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The influences upon the evolution and demise of British post-war, land-based sculpture.

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Introduction

Udo Kultermann stated, in 1967 that, 'Sculpture is on the way to rediscovering our environment, and disclosing hidden elements in it. … We stand at the beginning of an epoch which … explores not only unfamiliar and distant regions, but also the unknown and unused areas of our immediate surroundings.'[1]

This introduction outlines the basis and, where possible, defines and identifies points of commonality in land art; whilst attempting to demonstrate what constitutes land art within the bounds of the British Isles. It will provide some evidence of associations with historical landscape and design, to consider how land art has advanced both independently and distinctively in the British Isles. It will attempt to reinforce land art's relationship to conceptual art and its significance and contribution to the development of the contemporary British landscape. Finally, it will introduce the four selected post-war British sculptors that, arguably, provide many of the founding tenets for land art in Britain today and whose selected work will be utilised to review any predictions alongside the actuality of the demise of their art, in the late twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries.

Land Art

Land art as a movement emerged in America in the late 1960s, where landscape and the work of art became intricately connected. Land art has been studied extensively including seminal works by John Beardsley, Suzaan Boettger, Gilles Tiberghien and Udo Weilacher.[2] Rosalind Krauss states that during the 1960s and 1970s 'surprising things have come to be called sculpture'.[3] This refers to the work of land artists in America, about which she argues 'a cultural term (sculpture) can be extended to include just about anything'.[4] Land art relates to much older land works, which had a religious or mythological intention, for example, the megalithic sites of Stonehenge and Avebury were created as sanctuaries utilising menhirs (standing stones) in a specific pattern and Lucy Lippard reasons that now 'Our lack of shared beliefs and values contributes to our fascination with ancient images and monuments'.[5] She believes that the expansion of the term sculpture is 'overtly performed in the name of vanguard aesthetics - the ideology of the new - its covert message is that of historicism. The new is made

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[1] Udo Kultermann, *The New Sculpture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967), p. 91.
[2] John Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond. Contemporary Art in the Landscape* (New York: Abbeville, 2006); Suzaan Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Gilles Tiberghien: *Land Art*, (Paris: La Découverte, 2012); Udo Weilacher, *Between Landscape Architecture and Land Art* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1996).
[3] Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', *October*, 8 (1979), p. 30.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Lucy R. Lippard, *Overlay,* (New York: New Press, 1983), p. 11.

comfortable by being made familiar, since it is seen as having gradually evolved from the forms of the past.'[6] There are many historic and prehistoric sources for contemporary art in the landscape, which are available as an endless resource for innovation and interpretation. Lippard speculates that the art of contemporary artists in the landscape 'help us to understand how the ancient patterns apply to our own, to move toward a reintegration of the political and the cultural, the personal and the natural, and all the permutations thereof.'[7] Contemporary art in the landscape is considered to reference pre-historic and historic, as well as, twentieth-century antecedents.

Contemporary land art is challenging to define. John Dixon Hunt commences his characterisation by stating that the intention of a landscape architect's design, is to design places for habitation.[8] Land art does not do that, as we can visit, observe and often walk on, within and through such art. He further clarifies that land artists are inspired by ideas, 'ideas of how to respond to land, ideas of art and design, together with no fear of conjoining them.'[9] Beardsley states that in the late 1960s, 'a handful of artists chose to enter the landscape itself, to use its materials and work with its salient features. They were not depicting the landscape, but engaging in it.'[10] Moreover, sculptures are not positioned in the landscape rather the landscape provides the elements for their creation. Weilacher states that 'Interventions by the artist, which use…natural materials…change and restructure the landscape space … with a sensitivity and care arising from an awareness of ecological responsibility.'[11] Many of these art works are created in remote places and are often transient in their final form, so may only be recorded for public view in photographs or film; the intention being to reject the conventional commercial art world, museums and galleries. For Walter de Maria 'isolation is the essence of land art' because it severed connections to the art world and its institutions by seeking locations remote from major urban and cultural centres.[12] The objective of transience refutes supporters of historicism, albeit this land art could only be displayed and evidenced by using new technology, not historically available. Robert Smithson, an influential American earthwork artist noted 'Deliverance from the confines of the studio frees the artist to a degree from the snares of craft

[6] Lippard, *Overlay*, p. 11.
[7] Ibid. p.13.
[8] John Dixon Hunt, *Historical Ground: The Role of History in Contemporary Landscape Architecture* (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), p. 139.
[9] Weilacher, *Between Landscape Architecture and Land Art*, p. 6.
[10] Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, p. 23.
[11] Weilacher, *Between Landscape Architecture and Land Art*, p. 11.
[12] Martin Hogue, 'The Site as Project: Lessons from Land art and Conceptual art', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 57 (2004), p. 57.

and the bondage of creativity.'[13] The sculptors communicate directly with their audiences and fulfil roles beyond the creation of artwork, as teachers, interpreters and concept creators.

Conceptualism was adopted as a term used to classify a range of art such as performance and land art in the late 1960s; it is defined as art based upon ideas. Thus, land art is connected to conceptual art (and is part of it), which may seem contradictory as this art appears to emphasise the visual end-product. However, land art exists briefly, before progressing to myth, discussion, photography or text (often as art criticism or review). Beuys recognised that his artwork (1982), *7,000 Oaks – City Forestation instead of City Administration in Kassel*, would evolve from the time of its inception and 'the mature, still growing aesthetic organism intervenes radically and sustainably in the visual, ecological and social structure of the urban habitat'.[14] This substantial art work reinforces land art's relationship to conceptual art.

In general, Weilacher states 'land art has an intrinsically romantic component in so far as it is the intention of the artist to give nature a specifically human marking as a manifestation of man's spirit and creative power.'[15] Conversely, Sonfist claims that man should not alter nature but present it; he wants to create art that makes nature visible and directs people to look at nature.[16]

Weilacher investigates and discusses the concept and form of land art.[17] He asserts that the term land art is 'uncritically applied to virtually any kind of design in public space which appears to have artistic qualities, irrespective of the meaning it conveys.'[18] Thus, land art seems to have become part of mainstream public art and the term land art is often mis-appropriated as nomenclature for any kind of art in nature even where it is not conceptually related to the works of the innovators of this genre. Ross divided land art into six categories: Masculine gestures (Michael Heizer, Robert Smithson and Walter De Maria), Ephemeral gestures (Richard Long, David Nash), Environmental performance art (Hamish Fulton), Architectural installations (Nancy Holt, Chris Drury), Quasi-gardens (Alan Sonfist) and Sculpture gardens.[19]

In the 1960s, St Martins School of Art in London, was perceived as the innovator of advanced art in Britain. British land art, created by the artists of this generation, displayed an emotional response that

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[13] Robert Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings* ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996a), pp. 100-113.
[14] https://www.documenta.de/en/works_in_kassel# Documenta 7 (1982) to Documenta 8 (1987), [accessed 2 June 2019].
[15] Weilacher, *Between Landscape Architecture and Land Art*, p. 12.
[16] Alan Sonfist, *Natural phenomenon as public monuments* (New York: Neuberger Museum, 1978), p. 5.
[17] Weilacher, *Between Landscape Architecture and Land Art*, p. 9.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Stephanie Ross, *What Gardens Mean* (London: University of Chicago, 2008), p. 208.

dramatically contrasted with their American peers. Beardsley postulated that 'the antiheroism of the recent (British) work is no doubt a reflection of the present-day character of the English countryside.'[20] Britain as a proportionately small land mass had become densely populated, with a landscape that was regulated and shaped by stringent planning legislation. Charles Harrison stated, 'American Modernism was probably better understood and absorbed at St Martin's than anywhere else at that time, and sculpture students there were in a good position to make divergent moves and to have them identified as such.'[21] The 1960s witnessed social disruption and provided the opportunity for a *tabula rasa* and a return to simplicity and sacred/therapeutic geometry.[22]

A touring exhibition, in 2013 and 2014, *Uncommon Ground: Land Art in Britain 1966-1979*, provided an insight into the work of 24 artists and artists groups and revealed 'the distinct forms that land art took in Britain: predominantly conceptual …, hand-made and organic'.[23] The exhibition supported the concept that historic landscape art was no longer 'old-fashioned and redundant, landscape [had become] the ground of radical artistic experiment.'[24]

The Sculptors

Most design in the landscape is called land art even if it only uses the landscape as a setting. Other terms which are frequently adopted include earthworks, environmental art, earth art and nature art. The work presented in this dissertation is based upon four British post-war male sculptors. Marina Warner defines these sculptors as nature artists 'who have taken it as their task to rethink and repair the rift between humanity and nature, and who …. work in and with the landscape'.[25] These artists include Richard Long (1945), Hamish Fulton (1946), Chris Drury (1948), David Nash (1945), Andy Goldsworthy (1956) and Peter Randall-Page (1954), who have 'developed a double strand in this … active, nature sculpture: they grapple with the sense of an immanent [*sic*], overwhelming spirit in stone and tree, and, at the same time, acknowledge that human beings can't pretend they aren't part of nature, too, that they aren't present making a difference'.[26]

The selected British land artists, being presented in this work, include four of those demarcated by Warner above: Richard Long, David Nash and Andy Goldsworthy, who are classified as traditional land

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[20] Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, p.41.
[21] Charles Harrison, 'The Late Sixties in London and Elsewhere' 1965-1972, *When Attitudes Became Form*, ed. Hillary Gresty (Cambridge: Kettlesyard Gallery, 1984) p.10.
[22] Robert Rosenblum, 'Toward the Tabula Rasa', in *Transformations in Late Eighteenth century Art* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 146 – 191.
[23] Ben Tufnell, Joy Sleeman, Nicholas Alfrey, *Uncommon Ground: Land art in Britain 1966-79* (London: Hayward Publishing, 2013), p. 4.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Marina Warner in David Nash, *Forms into Time* (London: Artmedia, 2001), p.24.
[26] Ibid.

artists and Peter Randall-Page, who might be more conventionally aligned to the practice of sculpture. However, much of his work associates with broader elements of the land art definition, in particular, his rural work uses the landscape as an explicit background for his sculptures.

It is notable that no female sculptors have been chosen for review in this work. During the 1960s and 1970s there were a limited number of female sculptors originating from either St Martin's School of Art or Chelsea School of Art. Of these Jane Ackroyd (1957), Ruth Horam (1931-2021), Yoko Terauchi (1954), did not work directly in the land. Phyllida Barlow (1944) studied at the Chelsea School of Art (1960-63); she 'remembers a sign on the welding-room door at Chelsea saying, "No Women". But, she said, "There *were* women in there: you were taught … five skills of sculpture"'.[27] Female sculpture students at St Martin's Art School and the Chelsea College of Art were limited, during this period, many female students became painters or illustrators. Emily Young (1951) attended both of these revered art institutes and has been extolled as 'Britain's greatest living stone sculptor'.[28] She is also known as an environmental artist and activist. Whilst her work reflects many of the characteristics identified in environmental sculpture, her work focusses on the human anatomy rather than a therapeutic geometry evident in the work of the four selected sculptors. Of the 24 artists and groups represented at the *Uncommon Ground* exhibition (2013-2014) only one of the artists was female (Susan Hiller (1940-2019)). Consequently, the omission of a female delegate in this dissertation echoes a continuing male partiality in this field, at that time.

The threads of commonality in the biographies of the selected sculptors are summarised in table 1 and are expanded in the following summation. Firstly, they all commenced their careers in the 1960s and 1970s, which affords the opportunity to review and observe the development and demise of their permanent works over several decades. They all utilise natural materials to construct their artwork. However, these materials vary in their permanency from ice or a footstep (ephemeral work, with a photographic imperative as the work is action-based) through to granite. Long states 'I'm not interested in ephemerality—that's just a by-product the idea is to make something and photograph it.'[29] Ephemeral works will not be considered in this dissertation, as they are by default short-lived and their demise difficult to anticipate or quantify.

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[27] Charlotte Higgins, 'Bish-bash-bosh: how Phyllida Barlow conquered the art world at 73' , *The Guardian*, (9 May 2017).
[28] Hans Josephsohn, 'Emily Young, We Are Stone's Children, Fine Art Society, London – review', *Financial Times*, (1 September 2013).
[29] Ina Cole, 'Ideas Can Last Forever: A Conversation with Richard Long', *Sculpture*, (July 2016), https://sculpturemagazine.art/ideas-can-last-forever-a-conversation-with-richard-long/ [accessed 25 April 2021].

