Festival of the Future City/

Edited by Andrew Kelly
and Melanie Kelly

Festival of the Future City/

FESTIVAL
OF THE
FUTURE CITY

Tue 17– Fri 20 November 2015

**Bristol
Festival
of Ideas/**

In association with

The Observer

**BRISTOL
2015** EUROPEAN
GREEN CAPITAL

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"Cities have always been the fireplaces of civilisation, whence light and heat radiates out into the dark, cold world."
Theodore Parker, *Lessons from the World of Matter and the World of Man*, 1908/

"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody."
Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1961/

"A culture, we all know, is made by its cities."
Derek Walcott, Nobel Lecture, 1992/

"It's very important for cities all around the world to reinvent themselves."
Zaha Hadid/

"Cities are the greatest creations of humanity."
Daniel Libeskind/

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The Festival of the Future City was the last of six major projects supported by Arts Council England through an Exceptional Award to put arts and culture right at the heart of Bristol's year as European Green Capital.

From the very beginning Bristol 2015 offered the opportunity to create an arts and cultural programme of such ambition and with such national and international impact that it would be truly exceptional.

That is why Arts Council England made the award of £744,564 – our largest ever – to support this exciting year-long series of events and activities.

The programme we supported placed the green agenda on a more creative and contemporary platform to really engage everyone – artists, audiences, and particularly children and young people – in celebrating sustainability and future ways of living.

Luke Jerram's eerie flotilla of abandoned fishing boats in Leigh Woods raised questions about the weather, the oceans and climate change. *The Bristol Whales* made us look at how we treat our oceans and consider the effects of plastic waste. An exhibition of work by one of Britain's best known landscape artists, Richard Long, connected us with our environment in new ways and using fresh eyes. Arcadia and its world-famous 50-tonne mechanical spider landed in Queen's Square and used themes of sustainability, transformation and change to spectacular fire-breathing effect. Chicago's award-winning installation artist Theaster Gates breathed new life into discarded materials and forgotten places to create the magical *Sanctum*.

The final exceptional project, The Festival of the Future City, gave us a chance to reflect on all of the issues raised and remember the things that made us smile, made us question, made us think.

It provided an ambitious intellectual underpinning of the year, a conversation with internationally recognised artists, writers and thinkers to which the whole city was invited.

I can't think of a better or more important way to round off an exciting and inspirational year.

Phil Gibby
Area Director, South West, Arts Council England

Opposite page: Festival of the Future City poster design by student Tom Handy, BA (Hons) Illustration, UWE.

Introduction/

Andrew Kelly/

The city and the future of cities have always been important in our work. We've sought inspiration from cities around the world; looked at what we can learn from cities of the past and imaginary cities; and have been as keen to involve ourselves in debates about transport, planning, leadership and governance as we have been in developing cultural projects.

We were offered a great opportunity in 2015 to bring all this work together. In June 2014 Bristol Cultural Development Partnership (BCDP) was awarded a major grant of £744,564 for the Bristol 2015 European Green Capital arts programme.

The award came from Arts Council England's Exceptional Fund for projects that have national and international importance. Arts Council England (ACE) has worked with BCDP ever since we were founded in 1993, alongside Bristol City Council, Business West, University of Bristol and University of the West of England. BCDP has run many year-long programmes of work in partnership with others including Brunel 200 (2006), celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of Isambard Kingdom Brunel; BAC100 (2010), marking the centenary of the founding of Bristol's aviation industry; and Bristol 2014 (2014) on the First World War. In 2016 BCDP is leading the Bristol800 partnership, marking a series of significant local and national anniversaries.

BCDP was ultimately responsible for the delivery of all six Exceptional Fund projects, which included the project it ran directly, the Festival of the Future City. The others were *Withdrawn*, *The Bristol Whales*, *Arcadia Bristol*, *TIME AND SPACE*, and *Sanctum*. The final chapter has more details of these.

The Festival of the Future City took place 17-20 November 2015. It was also an 18-month programme of work that brought together planners, academics, writers, artists, think-tanks, governments and the public to debate and explore sustainable, resilient city futures and many aspects of future city life. It culminated in a series of 69

events held over the four days with a total of 209 speakers and 7,423 audience members. This was on top of a series of 69 build-up events in the preceding 18-month period, which involved 354 speakers and 12,984 audience members.

We wanted this to be the largest ever public debate about the city. The festival aimed to: promote comprehensive thinking and discussion about the future of cities; look at examples of good practice in cities that would help promote a better and more resilient, sustainable and prosperous future for all; examine models for future city development; provide a public platform for existing programmes of work – such as InnovateUK, Foresight, Future Cities Catapult and Centre for Cities; and ensure Bristol is seen as both a good example where future cities work is taking place and a natural place for debate about future cities.

It was part of BCDP's year-round Festival of Ideas. Established in 2004, the Festival of Ideas emerged out of Bristol's bid to be Capital of Culture in 2008. It was inspired by our wish to expand the level of debate in the city and to celebrate the work of great writers, commentators and thinkers in and outside Bristol.

In programming the Festival of the Future City sessions we wanted to bring a diversity of voices to the cities debate, mixing established names with newer and younger speakers. We also sought to complement what had already taken place in Bristol 2015 and to put the arts and creativity at the heart of city-making and building. Complementing other aspects of Bristol 2015 work ensured that debates on subjects not previously covered could take place and new thinking could come forward. Though sustainable cities were important, that topic had already been covered widely. The festival allowed us to look at the other issues: fairness and equity; overcoming inequality and intergenerational problems; improving housing; immigration and cities of refugees; devolution; and the future of work.

The festival included a launch event with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as part of its 10th Anniversary Debates series The Way We Live Now: Sir Mark Walport, the government's chief scientific adviser,

Opposite page: New Thinking About Cities (1) panel chaired by Simon Cooper (JonCraig.co.uk).

spoke on Future Cities for All and there was a panel discussion with authors Olivia Laing and Lauren Elkin, Gabriella Gómez-Mont from Mexico City Lab, and city consultant Brent Toderian. The government's Foresight programme on the future of cities spent a day at the festival with their researchers; Bristol Health Partners ran a day on healthy cities; the Wildlife Trusts ran a day-long strand looking at nature in cities; and InnovateUK hosted a day looking at their future cities work.

Other sessions included: *Guardian* journalists Gary Younge and John Harris on US and English cities; various European speakers on the issue of resilience; an evening with Assemble artists; Jonathan Meades, Gillian Darley and Miriam Fitzpatrick on city thinkers of the past; debates about immigration and cities; sessions on Detroit (Chris Dorle), Turkey (Elif Shafak) and Delhi (Rana Dasgupta); an examination of devolution and cities; Michael Marmot discussing health inequalities; Owen Hatherley and Stuart Jeffries on the Left and future cities; Lynsey Hanley, Gavin Kelly and Marvin Rees on social mobility; Bettany Hughes and Edith Hall on cities and ideas in the ancient world; Matthew Beaumont and Iain Sinclair on cities and walking; Darran Anderson, Douglas Murphy and Melissa Sterry on utopian cities; and Guy Standing on the emerging Precariat class and its impact on urban areas. There was a day on the Playable City; Mara Balestrini, Stephen Hilton and Evgeny Morozov were among the panellists discussing smart cities; and Will Self talked about JG Ballard and future cities and led a guided walk exploring different aspects of Bristol and cities.

In addition to the events in the main programme (17-20 November) and many future-city themed events and activity that formed part of the Festival of Ideas in the preceding 18 months, BCDP also convened a series of round tables, seminars and conferences to debate city issues with various partners including Voscur (Bristol's voluntary sector organisations) and Bristol's universities.

There was also new research on examples of good practice disseminated through the festival blog, and we commissioned an online AHRC/ YouGov survey on British attitudes to cities. Among the survey findings were:

• 17 per cent agree that it is generally easier for people to have a good quality of life if they live in a city rather than elsewhere in the UK.

• 56 per cent agree that surrounding areas benefit from a UK city's economic success.

• 23 per cent agree that immigration from other countries to UK cities is generally beneficial for the city's *existing population* (48 per cent disagree).

• 30 per cent believe that immigration from other countries to UK cities is generally beneficial for the *UK as a whole* (44 per cent disagree).

• 38 per cent agree that the UK government is right to want to give more powers (eg legislative, tax-raising) to cities, which could mean having an elected mayor for the area.

• 47 per cent agree that UK cities will become more important to the UK's economic prosperity in the future; only ten per cent disagree.

• 34 per cent agree that UK cities need to grow at a faster pace than they are currently in order to meet the future needs of society.

• The most important requirements for a city to be a place where someone would want to live are: low crime rates and good public health facilities (both 63 per cent); affordable housing, good public transport and good employment opportunities (all 61 per cent); and parks and other outdoor public spaces, and good range of shops and restaurants (both 58 per cent).

• 36 per cent of rural adults would never want to live in a city.

• 47 per cent think UK cities in 2065 will be less 'liveable' than they are now.

• The five most commonly cited challenges facing UK cities in 50 years' time were: overcrowding (71 per cent); high demands on health services (62 per cent); road congestion (57 per cent); loss of green spaces (50 per cent); poverty/income inequality (48 per cent).

The Festival of the Future City was the largest and most successful Festival of Ideas themed season BCDP has run to date. We were delighted to find that 81 per cent of those who responded to our survey rated the festival as either 'very good' or 'good'.

It was also a vindication of the BCDP approach: projects that link and bring together arts and sciences; facilitate academic and professional debates in and with the public; have artists at the centre; and make sure that the views of thinkers, campaigners, politicians and spokespeople can be challenged. Finally, making it a festival and not a conference gave it a unique character and feel. With this, *Sanctum* and the Playable City conference taking place at the same time, Bristol was for those four November days the centre of debate about city futures and is now deemed an essential location for such activity. Little wonder that one speaker said that, for her, Bristol is now the most interesting city for culture in Britain and Europe; another said that Bristol and Manchester were the two cities doing the most interesting work now in England. We plan to hold the festival every two years, the next in October 2017.

This book provides an overview of some of the many topics that were debated during the festival. We're delighted to be able to include some of the posters designed for the festival by the students at the University of the West of England and to have a range of essays and poems from our resident writers and poets. We have two festival attendees writing about what they felt about the festival; examine cities of the ancient world – in this case Greece and Rome – and what they can teach us today; look at utopian cities, ambitious cities, cities of ideas, the life and legacy of Kevin Lynch and Jane Jacobs – inspirations in our Bristol work; look at who owns cities;

and examine housing, social mobility, immigration and nature-rich cities. In our cities case studies we have John Harris looking extensively at the cities of Bradford, Bristol, Manchester and Plymouth followed by sections on Detroit, Delhi, African cities, Lagos and Mexico. The book concludes with Eugene Byrne's provocative contribution about Bristol and a report on Will Self's walk.

I would like to give my personal thanks to all who contributed to the project: all speakers and chairs and all who have contributed to this book; to those who supported the festival in planning, funding and delivery; Bristol Cultural Development Partnership – Business West, Bristol City Council (especially Stephen Hilton), University of Bristol (and the Cabot Institute), University of the West of England (especially Martin Boddy, Christine Hill, Louise Jennings, Carinna Parraman, Jonathan Ward); partners and supporters – Arnolfini, Arts and Humanities Research Council, At-Bristol, Avon

Wildlife Trust (Bevis Watts and Lucy Rogers), Bristol Health Partners (David Relph and Zoë Trinder-Widdess), British Council, British Future, Centre for Cities, Future Cities Catapult (especially Peter Madden and Caroline Twigg), InnovateUK (especially Richard Miller, Mike Pitts, Niraj Saraf, Sarah Tromans and Tim Warnes), Knowle West Media Centre, Situations, Society of Merchant Venturers (especially Chris Curling), Watershed, Waterstones; Bristol 2015 partners who supported the festival – Skanska, First, KPMG, DECC, Bristol City Council; and Bristol 2015 supporters – Burges Salmon, Arup, DNV-GL, Triodos, Airbus, Bristol Sport, Bristol Airport, Bristol Energy, Ikea, JCDecaux.

Most of all, thanks to Arts Council England: in Bristol, Adam Gent, Phil Gibby, Nick Green, Nema Hart, Nona Hunter, Pippa Warin; in London, Sir Peter Bazalgette, Alan Davey, Darren Henley, Simon Mellor; in Manchester, all the staff in the Hive who provided advice when needed.

The Festival Programme/

The main festival period was from 17 to 20 November 2015 with events taking place as follows:

Tuesday 17 November 2015/

- Building Healthy Cities for All: Building Age-Friendly Cities. Anne Karpf, Helen Manchester, Paul McGarry, Guy Robertson. Chair: Jenny Lacey.

- Mike Rawlinson: How the Uses of Cities Change Over Time (guided walk).

- Building Healthy Cities for All: How Do We Know If Cities and Neighbourhoods Are Healthy Places? Sarah Burgess, Joe Irvin, Daniella Radice, Liz Zeidler. Chair: Sarah Purdy.

- Walking the Talk – Making a Reality of Age-Friendly Neighbourhoods (guided walk).

- Steve Leonard: Smart Nation Singapore. Chair: Caroline Twigg.

- Building Healthy Cities for All: How Can We Get Better at Creating Places That Support Health? Hugh Barton, Jane Powell, David Walker. Chair: Marcus Grant.

- Delivering the Future City in the Face of Global Challenges. Caroline Bird, Andy Gouldson, Paul Hassan, Alex Minshull, Rich Pancost, Gary Topp, Sarah Toy, Liz Zeidler.

- Building Healthy Cities for All: How Do We Support Mental Health as Well as Physical Health? Ellen Devine, Aileen Edwards, Richard Kimberlee, Claire Miller. Chair: Andreas Papadopoulos.

- Building Healthy Cities for All: Cities, Health, People and Leadership. Morgan Daly, Simon Denegri, Martin Gregg, Debbie Sorkin. Chair: Hildegard Dumper.

- Self Selects: *Naked* (film screening).

- Festival of the Future City Launch Event: Future Cities For All. Lauren Elkin, Gabriella Gómez-Mont, Olivia Laing, Brent Toderian, Mark Walport, Alan Wilson. Chair: Andrew Kelly.

- Bilbao Workshop.

- Foresight Workshop.

Wednesday 18 November 2015/

- Liveable Cities Day 1.

- New Thinking About Cities (1). Charlie Catlett, Eva Gladek, Enid Slack, Brent Toderian, Mark Walport. Chair: Simon Cooper.

- Nature-Rich Cities: The Value of Urban Nature and Natural Capital. Chris Baines, Melissa Harrison, Stephanie Hime, Tony Juniper, Claire Wansbury. Chair: Bevis Watts.

- Owen Hatherley: City Change in a Time of Austerity (guided walk).

- City Data Workshop. Tony Champion, Paul Swinney.

- The Future of World Cities (1). Tim Moonen, Susan Parnell, Olamide Udoma, Gary Younge. Chair: Martin Boddy.

- Future Resilience in Cities. Wynand Dassen, Chris Dorle, Julie Robertson, Sarah Toy. Chair: Ann Cousins.

- Nature-Rich Cities: Promoting and Developing Nature in Cities. Mathew Frith, David Goode, Georgia Stokes. Chair: Jane Memmott.

- Michael Marmot: The Health Gap. Chair: Julian Baggini.

- Nick Dunn: How the Future of Cities Was Seen From the Past. Chair: Simon Cooper.

- Jerry Kaplan: What is the Future of Life and Work in an Age of Artificial Intelligence? Chair: George Miller.

- Nature-Rich Cities: Architecture, Nature and Wildlife in Cities. Rab Bennetts, Mike Roberts, Melissa Sterry. Chair: John Alker.

- Tim Mowl: Temple Quarter (guided walk).

- The Future of British Cities. John Harris, Rowan Moore, Josh Stott. Chair: Jenny Lacey.

- City Thinkers of the Past and Now (1). Owen Hatherley, Stuart Jeffries. Chair: George Miller.

- Nature-Rich Cities Workshop.

- Launch of the InnovateUK Future Cities Demonstrator Report. Chair: Mike Pitts.

- Public Art Masterclass: Theaster Gates' Sanctum and the Exceptional Fund Projects. Chairs: Claire Doherty and Simon Cooper.

- Social Mobility and Future Cities. Lynsey Hanley, Gavin Kelly, Marvin Rees. Chair: Julian Baggini.

- City Thinkers of the Past and Now (2). Gillian Darley, Miriam Fitzpatrick, Owen Hatherley, Jonathan Meades. Chair: Andrew Kelly.

- Bettany Hughes and Edith Hall: Cities and Ideas in the Ancient World. Chair: Jenny Lacey.

- Iain Sinclair and Matthew Beaumont: Cities and Walking. Chair: Lauren Elkin.

- Assemble: The Hand-Made and the Improvised. Chair: Jonathan Mosley.

- What Happened to Utopian Cities? Darran Anderson, Douglas Murphy, Melissa Sterry. Chair: Jonathan Derbyshire.

- Bristol Data Dome Launch.

Thursday 19 November 2015/

- Liveable Cities Day 2.

- New Thinking About Cities (2). Irena Bauman, Bradley L Garrett, Caroline Haynes, Charles Landry, Mike Rawlinson, Melissa Sterry. Chair: Margaret Heffernan.

- The Future of the High Street. Guy Chatburn, Guy Douglas, Neil Garner, Jenny Griffiths. Chair: Sarah Tromans.

- Immigration and Cities: The Pressures of Change: How Can Cities Make it Work? Ted Cantle, Abdullahi Farah, Steve Hanson, Rachel Sylvester. Chair: Sunder Katwala.

- Jonathan Meades on Bristol (coach tour).

- Chris Dorle: Cities Back From the Brink: The Case of Detroit. Chair: Margaret Heffernan.

- Arts, Culture and the Playable City: Arts and the City. Peter Bazalgette, Laura Kriefman, Charles Landry, Col Needham, Pip Rush Jansen. Chair: Clare Reddington.

- Immigration and Cities: Is Cosmopolitan Confidence Part of the Problem? Sunder Katwala, Gary Younge. Chair: John Harris.

- Arts, Culture and the Playable City: Playable City UK. Sebastian Dobiesz, Claire Doherty, Anna Grajper, Matthew Rosier. Chair: Clare Reddington.

- The Future of World Cities (2). Greg Clark, Rana Dasgupta, Gabriella Gómez-Mont, Justin McGuirk, Elif Shafak. Chair: Margaret Heffernan.

- Arts, Culture and the Playable City: Playable City International. Richard Roberts, Seiichi Saito, Olamide Udoma. Chair: Clare Reddington.

- Designing Future Cities. Eva Gladek, Mark Miodownik, Claire Mookerjee. Chair: Paul Gough.

- Will Self Walking Tour of Harbourside.

- Biomimicry and Future Cities. Peter Head, Sue Thomas, Julian Vincent. Chair: Richard James MacCowan.

- Devolution and the Future Cities. Mike Emmerich, George Ferguson, Alexandra Jones, Mark Tewdwr-Jones. Chair: Heather Stewart.

- Housing and Future Cities. Danny Dorling, Michael Edwards, Kate Macintosh, Anna Minton. Chair: Zoe Williams.

- Arts, Culture and the Playable City: Playable City Workshop: Unexpected Spaces For Play.

- Are Smart Cities Really That Smart? Mara Balestrini, Charlie Catlett, Eva Gladek, Adam Greenfield, Stephen Hilton, Evgeny Morozov. Chair: Margaret Heffernan.

- Poets, Writers and the City. Liz Berry, Rachael Boast, Edson Burton, Rana Dasgupta, Melissa Harrison, WN Herbert, Eimear McBride, Helen Mort, Peter Robinson. Chair: Jenny Lacey.

- Guy Standing and Danny Dorling: The Precariat and Future Cities. Chair: George Miller.

- Will Self on JG Ballard and Future Cities. Chair: Bradley L Garrett.

- *High Rise* (screening with introduction by Will Self).

- Jonathan Meades on Place and Cities. Chair: John Harris.

- Bradley L Garrett and Anna Minton: Place-Hack Your City. Chair: Leo Hollis.

Friday 20 November 2015/

- Bristol Day.

- Tim Mowl: Castle Park (guided walk).

- Mayor's Annual Lecture and Public Debate 2015. Hugh Brady, Jaya Chakrabarti, George Ferguson, Phil Gibby, Thanushan Jeyarajah, Ian McMillan, Neha Mehta. Chair: Laura Rawlings.

The majority of events took place at Watershed, Bristol. Other venues used were Arnolfini, At-Bristol and the Wills Memorial Building, University of Bristol.

The festival was managed by Bristol Cultural Development Partnership (Arts Council England, Bristol City Council, Business West, University of Bristol, University of the West of England), which founded and continues to direct the Festival of Ideas. In addition to the events in the Festival of the Future City that are listed above, there were many other events over the preceding 18 months in the Festival of Ideas programme that linked with the future-city theme. These included: Leading the Green City: An International Exchange (12 September 2014); London and the Cities (October 2014); Freeing Cities (15 October 2014); Art and Media in London and the Cities (13 November 2014); Robin Hambleton: Leading the Inclusive City (24 November 2014); Judith Rodin: Building Resilient Cities (16 January 2015); the Bristol Explored walks led by Tim Mowl (May 2015); and sessions in the 2014 and 2015 Festival of Economics.

The Festival of the Future City was part of the Bristol 2015 European Green Capital summit programme which included: The Nature and Well-Being Summit (4-5 March 2015); The Bristol 2015 Youth Day: It's Our Future (20 April 2015); The Bristol 2015 Student Day (21 April 2015); The Active Cities Conference (9 June 2015); The Business Summit (22 October 2015); and The City Leadership Summit (23 October 2015).

Audio recordings of most of the sessions can be found on SoundCloud (www.soundcloud.com/bristol-festival-of-ideas/sets/2015-festival-of-ideas). Filmed sessions can be found on our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/festivalofideas).

Festival of the Future City poster design by student Emma Nicol, BA (Hons) Illustration, UWE.
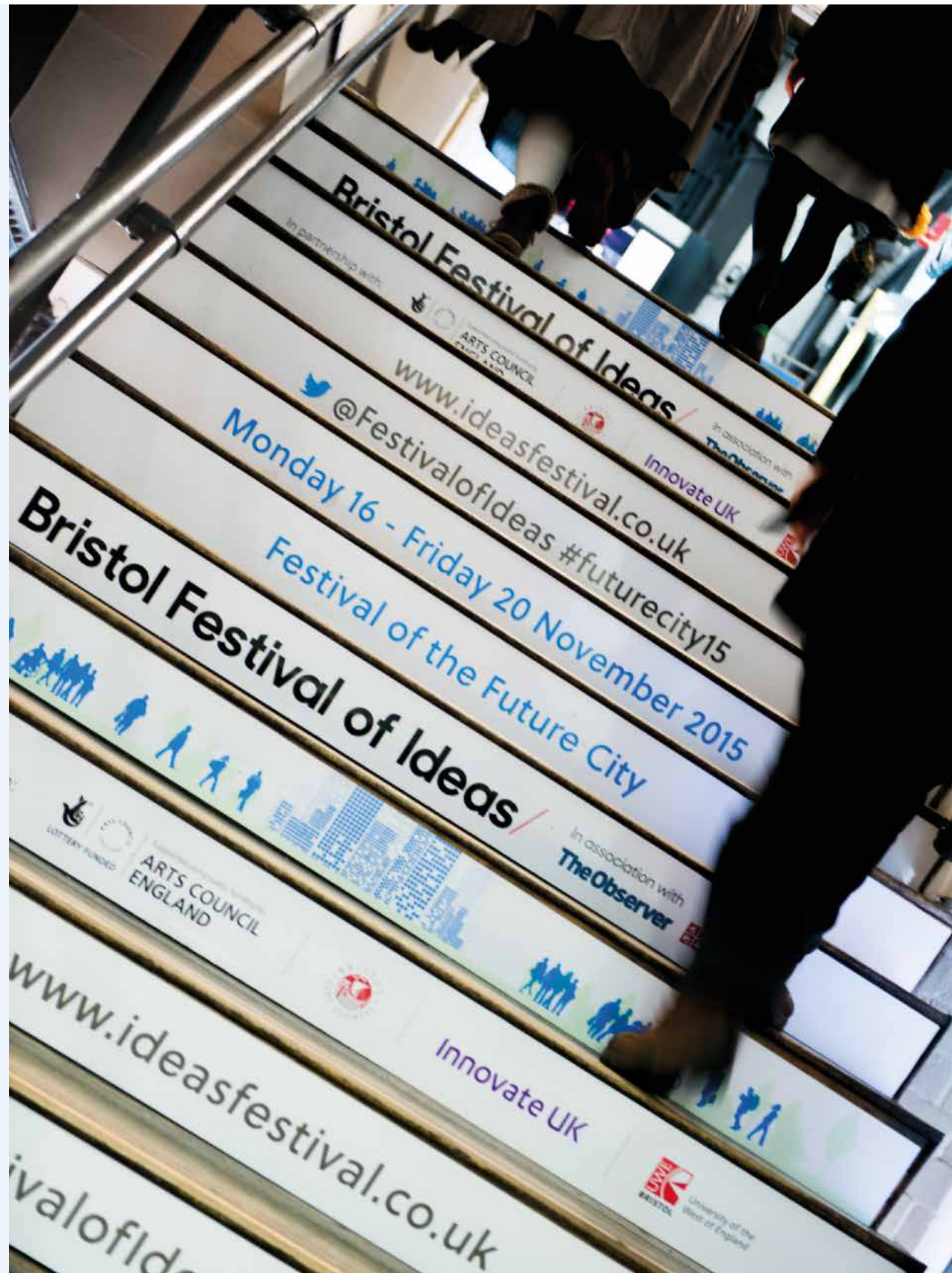
The Future is Urban/

Antonia Layard/

Bristol's Festival of the Future City, held 17-20 November 2015 as a special season within the year-round Bristol Festival of Ideas, was an incredible success. The quirky highlights included Will Self leading a walking tour around the city, armed with umbrella, urging participants to press their faces into an old stone wall and to feel its 'this-ness'; Jonathan Meades guiding a bus tour around Bristol; a master class with the Bristol-based, globally-facing public art producers Situations on their collaboration with Theater Gates on *Sanctum*; and games in the street with Watershed's Creative Director, Clare Reddington, working with the 2014 and 2015 winners of the Playable City award (Chomkorosier for Shadowing and LAX for Urbanimals).

Taking to the streets reflected the widespread recognition that despite all the emphasis on cities as drivers of economic growth (by government or councils) cities are cultural as well as economic hubs. There was great focus on fostering the 'stickyness' of cities. While academics have long discussed the precise details of the creative city debate (and who precisely might be in or out of a 'creative class'), there was widespread appreciation amongst all participants in the festival of the geographies of talent. The festival was in many senses a showcase. It reflected the broad consensus that talent is attracted by culture and cultural amenities as well as an entrepreneurial scene. So far, so Bristol (dancing cranes anyone?).

In more conventional ways too, the festival's integrated, multiple strands were evident. It provided the launch event for InnovateUK's Future Cities Report and its partners included the AHRC, both universities, the city council, Foresight and the Government Office for Science. It benefitted from the Festival of Ideas' media partnership with the *Observer*, and was part of the line-up of events for Bristol's year as European Green Capital.

Coupling these resources with Director Andrew Kelly's incredibly productive networks, the festival was able to invite a fabulous range of international speakers: from Mexico, Paris, Canada, Lagos and the United States, to name just a few. One of the most compelling presentations was by Eva Gladek, from Dutch consultancy Metabolic, illustrating her company's projects based on a systems analysis that implements incredible ecological – and aesthetic – results in practice. If, as the World Bank suggests and Gladek began, 80 per cent of GDP is produced in cities, there are compelling arguments to laser-in on how to make sustainable urban living a reality. (Let's all move to Holland).
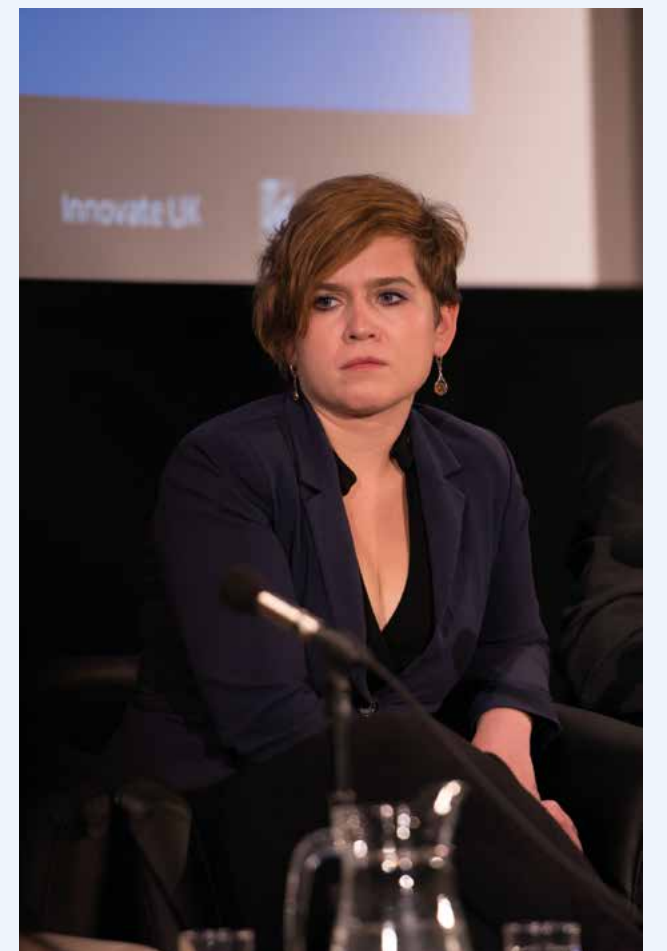
Opposite page: Festival signage on the steps of Watershed. All photos in this chapter are by JonCraig.co.uk.

Right: Eva Gladek.

Left: The Waterstones bookstall at the festival.

Opposite page: The Festival of the Future City launch event – Future Cities for All – in the Great Hall of the Wills Memorial Building, University of Bristol.

There was also genuine engagement. In parallel with the festival, the Danish Government held a series of seminars on Liveable Cities that brought together perspectives from Copenhagen (last year's Green Capital) and Bristol on housing, open space and transport. On 20 November there was the Future of Bristol Day (with its student parallel), where participants could work with local authority representatives, city thinkers and activists to open up conversations about how the city might look in 2065. Some festival sessions were held away from the city centre, including at the highly rated Knowle West Media Centre (who were also working with UWE's Architecture School on the Next City: Reimagining the Means of Production project held at Novers Park Community Association). The week concluded with the mayor's annual lecture, given in the Great Hall of the University of Bristol. At the festival, many events – including the Bristol Day – were free, with the price for tickets rarely exceeding £8.00.

Nothing is perfect and there were real and consistent concerns about inclusion and over-reliance on networks and sheer whiteness. In many senses this hides deeper questions about engagement practices and the time-consuming nature of much participation. Bristol Day was heavily over-subscribed; one had to apply to be admitted and the event filled up fast. There were certainly tensions throughout the Bristol-focused events: on the slow release of land for self-build and engagement with community land trusts; on the difficulties of bus transport; about representation – race, class, disability and exclusion. And yet, and yet, there is a sincere commitment within the Bristol Festival of Ideas and beyond to keep trying, to improve representation, to have multiple locations, diverse speakers and broad audiences.

In addition a special YouGov poll was commissioned before the festival took place. All age groups cited overcrowding, including housing shortages, as the biggest challenge to cities and George Ferguson (Bristol mayor, ex-president of RIBA and influential architect) spoke passionately at the joint Bristol-Copenhagen housing sessions of the need to change cultural perceptions of density. With London participants referring repeatedly to the 230 towers proposed in the capital, a Danish version of density, with light-filled apartments and beautiful lighting (very *Borgen*) was made to look incredibly appealing. Perhaps this is an unachievable holy grail? Certainly, Barra Mac Ruairí, Bristol's Strategic Director for Place, spoke persuasively at a Liveable Cities event about the possibilities for aesthetically attractive, well-connected, dense and inclusive buildings at key sites within and extending the city.

And yet, despite the sparkle of Danish designs, housing was the thorniest issue. When decisions about who can live in the city are so often dependent on price, and truly affordable housing is increasingly scarce, it is to be expected that presenters can illustrate the (inner) urban exclusions that are increasingly taking place. John Harris, Rowan Moore and Anna Minton were evocative in their descriptions of the loss of affordable housing, both on existing estates (in London) and in new-build. Similarly, Michael Edward's Foresight report on housing brought in graphs and infographics to articulate property's position within the economic context, while Danny Dorling was short and to the point: vote Corbyn; bring in three-to-five year assured shorthold tenancies; build age-friendly housing and then increase housing supply. It was left to Kate Macintosh, designer of pioneering social housing schemes in the 1970s, to draw on visual reminders of times long gone now, reflecting on her commissions at a time when low-rise, architecturally sensitive social housing was commissioned with the possibilities that gave.

Here also is the evidence of devolution. Set against a landscape of city deals as asymmetric as national devolution in the UK, cities are working in an ongoing network of localism and centralism. In housing, the dismantling of the planning system by the National Planning Policy Framework and definitions of 'viability' are the absolute backdrop to any city-scale discussions on affordable homes in England. A Bristol mayor has many powers but few resources. Overhearing an audience member grumbling about residents' parking was a stark reminder of how a consensus within the festival to get cars off the streets, improving flow, air quality and connectivity, is not always paralleled in mayoral voting intentions.
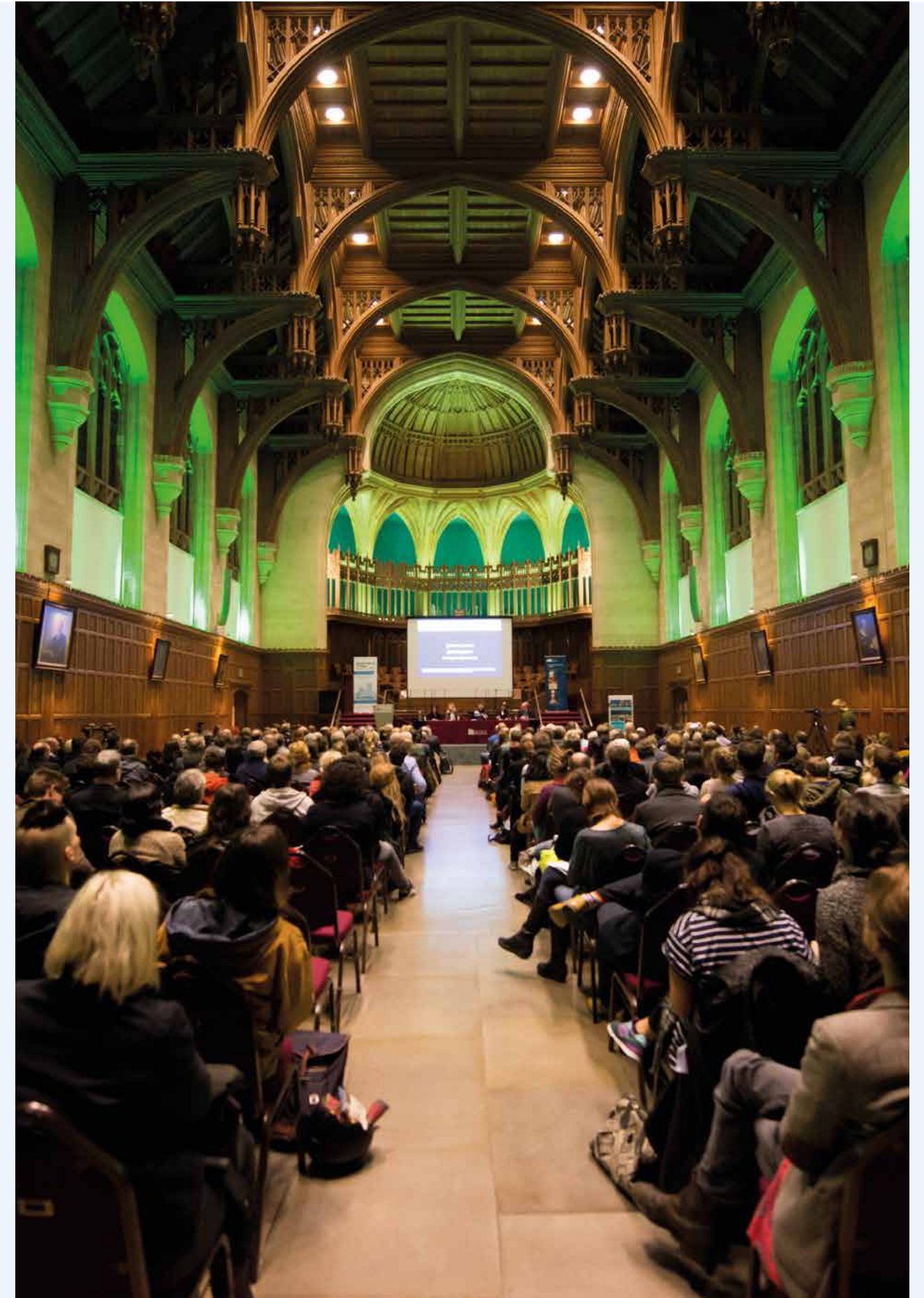
Top row: Michael Marmot and Julian Baggini: The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World; Irena Bauman: New Thinking About Cities (2).

Left: Thanushan Jeyarajah, one of Bristol's two Youth Mayors, at the Mayor's Annual Lecture and Panel Debate.

Below: Question from an audience member during the debate.

Opposite page, top: What Happened to Utopian Cities?

Opposite page, bottom: Mike Pitts: Launch of the InnovateUK Future Cities Demonstrator Report.

In one sense all of these inspirational, imaginative and challenging presentations reflect an expression of belief. The Situationist proposal of 'an autonomous organization of the producers of the new culture, independent of the political and union organizations which currently exist' pervaded the festival (Situationist Manifesto). It was a consistent message: cities can do it for themselves. We can use creative technologies for good. As such, the Turner-prize winning architects Assemble were preaching to the choir. As one Tweet put it: 'Abandon Notions of Permission! Reclaim the City! Use Your Analogue Tools! Use Paint, Screwdrivers, Your Hands!'

Of course in Bristol, as elsewhere, austerity localism is a constant reality, to which amateurism and hand-made can only provide a very partial response. City representatives were open about the painful experience of local authority job cuts, losing friends and colleagues, as well as the fear of what the next week's Spending Review would bring. In addition to art for art's sake and socially engaged practice, if cities become increasingly reliant on business rates for funding, with no devolution of property taxes and continued limits on council tax bands, then the need for cities to do it for themselves becomes an issue not just of artistic practice and communal beliefs but of dire political necessity. There were also plenty in the festival audiences who were fully aware of the significance of land ownership – the most expensive urban resource – to build new housing or provide access for creative acts. Few remain unaware of the implications of ongoing privatisation and defensive property practices. Unsurprising then that Bradley L Garrett's call for an urban Kinder Scout movement was enthusiastically received in a city where non-conformism has a long history and even Visit Bristol indirectly extol property incursions by encouraging tourists to seek out streetart by Banksy.

In all, then, it was the mix of personalities, ideas and visuals that characterised the festival. The best presentations were full of pictures: including Nick Dunn's presentation of his Foresight report on a visual history of the future. We can imagine the future in words, feelings and images, or, as the festival illustrated, all three at once. We can combine ideas with feeling, a festival with the streets. This is the credo: 'At a higher stage, everyone will become an artist.' Perhaps, at least in Bristol, we are all Situationists now.

Disclaimer: This is a wholly personal view of the festival. I missed many sessions through overlaps (#futurecity15 took fear of missing out to new heights), meetings and teaching.

City Thinking: Past and Present/

The Festival of the Future City explored city thinking of the past and of the present, and how these ideas might inform the city of tomorrow.

This section opens with a look at some of the world's oldest cities and some of the different ways in which the concept of the city has been understood since the time of Aristotle. Melanie Kelly writes of the historic cities of Greece and Rome and Amy O'Beirne summarises the discussion from the session Cities and Ideas in the Ancient World. Both chapters offer lessons for the future from the distant past.

In 'On Utopia' Darran Anderson explores the multiple forms of the utopian idea; the sterility of perfection; how utopias become dystopias; and how we might shake off our cynicism and hopelessness and bridge the gap between what is and what might be.

Miriam's Fitzpatrick's chapter, 'For Cities and Their Critics: Ideas are Social', is based on her introduction to the session City Thinkers of the Past and Now (2). In April 1958 'Downtown is For People' was published in *Fortune*. Its author, Jane Jacobs, and the critic Ian Nairn (whose photos were used to create illustrations for the article) were brought together at the invitation of William H Whyte, American urbanist, organisational analyst, people-watcher and author. It was a turning point in all their respective careers and in public perception of the city.

Although Kevin Lynch was not discussed in depth during the festival, his thinking on how people perceive the city they live in and how this should inform good design would have struck a chord with many of the speakers. Melanie Kelly's chapter on his work summarises his theories.

Gillian Darley was one of the panellists in the City Thinkers of the Past and Now (2) debate. Her chapter looks at Bristol's often contentious reconstruction and development in the post-war period in the context of Jacobs' work.

In 'Who is the City For?' Leo Hollis also reviews Jacobs' work, this time in relation to how public space in cities is becoming increasingly privatised, a theme further developed in Bradley L Garrett's call for an urban rambler moment.

Historic Cities: Greek and Roman/

Melanie Kelly/

Ancient Greece provides not only interesting examples of early town-planning in what might be considered 'the true starting point of European urban development', but also demonstrates how the city can come to mean more than just its physical fabric (Vickers p24).

The Greek philosopher Aristotle considered the city to be the world's most authoritative political partnership. A city was more than just a collection of small settlements and villages that had come to form one large entity to allow greater autonomy; a properly constructed city was essential if one was to live well (by which Aristotle meant fulfilling one's *telos* or purpose) and be fully human.

City life was lived in public and a city worked for the highest good; the shared pursuit of virtue and the happiness of its citizens. Aristotle wrote: 'The man who is isolated, who is unable to share in the benefits of political association, or has no need to share because he is already self-sufficient, is no part of the city, and must therefore be either a beast or a god' (p11). A city was formed by its citizens as a living community: 'We must not regard a citizen as belonging just to himself: we must rather regard every citizen as belonging to the city, since each is a part of the city' (p298).

Size was a factor in a city's success, Aristotle believed. If a city was too small it could not be self-sufficient as there would not be enough specialists for it to function; if it was too big then citizens would not have personal knowledge of the character of candidates when it came to making appointments to office. The requirement of public and political engagement would come to have a fundamental influence upon the shaping of the city form. In his survey of the evolution of the city, Graham Vickers wrote that during the Hellenistic period:

Opposite page: The Propylaia to the Acropolis, Athens, Braun, Clément & Co, c1890, carbon print (digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program, 87.XM.99.5).

the Greeks on the mainland began to introduce a strong social element into town life, the result of their preoccupation with the concept of democracy. It was one of the most important architectural developments of all time, this democratic need for widespread consultation, public assembly for the purposes of decision-making and debate, and it conditioned town-planning in a fundamental way. (p28)

Ancient Greece comprised hundreds of independent *poleis* (loosely translated as city-states) that had emerged with the process of urbanisation. People thought of themselves as citizens of their *polis*, Greece's largest political unit, rather than as Greeks, though they shared a common language, mythology and religion. At the heart of each polis was a compact, powerful, self-governing city that controlled the farmland around it and sometimes other smaller cities in the area. The polis was 'both a community and a *sense* of community that helped to define the Greek citizen's relationship to his city and his fellow citizens, to the world at large, and to himself' (LeGates and Stout p18). Comparing the Ancient Greek polis with our modern-day idea of the city-state, HDF Kitto wrote nostalgically (and perhaps romantically): 'The Greeks thought of the polis as an active, formative thing, training the minds and characters of the citizens; we think of it as a piece of machinery for the production of safety and convenience' (in LeGates and Stout p36).

Each polis developed its own constitution. By 750BCE the typical polis was ruled by a small group of nobles rather than by a king. In most cases these nobles would eventually come to be replaced by an oligarchy of wealthy citizens. Although the mountainous terrain of much of Greece could make communications difficult, over time a polis might form strategic allegiances with other poleis and non-Greek states for trade, politics, festivals and defence while retaining its independence and physical isolation. A small polis would resist being absorbed into a larger one. Kitto wrote: 'there was in Greece no great economic interdependence, no reciprocal pull between the different

parts of the country, strong enough to counteract the desire of the Greek to live in small communities' (p34).

The most powerful poleis were Athens and Sparta. Athens, one of the world's oldest cities, was a centre of Ancient Greek civilisation. It offered democratic rights to all free, non-foreign, male citizens over the age of 20 (about 20 per cent of the population). Every citizen was expected to vote and to serve in government when required, contributing to public life. Athens was a city of ideas, which supported the study of philosophy, science, the arts, literature, mathematics, logic, history and architecture. In addition to the magnificent Parthenon, which expressed the Athenians' 'deference to higher spiritual forces', it contained many smaller temples that demonstrated ideals of beauty and architectural order, as well as monumental secular buildings including the theatre of Dionysus (Vickers p29). Aristotle came to Athens to study at Plato's Academy and the city could be said to have laid the foundations for European intellectual and cultural life for the next 2000 years.

Having led the defeat of the Persians in 480BCE, Athens became a superpower, demanding tribute from other city-states and forming a defensive alliance, the Delian League, to deter further Persian aggression. Athens' main rival within Greece was Sparta, a militaristic society with little interest in intellectual achievements. For the Spartans, war was an end in itself, rather than a means of establishing peace. Sparta was ruled by two kings of equal power overseen by a five-man council, with laws being passed by a larger council of elders. Sparta defeated Athens in the Peloponnesian War (431-404BCE), but was itself defeated by Thebes in 371BCE.

The power vacuum that resulted from the fall of Athens and Sparta was filled by Philip II of Macedon who united the Greek city-states under his rule. He was succeeded by his son Alexander in 336BCE. With the expansion of the Macedonian empire under Alexander and his successors the concept of the polis spread into Asia.

Defensive city walls and the agora – a large, open public assembly space for civic and commercial activity – became common features of poleis from the seventh-century BCE. In How the Greeks Built Cities RE Wycherley wrote, 'the architecture of the polis grew out of the needs, ways of life, traditions and ideas of its citizens, and followed these at every point, without pursuing the artificial and the extravagant' (pix).

The agora became 'the most vital and distinctive element of the city', eclipsing in significance the hill-top acropolis around which older cities had originally been formed (p7). At first the main city streets 'converged erratically upon the agora' with the houses 'mostly huddled together in irregular groups' (p9). It was on 'this loose framework [that] the rest of the city arranged itself informally; there was little deliberate or far-sighted planning' (p9). He continued: 'Concentration and coherence around the vital centre, the agora, was invariable. Beyond this we get that endless local and individual variety which makes Hellenic culture so fascinating' (p12).

Evidence of more deliberate town-planning can be seen from the fifth century BCE onwards, in accordance with developing ideas of how the city needed to be managed and what the city should provide. It is likely that the Greeks took their lead from the plans of Ionian settlements on the west coast of Asia Minor. A plan is clearly apparent in the Greek colony cities, which required a rapid building of defences and the imposition of order and autonomy in a foreign land. These cities were conceived as a complete form, sharing a 'common pattern of long, slim blocks separated by narrow feeder streets' and 'an irregular wall which responds to the defensibility of the terrain' (Lynch p16). The Ancient Greek street plans and architecture were driven by practicality.

> The rectangular method meant the least complications. Where real ingenuity was shown was in adapting the Greek city, with all its old original elements, to this rigid frame, and in making the most of architectural possibilities which the process of adaptation offered… [The Greeks] made no pretence of aiming at grandiose or picturesque effects, splendid vistas and the like. But for all that, with a little ingenuity, especially in the siting and arrangement of buildings, they could avoid formless monotony and bring off a successful scheme. (Wycherley pp16-17)

It was a 'tidying-up, not a revolution': the vital elements of the archaic and planned cities were essentially the same (p30).

By 146BCE Greece was under Roman rule. Much of the poleis' political power and independence was lost, though they could continue to be a source of civic pride for their citizens. According to legend, Rome had been founded in 753BCE. For centuries it was little more than a cluster of farmers' huts built on the hills surrounding the east bank of the river Tiber in central Italy. When Athens was at its height in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, Rome was still essentially a small town, overshadowed culturally by the Greeks. A defensive wall was built around its centre as protection against the Gauls but as the town grew with the expansion of Rome's military strength, it stretched messily beyond this boundary. Rome 'emerged as a powerful republic similar to the earlier Greek cities, but then exploded into a giant metropolis and a city of world empire' (LeGates and Stout p18).

The centre of Rome's public life was the Forum, a place of business, worship, political meetings and social gatherings. Markets, fora and places of mass entertainment were essential elements of city living. Citizens had the right to vote and citizenship could be carried to the Roman colonies where many retired veterans made their home.

A Roman city was part of a well-managed, centralised system of government and financial network. New settlements owed something to the design of the colonial Greek cities in southern Italy but also followed the layout of the Romans' military camps; a gridiron divided into regular rectangular blocks with the two major roads that ran from the city gates (east-west, north-south) crossing in the centre. The intersection was the location for the

Interior, Theatre of Dionysius, Athens, Félix Bonfils, 1872, albumen silver print (digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program, 84.XM.422.42). 'Greek theatres were used exclusively for drama – intellectual games' in contrast to the 'real and bloody games' of Rome's Colosseum (Vickers p49).

most important buildings. The orthogonal plan is a practical, interchangeable form that was used to impose Roman imperial authority and it became common around the world. It is still seen today in the street-plans of many modern cities.

The new Roman cities were 'living monuments – cities conceived and organised on a scale sufficiently ambitious and grandiose to reflect the importance of the new Empire. Rome itself was to be the grandest monument of all' (Vickers p38).

However, Rome did not lend itself easily to the gridiron because of its rapid, haphazard growth. Lewis Mumford wrote: 'it was only in the small provincial and colonial cities that Roman order truly prevailed' (p218). While Rome's contribution to the development of civilisation through its engineering achievements, its administrative systems and its spreading of literature, philosophy and the arts was impressive, its record on social organisation was less so. By the third century CE 'Rome's command of refined urban technology was… applied only haphazardly to the city's social problems, and many of the citizens were forced to live in overcrowded slum conditions' (Vickers p49). Mumford wrote of Rome's unsanitary, badly-built tenements: 'These buildings and their people constituted the core of imperial Rome, and that core was rotten' (p221). They were symptomatic of the failings of a deeply divided society. 'In the place of the Greek conception of community and participation in the life of the polis, the Romans erected a citizenship of imperial privilege rooted in a rigid social hierarchy of patricians, clients, and plebeians' (LeGates and Stout p19).

Mumford wrote: 'Rome never faced the problem of its own overgrowth, for to do so it would have had to challenge both the political and the economic basis of the whole imperial regime' (p241). It therefore provides 'a

Top: Detail from map of Ancient Greece showing Athens and its port, Piraeus, which was laid out by the town planner Hippodamus of Miletus in the fifth century BCE. From Voyage Pittoresque de la Grèce Vol 1 by Marie-Gabriel-Auguste-Florent, comte de Choiseul-Gouffier, 1782 (University of Bristol Library Special Collections Restricted Folio DF721 CHO).

Above: Plan of Priene from A von Gerkan's Griechische Stadteanlagen, 1924 (Copyrighted work available under Creative Commons Attribution only licence CC BY 4.0 from Wellcome Library, London). The grid usually ensures the most effective use of space. Here it has been laid out upon the site's steep slopes. Priene is 'a model Greek city, containing everything which makes a polis, all very neatly and ingeniously arranged and subordinated to the Hippodamian plan' (Wycherley p25).

significant lesson of what to avoid' from 'the standpoint of both politics and urbanism' (p242). The water, sewage and road systems could not take the strain brought by the increase in population and housing density. Roman order broke down through the combination of its 'chaotic sanitation, its parasitic regimen of life, its compensatory rituals of extermination' (p239). 'Rome, at a population of one million, became a parasite on the entire Mediterranean world, and both city and empire eventually fell of their own weight' (LeGates and Stout p19).

Barbarian invasions in the fifth century hastened the city's decline.

Historians continue to argue about the relative merits of Greece and Rome and each has its own champions, yet both can provide inspirational as well as cautionary tales for those looking at the future of cities. Cities can be well-planned, effectively managed places of ideas, debate and public engagement. They can also reach beyond the limit of their abilities to function and become places of self-destructive excess.

Bottom, left: Plan of the Roman colonial town of Timgad from F Haverford's *Ancient Town Planning*, 1913 (Copyrighted work available under Creative Commons Attribution only licence CC BY 4.0 from Wellcome Library, London).

Below: Rome in antiquity from Jean-Jacques Boissard's description of the topography and antiquities of Rome, 1597-1602 (University of Bristol Library Special Collections Restricted BC2g).

Bottom, right: The Roman Forum, Braun, Clément & Co, 1890, carbon print (digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program, 87.XM.99.4).

Opposite page, top: Colosseum, Meter Sudans & Arch of Constantine, Rome, Mrs Jane St John, 1856-1859, albumen silver print from a paper negative (digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program, 84.XA.760.14.24). Although derived from a simpler Greek model, 'Everything about the building underlines the importance Rome placed upon great public gatherings, complex organisation and grand monumentality' (Vickers p49).

