

HEFTED TO HILL



Ewan Allinson
BA(Oxon) MA

- An HLF funded arts project within the Northern Heartlands Great Place Scheme
- Giving voice to the covenant between farmers & the land
- Creating terms for a Brexit covenant between the public and farmers
- Hefted to Hill is also the title of my PhD application for AHRC funding, subtitled “John Dewey and the Place of the Aesthetic in the Daily Life of a Working Dale”
- [Twitter @EwanAllinson](#) [@NHeartlands](#) [#HeftedToHill](#)

HEFTED TO HILL- in brief

- A co-production with seven hill farmers

Joanne, Trevor, Peter, Andrew, Michael and Greg

two photographers

Louise Taylor and Richard Glynn

and a DJ

DJ Dolphinboy

OUTPUTS

- An immersive audio-visual exhibition in churches locally in 2019.
- Reports and advocacy, within the Brexit context, around the public goods that flow from hill farmers' covenant to the land and the values that inform their daily efforts.

PURPOSES include

- Undo that antagonism between farmers and 'environmentalists' that so limits the impact of environmental policy and which constitutes a landscape injustice.
- Validate different ways of 'knowing' and different models of decision-making amongst public, in academia and the policy milieu.

This overlaps closely with tomorrow's sessions on:

Valuing the Arts in Valuing Nature

.....which is exploring the diversity of contributions artists can make in a research setting.

Because Hefted to Hill is a work in progress, I will focus here on the back story and how I have employed my agency as an artist to unearth and mobilize local landscape values.

Hefted To Hill - A long-term artistic process, distinct from the case studies being explored tomorrow, in which I am:

- Instrumentalising my practice on my own terms, within a funding setting that affords that freedom.
- Using my structural ambivalence to make things happen.
- Following a path of Artist as Agitator

**BEWARE OF
ARTISTS**
THEY MIX WELL WITH ALL
CLASSES OF SOCIETY
AND ARE THEREFORE
THE MOST DANGEROUS

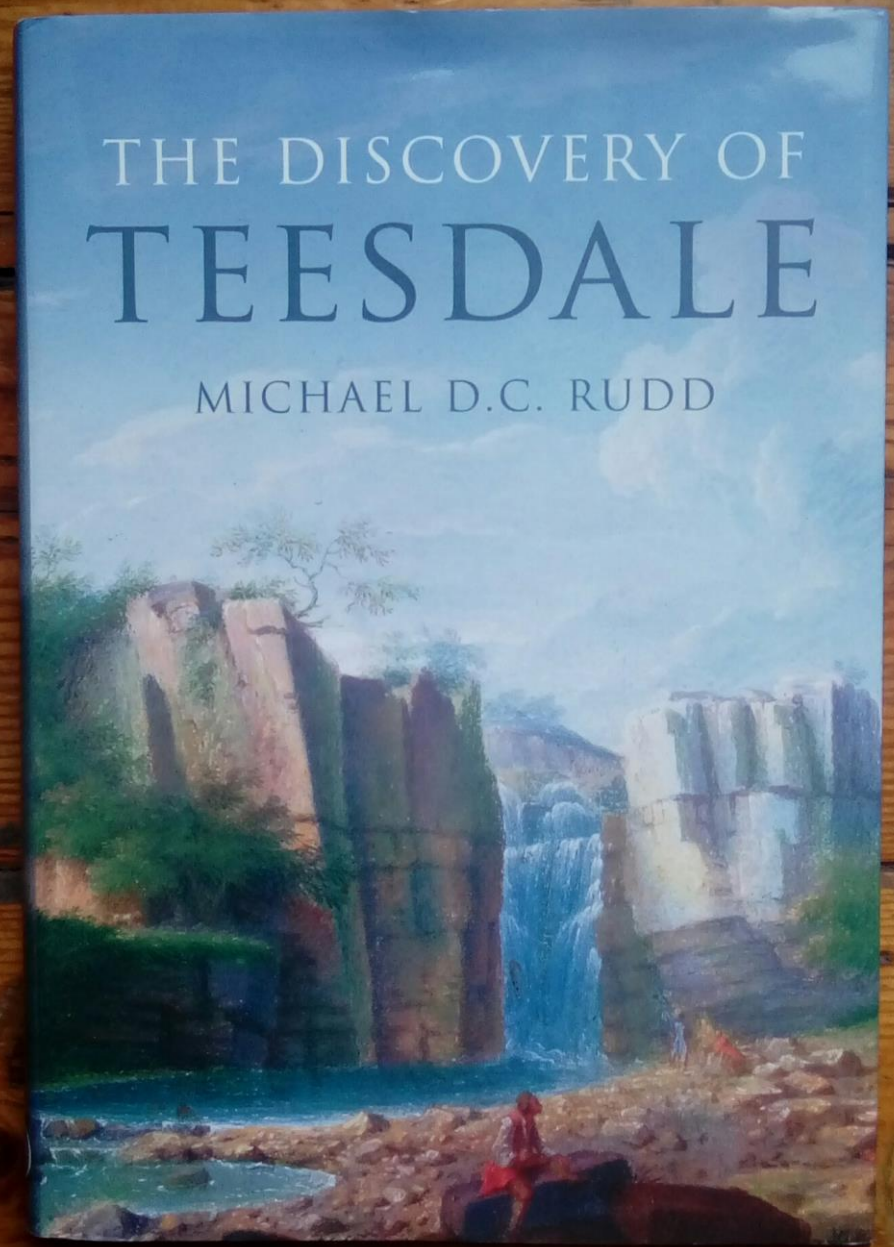
The McCarthyite meme owes its origin to this:

