

(A report of the 2nd competition for new ideas for the development of public spaces of enjoyment and relaxation, arranged by the Arts Council of Great Britain in collaboration with the RIBA, The Landscape Institute and The Sunday Times).

Art into Landscape

Introduction

As citizens we are all concerned with the environment in which we live and most of us believe that if we were given an opportunity we could do something to improve it. It is a minority of designers and architects who influence large-scale environmental design, while we have to be content to indulge our aesthetic instinct by choosing the furniture and furnishings in our homes and in planning, on a much smaller scale, our gardens. The intention of this *Art into Landscape* competition, however, was to give everyone an opportunity to make a contribution to a number of proposed projects by inviting interested designers – both professional and laymen – to suggest ways in which open spaces might be developed for public use and pleasure.

Competitors had a choice of twelve sites (see the current situation regarding realisation of schemes, for a complete list) from all over the country, where local authorities were eager to extend an enthusiastic welcome to incentive schemes. Each competitor was notified of the target costs within which he had to work, and a brief was prepared for him to follow.

The Current Situation regarding Realisation of Schemes

1. Elland Bridge site:

Calderdale Borough Council

Local exhibition held at Elland Public Library and Halifax Town Hall, with a meeting organised by the local Civic Trust. Lower Calder Valley Development Services sub-committee are to announce final decision later, but expect to commission one or more schemes. (Target cost £24,000).

2. North East Ironmasters site: Cleveland County Council & Middlesbrough Borough Council

Local exhibition held at Middlesbrough Art Gallery and report presented to Council in early November. Expect to commission combination of three schemes. Teessaurus playground (Genevieve Glatt, No. 12), Jubilee Hill (Mary Mitchell, No. 16) and Ironstone Wynde (George Middlemiss, No. 15). Teessaurus playground now to be commissioned. (Target cost £40,000).

3. Open Space at Spon End:

Coventry City Council

Local exhibition held in the foyer of the new Council Offices. Housing Committee to decide whether to proceed with a commission by the end of November.

** We now hear from the City Architect and Planning Officer, as follows:

'One of the schemes, "Adventure Hollow" by Flood Parks, has been particularly favoured by residents and it is hoped that the City Council's Housing Committee at its next meeting in December will consider its implementation. As there are

problems in implementing the scheme in its present form a meeting has recently been held with its author to discuss modifications'. (Target cost £8,000).

4. Spennymoor slag heaps:

Durham County Council

Exhibition held in Council Offices. County Council Environmental Improvement sub-committee have agreed to implement the scheme *Elizabeth Jubilee Park* (Ronald McFadzean and Susan Luther-Davies, No. 32), subject to availability of grant-aid from Department of the Environment. (Target cost £28,000).

5. Roundabout at Ware:

East Hertfordshire District Council

Local exhibition held at Ware College, Scotts Road. As a result, Hertfordshire District Council, Planning Committee are considering the following schemes with a view to commissioning one: Grass Weir for Ware (Tom Turner, Margaret Hogg, No. 47), Market Roundabout (R.D. Caddick, No. 39) and Stuff the Genius loci? (Derek Walker Associates, No. 50). They expect to proceed with help from Ware Town Council.

Grass Weir for Ware is now to be commissioned. (Target cost £5,000).

6. Approach to Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum: Glasgow District Council

Exhibition held at Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery and Parks Department hope to proceed with an amalgam of several schemes. Strongest possibilities appear to be Light Lines (Tom Heneghan, Mark Walker, Richard Woollard, No. 56) and Amazing City (Anthony Vogt, John Doak, No. 60). (Target cost £2,000).

7. Finsbury Park focal point:

Greater London Council

Exhibition held in Holyon Building, close to County Hall, but no decision made. (Target cost £5,000).

8. Lambeth Walk hoardings:

Greater London Council

Local exhibition at Lambeth Walk Community Centre, and Holyon Building and County Hall. Strong support from local street trader's association for Garden Fence (Adrian Corry, David Edgerley, Neil Taylor, No. 85). Endless Journey (Charles Garrad, No. 86) and Lambeth Walkers (Roy Winter, No. 96). GLC Central Area Planning Committee are expected to proceed with a commission. *Lambeth Walkers* and *Endless Journey* have been selected for implementation. (Target cost £5,600).

