
ASSIGNMENT 5 – PEOPLE AND PLACE ON ASSIGNMENT

For this assignment, the choice is down to the student. The proviso is that it must relate to People or Places they inhabit. The assignment brief is to produce a brief from a notational client and make 8 – 12 photos which suit the brief and client's purpose.

Client

I have decided that my client would be a magazine covering local interest articles. This would be an informational publication with articles which would be of interest to local residents and visitors to the area.

Brief

Produce 8 – 12 photographs showing how man has left his mark on the landscape over the years. This is for an article entitled "The Changing Landscape". These will show how man has marked or altered the landscape in different ways over many centuries.

Planning

My initial thoughts were that I would use places in the countryside opposed to using town or larger conurbations. I felt that this would be more in keeping with the brief to show how the landscape had been marked by man rather than to show a large collection of buildings in a town which had obviously changed the landscape. Having said that, this was not excluding any towns from the photos, they might form part of an overall scene; I wanted to avoid making it the main subject.

As I was planning this assignment, I was thinking about making the man made object part of the scene rather than the dominant part. Landscape is constantly evolving and changing; what is a new structure becomes accepted and forms part of the landscape within a short period of time.

I was stilling debating with myself about the unobtrusive against obtrusive structures when I received feedback on the last assignment. Part of the feedback suggested looking at Paul Graham's *Troubled Land*. This work shows scenes from the Troubles in Northern Ireland which look like every day scenes from anywhere in UK. On closer looking at the photos, you notice that it is not an everyday scene as there are soldiers or murals and it becomes clear that the photos represent something other than the first impression.

I decided that I would use this work as inspiration and would take the photos of man made objects which would be in the background or unobtrusive in the photos. That way, the look supports the title of the article "Changed" rather than overt objects.

Subject Planning

Some subjects that I thought would be suitable were:

- White Horses carved into the hills
- Avebury
- Lone buildings
- Canals

- Hill Forts
- Roads

I decided on the following locations:

- M4 motorway
 - Relatively recent scar
- Alton Barnes white horse
 - White horse carved into a hill below an ancient hill fort
- Stonehenge
 - Ancient structure alongside a recent road. In addition, one of the roads is being removed so this is a scar removal as well as fitting the brief.
- Caen Hill locks
 - Series of locks as a means of man controlling nature to enable boats to sail over hills.
 - This was the original idea but was too overt so I decided to use Pewsham lock and canal instead as this is more subtle.
- Silbury Hill
 - Man made hill for an unknown purpose
- Solitary building in the landscape
 - Unspoilt landscape marked with a solitary building

The Photos



I wanted to use the lead in line of the paths to lead towards the motorway in the distance. I selected this one as the path is not quite so obvious and it is in portrait orientation with some “dead area” at the top right which could be used for text. Also it is in portrait format; the opposite of the traditional format for landscape photos. Also I wanted to produce a mixture of formats which could be used in the publication rather than taking all landscape formats.



This is actually man removing a scar from the landscape. The road leading to the right background is being covered over and turned back to grass.



I initial chose this photo as there are less vehicles so it is not so obvious that it is a road. But on reflection, I changed my mind and went for the portrait format below. The viewer is drawn to the obvious road first then onto the background road being covered over and then Stonehenge on the skyline.





Although the scene is focussing on the Second World War bunker, in the background is white horse carved into the hill. This shows that man has been changing the landscape in the area of Alton Barnes for many centuries. The far older white horse is preserved yet the newer pill box is being allowed to deteriorate and nature is growing over and reclaiming the structure. Eventually this will disappear while the white horse will continue to be seen.



The interlocking triangles of the trees and crops show how the man made changes affect the landscape. It also shows that the changes are transitory – the corn will be harvested and the land cleared ready for the next crop. In time, the trees will be felled. This area was heavily forested before the Romans invaded; the land was cleared for crops over the next millennia but is now being forested again.



Silbury Hill is a man made hill from the Neolithic Age that is accepted as part of the landscape as shown by the people reading or playing on the hill overlooking it rather than taking any notice.



I thought that the hill was too prominent in the background so cropped the image more tightly to change the image to the person reading and Silbury then becomes more in the background.



I had intended taking photos of the Caen Hill locks but decided against that as I thought they were too obvious as a man made structure. Instead, I found a stretch of canal which is not obvious as that. The path looks like it is beside a river. This fits in with the theme of the series of photos.



I included this photo in contrast to the others in the set as it shows how man is making changes to the landscape to suit his purpose in a non-permanent way. The two tree trunks have been placed as jumps for horses while a track has been made on the left mid ground by a vehicle. There is a barely visible farm house on the skyline on the right but the eye does not notice this so much as the jumps.



I chose this photo because, unlike the previous photos have shown the changed landscape without drawing attention to the man made effect but this one shows the opposite. This shows how people's attention is drawn to the changes in the landscape by an object that has changed the landscape it's self.

Submission





Conclusion

I am happy with the photos that I produced for this brief in that they show how the landscape has been changed or affected by people over time. It would have been relatively easy to find locations which were obviously changed but I wanted the challenge to take photos where the changes were not so obvious. Apart from the bunker and last one, the photos fulfil this. The last photo changes the view point around and draws the viewer to the obvious cairn before being drawn to the background man made structures. In effect, the man made cairn links the viewer to the barely seen structures in the background.

The difficulties I faced with fulfilling the brief were in finding the locations to photograph. This was mainly down to time constraints on my behalf and not being able to devote more time to the assignment. I would have liked to have included more people in the photos but as there was no one about, apart from the photo of Silbury Hill, I could not do this.

References

Denison, S. (2014). *Simon Denison Photography*. [online] Simondenison.co.uk. Available at: <http://www.simondenison.co.uk/8.html> [Accessed 3 Oct. 2014].

Fawcett, K. (2014). *Europe's Landscape Is Still Scarred by World War I*. [online] Smithsonian. Available at: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/europe-landscape-still-scarred-world-war-i-180951430/?no-ist> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2014].

Graham, P. (2014). *Paul Graham Archive*. [online] Available at: <http://paulgrahamarchive.com/troubledland.html> [Accessed 1 Oct 2014].

Waite, C. (2014). *Gallery of Charlie Waite's Landscape Photography*. [online] Charliewaite.com. Available at: <http://www.charliewaite.com/gallery> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2014].

Watson, P. (2014). *Award winning UK landscape photographer Peter Watson*. [online] Peterwatson-photographer.com. Available at: <http://www.peterwatson-photographer.com/> [Accessed 2 Oct. 2014].