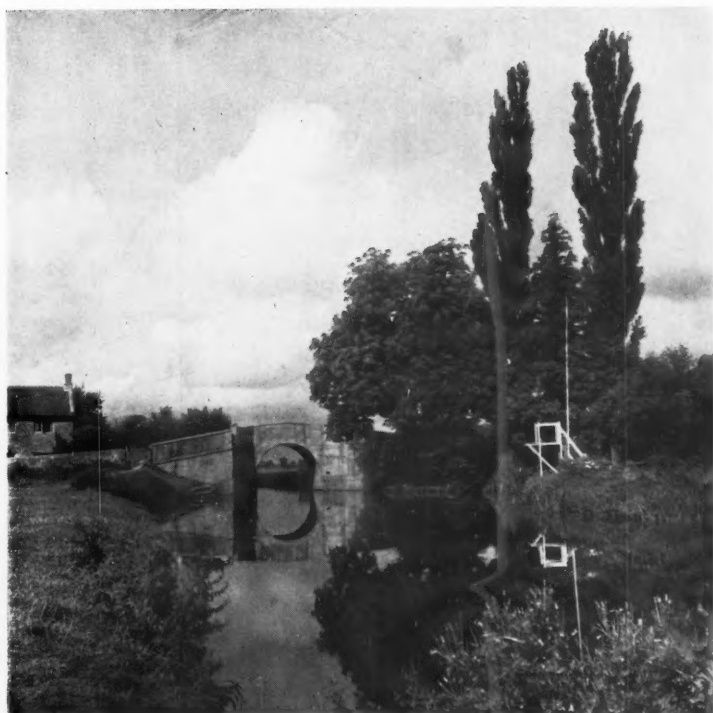


160



161

A fairly common and characteristic form of punctuation in the river landscape is produced by flag poles set close to the water to reflect their whole length—especially pleasing when the poles are backed by dark green foliage. 162, an example at Radcot Bridge. 163, another one at Bray.



162



163

164, punctuation which closes the vista above the bridge at Marlow is the spire of the Gothic Revival church, especially telling on account of the horizontal sweep of the early nineteenth century suspension bridge below it. 165, punctuation by a tall poplar behind a cottage at Clifton Hampden Bridge has the same visual power.



164

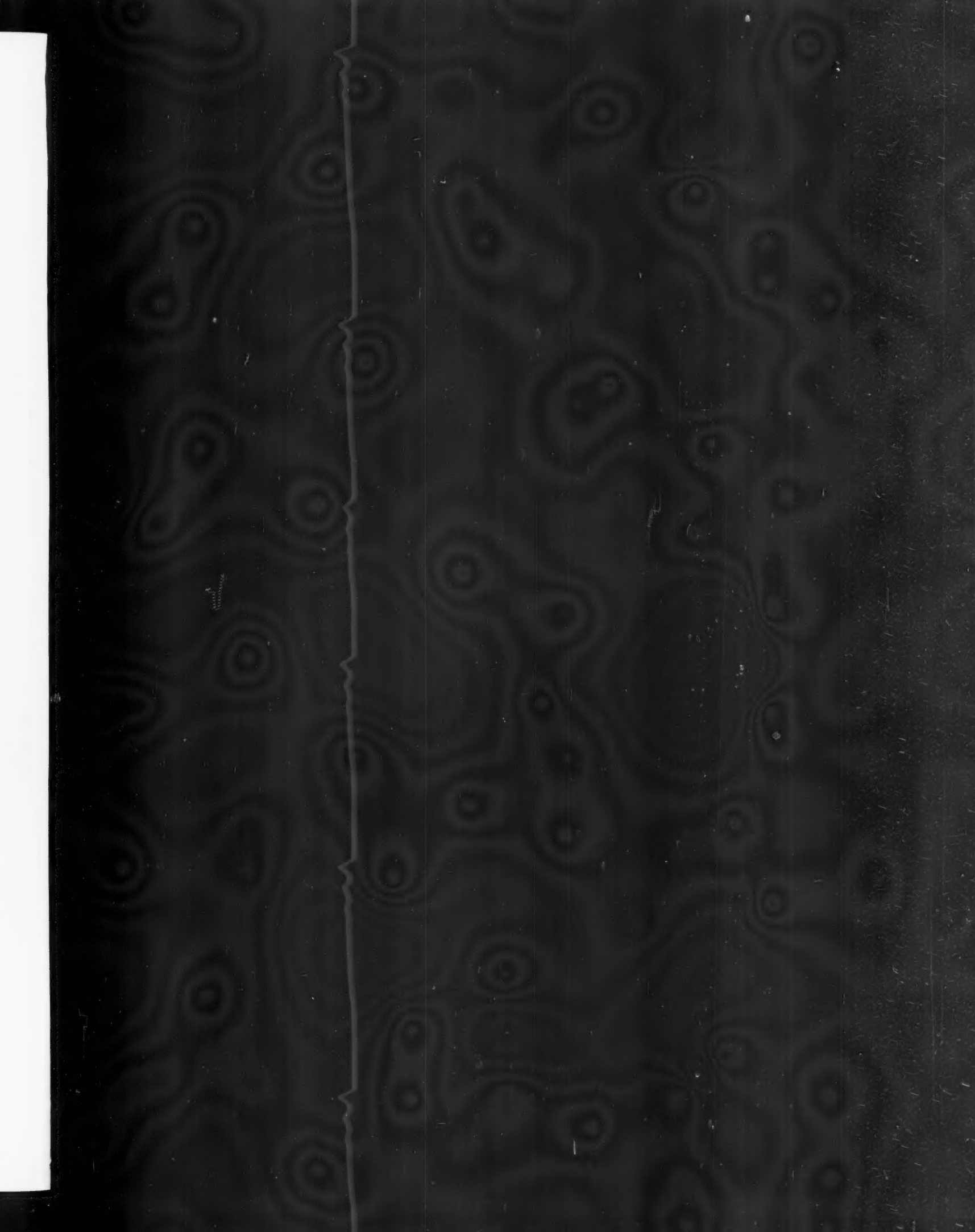


165



1

application of the technique a riverside marquee at the Compleat Angler, Marlow. Apart from the general effect of luminosity and tranquillity there are two small points which in the photograph (a poor substitute for reality) indicate the atmosphere of union with water as it affects us in the experience. The supports are brought right out to the edge of the embankment as far as possible and there is no protective rail which would have the effect of separating us from the river. It is exactly this approach to the technique of riverside design that this special number aims to encourage; the development of New Marlow on the pages that follow is an exercise in its use.



6 application of the technique **NEW MARLOW**

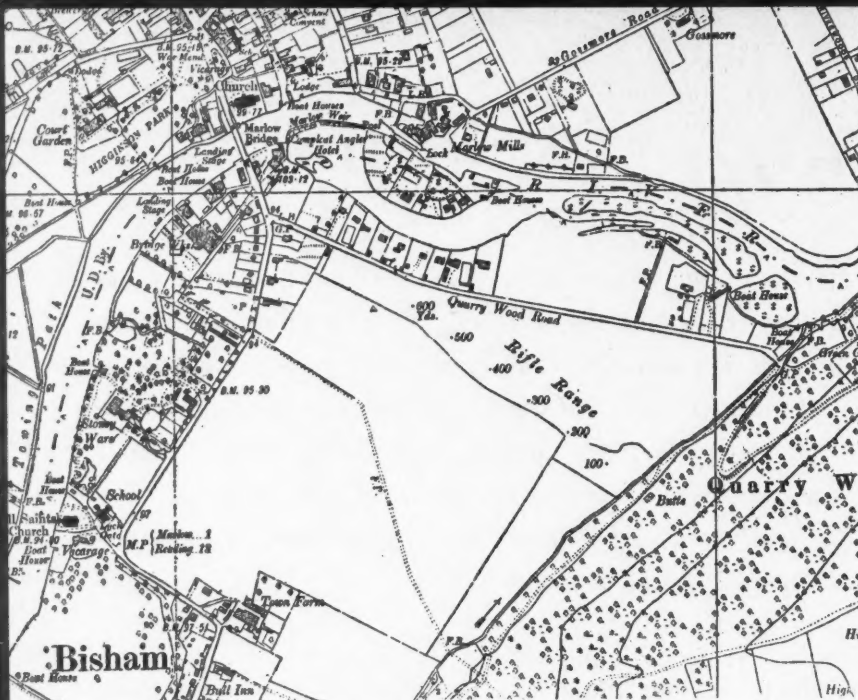
The drawings on the following pages show how a new town could be built as a real water town. The designs, by Gordon Cullen, are based on the possibility of extending the existing Thames-side town of Marlow—already rich in water-side character—to serve as a small urban concentration and a social centre for the Linear National Park recommended on these pages. On the practical aspects of the scheme he has had the advice of the distinguished engineer Ove Arup. The designs show how those principles of design peculiar to Thames-side building, which this issue has been at pains to analyse, could be applied to the creation of an atmosphere of ornamental gaiety, a distinctive river-side urbanity.

The pleasure of living by water affects us through several senses. We see the sparkle and movement of the day and the grave calm of the evening when white posts stand like ghosts against the dark foliage. From under our luminous awning we watch the various river craft pass by and in the distance we glimpse the pleasing nautical forms of a lock or the trim of banks and mooring places. We hear the constant rush of the weir and notice how far sounds carry over still water. We are soothed, yet at the same time excited by an agreeable sense of adventure.

Travelling on the water we become detached and enter a world on its own. As we move along in an even, leisurely way the outside world flows past us. Picture follows picture, each a vivid contrast to the next. The height of the bank varies, houses crowd in, overhang and then suddenly stop, leaving us exposed and tiny in a wide panorama. Ramps slide up, interlock and fall away. We pass under a bridge and there is a sudden change of scale from open landscape to a cool vaulted room. All such impressions and sensations are unique to living on, or near, water and inspire one to create a WATER TOWN where they can be focused and given the maximum effect. The project illustrated is such a creation. It merely suggests how the waters of the Thames could be exploited at one particular place and it is not intended to be read as a finished scheme.

Apart from the innate pleasantness of such a water town, the project can be recommended for other reasons. First, it would tend to check ribbon development along the river banks—and of this there is already enough. Such development may now be prohibited by law but mere prohibition is a negative thing. Many people want to live by the water. How can this best be arranged? By concentrating development into a new town set in a lagoon fed from the river and possessing its own special river character. Such a town could add to, rather than subtract from, the river's charm and would make living by the water possible for a whole new community under an inspiring standard of physical and architectural conditions.