Opposite page, bottom: Model of the excavated ruins at Pompeii, Edizioni Esposito, c1875, albumen silver print, (digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program, 2004.51.2).
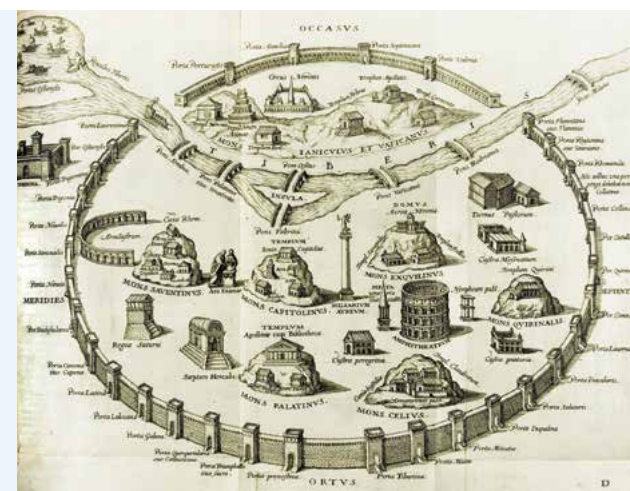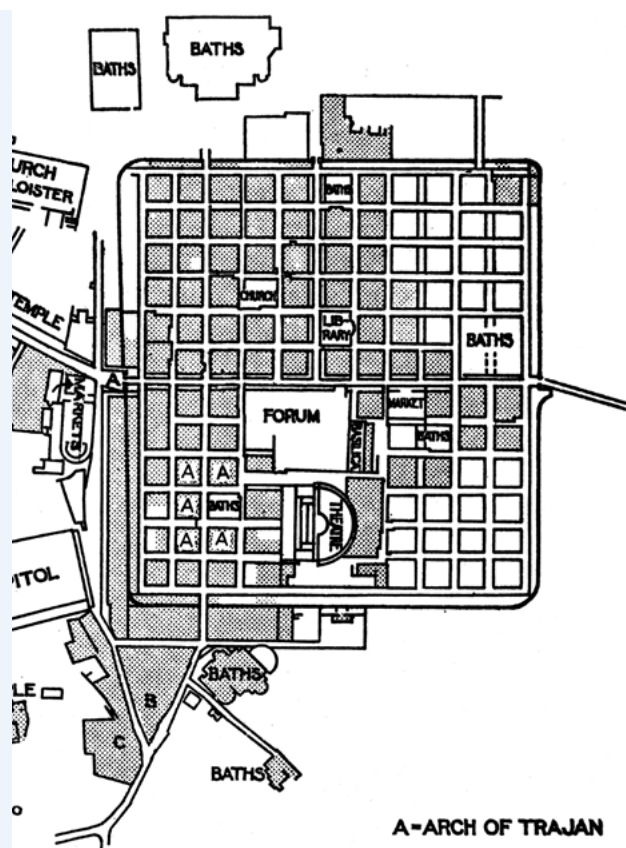
Soldiers Carrying a Model of a City, Taddeo
Zuccaro, c1548, pen and brown ink, brush
with brown wash, over black chalk, white
heightening, on blue paper (digital image
courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program,
96.GB.329).

Cities and Ideas in the Ancient World/

Amy O'Beirne/

This is a summary of some of the discussion points raised during the festival event with broadcaster and author Bettany Hughes and classicist Edith Hall which took place on 18 November. The event was chaired by Jenny Lacey.

Cities of the past offer a number of important lessons for cities today and of the future, from ideas about the purpose, development and meaning of cities themselves to lessons about planning for the future.

Göbekli Tepe, a recently discovered site in southern Turkey, has prompted new theories about how and why cities began, Bettany Hughes explained. Dating back to around the tenth to eighth millennium BCE, the site is a large temple, the oldest religious building discovered to date, and was created during a period when there were no settled societies. Göbekli Tepe demonstrates that people did not initially settle in cities and then develop a moral code and spiritual consensus in order to live harmoniously with one another; rather they met specifically to share a religious experience and subsequently began to gather together regularly, and this led to the emergence of settlements and cities.

Examining ancient cities also reveals that surplus is an important factor in the development of cities. As Edith Hall stated, 'cities are a luxury that only a surplus-over-subsistence economy can afford'; ancient cities which died out or disappeared did so because they did not have enough money to maintain their infrastructure, whereas cities with surplus were able to thrive and create environments that can still be seen today. Hall offered the construction of the city of Palmyra as an example, its impressive structures the products of tax-related surplus. Additionally, she argued, Palmyra is an important example of city planning and development. The chessboard-style pattern of Palmyra indicates that it was founded and designed. If a community had instead developed organically into a city, the resulting layout would likely have been roughly circular, centring around a meeting place.

Hall and Hughes pointed out that surplus not only helps to generate city infrastructure, but also stimulates the creation of new ideas and new thinking about cities. As Hall remarked, money buys time: 'It is not possible to devote your life to thinking about why we are here, how we should act, and how we know what we know if you have to spend time earning a living.' Hughes agreed, adding that 'extraordinary thinkers come up with what they do because they are living in cities and connected to a vibrant city culture'. Before the development of cities, she explained, people lived in much the same way for millennia, dominated by tribal, village and kinship bonds. This changed with the emergence of cities and the new possibilities they allowed in terms of migration and the formation of relationships within them. Great thinkers wanted to understand how people could live with one another in this new way, without the traditional forms that existed previously.

Ancient cities also demonstrate that there are numerous ways in which to consider the concept of cities. 'Is a city some physical place, some kind of fenced in or topographical place, or is it a political contract, a civic arrangement regardless of material environments?' asked Hall. The tablets for the Epic of Gilgamesh, for example, describe Uruk, the city Gilgamesh wanted to build in the Mesopotamian plains, and suggest that Uruk is to be a place for people to meet, to appreciate beautiful buildings and roads, and to trade. What the text does not include, noted Hall, is the notion of the community in the sense of a political, self-governing body.

'A city is not buildings, it is etymologically, aspirationally and philosophically the people who live within it that make the city a city,' argued Hughes. She suggested that people were driven to live in cities because they needed to come together to share ideas; humans evolved to articulate and communicate abstract thoughts and ideas. Similarly, Hall explained that Aristotle believed people had an intrinsic need to create cities and forge new partnerships. She said:

People collaborate with one another, then villages develop because people share commodities and ideas. The city-state is an inevitable agglomeration of interconnected households and villages, and becomes more than the sum of its parts.

Ancient cities further offer lessons in planning cities of the future. Ancient civilisations, for example, learned to mitigate against natural hazards. They built specifically for the geoseismic events they knew they would face, with every aspect of town planning designed to prevent buildings from collapsing, explained Hughes. She argued that cities today should learn from this and should prepare for the worst, mitigating against the threats posed by potential major geological and meteorological events rather than maintaining their current short-term mindset.

Hughes also suggested that future cities could learn from the notion of '*ghosti*', a proto-Indo-European guest-host idea encouraging people to welcome strangers into their community. *Ghosti* first emerged around 6,000 years ago and, rather than being assumed a threat, newcomers were welcomed into societies on the basis that they would probably bring new goods and new blood, and would certainly bring new ideas. 'In order to survive as a species, we have to take the risk of allowing the new, the strange, the unfamiliar physically across our threshold,' Hughes said. 'It seems to me, philosophically, that is an important thing that we should all remember to do.'

Future cities can also learn the skill of utopian thinking from the ancient world. 'We have lost the art of planning what we think is a good place together,' argued Hall. Hughes agreed:

There is a reason that we talk about cities as dream places. They are places that we dream about and within which we have dreams. Cities are there so that we can find the very best kind of society that we can be by sharing ideas within a central space.

Edith Hall, Jenny Lacey and Bettany Hughes (JonCraig.co.uk).

On Utopia/

Darran Anderson/

Utopia gets a bad press. We approach it with a sense of false naivety; treating it not as a perspective but as a tangible thing; not a process of questioning or continual beginning but as a fixed end. When it fails to arrive as expected, the entire idea is discarded. The problem is that we have a primarily visual culture. Think of utopia and we think of images: the vast marble piazzas of Fra Carnevale's *Ideal City*; the woodcut island of Thomas More; the googie on stilts of *The Jetsons*; the Constructivist marvels of Chernikhov; the retrofutures of Radebaugh; and, in a long-clichéd demonstration of utopian philistinism, Le Corbusier's Radiant City tower blocks looming over what was once central Paris. They are all intriguing totems that are mistaken for something infinitely larger and more diverse. We are far more likely to find actual fragments of utopia in the cities we inhabit; provided we look for an idea which comes in multiple forms. To paraphrase William Gibson, utopia is already here; it just isn't evenly distributed.

Since Aristotle, politics have been blighted by the temptation of perceiving and recreating the world in binaries. Since Ancient Egypt, architecture has been cursed by a similar sense of us and them. The latter, granted, has given us wonders but this has crucially depended on the brilliance, openness and invention of the architect. This cannot always be relied on; particularly for the spaces beyond exhibitions, temples and skyscrapers, where humans actually live. The flaws of certain Brutalist designs, and the unwillingness to maintain the structures, were used to discredit not only the style as a whole but the idea of social housing itself. It is no accident that the relative critical rehabilitation of the movement came when the developments began to be populated by young professionals rather than working class families. Political prejudices and commercial motives are always there in the shadows.

At times, architecture fails its inhabitants by succeeding. It is entirely possible to regard liminal spaces (motorway service stations, industrial estates, shopping malls and so on) as 'nonplaces' or 'junkspace', in Auge and Koolhaas'

words respectively, but also as a sort of perfection. The result is not a dazzling pleasure-palace but a pristine inhuman void. We can marvel aesthetically at the likes of Eero Saarinen's TWA Flight Center, provided we aren't obliged to spend much time there. Indeed the extravagance of airport design is down to them being essentially architectural husks. The curious phenomena of people trapped in airports, most famously Mehran Karimi Nasseri in Terminal 1 of Charles De Gaulle, interest us because we already know they are a modernised form of limbo. Of course, liminal spaces are meant to be simply transitional; except we have seen these spaces increasingly seep into our daily lives, through the far-too-permeable barrier between employment and free time. 'Beneath the paving slab, the beach' is now 'Beneath the facade, the office space'.

Perhaps the problem is that we're secretly attracted to sterile perfection. We feign disdain towards the crass commercialism and uncanny valley aspect of shopping malls, for example, but we nevertheless flock to them. Overarching singular building designs are, after all, a manifestation of that most human of things – the ego. There's certainly a sense of wonder in Kahn's Salk Institute, Le Corbusier's Chandigarh, or Niemeyer's Brasília for all their 'unnatural' flaws. They may be easily pastiched (see *Logan's Run*), badly imitated or manipulated to reveal the supposed darkness or emptiness within. Such examples need not be as pristinely grotesque as the gargantuan horror of Speer's Germania; all it takes is a changing of light to turn Carnevale's piazzas into the menacing, shadow-laden dusks of De Chirico. We *want* to see the dystopia within. *Paradiso* momentarily dazzles but *Inferno* is the book we return to and savour.

It is arguable that planned cities, the most overt attempts at utopian living conditions, are inevitably doomed to feel inorganic and inert. 'Where is the planned city?' we might ask, forgetting Haussmann's Paris. When it does fail, it's because it ignores how we interact with space. We are creatures of resonances, significances and orbits. Equally, we require accidents, collisions and surprises. These are planned out of existence by perfection. We thrive on exploration, on the naturally-subversive reclaiming of space through experience and stories,

and there are increasingly few places to do so. Indeed omission of living space from blueprints has become the defining urban evil of our age. It is hard to create private mythologies in glorified industrial estates.

Whilst subject to ethics as much as any profession, it is easy to blame architects, who are continually held to account for the sins of their patrons. Our contemporary climate is only fully understood by surveying who has power today; the dominance of finance and the enthusiastic redundancy of politicians in thrall to the markets and the deep state have resulted ultimately in a catastrophic erosion of democracy. Without examining these deliberate shifts, attempts to rectify them architecturally will be tokenistic at best. Dubai is the obvious example of somewhere where the paradise of a few is propped up by the misery of many. This model is being replicated to varying degrees throughout the world. All utopias are dystopias, we have been endlessly told. They neglect to tell us the reverse is also true.

Utopias become dystopias by how they deal with those who do not fit into the plans. For centuries, dissidents in all manner of societies have been exiled, executed or simply just left to rot. In the Brezhnev-era Soviet Union, it was claimed that such individuals were suffering

from 'philosophical intoxication' for not recognising the proletarian bliss surrounding them and so they were silenced and discredited in psychiatric wards. What the Communist Party was defending was no longer utopia, if it ever had been, or even Marxism, but that which all in power come to defend in time; stasis, monopoly and hubris.

There are two routes, then, to utopia. The first is, at best, a sort of Switzerland of the soul; a perfect enclave for a privileged few where dissenters are banished or left out of the plans. This is a model, again, adopted not only in the island colonies of right-libertarians but in the gated communities and financial citadels of our capitals. The other vision is one of pluralism and inclusivity; the city as it truly is – a collage filled with and fuelled by a multitude of ideas and perspectives; the city as babel and dialectic engine. Here is the reason cities are hated by puritans who cling to a single chronically-insecure totalitarian idea from biblical theocrats to the Khmer Rouge to Islamists. The egalitarian utopia is not entirely fictional but it is in retreat. It exists in the things we enjoy that were for centuries utopian dreams (schools, universities, libraries, public space) and whose quiet radicalism we will not fully appreciate until they are taken away from us. If they and we are to survive and prosper,

we must expand these spaces and develop them. The sense of optimism and momentum employed by the snake-oil salesmen of today touting their evangelical versions of big data and smart cities must be taken back. At the very least, we must shake off our paralysing cynicism and hopelessness.

We live in a technological world scarcely imaginable to even the wildest fantasists of the past. We are, in essence, already inhabiting the future. The initial challenges will be to dispense with the colossal waste that is the class system; to bring our eighteenth-century political systems up to date with our accelerating interconnected world; to see that the dividing line is not between the markets and the state but power and the individual; to restore the link between architecture and egalitarianism that was integral to the early Bauhaus, the German Expressionists, the Russian Constructivists, Archigram, Buckminster Fuller, Lebbeus Woods and the Japanese Metabolists. Imagine gazing out on the skylines of our cities knowing that the towers are not solely dedicated to finance but every facet of human existence (as in the metropolises of Hugh Ferriss); knowing that we are not physically excluded from them; knowing that we do not have to spend a fortune or endure endless surveillance to simply be part of the cities we breathe life into. It is not much to ask.

What is coming may well be daunting not just in terms of difficulties (climate change looms larger by the season) but opportunities (augmented reality, nanotechnology, the Internet of Things). If we begin now, we may master these changes rather than be the servants or slaves of them. Perhaps enthusiastic, conscious, critical engagement with these emerging technologies might make architects of us all as Hundertwasser dreamt; not just of our surroundings but our lives. The chance is there, however distant, to create a space resembling utopia or simply to escape from being a component in someone else's. So much depends on a place that does not exist and the crucial observation, perhaps the real manifestation of utopia, of the tantalising gap between what is and what could be.

Opposite page: William H Whyte working on one of his time-lapse movies (from Project for Public Spaces).

For Cities and Their Critics: Ideas Are Social/

Miriam Fitzpatrick/

'A book for people who like cities and a critique of the plans of people who don't' ran the text below the title on the cover of the first hardback edition of *The Exploding Metropolis*. Based on a series of six articles in the business magazine *Fortune* that ran from September 1957 to April 1958, the book was edited by investigative journalist, critic and New Yorker William H Whyte. The paperback edition ran with a more daring subtitle: 'A Study of the Assault on Urbanism and How Our Cities Can Resist It'.

The sixth and final article of *The Exploding Metropolis* series was a special, one-off collaboration that brought together five luminaries in urban design. This was 'Downtown is for People'. As well as Whyte, Senior Assistant Editor at *Fortune*, it included Jane Jacobs, Ian Nairn, Gordon Cullen and journalist Grady Clay, a life-long friend of Whyte. Jacobs and Whyte were both from the publishing house of Time Inc in New York while Cullen and Nairn hailed from the larger-than-life UK publishing house The Architectural Press. Clay was the editor for urban affairs at Kentucky's broadsheet *Courier-Journal* and later editor of the magazine *Landscape Architecture*.

This article tells how and why these contrarian journalists got together. To situate what these city thinkers mean for cities today, the focus is on their context, predisposition and how, against the odds, these characters awakened a professional consciousness. My argument is that with Whyte as a catalyst they fused ideas into a rare alchemy of urban critique. The intellectual Theodore Zeldin encourages such synthesis by proposing 'thinking as bringing ideas

together, flirting with each other, learning to dance and embrace'. This is a vignette of how these rare urbanists did exactly this; how they 'zigzagged across intellectual horizons' and found resonance in each other (Zeldin p85).

So why, in 1958, did Whyte make such taunting statements on cities? What was afoot in city planning to prompt this rallying call?

By the series' title – *The Exploding Metropolis* – Whyte hinted at one anxiety; the hollowing out of cities by policies of 'dispersal and decentralization' (Gutkind p52). But it was the series' crusading tone that gets us closer to an intriguing social story. This was the sense of outrage these creative critics shared at an apparent lack of care for cities as well as their collective sense of urgency to up-skill critical thinking or critiques of city designs.

Loving 'the atmosphere of urbanism' and the elusive quality that made cities, these pro-city boosters belonged to a heterodox faction in the 1950s (Ehrenhalt p19). Individually, they challenged an accepted planning predisposition to decongest, to disperse, to decentralise, to deurbanise. With the city centre as their fulcrum, together they found their lever. By a shared lucidity in language and a cross-Atlantic collective outrage, they thrived in the release of a shared agitation.

For a little more context, it is worth recalling two charged oppositional forces that dominated city planning in the mid-twentieth century. These were notions of decentralisation and centro-centralism. An Aesop's tale helps to illustrate this twin phenomenon further; this is the story of 'The City Mouse and the Country Mouse'. The tale's structure serves to heighten a tension between a magnetic attraction towards 'the centre of things'

(centro-centralism, Whyte 1968 p334) and an oppositional force to 'just beyond the notional edge of the metropolis' (decentralisation, Urban Land Institute p1). Arthur Rackham's 1912 illustration of the tale captures the urbane city-booster – at home in any metropolitan environment – and, in more appropriate attire for fieldwork, the cousin, with morning dew on rustic boots speaking of a desire for release; the prospect of 'getting away from it all' (Whyte 1968 p334).

This allegory serves to sharpen a binary distinction of centrifugal and centripetal forces on city development (Colby pp1-20). An easy mnemonic is 'f' in centrifugal is 'f' for far-flung, faraway fields and 'p' in centripetal is 'p' for proximity and propinquity.

If there was to be any awakening of an urban consciousness, Whyte felt compelled to counter a 'Groupthink' that was leading a charge to deurbanisation almost by default, especially as he believed that 'It is the people who like living in cities that make it an attraction to people who don't!' (Whyte 1958 p24).

'Groupthink' was a term Whyte coined for a memorable article for *Fortune* in 1952, where he outlined the dynamics of group compliance versus heterodox critical evaluation. Its celebration of contrarianism was core to the subsequent success of his *Organization Man* in 1956. This was a study of the new suburbs that soon became a bestseller and thereafter shorthand for a mindset of compliance or bureaucratisation.

What Whyte did – and which we are perhaps more alert to today – is to query how opinions got formed and swayed, and who influenced the influencers. A follow-up series into the habits of the following generation was eagerly sought.

In the summer of 1957, as media star Marilyn Monroe detonated the first dynamite stick for the groundbreaking of the Time-Life Building in New York, Whyte had already begun to consider what would become *The Exploding Metropolis*.

He opened the new series in September with an article entitled provocatively 'Are Cities Un-American?'. This was followed a month later by 'The City and the Car' by Francis Bello. Both articles examined urban preferences of interest to *Fortune*'s business readership. But behind the scenes at Time Inc the series crossed a fine line in editorial fields.

A tacit compact existed about which story went out in each of Time Inc's five magazines. In addition to *Fortune*, there were the weeklies, *Time* and its more pictorial sister, *Life*; and the monthlies, *Architectural Forum* and its interior arm, *House & Home*. The initiation of a series critiquing the city, especially its design, by the business magazine, *Fortune*, stepped on the toes of the other magazine editors, most notably the formidable Doug Haskell, campaigning editor of *Architectural Forum*.

In November 1957 Haskell assembled an in-house session to discuss 'Cities and their Problems'. By contrast, Whyte

wished to emphasise the city's strengths not its problems. The sibling rivalry only added potency and urgency. Three further articles followed in quick succession: 'New Strength in City Hall' in November and 'Enduring Slums' in December (both by *Fortune* editors), and, in January 1958, 'Urban Sprawl', an article by Whyte that coined the term for the urban lexicon.

To complete the series, Whyte had to move quickly to extend his pool of contributing critics, noting later that there were too few interested enough or skilled enough to critique the city and its design.

Since the first Conference on Urban Design held at Harvard in June 1956, Jane Jacobs had impressed Whyte. Jacobs had stood in for Haskell to deliver an impassioned plea for understanding the enmeshed economic and social consequence of cities with a paper on 'The Missing Link in Urban Design' (Allen pp39-40).

The challenge for Jacobs was her monthly commitment to *Architectural Forum*. So Whyte looked for others to supplement Jacobs' contribution and approached his journalist friend Grady Clay, who submitted a sub-article on 'What Makes a Good Square Good'.

Whyte wished to close the series with optimism for city centres, and so chose to illustrate the article with examples of 'not the horrors known so well, but the strengths so easily overlooked' from places across America (Whyte 1993 p186). He had admired the photo-journalism of *The Architectural Review*, and was especially beguiled by its Counter-Attack Bureau, established by Ian Nairn and Gordon Cullen, who he invited to provide illustrations for the piece. With the additional material agreed, Jacobs now felt able to provide a short article.

The sibling rivalries remained. But by tenacity, the final article in the series, 'Downtown is for People', was eventually published in April 1958, bringing the five luminaries together in a rare meeting of minds.

Whyte recalled later his indignation at a number of his colleagues who felt Jacobs 'should not be entrusted with an assignment on the city. She was female; she was untried, having never written anything longer than a few paragraphs'. Elaborating on their biases and bigotries, the ultimate indignation was that Jacobs dared 'to work on a bicycle... All in all a most inappropriate choice' (Whyte 1993 pxv).

The impact of 'Downtown is for People' was immediate. This 'blockbuster on the superblock' attracted some of 'the best responses' of any article by *Fortune* up till then (Laurence p12). The article ran to 14 pages with 17 punchy captions to illustrations of photographs taken by Nairn and redrawn by the exemplary hand of Cullen.

The article was a pivotal moment in the emergence of a pithy and prescient urban critique. It filled a gap,

Opposite page: Cover of first edition paperback of *The Exploding Metropolis*, Doubleday Anchor Book, ©1957, 1958 (with thanks to Peter Laurence).
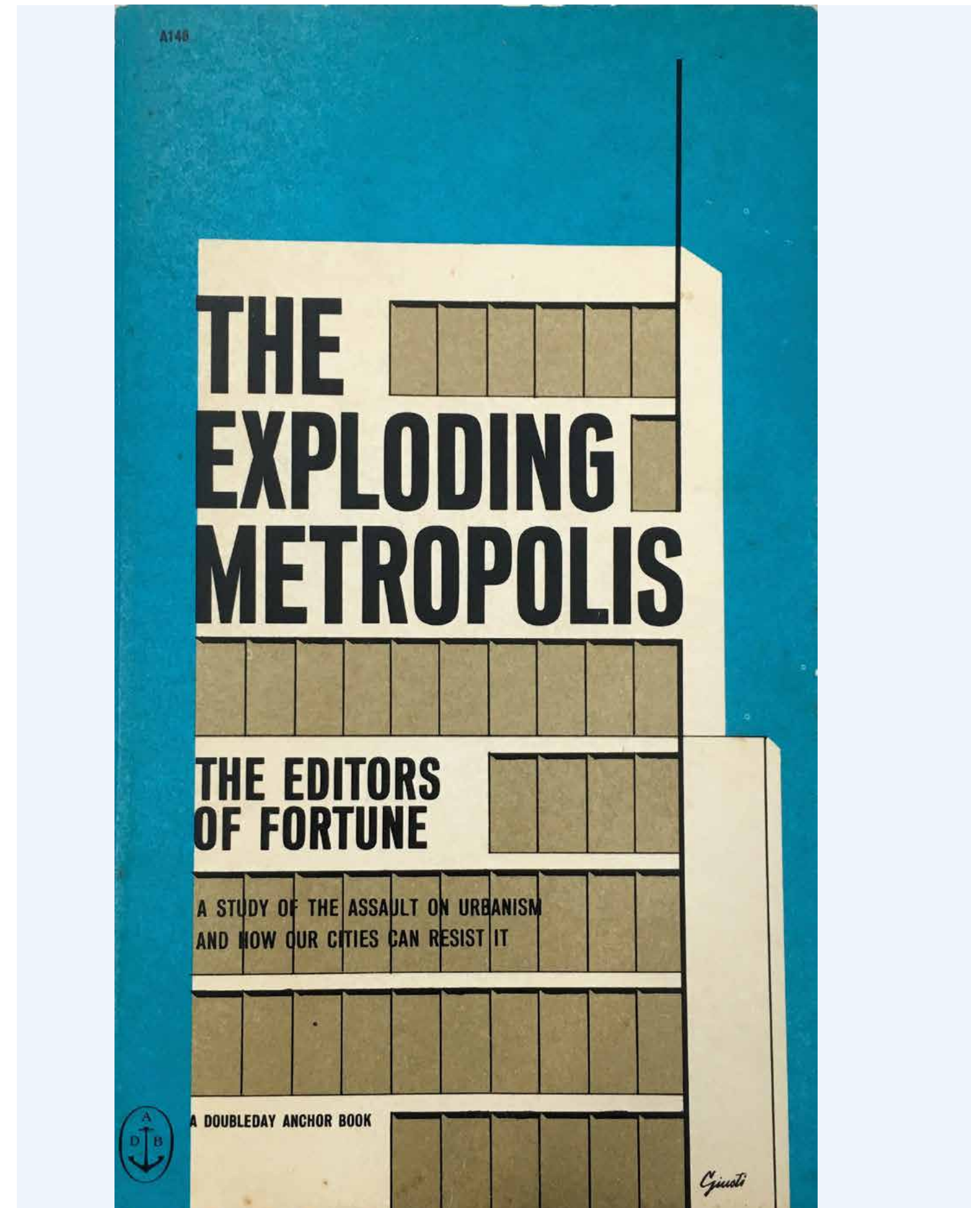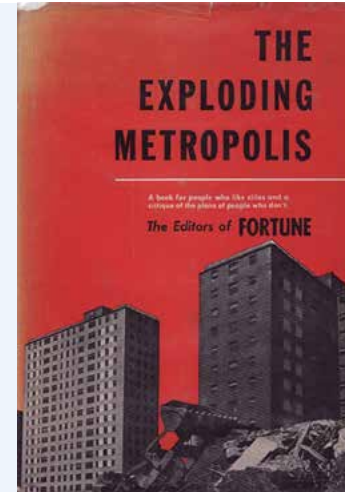
between the panoptic view of planners and the socially savvy view of street life, between the macro- and micro-scale, between top-down and bottom-up planning. It evoked hope 'for people who *like* cities' (author's italics) as to how to find new life and not to pander to beleaguered, anti-city sentiments of the time.

At heart, it established a thesis on the value of propinquity, face-to-face contact on street corners; it attested to the vitality of life on the steps, stoops and street corners of the city centre. Its critique of default decentralisation and its passionate praise of city centres' messiness, strips of chaos, was, even then, a bulwark against complacent planning policy. Its findings are as vital today.

Bolstered by their shared passion, 'Downtown is for People' was a collaboration that was to change the respective careers of all five contributors. Its publication in 1958 coincided with the fit-out of the Time-Life Building. But neither Whyte nor Jacobs were ever to take up their allotted seats in the new headquarters. They had in effect built their own edifice, that of urban critique. They independently took leave of absence from Time to pursue more direct action; Jacobs to write her famous *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) and Whyte to follow his lifelong study of open space.

Returning to Whyte's proclamation 'for people who like cities', after 'Downtown is for People' was published a critical voice was spawned for pro-city boosters. Planning courted publicity. No longer could top-down decisions be accepted as inevitable. Planning became social. Hired primarily for their literary and graphical skills, the five contributors' 'ideological imprint was to last well after their respective careers moved on' (Clutter p88).

By their collaboration, Clay, Cullen, Jacobs, Nairn and Whyte not only made urban design newsworthy, they also brought some sagacity to the public's perception of the city. Together they reasserted the power of criticism, broadened the audience and, in effect, educated the consumer. Their outrage was palpable, their intellectual affinity was motivating and their timing was prescient.

If this sounds portentous for over half a century later, the implications are deliberate. The question remains as to how to subject decisions about urban design to an informed and independent critique. Moreover, how might such a critique be made newsworthy or stimulate coalescence between different interests to shape our designed environment to better ends?

Paraphrasing critic Paul Goldberger, what the five achieved individually was that 'they put their facts where their heart was, and their hearts where their facts were'. Collectively, they did more than this.

As Edward Glaeser attests in his recent publication *Triumph of the City*, cities magnify humanity's strengths through our ability to learn from each other 'more deeply and thoroughly when we are face-to face' (p249). Drawing upon the spirit of the US Pragmatists a century earlier, what these contrarian critics had in common was 'an idea about ideas... that ideas are produced, not by individuals, but by groups of individuals'. These insights by writer Louis Menand capture what must surely be the ultimate outcome of their collaboration; that for cities and their critics 'ideas are social' (pxi).

Above, left: One of the drawings from 'Downtown is for People' illustrating San Francisco's Union Square (*Fortune*).

Above, right: Cover of first edition hardback of *The Exploding Metropolis*, Doubleday, ©1957, 1958 (with thanks to Peter Laurence).

Opposite page: Time-Life statue in New York City, in front of the Time-Life Building, 2012 (iStock.com/AlexPro9500).
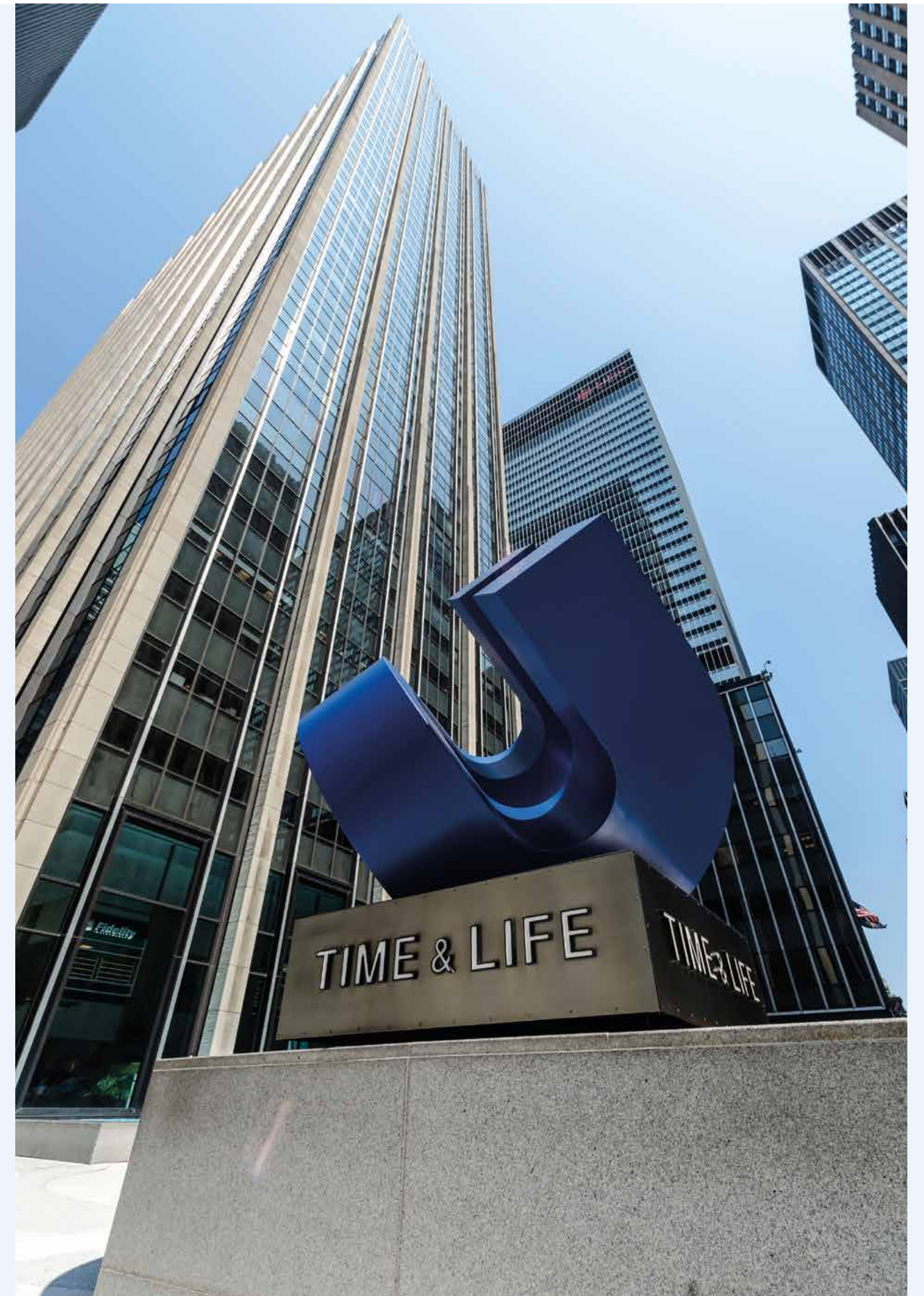
The Image of the City: Kevin Lynch/

Melanie Kelly/

In 1960 a book was published that has become a standard reference for city planners and designers, tourism bodies, architects, social scientists and those with an interest in city-living. Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* provided an easily understood examination of how the image of the urban landscape was perceived, organised and navigated by the people who lived there, and how this could guide good city design.

At the time of publication Lynch was an associate professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He had studied at Yale, the Taliesin studio of Frank Lloyd Wright and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and received his bachelor's degree in city planning from MIT. However, interviewed in 1980 for an MIT Department of Architecture educational video, he claimed that his high-school education at the progressive Francis W Parker School in Chicago had shaped his future development as a planner far more than his time at college. The school promoted the principles of community and citizenship, and thereby 'shaped his future interests in human environments and social justice' (Lynch 1990 p11).

Lynch sought to respond sympathetically to the diverse human experience, paying close attention to local users' needs, rather than high-handedly imposing an outsider's schema upon public space. He felt that with a good environment there was the possibility of leading fulfilling lives but not necessarily that a good environment would change society. A 'prerequisite for intelligent and enjoyable behavior in the street' was 'to make the environment conceivable to the "man in the street"', he wrote (Lynch 1990 p66).

The research photos of Boston taken for 'The Perceptual Form of the City' are by Nishan Bichajian, 1954-1959. Bichajian was Kepes' assistant. Opposite page: 50 ft Intervals, Boylston Street, Sidewalk with Pedestrians, Otis Clapp & Son (pharmacy), 12:00 PM. to 2:30 PM (detail) (© Massachusetts Institute of Technology, KL_000456).

Born in 1918, Lynch grew up during the political upheaval of the late 1920s and early 1930s. His interest in architecture was sparked by a course on Egyptian history taught by his 7th grade teacher. Graduating from high school in 1935, Lynch was advised by a local architect to study architecture at Yale, but he dropped out before completing his degree, finding the school's Beaux-Arts approach too conservative for his taste. Lynch felt that the 18 months he spent subsequently at Taliesen made him look at the world around him properly for the first time.

After leaving Taliesen, Lynch went to Rensselaer to study civil and structural engineering. However, he increasingly spent time with Professor Archie Bray in the institute's biology department. It was Bray who helped him to see the connection between living things and social life. Once again abandoning his course, Lynch returned to Chicago, working as an assistant in an architect's office before he was called up for the draft. He served in the Army Corps of Engineers.

After the war, Lynch was able to go to MIT to study city planning with the support of the GI bill. Graduating in 1947, he worked as an urban planner in North Carolina before being invited back to MIT in 1948 to join the teaching staff as an instructor in the Center for Urban and Regional Studies. Lynch helped to build the MIT planning programme 'into one of the most distinguished in the world' (Lynch 1990 p20).

In 1954 Lynch and his teaching colleague Professor Gyorgy Kepes made a successful grant application to the Rockefeller Foundation for a study entitled 'The Perceptual Form of the City'. They argued that modern cities had become too multifaceted and too big for the general public to comprehend, and sought to discover how this problem might be effectively resolved through design. They wrote in their grant proposal: 'One of the basic difficulties today is that the city-dweller is out of scale with his environment' (quoted in Raynsford). Their five-year study developed the ideas that Lynch would

later expound in *The Image of the City*. The two main methodologies used to gather data were a detailed field survey of city streets by a trained observer and extended interviews with a small sample-group of citizens, which also involved the drawing of maps.

The Image of the City is based upon case studies of three contrasting places: vivid, historic Boston, with its often disorientating street patterns and 'locational difficulties'; formless, faceless, indistinct Jersey City; and the relatively youthful Los Angeles, with its central gridiron layout (Lynch 1960 pp14-15). All three revealed how city users consistently understood their surroundings by forming mental maps which comprised a pattern of five definite elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. The importance of these elements had become apparent during the 'Perceptual Form' study from the directions given to the researchers when they asked people in the street how to get to a specific location as part of the field study and from the maps the interviewees were asked to draw of specific areas of the city.

City design is complex, Lynch believed, because 'the city is a construction in space, but one of vast scale, a thing perceived only in the course of long spans of time' (Lynch 1960 p1). He continued:

At every instant, there is more than the eye can see, more than the ear can hear, a setting or a view waiting to be explored. Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings, the sequences of events leading up to it, the memory of past experiences.

Lynch argued that understanding the five physical elements, what they mean to people, their inter-relationship and how they can be organised, provides planners, those developing way-finding schemes and others working in city design with an opportunity to enhance the city experience and create a satisfying urban form. The five elements are interdependent yet overlapping. They are the building blocks from which a city's overall image is formed.

• Paths are the channels in which people move, such as streets, railway tracks, pavements or trails. They are the dominant elements in urban space and often provide the basic structure around which the rest of the built environment is arranged. If they have clearly defined origins and destinations they can help to tie the city together, preventing confusion and disorder.
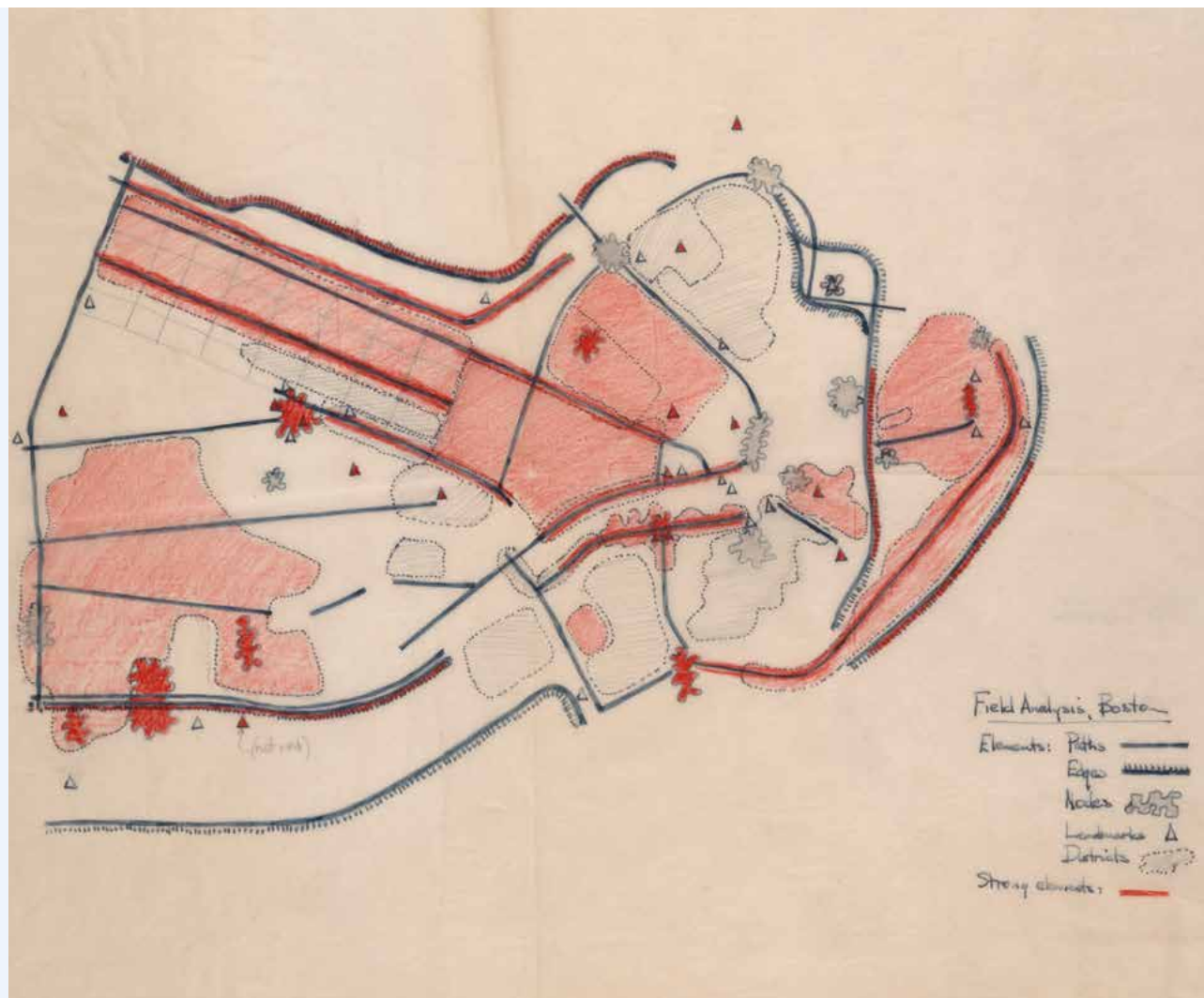
• Edges are linear boundaries, such as walls, buildings and shorelines, which visually break the continuity of the surrounding area and separate districts. They are zones of transition.

• Districts are relatively large, two-dimensional sections of the city with a common identity, theme or character. They might be referred to locally as quarters or neighbourhoods. People are aware when they are in a particular district from the clues around them, though familiarity with the city may enhance this recognition and strangers may be less readily able to identify them.

• Nodes are strategic meeting or focal points that can be entered, such as junctions, city squares or railway stations.

• Landmarks are readily identifiable, singular objects chosen by people as things that identify the environment they live in. They are unique or memorable visual anchors. They might be large-scale, providing a constant point of direction in the distance, such as towers or church spires, or be visible only within a restricted local space when approached from a particular direction, such as a familiar doorway, a piece of street furniture or a shop sign.

In addition to the five elements, two important interconnected concepts were discussed by Lynch in the book: 'imageability' and 'legibility'. He would return to these in later work. Imageablity refers to 'that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer': the more memorable and distinct the form, the stronger and clearer the image (Lynch 1960 p9). Imageabilty 'might also be called *legibility*, or perhaps *visibility* in a heightened sense where objects are not only able to be seen, but are presented sharply and intensely to the senses' (Lynch 1960 pp9-10).

Legibility refers to 'the ease with which [the cityscape's] parts can be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern' (Lynch 1960 pp2-3). The mental image of the city is logically and systematically assembled by the user through the use of cues – such as colour, shape, motion, light, symbols and signs – and the way in which the five elements have been differentiated and grouped.

Legibility is essential for 'facilitating the practical tasks of way-finding and cognition, but it has other values as well', Lynch argued.

It can be a source of emotional security, and one basis for a sense of self-identity and of relation to society. It can support civic pride and social cohesion, and be a means of extending one's knowledge of the world. It confers the esthetic pleasure of sensing the relatedness of a complex thing, a pleasure vividly experienced by many people when they see a great city panorama before them. (Lynch 1990 p470)

Opposite page: Field analysis by Lynch of Boston showing paths, edges, nodes, landmarks and districts, 1959 (© Massachusetts Institute of Technology, KL_002195).

For Lynch, the urban environment needs to be understood as 'an enormous communications device' constantly being read by the people in it (Lynch 1990 p519). Distinctiveness itself is not necessarily the key: 'A highly differentiated system, lacking abstractions and generality, may actually reduce communication' (Lynch 1960 p139). What is desirable is an environment that evokes 'rich, vivid images' and

that these images be communicable and adaptable to changing practical needs, and that there can develop new groupings, new imagings, new poetry. The objective might be an imageable environment which is at the same time open-ended. (ibid)

Lynch suggested that the city image could be analysed in terms of three integrated and ever-present components:

• Identity: what makes one object a separate entity, clearly distinct from others, the sense of 'individuality or oneness' (Lynch 1960 p8).

• Structure: 'the spatial or pattern relation of the object to the observer and to other objects' (ibid).

• Meaning: the observer's practical or emotional feeling towards the object. This is the hardest component to analyse – and one Lynch only touched on in this book – because there is far greater variance than with the other two components.

The city image is not an entity in its own right. It is a complicated and mobile pattern, built from a combination of the subjective thoughts of the observer and the physical reality of the observed. It is a snapshot taken of a transient structure and need not necessarily be correct in every detail. Although the image of a given reality may vary significantly between individual observers, Lynch found considerable agreement among members of the same group as to its common threads.

In *The Image of the City* Lynch was not laying down a set of fixed planning rules or calling for uniformity of design, but was presenting an investigative technique that could help planners to visualise a specific urban environment in the same ways as the city's users, with the potential to recognise the unique as well as the shared perception. His book offered a coherent framework for seeing the city as an all-embracing image that acknowledged the subjective experience of individuals. A well-designed city harmonises the relationship between the inner and outer world, offers a precise hierarchy of the dominant elements and thereby improves people's sense of security. Lynch felt that moments of disorientation were not necessarily something to be avoided. They could bring a pleasurable sense of wonder and mystification as long as they did not constitute an overall loss of form and balance.

The Image of the City was published at a critical moment in the history of city design in the US. Jane Jacobs' *Death and Life of Great American Cities* was published the following year and Herbert Gans' *The Urban Villagers* the year after that. All three explored the relationship between urban forms and city inhabitants and influenced the emerging environmental design movement.

Field Analysis, Boston
Elements: Paths ⎯⎯
Edges
Nodes
Landmarks △
Districts
Strong elements:

In the 1980 MIT interview Lynch said that he believed that there is nothing sacred about buildings. What is important is not that a building is historically significant or that it was designed by an architect revered by his peers, but what it means to people. In *The Image of the City* and other work he had hoped to demonstrate that planning authorities should not depend on the elite designer and the elite power centre for making decisions about urban sites but should find out what the people who will live there value.

Lynch's influence is seen today in the efforts of tourism groups to highlight neighbourhood distinctiveness and produce effective maps and on-street signage for visitors; in the regeneration schemes that seek to reconnect people to the city; in way-finding and city branding programmes; in the reconfiguration of previously intrusive road layouts that had formed physical barriers between different city areas and different groups of citizens; in researchers employing human-scale evaluation methods as a means to understand place. In Bristol it is most clearly evident in the award-winning Bristol Legible City way-finding system. However, Lynch himself was largely disappointed with the book's impact outside of academia. He felt that planners still paid insufficient attention to how city design could improve quality of life by providing public spaces with which people could empathise.

Lynch sought to develop normative theories of city design based on human values that were grounded in the reality of practice and also sufficiently conceptual to apply to a range of contexts over time. Such theories were needed to complete the design process. They sat alongside planning theory, which was concerned with the complex decisions that had to be made in any city development, and functional theories regarding spatial structures and dynamics.

In 1978 Lynch retired from MIT with emeritus status (he had been made a full professor in 1963) though he continued to teach. His work in planning and city design, at home and abroad, had run parallel to his academic career. He had been an associate of the firm Adams,

Howard and Greeley as well as a freelance consultant and he co-founded Carr Lynch Associates with Stephen Carr, a former student and an MIT colleague.

Lynch died in 1984. The posthumously-published edited volume *City Sense and City Design: Writings and Projects of Kevin Lynch* (1990) includes professional design and planning projects that show how he translated many of his ideas and theories into practice. In the introduction, the editors wrote:

> [Lynch] spoke of how the most successful places are those that are owned, cared for, and intensely loved by people. He felt that planning and planners had not been very effective in creating localities, and that where localities exist they have happened without much formal planning. The point, which Lynch had made in many of his writings, is that planning and design must begin with community participation, local control, and individual engagements with the immediate environment. The success of planning and design will ultimately depend on our ability to create such opportunities and environments. (Lynch 1990 pp26-28)

Opposite page: 50 ft Intervals, Huntington Avenue, Facing Trinity Church and Copley Square, Series in Snow (detail) (© Massachusetts Institute of Technology, KL_000543).

Above, left to right: Men Playing Cards, Man with Dog, Paul Revere Mall; Storefronts on Newbury Street, with Rita Thornton (Clothing Store), Gwendolyn Cowell (Clothing Store), Bay Colony Book Shop, and Newbury Hat Shop, 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM (© Massachusetts Institute of Technology, KL_001232, KL_001195).

Next page: Corner of Avery Street and Washington Street, Walton's Cafeteria (detail) (© Massachusetts Institute of Technology, KL_000679).

Jane Jacobs' Influence in Bristol: Probing the Real World/

Gillian Darley/

Jane Jacobs' seminal book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities: the Failure of Town Planning* appeared in print just as bombed Bristol began to consider its future form; restrictions on building materials had been consigned to history and new orthodoxies of city planning were in the ascendant. Perhaps some readers of her British edition, published by Jonathan Cape in 1962, took comfort from her observations on the way in which cities could build in, and on, social interaction alongside economic and physical diversity – concentrating on 'common, ordinary things' (p13). As she put it, 'classified telephone directories tell us the greatest single fact about cities' (p155). But across the UK, a very different pattern of urban development was envisaged for the future, with persuasive and progressive social and economic underpinnings. The lines of engagement were forming.

The American edition of *Death and Life*, the title in elegant, classic font on a plain background, had appeared in late 1961. The dust jacket of the British edition, which appeared some six months later, was a grainy monochrome photograph of poor (white) Americans passing time on their communal stoop, the title a column of sans serif type. Jacobs' name was in sharp pink. The designer of this tour-de-force was young Jan Pienkowski.

Jacobs introduced her book with the no-nonsense confidence of a practiced public speaker and militant campaigner. She had won her spurs in the opposition to Robert Moses' plan to dissect quiet Washington Square

in Manhattan with a freeway. In the admiring words of another woman squaring up to become a forceful presence in architectural and planning discourse (albeit on paper), Ada Louise Huxtable, Jacobs had orchestrated the 'most disorderly and best-publicized battle', the saving of the West Village (p85).

Death and Life is, at least in the early pages, rather more a polemic against the overweening solutions of city planners than a reasoned study of urban and social imperatives. But read on and her subtle analysis seems particularly applicable to a city such as post-war Bristol. The book was unillustrated. 'For illustrations,' wrote Jacobs, 'please look closely at real cities. While you are looking you might as well also listen, linger and think about what you see' (p9).

Jacobs had been writing about urban renewal in the USA for *Architectural Forum* (AF) and she knew exactly what she was doing in that opinionated preamble – being the fox in the henhouse. She had already rehearsed her part in *The Exploding Metropolis* with its resonant subtitle 'A Study of the Assault on Urbanism and How Our Cities Can Resist It'. In this book of essays edited by William H Whyte and reprinted from *Fortune* magazine, a Time Inc business title, Jacobs and her fellow contributors had forcefully set out their stall (to the discomfort of the publishers). Among those contributors were two British architectural journalists whose special reports for the *Architectural Review* (AR) – quickly issued as the

books *Outrage* (1955) and *Counter-Attack* (1956) – had shown how to mobilise public opinion on the miserable state of the built environment using unprecedentedly strong language and immediate, graphic imagery. Ian Nairn, still only in his mid-twenties, had written the short commentaries accompanying artwork by Gordon Cullen that was based on Nairn's own photographs. The photographs had been taken during a speedy preparatory visit to the USA in 1957 since Cullen, the visualiser of 'Townscape' (first articulated in the *AR* in 1949), would not travel by air. It was on this whistle-stop tour that Nairn met Jacobs, and in the following May the editor of *AF*, Douglas Haskell, wrote to Nairn that Jacobs wanted to further their connection, saying 'Often the second take on such a subject is very good. What think?' (Haskell Papers 1958). Eighteen months later, now funded by the Rockefeller Foundation (as was his host), Nairn was back in the USA to research a book provisionally titled *Townscape USA*. He stayed with Jacobs for some days in Manhattan before setting out for what became, somewhat to the surprise of the Foundation, a three-month road trip.

Death and Life was a wake-up call, not just in the columns of professional journals, but to the citizens, officials and politicians charged with planning new city centres across North America and sleep-walking towards homogenised solutions regardless of the needs of the individual city, be it Pittsburgh or San Francisco, Boston or Austin. This was, Jacobs wrote in the opening paragraph, 'an attack' and her target 'the principles and aims that have shaped modern, orthodox city planning and rebuilding' (p13). However different the rules of engagement in the USA (largely the eastern seaboard and mid-western cities), the principles could be applied equally on either side of the Atlantic. Jacobs' message to her readers was that citizens use their eyes; apply common-sense to the factors that make a street or a neighbourhood lively; and respond to the variants upon idealised town planning, Beaux-Arts or Modernist as the case might be, with a measure of informed scepticism.

As she put it, 'The pseudo-science of city planning and its companion, the art of city design, have not yet... embarked upon the adventure of probing the real world' (p23). Ebenezer Howard, father of the Garden City movement, had, Jacobs admitted, 'made sense in his own terms' but not 'in terms of city planning' (p29). Theory had to be shifted in favour of pragmatism, observation and experience: 'I have tried to test out what I saw or heard in one city or neighbourhood against others' and her readers were cajoled to test out their own faculties – preferably on foot (p27). She cited the urban experiences of her sister, her neighbours and friends – even her own children.

