



Landscape Research Group Ltd

Directors' Report, 2015

Landscape Research Group Ltd:
a company limited by guarantee (Registered No: 01714386) and registered charity
(Registered No: 287160)

29 April 2016

Approved by the Board of Directors: 29 April 2016
Approved by the Annual General Meeting: 19 May 2016

LANDSCAPE RESEARCH GROUP LIMITED

DIRECTORS' REPORT, 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

The Directors are pleased to present their Report and enclose Accounts for the thirty-third period of business of Landscape Research Group Limited, from 1st January to 31st December 2015. The company (referred to below as "the Group" or "LRG") was incorporated on 12th April 1983 as a company limited by guarantee (registered number 1714386), and as such was the successor body to the unincorporated association known as "Landscape Research Group" which was founded in 1967. The objects for which the Group is established are:

"to advance education and research, encourage interest and exchange information for the public benefit in the field of landscape and any related fields".

The Group is a Charity registered with the Charity Commission (number 287160). It is also recognised as a Charity by HM Revenues and Customs for taxation purposes.

Prof. Jay Appleton: The Board considers it appropriate to record at the start of this report their sorrow at the death on 27 April 2015 of Jay Appleton. Jay joined the original association Landscape Research Group in the early 1970s, and was a Committee Member from 1975-1980 and 1981-1983 and Chair from 1976-1978 and 1981-1983. He was a founder Director and Trustee, and first Chair, when Landscape Research Group Ltd was incorporated, finally retiring as such in 1986 when he was elected as an Honorary Life Member of the Group. Board colleagues remember his enthusiasm for the Group's work, in particular in securing funding for its first-ever research programme known as the *Nature-Experience Research Programme*; his promotion of the pioneering conference on *The Aesthetics of Landscape*; and his contributions to *Landscape Research Extra (LRE)* for many years after his retirement from the Board. The Group was delighted to have been a major sponsor of the photographic exhibition *Image, Instinct and Imagination: Landscape as a Sign Language* in 2014 (photography by Simon Warner – see last year's Directors' Report), which celebrated and explored Jay's seminal book *The Experience of Landscape*, first published in 1975. The Chair Paul Tabbush represented the Group at Jay's funeral, and Paul formally passed on our condolences to his family. An appreciation of Jay's life was published in *LRE* 76 (in August 2016) and on the Group's website.

2. DIRECTORS, BANKERS, AUDITORS AND SECRETARY

Directors who served during the year were:

Mr Paul Tabbush	(Chair**)
Prof. Tim Collins	(Vice Chair**; and Coordinator, Education and Training*)
Dr Steven Shuttleworth	(Company Secretary**; and Treasurer**)
Dr Chris Dalglish	(Coordinator, Research and Policy*)
Prof. Laurence le Dû-Blayo	(Coordinator, International and Outreach Activity*)
Mr Graham Fairclough	
Mr John Gittins	[to 7 January 2015]
Mr Peter Herring	
Dr Anna Jorgensen	(Editor, <i>Landscape Research</i> *)
Dr Markus Leibenath	
Dr Antonia Noussia	
Prof. Kenneth R. Olwig	
Prof. Hannes Palang	

Mr Gareth Roberts	(Coordinator, Events Activity*)
Ms Maggie Roe	(Consulting Editor, <i>Landscape Research</i>)
Ms Nancy Stedman	[from 15 January 2015]
Prof. Ken Taylor	(Associate Editor, <i>Landscape Research</i>)
Dr Ian H. Thompson	[to 27 April 2015]
Dr Emma Waterton	(Coordinator, Website Activity*)

The posts shown in the list of Directors above with a double-asterisk (**) are the Officers of the Group who, together with the Activity Coordinators shown with an asterisk (*), comprise the Group's Executive (all as at 31 December 2015).

Of the seventeen Directors at 31 December 2015, nine are British. The eight other Directors hold citizenship as follows: Prof. le Dû-Blayo holds French citizenship; Dr Leibenath holds German citizenship; Dr Noussia holds dual British/Greek citizenship; Prof. Palang holds Estonian citizenship; Prof. Collins and Prof. Olwig hold United States citizenship; and Prof. Taylor and Dr Waterton hold dual British/Australian citizenship.

Bankers are: Lloyds Bank plc, 34 Moorgate, London EC2R 6PL.

Reporting Accountants are: Hepburn and Co, 1027A Garrett Lane, London SW17 0LN.

The Company Secretary is: Dr Steven Shuttleworth, 4 Gwyns Piece, Lambourn, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 8YZ.

The Group's website is www.landscaperesearch.org, email address admin@landscaperesearch.org, and its Twitter 'handles' are @aboutlandscape and @LandscapeResJ.

3. PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

This Directors' Report comprises the 'Public Benefit Statement' which the Directors as Charity Trustees are required to make under the Charities Acts. As required, it describes the charity's activities during the year to deliver its charitable purposes for the public benefit, as set out in the Introduction above. The Directors confirm that they have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's 'Public Benefit Guidance for Charity Trustees' in undertaking those activities.

4. BOARD AND EXECUTIVE

(i) Board of Directors

The Board met on two occasions during 2015, on 14 May and 3 December. One email decision was made separately from decisions at Board meetings during the year, relating to approval of the draft Directors' Report 2014.

As well as discussions in its formal meetings and related to email voting, the Board and the Executive regularly discuss issues during the year, to progress the Group's business. The Board uses 'Basecamp' to share documents and track discussion, and since 2014 the Executive and Working Groups set up for specific purposes have been using 'Skype' for discussions. Overall, despite some problems, these systems are proving both effective and worthwhile.

(ii) Role of the Executive

The Executive is responsible for managing the day-to-day affairs of the Group, except insofar as they are delegated to Officers and Coordinators; for coordinating the work of all activity groups; and for formulating and recommending on all issues of strategy and policy to the Board.

The Executive comprises the four Executive Officers of the Group (namely the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Company Secretary) together with the Coordinators responsible for delivering the Group's activities (that is the Editor of *Landscape Research* and the five Coordinators for other activities). The Executive's Chair is the Chair of the Board, Paul Tabbush.

(iii) Business Strategy and related Board decisions

The 2014 Report noted that the Board had successfully completed implementing the conclusions from the 2012 review of its organisational arrangements and the next stages of the Group's strategic development, and given initial thought to a number of consequential issues. 2015 has focused on taking forward these further issues, and particularly on implementing the Group's Development Project. These topics, together with other key matters considered by the Board in 2015, are discussed at (iv) to (x) below.

(iv) The 'Development Project' and Activities of the Development Manager

Last year's Report noted that the Group had appointed Sarah McCarthy as its Development Manager, on a 0.6 full-time equivalent (fte) self-employment home-working contract for a three-year period from 1 December 2014. The post is intended to help the Group to deliver its ambitions related to increased networking activity and impact, and to increase membership. Sarah works to a detailed 'Work Plan' which is subject to regular review with the Chair. To make rapid progress on initial priorities, Sarah's contract was increased by a further 0.2 fte for a six month period from May to November 2015.

Progress on the strategic issues of communications strategy, internal communications, anniversaries programmes and membership is summarised below. Discussion of other aspects of Sarah's work – particularly in relation to website and information activity, international correspondents, the research strategy and Project Hercules – is set out in the relevant sections later in this report.

(a) Wider Communications and Publications Strategy

As noted in last year's Report, the Board recognised the importance of reviewing the future direction of communications and publications issues generally as a means of delivering increased networking activity, impact and membership. The Board appointed in 2014 a Working Group comprising Paul Tabbush, Anna Jorgensen, Kenneth Olwig, Gareth Roberts, Steven Shuttleworth and Nancy Stedman, together with Bud Young (*LRE* Editor) and Sarah to consider this issue of longer-term publications issues and options, in the light of the expansion of *Landscape Research* to eight issues yearly from 2015. The Group identified the issues of "what are we trying to achieve", "who we are aiming at", and "why", and the practical issues that then follow of "what" and "how", as central to agreeing any future Communications and Publications Strategy.

In 2015 discussion focused on agreeing answers to these issues. Sarah's work therefore researched the context in which the Group operates, to understand and define what the Group is and could be, and plotting priorities for future development, in the context of the Development Project's priority objectives of increasing the outward-facing profile of the Group and increasing the membership. A considerable amount of research has been undertaken to inform answers to these issues. While a formal Strategy has yet to be agreed, it was clear that the most effective initial solutions (in terms of 'reach' to a wider audience, practical feasibility and effort, and financial viability) to external communications and profile would follow from making more use of social media and electronic communications. As noted in last year's report, a Twitter account was set up as a first step in December 2014. After consideration of options such as Facebook and Linked-In, it was decided that developing an e-bulletin would be the most effective complement to Twitter and the established publications (ie *Landscape Research* and *LRE*). It was also recognised that further consideration

needs to be given to future options for *LRE* production and access. More detail on these initiatives is given in the sections on 'Website and Information Activity' and 'Landscape Research Extra' below.

(b) Internal Communications

The Board uses Basecamp as its main method of formal communication outside meetings and for document storage. The structure of this system has not evolved in any planned way. To enable more effective internal communication in future, Sarah therefore undertook a major rationalisation of Basecamp to make it easier to navigate and render current discussions, issues and events much more visible. This has been achieved primarily by reallocating material to more relevant folders (projects), creating specific archived folders, and deleting duplicates of files and those conversation threads which did not contain discussion relevant to past and current Group activity.

(c) Anniversaries Programmes

As noted in last year's report, the Board is developing a series of activities to mark important anniversaries in 2016 and 2017¹, which present a great opportunity for the Group to promote itself and *Landscape Research*.