"The dealings with artists, for instance, require great prudence; they are acquainted with all classes of society, and for that very reason dangerous"

Letter from Leopold I to young Queen Victoria

- Because I refuse to know my place, I can be socially useful in times of turbulence.
- Especially if there's money to be spent.

- Hefted to Hill owes its existence to my board-level involvement in the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership which ran from 2011-2016.
- HLF's Landscape Partnership programme is a key plank in the UK's approach to the European Landscape Convention. £177 million spend across UK up to 2015.
- Our Heart of Teesdale bid drew upon the 18th & 19th century celebration of the dale by eminent artists and writers.
- As Vice-Chair of £3.6 million Heart of Teesdale LP, I was able to divine and articulate a 'cultural landscape' approach that won over local people and got them involved in its delivery.
- Because of this local buy-in, HoT was shortlisted for a National Lottery Award.



ARTISTS, FARMERS AND PHILOSOPHERS



GETTING GRASSROOTS EXPERTISE
INTO LANDSCAPE RESEARCH,
POLICY AND PRACTICE.

THE BOWES MUSEUM 7/9 SEPTEMBER 2016



'PaperBridge' © Steve Messam

I devised, programmed and project managed our concluding symposium.

The premise of the symposium was that the UK is awash with local expertise of all kinds that is overdue a place at the table, not least with regard to setting spending priorities.

Read a write-up here

http://www.landscaperesearch.org/wp-content/files_mf/lre78.pdf

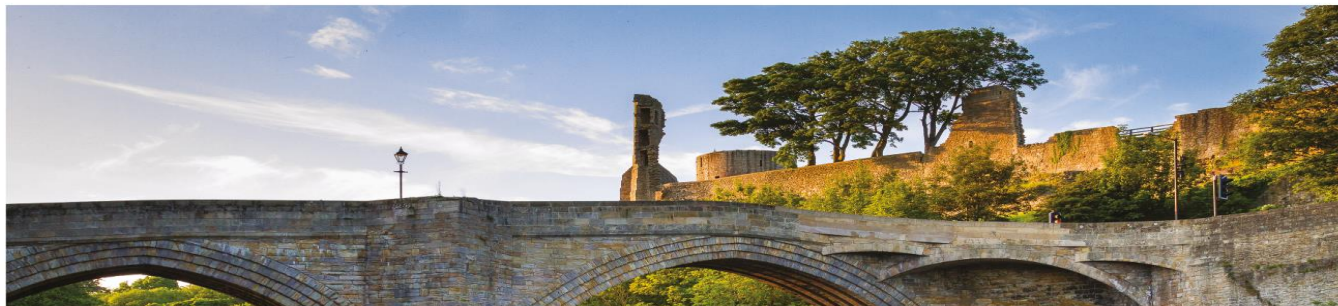
And another here:

http://www.landscaperesearch.org/wp-content/files_mf/lre7920.pdf

The speakers at the Farmers' Session included 2 local lords, three tenant farmers, an eminent local botanist and a Natural England board member