Jacobs was talking about pedestrians in the streets, the quality of public parks, slums and their recovery; 'in short... how cities work in real life' (p4). Social and economic vitality went hand in hand; Jacobs wanted to expose and then root out the causes of failure, in planning and in practical building. But she may not have reckoned with the massed ranks of professional men who seized upon her book, damning her with faint praise at best.

The New York Times chose the Professor of Urban Studies at MIT as their reviewer. Lloyd Rodwin referred to her 'amiable preference for evidence congenial to her thesis' but concluded she should 'help to swing reformist zeal in favour of urbanity and the big city. If so', he surmised,

> it might well become the most influential work on cities since Lewis Mumford's classic *The Culture of Cities*. It has somewhat comparable virtues and defects. Not quite as long or comprehensive it is wittier, more optimistic, less scholarly and even more pontifical. The style is crisp, pungent and engaging; and like its illustrious predecessor, the book is crammed with arresting insights as well as loose, sprightly generalisations. (p14)

Jacobs had been highly critical of Mumford, in less than subtle terms, and she would find him a redoubtable intellectual enemy. Mumford, wrote Sir William Holford, considered himself to be 'keeper of the town planning conscience of the Western World' (p31). It took a year for Mumford to articulate his response to Jacobs, which appeared on 1 December 1962 in the *New Yorker*, edited down from three articles to a mere 20 pages. Mumford wrote that Jacobs was a writer of insight who had gone wrong, but privately his view was that her book was both 'stimulating and awful' (as reported by Robert Fulford, 1992). Under the misogynistic title 'Mother Jacobs' Home Remedies' he lambasted her for wilfully misconstruing Garden City thinking, and certainly she did not linger to examine what it, and the New Towns that had taken up Howard's baton, brought to the discussion of an 'embryonic form' of a new urbanity – specifically British.

The young American sociologist Herbert Gans had a far more telling criticism: Jacobs 'not only overestimates the power of planning in shaping behavior, but she in effect demands that middle-class people adopt working-class styles of family life, child rearing, and sociability' (p4). New forms of housing are 'not products of orthodox planning theory, but expressions of the middle-class culture which guides the housing market, and which planners also serve' (ibid). He pointed out that Jacobs' 'blanket indictment of planners detracts from the persuasiveness of her other proposals, and antagonizes people who might agree with her on many points' (p7). Crucially, he suggested, she would also (inadvertently) win support from two antipathetic groups:

> the nostalgic who want to bring back the city and the society of the 18th and 19th centuries, and of the ultra-right-wing groups who oppose planning – and all government action – whether good or bad. (ibid)

British reviewers were less intuitive. The eminent literary critic Raymond Mortimer in *The Sunday Times* (26 August 1962 p20) pointed out that although she had never visited Europe Jacobs had characterised all his favourite cities: central Paris, Pre-Mussolini Rome and Venice. However the *Observer*'s long-term architectural correspondent Robert Furneaux Jordan (soon to be replaced by Ian Nairn) considered Jacobs' work 'fanatical' and 'quite the most American book I have ever read', devoid of illustrations, and showing the writer to have no affinity

with city spaces nor patience with solitude (p16). However, no doubt read by many fewer, Malcolm MacEwen, editor of the *RIBA Journal*, wrote a long review, 'Festering Urbia in America', which appeared in the launch edition of *New Society*.

> Jane Jacobs has written an extreme, provocative, stimulating, useful and dangerously misleading attack on the principles and aims that have shaped modern orthodox city planning and rebuilding in the United States. (p33)

A former Communist party member, he added that the author appeared not to realise that she was offering a powerful indictment of American 'free enterprise' – had he read Gans' review?

MacEwen continued 'Although planners should listen to Mrs Jacobs, and seek to create some of the conditions she advocates, we should not be led astray by her eloquence' and in particular he disputed her views on urban density. 'Nevertheless, this is a book to be read and studied; read with care it can make planners, architects and administrators understand cities better' (p34). MacEwen's wife Ann had until recently been a leading planner at the London County Council, working in East London in Poplar and Stepney where she crossed paths, and views, with Ian Nairn. Now she was a colleague of Colin Buchanan, working on the hugely important forthcoming *Traffic in Cities* (1963).

The idiosyncratic editor/proprietor of the *AR*, Hubert de Cronin Hastings, wrote an essay in February 1963 under
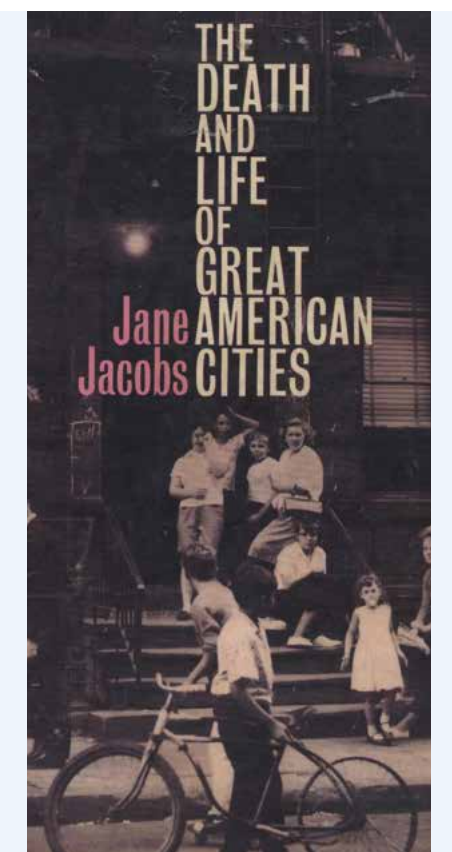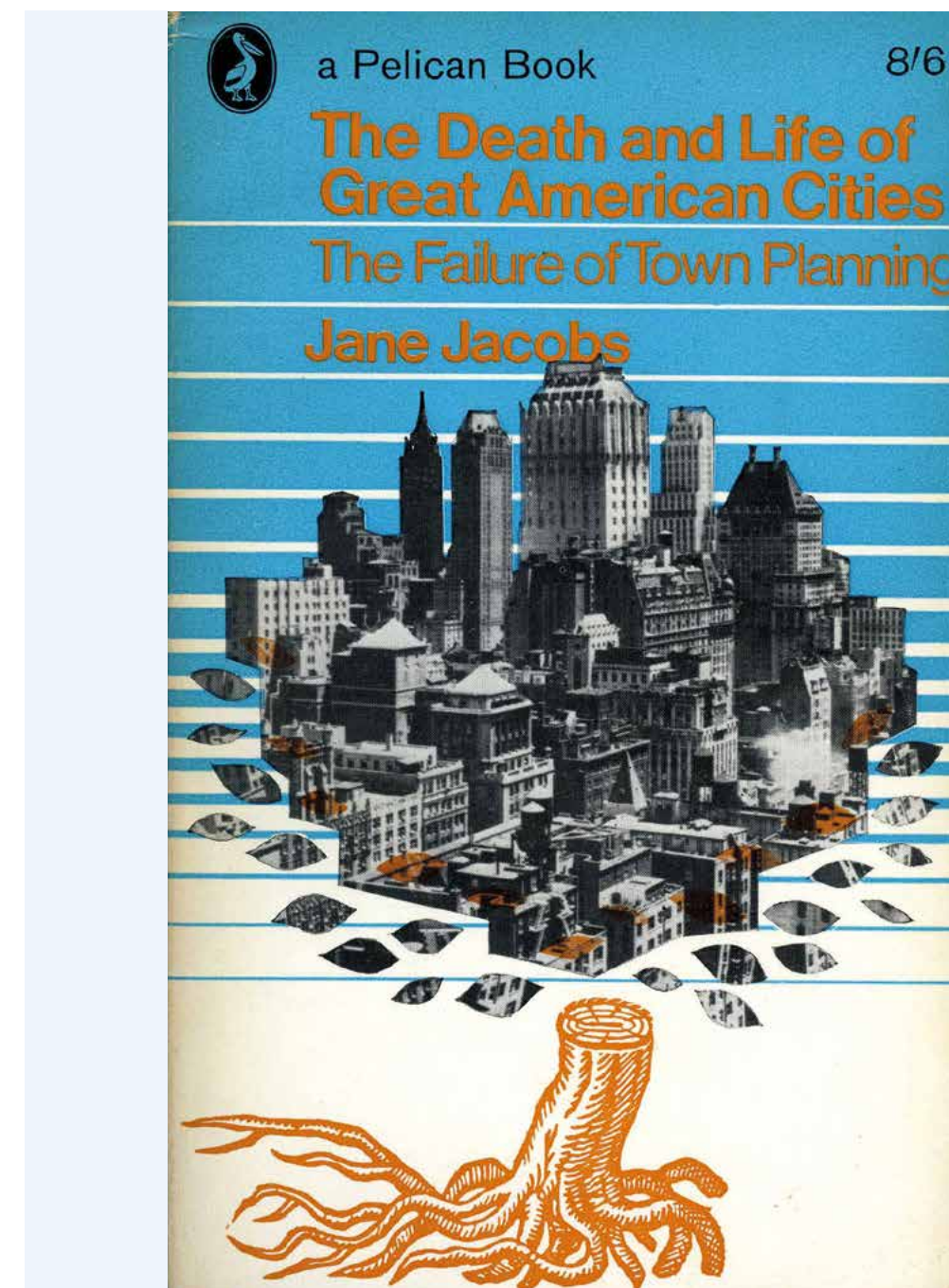
Detail from the cover of the first hardback British edition of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Jonathan Cape, 1962: photograph of copy held by Libraries West) (above) and cover of the 1964 Pelican edition (with the permission of the University of Bristol Special Collections: Penguin Archive) (left).

Opposite page: Wine Street car park, August 1959 (*The Bristol Post*, thanks to Eugene Byrne).

Left: Ian Nairn outside Westminster Abbey, 1956 (photographer Sam Lambert, Architectural Press Archive / RIBA Collections, RIBA47151).

his favourite pseudonym of Ivor de Wolfe. He had to balance old allegiances, architectural good faith and current theory, against this hurricane of a book. He began by proclaiming the *AR*'s own role in bringing townscape to the wider discussion of town planning (in particular his own 1949 article).

> Now comes a warm but high wind across the Atlantic... [offering a] hot handshake... [for] the Ian Nairns, Gordon Cullens and Kenneth Brownes of this continent in the shape of a book which is a must for all who believe the urban consequences of those odd bedfellows, Ebenezer Howard and le Corbusier, to be the spawn of the devil working through his chosen vessels. (p91)

Jacobs' *Death and Life of Great American Cities* was, he or a fellow editor ventured in a footnote, 'a far more important work than Lewis Mumford's portentous *The City in History*' (ibid). If the words were Nairn's, then it is an echo of his own review of the title; 'if you feel only ideas and theories' he wrote, 'you risk ending up with the city as a bag of abstractions' (1961 p871). Hastings' own essay lapses into an eccentric ramble over another two pages, expanding on his idea of graduated speed limits, a master-stroke against the problem of traffic in the city.

A more attuned critic, Peter Reyner Banham, referred to Jacobs' 'sensational book' and praised the author's vigour and observational powers in two essays linked to Third Programme broadcasts, respectively from Sydney in

November 1962 and then New York in January 1963 (p200). In his opinion Jacobs was not the subjective amateur that her critics painted, nor did she need defending since 'town-planning exists to implement subjective visions quite as much as carefully collated statistics' (ibid). Interestingly, in the second broadcast he gave due credit to the townscape writings of Gordon Cullen, 'one of the concealed influences behind the book', but did not mention Ian Nairn (p201). (The *AR* colleagues remained anathema to one another.)

Banham points out the central paradox; that

> the subjective visionaries, derided and despised by the practical men of their time... establish the image of the city that the practical men of a generation later have to try and implement in bricks, mortar and road-patterns. (p202)

However, the virtues of Jane Jacobs' Hudson Street could not be stamped at will on cities around the world; not even Scranton, Philadelphia, her birthplace, or Cleveland.

The one person who might have been expected to review Jacobs' book was Ian Nairn. He had stayed with her in New York and she apparently remained keen to collaborate further, telling Douglas Haskell that she was eager to combine her observations, 'arrived at from the aesthetic side', with hers, 'arrived at from the sociological side' (Haskell Papers 1960). Nairn's unsatisfactory book on the USA, *The American Landscape*, finally appeared in 1965. He had

been the wrong pundit in the wrong continent. However when the *Observer* ran a round-up of new paperbacks in the summer that year, Jacobs' '*Life and Death*' [sic] is described by an unnamed reviewer as dealing with

> what cities actually are, not what they're supposed to be. A warm-hearted book to overturn both the old and dead tradition of city planning and the current reaction of with-it kids. (August 1965)

Surely the words were those of the Sunday newspaper's latest regular architectural critic, Ian Nairn.

It is tempting to surmise whether Nairn and Jacobs ever discussed British cities when they spent time together in New York. Soon after his return from the USA Nairn began a series of essays for *The Listener* which were to be published, with brief updates, as *Britain's Changing Towns* (1967). In June 1961 he had considered Plymouth.

> If you feel like working up a head of steam about the shortcomings of English architects, engineers, and town planners, the south-west is a good place to go. Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth were all heavily bombed, and have all been given rebuilt centres of overpowering mediocrity, neither good to look at nor fun to walk round. New Exeter and new Bristol are unrelieved gloom... (p81)

In February 1958 Ian Nairn had delivered a furious talk to activists in the city (titled 'Bristol is a dying city') and told

them he could see places where they might still be able to stem the tide of mediocrity and inertia. In particular, he cited Kingswood, threatened with demolition, and the Wine Street area, where there was still a chance that it might find itself after the devastating bombing of Castle Street and the intricate street pattern, by then a gigantic car park.

Protest was becoming endemic among Bristolians but they seemed to find little purchase on a cliff face of inertia. There was a Bristol Architects' Forum and the New Bristol Group, whose publication *Output* had been founded in June 1961 with the enthusiastic support of Anthony Wedgwood Benn who drove from London for the AGM. Five years later, in June 1966, Benn drove down again for what was, he wrote in his diary, 'meant to be a funeral... [but which] became a conception'. He found the participants hoping to launch another edition, as a result of which 'we had a splendid discussion that went on late' (p438).

The Civic Society was active, and the redoubtable Reece Winstone photographed everything he could, as it stood and as it fell. The sites in the centre that were cleared of almost all existing buildings, still deteriorating since wartime damage and prior to redevelopment, included Lewins Mead and the area around St Mary Redcliffe, both in the service of road schemes. Then came the closure of the Floating Dock.

The re-planning of Bristol was the inevitable response to terrible attrition by bombing raids but also the ambitious

Top: Sign at the Cumberland Basin undercroft, promoting the improvement scheme led by Clifton and Hotwells Community Association (Gillian Darley).

Above: The pool and fountain at Cumberland Piazza in its heyday in the 1960s (Bristol Record Office, 37167/128).

reconfiguring of a major city for the second half of the century – much as was occurring across the country. In Bristol, the original master plan far pre-dated the war.

Bristol, long caught between splintered administrative areas and political allegiances (to the extent that the great Labour municipalities of the North never had been), seemed unprepared for the messy business of translating plans into action. For much of the early 1960s, the chief planner Jim Bennett, who had taken over from the long-serving City Architect, J Nelson Meredith, was also city engineer. The accommodation and facilitation of vehicular traffic took precedence and the consequences were to be seriously intrusive. To ameliorate the situation, authoritative figures such as the landscape architect Sylvia Crowe were commissioned to look at certain pieces of the puzzle. In 1964 Crowe was handed the poisoned chalice of sorting out the public realm around and under the fly-overs lacerating the Hotwells area. Her scheme there included the undercroft landscape at Cumberland Basin, including a public fountain, elegantly designed hard surfaces and a generous children's playground. As Wendy Tippett argues in her exemplary study of Crowe's wider work in Bristol, the schemes were of the highest calibre. Never properly evaluated or cared for, the undercroft is now being 'brightened up' in a piecemeal fashion.

At much the same time, Sir Hugh Casson, through his firm Casson Conder, was asked to look at the rebuilding of one relatively small area, Wine Street and the former Castle Street. At this stage the consultants offered rather courageous and surprising advice for an area that had been earmarked to become the Civic Centre. In an unpublished report from 1962 they wrote sternly:

A city of the size and importance of Bristol lucky enough still to possess in its very heart a large and most valuable empty space may be too easily tempted to fill it to its limits either with all the social and amenity buildings for which there must be a need, or even for housing or financially rewarding business purposes. (p6, item 4, 'planning principles', typescript lodged in Bristol Central Library)

So, Casson (for surely these are his words) continued, the decision of the city to resist full-scale development proposals is correct. Spaces between buildings are crucial and here 'public open space should be allowed to be pre-eminent' (ibid). To allow that, high-density development 'should be encouraged in the immediately surrounding areas' (ibid). Good views should be maximised, eyesores 'played down or ignored by turning one's back upon them' (item 4.2). The new museum and art gallery, now to be the proposed focal point in the park, must be carefully sited 'and be not too coldly formal in their architectural expression' (item 4.3). Other strengths of the area, pedestrian routes and the 'warmer', more welcoming west end, must be exploited. Above all, Castle Green should be freed from the car, and everything associated with it 'be kept out of sight and out of the way' (item 4.1).

Casson was steeped in *AR* picturesque theory; the townscape of Hubert de Cronin Hastings' article in 1949,

duly visualised and promoted by Gordon Cullen. He was also, at this time, an editor on AR, and he knew both Nairn and Cullen. *Journeys through Subtopia* was a six-part BBC Home Service series narrated by Casson and broadcast in the summer of 1956. According to internal BBC correspondence, Casson had insisted, honourably, that Nairn, who had coined the phrase, be taken on as a paid adviser, which he duly was.

Casson must also have been familiar with Jacobs' writing and, by the time he was considering Bristol's difficulties, familiar with *Death and Life*. Jacobs wrote that people 'do not use city open space just because it is there and because city planners or designers wish they would' (p100). She reminded her readers that merely to leave open space ('dispirited city vacuums') was to ask for trouble; 'people do confer use on parks and make them successes – or else withhold use and doom parks to rejection and failure' (p99).

But Casson had also taken the temperature of Bristol, awash with professionals, politicians and articulate residents. He warned the council against too much public consultation on the city plans since

in practice such procedure has its drawbacks. Local pressures, local conflicts of opinions or personalities, too much local background knowledge can too easily fog the issue. (introduction)

The Wine Street/Castle Street site (also known as Castle Green) had already seen 15 years of inaction, unfulfilled plans and proposals, and an 'atmosphere of ruins, hoardings and cindered car parks can be... dispiriting, and throws a strain upon the loyalty and patience of the citizen' (ibid). It could not remain a no-man's land and opportunities should be seized with both hands and exploited to the full... its visual rewards could be beyond price' (ibid). Nairn, alerted to the plans, commented in the *Daily Telegraph* in 1963 that 'the one thing the site cannot stand is a grand gesture'.

In fact Casson Conder's museum and art gallery, the last remnants of the Civic Centre scheme, were finally consigned to the bin in 1966 on grounds of expense. Nothing was built in the Castle Green area except on the north-west corner (the 'warmer' end) where sits the morose 1964 Bank of England building, extended in the 1970s and derelict since 1990. Today, renamed Castle Park, it is yet again the subject of a lukewarm consultation exercise.

Writing in 2013, Adrian Jones (aka Jones the Planner) lambasted the terrible Lewins Mead area, still a melee of elaborately routed vehicles and pedestrian bridges, ungainly office blocks and tiny fragments of the pre-war city; gold fillings in a rotten mouthful. Bristol's topography has always been entirely at odds with the needs of road traffic. As Jacobs wrote, 'everyone who values cities is disturbed by automobiles' (p352).

The first bright idea to sort out the near throttling of the city centre by road traffic was that the road system could be slotted into (above and across) the Floating

Harbour, which had finally closed as a working port in 1967. The Bristol Architects' Forum, formed in 1958, was enraged and produced 'A Plan for Bristol', an exhibition of alternative traffic management held at the central library on College Green. It was, like Jacobs' campaigns, a passionately fought battle, but here the protesters were also advocates, and they suggested the Modernist arrangement already proposed in the theoretical Boston Manor scheme in west London; that of stacking cars and pedestrian foot traffic at different levels. Pedestrian bridges and decking, much as eventually adopted, would be the solution. Judged interfering, the exhibition was removed from the library and took up position elsewhere. The signals were clear: activists, even activists bearing gifts, were not welcome.

Casson Conder's next report for Bristol was on the docks, the Bristol Corporation Bill (1971) having been the catalyst. Commissioned in November 1971 and published in 1972 it was 'addressed to Bristolians who know and care for their city' (p2). There would be no photographs of existing buildings or 'seductive sketches of buildings yet to be designed; just diagrammatic plans (ibid).

Again local activists organised an exhibition, 'Twenty Ideas for Bristol', this time shown at the City Art Gallery, no doubt encouraged by the fact that the RIBA held its Annual Conference in the city in 1971. By then there was little doubt that Casson Conder espoused low-key, open-minded approach and had shifted their priorities, and they must have hoped their clients', away from

the all-encompassing solution and towards a far more finely balanced outcome. In a *Times* article (27 February 1973) pondering the disenchantment felt by the public about the state of the built environment, Hugh Casson bracketed Jacobs with Ian Nairn, Lionel Esher and Nan Fairbrother as the people who had best articulated these concerns, pointing the way to more satisfactory engagement. He noted that two of them were women and only one an architect.

Perhaps Casson's views had been coloured by what he saw occurring in Bristol in the late 1960s. By then the area around St Mary Redcliffe was razed. Every last vestige of the old city fabric, including the ancient Shot Tower, had gone, leaving the great Gothic church stranded on an island of dual carriageways, nodding towards the tiny remnant of a Quaker burial ground across a two-lane highway. And so it remains: a conundrum still to be resolved.

Jacobs' analysis of road traffic in cities was more applicable to the USA than to Britain but her thoughts about waterfronts could not have been more relevant to Bristol in the early 1970s. The city saw the Floating Harbour, that remarkable nineteenth-century adaptation of a rather impractical watercourse, as the ideal location for a system of stacked motor routes. Jacobs had seen the waterfront in Brooklyn and at Battery Park, on the tip of Manhattan, as wasted assets. The latter was located 'in the most stirring location of the city, riding into the harbour like a prow' yet bland landscaping had
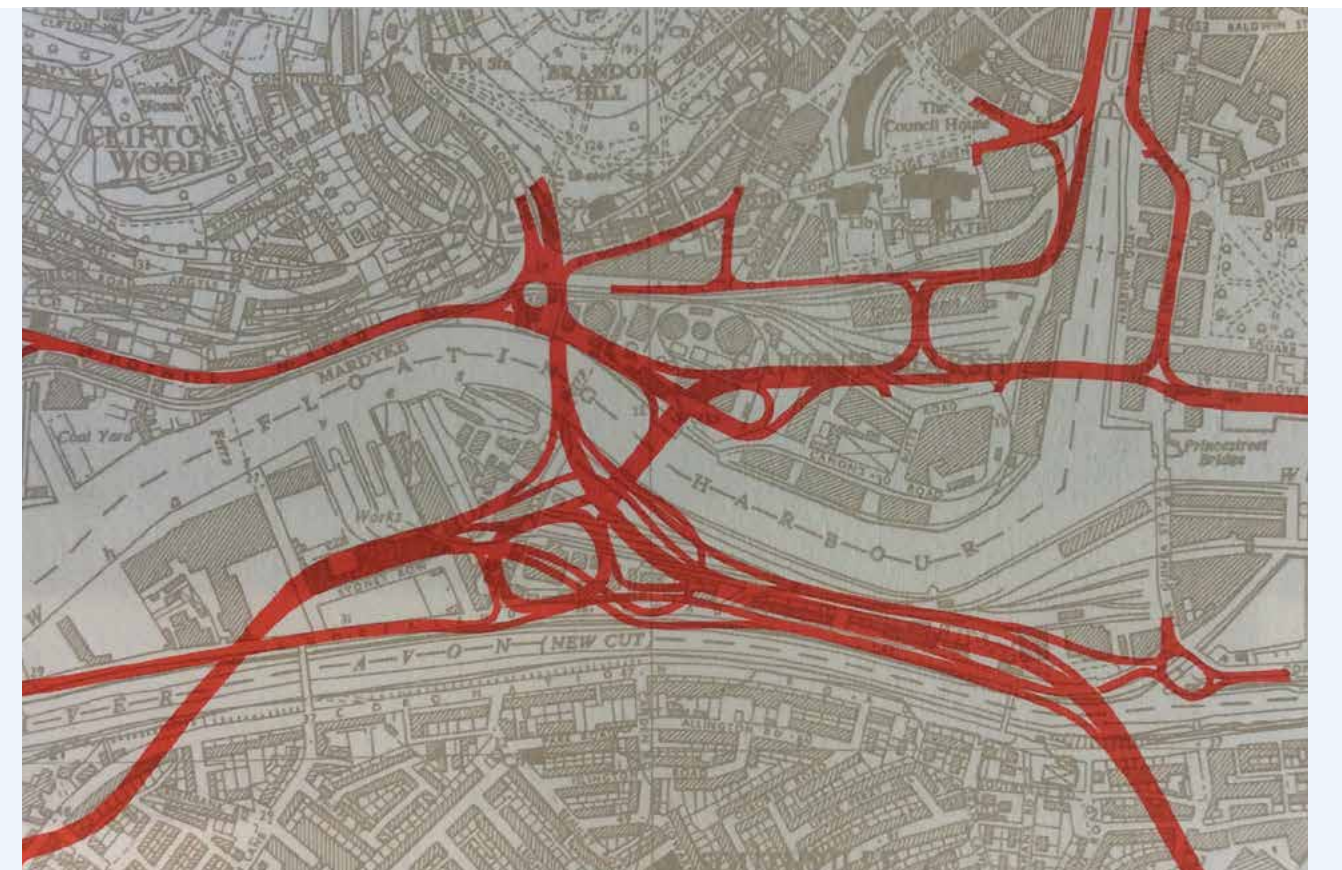
succeeded in making it 'resemble the grounds of an old people's home' (p171). The shore-line was invaluable, the obvious embarkation point for pleasure boats, places that 'should be as glamorous and salty as art can make them' as she put it (ibid). Elsewhere in her book she reminded readers of Kevin Lynch, quoting his appealing notion in *The Image of the City* of a 'seam rather than a barrier, a line of exchange along which two areas are sewn together' (p281). A redundant waterfront, rather than being left-over open space, could support all kinds of activities that thrive on the water's edge: fishing, vending, loading and a dozen others. The successful though continually challenging campaign to make Bristol's Floating Harbour support a communally-owned fleet of ferries, for both pleasure and commuter traffic, was one of the turning points in Bristol's fight-back, and now there is no doubt that the wider city has become both inviting and active, in an incremental fashion that would surely have pleased those observant, critical pundits of the urban fabric, Jane Jacobs and Ian Nairn.

Opposite page: Front page of *Bristol Evening Post* showing the Bristol Architects' Forum's model for their proposals for stacking cars and pedestrians in the city centre (from the Macfarlane collection).

Above: Map showing proposed road scheme from Casson Conder and Partners' *Bristol City Docks: Revelopment Study* 1972 (Bristol Central Library).

555 Hudson Street, Greenwich Village. Jane Jacobs' front step (Leo Hollis).

Who is the City For?/

Leo Hollis/

Last summer I found myself standing outside 555 Hudson Street, Greenwich Village, Manhattan. It was here, on this front doorstep, that the writer Jane Jacobs once stood and watched the world go by. As she charted the interweaving of everyday lives on this stretch of ordinary asphalt, she decoded the DNA of an average New York street. She called this intricate interplay of bodies, life, work, machines, stone, that she observed playing in front of her the 'ballet' of the city street. And in her 1961 masterpiece, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* she described how

> [it] never repeats itself from place to place, and in any one place is always replete with new improvisations... Something is always going on, the ballet is never at a halt, but the general effect is peaceful and the general tenor is leisurely. People who know well such animate city streets will know how it is. (p66)

These words have been repeated so often, it is easy to take them for granted. They speak to us of the neighbourhood, a place of nurturing, where everybody knows your face. However, today, as we stand in the same spot Jacobs once stood, we must chart how much in the 50 or so years since then has remained the same, and how much has changed. We observe how the life of the street corner is always in flux, and always evolving with the times. Do Jacobs' words speak to us anymore? What might an updated version of this street ballet look like?

It is morning on Hudson Street, summer 2015. It is about the time that one might usually leave the house to go to work. This side of the city has moved up in the world and is no longer the down-at-heel neighbourhood that it was when Jacobs was here. It has been gentrified and much of the old community has been replaced. Mr Goldstein's hardware store is no longer there, but there are other signs that the neighbourhood has moved on. Now a Pain Quotidien café sits opposite the White Horse pub. A sign in the window of the closed Splendid Dry Cleaners says 'prime retail space available'. The local butcher promises 'pasture-raised' ethically farmed meat. In the window of the City Habitat real estate office, a one-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment around the corner is going for $1.5m. Recently on Hudson Street itself, a penthouse sold

for $14m. Whoever can afford these prices probably are not locals.

The street is still full of life, just as in Jacobs' day. People are wandering and weaving their way along the street, stopping in front of store windows, halting for a chat with a familiar face. There are joggers, walkers, shoppers, parents with children, bicyclists on the hired Citibikes, while freelance workers stare into their laptops in the front window of the inevitable local Starbucks. On the street, some are speaking into phones, while others are wired with earbuds, plugged into their internal lives, not quite connected to what is happening around them.

The ordinary life of the city is made of such moments. A vibrant city hums; it buzzes with lives that connect, are enriched by being together in the same place. Yet this ballet produces a life that is the opposite of smooth or planned. The things that make up our everyday lives are each like single objects dropped into the seas of our lives; each breaks the calm surface and creates a ripple that spirals out from our lives into those of others. The ruffled waters are often choppy as the impact of our days accumulate, and the ripples that form are dense and complex patterns, which may appear on the edge of chaos. It is this complex, messy and thoroughly human face of the city that today is under threat.

In her time, Jane Jacobs' neighbourhood was threatened by the wrecking ball that wished to replace the old city with a more efficient metropolis dedicated to the motorcar. Today we are told that in order for the metropolis to be revived it must be privatised; that the old, the unproductive, must be replaced, pushed out, in order to make way for the new and the economically productive. Every corner of the city, every moment of the day, must be made to be as profitable as possible. And according to the mantra of the free market, private ownership is the best route to add value, to make a space productive once more.

Privatisation is proffered as the solution for how to improve quality of life, rather than a political decision to reformulate the city. Only the market can ensure the city's competitiveness.

As our cities are privatised, the predominant narrative of the future is not of finding ways to include all in a shared enterprise but how to sort out who belongs and who does not. It is the same story in London, Paris, Istanbul, Berlin and even Bristol. One afternoon, for example, walking into Paternoster Square, a popular tourist spot next to St Paul's Cathedral with cafés and shops, as well as the offices of the London Stock Exchange and Goldman Sachs, I encountered a placard that read:

Paternoster Square is private land. Any general license to the public to enter or cross the area is revoked forthwith. There is no implied or expressed permission to enter the premises or other parts without consent.

Enclosure divides up and closes off the city, defining not just the places but also the behaviours that are and are not allowed. This widespread privatisation, reminiscent of the enclosure of common land in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, can be found throughout the city in the plazas and squares set around the new office blocks, residential developments, sports arenas and shopping malls.

But in the end, the privatisation of the metropolis is not about the places that are shut down, but the curtailment of possible lives for the people of the city. The privatisation of public space is selling the city from under our feet and will have dire consequences on how we lead our lives. We need good public spaces, for despite our deep desire to be together, we are not equipped at birth with the necessary tools for being the true social animals that our instincts tell us we are. Without these genuine public spaces, we cannot learn the language and conduct of civility.

But there is also an added benefit that emerges from open public spaces: citizenship. By occupying life on the corner and interacting with each other, we learn the powers of citizenship as well as the creativity that will emerge from our meetings. We will find that through this a civil society can evolve.

This question is at the heart of 'social urbanism': Who is the city for? In particular this brings to the fore Henri Lefebvre's idea of the 'right to the city' that demands 'a transformed and renewed access to urban life' (p158). This reminds us that if the city is not for all, it is not for anyone. But it also offers us the chance to think of how we can live together. What will make our cities more equal, fair and inclusive?

Discussion about the right to the city can concern access to services: how do we design housing, infrastructure, economies that bring the greatest security for the greatest number? But we need to look beyond this, to look at how the city can provide the essentials of a good life. How can we ourselves fulfill our potential, provide for ourselves, be good citizens?

If there is to be an urban future, it will emerge from a revolution in everyday life, an embrace of urban complexity with all its human complications, and the return to the public sphere as an actual place in the city. The future is a common space, a place to be shared. The pursuit of a more equal and shared city is a hope for the future rather than a nostalgia for some lost past. Public space has always been contested, but this should give us courage to act, not in nostalgia but in hope for what might be possible tomorrow.

Above: Le Pain Quotidien, Hudson Street, Greenwich Village (Leo Hollis).

Opposite page: Starbucks, Hudson Street, Greenwich Village (Leo Hollis).

Our Urban Kinder Scout Moment/

Bradley L Garrett/

We are losing our cities. The land grab taking place around us is a subtle, soft play, where the dirty work takes place behind a veneer of affable brand management, swanky starchitecture and a general sensation that our dear old town, whether it be Bristol, Boston or Bangkok, is stepping up as a 'global city'. We are expected to be proud.

In London, the first time we went through such dramatic landscape convulsions, in the nineteeth century, we were left with public infrastructure – sewers, electricity tunnels, transport – that served the populace for 150 years. The next architectural spasm was when we re-housed the population bombed out during the war. Today, we find ourselves once again hemmed in by construction machinery on all sides, but the new city being built, contra to those times past, is not for us. There are 263 higher-than-20-storey buildings currently planned for London and nobody seems to know who will be able to afford to live in them. Council blocks are being ripped down across the capital, and in a number of boroughs rents have doubled since 2008, causing a mass exodus of long-term communities to the furthest branches of the public transport network and beyond. Where communities are ripped asunder, private issues become public issues. But where to air them?

One of the subsidiary effects of the rampant redevelopment of the city is that when the construction dust settles, often we find that open-air public spaces once maintained by civil bodies have been quietly passed into the hands of corporations as part of austerity-driven buyouts. In these 'new' spaces, our public rights are severely curtailed by corporate land management policies, policed by aggressive security guards in fluorescent vests, and monitored by the swivelling eyes of dome cameras tracking our every transgression. Photography is banned. Loitering is banned. Protest is banned. The public realm becomes space fit only for consumption; all other activities are rendered subversive, deviant, out-of-control.

Where the councils still hold the deed, they are often bullied by developers into ramming through draconian legislation such as Public Space Protection Orders meant to 'tidy-up the city' in anticipation of regeneration. These orders criminalise busking, street drinking, rough sleeping, dog-walking and gathering. People gathering in public space are, of course, a threat to corporate power – they might talk to each other, ask questions, demand explanations.

Our cities will likely have a financial future as places for tourism and exchange, places where the rich will park their money in speculative real estate and artists will make a fortune churning out even more speculative crappy public art. What is in question here is whether our cities have a cultural future as citizens are increasingly pushed to the margins. Perhaps the only viable option left to such a disempowered populace is direct action. In 1932 over 400 people trespassed onto a moorland plateau called Kinder Scout to contest the closure of public access by landed gentry. Corporate closures today, swathed they might be in seductive sales-speak, are no less violent in their closure of public space and must be fought with similar verve.

It is time for our urban rambler moment; it is time to reclaim our cities.

Opposite page, top: Bradley L Garrett speaking at the intervention at Potters Field Park, South Bank, London on 13 February 2016 (Nick Hooper). Bottom: Some of those who attended, including Anna Minton (far right) who co-organised the day with Garrett (Nick Hooper).

The Future City: The Challenges, The Opportunities/

The Festival of the Future City sought to promote debate about the future city by the widest range of people and organisations, addressing issues facing policy makers, campaigners, think-tanks and all those who live and work in cities.

The festival was part of the Bristol 2015 European Green Capital programme and environmental concerns were at the forefront of much of the discussion. In the opening chapters of this section Rich Pancost and Pru Foster assess how we might re-imagine future resilient cities in the face of climatic uncertainty, and Caroline Bird, Andy Gouldson, and Gary Topp present some of the findings from a series of public conversations on Bristol's ability to shape its own future in a rapidly changing world.

How ambitious should cities be? Charles Landry examines in his chapter how the best cities create confidence by thinking big but starting small, building incrementally on what they know; and Tim Moonen sees hope in the way in which the severe challenges and capacity deficits faced by cities can give rise to inventiveness and innovation.

The growing debate on devolution across the UK in recent years and its implication for cities is the subject of two chapters: Alexandra Jones' overview of the issue and Amy O'Beirne's summary of the Devolution and the Future of Cities panel discussion that took place during the festival.

The housing crisis, growing social inequality, the impact of immigration upon questions of identity, belonging and citizenship: these are key issues of our time. Amy O'Beirne summarises the festival discussions on Housing and Future Cities, Social Mobility and Future Cities and Immigration and Future Cities, and Gavin Kelly's blog 'Time for a City Perspective on Social Mobility'.

This section ends with Amy O'Beirne's summary of the session Are Smart Cities Really That Smart? Cities, governments and companies are devoting enormous resources to making cities smart in order to secure a sustainable future, but how valuable and efficient will these initiatives prove to be?

Opposite page: *Fog Bridge* by Fujiko Nakaya. For ten days in 2015, Pero's Bridge in Bristol Harbourside disappeared behind a veil of fog to invite visitors to consider the uncertain climate and how it might disrupt our lives (Paul Box).

Cities in the Uncertain World/

Rich Pancost and Pru Foster/

It is widely recognised that the global environment is changing in numerous ways and at unprecedented rates, but it is less well appreciated that those changes are associated with deep and complex uncertainty. During the Bristol Green Capital year and using formats ranging from booths at festivals to scientific conferences, the University of Bristol's Cabot Institute explored varying perceptions of uncertainty with thousands of Bristolians. Interpretations of uncertainty with respect to its implications for action diverged considerably, with many viewing it as a rationale for direct and immediate action or even as a catalyst for positive social change but some viewing it as a reason for prevarication. Arising from these conversations, we learned that cities are striving to minimise environmental change via more sustainable behaviour, but profound uncertainty means that they also must develop a new type of flexible, creative and radical resiliency that spans multiple sectors. This will require common purpose among diverse agents, facilitated and enabled by bold but inclusive urban leadership.

Humans are causing our planet to warm and consequently its climate and environment to change in unprecedented ways. Our consumption and waste is exceeding regional capacity and approaching planetary limits with respect to traditional food, water and energy resources. These changes represent direct and well-documented challenges for both our natural environment and society. They are also making our environmental future profoundly uncertain; uncertainty that will be manifested across a range of health, security and economic sectors.

Uncertainty is the oft-forgotten but arguably most challenging consequence of humankind's persistent impact on the environment. Human civilisation has sought to reduce environmental uncertainty for millennia, whether it be via wars or aqueducts, land management or trade agreements. But this trend towards more control over the environment has been reversed with the onset of climate change, extensive global pollution and depletion of the non-renewable resources that underpin our food, water and energy security. All of us, from individuals to councillors to prime ministers, make decisions that are informed by experience. That includes our personal experiences, but also centuries of observation that drive our predictions of future floods, drought, hurricanes and heat waves which in turn underpin decisions related to urban planning, agriculture and national security.

Not only is the environment more uncertain but so are the impacts of the environment on society. Our planet is now more engineered, our cities more complex, and our global networks more integrated. Even for expected events, the consequences are harder to predict, with butterfly effects, black swans, dragon kings, tipping points and unknown unknowns now part of regular policy discourse.

In short, we are changing our society, our environment and our climate to such a degree that the lessons of the past have less relevance to the planning of our future. Consequently, our city ecosystems must be re-imagined and our urban planning should consider new knowledge, tools, perspectives and skills.

During 2015, the concept of environmental uncertainty – and especially that associated with climate change – was explored with a range of stakeholders. Over the course of the year, as our conversations matured, it became clear that even in the European Green Capital, the communication of uncertainty and its implications remains problematic. Discussing probability density functions muddles perceptions whereas common tropes, such as a one-in-100-year flood event, are

often misinterpreted. Moreover, a focus on uncertainty obscures more robust knowledge, conflating well-understood components of the climate system with those that are not; a cognitive challenge that is often cynically manipulated. As such, it is vital that discussion of environmental uncertainties, caveats and complexities be embedded in and derive from a foundation of what is well understood.

Another crucial and widespread misperception is that we could vastly reduce the impacts of future climate uncertainty with more research. While more research will reduce uncertainties associated with knowledge gaps, methodological approaches and data resources, there remain fundamental and likely irreducible sources of uncertainty in complex, sensitive and non-linear environmental, ecological and social systems. This is exacerbated with respect to climate change. Our planet has likely not experienced an atmosphere with 400 ppm of carbon dioxide for three million years, and therefore beyond human experience. And the rate of climate change appears to be nearly entirely without precedent even in geological history. Our mechanistic modelling of these complex systems and our capacity to learn from the past have limits, and uncertainty will not be bartered away solely by more investigation.

Consequently, environmental uncertainty generally (but not universally) is perceived to be an imperative for preventative action. Although uncertainty in other aspects of life can be a catalyst for change or a challenge to complacency, environmental uncertainty is associated with risks that are too profound and too unfair, and the consensus was that they should be avoided. More optimistically, many thought that dealing with future uncertainty was an opportunity to catalyse necessary societal transformations with respect to over-consumption, inequality or creative stagnation.

From these discussions, we identified five themes and associated principles that can guide us in the re-imagination of future, sustainable and resilient cities.

Minimise the behaviour that causes harmful environmental uncertainty: Some uncertainty can be provocative, stimulating and invigorating, but in other contexts it can be harmful, unfair and preventable; in the case of climate change, it can be minimised by reducing and ultimately ceasing the emissions of greenhouse gases. Not only must we reduce carbon emissions in the short term, but we must eventually cease them, probably by the middle of this century. Although there is a widespread ambition for cities to take the lead in this, cities alone cannot achieve carbon neutrality, and they will have to work with or drive other actors to deliver new financial, infrastructure and technological instruments.

Create radically resilient citizens and communities: Even if global warming is limited to 2°C as per the Paris Agreement, cities can anticipate more intense heat waves, floods and enhanced exposure to infectious disease, and their occurrence and impact will all be associated with growing uncertainty. Other risks, associated with even deeper uncertainty, include food price volatility and economic anxiety, with attendant security and health impacts. The increasing uncertainty associated with these risks means that we can no longer simply build higher barriers to manage well-constrained flood risks or store modest amounts of extra food in central distribution centres; we must fundamentally re-think where we live, how we live and our capacity to cooperate. Cities require new forms of resiliency that build upon classical risk management approaches, extending and transforming them via more flexible systems; creative, empowered and better resourced individuals; and stronger, more cohesive communities with the social, economic and material capacity to adapt and connect.

Break down silos to achieve system change: Environmental change is part of a wider nexus of city challenges, including those related to health, inequality, nature, the economy and security. The combination of stresses requires a system-scale approach to future city planning and development. Such holistic planning is not only necessary to manage increasingly complex systems but can minimise costs and create efficient synergies, especially at a time when resources for adaptation are limited.

Find common cause: Making such changes will not be easy nor politically expedient. It is essential to have a wider and more inclusive dialogue about environmental change in order to incorporate local knowledge and culture and to generate political will to launch new policies or make unpopular compromises. Not only will this empower local communities, but it will ensure maximum buy-in for new initiatives, regardless of the sector from which they arise.

View environmental challenges as foundations for transformation: Environmental challenges are also opportunities for a genuine transformation of the future city. The associated interventions and adaptions could enable the development of a sustainable, thriving urban ecosystem, addressing a range of health, inequality and social justice concerns. Achieving this will require widespread support and strong, multi-level and mutually supportive political and community leadership. It will also require new tools for generating shared knowledge and building cooperation. Smart city technology could be central to this, but only if it is genuinely inclusive, including open data, digital commons and shared playgrounds, allowing all to investigate and experiment, and creating fora from which consensus can emerge.

Our cities have always faced internal and external challenges. For future cities these will be associated with potentially unprecedented complexity and uncertainty. Future cities will also have access to unprecedented technological and social resources, and cities can engage with uncertainty to achieve positive change, shaking us out of complacency, inspiring creativity and enabling connection rather than isolation. Our social and environmental interdependence makes us particularly vulnerable to conflict or instability on the far side of the planet or a forgotten corner of our city, but it also makes us all invested in one another's lives. This co-investment is likely to be the most fundamental feature of the future resilient urban citizen: empowered to learn, to improvise and to create not just in isolation but as part of a cohesive community.

Opposite page and above: *Fog Bridge* by Fujiko Nakaya (Paul Box).

Delivering Future Cities in a Runaway World: Bristol Conversations/

Caroline Bird, Andy Gouldson, Gary Topp/

Implicit in future cities debates is the idea that urban communities can imagine and then find ways of working towards the future city that they would like. The idea that cities of the future might be envisaged, planned for and worked towards is reassuring and even comforting. Research on utopias suggests that developing visions – and especially shared visions – of the future cities that we might wish for is possible, enjoyable and useful. University of Bristol academic Ruth Levitas argues that imagining utopian futures can take us out of the present, ground us in the future and allow us to look back critically at where we are now and the steps we could take towards a desired future.

But the idea that society is in control of the future is at odds with those – like the sociologist Anthony Giddens – who argue that we are living in a 'runaway world'. These arguments suggest that we live in a time of constant flux where our governing powers are being dismantled, eroded, dispersed and sometimes subordinated to more powerful and non-democratic forces. Globalisation and liberalisation are conspiring with our own individualisation to ensure that the impacts of accelerated and intensified change – whether social, economic, technological or environmental – are made less governable and potentially even ungovernable.

Opposite page: Bristol old and new – docks, a bridge for people, bikes (University of Bristol).

So are urban governance and leadership arrangements (both formal and informal) responsive and able to orientate themselves towards the future and to evolve to reflect changing circumstances and priorities? Or are they unaware, slow or resistant to change, so that the arrangements in place now are always the ones that evolved for the phase that has just passed or even the ones before? At their core, these are questions about a city's ability to shape its own future in a rapidly changing and highly uncertain world.

The University of Bristol's Cabot Institute and the Bristol Green Capital Partnership convened a series of conversations during Bristol's year as European Green Capital in 2015 to consider Bristol's ability to shape its future in the face of rapid change. These conversations brought together city thinkers from academia, public and private sectors and civil society. Some common and recurrent concerns and themes emerged in the conversations, shown in the Wordle diagrams generated after each one. Two particular sets of issues emerged that we discuss here: one to do with questions of leadership and governance, the other to do with democracy and engagement.

Issues of leadership, governance and power ran throughout the conversations; the question of who does what to manage the city and facilitate change is key in shaping the future. It was recognised that leadership is not just about politicians and public bodies, although

they are undoubtedly important. Leadership has to be diffused throughout the city: to a wide of actors in the public, private and third sectors and through society at large. The way that these actors come together to shape the future – and the formal and informal governance arrangements that enable them to do so – is a crucial part of the future cities agenda.

There is then the issue of capacity: the public sector is widely acknowledged to be under increasing pressure, raising questions about whether and how it might best engage with other bodies to deliver services. In this context, working in partnership is becoming more and more important. The capacity of other actors – and particularly those in the third sector – to take on some of the roles that used to be fulfilled by the state is, however, far from certain. The social enterprise sector has, of necessity, become very innovative in developing new approaches, and there is a need to recognise success stories, learn from them, institutionalise them and scale them up and out. But there are likely to be risks associated with these new leadership, governance and delivery arrangements. We might not be able to, and perhaps should not, rely on new arrangements to fill all the spaces left through austerity and the retreat of the state.

Questions of democracy and engagement were another core theme in the conversations. Low levels of participation in the election of local and national governments could be seen as a call to create new forms of city decision-making and engagement to ensure

that multiple voices are heard and that all people feel their actions and opinions count. It was recognised that diversity and social capital are to be celebrated and valued, and that new ways of communicating, listening and valuing are needed to bring people together. This approach has intrinsic human benefits but in the context of the discussions, it was also seen as a pragmatic and practical route to delivering new approaches to city change. Cities are institutions, or perhaps even 'machines', for collaboration, with founding economic, social and environmental reasons for their existence. The question is whether the current forms of activity, of social and economic structures and the values they create and exhibit, meet the needs of every group in the city today. Many would argue that, with rising inequalities, they do not; provoking us to consider whether and how they need to change for the future city of tomorrow.

In these and other areas, the conversations considered the gap between the governance arrangements and capacities that a city like Bristol currently has – or is likely to have – and those that it might need to work towards for a more sustainable future city. How could Bristol recognise and more consciously value, nurture and develop the arrangements and capacities needed to close this gap? The utopian approach might allow us to reimagine and then recreate or reconfigure very different kinds of capabilities for leading and governing cities, with different roles for the public, private and civic sectors and implications for social, political and economic agendas. At a city scale, some of this is possible; and it has the

potential to disrupt in order to create wider change, nationally and even internationally.

The conversations suggested that, as a city, Bristol might be better placed than some to respond to the challenges. It has flourishing and inventive social and private sectors and energised communities that have been prepared to try different approaches and take risks. There is a forward-looking city council with the willingness and ability to adapt and to support or enable new methods of engagement, decision-making and service delivery. It has two universities that play important roles in the city, the Green Capital Partnership with over 850 members from all sectors, and a broad history of working collaboratively to deliver new ideas. Different people and organisations across the city are starting to imagine and work towards the future city. They are taking small steps and developing innovative ideas that, if successful, could be scaled up in appropriate ways to meet the diverse needs of different parts of the city. All of these are vital elements of a city that will have to adapt to ongoing changes as it moves into its future. Without these, the city would be much more fully exposed to the runaway world.

Opposite page: Wordles from the four conversations (broadly themed on governance, austerity, engagement and economics) show what was uppermost on people's minds – 'people' features prominently in all of them.

Above and right: Bristol Green Capital Partnership at work in 2015 (JonCraig.co.uk).

Ambition and Successful City-making/

Charles Landry/

Ambition is a significant word. It is a quality that generates energy, motivation and passion from which other possibilities flow. It can jump-start change processes as people think 'it is not OK to only be OK'. Ambition precedes vision and curiosity precedes creativity, and both are pre-conditions for successful city-making. Ambition helps people concentrate on essentials and the bigger picture, providing the engine from which commitment grows with a purpose and goal. The best purpose is to challenge places to be the best they can, given their physical, intellectual and cultural assets. Goals reflect choices and beliefs about what success means.

Successful places are contented, but also alert, agile, somewhat restless and focused. In the past we thought physical infrastructures were the basis upon whose foundations economic prosperity could grow, with a reliable job and income seen as enough. Now we realise there is more to success: a sense of anchorage, familiarity and solidity; of possibility, choices and opportunity; of connection, bonds and solidarity where divides between rich and poor are mitigated; a place of caring and welcome where differences can meet; somewhere that provides the ability to self-improve and grow, as well as a sense of inspiration. From this, contentment grows and differing interest groups see success in their own terms.

Within more refined notions of success, economic vigour remains crucial. Yet material well-being is cradled within a set of wider balances, blending physical, cultural, economic and social vitality. Suddenly

Opposite page: Malaga: creating a new level of people-centred design (Charles Landry).

being attractive, vibrant, having high-quality urban design, good public spaces or a rich cultural life rise in importance.

City-making is a collective endeavour and not one person's job. Politicians or urban professions may claim they are in charge; business or urban activists could argue they are the city's energetic lifeblood. Few people connect the agendas, ways of thinking and knowledge bases. This is the twenty-first century challenge for cities and the role of the connector is perhaps the important urban professional. If no one is responsible, then everyone is to blame for our ugly, soulless, unworkable cities or occasional places of delight.

Cities of ambition recognise that their context and operating conditions have changed dramatically and that a business-as-usual approach will not get them to where they want to be. The most successful cities start with values that are important to them and establish principles to which they commit to guide their actions. They assess their situation honestly, overcome the power of denial, and review their resources to confront new conditions.

They tackle the really difficult head-on and engage with criticism and can see where the problem is. They are willing to be unpopular. Ambitious places use crisis as means to re-assess potential. They listen to their constituencies and especially trust their youth so everyone can find a place in the grand evolving picture. Leaders – and there are many – explain the direction of travel. Their plans are not too precise so a space is opened for dialogue and the urban conversation. They do not subscribe to the heroic version of urban reinvention so build a team and set of networks around themselves. Together they discuss and identify catalysts and game

changers. They have the confidence to challenge the accepted canon in many spheres as well as the inevitable inertia. This might be the way governance structures or bureaucracies operate. The overall philosophy adopted is open and flexible and dares to risk uncertainty or failure.

Cities of ambition create conditions where people and organisations can think, plan and act with imagination and look for possibilities and hidden resources laterally. Along the way they rethink the processes and procedures and so begin by persuasion and with good examples to overcome organisational rigidities. They realise getting things done involves partnering with others. The public administration is less controlling and more in enabling mode; and the private interests understand that fostering the public interest helps them in the longer term. There is room for community or activist groups and critics to bring ideas and solutions to the joint city-making endeavour.

To create confidence the best cities think big and start small, as being incremental allows a place to build in flexibility.

Confident cities go with the grain of their local culture; they start with themselves and build from that. They learn from good appropriate examples from elsewhere but do not imitate mindlessly. They identify clear new roles and purposes for their city and align action plans to these goals. Their programme incorporates staging posts and early winners, starting with easier, cheaper, shorter-term initiatives to prepare for the difficult, more expensive, longer-term projects that follow. They build a strong evidence base to create legitimacy. This trajectory anchors a paced and purposeful approach and allows time for reflection even though many want to rush. They adopt new measurements for success and failure.