During 2015, the Editor and Editorial Team of *Landscape Research* has prepared a special 'Editor's Issue' to be published during 2016. This issue comprises a retrospective paper which reflects critically on the journal's achievements and successes over the past forty years, together with a series of papers resulting from a call issued to past and current editors of the journal and members of its International Editorial Advisory Board inviting submissions on a range of current and future developments in landscape research. The Editor has also prepared an Editorial for the first issue of 2016 which focuses on the theme of 'landscape justice', thereby complementing a key theme in the Group's Research Strategy.

In addition, initial work has been undertaken by the Company Secretary/Treasurer to prepare a special paper for publication in 2017, to act as a document of record of the Group's history and reflect on its achievements.

The Board also agreed in 2014 that there should also be a major series of events with a strong international dimension so that the Group can use the 50th Anniversary to promote itself. During 2015, the Chair and the Secretary/Treasurer together with Sarah McCarthy have taken initial steps to develop a programme of activities in 2017 to achieve this. The Board agreed at its December 2015 meeting that the key events – likely to be two major conferences in Europe and Asia-Pacific region – should focus on the theme of 'landscape justice' (thereby complementing both the Group's Research Strategy and the focus in *Landscape Research*), but was supportive of the notion that other activities also being planned should have a wider remit. A Working Group comprising Gareth Roberts, Chris Dalglish, Nancy Stedman, Steven Shuttleworth and Sarah McCarthy is taking forward detailed planning. More detail on emerging plans is discussed in the section on 'Events'.

(d) Membership

A key objective for the Development Project is increasing the individual membership of the Group, although recognising that this can only be achieved effectively in the context of providing a clearer 'offer' to prospective members. The work outlined above and in the rest of this Report in relation to better communication, events and the research strategy are part of improving this 'offer'.

¹ 2017 marks the 50th Anniversary of the original founding of Landscape Research Group. In addition, 2016 marks two important anniversaries for *Landscape Research* – the 40th Anniversary of the first issue of the journal, and the 20th Anniversary of the Group's association with Taylor & Francis Ltd.

While it is very difficult to be clear about the precise factors that influence people's decision whether or not to join a group, it is clear that the work so far has had a significant impact. After a long period of declining membership [a key reason for setting up the Development Project], 2015 has seen a 28% increase in the number of individual members [full and student members], from 98 to 135. The majority of these joined in the context of them attending the Newcastle and Dresden conferences, but most have done so using the web-based Paypal system suggesting that online payment is an attractive factor too. This success hopefully provides a good base for further membership expansion.

(e) Work Priorities for 2016

Work in 2016 will build on that undertaken in the Development Project's first year. Learning from experience (for example, the work done in planning and upgrading the website, and on social media and the e-Bulletin), it is recognised that detailed work initiatives need to be launched in the context of a pre-agreed strategy. Strategy papers will therefore be developed on seven subjects – membership, partnership, promotion of the research strategy, branding, managing the website, income strategy/financial sustainability, and a third publication – to provide a clear basis for specific initiatives.

(v) Governance Arrangements

The Company Secretary (Steven Shuttleworth) prepared a major report concerning the Group's governance arrangements, that was considered by the Board at its May 2015 meeting. This report followed the updating of guidance recently carried out by the Charity Commission which among other things outlines the expectations of Charity Trustees, and is an entirely separate issue to the governance issue discussed in the sub-section following. He advised that a risk assessment of the Group's governance arrangements should be carried out, and that new or updated procedures should be adopted as appropriate. He further advised that it was desirable that such a risk assessment and revision of procedures should be carried out by Directors who were not members of the Executive [ie not Officers or Coordinators] to ensure an independence of thinking, noting that much relevant guidance was available and simply needed adapting to the Group's specific needs. The Board appointed a Working Group led by Graham Fairclough, together with Hannes Palang, Nancy Stedman and Sarah McCarthy to undertake this review.

The Working Group presented its initial findings to the Board's December meeting. It suggested that the largest risk is that the Group's governance framework is dispersed in several documents of different dates and many types, so that procedures are relatively invisible, inaccessible and susceptible to being overlooked. At a strategic level of review, the Group considered that there was no need to revise the Articles and Memorandum of Association (but see the sub-section below). However, it considered that it was highly desirable to create a new 'living' Operational Guidelines document (based on existing material in 'Limited Company Regulations' and various Board decisions) to provide a clear basis for all documentation relating to governance issues to be collated in a modernised, accessible document. Linked to this, the Group considered that it was also desirable to create a modernised free-standing accessible document setting out (ie interpreting for present needs) the Group's philosophical underpinnings (starting with 'Objects' and 'Actions'), perhaps to be publicly launched during the Group's anniversary year in 2017. In terms of the need for detailed revision or update, the Group confirmed from its initial work the Company Secretary's advice that a number of gaps in governance arrangements needed to be filled, notably to deal with conflicts of interest, develop a number of simple statements on matters such as environmental policy, vulnerable groups, care for staff, ethics and diversity, and to set out clearer procedures in relation to some minor financial issues, risk management policy and process, and transparency in our grant schemes. Finally, the Group recommended the need to develop a more transparent system for selecting candidates for the Board that also serves to increasingly broaden our range of expertise.

Linked to this work, and specifically in relation to the skills required of Directors in terms of their individual and collective duty as charity trustees and to support the future selection of candidates for the Board, during 2015 the Development Manager, Chair and Company Secretary prepared a skills audit questionnaire which has been completed by all Directors.

The Board agreed the Working Group's recommendations, and decided that Gareth Roberts should also join the Group. The Working Group has been tasked to bring forward proposals to the Executive, in time for consideration by the Board in May 2016.

(vi) Payments and Benefits to Members and Directors

The 2014 Report explained the Board's deliberations about a governance issue that arose following the Group's involvement in Project Hercules. This issue, regarding payments and benefits to Members and Directors, potentially has significant implications for any future LRG involvement in external research contracts that might arise as a result of implementing the Research Strategy. The Board recognised that the issue might prove prejudicial to the Group's ability to implement its ambitions in relation to the Research Strategy. More generally, the Board also recognised that the way the issue is resolved is key to the Group's ability to provide certain services – not only in research, but also in consultation and profile – on a sustainable basis, which in turn drive and are driven by how the Group wishes to develop as an organisation. The Board therefore agreed that alternative models for delivering work resulting from externally funded contracts should be explored.

In 2015 legal advice was commissioned to outline the options available to resolve the issue. The solicitor's report identified ways that the most recent Charity Commission guidelines can be implemented, where remuneration for large, external projects (such as the work involved in the Hercules project) is reasonable. The recommended solution involves amending the Group's original Memorandum of Association (which will require Charity Commission approval) and setting up a wholly-owned trading subsidiary company.

The Board approved the recommendations, and authorised the Company Secretary and Chair to commission further legal support to progress the matter. Solicitors have been instructed, and it is hoped this matter can be resolved during 2016.

(vii) Future arrangements for *Landscape Research*

Last year's report noted that Anna Jorgensen took up her role as Editor of *Landscape Research* with full effect from January 2014 after a smooth transition from her predecessor and that new support arrangements were put in place that were underpinned by a re-negotiated Publishing Agreement with Taylor and Francis Ltd (T&F), a new Editorial Agreement with the University of Sheffield, and new arrangements for the Editorial Assistant. A major consequence of the new arrangements came into effect in 2015, the expansion of the journal from six to eight issues yearly, which is discussed below in the sections on 'Editorial Activity' and 'Finances'.

The only outstanding issue for the new arrangements is reaching agreement with the institutions of the other members of the editorial team to provide limited research programme support similar to that for the Editor. Initial steps to progress this matter were taken in 2014 after the new Agreement with T&F was formally concluded. It was intended that these should be completed in 2015, but progress has been regrettably delayed by other pressures on the Treasurer's time.

(viii) Research Strategy

As indicated in last year's Report, the Board resolved in December 2014 to adopt the Group's first Research Strategy and approved a small budget to support its implementation. During 2015 the

Strategy was formally published, together with a simplified summary. This work is discussed in more detail in the section on 'Events, Research and Networking Activities' below.

(ix) Honorary Life Membership

No proposals were received or therefore considered by the 2015 Annual General Meeting, for Honorary Life Membership of the Group

(x) Administrative Assistant

The Administrative Assistant remains Pauline Graham, who provides support to the Chair and the administrative and other support that is necessary for the smooth working of the Board and its meetings, as well as managing membership subscriptions and day-to-day financial processes (which are becoming ever more complex and voluminous) under the supervision of the Treasurer. As in previous years, she undertakes the role on a 0.27 full-time equivalent self-employment home-working contract. The Board wishes to thank Pauline for her continued excellent support.

5. EDITORIAL ACTIVITY: *LANDSCAPE RESEARCH*

(i) Role of the Editorial Board

The Editorial Board is responsible for producing *Landscape Research* on behalf of the Group's Board of Directors, and ensuring that the journal maintains standards appropriate to a respected international academic journal; and for formulating and recommending on related issues of strategy and policy to the Executive Committee.

The Editorial Board comprises the Editor and Associate Editors of *Landscape Research*; two other Board members not directly involved in the journal's production, responsible for ensuring that the editorial approach to the journal meets the Group's wider charitable objectives; and on an *ex officio* basis the Chair and Treasurer of the Group. The Editorial Board is also empowered to co-opt up to two additional members from the main Board as it sees fit, to add to the breadth of its expertise, and a T&F representative(s). The Chair of the Editorial Board is the Editor of *Landscape Research* – during 2015, Anna Jorgensen.

In 2015 the Editorial Board has not needed to meet, since the Editor and the Treasurer/Company Secretary have dealt with the key issue of concern to it – ensuring the support arrangements that underpin production of the journal are functioning smoothly (see 'Business Strategy and Related Board Decisions' above).

(ii) *Landscape Research* Editorial Team and International Editorial Advisory Board

The Editorial Board referred to above is not involved in matters of editorial content of the journal, which are the responsibility of the Editor advised by the wider Editorial Team and a separate International Editorial Advisory Board.

