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scotregen

sharing experience : shaping practice

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plus links, reviews, language and numbers in regeneration.

Urban Imaginings

Scotregen is expanding its scope of specialist columnists to bring our readers the views, experience and ideas of some of the leading Scottish regeneration thinkers and practitioners. In the article below, Professor Alex Law of Abertay University sets out the context for his future regular Scotregen column on visions of urban utopia.



Alex Law
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Everyone engaged in urban regeneration knows of the practical difficulties involved in breathing fresh life into decaying areas. It is not only the physical material of rebuilding or even the presentational one of rebranding that can prove obstructive for generating a ‘sustainable’ urban renaissance.

Our vision of the spaces that need repaired is thoroughly imbued with ideas about the broken social relations that inhabit these places.

There is no vision without division

As the urban sociologist Mike Davis has titled his recent books, on the one hand, hundreds of millions across the world live in a

“Regenerative urbanism tries to get five minutes in front of history but frequently ends up decades behind it.”



‘Planet of Slums’ (2006) while, on the other hand, the world’s elite are creating exclusionary ‘Evil Paradises’ (2007) for themselves. Millionaire Shangri-Las have sprouted up in enclaves of Dubai, Beijing and Los Angeles, turning the idea of a shared human existence into a perverse parody of utopian hopes.

How can our vision of the world span an urban reality of the utopian greed of the few combined with dystopian misery for the many? Only with great difficulty or through wishful thinking it would seem.

Because such divisions are often envisioned as intractable they can lead either to exotic flights of fancy or to counsels of despair. In either case a divided reality is left untouched.

No wonder such choices are ignored at the practical level of regenerative work. Instead, activity is geared towards what can be done pragmatically, in the here and now, rather than invoking grand schemes for a time that will in all probability never arrive.

But even for the most practical mind, the twins of vision and division play a crucial role. Every piecemeal form of urban regeneration expresses some utopian longing, even in its very language, as Chik Collins reminds us in his regular Scotregen column.

A view from the chair



*Ian Wall
SURF Chair*

Regeneration in a Recession

The credit crunch brought upon us by the incompetence and greed of the financial institutions is going to make all our work much more difficult

'Trickle down' theory never had much merit and at present as energy companies and finance houses extract even more money from those who can least afford it, and punish them severely if they do not give them all they demand, the main practice appears to be trickle down, flood up.

Another of those metaphors that masquerades as policy, whilst in fact doing nothing more than support the status quo, is 'a rising tide lifts all boats'. It will not be surprising to find that all boats will not now sink equally fast, a view given substance with the UK Governments refusal to tax energy company's windfall profits to provide support for peoples fuel bills this winter.

The recession presents us with a double whammy. On the one hand the

need for our work will become both greater and more pressing, on the other hand because of declining government revenues and greater call upon them, not least for unemployment pay, the public funding resources we may use are likely to decline.

It is possible to exaggerate the recession's effect on the private sector and continued investment by them should not be written off, but in one area, property, the situation is severe. In terms of new house construction Homes for Scotland estimate that next year's production of houses will be some 50% of last year and already 15,000 people have lost their jobs and the position in commercial property is almost as bad so that those regeneration schemes that relied upon rising land values, development profits and Section 75 contributions are going to be delayed unless additional resources are invested to keep up momentum. In macro economic terms such counter cyclical investment is currently required but given demands elsewhere it may be limited.

On the wider front, funding regeneration has never been easy and this will not improve in the short term. SURF is therefore considering organising a conference to look at all regeneration related funding sources, from local charitable Trusts to Europe, from Private through Mutuals to Government finance and some new ideas and initiatives coming through such as charity equity and the Scottish Investment and Fairer Scotland funds, among others.

After 15 years of uninterrupted growth the coming period is going to be testing; the pages of Scotregen are open to all with ideas, experiences and example to help us rise to the challenge.

Editorial



*Andy Milne
SURF Chief
Executive*

Welcome to the Autumn 2008 edition of
scotregen, our 43rd edition.

The purpose of this quarterly journal is to use SURF's independent position to raise discussion and debate about important developments in regeneration policy and practice. Scotregen is part of SURF's regular output of publications, events and discussions aimed at supporting more successful and sustainable regeneration efforts across Scotland.

In this issue we look at regeneration policy matters ranging from Assets to Allotments and Health to Housing. We also pick up messages from Pittsburgh and touch on the key elements of a brilliant and challenging SURF Lecture from Scotland's Chief Medical Officer, Dr Harry Burns, in which he illuminated the latest research on 'The Biological Consequences of Deprivation'.

While our regular columnists take a look at the numbers and the language games that help explain the regeneration world, we are pleased to be introducing new regular columns on Housing, Planning and Urban Imaginings.

The Hub and more to come

My last editorial in Scotregen 42 referred to SURF's interest in the government's 'Hub' initiative and its potential impact on Scottish regeneration processes and outcomes. I'm pleased to say that our Winter 2008 issue will feature an article from Mike Baxter who has been working for the government on the development of 'Hub' for the last 2 years.

Other items for the next issue will include,

- the role of the voluntary sector in regeneration,
- tackling poverty and inequality,
- learning from the GoWell project
- regeneration in a recession.

And the intriguing question of:

'Is regeneration a puzzle or a mystery? And why does that matter?'

Your feedback on any of the above, or anything else you think we should be looking at in future editions of Scotregen, is always welcome. Just email me at [andymilne\(at\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:andymilne@scotregen.co.uk)

Urban Imaginings continued from page 1.

What exactly is it that has 'degenerated' and needs to be 'regenerated' on a 'sustainable' basis if not some utopian idea of the city neighbourhood. 'Problem places' are often imagined as akin to an organism that can be cultivated until it once again flourishes under its own momentum. Organicism shares with the utopian vision the idea that division can be overcome or at least alleviated; what has been broken (and, presumably, unsustainable) can be made whole (or 'sustainable', in the parlance of our times).

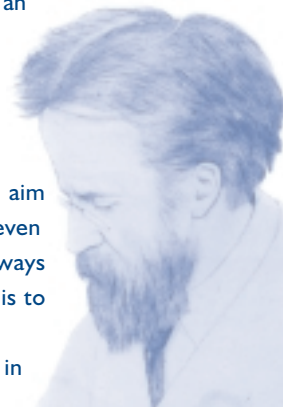
This kind of urban self-activity is what the Scottish practical utopian, Patrick Geddes, knew as 'civics'. Through Lewis Mumford and the Chicago School of urban sociology, Geddes gave birth to an evolutionary vision that envisaged the city as a bio-social whole in need of regenerative 'conservative surgery'.

In many ways, the problem with Geddes's evolutionary urbanism (and more recent sustainability versions) is that social divisions are naturalised by a too frequent recourse to organicist metaphors of

holistic self-repair. Organicism obscures the constructed, artificial, discontinuous and political nature of the urban environment.

Regenerative urbanism tries to get five minutes in front of history but frequently ends up decades behind it. Nevertheless, Geddes's practical longing to see urban society as an organic whole was, at the same time, a protest against social conditions that had degenerated from some ideal point in the distant past.

In future 'Urban Imaginings' columns I aim to explore some of the ways in which even utopian visions of urban renewal are always tempered by social division. My theme is to consider how a regenerative vision and division of urban utopia manifests itself in novels, film, political tracts, and social scientific analyses.



Patrick Geddes, practical utopian

Alex Law is a sociologist at the University of Abertay Dundee.

The Biological Consequences of Deprivation

SURF's Annual Lecture for 2008 was recently delivered by the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, Dr Harry Burns. In the very appropriate surroundings of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, SURF members and special guests heard a well presented and challenging set of messages. Dr Burns drew on a series of related research sources to set out his view that the linkages between health and poverty are complex and that while there are no magic bullets, there is hope, particularly via early intervention.