Sculptor	1960s – 1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s
Richard Long (b. 1945)	St Martins School of Art (1966-1968) (Advanced Sculpture Course)	Turner Prize nominee – 1984,1987, 1988 and awarded 1989 for *White Water Line* 1984 – contributed to *Second Nature* (Common Ground publication)	1998 – Yorkshire Sculpture Park	2001 elected as a Royal Academician in Sculpture	2013 – Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) 2018 – Knight Bachelor 2015 – Commission at Tremenheere Sculpture Garden
David Nash (b. 1945)	Kingston College of Art (1963-1967) Chelsea School of Art (1969-1970)	1983-1984 *Sod Swap* 1984 – contributed to *Second Nature* (Common Ground publication) 1986-89 – Trees and Wood Projects (Drawings of Trees) 1986 - Forest of Dean - commissions	1999 elected as a Royal Academician in Sculpture	2004 – Order of the British Empire (OBE)	2011 – Yorkshire Sculpture Park 2016 – Marsh Award for Excellence in Public Sculpture (*Habitat*) 2018 – work included in the Exhibition of Common Ground Art Collection at Yorkshire Sculpture Park 2015 – Commission at Tremenheere
Andy Goldsworthy (b. 1956)	Bradford College of Art (1974-1975) Preston Polytechnic (1975-1978)	1983 - Yorkshire Sculpture Park 1984 – contributed to *Second Nature* (Common Ground publication) 1986 – *New Milestones* Project	1996-2000 – *Sheepfolds* A millennium project at a local level	2000 – Order of the British Empire (OBE) 2007-2008 – Yorkshire Sculpture Park	2018 - work included in the Exhibition of Common Ground Art Collection at Yorkshire Sculpture Park
Peter Randall-Page (b. 1954)	Bath Academy of Art (1973-1977) Conservation Wells Cathedral (1979)	Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travelling Fellowship – stone carving Carrara quarries (1980) 1986-87 *New Milestones* Project 1986 – Forest of Dean - commission	1992 – Yorkshire Sculpture Park 1989-1996 *Local Distinctiveness* Project	2006 – Marsh Award for Excellence in Public Sculpture (*Give and Take*) 2003-2005 – Member of the design team for the new education building Eden Project.	2015 – elected as a Royal Academician in Sculpture 2015 – Commission at Tremenheere 2018 – work included in the Exhibition of Common Ground Art Collection at Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Key:			
	Common Ground initiative(s)		Award of Order of Chivalry
	Forest of Dean (Commission(s))		Marsh Award
	Tremenheere Sculpture Garden		Royal Academy Award (in Sculpture)
	Yorkshire Sculpture Park work		Notable individual achievement

Table 1. Summary of the sculptors key individual and shared biographical details.

Whilst according to the many definitions Long, Nash, Goldsworthy and Randall-Page can be described as land artists. Long and Goldsworthy could also be known as earth artists as they have both used earth to create sculptures, for example, *Turf Circle* (Krefeld, Germany, 1969), and the *Lambton Earthwork* (UK, 1988), respectively. They are all clear in their individual preference for nomenclature and variously describe themselves, simply as an artist (Long)[30], Nash, states 'I started as a Painter and then a Sculptor'[31] or Goldsworthy, who consistently refers to himself as a Sculptor.[32] Randall-Page is recognised to be a sculptor by a more conventional definition, although his themes and designs are mathematical with a predilection for nature and the siting of his work, in the landscape, is critical to their message. Long (2001), Nash (1999) and Randall-Page (2015) have all been elected as Royal Academicians in Sculpture. Henceforward, the four artists will be referred to as sculptors for consistency.

Long was one of the innovative St Martin's students (1966-1968) referenced by Charles Harrison earlier. He states that he was 'accepted to St Martin's on the Advanced Sculpture course; a course for odd-balls.'[33] The 1960s was a *tabula rasa* in Britain, when minimal, conceptual and performance art emerged. Nash is of the same generation as Long and acknowledges that he followed Long's work and 'he was a sort of teacher to me'.[34] Randall-Page and Goldsworthy both studied at art school in the early to mid-1970s. Nash, Goldsworthy and Randall-Page allude to surrealists as their mentors, all referencing Constantin Brâncuşi (1876-1957), as an influence in their work. Brâncuşi is known as the patriarch of modern sculpture and an innovator of modernism.

Common Ground

Significantly, these sculptors have all been involved with, and contributed works to, the 'Common Ground' movement. Common Ground was established in 1983 by Sue Clifford, Angela King and Roger Deakin, an arts and environment charity with the stated mission 'to work closely with artists, authors, and music makers to inspire and embolden people across the country to speak up for the local environment in the most imaginative ways'.[35] Since its inception the organisation has instigated and

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[30] *Mary Corse and Richard Long in conversation with Greg Hilty* [online video], (Lisson Gallery, uploaded 1 June 2018), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPY9mlGSIQA [accessed 14 February 2021] (2 minutes 30 seconds).
[31] *Artists Lives, Interview with David Nash* [audio recording], (The British Library, C466/32, June 1995) http://sounds.bl.uk [accessed 18 November 2019] (pdf. p 263).
[32] Tina Fiske, Andy Goldsworthy, *Andy Goldsworthy at Yorkshire Sculpture Park* (Wakefield: Yorkshire Sculpture Park, 2007) p. 40.
[33] *Richard Long in conversation with Stephen Snoddy* [online video], (New Art Gallery Walsall, uploaded 14 May 2014), (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVCEku5SAWo [accessed 18 March 2021] (4 minutes 41 seconds).
[34] https://www.sculpture.org/documents/scmag01/dec01/nash/nash.shtml [accessed 3 January 2020]. No longer accessible returned on 18 August 2021.
[35] https://www.commonground.org.uk/history/ [accessed 15 March 2020].

supported many initiatives, including *New Milestones* (Goldsworthy and Randall-Page, late 1980s). The project was considered to be pioneering, as it introduced the sculptors to the community to develop works that venerate 'some aspect of their place; … liberating sculpture into the landscape (from the gallery and sculpture park); … enabling local communities to commission sculptors and craftspeople for themselves'.[36] Other Common Ground projects have included: Trees, Woods and the Green Man (Goldsworthy and Nash, 1986-89); Yorkshire Sculpture Park (Goldsworthy, Nash and Randall-Page, 1987); *Knowing your Place* an exhibition that commenced in 1987 (Nash) and contributions to *Second Nature,* a Common Ground publication (1984), which contains illustrations from Long, Nash and Goldsworthy.[37]

Materials

The sculptors (occasionally with the exception of Randall-Page) all aim to source the materials for their works locally and sustainably. Lippard states that this is a reflection of 'rebellious, anti-precious-object syndrome' of the late 1960s, where 'the process by which a work is made and material from which it is made became as important as the final product.'[38] Many of Long's first works were made from driftwood gathered regularly from a bend in the tidal river Avon, near the Clifton suspension bridge.[39] Long consistently sources commercially valueless stone from quarries local to his commission sites, for example, *Jackdaw Line* (2020), at Hestercombe Gardens was created of Morte slate upon which the garden is situated. More generally, if Long creates a work during a walk he uses the natural materials at the selected site, for example, *A Circle in Ireland* (1975), was made using the Burren limestone. He regularly states, 'I really like the idea of making something from nothing.'[40] Goldsworthy uses locally sourced materials for his work; often reusing stones from derelict or collapsed structures for walls. Long and Goldsworthy create their stone sculptures by placing stones, in contrast to Randall-Page, who sculpts the stone using stone mason's tools and skills.

Randall-Page uses stone sourced from different locations, including internationally, although he selects the stone to accord with the commission site. Randall-Page has experimented with different stone during his career having worked with chalk, Forest of Dean Stone, Kilkenny limestone, Portland

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[36] Common Ground Archive, publicity material for *New Milestones*, EUL MS 416 PRO/1/3/2.
[37] Richard Mabey, Susan King and Angela Clifford for Common Ground (Eds), *Second Nature* (London: Cape, 1984*)*.
[38] Lippard, *Overlay*, p.130.
[39] Zoom conversation with Clive Adams (curator at the Arnolfini Gallery 1974-1979) (14 June 2021).
[40] *Richard Long in conversation with Stephen Snoddy* [online video], (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVCEku5SAWo (23 minutes 30 seconds).

stone, various marbles (including Carrara) and granite, which is the most enduring material used by these sculptors.

Nash works almost exclusively with wood (both living and dead), and as a young sculptor collected fallen boughs and driftwood from the oak and birch woods around Blaenau Ffestiniog, when he was too poor to buy materials.[41] He acknowledges that wood suits his nature and from the late 1970s he established his practice of using wood sourced from close to his working site, 'he often worked *in situ* with fallen or felled trees, "mining" them for the raw material of his sculptures'.[42]

Therapeutic/Sacred Geometry

One consistent element of their work is how sculptures often reference therapeutic/sacred geometry, and each sculptor indicates a preference for recurring mathematical themes. Randall-Page's work is inspired by natural phenomena and geometric patterns, notwithstanding his strong acknowledgement of natural variation. Much of his work is based upon the geometry of the botanical form, relating to the Fibonacci sequence, 'which can be found in the dumbfounding loveliness of the nautilus shell's inner spiral, in the radiating halo of the sunflower's face, in the revolutions of the milky way,'[43] (figure 1) coupled with the golden proportion in nature, which is an efficient, geometric process that is mathematically specific.[44] The geometry of the botanical form is known as spiral phyllotaxis and can be identified in a number of Randall-Page's sculptures including *Phyllotaxus* (2013) (figure 2) and *Wayside Carvings* (1987).

The other sculptors display a proclivity for: lines, mazes, crosses and circles (Long) (figure 3); spheres, tripods, squares and crosses (Nash) (figure 4); and arches, spirals and cones, usually in the form of cairns (Goldsworthy) (figure 5).

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[41] Nash, *Forms into Time* (with an essay by Marina Warner), p. 13.
[42] Ben Tufnell, , *In Land: Writings around Land Art and its Legacies* (John Hunt Publishing: Winchester 2019), p.44.
[43] Marina Warner, 'Heart of Stone', *The Guardian Online*, (July 2009), https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/jul/04/peter-randall-page-sculptures-wakefield [accessed 4 July 2020].
[44] *Theme and Variation in Nature and Culture, Peter Randall-Page* [online video], (TEDxExeter, uploaded 9 June 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRjqFPwcJgY [accessed 2 February 2021] (7 minutes).

Figure 1. *Shell* (1986) Peter Randall-Page https://www.peterrandall-page.com/ sculptures/shell/ [accessed 3rd March 2021].

Figure 2.
Phyllotaxus (2013), New Art Centre, Roche Court, Peter Randall-Page (March 2020).

Figure 3.
White Deer Circle (2016), Houghton Hall, Norfolk, Richard Long (June 2019).

Figure 4.
Charred Cross Egg (2008), New Art Centre, Roche Court, David Nash (March 2020).

Figure 5.
Millennium Cairn (2007), Penpont, Andy Goldsworthy
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Millennium_Cairn_-_geograph.org.uk_-_376962.jpg
[accessed 4th January 2021].

Table 2 provides a graphic representation of the key and related elements of each sculptors' work. Long is exceptional in seeking to work independently, without assistance, and almost exclusively relying upon his hands to create his sculptures. He speaks of the serendipitous trajectory of his career, immediately following his studies at St Martin's. Two months after leaving St Martin's, in 1968, he attended an exhibition in Dusseldorf and coincidence led to his meeting artists including Josef Beuys, Carl Andre and Panamarenko, amongst others. So 'I fell out of the London artworld and into a peer group that was much closer to the experimental work that I was doing at St Martins'.[45] He became a professional artist in Dusseldorf, where an exhibit was purchased. Long had refined his art even before attending St Martins.

[45] *Richard Long in conversation with Stephen Snoddy* [online video], (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVCEku5SAWo (7 minutes 47 seconds).

Sculptor	Ephemeral Work	Permanent work	Living work	Recurring themes	Uses assistants	Materials	Tools	Mentors/ Influences	Residencies
Richard Long	√	√	√	Circles, Lines, Crosses	No	S, E, M, W	Hands	Anthony Caro Carl Andre Hamish Fulton	
David Nash		√	√	Balls, Steps, Tables, Chairs , Geometry , Tripods, Narrative, Pyramids, Sphere, Cube, Space and Time	Yes	W, E, Sn/I, P/T	Augers, Axe, Wedges, Chainsaw (from 1977)[46], Fire	Richard Long[47] Constantin Brâncuşi, David Smith, Matisse[48]	Grizedale Forest (1978 (Common Ground) Yorkshire Sculpture Park
Andy Goldsworthy	√	√	√	Arches, Cairns, Cones, Holes, Shadows, Sheep Folds, Spires, Walls, circles in the form of a concentration of space[49].	Yes	S, E, M, W, L, Sn/I, P/T	Hands, varied tools and machinery for large pieces.	Constantin Brâncuşi Paul Nash Ben Nicholson Joseph Beuys (*7000 Oaks*) David Nash Henry Moore	Grizedale Forest (CG) (1984, 1985 and 1990) Hampstead Heath (Common Ground) (1985-86, *Visual Diaries*) Yorkshire Sculpture Park
Peter Randall-Page		√		Seeds, Pattern, Variation, Fibonacci Sequence, Phyllotaxis	Yes	S (+ some metal)	Sculptors tools	Barry Flanagan Constantin Brâncuşi Joan Miró Isamu Noguchi	Lolui Island, Uganda (2007)

Materials key
S = Stone
E = Earth, M = Mud
W = Wood (Dead), L = Leaves, P/T = Plants/trees (Living)
Sn/I = Snow/Ice

Table 2. A synopsis of key elements of each sculptor's work.