During 2015 *Landscape Research's* Editorial Team comprised the Editor (Anna Jorgensen), Consulting Editor (Maggie Roe) and Associate Editors (Tom Mels, Ken Taylor, Ian Thompson and Vera Vincenzotti), and Book Reviews Editor (Mick Atha). Ian Thompson and Mick Atha both retired from their roles at the end of 2015, and the Editor and the Board wish to take the opportunity of thanking them for their work over many years. Also at the end of 2015, Vera Vincenzotti is on maternity leave, but will return to her role as an Associate Editor later in 2016.

Last year's Report noted that towards the end of 2014, the Editorial Team was expanded to include three new Assistant Editors on a trial basis, to provide extra editorial capacity to deal with the

expansion of the journal. Federica Larcher was confirmed as an Assistant Editor during 2015. It is expected that Lise-Marie Shillitoe will be confirmed in early 2016 and it is hoped that Penny Travlou will also be confirmed in due course.

The Editor organised a successful 'away day' with some members of the Editorial Team in May 2015, to help the new team develop its working relationships and develop ideas for their future work. Other team members who could not attend took part via Skype.

The Editorial Team's work to develop the academic content and quality of the journal is supported by an International Editorial Advisory Board (IEAB). At 31 December 2015, the IEAB comprises twenty-eight highly respected academics, chosen to represent a wide range of disciplines and interests across the field of landscape research and to ensure wide geographic coverage. A full list of the IEAB members and their affiliations is given in the inside front cover of each issue of *Landscape Research*. In late 2015 Professor Mattias Qviström (Faculty of Landscape Architecture, Horticulture and Crop Production Science at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences) joined the IEAB, and Paul Gobster (formerly of the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service and former Editor in Chief of *Landscape and Urban Planning*) was appointed with the intention that he takes up the role in 2016. There were no retirements in 2015. The Editorial Team's work is also greatly supported by the many individuals who act as peer reviewers of submitted papers. They carry out their work on individual papers on an anonymous basis, but a full list of those who undertook the role in 2014/15 is provided in Volume 40 (Issue 8).

The Board wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the work and commitment of the Editor and her team, which has led to the journal becoming highly respected in its field (see below), with continued high quality special and theme issues. The Board also wishes to thank the members of the IEAB and the peer reviewers, without whom the journal could not maintain its academic status.

(iii) Editorial Assistant

The Editorial Assistant remains Crista Ermiya, who provides the administrative and editorial support that is necessary for the smooth production of the journal. As noted in last year's Report, Crista was engaged on a self-employed homeworking contract on an 0.5 full-time equivalent basis with effect from January 2014. This arrangement continues to work smoothly, to the satisfaction of both Editor and Editorial Assistant. However, it has become clear that it will be necessary in 2016 to review Crista's workload to determine whether additional hours are needed following the move to 8 issues per year. The Board wishes to thank Crista for her continued excellent support.

(iv) Landscape Research

Feedback from various sources demonstrates that *Landscape Research* continues to be a respected international journal which is performing well in the current market, and that the T&F Publishing Agreement continues to be effective. Subscriber numbers remain steady with a 96% renewal rate for core subscribers in 2015 following the 2% growth the previous year. The total number of full-rate subscriptions remained steady. Online access sales continue to grow year on year – in 2015, *Landscape Research* full text downloads exceeded their total for this time last year by almost 13%.

The latest data for article citations and impact factor is for 2014. The impact factor of 1.077 (2014) is the highest the journal has had over the last seven years [and compares well to the score of 0.943 the previous year (2013), which was itself the highest score achieved to that date]. Figures for 2015 may show a dip because there were fewer Special Issues, these tending to be the most highly cited papers, but as indicated below, there are now sufficient Special Issues in the pipeline to ensure a plentiful supply over the next few years.

Submissions to the journal remained stable in 2015 compared to 2014 (over 160 papers submitted via the online submission system), but early figures for 2016 suggest that submission rates are increasing. The online backlog noted in previous years' Reports has been resolved, and there is now an even flow of accepted papers with just a small backlog maintained to act as a cushion in the event of any unexpected drops in submission or throughput.

A key issue for the Editor and Consulting Editor in 2015 was successfully managing the expansion of the journal to eight issues. This was challenging, but the help of seven Guest Editors (fielding seventy articles) has greatly helped, as has the work of the various Special Issue Editors. Expansion was expected to provide an effective response to the growing demand for space for quality research papers, and it appears that this has indeed proved to be the case.

A new Journal cover was introduced in January 2015 (Volume 40, Issue 1). 2016 will see a new cover in the same design, together with a banner celebrating forty years of the journal. Following on from the new front cover design, T&F are planning to introduce colour illustrations into the body of the journal, and have also given their agreement for Anna Jorgensen's original editorial to be uploaded to the website.

It is planned that four Special Issues will be ready for publication in 2016, including an Editors' Special Issue containing a selection of papers by current and former editors/members of the IEAB as well as a paper reviewing the past 40 years of articles published in *Landscape Research*. For 2017 and subsequently, a further nine are confirmed and at various stages of preparation with six currently at the review stage, while a further five proposals are pending (that is, are proposals already submitted or ideas currently in discussion with the Editor). In addition, as noted above, a paper on the history of the group is also being prepared for 2017.

As noted in last year's Report, one of the new Assistant Editor posts (Lisa-Marie Shillito) has special responsibility for promoting the journal through social media such as Twitter, with a new Twitter account (@LandscapeResJ) being set up in late 2014. This activity is coordinated with that of the Group's Twitter account managed by Sarah McCarthy (see below). During 2015 this Twitter account has proved a popular resource, attracting 637 followers over a broad range of interests.

Eight issues of the journal (comprising Volume 40) were published during 2015. The contents were as follows:

- (i) The **January** issue was a General Issue containing seven papers, plus a special Editor's editorial reflecting on the definition of landscape as an area for research and study, and its implications in terms of the focus for *Landscape Research* as an academic journal and for its future development.

The seven papers covered: the Humphrey Repton designed landscape at Sheringham Park, Norfolk; the importance of movement in people's engagement with and understanding of landscape, and its meaning as part of national identity, with reference to a case study in Iceland; the role of landscape in regulating (ir)responsible conduct, based on a study of dog-walkers' control of their animals in the Cairngorms National Park; the workplace window view as a determinant of workers' work ability and job satisfaction; the impact of wind power on the re-shaping of landscape, with reference to the landscape of Beauce, Indre-et-Loire, France; the role of landscape characteristics in predicting the recurrence of short-term wildfires in Italy; and the impact of liberation struggle and war on shaping people's perception of a river boundary landscape, with reference to the Dandawa area of Zimbabwe.

- (ii) The **February** issue was a General Issue containing eight papers on varied topics. They were studies of: the social construction of landscapes, with reference to the implications of historic institutionalisation and post-structuralist discourse theory for landscape planning and policy-making, using two case studies in Germany; the relationship between infrastructure and power,

based on a study of road transportation in Los Angeles, USA; the customary use of landscape and access to land, and patterns of possession and dispossession, in fox-hunting landscapes in England; the economic, environmental and territorial transformation of the Metaponto district of Basilicata, Italy; the impact of urbanisation-related landscape change in space and time near roads, based on a case study in Estonia; the utility of a 'maximum entropy approach' to assessing habitat suitability for species conservation and landscape structure improvements, based on a case study in Tuscany, Italy; the effectiveness of design theory in improving the use of newly-designed playgrounds in Denmark; and the garden arts factors influencing the design of historic gardens in Iran, with particular reference to the historic gardens of Tabriz.

- (iii) The **April** issue was a General Issue containing seven papers on varied topics. They were studies of: the refinement of the landscape characterisation process developed by the 'Living Landscapes Project' in the Peak District National Park; the conflicts between different stakeholders' perceptions of and different priorities and approaches to the future use of urban forest land, using a case study in Moss municipality near Oslo, Norway; the cultural, landscape and historical significance of the stone towers landscape of Mount Etna, Sicily, Italy, and the problems affecting its conservation; the different perceptions of government officials and indigenous people concerning landscape character and management, with reference to the Tsimane' people of Amazonia, Bolivia; the persistence of landscape changes induced by former human activity, in the Glenveagh National Park, Donegal, Ireland; the utility of landscape continuity analysis as a tool for landscape planning, based on a case study in Istanbul, Turkey; and the dynamics of change in the management of water meadows in Hampshire and Wiltshire, from 1800 to the present day.

- (iv) The **May** issue was a General Issue containing seven papers on varied topics. They were studies of: the use of the technique of governmentality and its effects, with reference to the protected landscape of Sete Calderes in Sao Miguel, Azores; the effects of floods on village spatial structure and hierarchy, based on a case study of the traditional village of Hahoe, South Korea (a World Heritage site); recent landscape and biodiversity changes on Giannutri island (part of the Tuscan Archipelago National Park), Italy; mapping Alpine landscape values and related threats as perceived by tourists, using a case study in the Valle di Ledro, Trento, Italy; the evaluation and forecasting of changes in landscape image, with reference to the Bystrzyca river valley, Lublin, Poland; large-scale spatial patterns in species richness of *Orthoptera* and their relationships with land cover, in the Greater London area; and the integration of natural and cultural values in the tourist geolandscapes of the Bucegi Mountains, Romania. The issue also contained four book reviews.

- (v) The **July** issue was a General Issue containing eight papers on varied topics. They were studies of: the potential for understanding urban landscapes of 'guerilla gardening' (a practice that creates informal and illegal green areas for public use in urban environments); modelling the influence of changing socio-economic conditions on individual farmer behaviour and its impact on landscape appearance, with reference to three case studies in the Alpine foothills in Austria and Germany; an introductory overview of the impact of economics on landscape design practice; the impact of the manorial economy and land institution framework on the impact of designed landscapes in the Seventeenth Century, with reference to Seaux, France; the impact on land-use and economic regeneration of the redesign of alleyways as part of an urban regeneration project in Hollywood, Los Angeles, USA; settlement typology and community participation in the participatory landscape ecology of residents of Taipei, Taiwan; teachers' perceptions on the use of botanic gardens as a means of environmental education in schools and the enhancement of school student benefits from visits to botanic gardens, based on a case study in Greece; and the potential for landscape urbanism to improve landscape architecture practices in Dubai.