The main messages of the Dr Burns's lecture included the following points:

- **Poverty** - The relationship between health and poverty is more complex than is commonly acknowledged. While there may be a strong case for income redistribution on the grounds of justice, there is no evidence that making people wealthier will make them healthier.
- **Diet** - Some evidence on linkages between improved diet and health outcomes, such as reduced levels of heart problems appear to be largely post hoc justifications.
- **Tobacco** - Men in Scotland smoke less than those in other countries which have much higher life expectancy levels. A smoker in Paisley is four times more likely to die of lung cancer than a well off smoker of the same number of cigarettes in England.
- The setting aside of these traditional concerns raises two key questions. **Do people in poorer areas have less resilience in combating and recovering from illness? Is there a link between social circumstances and cellular biology?**
- The 1996 Everson Research which included measuring levels of 'hopelessness' or 'pessimism' in men indicates a relationship between stress, cortisol and the thickness of fat coating the inside of arteries.
- Research from the NY University Psychology dept indicates that the greatest levels of stress in baby Macaque monkeys occurs when there is an inconsistent (rather than a deprived) feeding pattern for the mothers.
- This research further indicates links from stress to aggressiveness and obesity. There is a further link to changes in the brain structure and development, resulting in poorer levels of decision making.
- Separate research based on 'the Dunedin Cohort' from 1972-73 shows that improvements in social circumstances can help brain cells to repair and performance to improve.
- Stressed poorer people have to run their cellular reparatory inflammatory system a lot of the time. This results in the thinning of artery walls.
- Cancer- Telomeres repair damaged DNA strands but eventually the cells can't be repaired and then die or may become cancerous.

SURF Lecture 2008



In his concluding remarks, Dr Burns made the following points:

- There is clear evidence of a link between life circumstances and health.
- Practical local initiatives, sensitive to local circumstances, are more appropriate to tackling this issue than top down policy making.
- Early interventions in supporting a nurturing parent child relationship can be very helpful.
- A practice based learning network should be established to support dissemination of this information and development of practical responses.
- We should strive to find ways to get rapid access information support to practitioners.
- We need to find the courage to set standards that will help shift attitudes and culture.
- The timing and sequencing of regeneration efforts needs to be improved.
- Robust and clear information is key to making convincing arguments for change.

It is not possible to do justice to the excellent content of the lecture here, but Dr Burns has kindly agreed that a transcription will be made available via the SURF web site www.scotregen.co.uk



Big Assets



Regular Scotregen readers will be aware that in recent issues we have consistently highlighted the potential of community asset building and the related role of the Big Lottery, Growing Community Assets fund. SURF has been directly involved in promoting the debate around the key role of local authorities in supporting community asset development. In the two articles below, Phil Williams of the Big Lottery in Scotland restates its continued support for community asset building and Steve Inch of Glasgow City Council confirms a significant move by Scotland's biggest local authority to actively support this approach to community regeneration.



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Growing Community Assets (GCA) is part of the Big Lottery Fund's "Investing in Communities" funding portfolio. The key aim of GCA is to make local communities stronger and more sustainable by helping them to acquire assets, or redevelop assets they already own. Assets can be used to deliver key services and amenities, and to generate new income streams for reinvestment in the local community.

GCA will invest a total of £50 million over three years, with approximately £21 million having already been committed. Although we are now closed to new outline proposals, we are currently working with a wide range of proposals with a combined value significantly greater than the remaining budget. GCA has supported a wide range of community-owned assets including workspaces, shops and windfarms. Projects that lead to a mixture of economic, social and environmental outcomes are more likely to be funded. We have also supported detailed project planning prior to acquisition or redevelopment of an asset.

GCA was developed from the learning on our previous programmes, most notably the Scottish Land Fund (SLF). Evaluation findings suggest that owning an asset can enable significant economic, social and environmental outcomes for the local community. However, SLF funding was only available to rural communities and was closely tied with land reform legislation. While developing GCA we were aware that there is a long history in Scotland of communities coming together to deliver local services and amenities. So GCA sought to extend the opportunity of asset-based community development to all parts of Scotland.

Further support

The different patterns of asset ownership in more built up areas often means that local authorities and other public bodies have a particularly important role to play in relation to GCA. We also recognise the challenges that the public sector faces in securing the "public good" for their assets. That is why we welcome the recent decision of Glasgow City Council's executive committee to consider supporting the transfer of council assets to local community groups where appropriate. We hope that this development will enable us to further support a range of well-planned community owned assets in the Glasgow area.

Community ownership is not the right approach for every community. The responsibility of owning something on behalf of the community requires the organisation to have robust finance and management plans in place to ensure the asset will continue to deliver local benefits. But our experience to date suggests that well managed community-owned assets can bring significant benefits to the local area and the confidence and capacity of people and organisations.

The process of regeneration combined with the reconfiguring of the delivery of public services has left a legacy of buildings which are no longer required by Glasgow City Council for their traditional use and which are now surplus to requirements. Bringing these buildings into productive use poses many challenges. For example, many are either grade A or B listed and require development solutions which exceed normal development costs, while many are in areas might not be particularly attractive to the commercial market. This combination of circumstances does however create tremendous opportunities for organisations in the social economy to put together imaginative proposal and funding packages and, through working with the Council, to strengthen their own asset bases.

Glasgow City Council has traditionally released surplus property by either simply disposing of it for development, or making available on long leases to community organisations to provide them with either an operating base or a potential income stream. Several old schools are, for example, currently held on long leases by voluntary and community sector bodies, with the Council receiving a 15% share of any rental income generated. Recent discussions with various funders and with social economy organisations suggest this traditional model is no longer relevant, and that full community ownership of assets would provide a significantly higher "social dividend" from transferring ownership from the Council to community organisations who have the skills and capacity to put together funding packages, and thereafter manage development.

Radical re-appraisal

Discussions are underway with a number of organisations in the City. The general model being taken forward is one in which the Council sells the particular asset at market value (normally established by the district valuer) to a community organisation. Thereafter the Council will return the purchase price to that organisation to give it capital which will count towards the match funding it requires to unlock funding from the Big Lottery ERDF etc.

This radical re-appraisal of how the Council treats its property stock has already resulted in a number of new projects being brought forward for consideration and it is anticipated that it will lead to a larger inflow of Big Lottery funding into the City since it now clearly satisfies one of the major conditions under which they will consider providing grant support to social economy organisations for property projects.

SURF welcomes this significant step forward in the support of real community asset development. It's an issue we will return to in future Scotregens and in SURF's broader output.

Investment Reform and Housing Association's Involvement in Community Regeneration and Wider Action



Housing is a key element of regeneration, both as a fundamental necessity and as a driver of wider related activity, particularly via RSL's. In the first of a regular SFHA column for Scotregen, David Stewart outlines some of the context for SFHA members in what is a challenging climate for all housing providers.



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Like many of the members we represent, the SFHA recognises the importance of regeneration and social enterprise in building sustainable, balanced and successful communities. Earlier this year we published Making Places Work, a piece of research that reviewed successes in the Housing Association sector to date while looking at opportunities for the sector to develop its role in community development and social enterprise. There are many excellent examples of social enterprise in the Housing Association sector, for example – Ore Valley are developing a community energy project in Cardenden, Cordale have developed amenities for their community in Renton and Cunninghame provide training and employment opportunities in North Ayrshire. At the same time the SFHA are involved in discussions with the Scottish Government with the aim of introducing flexibility in phasing and in funding on large scale regeneration projects – we are aware that the credit crunch could have a major impact on market led regeneration and are seeking in the longer term to develop a solution to prevent the affected communities from suffering.