[46] Roger Deakin, *Wild Wood – A Journey through Trees* (London: Penguin, 2007) p. 155.
[47] *Artists Lives, Interview with David Nash* [audio recording], June 1995)(pdf p. 196.)
[48] Nash, *Forms into Time* (with an essay by Marina Warner), p. 22.
[49] Paul Nesbitt and Andrew Humphries, *Andy Goldsworthy, Sheepfolds* (London: Michael Hue-Williams, 1996) p. 13.

Conversely, it might be conjectured that the other sculptors were perfecting and evolving their art following their studies. Nash and Goldsworthy both completed residencies. Randall-Page worked briefly with Barry Flanagan, and thereafter he focussed on conservation work at Wells Cathedral and subsequently he was awarded a stone carving fellowship, in Italy.

Finally, all of these artists have had their work curated by Clive Adams. At the Arnolfini Gallery in Bristol, Long (1976), Mostyn Art Gallery, Nash (1983), Fabian Carlsson Gallery, Goldsworthy (1985-89) and as an independent curator he prepared the catalogue raisonné of Goldsworthy's photographs (1989) and Randall-Page's sculpture (1992) for the Henry Moore Centre of the Study of Sculpture. Perhaps it is purely coincidental that, during his career, Adams curated and maintained lasting relationships with these sculptors. Alternatively, one could surmise that this concomitant occurrence serves to reinforce the accuracy of the selection of this quartet of sculptors for research.

Decay of Sculpture

Research on decay of cultural heritage in Britain is centred on particular materials. The demise of stone is focussed heavily on gravestones[50] and cathedrals, in particular St Paul's Cathedral in Britain, where repair expenditure records provide substantive data.[51] From the commencement of the Industrial Revolution until the beginning of the environmental revolution in the 1970s, Britain was exposed to pollution (sulphur dioxide) from industrial, urban and residential sources.[52] Studies confirm that increased urban pollution accelerates stone decay, particularly on limestones.[53] Furthermore there is a correlation between air quality and land use in the vicinity of gravestones, which contributes to their speed of decay.[54]

Interest in the scientific mechanisms of wood decay includes the various biological and chemical contributors to the process. This research is generally economically motivated in seeking to understand determinants of decay and potentially prevention of demise of construction materials.

Some sculptors had considered, in the planning of their land art, their expectation and hopes for the demise of their work. Robert Smithson was a great advocate of entropy; a decline into disorder, observable in the *Spiral Jetty* (1970), where the initial construction and intervention in the land was

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[50] Ron Cooke, Robert Inkpen and Giles Wiggs, 'Using gravestones to assess changing rates of weathering in the United Kingdom', in *Earth Surfaces Processes and Landforms* 20 (1995) p. 535.
[51] Ron Cooke and Graham Gibbs, *Crumbling Heritage: Studies of Stone Weathering in Polluted Atmospheres,* (London: National Power plc, 1993), p 15.
[52] H.D. Mooers , M.J. Carlson, R. M. Harrison, Robert Inkpen and S. Loeffler, 'Correlation of gravestone decay and air quality 1960-2010', *Atmospheric Environment,* 152 (2017), pp. 161.
[53] B. J. Smith, 'Background Controls on Urban Stone Decay', *Effects of Air Pollution on the Built Environment* (London: Imperial College Press, 2003) Peter Brimblecombe (ed.) p. 56.
[54] Mooers, Carlson, Harrison, Inkpen, Loeffler, *Atmospheric Environment,* 152 (2017), pp. 161.

left untouched to change with the vagaries of the environment. He further selected his site in the Great Salt Lake, in Utah, to observe the alchemy, which would occur between the basalt rocks and the lake water.

References to the anticipated decay of permanent works by these sculptors, in this dissertation, is limited. Comments often allude to decay in a more generalised manner. Long is his own arbiter, as his sculpture is often sited whilst exploring anonymous and remote territories, which tend then to remain private, modest and covert. 'I never have the intention to make monuments … I make a work, marks of passage, leaving a mark and then moving on'.[55]

Nash refers to his sculptures as 'coming' (living and growing) or 'going' (created from dead wood), and this separation indicates that coming works are evolving and going works have begun their demise upon completion.[56] Warner states that Nash's works 'show independent vitality beyond the artist's control: their maker isn't setting himself up as a master of natural processes but a catalyst and then a witness.'[57] Nash anticipates the evolution of some of his coming works, however, as illustrated later, this evolution and decay is erratic and often subject to capricious, human interference.

Goldsworthy considers his sculpture to be a full complete work of art, in its decay 'and now when I make works that are likely to decay; the decay is written into the idea.'[58] However, whilst decay is anticipated and accepted any predictions upon longevity or mechanisms of decay are rarely referenced in the literature. Goldsworthy does recognise that his permanent works are about change but on a different time scale to his ephemeral works.[59] He recognises that nature is about transition; 'I want my art to be sensitive and alert to changes in material, season and weather. Each work grows, stays and decays. Process and decay are implicit. Transience in my work reflects what I find in nature.'[60]

As Randall-Page uses predominantly stone in his work; there is an innate acceptance that his work will endure for decades, if not, centuries. Consequently, the longevity of these sculptures might be implied at the outset . However, in the Catalogue Raisonné of Sculpture (1977-1992)[61], documenting Randall-Page's work, during this period, a number of sculptures are no longer in existence, demise being

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[55] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLPnvde71p4 - Richard Long, Slideshow – Q&A at Thelma Hulbert Gallery, 30 September 2020 (4 minutes 20 seconds) [accessed 15 February 2021].
[56] Ben Tufnell, *In Land: Writings around Land Art and its Legacies,* p.46.
[57] Graham Beale, Marina Warner, *David Nash: Voyages and Vessels* (Nebraska: Joslyn Art Museum, 1994) p.19.
[58] *Andy Goldsworthy – Projects* [online video], https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBXrkD0yZpA (Museum of Jewish Heritage, uploaded 14 December 2017), [accessed 30 March 2021] (26 minutes, 19 seconds).
[59] Ibid. 32 minutes.
[60] Rick Williams, Julianne Newton, *Visual Communication: Integrating Media, Art and Science* (London: Routledge), p.355.
[61] Peter Randall-Page, *Sculpture and Drawings 1977-1992* (London: Contemporary Art Society, 1992) p. 76-79.

attributable to vandalism and wind damage, in particular, *Helicine I* (1980), which was damaged beyond repair in the storm of 1987.

This dissertation will review the different influences that have affected the perpetuity of some of these sculptors' works and will follow the narrative of selected and topical examples. This work is informed by primary sources: including visits to sites (table 3); photographs; discussions with artists and curators; email correspondence with archives, staff from sculpture parks and trails, and attendance at the Common Ground archive in Exeter. This research is augmented by secondary sources, which are included in the bibliography. The site visits were planned to include a spectrum of sculptures for each sculptor at a range of locations. The sites were selected to provide a combination of varying: climatic conditions; altitude; ground/tree cover, and accessibility (figure 6).

Sculpture locations.	Site category	Sculptor (Number of sculptures)
Chalk Stones (Sussex)	Sculpture Trail	**Goldsworthy (1)** – Stone.
Cuilfail Spiral (Lewes, Sussex)	Urban Sculpture	**Randall-Page (1)** – Stone.
Durdle Door (Dorset)	Sculpture Trail (Coast)	**Randall-Page (1)** – Stone.
Forest of Dean (Gloucestershire)	Sculpture Trail (Forest)	**Nash (2)** - Wood, **Randall-Page (1)** – Stone.
Houghton Hall (Norfolk)	Sculpture Garden	**Long (4)** – Stone (3) and Wood (1).
Jupiter Artland (Edinburgh)	Sculpture Garden	**Goldsworthy (2)** – Stone and Wood/Stone.
Lambton Earthwork/Jolly Drovers Maze (Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham)	Cycleway	**Goldsworthy (2)** – Earthworks.
Roche Court (Wiltshire)	Sculpture Garden	**Long (1)** - Stone, **Nash (1)** – Wood, **Randall-Page (3)** – Stone.
St George's Hospital (Tooting, London)	Sculpture	**Randall-Page** (1) – Stone.
Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens (Cornwall)	Sculpture Garden	**Long (1)** - Plants, **Nash (1)** - Wood, **Randall-Page (1)** – Stone.
Yorkshire Sculpture Park (Wakefield)	Sculpture Park	**Nash (4)** – Wood (2), Stone (1) and Trees (1). **Goldsworthy (3)** – Stone (2) and Wood and Stone (1).

Table 3. Data for locations, site categories and sculptures reviewed.

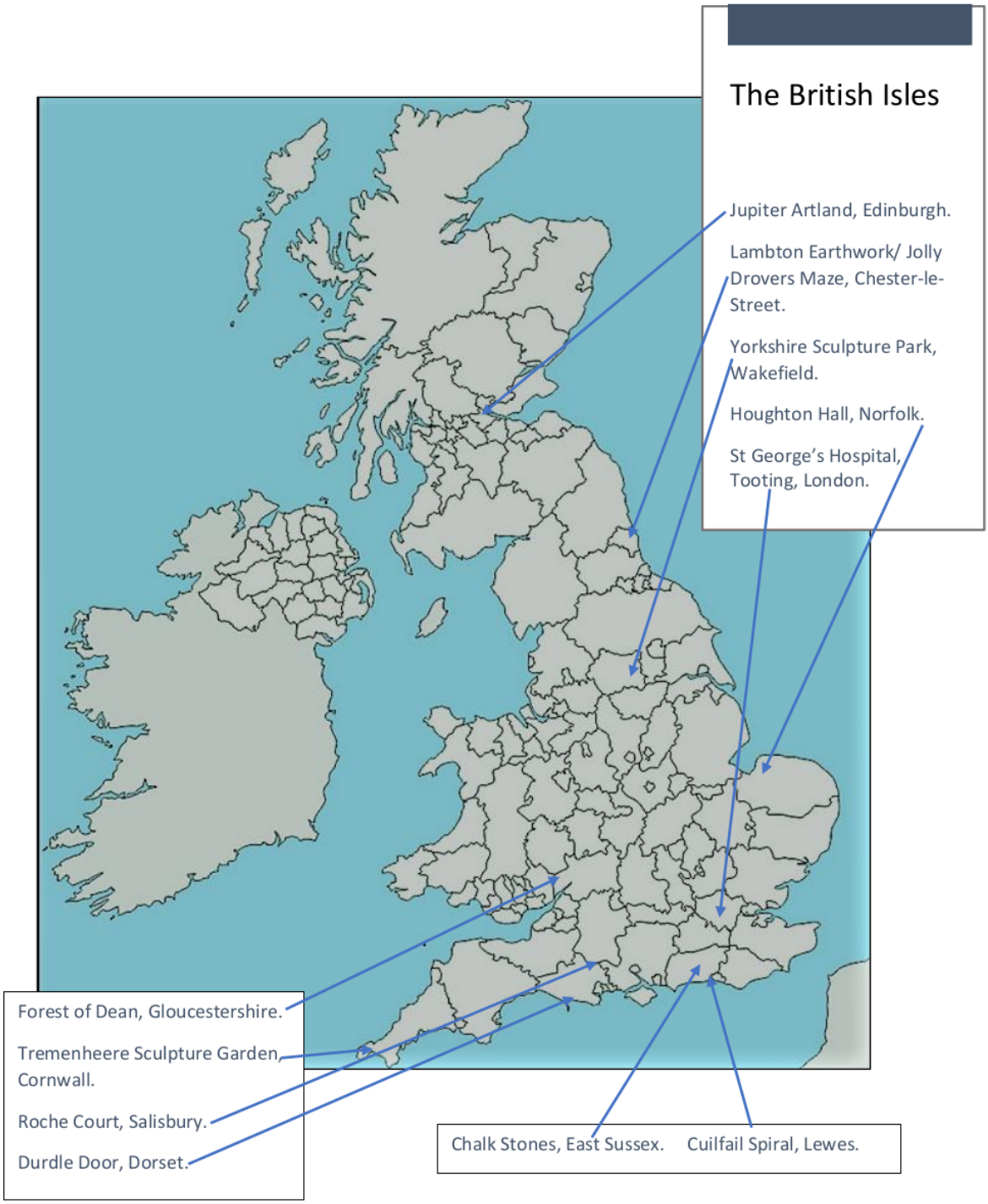

Figure 6. Location of Sculptures discussed in this dissertation.

This dissertation is divided into four sections. Chapter one reviews details of the individual sculptors' works and the materials utilised, whilst also identifying some of the decay mechanisms to which they are exposed. Chapter two focusses on the siting of sculptures in the landscape, as a major element of the holistic artwork; reflecting the artistic aesthetics and the intention of the sculptor. Chapter three will progress to consider how the activities of man can influence the demise of the land based art, which will expansively include land governance, political, economic, demographic and social determinants. Many of these factors, together or alone, have contributed to the major influences on the longevity of land based sculpture, through subsequent anthropogenic activities. Chapter four will review the climatic and weathering impacts affecting the sculptures and will consider any anthropogenic pressures. The conclusion will consider the main findings of this work and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 1 – Land art decay mechanisms and influences

This chapter will consider the varied cycles applicable to the degradation of different materials used in the work by the four sculptors studied in this dissertation. Initially, the focus will be on the degradation of sculptures when they are exposed to the different environmental parameters, which include physical, chemical and biological factors that induce changes in the constituent and structural characteristics of their component material.