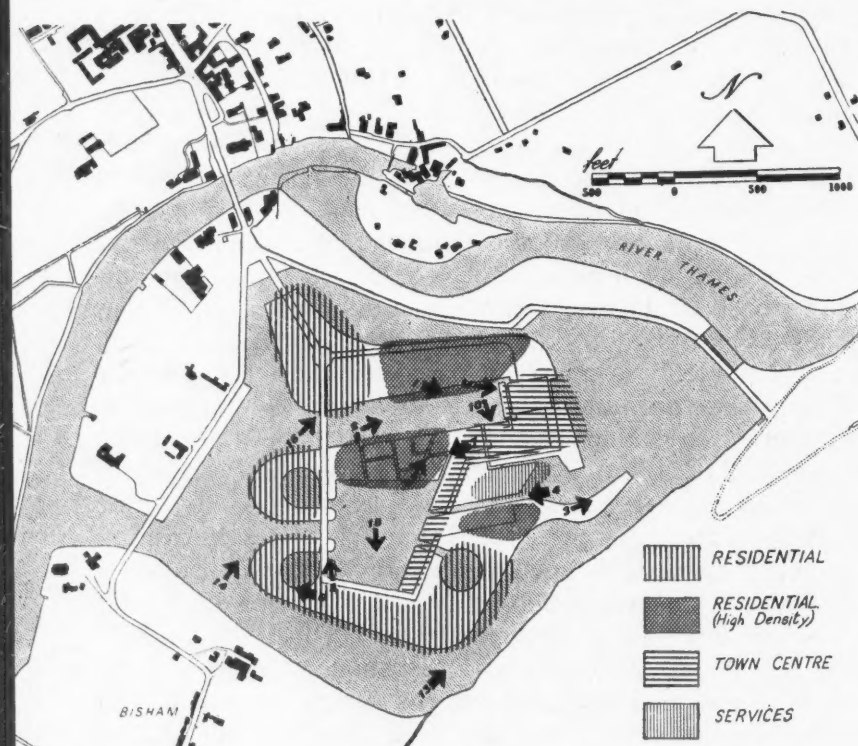
Secondly, if the Thames is to become a Linear National Park, the new town would serve as an important river centre. Here would be situated not only riverside homes, boatyards and the headquarters of clubs and societies but a focus, a needed social centre for pleasurable river activities such as water carnivals and river functions of every sort.



the plan The Thames runs in a wide curve at Marlow and encloses a semi-circular area of low-lying land, the diameter or southern boundary of which is defined by a steeply rising and heavily wooded hill. Along the river boundary of this area are scattered villas of respectable size and quality, but the central area, comprising about 150 acres, is undeveloped grazing land. To the west of the site is the village of Bisham. Marlow Lock has a drop of 7 ft. 6 in., and consequently the site slopes gradually from west to east since the river banks are approximately the same height above river level at either extremity. It is proposed to create a lagoon by excavating the soil so that the water level of the lagoon shall be the same as the Thames at Bisham, allowing a depth of water of four or five feet. This excavated soil, chiefly from the west part of the site, is used to form an embankment on the eastern river boundary and also helps to build up those parts of the central island which need it. Water from the lagoon escapes by means of a weir on the east. Existing roads are retained except for a small realignment near Marlow Bridge.

The island is served by road and water. Building density is high and, as a large proportion of the residents will be seasonal, provision is made for hotels and flats to let for the season, whilst smaller residential areas are provided for permanent residents, chiefly round small basins connected by water to the main water square.

A meandering causeway of varying width returns on itself and encloses two main water areas, a Long Basin and a Water Square. These are connected by a system of water streets, the smaller residential basins being located off the Water Square. The north side of Long Basin, facing south, forms the main promenade, shopping and cafe centre leading up to a theatre at the east end. A Land Square contains headquarters of clubs, administration and hotels. Behind this Square is an area devoted to services, boat repair and storage.

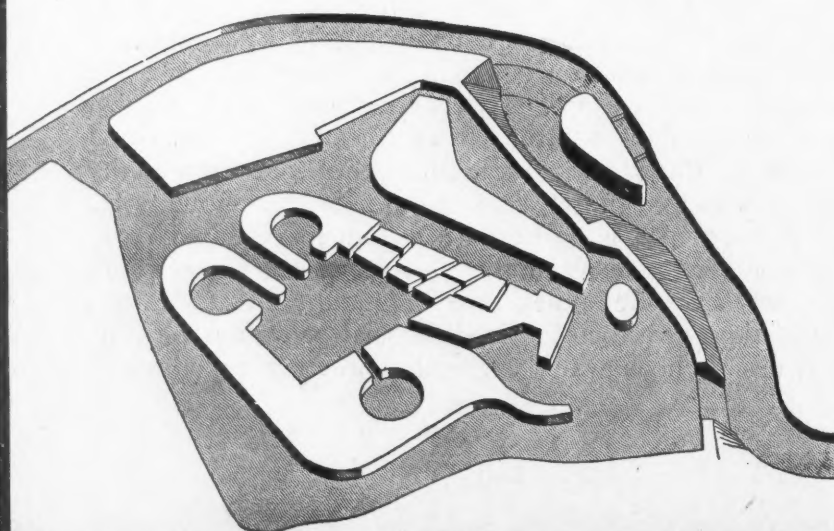


2. Ordnance Survey map of the area.

3. The new plan. Numbered arrows indicate drawings which appear on following pages.

4. Isometric showing main disposition of lagoon and island.

4





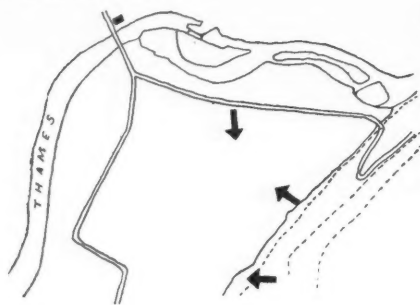




character The character of Old Marlow, which is shown in these three photographs, contains many of the elements that should be developed in the new town. First, the obvious signs of the enjoyment of the riverside which are heightened by the easy, informal yet precise and businesslike atmosphere. The waiter (or is he a steward?) will probably bring your drink smartly and you will drink it very slowly. Secondly, the atmosphere is neither vulgar nor refined, in the sense of being either designed or expensive. It is serviceable, and that is the atmosphere aimed at in the new town. It would be neither a fun fair nor an exclusive backwater, but a utility to be used by all the classes of people who enjoy the river.



New Marlow



the site today Looking from the base of the hill towards Marlow (middle arrow on plan, upper left photo). In the foreground is the bank of a small stream which flows into the Thames at the east of the site. This would form the southern boundary of the lagoon. From the hillside looking down towards Bisham (bottom arrow on plan, upper right photo), Town Farm in the centre forms the western extremity of the lagoon. Quarry Wood seen from the road (top arrow on plan, lower left photo). Ground level at this point would be the bottom of the lagoon. As an introduction to the drawings on the following pages this view has been developed to show the proposed New Marlow.



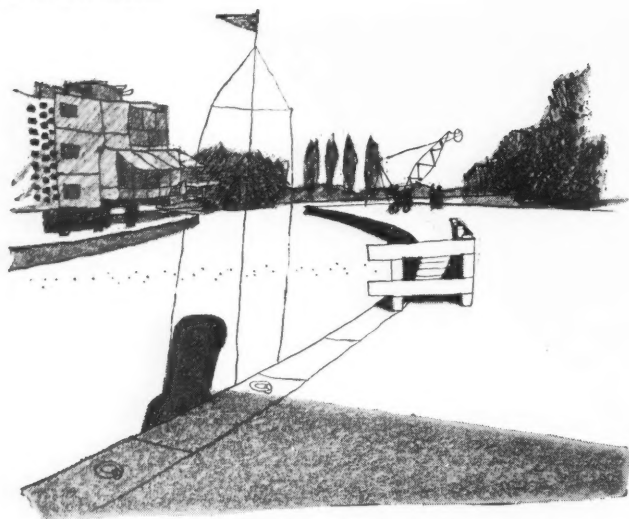


1

long basin Having the deepest water this enclosure admits larger vessels bringing people to the entertainment centre. On the northern bank are situated shops and cafes on terraces, above which rise towers of flats. At the end is a theatre forming one side of a Land Square where clubs, societies, administration and hotels are situated. In design the Basin is a simple enclosure broken at the end by the Land Square which by its change of scale and character forms a foil. The boundary is emphasized by a flag pole. A further break under the theatre, whilst not affecting the pedestrian nor the continuity of enclosure, emphasizes the essential quality of water. Obedient but free, it finds every last crack and break of solidity. Passing by boat out of the Basin, you ally yourself with a stranger and move silently out of a huge room. The numbers against the drawings refer to the viewpoints shown on the plan of New Marlow on page 58.



2

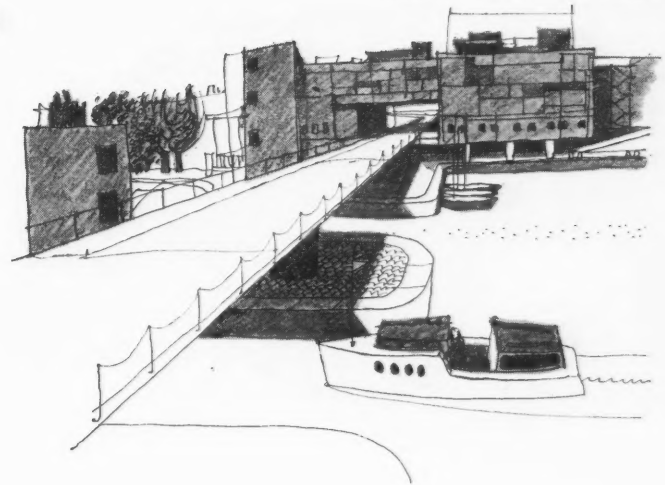


narrows Behind the Land Square are the services, storerooms and boatyards which can be seen on the right of the main drawing. On the left is a block of flats with public amenities and at the end of the canal lies the main Water Square screened by a hotel. The emphasis here is on the several stages leading to the tranquillity of the Square. The introduction is by the promontory (see smaller drawing)—a low quay from which a ramp leads up to the main pinch between hotel and warehouse. Here the direction changes and runs direct to the narrow slit of light below the hotel. The straightness and sense of constriction are aided by the retaining wall, which is built directly out of the water and provides no foothold. (The contemporary origins of the buildings shown will be recognized. The bollard, which may not be so easily recognized, is of recent date and constructed of reinforced concrete. It is carefully drawn from the original at Blakeney in Norfolk.)