Firm Foundations

While the SFHA believes that social enterprise and community regeneration is a major role for associations both now and in the future, a key theme of the present Scottish Government has been to promote an Efficiencies Agenda. Through 'Firm Foundations', the revision of Housing Association Grant assumptions and now the Housing Investment Reform Project the message has been clear – the government wants to see more houses built to meet need and promote sustainable economic growth, but the current economic climate means that any increase will have to be delivered through the same amount of grant funding. While the SFHA has expressed concern regarding possible impacts of the revised grant assumptions and the efficiencies agenda promoted in Firm Foundations, it is clear that the Scottish Government is determined to move forward on this basis, with regional competition where consortia can bid for housing association grant over a 3 year programme.

Significant concerns

This begs the question, what effect might the efficiencies agenda have on Housing Associations involvement in social enterprise, and what can the SFHA and its members do to positively influence the direction of Investment Reform? An initial analysis of the likely impact of an efficiencies agenda seeking better value for the public purse suggests that there could be several significant concerns for the sector:

- Danger of rents rising to fund higher private loans, leading to tenants being caught in a benefits poverty trap
- Reductions in quality and energy efficiency to lower capital costs
- Housing Associations, with their resources squeezed to fund higher loans, focus on their "core business" of developing, managing and maintaining houses and partially withdraw from social inclusion and social enterprise agenda.

Positive signs

Were any of the above to come to pass it would be a huge set back, and that is why it is crucial that Housing Associations and other bodies involved in social enterprise and community regeneration work to influence the Scottish Government to ensure that the importance of sustainable communities is at the heart of the investment reform process. While it is early days, with a consultation paper on Investment Reform not expected until the end of November, the signs so far have been relatively positive. Having been criticised for its consultation on the new grant assumptions, where many responses registering concerns failed to change a single aspect of the proposals, the Government has been very willing to engage with associations, hear their views and listen to their concerns. Officials have also emphasised that they wish to avoid sharply increasing rents or drops in building standards.



Abertay Housing Association engaged in wider role to support the SURF Award-winning Community Block project in Dundee

The government agreed to the SFHA's suggestion to run 6 regional seminars seeking association's views on investment reform ahead of November's consultation paper. The impression given at the seminars was that the government has an open mind on exactly how investment reform should take shape. Some of the key points made at the seminars were relevant to the social enterprise agenda, with a couple of associations suggesting that if the competitions contained the right criteria, there could be an opportunity to expand social enterprise by the sector – for example, points could be awarded for social enterprise proposals in bids or community benefits clauses could be included in construction contracts, in line with the pilot Community Benefits in Procurement schemes.

Clearly, the Investment Reform project represents a radical change in the way that housing association new builds are funded. It is vital that the Housing Association sector, and its colleagues involved in social enterprise and community regeneration, influence the shape of the reform to ensure that it furthers, rather than reduces, social enterprise in Scotland. To this end it is key that we become involved in, and help to shape, the debate.

The SFHA will continue to update Scotregen readers via a regular column on housing and regeneration.

SURF goes to Pittsburgh



Andy Milne
SURF Chief
Executive

On the back of its continuing efforts in linking the interdependent Regeneration and Health and Wellbeing agendas, SURF recently participated in a conference on 'Social Inclusion and the Transformation of Mental Health Services: Transatlantic Perspectives' which took place in Pittsburgh University from June 12th-14th 2008.

The purpose of the conference was to examine the concept of social inclusion and its role in recovery and in mental health promotion. In doing so, it set out to address the following questions:

How do public policies based on the concept of social inclusion:

- Foster recovery and promote the opening of opportunities in the community for people with psychiatric disorders?
- Promote mental health and resiliency in distressed communities at risk for high rates of mental illness?

SURF's main input was to offer a wider view of the impact of regeneration, and related social inclusion activities, on community and individual wellbeing via 3 linked concepts:

- Successful communities tend to have the capacity to be more inclusive and more able to maintain people with mental illness as an integral part the wider community, which is more likely to assist their recovery.
- The availability and quality of jobs, education, housing, environment, culture and recreational opportunities has a significant effect on the mental health of individuals in any community.
- Large scale change, upheaval, and what has been termed 'post industrial shock' can have profound impacts on individual and community self regard and wellbeing.

Glasgow presentation

A central element of the event programme was a presentation from a group of colleagues from Glasgow. This was in recognition of the similarities in the post industrial challenges for both cities and the coordinated efforts at remedial social inclusion being undertaken in Glasgow. There was particular interest from U.S. colleagues at the level of formal partnership between local government and health bodies in Scotland.

Bruce Whyte, from the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, presented an excellent 8 minute DVD that the project had produced, titled Miniature Glasgow. It proved to be a highly accessible and fascinating graphic statistical summary of the Glasgow population. The film is available via the GCPH web site at www.gcph.co.uk

State of the Union

In the course of a particularly interesting presentation, **Kathryn Power**, Executive Director, Centre for Mental Health Services, U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services, referred to:

- A U.S. system of health care that is not delivering.
- The challenge of mental illnesses being diagnosed in 14 year olds
- The need to consider the wellbeing of the whole population in addition to those currently diagnosed as being mentally ill
- The links between social justice and social inclusion
- The need to rethink the U.S.'s social, economic and community theory.
- The need to weave existing economic and social structures into individual care plans.
- The need to develop inclusive, egalitarian and democratic service provision

And In doing so to consider:

- Housing and related support
 - Employment – workplace availability and awareness of employers
 - Personal Resources – to support a persons self image as a contributor.
 - Social networks –not just peers, but networks to security and prosperity.
- She concluded by restating the importance of the political, social, economic and technological context for supporting this work.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN MESSAGES FROM THE CONFERENCE

- **European lead**

The extent to which Europe, and Scotland within it, are seen as leading the way in social policy and wellbeing, was striking. There is significant interest from U.S. colleagues in the concept and application of European Social Inclusion approaches to services supporting recovery of mental health and in the prevention of stresses likely to contribute to mental illness.

- **Roots of wellbeing**

Kathryn Power, US Director for Mental Health Services, offered a strong lead for the US taking a more holistic view of the factors affecting the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population.

- **Questions of inclusion**

It is important to consider who is including who, and on what basis. The notion of inclusion involves a power play which may not necessarily result in the increased wellbeing of those being 'included'.

The economic, cultural and technological impact of accelerated globalisation will have a profound effect on strategies for increasing social inclusion.

Some new opportunities for supporting more inclusive localised communities may arise from the present and anticipated pressures on fuel and related transport costs.

- **Exclusion and Inclusion**

Exclusion is not simply the flip side of 'Inclusion' but a different concept which may involve discrimination in economic, racial or cultural terms. Economic upheaval and immigration and forced migration are massive historical and contemporary realities for large sections of society. The idea of a continuous, progressive upward curve of inclusion is largely an illusion.



Visiting reality

In addition to the formal conference programme I was given the opportunity to take a short tour of the 'Hill' district of Pittsburgh in the company of Denis Candy who works for the Pittsburgh Community Partners Institute and who is currently supporting some very interesting community development work in that area. The focus of Denis's work is to encourage the development of community enterprises that may help forge a new future for the existing residents of the historically disadvantaged area. New interest in the Hill as a prominent location suitable for high end property development has emerged from the private sector. This has apparently been a spur for local initiatives under the banner of the 'Find the Rivers' project which is aimed at capitalising on the raised land values for the benefit of local people, organisations and businesses. Denis has helpfully supplied the article on page seven to outline the context of and aspirations for his exciting work.

In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Find the Rivers! is proposing detailed plans for a network of inter-connected trails, river overlooks and green public spaces in synch with the urban landscape - with uses and activities shaped by the aspirations of local people.