The transformation of material due to metabolic activity that is connected with the growth of living organisms, is an element of the natural cycle of decomposition. For example, the transformation of rock into soil or reduction of complex biological structures to their original, components. Many micro and macro organisms adopt habitats for growth on stone and wood. These organisms range from microscopical bacterial cells to more complex plants and animals. The growth and vegetative development of organisms have a direct impact on the decay of sculpture.

Stone

Stone is the most fundamental and mythic of the materials, which is used by the sculptors. It is also the most durable material; its endurance is subject to its origins as well as the location of the artwork. Randall-Page uses stone almost exclusively for his work. Goldsworthy uses this medium widely and often combines stone with other materials including, most commonly, wood. Long often uses stone and his selection is usually determined by the terrain, his artistic intention, and whether the work has been commissioned. Whilst walking Long states 'the reason that I use stone is because stones are what the world is made of, so I can use stones wherever in the world I might be'.[62]

The three major rock types are igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary and table 4 indicates the extensive variety of rocks that the sculptors use in their work, including examples.

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[62] Richard Long Slideshow/Q&A at Thelma Hulbert Gallery (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLPnvde71p4 [accessed 15 February 2021] (3 minutes).

	Richard Long	Peter Randall-Page	Andy Goldsworthy
Igneous Rocks (Intrusive or extrusive)			
Granite (Intrusive rock where lava cools below the earth's surface) - containing mainly quartz, feldspar and mica minerals	*Pink Granite Line* (1984) **Norfolk**. *Granite Circle (2008)* ***Norway***.	*Granite Song 1 (Ashburton Marble)* *Granite Song 2* *Granite Song 3** *Granite Song 4,5,6 (all 2*008) **All Dartmoor, Devon.** *Lead and Granite	*Garden of Stones (2003)* **Connecticut, USA.** *Strangler Cairn* (2011) **Conondale, Australia.** *Path* (2012) **Buffalo, USA.** *Rising Stone* (2013) **as above.** *Boulder House* (2016) **New Hampshire USA.**
Basalt (Extrusive rock containing small crystals)			*Stone House, Bonnington* (2009) **Edinburgh.** *Stone Coppice* (2009) **Edinburgh.**
Sedimentary Rocks			
Chalk		*Feet on the Ground Head in the Clouds* (1981) – destroyed.	*Chalk Stones* (2002) **West Sussex.**
Clay			*Alderney Stones* (2011) **Channel Islands.**
Flint (Chemical Sedimentary)	*Tame Buzzard Line* (2001) **Winterslow, Wiltshire.**		*A Clearing of Arches. For the Night* (1995) **Sussex.**
Limestone (Organic and some Chemical Sedimentary)	*A Circle in Ireland* (1975) **Co. Clare, Ireland** *Boyhood Line* (2015) **Arnolfini, Bristol.**	*Corpus* (2009) *Phyllotaxus* (2013) **Winterslow, Wiltshire**. *New Milestones* (1986) **Dorset.**	*Oak Room* (2009) **Edinburgh.** *Stone Sea* (2012) **St Louis, USA.** *Sleeping Stones* (2014) **Spain**
Sandstone (Clastic Sedimentary)	*A Line in Norfolk* (2016) **Norfolk** Carrstone	*Cone and Vessel* (1988) **Forest of Dean.**	*Marburn Arch* (2009) **Drumlamrig, Scotland.** *Culvert Cairn* (2013) **California, USA.** ***Torn Tree Shelter* (2016) Ohio, USA.** *Arundel Street* (2017 **London.**
Metamorphic Rocks			
Marble		*Shapes in the Clouds I, II, III, IV and V. (2014)* (Rosso Luana Marble)	
Slate	*Full Moon Circle* (2003), *Houghton Cross* (2016), *Wilderness Dreaming* (2017) **All Houghton, Norfolk.** *Jackdaw Line* (2020) **Hestercombe, Somerset.**	*…and Wilderness is Paradise Enough* (1986) **Tooting, London.**	*Slate Cairn* (1983) **Brough, Cumbria.** *Refuges des Arbres* (2008), **France.** *Strangler Cairn* (2011), **see granite.**

Table 4. Rock Types used by the Sculptors.

Green text = wood and stone.

Crispim and Gaylarde state that 'The microbial colonization of stones is considered to start with phototrophic organisms which build up a visible biofilm of enriched organic biomass on the stone surface … the metabolic activity of these algae … and lichens as well as mosses and higher plants is regulated by parameters such as light and moisture'.[63] These organisms cause physical and chemical deterioration of stone in moderate climates, which is exacerbated by pollution from anthropogenic activities. They are also known to promote the decay of crystalline structures in sandstone, granite and limestone.[64] Evidence of biofilm development and discolouration is noticeable in the sculptural depressions of Randall-Page's *Fructus* (2009) (figure 7).

Figure 7. *Fructus* (2009), Peter Randall-Page, (March 2020).

Lichens use the microbial community to breakdown the hard rock and prepare a soil in which more highly evolved plants can establish themselves; lichens are succeeded by moss and then by vascular plants in the succession chain of stone decay. Research has not yet established whether biofilm and lichens contribute to the decay of stone at a faster rate than rain, wind or temperature fluctuations.

Figures 8 and 9, illustrate the progression of vegetative succession on the walls of Goldsworthy's *Hanging Trees* (2007), showing significant moss, algae and lichen growth on the corner of one of his two-sided ha-has at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, over a twelve-year period.

[63] C. A. Crispim, C. C. Gaylarde, 'Cyanobacteria and biodeterioration of Cultural Heritage: A Review', *Microbial Ecology*, 45 (2005), pp. 1-9.
[64] Ibid.

Figure 8. *Hanging Trees* (2007), Yorkshire Sculpture Park, https://ysp.org.uk/openair/andygoldsworthy/hangingtrees [accessed 2nd April 2020].

Figure 9. *Hanging Trees,* evidence of algae and moss on the stone wall (September 2019).

Wood

Nash and Goldsworthy create their sculpture using both living and dead wood, whilst Long uses only dead wood. These artists do not use commercially sourced wood.

Goldsworthy is differentiated by combining wood and stone in his sculpture, for example, *Wood through Stone* (1993) and *Hanging Trees* (2007). He occasionally combines stone with growing wood; *Strangler Cairn* (2011) and *Chaumont Cairn* (2016). Works made from more than one material, or two different woods or stone are marked in green in tables 4, 5 and 6.

Long's sculptures, which utilise wood, are more limited but include *Circle in Alaska* (1977), created with driftwood (recorded photographically) and *White Deer Circle* (2016) (figure 3), which is a permanent sculpture formed using grubbed up stumps from old oak, beech and sweet chestnut trees. The stumps were sourced from the park at Houghton Hall in Norfolk, where this installation is located.

Nash is unusual in his predilection for creating living wood sculpture, including *Ash Dome* (from 1977), *Divided Oaks* (1985) and *49 Square* (2013). These are coming, 'long term works which embrace change and the action of time as an active element within the piece'.[65] His going works are formed only from wood that has been blown down by the wind or killed by disease, 'I only work from dying, or dead trees, or ones that have fallen, or become dangerous. After a storm, people ring me up about a fallen tree; if they're any good I go and quarry them.'[66] Nash is known for scorching, charring and burning much of his artwork, which harnesses the forces of nature and the pieces he creates highlights the theme of nature (figure 4). He believes that by blackening the wood the observer sees the art first, and then the material. It is the converse for artwork created from untreated wood, in which he considers the observer sees the wood on first sight followed by the art. This heat treatment adds a complexity to the process of decay. Surface charring of wood is an ancient technique used in Japan (*shou sugi ban*), which prevents and delays decay from weathering, rot and insect damage.

Table 5 shows the variety of wood species, which have been chosen by Nash and Goldsworthy for some of their installations. The locality of a commission generally dictates the species of wood used for a sculpture and is further determined by its availability.

[65] Tufnell, *In Land: Writings around Land Art and its Legacies,* p.46.
[66] Interview with David Nash (Viva Magazines) Alex Leith (https://www.vivabrighton.com/single-post/2019/09/26/David-Nash) [accessed 20th December 2019] page not found 23 September 2021.

	David Nash	Andy Goldsworthy
Growing Wood		
Ash	*Ash Dome* (1977) **Cae'n-y-coed, Wales.**	
Birch (Himalayan)	*49 Square* (2013) **Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP)**	
Larch	*Sweeping Larch Enclosure* (1978) **Grizedale, Cumbria**.	
Oak	*Divided Oaks* (1985) **Kröller Müller Museum, Netherlands** **Oak Bowl** (1988) **Cae'n-y-coed, Wales.**	*Garden of Stones* (2003) **New York, USA.**
Pine	Turning Pines (1985) **Kröller Müller Museum.**	
Plane		*Chaumont Cairn* (2016) **Chaumont-sur-Loire, France.**
Strangler Fig		*Strangler Cairn* (2011) **Conondale, Australia.**
Sycamore	Serpentine Sycamores (1988) **Cae'n-y-coed, Wales.**	*Stone Coppice* (2009) **Jupiter Artland, Edinburgh.**
Dead Wood		
Ash		*Torn Tree Shelter* (2016) **Ohio, USA**.
Alder	*Red and Black* (1991) (Red Alder, White Birch and Black from Charred Oak) **Eastern Poland.**	
Birch	*Red and Black* (1991) **As above.**	
Elm	*Through the Trunk, Up the Branch* (1985) **Ireland.**	
Cypress		*Spire* (2008) **San Francisco, USA.**
Eucalyptus		*Wood Line* (2001) **San Francisco, USA.**
Larch	*Black Dome* (1986) (Charred) **Forest of Dean.**	
Linden		*Torn Tree Shelter* (2016) **Ohio, USA.**
Oak	*Wooden Boulder* (1977) **Wales.** *Sheep Spaces* (1980) **TICKON, Denmark.** *Standing Frame* (1987) **Minneapolis, USA.** *Red and Black* (1991) **As above.** *Black Mound* (2005) **Tremenheere, Cornwall.** *71 Steps* (2010) **Yorkshire Sculpture Park.**	*Hanging Trees* (2006) (**Yorkshire Sculpture Park).** *Oak Cairn* (2004) **California, USA.** *Oak Room* (2009) **Château La Coste, Provence.**
Sycamore		*Coppice Room* (2010) **Jupiter Artland, Edinburgh.**
Willow	*Willow Ladder I* (1978) **Grizedale, Cumbria.** *Willow Ladder II* (1979) **(As above).**	
Charred Wood (no wood species indicated)	*Nine Charred Steps* (1988-89). *Black into Green* (1989).	

Key
Green text = wood and stone
Red text = a combination of woods

Table 5. The spectrum of wood species used by Goldsworthy and Nash.

The decomposition of wood attracts significant research due to its economic importance. Dead wood that is in ground contact is a focus of microbial ecology. Above the ground, the wood surface is dried by air movement resulting in reduced decay by microorganisms. At the interface of a wooden sculpture with the ground surface, materials dissolved in or carried by water will be deposited (where evaporation occurs), and it is in this region where the most active decay takes place.[67] The increase in temperature, lower rainfall and variability of fungal communities attributable to climate change contribute to the speed of wood decay.

Nash's sculpture *Black Mound* (2005), at Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens was created using a cluster of domed charred oak shapes, two of the shapes show evidence of rot and one had Honeycomb Coral Slime Mould (*Ceratiomyxa fruticulose*), in December 2020, growing at the juncture between the wood and the ground (figure 10), this slime mould is found on rotting wood although it is not responsible for the rot, it takes advantage of the broken and perished structure of the wood.

Figure 10.
Honeycomb Coral Slime Mould on *Black Mound* (December 2020).

Earth

The activities of plants, animals, insects, fungi, bacteria and humans all contribute to the formation of soil. Soil is the product resulting from the interaction between the minerals of the underlying rock, its constituent organisms, and the elevation, orientation and gradient of the land. 'Soil is the fragile,

[67] John F. Levy, 'The Natural History of the Degradation of Wood', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, Series A, Mathematical and Physical Sciences, 321 (1987), pp. 423-433.

living skin of the earth' and provides the habitat for the growth of plants and trees and is used by Long, Nash and Goldsworthy in some of their sculptures.[68]

Richard Long	David Nash	Andy Goldsworthy
Turf Circle (1966) **England.** *Turf Circle* (1967) **Ireland.** *A Line made by Walking (1967)* **Wiltshire.** *Turf Sculpture (1967)* **Bristol**. *Turf Circle (1969)* **Krefeld, Germany.** *Waterlines (2003)* **Maharashtra, India.**	*Sod Swop (1983) (Earth and Plants)* **London and Cae'n-y-coed, Wales.**	*Lambton Earthwork* (1988) (Colliery spoil) **Chester-le-Street, Durham**. *Jolly Drovers Maze (1989)* ***Leadgate,*** **Durham.** *Alderney Stones* (2011) (Clay, Earth + numerous other components) **Channel Islands.** *Earth Wall* (2014) (Earth and Eucalyptus) **California, USA.** *Contour 950* (2016) (Earth and Sandstone) **Ohio, USA.**

Table 6. Land art using soil/earth.

