

1948 // NATIONAL PROFILE THE UNITED KINGDOM

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE IN 1948

In 1948 there had been a formal and constitutional Institute of Landscape Architects in Britain for almost twenty years. It began in 1929 following a meeting at the Chelsea Flower Show where a number of important figures attended to discuss the future of the emerging profession. In 1948, Geoffrey Jellicoe was its president, J. H. Forshaw, Thomas Sharp and Clough Williams-Ellis were vice presidents and Brenda Colvin was the honorary secretary. The Institute had around 180 members including students and probationers. By this time in Britain, there were a range of educational courses in landscape architecture at the University of Reading, the University of Manchester, the Architectural Association and the School of Planning in London. However, it was still a period in the profession's history where members came from a variety of training backgrounds including architecture, planning and horticulture. The year 1948 marked a change in the educational development of landscape architecture as this was when two permanent lectureships were created - Brian Hackett took on the first role at the University of Durham from which a Landscape Design course emerged soon after, and Peter Youngman at University College London.

With both the 1946 New Towns Act and the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act in the air, the Institute found they had the vocal support of Lord Reith who was not only the founder of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and a government minister and peer but also the Chairman of the New Towns Committee. It was his belief that a landscape architect should be on the design team of every New Town in Britain. Within this important context, the Institute found themselves playing an active role in the work of postwar reconstruction. This positioned them well to maintain their independence from

the RIBA, at a time when this was not a given, and lead the way in continuing to establish landscape architecture in Britain. According to the recollections of Geoffrey Jellicoe, it was around this time in 1946, at an Institute of Landscape Architects meeting, Lady Marjory Allen raised the idea of setting up a meeting with other landscape architects across the world, to explore the possibility of an international federation. Two years later the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) held its first meeting in Cambridge, England. More than 75 British delegates attended the inaugural meeting of IFLA in 1948 demonstrating the country's interest and commitment to this endeavour.

NOTABLE INDIVIDUALS

Madeline Agar (1874 - 1967) was a landscape architect in Britain in the early twentieth century. She trained as one of the first women at Swanley Horticultural College where she later became a tutor. Agar was a prolific designer, working for the Metropolitan Parks and Garden Association (MPGA) in London, laying out parks and gardens as well as advising the capital on tree planting. She taught Brenda Colvin and who then became her assistant for the Conservators of Wimbledon Common. She was involved in the Institute of Landscape Architects, serving on the education committee and helping to develop their examinations policy.

Lady Allen of Hurtwood (1897-1976) studied horticulture at the University of Reading and went on to work as a garden designer with Richard Sudell. She was a founder member of the Institute of Landscape Architects and used her influence as a public figure to promote landscape architecture as a profession



for women. As well as her design work, she co-authored numerous of books with Lady Susan Jellicoe, campaigned for the rights of children's welfare and was responsible for bringing the adventure play movement to Britain in the post war years.

Brenda Colvin (1897-1981) studied horticulture, then landscape design at Swanley Horticultural College in 1918, where she was taught by Madeline Agar. She went on to set up her own highly successful practice in 1922 and her work has been some of the most influential on landscape architecture in twentieth century Britain. She led the way with landscapes of



roads, power stations, universities and reservoirs. She was a founder member of the Institute of Landscape Architects and became the first female president in 1951 as well as being an important figure in the foundation of the International Federation of Landscape Architects. She collaborated with Hal Moggridge where her practice became Colvin and Moggridge which continues today.

Sylvia Crowe (1901-1997), like a number of her contemporaries, studied at Swanley Horticultural College before going on to set up her own practice. In 1939 she was elected to the Council of the Institute of Landscape Architects and became its second female president in 1957. Crowe was a landscape consultant to both the Central Electricity Generating Board and the Forestry Commission and her work spanned landscapes of reservoirs and nuclear power stations, crematoria and hospitals, new towns and motorways. She shared an office with Brenda Colvin for part of her career,

1. Copyright MRC Lady Marjory Allen Collection, University of Warwick

2. MERL Brenda Colvin collection

3. Image Copyright Jellicoe Family Private Collection

4. MERL Sylvia Crowe collection

5 Youngman, P. (1948) 'International Conference of Landscape Architecture', Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects, (14), pp. 2-5.

although they never worked together. Alongside a number of her contemporaries she was a founder member of the International Federation of Landscape Architects and became its president in 1969. Crowe published a number of influential books including *Tomorrow's Landscape* (1956), *The Landscape of Power* (1958) and the *Landscape of Roads* (1960), all of which have impacted a generation of landscape architects.