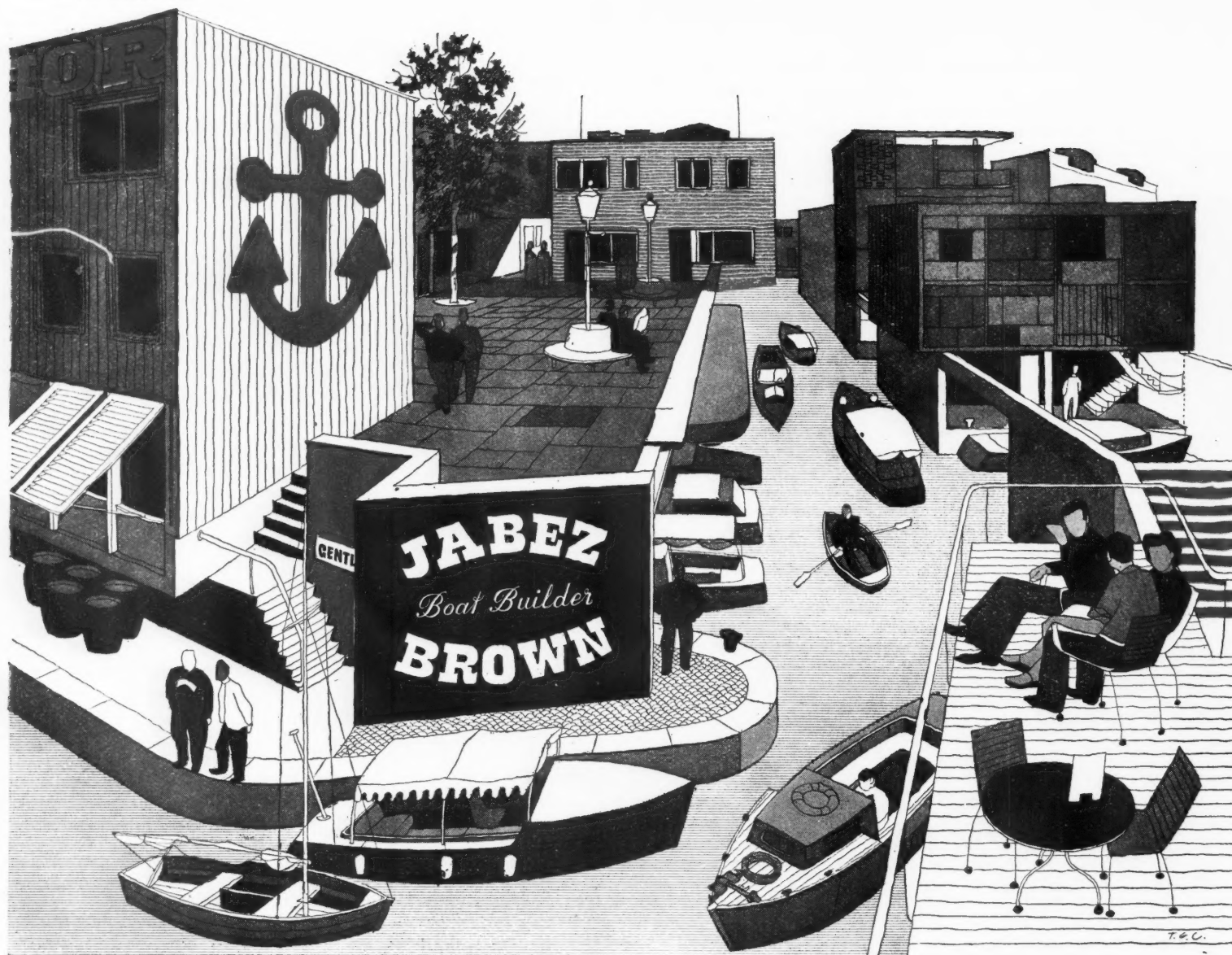
5

residential basin Off the main Water Square, part of which can be seen in the smaller drawing, are three smaller pools or basins surrounded by houses. These are permanent homes and being so self-contained do not suffer from the inevitable desolations of seasonal fluctuations in the larger zones. From a scientific point of view this may not be considered a suitable reason for abandoning the correct aspecting of all the houses. A row of people sitting in deck chairs will never be able to carry on as intimate a conversation as a group sitting round a fireplace. The whole intention in this area is to produce a feeling of intimacy accentuated by trees, absence of traffic and open-air cafes or pubs. The smaller drawing shows part of the high level service road which forms the western boundary of the Square; from here traffic will be able to diverge to local service points.



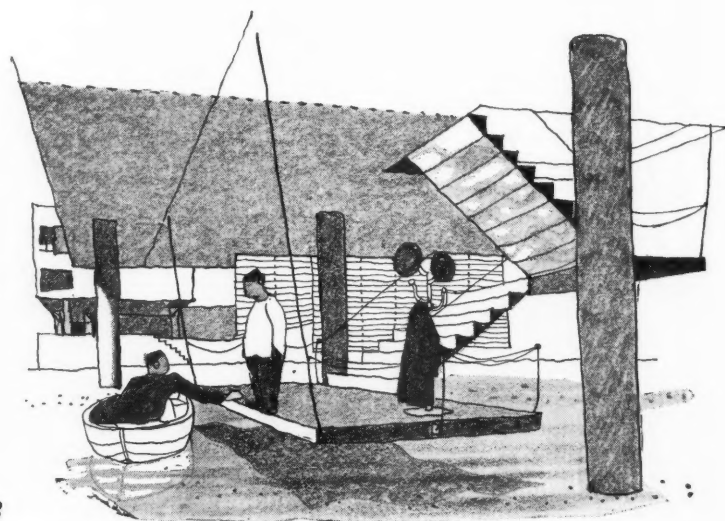
6





7

water streets Between the Long Basin and Water Square is an area of houses, both detached and terraced, and hotels, pubs and utilities. The emphasis is on water travel rather than on walking, although the footpaths form a secondary system. The small sketch shows a (possibly exaggerated) domestic scene of access to a house which is complementary to the arrangement shown on the right of the larger drawing in which a private house has its own dock. The general air of complexity, of bustle in the canals and variety of levels interspersed with vigorous lettering and symbols, produces a holiday atmosphere, a feeling of being in the centre of things.



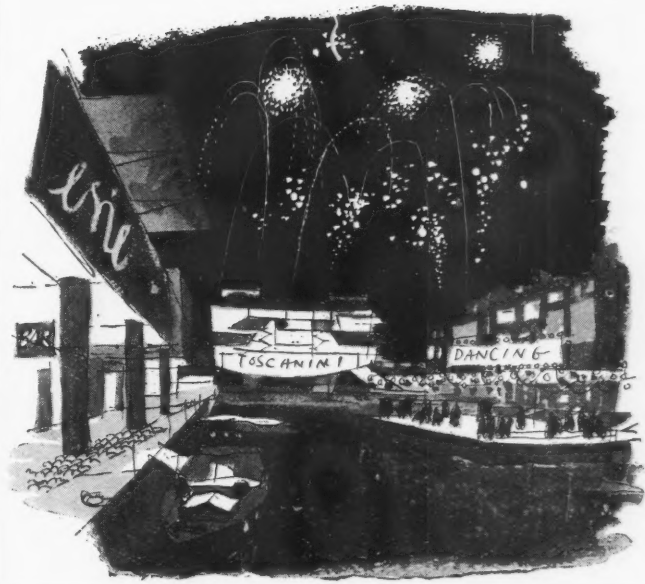
8

long basin at night Throughout the summer the night aspect could periodically be enlivened by displays of fireworks, water music, dancing on pontoons, floodlit water-polo contests and water carnivals.

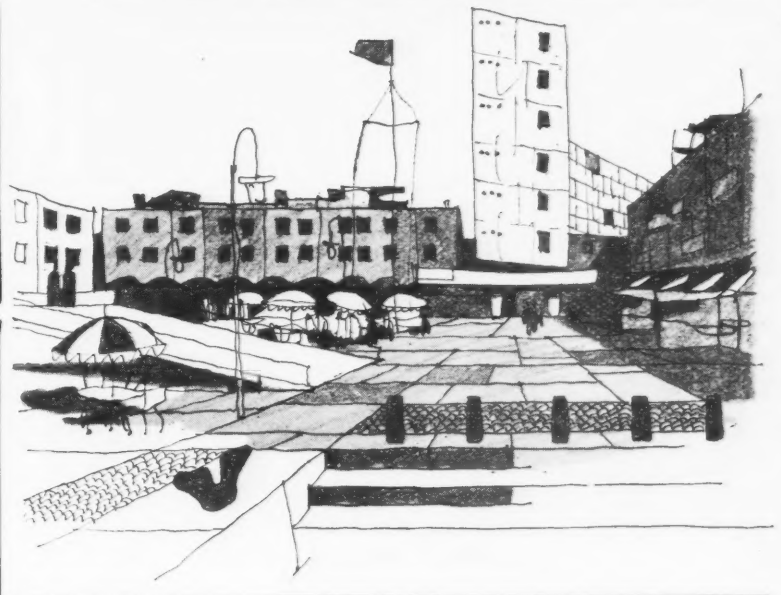
land square A closer view of the Square showing, on the left, the ramp going up to the theatre and, in the centre, the hotel. Being the only large land area, special precautions are taken on its edge to warn people of the water by change of floor texture and posts.

the theatre The change between enclosure in the Basin to exposure outside. The point of change is sufficiently large to accentuate its purpose. The roof gradually bears down until the height between water and ceiling is the minimum, although the width remains the same. This produces the sensation of great compression and subsequent release.

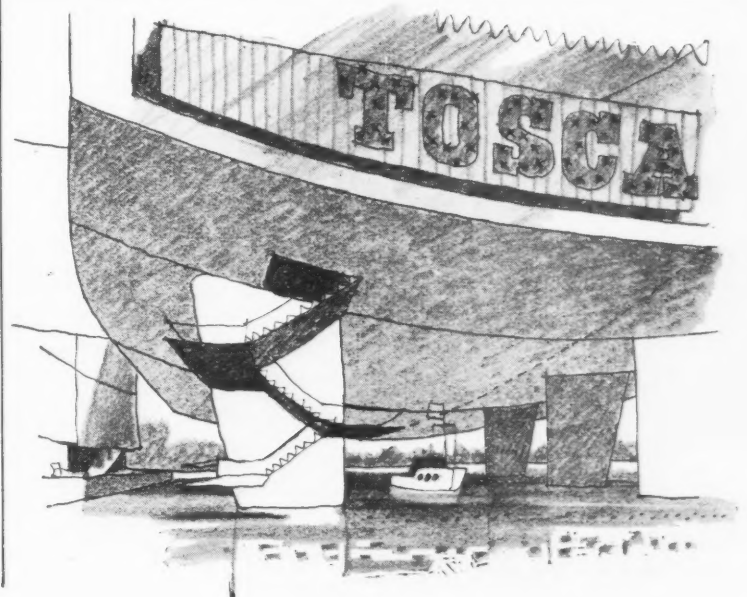
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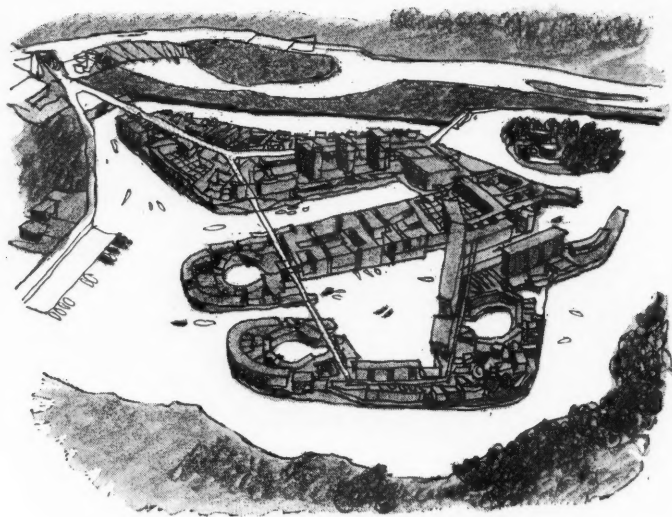