The Anthropocene

The final section of this chapter will consider the major anthropogenic influences on the decay of these sculptures, with a focus on the pace and arbitrariness of those changes.

It is timely to outline details of the Anthropocene and its scope in terms of climate change, species loss and the interruption of biogeochemical cycles. In 2002, Paul Cutzen proposed the Anthropocene as the present geological interval 'where accelerated anthropogenic activities over the past 200 years', precipitated by humans determine the health of the earth.[69] The concept of an unhealthy earth has been topical for decades, although there has been a more recent momentum towards a global imperative for recognition and change. Activity highlighting the human bearing on the health of the earth include seminal publications (e.g. *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson (1962)), television productions (e.g. *A life On Our Planet*, David Attenborough (2020)) and activism (Friends of the Earth (1969), Greenpeace (1971), Extinction Rebellion (2018), and the activities of Greta Thunberg, a young Swedish activist, known for challenging world leaders on climate change concerns.

Climate change is the central issue of our generation and constitutes transitioning weather patterns. The effects of climate change are global in range and unequalled in scale. Greenhouse gases occur naturally and are necessary to maintain the survival of life, their function being to retain some warmth from reflecting back into space. However, industrialisation, deforestation and intensification of

[68] Christopher Rhodes, 'The Imperative for Regenerative Agriculture', *Science Progress*, 97 (2017), p. 85.
[69] Hannah Gibson, Sita Venkataswar, 'Anthropological engagement with the Anthropocene' *Environment and Society*, 6 (2015), p.5.

agriculture has caused significant accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which results in increased temperatures on earth. The various elements of climate change including soil erosion; flooding; temperature fluctuations; deforestation; acid rain and intensive agricultural practices can all contribute to the speed, and potentially the mode, of decay of sculpture in the landscape. Globalisation increases the rapidity of foreign microbial and plant colonisation e.g. ash dieback strains being introduced into Europe albeit the same variety continues to operate symbiotically with ash in Japan. Further human influence on the speed (or delay) of the demise of land art include political intervention, for example, in its directives on health and safety and planning policy. The added influence of society is observable in its appetite for travel and tourism.

Chapter 2 – Artistic aesthetics and siting of sculpture

The location of a sculpture is a contributor in terms of its evolution and demise in the environment. There are a number of dimensions to the definition of location: rural or urban; public accessibility; private or public land; garden, trail or forest.

Long said whilst discussing *Sahara Circle* (1988), 'It's not really about the circle it's about the whole place … I'm an opportunist, if I can make a beautiful circle in conjunction with something on the horizon, I will use that opportunity.'[70] This is identifiable in many of his lines and circles; *A Line in Scotland* (1981), *Sahara Line* (1988), *Cotopaxi Circle* (1998) and *Acongacua Circle* (2012), which are permanent works created whilst walking. In a sculpture garden setting, Long continues to honour his practise of combining and extending his work to the horizon. *Tremenheere Line* (2013) faces due South overlooking Mount's Bay in Cornwall and his sculptures at Houghton Hall, align with the majesty of the house or as observed in figure 11, with the stucco, classical temple (the estate's water tower) built by Henry Lord Herbert, later Earl of Pembroke in 1730.

Figure 11. *A Line in Norfolk* (2016), Houghton Hall, Norfolk. (June 2019)

Nash owns a four-acre plot of woodland, near his home in Blaenau Ffestiniog, which he uses to grow a collection of long-term, coming works 'The hillside, with its various green, growing monuments, recalls the pioneering gardens of Chinese philosophers, with their cultivated shapes integrated in wild settings.'[71] Nash's freedom to determine the siting of his permanent sculptures, like Goldsworthy and

[70] Richard Long slideshow Thelma Hubert Q&A https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLPnvde71p4 (11 minutes) [accessed 3 February 2021].
[71] Beale, Warner, *David Nash: Voyages and Vessels*, p. 21.

Randall-Page is guided by the motivation behind the sculpture i.e. if the sculpture is conceived during a residency the choice of site permits autonomy. Yet, in a sculpture garden scenario with limited acreage siting of work is less flexible.

The Grizedale Forest Project began in 1977, a 4,000-hectare forest in Cumbria, which combined the idea of pilgrim-spectator, where 'the religiosity of the pilgrim was replaced with a "New Age" conglomeration of environmental, ecological and psychological ideology'.[72] The pilgrim reference is an allusion to the visitor walking a short distance to view a sculpture. Grizedale's original rationale was based upon 'sculptors working outdoors, often on site specific pieces ... that is intrinsic to an evolving process and production'.[73] Initially work was not commissioned in the forest; it was a project based upon artist residencies, which were awarded to emerging as well as established sculptors.[74] Residencies ceased in 1999 and transitioned to the use of plastics being used for sculptures; this has now reverted. Grizedale is described as a sculpture project, where work is sited throughout the forest and is open access to visitors. A further reason for Grizedale's development as a locale for art and sculpture, was its suitability as a distraction for the Lake District National Park, its neighbour, diverting the public away from the fragile park whilst achieving the intentions of the prevailing legislation to provide public access to the countryside. Early in their careers Nash (1978) and Goldsworthy (1984) were invited to undertake residencies in Grizedale Forest.

This project is unmatched in its contribution to sculptural development in Britain, 'it is not a sculpture park in the normally accepted sense of the word, but is a series of sensitively placed works of a widely diverse nature, designed to complement the land form and mould into the landscape.'[75] The Grizedale Forest guidance for residencies stated, 'The placing of sculptures should activate otherwise neutral spaces and not occupy areas that already have a positive sense of "place".'[76] To create *Wooden Waterway* (1978), Nash searched for a water source combined with fallen trees, on a gradient.[77] Goldsworthy spoke about the concept for *Seven Spires* (1984), his first permanent work 'I wanted the pine tree to dictate the idea, scale, form, construction and location of the piece and I chose to work within the pine woods – avoiding tempting clearings.'[78]

Other land-based sculpture projects were developed in subsequent years (table 7), which varied in

[72] Joy Sleeman, 1977. 'A Walk across the Park, Into the Forest and Back to the Garden', in Patrick Eyres and Fiona Russell (eds), *Sculpture and the Garden*, (Oxford/New York: Routledge, 2017), p.164.
[73] Peter Davies and Tony Knipe, T (eds), *A Sense of Place*, (Ambleside: Ceolfrith, 1984), p. 34.
[74] Bill Grant (ed.), *Natural Order*, (Ambleside: The Grizedale Society, 1996), p.7.
[75] David and Knipe (eds), *A Sense of Place*, p. 77.
[76] Ibid. p. 103.
[77] Ibid. p. 102.
[78] Ibid. p.151.

	Location	Motivation for work /access cost to view	Public accessibility	Sculptors	Historical landscape	Example sites (commencement date)
Increasing susceptibility to social intervention, resulting in hastened decay.	Sculpture Forest Project	Artist residencies	Public encouraged but not monitored or observed	Goldsworthy Nash	Grizedale Estate (Forestry Commission assumed responsibility in 1937)	Grizedale Forest (1977)
	Sculpture trails in forests/ Parks plus Common Ground initiatives	Commissioned work	Public encouraged but not monitored or observed.	Long Goldsworthy Nash Randall-Page	Bretton Estate, Pleasure Grounds created in 1820s, Grade II listed. Coastal path. Forest (history of charcoal making)	Yorkshire Sculpture Park (1977) *New Milestones* (Dorset) (Common Ground) (1985) Forest of Dean (1986) Andy Goldsworthy *Sheep Folds* (Cumbria) (1996)
	Sculpture Gardens (1)	Work for sale (entry fee payable) Work for sale (no entry fee payable)	Public encouraged and monitored.	Randall-Page Long Nash Randall-Page	Originally part of Gatton Park, parkland laid out by Capability Brown. 19th Century house and garden	Hannah Peschar Sculpture Garden (Surrey) (1985) Roche Court New Art Centre (Salisbury) (1994)
	Sculpture Gardens (2)	Commissioned work (entry fee payable)	Public encouraged and monitored.	Long Nash Randall-Page Goldsworthy	Wooded land planted by Seymour Tremenheere in approx. 1830. In grounds of Bonnington House, 19th Century	Tremenheere Sculpture Garden (Cornwall) (1997) Jupiter Artland (Edinburgh) (1999) – Not for profit.
	Gardens with Sculptures	Commissioned work (entry fee payable)	Public encouraged and monitored.	Long Nash Randall-Page	Houghton Estate – 18th Century Park designed by Charles Bridgeman Chatsworth Estate	Houghton Hall (Norfolk) (2000) Chatsworth House (Derbyshire)
	Unknown locations	Not commissioned	Public unaware of exact location. Record maintained as photograph.	Long Goldsworthy Nash		

Table 7. Relationship between initiatives of sculpture location/accessibility and inspiration.

location, purpose and economic expectation. The consistent theme of these ventures is a common and inherent commitment by the founders to share their passion for land-based sculpture and the endurance of its traditions.

Forest sculpture trails proliferated including the Beginners Way in Haldon Forest, Devon, the enterprise of Jamie McCullough in the 1980s and the popular trail in the Forest of Dean. The concept of viewing sculptures outside in rural settings was extended to include works on disused railway lines, for example, Sustrans commissioned the *Lambton Earthwork* (Goldsworthy 1989) as part of the Coast to Coast cycleway; *Jolly Drovers Maze* (Goldsworthy 1989) was created on the old Eden pit colliery representative of mine passageways, and canals (Ellesmere Sculpture trail), where the emphasis was often on recommissioning land from earlier industrial activities.

Common Ground funded and coordinated the *New Milestones* project. The intention of this initiative, as with all of their projects, was to engage people with their local environment and to demonstrate the idea of 'Local Distinctiveness' through commissioning small scale works. These were in accordance with Common Ground's philosophy for open access to the public.

The next cohort of dedicated sculpture space was for more protected, managed and access-restricted visitor sites including, for example, Tremenheere Sculpture Garden, Jupiter Artland and Houghton Hall. The inspiration for Sculpture Gardens is varied and encompasses wellbeing, education through art, garden and plant appreciation.

Public access to sculptures in the forests, which by virtue of their aim, are sited in unmonitored locations and become more susceptible to decay and destruction hastened by the activities and the interaction of spectators and animals. Correspondingly, sculpture placed in urban settings, which are openly accessible to the public are also susceptible to vandalism and public intervention. Sculpture gardens containing commissioned sculptures with restricted opening times and commanding an entry fee are less prone to public interference.

Chapter 3 - Political and Social Influences

The impact of political and social intervention on the longevity of sculptures is largely determined by public accessibility and the material used for the sculpture. 'Many sculptors see their role as providers of art for specific public places, and part of the job is to persuade the public of the validity of what they are doing.'[79] The model of visiting forests and the countryside and combining that with viewing sculptures has become a popular activity.

Long, and to a lesser extent Goldsworthy and Nash, is unique amongst these sculptors in creating most of his work away from the public's gaze or access. The existence of these works is recorded merely in photographs, to retain what is vital and to ensure the sculpture is remembered. Consequently, the extent of political or social interference is not easily measurable for most of Long's sculpture.

Unmonitored public access to view and engage with sculptures is a significant contributing factor in the rapidity of their demise. The six-mile Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail is located on land historically used for charcoal making and includes two works by Nash and one by Randall-Page. Nash created *Black Dome* (1986) (figure 12), of 900 sharpened, charred larch stakes, evocative of the earlier charcoal manufacture on the land which left a mound of charred wood at the end of the process. The expectation was that the mound would over a period of 50 years combine with the soil:[80] 'What I hadn't anticipated was that people liked to walk on it. It got very trampled, but it survived.'[81] Following the introduction of new health and safety legislation the mound was covered, to avoid any injury to visitors although the sculpture remained visible (figure 13). Nevertheless, the public continued to walk and cycle over, and through, the remains. The sculpture was de-commissioned in July 2020, after 34 years, for safety reasons precipitated by an overzealous public desire to walk in, on and around it.

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[79] Alan Powers, 'Trailing Nature', *Country Life*, 11 (1990), p.78.
[80] Ibid.
[81] John K. Grande, *Art Nature Dialogues*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004), p. 6.

Figure 12. *Black Dome (*1986) https://www.forestofdean-sculpture.org.uk/black-dome/date [accessed 25th February 2020].

Figure 13. *Black Dome* (1986), Forest of Dean *(*December 2019).