MICKLETON VILLAGE HALL

14.30	Introduction & Session Chair, Ewan Allinson , Sculptor and #AFP16 Chair.
14.40	Panel, Lord Barnard , Landowner. A landowner's perspective.
14.50	Panel, Richard Betton , Hill Farmer Farmers Liaison-UTASS. A sustainable working landscape: harnessing nature.
15.00	Panel, Margaret Bradshaw MBE , Botanist. The 'Teesdale Assemblage of Flowering Plants' and its dependence upon grazing.
15.10	Panel, Julia Aglionby , Board Member, Natural England. Better outcomes depend on respectful relationships.
15.20	Panel, Kay & Tom Hutchinson , Farmers – stars of 'Addicted to Sheep'. Trials and tribulations of upland hill farming.
15.30-15.45	Discussion, questions and contributions from all participants and audience.
Break	Coffee and cake available.
16.15	Keynote, Lord Inglewood , Landowner. Hill farming and the uplands.
16.45	Discussion, questions and contributions from all participants and audience.
17.15	Coach leaves from Mickleton Village Hall to Barnard Castle.



SESSION 3

HILL FARMING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

VENUE: MICKLETON VILLAGE HALL,
THURSDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER, 14.30-17.15

EXPLORE:

- > The opportunity for environmental policy-making, once the UK leaves the EU, to be locally embedded and more responsive to the particulars of place.
- > The value of the long-term covenant that farmers have with the land and how to capitalise on that.
- > The landscape knowledge and nous that farmers possess and how to bring that into policy-making.
- > The role of farmers in managing the things that we as a society value in and need from our landscapes.
- > The need for farmers to be paid for delivering that management.

QUESTION:

- > What is nous and how do we give it more heed within environmental and landscape policy?
- > What does a farmer know that the scientist doesn't?
- > How do we mediate between top-down science and grassroots nous over the long-term?
- > How do we build on the public's current interest in farming and translate that into a social covenant that recognizes society's debt to the sector and rewards farmers for it?
- > What are the theoretical/practical foundations to all this?

ADVOCATE:

- > The strategic involvement of farmers in HLF Landscape Partnerships.
- > A covenant between the public and farming that rewards farmers for their daily efforts to deliver not only the food we eat but also the landscapes and habitats that give so much to so many.

ARTISTS, FARMERS AND PHILOSOPHERS

#AFP16 Steering Group

Ewan Allinson (Chair), Sculptor, Landscape and Arts Network

Maggie Roe, Newcastle University and Landscape Research Group(LRG)

Graham Young, HLF Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership

Alex Sijpesteijn, HLF Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership

Gary Charlton, Natural England

Michelle Gorman, Visit County Durham

Jill Cole, Freelance Arts Manager

Henna Asikainen, Artist



Supported by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Visit County
Durham

Essential to the success of the event was the support of the steering group I pulled together.

Meanwhile, I had taken a lead in identifying a legacy opportunity that would build on the goodwill and impact generated by HoT locally and nationally.

The publication of a Culture White Paper offered up one such opportunity by way of an innovative pilot scheme .

Aided by some of the steering group who stayed on after the symposium, Graham Young and I devised and wrote a loudly independent and audacious bid to:

Great Place Scheme

England

Scotland

Wales

Northern Ireland

England

The Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England have funded 16 pilot areas in England.

Aims

The Great Place scheme will enable cultural and heritage organisations to make a step-change in how they work together, and with other organisations in other sectors, in order that arts, culture and heritage contribute more to meeting local social and economic objectives.