11

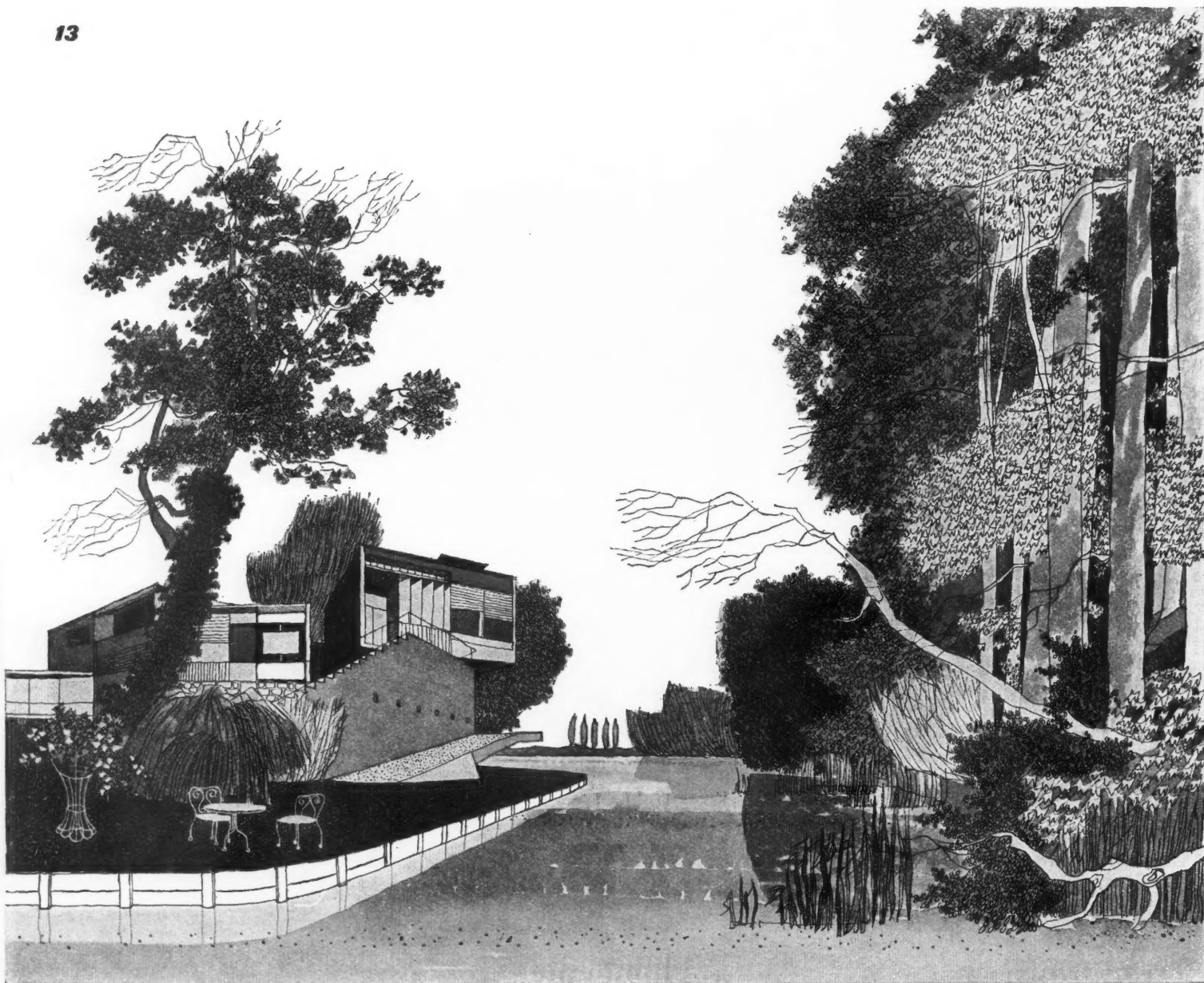


the periphery The particular spot chosen for the drawing below shows the base of Quarry Hill on the right and villas for permanent residence on the left. As will be seen from other sketches, the character of the periphery changes but all of it has the common element of trim as opposed to the natural banks surrounding the lagoon. On the right, by way of contrast, we see dense growths, irregular banks and the normal effects of untroubled nature; on the opposite bank green lawns stretch out to white painted embankments. White painted seats are arranged among carefully considered planting. The small drawing on the right is a bird's eye view of the whole spread of New Marlow. See also the plan on page 58, where the viewpoints of all these drawings can be identified.

12

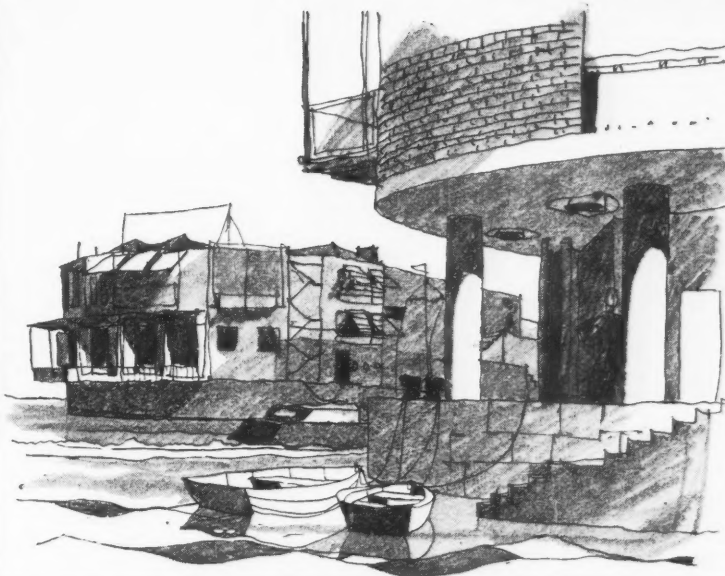


13



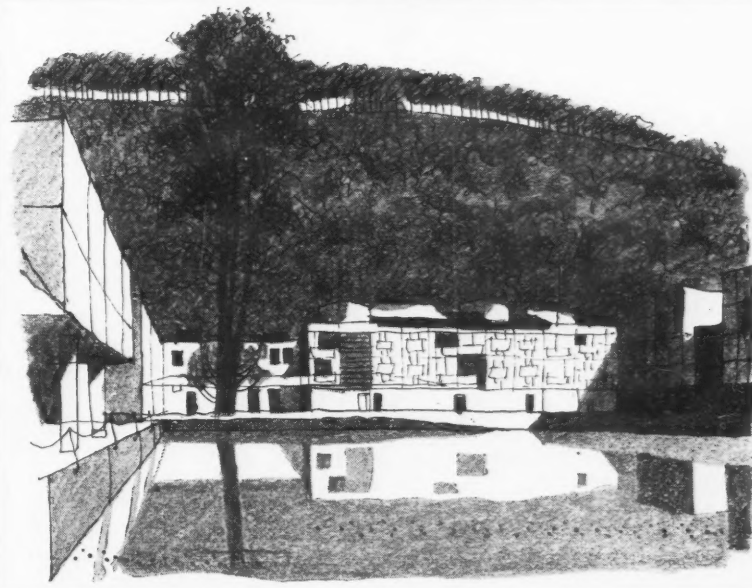
entrance to water square This entrance, the one seen first by craft approaching from the Bisham cut, which links the lagoon to the Thames, is flanked by houses built up in terraces from the curving quays. These houses are the outer side of the small residential basins and set the key for the whole development. The effect desired is one of vitality, intricacy and close building.

14



water square Inside the Square, a vast sheet of water surrounded by flats and houses; the effect is created of serene geometry against the background of the steep wooded hill. The tree is one of the few on the site and could well be preserved.

15



ramps The entrance to Long Basin is articulated by the road bridge over and by the ramps which lead up to it on either bank from the quay and terraces.

16



appendix for planners *some provisional points of a practical nature on the organization and planning necessary to retain and improve the Thames region above Teddington as a National Park*

organization: A special body to be set up under the National Parks Commission composed of representatives of all interests concerned: Borough, County and Joint Planning Authorities, Thames Conservancy Board, Ministry of Town and Country Planning, Council for the Preservation of Rural England, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society, Ramblers' Association, Youth Hostels Association, Anglers' Co-operative Association, Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, the Royal Fine Art Commission, riparian owners' association, water boards and so on. Let us call it the Thames Park Council. Within that Council a full-time executive staff to be formed capable of a creative realization of the Park.

objective: To preserve the Thames River from Teddington to Cricklade as a National Linear Park; to develop and enhance its distinctive visual character; to improve all its facilities for recreation; to reconcile conflicting interests of users; in particular to develop and maintain the towpath as an uninterrupted pedestrian way.

survey: To discover:—

(1) The extent to which the river is now used for various purposes, economic, cultural, recreational.

(2) The extent to which the river could be used as a National Park for these purposes without being overloaded and so spoiling the very character which is to be preserved.

(3) The extent to which present amenities fall short of requirements in such matters as boating stations (now among the most unsightly of riverside structures), public landing stages in towns and villages (now quite inadequate), refreshment facilities, hostels and hotels, camping sites (whether for single tents or many), moorings and winter storage for private boats (now very overcrowded; here co-operation with the Wey River and Basingstoke Canal should be considered), public facilities at locks such as drinking water supply and refuse dumps, fishing reserves and stocking.

(4) Where, and to what extent, the landscape is now blighted by factories, poor housing, railway bridges, shacks and so on. (Hurley Village, for example, though at one of the loveliest parts of the river, is unkempt and is marred by a chaotic caravan town.)

(5) What areas should be scheduled as reservations? (The 1929 CPRE Survey lists the following twenty:—Beacon Hill, Wytham Hill and Park, Bagley Wood, Nuneham Courtenay, Andersey Island, Culham-Sutton Courtenay Flats, Long Wittenham Flats, Dorchester Levels, Sinodun Hills, Wallingford, including the flats on the Oxfordshire bank, the Goring Gap, Sonning Village and environs, Henley and environs, Hambleden and Mill End, Hurley Reach, Quarry Woods, Cliveden Woods, Home Park at Windsor, Eton playing fields and adjacent open areas, Cooper's Hill. To that list add Abingdon.

(6) What built-up areas should be scheduled for clearance as open space. (These mostly lie below Staines though there are floodlands above at several points now built over which should be cleared.)

(7) What is the condition of existing trim, both in its physical state and its design qualities, e.g., towpath gates, river posts, verges, embanking, landing stages.

(8) What parts of the river are suitable for special purposes, e.g., below Cricklade, at Radcot, New Bridge and Little Wittenham for fishing; Dorchester and Streatley for country walking; Bourne End, Godstow and Culham for sailing, Abingdon for good food (bless the Crown and Thistle), and for architectural and archaeological beauty and interest; Shifford Cut for contemplative retirement and so on.

(9) What are the special needs of the towpath as a continuous walk—legal, embanking, campshedding, ferries, footbridges, camp sites, youth hostels, junctions with local footpaths and so with the whole national footpath system, eyesores to be removed or mitigated. (A good deal of this work has already been done by the Thames Conservancy and a final towpath plan is now being prepared.)

(10) What ancient monuments on or near the Line should be preserved and properly maintained—bridges, churches, houses, mills, villages.

(11) What are the typical flora and fauna of the river and how can they be preserved and protected.

(12) What are the possibilities of extending the park to include the Basingstoke Canal, the Oxford Canal, the Kennet and Avon Navigation, and the now derelict Thames and Severn Canal.

(13) What are the conditions of the islands and eyots.

plan: Any planning must be imaginative, subtle and, above all, unobtrusive. Already considerable work both in survey and constructive recommendations have been made on the river, the chief published results of which are as follows:—*The Report of the Thames Valley Joint Town Planning Committee* (1923). *The Council for the Preservation of Rural England's Survey of the Thames Valley from Cricklade to Staines* (1929). *The Greater London Plan* (1944). *The Riverside Area Report of the North-East Surrey Joint Planning Committee* (1947). *The Report on the Surrey Bank of the River Thames by the North-West Surrey Joint Planning Committee* (1947). *The Report on the Thames Riverside from Chiswick to Staines prepared by W. R. Davidge and Partners for the West Middlesex Joint Planning Committee* (1948).

(1) Scheme of tree planting to be instituted immediately, especially where screening is required. Characteristic informality and types of trees to be retained.

(2) The continuous Riverside Walk from Teddington to Cricklade to be completed at first opportunity.

(3) Construction of new amenity buildings—such as hostels, cafés, boating stations, etc.

(4) Construction of new mooring basins for private boats. The use of disused gravel pits should be considered in this connection for they need not form landscape scars, but if properly planted and tended could make pleasing ornamental lakes. The pits near Wraybury provide an example.

(5) Construction of new landing stages and temporary moorings at towns and villages. These are now inadequate and where they do exist, as on the Berkshire side above Maidenhead Bridge, are of use only to boats of very shallow draft. The main cause of this inadequacy is due not merely to lack of initiative of local councils, but to the lack of a public mooring tradition on the river. The public has never owned the right to land anywhere above Staines.