A further example of social interaction and concern around public safety and disintegration is illustrated by Randall-Page's sculpture, *Cone and Vessel*, (Forest of Dean, 1988). Randall-Page identified a suitable site, in a clearing on the forest floor, for his complementary pieces. The cone was positioned beneath a pine tree and the vessel beneath an oak tree to signify the balance between deciduous and coniferous trees in the forest, which are open to the public via forest paths. However, when Randall-Page visited in the 1990s he was disappointed by the extent of the soil erosion (figure 14) hastened by visitor activity, 'I felt as if I had completely ruined a lovely glade'.[82] The sculptures were relocated to a more remote position (figure 15), so observers could view the *Cone and Vessel* and appreciate the progress of nature and the cycle of the seasons on the sculpture. This example is

[82] Statement made by Peter Randall-Page, in conversation with author, 27th January 2021.

disconcerting given the necessity to disrupt the site specific component of this sculpture, which is by definition critical to the totality of the work.

Figure 14. *Cone and Vessel* (1988) https://sca.glos.ac.uk/index.php/photograph-of-sculpture-cone-and-vessel-in-original-site-showing-erosion (c 1990s) [accessed 10th January 2021].

Figure 15. *Cone and Vessel* (1988), (December 2019).

Randall-Page stated that his experience with *Cone and Vessel* had determined his choice of site for his Common Ground sculpture *Granite Song* (1991), on an island in the middle of the River Teign, which is visible from the Two Moors Way, in Devon, although not readily accessible.[83]

[83] Ibid.

Extreme instances of public, social intervention are illustrated by acts of vandalism, including the wilful destruction, one night, of Nash's *Running Table* (1978), in Grizedale Forest. It was 'hacked to pieces … using a chainsaw'; which is paradoxically the tool that Nash often uses to create his sculptures.[84] A sculpture commissioned for the Clifton Nurseries, in Covent Garden; *In the Garden* (1981) by Randall Page was vandalised beyond repair by football supporters in the year of its placement.[85] Another commissioned work by Randall Page for the Pennyland Project in Milton Keynes (1979), *Nocturn II*, was also vandalised beyond repair. Vandalism is not, therefore, determined by location rather by accessibility and potentially the social perception that public sculpture is associated with wealth.

In 1983 Nash provided an exhibit for the 'The Sculpture Show' at the Hayward and Serpentine Galleries, London, which entailed a ring of sod (30' in diameter) being swapped between his land in Cae'n-y-coed, Wales and a ring of equivalent dimension being taken from Kensington Gardens: 'This is just ordinary sod from the raw land that will contrast significantly with the manicured, weedless sod of a London park.'[86] Unusually, the *Sod Swap* aroused interest from both environmental and art critics. Following the exhibition, the Serpentine Gallery planned to destroy the newly introduced turf from Cae'n-y-coed, as it was sited on Crown land. Nash wished to retain the London turf to observe how it developed on its new Welsh site, so he asked Common Ground if they could identify another site in London, for the Serpentine turf. On 22nd November 1983, Common Ground issued a press release confirming that the renamed London sod, *Turf Exchange* had been relocated to a new permanent home in the Old Kitchen Garden, of Kenwood House on Hampstead Heath. This relocation was facilitated and funded by the Greater London Council Parks Department (GLCPD), which held responsibility for the house and gardens, at that time. English Heritage assumed responsibility for Kenwood House in 1986. The intention was for both sods to be maintained in accordance with the regimen of their origins i.e. the turf from London would be regularly mown as if it was still public park turf, whilst the Welsh turf would be left unmown, as if it had remained in Wales and this was how the separate turfs were managed.[87]

In December 1991, Sue Clifford and Angela King, of Common Ground, visited Kenwood House to view the evolving condition of the Serpentine turf to discover it had vanished having been closely mown for nearly a year, under the direction of English Heritage. Subsequent lengthy dialogue between Common Ground (supported by Nash) and English Heritage, looked at other options including re-siting

[84] Sleeman, *Sculpture and the Garden*, p.166.
[85] Statement made by Peter Randall-Page in conversation with author 5 August 2021.
[86] Letter to Common Ground from David Nash, undated, Exeter University Library EUL MS 416 PRO/1/3/3.
[87] Letter from David Nash to English Heritage 10 January 1992, EUL MS 416 PRO/1/3/3.

the London turf. However, Julie Page (of English Heritage) confirmed that 'at no time was English Heritage informed that there was an agreement between Common Ground and the GLCPD stating that the sculpture should be permanent.'[88] The correspondence was concluded by Julius Bryant, Head of Museums Division at English Heritage, who stated that the loss of the London turf had 'not been a deliberate act of vandalism', which had initially been asserted by Nash.[89] 'I can only repeat that the staff responsible for maintaining the Kenwood estate did not know of your interest in the sculpture.'[90] Richard Mabey, of Common Ground, writer on nature and culture, considered it to be 'destruction of artistic property and therefore actionable'.[91] Nash was initially incensed by the denial of English Heritage, although, he became more philosophical 'I'd rather keep my head and heart in other projects. The London ½ up here is well and can be maintained.'[92]

The politics surrounding the government's abandonment of the Greater London Council, which resulted in considerable disagreement over the future management of Kenwood House and a general resistance to English Heritage assuming this responsibility, may have diminished any commitment to the continued maintenance and interest in a contemporary sculpture. This political complication would certainly have contributed to an absence of records for this sculpture, which seems to have merely been in the knowledge of Common Ground, Nash and any remaining gardeners at the House following the disputed transfer from the GLCPD to English Heritage. Reassuringly, Nash has confirmed that the London turf (transitioned to Cae'n-y-coed) was maintained until 2003 (figure 16) 'as a discernible circle but the environment changed with the trees, I had planted in 1983 around it, (they) grew tall enough to shade the area and moss took over so I ceased tending and it has merged completely with the surrounding ground covering.'[93]

[88] Letter to Sue Clifford and Angela King, 7 January 1992, Common Ground Archive, EUL MS 416 PRO/1/3/3.
[89] Ibid. (23 January 1992).
[90] Ibid. (28 January 1992).
[91] Ibid. (16 January 1992).
[92] Ibid (31 January 1992).
[93] Extract from email from Nash to author, 21 August 2020.

Figure 16. *Sod Swap* located in Cae'n-y-coed and maintained by Nash, c. 1983 (EUL MS 416 PRO/1/3/3).

In December 1988, Goldsworthy was commissioned to create an earthwork jointly by Northern Arts and Sustrans at South Pelaw, Co. Durham (figures 17 and 18). Sustrans focusses on identifying ways of re-purposing disused railways and the closure of the Consett Iron Works in 1980 resulted in the de-commissioning of its dedicated railway. This earthwork lies adjacent to the Consett to Sunderland cycle path. The *Lambton Earthwork* is located 'in a wide low cutting, the banks of which are in most places higher than the earthwork, giving it the appearance of an excavated object exposed just below the surface of the land.'[94] The earthwork is formed of a spiral and extends for a quarter of a mile. There was conjecture regarding the possible future of the earthwork, in the event that the railway was to be reconstructed and the earthwork was lost, however, Friedman states that 'Goldsworthy would not be perturbed because change and finiteness are principles of his art.'[95] In 2021, the earthwork remains and has evolved into a verdant sculpture, trees and houses appearing above the funnel of the cycleway. It has matured elegantly, 'saplings have self-seeded together with wildflowers and in February/March frogs spawn appears, then the frogs start to jump around the earthwork.'[96] Whilst the earthwork has been dissected by paths, most significantly, along the spine of the serpent, which

[94] Andy Goldsworthy and Terry Friedman (eds), *Hand to Earth, Andy Goldsworthy*, (Thames & Hudson: London, 2006), p. 131.
[95] Ibid p. 136.
[96] Comment by Councillor Tracie Smith (Chester-le-Street North) from text discussion dated 8th May 2021.

is used by dog walkers, children and cyclists it remains clearly identifiable from higher ground. There are regular initiatives to engage the community in clearing undergrowth, litter picking and pruning the vegetation. An interpretation sign was installed in April 2021, to provide the details and history of the earthwork for cyclists and passers-by.[97] Thus, the earthwork remains as a celebrated feature and is tended by the community and respectful volunteer restoration is led by Sustrans North East, to ensure its relevance and significance persists.

Lambton earthwork fabricated in coal spoil.

Matured and visible in 2021 (arrow indicates image angles).

Figure 17. (left) circa. 1988 https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/15031801.hidden-serpent-emerge-undergrowth-coast-to-coast-cycle-path/ [accessed 8th May 2021].
Figure 18. (Right) (May 2021).

Some sculptures evoke an engagement akin to an emotional connection, which contributes to its growth and the evolution of its narrative. In 1983, Randall-Page was commissioned to create the *Cuilfail Spiral,* by East Sussex County Council, for a roundabout at the mouth of the Cuilfail Tunnel, in Lewes, Sussex. The construction of the tunnel was widely challenged and involved two public inquiries before construction began in 1978. The spiral's commission may have been a gesture to the public, who had so strongly challenged the tunnel's construction. The spiral is sculpted in Portland stone and is known locally as the snail reflective of the ammonite fossils found in the chalk through which the tunnel was bored. The Lewes Bonfire Society attached a snail's head to the spiral reminiscent of Brian from the BBC Magic Roundabout television series, which appeared in one of their bonfire processions on 5th November 1984. The spiral's appearance as Brian is repeated regularly. On Christmas Eve 1984, Brian emerged with a smiling face and flashing antennae. Moreover, the public build snowmen on the spiral's ledge (figure 20), and it was included in the Best of British Roundabouts calendar (2014).[98] Latterly, the *Cuilfail Spiral*, formed part of the Lewes Art takeover (June 2019), by Extinction Rebellion,

[97] Comment by Councillor Tracie Smith, 8th May 2021.
[98] https://www.roundaboutsofbritain.com/ [accessed 17th July 2021].

when the movement placed a sculpture on the spiral.[99] The spiral becomes darkened by pollution, and is power washed by the Council (most recently in 2018). In 2021 the spiral, is again streaked by vehicle emissions, and vegetation, including buddleia, which is growing from its base. It remains a goal for adventurers, who leave items on the ledges as a record of their visit.

Figure 19. *Cuilfail Spiral* (1983) https://www.peterrandall-page.com/sculptures/cuilfail-spiral/ [accessed 11th November 2020].

Figure 20. *Cuilfail Spiral,* December 2014 (https://lovelewes.com/2014/history-of-cuilfail-tunnel/) [accessed 11th November 2020].

Figure 21. *Cuilfail Spiral*, January 2018, https://twitter.com/PRPsculpture/status/1070698555634040832/photo/1 [accessed 12th November 2020].

Figure 22. *Cuilfail Spiral,* August 2021.

[99] Anon, 'Extinction Rebellion takes over Lewes', *The Sussex Express*, (30 June 2019), https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/politics/extinction-rebellion-takes-over-lewes-959544 [accessed 17 August 2021].

Finally, to illustrate the antithesis of exacerbated decay and demise of land art caused by social and political influence, it is instructive to relate the narrative of Nash's *Wooden Waterway* (1978), in Grizedale Forest. This work has lasted for many years beyond expectation, it was created by diverting water along oak, ash and sycamore branch troughs and roots 'to finally pour over a stone and disappear into the ground.'[100] Visitors have repaired this work by clearing stones and leaves, as well as realigning the branches to ensure a continued water flow. This work was last reported as operational in March 2020.[101]

[100] David and Knipe (eds), *A Sense of Place*, p. 102.
[101] https://grizedaleforestsculpturepark.wordpress.com/wooden-waterway/ [accessed 1 June 2020]

Chapter 4 - Weathering and Anthropogenic Processes

There are many factors that determine the condition of the environment including weather, temperature, water and light. Additionally, there are living organisms, which define the evolution and demise of the landscape and sculptures in their distinctive ecosystems. Most notably, however, many of the following examples, which illustrate the biological and chemical demise of sculptures, were hastened by anthropogenic activity.

One of the most widely publicised examples of a living organism causing the decay of a sculpture is embodied in Nash's *Ash Dome*. This planted work, a 'coming' sculpture, was started in 1977, at a time of political restlessness, high unemployment and the continuing spectre of the Cold War. Nash planted 22 ash saplings in a perfect circle, approximately 30 feet in diameter, in a semi-secret location, near his house in Cae'n-y-coed in Wales. The trees have been trained (through trial and error) into a vortex like shape over a 40 year period. The creation of the *Ash Dome* was coincidental with a time when the environmental movement was becoming more influential and radical. Nash confirms that the *Ash Dome* was 'a gesture … planting something for the twenty-first century … a long term commitment, an act of faith'.[102] He believes that 'the most politically powerful statement to make as an artist was to engage with the environment'.[103] Nash committed to remain with the conceptual artwork, and for it to grow through the 21st century, compensating for the political and economic ambiguity and tumult of the 1970s. The sculpture answered Nash's desire to create 'a sculpture that sustained spontaneity, would be seasonal and be of its place'.[104] However, Nash's hope for this sculpture to outlive him was thwarted in 2017, when the fungal disease ash dieback was detected in the trees. The risk of tree infection from pests and pathogens has been exacerbated by globalisation and extended trade networks. Other pressures associated with anthropogenic effects, including air pollution and climate extremes, which accelerate the spread of organisms, further contribute to the outbreak of disease, from pests and pathogens. Thus, *Ash Dome*, a coming work, planted with enthusiasm and seasonal expectation for posterity, is going now, a casualty of ash dieback. As an addendum to this narrative, Nash, his assistant Sam and his son Jack, planted a ring of oak trees (2018), outside the dying ash ring. Sam and Jack have been appointed stewards for this work.[105]

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[102] Grande, *Art Nature Dialogues*, p.3.
[103] *David Nash – interview* [online video], (Studio International, uploaded 14 October 2019), https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/david-nash-video-interview-200-seasons-towner-art-gallery [accessed 22 March 2019] (34 minutes).
[104] Ibid. (29 minutes).
[105] Ibid.