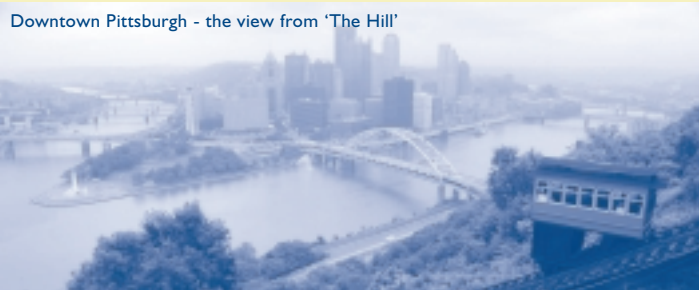


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After World War 2, urban landscapes throughout the United States were altered by wrecking ball policies and practices known as Urban Renewal - designed to reduce density in inner cities and speed people on highways to new suburbs in former fields. Public investment subsidized the resulting sprawl, which was bad for people and regional economies.

Pittsburgh's Hill District is a case in point. The Hill overlooks the City's three rivers. In years gone by it was a melting pot of migrants and immigrants as Andrew Carnegie's steel mills became the bedrock of America's industrial might. Later, it was a hotbed of African American culture known as "the crossroads of the world." In the 1950's segregated public housing blocks were built and civic leaders expanded Downtown by demolishing part of the Hill, displacing 8,000 residents, mostly minorities. Decline followed fast and in subsequent decades the Hill has struggled.

Downtown Pittsburgh - the view from 'The Hill'



This pattern raises the question, "How do we heal the fabric of a wounded place?"

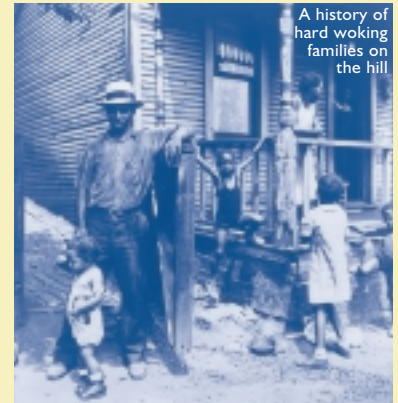
To restore vitality in stressed urban communities, many agree that work must take place from the inside out. But how this is approached is crucial. Many common design patterns for buildings, streets and communities are applied these days. What then makes any given place distinctive? It is the palpable sense of identity that we feel in a successful place, its essence. For me, the essence of a place includes stories - of the physical landscape over centuries, of the people who have populated and shaped the place and the animals, plants and minerals that make it distinctive. It also includes the built character of the place - buildings, lots, streets, alleys and the like. These elements are dynamic and relate to each other. As they interact, something of the essence of the place can reveal itself. Its essence is akin to its DNA. To restore and heal communities, we must take time to tease out what I call 'Community DNA.' It is best discovered with local people and attending to it requires blending many disciplines.

It is a challenge to craft collaborative visions and launch plans that relate to the deeper essence of a place, but it is happening in the Hill through an initiative called Find the Rivers! (FTR!). Our purpose is to heal a community and its City - by simultaneously working on upgrading economic, physiological (and mental), and socio-cultural health.

FTR! is grounded in two community organizations – the Hill District Consensus Group (a broad coalition) and Hill House Association (a community centre and human services provider) along with my consultancy Community Partners Institute. Core partners now include Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and the University of Pittsburgh's Studio for Creativity. In 2003, we began a three-phased approach.

1) Community conversations and exploration: Asking people to seek the beauty in their landscape, explore its essence and dream big about how the layout of the place itself could lift minds, bodies and spirits, even as developers and politicians came in with their own plans. How, we asked, could we re-make severed connections to neighbouring parts of the City that were undone by Urban Renewal?

Sometimes people are weary from extensive consultations on the margins of re-generation so our engagement took on new forms – meetings on boats on the rivers, to experience the Hill from another perspective in nature, dialogue and arts events, informal conversations and school-based projects on local history and landscape. Our approach gave special place to the role of the imagination and the artists who work that terrain.



2) Producing a design Vision: Blending a multi-disciplinary cast of characters in the work and creating new experiences of connection to the City that allow an artful design vision to emerge. Through FTR! residents partnered with city planners, architects and urban designers, parks, public health, environment and ecology experts, artists, students and faculty from universities and schools, and politicians. The role of public sector people – City planners, environmental and regeneration officers and the like – has been important because ultimately the State and City will have to help build and maintain new public spaces emerging from the process. The design vision is based on expanded awareness of place and fresh perspectives. We propose related economic and health benefits from "green" economic development. A performance arts series, CONFLUENCE, helped to extend the conversation by creating a joyful space where diverse people would gather to listen to music, prose and poetry and to consider emerging FTR! work.

3) Site design and construction plans: Re-imagining the urban landscape and shifting to a more traditional realm – working with design partners and local stakeholders to produce plans that manifest their aspirations for a sustainable future.

FTR! plans seek to reflect the Hill's essence and draw out its beauty by incorporating history into design elements that use water, art and landscaping in a network of green public spaces. Important arteries can be re-made as parks with a variety of uses for locals and visitors. In addition to community organizations, key partners here include local authorities- Pittsburgh's planning department and Urban Redevelopment Authority –in plans to designate a chunk of public land as a several mile-long Greenway. FTR! is also producing construction drawings for a new river overlook for Pittsburgh in the Hill. We have also completed design plans for three strategic areas – Kirkpatrick Street, Herron Avenue and Bedford Avenue. Next up is a Greenprint for the Hill - a green planning framework for future development.

SURF is hoping to support a visit from Denys to share further learning between Scotland and the USA.

Holistic Health - a social enterprise

SURF continues its strong focus on the links between health, wellbeing and regeneration by making this the topic of its next Annual Conference on February 27th in Dundee. Meanwhile, in the article below, Dr Lubna Kerr explains the thinking behind her efforts to establish Centres of Health and Wellbeing as locally based social enterprises.



Dr Lubna Kerr

Centre of Health and Wellbeing project leader
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Centres of Health and Wellbeing A New Model of healthcare delivery

The Scottish government aims to achieve independence and this can only be realised if the economy is sustainable. To achieve that the people of Scotland need to be in employment and have to be healthy in mind and body. A healthy, wealthy, fairer, greener, safer Scotland is a reality and this proposal aims to address those issues. Six national priorities announced in Jan 2008 are Health inequality, obesity, smoking, alcohol, early years and mental health.

This proposal is based on the substantial evidence base showing that the lives of people with conditions including obesity, type 2 diabetes, respiratory conditions, mental health issues, cardiovascular problems, and diseases arising from dependency on drugs including alcohol and tobacco, can be spectacularly improved if they can take control of their lifestyles and act positively to change their health status.

Some health colleagues and I are proposing to create Centres of Health and Wellbeing, which will operate as a social enterprise with charitable status, where patients will have a bespoke programme of health improvement. This will be based on a comprehensive medical assessment and will include relevant complementary therapies, dietary and nutritional advice, self management strategies, motivational behaviour advice, relaxation techniques and exercise. The Centres will also provide a haven for people who are off long term sick and provide encouragement to return to work.

Award winning

Our proposal originates from the service set up for black and ethnic minority people with diabetes living in Lothian. This won the 2006 DAWN award, an international award given to services improving the lives of patients with diabetes.

The proposal is to set up centres, it is hoped, the support of range of organisations such as the Scottish Government, NHS Boards, major foundations, councils, Third sector, Big lottery, business entrepreneurs and pharmaceutical companies. Independent evaluation will be conducted on the pilot projects that are initially delivered and if successful will be rolled out to other parts of Scotland as and when appropriate. For Edinburgh the Centres will be able to deliver the 4 themes that have been identified by the Health inequalities standing group, Food and health, physical activity, social capital and healthy environments, thus helping reach the single outcome agreements and HEAT targets.