(6) Steps to be taken to preserve open spaces, towns and villages scheduled as reservations.

(7) Eyesores and blight to be removed or ameliorated and areas scheduled for clearance to be cleared as opportunity permits.

(8) All future building along the river to be strictly controlled and all building to be prohibited on flood land.

(9) Plans to be prepared for preserving and enhancing riverside towns as riverside towns.

(10) Islands and eyots and their vegetation and wild life to be preserved and maintained.

(11) Fishing facilities to be increased. There are now two million anglers in Great Britain, and the number is growing. On the Thames the fishing is almost entirely coarse fishing, and to help the coarse fishermen the first aim must be to keep the river as unpolluted as possible, a task for which the Thames Conservancy is responsible. Areas might be set aside as fishing reserves such as a few of the back-waters. Lagoons in riverside meadows could be dug, disused gravel pits could be used and tributary streams now piped or culverted could be opened up, to provide water free from wave wash and the noise from passing boats.

(12) All new electric cables and wires within sight of the river to be laid under ground, and existing overhead cables to be gradually taken down and laid below ground. Possibly expensive but essential.

(13) The water to be increasingly purified, especially of industrial and sewage effluents. Soil and rubbish dumping into the water from river craft to be firmly discouraged.

(14) General recommendations to be prepared and published for the guidance of riverside dwellers and workers on the treatment of boat stations, cafés and pubs, riverside bungalows and gardens. (Garden owners might be encouraged by annual competitions as the lock keepers are at present.) Recommendations, too, might be published for the treatment of landing stages, verges and general trim.

(15) Facilities for holiday makers to be improved at locks, such as the provision of easily accessible drinking water, dumps for rubbish, "comfort stations," and, perhaps at certain standard distances from locks and recognizable by unobtrusive standard signs, pits for night soil. A good local map might be provided on the notice board of each lock showing local footpaths which link up with the towpath, places of historic and architectural interest in the neighbourhood, local beauty spots, good moorings, camping sites and other amenities.

(16) Car parks at those points where crowds congregate to be kept well away from the river banks.

Barbarian Invasion

Sir Gilbert Augustus Clayton East, Bart: I do not object to the public using the river, because that I have no right and no wish to do, and I rather like to see them enjoying themselves. From 1858 to 1862 I was at Eton, and during that time the public, practically did not exist; the only boats then seen were Eton boys' and masters', soldiers', and a few residents' . . . I think it was somewhere about 1866 that the Guards' Club was started; and that first brought people down to Maidenhead in any numbers. . . . In 1878 the river had become so unpleasant, not from the number of public, though that had something to do with it, but from the way they treated you, that I gave up making these trips at all. They began to be most abusive and disagreeable. . . . My complaint is not of the public coming to use the river, but of the class who come. It is so totally different. You used never to have any unpleasant remarks.

Chairman: What proportion of the public do you complain of in this way?

Sir Gilbert: That is what I have often wanted to know; whether these people are naturally savages; or whether they become savage when they come on the river.

Chairman: What proportion of the public who use the Thames in this way possess this qualification of savages of which you speak?

Sir Gilbert: I distinctly say it is not the working class; because if you ever see any of the working class on the river, which you do on Bank holidays, they are always very well behaved. I cannot tell what class it is. I believe it is a class of savages born on purpose.

Chairman: Is the proportion one in ten, or one in five, or what proportion are the people who make the river a nuisance?

Sir Gilbert: I should say that many of the respectable people are giving up using the river; it is getting more every year that these savages use the river. It is difficult to speak of any proportion. I will speak of what I myself know at Hurley. What brought them there was the opening of the Marlow Railway in 1878. They did not find that out for a few years; but after a while they did.

Chairman: When you say you delight in seeing the public happy on the river, you at the same time tell us that the river is no longer endurable because of the public?

Sir Gilbert: Not of the public, but of a certain class of the public. . . . There are apparently two classes of roughs which frequent the river; one class clearly belongs to the London "Arry," by the absence of the letter H; the other is a superior class if you can judge by their clothing and their manner, and yet these are the people who do as much, if not more, damage, than the others. The real river roughs offend by their appearance, their language, and their deeds.

Chairman: Which do you call the real river rough, the first or the second class?

Sir Gilbert: The real river roughs are the first class. They now dress in short trousers not reaching down so far as their knees, and a jersey without sleeves. When, as often happens, there is a difficulty in keeping the apology for trousers in their place, they appear almost absolutely naked, and yet these savages are often accompanied by women; their language is as disgusting as their appearance.

Chairman: I want to know the ratio of the disorderly persons to the orderly persons who use the river?

Sir Gilbert: I do not know the river at Maidenhead on Sunday, because I do not go there, but from my knowledge of the river I should say that on a Sunday the majority are these objectionable people. I am not speaking of a week-day. On a week-day I should say the majority are respectable people. One Sunday I was down at my Reach, and three lockfuls of boats came through one after another. A steam launch came through. I suppose they are not all as well behaved as they should be. There was a table fitted up in front, with

[continued on page 70]

The UN Building

The skyscraper block on the East River at New York, which is to house the Secretariat of the United Nations, see AR, March 1950, page 198, has just been completed. The building will be fully illustrated in a later issue.

M. Le Corbusier, one of the six architects from various countries who were originally commissioned to prepare the designs for the UN Headquarters, sends a copy of a letter he addressed in 1947 to Senator Warren Austin, President of the Commission of the Site Planning Committee. This is an appropriate moment to publish the letter (which is accompanied by some of M. Le Corbusier's inimitable sketches) because discussion of the design of the building will inevitably raise the whole important question of control of sunlight and protection from the cold in modern buildings with large areas of glass, and this question—together with the scientific principles on which M. Le Corbusier would like to see it dealt with—are objectively set down and their relevance to this building made clear. Mr. Harrison, referred to in the opening sentence of the letter, is the executive architect of the building.

Paris, December 4th, 1947.

The Honorable Senator Warren Austin,
President of the Commission of the
Site Planning Committee,
Lake Success, New York.

Dear Senator Austin:

On the 19th of November, I sent you a letter referring you to the text of the *Architectural Forum* which stated that Mr. Harrison had planned that the buildings would be equipped with large glass panes set in aluminium frames; these glass panes would be double, spaced one foot apart; in this space there would be circulated hot air in winter and cold air in summer, a procedure which would prevent excessive heat in summer and would allow solar heat to penetrate in winter.

I also informed you that this was my invention of 1929 called 'neutralizing wall,' invented for the Ministry of Light Industries, which I was building at that time in Moscow. This invention was rejected by the Soviet authorities and my building was equipped with the traditional heating system using radiators. Moreover, I reminded you that in 1936 I established in collaboration with a group of Brazilian architects the plans for the Ministry of National Education Building in Rio de Janeiro, which was built during the war by my disciple Oscar Niemeyer. This building was equipped with 'brise-soleil' (sun-breakers, a form of sun control). The 'brise-soleil' was a solution I had found about 1929 for North Africa and which since then I have applied under various circumstances. In my letter of November 19th, I stated the following conclusions:

'My strong belief, Mr. Senator, is that it is senseless to build in New York, where the climate is terrible in the summer, large glass areas which are not equipped with a "brise-soleil." I say this is dangerous, very seriously dangerous.'

In the same letter of November 19th, I wrote you in a postscript that in agreement with Mr. Misenard, vice-regent of the *Institut Français Pour Les Recherches Humaines* (of which the late Dr. Carrel was president) that I would send you a very detailed report. I shall now give you briefly the exact conclusions dealing with this problem on which Mr. Misenard and I have agreed. Mr. Senator, please do not consider this problem beyond your

two men and two women, and they went up sitting at this table with a bottle of Champagne; in another hour they came back. They had consumed two bottles of Champagne; and they were then followed through the lock by another launch which had a cabin to it. In this cabin was a middle aged man lying down fast asleep with an empty Champagne bottle by his side. I have not so much complaint to make of these steam-launches, because they do not offend very much; they pass by and are gone, but the rowing boats hang about. They come up from Marlow, and hang about all day.

(From the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Thames River Preservation, June, 1884.)

comprehension because it appears to be too technical. The responsibility of building the United Nations Headquarters is grave, and I want to repeat once more that there is real danger involved in building large glass areas without 'brise-soleil' on the East River.

Fig. One.—Necessity of a 'neutralizing wall' for the construction of the United Nations Headquarters at New York.

Fig. One shows the vertical section of one floor of a New York building. In A we have a window wall; the heating system provides an inside temperature of 20°C. (68°F.) from an outside temperature of 1°C. to -14°C. (33° to 6° F.). B represents a person enjoying relative comfort. B₁ and B₂ represent two people who are in an intolerable position surrounded by hot air but feeling intense cold.

Why this feeling of intense cold? Because (physical law) a body radiates heat to places colder than itself; consequently, here B₁ and B₂ radiate their own heat to the glass and their discomfort is so great that they will be unable to work. Hence, if these people are employed in the United Nations on the East River (directors, editors, accountants, typists, etc.) they will not be able to fill their jobs and the entire Secretariat of the United Nations will be incapacitated much more seriously than they were at Lake Success because of artificial light. This is extremely grave. It is decisive. One has no right to admit even once such an alternative.

Fig. Two.—A vertical section of the same room. This time there is a set of double glass panes separated by 8 to 10 cms. (3-4 inches); between the panes hot air is circulated, creating the 'neutralizing wall.' This way the inside glass surface has ceased to be cooling. Consequently, the people B₁, B₂ and B do not radiate their body heat towards the glass pane; B₁ and B₂ are now comfortable, and the work of the United Nations on the East River will be done under normal conditions.

Fig. Three.—m/ represents a façade of a part of a New York skyscraper with windows (25-40 per cent. of the surface); n/ represents a façade of a skyscraper of the project on the East River with a window-wall (100 per cent. of the surface).

In m/ you know that the working conditions are very conducive to fatigue in the present New York skyscrapers from June to September because of the intense New York heat.

In n/ the working conditions will be intolerable, of this we must be convinced, we must be sure, and we should be afraid. We must do what is necessary to prevent such a result.

Fig. Four.—Sunlight may be divided into:

- 1—visible rays;
- 2—ultra-violet rays;
- 3—infra-red rays;
- 4—miscellaneous rays.

Glass rejects the ultra-violet and infra-red rays. The visible rays penetrate, but as soon as they come into contact with any opaque body (called a black body), these rays are changed into heat which

radiate in all directions but which is retained in the building.

Let us consider the summer months in connection with the 100 per cent. glass surface; the effect of these rays inside the building will be serious.

But Mr. Harrison declared: 'We shall circulate cold air between the two glass surfaces.' This cold air will have no effect on the visible rays going through the glass wall (100 per cent.) (one cannot cool rays).