- Our bid for £1.6 million was successful.
- Our independence won us an unusual degree of licence to experiment.
- A cross-sector partnership, lead by Visit County Durham.
- Included in a Natural England pilot scheme for their 25 Year Environment Plan, specifically around making more of local knowledge and assets



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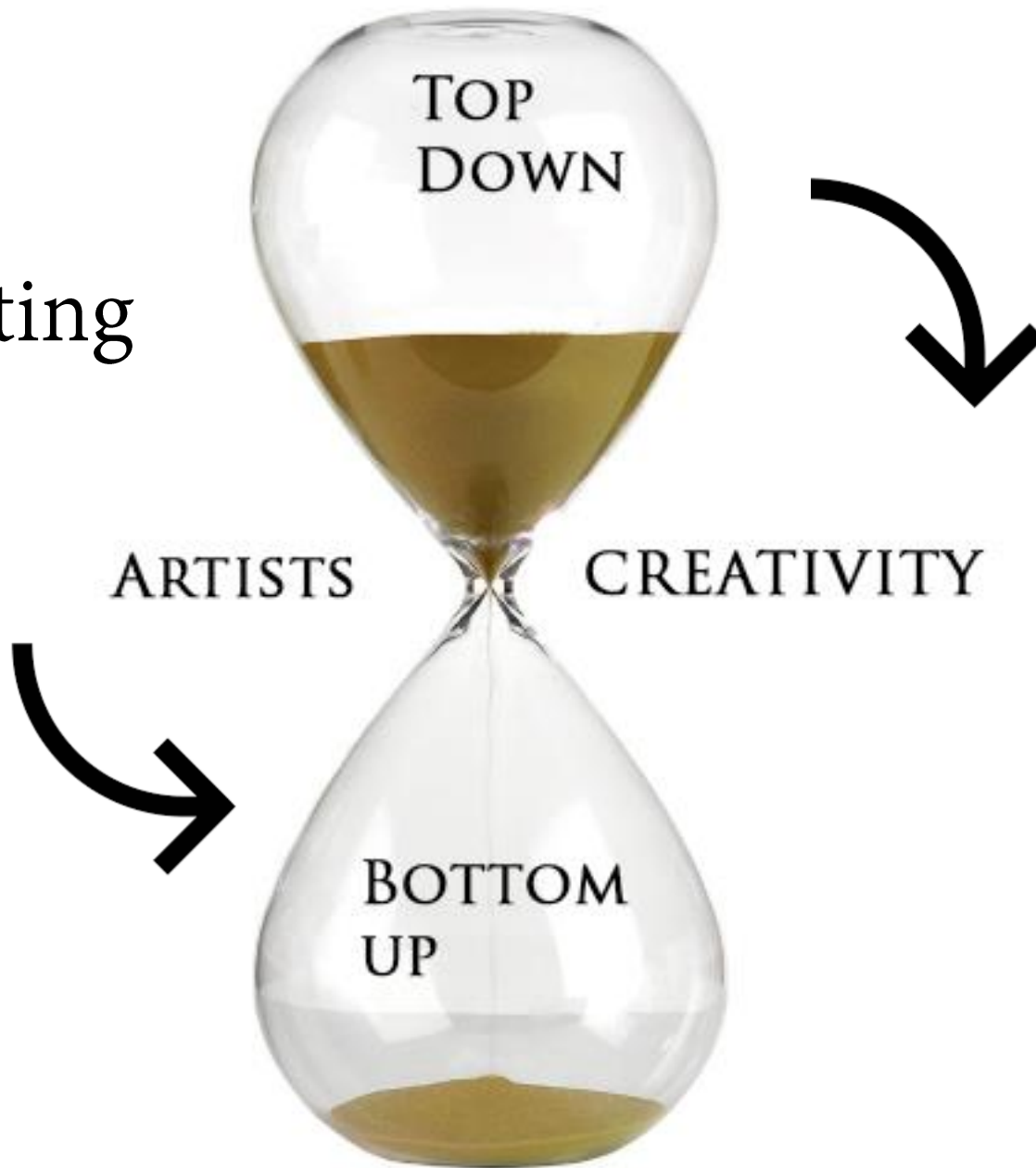
ABOUT US

NORTHERN HEARTLANDS

Our Mission is to deliver cultural activities that transform people's understanding of the heritage, landscapes and places they live in, building their confidence and ability to influence policy and decision-making.