Brian Hackett (1911-1998)

trained as an architect and planner at the Birmingham School of Architecture but worked as a landscape architect for most of his career. After the war he went to teach at the London School of Planning and subsequently took up a lectureship at the University of Durham where he initiated a course in landscape design. He became president of the Institute of Landscape Architects in 1967. His thinking on ecology and planning was influential in the post war period, as well as his two books - *Man, Society and Environment* (1950) and *Landscape Planning* (1971).

Sir Geoffrey and Lady Susan Jellicoe (1900-1996; 1907-1986)

worked as a powerful professional partnership for many years. Geoffrey studied architecture at the Architectural Association but spent most of his life working as a landscape architect delivering many well known designs including the Kennedy Memorial Garden and Clivedon House's gardens. He was known for his deep commitment to the connection between art and landscape. He was president of the Institute of Landscape Architects in 1948 as well as the founding president of the International Federation of Landscape Architects. Susan, whilst having no formal training



worked as a planting designer, author, editor and photographer. Their most well known design collaboration was for the new town Hemel Hempstead's water gardens, where Geoffrey developed the overall landscape design and Susan worked on the planting plans. They also co-authored a critically acclaimed book *The Landscape of Man*. Together, as a married couple, they were a crucial part of developing both the formal and social and cultural aspects of the Institute of Landscape Architects for many years.

Richard Sudell (1892-1968) was a landscape architect and author who was an important figure in the founding of the Institute of Landscape Architects. He was a prolific author, writing *Landscape Gardening* (1933) which helped pave the way for the role of the landscape architect in Britain. He edited the Institute's journal, *Landscape and Garden*, for five years before it was put on pause in 1939. His design work included gardens, parks and crematoriums as well as the design of a roof garden for Selfridges in Oxford Street, which he did in collaboration with Lady Marjory Allen. He was president of the Institute of Landscape Architects in 1955.

Jaqueline Tyrwhitt (1905-1983) studied at the London School of Economics, the Technische Hochschule in Berlin and then the School of Planning in London. She is best known for her work as a town planner, journalist, editor and educator. She was at the centre of the CIAM transnational network. She worked at the University of Toronto and the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She collaborated with Brenda Colvin on developing opportunities to teach landscape architecture and training women gardeners who could not afford tuition fees.

Peter Shephard (1913-2002) was an architect and landscape architect, who studied at the Liverpool School of Architecture. He was president of the Architectural Association (1954), the Royal Institute of British Architects (1969), the Landscape Institute (1965) and the Royal Fine Art Commission (1968). His business, Shephard, Epstein and Hunter, remains an award winning practice today. His work as an architect including London County Council housing, alongside a number of universities and colleges. His landscape work included projects such as London Zoo and the University of Pennsylvania.

Peter Youngman (1912-2005) studied history at Cambridge University, before going on to work for George Dillistone in 1935 as a pupil of the then Vice President of the Institute of Landscape Architects. He later worked for the planner Thomas Adams, whom he credits with a complete reorientation of his career. Youngman's work was divided between private practice and education. In private practice he worked on large infrastructure projects including the 1956 masterplan for Cumbernauld New Town, and the masterplan for Milton Keynes in the 1960s as well as Gatwick airport and Sizewell nuclear power station. Youngman worked as a part time teacher at University College London from 1948 to 1978, latterly as the first visiting professor in landscape design. He was president of the

Landscape Institute from 1961 to 1963 and was awarded the CBE in 1983.

IFLA CONFERENCE REPORTS

Peter Youngman reported on the first IFLA congress in London "The great value of the conference lay not so much in the technical usefulness of its official discussions as in its bringing together, after the separation of the war years, members of the profession from so many countries. Altogether there were some 160 delegates...As in this country, so in many others there has been during the last ten years or so a great extension of the scope

of the landscape architect's work and a growing public recognition of the status of a new profession...The real value of the conference perhaps lies in its paving the way to a closer and fruitful collaboration between landscape architects in all countries in the future: and it is to be hoped that there will soon materialise the idea (approved in principle by the leading delegates of each country at a meeting held during the visit to Cambridge) of some sort of a permanent international federation of landscape architects."⁵