- (vi) The **August** issue was a Special Issue guest-edited by Juliet Ramsay, on *Cultural Landscapes in the 21st Century: Issues and Opportunities*. The issue content was drawn from a symposium organised by the International Scientific Committees on Cultural Landscapes and Cultural Routes on 'Issues and Opportunities for Cultural Landscapes and Routes in the Twenty-First Century' and from the Australia ICOMOS national conference 'Imagined Pasts, Imagined Futures', both held in Canberra, Australia in October/November 2013.

The editorial summarised the key points arising from the events, and in particular the importance of the diversity, dynamism and challenging nature of organically-evolved continuing landscapes; the crucial inter-relationships between humans and these landscapes; and the strategic role of humans as part of sustainable nature. The papers explore these themes.

The papers discussed: the harmony between nature and humans in the creation and management of the Hani rice terraces of Honghi, a World Heritage Site in Yunnan, China; the historical formation, present issues and future considerations affecting the tea plantation cultural landscapes of Sri Lanka; the impact of the industrialisation of agriculture and agri-business on the productive rural lands of Australia; the importance of incorporating heritage values into development strategies for agricultural landscapes in the USA; the conflicts between popular perceptions of cultural landscapes and the reality of poor management of historic landscapes, with reference to the supposed 'pilgrim routes' of Finland; the 'ui-won' gardens of imagination created by Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century scholars in Korea; the impact of large-scale disasters on World Heritage Sites and other cultural heritage, with reference to the earthquake and tsunami of March 2011 and the impact of typhoons and related flooding in Japan; and the conflicts between industrial development (particularly an iron-ore bulk-handling port) and the indigenous cultural landscape of the Burrup Peninsula and Dampier Archipelago, in Pilbarra, Western Australia.

- (vii) The **October** issue was a General Issue containing seven papers on varied topics. They were studies of: the lessons to be learned four decades after the development of Woodlands new town, Texas, USA, which was developed in accordance with Ian McHarg's principles of ecological planning; the impact of designed outdoor spaces and greenery for residents and users in a brownfield inner city area of Sydney, Australia; the integration of landscape connectivity and ecological networks into comprehensive spatial planning in Spain; the reliability of perceived sensory dimensions as a tool for the assessment and planning of urban green space, based on a case study in Helsingborg, Sweden; the impact of regional-scale landscape change on fishing communities on the Pacific coast of Baja California, Mexico; the impact of visitor pressure on the El-Goli garden, the sole survivor of the historic gardens of Tabriz, Iran; and the trees of the sacred natural sites of Zagori, Greece.

- (viii) The **December** was a Special Issue guest-edited by David Harvey and Emma Waterton on *Landscapes of Heritage and Heritage Landscapes*. The issue content was drawn from a workshop held in Gothenburg, Sweden in June 2012 at the inaugural conference of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies on 'Re/theorising Heritage'.

The editorial summarised the key points arising from the workshop, and in particular the tension and opportunities that exist between the terms 'heritage' and 'landscape'. The papers explore these themes.

The papers discussed: the importance of developing a multi-disciplinary dialogue between landscape studies and heritage studies, with particular emphasis on the lessons to be learned from phenomenological and non-representational theories; the importance of considering commonplace landscape features as an essential part of social and cultural landscape heritage, linking historic landscape and archival research with recent theoretical writing on landscape; the conflict between the 'authorised heritage discourse' criteria used to define Nationally Valuable Landscape Areas in Finland with the requirements of the European Landscape Convention (ELC); the potential falsity of the perceived inevitable conflict between modern landscape features and heritage values, based on a case study of the views of residents of a modern housing estate in Trondheim, Norway; the implications of differing interpretive strategies of

indigenous cultural landscapes for visitor perceptions and understanding, with reference to Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Australia; and the relationship between landscape, heritage and identity as perceived 'from below', that is by non-elite local people, with reference to the importance of the ruined blackhouse and crofting landscape in the highlands and islands of Scotland.

The issue also contained five book reviews.

(v) Research project, University of Sheffield

One element of the University of Sheffield Editorial Support Agreement is the provision of a grant (£5,000 in 2015) to promote landscape-related research at the university. This grant was provided to recognise, in a notional way, the large amount of time spent by the Editor in producing the journal, and mirrors the previous arrangement with Newcastle University for the previous Editor.

The funds are to be used to provide small research grants to students and staff. All students (undergraduates and both taught and research post-graduates) are eligible to apply by a competition process. No grants were awarded in 2015. However, a call for applications closed by the end of the year and the following applications were received and will be adjudicated in early 2016:

- *Josepha Richard: Cataloguing Stewart Johnston's research papers on Chinese gardens (£313.80);*
- *Audrey Gerber: Exploring the development of landscape architecture in southern Africa and its agenda for landscape orientated research (£1000);*
- *Ngairé Burston: Plant hunting expedition to Yunnan, China (£1000);*
- *Camila Allen: Point of Conception: Richard St. Barbe Baker and the Great Green Wall (£1554);*
- *Elsie Roulston: James Russell and the Irish Woodland Garden: a review of his role in the design of gardens in the Republic of Ireland between 1953 and 1979 (£750);*
- *Kevin Thwaites: Children and Youth, Formas Research Grant Development Workshop (£2000);*
- *Angela Hird: Building towards socially cohesive urban neighbourhoods? An examination into the Urban Design of prevailing approaches to high density housing in the UK and Sweden (£568).*

6. EVENTS, RESEARCH AND NETWORKING ACTIVITIES

(i) Coordination of Activity

The Group development and promotion of events, research and networking activity in all areas other than publication of *Landscape Research* is managed by Directors who act as Coordinators for various activity networks. During 2015 these were:

- delivery of Events - Gareth Roberts;
- development and active management of the Website - Emma Waterton;
- promotion of Education and Training Activity (including prizes) - Tim Collins;
- development of International Activity - Laurence le Dû-Blayo; and
- development of Research and Policy Initiatives – Chris Dalglish.

In addition, a key events, research and networking activity remains the production of *LRE*, of which Bud Young continues as Editor although now retired as a Director.

The Board is pleased to report that these new arrangements continue to work well, and significant activity has been successfully undertaken in 2015 as summarised in sub-sections (ii) to (vii) below.

(ii) Events

a) Introduction

The Group, via Coordinator Gareth Roberts, organised or contributed to four events during the year, discussed in turn below. These were:

- Co-funding a conference on *Landscape, Wilderness and the Wild* with the University of Newcastle, and organising a conference workshop (in Newcastle on 26 to 28 March 2015);
- Organising and co-funding a conference on *Energy Landscapes: Perception, Planning, Participation and Power* with Leibniz-Institut für ökologische Raumentwicklung (IOER, the Leibniz Institute of Ecological and Regional Development, Dresden) (in Dresden, Germany on 16 to 18 September 2015);
- Supporting a further venue for the photographic exhibition on *Image, Instinct and Imagination: Landscape as a Sign Language* (in Bath on 24 June to 25 July 2015); and
- Holding a public lecture (in London, 3 December 2015).

This level of event activity was as planned at the start of the year and at a similar level to that undertaken in 2013 and 2014. Linked to the emerging programme for 2016 and 2017, it continues to give confidence that the new arrangements for promoting event activity are now progressing well.

b) Newcastle Conference

The three-day conference on *Landscape, Wilderness and the Wild* in March 2015 was held at the University of Newcastle. It was funded by Newcastle University with support from the Group, and organised by Ian Thompson from the University and the Group. The central issue under discussion was the concepts of wilderness, wildness, wildscape, re-wilding, wilding and the wild, with the aim of exploring the place of these notions in the contemporary imagination while giving an account of their continuing importance for academics, professionals and all those engaged in landscape issues. The event was deliberately planned to be both international and cross-disciplinary, involving two days of conference discussion and a third day of facilitated field trips in Northumberland, North Pennines and Teesside. Speakers included the Group's Anna Jorgensen.

The event was well-attended, with over 100 delegates from 15 counties. It also included a brief presentation about the Group, making use of the publicity banners and leaflets etc. A report outlining the papers and discussions was published in *LRE 73* (in May 2015). It was judged by attendees to be very successful in promoting debate, and from the Group's perspective highly beneficial in that a number of new members joined as a result.

c) Dresden Conference

The three-day conference on *Energy Landscapes: Perception, Planning, Participation and Power* in September 2015 was held at the Deutsche Hygiene-Museum in Dresden, Germany. It was billed as the European Conference of the Landscape Research Group, and was funded jointly by IOER and the Group. It was organised jointly by Markus Leibenath (of the Group and IOER), with support from Technische Universität Dresden (the Technical University of Dresden), the Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning (at Erkner near Berlin), Arbeitskreis Landschaftsforschung (the informal e-network of German-speaking landscape researchers – see previous Reports), and the EU's COST Action Programme TU 1401 on *Renewable Energy and Landscape Quality* (RELY). The Local Organising Committee led by Markus Leibenath was supported by an Advisory Board consisting of Laurence Le Du-Blayo, Hannes Palang, Steven Shuttleworth and Paul Tabbush from the Group, together with representatives of the other co-organisers and a number of renowned scholars with extensive personal networks (some of whom are Group members). The programme comprised plenary sessions with keynote addresses for each of

the four conference themes 'perception', 'planning', 'participation' and 'power', regular presentations in parallel sessions, and two field trips on the final conference day. Furthermore the Group held a reception on the first day (16 September) and there was a conference dinner on the second day. The event was attended by 160 delegates from 28 countries, mainly in Europe but including from China, Israel, Japan, Turkey and USA.