The Wellbeing Centres will provide both anticipatory care and secondary prevention, for a range of long term conditions such as

diabetes, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, respiratory conditions, epilepsy, depression and obesity, as well as other conditions. Our centres will help deliver the Scottish Government's model of care outlined in the Better Health, Better Care: Action Plan. Education on health, including smoking, obesity and drug issues for school age children and their parents will also be made available.

The Wellbeing centres will also focus on involving those individuals who have been off long term work but not yet on incapacity benefit and provide encouragement and opportunities to return to work early.

Large corporate companies will be encouraged to look after their employee's physical and mental well being and will be encouraged to take our membership and package opportunities at the Centre. This will include those "living dead" who attend work but are not performing to the best of their ability.

Keys to success

Individuals attending the Centre will initially have a full health clinical assessment leading to a specifically designed programme of wellness education focusing on self management, nutrition, complementary therapies, relaxation techniques and exercise. Clinical parameters will be re-assessed at specific timings so quality outcomes can be measured. Individuals will be able to self refer, as well as be referred



through a health care professional. Through time and after evaluation of the pilot phase, if successful, a separate building will be acquired in which an organic café and small retail outlets will also be part of the centre and will employ young adults with learning disabilities. There will also be a crèche tailored to meet the needs of children with learning disabilities.

The key to the success of this proposal is building a team of motivated individuals who have the drive, enthusiasm and the ability to build centres of excellence and a showcase example of best practice. The centres will also participate and collaborate in research with other organisations. Independent evaluation will be conducted to assess the impact of the Centres on the health and wellbeing of patients, including cost-effectiveness. Once this has been demonstrated, it is anticipated that the concept will be rolled out to other Scottish town and cities.

Our proposed Centres of Health and Wellbeing will be the first social enterprise in Scotland to provide such a range of services for a range of conditions, as well as providing preventative and anticipatory care, within the social enterprise model. We want to develop a model of care provision that is mainstream, cost effective and available on the NHS, thereby ensuring those with socially deprived backgrounds can access the services.

So perhaps, if there is a bit of land near you needing to be regenerated why not think of what innovative use could be made of it.



Allotments

A growing understanding?

Gardening and allotments seem to be hitting a lot of bells in chiming with regeneration policy aspirations on health, urban greenspace, food miles, economic diversity and local sustainability. In the article below, Judy Wilkinson of the Scottish Gardens and Allotments Society, highlights a 'Growing Understanding' of the important benefits that better support for such activity could provide for holistic regeneration efforts.



Judy Wilkinson

Committee member
Scottish Allotments and
Gardens Society
[cdwilkinson\(at\)atlas.co.uk](mailto:cdwilkinson(at)atlas.co.uk)

Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society are campaigning for cultivatable community spaces to be included in all regeneration and new developments.

Why?

Allotments, gardens and orchards can play a central role in meeting some of the key challenges for sustainable communities in the changing physical and political climate.

Allotment communities can be wonderful support networks, bringing people into contact through a common resource. Keith Vickerman, writing on the value of allotments says 'In an age when most of our problems are social ones, allotments provide social cement. My own allotments association brings together men and women from all age groups, ethnic and national origins, social and educational backgrounds, income groups, and occupations - including retired and unemployed people. The plots are witness daily to countless acts of kindness - gifts of seed, plants and produce, help with watering and heavy work, sharing of equipment, refreshments and experience - that run counter to the prevailing selfish culture outside.'

Of course allotments are microcosms of the world so tensions can arise, particularly if the sites are self-managing and there are disagreements over allocation of resources or levels of cultivation required by the inspection team. However because of the varied backgrounds and interests of plot-holders, these provide good experience in encouraging tolerance and honing negotiating skills. Again good experience for community growth, especially if they threaten to boil over, which happens very rarely, Council Allotments Officers can provide advice and act as a conciliator.

Increasingly, sites are engaging with local people and providing community plots for local schools and community groups. The Audit Report 'Finding Scotland's Allotments' records that many sites have

open days, social events, horticultural shows and produce sales to support charities. Diverse groups, supporting a range of interests and needs, almost equally spread between: schools, those involved in health issues (mental and physical), disability issues (physical and learning difficulties), and youth/adult training, and support for asylum seekers, rent plots. People gardening together are integrated into the local allotment community.

Where?

Allotment sites can be small (some with only four plots) or large-Saughton in Edinburgh covers 3 ha. In other countries there are cultivatable community plots in play parks, along side walkways, in the middle of housing developments, in hospitals and prisons. We need to get rid of sterile grass deserts with ubiquitous laurel bushes and create growing oases full of vegetables, flowers, herbs and fruit.

How?

The Allotments (Scotland) Act 1892 states in section 2 - subtitled 'Duty of local authority to acquire land for allotments' *On a representation in writing to the local authority by any six electors that there is a demand for allotments, the local authority shall by purchase or leasing acquire any suitable land that may be available adequate to provide a sufficient number of allotments, and shall let such land to persons resident in the area.* Thus, plots should be available for any citizen who wishes to garden.

With current concerns about health, food shortages and adaptation to climate change, planners, developers, housing associations and development trusts should be actively encouraging communities to set up allotments and community orchards. There are some successful examples particularly in housing associations and some supportive local authorities. Recent changes in planning policy (SPP 11 and PAN 65) on greenspace requirements enable planners if they so desire, to include allotments in their briefs to developers.

Scottish Allotments (SAGS) are disseminating experiences, skill and knowledge through their website, their Annual Scottish Allotments Conference and by joining other organisations in organising events and seminars. Committee members are spending a lot of time networking and advising new groups who wish to set up sites. The number of such groups is growing exponentially.

Vision:

Many plot-holders grow herbs and flowers as well as vegetables and soft fruit; there are boundary hedges, ponds (both small and large) and often fruit trees so sites are a delight to visit on a summer evening, rich with bird song and home to the local fox. Many European allotment sites have public walkways through them and the lease states that they should be open from dawn to dusk in the summer. If this practice were to become the norm in Scotland, then allotment sites would be an integral part of the built environment, enjoyed by all.

Plots vary in size; small flower and herb patches need 6m² while a plot to provide vegetables and fruit for a family of four all year round requires 200m². Together with individual and community plots, sites can include resources such as wildlife areas, a small play park, composting facility, community resource hut and community orchard. Small market gardens can be associated with larger sites, supplying local cafes or farmers markets not just with vegetables but with herbs, fruit and flowers as well as products made from natural ingredients grown on the site.

The opportunity to improve the Scottish quality of life and Gross National Happiness is here to be grasped.



Planning To Act

In the first of a series of columns on a more participative approach to planning, Planning Aid for Scotland's head of policy and Planning, Simon Pallant outlines the current context of Planning in Scotland and the positive role that PAS aims to increasingly play.



Simon Pallant
Head of Policy & Planning
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Planning Aid for Scotland is a unique and independent, national organisation that helps people to engage in the planning process. We are the leading voice on community engagement in planning matters, being professional, trusted, impartial and effective.

The Scottish land use planning system operates in the public interest and guides the future development and use of land in cities, towns and rural areas. The primary objectives of the system are to promote sustainable economic development, encourage and support regeneration and to maintain and enhance the natural and built environment.

The system is currently in the process of going through significant reform as part of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006. This reform will lead to a raft of new measures that will be implemented through secondary legislation. In terms of increasing community engagement and involvement in the planning system, Planning Aid for Scotland considers the changes to planning application procedures and Development Plans will be of critical importance. These changes include the introduction of pre-application consultation for certain types of development, and the increased public availability of information. Changes to Development Plans, which consist of planning policies and a spatial strategy for an area, will include a Development Plan Scheme and a Participation Statement that will set out how and when people can become involved.

Participation and partnership

Planning Aid for Scotland is aware that there have always been opportunities for people to get involved in the planning system, but these have often been regarded as highly complex, remote and technical by many. We hope that these changes bring about an 'inclusive' planning system where early engagement and transparency occurs, leading to increased opportunities for individuals and communities to comment and influence planning proposals. This will be stimulated through increased public participation, greater publicity and availability of information in a variety of formats, and increased partnership working between developers, planning authorities and communities.

