Editorial
Connecting cultures and continents: the heritage of routes and journeys – Part 2
Looking Back, Moving Forward

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This is the second recent issue of *Historic Environment* dedicated to the concept of cultural routes. In the previous issue Sandy Blair, a long-term member of the ICOMOS CIIC, the International Scientific Committee on Cultural Routes, made some observations as its guest editor about the concept, recent research trends, how practitioners are moving forward and future directions. We also look back to find a way forward. Both issues build on previous issues of *Historic Environment*, one with papers drawn from the 2001 Australia ICOMOS conference in Alice Springs, ‘Making Tracks’ and the other with papers drawn from the ‘Corrugations’ conference held in Melbourne in 2005.

The concept of a cultural route has come a long way and is now unambiguously part of the World Heritage listing process. It developed through the work of the Council of Europe in the 1970s and 1980s and subsequently through the work of UNESCO, IUCN and ICOMOS. It emerged from the concept of a cultural (or rural) landscape, itself a contentious issue in the late 1980s. The symbiosis of routes with landscapes endures. An expert joint group met in La Petite Pierre, France in 1992 to amend the inscription criteria and provide new guidance on definitions and categories of cultural landscapes. Christina Cameron and Mechtild Rössler have written about this period in their recently published book, *Many Voices, One Vision: The Early Years of the World Heritage Convention* (2013). The book is reviewed in this issue.

By the mid 1990s the role of intangible heritage in cultural landscapes and routes brought fresh debate. In an historical analysis of global heritage, tracking the evolution of the concept of cultural landscapes in the World Heritage Convention, Dr Aurélie Elisa Gfeller identified the significant contribution made by Dr Isabel McBryde at the 1992 meeting of experts on World Heritage cultural landscapes in La Petite Pierre, Vosges (Gfeller 2013: 497). Prior to McBryde’s work the concept of ‘associative landscape’ was a landscape connected with an historic event or individual artist/writer/poet. Through her contribution McBryde defined the category of ‘associative cultural landscapes’ and created the opening for Indigenous peoples’ relationships with land to be recognised. Gfeller notes that McBryde was ‘met with incredulity’ as most experts at the meeting had not considered that cultural landscapes could exist without tangible elements. She states ‘The definition endorsed at this meeting marked a paradigm shift in the World Heritage Convention by introducing the notion of intangible cultural heritage’ (Gfeller 2013: 497).

An outcome of the 1992 meeting was the inscription of Tongariro National Park (New Zealand) in the World Heritage list in 1993 as the first property to be inscribed under the revised criteria describing cultural landscapes. This was followed by Uluru Kata Tjuta (Australia) in 1994, both places being inscribed on the World Heritage List for their natural and cultural values including for their Indigenous values.

In 2001 in Navarra, Spain the CIIC held a seminar specifically on the topic of cultural routes and then in 2003 at Victoria Falls, Alberto Martorell Carreño delivered his paper ‘Cultural Routes:
Tangible and Intangible Dimensions of Cultural Heritage'. Two fresh debates emerged, one on the role of historic transport corridors, the other on the role of historic roads as elements within cultural routes. The former has been much less traumatic for CIIC but the latter, which threatened the continuation of the Committee, now seems to be resolved following the CIIC meeting in Chihuahua in 2013. As Wang Jianbo wrote in 2013 ‘Since the adoption of The ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes at its 16th General Assembly and Scientific Symposium in Quebec (Canada) in October 2008, Cultural Routes, as a category of cultural property, has been clearly defined in terms of its basic principles and methodologies. But still, the concept is subject to clarification and further explanation in the following aspects … (1) Cultural Route vs. Transport Line [or Corridor] (2) its dynamic character and (3) intangible heritage in cultural routes’ (http://www.whitr-ap.org/index.php?classid=1488&newsid=2312&t=show). For the most recent overview see Michael Romero Taylor’s paper in the previous issue of Historic Environment and for further analysis of the emergence of cultural landscapes and cultural routes see McBryde’s paper in this issue originally delivered at La Petite Pierre.

Much of the heat and confusion in this recent important theoretical debate is at an international level. However, cultural routes can exist at a local, national and global level and the debate informs the identification, protection and management of cultural routes and of cultural landscapes at whatever level of significance. Australia ICOMOS through its joint National Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes and Cultural Routes has fostered cooperation between both ISCs.

The papers in this issue of Historic Environment take the research in the previous issue further, continuing its Asia Pacific focus. They both look back to the evolution of associative cultural landscapes and intangible cultural heritage and look forward to contemporary practice.