Leading players possess and express passion at times and they show their love for their city, even emotionally. This keeps up energy and for them their city is a vocation. They are driven because they want to make things happen to unleash and harness potential.

Narrating a story that builds emotion plays a part, as does using the past to go into the future. Ambitious places communicate with a real simplicity of message and clarity of purpose and they work with symbols and emblematic initiatives having identified meaningful catalysts. They get the many to own the transformation. In this overall approach they facilitate, stimulate, regulate and enthuse, working the connections and networks heavily; instead of exerting power they trade it for enhanced creative influence. They set aside personal vanity for the many to take part in the glory. All this is only possible with strong partnership capacity so ambitious places instigate quadruple helix linkages between the public and private sectors, universities and wider communities of interest. Orchestration is the watchword.

Good city-making is complex and needs to bring disparate elements together and harvesting the benefits of this broad rethinking takes time; a long time.

Above: Bologna: the two remaining family towers remain a powerful emblem of the city (Charles Landry).

Opposite page, top: Barcelona: Torres de Toyo Ito next to the congress centre (Charles Landry).

Opposite page, bottom: Malmö: The Western Harbour – a carbon neutral area with a Calatrava icon (Charles Landry).

The Future of Cities: the Global Perspective/

Tim Moonen/

Over the last decade there has been a major surge in attention as to how cities can be prepared and primed for the future. The world is witnessing a mindset shift in how to think both about the future of individual cities, and also about the long-term perspective for systems of cities across countries and continents.

There are at least three obvious reasons for this upswell of interest in the future of cities. First, cities will, like it or not, host the vast majority of population and economic growth in the rest of this century. The profusion of cities – by 2050 there will be over 800 cities larger than one million people – means they must be viewed as places whose promise has to be unlocked and optimised.

A second reason has to do with relevance to global agendas. The many impacts of migration, climate change, natural disasters, terrorism, health epidemics and resource shortages are now felt so strongly and so visibly in cities. This heaps great pressure on cities to plan ahead in order to adapt and bounce back from those impending 'known unknowns'.

A third factor is our more sober grasp of the failures endured in the previous 150 years of urbanisation. This has raised awareness of the risk that cities become stuck in 'negative path dependencies': for example when their economies become too narrowly specialised (as with Detroit in the 1960s) or when transport decisions lock them in to a model that soon becomes outdated or inefficient (as we've seen in Birmingham and Los Angeles).

So who is driving the inquiry into the future of cities? International institutions lead the way. UN-Habitat, World Bank, the OECD and others have shaped the agendas for countries of all income groups to plan their systems of

cities and leverage urbanisation with the help of stronger urban institutions and connectivity. Meanwhile, many national governments have also shown more appetite to create urban policy that does not undermine their most successful cities and that curbs the incentives that promote sprawl. In recent years Ethiopia, Poland and Sri Lanka have all made breakthroughs in their strategies around urbanisation. And cities themselves are also experimenting with scenario-building exercises, reaching out to citizens to debate behaviour change and to explain the costs of accommodating future growth.

The vast amount of activity around the future of cities underlines that there will never be one single future or one single narrative about cities. Cities find themselves not just in unique national contexts, but also at differing points in their evolving development cycles. They have extremely varying capacities and appetites for change. The future of cities is the sum of what each city can make of it.

As the different global streams of work on the future of cities begin to converge, consolidate and find common ground, four shared challenges for all cities are coming into view.

The first is how to be agile to global economic change. As different sectors globalise and more parts of urban economies become contested, cities cannot avoid being thrown into competition in a mix of national, regional and global markets. In Asia 20 years ago only Tokyo, Hong Kong and Singapore were really acquiring higher order economic functions, but today the Asian system of cities is evolving very rapidly as up to 30 cities move to specialise in globally traded technology sectors, business services, entertainment and tourism. Numerous others are trying to position their industrial production within very dynamic

value chains. The upshot is that those cities that want to pursue a future around growth and competitiveness will need much more nuanced approaches towards how they manage their workforce skills, business climate, and spatial and infrastructure model if they want to prosper beyond the immediate business cycle.

The second common challenge is how to manage the unintended consequences of growth. Most in-demand cities eventually come up against a series of externalities: inflated costs, unmet housing need, opposition among property owners to new development, congested infrastructure, increased security and sustainability risks, and the rise of a two-speed economy that breeds resistance to pro-global policies. These conditions present an imperative to densify, and stark choices about where and how to grow in a way that will escape rather than exacerbate past mistakes.

The ability to cope with the consequences of growth and success often means overcoming a third challenge: governance deficits. City leaders are often mired in vertical and horizontal government relationships that are shaped more by historical accident than rational design. What we find are numerous local governments, authorities, agencies and interests that were not originally set up or empowered to think about large cities as single collective units. Siloed mentalities die hard. With some prominent exceptions like Singapore, Hong Kong and the German city-states, the vast majority of cities have limited governing powers and must plot feasible pathways to reform.

Finally, most cities face a system of fiscal centralisation in which higher tiers of government are either erratic in their investment or have effectively abdicated responsibility altogether. Handicaps in the ability to borrow capital

and to develop new financial tools tend to discourage innovation and ambition at the local level, especially in emerging cities where they are badly needed. Solutions that propel cities into a higher investment equilibrium will be decisive enablers of progress.

The challenges and capacity deficits for cities are often severe, but they are giving rise to inventiveness and innovation in many places. The best and most durable examples tend to require long-term strategic planning, coalition-building, and meaningful devolution. Cities that make progress on these challenges are often able to address their metropolitan areas collaboratively as one functional system. They normally benefit from mechanisms for delivery and investment that dodge the capriciousness of four- or five-year election cycles and instead support structural changes that take 20 or 30 years. Cities where a long-term agenda really sticks – from Auckland to Curitiba to Seoul – rely on a critical mass of consensus with citizens, and on business and civic leadership to become active partners and advocates for catalytic projects.

The world is only a short distance along the journey towards coherently organised and economically sustainable cities. Dangers of becoming locked in to unsustainable, unjust, or unproductive patterns of urbanisation are clear and present. The exchange of experience and knowledge about how cities turn vision into action remains essential. Despite the many constraints, there is reason for optimism that bold leadership, careful reform, and experimentation really can help create and sustain the cities we wish for: competitive, connected, efficient, open and integrated.

Auckland Central Business District, Sky Tower and Waterfront (iStock.com/Pixsooz).

Cities and Devolution/

Alexandra Jones/

2015 was another startling year for cities and devolution. A series of tailored devolution 'deals' with major cities, alongside the commitment to have metro mayors in at least five city-regions by 2017 and full devolution of business rates to local authorities by 2020, adds up to a quite different landscape in a short space of time. So how has this happened? And is this the end, or simply the beginning of changes to the way the UK works?

Devolution has rarely featured high on the UK's national policy agenda but, over the past two years, this has changed dramatically for a series of interconnected reasons.

One of the highest profile catalysts for change was the Scottish referendum on independence, which sparked an unprecedented debate across the UK about nationhood, identity and self-determination, significantly increasing public interest in devolution.

The politics also increasingly makes sense and has helped to push this agenda. Devolution has long been a Liberal Democrat interest and one they pursued when in coalition, while the Conservatives have been keen to engage in order to demonstrate their 'one nation' credentials, both in coalition and since May 2015. And within those parties, influential people have pursued this agenda, particularly: Greg Clark, formerly Cities Minister and now Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government; Nick Clegg, former Deputy Prime Minister; and most recently George Osborne, the Chancellor. Their personal commitment has helped keep the momentum going even when it encountered hurdles such as Whitehall reluctance.

In addition, devolution can help achieve some of the flagship government policies. Delivering on austerity requires stronger economic growth, and around the world it is cities that are driving growth. It also requires a transformation of public services. Both can be better delivered through greater local decision-

making that enables cities to make decisions about how to manage their own transport, housing, business support and public services in a way that responds to local needs.

So, amidst all the talk of devolution, what has happened?

Following on from a series of city deals and local growth deals between 2011 and 2014, the most recent significant development has been the devolution deals announced with Greater Manchester, Sheffield, the North East, Merseyside and the West Midlands.

These city-regions have signed up to metro mayors over an agreed geography, a precondition for significant devolution of powers. All also have an agreement they will receive between £450m and £1.1bn over 30 years, as well as powers over:

Transport: responsibility for a devolved, consolidated transport budget with a multi-year settlement and responsibility for franchised bus services to deliver smart ticketing.

Planning: powers over strategic planning, although some of the detail looks a little different.

Skills: most places have agreed a review of post-16 skills and employment and that they will co-design employment support for the hardest to help.

Business support: responsibility for the delivery of business support programmes and more integrated work on investment and trade.

Increasingly, elements of the deals are becoming standardised as city-regions demand the same as their peers, and civil servants wish to avoid renegotiating everything again. However, each deal still has bespoke
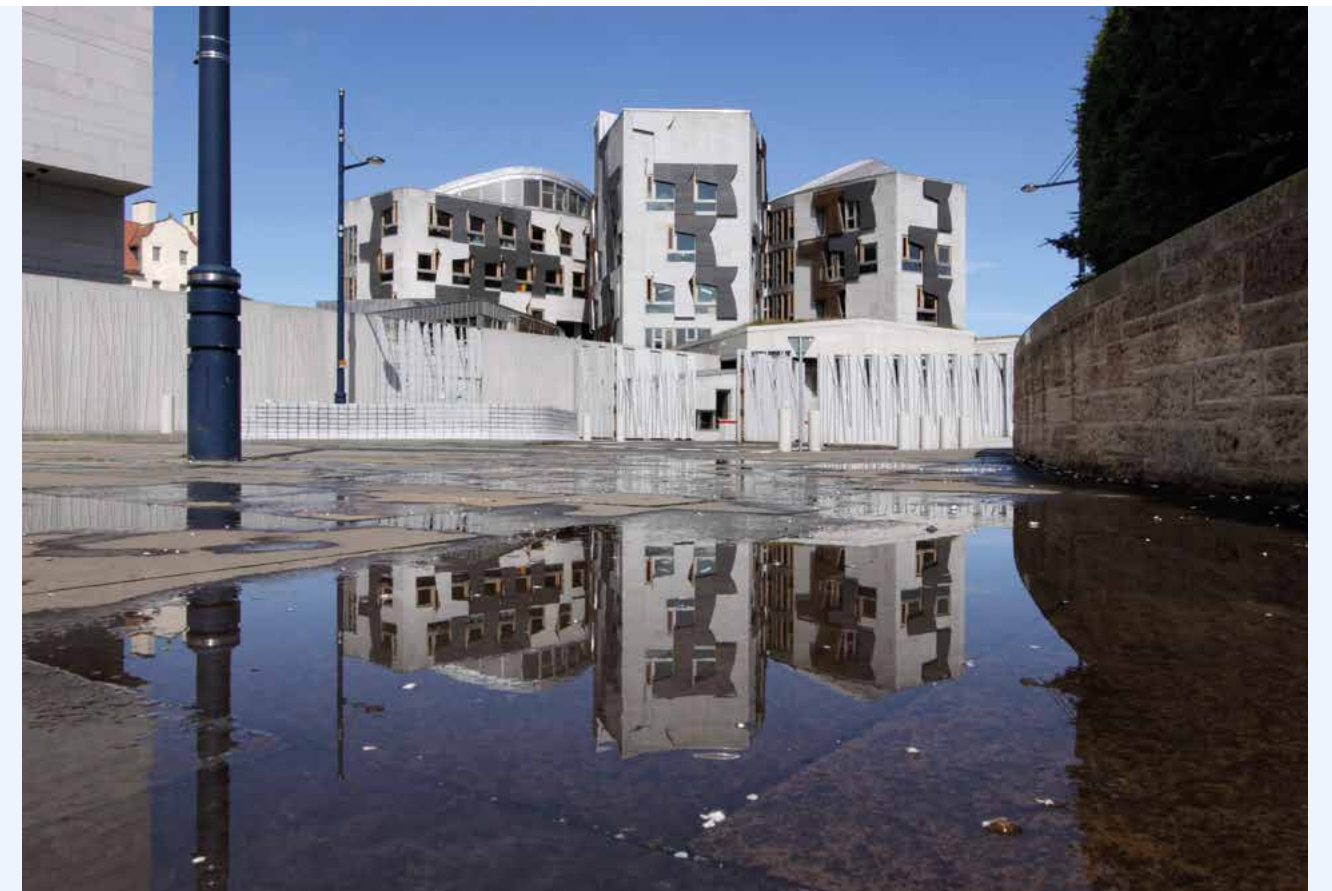
elements; for example, in Sheffield there's a commitment to government support for a science and innovation audit, while the North East will put their £30m towards an Investment Fund to help them compete in international markets and Greater Manchester has significant powers over £6bn of health and social care. And the way in which the powers are used – even where they are the same – will vary significantly. For example, Liverpool will focus on its deepwater port; in the West Midlands there's a big focus on metro connections.

In such a centralised country, all of the decisions made to date represent significant progress. Yet there is more to do if we are to move towards UK cities having similar powers to international counterparts.

Most international cities have far greater influence over their own money. Here, fiscal devolution has inched onto the agenda in the form of every local authority retaining 100 per cent growth in business rates from 2020, and places with mayors being allowed to increase business rates by up to 2p if agreed with businesses on the Local Enterprise Partnership. Yet greater variation of council tax, retention of stamp duty and levying tourist taxes remain off the agenda for now.

There are also outstanding questions not only about the taxes but the extent of local influence over money councils receive. More detail is needed about business rates reforms, the impact of the recent local government spending settlement and how much autonomy cities will really have over capital and resource spending.

Sustained devolution will require Whitehall to genuinely let go of funds and powers without strings attached. The continuing evolution of the Greater Manchester deal shows that there is scope for national government to devolve further powers, provided the benefits are clear. But if the aim is to sustain the profile and progress made to date, then advocates across the country will need to continue to encourage public debate and engage the electorate (particularly when the mayoral elections are held) as well as demonstrate how effective devolution can be. This marks an opportunity to genuinely change the way the country is run but very much marks the end of the beginning: there is far more to do.

Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh, Scotland (iStock.com/Heartland-Arts).

Devolution and the Future of Cities/

Amy O'Beirne/

This is a summary of some of the discussion points raised during the festival event on devolution, chaired by Heather Stewart, which took place on 19 November. The speakers were Mike Emmerich, Metrodynamics; George Ferguson, Mayor of Bristol; Alexandra Jones, Director Centre for Cities; and Mark Tewdwr-Jones, Professor of Town Planning, Newcastle University.

In 2014 and 2015 the UK government announced a number of devolution deals with cities and city-regions, including Greater Manchester, Sheffield, the North East and the West Midlands. These deals, which offer cities and city-regions the opportunity to better direct the growth of their areas, also present new challenges in terms of engagement, collaboration and leadership.

Devolution discussions have been prompted by a combination of different factors, including levels of public debate, politics and economics. Austerity debates, the Scottish independence referendum in 2014 and discussion of the Northern Powerhouse have all played a role, suggested Alexandra Jones, adding that it is important to understand why devolution is occurring in order to maintain its momentum.

Although the devolution deals announced are not identical, and different areas will likely implement powers in different ways, the deals have similar broad themes of skills, infrastructure, money and planning. For example, each city-region has agreed to have a metro mayor, and each will be given around £30m a year for 30 years. The cities will have powers over their transport budgets, as well as over strategic planning, and will be able to take decisions about planning across their wider city-region areas. However, the UK does not yet offer cities with devolved powers the same powers as their international counterparts; cities in the UK will not get greater variation of council tax or the power to set tourist taxes, and they will not retain property stamp duty. 'More of this will be needed on the agenda if cities are to really own their own futures in the way they should,' argued Jones.

Mike Emmerich rebuffed the criticism that devolution will harm national institutions, and argued that current attempts made on a national scale to solve the problems faced by the UK do not seem to be working. Devolution allows cities, which not only face the largest problems but also offer the greatest opportunities, a chance to be innovative in their approach. Additionally, appointed mayors will be more knowledgeable about the issues and solutions presented by their cities, as opposed to national politicians who are considered to be quite removed. The effect of having an identifiable leader can be significant: in Bristol, for example, leadership recognition has moved from 24 per cent to 69 per cent since an elected mayor was appointed. George Ferguson noted that there is much greater engagement and this, he pointed out, is important when responding to issues and working with communities to find solutions. 'More people will take more of an interest, because it will really mean a change to their lives in a way that it might not have done before,' he said. Jones added that, ideally, 'citizens should be discussing the trajectories of their cities and city-regions, and they should have a sense that they can affect the future of their city'.

The way in which the devolution process is communicated plays a role in engaging the public in the debate. Mark Tewdwr-Jones argued that the notion of devolution needs to be sold to a broader spectrum of people: 'The public are cynical about the value of devolution while the austerity issue is a permanency in everyday media,' he said, and later he emphasised the need for the public to be integral to discussions. Jones suggested that 'it needs to be communicated that there are some risks with devolution, but there is also a real risk with staying with the status quo'. She also remarked that the devolution debate could become quite technocratic at times, focusing on talk of infrastructure, funds and financial institutions rather than the outcomes delivered, such as jobs, homes and public services, concepts which the public might find easier to grasp.

Tewdwr-Jones highlighted the need for collaborative, cross-sector work; silo mindsets should be tackled in local and regional contexts, as well as nationally. The large amount of innovation produced by communities and the voluntary sector, for example, is not always recognised by local authorities, nor do city leaders understand the full extent of communities' interest in governance. Innovation from the various sectors can be drawn upon as part of the devolution process, he suggested, and, through changes to processes and policies, city leaders should harness community interest to their advantage.

Jones suggested that putting the focus on people, flows of money and the way in which people live their lives might help to break down barriers. Ferguson agreed, adding that devolution requires people and cities to work together in new ways. Elected mayors, Tewdwr-Jones suggested, will need to facilitate, broker and lead, but not ultimately control; in order to develop stronger economies and social inclusiveness, mayors must 'give legitimacy to the rest of the city, to experiment and innovate and be different and distinctive'. He also thought that universities ought to play a more prominent role in the civic agenda and the civic life of their cities. 'This is the start of the process – it's an ongoing process – and there will be bumps on the way,' he said, but added that with different sectors working together, from citizens to universities to the private sector, and with metro mayors playing a facilitating, 'choreographing' role, 'we can create long-term, ambitious, innovative directions for cities in the future'.

Top: George Ferguson preparing to deliver the Mayor's Annual Lecture 2015 (JonCraig.co.uk).

Above, clockwise from top left: Heather Stewart (the *Guardian*), Alexandra Jones, Mike Emmerich and Mark Tewdwr-Jones (Newcastle University).

Housing and Future Cities/

Amy O'Beirne/

This is a summary of some of the discussion points raised during the festival event on housing, chaired by Zoe Williams, which took place on 19 November. The speakers were Danny Dorling, Halford Mackinder Professor of Geography, University of Oxford; Michael Edwards, The Bartlett School of Planning, UCL; architect Kate Macintosh; and journalist and author Anna Minton.

The UK has an extremely high-value built environment, and its value has grown rapidly in recent decades, generating massive profits through capital gains and rents. Housing and real estate accounted for around 50 per cent of the nation's tangible assets in the 1980s and 1990s, and by 2007 they represented around 80 per cent. This figure fell slightly with the credit crunch, but by 2013 some parts of the country had reached their pre-crash levels, particularly in and around London and the South East.

In contrast to the recovering private rental sector, it seems that the social housing sector is shrinking. 'There is a death of social housing at the moment,' said Anna Minton. Up to 90 estates across London, for example, are going to be demolished or partly demolished, forcing people to relocate. Although circumstances vary locally, people do not generally want to leave their homes, and yet they are often re-housed away from those communities in which their families have lived for many years. 'This really is a process of social cleansing,' Minton said. 'It is creating a re-imagining of London, where affordable housing has been redefined to mean up to 80 per cent of market rent, and social housing is being replaced with luxury housing for investment.'

Land banking is part of the process, Minton suggested, as inflated values and government policies create a 'mad dash' to capture valuable land, resulting in a lack of consideration for social benefits and the demolition of estates. Kate Macintosh agreed: 'Of sites in London which are eligible for housing development, 45 per cent are in the hands of companies who show absolutely no intention of developing at all.' She suggested that

land value taxation might go some way to stopping this problem, and further argued that VAT currently acts as an incentive for demolition; new-build housing is exempt from VAT, whereas upgrades, repairs and renovations to existing housing stock are subject to the full 20 per cent.

Michael Edwards highlighted other concerns about housing in the UK. He explained that many people are inadequately housed, space standards and environmental performance are low and there is a shortage of funding for social and physical infrastructure and services. At the root of this, he argued, is the increased financialisation of housing, the conversion of housing from being a use value to becoming an exchange value, a commodity. Wider real estate in the UK, such as offices, shops and industrial estates, is also subject to ownership by financial institutions to a unique degree. 'The UK is very special in the respect of financialisation,' he said. 'It is quite out of line with other countries. Even in comparison with very financial countries like Switzerland, we are a remarkably financialised country.'

Another factor to consider is the growing inequality in the UK. When inequality meets the rather static stock of housing, suggested Edwards, the outcome is price escalation and poor value for money. The UK's housing stock is meeting the needs of ever fewer people, and there are significant affordability problems in the private rental sector. Policies should aim to stabilise rents and prices, he argued, and the pursuit of GDP maximisations should no longer be the sole or dominant aim of social and economic policy.

Danny Dorling suggested that the problem lies in an inability to share out the housing stock effectively. Between 2001 and 2011, the UK built more rooms than were required by the influx of people. Now there are more rooms in the UK's housing stock per person than there have been before; 'every family and every single

person could live somewhere with a spare bedroom.' However, in London there are currently a quarter of a million children living with their families in poverty in unaffordable private rented accommodation, and many such families are moved on every few years. Dorling argued that the first and most urgent thing to do in order to solve the UK's housing problems is to change the law on short-hold tenancies. Changing the law would result in a reduction of the value of housing to profiteers, and this would begin to result in lower prices, he explained.

Dorling also recommended that people should be encouraged to move around in order to make better use of the housing stock. 'You don't want to force anybody to move, but you don't want a situation in which it makes sense for people to sit in houses too large for them, which they cannot afford to heat, in which they are getting lonely,' he said. Lower house prices, ideally falling at a steady rate, would encourage people to move on from large family homes. Furthermore, he argued that if more retirement apartments were built, particularly on the outskirts of cities, people would be able to move out of those family homes but still be near their social networks.

Minton emphasised the need to 'force housing issues onto the table, and make sure they are at the forefront'. Edwards agreed, encouraging a proactive approach. 'The most important thing to recognise is that it is the responsibility of all of us. It is our job to disseminate and argue and debate,' he said. 'We cannot go on as we are.'

Above, clockwise from top left: Zoe Williams, Danny Dorling, Michael Edwards, Kate Macintosh and Anna Minton.

Time for a City Perspective on Social Mobility/

Gavin Kelly/

Social mobility plays a curious and sometimes tortuous role in our national political psyche. We love talking about it even if we can't, or won't, do much about it. Greater mobility is a goal lionised by all politicians: along with the NHS it's perhaps the closest thing to a secular faith that you will find at Westminster. Our media lap up story after story on it. And research on the issue has undergone a mini-boom in our top universities, dominating the work of some of our finest scholars over the last decade or so.

Yet for all this attention there is a disheartening rhythm to much of the policy debate. Every time a gloomy report is published, saloon-bar solutions to our social mobility challenge are trotted out and treated seriously contrary to all evidence (think 'grammar schools'). The fact that the key data underpinning most of this work is very dated (relating to those born in 1970) rarely features. Complex and broad questions about the distribution of opportunity across society get shrunk into the issue of the precise number of talented but poor children who manage – or not – to get into Oxbridge.

There is also a steady predictability to the findings produced by study after study showing that the UK is an international laggard: relative to their better-off peers, poor children have the odds stacked more steeply against them in the UK than in most other advanced nations. Indeed the language of social *immobility* has gathered currency – with more references to 'class ceilings' and the '*Great Gatsby* curve' (illustrating that high-inequality societies become low-mobility ones) among the media and policy-makers.

Sometimes this breeds a weary sense of policy-fatalism. Seasoned observers highlight with some justification that because national levels of mobility appear to be

shaped by deep forces – the occupational structure of the jobs market and technological change – they can only be altered by major economic transformation or massive social upheaval. The implication is that we should find something slightly more tractable to worry about.

Despite all the analysis there is much that we don't know that might help open up the policy debate in a more productive way. Ask for a view of how social mobility across the generations varies between say London, Glasgow and Manchester and you will be met with silence. Sure, we know all sorts of things about school performance, wages, jobs, access to university, life-expectancy and how they vary across urban areas. But hard evidence of the extent to which economic opportunity gets transmitted from one generation to the next in one city compared to another? It doesn't exist.

Which is why it's refreshing that a new path-breaking body of research jolts us into opening our minds to exactly this question. It comes from Raj Chetty and colleagues at Harvard and Stanford and demonstrates the enormous variation in levels of intergenerational social mobility that exists across US cities. Rather than lament national failure it invites us to explore the causes of city-level differences.

The work is a 'big data' research project that tracks the economic trajectories of a staggering 40 million children: in social research terms this is akin to discovering the Ark. It allows an entirely new map of uneven opportunity in contemporary America to be drawn and studied.

It's widely known that, contra the national myth of the American Dream, the US has shockingly low levels of

social mobility. But hitherto no one would have realised that the poor child in, say, Seattle, Salt Lake City or San Francisco has similar rates of upward mobility to a poor child in a high-mobility poster-boy country like Denmark. Nor do the differences fit into easy caricatures. Why does a working-class child from Seattle have a similar chance of growing up to lead a *middle-class* life as a middle-class kid in Atlanta (both booming cities)? Why does Pittsburgh so out-perform nearby Cleveland? The variations are huge: poor children have almost three times more chance of making it into high-income households as adults in some cities compared to others.

Chetty believes his research can account for the great majority of this variation. Some of the answers don't translate to the UK: race is not surprisingly a major factor in the US whereas in the UK the story is more nuanced (for instance, poor white children do least well; whereas those from BEM backgrounds are disadvantaged in terms of how their qualifications are translated into wages). But some of the most powerful findings are suggestive for us. Social segregation of the poor due to patterns of housing has a strongly negative effect on mobility as does long commute times. High levels of overall income inequality in an urban area are a big drag on mobility, though, interestingly, the position of the top one per cent makes little difference (leading to the conclusion that it may be the relative position of the middle class that is pivotal in permitting more upward progression rather than what is happening to the run-away elite at the very top). Measures of school performance matter greatly and the evidence suggests that the pivotal years in determining prospects for mobility occur when children are relatively young. Levels of social capital – local civic engagement as well as religious participation – also stand out as being important, as does family structure.

What can we say about social mobility and cities in the UK? Excellent research has been undertaken (as I've highlighted before) on how the class attainment gap in London's schools has been dramatically reduced over a generation (though we *don't* know the extent to which these big strides will translate into future earnings). And the Sutton Trust have produced an innovative and revealing map showing the variation in performance of disadvantaged children in every (English) parliamentary constituency. We also know that, if we look at earnings mobility, where you live makes a big difference: those in London have a far greater chance of advancing up the pay ladder compared with people in other regions – even after we take account of skill levels, occupational mix and other factors – and this effect became much stronger in the 2000s compared to the 1990s. Against this, it would be surprising if London's staggering levels of inequality in income and wealth compared to other parts of the UK, together with its dysfunctional housing market, didn't act as a heavy anchor on mobility across the generations.

Studies of social mobility repeatedly suggest that geography matters. In the UK, as with other countries, there are powerful neighbourhood effects at work that shape the odds facing disadvantaged kids over and above all their family-specific factors like parental class, income and education. The LSE showed that, even after fully taking account of family circumstances and school intake, it was still the case that coming from a neighbourhood characterised by high levels of child poverty was closely linked to a strongly negative impact on educational outcomes. How a given level of poverty is distributed across an urban area appears to matter greatly to child opportunity.

These partial insights, however, only take us so far. At one level our knowledge gap about cities and much else simply reflects the fact that it's not been possible to link up major data sets (including from HMRC) in the UK in the way that other countries have done: a sure case of the need for greater data-activism. But, at a deeper level, it also mirrors our political culture. Take part in a debate on social mobility and you will – not surprisingly – find yourself discussing familiar national themes: private schools and the demise of grammars; the rise of financial services and decline of manufacturing; mass expansion of higher education; and the role of the welfare state. But a granular discussion about alternative strategies for city-development? Unlikely.

Yet the context for social mobility may well be shaped – more than we realise – below the level of the nation state. Perhaps some of our cities are quietly generating Scandinavian levels of mobility without us knowing; or maybe the smaller, more centralised nature of the UK means they're all much the same.

It would, however, be highly surprising if there weren't unlearnt lessons. Decisions about housing supply and mix, land use, transport infrastructure and commute times, migrant settlement and integration, models of school improvement, the transition from education to employment, and the design of shared civic spaces and services may well count for more than we think. Powers over these issues, together with the revenue base needed to underpin them, should form at least part of our national conversation about equity and opportunity, alongside regional economic growth.

It is a feature of our times that, despite strong headwinds, our leading cities believe they have more agency to shape their economic plight than has been the case for some time. As more powerful leaders emerge across our city-regions over the next few years they could also help breathe some new life into our national debate on social mobility. It would be useful if they had some research to guide them.

Social Mobility and Future Cities/

Amy O'Beirne/

This is a summary of some of the discussion points raised during the festival event on social mobility, chaired by Julian Baggini, which took place on 18 November. The speakers were commentator and author Lynsey Hanley; Gavin Kelly, chief executive of the Resolution Trust; and Marvin Rees, director of a leadership programme encouraging social mobility in Bristol.

Social mobility is one of the major challenges faced by future cities. There are fears that inequality is growing, that upward mobility is, if not in decline, stagnating, and that cities are becoming places for the wealthy.

Lynsey Hanley pointed out that the issues discussed in her book *Estates: An Intimate History*, first published in 2007, namely realities of class and barriers to social mobility, remain all too relevant today. She argued that the relationship between class and place has not altered, nor has the stigma attached to growing up on a housing estate, and it seems that those from high-income backgrounds are still more likely to command high incomes as adults.

In tackling the question of social mobility in UK cities, lack of data presents a real problem. All of the available data is at a national scale, so the degree to which social mobility varies from city to city is not well understood; moreover most of the data is based on people who were born in 1970. However, as Gavin Kelly explained, a study examining the life trajectories of 40 million American children is currently being conducted by researchers from Harvard and Stanford, and it is likely that some of the findings are relevant to the UK. The study is observing that social mobility in cities in the US, considered to be the least socially mobile country in the Western world, varies greatly, and there are likely to be similar differences between cities in the UK. The researchers have found a number of factors that account for the differences in the US, including race, social segregation in terms of concentration of poverty, urban sprawl and also social capital and the intensity of civic interaction.

Kelly added that the geography of poverty – the distribution of poverty around a city – also matters considerably. For example, the density of poverty in a neighbourhood is one of the most powerful predictors of whether or not children will succeed academically. He argued that other factors must enter the social mobility debate, too, and suggested that commuting times, urban transport networks, land-use plans, the quality of shared public spaces and the density and quality of housing all ought to be considered. These are factors over which leaders of devolved cities will have more purchase, and therefore devolution could have a positive effect on social mobility. Hanley highlighted the particular significance of transport, arguing that the way to make a city and its resources more accessible to those living on the outskirts is by drastically improving public transport.

Hanley suggested that confidence is another theme of social mobility debates, and addressed in particular the difficulties faced by people who come from places in which self-confidence and confidence in outside institutions are very low. She argued that social mobility should not only mean increased access to all available resources, but also increased autonomy and increased social esteem. Politicians present social mobility as an unequivocally good thing, Hanley argued, but they should take into account the burden borne by individuals going through the process in an increasingly unequal society.

Marvin Rees agreed with Hanley, and further suggested that social mobility should be discussed as 'social immobility'; framing it in this way would force people to think about the very real barriers that exist to some in our society. Social immobility can be subtle, cultural, institutional and unintended, and is about power, choice and privilege, he argued. Rees highlighted inequality as a barrier to achieving social mobility. He suggested that the dominance of people from elite backgrounds in leadership positions within organisations indicated that

people reached those roles not through talent or merit, but rather because they came from 'a background that simply knows how to navigate the world'.

Rees also argued that social immobility is inherent within society:

> While social immobility may be bad news for many people, it is actually good news for some. It not only means that good people do not go up; it also means that less than competent people do not come down. Social mobility means losing some of the privilege, and losing that privilege comes at a price. Maybe social immobility is not an accidental fallout of a broken system. Maybe it is actually the system we are part of, and we have engineered disadvantage into it.

He argued that he had not seen or experienced a genuine interest in an empowered population, and asked, 'Do the people shaping the way we do business and the way we do economics have the imagination and the will to consider other ways of doing economic development?'

However, examples from elsewhere in Europe show that changes can be made. Kelly explained that, before their current tax and benefit systems were implemented, Sweden and Denmark both had unequal societies, but once they had made societal and political changes, the resulting systems, over time, led to improved outcomes for their populations. This example demonstrates that the inequality of societies is a problem that it is possible to address. Ultimately, Kelly remarked that social mobility is not a 'zero sum game', but rather is about raising the opportunity for the majority of people to enjoy a higher absolute standard of living, while at the same time 'fixing the odds' so that they are not stacked against a child moving from poverty to a higher position within society.

Julian Baggini, Gavin Kelly, Lynsey Hanley and Marvin Rees (JonCraig.co.uk).

Immigration and Future Cities/

Amy O'Beirne/

This is a summary of some of the discussion points raised from one of two festival sessions on immigration which took place on 19 November: Is Cosmopolitan Confidence Part of the Problem? The chair was John Harris. The panellists were Sunder Katwala, British Future, and journalist and author Gary Younge.

The UK is increasingly cosmopolitan. There is more diversity, with ethnic minority groups accounting for 80 per cent of population growth over the past decade, and urban areas, which are proportionally more cosmopolitan, are growing. Cities are increasingly becoming the focus of economic and political activity in their regions, exerting a greater force on their surrounding areas. University education, a crucial driver of attitudinal change, is also rising. This growing cosmopolitanism will not be confined to major cities in the future, but will also be present in suburbs and small towns.

Some people are uncomfortable about difference and change, and in particular the notion of accelerated change. There is additional tension between those living in big cities and those in smaller, peripheral places. Both John Harris and Gary Younge explained that the political far-right, for example, do best not in cities but rather on the peripheries of cities. This is because, they argued, people living on the periphery are afraid of what they perceive to be happening in the city itself; they feel cut off and at a disadvantage, believing that politicians know little of their problems. Peripheral areas also tend to be places where immigration and diversity are new, or relatively new, experiences. The people in these areas might feel a lack of control over their lives, suggested Younge and, in the absence of that sense of control, they begin to move towards an internal conversation about who they are and their place in the world.

People who have already expressed a sense of cosmopolitan confidence are struggling to share this and to build majority confidence in the type of society the UK is and will increasingly be. The populist argument

against migration, diversity and change is 'a very powerful "them and us" story,' explained Sunder Katwala, and this can make it difficult for those who perceive immigration as a positive force to engage with those who do not. Most people fall somewhere between 'pro' and 'anti' mindsets; for example, they may recognise the benefit of skilled workers, but they might also worry about the pace of change and the 'feel' of their local area. Younge argued that it is therefore important for conversations about immigration and diversity to cover not only economic issues and other metrics, but also matters of identity, difference, fairness and cultural ease or unease; issues which can be much more difficult to pin down. For example, 'myth-busting' pro-immigration arguments, which focus simply on facts, can be ineffective not only because public trust in immigration policy and information is low, but also because they tend to lecture rather than offer an opportunity to converse or engage, and they fail to take into account the fact that people hold different values, priorities and preferences.

Those who are confident about cosmopolitanism should address the concerns of others through constructive responses, and should recognise that anxiety might stem from the fear of losing control. As Katwala said, 'We have to look for the actual reasons behind these voices. Can we separate legitimate concerns from the irrational prejudice that we should dismiss?' Younge echoed this: 'It is a perfectly decent human response to be worried by change. The question is where you look for solace and the nature of your worry.' Younge also stressed the importance of conducting conversations in a non-judgmental way. 'People have to be able to make mistakes,' he said, adding that

> [although] we have to be comfortable about calling people out, there is a difference between telling people what they said is racist and what they are is racist; the 'what you did' conversation as opposed to the 'what you are' conversation. It's a very important distinction.

Politicians should also engage the public more actively in the debate about immigration and diversity. The public need 'the show, not tell, version, where they can see, hear and feel, and get to participate,' said Katwala. Often, when people have personal experience of immigration, their hostility decreases, so those more confidently cosmopolitan need to engage others in a 'what do we do together' conversation. Improving infrastructure, particularly transport networks and broadband, will help more people feel connected, and will ensure that the cosmopolitan future is made more available to more people.

The media has a role to play in creating new spaces where people can hold these conversations about immigration and diversity, particularly in areas where such conversations do not often occur. One challenge to overcome is that journalists are largely based in London, and this results in London-based reference points which do not hold true for the rest of the country. As Younge remarked, even when not situated in London, journalists are generally based in large cities rather than in rural areas. This can make people living outside the cities feel

excluded. People who do not live in urban areas need to feel that they are part of these discussions and that they belong in the country that the UK is becoming. 'This is one of the most integrated countries in the world, and yet the way that our national conversation takes place you wouldn't necessarily know it,' said Younge. As Katwala pointed out, it is about engaging as many people as possible in the conversation:

> it's about finding the common spaces, common places where we actually construct it together... British identity has become much more inclusive during my lifetime and people don't know if English identity will or won't [too]... so I want to lean into that and say let's just do it; on St George's Day, let's invite everyone.

Gary Younge, John Harris and Sunder Katwala (JonCraig.co.uk).

Are Smart Cities Really that Smart?/

Amy O'Beirne/

This is a summary of some of the discussion points raised from the festival event on making cities smart which took place on 19 November. The chair was Margaret Heffernan. The panellists were Mara Balestrini, University College London; Charlie Catlett, University of Chicago Computation Institute; Eva Gladek, Metabolic, Netherlands; Adam Greenfield, Urbanscale; Stephen Hilton, Bristol City Council's Connecting Bristol programme; and author Evgeny Morozov.

The emergence of the smart cities discourse has raised questions about technology and its impact on our cities, including issues of open data, efficiency and ownership and power.

Smart cities present a model of efficient use of resources, individuals and labour, enabled by communication networks and technologies. However, Evgeny Morozov argued that only a few companies benefit from this hyper-efficiency, earning more from the new resources added to the global market as a result of the networks. Large corporations offer a number of packages to cities so that they can optimise their resource use, and citizen-led efforts cannot currently compete with the power of these companies. 'What really matters to how cities will be governed in the future, how they'll be operated and run, is who will own the data that is generated,' Morozov added.

Adam Greenfield echoed this concern over power and ownership. 'The core notion of the smart city is to embed networked informatics in every object, surface and relation of urban space, so everything that happens in the city can be captured.' He contended, however, 'if you're not offering that information back to people, and you're aggregating it and collecting it for yourself... any rhetoric you hear about empowerment, or decentralisation, or the distribution of agency, is very hollow indeed.'

Another issue highlighted by debates about smart cities is the term 'smart cities' itself. Charlie Catlett suggested that the term can be misleading because it suggests

that it is possible to solve any problem with technology and science. It should, rather, convey the idea that by using the data available and by collecting more data, an opportunity exists to 'make the city work better for people'. He agreed that data should be open and free as a citizen utility, and gave the example of the Chicago Array of Things project. Currently, sensors across cities can be installed by different city departments with contracts to different companies, meaning that data cannot be combined. The Array of Things aims to extend the notion of open data, and to allow such data to be shared and used more easily. Open data and greater data use, Catlett argued, will enable cities to 'get in front of' problems.

Greenfield, on the other hand, argued that the smart city imperative 'to minimise disruptions' was one of his biggest concerns.

> The idea of the smart city to install its predictive policing, to get out of time, to anticipate patterns of behaviour and circumvent or prevent them, criminalises entirely legal behaviour. To the smart city and the operators of a city equipped with these technologies, the practice of democracy equals nothing other than disruption.

He added:

> There is clearly a vision of consumption, convenience and security, but this seems to be consumption, convenience and security for a few, and a permanent state of exception for everybody else.

However, as Mara Balestrini pointed out, there are examples of communities using smart city concepts to exercise their rights to their city; communities have appropriated smart city technologies in creative ways to effect positive changes and to change their environments in ways that are relevant to them. Smart city technologies can 'empower people to move to a different way of functioning,' suggested Eva Gladek, who added that

supporting large corporations 'is a very different thing from supporting the communities who are using these types of technologies to empower themselves'.

Stephen Hilton gave examples of initiatives in Bristol. The Playable City programme, for example, explores the use of technology, data and place in creating new connections between people and their city. Hilton also argued that technology can help cities to become more sustainable and sufficient. He explained that smart city projects in Bristol have increased people's knowledge about the energy they use in their homes, and have had a large impact on the way they understand energy consumption. Other projects will use big data to help solve problems such as air pollution and traffic congestion, he said.

Greenfield disagreed with the argument that smart city technology could result in more sustainable cities: 'The smart city has no way of accounting for things like informal housing, or the provision of informal mobility, or the provision of informal services,' he said. In terms of its contribution to GDP, the informal sector, activities and income that are partially or fully outside government regulation, taxation and observation, accounts for between 25 to 40 per cent of annual output in developing countries in Asia and Africa. 'If the smart city is not capable of recognising that kind of activity except through its ghostly traces on other activities, showing up on other registers, then it can't really claim to be about sustainability,' he argued.

'I would like to see decentralisation, open access, public ownership,' said Greenfield.

> We need to be activists... Had nobody come forward to challenge the standard smart city discourse as it was represented originally, then it really would have been dominant, and we wouldn't have been able question it. Thankfully people did, and now there are fruitful alternatives, and people talking about open ownership, open access, common ownership, and activism at every level.

Morozov remarked that 'we have to be able to articulate a vision for how citizens can actually start thinking about services that can be smart, flexible and employ a lot of the infrastructure for the benefit of their own communities.' In order to deliver an alternative service, he argued, people should contest the power that technology companies hold not just on infrastructure, data and networks, but also on our imaginations.

We should try to understand the motivations of citizens, suggested Balestrini, and to observe how people are using these technologies. By discussing ownership issues, and by producing commons and discussing governance of the commons, she argued, we will be able to appropriate and co-create technologies that are highly useful to citizens and societies of the future.

Margaret Heffernan (JonCraig.co.uk).

Nature and the City/

One of the great benefits of the current renewal of cities is the potential to make them nature-rich.

A special strand of the festival, organised in association with Avon Wildlife Trust, explored how we might integrate nature in urban living, design and planning, and debated the challenges of making our urban landscapes wildlife-friendly in order to protect existing wildlife and to attract more. Amy O'Beirne has summarised the discussion in the opening chapter of this section.

One of the speakers in the first panel session in this strand, The Value of Urban Nature and Natural Capital, was Melissa Harrison, novelist and author of the Nature Notebook column in *The Times*. She was commissioned by the festival to write a short story on the theme of nature and the city, which is published here. The story takes an unconventional look at the contentious issue of invasive species and how they should be managed.

Design scientist and futurist Melissa Sterry took part in the Architecture, Nature and Wildlife in Cities debate. Her chapter centres on this topic, but also touches on points she raised during the discussion on utopian cities, one of the other sessions to which she contributed.
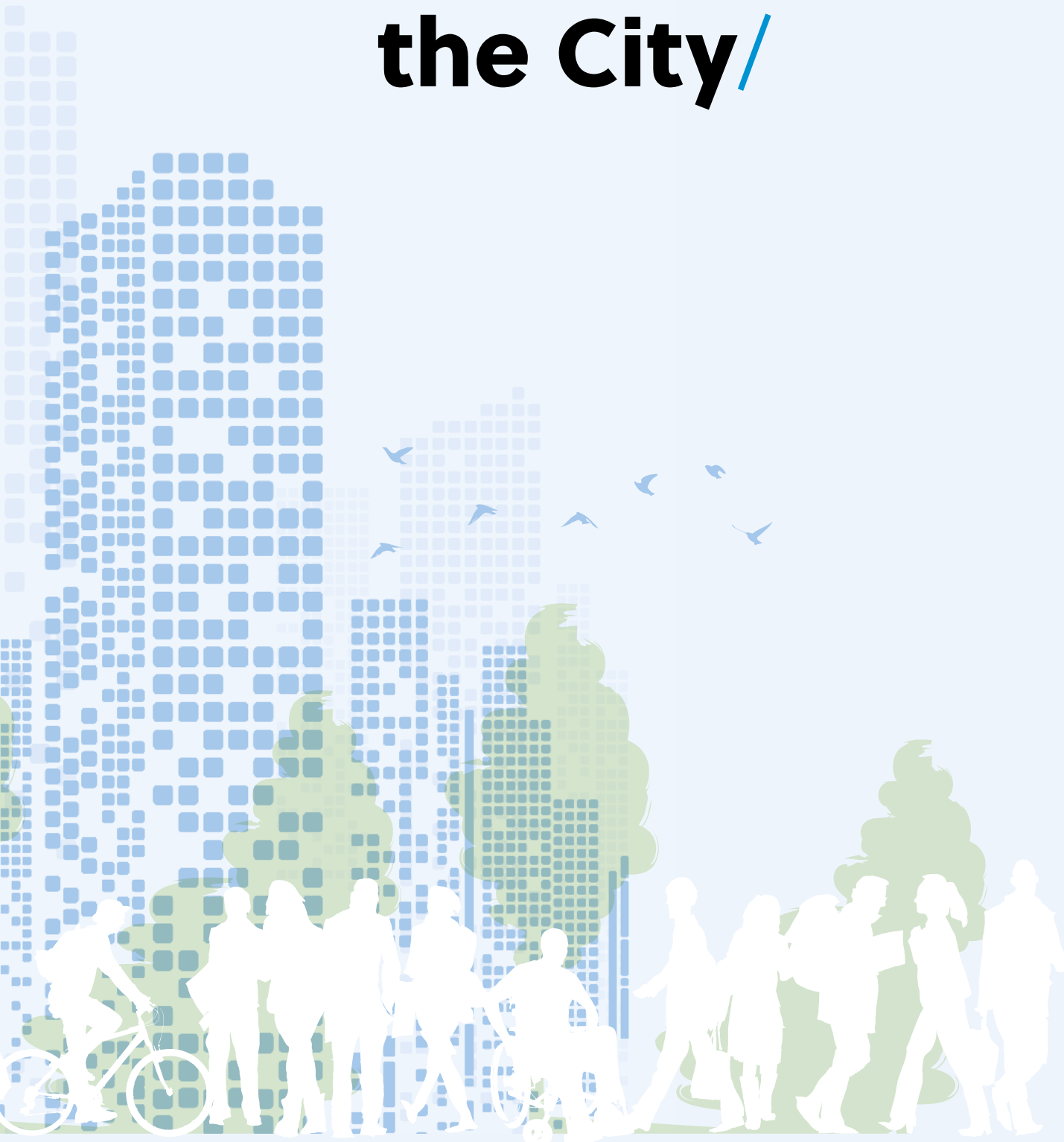
Nature-Rich Cities/

Amy O'Beirne/

This is a summary of some of the discussion points raised during the three panels that formed the Nature-Rich Cities strand of the festival. The sessions were organised by Avon Wildlife Trust. Keynote speaker: Chris Baines, environmentalist. Chairs: Bevis Watts, Avon Wildlife Trust; John Alker, UK Green Building Council; Jane Memmott, Professor of Ecology and Head of the School for Biological Sciences, University of Bristol. Panellists: Rab Bennetts, Bennetts Associates; Mathew Frith, London Wildlife Trust; David Goode, author; Melissa Harrison, novelist and author; Stephanie Hime, KPMG's natural capital specialist; Tony Juniper, campaigner and author; Mike Roberts, HAB Housing; Melissa Sterry, Bionic City; Georgia Stokes, Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust; Claire Wansbury, Atkins Global UK Ecology Leadership Team.

On 18 November the Avon Wildlife Trust welcomed a range of expert speakers to explore the need for nature-rich cities as part of the Festival of the Future City. This full-day programme brought together practitioners, architects, environmentalists, economists, developers, campaigners and authors to examine the value of nature for urban populations and landscapes.

Over half of the world's population currently lives in urban areas. By 2050 there will be an additional two billion people on the planet, and by then two thirds of the population will live in cities. London's population, for example, is predicted to grow from 8.6 million to 11 million in this period. There is consequently huge pressure for development. One of the benefits of the current renewal of cities is the potential to make them nature-rich, and to integrate nature into urban living, design and planning.

Keynote speaker Chris Baines described how in the 1970s and 80s he worked as a landscape architect in a range of tough inner-city housing estates, encouraging communities to green up their environment. In a period of extreme urban tension and social unrest, at the end of the infamous Brixton riots when whole neighbourhoods had been trashed, 'no one had touched the sunflowers on "my" Tulse Hill Nature Garden'. This small wild oasis among the tower blocks, created and cared for by local

children, was clearly respected as a living symbol of personal empowerment, peace and sanity.

Since the 1970s, scientific research has confirmed the health benefits of urban greenspace. As little as three minutes spent in natural surroundings are enough to reduce stress and tension to a measurable degree and this means that accessible wild spaces right on the doorstep can make a significant difference to healthy living.

Furthermore, green routes to school and work encourage journeys on foot, and a green outlook from the workplace can increase productivity, reduce absenteeism and boost economic efficiency. No surprise, then, that homes and offices in natural green surroundings command a premium.

Despite this, when it comes to policy and the way we think about environmental questions, there still seems to be a divide between urban areas and nature. As Tony Juniper put it, 'nature is seen to exist "out there" in the countryside'. This mindset leads to a continual trading between economics and environment, as demonstrated by attempts to remove planning constraints in order to promote economic growth. Many people, both in business and in politics, have come to see the destruction of nature as a price to be paid for progress.

However, nature should not be seen as an impediment to the development and economy of cities, but as an asset. Nature-rich cities tend to attract more investment, and there is evidence relating the presence of nature to employee recruitment and retention. Nature-rich cities also provide a range of ecosystem services, from flood protection, to providing food and timber, to reducing air pollution. A natural capital argument voiced at all levels of decision-making might therefore be powerful; it would demonstrate that sacrificing nature can damage the economy. Juniper said:

> We need to show that nature, and the protection and rebuilding of nature, is not a cost or burden but a benefit to our cities. The more we can empower people who care about nature on an emotional level with some economic tools, the further we can get.

Opposite page: Snakes Head Fritillaries in Camley Street Park, Kings Cross (London Wildlife Trust).

Opposite page: Camley Street Park, Kings Cross. Atkins valued the natural capital of this nature reserve in the heart of London at £3m per year (London Wildlife Trust).

Above, left: Natural Estates, transforming housing estates in London. Sycamore Estate, Tottenham (London Wildlife Trust).

Above, right: My Wild Street: urban wilding of an inner-city street in Bristol involving residents of 31 households (Avon Wildlife Trust).

Below: Nature-rich housing developments: HAB Housing's Applewood Development in Stroud, Gloucestershire (Tim Soar).

While monetising nature and ecosystem services might help some people understand their value, others have concerns about this approach. A valuation might be seen as a price tag for nature, Claire Wansbury suggested, and as such the amount someone needs to pay in order to destroy it, a license to trade off one good against another. 'It may be that the people making the economic decisions are most interested in the numbers, but that doesn't mean you have to stop, or should stop, talking about the other aspects,' she said. Stephanie Hime agreed, asserting that there was a time and a place for valuation, and that it must be recognised that valuation is not always the right option. Melissa Harrison argued that monetising nature is a cynical move, one which would alter people's relationship with the natural world. 'Do we trust people to behave morally when the overriding impulse is for them to behave economically?' she asked.

Arguments for nature-rich cities must also highlight the benefits to the wider natural world, not solely those for humans, Harrison suggested. The UK is an increasingly urbanised country, so integrating the natural world into the areas where the majority of people live would help to reduce the disconnect between people and nature, perhaps resulting in a greater amount of care and concern for the natural environment than if nature were excluded from cities. We risk 'ghettoising' nature, Harrison said, adding 'What frightens me is a situation where we all live in cities, the cities have very little nature in, and we're happy with nature being something over there.'

It is clear that a collaborative approach to the strategic management of cities and towns is required in order to sustain and improve the diversity of wildlife in urban areas. There are all manner of people who can be involved in the protection of nature, to varying degrees, and it is crucial that all are included. Mike Roberts argued that the housing industry is not doing enough to recycle knowledge and improve new schemes and developments. Architects need to be challenged to put biodiversity back into the core of new developments, he said, as nature is currently relatively low on the list of priorities for sustainable housing. Melissa Sterry echoed this, and added that much of what material scientists

around the world are now creating is biomimetric, inspired by nature. New science and technology are focused on nature, so the materials used in future cities will be much more nature-like, she explained.

Georgia Stokes argued that partnership work will be crucial to the future of our cities, citing the collaborative approach used to develop Birmingham and the Black Country's Nature Improvement Area, a process which involved small 'friends' groups, local authorities and private sector organisations. John Alker also suggested that the private sector must take a lead alongside policymakers in recognising value in nature and building appropriate partnerships, particularly with local communities. Rab Bennetts agreed: 'There are an awful lot of good people running commercial organisations that want to do the right thing,' he said. Mathew Frith added that social landlords must be involved. Around 18 per cent of households nationally are in social housing, often in places with poor quality natural green space, so work with landlords could greatly improve open spaces in inner-city neighbourhoods.