Do they hope to cool the glass area A so that it would become a radiator of cold? That is senseless; a fantastic quantity of refrigerant would be

necessary (which would be very expensive); also the glass, a, is by definition a poor conductor. Therefore, there is no other solution than that of the brise-soleil, the explanation of which follows:

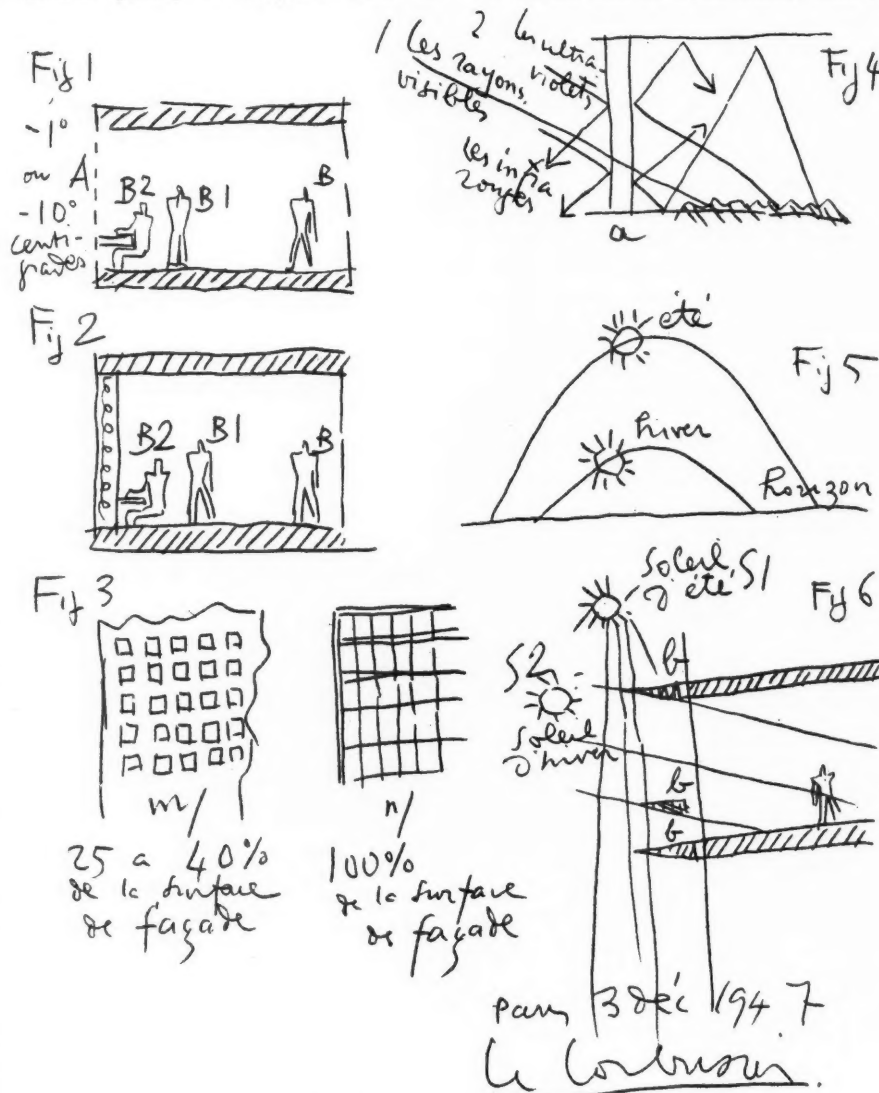
Figs. Five and Six.—The high summer sun S₁ has its rays broken by the brise-soleil b. The sun does not touch the windows nor does it reach the interior of the building, thus leaving the employees in complete comfort behind a 100 per cent. glass surface.

In winter when the sun S₂ is low on the horizon; it penetrates far into the building, bringing light, warmth and optimism.

This, Mr. Senator, is the physical truth:

1. It is indispensable to create a 'neutralizing wall' (an invention of Le Corbusier) to assure comfort in the working conditions of personnel behind window walls during the winter.
2. To equip the window wall with a brise-soleil to assure the comfort of the personnel during working hours during the summer.
3. The window wall allows a free disposition of rooms, the optimum use of space (the last modern conquest of steel and concrete).
4. One cannot make window walls without a 'neutralizing wall' and a 'brise-soleil' (just as one cannot make an automobile with a powerful motor without adequate brakes, etc.).

Mr. Senator, here are logical reasons which give



1, Le Corbusier's drawing, illustrating his letter to Senator Austin about the UN building.

MARGINALIA

you indisputable arguments which will aid you in making a decision regarding this problem.

An error made by the United Nations in this direction could have serious consequences.*

Most respectfully yours,

LE CORBUSIER.

P.S.—I have sent a copy of this letter to Mr. Trygve Lie, who is already aware of these problems.

The First Post-War Pub

A statement in the special issue of the REVIEW entitled 'Inside the Pub' (October, 1949) that no new pubs have been built in Britain since the war draws from Roberts & Son, caterers of Worthing, the information that they are now building a new pub—thought to be the first since the war—at Marine Parade, Worthing, which is due to be finished this summer.

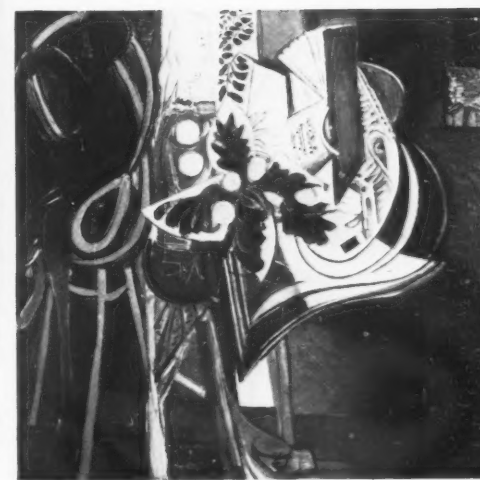
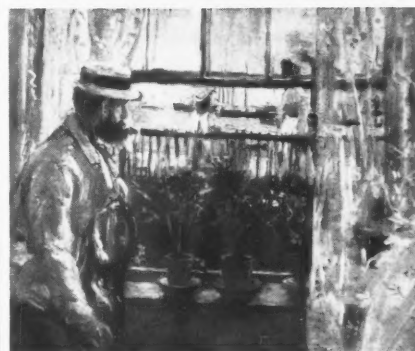
They send a drawing of the exterior, reproduced on page 72, which shows the kind of design still thought appropriate for a seaside pub in spite of the criticism that has been focused in recent years on fancy-dress styles and the attention lately paid to the contemporary validity of the English pub tradition. The building was described in a recent number of *The Wine and Spirit Trade Record* as being 'of striking and unusual design . . . of Spanish-Mexican style, with many features that hitherto have never been incorporated into any licensed premises in the area.' The architects are Lawrence A. Cooper and P. Winton-Lewis.

EXHIBITIONS

Renoir was as great a sculptor as painter. Can the same be said of Degas? The Lefevre Gallery (which has moved from New Bond Street to 30 Bruton Street) recently held an exhibition of fourteen paintings and pastels and a score of small bronzes by this master which invited an answer in the affirmative. The poetry of arrested motion found in Degas its greatest interpreter: he was able to give nobility to the most ordinary gesture of the female toilet, while in some of his little figures the more calculated postures of the dance take on a quality which can only be described as monumental. But what, of course, Degas's sculpture lacks through the nature of the medium is evidence of his genius for pattern-making, for turning a three-dimensional subject into a two-dimensional design on canvas without losing or denying the relationship in depth of the various objects of which it is composed—as in the splendid *Jockeys avant la Course* reproduced here.

Berthe Morisot's was a happy talent, and the Matthiesen Gallery when hung with nearly eighty of her works by the Arts Council was a pleasant place to find oneself in. In the introduction to the catalogue Philip James had written: 'It is perhaps true to say that of all women painters Berthe Morisot alone has a secure place among the acknowledged masters,' and with those words in one's mind it was inevitable that one should temper one's pleasure in the contemplation of paintings which had so direct an appeal to the senses with speculation on the problem of women in art.

* In the event the building has been provided neither with brise-soleil nor with a 'neutralizing wall.'



FROM THE EXHIBITIONS. 1, Portrait of the writer Jean Desbordes (collection Paul Beglarian); 2, London (gouache, collection Mme. Claude Hersent), both by Christian Bérard, from the exhibition at the New Burlington Gallery. 3, Eugène Manet in the Isle of Wight, by Berthe Morisot, from the Arts Council Exhibition at Matthiesen's. 4, Jockeys avant la Course, by Degas (Lefevre Gallery). 5, Blasted Trees, Western Front, 1918, by William Rothenstein, from the Memorial Exhibition at the Tate. 6, Light and Shadow, by Ceri Richards (Redfern Gallery).



Britain's first post-war pub, at Worthing, described as Spanish-Mexican in style. See note on page 71.

Was there anything in Morisot's work to provide a clue to the paucity of women painters with any claim to take their place in the company to which Philip James so cautiously assigned her? Well, it was clear that she had been easily influenced, early by Corot and Manet and later by Renoir; but it was not necessary to leave Bond Street to remind oneself that that is not an exclusively feminine trait. Then there was little sign of constructive intellect in her work; but the same was true of most of her male contemporaries, if not of Impressionism as a whole. Yet it won't really do to say that great women painters have failed to come forward through lack of opportunity: in the twentieth century there has surely been opportunity enough—but only one Gwen John.

Christian Bérard, who died last year, was known in England as a designer for the ballet (for instance, the Sadler's Wells *Clock Symphony*). As a painter he was scarcely known, here, at all. But it was his painting that he took most seriously of all his multifarious activities, and the exhibition of (mainly) his paintings put on by the Arts Council at the New Burlington Galleries was therefore a proper tribute of respect for one of the great personalities of the twentieth century. Not one of the great painters, to be sure, but still a painter to be reckoned with; what may have surprised those with a half-familiarity with the Bérard myth was that the most marked characteristic of his more ambitious paintings should be their solemnity; when they were derivative they were so not with the slickness of the facile *pasticheur* but rather with the earnestness of the student who is humble enough to submit himself to the problems that his masters have tackled and solved before him.

Another memorial exhibition has been that of the works of Sir William Rothenstein, at the Tate Gallery. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of Rothenstein's contribution to what one might call the art-culture of England over a period of fifty years or so. As a painter he was gifted, skilful and highly intelligent, and it is understandable that Degas should have thought highly of his early work. There were in fact many excellent pictures in this exhibition; yet for all that the emotional temperature was too low to warm the heart to anything more than respectful admiration. The wise visitor, before leaving the

Tate, went to the other side of the sculpture gallery to see some of the latest acquisitions for the permanent collection. These include one of Giacometti's thin men, Reg Butler's big 'Woman, 1949,' a painting by Francis Bacon, and two big bronzes by Renoir after which Maillol's *Three Graces* almost seemed over-refined and academic.

The Redfern Gallery has been gay with the wanton pianos of Ceri Richards.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

New Uses for Aluminium

Present day development in aluminium has tended to concentrate on the alloys which have aimed at great strength combined with the natural quality of a low weight factor, particularly for structural purposes. British Aluminium have not overlooked the other qualities of this material, and recently they have put on the market a super purity aluminium—99.99 per cent. pure, to rival the more usual copper, lead and zinc as a material for flashings, weatherings and gutter-linings. Up to now, though commercial purity aluminium (99.0 per cent.—99.7 per cent.) has been used for flashings it has not made much headway against lead due to the greater ductility of the latter.

The new quality of aluminium sheet overcomes this drawback and since it costs less than zinc and copper and is only one-third of the price of lead of a quality normally used for flashings, in comparable gauges, it may now be considered a formidable rival to the established materials. It is also very durable, though care has to be taken not to use any fastening containing copper—aluminium or heavily galvan-



8, super purity aluminium used for valley gutter lining.

ised nails and clips only should be used, while rain-water from copper roofs should not be allowed to run on to it.

Large scale production facilities have been developed since the war and this super purity aluminium is now available in quantity on the general market. The illustration shows it used as a gutter lining.

The British Aluminium Co. Ltd., Salisbury House, London Wall, London, E.C.2.