Prof Isabel McBryde’s set of three papers (presented in this volume as one paper in three parts) demonstrates how global heritage practice has been greatly enriched by her work. In the introduction to the first paper (Part 1) she notes that it ‘may seem curious: indeed even unnecessary’ to publish a paper prepared more than 20 years ago (McBryde 2013:1). The report on definitions and criteria presented to the World Heritage Committee from the 1992 La Petite Pierre meeting were ‘radical’ (McBryde 2013:2) as McBryde had shown that European concepts of monumental heritage reflected in current definitions and criteria were inappropriate for many cultural landscapes, particularly in those former colonial countries like Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada where Indigenous societies had created heritage places with beliefs, traditions, stories, songs and contemporary practice. In her paper McBryde stresses the importance to explicitly recognise and accommodate cultural continuity in the criteria.

McBryde developed her argument by analysing further the other World Heritage cultural landscapes in Australia in 1992 which combined natural and cultural values: Kakadu National Park; The Willandra Lakes Region; and The Tasmanian Wilderness Area. She also looks to the future, with some prophesies now fulfilled, and comments on eighteenth and nineteenth century cultural landscapes clearly of significance to Australia but also, possibly, of universal value. The Western emphasis on monuments, sites and groups of buildings was, at that time, increasingly a constraint. The use of one prophetic word, ‘place’, has become close to universal in Australia through the success of the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter. Managing disparate sites, linked by intangible cultural values tens of thousands of years old, was seen as a problem. Another constraint in making WHL nominations was the need for establishing Western-style boundaries.

McBryde’s second contribution (Part 2), ‘Travelling a storied landscape: trade routes, song lines and heritage’, a discussion paper for the UNESCO World Heritage Centre Expert meeting on ‘Itineraries as Cultural Heritage’ was presented at the inaugural meeting to discuss cultural routes in Madrid in 1994. At the meeting which celebrated the inscription of the pilgrim route of Camino de Santiago de Compostela in the World Heritage List she acknowledged the listing as a significant conceptual change. Her case study on the Pukardu Hill Red Ochre Expeditions demonstrated how the route is similarly embedded in the spiritual and ritual, with trading systems and traditions, and yet belongs to a very different cultural context from the Western Christian concept of pilgrimage.
McBryde engaged with the complexity of defining a route: does it consist of the places along the route, a serial site with physical features or is it the line of travel between these places, which may be a physical route or a mental construct. She recognised the difficulties in listing and managing heritage routes, in assessing their values and establishing boundaries, including the challenges of differing perceptions of heritage values by various groups within Australia. Extensive consultation with Indigenous custodial groups and other stakeholders is essential. Again, her argument that the values and practices of the creating culture did not conform to European traditions of monumental heritage was radical. McBryde recognised the need to include the concept of associative cultural landscapes as their inclusion would enrich the World Heritage List and make it more representative.

McBryde’s third contribution (Part 3) is an abridged discussion paper from 1995, ‘Storied landscapes: the long-distance exchange networks of the Cooper/Lake Eyre Basin as cultural landscape’. It is seminal in at least two ways. Firstly, it considers the associative, symbolic values of cultural landscapes and, secondly, it shows that trade routes and social and spiritual journeys differ in having separate characters and distinctive components. Using the exchange linkages across the landscape of the Cooper/Lake Eyre Basin as a case study, she illustrates how a line of route is a mental construct relating landscape, tradition and place, along which material goods, information, songs, dances and ceremonies travel. McBryde’s fresh arguments about time, place and intangible values strongly influenced our understanding of the new concept of cultural routes.

John Blay, the Bundian Way Project Officer for the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council, speaks with a different voice. His paper looks at the modern management of the ancient Bundian Way, an Indigenous track linking the mountains of South-East Australia with the sea. This was a route between two Indigenous cultures and included exchange and trade as well as the sharing of symbolic and spiritual values. There are important practical implications for the continuing Indigenous community. Also important is the European overlay along the route. The route’s sensible alignment was determined by topography and worked for the Europeans. The ecological conditions that favoured the production of yams also suited early pastoralism. European sciences help with the understanding of ancient occupation. The cultural exchange of a route is not only linear, i.e. two or even three dimensional, but also through shared time, a sort of fourth dimension. Blay’s paper may tell a different story but it is as forward looking as McBryde’s was a generation ago.