National wildlife organisations and natural history societies have a central role to play in involving more people and bringing them closer to nature, as remarked upon by David Goode. Running alongside a need for collaborative work and engagement is the need to improve people's understanding of ecology. Goode highlighted data collection by amateurs as a way to address this, and suggested 'bioblitzes' and neighbourhood wildlife watch groups as ways for people to get involved in their local area while contributing to the knowledge of the wildlife and diversity in the city, adding that 'a smartphone is the new butterfly net'. Frith noted that the language used in discussions about nature and the environment can act as barriers to engagement, and argued that the right language must be used for the right audiences. Ecological literacy should be embedded across society, Sterry suggested, so that conversations are more effective and more people can take an active role in promoting nature-rich cities. 'The rock stars of change are not generally politicians,' she added. 'Don't rely on someone else to lead the change. Get out there and do it.'
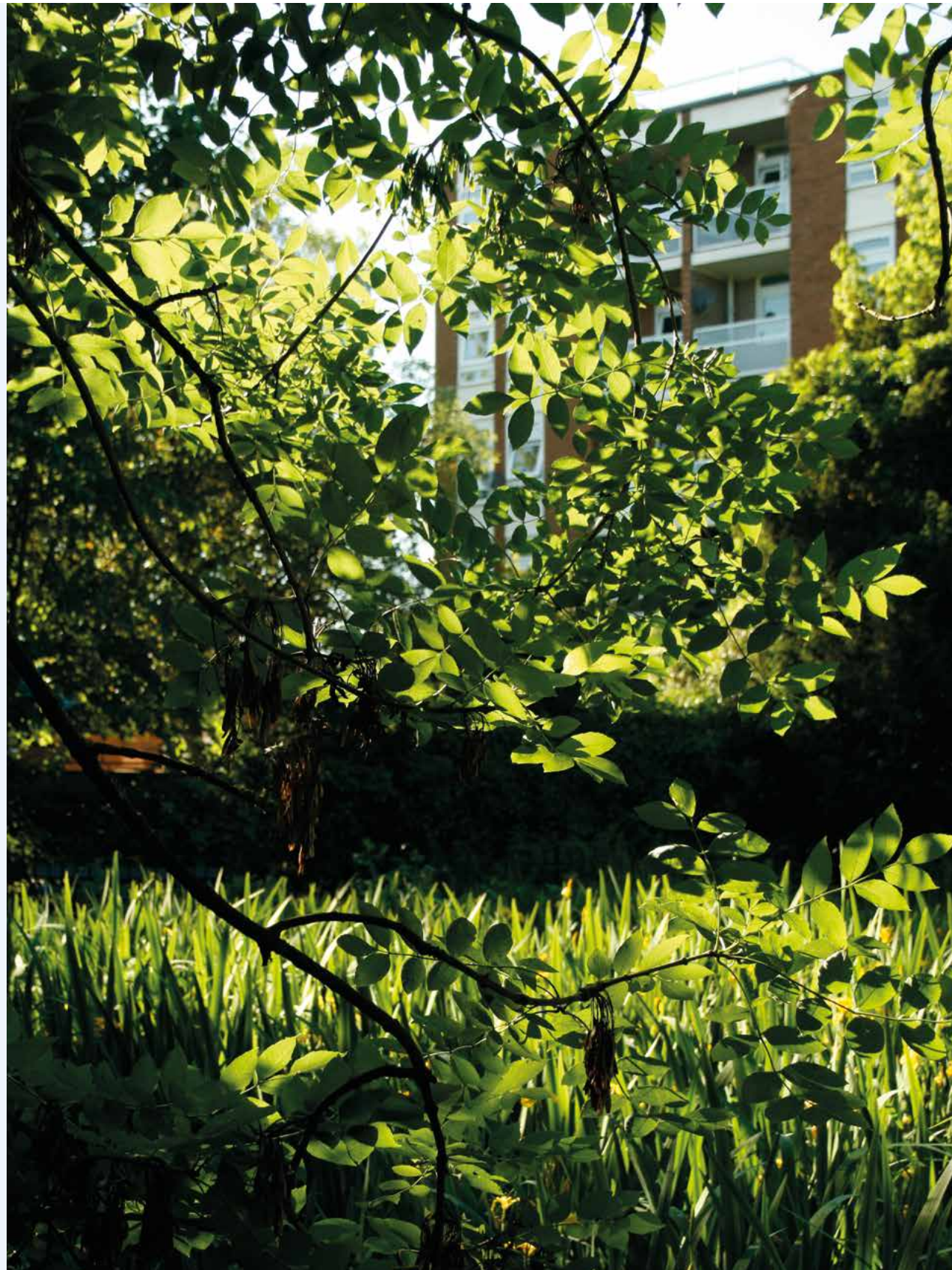
State of Nature/

Melissa Harrison/

For some reason it's the little owls I can't forget. I've no idea why: *Athene noctua* may be pretty little raptors, but they hardly mattered given everything else. Yet all these years later I can still remember how light they were, how sharp their keelbones felt deep under all their dappled feathers. It's stupid, I know, but I can't seem to get over the way the female's right foot with its four little talons gripped my finger so tightly as I held her in my hands.

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Goram's Wood is only about a mile away: six hectares or so of mixed deciduous woodland, a pond formed from an old charcoal pit and some scrubby meadow surrounded on three sides by terraced streets, on the fourth by the railway line. It's one of the last surviving fragments of the wildwood that once crept right up to the old city walls; I like to think of it full of wild boars and white harts being hunted by medieval nobles – though English peasants driving swine for acorns is probably nearer the truth. A group of locals began looking after it back in the 1990s – nothing useful, of course, just litter-picking and cutting back the brambles – but at some point they got help from one of the big wildlife charities. They slapped it with a load of official acronyms and sent the volunteers on training courses: botanical surveying, pond management, even scything, or so I heard. Say what you like about the conservation movement, they know how to get a good job of work out of your average volunteer. By the time I moved to the area Goram's Wood was no longer dank and overgrown, full of rotting mattresses and condoms, but well-managed woodland with some fine veteran oaks and ancient ash stools, a spring-flowering meadow and a pond edged with yellow flag irises and dancing with damselflies. The first time I saw it, one May morning nearly a decade ago, it seemed to me like – well, a bit like paradise.

Or so I thought. Ignorance is bliss, and I've learned a lot since then, I can tell you. Back in those days I took things on face value, believed what I was told; back then I had a positive take on most things, you know? I was still working for Railtrack and I saw the kids every weekend, so life was pretty full – but if you'd asked me about the environment I'd probably have said that things were OK: nobody stole birds' eggs like my old man used to do, foxhunting was over and done with, the rivers were clean again. If you'd asked me, I'd have said that unlike the whales and the rainforest, nature in this country was pretty much doing alright.

And d'you know what: most people probably still think that even today. You won't find the full picture on the bloody television, that's for sure – and that's where the general public gets its view of the world. You're not going to hear the truth from the BBC with their cosy wildlife programmes and political correctness and kow-towing to Whitehall. And the so-called conservation charities, well, they're all as bad as each other, grubbing around for the public's pennies, fighting amongst themselves and none of them with the guts to say what really needs to be done. At least I tried: I can say that. At least I tried.

I was never an official volunteer at Goram's Wood; the local paper got that wrong, along with everything else. At first I was just a punter: I took the kids there every Saturday – while their mother still let them come, that is. They were never allowed to do anything outdoors with her, because she didn't like them getting dirty, so they really loved it. We'd look at the birds and the trees and they'd run about and climb stuff like kids do, and after a while we'd sort of feel used to each other again, you know? You could feel it happen. It wasn't anything fancy, but it was a routine, and it was ours, and that mattered to me. It mattered.

Afterwards I'd take them to the IMAX or to the soft play, and then I'd buy them chips or ice cream, whatever they wanted, and I'd walk them back as far as her front gate and go for a pint or three. It's tiring, looking after kids.

I started going to the wood on weekdays after I lost my job. I was at a loose end, I suppose, and I couldn't sit in all day, not in that flat. I'd never really made it my own, you see; I really believed it was temporary at first, and then after a bit there was a stubbornness to it that I can't explain any more. You'd probably say I wasn't thinking straight, just sleeping on a mattress

All photographs in this chapter are by Melissa Harrison.

with a sleeping bag, no proper plates or cups, but it was how I wanted it back then.

Anyway, I'd go to the wood in the afternoons and just sit and smoke; sometimes I'd have a nip of something to keep the weather off. I'd watch the volunteers doing things like clearing scrub and putting up bat boxes, and I suppose I just got interested in it. I'm used to being useful, d'you see what I mean? I started picking up the odd bit of litter – just around my bench at first, but then around the others; I bought a box of those blue surgical gloves online and started coming most days. After a bit I got to know the volunteers – nothing much really, just to say hello. At first I think they thought I was an alkie or something, so they weren't too friendly. But they could see I was trying to be useful, and after a while I stopped bringing the Teachers with me. That helped.

I remember the day I first felt part of it. They were pulling up Himalayan balsam around the pond and I asked the one in charge, Ian, why: I said I thought it looked nice, with its tall stems and pink flowers. He explained about it being invasive, but I didn't really get it: there wasn't that much of it growing there, and it seemed to me you could easily keep it down if it threatened to get out of hand. But we pulled it up and it was taken off to be burned, and when we were finished I asked him about Japanese knotweed, whether that was the same. You were starting to hear about it on TV at that point: people being refused mortgages and the like – as if that's what we should be worried about: rich

people losing a few quid. That's what I mean about the TV twisting everything, you know?

Anyway, there wasn't any knotweed on the site, Ian said, but it grew not far away, along the railway cutting, so they were keeping an eye on it. I asked if the seeds might blow in on the wind, but one of the others, Libby, chipped in and said it didn't spread by seed, actually. She said I must have been thinking of ragwort, which was brought here from Italy by the Victorians, spread along the railway lines, helped by the passage of trains, and was now all over the country.

I wasn't, but I let it pass.

So I started doing a bit of weeding then – not a lot, just when I saw things that shouldn't have been there. Don't get me wrong, I wasn't trying to make it all tidy, like a garden: far from it. I left the nettles and the ivy alone, given their importance to wildlife. I started going to the library and reading up on the internet about biodiversity and habitat improvement, about how everything fits together, and how everything has to have enough resources in order to survive. The truth is, species have to have evolved alongside each other for them to be able to coexist, d'you get what I mean? They have to belong.

There was so much potential, on a small, fully enclosed site like Goram's Wood, to get it right, to make it perfect – but equally, it was obvious to me how easily it could all go wrong. So I started looking out for things. Not just the Himalayan balsam or the ragwort or knotweed,

but anything that shouldn't have been there: Spanish bluebells, everlasting pea, alien water plants in the pond. My job, as I saw it, was to be another set of eyes; a guardian, if you like. I emptied out the old work tools from my toolbag, got myself some spray glyph and a weed puller and a good pair of secateurs.

Then one day I arrived for work and the others were talking about terrapins. Looking back now I still can't understand how I'd never seen them, given how much I knew by then, and given how much I was on site – but apparently there were at least two in the pond.

'How on earth did they get there?' one of them asked – Libby, probably. She never was that bright, as I recall. The pretty ones never are.

'Pet release,' I said, but Ian said it louder so they all listened to him, as usual.

'It was a big craze back in the nineties,' he went on; 'Remember *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*?'

That was enough to set them all off reminiscing and getting off the point.

'Can't we just leave them?' asked Libby eventually; 'After all, they're not doing any harm.'

'They'll be predating native fish and amphibians,' I told her. 'Baby ducklings too, if they're big enough.'

They all turned round to look to me then. 'And there's another thing to consider,' I told them; I think I may have folded my arms. 'These terrapins may not have been able to breed so far, but one really warm summer and they will. Factor in global warming and we've got a problem. We have to act.'

'Baby ducklings is a tautology,' Libby said.

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I didn't see the terrapins that day, or the day after – although I volunteered to be lookout on the bench by the pond for both my shifts. It was the weekend when I actually laid eyes on them, and I had the kids.

I was working on an unofficial tree survey around this time, making a note of all the things like horse chestnuts, Turkey oaks and ornamental cherries. There were lots of young sycamores as well, too many to count, but I wanted to come up with at least a rough estimate. I still believed, back then, that the others would want to know.

Anyway, we were doing the rounds of the wood, me and the kids, and the kids were moody for some reason, not enjoying themselves like they should have been with all that glorious natural heritage around them. Their birthright, I used to tell them it was. But I'm getting off the point.
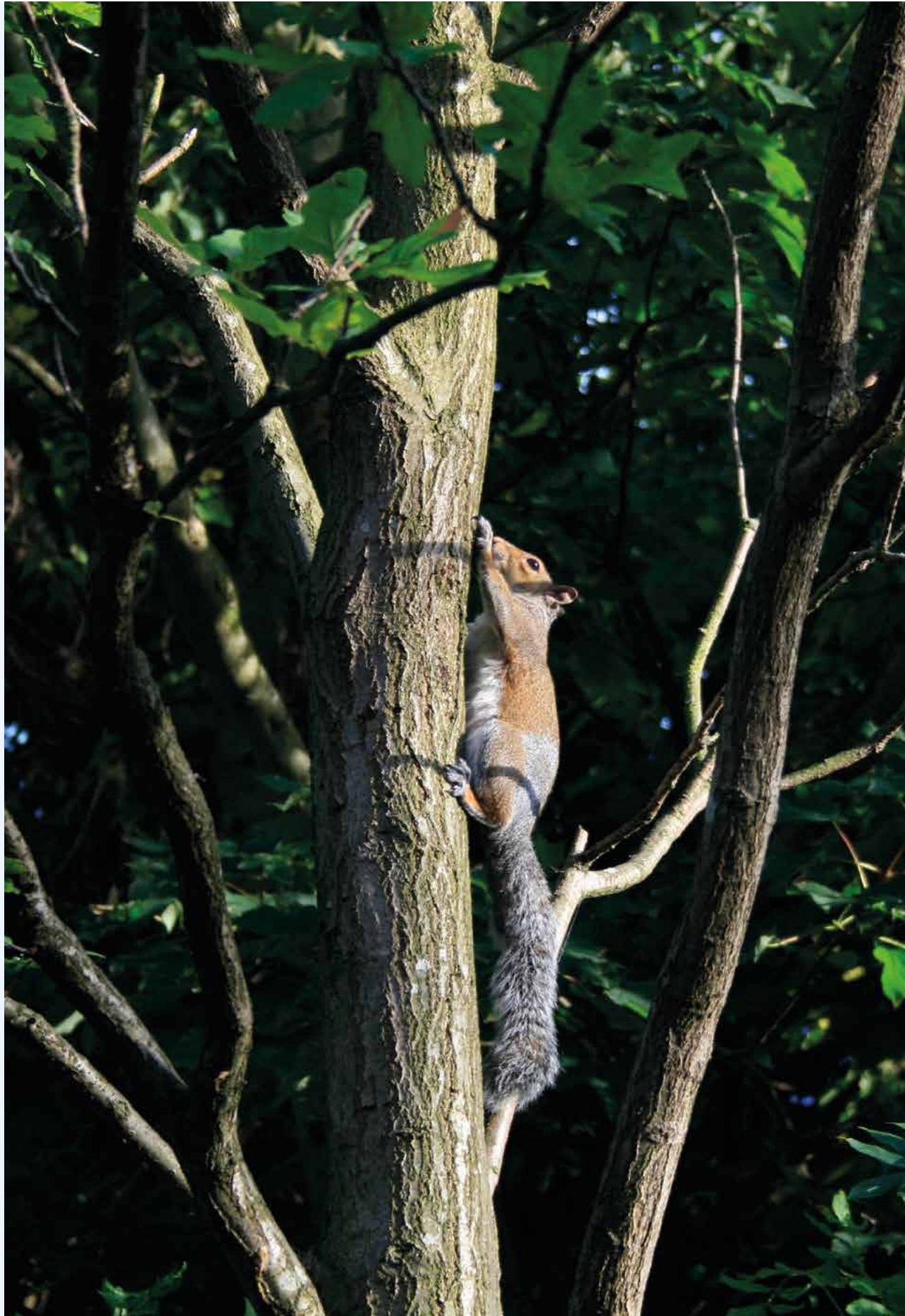
So I let them go off to the pond and watch the idiots throwing the wrong kind of food to the ducks. It gave me a bit of peace and quiet while I totted up the trees in the western sector of the site. The next thing I know, it was, 'Daddy! Daddy! There's a tortoise in the pond!'

Well I jogged to the pond and got a look through my bins – second-hand, but good ones, the type that Ray Mears recommends – and sure enough, basking in the sun like they belonged there were two adult red-eared terrapins, all the kids and parents gawping like they were something to be excited about. Mind you, your average punter would probably cheer an American signal crayfish if they thought it was 'nature', if they thought it was something off of *Spring*-bloody-*watch*. More fool them, that's all I can say.

I'd caught them within the week. One of the regulars at the pub was an angler, and after I borrowed his chest waders and landing net it was easy. It was sometime in summer – June or July, I think; early enough in the year to be light in the evenings. That's when I did it – by myself, of course. I just climbed the fence and scooped them out, simple as that. Course, it kicked up quite a bit of sediment, but the pond was almost clear again by daylight.

You should have seen the others' faces when I turned up for work the next day.

'I've got the terrapins,' I said. I didn't just come out with it straight away; I waited until Ian had finished briefing us all.

'You've what?' said Libby, turning round to stare at me over her shoulder. 'When did you do that?'

I held up the box. 'Two red-eared adults, Ian. I haven't sexed them, but it looks like it could be a pair.'

It went quiet for a moment, then Ian came over to look. I had them in a Tupperware biscuit box.

'What'll we do with them?' I asked him as I handed it over.

'We'll… I'll have to check with the Trust,' he said, opening one corner of the lid warily and peeking in. 'Find out what the recommended procedure is.'

'I expect they'll be rehomed,' chipped in Libby. 'A sanctuary or something.'

'Saves us calling someone out, I suppose,' said Ian.

I didn't notice until I got home, after my shift, that none of them had actually thanked me.

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We used to get the odd ruddy duck at the pond. Funny little things they were, with bright blue beaks. The government's eradicated them all now, although it cost hundreds and hundreds per bird in the end; it's one of the only sensible things Westminster's ever done. They

had to push it through, though: even the professional wildfowlers wouldn't touch the job in its later stages. They said it was unsporting to shoot birds on the nest, and females with chicks.

Maybe they're right, and I can see it wasn't the ducks' fault. But the fact is, they were in the wrong place. We're an island nation, we've got to look after our own – and we've got to plan for the future. Look what's going on now: immigrant ladybirds wiping our native ones out, Asian killer hornets threatening to wage war on our bees, ash trees from European nurseries infecting English ones with disease. You can't tell me that's right.

American grey squirrels, for example, are rightly classified as vermin, and the law says that you can kill them. Sure, the kiddies like seeing them begging for sandwiches in the parks and what have you, but they're nothing more than rats with fluffy tails, which is exactly what I told my two. They're out of control in this city – never mind the rest of the country, never mind the damage to trees, the way they out-compete garden birds for food and the squirrel pox they carry that's driven our poor reds almost to extinction. Do you see what I mean? Cute or not cute, it's about taking hard decisions. Somebody has to.

I told the paper all that, you know; I explained that I was just doing my bit for biosecurity. And I know from some of the letters I got that despite everything that happened, there were plenty who agreed with me.

Anyway. I could tell, by then, that Ian wasn't up to it, so I put some traps down. Not special squirrel ones; they were too pricey and my redundancy money was nearly gone by then, not to mention the fact that she – my ex-wife – was sending me snide messages via the kids about child support. I was applying for jobs, of course I was; but there just wasn't enough work to go around.

So I put a few rat traps down, setting them at dusk and checking them early, before the gates were unlocked. It was no big deal. On the first night I got three brown rats, which shouldn't have come as a surprise. *Rattus norvegicus*, of course, is also classified as vermin, and wherever it originated from it wasn't here. So I didn't mind too much about that.

It wasn't long until I started eliminating the targets. One after another after another, it was, usually in the early mornings, and I'm sorry to report that due to the highly mobile nature of the target it was not always a clean kill: trapped paws, a tail once, which was irritating because it managed to drag itself into a pollard oak with the trap attached. One got caught by the very end of its nose and died of shock before I got to it. Despite this, I must have got nearly three dozen by the end of it, and with nobody any the wiser.

I know it wasn't textbook, but like I say, it was the future of the site I was thinking of.

As for everything else, well, what can I say? I accept that cutting down the sycamore saplings was a mistake –

partly because of the visual impact it made on the site, which I couldn't have predicted given the fact that I was working in the dark, and partly because it led to them finding out about everything else. I even admitted it was a mistake to that bloody reporter, following my arrest, but she twisted it, she made out I said that I regretted nothing *except* the trees, which made me sound like some kind of psychopath.

I can say this now: I also regret the poison, because it led to the deaths of some non-target species. I couldn't admit to using it at the time because there was the possibility of a custodial sentence, but the fact is I didn't deliberately kill those cats – despite their serious and ongoing impact on native songbirds, an impact which I had been monitoring all spring. They were, unfortunately, collateral damage, and highly regrettable. However, in urban areas domestic felines frequently disappear, or fall victim to traffic collisions. If only I hadn't buried them at the back of the site near the sycamore log-pile, along with all the squirrels and rabbits and those two Canada geese. And the pair of little owls and their chicks.

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I don't see the kids any more, which is... well. It's hard. They're 12 and 14 now. I send birthday cards every year with a tenner in; I post them to my ex's sister in the hopes she'll forward them on to wherever they've moved to now. Could be a few streets away, for all I know; could be hundreds of miles. They don't write back.

I get by. I do 20 hours a week on the tills at Tesco, and I sweep up at the hairdressers on Saturdays. I volunteer at the charity shop, too, and the British Legion; it keeps me busy. I don't go to Goram's Wood any more, of course, or to the pub. I haven't for years now.

I may not have gone about it the textbook way, but my motives were pure, I can always say that. I loved Goram's Wood, it was important to me; I wanted to conserve it for my two kids – for the nation, really. It was so perfect, so beautiful, and it had history, too – it was a fragment of old England, did I mention that?

It's about preserving how things used to be – how things *should* be, do you see that? D'you get what I'm saying?

I just can't stand to think of things changing.
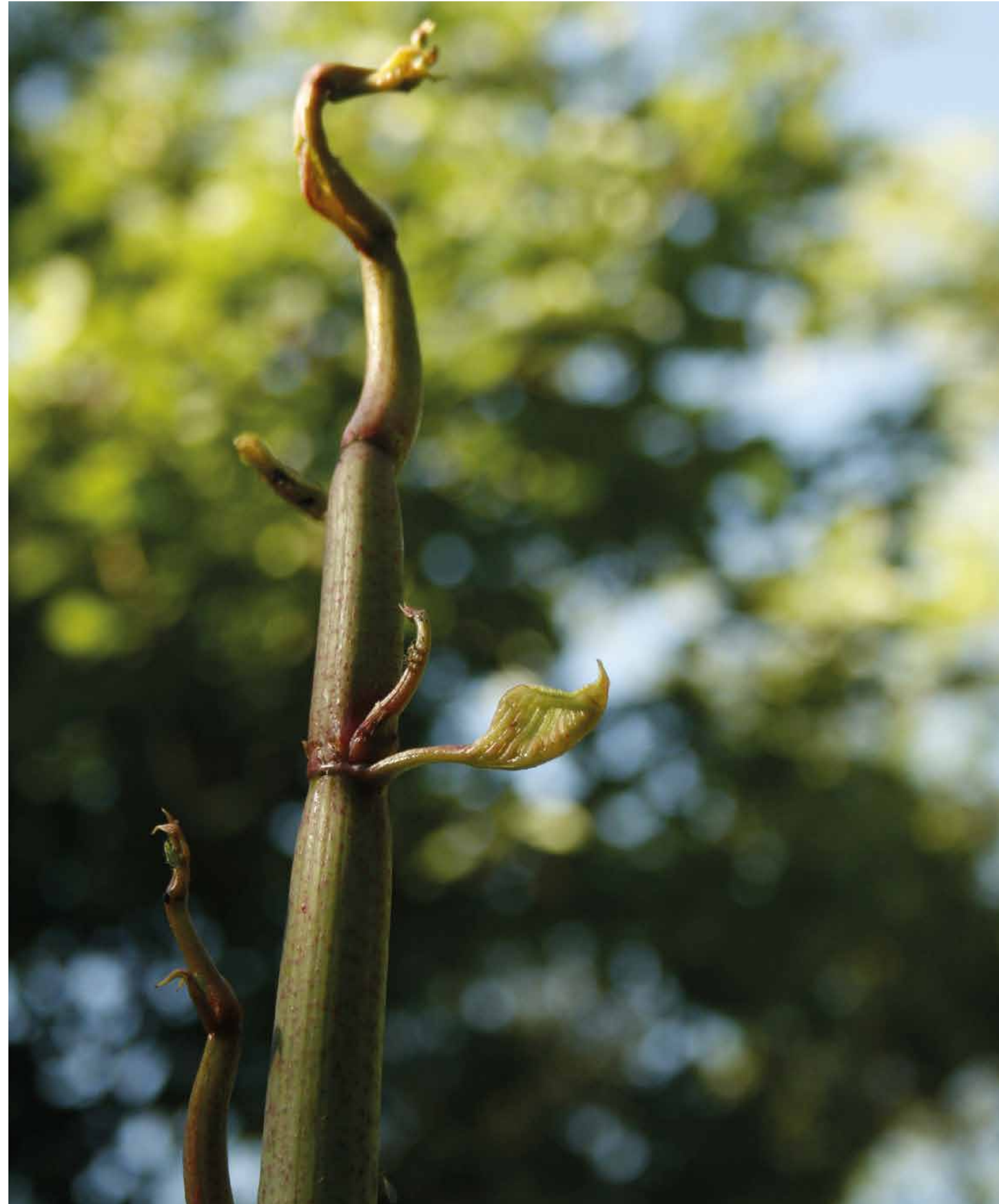
The Ecologically Smart City/

Melissa Sterry/

In a society in which progress is frequently framed as the exponential expansion of the present, the city of the future is most often depicted as an assemblage of stratospheric skyscrapers, gleaming, all glass and steel, in brilliant sunshine. We are told, and with great confidence, that these glistening *tabula rasa* visions will address our most pressing problems, and do so with aplomb. The state-of-the-art, we are assured, is so extraordinary as to surpass that which came before. All thoughts are to tomorrow, as framed in CGI renderings of urban pastures new, where the grass is greener, and no less so than on the rooftops of densely populated buildings.

In the words of Robert Burns, 'The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men/Gang aft agley'. With this is mind, we might ask how the seemingly flawless visions of towering utopias before us may turn out to be a future rather different from the one which we are being sold. There are many and varied ways in which we may approach the question. For example, we might review to what extent the concepts before us meet with the laws of natural science. In centuries past many pioneers of the built environment were adept interdisciplinary researchers and practitioners; the likes of Sir Christopher Wren, whom though commonly known for his architectural prowess, was foremost a man of science and of mathematics, held in the highest regard by Newton and Pascal, and the founder of the Royal Society no less. However, presently, architectural and planning practice requires barely, if any, understanding of science, a matter which is reflected in all too many future city visions, from oceanic floating cities that illustrate not the barest understanding of oceanography, to oft celebrated 'urban forests' that, while promoted as viable ecological biomes, frequently amount to little more than window dressing, quite literally so in the case of tower blocks with balconies strewn with trees and shrubs.

All the photographs of Ahmedabad in this chapter are by Melissa Sterry.

Evaluating the viability of future city proposals, we might also consider the extent to which the various concepts are informed by assumptions. The future is generally comprised of possibilities, not certainties, and yet, this is not reflected in the ways and means by which many a future city proposal is developed. On the contrary, the rhetoric in and around our future city conversations often revolves around the idea that it has been possible to establish precisely what the world of 2025, 2050, 2070, and beyond will comprise, down even to the statistics of population and the distribution thereof, ie how many persons will inhabit our future cities. The reality is far removed. The complexity of that which shapes our future, in particular at the city-scale and in turn at the national and the global scales, is so very great that, while we can build and thereon reflect upon scenarios that may unfold, we cannot foresee what the end result will be.

Historically, humanity has exhibited no shortfall of aspiration and vision in regard of its future cities. Indeed, so very inspired and inventive were some of the cities born of our forebears' imagination as to render a great many of today's future city visions intellectually and artistically impotent. However, time and again, our ancestors' Achilles heel amounted to an over reliance on the *status quo*, be that political, economic, social, environmental, technical or cultural. Even now, when it has become abjectly clear that whatever the future holds, we have pushed our planetary boundaries so very far that tomorrow's business will not be as usual, most future city visions meet not wide-ranging contextual possibilities, but merely seek to make our current *modus operandi* rather more efficient. Worse still, not only are most future city visions built upon one assumption after another, but the criteria they seek to meet by means of establishing their viability are inordinately narrow. Why? One reason is that for all the green roofs, vertical gardens, high lines and low lines, most future city visions revolve around the needs of just one species, our own species, despite the fact that our future survival is wholly

dependent on the retention of biodiversity near and far. The statistics that make this evident are not speculative, but are cold, hard light-of-day facts, such as humans having wiped out some 50 per cent of wildlife within the last four decades.

What if we changed the narrative? What if we conceived of the future city not merely from the perspective of our own species, but of others, innumerable others? How might we go beyond existing perceptions of ecosystem services? In an age when new science, enabled by recent technological advancements, is enabling us to re-evaluate our perception of the symbiosis of species, how might we use this information to inform our future city visions? Might we set our aspirations beyond merely reducing the extent of our adverse impact on the natural world? If we set our sights on creating urban habitats so very conducive to flora and fauna as to be equivocal to virgin habitats, how might we enable that journey? How might we see the wood for the urban forest of trees?

Two years ago I visited one of India's most biologically diverse cities. Ahmedabad is the largest city in the state of Gujarat, and the seventh largest metropolitan area nationally, yet boasts of sightings of 286 species of bird in a single day (*The Times of India*). Curious to find out what enabled such rich urban biodiversity, I set out to investigate, accompanied by a colleague. We travelled to various districts of the city; its wealthiest and its poorest communities, including its slums. Everywhere we went was alive with all 'creatures great and small': indigenous, migratory, domestic, and semi-domestic species co-existing with one another, and with the city's genus *Homo* citizenry. Located in India's arid west and heavily built-up, the city is rather light on parks and other vegetated spaces, therein at odds with the vision that a biodiverse city is by necessity 'green'. What then facilitates the survival of the many and varied species in Ahmedabad's urban jungle?

The streets of Ahmedabad's old city are in many ways reminiscent of those of British cities during the Middle Ages. The streets are narrow and comprise closely packed vernacular architectures that have been augmented over time. The latter is much apparent from the various stylistic changes to the new additions: a balcony from this century, a veranda from that, a window added here, and a floor there. Much weathered, the historic architectural assemblages appear ram-shackled, full of nooks and crannies, cracks and crevices. Put another way, the buildings present umpteen places and spaces for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals and more, to hunt, hide, perch, and nest. In Britain we often find bats in a medieval-built belfry. In Ahmedabad we find bats, palm squirrels, langur monkeys and much more cohabiting the city's historic buildings.

Hand-in-glove with historic architectures that accommodate some of the needs of urban fauna, are the values and beliefs of Ahmedabad's citizens, many of whom care daily not only for their families, but also for a variety of species in their neighbourhood. Shortly after dawn breaks, one finds residents scattering seeds about the city to feed the local bird population, which is further nourished by the contents of a significant number of bird feeders hanging about the exteriors of buildings. Vegetable offerings are dotted about the streets, squares and alleyways to feed the local cow population, which, revered as sacred beings, are endowed with the bovine equivalent of the 'Freedom of the City'. Containers of many and varied sizes are filled to the brim with water and placed about pavements, such that all members of the city's animal population may quench their thirst. These are but a handful of the ways in which Ahmedabad's citizens, including those who live in its slums, extend their care and compassion to non-humans.

Back to the city of the future, and to the many, but not terribly varied, visions thereof to which we have born witness of late. How accommodating of fauna are their architectural narratives? How many nooks and crannies as might provide a nest site for an insect or a bird do we find in the glass and steel facades of the innumerable stratospheric skyscrapers? How often do we find architects and planners thinking beyond green roofs and vertical gardens to a scenario in which the fabric of buildings themselves, and not buildings' adornment, are created for cohabitation by other species? 'Greening' the city is all well and good, but, as we find with Ahmedabad, regional climate, or, more specifically, precipitation levels, render the concept limited in its geographic relevance, and no less so than at a time when we are witnessing greater variability in seasonal rainfall, all the while facing the distinct prospect of yet greater variability in the near future. More generally, an indicator of just how very far we have to go to accommodate for greater biodiversity in the cities of today, and of tomorrow, is that of the predominant architectural building materials being so truly obnoxious unto life as to prove uninhabitable even to that most hardy of species, lichen!

The urban ecological fable of this short but, one hopes, thought-provoking story is that of not judging a future city book or development proposal by its cover. Architectural offices are now endowed with digital wizardry that makes it exceedingly easy to rustle up imagery of shiny and pretty 'futuristic' cities. In the virtual world these visions may appear compelling for in that world even the most sophisticated modelling software yet created presents but a modicum of the complexity of the real world. May we collectively have the humility to look to the latter when evaluating the former; to recognise that we are not, and by millennia, the first generation to contemplate the urban problems to which we now seek solutions. May we recognise that the term 'expert' is relative, and that sometimes it is not the starchitect presenting the most viable or, indeed, even the most interesting solution – sometimes it is the man or the woman or the child on the street. But, above all, may we be inspired by the fact that in Ahmedabad even some of those dwelling in homes with no utilities to speak of – no running water, no sewage infrastructure, no electricity, no Wi-Fi, let alone many of the creature comforts we in the Global North tend to take for granted – find it in their hearts to care and to nurture nature, in all its many and varied forms.

The Arts, Creativity and the City/

The Festival of the Future City was one of six Exceptional Fund projects supported by Arts Council England as part of the Bristol 2015 programme.

A key role of BCDP is to celebrate and raise awareness of the links between the arts, creativity, technology and the sciences, working on projects that cross disciplines and embedding arts and culture into all aspects of city life.

This section opens with Amy O'Beirne's summary of the Arts and the City debate which opened the Arts, Culture and the Playable City strand of the festival.

The annual Playable City Award was launched in 2013. Clare Reddington, Watershed's Creative Director and leader of the Pervasive Media Studio, provides an overview of the Playable City concept and describes the first three award-winning projects.

This section ends with new poetry and prose commissioned for the festival. All of the authors, with the exception of Ian McMillan, performed their work in the session Poets, Writers and the City. McMillan's poem was read at the opening of The Mayor's Annual Lecture and Public Debate.
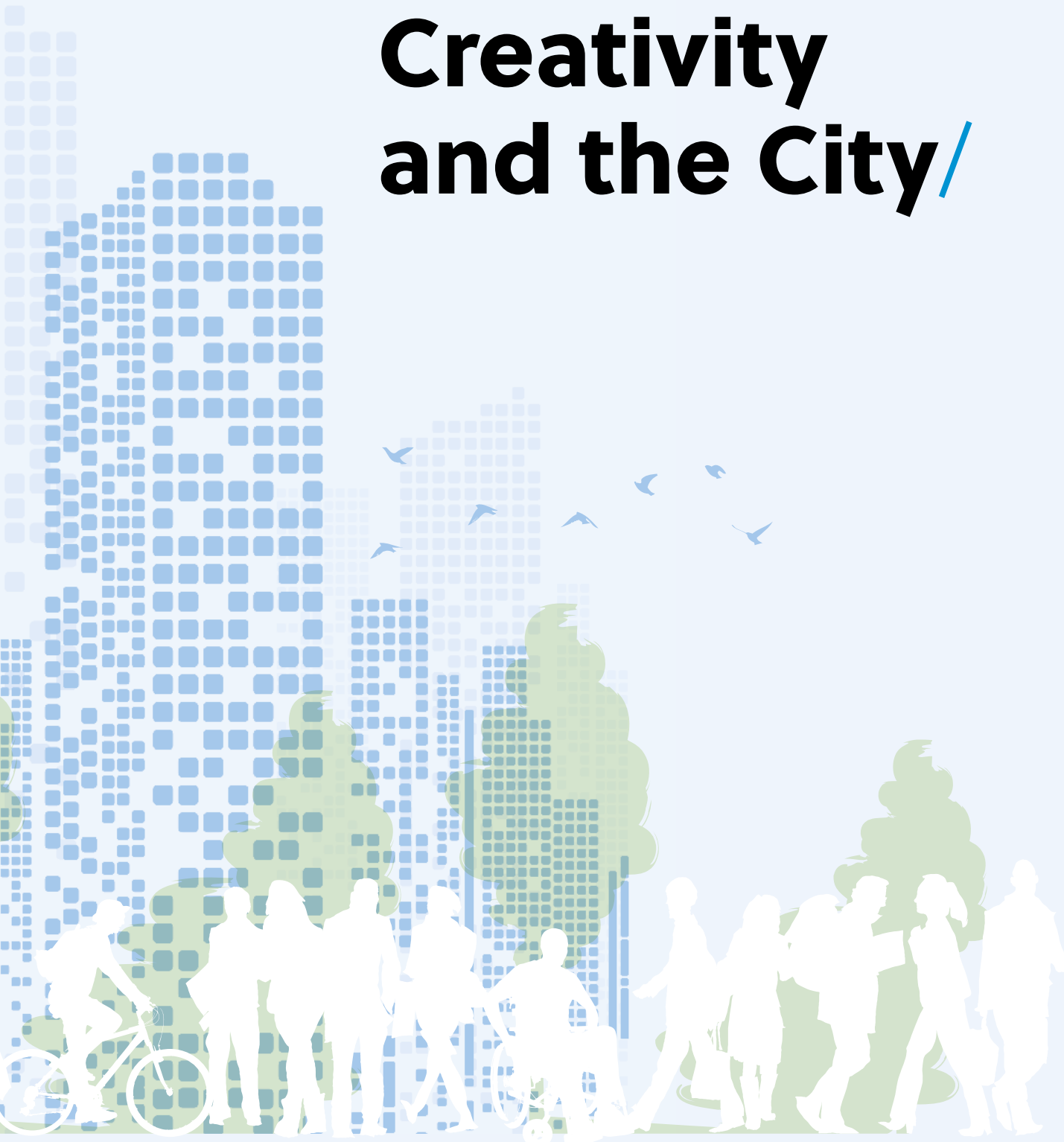
Arts and the City/

Amy O'Beirne/

This is a summary of some of the discussion points raised during the festival event on arts and the city which took place on 19 November. Chaired by Clare Reddington, the speakers were Peter Bazalgette, Arts Council England; Laura Kriefman, Mass Crane Dance; Charles Landry, Comedia; Col Needham, Internet Movie Database; and Pip Rush Jansen, Arcadia.

Arts and culture are important to how we live and work. They are also central to the development of cites, and examples from around the world have shown how arts and culture can help to inspire, rebrand and redefine the places in which we live.

The phases of urban development can be characterised by three city types and, as Charles Landry explained, culture and the participation of citizens in arts and culture can be seen to change as cities develop. The first city type, 'City 1.0', is a hardware-driven city; it concentrates on mass production and the mental model is that of the city as a machine. In this city, culture is focused on traditional forms and is dominated by cultural institutions. By contrast, Landry suggested, 'City 2.0' is more aware of the sensory landscape of places, the feel of the city and its atmosphere. There is greater awareness of the public realm and urban design, as well as awareness of the power of creative industries and the connection between arts and the wider economy. The final city type, 'City 3.0', is a city in which culture is not confined to institutions, but performed in a range of settings. Citizens are no longer passive consumers, but 'makers, shapers and co-creators'. This city is where 'we are trying to be and can become the best we could be as individual citizens,' Landry said.

He added that arts and culture provide a sense of anchorage and connection, as well as a sense of possibility and inspiration, 'of being more than you thought you could be'. They also have a spillover effect, he explained, providing value and purpose to other products and industries. 'The society that we live in,' he argued, 'could not be and could not become what it wants to be without the skills, talents and... expertise that lies within artistic forms of education. It's completely deeply embedded.'

Opposite page: The panellists (all photographs of this event are by JonCraig.co.uk).

There are numerous examples of how arts and culture have driven the redevelopment of cities, inspiring and rebranding communities. Peter Bazalgette spoke of the Museum of Old and New Art in Hobart, Tasmania. The art gallery, which was opened in 2011 by David Walsh, has transformed the image and life of the city, and local politicians estimate that it has brought millions of dollars of value and businesses to the area. Bazalgette argued that similar renewal has occurred in the UK: Nottingham City Council is using the Nottingham Contemporary as the core for a cluster of creative businesses, and the Lowry has been key to Salford's redevelopment.

Bazalgette also highlighted the importance of leadership, using the Angel of the North as an example. In the time preceding its construction, he explained:

> everybody was against it. The press were against it, the local people were against it... The fact that it was built as a sort of artistic icon for a town was about leadership. It was about people who believed in giving leadership and vision even when they didn't have everybody's wholehearted support.

He argued that the redevelopment of Gateshead, and the emergence of the Sage and the Baltic, all resulted from the Angel of the North: 'it is a poster child for how arts and culture can revivify a community,' he said.

He suggested that arts and culture can redefine residents' perception of their communities, and can make people proud of the places in which they live. 'Arts and culture provide the quality of life, provide the conversation in the street, provide the view you have of the place you live in,' he said, explaining that this is one of the most important outcomes of the arts. 'It's the people's view of the place they live in that matters more than anything else,' he said.

Pip Rush Jansen echoed this, citing the comments Arcadia received after their recent show in Bristol: 'The best thing for all of us... were the Facebook comments that rolled in afterwards, and just the sense of pride that the people from Bristol had... literally page after page after page of people saying just how proud they felt to be part of Bristol.'

Cities can also act as catalysts for the development of artistic and cultural projects. One example is the development of IMDb, an online information resource on every film, TV show, video game and webseries made, now used by 250 million people worldwide every month. As Col Needham explained, IMDb grew up within Bristol: 'Bristol was instrumental in the growth... it's hard for me to imagine it being as successful in any other city.'

IMDb began as a volunteer operation 'co-ordinated from a North Bristol living room,' he said, explaining that the emergence of the internet allowed him to meet others virtually and share his passion for film: 'As a hobby, a group of people who cared enough about entertainment information got together and collected data, wrote software, and published it online.'

The first IMDb software was published online in October 1990 and people around the world were able to give suggestions for its development. The organisation incorporated and became IMDb.com in 1996 and as the business grew Needham recruited the volunteers to join the team. 'But,' he explained, 'that wasn't enough, and one of the great things about Bristol was the access to the great, talented people who live in and around the city.'

Bristol was also the setting for Laura Kriefman's Mass Crane Dance, a synchronised dance routine for three industrial construction cranes. Kriefman explained that her interest lies in using city infrastructure to create city-wide spectacles, exploring 'the movement capababilities and the affordances of mechanical objects in our cities, and how we can celebrate the craftsmanship, skill and elegance, but also how we can challenge what we think of our cities, who has ownership of them, how we engage with them... Can we make people think about engaging with spaces in a completely different way?' She argued that such projects are only possible if the city is willing to be engaged and involved, and inclined to listen to and support artists' ideas. Kriefman is planning to repeat the project in London, using around 150 cranes in Zone One, and said that she hoped to prove that 'an entire city can be part of a spectacle. Not just a licensed area, nor

just an area that's used for an event but – by using the infrastructure of a city – everything.'

There are issues that must be addressed when thinking about arts and culture and future cities. One of these issues, Bazalgette argued, is the size and power of secondary cities in the UK. The world's population increasingly lives in cities, raising questions about what we want these places to be, how we are going to imagine them as great places to be, and what sort of cities we want in this country, he explained. 'The problem in the UK is not that London is too big... it is that our secondary cities are not big enough,' he added. 'Other countries in Europe have a whole range of secondary cities that are big and powerful, so we need to invest in and boost the secondary... cities in this country.'

Another issue that must be tackled is the speed of broadband in the UK's cities. 'We need a strategy for ultra-fast high-speed broadband in our major cities that is going to drive the culture and the economy going forward. I don't believe we have a national strategy for that at the moment,' Bazalgette argued. He explained that 47 per cent of the creative and digital companies around Silicon Roundabout, the high-tech zone in London, are not happy with their broadband speed. 'We've really got to do something about that,' he said.

In addition to this, Bazalgette suggested that there needs to be a strategy for affordable space in order to maintain mixed and thriving communities. As he explained:

Artists move in to run-down areas because it's affordable. They then make those areas cool, then middle-class professionals move in, and then the property prices go up... What policies do we have for affordable space and affordable living accommodation?

Rush Jansen also highlighted the need for affordable space. 'You have to have a space to be able to develop, and I think that's quite hard in this country at the moment,' he said.

At the moment everything you do has to be commercial. Even if somebody gives you a space for free, you still have to pay rates, and you still have to always be trying to please people. You have to quite quickly try and put out what's going to make the money.

He suggested that the success of arts and culture in Bristol might be due to the city's use of space:

There was a time where empty buildings – and there are tons of them in Bristol – were given to arts organisations so that they could have a bit of a chance... Teenagers, coming into adult life, if they wanted to be an artist, could develop their creative thing, and I think that's where some really good quality art comes from.

Finally, there is an important balance to strike between leadership and co-creation. 'If you only ask people what they want, they tend to talk to you about what they know and what they've had before. That's not how you get innovation,' Bazalgette explained. In fostering great art and culture, he said:

the question is how to involve all communities in putting forward new ideas... how you get individuals... people who have insane ambitions, wild ideas, things we hadn't thought of before, how we embrace that and how we push that forward... You've got to do it with consent and involvement, but it doesn't mean you can't surprise people, and it doesn't mean you can't seek out the best creativity and give it full rein.

Opposite page: Clare Reddington and Col Needham; Charles Landry.

This page, top row: Pip Rush Jansen; Peter Bazalgette. Left: Laura Kriefman.

Overleaf: *Arcadia Bristol* rehearsal, 2015 (Paul Box).

The Play's the Thing/

Clare Reddington/

Patrick Geddes wrote, 'a city is more than a place in space, it is a drama in time' (p108).

From the Bristol Pound to Luke Jerram's Park and Slide, Bristol is renowned as a city for unorthodox thinking; delivering a vision of a creative and connected future with more texture than the average innovation demonstrator.

It is the drama of Bristol – its energy, its openness, its grit and its joy – that has served as both the inspiration and the stage for Playable City. Since the term was first coined by Watershed in 2012, the cast and crew of Playable City now spans Japan, the USA, Nigeria, Brazil and beyond, through an annual global commission and an international programme of workshops and labs.

Playable City puts people and play at the heart of the future city: 'Playable city ideas are a human response to the coldness and anonymity of the urban environment. By encouraging activities that bring joy, we can create a happier, more cohesive urban future' (the *Guardian* Games Blog).

It seeks to transform city spaces into places of unexpected interaction; to generate and produce ideas that prompt citizens to connect with each other and to think differently.

Our first call for ideas for the international Playable City Award was in 2013. The award continues to attract a huge range of ideas and attention, capturing the imagination of cities, practitioners and citizens across the world. The winning projects illustrated here use the new technologies of smart cities, but differentiate themselves by inviting people to be playful, engaging them with their environment and each other in new ways.

The Playable City Award seeks to produce the best ideas from anywhere around the globe; our programme of labs and workshops has taken the collaborative DNA of Bristol and shared it with the world; and an international network will be launched in 2016.

A city is not one thing. Cities around the world have very different attitudes to working, travelling, living and playing. By putting Bristol at the heart of a global conversation about future cities, there is as much to learn as there is to share.

Playable City projects do not set out to provide specific solutions to city challenges; much bigger budgets would be needed for that. Instead, they act as powerful conversation starters, suggesting alternative narratives to those often created for cities by governments and industry.

As play theorist Patrick Bateson writes, 'Active engagement with an environment has great benefits, because the world is examined from different angles, and the world rarely looks the same from different angles' (p31). Or as the *Guardian* blog put it, 'Cities that Play together, stay together'.

The drama of Bristol is in its people and its way of thinking. Playable City seeks to celebrate all that is different, unorthodox and engaged about Bristol and share it with the world.

Opposite page: Shadowing
(photographer Toby Farrow).

Hello Lamp Post/

Hello Lamp Post, a project by Pan Studio, Gyorgyi Galik and Tom Armitage, won Watershed's first Playable City Award in 2013.

Hello Lamp Post invited people to attempt a whole new way of communicating, through lamp posts, post boxes and other familiar street furniture, by texting the unique codes found on each object. With Hello Lamp Post, these codes became secret passwords that allowed you to 'wake up' a sleeping object and discover what it had to say. Would it be pleased to see you? Irritated at having been left in the rain? Or would it tell you a secret? Over eight weeks, 25,674 messages were exchanged between the people of Bristol and everyday pieces of street furniture.

When it was commissioned, no one realised Hello Lamp Post would create a kind of city analytics platform – able to gauge the mood of a city, to probe particular issues, to understand mobility and movement. The project was nominated as one of the Design Museum's Designs of the Year 2014 and has since been produced in Texas, Tokyo and Singapore – gathering insight and oddness, and sparking conversation across the world.

'Hello Lamp Post is a poetic + mainstream glimpse into the future user experience of the coming fully-connected world,' said Matt Webb, former CEO of Berg.

Above: Hello Lamp Post (Pan Studio).

Right: Shadowing (photographer Toby Farrow).

Shadowing/

The winner of Watershed's 2014 Playable City Award was Shadowing by Jonathan Chomko and Matthew Rosier.

Shadowing gave memory to Bristol's city lights, enabling them to record and play back the shadows of those who passed underneath.

Over six weeks in Autumn 2014, Bristol residents and visitors hunted out the clandestine locations of eight augmented street lights, and were playing, dancing and shaping their shadows in some of the unexpected and lesser-travelled streets and pathways of the city.

As the sun set, the Shadowing streetlights would start to capture the movements of pedestrians passing beneath and echo them back as shadows to the next passerby, leaving a glimpse of those who walked the same path moments before. If a visitor stepped out of the light to watch for a while, the lamp would begin to 'dream', recalling a procession of shadows from earlier visitors.

'This used to be a mugging area, but the light has brought people out to play. The muggers don't come anymore,' said a Bristol resident.

The project was nominated as one of the Design Museum's Designs of the Year 2015, featured in the Illuminating York 2015 programme and installed in Japan as part of Media Ambition Tokyo.

Above: Urbanimals – LAX
(Anna Grajper, Sebastian Dobiesz).

Urbanimals/

The winner of the 2015 Playable City Award was Urbanimals, a playful pack of wild creatures created by LAX (the Laboratory for Architectural Experiments), who are based in Poland.

Lurking behind walls, hiding in dark corners, the Urbanimals were installed in eight unexpected places across Bristol, inviting people to leap with the graceful dolphin, chase a shy rabbit, find the secretive beetle or skip with a cheeky kangaroo.

Poetry and Prose/

Bristol Voluntaries
Peter Robinson/

for Tom and Sarra Phillips

Waking, jet-lagged, in the small hours
for a moment among blind summits,
the steep-and-over streets,
linked districts to traipse through, to linger,

I'm lost where ground's suddenly ended
in a gorge, New Cut at low water,
or once more beside Cabot Tower's
point of vantage. Stranded

          *

in a past to live up to or down,
it requires some place to remember
like a Southville, a Clifton, St Paul's...
Gulls' cries in earshot, it wants a seaport town

where, offered a bed for the night,
I'm paused at this nail-worn bollard
and talked back to myself as was
by a friend or family member.

          *

But that time, beside Cabot Tower,
streetlamps come on at twilight
like Mallarmé's train of jewelry fire,
I'd let my thoughts wander

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.
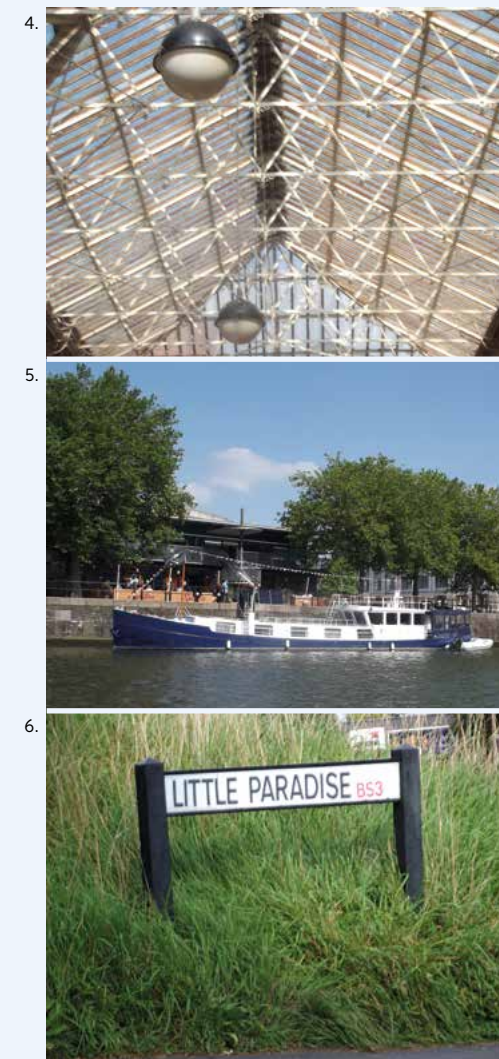
up or down Whiteladies Road,
had gone over how we would leave
(us both written off, put asunder,
with other lives to live).

          *

Reeking ghost-cargoes, what's gone
from its past won't be undone
in my own and, no, can't be lived down,
unforgivable, remember.