The new planning system can become a stimulus for investment, regeneration and sustainable development across the country as long as it is intelligently implemented, and supported by all those involved. The onus is on all of us to make sure we play a part and turn this vision into a reality; the crucial role of the general public must not be underestimated and highlights the need for the planning system to be accessible and transparent.

Planning Aid for Scotland's key role of enabling people to have their say incorporates an advice service and the provision of training workshops to raise awareness and help people and community groups play an active role in shaping their future. To take account of the changes brought about by the Act we are currently developing and expanding the training that we provide. One such approach is the 'Planning to Act™' workshop which received a commendation in the 2007 Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning. 'Planning to Act' targets people not traditionally engaged in the planning system through the use of performance art and is of particular interest in areas of regeneration and when trying to reach young people.

Planning Aid Scotland aims to ensure that people are involved in the changes which affect their local area and beyond.

Town centres at the crossroads



Regular Scotregen readers will be aware that SURF has sought to keep a focus on town centre development. We were therefore pleased to be invited to participate in the establishment of a Scottish Parliament cross party group on town centre management.

Stirling Town Centre Manager, Andy Kennedy, who was central to getting discussions towards the formation of the Parliamentary cross party group going, says "The cross party group that The Association of Town Centre Management (Scotland) is keen to develop, will focus on issues pertaining to city and town centres specifically. These geographical areas have not been afforded focus in the past, simply because they are no individual or organisations specific responsibility. In essence the urban core is everybody's neighbourhood, but nobody's baby, yet fulfills an array of different functions. We hope to raise awareness of the importance of our town centres, and the diverse role they play, but recognising their complexity. We also want to create a platform to debate, discuss and develop new ideas for our town centres with key organisations".

Progress on this welcome initiative will be presented in future issues of Scotregen

Celebrate Best Practice with the SURF Awards - book your table now!



SURF and the Scottish Government's Scottish Centre for Regeneration (SCR) have teamed up again to deliver the prestigious SURF Awards. As this issue of Scotregen goes to press, a panel of independent will begin to evaluate the nominated projects that are doing outstanding regeneration work in some of Scotland's most disadvantaged communities. Once they have completed their difficult task, we will hold a celebratory dinner to present the awards.

The SURF awards presentation dinner is a great chance to enjoy the celebration of success in Scottish Community regeneration with friends and colleagues from across the SURF network. This year it will take place in Glasgow's Radisson Hotel on the evening of Thursday 4th December.

Please visit the events page of the SURF website at www.scotregen.co.uk/events for further information and details on how to book your place at the presentation dinner.

A Day of Regeneration



CIH Scotland Regeneration Conference

4th December 2008

in association with SURF

CIH Scotland is pleased to announce that they will be holding the annual Regeneration Conference on 4th December at the Radisson Hotel, Glasgow. This event will be held in association with the SURF Awards Dinner taking place that evening.

This conference will give delegates an opportunity to look at the future of Regeneration in Scotland and the opportunities and challenges open to all organisations to make a difference in their communities. We will discuss the roles played by both Local Authorities and RSL's in the wider regeneration agenda. We will look at how the new Single Outcome Agreements are to be used to deliver regeneration at a local level with Local Authorities taking the lead along with Community Planning Partnerships.

The Scottish Government are keen to encourage RSL's to contribute in the field of regeneration, moving away from just being housing providers. We will look at the capacities of RSL's to achieve this in the long term and the challenges for the future.

This event will also feature entrants of the SURF awards in 2007 to showcase their regeneration initiatives and examples of good practice.

This event should be attended by anyone responsible for the planning and delivery of regeneration in their neighbourhoods as well as representatives from the private sector and those involved in Community Planning.

Delegates will receive a 10% discount when booking for both events

For further information and how to book, please contact CIH Scotland on 0131 225 4544 or email us at Scotland.training@cih.org

The Numbers Game

Dr Stirling Howieson of Strathclyde University is interested in numbers. From understanding the 'big bang' to managing your credit card repayments, numbers hold the key to everything. Here, in his regular Scotregen column, he offers some more interesting figures.....



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7:84 and 0.6:100

When touring the highlands with a new theatrical production the director of a famous Scottish theatre company was reputedly asked by a petrol pump attendant the significance of the **7:84** ratio displayed on a poster adhered to the vehicle. He politely explained that it represented the imbalance of wealth distribution in Britain. The attendant admiring the Director's new car retorted ... "fair enough, but do you have to flaunt it?"

When it comes to land ownership in the UK the **7:84** ratio represents something akin to communism, with only **0.6%** of the UK population owning **100%** of the land. A remarkable proportion of this tiny percentage is made up of families who arrived in Britain some time ago. The Duke of Westminster who owns Belgravia (and another **140 000** acres) can trace his roots back to Hugh de Gras Venuer who seized these considerable tracts of land - circa 1066 - in 'negotiations' that did not require the input or exorbitant fees now demanded by the legal profession.

Land ownership has proven to be the dominant investment vehicle in the UK, with capital values outstripping even house prices. Between 1986 and 2006, house prices rose by **469%**. Over the same period residential land values increased by **764%**.

This hyper inflation has resulted in land acquisition costs being absurdly high, leaving little in 'fixed' budgets for good design and quality materials. 'Affordable' housing can thus only be built on the most unattractive areas of land, that may be heavily polluted by past industrial processes, require the developer to incur major demolition costs or subject to a high and increasing flood risk.

Land ownership and the rental income that can accrue, are the reason why Scottish cities look significantly different from their English counterparts. Why for instance did we build **4** storey sandstone tenements as opposed to **2** storey brick terraces? We find the answer in Scotland's inability to throw off feudalism along the more radical lines adopted by the English bourgeoisie. Decapitating the King gives a fairly clear message to even the most inbred member of the aristocracy as to who is now in charge. In Scotland, the feudal system remained relatively intact with landowners - who had in the main murdered, raped and robbed to achieve their 'noble' status - charging a high annual feu duty; Glasgow fuees were twice that of central London. This resulted in site stacking by private Georgian and Victorian builders to defray these recurring costs among a greater number of tenants. Ironically this high density has proven a positive factor in reducing the Scottish urban populations' carbon footprint for both travel and domestic space heating.

So how can we control this hyper inflation and odious capital accumulation by an unworthy elite who are not adding value? There are, I would suggest, two distinct approaches. The first is to revert to 'laissez faire' capitalism and let the market decide; declare all land available for building and abolish local authority planning departments and with them the environmentally damaging concept of 'green belts'. Flooding the market and cutting red tape will cause land values to crash.

The alternative is to take all land holdings larger than the average croft into public ownership (just like Northern Rock) with compensation set at modest levels - say **£10,000** per hectare, or better still only doled out on the basis of proven need. This would double the budget for any new-build and significantly increase the chances of producing an affordable, quality, low carbon, sustainable environment. Now where did I put that guillotine?

A Place for Community Football

The second of SURF's special events looking at the shared goals of Football and Regeneration took place in Kilmarnock in August. After the previous Edinburgh 2007 event which focused on the professional side of the game the Ayrshire venue was very appropriate for this years highlighting of junior and community football activity. The main presentations were from:

- Mel Young, President, Homeless World Cup on Football in the Community - an international perspective
- Andy Gould, Head of Regional Development, Scottish Football Association on National to Local Support
- Colin Campbell, Network Development Manager, SenScot on Football as a Sustainable Social Enterprise
- And Stewart Harris, Chief Executive of SportScotland (pictured) who offered a national perspective on community football. He commented...



... 'SURF's community football and regeneration conference was very helpful in networking relevant policies, people and organisations.