9. 125 Rotherhithe Street:

Greater London Council

Local exhibition at Rotherhithe Community Centre



and the Jolyon Building. Strong support for A Brobdingnagian knot garden (Thomas Meddings, No. 104) and the Central Area Planning Committee expect to proceed with a commission. (Target cost £7,000).

10. *Wall at art education building:*
Sheffield City Council

Exhibition held at Graves Art Gallery, City Council expects to proceed with *Sheffield steel wall* (Mick Coleshaw, No. 114), subject to technical feasibility study. (Target cost £2,000).

11. *Playscape for Eastbourne:*
Stockton on Tees Borough Council

Local exhibition in public hall near site. In principle a scheme will be commissioned and *Bogie run and barbican* (Malcolm Newton, No. 135) is favoured. The Council has now agreed to commission this scheme. (Target cost £14,000).

12. *Kingsbury Water Park lookout:*
Warwickshire County Council

Decided without a local exhibition to commission *Trickle splash gush* (Anthony Vogt, Neil Morrison, Adrian Lock, No. 150). (Target cost £6,000)

The Exhibition

Sue Grayson was responsible for designing the exhibition of the 150 prize-winning and selected entries, chosen by a panel of judges from over 1,000 received, which was held at the Serpentine Gallery in London from 16 July to 14 August 1977. These entries had been judged in four categories: *professional* (artists, architects, landscape architects, engineers and students of these professions); *laymen*; *children* and *school groups*. In the preface to the exhibition catalogue, Sue Grayson wrote:

'The first Art into Landscape exhibition in 1974 clearly demonstrated that, when it comes to improving their surroundings, artist, bankers, housewives and children have as much imagination as professional planners and architects. Their ideas

for transforming widely differing sites — from vast areas of industrial dereliction to tiny pockets of neglected parkland — were greeted enthusiastically by the critics, the public and even by those responsible for the sites. But no funds were available for realising even the most exciting proposals; none was implemented.

The 1977 exhibition will have more permanent and visible results for after it closes, each authority will display locally the alternative proposals for its own site. Thus the people who would actually be affected by them will be able to see the skill, inspiration and sheer range of ideas which competitors have brought to the bleaker spots in some of our cities. Perhaps some will be moved to propose their own ideas for under-used public spaces.

In order to avoid a uniformity in presentation, finalists were given as free a hand as possible in the development of their proposals, and the final selection of exhibits was made at the eleventh hour. This further complicated the judges' task and led to some inconsistency between what is in the catalogue and what is on show. We believe this is more than justified by the rich variety of the results.

School Groups

Two school group entries were successful in winning prizes. These were:

- (1) *Form 3R* (ages 13 to 14 years) from the Laurence Jackson School, Guisborough, Cleveland, for *Riverside Re-creation* (brief 2); and
- (2) *3rd Year*, St. Marylebone Grammar School, for *Finsbury Follies* (brief 7), which also received a £200 prize as one of the Sunday Times overall winners. These two designs are illustrated here with details of the appropriate briefs:

Brief 2: North East Ironmasters, Middlesbrough
(Cleveland C.C. and Middlesbrough B.C.)

The tide is turning on the Tees — help turn the tide!

Brief

Entries are invited for the 'face-lifting' of a strip of land on the south bank of the River Tees in Cleveland,

known as the North East Ironmasters, as a landscaped walkway some 1,100 metres in length. This is to be a prominent part of the proposed long distance walk way along an 8 mile stretch of the River Tees. At one point along the Ironmasters walkway a slag mound has been retained to form the basis of a major viewing point of riverside activities. The mound is a unique feature on the otherwise flat valley of the River Tees; commanding fine views of the shipyard on the opposite bank, the Transporter Bridge and Middlesbrough Docks downstream of the site, and of the Regional Centre and the Cleveland Hills beyond.

Seating and other amenities in the vicinity of the mound would benefit visitors to the area as well as people employed within the industrial estate. There is scope for the development of an area which may be used for ball games on an informal basis on land adjoining the mound.

The River Tees is a tidal river and is grossly polluted. However it is intended to gradually improve the quality of the river in the foreseeable future. Any treatment of the banks will have to take these factors into account.