Its mute memorials everywhere
are passed by, noticed, missed –
like places to start from for Hispaniola
as still, now, we have to go on

          *

and always, wherever, my thoughts
haunt what it would be to live
here in this once and future city
surrounded by school runs, commutes,

the short-cuts by dock walks, the cobbles
erupting through asphalt, imagine,
pasts like ours, gulfs, downfalls
of the heart lived over and over,

          *

or futures on Open Days, people
wondering, as at job interviews,
what it would be like to live
here, and then try going

out through traffic management flows'
no choices, dead ends, ring roads,
by means of others' suburbs
on a plain ordinary day –

*

to ask for directions, have snapshots
of more streets slipping away
in quiet heartlands, imagine,
where greenery thrives and clutter

from lives is inherited, cherished
at the home of a son or a daughter,
then on by grass verges, islands
turned into edible plots, allotments ...

*

is how I'd glimpse a different future
by Watershed or the Arnolfini
with chances, imagine, to choose
community, township, be sure in

the arms of, no, not where you have,
but places you want to live –
as pastel terraces on hillcrests opposite
at sunset will enhance the light.

1. Clifton Village; 2. Harbourside; 3. Bristol bollard; 4 St Nick's Market;
5. Floating Harbour; 6. Little Paradise, Bedminster; 7. Clifton cul-de-sac;
8. Garden, Castle Park; 9. St Luke's Rd; 10. Totterdown. Pictures: Sarra
Blakemore Phillips.

Dreamingham
Liz Berry/

Over our city grass will grow
and in the collied rubble of the ring road
rosebay willowherb will sway
its feathered throat, rogue
and careless as a boy being kissed
in an alley at dusk.

Our townscapes, our grids,
they'll mean nothing to wet-the-beds,
these towerblocks will be palaces
for bluebottles and moss-piglets
who care only for air, feast and hum.

Already it has begun. There is lichen
flowering in the Queensway Tunnel,
a petrol throated pigeon
jimmucks its wings in the mansions
where our money was spent.

Our factories, motors, our shining
libraries and the sump of the cut,
bramble and spider
will watch them all come undone,
as ragwort and earth-worms creep in
like conquistadors, loving only our bodies
mouldering in the bone-orchards.

Kingdom follows kingdom
and the city slips like an elver
from our paper architecture.
So feed your plans to the wind
and follow me out into the edgelands.

We'll bow to knotweed and moss,
to new leaf and crow and I'll kiss you
beneath the Rotunda's mournful glow
until our limbs bloom feverfew
and the convention centres
return to copses sighing with light.

Your City
Helen Mort/

You say this is your city, but how do you know?
Would Crookes and Sharrow dim their house lights
if you chose to go? And would the Arts Tower darken in your wake
if you walked clean out of the world down Furnival Gate?

You love those mornings when your body's made
of seven hills, and every crossing in the suburbs is a windowsill
that you could step from, steady, slight as Whiteley trees,
your epitaph like something by The Human League

Don't you want me? Don't you want me? No.
There's not a corner of The Moor that you don't know,
your life a slow audition for an Arctic Monkey's song,
your shibboleths the names strangers get wrong:

Malin. Greenhill. Owlerton. You keep the Don and Porter
underneath your skin. Your heart's a stainless lump
you took out, flattened, put back in.
You are a cooling tower turned shopping mall,

an empty foundry rebuilt as a climbing wall, you are
a layby, exit, passing place. Your frown
draws maps of Wharncliffe on your face
and when you smile, you're Park Hill flats

and yet, no matter what you do, this city
never looks straight back at you. The roads
keep glancing past to somewhere out of sight.
Tomorrow afternoon. Next Friday night.

Those years of strangers, standing where you stand
right now, the students jostling through the heart of town
as if they all deserve to start again. You've touched
this city, but you touch it like the rain.

Sumerian Dream Vision of Vertical Gardens
Rachael Boast/

This could be any city in one lifetime
or another, at a club we've never been to
at the Square which could be the Square

of Pegasus where in the corner the Lady Inanna
sings her dark songs to a slide guitar
in a language unheard, in a time not yet ours.

I've been waiting for this moment
beyond the moment where I'm waiting
for the waiting to end, as we try not to look

over at each other, except from the corner
of our prolonged gaze, for it's not that the room
we're in is too bright, but that we see the light

that lives inside our looking, within which
vines and creepers of scented flowers
cover a gate made of cedar and wrought iron

in the shape of thoughts that can't be spoken -
but somehow it opens – and we find ourselves
on the roof of a ziggurat where offerings

have been left for centuries or more, the sides
and the stairways covered in foliage,
turned into vertical gardens for the god

of the star of planetary strife and the star
of the life-giving water and the word
with his beard of lapis lazuli. We see it all

in a blink, drawn back from the dream
to the room where the lady still sings
in that dark language we both understand

of the love for the sanctum that cannot
be entered except in moments like this,
when heaven is left hanging in the underworld.

Now give me your overdue caress,
let the early hours heal us, having drunk
the ordeal poison from the poisoned stream.

The Snail and The Spider
Edson Burton/

This is one section from a longer work.

A giant snail stretched along
Dundry's plain exhales scented
Mist from concentric shell
Stitched from steel pores
Pulsing blue in answer to
Sun and shade's rise and retreat.

Beneath the shell, synthetic trees
Encased in lilac living bark
Rise from cabled roots sucking
Cool water from rock pools
Buried miles deep. Each branch
Curves into blue lit leaf beds.

Signs*, float in customised fantasies
Whilst symbiotic suit feed reports,
To cortex concealed in stem:
Rapid calculation: new targets set,
Retention, ejection, vigilance orders issued.

In dreams Spider conquers a sheer glass peak
Each palm pressed, a digital print
Encrypting victories beamed to Dundry.
Summit in sight the rest cycle evaporates.

Ground level: Signed workers press
The Company's motto: Bespoke,
Built and Brought to you in 24 hours'
Across zones matched with task:
Conceptual team in classical setting;
Design in alpine cabin; assembly in disco
Distribution in undulating dune.
Doric column, smoking wood,
Spinning mirror ball, white sand
Each zone a stage optimizing practice.

Like skeletons designs gather flesh;
Half sketched whims become product:
Auto cars, sky boards fly boots,
New generation symbiotic suits,
Mobile virtual sets – dispelled
To levitating trains crossing country
Enroute to invisible clientèle.

Inner shell ceiling becomes
Giant screen '*Fatigue is the*
Enemy: Fight for the team.
Pumping vocals scream
'Harder, stronger, faster,
Over 200bpm beats.
Timed boom shocks.
Sun rise hour blasts open
Pin prick eyes, smart gloves
Accelerate at dip of manual dexterity
 At first droop suit monitor trills
'*Would you like to take a pill*'

Pace builds to individuated break:
Memory sofas respond to weight
Reform to become milk musky mattress
The signs gather round super screens
Catch episodes of Company soap
Spliced with customer testimony.
Thud, grunt, and curse of approved
Exercise in the physical improvement zone.
High performers zap excess credits to family.

Suit flags Spider's collapse:
Fingers, despite smart gloves, slow,
Enhanced focus pills fail
Dizzy spell disclose serotonin crash,
Spider is 'offered' a crisis review
Conducted in translucent cubes.
Hologram companion beam
Tests: verbal reasoning, dexterity,
Creativity, psychology, cognitive.
Nano rovers extract tissue samples.
A clammy wait to discover fate
Ceiling screen dims to azure blue:
Loudspeaker coos: *Time out see you soon*.

Spider joins ejected cue
Collects personal review
Promises a swift return once
Every word is gut written.
Hatch opens to alien world
Suits, trigger dancing dust
That writhe into a farewell.
Snyth grass sway, glow then dim
Laser gates cool to permit exit.

* Signs – Workers

The Nine Trades Welcome You to the City of Refuge
WN Herbert/

Our stays here and days here
Are very Short and Brittle
They short are, goes swifter
Then does a Weavers shuttle.
(from T*he Lockit Book of the Dundee Weavers* 1771)

The Baxter will bake you a bridie, my bride,
my Mary of all the monsters that dream,
to bind the flesh of the bridegroom fast
all mingled with fragments of shot between.

Then the Cordiner will cut out two soles,
   my son,
and sew shoes since your pilgrimage is done –
such a shame you should walk to our city
   unshod
where the Turk was paraded in King Crispin's
   shade.

And the Skinner gie a glove for the hand that
   you lost
to cutlass or crime or the snow on the hill
so you'll think of its scuttle like a soft-backed
   crab,
a shuttle between all the threads in our mill.

The Tailor will stitch up the cloth you'll be
   clad in
since eternity also has sumptuary laws,
and his statutes still tell us *na wemen sall weir
na dresses abune their estait except houris*

Then the Bonnetmaker caps you wi a toorie,
   my boy,
all black with the Indies' best indigo, too,
for it's up wi the bunnets o Bonnie Dundee
since all who pay their fees shall be free.

And the Flesher shall strike you a calf with
   his axe
on Commercial Street, so it falls to its knees
blinded by blood where the shambles once
   stood
for you are all braw lads if dusty of feet.

Let the Hammermen cunningly craft you a gun
of the fishtail design or the old lemon butt
and fashion you both the hauberk bold
and the bullet that shall pierce it.

Then the Webster will weave you a shroud
   sae fine
as muslin from Mosul, or Gaza's old gauze;
the cutty sark shall be your sign
that your bairns have been swaddled in some
   future's cause.

And the Dyer will print out your ends and
   your means
inking his press with gall of the oak
listing your numbers if rarely your names
and sealing the news in his lockit book.

City
Eimear McBride/

I am always losing cities. Passing through them. Catching at and not understanding. Looking though, always looking, beyond my shoes and onto their streets. Or over their heads and into their distances, wondering what hides below their shine of lights at night. Thinking about falling into their worlds and considering their different life, lives, histories – what stays buried beneath their streets. Or across their wharves and up their cranes. Down from their towers and into their estates and stately counting houses swaying with the weight of sin.

For the city's all things to all people. There's one for every person you can name. Cities on mountains or flanked by trees. Desert cities. Cities on rivers. In the jungle or by seas. Some cities turn their faces to that. Open arms and make themselves cats fit for stroking. Some cities turn away. Tire of the roll of tide and life. Wall-up behind fatigue and choose that time to symbolise all they will ever be. Some cities fight it. Put up lights. Kick up their heels and make themselves triumph – good at this, if only forestalling, the grow of future and more. For history's coming. Always is. Because the streets stay busy, making time. Pushing through. Passing on. And the buildings are peeling their faces off. Making new. Making fresh. Bringing the world to, or from, however the cities please. And sometimes they are ripped at, lie backbones exposed. Sometimes drown or fear drowning. Sometimes shook. Sometimes burned like the idols they are, or were. Sometimes they are memory. Often they are lies. Sometime everyone gets stuck in one and then cities themselves despise the living gouging out their sides, sucking them for everything and all.

There is a float to cities. Each its own. Match to it or get you gone for you stay at your peril where you might find that dark black in your lungs. City air. Human dust. Crushing down the gullets when it's hula hot. Out on balconies. Roofs for some. Cardboard covered winters when it's pelting down, person and path, the same. For even looking up you can glimpse that corrugated roof, that blanket on sticks, that pigeon eating chicken or woman had for lunch. City ever punching through.

Night in the city divides itself up. One for you. One for you. Hawkish if you want or –maybe – pleasing to every whim. Good for marauders. Carnage for children. It is click heels and rubbed pants and trainers in the wet and no light on in the doorway or porch or in the street. It is give me your handbag or lie down there or don't scream or don't fight back. But city too, in hides of hedge, up backstreets and down basement steps gives places for a little fun. Or sex. Or pity. Or escape. City of helping free from traps for those who barely get out alive.

City's five friends. Two friends. No friends. Dawn. Making off across the streets from the dregging last of clubs. It is early cups of tea and egg and chips. It is watching bridges open. It is starving for sleep. It is the fear of airplanes in the sky.

Cities are the bargain and the gift. I know their holy names. City of God. Earthly city. City of hope. City of pain. Of the time before time. Of what will be again. I am all for the city. Even drenched in its spit. Even when it tells me I am not fit, it stays mine. I have made myself for it. City I. I'll always wait for what you'll be.

What Are You Wearing Today?
Ian McMillan/

What are you wearing today?
I am wearing my *Personal Future City*.
I like the way it fits, I like the way

It anticipates my every move,
My every thought. It delivers me
By drone to my 'place' of 'work'

Where I sit with the other 'workers'
Each with their Personal Future City
And something happens. Blood

Is extracted. Money is injected.
I had my dream last night.
The one about the horse-drawn milk-float

And the man singing his milkman's songs
About cream and eggs. Now,
If that isn't a dystopian vision,

I don't know what is. I need a new
Personal Future City; this one is tight
In too many places. We all outgrow

Our own cities, the philosopher said,
And he was right. At times
I long for that horse-drawn milk-float,

That milkman's high keening song.

Opposite page: Ian McMillan reading his poem
at the opening of The Mayor's Annual Lecture
and Public Debate (JonCraig.co.uk).

City Case Studies/

The Festival of the Future City looked at good practice in cities that will help promote a better and more resilient, sustainable and prosperous future for all.

This section opens with John Harris' examination of four English cities, including Bristol, based on a series of articles published in the *Guardian* in the week beginning 2 November 2015. It is followed by Paul Swinney's overview of how and why city economies in England and Wales have changed over the last 100 years.

In recent years no city symbolises disastrous urban failure as does Detroit: major economic decline, bankruptcy, huge population loss, massive housing over supply and a downtown in decay. Yet the city is recovering. Chris Dorle leads us through the story, focusing on Detroit's industrial past, what's happening now and the long-term plans for renewal.

In 'New Delhi: A Portent of the Future' Rana Dasgupta presents three contrasting ways in which his adopted city offers an image for our global future.

In their respective chapters, Susan Parnell argues that urban Africa has to assume a much more prominent place in our understanding of the future of a world of cities while Olimade Udoma describes some of the creative solutions that are being developed to support Lagos, Nigeria a city of over 21 million people.

Our final look at cities around the world comes from Gabriella Gómez-Mont's perspective on work taking place in Mexico.

We end this section returning to home with a 'provocation' from the first Bristol Day by Eugene Byrne, local journalist and historian, and Steven Morris' account of Will Self's guided walking tour of Harbourside.

English Cities: Bradford, Manchester, Plymouth and Bristol/

John Harris/

The summer and early autumn of 2015 were a strange time, politically. People at the top of the Labour Party were reeling from their supposedly unexpected defeat in that year's General Election, and trying their utmost to stop Jeremy Corbyn; the Conservatives were adjusting to the fact that the Liberal Democrats were now out of the way, and they were able to govern on their own terms. A newly confident George Osborne – who, it seemed, had recently discovered life beyond the M25, and then started evangelising about it – was full of talk about the Great Cities of the North and something called the 'Northern Powerhouse'. But at the same time, those very places – and many more besides – were increasingly terrified about what the government's ongoing austerity was going to mean for their social fabric. To spend time in English cities at this point was to sample an uneasy mixture of guarded optimism and palpable anxiety. A fragile economic recovery was beginning, but what would it count for if the streets were full of litter, care services had been hacked back and the libraries were newly under threat?

Over two months during this period, I made repeated visits to four places: Bradford, Manchester, Plymouth and Bristol. The plan was to talk to the people currently in charge of those cities, but also to get a sense of day-to-day reality, and the very modern themes that define urban living, in Britain and beyond: austerity, inequality, regeneration and life in the long shadow of industrial decline. I listened to stories of incredible revival, but also heard voices that were much more uncertain about the future. Some people enthused about hard work that had started to turn things round; others said that the main changes they could see were corroding old bonds of community and belonging.

Opposite page: Wave, Stokes Croft, Bristol
(Destination Bristol).

In a lot of the conversations I had, London provided an obvious subtext: some people insisted that they had escaped the capital's influence and blazed their own trail, whereas others said they needed to be more connected to it. In Bristol, people said that London's overheating economy was sending people up the M4, with the money they had received from selling their houses: the result was the disruptive process we know as gentrification, with all the controversy that comes with it.

All of these stories were first published in the *Guardian*, and then presented at the Festival of the Future City. Reading them back now, it feels as if all of them are built around themes that apply not just to the cities in question, but Britain as a whole, in one of the most uncertain, unpredictable phases of its modern history: a stroppy, unsettled little island, never quite sure where it might be headed next.

Bradford/

'People know Bradford for all the wrong reasons. It's about time that narrative moved on.'

For most of the past ten years, the centre of Bradford has been dominated by a vast empty space. Some locals called it 'the hole in the heart' or the 'Bradford Hole'; others knew it as 'Wastefield'. It was a huge expanse of rubble and dirt left vacant when the credit crunch and subsequent crash meant that the shopping-centre giant Westfield decided to halt its plans for a huge new development.

Part of the site was eventually used for a temporary 'urban garden'. In the summer of 2012 it was also briefly home to a small protest encampment. Now, though, a new Westfield

centre called The Broadway – which is around a third smaller than the original design – is finally about to open.

It looks absurdly incongruous: the standard-issue Westfield mixture of Lego-brick architecture and illuminated brand names plonked amid the city's grand, nineteenth-century buildings, with apparently little effort to harmonise the new architecture with its surroundings. 'Average people aren't bothered about all that,' one passing twentysomething tells me. 'Ninety per cent of people just want to go to H&M and Zara.'

Westfield's doors will open on 5 November 2015: another instalment of this fascinating city's quest to overcome a host of stereotypes, and finally escape from the weight of its industrial past. Of course, these things are rarely easy – and in Bradford's case, the odds stacked against any success are obvious. Its existing city centre has a smattering of empty shops at the foot of neglected Victorian buildings, and is noticeably short on big chains. It has problems with long-term unemployment, particularly among the young.

To trowel on the pain, some perceptions of the city are still shaped by the convulsive riots of 2001 – which were initially sparked by hostility to the National Front, but essentially aimed at the police, and which resulted in 200 local people being sent to prison. Meanwhile, national headlines about Bradford regularly feature stories about segregation, ethnic tensions and militant Islam – as evidenced by recent stories about local people relocating to territory controlled by Islamic State. All told, bringing in investment and sparking positive interest in the city was never going to be easy, but to the credit of people with a deep attachment to the place, it is starting to happen, even as austerity makes life even more difficult.

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British – or, rather, English – politicians currently love talking about cities. As evidenced by George Osborne's self-reinvention, 'city devolution' is the acme of Westminster fashion, and being seen in the company of 'city leaders' – wearing the obligatory hard hat and hi-vis vest – is a dependable way of proving that you have an ambitious vision of the future. The obvious embodiment of all these dreams is the centre of Manchester – revived as much by culture as economics, festooned with the cranes that constantly augment the city skyline, and the heart of what Osborne calls the Northern Powerhouse. Manchester was also, let's not forget, the setting for this year's Conservative party conference – where Osborne made a speech that included references to the 'proud cities' of London, Manchester and Leeds.

Self-evidently, though, these are not the only English metropolises. Though national politicians barely mention them, there is also an array of places whose prospects seem much more uncertain: Sunderland, Wakefield, Coventry, Portsmouth, Plymouth – and Bradford. It is only around 11 miles from Leeds, but in terms of reputation, Bradford has its own set of problems. Once a booming textile capital, it has long been in decline. And in July, David Cameron used a speech about extremism to

claim that the city – 20 per cent of whose population are of Pakistani origin, with 25 per cent reckoned to be Muslim – was among the 'most segregated parts of our country'. Bradford, he said, was the kind of place, 'where community relations have historically been most tense, where poisonous far-right and Islamist extremists desperately try to stoke tension and foster division'.

Even if the problems he described were hard to deny, for the Bradfordians trying to remake their city, this was hardly the most helpful intervention. Racial and religious divisions, after all, usually have a deep economic aspect – something borne out in Bradford by both statistics (youth unemployment in the city was put at 25 per cent last year, and there have long been concerns about joblessness among young Muslims), and the experience of driving around areas of town that combine a sense of being monocultural with grinding deprivation. If such poverty and exclusion are ever to be tackled, pronouncements about Bradford will surely have to be a little less hysterical than politicians and the press have so far managed. The most obvious point is this: that underneath the hysteria is another post-industrial Northern city trying to find its way in a world that offers no easy economic answers.

Before the crash, the proposed solutions to Bradford's problems sometimes entered the realms of the surreal. Most notably, in 2003, London-based architect Will Alsop – who had already suggested the former coal town of Barnsley might be refashioned to resemble a 'Tuscan hill village' – announced a new civic masterplan that would 'make Bradford very distinct from Leeds'. He divided the city into four new neighbourhoods: 'the bowl', 'the channel', 'the market' and 'the valley'. His visions were sold to the city with such modest pronouncements as 'all Architects are magicians. Never forget that'.

Though some parts of the plan were modified and eventually realised – as with City Park, a huge combination of a shallow artificial lake and towering fountains, right in Bradford's heart – most of Alsop's grander visions were killed by the crash, whose effects were felt all over the city. Another story of the downturn's effects was played out in the hard-pressed Bradford neighbourhood of Manningham, where the Mancunian developers Urban Splash had announced a £100m plan to convert a former silk mill – once the world's biggest – into 800 gated apartments. As things stand, two-thirds of the project remains unrealised, and even some mostly completed flats have been mothballed, as the company 'reviews our options'.

Over three days, most of the conversations I have about the city's future reflect this sense of ongoing uncertainty – not least when I talk to five young(ish) people assembled by Kamran Rashid, a social entrepreneur in charge of a new setup called The Socially Conscious Company, which works on 'giving young people a stake in civic society'. All five are graduates, and locally born and raised.

'Bradford's got all the hallmarks of a potentially very successful city,' says Rashid. 'We've got a rich history,

before the migration, before our fathers and grandfathers came here. It's got a lot to offer. But for some reason it's not been brought together well enough. I think there's some sort of leadership deficit here at the moment.'

What does he mean?

'To do with regeneration. Responding to market trends... We've not really got a tech centre here: we've not capitalised on that. And rail connections. If you're in Leeds, you can get to London within two hours. All the major cities have that.'

A little later, he says: 'There's no industry here. This is what I'm saying. Where are the twenty-first-century industries?'

'All my friends work in Leeds now,' says Nabeelah Hafeez, 27. 'Because they couldn't find anything in Bradford. There's just more opportunities.'

'If you took a wander around Leeds,' says 29-year-old Aqeel Waheed, 'you'd see so much scaffolding... We're just way behind. And it always feels like they've got a head-start. Foreign investment: people start investing, and then more scaffolding goes up, and they get more investment.'

'People are very loyal to Bradford,' says Mohammed Atique, 26. 'The amount of people I know who work outside of Bradford, but they refuse to move... they'll do that 40-minute commute, to Leeds or wherever. And they'll be like, "Bradford's home".'

'Especially being from an ethnic minority, there's a sense of security here. You can go into any restaurant you want as someone who eats halal meat, and you don't even need to ask if it's halal. Whereas, the minute you step outside Bradford, just to be sure, you've got to ask. And I feel a sense of loyalty, personally. It's a unique place.'

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It may say something about Bradford's straitened circumstances that, whereas some city leaders hold court from palatial offices, the leader of Bradford district council's HQ is comically modest. Its reception area needs vacuuming and a lick of paint; in the main office, the most noticeable feature is a fake coal fire.

David Green, 57, came to Bradford from London as a student. He became a councillor in the early 90s and, before taking office in 2010, watched as grand plans and 'big bangs' distracted people's attention from what reviving the city would have to involve: 'hard yards and small steps to getting sustainable employment'.

The Alsop masterplan, he says, was 'the biggest bunch of garbage I'd read in a long time', though he quickly tries to moderate that view, saying the plan 'was very interesting' but 'theoretical'. He says the Westfield hole was a 'huge hit on people's morale, a laughing stock, and no one likes being laughed at'. Among the first priorities when Labour took power here in 2010, he says, was bringing Westfield's plans back to life, albeit on a smaller scale – though the company still has planning permission to expand, 'should the world turn into a warm, wonderful capitalist heaven'. Even if it doesn't, the council now has a ten-year city plan, built around the insistence that, 'We have to stop just thinking about shops', and aimed at starting 'a decade of regeneration and growth'.

Beamsley Street, Bradford, 2011.
On the left is part of Lister Mills, an Urban Splash redevelopment site (Julian Dobson, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0).

Our conversation goes on, through the legacy of the 2001, and on to the three-year reign as MP for Bradford West of George Galloway, some of whose election hoardings still adorn buildings on the fringes of the city centre. 'That was a disaster,' says Green. 'Basically, it was a struggle to get anyone to take us seriously. Galloway was one of these politicians who didn't help Bradford's reputation, because he spent all his time saying how crap the council was, or this was, or that was. How long was he the MP? Three years, roughly? He never came to see me once.'

More recently, what did he make of Cameron's segregation comments?

'I wasn't surprised,' he says. 'I mean... there's lazy journalists and lazy politicians. And that was a lazy political comment.' He goes on: 'Is there an issue with segregation? Yes. Is it wilful? Not necessarily.'

A pause.

'If those communities become more monocultural – white, Asian, whatever – their schools become more monocultural. God Forbid that a politician should ever say, "I don't know the answer," but I don't know the answer. Some people have said we should bus people across the city to encourage that mix. And, on the surface, that might be attractive to some people. But would you want your five-year-old son or daughter to be put on a bus for an hour every morning before they start school?'

What if segregation is an impediment to people investing in Bradford?

'But they're not investing in a particular street, or a particular community – they're investing in a city. And what I would say to any investor who has that point of view is: walk through Bradford city centre. It is not segregated. I'm not going to sit here and try to claim that neighbourhoods are not monocultural in parts of this district. But in other parts of this city, they're multicultural. If you then walk into a place of work, you'll see people of all races, all cultures, all religions and no religion in one place.'

Bradford is the centre of a metropolitan district with a population of around 500,000, which runs out into surrounding rural areas, most of which are firmly Tory. Indeed, the Conservatives ran the council – with the support of the Liberal Democrats – until 2010, and the ruling Labour group now has a majority over other parties of a single seat. Green assures me this is less of a problem than it looks: seats held by Galloway's Respect party will soon be up for grabs, and Labour expects to win them back. Which only leaves the biggest difficulty of all: trying to revive the city when the money available is being savagely hacked back.

In Bradford, £170m has already gone from a council budget that in 2010 stood at £480m. For all Osborne's talk of boosting the North, Green says that, looking ahead to 2015's spending review: 'My gut feeling is that he's going to decimate local government.' His only hope, he explains, lies in Bradford's shared bid for a chunk of Osborne's new

devolution – complete with a new elected mayor – as part of a Leeds city-region, covering a whole swath of West and North Yorkshire. The key point, he tells me, is that by pooling resources, an area with a population of 2.8m and combined annual economic output of nearly £60bn might hold back the worst effects of austerity, meaning that he can somehow press on with boosting his city. 'If we don't go down that route, I think local government is going to struggle to be a partner in regeneration, because I don't think...' He pauses. 'Look: you are not going to have the staff and expertise to do it. Because what do you do: do you have an urban planner, or do you have a social worker? If you put that to a vote out there...'

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On my second day in Bradford, I spend an afternoon with Irna Qureshi, 48, and Syima Aslam, 41. In 2014 they organised the city's first literature festival, hosting 25 events over two days. This year, they staged 150 events over ten days. In 2016, having got new sponsorship, there will be 200 events, put on in what they grandly call 'the literary hub of the North'.

Having met at the National Media Museum (once devoted to photography, film and TV, but renamed in 2006, in line with the digital age), we drive around the university that serves a student body of nearly 14,000, and Bradford College, which has just opened its new David Hockney building. We flit through a new independent quarter, whose businesses include a new shop and café that sells – but of course – both vinyl records and cooked meats, and pass the Odeon: an ornate former cinema saved from demolition, and now the focus of work to turn it into a 4,000-capacity music venue. The whole thing is a breathless exercise in what the Americans would call boosterism, and their shared drive to overturn what Aslam calls 'the overall misery picture', and get over the sense that the city is at last gripped by 'a real sense of excitement, that things are happening and... lifting'.

'People know Bradford for all the wrong reasons,' says Aslam. 'It doesn't matter where you go: those are the reasons it's known for. It's about time that narrative moved on.'

'This is where the media come to gauge the temperature of the Muslim community,' says Qureshi. 'This is where they come for their vox pops. And that's the picture that some people have of Bradford who've never been. They don't see those green spaces, the wonderful architecture we have, or the different communities who live here.

'That includes Muslims,' she says. 'But there's not just one Muslim community. There are many different ones, from many different parts of the world: Bosnia, Somalia, Gujarati Muslims, people from Bangladesh. That gets lost.'

Two minutes later, we glide past the new Westfield centre. Not for the first time, I wince. But with no little chutzpah, Qureshi even finds a way of folding that turquoise-coloured eyesore into a story of civic wonderment. 'Oh no, it's very symbolic of Bradford,' she says, straight-faced. 'You know – many different cultures, sitting side by side.'

Manchester/

'It's getting all funked-up, isn't it?'

Jake Stainton is 23. For his sins, he grew up in Stratford-upon-Avon – but from his late teens onwards, he and a few friends began a once-monthly ritual involving a weekend drive up north, and a 'proper night out' in a big city. 'We did all the big places: Liverpool, Newcastle, Leeds, Sheffield,' he tells me. 'But very quickly, Manchester became our go-to place.' They were soon regular visitors, gleefully travelling up the M6, painting the town and staying at the Ibis hotel on Portland Street: 'One person would pay for the room and we'd all sneak in there.'

Stainton is now a business student at Manchester Metropolitan University, with a part-time job at Shoot Business, a video company that operates from a centre for aspiring entrepreneurs called Innospace, full of hot-desking facilities and compact offices, and a palpable sense of go-getting optimism. As evidenced by his breathless enthusiasm for the city in which he now lives, he is also a Manchester evangelist. 'I won't be leaving after my degree,' he tells me. 'The opportunities here are fantastic. They say it's the second business hub outside London. I like the culture up here, and the people. I love the nightlife. It's just a great city. I can't see myself going back.'

Over the three days I spend in Manchester, I hear a lot of stuff like this: tributes to the city so frothingly enthusiastic they rather suggest the script for a promotional video. On one level, this isn't surprising: I come to Manchester a lot, and inside an hour of arriving, the city centre's sense of possibility always starts to feel infectious. Taking the long view, though, meeting people who talk about a thriving economy and supposedly boundless opportunities, still

seems a little strange. To someone who grew up not far from the city and is now on the wrong side of 40, Manchester's reinvention can still feel like something that happened only recently, against huge odds.

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Before coming up this time, I watched the 2007 feature-length documentary about those exemplars of downcast Mancunian existentialism Joy Division, directed by Grant Gee – in which, amid stock footage of city slums and smokestacks, that great civic patriot Tony Wilson talks about a city that reached its nadir 40 years ago. 'I can remember very precisely what Manchester was like in the mid 70s,' he says. 'It felt like a piece of history that had been spat out. It was really grimy and dirty. Dirty old town.' Then comes the voice of the group's guitarist, Bernard Sumner: 'You were always looking for beauty, cos it was such an ugly place.'

Beyond the city centre, particularly on Manchester's north side, there are more lingering traces of this phase of local history than some over-excited accounts of the city's rebirth might suggest. But in the heart of town, the contrasts between then and now are often jaw-dropping. Cranes are an ever-present feature of the skyline, and towering new buildings seem to pop up at a frantic rate. From St Anne's Square, you can marvel at No 1 Deansgate, the tallest all-steel residential building in the UK, where three-bedroom apartments can be rented for £9,000 a month. Walk for five minutes, and you are confronted by the Wakefield Street Tower, reckoned to

The heart of Manchester, with the clock tower of the Town Hall to be seen on the right (iStock.com/GoldStock).

be the 'tallest purpose-built student accommodation in the world' – outwardly more suggestive of a midtown New York hotel than a hall of residence, but such is the new Manchester: a place whose student population of around 100,000 gives its population a median age of 29.

Other startling statistics extend into the distance. Between 2001 and 2011, Manchester's population increased by 20 per cent. In 1987 the population of the city centre was a mere 300; now, it is over 11,000. The city is predicted to exceed the UK's average rate of economic growth for at least the next ten years. This is now the place, moreover, to which a lot of other English cities look for clues about how to somehow escape the post-industrial condition, and make the most of the twenty-first century: as a recent piece in the *Financial Times* poetically put it, 'an assertive, restless, almost republican city in an increasingly disunited kingdom'.

The day after my visit to Innospace, I spend 90 minutes with Richard Leese, the leader of Manchester City Council, and one of the most powerful Labour politicians in Britain. In his pristine offices in the Town Hall, he talks at length about what has happened here over the last quarter-century, and what remains to be done. He is a quiet, understated presence, and not one to brag – but every now and again, he says something that underlines his sense of success.

'I think what we've done – and I'm talking about thousands of people here – is help to make Manchester a far more exciting place,' he says at one point, 'and a far more pleasant place than London – or pretty much anywhere else in the country.'

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Though he speaks in a gentle Mancunian accent, like a lot of the people who lead English cities, Richard Leese – Sir Richard Leese, to give his full title – is not from the place he commands. He grew up in Mansfield in Nottinghamshire, and went to Warwick University. It may be some indication of the methodical, eternally pragmatic approach that sets him apart from a lot of politicians that he studied pure maths. He then spent a year teaching in Minnesota on an exchange programme, before coming to Manchester in 1979 to take a job as a youth worker.

Leese became a city councillor in 1984, and eventually played his part in a convulsive debate between two tendencies within the Mancunian Labour party – the result of which, he says, set the city's co-ordinates for the next 25 years. 'There was the welfarist wing of the Labour party and the labourist wing,' he explains.

'The welfarist view of how you tackled poverty was to just increase people's benefit payments. The labourist wing said, "Well, hang on – what are the causes of poverty? The biggest cause is that people haven't got jobs, or they haven't got jobs that pay decent wages." The labourist side won the argument, when we were in the midst of very significant public sector cuts. Which meant that if we were going to create jobs and get people into them, it

wasn't us who were going to do that – it was going to be the private sector. And if we wanted to develop the city, the same thing applied.

'That debate probably took nearly four years. It went from 87, through to the introduction of the poll tax. But we came out of that period with the mantra of "jobs, jobs, jobs". And that's been the driver of politics in the city ever since.'

There is a sense in how Leese tells this story of a move away from an outmoded kind of Labour politics into an approach that was much more modern: New Labourish, perhaps, but so specifically Mancunian that it had a distinct identity all its own. 'The old council, which we sort of swept away, was complacent, paternalistic and patronising,' he says. By contrast, he and his colleagues had an appreciation of the importance of involving people in what was done to the city, and the significance of symbolism – as evidenced by the 1991 demolition of the Crescents, the huge residential blocks that had dominated the neighbourhood of Hulme, and whose knocking-down Leese puts at the start of the modern Mancunian era.

Leese became leader of the council in 1996 – political continuity is a key part of this story, bound up with the amazing Labour dominance that means the party has all 96 city councillors – and he has been assisted, since 1998, by Manchester's renowned chief executive Howard Bernstein. In political terms, he continued sloughing-off any residual leftwing hostility to business – capitalism, even – and relentlessly focused on developing the necessary relationships, something seen latterly in the council's close work with everyone from the Beijing Construction Engineering Group (who have a 20 per cent stake in a huge new development around Manchester Airport), to Masdar, a set-up based in Abu Dhabi who have invested in work with graphene, the versatile industrial material pioneered at Manchester University. When it came to the city's infrastructure, the drive to create a thriving economy led to the building of the Metrolink tram system, which began running in 1992, has since expanded four times – and, as evidenced by the clattering building work happening right next to the Town Hall, is now being extended across the city centre.

At the same time, the city council did its best to encourage the kind of cultural developments that had become a byword for the new Manchester since the late 1980s, when the great entrepreneurial upsurge around acid house and Manchester's renown as a gay-friendly city began to create what we would now call a night-time economy.

'From the late 80s, the council very consciously supported the notion of bringing people back to live within the city centre,' Leese says.

'We very consciously supported creating pavement-bar culture. But it still needed people to come along and do it: it did need your Tony Wilsons and so on. But that was very much based on northern European cities. Stockholm is a good example. We looked at what was going on in other places and borrowed bits.'

A quarter-century on, Manchester is the most mentioned place in an increasingly loud conversation about British cities, and is looking how to realise that great holy grail of somehow boosting the North and 'rebalancing' the UK economy. Policy-wise, this debate has two elements: George Osborne's beloved Northern Powerhouse project (which aims at a 'a virtual supercity of the North,' Leese explains, 'but with a scale to balance London, and match larger cities elsewhere'), and the devolution that will see the Greater Manchester area elect a new mayor, and take on new powers, over health, transport, housing, further education and more.

Leese talks about both these things with obvious enthusiasm, but there are caveats, not least when it comes to the cuts. 'Part of economic growth is about life,' says Leese. 'It's about parks and libraries and culture and all those things – the things that councils support.'

I have two remaining questions. One of them is parried by Leese before I have even asked it, when he rejects the idea that Manchester's success and prosperity have done for its creativity. 'Stuff about needing poverty to get creativity – it's clearly bollocks,' he says. 'Absolute bollocks.' He mentions the esteemed Mancunian solo artist LoneLady, new artists working in pop-up studios at the Castlefield Gallery, and MadLab, a self-styled 'not-for-profit grassroots digital innovation organisation' based in the north of the city centre. 'There is more creativity now in the city than there ever was 35 years ago,' he says. And it's all over the place.'

Which brings me to the last point written in my notepad. Even if the city centre now oozes ambition and optimism, what of those parts of Manchester that still seem to lag behind?

'Overall, I'd give you three statistics,' he says.

'Between 2000 and 2011, the population of the city went up by 19 per cent. We were the fastest-growing city in the country. Up until about 2005, all we ever did was close schools; now, we've not been able to build them fast enough. We've probably increased by the equivalent of 40 primary schools over that time. Between 2007 and 2012, the number of families went up by 15 per cent, and the number of families in poverty went down by 25 per cent. It's still far, far too high, but that was an enormous decrease. And if you look at our economic activity rate, from 2004 to 2014, the national change was plus 9 per cent; in Manchester it was 28 per cent.'

He then asks himself a couple of questions.

'Are we making a difference by doing things in the most deprived communities? Yes we are: very significant, measurable differences. Are we exactly where we'd like to be? Nowhere near. We've got a long way to go.'

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Collyhurst is not much more than a mile and a half from central Manchester, but metaphorical light years away from the more up-market parts of the new city. Those *au*

fait with the details of Manchester's pop-cultural past will know it as the location of the Electric Circus, a short-lived punk venue in a disused – and since demolished – variety club that hosted most of the big names of its era.

To get to this part of town, you drive through the bohemian expanse of the so-called Northern Quarter, past the redeveloped neighbourhood of New Islington, and up the Rochdale Road, until you arrive in a flat, bare-looking expanse peppered with tower blocks. Its southern border is marked by the current outer frontier of city-centre regeneration: three hulking residential high-rises done up by the Mancunian developers Urban Splash, and renamed 3Towers. Each is topped with the illuminated first name of one of the Pankhursts – Sylvia, Emmeline and Christabel – and protected by what estate agent blurbs call 'a gated secure fob/code system'.

Just over 7,000 people live in Collyhurst. Among the first I meet is 52-year-old Tony Reeves, a former carer who moved here from London 25 years ago. 'You could sit in your flat and hear other flats getting broken into,' he remembers.

'You could hear doors being kicked in. There was one time they were renovating some maisonettes: the council would put in all the new boilers and radiators during the day: they'd drive away, and then another van would pull up, break into the places and take everything out again. That's what it was like. Pretty wild west.'

Things in Collyhurst are different now – 'It's gone from somewhere no one wanted to go to, to a place where people do want to come and live,' says Reeves – but deep difficulties remain. It has no supermarket or post office. Its solitary cashpoint charges £1.85 for withdrawals. The city council's own reports have described it as 'one of the most deprived areas in the whole country' – and even if the city has long since switched from 'welfarism' to 'labourism', there are ingrained problems in Collyhurst with long-term unemployment. The area was recently dealt a cruel blow, moreover, when the incoming coalition government cancelled a £250m redevelopment plan that was meant to be funded via the on-tick magic of the Private Finance Initiative.

Now, the national charity Big Local is trying to improve life here by establishing walking routes that will draw together long-divided housing estates, offering loans to would-be local businesses, putting new facilities into forlorn-looking public space, and energetically trying to boost the place's fractured sense of community. Thanks to a £6m programme introduced by the city council, local houses have been spruced up, reinsulated and provided with new fences, and some housing has been demolished to make way for new development. The council, indeed, has plans to attract developers who will build hundreds of new private homes over the next 15 years. Most of the locals I speak to seem guardedly optimistic about all this, but also concerned that as more affluent newcomers arrive, the deep problems faced by the people who already live here will be concealed.

Apart from anything else, what an afternoon spent here illustrates most vividly is that whatever Richard Leese and

his colleagues do, much bigger forces are at play. At the Lalley Centre, a community facility run by the Catholic church, volunteers say that in the last two years, demand for the twice-weekly food bank has doubled, so that up to 120 people come here for help every week. Kath McCarron, a debt and benefits adviser, tells me about people instructed to travel to job interviews at impossible times and distances, and then denied their benefits: one man, she says, was told to travel ten miles from here for an interview at 5.30am on a winter's morning: he tried to do it on his bike, failed, and had his benefits stopped for three months.

Local advice services have been slashed thanks to the cuts; the state is in palpable retreat here, but at the same time, hundreds of increasingly anxious people want as little to do with officialdom as possible, in case they suffer even more. 'Families here are frightened of the state,' says McCarron. 'They're scared of losing their children; being judged. They're terrified.'

Margot Power, the project leader in charge of Big Local's work, takes me on a walking tour of the area, past an overgrown patch of land where there used to be a youth centre, and on to a paved expanse opposite two closed-down pubs. Next to a vacant space where a set of maisonettes were recently demolished, we meet 41-year-old Anne Robson, a single of mother of three, who's unemployed and reliant on benefits, but says she's now set on starting her own business, selling aloe vera products from home.

'I feel like Collyhurst is disappearing,' she says. 'Our street is, anyway… I don't like what they're doing, knocking stuff down and moving our families and friends. I've lost my best friend, my uncle – we've been brought up knowing all these people, and now they've all moved.'

What does she think the area is losing?

'We're losing … Collyhurst. It's just not going to be Collyhurst any more.' She gestures at the Urban Splash tower blocks, and the tall fence that surrounds them. 'It must be students in those flats, with money.'

Does she know anybody who lives there?

'One person. He's American. He's my friend's friend. Whereas years ago, everybody knew everybody.'

She pauses.

'There's nothing for the kids. Nothing. Why don't they build a community centre, or a rollerskating rink – something that's going to do the community good? It's all right going to town, but you're paying town prices. It's like £16 to go swimming. It's disgusting. Twenty quid to go to the cinema.'

She looks again at a couple of cranes in the middle-distance. Not for the first time, there's a sense of a regenerated wonderland slowly advancing in this direction, but still remaining untouchably distant. 'Manchester's getting all funked-up, isn't it?' she says. 'Like, posh.' Then she utters what sounds like a crisp definition of the modern urban condition: 'You need money to do everything, don't you?'

Plymouth/

'Send more rich people!'

Twenty years after their cultural peak, the 1990s seem to have been fixed in the culture as a decade of primary-coloured hedonism, and politics almost wholly free of substance: the time of Union Jack guitars, the supposed End of History, New Labour in its vacuous pomp, and a long economic boom.

But in Plymouth, the 1990s were not like that at all. With the Cold War a fading memory and its dockyards shrinking at speed, in the early part of the decade, this once-great maritime city registered an unemployment rate of over 14 per cent, and its neighbourhoods became mired in decline. In 1981 around 15,000 people had been employed at the local naval dockyards; by 1997, that figure was down to around 4,000, where it has remained ever since. As the British city said to have been most damaged by German bombing in the Second World War, Plymouth had been faced with the challenge of rising from the wreckage left by the Luftwaffe, but its self-understanding as a great naval centre had remained intact. Now, with the very essence of its identity disappearing, it inevitably crumpled.

'The 90s were terrible,' says Tudor Evans, the Labour leader of Plymouth city council, and a three-syllables-a-second proselytiser for his adopted home city.

'Let me tell you exactly what happened. On top of everything else, the government of the day decided to introduce privatisation into Devonport dockyard. And within 18 months to two years, employment there was devastated… The restructuring was violent, in a sense. In terms of its scale, what happened here was on a par with anything in a pit village or a steel town. For 350 years, the city had a workstream. And now, all of a sudden, it was starting to question why it existed at all.'

All this sits in the background of just about every minute I spend in Plymouth – a city of 250,000 people, tucked away in the far-left corner of England, which sometimes has the feeling of somewhere too often left to fend for itself. To the credit of Evans and the other people energetically working to improve the city's prospects, it feels like a place determined to somehow slough off decline and re-invent itself as 'Britain's Ocean City', while not yet fully sure if everything will work out. Everything seems to be in flux, from a once-grand centre purpose-built after the war, to parts of the city in which people have left their old homes to make way for regeneration, and suddenly had to find their feet in new neighbourhoods.

All of that is fascinating in itself, but it also shines light on the future of the country as a whole: whatever Britain's future is, in other words, Plymouth is a place where you get a sharp sense of what living in the twenty-first century might actually entail.

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Tudor Evans is a 55-year-old native of the faded Welsh steel town of Ebbw Vale who came here as an undergraduate and stayed, and his passion for Plymouth is infectious. Inside a minute of my arrival in his office, he hands me a paperback titled *The Book Of Wonder*, which contains 100 'amazing facts', from Plymouth's claim to the world's first pasty recipe, to the three months Charles Darwin spent here before he sailed on HMS *Beagle*. And for the next hour, he and Anthony Payne, Plymouth's director of development and regeneration, talk at lightning speed about their work, before driving me around the city and enthusing some more.

Among other things, the two of them explain the new City Deal signed with the coalition government in 2014, which will bring in tens of millions of pounds of investment, and transfer dockyard land from the Ministry of Defence to the council, which hopes to create 1,200 new jobs in the maritime sector. They big up the university's wave tank. They talk about the enduring presence of the confectionery giant Wrigley, which has been here since 1972, and Princess Yachts, which makes ocean-going vessels for the global super-rich: according to its catalogue, at the top of their range, 'the tri-deck 40M epitomises the absolute peak of quality, luxury, performance and space' – and sells for £12m.

They also rhapsodise about the importance of culture: the necessity of big events, galleries and museums – and such regeneration projects as the turning-round of Royal William Yard, a huge former supply depot redeveloped by the Mancunian company Urban Splash (who have also just acquired the Civic Centre, a brutalist office block in the city centre). An eight-acre site, it now features a River Cottage restaurant overseen by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, as well as Ocean Studios, a new creative space aimed at helping aspiring artists, and partly funded by Arts Council England.

When we stop there, it provides the highlight of our tour: half an hour spent among imposing, martial architecture now given over to creativity, recreation and play – which, on a sunny day, gives the whole place a surreal, Alice in Wonderland aspect.

'Why the fuck would a hairy-arsed place like this, with dockyards and matelots and everything, be interested in culture?' says Evans. 'The answer is, because those people's sons and daughters are. It's like miners and *Billy*

Plymouth Civic Centre. Urban Splash has acquired this brutalist office block for redevelopment (iStock.com/MattStansfield).

Elliot: "You haven't got to go in that yard, you haven't got to go in that mine, or that steelworks – there's something else."'

Over the summer, he reminds me, Plymouth Hoe – the green space that faces the sea – hosted the second of four annual MTV Crashes events, built around an outdoor stage on the waterfront: 'a fucking big event: 30,000 kids bouncing up and down to Tinie Tempah. It was huge'.

'Why are we doing things like that?' he asks himself.

'The proposition is, as well as everything else, in order to be a great manufacturing city, in order to be a great university city, in order to be a great anything city, you've got to be liveable. And in the past, the cultural offer wasn't up to the mark. When I first came here, I saw 14 bands in 14 nights, including The Clash and The Stranglers. I couldn't do that now; there aren't those places. But here's still the appetite. There's no reason why it shouldn't be: the question is, why isn't it? And can we do anything to make it happen?

'When you're trying to get someone to locate to Plymouth, they have to come quite a long way. It isn't like the Midlands, where you can whistle, and there'll be 20 former car engineers coming at you from every direction. That doesn't happen down here. They have to relocate. So you're selling the city, and the soft stuff, as much as you're selling the work.'

To some extent, this seems to be succeeding. Property articles in the *Telegraph* – among other media outlets – have hailed 'one corner of the West Country where you can do world-class waterfront on a budget'; and in the city's more up-scale corners, there is a sense of money starting to arrive, and new business arrivals catering to elevated lifestyles. But obviously, such developments bring awkward questions, too. After the war, the city centre here was rebuilt in the spirit of post-1945 optimism: it has been called Britain's 'first great welfare-state city', and even now, the breathtakingly wide main street of Armada Way and the city's grandest buildings have a democratic, inclusive ambience. So I wonder: might a future of expensive apartments and high-end restaurants cut across all that? In other words, what of inequality?

Evans' answer makes reference to council tax bands, those indicators of wealth that go from A at the lowest to the top category of H – which in Plymouth denotes an annual contribution of around £3,000. 'All right,' he says, 'This is going to sound really peculiar now – but trust me, I'm really trying to speak for effect. Part of Plymouth's problem is that until recently, we only had 56 houses in Band H council tax – 90 per cent of Plymothians live in either C, B or A. So our council tax base is low.

'Wages are low. Aspirations are lower. So we have to have more posh people in our city. This is going to sound like a really weird thing for a Labour politician to say, but [affects shouting voice] send more rich people! Right? Cos you can't live by one group of people alone.'

You can't. But what if you live in one of the more deprived parts of the city and, whether rightly or wrongly, you feel that a Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall restaurant isn't aimed at you?

'Then let me tell you about our regeneration plans,' he says.

'My desperate need is to build houses. We promised 1,000 a year. Last year, we arranged for 1,000 to be built, 95 per cent of which were on brownfield land: a fantastic performance. We intend to do more of that. We are building new houses instead of clapped-out old ones, because we believe that everybody has the right to a decent home. In Devonport, you'll see that terrible post-war housing is coming down and new great stuff that people can afford is going up in its place. Houses to buy, houses to rent, houses to part-buy – we've got the range. And those communities which for too long have not been treated properly, are now being treated properly. That's where the working class are living. They're not being pushed out.'

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Up until 1914, Plymouth was one of the three local towns, along with East Stonehouse and Devonport, that would be joined together to form a larger borough which was granted city status in 1928. Devonport had a naval history that went back to 1690. In the post-war years, it became a dystopian mixture of poverty, and the nitty-gritty of the Cold War: a vast dockyard, surrounded by a huge wall, effectively cut the community in two, and around it were built endless three-storey, pebble-dashed tenement blocks. In time, the area became a byword for huge social problems: as one local resident put it, 'a spiral of degradation, crime, drug abuse, vandalism and general neglect'.

Devonport is not like that anymore. Its most remarkable feature remains the Grade I-listed Guildhall, a huge neoclassical structure completed in 1824, which was once home to the local magistrates' court – complete with holding cells – and the HQ of the town's mayor. It is now owned and run by RIO (aka Real Ideas Organisation), a social enterprise spread across the South West, which completely renovated it at a cost of just under £2m. On the ground floor is a bakery and café, founded partly with money borrowed from the city council's Social Investment Fund. The hall hosts markets, as well as gigs, weddings and funerals. RIO has also reopened the Devonport column, a 124-foot construction – another relic of imperial grandeur, also finished in 1824 – from whose viewing platform you get an amazing perspective on the city. This is not exactly a tourist area, but over the summer, the column averaged around 300 visitors a month.

RIO's next project – explained to me by Ed Whitelaw, its head of enterprise and regeneration, and Lindsey Hall, the chief executive – is the doing-up of Devonport's old market hall, once enclosed behind the Navy's security wall, but now set to become a digital technology centre, with workspace for a variety of local companies and

organisations, an auditorium and educational facilities. All this feeds into a bigger story about so-called social enterprise: around 7,000 people are employed by not-for-profit organisations in Plymouth, and austerity (which, Tudor Evans says, has cut the city council's budgets by a third in just three years) means that politicians are more willing than ever to involve them in city life.

The biggest change here, though, is the transformation of Devonport's housing. In 2001 £48m of government money was secured for Plymouth as part of the Labour government's New Deal For Communities programme, and spent over ten years: the foundation of a reinvention of Devonport that is still ongoing. Some tenement blocks remain, but most have been cleared to make way for terraces of pastel-coloured dwellings. Whereas 75 per cent of the area's homes were once council-owned, the new houses and flats are split between three categories: 30 per cent of the new housing is social rented, and 15 per cent subject to shared ownership, while the rest has been sold on the open market. This is a radical change, though it does not quite add up to gentrification, for the time being at least: a three-bedroom property here currently goes for around £165,000. The local press has reported cases of structural problems with some new houses: a lack of ventilation causing damp and rust, unreliable security doors, poorly insulated pipes giving rise to stifling heat. How these stories have played out gives another sense of the city then, and now: in the past, unsatisfactory housing – in theory, at least – was a political matter, whereas now, given that the houses here are either private or rented from housing associations, it seems to rattle around that inconclusive part of local life reserved for customer complaints.

On Ker Street, the road leading away from the Guildhall, I meet 46-year-old Rachel Davies, who tells me she lives in a shared-ownership home (another stake is held by Devon and Cornwall Housing, aka DCH, a south-western housing association) with her husband and 79-year-old father, a former electrician at the dockyards. She was 'part of an exodus', she tells me, from the neighbourhood of North Prospect, which had been readied for redevelopment at the end of the last decade. For her, that meant a compulsory purchase order, and 'in one fell swoop, where I spent most of my teenage and childhood years got knocked down'. Such is one overlooked element of Plymouth's recent history: thousands of people moving from area to area, as the city's residential areas are dramatically redeveloped.