Nash has replicated a coming sculpture in two locations with different public access rights, geological and climatic variables. In 2001 Nash planted a sculpture in Cae'n-y-Coed (figure 23), comprising 49 Himalayan birch trees, planted in a square (7 trees x 7 trees) in the expectation it would grow to emulate a white cube. In 2013, Nash reproduced the same sculpture *49 Square* at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park (figures 24 and 25), on the northern flank of the Lower Lake. The differential of twelve years between the planting times of the sculptures, precludes a direct comparison in the evolution of the sculpture, however, it is noticeable that the latter sculpture requires management. The sculpture also retains its protective guards (from animal intervention) and the trees have been supported vertically and approximately half of the trees have cane supports, above the pruning points, to avoid wind damage (figure 25). Nash confirmed that 'the trees are struggling with the wind and the lower branches were pruned too soon.'[106] The sign at the bottom of the slope at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, requests that visitors do not climb on the sculpture. A combination of different influences are affecting its development, which will eventually determine the success and/or early demise of the sculpture. Notably these include direct public access, arboriculture management and exposure to strong winds along the valley.

Figure 23. *49 Square* (2001) Cae'n-y-Coed (photograph courtesy of David Nash (2020)).

[106] Email from David Nash dated 20th August 2020.

Figure 24. *49 Square* (2013), Yorkshire Sculpture Park, (August 2020).

Figure 25. *49 Square* (2013), Yorkshire Sculpture Park, showing protective guards and numerous supports (September (2020).

Long has only created one living sculpture, which is located at Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens in Cornwall; *Tremenheere Line* (2013). These gardens were developed to display nature and art in harmony. Long planted his sculpture above the main area of garden facing due south, a line of restio (*Boloskion tetraphylllum*); a popular ornamental plant with structured nodular foliage: 'Elegant in its simplicity, it invites visitors to cast their eye across the woodland and bay'.[107] The following photographs show the sculpture's erratic evolution, specifically impacted by rabbit and deer intervention. The head gardener Ruth Hawkley confirmed that some plants were replaced following rabbit interference, in the early years.[108] A further observation, in terms of the evolution of this sculpture, is that the plants grow more luxuriantly at the top of the bank with more restricted growth at the bottom; this asymmetry is most likely attributable to light and rainfall differentials.

Figure 26. *Tremenheere Line* (2013), Tremenheere Sculpture Garden, https://glasgowgallivanter.com/2014/10/12/cornwall-sculpture-gardens/#jp-carousel-4032 (2014) [accessed 10th March 2021].

[107]Elizabeth Fullerton, https://sculpturemagazine.art/tremenheere-sculpture-gardens-collaborating-with-nature/ [accessed 2 July 2020].
[108] In conversation with Ruth Hawkley on 23 December 2020.

Figure 27. *Tremenheere Line* (2013), https://tammytourguide.wordpress.com/2015/10/21/tremenheere-cornwalls-hidden-art-garden/ (2015)[accessed 12th March 2021], close observation indicates evidence of fencing that has been erected to prevent access by foraging rabbits.

Figure 28. *Tremenheere Line* (2013), continued evidence of rabbit and animal passages December 2020.

Recurrent destruction of sculptures is observed following sheep and deer interference. An initial ring of ash saplings for Nash's *Ash Dome,* were consumed by sheep, when re-planted they were protected by a fence. A number of works by Nash, in Grizedale forest, have been completely or partially destroyed by deer; some having been destroyed almost immediately following their creation. Nash's *Willow Ladder I* (1978) was quickly eaten by deer and *Willow Ladder II* (1979) was last listed on a map in 1991 albeit one leg of the sculpture remains.[109]

Whilst it is possible to identify examples of work that have been destroyed by animal activities, there are sculptures that have been created with the express intention of animals evolving and further sculpting the work, which include Nash's *Sheep Space* and in some instances Goldsworthy's *Sheepfolds*. Nash created *Sheep Space* at TICKON in Langeland, Denmark (1993); some large fallen oaks were moved to a shady place and the sheep began to use them for shelter. The sheep 'need to be able to get out of the sun, … the wind, … the rain … they go to different places according to the weather on a particular day … Over time, their continual presence wears an oval patch into the ground'.[110] The lanolin from the sheep's wool is deposited on the wood. Goldsworthy's *Sheepfolds* was a Millennium Project, during which he created 100 *Sheepfolds* in the Cumbria countryside. Goldsworthy identified sheepfolds that had fallen into disrepair and were no longer operational and he restored them. Some of these restored folds are operational and many continue to provide shade for the animals. Sheep relate synchronicity with many sculptures.

Goldsworthy works with the dynamics of wood and stone in a number of his sculptures, spanning a variety of projects, for example, *Garden of Stones*, at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York and *Strangler Cairn* in Queensland, Australia. At Jupiter Artland, near Edinburgh, he has created *Stone Coppice* (2009), which he believes 'will always be a work in progress, the future of which is not, and probably never will be resolved.'[111] Goldsworthy worked in a woodland populated by sycamore trees, into which he selectively placed large granite stones that became cradled in the trees' coppiced branches. A coppiced wood requires regular maintenance, 'at some point I will need to engage with the work once more.'[112] Goldsworthy further states 'The trees gradually entwine and elevate the rocks, offering a counterintuitive revelation of which of the elements in the piece is most powerful.'[113] In 2021, the passing of time has resulted in some branch and granite casualties; trunks have broken, and the stones lie beside their guardian. The weight of the stones causing the trees to envelop the

[109] https://grizedaleforestsculpturepark.wordpress.com/willow-ladder/ [accessed 12th December 2020].
[110] Grande, *Art Nature Dialogues*, p. 12-13.
[111] Lisa Le Feuvre (ed.), *The Generous Landscape Ten Years of Jupiter Artland Foundation* (Edinburgh: Jupiter Artland Foundation, 2018) p. 86.
[112] Ibid., p. 86.
[113] Ibid., p. 80.

uneven shapes of the resting stones and scars have developed in the bark of the trunk as the tree has grown around the stone, this is illustrated in figure 29. However, the majority of the stones remain embraced by the growing and developing trees. The following photographs, constituting figures 29-33. were taken in May 2021.

Figure 29. *Stone Coppice* (2009), Jupiter Artland (May 2021).

Figure 30. *Stone Coppice* (2009), Jupiter Artland (May 2021).

The most noticeable and powerful negative elements, affecting the decay of the sculpture are water (through waterlogging of the wood at the contact point with the stone) combined with gravity (causing the stones to rupture the wood and fall to the ground). However, plentiful water, nutritious earth and adequate light and warmth support the continued strong growth of the trees in cooperation with their

stones. Reinforcing the counterintuitive statement that the trees are the strongest element of the sculpture, irrespective of the immensity and weight of the rocks and the force of gravity.

Figure 31. *Stone Coppice* (2009), May 2021.

Figure 32. *Stone Coppice* (2009), May 2021.

Figure 33. *Stone Coppice* (2009), May 2021.

The dynamic of dead wood and stone, used in *Hanging Trees* (Yorkshire Sculpture Park, 2007) juxtaposes the evolution of *Stone Coppice*. Goldsworthy constructed three, rectangular, dry-stone wall ha-has, on the flanks of the Bretton estate, into which he horizontally, embedded and suspended dead oak trees within the cavity of the walls. It was important to Goldsworthy that he had removed the dead trees from their normal lifecycle of decay albeit they remain subject to weathering processes,

rot and fungal activity. As the trees are suspended and not lying on the earth their decay is observable, through the seasons, although it is slower than the decay of a fallen tree, adjacent to wet earth. The decay is most prevalent where the wood is embedded and contiguous with the stones.

Figures 34- 36 illustrate the slow degradation of the hanging trees over a period of approximately two years. In September 2019, the debris in the floor cavity comprised mainly of decaying leaves, sparsely populated by grass and weeds with one *Solanum* seedling emanating from the stone wall on the right. In August 2020, the cavity floor is obscured by *Solanum* plants with evidence of a *Rosa rubiginosa* branch lowering itself into the stone cavity. Moss and plant growth is most pronounced on the north facing side of the cavity. The photographic comparators indicate pronounced diminution of wood fibre as a result of brown rot incursion in figure 36, in both left and right main branches. Humidity and temperature are significant contributors to the speed of decay of these branches. The prevalence of humidity-attracting groundcover in 2020, will further exacerbate the rapidity of wood decay.

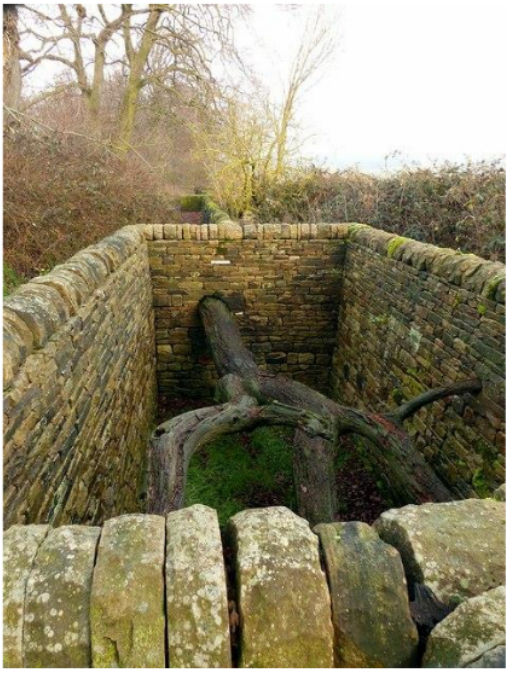

Figure 34. *Hanging Trees* (2007), https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6011209 Alan Murray-Rust, 2018, [accessed 2nd February 2021].

Figure 35. *Hanging Trees* (2007), (September 2019).

Figure 36. *Hanging Trees* (2007), (August 2020).

The decay, deterioration or destruction of stone used in sculpture is more difficult to measure in years, this is more likely to be measured in decades or centuries.

In October 1985, Randall-Page commenced work on the New Milestones project for Common Ground, located on a bridleway to the north of the coastal path near Durdle Door and Lulworth, in Dorset. Wilfred Weld the owner of the Weld Estate in East Lulworth was keen to encourage visitors to explore a different part of the Dorset coast, away from the eroded Dorset Heritage Coast Path (UNESCO World Heritage site). This diversion of visitors to less immediately attractive land correlates with the desire to re-focus interest from the Lake District to the less publicly attractive Grizedale forest, which was detailed earlier. The Weld Estate supported the creation of the *Wayside Carvings* by supporting Randall-Page for a three month period. Randall-Page 'decided to make three carvings in Purbeck Marble – not a true marble but a very hard local limestone … consisting entirely of tiny fossilised gastropod shells'.[114] Purbeck Marble has been used for centuries and in medieval times was used for the internal adornment of numerous cathedrals in the south of England. The three 'shell' sculptures were recessed in a drystone wall niche 'in a boundary bank … where they would not interfere with cultivation, be damaged by farm machinery or pose a threat to grazing animals'.[115] They offered an exemplary demonstration of how contemporary sculpture can appear to grow out of a rural setting'.[116] Their location was selected to maximise protection from the wind, rain and salt weathering on this exposed site, however, a combination of the elements and the permeability of the stone has destroyed one of the three sculptures. The eradicated sculpture was in the highest niche along the bank, where the exposure to weathering was likely greatest. Vegetation has engulfed the stone wall niches which affords some protection for the sculptures, during summer months. Figures 36 to 41 show the changes to the sculptures, variously from 1986 to 2021.

A handwritten note dated 3rd December 2001 (written by Sue Clifford of Common Ground)[117] stated that Randall-Page wished to re-do one of the broken snails and that South West Arts and Wilfred Weld were being requested to support this re-creation. However, Randall-Page confirmed that this did not happen. Although he asserts that he is comfortable with the speed of decay as it emphasises the difference between the geological and biological timescales of the stone.[118]

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[114] Joanna Morland, *New Milestones: Sculpture, Community and the Land*, (1988) (London: Common Ground, p.32
[115] Ibid. p. 33.
[116] Richard Cork, 'Gathering the Stone Harvest', *The Times*, 4 September 1992.
[117] EUL MS 416 PRO/1/3/ 2 Publicity material for *New Milestones*.
[118] Statement made by Peter Randall-Page, in conversation with author, 27 January 2021.