There is little soil on site. If substantial 'soft' landscaping is envisaged sufficient quantities of top and sub soil will have to be improved. Landscaping over a high voltage electricity cable will be restricted and no mounding or tree planting should occur within the cable track or in any positions where tree roots may interfere with the cables. The Acklam Fabrication Works of the British Steel Corporation will remain on the site. The width of the landscaped walkway will be restricted therefore, to less than the average width (22 metres) in the vicinity of the works.

The walkway should not only be suitable for pedestrians but also cyclists and for any maintenance vehicles that may be necessary. Barriers along the edge of the river bank are necessary to maximise safety of the walkway users. At some points along the river industrial concerns may require occasional access to the river for import/export purposes.

Therefore, any proposals should allow for the periodic temporary closure of the walkway to allow the safe and convenient access to the river for firms. A public car parking area adjacent to the River Tees is proposed. The proposed road immediately south of the mounded area provides the only other means of public vehicular access to the riverside in this area and a small amount of space for public car parking may be appropriate in this area too.

Climate

The River Tees lies within the coldest and driest half of the British Isles. Temperatures average about 9 degrees centigrade over the year. Dominant winds are from the south and west. These winds are also the strongest, especially in autumn and winter. Winds from the north and north-east are characteristically gentle but cold.

Riverside re-creation, entry by Form 3R, The Laurence Jackson School, Guisborough, Cleveland



Our proposals are to produce a better place to relax in, a better place to look at, and a better place to look from. We suggest both cycle and walking tracks on the river bank, seats strategically placed for older people and a ball-playing area which would be a boon to workers and to older children. Plants already growing should be encouraged to grow more abundantly. We would collect the bricks, slag, driftwood and scrap wood strewn in the area for re-use on the wharf, which would be an ideal place for 3-D display; the sides of the buildings could be decorated with relief work. Schools, the local Art College and local artists could all make a contribution by using local materials. The mound is our viewing-point and places of interest both distant and near are indicated on the flat top of the summit's shelter wall.

Brief 7: Finsbury Park Central
(Greater London Council)
Design a focal point for a park

Brief

Finsbury Park is an area of 115 acres, and was opened in 1968; proposals have been accepted by the GLC for a gradual improvement (modernisation) programme to be carried out. The site in Finsbury Park proposed for some kind of feature or layout is, in fact, the highest part of this much used open space, being prominent in that respect, but also because it adjoins the popular boating lake. A recently built refreshment building forms one boundary of the area, which has some fine London planes and other trees flourishing in the area. The existing surface is tar-macadam.

The GLC Parks department will be happy to see proposals for any feature or layout which will be a focal point, or be of special interest in this area. There is an opportunity for an imaginative proposal and this would be welcomed by the Council. Competitors might like to consider that their proposal could be applied to many similar parks.

Finsbury follies, prize-winning entry by 3rd Year, St. Marylebone Grammar School

Brief 7:
Finsbury Park
Central.



Brief 7:
Finsbury Park
St. Marylebone
Grammar School
'Finsbury Follies'.



These ideas developed from making and flying kites in the park. It was a very windy day and so it was decided to design something which would utilise the idea of wind and movement. As the site was on a hill surrounded by trees, it would not be seen in the summer when the trees were in leaf. This would mean designing something in an enclosed space near ground level, or something above the trees which would be seen from a long distance and could be lit at night.

'We chose things which would change shape and direction in the wind as the landscape does'.
G. Howes

'It seemed to be a place where there was a constant flow of wind and since we had both height and wind we thought it would be nice

to make moving objects which would be more eye-catching'. S. Kanagasabai

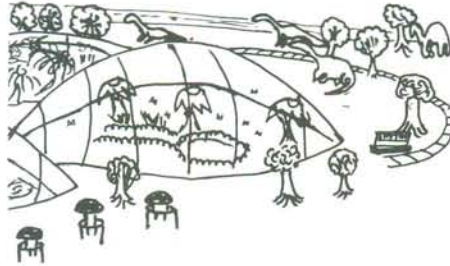
'We had to make the object move because it would have been like all other monuments: still and boring'. V. Robinson

Prize-Winning Entries from Children

Many submissions were received from children include the following prize-winners: :

Brief 1: Elland Bridge
(Metropolitan B. of Calderdale)
Riverside revival to restore a Pennine valley panorama.