Devonport, she says, is a distinct improvement – in North Prospect, some of her neighbours were difficult, and at one point, a brick had come through her kitchen window. But her newly built home is less satisfactory. 'It's very poorly built,' she says. 'My roof's leaked twice. There are windows we can't open, in case they come in on us. I've had the lock on my door fall out into my hands... It's been a never-ending list of problems. I've got a wall that's two inches narrower at the bottom than it is at the top.'

Whatever the problems, though, she is going to have to stay put. 'There's nowhere else: we've got no money to move.

'Don't get me wrong,' she cautions. 'I've gone from one toilet that occasionally works to three. The standard of living has improved. But the quality of the build? No.' (The construction company Linden Homes built her house: 'We have been made aware of this issue regarding homes we have built in Devonport,' runs a statement they subsequently send me, which goes on: 'we are committed to addressing the issues raised and will be taking guidance from the NHBC [National House Building Council] to find solutions to the issues highlighted.')

Ten minutes after meeting Rachel Davies, I chat to Darren Rodd, 45, a father of three and a Plymouth bus driver, born and raised in Devonport, who rents his flat from a local housing association. He spent the first 30-plus years of his life in the blocks that were pulled down. 'They were brilliant at first,' he says. 'But they got worse and worse. Concrete cancer, and all that. They were a blight. Everything's better now: better housing, better layout.'

He points towards the bottom of the street. 'That was the bull ring. It was a notorious place: everything went on there. It was always bad: sirens at all hours.' He gestures around him. 'You can ask anyone round here what it's like now. There's no trouble. And it's an up-and-coming area.'

Does he feel anything's been lost?

He emits a dry laugh. 'Only the bad stuff.'

I drive back into town, and have a coffee in Drake Circus, the vast shopping centre named after that local icon Francis Drake, who allegedly continued playing bowls on the Hoe having been informed of the approach of the Spanish Armada, and these days lends his name to Top Man, M&S, an Apple Store, and the other staples of twenty-first-century shopping. I leaf through the mountain of promotional bumf handed to me by Tudor Evans, and listen back to our interview, trying desperately to keep up with what he says.

As much as anything, he sounds like someone with a profound sense of urgency. Out of 57 council seats, Labour currently has 28 – down from a highpoint of 31 – to the Tories' 26, with Ukip on three, and there will be elections next year. For Evans, the kind of political continuity that has been such a gift to Labour in such cities as Manchester is but a dream: his party took power here in 2012 after five years when the Tories were in charge, and what with Labour's national convulsions, the council could soon change hands once more.

So in the meantime, whatever the drawbacks and imperfections of its ongoing regeneration and however much this fast-changing city is overlooked, he evangelises about Plymouth, again and again. 'I'm completely fed up with us being the best kept secret in the UK,' he says. 'I spend my time going to London, going to meetings, and making myself deeply unpopular when I tell everybody how great Plymouth is.'

He pauses for breath, which doesn't happen that often. 'But if I don't do it, and others like me don't do it... well, nobody's going to do it for us, are they?'

Bristol/

'If you're poor here, you're really, really stretched.'

In his brilliant 1930s travelogue *English Journey*, JB Priestley salutes Bristol as 'a real old city, an ancient capital in miniature' – and its built environment proves his point. But history is not the only thing captured in its brickwork. The buildings in the city's wildly different neighbourhoods also speak volumes about inequality, that huge problem seemingly embedded in most modern cities, which the onward march of free-market economics only seems to be making worse.

Here, no end of contrasting examples of the wealth gap present themselves. Ten minutes' walk from the city centre is Redcliffe, and a forlorn clump of low-rise flats I visited during the general election, when one local woman cagily opened her door and told me she would vote for anyone who offered her a bit of hope. But aim yourself in a different direction, and you soon find yourself in Clifton, a byword not just for Brunel's suspension bridge but café society, shabby-chic boutiques, and five-bedroom houses that go for over £1.5m.

Bristol has a population of around 442,000, making it southern England's second most populous city. It is newly fashionable, attracting émigrés from across Britain, and beyond. In the time I spend here, I get a sense of an uneasy mixture of moods: solid confidence and contagious civic pride, often mixed with the sense that the place is changing fast, in ways that some people find very hard to take.

Bristol was the only English city to vote for an elected mayor in the referendums that took place in 2012; something put down to the apparent chaos of its politics (between 2001 and 2011, the old city council was led by seven different people) and the city's ancient fondness for doing its own thing.

That maverick streak was also manifested in the person eventually elected to the job: George Ferguson, now 68, a red-trousered independent who styles himself as an 'establishment rebel' and was once a member of the old Liberal Party. He is also that rare thing: an architect-turned-politician with an array of successful projects behind him, and an array of opinions about what Bristol looks like, and the forces that have pushed its physical environment in this or that direction.

When I spend an hour talking to him in a functional office block near the railway station, he begins by explaining how he feels about modern Bristol's cityscape. 'Architecturally, I think it's disappointing,' he says, and off we go: through 15 minutes that takes in the kind of supposed regeneration led by supermarkets and high-volume housebuilders ('I think that's actually degeneration,' says Ferguson), and the danger of reducing the redevelopment of cities to mere numbers. He also talks about the area of the city now called Harbourside, which presents a pretty soulless vision of clinical apartment blocks and streets that usually feel

devoid of life – a product, he says, of 'big architecture' taking precedence over 'good urban design'.

He then accentuates the positive. 'The good thing that's happened in Bristol over the last 30 years is people coming back to live in the city centre,' he says. 'When I first came to Bristol, there were probably half a dozen people who did that. That's definitely a move in the right direction; I don't mean it's all good development, but certainly that has made the city centre a real place, with a much greater mix.'

Some of this, it seems, is traceable to what is happening in London. Bristol is clearly being changed by the consequences of the capital's impossible living costs and property prices, and migration beyond the M25. There are no figures to confirm it, but the city's coverage in the media speaks volumes: the *Sunday Times*' recent claim that Bristol was now the best UK city in which to live; a report by estate agents Knight Frank which identified Bristol as one of four 'new prime urban markets' (along with Oxford, Bath and Cheltenham); an item on Buzzfeed headlined '19 things every Londoner learns when they move to Bristol'.

'I celebrate London,' Ferguson tells me. 'It's of great benefit to us all.' He cracks a mischievous smile. 'But actually, I think it's of greater benefit to those of us that don't live in it. Economically, I think we benefit from London's overheating.'

It is not hard to understand what brings people here. I have lived about 45 minutes' drive away since 2004, and I come to Bristol whenever I can. Almost as much as Manchester, it is a thriving place, full of cultural vivacity and the sense that it has kept hold of the kind of bohemian corners other cities have mislaid. It often betrays a brilliantly wilful, anarchistic mindset, and has a rich history of sedition and rebellion: riots, political radicalism, nonconformist Christianity.

In its own polite way, Ferguson's election – albeit on a turnout of 24 per cent – was proof of these traits, though his record so far is more substantial than the clichéd view of him as flamboyant maverick might suggest. As well as developing the city's green credentials, he has started work on ambitious redevelopment of the area around Temple Meads station, including plans for a new 12,000-capacity arena, and energetically pursued a new housebuilding programme – though he says that cuts forced on him by Westminster are about to stall any progress on that front.

As we talk, Ferguson also acknowledges deeper difficulties. Compared to most of England's big cities, Bristol is relatively prosperous, but its affluence only throws its problems with deprivation into sharper relief. As he puts it: 'If you're poor in Bristol, you're poorer than if you're poor in Liverpool. I had this discussion last week. Council housing is overburdened; affordable housing is meant to be priced at 80 per cent of the market rate – and in Liverpool, generally, 80 per cent of that is nearly half what it is in Bristol. So if you're poor in Bristol, you're really, really stretched.'

When it comes to inequality, most of the policy instruments (such as taxation or any say in the benefits system) that might conceivably be useful are unavailable, and the problem feels deeply ingrained. So must he simply accept things as they are? 'I'm not prepared to be that fatalistic,' he says. 'It's an absolute imperative that there has to be movement. But you're not going to do that in five years; it's a long game. What's interesting is, places like St Pauls are actually becoming quite trendy places to live.'

There is a problem with that, though: it sounds like what we all know as gentrification. St Pauls is the inner-city neighbourhood most associated with Bristol's Afro-Caribbean population, and therefore a place with a deep sense of history. Its new fashionable status might bring in new people with money to spend, but some people think it also threatens the area's very identity.

'Well, it's not gentrification until it tips over,' Ferguson says. 'And I think St Pauls has got enough social housing, enough in the way of hostels, enough in the way of cemented alternatives to gentrification...'

He pauses for thought.

'Yes, a lot of people have seen that area as an alternative way to live quite close to the city centre, and house prices have gone up... but there's still a very rich cultural mix. And that is my aim: that the deprived areas get enough investment to keep that cultural mix. Gentrification only becomes a problem when it tips over the edge, like you've seen in a lot of American cities, and London. It's a danger.'

By way of extra emphasis, he repeats himself. 'It is a danger. But I think the benefits of private investment in those areas far outweigh the risks, especially in some of the most deprived parts of Bristol.'

On the ground, these issues feel a lot more complicated – something highlighted by an afternoon spent in St Pauls. On Ashley Road, opposite an imposing set of sandstone Georgian houses long since converted into flats, is the Malcolm X community centre, a facility opened in the wake of the riots here in 1980.

Jumble trail in St Pauls, Bristol (Janet Gibson).

It has a big hall, meeting rooms and a basement recording studio, and hosts services for refugees and older people. It has also been hammered by recent cuts: in 2010 its annual grant from the city council was cut in half, from £70,000 to £35,000, meaning it now has no full-time staff, and depends more on volunteers. At the same time, the demography of this part of Bristol is changing, with consequences for what the centre does, and even what it is called: the council has reportedly suggested it should change its name, something the people in charge have so far resisted.

Amirah Cole, 49, is the centre's vice-chair. She lives nearby in a rented two-bedroom house with two of her kids: in the last four years, she says, her weekly rent has gone up from £100 to £160, and she says she has no hope of buying a home. In her street, she says, five new people have recently moved in, all from London. 'They're professional-type people,' she says. 'They socialise together; they don't socialise with the rest of us.'

For places like the Malcolm X community centre, such changes have so far only made life more difficult. Cole says she needs active board members: people to see to fundraising, PR, and more. 'But people don't get involved. A lot of the people who would be involved are outside the area now, and a lot of people who live here now don't have the connection any more. So in terms of running the place, you don't get that support.'

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Perhaps the most fascinating example of how much Bristol is changing lies next to St Pauls, in the neighbourhood of Stokes Croft. In April 2011 this was the scene of the so-called Tesco riots: disturbances at least partly triggered by the arrival of a new Tesco convenience store, which only served to highlight Bristol's reputation for a feisty kind of defiance. The area's walls are festooned with creative graffiti and huge art pieces: it has a sense of the kind of self-organised bohemia that one might associate with East Berlin, or Greenwich Village before Manhattan's affluent transformation did for it.

A lot of this is traceable to the work of Chris Chalkley, a 57-year-old embodiment of the radical Bristolian attitude who first came here as a student. Thanks partly to a childhood spent in Staffordshire, his main line of work is bone china, and a workshop and showroom that sell cups, plates and more, decorated in a spirit of creative subversion: mugs featuring the Queen and the words 'I eat Swans', and a new line of Jeremy Corbyn items that are apparently selling very well indeed. This business now turns a profit, and contributes to Chalkley's other work, as a community activist and leftist entrepreneur, determined to protect Stokes Croft's singularity and obstruct the forces that, as he sees it, threaten this last redoubt of what cities should be all about.

Around ten years ago, Chalkley used to drive through Stokes Croft on the way to his old HQ in nearby Montpelier, and look askance at an area with a 30 per cent rate of dereliction. 'It was grey,' he says. 'It was the

kind of the place that if you were going through it, you'd keep your head down and not look left or right. It was an intimidating place... begging, drugs, alcoholics, and the net effect of intervention by the council was to make it incredibly unwelcoming.'

As well as being a byword for social problems, Stokes Croft was a favoured part of town for street artists including the young Banksy – but part of its malaise, as Chalkley saw it, was a policy of painting over their pieces as soon as they appeared. By 2009, when he had shifted his operations to Stokes Croft, he was ready for a battle.

On a new website, he listed all the empty spaces in the area that could be painted on. With the co-operation of a local property owner who allowed an exterior to be decorated, he then picked a fight with the city council, who soon proved unable to follow which artworks were authorised, and unauthorised . And soon enough, as Chalkley renamed his business and wider ventures the People's Republic of Stokes Croft, and he extolled the wonders of what he calls 'an outdoor art gallery', the authorities started to back off.

'What that led to was a kind of self-governance scenario,' he says. 'And it's very different now: there's a recognition that this is significant. We have graffiti tours coming round here all the time.'

What tourists now behold is an area of the city in a delicate state of balance. A visible part of its population is still made up of street drinkers and homeless people, who Chalkley says need more help. In among Stokes Croft's social enterprises and co-operatives are the kind of independent businesses – cafés, boutiques, art outlets – that always denote a city's more vibrant areas. But as he himself acknowledges, they also tend to herald changes that often end with rocketing property prices and a kind of ersatz bohemia: a transition some people in Stokes Croft think is already underway.

Chalkley says he was always mindful of this possibility. Now, having bought another big local building from a church and begun letting its rooms out to artists, theatre groups and others, he has set up a co-operative land trust that will issue shares and take control of it early in the new year. The idea, he says, is to set up a structure that will allow the possibility of buying up property so local people can own it.

'It's really about a new economy,' Chalkley says. 'All the major problems that have confronted Stokes Croft are basically about businesses from outside. I think we can be competitive with the forces of darkness. And I can't see another answer.'

Across the road from the People's Republic of Stokes Croft HQ is the focus of a huge local story. The Carriageworks was designed by the Victorian architect and polymath Edward Godwin and built in 1862, and is now a Grade II*-listed building. In 1982, along with a neighbouring office block called Westmoreland House, it became empty. Since 1989, under the ownership of the Comer brothers, billionaire property tycoons based in

Ireland, both buildings have been the focus of sporadic planning applications for the site's redevelopment, as it has fallen into borderline dereliction. As evidenced by the caravans behind a set of locked gates, it is now home to a group of travellers.

In 2011 local campaigners organised as the Carriageworks Action Group carried out a huge consultation involving 1,600 people, and came up with a grassroots plan for a mixed-use development with social housing. By 2013, the city council were ready to introduce a compulsory purchase order and then hand the site's redevelopment to a housing association, with a view to making this vision a reality. Now, though, a new scheme has been given planning permission: a combination of 113 private apartments and some new business units, to be built by a London-based developer called Fifth Capital – which, in a fairly unprecedented turn of events, was asked by the city council to work with the action group on improving its initial set of plans.

The proposals have visibly changed – most obviously, the development is no longer going to be gated – but Chalkley is still less than impressed, not least with the new development's complete lack of social housing. 'It's going to look like Cabot Circus [a Bristol shopping centre],' he says. 'It'll completely change the area. It'll be much more controlled: there won't be that element of freedom there has been for the last 20 years.'

But there is another view. In the co-operatively run Café Kino, I meet Lori Streich, 59, one of the local people who has been painstakingly working with Fifth Capital. She explains what has been achieved: among other things, 'less blocky' architecture and a new accessible space in the development's centre, which will host a market. She is also pushing for a Bristol social enterprise to manage the new business units and thereby ensure they go to local people ('No chains,' she emphatically insists), and her group's proposal to put all the apartments under the management of a housing association, so as to avoid the worst aspects of the private market.

When I speak to Marc Pennick, the owner of Fifth Capital, he confirms he is actively pursuing these proposals. He says that as well as 11 affordable flats that will be sold under shared ownership with a housing association, 80 per cent of the 100-or-so other apartments will be privately owned, and sold for around £140,000 for a one-bed, and £210,000 for a two-bed; while 20 per cent will be privately rented. A greater share of affordable homes, let alone social housing, he insists, would simply not be economically viable, not least given the reconstruction work involved. He promises a 'centrepoint for Stokes Croft, where people can go to from Monday to Sunday'. He also confirms that there will be no chain businesses.

'I'm sure it's going to put up property values, because there won't be a huge derelict suite any more,' Streich tells me. A little later, she says, 'A lot of people who live round here find the area quite depressing. There's a huge vibrancy about it, and a lot of people are attached to it. But other people who've lived here for a very long

time find the anarchy quite alienating. And I think they need to have their voices heard as well... there is a sense of wanting something to be a bit more proud of.'

Before leaving for home, in Chalkley's new community building, I spend half an hour in the company of his most interesting tenants: the small collective who devote their time to the Bristol Cable, a website and quarterly newspaper that stands as a shining example of the inventiveness and energy that cities can foster, and how it enriches civic life. Run as a co-operative, it currently has 500 members, whose financial contributions raise a monthly £1,300 – enough to meet their day-to-day overheads and cover the costs of printing. Over time, the aim is to increase their membership to 2,500, which would bring in as much as £75,000 a year.

Every working day, a small group of people work here, for free. Their mission, they tell me, is to fill the vacuum left by a declining local and regional media, and investigate a tangle of ongoing issues in the city, from the treatment of refugees to the role of money in local politics. Among their most striking pieces so far was an infographic published in April showing the share of new Bristol housing developments given over to 'affordable' homes, which has seemingly always fallen well below the 30-to-40 per cent stipulated in official council policy – proof, they say, of how gentrification is axiomatically connected to inequality.

What do they think will be the future of Stokes Croft?

'It is changing,' says Alon Aviram, 25. 'I think in a few year's time, there'll be less drunk people on the street, but I think the graffiti will still be here – cos it's a commodity the city trades on. If you go to Bristol Airport, there are big displays about Banksy. You see it here: every ten minutes there's a group of tourists with cameras. But in terms of rising rents and people who are here now moving out – I think that's probably inevitable.'

His colleague Ellie Coombs, 27, is a self-employed writer and journalist. Thanks to rising living costs, she says she's just moved out of the inner-city area of Easton to a new rented flat 15 minutes further from Bristol's centre. She has three different zero-hours jobs, and once her rent and bills are paid, gets through the average month on £100. She talks about clear signs of things changing: landlords selling up, new cafés popping up, and cash-strapped creative people leaving: 'You just see everyone taking these steps further and further out.'

Twenty-five-year-old Adam Cantwell issues a final prediction from behind his laptop: 'In ten or 15 years, what Bristol trades off is going to disappear.' What he says sounds like a warning – relevant not just to this city, but anywhere in which rising confidence and thriving creativity are colliding with spiralling property prices and people finding life increasingly impossible. 'That's what I think,' he says. 'It's going to become another standard place that doesn't have anything to sell to its tourists, and put in its brochures.'

Industrial Revolution to Knowledge Revolution: A Century of Urban Economic Change/

Paul Swinney/

7x more jobs
2x more jobs

● Jobs decline
● Jobs growth

Growth in jobs 1911-2013: Source: Census 1911; ONS 2014, Business Register and Employment Survey (Centre for Cities).

How and why have city economies changed over the last 100 years?

The North-South divide is an issue that has dominated policy for many decades. Indeed, the first example of rebalancing policy can be traced back to the 1930s. And yet despite this attention, the divide has continued to widen in recent decades.

Using data from the 1911 census allowed us for the first time to look at the performance of cities over the last 100 years to get a better perspective on why we see such variation between cities today.

And the difference in performance has been stark. As the map shows, cities such as Peterborough and Crawley have more than doubled their number of jobs. But cities such as Liverpool and Blackburn have fewer jobs today than they did a century ago. The result is that the 'South' has been pulling away from the 'North' for a century. Since 1911, for every job created in the North, Midlands and Wales, 2.3 have been created in the South.

The differing ability of cities to create jobs over the last century has been heavily influenced by the way that they have responded to changes in the global economy.

In 1911 they were places of low-cost production, where businesses wanted to locate close to fuel sources and ports. But a century of change, which has included the creation of the electricity and motorway networks, the rise of container ships and the advent of low-cost holidays, has fundamentally altered the role that cities play in the national economy. Now, instead of being places of low-cost production, our strongest performing cities are now places of knowledge production.

The majority of cities in the South of England perform well today because they have been able to adapt to the constant changes in the global economy. They have reinvented their economies, creating jobs in new, more knowledge-focused industries to offset losses in more traditional industries. These cities, such as Reading and Brighton, have thrived as a result, creating many thousands of jobs in higher-skilled, knowledge-based occupations both in services and 'advanced' manufacturing.

Those cities that have struggled over the last century have replicated their economies. They have replaced coal mines with call centres and dockyards with distribution sheds – swapping one set of low-knowledge jobs for another. The result is that they tend to have lower wages,
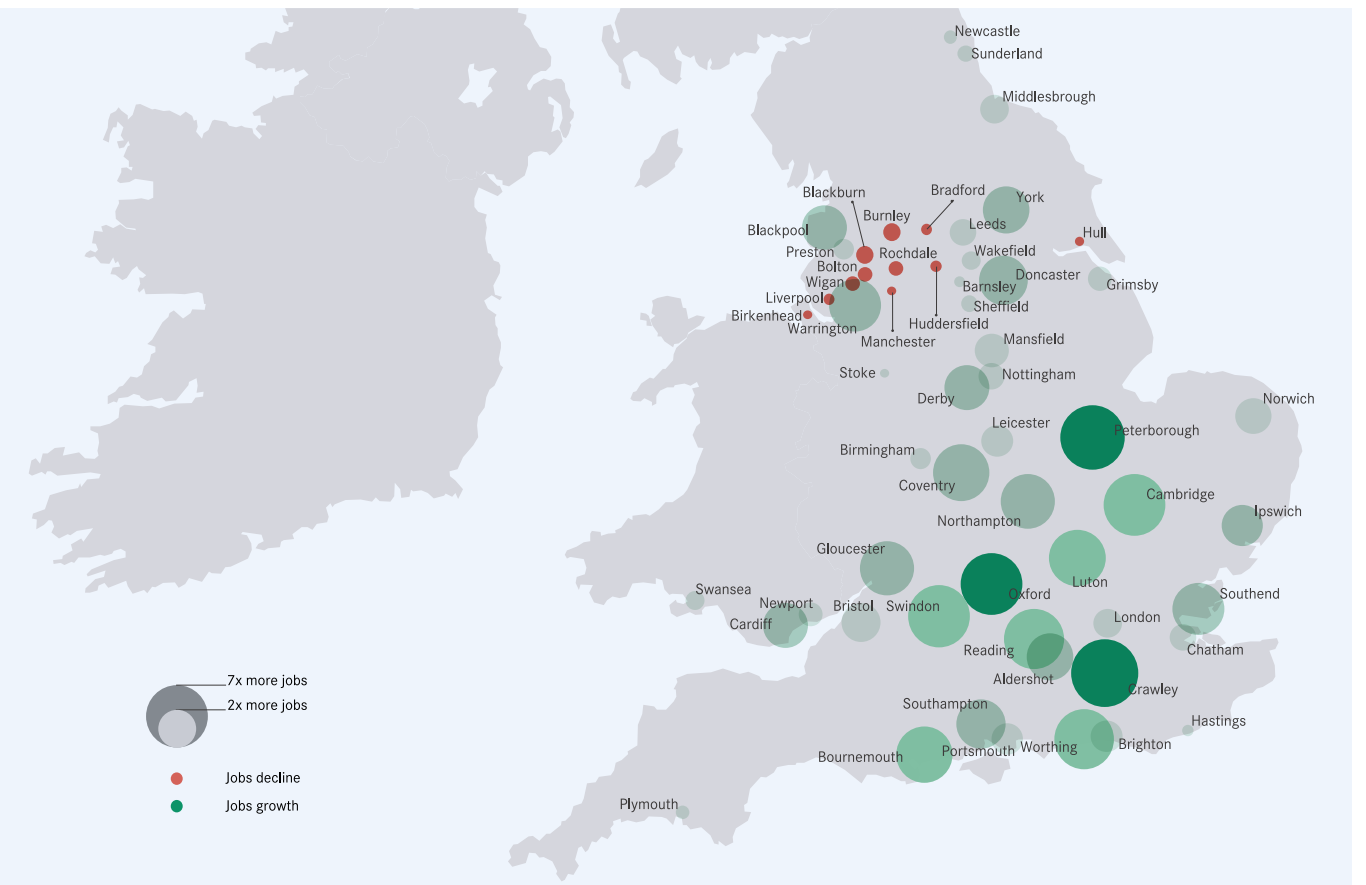
fewer business start-ups and higher shares of their residents in receipt of benefits.

The implication is that it is the geography of knowledge that has driven the widening North-South divide. Contrary to much of the public and political discourse on this issue, it is not the decline of manufacturing that has been the cause of the struggles of many cities in the North, Midlands or Wales – it has been their inability to attract new, knowledge-based employment.

If this pattern is to be reversed then policy needs to focus on helping struggling cities to reinvent their economies. The irony is that for 80 years policies intent on closing the gap between North and South have inadvertently reinforced replication instead of encouraging reinvention. Examples range from the Special Areas Act of 1934, which attempted to boost industry in areas of high unemployment, through to the recent Regional Growth Fund, which has in large part attempted to rebalance the economy towards manufacturing and the North.

Instead policy – both local and national – needs to focus on increasing the stock of knowledge in their economies if they are to thrive over the coming century. There are two elements to this.

The first is to improve the skills of the workforce – knowledge-based businesses need high-skilled workers. And the second is to encourage innovation. New knowledge and innovation rarely develop in a vacuum but through the links that people have in a 'knowledge network'. High-skilled workers aren't more productive just because of their own abilities but because of their connections to other high-skilled people too. Increasingly this is occurring in city centres, so cities should focus on making their city centres as attractive places to do business as possible.

The move from the industrial revolution to a knowledge revolution has fundamentally changed the role that cities play in the national economy. It is those cities that have adapted to constant economic change, moving to a more knowledge-focused economy, that are our strongest performers today and make the biggest contributions to national growth. If our struggling cities are to turn their economies around, they need to follow suit.
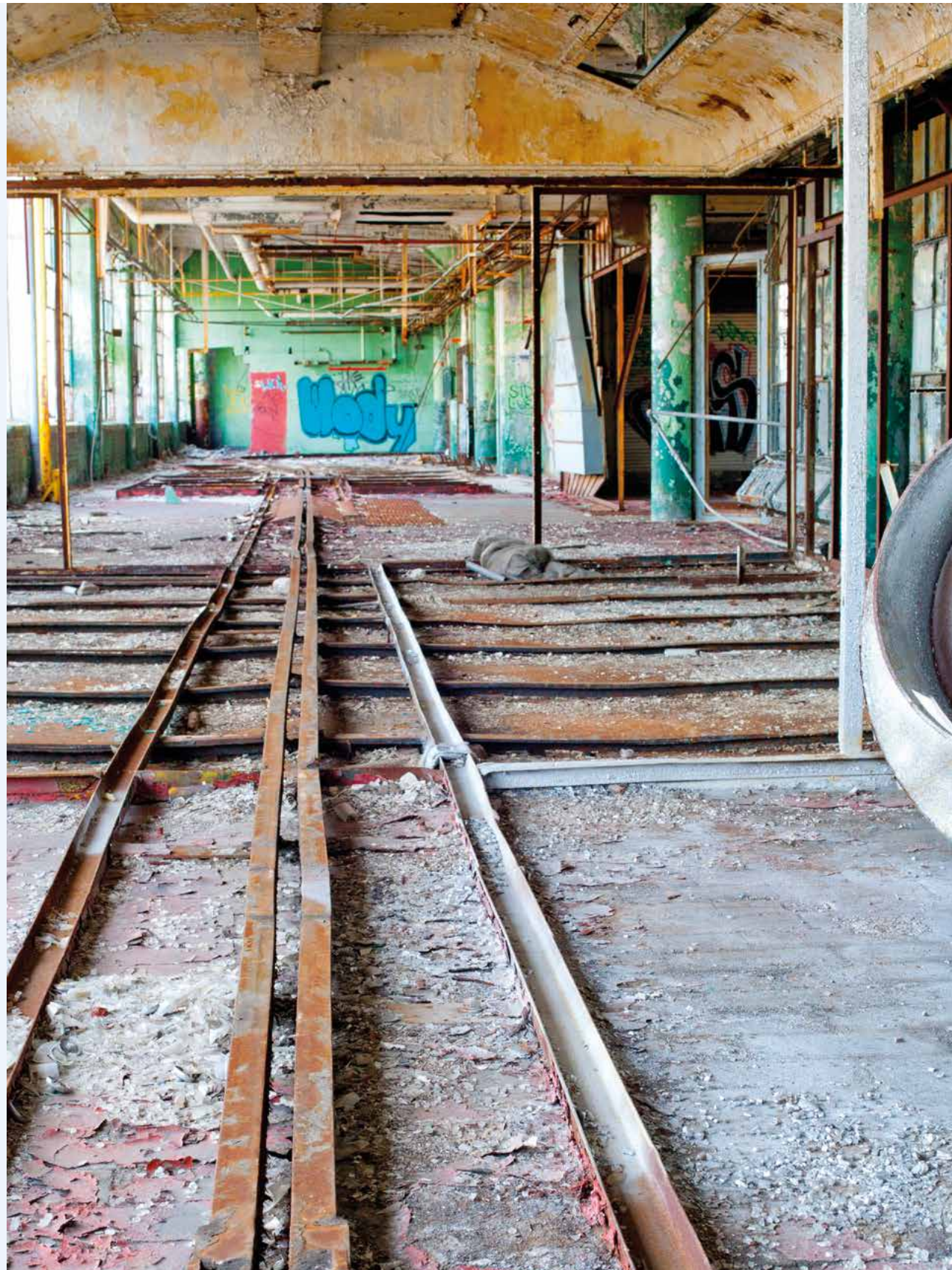
Cities Back from the Brink: The Case of Detroit/

Chris Dorle/

Detroit is a city that grew around industry – one industry in particular – and through its industrial production Detroit was able to shape the twentieth century. However, the city's focus on industry above all things left it vulnerable. Long-term deindustrialisation, compounded by discrimination, has resulted in conditions approaching a humanitarian crisis. In addressing its multiple challenges, from poverty to pollution and climate change, Detroit has the opportunity to chart a new course for the future, one that learns the lessons of its past, focuses on transforming its current liabilities into future assets, and sets improving quality of life for Detroiters as its ultimate goal.

Rise of Detroit/

In order to know where you're going, it's important to know where you've been.

Detroit is strategically located between Lake Huron and Lake Erie. While it owes its early growth to the fur trade, it was the increase in automobile manufacturing at the beginning of the twentieth century that led to the city's boom. Between 1900 and 1920, 125 auto companies opened in Detroit, with Henry Ford establishing the Ford Motor Company in 1903, the Dodge brothers opening their first factory in 1910, and General Motors forming in 1916 (Gavrilovich and McGraw p43). Through the innovation of the assembly line, Detroit auto factories were able to dramatically increase production and lower costs. For example, in 1912 the Ford Motor Company produced 82,388 Model Ts, and the touring car sold for

Opposite page: Abandonned car factory, Detroit (iStock.com/Cynthia Lindow).

$600. By 1916, Model T production had risen to 585,388, and the price had dropped to $360 (website ref 1).

Lower prices increased demand for automobiles, which in turn increased Detroit's demand for workers. Thousands migrated to work in the factories, bolstered by Henry Ford's introduction of the $5 per-day wage in 1914. From 1910 to 1920 Detroit's population doubled to 993,000, and by 1930 it was 1.5 million, more than twice what it is today. Among those who moved to the city were the first wave of the African-American Great Migration; people escaping persecution under Jim Crow to come to Detroit and other northern cities.

The Second World War further tested Detroit's capacity for industrial production. On 28 May 1940 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) called Bill Knudsen, the President of General Motors, for advice on how the US could mobilise its economy for war. In the years that followed, General Motors, Chrysler, Packard, Hudson and Ford transformed their factories for the production of tanks, engines and armaments. Detroit became what FDR termed the 'Arsenal of Democracy', producing 25 per cent of all US war material during that conflict, including 75 per cent of all aircraft engines, a third of all machine guns, 40 per cent of all tanks and 100 per cent of all trucks and motor vehicles used by the US (Herman).

Production on this scale required far more workers than Detroit had at its disposal. The city increased its population by 400,000 between 1941 and 1943. People coming to the city included 50,000 African-Americans fleeing poverty rates as high as 80 per cent in the South as part of the second wave of the Great Migration, and 350,000 white people, many from the South and harbouring racism for black people.

Production of M4A4 Sherman Tanks at the Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant, 1942 (Public Domain).

Sign posted in response to proposed Sojourner Truth Housing Project, February 1942 (Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection LC-USW3-016549-C).

The war effort created opportunities for under-represented groups, and the percentage of African-Americans working in factories increased from 29 per cent in 1940 to 45 per cent in 1950. Factories also turned to women to fill demand, and the real-life role model for Rosie the Riveter, Rose Will Monroe, worked at the nearby Willow Run bomber plant (website ref 2).

Deindustrialisation, Discrimination and Decline/

Following the Second World War and the return to peace-time production, Detroit had every reason to be bullish about its future. In 1948 auto production reached its highest level since 1929, and in 1950 the city's population reached its peak of 1,849,568. However, Detroit's reliance on the auto industry left the city vulnerable when the nature of that industry changed after 1950. Between 1948 and 1967, Detroit lost nearly 130,000 manufacturing jobs, a trend that continued for the next four decades. Today only around 20,000 of those who work in the city are employed in manufacturing, a decline of 90 per cent compared with 40 years ago.

A number of factors contributed to Detroit's deindustrialisation, which historian Thomas Sugrue outlined in detail in his definitive work *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (pp126-152), the source of many of the figures cited here. The auto companies pursued a corporate strategy of decentralisation away from Detroit and its labour force, relocating and/or building plants in areas where wages were lower, organised labour weaker and vacant land plentiful. Between 1947 and 1958, the Big Three (General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler) built 25 new plants in the Metro Detroit area, all in suburban communities. The majority of new plants, however, were built in small- and medium-sized cities outside Michigan, in particular the 'Sun Belt' of the South and West. In 1950 56 per cent of US automobile jobs were in Michigan; by 1960 this had fallen to 40 per cent. Tier One suppliers followed suit: between 1950 and 1956, 124 manufacturing firms located to the suburbs, taking Detroit jobs with them.

Moreover, the Big Three further reduced their demand for Detroit's workforce by seeking efficiency gains through automation. In addition to reducing their need for workers, automation had the secondary effect of crushing independent manufacturers such as Packard who could not afford the significant up-front investments required. To compete, these independent manufacturers sought to reduce costs by cutting staff: Packard cut its workforce from 16,000 to 4,000 between 1952 and 1956, then closed in 1957, putting all of its remaining employees out of work.

Federal policies also contributed to Detroit's deindustrialisation. Federal defence policy encouraged the relocation of defence industries away from cities such as Detroit in anticipation of future air attacks. In Congress, Sun Belt politicians were ascendant, and with their increased power they were able to steer more government contracts to the South and West.

Another factor was the Detroit auto companies' decision to focus once again on the manufacture of automobiles instead of diversifying into the new industries in which they had developed expertise during the war years. In 1954 alone Detroit lost 56,000 defence jobs, and a further 26,000 were lost between 1955 and 1957.

Deindustrialisation disproportionately affected Detroit's African-American population as it was compounded by racial discrimination. As manufacturing jobs left the city, so too did those white workers who had the means to move to the suburbs and small towns where the factories relocated. This was not an option for African-Americans; they were often precluded from moving to new neighbourhoods and buying homes through a mix of explicit harassment and implicit discriminatory practices such as the Federal Housing Administration's policy of restricting home mortgages and loans to racially homogeneous neighbourhoods. Joining the new factories that had been established in the South, from which many African-Americans had migrated to escape racism and oppression, was also not an option. Between 1950 and 1970, the population of Metro Detroit increased by 43 per cent while Detroit's population declined by 18

per cent. In 1950 Detroit was 83 per cent white; by 1970 it was 55 per cent white; and by 1980, 34 per cent white. Overall, Detroit has lost 60 per cent of its population from its peak in 1950 to today (website ref 3).

In addition to housing challenges, Detroit's poor transportation system aggravated the geographic divide separating African-American workers from job opportunities. The region does not have an effective public transit system to mitigate the challenges of distance, and currently Detroit has the largest gap in the US between where people live and where they work, with only 22 per cent of jobs in the region accessible within 90 minutes by public transportation. In early 2015 these challenges were personified in the *Detroit Free Press* by James Robertson, a 56-year-old Detroiter who walks 21 miles and rides buses from two different bus systems for a total commute of eight hours each day (website ref 4).

The Civil Rights movement sought to address these issues through peaceful protest. On June 23 1963, 125,000 black and white Detroiters joined together for the Detroit Walk to Freedom. It was the largest civil rights march in US history at the time (website ref 5). Frustrations continued to build, however, resulting in the 1967 riot that caused 43 deaths, 342 injuries, and 7,231 arrests, destroyed more than 500 businesses and left 1,000 families homeless.

Following the Detroit riot and similar unrest in other cities, President Lyndon Johnson appointed a special commission – the Kerner Commission – to study the root causes of the conflict and to provide recommendations. The report bluntly summarised its findings: 'This is our basic conclusion: Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal' (website ref 6).

In examining the city today, it is evident that the long-term disinvestment in Detroit has created conditions equivalent to a humanitarian crisis. Economic distress, ageing infrastructure that threatens public health and safety, and vacancy and blight that destabilises

communities are significant challenges to improved quality of life for Detroit residents.

Economic distress: the city suffers from concentrated poverty, with an estimated 39 per cent of Detroiters living below the poverty line (website ref 7), including 59 per cent of all children (website ref 8). Unemployment is almost three times the US average, while an estimated 47 per cent of Detroit residents are functionally illiterate (website ref 9).

Ageing infrastructure that threatens public health and safety: Detroiters have been harmed by dangerous conditions caused or contributed to by the city's ageing and inefficient infrastructure systems. Originally designed for a population almost three times the current size, these systems exceed their needed capacity by as much as 30-40 per cent, making them fiscally difficult to upgrade and maintain city-wide. Ageing systems are more likely to malfunction, with severe consequences to personal safety and the economy.

For example, in periods of severe weather, Detroit's combined sewer system becomes overloaded, resulting in combined sewer overflows that send raw sewage, chemicals and agriculture pollution into the Detroit and Rouge Rivers and threaten the water quality of the Great Lakes. The lakes constitute 84 per cent of North America's surface freshwater and are a national strategic resource critical to the public health, safety, and economic security of the US and Canada. On 11 August 2014 severe weather resulted in over ten billion gallons of combined sewer overflow, with six billion gallons of the flow coming from Detroit's system, 80 per cent of which did not receive any disinfection. In August 2014 500,000 residents of north-west Ohio, as well as residents of south-east Michigan, were left without drinking water because of a harmful algae bloom that had resulted from the contamination of Lake Erie (website ref 10).

In addition to the water quality issues raised by Detroit's ageing sewer system, Detroit's ageing power system represents a further health and safety hazard for residents. Detroiters have among the highest rates of

asthma and respiratory disease nationally, which is due in part to point source pollution from fossil fuel power plants and oil refineries. For example, on 2 December 2014 a cable failure led to the loss of power across the municipal power grid, leaving public schools, city hall, fire stations, police stations, Wayne State University and Detroit Receiving Hospital in the dark for hours (website ref 11).

Lastly, Michigan is home to an extensive network of ageing oil and gas pipelines and underground storage facilities. This infrastructure is in some places over 70 years old and its failure could result in dangerous leaks, such as the prolonged blowout that struck Porter Ranch, CA and caused the State of California to declare a state of emergency in January 2016 (website ref 12). Michigan has more of the storage facilities found in Porter Ranch than any other state in the US (website ref 13).

Climate change: Climate change has the potential to multiply the threats to health and safety associated with Detroit's ageing infrastructure. According to the University of Michigan's Graham Center for Sustainability, severe storms in the Midwest are becoming more severe and more frequent, with the most intense one per cent of storms from 1951-1980 to 1981-2010 increasing 24.5 per cent in precipitation and 23.3 per cent in frequency, placing additional pressure on Detroit's already failing combined sewer system (website ref 14). Detroit is also projected to see a dramatic increase in the number of hot days exceeding 90°F (32°C), with estimated annual heat-related deaths reaching approximately 255 by 2020 (website ref 15). Detroit's ageing energy infrastructure and its reliance on fossil fuel power plants – the leading contributor of greenhouse gas emissions nationwide (website ref 16) – is also a contributor to climate change.

Vacant property, blight and destabilising communities: Detroit has 23.4 square miles of vacant land, and, according to the 2014 report of the Detroit Blight Task Force, 30 per cent of Detroit's buildings are dilapidated or becoming dilapidated, and 90 per cent of publicly held parcels are blighted. Moreover, much of Detroit's soil is contaminated, a legacy from its history of industrial production, with 72 contaminated sites identified by federal government through its Superfund programme. Blighted property serves as a contagion on the community, lowering property values, creating opportunities for illicit activity, directly and indirectly threatening the health and safety of residents and destabilising communities in the process.

Future City/

In looking to the future, Detroit does not have to repeat the mistakes of its past. Instead of pursuing a way forward that prioritises the needs of industry over those of its residents, creating opportunities for some while leaving others behind, Detroit has the chance to chart a new course by focusing on improving quality of life for all. By addressing the various challenges, from poverty to pollution and climate change, that hinder its residents from flourishing, Detroit can transform its current liabilities into future assets.

The Detroit Future City (DFC) Strategic Framework is an example of how Detroit residents want to pursue a new course. In order to develop a vision for the city's revitalisation, Detroit undertook a multi-year effort to engage residents from all walks of life: public, private, philanthropic, non-profit and faith-based organisations and individual residents. Through what became the largest participatory planning process in the city's history, residents were able to share their hopes, dreams, and lessons learned for a future Detroit. In January 2013 this process culminated in the release of the DFC Strategic Framework Plan, a shared long-term vision for Detroit's revitalisation.

As the product of this sustained engagement process, the DFC Strategic Framework Plan is notable because it explicitly prioritises improving quality of life. Its recommendations for land use, policies and projects focus first and foremost on ensuring that all Detroit residents, current and future, have the opportunity to flourish in the city in which they live. It is a plan focused on providing any organisation or resident with the information and tools they need to guide development of their own projects and priorities. It offers ten-, 20- and 50-year land use visions that recommend different strategies based on the underlying conditions of different parts of the city. These strategies are intended to realise a more resilient, equitable and desirable city vision for all.

This vision can be summarised into three complementary strategies:

• Drive Density and Equitable Growth
• Stabilise Neighbourhoods
• Transform Vacant Land into an Open Space Asset

In Driving Density and Equitable Growth, the goal is to ensure all residents have the opportunity to benefit from the city's revitalisation by changing the way we approach the built environment, train our workforce and support entrepreneurs.

With regard to the built environment, DFC is focusing on how the city can reutilise its 1.3 square miles of former industrial buildings. Once symbols of Detroit's manufacturing might, structures such as the Packard Plant and Fisher Auto Body have come to symbolise Detroit's decline. In 2015 DFC and the German Marshall Fund of the United States partnered to launch Detroit Opportunity Sites, a programme focused on bringing Detroit decision-makers together with European colleagues from other former industrial cities to identify opportunities to adapt these sites to new uses, from renewable energy to food production.

In the area of workforce development, organisations such as the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and Greening of Detroit are raising the profile of non-traditional skilled trades by training Detroiters from a range of backgrounds, including returning veterans, homeless people and individuals returning from correctional facilities, to tackle some of Detroit's most pressing problems in stormwater management and energy generation and transmission.

Lastly, organisations such as the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation and SWOT City are ensuring that Detroit's entrepreneurs are empowered to grow their businesses through programmes such as the Detroit BizGrid, an interactive tool that lets everyone from start-ups to small business owners find the resources they need amongst Detroit's various support organisations.

In the effort to Stabilise Neighbourhoods, Detroit is focusing on the over 80,000 vacant and abandoned structures and side lots in the city, which are often a source of blight, contributing to the destabilisation and deterioration of neighbourhoods. While there has been a strong push towards demolition as a means of addressing Detroit's vacant homes, DFC led a pilot project of deconstruction in the Springwells neighbourhood on Detroit's West Side. Deconstruction seeks to salvage useable and recyclable materials

from vacant homes before they are torn down. Once recovered, entrepreneurs are transforming these former pipes, fixtures and beams into everything from furniture to guitars.

With regard to the city's vacant side lots, DFC created the Field Guide to Working With Lots as a means of providing residents with the tools they need to transform their side lots into everything from vineyards to rain gardens, improving the city's overall ability to manage stormwater in the process.

Detroit's 23.4 square miles of vacant land may be the city's greatest liability but also its greatest opportunity. By investing in sustainable and natural systems, Detroit can prevent untreated discharges of combined sewer overflows into the Great Lakes, improve air quality, reduce heat island effect, stabilise utility costs, reduce greenhouse emissions, create new jobs and job training opportunities and provide new amenities that improve overall quality of life. To this end, DFC led the successful effort to develop a proposal to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development for $8.9m for sustainable infrastructure projects using Detroit's vacant land, including green infrastructure in Detroit's Brightmoor and McDougall-Hunt areas as well as a large, utility-scale solar array along a former rail spur in the Mt Elliott area of Detroit.

In summary, while Detroit's long-term deindustrialisation, discrimination and decline have resulted in significant challenges, Detroit is not giving up. By deliberately tackling its challenges, the city is moving towards a future that is more resilient, sustainable and equitable than its past.

Opposite page: Georgia Street Community Garden (Detroit Future City).

Above: Downtown Detroit (Detroit Future City).

New Delhi: A Portent of the Future/

Rana Dasgupta/

Well advanced in the twenty-first century, we have not yet lost that feeling of the twentieth: *the future is New York!* Even though New York itself is now a grinding antique, even though its superlatives have been surrendered long ago to cities in Asia and the Middle-East, many people still feel that the future of all cities, when it arrives, will resemble Manhattan.

The persistence of this feeling blinds us to the *actual* future, which has already arrived, and which looks far more ramshackle. Most urbanisation is taking place in the developing world, where no formal dwelling awaits most of the tens of millions who move to cities every year. The world's slum population has reached nine hundred million, but this itself is a fraction of the number of people living informally in cities. In New Delhi, where I live – booming capital of an ambitious economic giant – only half the population lives in formal housing; the other 13 million live in slums, unauthorised buildings, in tents or on the streets. And this is where the growth is. The true image of the world we are creating is to be found in cityscapes which look nothing at all like Fifth Avenue.

I talk below about Delhi, but it doesn't have to be Delhi. Many other cities would do as well or better – Lagos, Dubai, Rio. The point is that it is important for today's city observers, when confronted by places where there are large slums, conspicuous poverty, poor-quality infrastructure and small enclaves of great wealth, to abandon that twentieth-century instinct which said: *Just give them time to grow up*. No: they are grown up, and

Opposite page: New Delhi, India, 2013 (iStock.com/heckepics).

in fact it is in such places that the society of twenty-first century neoliberalism is most fully on display.

Here, I present three contrasting ways in which my own adopted city of New Delhi offers an image for our global future.

Inequality/

In the command centres of emerging economies, globalisation has produced a now-familiar arrangement of slums and Lamborghinis. Local elites, who control capital flows, who marshal land and labour and who have access to the political and bureaucratic machinery by which these things may be connected productively together, have acquired enormous significance to the global system – and have often become correspondingly rich. Wealth has flowed also to the middle-class managers and staffers of the new economy who, though they can never dream of the kinds of social protections once secured by middle classes in the West, have in many cases managed to buy themselves out of insecurity and win for themselves a recognisably Western standard of living. Meanwhile, a vast exodus from the countryside, occasioned by the good and bad effects of corporate farming, by a large-scale industrial takeover of rural land, by various kinds of ecological degradation and by the new urban aspirations of farming communities, swells the ranks of an insecure urban proletariat serially employed in construction work, industrial labour or the service of wealth (security guards, domestic labour, etc).

In Delhi, this latter class is visible everywhere. At night, the sidewalks are covered in sleeping people. Disused land is occupied by tents and cooking stoves. Clothes

and other personal effects are stored in trees and on roofs. At traffic lights, beggars elicit the sympathy of waiting motorists by displaying the empty sleeves where limbs were lost in factory accidents.

Western journalists love to describe these scenes with the word 'Dickensian', as if what is happening in the Asian present were a reiteration of their own past. As if it were merely the first, primitive stage in a capitalist story which, because we have already watched it unfold in the West, we know must lead to more humane futures.

This is the wrong way to think about it. The Western past offers no guide to the Asian future. Our present era is committed not to the global spread of those social protections with which the West once buried its Dickensian past but to their universal dismantling. The uncompensated injuries of Asian workers are not an Asian problem, and they certainly do not belong to another age. They are the very contemporary consequences of our global system, which determinedly moves industrial production to places where workers have less power to negotiate about such things as injuries. Insofar as the present arrangement has become essential to the continuing profitability of global firms, the motley landscape of Delhi's streets reveals far more about our unfolding world than the Western high streets where Zara, Primark and Gap hawk Asian products.

But we can go further than this. It is by now well-known that this same informalisation of labour is part of a profound transformation of the economic reality of rich countries too. In the US and UK, the rich and the poor have such different economic experiences that they might as well be living in different countries: the top one per cent of Americans live in an economy that is growing faster than China's, while the bottom 50 per cent find themselves in one that is more or less stagnant. Since the gains at the top are partly at the expense of the middle and bottom, and since there is an accompanying withdrawal of social protections, it is not surprising that the long-term result is the production of poverty. According to US government statistics, 16 million people have been added to the ranks of America's poor since 1993; every year, meanwhile, breaks records for the number of American children without formal homes – currently about 2.5 million.

It is in this sense, too, that my ragged hometown presents an image of the global future.

Majoritarian Violence/

A land-locked city, New Delhi now sprawls about 100km in every direction. Though this is the capital of one of the most famously liberal countries in the world, over the last few years it has seen some startling cases of violence by the Hindu majority against other religions, especially Muslims. (It has also seen some terrifying cases of violence by men against women and girls, and by high castes against low castes, which are not unrelated to the above, but I leave those alone here.)

In 2013, on the north-eastern edge of the National Capital Region, a series of clashes between Hindus and Muslims resulted in 20 and 42 deaths, respectively, from the two communities. Fifty thousand people fled their homes as a result of the violence. What alarmed many about this incident, however, was that both sides were clearly supported by local political parties, which did nothing to stop gangs travelling to the area – and amassing weapons – from elsewhere. Since it occurred during campaigning for the election that eventually brought to power Narendra Modi, whose aggressive Hindu credentials were well known, it seemed like a sinister portent of things to come.

Modi's tenure has indeed seen escalations of threats made to Indian Muslims by politicians – and by ordinary citizens emboldened by the new climate of Hindu chauvinism. Government ministers have suggested that Hindus should have more children, that Muslims should stop asking for equal rights and that the death penalty should be introduced for Hindus converting to other religions or for anyone consuming beef. A few months after this last statement, a mob took matters into its own hands, again in the National Capital Region, and beat to death a Muslim man suspected – wrongly, as it happens, though anyway there is no law against it – of eating beef.

It may seem strange to single out events of this sort as futuristic. But in fact the implicit declaration of India as a land for Hindus, and not a multicultural state, has everything to do with Modi's other pillar of Indian 'pride', which is economic growth. And we should understand that among the hundred fastest-growing economies today – which is to say half of the total – almost all are nation-states formed in the last one hundred years, and many are under regimes which use ethnic and religious chauvinism as a rallying cry to pull the nation together as an economic machine. More cynically, the resulting majoritarian pride acts as a compensation for the many who belong to the majority community but still find themselves shut out from the new economy's rewards.

Among these hundred economies are China (whose suppression of non-Han rights is well known), Bangladesh (which has recently seen minority Hindus hacked to death in city streets), Kenya (where the slaughter following the 2007 election arose from the continued polarisation of politics along ethnic lines), Nigeria (where oil wealth has only intensified struggles between Hausa and Yoruba), Saudi Arabia (where the violent policing of religious identities is essential to the maintenance of a fragile national consensus) and Indonesia (where non-Muslims live in an increasingly fearful climate following high-profile religious attacks).