The conference was very successful in bringing together a great number of people with an interest in the relations between landscapes and energies, and the resultant discussions sparked many new ideas. The event was also very beneficial for the Group, both in terms of encouraging new members (perhaps as many as 27 new members can be attributed to the event) and in providing good content for the first issue of the Group's new e-bulletin (see 'Website and Information Activity' below).

Two publications are planned as a result of the conference. The first will be a Special Issue of *Landscape Research on Governance of Energy Landscapes – Exploring Recent Developments and Perspectives*, edited by Markus Leibenath and Gerd Lintz (both at IOER). At the end of 2015, good progress has been made to prepare this issue. It is also intended to publish a collection of practice-oriented articles as a book volume, edited chiefly by Michael Roth, but the details of this publication have still to be defined. In the meantime, the presentation slides of the keynote addresses have been posted on the conference website at: <http://lrg2015.ioer.info/>.

d) Photographic Exhibition

Last year's Report set out the Group's sponsorship of the photographic exhibition *Image, Instinct and Imagination: Landscape as a Sign Language* by the landscape photographer Simon Warner drawing on the work of Prof Jay Appleton. The exhibition ran in London, Halifax, and Edinburgh in 2014, and was exhibited in 2015 at The Gallery in Bath Central Library. Over 800 people attended (making a total of over 3000 people at all four exhibitions). As last year, the Bath exhibition included the Group's new publicity banners and leaflets etc, and the launch was attended by Paul Tabbush who contributed to the introductory remarks at the exhibition launch and gave an interview on Radio Bristol. Details can be found at <http://www.simonwarner.co.uk/2014/03/image-instinct-and-imagination/>.

e) Annual Lecture

The final event of the year was the public lecture by Prof Carole Crumley on *If the past teaches, what does the future learn? Exploring historic knowledge landscapes for clues to a just and liveable future*. The event was organised by Antonia Noussia, and was hosted by the Architectural Association. Before introducing the speaker, Paul Tabbush gave a short briefing about the Group's work. The event included a reception after the lecture, and was supported by the Group's new publicity banners and leaflets etc. It was very well-received, with a stimulating discussion afterwards.. The lecture was videoed and is available for viewing on the Group's website (as are videos of the 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 lectures).

f) Future Events Planning

Other event-related activity during the year focused on firming up proposals for activities to be convened by the Group itself and on assessing applications for events the Group has been requested to support with grant aid in 2016, initial planning for Hercules-related events in 2016, and planning for events in the Group's 2017 anniversary year.

Four 'non-Hercules' events are scheduled for 2016:

- A symposium *Artists, Farmers and Philosophers* planned by the Teesdale Landscape Partnership, to be held at the Bowes Museum, Teesdale on 7 to 9 September 2016, for which

the Group and other agencies have offered support grant. The aim of the event is to consider how 'grassroots' expertise, pertinent to understanding the character and dynamics of landscapes, can be better shared to inform landscape research, policy and practice. 'Key opinion formers' from the worlds of art, farming, academia, conservation, environmental policy/planning and landscape governance, together with Group representatives, will be invited.

- A workshop on *Mountain grazing landscapes caught between abandonment, rewilding and agro-environmental bureaucracy. Is there an alternative future?* as part of the Permanent European Conference for the Conservation of the Rural Landscape (PECSRL) 2016 conference on *Mountains, Uplands, Lowlands: European landscapes from an altitudinal perspective*, to be held on 5 to 9 September 2016 in Innsbruck and Seefeld, Austria. The workshop is being organised by Kenneth Olwig.
- A research seminar with supporting field trip on *Distinctive non-designated landscapes: exploring models for their protection, enhancement and management* organised by Pennine Prospects to be held on 8 to 9 November 2016. The seminar will explore the different approaches to promoting, enhancing and managing 'distinctive landscapes' that are emerging in the UK home countries. The Group has offered support to invite practitioners and policy makers from within the UK and elsewhere in Europe, to help identify best practice experiences from existing protected landscapes and to evaluate critically the new models now being advocated. Nancy Stedman is leading the Group's involvement in this event.
- The sixth public Annual Lecture, to be given by Professor Brian Goodey on the subject *Interpreting The Landscape : The Popular Agenda*, to be held in London on 8 December 2015.

2016 also sees the culmination of Project Hercules. The Group is charged with taking forward or helping to take forward two scheduled events:

- a seminar in Rennes (Brittany) on 16 to 17 June 2016, being organised by Laurence le Dû-Blayo; and
- the Project Hercules Final Conference to be held in Brussels on 4 October 2016, the Group's contribution being organised by Graham Fairclough and Gareth Roberts.

Looking ahead to 2017, the Research Strategy has greatly helped the event-planning process by framing more precisely the scope and purpose of future events. The Group intends that the events should reflect the Strategy's over-arching theme of "just and sustainable relationships between people and landscape". In 2015 an open invitation was extended for proposals for anniversary events aligned to this theme (to be submitted to by 31 December 2015), with those short-listed being invited to submit full details by March 2016. As a result of this work, it is expected that two major events will be arranged in 2017, one in the UK and the other elsewhere in the world, and that a number of other smaller events such as seminars, workshops and guided walks can also be arranged.

Further details of the two events now being actively considered for 2017 are as follows:

- A two/three day symposium to be convened in Edinburgh in April 2017 entitled *Landscape Witness: ethics and equities of working with the land in research and design*. It is considered that this topic has potential to contribute to 'creativity and aspiration in relation to approaches to just and sustainable landscapes', and we expect it to attract a wide audience of disciplines and interests.
- A three day seminar in June/July 2017 in Port Arthur, Tasmania, a former convict settlement which is a World Heritage Site, one of Australia's most significant heritage areas and Tasmania's most popular tourist attraction. The seminar will allow experts from different disciplines to share expertise and perspectives, with the aim of developing a suite of innovative methods capable of capturing how landscapes are felt and experienced, based upon developing an understanding of affect (of this place) in response to atmosphere, mood and message.

Provisional planning is also taking place for three further events. The precise terms and timing of these should be concluded by the May 2016 Board meeting:

- A conference linked to the theme of 'landscapes of justice and injustice' in relation to international migration. Gareth Roberts and two of the International Correspondents (see below) had been planning to convene a conference in Tunisia about migration to Europe from the Maghreb, and support had been sought from the University of Oran and the School of Architecture at the University of Tunis. Unfortunately this proposal was put on hold given advice not to travel to Tunisia. However, others have since indicated interest in contributing towards an Anniversary Event on the theme of migration, and Gareth is currently exploring these.
- An event at which long-serving current and former Directors and members would be invited to reflect on the Group's achievements over fifty years followed by an open discussion focused on thoughts about the Group's future, the output from the event then being published. It is intended that this event would act as a complement to both the special paper due to be published in *Landscape Research* in 2017 (referred to above) and the Research Strategy.
- In relation to the 2017 Annual Lecture, discussion is ongoing to agree and invite a high profile speaker.

Details of all events organised by the Group feature on our website and are advertised in *LRE* and the e-Bulletin along with short reports summarising the outcomes of these activities. Ideas and proposals for events are always welcome.

(iii) Website and Information Activity

a) Website

Last year's report noted continued progress to complete the content and functionality of the website, following its re-design in 2012. This work, again led by Emma Waterton with specialist support, was completed in 2015, but was followed immediately by review and proposals to rebuild the site as part of developing and implementing a Communications Strategy (see 'Development Project' above).

An important development in 2014, described in last year's Report, was extending the facility to make web-based payments linked to a PayPal account, both for new Members to join the Group and for existing members to renew their subscriptions. This facility proved very successful and beneficial to members, with take-up significantly increased last year and even more so in 2015. Most of the new members joining in 2015 did so using the website/PayPal facility, and the majority of members who do not pay their subscriptions by UK-based bank standing orders or foreign bank direct transfer now do so using the facility rather than by cheque. In total some 49% of membership subscription payments are now received via the website, 39% by UK-based bank standing orders and foreign bank direct transfers and only 12% by cheques.

As noted in previous years' Reports, a key issue is ensuring the website is kept up-to-date. This has continued to be achieved during 2015, with news items and weblinks being added about events, the Research Strategy, new issues of *LRE*, the Annual Lecture and Project Hercules updates, as well as 'house-keeping' updates such as adding new or updated pen-portraits of Board members, and a copy of the Annual Directors' Report.

In terms of the Group having an effective communications strategy, the website is probably now the first point of contact for most people interested in finding information about the Group. However, as noted in last year's Report, the past few years' effort to upgrade it has led to the position where it needs rebuilding. It is not clear in the audience it attempts to attract. It is a large site with many pages; its organic and multi-contributor creation and content upkeep has rendered some sections, and access to them, not entirely logical and partly duplicatory; and it is not easy to keep up-to-date. In general therefore, it was apparent that the website would not meet the Group's future needs.

Sarah McCarthy with Emma Waterton conducted a review of the changes that would be beneficial, and developed plans to rebuild the site to accord with best practice in terms of functionality, consistency, attractiveness and easier management and upkeep. These have been reviewed by a Working Group comprising Tim Collins, Markus Leibenath, Nancy Stedman and Paul Tabbush.

Key steps have been taken in 2015 to begin this rebuilding process, starting with the migration of the website from the ISP Provider GoDaddy and emails from 1&1, both to Nethosted. Nethosted have been chosen because their service is much more flexible and responsive, with unlimited email addresses and disk space, much better speed and specified processing bandwidth, and a 24/7 helpdesk, all based and housed in the UK. The better 'all in one place' service is also more cost-effective. The unlimited email addresses now allow for individuals (especially Officers and Coordinators) to have their own dedicated LRG email address rather than use personal addresses.