Kubla Khan's Kingdom — Jeremy Franks and Simon Laye (both aged 9) who attend



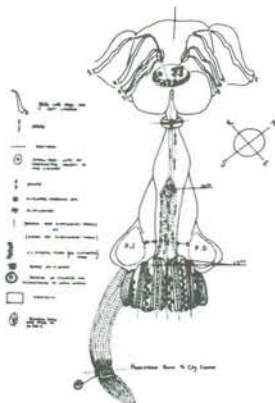
Gledhow Primary School, Leeds.

At Elland Bridge did Sunday Times
Some stately pleasure domes degree.
Where Calder, murky river, ran
Through factories measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So half a mile of barren ground
With paths and rails was girdled round
And there were gardens bright, which flowers filled,
Where blossomed toadstools, selling tea,
And here were monsters ancient as the hills,
To guard the sunny spots of greenery.
(With apologies to Coleridge and a little help
from our friends)

Like Kubla Khan, we thought we'd build pleasure
domes, only ours would be made of transparent
plastic with tropical plants, butterflies and tropical
fish pool, heated by solar energy. Outside there
is a small gauge railway running round the site,
weaving in between trees and giant fibreglass
dinosaurs.

Brief 3: Open space at Spon End (Coventry City Council)

The re-use of a small area of land left over from
redevelopment. The brief asks for the provision
of play facilities for local children and the
improvement of the environment of the area
by attractive landscaping.



Hot Dog – Jennifer Ramsay

I wanted to design something that the people could
enjoy and which would be an attractive feature of
their district. I'd like to think that the local people
could supply and plant the flowers, and possibly

the local schoolchildren could take an interest in
looking after them: and I hope that everyone will
have a lot of fun with it. The dog will be built of
concrete using plenty of flowers, evergreen trees and
shrubs to decorate it. One end (the head) will be
used mainly as a playground area with slides
running down the sides of the face. There will be
footpaths leading down the centre of the dog,
joining the main footpath to the city centre.
Also for people who don't want to go onto the
dog, they can cut through his tail by a footpath
which will be surrounded by grass and flowers, etc.
Born 1962. Attends St. Bedes School, Reigate,
Surrey.

Brief 4: Spennymoor slag heaps (Durham County Council)

An opportunity to shape the new face of a tired
landscape by changing 19th century recreation.



Aero port – Nicholas Rae

The slagheap is used as a small mountain range
with tracks in the valleys for motorised go-carts.
At the highest point there is a tarmac runway for
remote-controlled model petrol aeroplanes and a
building for storage and controls. The stream is
made into a pond for model boats. There is a
car park and a cafe.

Born in 1965. Attends King Alfred's School,
London.

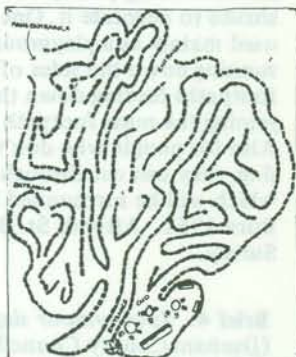
Brief 7: Finsbury Park Central (GLC)

Design a focal point for a park

Maze – entered by Jacqueline Hurley, who is 14,
from Bishops Douglas School, London.

My entry is a new kind of maze to go in an open
space at Finsbury Park. My maze is different
because it has no hedges or solid walls, but just
tapering pillars of concrete with small, but not too
small gaps in between them. Each pillar would be
9' to 10' high so that they would be hard to
climb over. The purpose of the gaps is so that you
can see through to the path you are aiming for but
cannot get to it. This would be off-putting because
you would immediately go to where you can see the
path (one hopes) but not to where the opening of

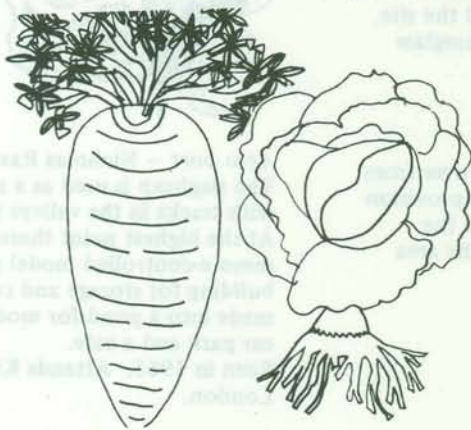
the path is. Another thing that will be confusing is that the whole maze is to be painted jazzy colours, which will be hard for the eyes to cope with



especially when you can see several lines of pillars at one time. This is my theory of how the maze will work; I am not a scientist so I can't say for certain how people will react to jazzy colours and concrete pillars, but just in case my maze does get built I hope that I am right.