* * * * *

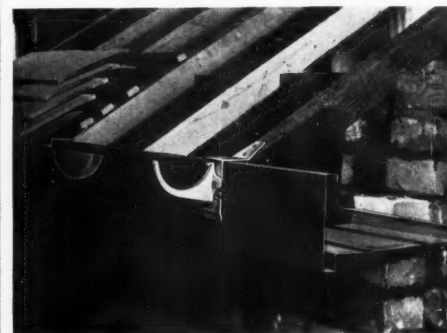
The steady rise of labour costs, though general throughout industry, naturally affects most of those industries in which labour is a relatively high proportion of total cost.

In the building industry, devices which reduce labour costs on the site automatically focus attention on themselves and the Bainbridge 'Facia-Soffitt' system is no exception. Moreover it is made of aluminium, a metal which, though it tends to involve a higher initial cost, can offer in many instances compensating advantages.

This system combines a fascia and a soffit, constructed in one piece on the box girder principle with stiffening corrugations.

The fascia is a standard 6 in., but the soffit may be 7 in., 9 in. or 12 in. The standard length is 8 ft. Corner-pieces and stop ends are available.

It is fixed by means of a bracket to every third spar with three nails, the rake on the upper edge of the bracket lining it up with the roof. It does not need to be cut as the sections are intended to overlap to fit any length of roof, nor is it necessary to plumb cut the spar feet. Finally a spar fascia bracket can be supplied that nails on to the spar, with three sets of slots to take the bolts for fixing the gutter bracket, and allow any 'fall' that may be necessary without the need for measuring.



9, a combined fascia and soffit in aluminium.

The makers claim that it takes two unskilled men, equipped with no more than a hammer and nails, two hours only to fit it to the average pair of houses. Scaffolding is not necessary. By using aluminium, the possibility of corrosion is excluded, and its design renders it completely weather-proof. The prices per running foot are 2s. 1d., 2s. 3d., and 2s. 6d. for the 7 in., 9 in. and 12 in. soffit size respectively. Corner pieces are 2s. 6d. extra, stop ends 1s. each and fixing brackets 9d., 10d. and 1s., according to the above sizes. Spar fascia brackets with a 4½ in. cast aluminium gutter bracket are 1s. 1½d. each, or with 4 in., 4½ in. or 5 in. galvanized pressed steel gutter bracket 11d. each.

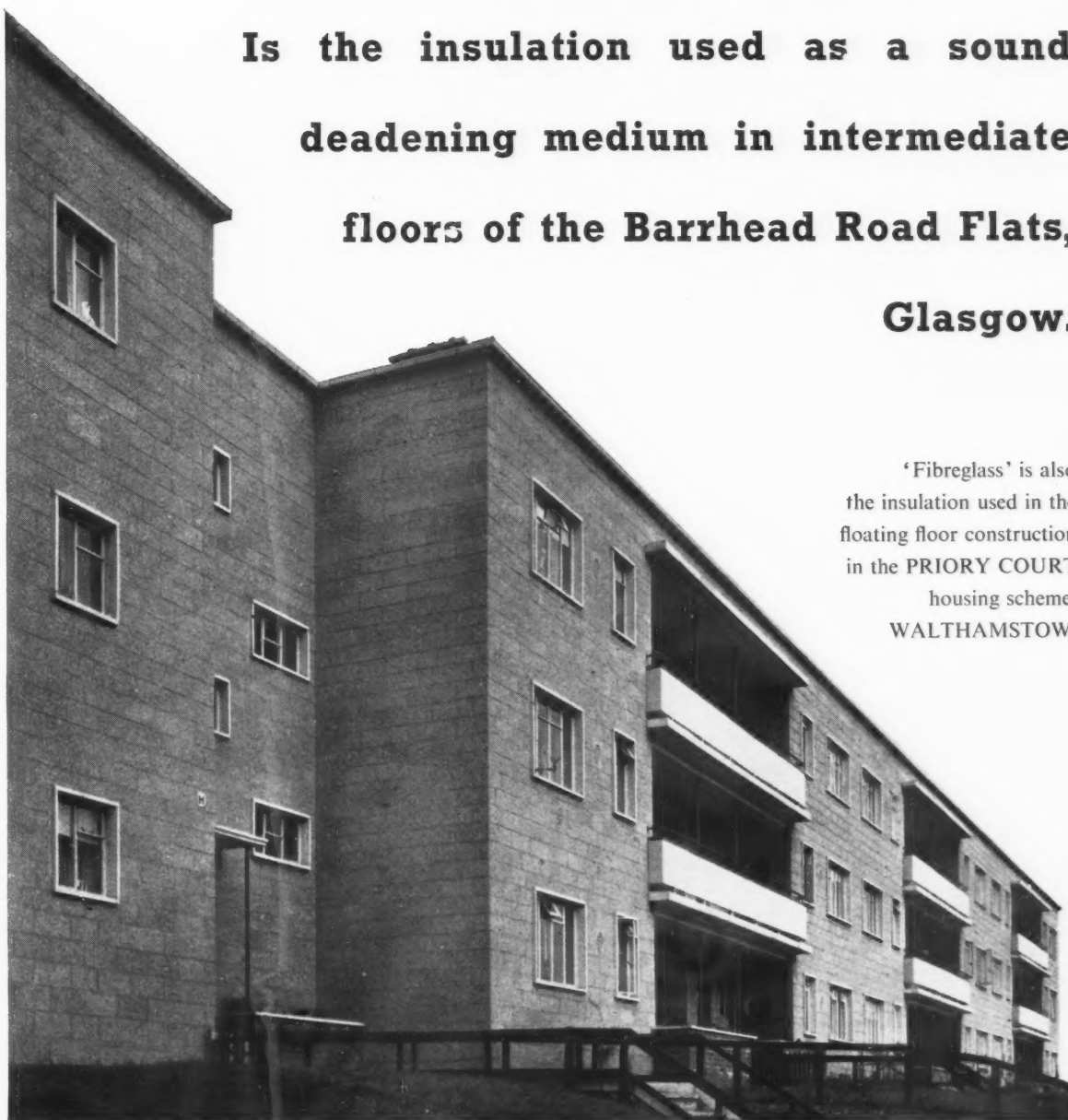
Bainbridge Bros., Uplands Road, Flixton, Manchester.

[continued on page 74]

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deadening medium in intermediate
floors of the Barrhead Road Flats,
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the insulation used in the
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continued from page 72]

A Practical Guide

To assist the bricklayer in lining up steel door frames, Messrs. Henry Hope and Son have devised a line guide which they will supply to all builders on request, free of charge. Its purpose is to overcome the difficulty, peculiar to this type of frame, that it is fabricated complete for fitting, with no loose architraves to be cut and fitted afterwards. Since it projects beyond the face of the brickwork it is difficult for the bricklayer when building them into the brickwork in the normal way to line his work up horizontally. The guide, it will be seen, consists of a steel clamp with a thumbscrew to enable it to be attached to the door frame, notched at the other end so that it will hold the line in position against the brickwork and lead it round the door frame.

Henry Hope & Sons Ltd., Smethwick, Birmingham.

INTELLIGENCE

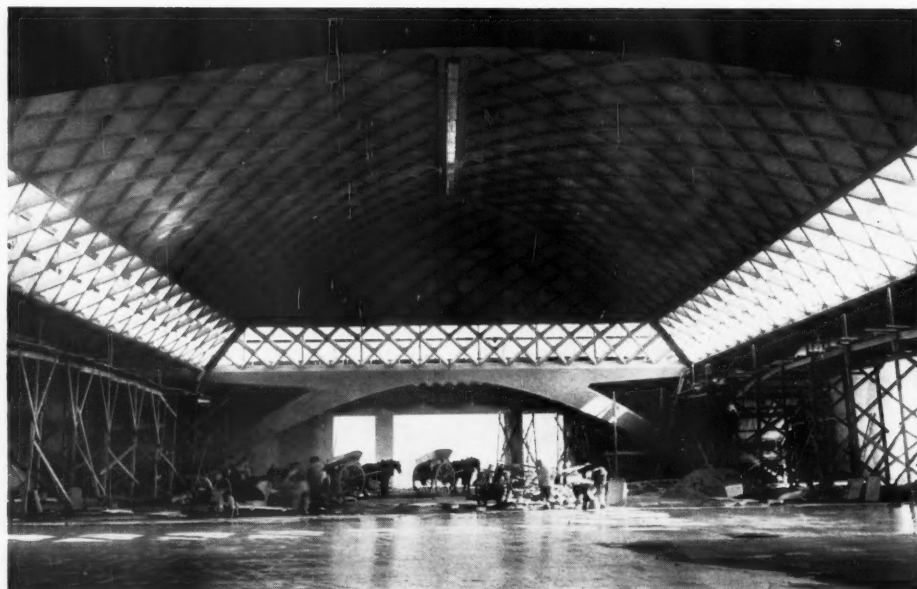
The touring exhibition which is being arranged in the 1951 Festival Ship *Campania* has been planned by the Festival Office Design Section working under James Holland, Co-ordinating Designer for the Festival of Britain. Architect members of the staff are: L. Wills, E. Pollak, V. Prus, W. Kay; and designers are: C. Hasler, P. Sharland, R. Negus, Miss P. Behr. Messrs. Hasler, Pollak, Prus, Sharland and Negus were joint winners of the first prize in

the recent Pub Design Competition organized by THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW with the support of the Brewers' Society.

Italy follows France in allocating a sum—in their case 2% instead of the 1% in France—of the total expenditure on building to be used for the purchase of sculpture and paintings. Certain buildings like

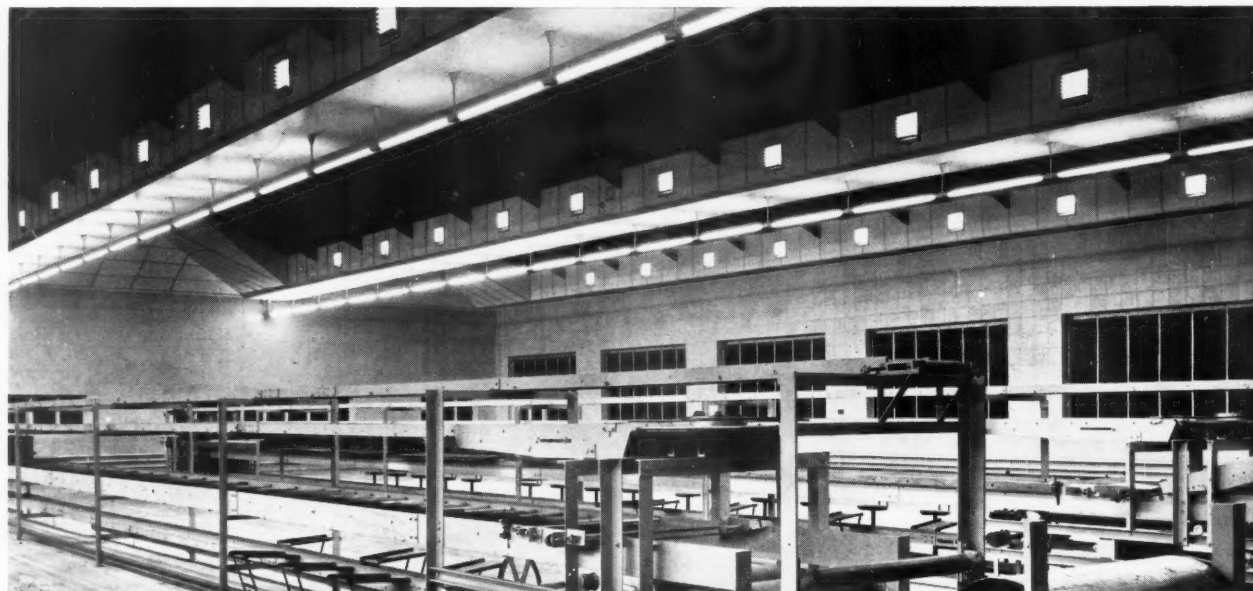
factories are excluded from this levy, but it is expressly stated that this money must not be used for interior decoration.