There are clearly a lot of opportunities for co operating on our shared goals towards more healthy, successful and sustainable communities'

A report of this event will be made available to the participants and SURF will be presenting the main findings to key policy makers and contacts. A summary report will also be made available on the SURF website.

SURF Open Forum Programme Update

Edward Harkins,
Networking Initiatives, SURF.



Edward Harkins
SURF Networking
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Establishing Urban Regeneration Companies - Reflections and Lessons, July 2008, Stirling.

Over 60 participants attended this Open Forum, organised in response to enquiries from network members about how matters stood with the Urban Regeneration Company experience. Publication of the Scottish Government's *Best Practice in Establishing Urban Regeneration Companies in Scotland* was an opportunity for discussion on lessons for wider application to the development of regeneration delivery vehicles. The single plenary session started with presentations from review author Liz Shiel of Tribal Consulting, and from Robbie McGhee of Scottish Government. They were joined by other invited guests for the subsequent Q&A session. Significant points arising included:

- The Scottish Government remains committed to supporting the URC model in Scotland. However, the Scottish Government view is that the URC model is one of a number of ways in which the public and private sectors can work together to deliver regeneration projects - structure should always follow purpose and regeneration is about outcomes.
- A distinct hallmark of early URC development was the commissioning of exceptionally high quality design, including some award-winning designs.
- A variety of new and innovative approaches to community consultation has been employed. Assertions of success in this field by individual URCs were the subject of robust debate and diverse opinion.
- A desire to see more transparent and accessible means of sharing and learning from the experiences of URCs – expressed in the context of 'having to do better' in learning in regeneration.

Sustainable Communities and Regeneration. September 2008, Glasgow. There was another impressive turnout of over 60 participants at this Forum that was aimed principally at drawing together the different facets of what would develop more coherent

“ Is there a possible tension in area based regeneration between assisting people out of poverty in their community, as opposed to helping them move on and out of the community in pursuit of their individual aspirations? ”

policy and practice around sustainability and regeneration. Laura McIvor from Scottish Government spoke of the Government's perspective on mixed communities as one way of pursuing sustainability. She spoke of sustainability as the cornerstone of the housing policy as outlined in *Firm Foundations*, and of the explicit promotion of partnership for sustainability in 'green policy' outcomes, such as Planning for Homes guidance published by Scottish Government.

The presentation by Sandra Renicks of Forward Scotland was appetisingly entitled 'Too many Cooks?...', and contained a number of robust takes on current policy. Sandra emphasised that sustainability was not only an 'environmental' issue; it had crucial social and economic dimensions. In that context she argued that Scottish Government policies on sustainability do not explicitly take 'communities' into account.

Panel guests Doctor Keith Baker of SISTech and John Salter of Scottish Colleges joined the speakers for a wide-ranging plenary discussion, in which housing played a major role. Participants offered views on the concept of new mixed communities, and whether we should be building more on the existing sustainability of existing communities. Others asked, is there is a possible tension in area based regeneration between assisting people out of poverty in their community, as opposed to helping them move on and out of the community in pursuit of their individual aspirations?

Thanks are again due to our speakers and panel guests who freely contribute their time and expertise. Outcomes Papers on these and other Open Forums will be available on the SURF website

The SURF Open Forum programme is funded by the Scottish Centre for Regeneration (part of the Scottish Government) with the aim of facilitating independent feedback and opinion to policy makers in Scottish Regeneration and Community Planning. This funding ensures that Open Forum participation is open to all without charge. SURF always welcomes suggestions for topics or offers of contributions for future forum events.

The Shock Doctrine Naomi Klein A review by Andy Milne

As others have observed in the pages of Scotregen and elsewhere, 'regeneration' can only be properly considered in the context of 'degeneration'. In 'The Shock Doctrine', Naomi Klein offers a particular view of the forces behind some of the major upheavals in national politics, cultures and economies over the last 60 years. Her highly readable and challenging narrative sweeps across the globe and through recent history, causing those of us of a certain age to reflect on what we thought was really going on at the time when Allende was toppled in Chile, when Solidarity was elected in Poland and when Mr Yeltsin was throwing some very odd 'shapes' on a stage in Moscow.

Klein's premise is that a completely ruthless, single minded cabal, utilising financial, cultural, psychological and physical 'shock and awe' tactics, not only took advantage of major international catastrophes to install authoritarian, neo liberal regimes, but instigated and systematically exploited chaos for highly personal gain.

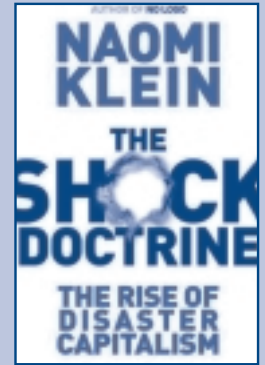
All the left's bogie men (and it is almost exclusively men) are there; from Kissinger to Rumsfeld and Pinochet to Murdoch. Almost every time the reader feels that this extended 'rant' (as some critics have described it) is stretching beyond the point of credibility, Klein produces substantial, supportive evidence in the form of source notes

and extensive quotes from those who were there and who, quite literally, have the scars to prove it.

It's a long and often depressing slog through successive chapters of our recent global history to a final few inspirational pages of hope, built on the still shaky foundations of regenerated, community based, resistance and resurgence. This is a book that will inform, and may significantly change, the reader's view of the world we share. It should help us all at least reconsider what is really going on when we hear high rhetoric of 'regeneration' through 'modernising globalisation'.

As some of Klein's detractors rightly say, overall, the book lacks balance and a substantial exposition of viable alternatives, but looking back on the dogmatic economic orthodoxy that so many bought into, until the spectacular collapses of recent weeks, it shines a bright light into some very dark corners of free market capitalism. On that basis alone it deserves to be widely read and its implications deeply considered.

ISBN 978-0141024530



A Floating Commonwealth Christopher Harvie A review by Ian Wall

One of the highlights of this year's SURF Conference was Christopher Harvie's description of the 'heyday' of Scotland from the mid nineteenth century to the 1930's. It was witty and erudite and left one wishing for more, particularly the distilling of the descriptions and connections into an analysis.

This book, which has been twenty years in the making, seeks to provide that and will, I suspect please and disappoint readers.



Professor Harvie at the SURF annual conference 2008

His overall thesis is that the littoral of the Irish Sea from Glasgow down to Liverpool, Cardiff and Cornwall, round to Dublin, Belfast and back to Glasgow was an integrated celtic commercial and social polity, a powerhouse of scientific, industrial, political and artistic endeavour much

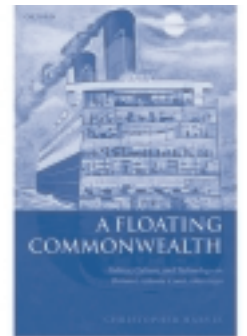
of it highly successful here and across the world. He adduces an astonishing range of examples in all fields; few historians can be as familiar with commercial company histories and, if they are, could not marry them so elegantly with the literature of Wales, England, Ireland and Scotland.

On geographical grounds the absence of Manchester and Bristol (not celtic enough?) and arguably the more important connector of the Atlantic Ocean with the Indies and the Americas is a weakness; as is a lack of a comparison with the North Sea in the same period. More telling is the absence of political economy with much of the history told through individuals and companies missing the wider movements of the period, political and economic.

The book's subtitle is 'Politics, Culture and Technology on Britain's Atlantic Coast, 1860-1930' and is a good description. It undoubtedly provides a rich and stimulating read but sometimes leaves one wishing for plainer fare with a sharper focus.

PS At £60 it may need to be ordered from the library.