Brief 8: Lambeth Walk cover-up (GLC)

Ideas for hoardings for redevelopment areas.



Vegetables in Britain – This was entered by Susanna Williams, aged 9, who is at the Thornhill Junior School, Islington.

I thought that it would be nice for someone who was walking along the road to see something that was growing. Then I thought vegetables would be a good thing.

Brief 10: Wall at Art Education Building

'Up the wall and round the bend' – a mural to focus on an Arts Complex in central Sheffield.

There were three prize-winners in this section:

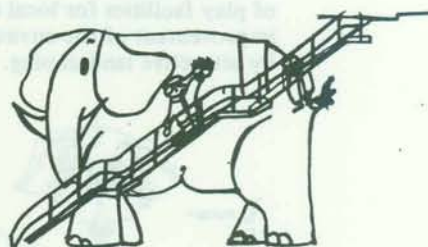
Wall of Brass – by David Jones, aged 13, Holmewood House School, Tunbridge Wells. The design I have done is of a brass instrument.

I got this idea from a poster of wall paintings in Cincinnati and from my friend at Holmewood who plays a French horn. I made a combination of the two ideas to fit the requirements of the Sheffield Wall.



Frosty Friday in Sheffield Wednesday – by Soraya Smithson, aged 13, who attends Pimlico Comprehensive School.

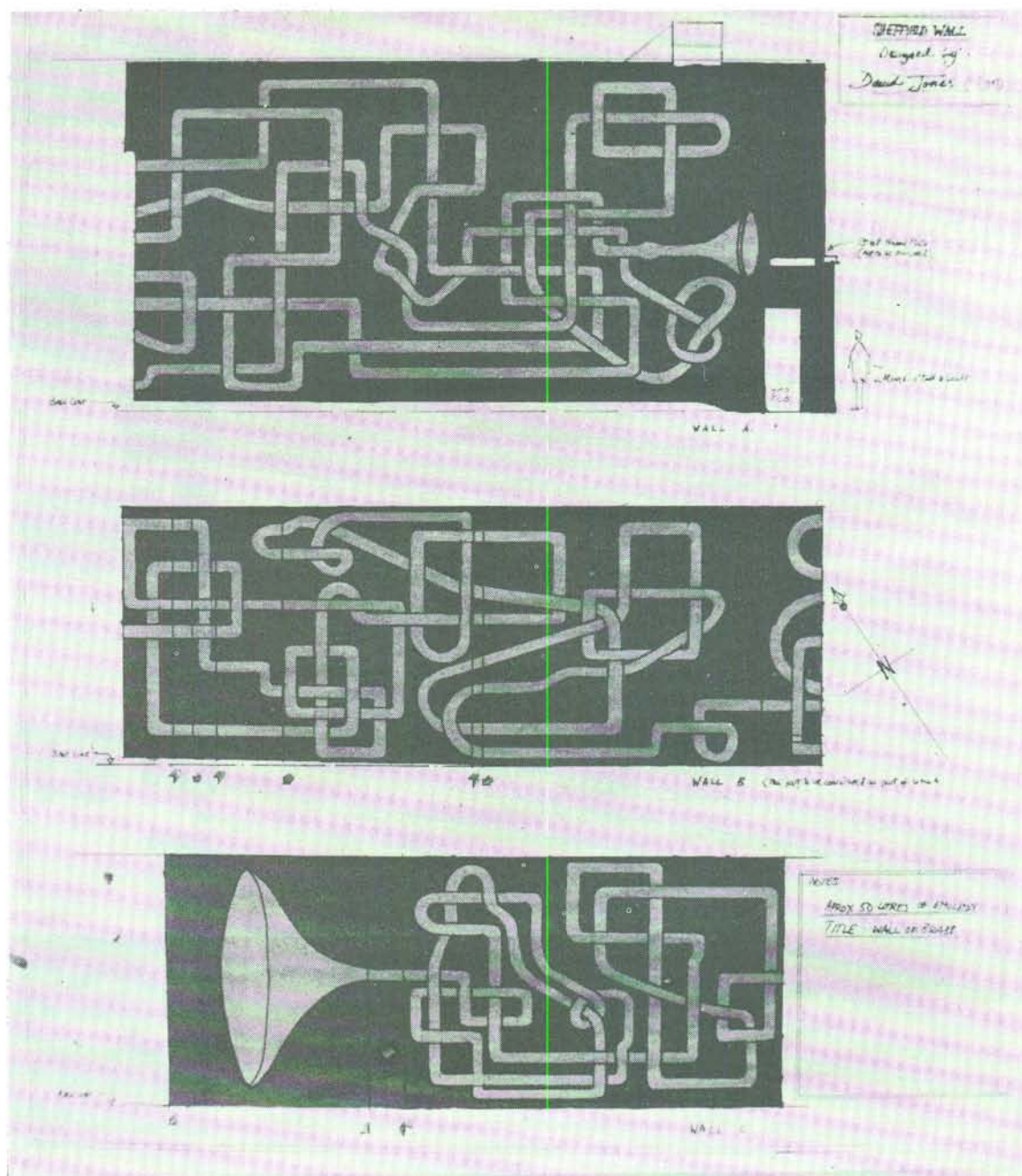
If it is ever painted, I hope that the people living in the houses behind my Sheffield wall, Arctic scene, will consent to let the backs of their houses be painted white and silvery-grey like I have shown in my drawing. I have tried to make it as lively as possible and to make it fit slightly in with its surroundings. I have drawn a bird in a nest on top of the telephone box, and birds flying away from the picture on springy wires that will move in the wind. The animals that I have drawn in my picture, the White Owl, the Polar Bears, the Penguin, the Whale, the White Rabbits, the Reindeers, the Harp Seals, the Seagull and of course the Eskimoes and the Husky Team and Igloo, all come from the Arctic. The Arctic in the summer is normally crowded as I have shown because the winter is six months of continuous night and nearly all the animals are asleep so you do not see them.