Looking ahead, a scope of works will be developed based on a clear understanding of cost, time-frame and achievability that can be issued to web-design companies. An important stage in this process will be to consult with other similar organisations which have recently gone through a similar process, so that the Group can benefit from their ideas and experience. By working closely with web professionals to consider at the start what will help the Group achieve its objectives most effectively, with an eye to future developments as much as is possible, the future maintenance and upkeep should be less taxing and challenging than it is now. That should enable the website to become our main recruitment, networking, trustbuilding, reference, fundraising and inspirational tool.

To achieve this, it is intended that the new website structure will streamline the existing content, giving greater profile and more immediate access to our activities. Key areas of the current website such as 'Events', 'Research', 'Publications', 'Membership', and 'Contact Us' will be retained; an 'About Us' section will be added to contain the information about the Trustees, governance etc; and the tab 'Links' will be replaced by 'Partnerships'. A more extensive 'Members Area' will also be developed, working closely with our partners in T&F and the *Landscape Research* Editorial Team to build up the membership offer over the short and longer terms. Finally, it is planned to introduce an element of automatic updating so that, for example, old events are automatically moved to an events archive section and 'old' news is removed from the news section.

b) Twitter

Last year's report noted that a new Twitter account (@aboutlandscape) was set up in December 2014, the Board having agreed the basis on which this will be operated. Twitter is proving a popular resource. It has attracted 280 followers over a broad range of interests and is not solely confined to academics or practitioners. The Twitter feed runs alongside the new e-bulletin (see below) and also provides download links to articles of interest. Sarah McCarthy's tweeting resulted in a membership surge after the Newcastle and Dresden conferences.

c) e-bulletin

The Group launched an e-bulletin in September 2015. Its purpose is to encourage debate and dialogue and to inform about landscape, by providing a dynamic, informal and inclusive platform for information, news, events and developments relating to landscape research, practice and experience. Both its content and method of e-circulation is intended to complement *Landscape Research* (available on subscription only) and *LRE* (available in hard copy to our members, and to anyone via pdf download from our website). The target audience is very broad – anyone who is interested in landscape – so all content is written (in English) in an informal style for the layman. The e-bulletin will feature material from diverse and geographically widespread sources, which reflects the diverse and dynamic nature of landscape theory, practice and experience throughout the world. No one is excluded from contributing material or content as long as that material relates to landscape and is not defamatory, discriminatory or inciting violence. The e-bulletin is not intended for longer

essays or articles other than in exceptional circumstances, and any such longer pieces should be no more than 500 words.

The e-bulletin will be issued via email to LRG members and to those who subscribe to it via our website. It is initially intended to issue it bi-monthly, and the second was issued in November 2015. However, the frequency may increase or decrease depending on the volume and variety of material, information and contributions that are forthcoming.

The e-bulletin Editorial Team is Sarah McCarthy and Nancy Stedman. They work within the guidelines of an Editorial Policy approved by the Board, and consult with Bud Young to determine the best format for items and avoid any conflict with *LRE* (see below)

d) Member Access to other Journals

In relation to the issue of improving the Group's 'offer' to current and prospective members, and in the interests of promoting better information on landscape issues to Members, one initiative agreed as part of the review of the T&F Publishing Agreement was to allow members to have access to some relevant journals published by T&F. Preliminary arrangements were made during 2014 to implement such an arrangement and finalised during 2015. As a result, Members are now able to access online, via the new Members' Area of the Group's website, the following journals, as well as *Landscape Research*:

- *Environmental Communication: a Journal of Nature and Culture*;
- *Ethics, Policy and Environment*;
- *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*;
- *Journal of Urban Design*; and
- *Landscape History* (this journal by virtue of a reciprocal courtesy arrangement with the Society for Landscape Studies).

(iv) Education and Training Activity

(a) The Annual Student Awards Prize Scheme

The Group has organised a prize scheme for student dissertations that contribute to the understanding of landscape issues, since 2000. The scheme was originally started on a small-scale basis to continue the work originated by the Nan Fairbrother Memorial Trust, which transferred its assets to the Group when the Trust was wound up (see Directors' Report for 1998). Since then the scheme has steadily expanded in scope. The submission and judging process moved online in 2012.

In 2015 eleven submissions were received for work completed in 2014, comprising two entries for the Masters prize and nine for the PhD prize, from students at nine institutions (there were no entries for the undergraduate prize). The judges were Tim Collins, Peter Herring, Hannes Palang, Nancy Stedman and Paul Tabbush, together with Prof Richard Coles (Birmingham City University) and Ross Maclean (University of Edinburgh). Five awards were made. Three were first prizes of £350 for Master's theses and two were first prizes of £500 for PhD theses.

The three Masters prizes were awarded to Jacqui Jobbins, Brian Shaw and Martyn Thomas (of Writtle College and Freiburg and York Universities respectively). Their dissertations were respectively entitled *A New Ethical Design Process* (awarded in the 'Art and Design' category), *Perceptions of Landscape in Wicklow - An Application of the Cultural Values Model* (awarded in the 'Science and Management' category), and *Assessing the Potential of HLC and PAS Data in the Study of Prehistoric Landscapes in the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* (awarded in the 'Humanities' category). Reports outlining the dissertations will be presented in *LRE* 75 and 76 (February and April 2016).

The PhD prizes were awarded to Andrew Butler and Laura Menatti (of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Uppsala) and Universidad del Pais Vasco (University of the Basque Country, San Sebastian) respectively). Their theses were entitled *Developing theory of public involvement in landscape planning: democratizing landscape* (awarded in the 'Science and Management' category) and *A New Geophilosophy. The Analysis of the Concepts of Space and Place in a Global World* (awarded in the 'Art and Design' category). Reports on these theses will be presented in *LRE 75* (February 2016).

As at 1 March 2016 a total of 23 entries have been received in relation to the 2016 competition for theses completed in 2015, comprising 2 entries for the Undergraduate prizes, 11 entries for the Masters prizes and 10 for the PhD prize, from students at 19 institutions in the UK, Europe, Asia and America. Of these 23 entries, 10 are in the 'Art and Design' category, 2 in 'Humanities' and 11 in 'Science and Management'. Any prizes awarded will be reported in next year's Report.

The first set of invitations inviting entries for the 2017 Awards (ie for dissertations completed during 2016) will be issued in June 2016.

(b) Other Education and Training Activity

As indicated in the 2012 Report, the Board has agreed the need to re-focus networking and outreach activity to address education and training. In 2015 the prime effort has focused on the Prize Scheme as discussed above. However, the Board is pleased to report that initial steps have been taken to progress a policy position on a LRG Education Programme.

A working group led by Tim Collins and including Laurence le Dû-Blayo, Chris Dalglish, Graham Fairclough and Paul Tabbush will prepare a paper on a proposed strategy, to be considered by the Executive Committee, Development Manager and two student representatives, in February or March 2016. Tim Collins with Paul Tabbush have also taken steps to identify students who would be interested in contributing to this work. The revised paper will then be presented to the Board at the May 2016 meeting.

(v) International and Outreach Activity

As noted in previous years' reports, the Group's profile as a leading institution in landscape policy and research circles has become widely appreciated and understood across Europe. LRG is now an accredited observer not only at the meetings of the ELC itself, but also at meetings of Uniscape, the organisation of universities to support the Convention. The Group is also invited to observe at and contribute to meetings of PECSRL, and retains its close connections with the French government research organisation Cemagref.

In 2015, after many years of informal links with Civilscape (which is a similar organisation to Uniscape, for non-governmental organisations) and initial discussions in 2014, the Group and Civilscape agreed a reciprocal corporate membership arrangement by which each waived the other's membership subscription. Laurence le Dû-Blayo as International Activity Coordinator will represent the Group at Civilscape's General Assembly in Barcelona in April 2016.

A key activity during the year for Laurence le Dû-Blayo, with the support of Sarah McCarthy, has been to finalise the identification and appointment of individuals to act as a network of "International Correspondents". Their role will be to develop contacts in different parts of the world where the Group is under-represented, to exchange information and promote LRG membership in their country, and to seek to strengthen links with 'landscape observatories' and similar bodies. These correspondents act in a voluntary capacity, except that their membership subscription is waived during the time they act in the role. Five correspondents were appointed in 2015: Mick Atha [Hong

Kong], WenWen Song [Beijing, for China], Malika Boudjani and Marouen Hedhlie [Tunisia, for North Africa] and Kim von Hackwitz [Uppsala, for Scandinavia]. It is intended to identify correspondents in other parts of the world during 2016.

In terms of the Group's international activity during 2015, the work undertaken with partners as part of Project Hercules continued to be the most significant, and is discussed under 'Research and Policy Initiatives' below. However, the Group has also had a presence at two other international events during 2015, while more general contacts have been progressed in Sweden, the Ukraine and with Civilscape. In addition, a range of Directors (in particular in 2015 Laurence le Dû-Blayo, Markus Leibenath, Kenneth Olwig, Hannes Palang and Gareth Roberts) and other Members (in particular Peter Howard) contributed more generally to work to promote international activity. Some of this work also links with other networking activity – for example, Laurence le Dû-Blayo has met with French academic colleagues to consider how the proposed research student network project (see above) might involve the landscape architecture schools in France.

The two events attended were in Dresden (discussed above) and in Piraeus, Greece (discussed below). The Directors present at each took the opportunity to promote the Group to other participants.

The Piraeus event was a two-day conference *A Marinescape Forum* organised by the Mediterranean Institute for Nature & Anthropos (Med-INA) on behalf of Civilscape, held on 26 to 27 May 2015 to discuss the challenges facing Mediterranean marinescapes and potential responses. It was attended by Chris Dalglish. The Forum concluded by issuing the 'Piraeus Statement on Marinescapes' which contains two key recommendations: (i) that "the sustainability of the Mediterranean Basin is founded on a 'Marinescapes Approach'", which draws on the principles and concepts expressed in international agreements such as the ELC and the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters; and (ii) that a "Mediterranean Marinescapes Observatory [MMO] is considered, developed and established". According to the Piraeus Statement, this MMO would consist of a network of partners supported by an associated infrastructure. Its aim would be to support initiatives of government, non-governmental organisations and communities relating to the sustainable development, protection, management and planning of Mediterranean marinescapes of all scales. The Observatory, once established, would develop, implement and support educational, scientific, technical and other programmes which contribute to this end. The recommendation to develop the MMO was announced at the European Commission European Maritime Day conference in Athens on 28 May 2015, the day after the Marinescapes Forum concluded. The Forum agreed that the first step in progressing the initiative is for interested partners to develop an action plan, a process being led by Med-INA. LRG has agreed to participate in the action planning process, and there is potential for future LRG involvement in the MMO once established and its activities. However, at this stage the details of such involvement have yet to be defined and agreed.