Most Western countries have existed for some time, and their most painful moments of ethnic and religious conflict lie in the past. It is easy for them to imagine, therefore, that the current global era is ever freer of these troubles. In those countries now rising to positions of global economic influence, however, such conflict is a
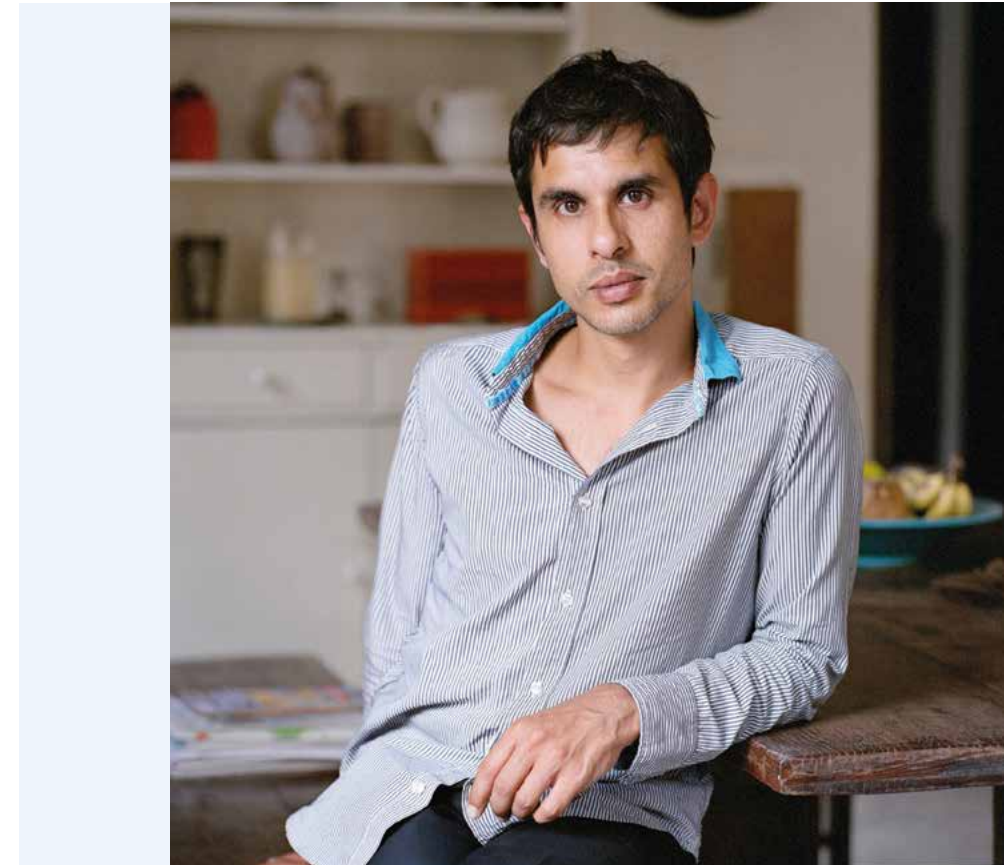
Rana Dasgupta.

conspicuous element, both of new national ambitions and of the unequal distribution of globalisation's rewards. In fast-growing global cities, conflict between communities simmers on the streets; lynch mobs are part of the new capitalist experience.

Population Flexibility/

For several decades now, the population of India's National Capital Region has grown at about 40 per cent a decade, and currently it stands at about 26 million – second only to Tokyo. Most of the new arrivals are poor migrants from small towns and the countryside. Also among them are large numbers of illegal immigrants, mostly from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and several tens of thousands of refugees, mostly from Afghanistan, Myanmar and Tibet.

What is striking about this very massive addition of populations is that, in contrast to the previous point, it has provoked comparatively little unrest or violence. And indeed there is something about my adopted city that is extravagantly – as the fad-word goes – resilient. Though inter-religious suspicions persist, perhaps they are less than should be expected among a population of nearly 30 million people, mostly poor and uneducated, packed densely together. Meanwhile, the terrorist attacks that have struck the city over the last 15 years – on Parliament and on public spaces – have resulted in remarkably little hardening of communitarian sentiments.

State surveillance of this large, multi-religious, multi-lingual population is also rather sparse. Incarceration rates in India, at 33 per 100,000 of the population, stand at around a fifth of the UK's and a twentieth of the USA's. Though Indian cities are violent in ways that many Western cities are not, they are also gentle and accepting in many ways that Western cities are not.

Given the recent furore over refugees entering Europe it is as well to remind ourselves that the vast majority of refugees have gone not to Europe but to far more proximate countries. Between them, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, Turkey, Jordan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Chad play host to nearly seven million refugees, while the inordinately richer EU, with a larger population than all these combined, is placed under greater political strain by its 1.5 million.

There is no doubt that this is in part because the EU delivers more valuable services to its refugees. But it signals also a rigidity in Western societies which will not stand them in good stead in years to come. Something of the flexibility and hospitality of other societies will be needed if the West is going to deal not only with the burden of aggressive immigration such as it is seeing right now, but also with the needs of its own economies. In order to achieve the OECD's projections of three per cent global economic growth between now and 2060, Europe and the USA each have to absorb 50 million migrants between now and then in order to supplement their own workforces. In order to do that they might have to borrow some future-skills from cities such as the one in which I live.

Thinking About Cities – From Africa/

Susan Parnell/

Africa has to assume a much more prominent place in our understanding of the future of a world of cities. African cities are important in their own right and as the crucible of a global system of cities. As world citizens we hold responsibility for the overall conditions of urban life, including those beyond our own borders. As such, the yet-to-be-built cities and the badly formed cities that so clearly fail to provide for basic human rights and expose millions of people to unacceptable levels of risk should surely demand special attention.

The most commonly articulated reason to give stronger attention to urban Africa is not moral but the demographic reality that, by 2050, African cities will grow by more than 600 million people. Most of the expansion of the urban population will take place in the east and west of the continent, taking the whole continent from majority-rural to majority-urban living. Rapid rates of urbanisation (Ethiopia has a 4.9 per cent annual rate of change, Burundi 5.1 per cent and Nigeria 4.7 per cent) are very difficult to manage even when there is lots of money and expertise. At these rates of growth cities double in size every 12 to 15 years and there is an absolute shortage of money, skill and institutional capacity to respond to the African urban challenge.

Cities around the world are changing but in Africa – where cities experience poly crises – this is a phase of radical transformation.

• Billions of dollars of global development finance, for example the Climate Adaptation Fund and corporate money (representing the pension investments from across the world), will invest in building African cities over the next two or three decades. How they do that is to be determined. It is far from clear whether the regulatory environment in emerging African cities will be robust enough to enforce the kinds of ethical investments that would be desirable or that would secure safe and sustainable living environments for future African residents.

• The current youth bulge (50 per cent of the population are younger than 19) will persist for 40 years. Arguably this may offer both a threat but also, if harnessed creatively, a dividend.

• Few African countries have clearly evolved legal or fiscal systems that operate effectively at the city scale. Weak local government and competition from traditional authorities, foreign corporates and illegal gangsters make governing a city tricky.

The good news is that after decades of anti-urbanism African leaders are embracing cities as the drivers of sustainable development; a view reinforced by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. For the first time there is a positive window on the future African city. The African Union has taken a leadership position that forefronts the role of cities in development:

We aspire that by 2063, Africa shall be a prosperous continent, with the means and resources to drive its own development, and where: African people have a high standard of living, and quality of life, sound health and well-being; Well educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation for a knowledge society; **Cities and other settlements are hubs of cultural and economic activities, with modernised infrastructure, and people have access to all the basic necessities of life including shelter, water, sanitation, energy, public transport and ICT**; Economies are structurally transformed to create shared growth, decent jobs and economic opportunities for all... (p3, author's emphasis added)

African leaders have committed to giving increased priority to cities looking forward. Exploring the past may be a way to begin thinking about the future of cities in Africa. Understanding the African urban palimpsest will help to identify dysfunctional legacies but also give prominence to distinctive and productive traditions that
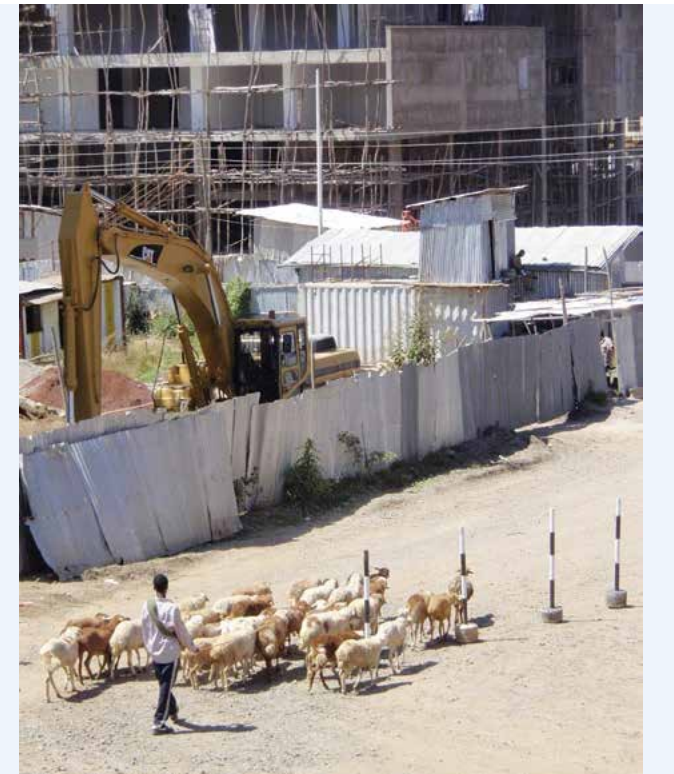
should be reinforced rather than eroded in reducing risk and fostering sustainable city building, life and regulation. Different epochs have typically generated both reformist and oppressive imprints. From the pre-colonial period there are laudable practices of sustainable construction but also pervasive gender discrimination. The colonial planning regimes that notoriously spawned segregated planning regimes also ushered in public health innovation. In the post-independence era there was democracy and a universal franchise but little local government, and minimal investment in urban planning meant the rise of informality. More recent epochs have no doubt had a similarly ambiguous impact in and on the African city, though it is hard to isolate positive legacies of structural adjustment and neo-liberalism. In Africa massive austerity in the 1980s put the brake on any major public investment in cities and meant that the public institutions needed to facilitate urban development were removed. This included the neglect of training built-environment professionals in local higher education institutions.

How do we move forward? Utopian ideas like those set out by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals are important, but we also have to address Africa's urban deficits. Deficits can be defined as places, processes and people that are currently missing, but without which and without whom there can be no fundamental and lasting urban reform or urban transition. Deficits provide a scalar and more structural/institutional counterpoint to core elements of utopian urbanism. Identifying Africa's urban deficits (not its people) to make sure future cities work for all involves looking across a range of issues. These might include: the intellectual deficit of how we understand the specific problems of the African city; the fiscal deficit of where money to build the critical infrastructure will come from; the legislative deficit that must be overcome to make conditions for investments in the city transparent and the rule of law work for all residents; the institutional and leadership deficits for running the cities; the deficit of urban professionals or the material deficit of infrastructure.

In conclusion, the twenty-first century is the time to acknowledge the interconnected character of urban change globally. To do this we have to deal openly and critically with local historical specificity and current and future capacity needs. What is clear is that for any of us to survive we all have to come to terms with the overall importance of Africa in the future world of cities.

Above: Nairobi; Addis Ababa.

Future Lagos/

Olamide Udoma/

Imagine a city of over 21 million people living working and playing on a landmass of 3,577km². If everyone stands still and is distributed evenly you would be standing next to 5,869 people in your square kilometre. To feed, house, transport, employ, educate and entertain a city of this size is definitely not something for the faint-hearted. It is miraculous that despite the city's past of instability and military rule plus the rapid population growth Lagos is functioning and, some may say, thriving.

Lagos, the once official capital of Nigeria, is not an island, and a lot of the challenges Lagos is faced with plague the whole country. However, all the challenges are heightened in Lagos because of its large population. The four biggest and most notable challenges are housing, power, mobility and waste. All four areas lack infrastructure and systems for efficient and sustainable performance and development.

Lagos has a large housing deficit of approximately five million and as far back as 1955 affordable housing has been on the agenda. However, the housing supply has never been able to meet the demand. There are a number of factors that affect housing provision, which include unprecedented population increase, inadequate access to finance, slow administrative procedures, high cost of land registration and titling, a stunted financial and mortgage system and exorbitant prices of building material. Construction is expensive due to the importation of materials, driving up the price, and the high cost of legal requirements.

The private sector plays a significant role in housing delivery but it is led by the market and cannot provide affordable housing without assistance. This leaves low-income earners, with no purchasing power or access to affordable housing, building shelter on unused land or abandoned property. Housing provision and the lack of a robust mortgage system affects the majority of the population (middle- to low-income earners) who can neither afford to rent nor buy property.

Opposite page: Water and waste (detail) (Olamide Udoma).

The Lagos State Ministry of Housing's solution to help curb the deficit is Lagos HOMS (Lagos Home Ownership Mortgage Scheme). Under this project, the government is currently engaged in the construction of 242 blocks consisting of 2,624 housing units in 11 locations in the state: Ikorodu, Ikosi, Gbagada, Alimosho, Mushin, Surulere, Ilupeju, Ogba, Omole, Magodo, and Lekki. Lagos HOMS aims to close the supply gap in housing stock in Lagos State by offering mortgage finance for middle-income earners who are first-time buyers through a lottery system. This is a valiant attempt but, with the ever-growing population, more solutions for housing provision and mortgage finance must be found and attempted.

Unlike housing, power supply in Lagos affects everyone, including the uber-rich. Power outages have plagued Nigeria since the early 1990s, and even though generation and distribution is now privatised the country still faces irregular blackouts. It is estimated that the power demand in Lagos is 10,000 megawatt-hours of electricity per day; in Nigeria only 2,000MW to 3,500MW is generated. The lack of regular power and electricity has led the nation to rely on generators. It is not uncommon to find a street where every home, including each apartment within a block, has a generator. This year, an investigation conducted by *The Punch* newspaper revealed that in the last five years Nigerians have spent 17.5 trillion naira on generators on generators. Generator usage is an unsustainable model for the business and manufacturing sector as well as for individuals and the state.

Understanding the deficit, the Lagos State government has been pioneering energy reform initiatives to ensure Lagos can be self-sufficient in its power needs. However, for legal reasons, Lagos State cannot distribute power to individual households so the power it generates is only distributed to state projects and government buildings. There are currently three operational power plants and they run on natural gas and compressed natural gas. These three power plants already reduce Lagos State's energy cost by 40 per cent and there are six more power plants planned.

As well as gas-powered power plants, Lagos State has started to explore medium-scale renewable energy.

The Lagos Solar Project has recently been launched to help curb the power deficit. The project will deliver 213 solar power systems with the aim of providing solar power systems of 9kWp (kilowatts peak) to 185kWp to educational and health facilities in the state.

Like power, mobility is directly affected by the struggles for influence between all levels of government. The maintenance of the road system has been less than adequate, mainly because of the lack of co-ordination among the federal, state and local governments. The federal government is responsible for Trunk A roads, which link the regional capitals with the national and international centres; the state governments are charged with the responsibility of maintaining Trunk B roads, which link the divisional headquarters with the regional capitals; and the local authorities are saddled with the numerous roads that link the various communities, Trunk C roads. Despite the clearly stated areas of responsibilities, roads in Lagos are continuously neglected and suffer from irregular maintenance, potholes and bad lighting.

Historically, transport in Lagos was water-based, but when bridges were built to connect Lagos Island, Victoria Island and the mainland, road-based transport became the preferred choice and the city has not looked back. According to the Lagos State regional plan (2005), travel by non-bus public transport (rail and water transport) has declined to less than one per cent in Lagos, despite its potential to increase mobility for the Lagos population. It is therefore safe to say that 99 per cent of the Lagos population uses the road network via public and private transport. Designed in the 1970s, the network is proving insufficient for the growing number of private cars, trucks, lorries, tankers, taxis, *keke maruwas* (tricycles),

danfos (minibus taxis) and *okadas* (motorcycle taxis). A 2008 World Bank paper estimated that eight million people travel to work on 9,100 roads and expressways via public transport daily (Economic Intelligence Unit) and it is estimated that some major streets are used by up to 15,000 pedestrians and 7,500 vehicles per hour (*Cities of the World: Lagos*).

The existing public transport system in Lagos is grossly inadequate and therefore unable to meet the present and future travel demand of citizens. Travelling within Lagos now takes double to triple the time it should, and road congestion adversely affects productivity and efficiency through lost time, fuel wastage and vehicular emissions. It is estimated that Lagos State loses 250 billion naira to traffic problems annually.

LAMATA (Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority) has developed a strategic long-term plan, The Urban Transport Project, aimed at transforming the Lagos transport sector beyond its current challenges. The plan identifies possible transport infrastructure and services required for meeting the growing travel demand by 2032. These include a light rail system, an extension of the bus rapid transport system, ferry services and a cable car. This will be linked to the public transport system that already exists so the transition from one transport mode to another will be simple and easy.

The private sector is also currently heavily investing in cab services, especially those that use technology to create a safer, cheaper and overall better quality experience than the public transport presently available. With the exception of the Lagos State-owned Corporate Cab Services, there are many players in this sector, including Afro Cab, Uber, Easy Taxi, Tranzit, Metro Taxi and Recab.

The cheapest private, taxi-like services are private cars. Private cars pick up passengers and drop them off at the driver's convenience, particularly in areas where public transport is infrequent. People stopping private cars can be found at the beginning of Third Mainland Bridge coming from both the mainland and Ikoyi, and Bourdillon Road/Alexander Avenue. This is done for a small fee. Some tech companies – for example Go My Way, Jekalo and Kabu Kabu – are trying to formalise this mode of hitchhiking or carpooling.

The radio station Lagos Traffic Radio 96.1 FM has been a creative solution for traffic management. Since inception in 2012, it has been an open channel for LASTMA (Lagos State Traffic Management Authority) officials and members of the public to broadcast the traffic situation on the streets of Lagos in real time. The radio station helps inform the public of congested areas and allows them to make an informed decision when planning a journey.

Another major headache for any administration is how to devise an appropriate and efficient waste management mechanism that would ensure a cleaner, safer and healthier environment. Some Lagos residents discharge their waste indiscriminately in unauthorised places – for example open spaces, gutters and streams – and some burn theirs openly. The lack of awareness of proper handling of waste and waste disposal methods has triggered environmental and health problems. Since 2007, the Fashola administration has worked tirelessly to enhance the rate of improvement of the state's waste management system through the Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA).

LAWMA is an autonomous agency, charged with the responsibility of collecting, transporting and disposing

solid waste. It manages an influential and effective street-sweeping programme. From 6am to 6pm, you can find a Litter Marshal or two sweeping and picking up rubbish on every major street in Lagos. A team of over 17,000 hard-working women ensure that the streets stay litter-free every day. The women are dressed in bright orange 'onesies' on which are written the initials LAWMA in bold black letters. They can't be missed. LAWMA's Highway Sanitation programme has helped with skills acquisition and the reduction of unemployment.

The solutions pioneered by both the private and public sector within housing, power, mobility and waste are all dependent upon technology, people, or both. With such a large population, people are Lagos' biggest asset, and by employing a large and visible workforce LAMATA and LAWMA are tackling unemployment, poverty, empowerment and education, as well as curbing traffic and ensuring the streets remain clean. The projects also help with safety: there are always eyes on Lagos' streets.

Technology, both low-tech and high-tech, is leading the way in urban development solutions worldwide so there is no surprise that technology is playing a role in Lagos. However, at present technology is being pushed by start-ups and private sector organisations.

Overall, creative solutions that bring together both the private and the public sectors are being developed and used more often to feed, house, transport, employ, educate and entertain Lagos, a city of over 21 million people.

A Lagos HOMS development (Chuka Ejorh).
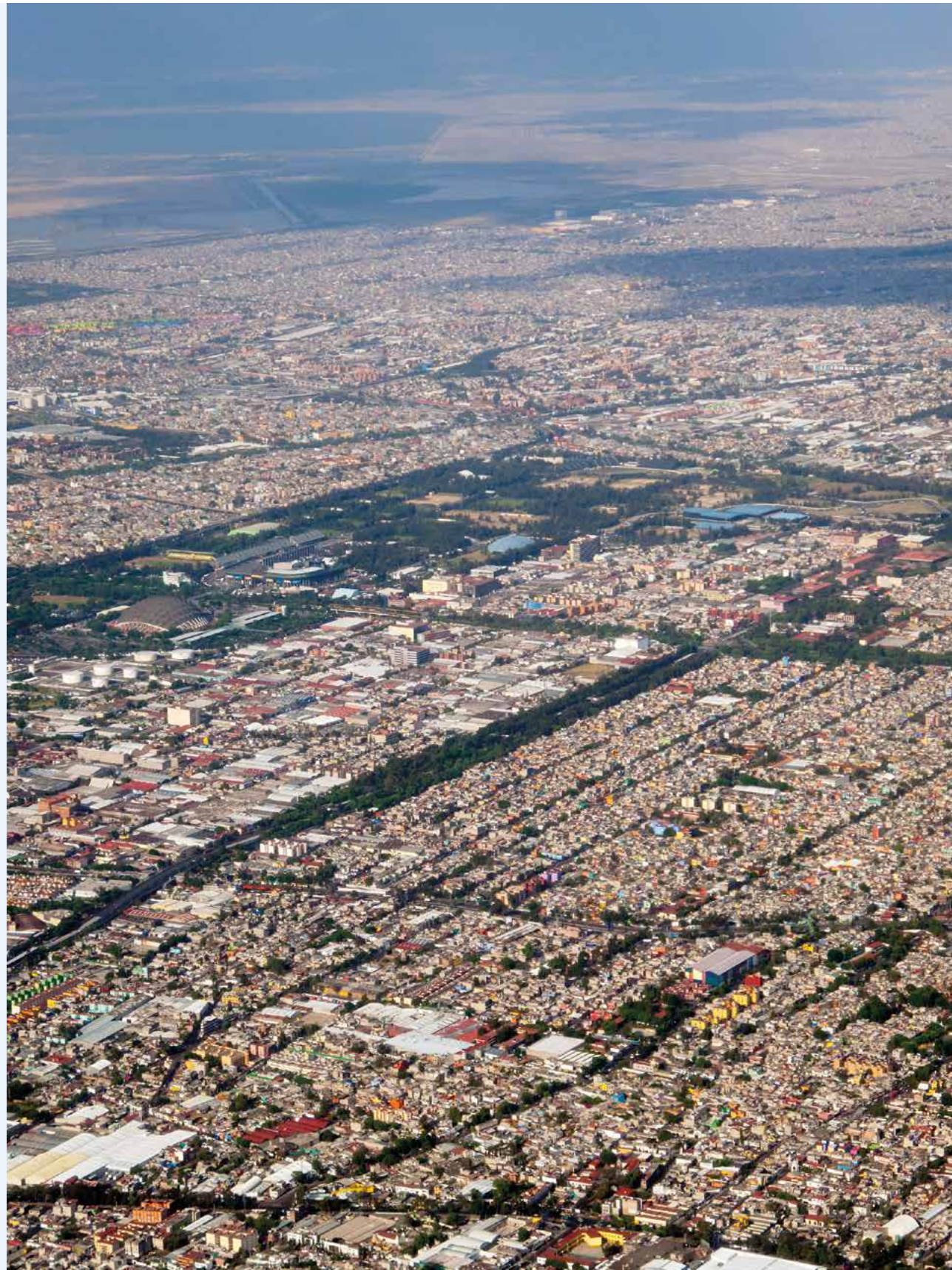
Imagination and the Megalopolis/

Gabriella Gómez-Mont/

The Lab for the City will intensify interaction between citizens and the government... to think about the city together, to build a city that stimulates imagination, a creative city.
Mayor Miguel Angel Mancera, Mexico City, March 2013

I believe we are now travelling into a new and fascinating stage where the question 'what is a city for?' is open up for discussion once again. I believe it is increasingly clear that this has at its heart an even more philosophical and meandering question: what do we want our lives to be about, collectively and individually? We are figuring out that the urban answers that served us well yesterday – productivity, efficiency, velocity – are no longer quite enough to describe what we expect and enjoy of these cities we have built around and above ourselves.

There is a phrase by Lewis Mumford that has followed me through different stages of my life, which states that cities should not only be built for the human body, but also for the human imagination. He said:

> The city that promotes art is art too; a city that creates theatre is in itself a play. We have understood it all wrong if we believe that a city's function is to organize communities and social structures with pragmatism and velocity: the principal function of a city is to convert power into form, energy into culture, inert materials into living symbols of art, reproduction into social creativity.

This is a statement which has acquired more relevance in my present life, heading Laboratorio para la Ciudad, Mexico City`s experimental arm and creative think-tank, which explores the possibility of political imagination and social creativity in an extremely diverse urbanscape. There are 22 million people living in the metropolitan area and this offers up an interesting number of possibilities within a single city, to say the least.

Opposite page: Mexico City (iStock.com/stockcam).

Besides the scale of the city, another interesting challenge is the times that are at hand. It is a fascinating moment to have decided to step into government. Trust in public institutions is at an all-time low in Latin America. But at the same time, paradoxically, many citizens in Mexico City (especially the younger generation) are becoming more and more interested in urban issues and the city that surrounds them. So how can we bring to life a new type of government office – one that is more experimental in nature, which speaks and acts in different ways? And how do we design it so as to better catalyse the social energy and creative capacity of the megalopolis which is Mexico City?

The answer was to form a shape-shifting office within government, reporting to the mayor. The Lab´s team is composed of a motley crew: artists, graphic designers, industrial designers, film-makers, social scientists, policy experts, data analysts, internationalists, architects, urban geographers, journalists, historians and experts in social innovation, civic technology and artificial intelligence, among others, most of whom have no prior experience in government. The average age is around 29: the same average as that of Mexican citizens.

It has been quite an adventure to open up a creative office within a gargantuan public institution, which at first seems to be almost at odds with its bureaucratic nature. But perhaps when things seem most ill-suited for each other that is when the interesting combinations happen – along with the turbulent encounters where we wait for the tensions to be settled inventively. What a creative ethos gives a city is the possibility to see things anew. Even laws. Even bureaucracy. And suddenly, with just one small mental flip, government can turn into a city-making-machine, a way of conjuring up other, more imaginative, forms of collective realities.

Governments, I realise now, are caught in a big conundrum. On one hand, they are expected to be solid and sure-footed; on the other hand citizens feel they are

lethargic and bureaucratic, lagging behind the times. That is where Gov Labs can find their place: specialising in the gaps between things, moving with more agility, designed to take risks.

So the Lab's slightly strange and fluctuating composition is not without purpose. The Lab, since its inception, has been exploring the possibility of synthesising the means and mechanisms of creative practice with a wider range of disciplines and questioning how different fields – from art to artificial intelligence – can help create new social blueprints that could inform urban life in positive ways. Besides, we have worked with an even more varied group of professionals from all over the world: primatologists, experts in play, self-assembly architects and, of course, many a government official.

Happily, the Lab has already started to sow its first seeds: from competing against world-class studios from Berlin, Boston and Seoul to win the Audi Urban Future Award (arguably the most important award in mobility innovation) to passing our Open City Law in congress – a first-of-its-kind dynamic law that tries to answer the question of how to create legal frameworks for changing scenarios. The Open City Law also mandates open data, open-source and non-proprietary tech platforms, plus states the need for government to explore new ways of incorporating citizens' voices in the design of public policy, not just expecting them to vote every so many years and then remain inactive. It brings participatory and deliberative governance back into discussion, in other words. The Lab now has more than 50 different types of experiments that have ranged from culture to health, from small urban interventions to city policy.

There was no guarantee that addressing serious subjects such as the mobility or governance challenges for one of the most sprawling, diverse, fascinating and complex cities of the world with creative methodologies would work. I have been very happy to see that so many times it has, and that even tasks like creating laws benefit from coming to the table with new ideas and fresh possibilities.

Every day I am more convinced that Mexico City is the epitome of both all the potential and all the challenges that the city of tomorrow holds. Mexico City also faces many challenges that befit a city of its size and complexity, including social inequality, problems related to urban sprawl and a possible health crisis related to obesity, among many others. It also has a narrative problem: we have not yet discovered how to tell our contemporary story and so we are stuck in the constraints of our own clichés.

As a megalopolis of the developing world, Mexico City shares many of the problems that cities in Latin America, Africa and Asia are (or will be) facing. Our conundrums seem so serious that at times one can rightly question if imagination is the way to go, when we need to get to the practical task of fixing our realities.

But I believe that this is exactly what Mexico City should be about. About promoting the fact that a creative ethos – the creative capacity of our cities – should also be the

focus of public policy, and not only our artistic passions. This is an exponential field: ideas traversing the city.

Because as the eighth largest city economy in the world, Mexico City also has the necessary infrastructure to create important experiments and become a city capable of prototyping, testing and implementing ideas that can later be shared with other cities. In that sense, Mexico City is the perfect bridge between the first world and the emerging world, since it is both a complex and enticing mix of both. In a way, it is a future city living in the present.

Throughout this development, Mexico City has quietly become one of the world's most socially progressive and creative urban areas. Its energy continues to amplify as it embraces its density and cultural roots. Mexico City is getting bigger, more imaginative and is starting to defy stereotypes of what a Latin American megalopolis can and cannot do: yes, we can pass progressive gay and transsexual rights, abortion and euthanasia laws despite Mexico being religiously conservative; yes, we can have a successful bike-share programme – with more than 18,000 rides a day, and growing – despite our size; yes, a 22 million strong metropolis can win international green transportation awards and significantly improve the quality of its air in less than five years.

I find it very exciting to be part of a tiny but intriguing shift in paradigms, and exploring these challenging questions from within such a challenging city, full of possibilities. In terms of the Lab, we have only existed for three years, and we have already managed to inspire other cities to follow suit – Paris, Bogotá and Montevideo are the latest city governments that have reached out to me and are seriously exploring the possibility of creating their own Labs. At the same time I confess that it is only recently that I have felt we have acquired enough experience in this new – and slightly volatile – experimentation space to become more strategic in designing multi-layered interventions for systemic change.

Creativity and culture have to be part of this. We need new political forms and urban languages. We need to think about both our futures and our fictions: it is the intangible infrastructures that hold the potential world.

Imagination is not a luxury and never will be: in art or in government.

Opposite page: Construction in Mexico City
(iStock.com/jaguarblanco).
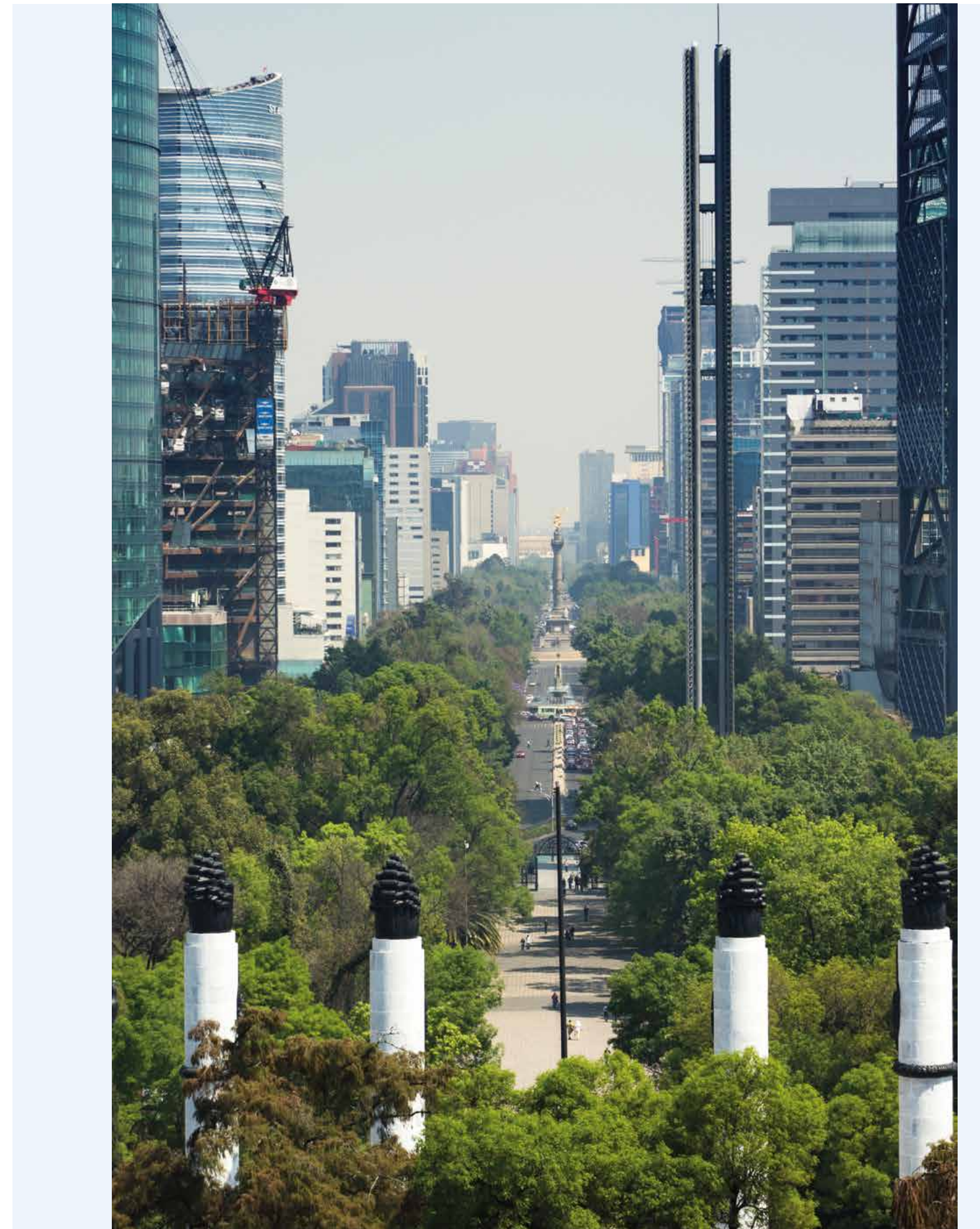
Bristol Day Provocation/

Eugene Byrne/

This article has been adapted from Eugene Byrne's presentation at the Bristol Day held on 20 November. The day comprised a variety of conversations, interactions and discussions that explored Bristol's current situation and how it might change – or be improved – over the next 50 years.

To suggest there are any lessons or morals we can learn from Bristol's history is very hazardous.

We might, though, claim that there are certain recurring themes.

Nonconformity/

Bristol has a tradition of radicalism which comes mostly from nonconformist religion, particularly groups like the Methodists, Baptists and Quakers. These were big in Bristol and brought in new ways of looking at the world, ordering their lives and making a living. Many of Bristol's great historic industries were started by nonconformists.

Nowadays of course we have other types of nonconformity in spades; in politics, the creative industries, arts, new media and business. We need to be constantly looking for new solutions, new ways of doing things.

The problem with nonconformity, though, is that it sooner or later becomes the new conformity. Bristol nowadays likes to promote itself as cool and edgy and creative, but historically this was not always the case; in the past its reputation was as a rather philistine place. Historically, its reputation for nonconformity was in business, technology, religion and politics – definitely not the arts.

Thirty years ago street artists were condemned as vandals and regularly ended up in the courts. Now they are seen as, you know, essential. The challenge for the future, then, is in taking advantage of new disruptions before everyone else does.

Immigration/

Immigration is a constant theme throughout Bristol's history. Like every other city, Bristol has absorbed economic migrants and asylum seekers. One historian reckoned that in the 1300s over half Bristol's leading merchants were Welsh or of Welsh descent.

You can make as long a list as you like of Bristolians of achievement, and you'll find over half of them were born somewhere else. This shouldn't be surprising; people who have the energy and gumption to leave home in search of a better life are generally quite enterprising folk, and of course they bring new ideas and new ways of doing things with them.

That cool and edgy image we have owes a great deal to street art and music, and they would never have happened without immigration from the Caribbean in the 1950s and 60s.

A couple of other examples: There are two people, just two, who can put the name of Bristol into history books worldwide. One is John Cabot, the first European to set foot on mainland America (allegedly). His real name was Zuan Caboto and he was Italian.

The other is Isambard Kingdom Brunel. His father had fled France for his own safety during the French Revolution. That is, Brunel was the son of an asylum seeker.

The moral? Incomers are to be welcomed, and Bristol needs to say officially and very loudly that leaving the EU would not be unwise or inappropriate, it would be absolutely insane.

Innovation/

We have this long tradition of doing things at the leading edge of technology – ships, aircraft, railways, trams, robotics, mobile phones and microprocessors and more.

But ask yourself how many really important things were invented in Bristol, and the answer is... Erm, the chocolate Easter egg?

Brunel created the first transatlantic steamer, the forerunner of all modern passenger ships but he didn't invent or discover any of the technologies involved. Sir George White's Bristol Boxkite, the foundation of our aerospace industry? Totally ripped off from a French design.

Bristol does not invent things; it takes other people's inventions, improves them and often makes a lot of money out of them. We have always had a knowledge economy.

The Local Elite/

For almost all of its history, Bristol was governed by a small and usually conservative elite which ran the city in the interests of business. It was really only in the second half of the twentieth century that power started leeching away to Whitehall, Westminster and boardrooms in other cities.

What's been really interesting about the last few years has been the resurgence of that local elite following the election of a mayor with executive powers.

As an independent, elected on the basis that he was not beholden to any party interests, the mayor has had a great deal of support from local business as well as the civically-active middle classes.

But being voted into office by a tenth of eligible voters is not democracy; it is oligarchy, and it is something with which the city fathers of yore would have been very familiar. The only difference between then and now is that most people were excluded from voting by law and they're now excluding themselves by choice.

This oligarchy was often well-intentioned and generous, but at other times it was a powerful obstacle to progress, shutting out new business and competition. At all times it was unaccountable.

I am not criticising Mayor Ferguson. He has had the courage to take a lot of unpopular decisions and has Bristol's best interests at heart. But if we keep the present system, and if we keep electing independents who are backed by business, or any other powerful interest group, we risk returning to the days of this old, narrow elite. They

may use public relations spivs at election time instead of street thugs as in days of yore, but the result will be the same; inertia, stifling of enterprise and the occasional riot when the grievances of the excluded boil over.

We need to build in as much transparency as possible so that whether they vote or not, people can have confidence in their administration, and so that power is not abused for the benefit of the few.

In summary... If you want to seek morals or lessons from Bristol's history, then, just for the sake of argument, how about these?

1. Spot the nonconformity and cherish it. And know how to spot when the nonconformity goes mainstream.

2. Welcome immigration and encourage graduate retention.

3. Don't bother trying to invent anything. Let other people do the work, then do it better and cash in.

4. Do not let the local elite, business or administrative, get away with anything. Watch the bastards like hawks.

Will Self's Bristol Walk/

Steven Morris/

This article was originally written for the Guardian *and published on 19 November. It describes a guided walk of Bristol led by Will Self which took place the previous day. It is reprinted here with the permission of the author and of the* Guardian.

Will Self was not taking no for an answer. Having lined up a slightly reluctant 30-strong audience against a craggy old stone wall in Bristol, the author, journalist, thinker and walker was urging them to press their faces against it and ruminate.

'Think of how long the wall has been here and what it would have seen if it could see,' he said. 'Feel the wall – its coldness, its integrity, its quiddity, its this-ness.'

It was one of many strange, thought-provoking and downright funny moments during an hour-long walk with Self, organised as part of the Festival of the Future City, being held in Bristol.

Over the course of the 60 minutes Self led his group into odd corners and tight spots. He ignored private signs, leapt barriers, upset motorists and described why he believed walking was the way to break free from the shackles of twenty-first century capitalism.

The walk began with a brief introduction to the Situationists – the Paris-based artists and thinkers of the 1960s who championed the concept of 'psychogeography', the unplanned drifting through an urban landscape to become more in tune with one's surroundings.

'They believed as I believe that almost all our movement in the urban environment is circumscribed by time and money,' Self explained. He argued that we have become defamiliarised with our surroundings, trapped by a perceived need to be useful and productive citizens.

All photographs in this chapter and on pages 206-207 were taken during Will Self's guided walk (JonCraig.co.uk). See also pp206-207.

The walk was an attempt to break free. 'We will try to liberate our senses,' said Self. He straightened his jaunty hat, held his brolly high so any stragglers would not get lost and with an '*On y va*!' the party was off.

The first stop did not feel much like a conventional place of freedom – a narrow, damp gap between a container and a redbrick wall. The Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas once claimed that in the future corridors would no longer be a means of reaching destinations, but would be destinations in themselves. 'For you the future is now,' said Self.

His umbrella proved an invaluable way of stopping traffic – provoking outbursts of swearing from motorists as he led the party across a busy road. Self explained that pedestrians had the right of way on all British roads except motorways. 'If you are hit, the motorist is liable. The problem is you're dead.'

Still very much alive, Self went on to argue that understanding the age of buildings was a key to understanding the built environment. Elderly people were better at it, he said, because they had often seen the buildings being constructed. Young people less so.

At the back of a four-star hotel, what looked like a Georgian facade turned out to have been built in the 1980s. Self introduced the concept of uchronia, a hypothetical or fictional time-period. 'A time that never really existed,' he said. 'A merrie England, a feudal, bucolic past where wenches served mugs of porter.'

Next a muddy tramp across College Green – Self does not bother to keep off the grass – to the City Hall, seat of local democracy in Bristol. Self explained that he walked because he felt claustrophobic if he didn't. He spoke of his 'airport walks' in which he 'ambulates' – it is hard not to adopt Self's vocabulary when is around – from home or hotel to airport, boards his plane, disembarks and walks on to his final destination. 'If you're happy in a Ford

Fiesta farting and playing with your iPhones, don't worry,' he said.

As Self led the party up Hill Street – pausing at the venerable wall – he introduced another big word, skeuomorph, which he defined as an object that used to serve a function but is now merely decorative. The writer pointed out Scandavian-like wooden cladding on a modern building and a UPVC window with fake leading. 'What is the point?' he asked.

The walk ended at the nineteenth-century Cabot Tower, which offers commanding views over Bristol's harbourside. But it was the hills further away that caught Self's eye. The problem with cities, said Self, was that they were too big – they had been designed for cars, buses and trains rather than people.

He quoted the writer Cyril Connolly: 'No city should be so large that a man cannot walk out of it in a morning.'

'This is a fab city,' Self said. 'Do you feel any freer?' Everyone agreed they did.

Conclusions/

The book concludes with two chapters looking back at the festival.

Tessa Combes, an audience member at a number of sessions in the Festival of the Future City, provides her thoughts on some of the themes that came out of the debates and discussions around social policy issues and calls for the development of 'big ideas and bold visions for the future of our cities'.

Andrew Kelly, the festival's director, examines what has been learnt from our involvement with Bristol 2015, the year in which the city was European Green Capital.

This section also includes the notes and bibliographies from some of the chapters, and author biographies.

The Challenge and Complexity of Cities/

Tessa Coombes/

The Festival of the Future City presented the opportunity to learn more about the complex and challenging issues facing our cities. It was a week-long event with many talks, discussions and presentations about a whole range of topics, some familiar, others less so. It was a week where Bristol was bursting at the seams with eminent speakers from across the globe, including academics, journalists, politicians, novelists, poets and commentators, all with something different to contribute.

I attended a number of events during the week, all of which provided insight, interest and challenge. I deliberately chose a mix of events to go to, to broaden my own horizons. I also chose to go and listen to some speakers I hadn't heard before as well as some with whom I was far more familiar. There was certainly a lot of choice and on many an occasion I found myself wishing I could be in more than one place at the same time.

Rather than writing about one specific talk, I thought I would draw out some of the themes that seemed to crop up across discussions and debates around the social policy issues relevant to cities. There were many more talks, covering many other issues about future cities, smart cities and technology, environmental and health issues, which I won't cover here, as I didn't attend those events. The themes I draw out are consistent themes that will inevitably be raised when discussing the challenges we face in our cities – the need for vision, city governance, housing and homelessness, and social mobility. I'll touch on each of these briefly to explore some of the issues that came up and some of the questions that remain unanswered.

When it comes to vision there appears to be an increasing need for policy makers and politicians to think short-, medium- and long-term, in a coherent and coordinated

Opposite page: The Waterstones bookstall at the festival (JonCraig.co.uk).

manner. However, while we seem well able to think in the moment and make short-term decisions, this is all too frequently done without any reference to the future impact or consequences of those decisions. What is lacking is a process of forward planning and thinking, like the visionaries of the past, who often thought about our cities and urban areas in a more creative and innovative way. As Sir Mark Walport put it in his presentation at the launch event for the festival, 'thinking about the future can shape the future'. Without that future thinking we risk leaving the growth and development of our cities to an ad hoc, messy process of short termism and disjointed thinking, which leaves us well short of the creativity and innovation that is both needed and possible. The question is, do we have the ability, desire and bravery to unleash the potential of our cities?

The discussion around city governance was perhaps inevitable, particularly given the recent introduction of the mayoral model in Bristol and recent announcements in other cities of devolution deals with metro mayors and combined authorities being established as the norm. City governance is undoubtedly changing at quite a pace, pushed along by central government to a central agenda, which according to Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, is driven by the need to reverse a century of centralisation to 'return power to every part of our nation'. He talked about the devolution deals as having 'swept away required uniformity', about a dynamic, competitive process to allow local strengths and local priorities to shine through. Despite this several commentators referred to the similarities and common ground found in many of the deals, with only small differences being identified around local projects amongst an overall uniformity of approach. This suggests, perhaps, that the vision, ambition and big ideas that need to be generated in our cities are not yet quite there. The reality of government processes and bureaucracy appears to be a long way short of some of the rhetoric. What did

Chris Baines, The Value of Urban Nature and Natural Capital (JonCraig.co.uk).

come across very clearly was the notion that English local government structures are becoming very messy. Imagine a process of trying to explain to a group of foreign politicians or students how local government works, what the structure is and who takes decisions, and you might find it takes a very long time. We have unitary, county and district authorities; we have combined authorities with metro mayors to come; we have directly elected mayors running some councils, while others are run by leaders and cabinets, others still have reverted to the 'old style' committee system. It's an ad hoc picture with seemingly no real coherence or commitment to a future uniformity.

While housing is becoming one of the most important issues for our cities to deal with, the changing government agenda is perhaps providing greater restrictions on the options and opportunities for local government to tackle local housing problems, as the emphasis is pushed further and further towards the ultimate goal of home ownership. Despite this, local authorities are left to pick up the pieces of dysfunctional housing markets, and the lack of affordability, lack of

supply and lack of choice this creates. In Bristol, and elsewhere, much of the conversation about housing quickly focuses in on a small number of issues that perhaps local government can do something about. Indeed, the Mayor of Bristol, in his State of the City address delivered at the end of the festival, made reference to Bristol's housing problem, with solutions based around releasing public land for housing and tackling the increasing problem of homelessness in the city. There are, of course, many more housing issues that need tackling and a range of solutions that are required to provide decent, affordable homes for those that need them. Solutions that provide real choices, rather than forcing people down a particular route they may not wish to travel. Much of this process of providing solutions and choices is, however, seemingly out of the hands of local government and instead rests with central government, where social housing for rent is fast becoming a thing of the past, and where affordable housing is more likely to mean 'affordable' to buy. The question remains about what local government can do to address the very real problems faced in their area, and what scope they have to be creative and innovative about housing solutions.

A final theme running through many of the debates, as well as the focus of some particular talks, is the issue of social mobility, or social immobility as one speaker termed it. Perhaps unusually, one of the discussions on this issue began with comments about redefining the issue, of the need to talk about social mobility alongside planning, design and transport with an understanding that the way poverty is distributed around a city makes a real difference to the functioning of that city. All too often, the people with the least economic stability, living in the greatest poverty, are pushed to the edges of our cities, into peripheral estates, isolated from the wealth of the city. Our perceptions of cities and the way we feel about them are shaped by how we experience them. If our experience is one of isolation, exclusion and poverty, then our perception of the city is likely to be a negative one, where our desire is likely to be one of 'escaping' rather than staying. The focus of the discussion then shifted to the debate about barriers to social mobility not just being physical or economic, but also psychological, where 'glass walls' in people's own heads stop them making progress. Marvin Rees made the point that to talk about

social immobility means we have to talk about the people at the top as well as the people at the bottom; only then can we understand what the problem really is. Social mobility issues were discussed not as accidental fallout of 'the system' but more as a manufactured, institutional part of a system that is needed to make it work, where there are the inevitable winners and losers, but where the starting position is anything but equal. The depressing conclusion to much of this discussion was that the lack of social mobility in the UK is a problem that never goes away, as the relationship between class and place hasn't and won't change; indeed, if anything, it's getting worse.

I thoroughly enjoyed the debates and discussions throughout the week that drew out the challenge and complexity of cities, which sought to provide linkages between and across issues and disciplines, looking to the future for solutions and ideas. The challenge is there for decision makers, policy makers and politicians to have the vision, creativity and bravery to grapple with the issues and develop big ideas and bold visions for the future of our cities.

The Exceptional Fund Arts Programme and Bristol 2015/

Andrew Kelly/

Bristol 2015 European Green Capital was recognised as a major opportunity for the city to embrace all its communities, companies and individual citizens. The programme included an integral arts and culture component, coordinated by the Bristol 2015 team and Bristol arts providers.

The Bristol 2015 arts and culture programme included large-scale projects, such as *Fog Bridge* by Fujiko Nakaya; the opening and closing ceremonies; neighbourhood arts commissions; and projects arising from strategic and small grants.

The Festival of the Future City, led and delivered by Bristol Cultural Development Partnership (BCDP), was one of six Arts Council England (ACE) Exceptional Fund projects that were at the heart of the programme. The other five were:

Withdrawn, a new artwork by artist Luke Jerram installed at Leigh Woods. It was open to the public from 18 April to 6 September 2015. The artwork was commissioned by the National Trust, who manage the site, and delivered in partnership with the Forestry Commission England, who own the land. The work consisted of a flotilla of five decommissioned fishing trawlers viewed in the woodland setting. It was both an installation to 'stumble across' while walking in the woods and a venue for a programme of special events.

The Bristol Whales, a temporary artwork initiated by Artists Project Earth, managed by Bristol 2015, and designed and built by Cod Steaks. Constructed from steel frames overlaid with 48 bundles of steamed willow

The Bristol Whales (detail) (Paul Box).

harvested locally in Somerset, the sculpture depicted two life-size whales (the 15-metre-long tail of one and the nine-metre-long head of another) swimming through an 'ocean' of 70,000 empty plastic bottles collected from the Bath half marathon and Bristol 10K. It was situated in Bristol's Millennium Square between 17 July and 1 September 2015. It is now at Bennett's Patch Nature Reserve, with ownership transferred to Avon Wildlife Trust.

Arcadia Bristol, Arcadia's first inner-city event in the UK. It took place in historic Queen Square on Friday 4 and Saturday 5 September 2015. DJs and live acts performed on three stages in a 50-tonne, 20-metre-high mechanical spider made in Bristol from repurposed military hardware. The highlight of the evening was the 30-minute, 360-degree *Metamorphosis* show featuring strobe lights, dry-ice, sound effects, and costumed performers dressed as aliens creating a post-apocalyptic-themed spectacular that evolved into a mood of euphoria and hope. This was the world's first biofuel pyrotechnics show. (see pages 126-127 for photo)

TIME AND SPACE, a major new exhibition at Arnolfini by Richard Long, which included several new works and recreations of previous works. The exhibition was open from 31 July to 15 November 2015. It focused on Long's personal relationship to the area and to local materials. The major new works were a sculpture made from Cornish slate and a wall work made with mud collected from the River Avon. An accompanying book was published in September 2015. In addition there was an off-site commission, *Boyhood Line*, funded by Simplyhealth, which was opened on 20 June 2015 and also ran to 15 November. It was constructed on Clifton Downs using white limestone to mark a 'desire line' made over many months by the footprints of people walking the same route.

Sanctum, the first UK public project by Theaster Gates, one of the most sought-after American artists of his generation, who had been invited to the city by Bristol-based art producers Situations. He chose the ruined Temple Church in the city centre as the site for the creation of a temporary performance space/sanctum and worked with Situations in developing its structure and programme. Performances ran continuously for 24 days, 24 hours a day, over 552 hours, from 29 October to 21 November 2015.

There can be no question that the Exceptional Fund projects were a success. Together they engaged 1,434 artists and reached a total audience of 898,025 people. BCDP was responsible for the overall management of the Exceptional Fund grant and of the partnership formed by the organisations leading the individual projects, in addition to directly managing the Festival of the Future City as well as contributing to the wider Bristol 2015 arts and culture programme.

BCDP has long believed that arts projects need to address the key issues of our time. In the case of Bristol 2015 the key issue was the environment. There was some concern that too many projects addressing issues of

climate change and building sustainable cities would lead to audience indifference or boredom. This proved not to be the case given the different areas of activity; the wide range of art forms involved; the calibre of the artists appointed; and the varied levels of participation achieved and audiences targeted.

The Festival of the Future City put arts and culture at the centre of city life, work and leisure with its day-long focus on the arts and cities, which took place on 19 November. This provided an opportunity for projects like *Arcadia Bristol, Mass Crane Dance* and Playable City to present case studies to people who might not be fully experienced in the arts and city futures.

All the works in the Exceptional Fund projects were developed, created, installed, managed and decommissioned in a way that was as energy and resource efficient as possible. It is impossible to measure to what extent they increased public awareness of the threats to the environment that they highlighted and, more significantly, whether this awareness will result in behaviour change in the long-term, but to varying degrees each addressed key issues and contributed to the goal of creating a greener, happier world.

Bristol is a good place to have this kind of debate. Bristol has pioneered new programmes of work about future cities over two decades and more: the greening of cities; new approaches to cultural development with BCDP; initiatives on city movement, marketing and information with Bristol Legible City; new work on digital infrastructure in cities with Bristol is Open; new city partnerships; and pioneering smart cities with the driverless car programme. There is also active and growing research work taking place in the universities in the city as well as cross-disciplinary and cross-organisational collaborations. Bristol has the potential to be both a laboratory for change on future city projects as well as the home for international debate. This has been a focus of BCDP since it was founded in 1993 and will continue to be so in the years ahead.

The Festival of the Future City will be back in 2017. In the meantime, the debate goes on.

Opposite page: Richard Long's *Boyhood Line* (Max McClure/Arnolfini).

This page, top: *Withdrawn* (Paul Box).

Sanctum at Temple Church (Max McClure/Situations).

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The Festival of the Future City in Bristol in 2015 brought together academics, writers, artists, think-tanks and government bodies to debate and explore sustainable, resilient city futures and many aspects of future city life.

As the largest ever public debate about the future of cities, the festival promoted comprehensive thinking among a wide range of people and organisations; shared examples of good practice; and provided a platform for existing programmes of work and models of future city development.

This publication provides an overview of just some of the many topics that were debated. It contains a list of the events that took place during the main festival period (17-20 November 2015); responses by audience members; examples of city thinking, past and present; a look at the challenges and opportunities for the future city; city case studies; and sections exploring the themes of nature and the city, and the arts and the city.

The second Festival of the Future City takes place 18-20 October 2017.

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