Dr Jane Lennon, a founding member of Australia ICOMOS, notes the link, sometimes along the exact alignment of water holes, between ancient Indigenous tracks and travelling stock routes (TSRs). In modern times Aborigines and Europeans worked the routes together, as employees and as bosses. According to one ballad ‘They’re a well mixed pack, both white and black, the Queensland overlanders’. The pastoral heritage of Australia is fundamental to the nation’s character and it is vast but, as Lennon notes, relatively little of it is formally identified. From the beginning pastoralism was the purpose for and led our patterns of settlement. Many historic roads, with their wayside infrastructure, started as stock routes and have become modern highways. Lennon’s paper focuses on the TSRs, the various government-owned land reserves used as ‘pathways for travelling stock on foot’, colloquially known as ‘the long paddock’. They were part of the system of threads linking inland pastures with coastal markets. Ultimately cattle were for food and sheep were for wool or meat, with their fleece exported. Drought was the other great factor which forced the use of TSRs. With their wells, tanks and yards, TSRs are still a distinctive feature of the Australian landscape. They are cultural routes of national significance.

In the second half of the nineteenth century goldfields were the other major markets for meat. Miners on these goldfields – some just transient camps, others the beginnings of provincial cities – had to be fed so profit was to be made. David Moloney, a historian and town planner, evokes in his paper the clamorous rush to one of the first and richest Australian goldfields, the Mount Alexander diggings, along ‘The Road to Fortune’. This international cavalcade of people must have been an extraordinary sight. They fought against dust and mud, brigands, disease and despair. Most failed or lost their gains. ‘The Road to Fortune’ lasted just ten years, usurped
by the much more reliable railway. The Mount Alexander Road, now largely the alignment of the Calder Highway/Freeway, is one of Australia’s most significant historic roads. We should probably not call it a cultural route, however, because its history as a way to the diggings was so brief, it was internal to the new colony of Victoria, it did not provide any cultural exchange, and there was no religious or symbolic purpose for it. As a historic road, however, it is a critical element of a greater cultural landscape, the Central Victorian Goldfields, a potential nomination for World Heritage Listing.

Timothy Hubbard, a member of CIIC, looks at a very different period, the second half of the twentieth century and a cultural route which cannot be confused with any highway: the Kangaroo Route flown by Qantas from 1947. With a limited terrestrial footprint, the Kangaroo Route abstracts the concept and tests the limits of the current definition of a cultural route. Its history is relatively brief but covers a remarkable period of change. It is truly international, linking the British Empire in its dying days but, even as the number of hops along the way reduces, it continues as a conduit for cultural exchange within the Commonwealth of Nations. The case for considering the Kangaroo Route as a cultural route was argued in a previous paper delivered at the CIIC meeting in Jammu, India in 2012. In this paper Hubbard reviews what significant fabric survives in Australia and finds some interesting evidence of both tangible and intangible cultural exchange.

The final paper by Guo Zhan, Director of the World Heritage Expert Committee of China, looks forward. He writes about the 2013 transnational nomination of the Silk Road, or at least parts of it by China, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan for inscription in the World Heritage List as a cultural route of universal value. Perhaps this is the greatest challenge facing the CIIC, ISCCL, ICOMOS and UNESCO. The Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang’an-Tianshan Corridor was inscribed in the World Heritage List in June 2014. The route passed through many vast and diverse cultural landscapes. Sections of it were traversed by sea, with only a limited terrestrial footprint. It is of great age, so old that the many empires it once linked are long gone. There is no doubt that it enriched and extended humanity, not least through the diplomacy it fostered. Its legacy and its romance endure as reasons for dialogue between East and West but its scale and scope are daunting. Guo Zhan, who rightly claims that the Silk Road (or Roads) is the oldest, longest and most influential cultural route in the world, argues in his paper for a partial nomination for World Heritage Listing. It is much more than a serial site of cultural landscapes, however. The Silk Road is a cultural route of a thousand threads which transcends the landscapes and seascapes through which it passes.

The case for the Silk Road’s inscription is so strong, indeed arguably incontrovertible, that the challenge should be faced with unity and unanimity. Guo Zhan emphasises that “the Silk Roads belong to all states along the route”. Can it produce through dialogue rather than dissent, a common sense of purpose between East and West, between the Old World and the New? One thinks of the title of Cameron and Rössler’s book, Many Voices, One Vision. The successful joint seminar of the CIIC and ISCCL in Canberra in October 2013 might be a model for further cooperation focused on the Silk Road. It is to be hoped that the forthcoming CIIC meeting associated with the 16th General Assembly of ICOMOS in Florence in November 2014 will put past rancour behind it and turn this challenge into an opportunity for advancing the concept of cultural routes as heritage for us all whichever landscapes we pass through, local, national or global.
References

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