Russell W. Kerr has been appointed Director of the Town and Country Planning Association in succession to Desmond Donnelly, M.P. for Pembroke-shire.



10. A letter on page 76 refers to the exhibition building in the Valentino Park, Turin. This year a large hall has been added to the building. It is shown nearing completion in the photograph above. It has a floor area of nearly 4,000 square metres, and is roofed by a reinforced concrete vault resting on four arches. The parts of the roof were prefabricated under cover in the great central hall of the exhibition, to allow work to proceed throughout the winter. The new hall was allowed for in Roberto Biscaretti's original design for the building. It has been designed by Prof. Nervi under the direction of the engineer Vittorio Bottoni.

[continued on page 76



Packing Hall Lighting Installation at Messrs. MacFarlane Lang & Co., Osterley.

The Installation was carried out by using 90 — 5ft. 80 watt Fluorescent Tubes and 45 Recessed Louvre Fittings each with a 200 watt Tungsten Lamp—giving an average illumination of 20 Lumens per sq. ft. over the whole area.

Architect
MESSRS. JAMES M. MONRO & SON

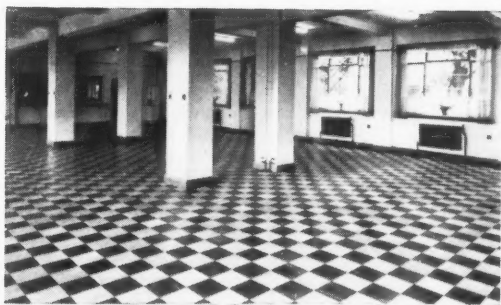
Installation by

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ALSO MANCHESTER · HEREFORD · WINCHESTER

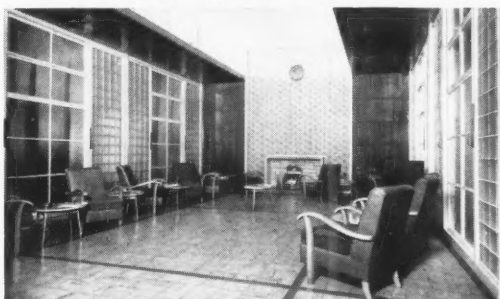
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Semastic decorative floor tile installation for the British Electricity Authority, Surrey.



Semastic decorative tile flooring installed in the canteen of Joseph Terry & Sons Ltd., York.



The reception room of the Standard Motor Co. Ltd., Coventry, equipped with Semastic decorative floor tiles.



Semastic decorative tile flooring in the foyer of the Essoldo Cinema, Kilburn, London, N.W.6.

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continued from page 74]

CORRESPONDENCE

Turin Exhibition Hall

To the Editors

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

DEAR SIRs,—No doubt I am not the first to point out the error in the May issue of the REVIEW ('Concrete Up-to-Date,' by Felix Samuely) in which the Exhibition Hall built at the Valentino Park, Turin, was described as being at Milan.

Even more important is the fact that no mention is made of the designer of the structure of this remarkable building, Pier Luigi Nervi. His works (Stadio Giovanni Berta at Florence, various hangars near Rome, and many other audacious structures in reinforced concrete) are not sufficiently known outside his native country, in spite of their technical as well as aesthetic merits. In justice his name should figure, if not alongside the Perretts and Maillartts of our time, amongst those rare engineers who prove by their works that the solution of a merely technical problem can result in a piece of real architecture.

Yours,

ALFREDO TURIN.

Taunton, Somerset.

New Government Offices

To the Editors

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

SIRs,—I have been following with some interest the recent correspondence in the architectural press regarding the building schemes for Government Offices, generally described as the Lessors Schemes. May I go a little further into the history of these schemes, with which I was vitally concerned? Prior to my retirement from the Ministry of Works in the

autumn of last year (after incidentally 38 years' service) I was the responsible officer at Headquarters for vetting all the London Building Lessors cases within the narrow limits imposed on us.

I entirely agree that, given a clear field, the ideal and proper course would have been to formulate a long-term programme, to ensure that the building development was in accord with good modern design, free of restriction and harmonious in its general conception. But policy (rightly or wrongly) settled at the highest level must be faithfully carried out by the responsible officers, even if the views of the particular officer concerned may not coincide with the settled policy, and the policy in the case of these schemes was initially dictated on the following lines:—

1. Owing to the many complaints that premises were being retained indefinitely on requisition, a definite assurance was given in the House of Commons that de-requisitioning would cease on a specific date.
2. Following on this decision a short-term programme of new buildings had to be developed as a measure of considerable urgency.
3. Each case, therefore, as it developed, had to be treated separately, and time did not permit of general consideration of all schemes as a whole.
4. The restrictions on costs and use of certain materials seriously limited the scope of treatment.

On the question of external treatment, to my knowledge the simplicity of treatment to conform with austerity finish was general, and as all these buildings were originally cubed at 3s. 6d. to 3s. 9d. a foot as a basis for rent negotiation, it will I think be agreed that little margin was available for special treatment.

I have personally followed all the Building Lessors Schemes through from the initial stages,

and attended many periodical Headquarters Meetings on the general policy, and if there is any criticism to be levelled, it should concern itself with the rights or wrongs of the high policy determining the programme. Such criticism can only, in fairness, be given if the full facts leading up to the particular circumstances are known, and a possible solution given which might have avoided the chain of circumstances. As matters developed, the only alternative would have been to extend requisitioning powers, which the long suffering public could scarcely have been expected to endure.

To summarize, it was a difficult situation, thrust upon the officers responsible for operating the scheme. Had it been possible to retain requisitioning powers indefinitely, or at least for some years, the emergency would not have arisen, but as circumstances developed the only possible solution was to make the most of the very limited and frustrating circumstances. It is on this score that I feel that the private architects concerned are worthy of commendation for giving of their best in a very difficult situation.

Yours, etc.,

DOUGLAS WATT.

London, W.5.

Mr. Watt adds some useful information to what was already known about the origin of the Lessors Schemes and the policy behind them. It is clear that the blame for the failure to make them part of a co-ordinated plan for the rebuilding of London must not be laid on the officials operating the schemes within the Ministry of Works, but on those who determine policy at a higher level. The fact remains, nevertheless, that a great opportunity has been missed and that many of the sites now occupied by these buildings are not the best sites for the purpose from the town-planning point of view. On the question of external treatment, an obvious answer to Mr. Watt's observation is

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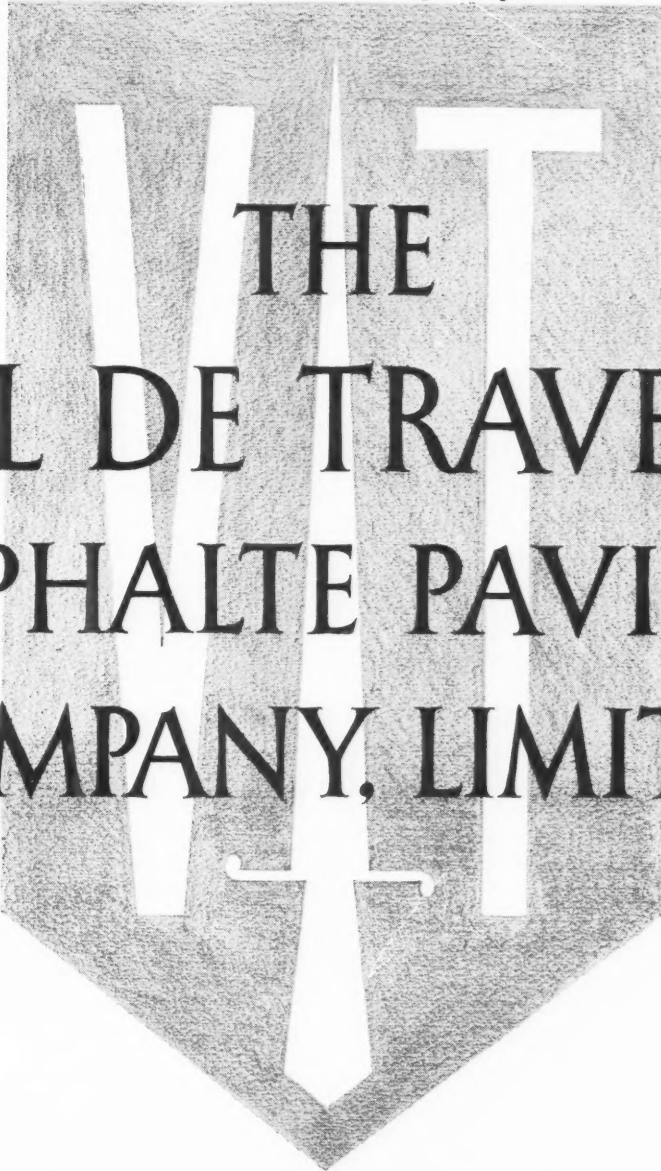
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11, St. George's House, New Oxford Street, one of the office blocks discussed in the accompanying letter.

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that, in some cases at least, more austerity rather than less austerity would have resulted in better architecture. One of the buildings recently criticized in the REVIEW, St. George's House, New Oxford Street, is illustrated again above. If, as Mr. Watt says, the finances of the scheme left little margin for special treatment, the money spent on classical trimmings might surely have been better used elsewhere.—THE EDITORS.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge the help given him in preparing this issue by the Thames Conservancy, especially their Mr. Bolland; to the many writers on the Thames whose works the author has studied, such as Messrs. W. A. Davidge & Partners' Report on the Thames Riverside from Chiswick to Staines; to the many river people such as the lock-keepers who have given the author useful information on his several river journeys. **THE LINEAR NATIONAL PARK:** all photographs by Eric de Maré except 8, 38, 90, 96, 100, 104, 112, 113, 122, 147, McCallum, Arphot; 16, 18, 34, 57, 58, 99, 111, 121, 128, 130, 131, 132, 137, 140, 152, 154, 155, 158, 161, 163, Galwey, Arphot; 78, drawing by D. Dewar Mills. **NEW MARLOW:** all drawings and photographs by Gordon Cullen except 5, Eric de Maré; 6 and 7, Galwey, Arphot; maps by D. Dewar Mills except 2, which is reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. **ENGRAVINGS,** page 5, Teddington Locks; page 14, Bray; page 25, Sunbury Locks; page 27, Map of Thames, from Tomblinson's *Thames*, Black and Armstrong, 1834. Page 17, *A Picknick at Quarry Woods*; page 18, Between Hampton and Sunbury; page 24, Abingdon, from *Rivers of Great Britain*, Cassell and Co., 1891. Page 32, *The Dragonfly and The Green Forester*; page 35, *Weir Paddles*; page 51, *The First Mill*, from *The Book of the Thames*, A. Virtue & Co. Pages 36 and 52, from Ireland's *Picturesque Views of The Thames*, T. and J. Egerton, 1792. **MARGINALIA,** pages 69-78, 1, 2 and 3, by permission of the Arts Council of Great Britain; 4 and 6, A. C. Cooper; 5, by permission of the Director of The Tate Gallery; 10, Moncalvo; 11, John Maltby.

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