Expenditure on international networking was formally recorded as nil in the 2014 Accounts. However, as can be seen from the discussion above, this does not reflect lack of activity but simply that Group expenditure on this activity was subsumed under networking related to the events programme and Project Hercules.

(vi) Research and Policy Initiatives

(a) Research Strategy

As indicated in 'Business Strategy and Related Board Decisions' above, Chris Dalglish as Coordinator has actively taken forward the publication of the Group's first Research Strategy during 2015 with the support of Paul Tabbush and Sarah McCarthy. A summary of the strategy was posted onto the LRG website in March 2015. An A5-sized summary booklet *Our Research Strategy* was

finalised in December 2015, and was distributed at the annual lecture and a pdf copy posted on the website. Copies will be distributed with *Landscape Research* and circulated to various individuals or organisations likely to have an interest in the strategy in early 2016. Chris Dalglish will coordinate any follow-up activity arising from this distribution.

Two further summary publications are now planned: a one-page summary to provide 'immediately accessible' information to interested parties, and a longer summary version (ie longer than the A5 booklet) with more in-depth explanation of the main points and with examples/case studies to aid comprehension.

The Board has already begun implementing the strategy through the various activities of the Group. For instance, the Dresden conference (see above) explicitly highlighted issues of justice and governance, two of the main pillars of the strategy. In addition, the overarching priority expressed in the strategy – to advance research that contributes towards “just and sustainable relationships between people and landscapes” – has been adopted as the theme for the LRG 2017 Anniversary Year and is informing planning of activities for that programme.

As indicated in last year's Report, the Board resolved to set up a budget (£5,000 yearly, subject to review) to support implementation of the Research Strategy. The Board decided that the budget could be used both proactively (ie to fund research activity which the Group has itself developed, alone or in partnership with others) and reactively (ie to fund activity proposed by others). Agreement to any such funding in both cases is dependent on the proposed research activity helping to deliver the Strategy's objectives and priorities. Chris Dalglish and the Treasurer have developed criteria to guide decisions on use of the fund.

(b) Research Project Support in 2015

In 2015, the Research Fund was used to support one item. It was agreed to provide £450 (15% of the total project budget; actual expenditure £459) to facilitate the publication of a report authored by the Group's Vice Chair Tim Collins in collaboration with Reiko Collins and David Edwards of Forest Research (the research agency of the Forestry Commission). This report resulted from the research underpinning an LRG-funded invited seminar and workshop, held at Kinloch Rannoch on 21 to 23 November 2013 (see the Directors' Report for 2013 and *LRE* 68 for February 2014). The final report *Future Forest: The Black Wood, Rannoch, Scotland* was jointly published by the Group with Forest Research in May 2015. Report preparation and publication was funded by Creative Scotland's *Imagining Natural Scotland Programme*, National Lottery's *Year of Natural Scotland* fund, Forestry Commission (Scotland) and the Group, with additional support from the Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust, the Perth and Kinross Museum and Art Gallery, and Forestry Research. LRG's strategic support for this work has resulted in follow-on chapters in a book on *Bio-Cultural Diversity in Europe* (published by Springer Verlag) and forthcoming articles in *Ecosystems Services Journal* and *Landscape Research*, as well as public exhibition during the Edinburgh Science Festival.

(c) Initiating the Research Fund

Beyond the Rannoch report grant mentioned above, use of the Research Fund in 2015 was minimal, and underspent budget will be carried forward to the next financial year. The current priority is to use the fund to support projects which will deliver results in time for the LRG's anniversary year in 2017, so that the dissemination of those results can play a significant role in highlighting the LRG's strategic research priorities as part of the anniversary programme. During 2015, in anticipation of the fund being deployed for that purpose in 2016 and 2017, initial consideration has been given to two possible research projects (see immediately below). Other project proposals will be considered as and when they are developed or submitted in 2016.

First, the Board has considered the principle of committing funds to support the development of the

Mediterranean Marinescapes Observatory (see above), particularly the research aspects of that development process. The Board agreed that there was potential for future LRG involvement, but that it clearly needed further investigation and discussion with other parties. At the end of 2015, the position is that the Group has only agreed to make an in-kind contribution to developing an action plan for taking forward the initiative. Since Chris Dalglish has been asked by other partners in the initiative to play an active role in his capacity as a researcher with the University of Glasgow, he has removed himself from all decision-making regarding the Group's involvement to or support for this initiative, to avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest. The Board decided that Laurence le Dû-Blayo as International Coordinator, together with Paul Tabbush and Steven Shuttleworth, should take forward investigation of any potential LRG involvement in the project, as and when further information becomes available.

Second, Northlight Heritage (part of a research and educational charity, the York Archaeological Trust) has presented LRG with an outline proposal for a research initiative on *Landscape Justice and Human Need*. Given the close fit of this proposed initiative to the priorities in the LRG Research Strategy, Chris Dalglish has been working pro-actively with Northlight Heritage to develop the proposal, with the intention that it be taken forward by Northlight and by other non-governmental organisation partners, with support from a range of funding sources. The draft aims of the project are: (i) to further understanding of the contribution which landscape can make to addressing human need; (ii) to analyse the means by which people can gain fair access to the benefits deriving from their landscapes and the barriers to justice in this context; and (iii) to raise awareness of the contributions, means and barriers identified, and to inform action promoting landscape justice (i.e. fair access to the benefits of landscape). The project will meet these aims through new synthetic and primary research (the latter focused on a limited number of case studies), and related dissemination and awareness-raising activities (events and publications). Effort in 2015 has focused on working up the concept and opening discussions with potential partners, with the intention of securing initial agreement by prospective partners by early 2016. The project will ideally run from March 2016 to the end of 2017.

No decision has yet been taken by the Board about LRG financial support for either of the above two projects (that is, about involvement in the project to develop and establish the MMO which will be outlined in the action plan currently being prepared, or about the *Landscape Justice and Human Need* research initiative). Any such decisions will require the proposals to be submitted and assessed formally, following the process and against the criteria which the Group has established for this purpose, whether for pro-actively developed and for unsolicited proposals, to ensure transparency and consistency in decision-making relating to use of the Research Fund.

(d) Externally Funded Research: Project Hercules

A major activity for the Group in 2015 has been its involvement in the EU-funded research project HERCULES, an acronym for 'HERitage in CULtural landscapES'. This purpose and research approach of the project is set out in the Directors' Report for 2013, and the Report for 2014 summarised the Group's activity in the first full year of the project, which started on 1 December 2013 and runs for 36 months.

As previously explained, the Group is formally involved in the Work Package or stream of work known as 'WP9', which is concerned with stakeholder involvement, communication strategy, and – at the end of the project – organising the final conference. In 2015, the Group has helped refine the detail of the WP9 work programme; contributed to the development of the Hercules website and related material; contributed to the second Hercules stakeholder meeting in Brussels in June 2015; contributed to the mid-term review of the implementation of the communication strategy; and worked closely with the WP9 lead organisation on the initial planning of project outputs. The last element includes the need for a multi-media summary, publishing a special issue of papers in *Landscape Research*, and the content and structure of the final conference which is to be held in Brussels in October 2016. Current thinking is that the Group will run a session with an element of audience

participation, based on the Project's policy analysis work. In addition, Laurence le Dû-Blayo has commenced planning for a more localised stakeholder workshop in Brittany in spring/summer 2016 to help inform final policy recommendations.

In addition to its role in WP9, the Group is making a wider contribution to the project by contributing where appropriate to the detailed work of other WPs and more generally acting in the role of 'critical friend' for other WPs. During 2015, the Group has contributed to ongoing internal debates on the relationship between landscape and heritage, the relationship of cultural landscapes to ecosystem and societal change, and the policy and practice implications of initial findings from the various Hercules work packages; and it has been involved in the quality assurance process for two of the seven project report 'deliverables' prepared during the year.

To support the above work, the Group has attended a Hercules Project Steering Committee meeting in Berlin in January 2015 (Steven Shuttleworth); the second Hercules stakeholder meeting in Brussels in June 2015 (Peter Howard and Sarah McCarthy); the third Hercules Project Group meeting in Tallinn in September 2015 (Paul Tabbush, Gareth Roberts and Sarah McCarthy); and WP9 meetings in Devon and Brussels in December 2015 (Paul Tabbush and Sarah McCarthy). Other meetings, both internally within the Group and with partners, have been conducted using Skype.

The conditions of EU research grants require that the consortium prepares progress reports at key stages of the project. The first 'Hercules Project Periodic Report' and 'Mid Term Assessment Report' covered the first half of the project, that is from 1 December 2013 to 31 May 2015. They were submitted by the due date in August 2015 and then assessed by the EU for compliance with the terms of grant in respect of completion of deliverables, financial compliance and the value of the research findings to date. The EU assessment was highly positive.

An important development in 2015 was a potential major extension of the Group's contribution to Hercules. This arose because one member of the consortium had to withdraw, so proposals were developed to deliver the the remaining work. The proposals involve the Group contributing an extra six person-months of effort (comprising work programmes in a Devon case study area and in policy analysis), which will add some 30,000 Euros to the Group's budget. Paul Tabbush and Steven Shuttleworth developed proposals to deliver this work (which will have to be done by paid staff) which have been agreed by the Executive. The consortium's revised approach was submitted for EU approval in October 2015, but this was still awaited at the year-end.