ISBN 978-0198227830



Letter to the Editor

Dear SURF,

The recent report from the Policy Exchange advocating the abandonment of northern English towns and cities because regeneration had not only failed but, because 'you can't buck the market', is bound to fail, caused such a stir that even David Cameron felt impelled to dismiss it as 'insane'

Of course as soon as you prioritise profit over people then insanity prevails but perhaps there is a germ of an idea in their flim flam.

Scotland should invite the North of England to join us.

The recent referendum in Berwick demonstrates at least part of England would gladly join us; after all our experiences and culture are very similar and they and we could leave behind the non market determined things that the report doesn't refer to, for example, arms expenditure, releasing enormous resources to invest in people.

Yours in hope

James McLellan

PS Think what benefit alone it would bring to our football leagues.

LANGUAGE GAMES

Dr Chik Collins of the University of the West of Scotland continues his personal look at the role language plays in social change.

Epidemiology

Epidemiology is a very big word, but I think I can spell it. I checked just in case. It's all about the factors that affect the health of populations and their tendency, on average, to exceed or fall short of their three score years and ten. And it's all the rage recently. The evidence is that Scotland as a whole isn't doing well against comparators, and that inequalities between different communities are getting progressively – or perhaps better to say regressively – worse. I'll leave the numbers to Stirling, but readers will have seen the reports – Lenzie versus the Calton and all that.

Epidemiology, though, is not a word one is likely to hear tossed about in those poor communities where men, on average don't make it to their three score years – never mind the ten on top of that. There, big words tend to be greeted with something like the "Away now and don't talk a lot of sh..e", which is from time to time invoked by Victor of Still Game fame.



But it would be a shame if the word epidemiology – or its associated practitioners – ever were so greeted. Of all of those who look at developments in communities, the epidemiologists are amongst those least deserving of Victor's riposte. Two recent examples are the Glasgow Centre for Population Health's The Aftershock of Deindustrialisation, and the final report of the World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, Closing the Gap in a Generation.

I particularly like the latter's repeated use of the phrase "toxic combination", as in the following: "The high burden of illness responsible for appalling premature loss of life arises in large part because of the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age ... Poor and unequal living conditions are, in their turn, the consequence of deeper structural conditions that together fashion the way societies are organized – poor social policies, unfair economic arrangements, and bad politics ... This toxic combination of bad policies, economics and politics, is, in large measure, responsible for the fact that a majority of people in the world do not enjoy the good health that is biologically possible." Admirably straight and direct, and massively pertinent to our own problems.

The BBC website carries a response from a UK politician. It begins, "The UK is at the forefront of tackling health inequalities", before going on to talk about the outstanding "challenge of reducing the gap in life expectancy". Cue Victor.

And how would Victor see our own First Minister's recent attempt to clarify Scotland's relationship with Thatcherism? Rhetorical question. Perhaps it can also be seen as another window – if one were needed – on just how endemic the 'toxicity', which is "in large part" responsible for that "appalling premature loss of life", has become in our own political establishment.

Wha's like us?

Further nominations for the 'language games' dissecting table to: [chik.collins\(at\)uws.ac.uk](mailto:chik.collins@uws.ac.uk).

SURF stuff - some selected upcoming SURF events for booking into your diary now.

- **4th December 2008, Glasgow's Radisson Hotel: SURF Awards Presentation and Celebratory Dinner - book your table now.**
- **29th January 2009, Stirling Tolbooth: SURF Open Forum – This Forum will look at poverty and inequalities, and their impact on regeneration efforts in Scotland.**
- **27th February 2009, Dundee's West Park Centre: SURF 2009 Annual Conference - top speakers and discussion on the theme of health and wellbeing in regeneration.**

For more information on any of the above events you can visit the SURF website at www.scotregen.co.uk or contact SURF Events and Communications Officer, Derek Rankine on 0141 585 6879 or at [derek\(at\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:derek@scotregen.co.uk).

Join SURF

SURF's membership is the backbone of its work.

Become a SURF member and get:

- A guaranteed 33% discount on SURF seminars conferences, and study visits.
- Advance notice of all of our events.
- A complimentary invitation to SURF's Annual Lecture and a free copy of the speech.
- Priority access to our programme of Open Forums
- Information on SURF's annual Regeneration Awards for best practice and reduced rates for the Awards presentation dinner.
- Copies of our quarterly Scotregen journal sent directly to you and your key colleagues.
- Access to our members' library of SURF publications and reports on our Website.

Get connected to a truly independent and informed network of regeneration organisations and individuals.

Your support will help SURF to continue to be an effective catalyst for improving all our efforts to create successful and sustainable communities across Scotland.

To find out more and for a form to join SURF visit our web site at www.scotregen.co.uk or contact Andy Milne directly by calling 0141 585 6848 or email him at [andy\(at\)scotregen.co.uk](mailto:andy@scotregen.co.uk).

Review: Cities Unlimited

– a Policy Exchange

report reviewed by Edward Harkins,

Networking Initiatives Manager, SURF.

This paper was written in a way open to sensationalist interpretation by the media, and it was predictably portrayed as arguing for an end to regeneration activities in 'failed' UK cities and for the residents to migrate to the successful cities – above all London. This sensationalism was unfortunate because the authors had other important, albeit equally contestable, observations about the North-South urban divide across the UK and raised legitimate issues about the longer-term effectiveness of regeneration efforts. But it could be asserted that their arguments are outmoded, poorly positioned and poorly sustained, and might at times amount to polemic.

Their basic premise is that most of what they categorise as the 'failed' or 'regeneration' cities and towns (Liverpool, Hull etc) are fatally trapped in locations determined by the 19th century economic geography of Britain; locations now unfitted for modern economic needs. One might then ask, 'but who in regeneration is trying to recreate the 19th century economic geography of Britain?' Indeed, most of the great UK regeneration success stories are about the post-industrial reinvention, repositioning and re-equipping of regional cities and towns.

Some of the authors' use of Government statistics seems open to challenge. For example, they argue on the basis of published GVA data that London is an economic success, whereas Liverpool and



Sunderland are failures. However, another commentator argues that the correct approach is to take *per capita* GVA – which demonstrated that Liverpool's and Sunderland's performance in fact exceeded London's.

There is also some unconvincing exposition of the authors' logic. They describe as 'spot on', the view that for other UK cities, "London isn't a rival; it's an ally for regional growth". Yet, elsewhere they describe how regeneration towns struggle "not least because their brightest and best educated leave for London after graduation", and "It is important that London does not suck in all of Britain's skilled workers, leaving declining towns only with those who do not have the skills to move. To some extent this is what is happening at the moment." (my italics).

It is perhaps most telling that in this paper the authors arguably fail to convincingly deal with 'the Edinburgh question' that stands in contradiction to much of what they say. Indeed there is a weakness throughout this paper in that it is unclear as to what extent it is about the UK or about 'England'.

There are other better argued, and better set out papers that may be commended to readers in this field. For example in an English context there is the TCPA's 2005 *Connecting England: A Framework for Regional Development*, where the authors point out that even the pre-eminent international position of metropolitan London is endangered by the lack of connectivity between it and across the English hinterland.

In a Scottish context there is Ivan Turok's insightful 2008 reprise *Harnessing the Potential of Scotland's Cities*. Turok points out (after Wight) that problems have been as much about early anti-city policies in the UK as in any supposed 'failure' of the regional cities in the period that the Cities Unlimited paper covers. For Turok, one enduring problem is that, 'The lack of a consistent spatial framework for city strategies has complicated efforts to coordinate different investment flows'.

Both of the latter papers are predicated on the need to address how best to harness the U.K.'s true national potential in the best longer term interest of London, the South East and the rest of the country. It can be argued that these issues need a better perspective than; 'let London (and Cambridge and Oxford) rip and benignly neglect the rest'.

Cities Unlimited. The Policy Exchange. Edited by Oliver Marc Hartwich
<http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/images/libimages/418.PDF>

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