Wayside Carvings (1987)

Figure 37. *Wayside Carvings* (1987), appearance of Sculpture 1 (1988) https://www.commonground.org.uk/new-milestones/ [accessed 5 February 2021]

Figure 38. *Wayside Carvings* (1987), empty niche for Sculpture 1, August 2021.

Figure 39. *Wayside Carvings* (1987) appearance of Sculpture 2 (1990) https://www.commonground.org.uk/new-milestone-gallery/ [5 February 2021].

Figure 40. *Wayside Carvings* (1987) appearance of Sculpture 2, August 2021.

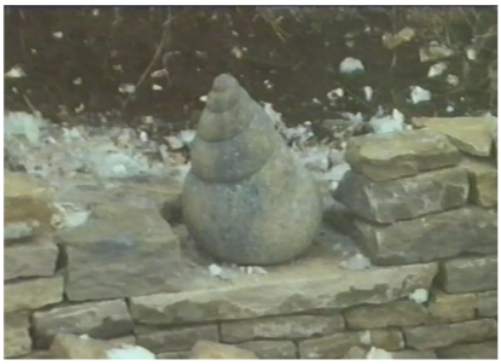

Figure 41. *Wayside Carvings* (1987) appearance of Sculpture 3 (1986) *https://www.peterrandall-page.com/video/new-milestones-common-ground-cinema/* (BBC, 1986) stone wall in construction around sculpture [accessed 5 February 2021].

Figure 42. *Wayside Carvings* (1987) appearance of Sculpture 3, August 2021.

Randall-Page's … *and Wilderness is Paradise Enough* (1986) located at St George's Hospital in Tooting, is grey Welsh slate. The undergrowth and trees around the three slate sculptures have grown providing a lush backdrop and algae is evident on the stones. However, the sculptures remain largely untouched by nature or human interruption, thirty-five years after it was commissioned. It is noticeable that during 2020 (COVID-19), the narrow path between the sculptures was less worn owing possibly to lower patient and visitor numbers.

In June 2002 Goldsworthy created *Chalk Stones*, which consist of fourteen chalk boulders, quarried and sculpted at Duncton Quarry in Sussex. The boulders were placed at various locations, adjacent to a footpath extending for five miles on the Cowdray and West Dean estates: '*Chalk Stones* is … a time based work, insofar as Goldsworthy intended that the chalk boulders respond to their setting changing and ultimately decaying'.[119] Cherith Moses and Rendel Williams commented that 'Initial assessments by the artist … and the Strange Partners commissioning team concluded that they would last for about 2 years.'[120] Planning permission was granted for the stones to remain *in situ* for two years, after which they will have to be removed.[121] However, the stones remain, as located, along the trail nearly 20 years later.

The chalk boulders have evolved over the years from inharmonious bold, white boulders to a muted, subtle beige/green tone, which blends seamlessly into the agricultural landscape and hedgerows. This sculpture provided geomorphologists, at the University of Sussex, with a significant opportunity to research rock weathering and stone durability on a larger scale than normal for field experiments. Studies undertaken between 2002 and 2005, indicated that decay and mass loss from the stones was reduced in periods of low rainfall and that greater mass loss occurs on the western faces of the stones, indicating a link to rainfall exposure. However, their conclusion indicated that 'judging by their present slow rates of weathering, the balls will last for over 200 years, but an exceptionally cold, wet winter might cause sudden and massive breakdown.'[122] Consequently, the demise of these stones seems to be predominantly dictated by external factors including: the weather mainly rainfall and temperature; biological protection in the form of algae, moss or plant growth, and location. Inherent factors including chemical and physical properties of the stone, will also contribute to speed of decay. The most severely impacted stones are located at higher levels in enclosed, forested areas on the Downs.

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[119] Molly Donovan and Tina Fiske, *The Andy Goldsworthy Project* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2010) p.15.
[120] Cherith Moses, Rendel Williams, 'Weathering and durability of the Goldsworthy Chalk Stones', *Environmental Geology*, 56 (2008), pp. 495-506.
[121] https://www.andrewgrahamdixon.com/archive/itp-122-chalk-stones-trail-by-andy-goldsworthy.html [accessed 14th August 2021].
[122] Moses and Williams, 'Weathering and durability of the Goldsworthy Chalk Stones', pp. 495-506.

Figures 43 and 44 indicate the location and appearance of two stones, in 2005 , both are located on high ground, in or adjacent to wooded areas. Figures 45 – 48 indicate their condition in 2014 and 2021, significant decay is evident in the latter photographs.

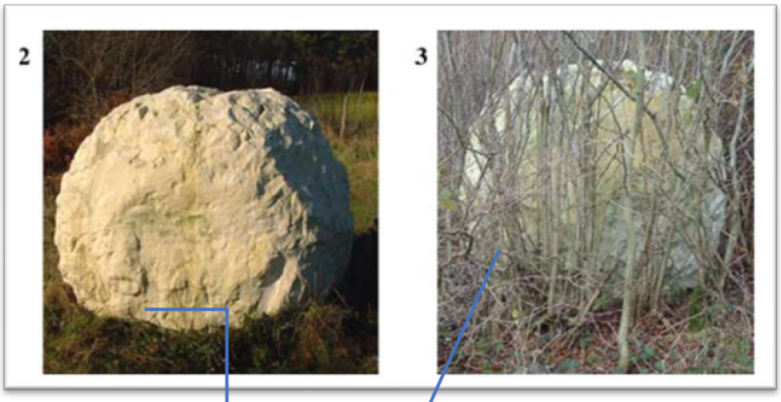

Figure 43. *Chalk Stone (2) and (3) (2005)* (from Moses and Williams, Weathering and durability of the Goldsworthy Chalk Stones p. 497).

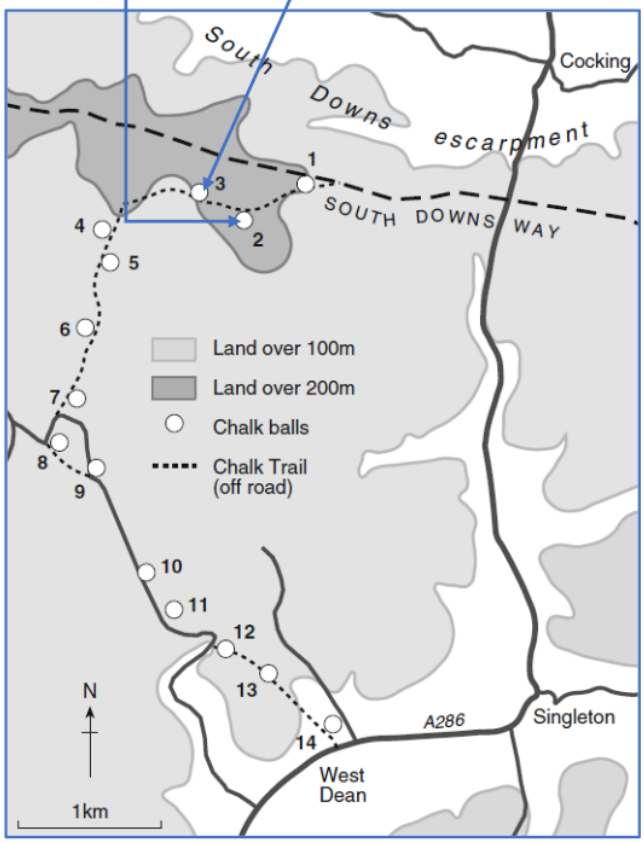

Figure 44. The *Chalk Stone* Trail map. (Moses and Williams, 'Weathering and durability of the Goldsworthy Chalk Stones', p. 496).

Figure 45. *Chalk Stone* (2) https://beptonranger.com/2014/04/21/some-very-big-easter-eggs/ April 2014, [Accessed 14th November 2020].

Figure 46. *Chalk Stone* (2), August 2021

Figure 47. *Chalk Stone* (3) https://beptonranger.com/2014/04/21/some-very-big-easter-eggs/ April 2014, [Accessed 14th November 2020].

Figure 48. *Chalk Stone* (3), August 2021.

A poignant example of natural decay combined with artistic engagement is illustrated by Long's *Circle in Ireland* (1975). This sculpture is located on the Burren (Co Clare, Ireland) in a clandestine, hauntingly isolated site near Doolin Point. Long was in the area about 20 years after its creation and he visited the site to find it was still there.[123] In 2021, the circle, had been subjected to weathering and the stones had become dislodged. Notwithstanding, the circle remained markedly discernible on the barren landscape (figures 49 and 50).

Figure 49. *A Circle in Ireland* (1975), http://www.richardlong.org/Sculptures/2011sculptures/circleireland.html [accessed 4 August 2021].

Figure 50. *Coming full Circle* (2021), https://www.burrencollege.ie/coming-full-circle/ [accessed 28 August 2021].

[123] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLPnvde71p4 - Richard Long, Slideshow – Q&A at Thelma Hulbert Gallery, 30 September 2020 [accessed 4 August 2021], (4 minutes 43 seconds).

Áine Phillips, a visual artist from The Burren College of Art, used the circle as the inspiration to create 'a performative restoration of the circle' during the Covid-19 pandemic; a time when groups of people gathering outside were limited to fifteen. A group of students performed 'an evocative action of reconstruction that represented a deeper healing, not only of the … monument but the healing of our environment and of humanity as a whole' during this ambiguous period.[124]

[124] *Coming Full Circle produced by Áine Phillips & Burren College of Art. Commissioner Clare Arts Office* [online video], (Clare Arts Office, uploaded 28 April 2021), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDbqAw-Fos4 [accessed 28 August 2021].

Conclusion

The original doctrine of this work was to determine the scope of various influences upon the evolution and demise of a range of British post-war, land art sculptures. During the course of this research, it has become increasingly apparent that whilst climate change has had a considerable effect on the evolution and demise of these sculptures; conscious and unconscious human intervention has been the major contributor in causing decay rather than the effects of climate change. Demise can be measured from wilful destruction through to the ambivalence of English Heritage in recognising the relevance of the *Sod Swap*, as art. This can, however, be counterbalanced by some positive human intervention, indicating a complete engagement with the works, including *A Circle in Ireland*, being the stage for a performance art initiative by students from the Burren College of Art, during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

There are several threads for further study that have been precipitated from this research. Firstly, a comprehensive review of the status of Common Ground's land-based sculpture projects. Secondly, a broad review and comparison of some of the international sculptures created by these sculptors in locations which are exposed to more punishing effects of climate change than experienced in the British Isles, for example, Goldsworthy's *Strangler Cairn* (2010) in Queensland, Australia (figures 51 and 52), or Randall-Page's *Eginga Eryimba* (2007) on Lolui Island, Lake Victoria, Uganda. The tension and dynamic of the growing strangler fig (*Ficus watkinsiana*) through Goldsworthy's granite *Strangler Cairn* would be intriguing to monitor.

Figure 51. *Strangler Cairn* (April 2016)
https://www.aussiebushwalking.com/qld/se-qld/sunshine-coast/conondale-np/strangler-cairn
[accessed 8th September 2021)

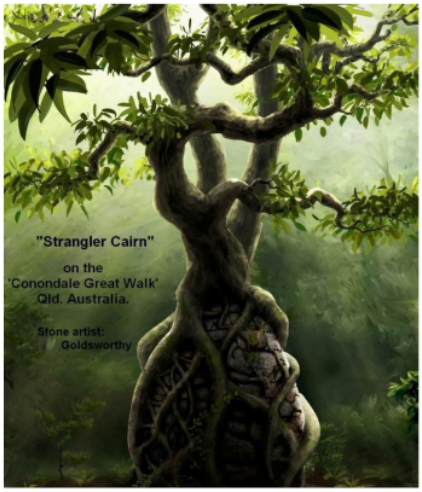

Figure 52. *Strangler Cairn* (Artists impression (Michelle Faldt, of the cairn in 100 years) http://www.classic-edu.com/en/arts/cairn.html (no copyright infringement is intended)

Finally, whilst there has been much interest in public art as an energetic and significant practice, evidenced by the advent, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, of a series of commissioning agencies for art in the public realm including Modus Operandi … Gingko Projects … and Situations, the majority of their work is based in urban settings.[125] Albeit, Gingko Projects worked with the Dumfries and Galloway Arts Association on Goldsworthy's *Striding Arches* (2006). Although, some land-based sculpture initiatives have been publicly funded, many organisations rely upon their charitable status to progress, such as, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. The Cass Sculpture Foundation, a not for profit organisation, closed in 2020 after 30 years, owing to the financial constraints of a costly lease. Many sculpture projects, trails and gardens are dependent upon their founders and the continuing lifespan of the project may be reliant upon their ability to contribute, both intellectually and financially. Consequently, a more holistic understanding of the status of land art initiatives in the British Isles, would be helpful in a broader context.

However, the assumption must be implicit that any further research should not detract from the original intention of land-based art, which is to engage the curiosity of the audience; inspire individuals to appreciate the uniqueness and elegance of the sculpture; encourage exploration of the remoter countryside and to focus attention on the horizon.

[125] Elaine Speight, *Public art for the post-regenerate age. The Everyday Practice of Public Art* (Eds.) Cameron Cartiere and Martin Zebracki (London: Routledge, 2016) p. 180.

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