Rainbow zoo – entered by Sarah Evans

I called my entry Rainbow zoo because the animals are to be painted all the bright colours of the rainbow. They are simple cartoon type animals. I thought that possibly the Art College students could have fun painting them on the walls of the building. Bright, washable, hard-wearing paint for outside would be used. I think the bright and colourful cartoon type animals I have drawn could be interesting and fun for the people passing by and using the college and other buildings around about. I drew the large pink elephant on the main wall because of the ladder which is just right for the keepers to stand on to clean him which is what they are doing. The lion reminds me of my cat fishing

Brief 10:
Wall of Brass
 by David Jones
 (aged 13).



with one of his claws as a hook to catch the goldfish. All the other animals are also drawn to fit in with the shape of the building; the giraffe with his long neck going round the corner. The snake wriggling up the small thin panel on the wall. Born in 1965 in Lusaka, Zambia. Attends Walton High School, Stafford.

Brief 12: *Look-out over Kingsbury Water Park*
 (Warwickshire CC)

Provide extensive views over lakes reclaimed for leisure.

Look-around Kingsbury – entered by Soraya Smithson.

The look-out has two floors for one reason: to allow bird watchers to watch birds feeding or flying. There are windows nearly all the way round but mostly facing out to the fishing pool and the marshy area; they have no glass and are in their own individual boxes and have shutters that slide along. The shutters are mainly there to stop the glare from the fishing pool and the marshy area. The Look-around is entirely round and looks like a flying saucer. It is made of wood because of all the spare elm wood around Warwickshire and also to make it fit slightly in with its surroundings. The stairs go all the way up inside a little hut which has a sloping roof with a railing around it

because children will run up and down it like I did in the Corb house in Paris. Also, the terrace and roof have rails around them. Born in 1964 in London. Attends Pimlico Comprehensive School.

Conclusion

The children who entered this competition and quite a number whose entries were exhibited but who have not been mentioned here are to be congratulated. An event like this helps to focus the attention of young people on the everyday world, and as this one gave them a chance to think of new ideas which would improve it there was a real stimulus to be inventive. Too many of our citizens remain passive in the face of both national and local bureaucracy and in the past few decades we have seen much of the environment become high-rise and road-work 'concreteness'.

Three cheers for this attempt to channel human creativity and dignity in a worth-while venture! Let it be a stimulus for further ideas which will, hopefully, affect future living with a little more sensitivity and aesthetic wholesomeness.