Fuller details about the project, including details of our partners and a range of reports, can be viewed on the Hercules website at www.hercules-landscapes.eu.

(vii) *Landscape Research Extra*

LRE was published four times in 2015 (issues 72 to 75). The four issues totalled 52 pages of illustrated two column text (*LRE* 73 being 16 pages, larger than normal). As in previous years, the Editor Bud Young aimed to present short pieces written in a clear style, seeking to stimulate readers with a very wide range of landscape topics and issues, and to provoke thought about them. Each issue included colour print illustrations, with reviews and short features. Each completed issue was published immediately on the Group's website by Emma Waterton.

Key features covered the Olympic Park project, focusing on the development of a soils strategy to guide the regeneration of the land and establishment of a new landscape; the impact of the Nepal earthquake in April 2015; an update about Project Hercules and the Group's involvement in it during 2014 (see last year's Report); the issue of knowledge transfer, promoted by reflections on Hercules' initial work; the *Soils of Dartmoor* memoir and soil map (which the Group supported financially – see last year's Report); and the Znesinnya Regional Landscape Park in Lviv, Ukraine. Other features

were on re-thinking the urban landscape; landscapes of travel and transport in the Ukraine; and two separate essays on clouds and their portrayal in the context of landscape. There was also a profile of Sarah McCarthy, in *LRE* 72, published as soon as possible after she took up her post as Development Manager; and memorial tributes to former Director/Trustees John Gittins and Jay Appleton, and to the landscape researcher Gary Fry.

The issues also contained notices and reports of various recent or planned conferences and papers, including: the *Future of Landscape Characterisation* research symposium held in Stockholm in March 2014 which was sponsored by the Group (see the Directors' Report for 2014); the workshop on *Landscape and Culture* held at the PECSRL conference in September 2014 in Gothenburg and Mariestad, Sweden, also sponsored by the Group (see the Directors' Report for 2014); the *Landscape, Wilderness and the Wild* conference at Newcastle in March 2015, also sponsored by the Group (see above); the symposium on *The Role of Food and Food Culture for a Sustainable Landscape Heritage*, held in Stockholm in May 2015; and advance notice of the *Energy Landscapes* conference (see above). Other features included a review of a contemporary art exhibition *High Line* in Thornton, Bradford celebrating fifty years of the Pennine Way; and a review of an issue-based art project about land called Freeman's Wood in Lancaster, and the conflict between local people's view of it as 'common land' and its recent fencing by a hitherto unrecognised owner. A further art-based feature was an essay with sketched images (to be used as the basis for prints) on the impact of walking the South West Peninsula Coast Path on artistic insight and creative processes.

Other articles included descriptions and portrayals of landscapes in Aden, the Cere Valley (France), the Elbe Valley (Germany), Menorca, and the Hampshire 'Tertiary basin'; a reflection on the contrasts between 'high rise' cities and the intimacy of small market towns; and a review of a recent book *Landmarks* by the environmental commentator, Robert McFarlane. The issues also included write-ups of three dissertations that received a prize under the Group's 2014 Scheme (see Directors' Report for 2014) and three under the 2015 Scheme (see above), and further 'editions' of the 'Companion Guide' summarising the contents of *Landscape Research*.

As noted above, the Group has started in 2015 to publish an e-bulletin. Considerable thought was given during the development of this initiative to ensuring that the e-bulletin would be complementary to *LRE*. The discussions recognised that there are potentially different (but not mutually exclusive) audiences, both in terms of immediacy of content and readership profile; that electronic communication has greater potential for reaching a wide audience quickly, but that formal publication has greater permanence (for example as website pdf copies and archiving in the UK deposit libraries); and that paper copy has greater potential for certain types of promotion. In the light of these considerations, the Editors of *LRE* and the e-bulletin have agreed a protocol to ensure they work cooperatively and to mutual advantage.

As a result of the above discussions, thought has also been given to long-term access to the many substantive articles published in *LRE* over its past 27 years of publication. A possible future development is uploading the articles to the website as single, stand-alone items which can be more easily downloaded, and creating an index for the articles already on the website. Bud Young and Sarah McCarthy are giving consideration to future options for *LRE* production and access, in the context of other aspects of development activity.

The Board wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the continued commitment of Bud and Rosemary Young, and the varied correspondents (both overseas and domestic) who supply much of the source material. In 2015 these were: John Angus, Richard Appleton, Emma Bauzyte, Andrew Butler, Roger Dalton, Wenche Dramstadt, Brian Goodey, Tim Harrod, Tim Hoyland, Peter Howard, Anna Jorgensen, Zdenek Kucera, Markus Leibenath, Owen Manning, Sarah McCarthy, Laura Menatti, Tim O'Hare, Kenneth Olwig, Josh Peacock, Gareth Roberts, Maggie Roe, Anita Reynolds, Hayley Saul, Brian James Shaw, Steven Shuttleworth, Nancy Stedman, Paul Tabbush, Emma Waterton, William Young and Oleksandr Zavadovych.

7. FINANCES

The 2013 and 2014 Reports noted that the Group's finances were 'split' to distinguish the two separate elements of the "unrestricted funds" available for any use considered by the Board to be appropriate to delivering the Group's charitable objectives, and the "restricted funds" held for the specific purpose of delivering Project Hercules. This split is applicable to the Group's 2015 finances also, and the discussion below therefore deals with the two elements separately.

With regard to its "unrestricted funds", the Group made a surplus in 2015 of £19,605 (income of £99,717, less expenditure of £80,112). This compares to the surplus in 2014 of £7,883 (income of £69,605, less expenditure of £61,722). There being one adjustment for 2014 creditor under-provision, the Group's Accumulated Fund of "unrestricted funds" at 31st December 2015 was £125,307 (2014, £105,762).

The 2015 surplus of "unrestricted funds" was due to the greatly increased income from the Publishing Agreement, reflecting the terms negotiated for the expansion of *Landscape Research* to eight issues yearly but which exceeded predictions. In addition, membership income increased by 28%, and the the Hercules restricted funds refunded some 'recoverable costs' to the Group, although the absolute amount of these is much smaller than the income from the Publishing Agreement. Expenditure also increased substantially compared to 2014, primarily because of the first full-year costs of the Development Project. The costs of the prize scheme increased due to the greater number of prizes awarded, but events and research support costs were lower. Expenditure on international networking was nil, as in 2014, but (as noted above) this activity was subsumed under networking related to the events programme and Project Hercules. All other costs, including Board/Executive and administration costs (but excluding the Development Project) were similar to the previous year, except for the costs of legal advice in relation to the trading company issue. However, the increased expenditure was outweighed by the greater increase in income.

As well as its unrestricted funds summarised above, the Group's finances have included expenditure in relation to Project Hercules. The funding for the project is provided to the research consortium in tranches, with the first tranche payable at the start of the project in 2013 and the second tranche due in early 2016. Accordingly, the Group received no income in 2015, but spent £5,829. The remaining balance of £10,559 is a "restricted fund", to be used only for EU-approved purposes in relation to Project Hercules.

Thus, the Group's total Accumulated Fund at 31 December 2015 was £135,866 – £125,307 being for "unrestricted" use and £10,559 being "restricted".

Looking ahead to 2016 and beyond in relation to the "unrestricted funds", income is expected to remain at a similar level to 2015, although it may rise slightly because of further increased royalties (based on increased volume of *Landscape Research* sales) due under the Publishing Agreement and because of increased membership income as a consequence of Development Project activity. More generally in relation to income, it seems prudent to continue to assume that bank deposit interest income will remain at its current extremely low level; and also, as noted in the Reports for 2012 to 2014, to assume that there will be no tax reclaim contributions from Gift Aid donations for the foreseeable future.

In parallel, it is planned that expenditure will also rise substantially over the next few years as a result of expanded activity made possible by the expected increased income. The costs of producing *Landscape Research* will increase from 2016 as a result of the new support arrangements for the Editorial Team. Also, as discussed above, major programmes of expenditure are being developed for events, international activity and research support in 2016, 2017 and thereafter, and also on website

costs as further improvement takes place as part of the Development Project. Other costs are expected to remain broadly similar to previous years.

With regard to the “restricted funds” for the Hercules project, the second tranche of research grant is due in early 2016 and the current and expected funds will be spent by the end of the project in November 2016.

The Group’s current financial strategy is based on achieving a broad balance of income and expenditure, by making use of the funds available over and above the costs of publishing *Landscape Research* and of administrative support, to enable the wider range of networking and outreach activity. In terms of financial planning for delivering this activity programme it is assumed that some years may have a slight surplus and others a slight deficit, but that over a rolling three-year period the Group will maintain a broad balance of income and expenditure. The four-year projection for 2014 to 2017 reflects this approach. However, as noted in previous years’ Reports, the Group’s Accumulated Fund overall is now considerably in excess of £60,000, the level of reserve intended by the financial strategy. The intended expenditure and investment described above – in particular plans for events in 2017 – should use some of that excess in a planned way, and more generally it will enable the Group to adopt a relaxed approach to high planned expenditure which exceeds income in individual years.

The key financial issue for the Board to focus on during 2016, and indeed over the next three years, therefore remains as identified in previous Reports – ensuring that expenditure plans for activities other than publishing *Landscape Research*, and in particular for events, international activity and developing proposals for research, are refined into robust multi-year programmes of activity, which are then implemented and delivered.

The Accounts, the Auditor’s Report and the Treasurer’s Report give a fuller assessment of the Group’s finances. The financial reports have been prepared taking advantage of the exemptions conferred by the Companies Act 2006 in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

Registered Office

1027A Garrett Lane
LONDON
SW19 1QE

Dr Steven Shuttleworth

Company Secretary
4 Gwyns Piece
Lambourn
Hungerford
Berkshire
RG17 8YZ

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