_LINK <https://northernheartlands.org/>

Our
operating
idea





Hefted To Hill is one of the keynote projects.



Seven hill farmers, all in the red meat business- lamb and beef - some tenants, some not, all with a deep covenant to their farms and all facing risks to their sustainability from Brexit, climate change and consumer shifts.

- Recruiting farmers was foiled by bad timing – letters of introduction landed on their doorsteps during the Beast from the East.
- I turned to retired waller Bobby Shann, a local walling legend, who was able to commend me to farmers across the dale.
- I have built up a relationship of trust with each farmer, relating not only to the value they place on my skill, but also to the obvious independence that surrounds my methods.
- Exchange of goods is at the heart of this process:
In return for our intrusion into their working lives, Northern Heartlands has paid me to provide each farmer with 2 days of dry-stone walling, free to them. Here are some pics of some of the work done:













*My method gets this
welcome endorsement.*

IT'S (NOT) COMPLICATED

Leading in a complex world

Provocation Paper for the Clore Leadership Programme
Fellowship 2018/19

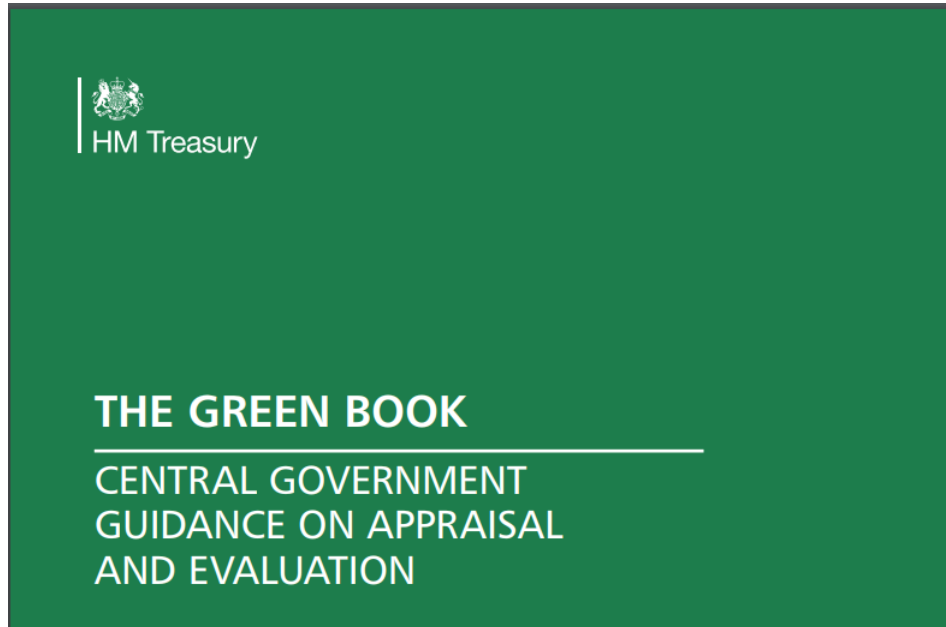
“Ewan used his skills in dry stone walling to get the insight he needed from local farmers, knowing that they would value this approach and that this action would be the little bit of leverage he could use in order to get what he needed from them. Ewan is an example of the type of leader we increasingly need, he has learnt how to take different approaches in order to lead in a complex world.
“

Alice Kershaw, Head of Business Process Review at the Heritage Lottery Fund

The project takes centre stage in her report:

https://www.cloreleadership.org/Alice_Kershaw_Leading_in_a_Complex_World

So, thinking into the policy context of Hefted To Hill, it pays to read the runes regarding values in:



- ‘social value’ is mentioned 71 times
- ‘Landscape’ mentioned 9 times, with respect to ‘non-market valuation and unmonetisable values’

With the Treasury's priorities in mind, the headline elements from the UK Agricultural Bill 12/9/2018 that we need to think through are the proposed:

“Voluntary land management contracts based on results-focused plans *developed by the farmer* “ (my italics – that's a good start).
by which the government will ‘spend public money on public goods’.

The two public goods of relevance to Hefted to Hill are:

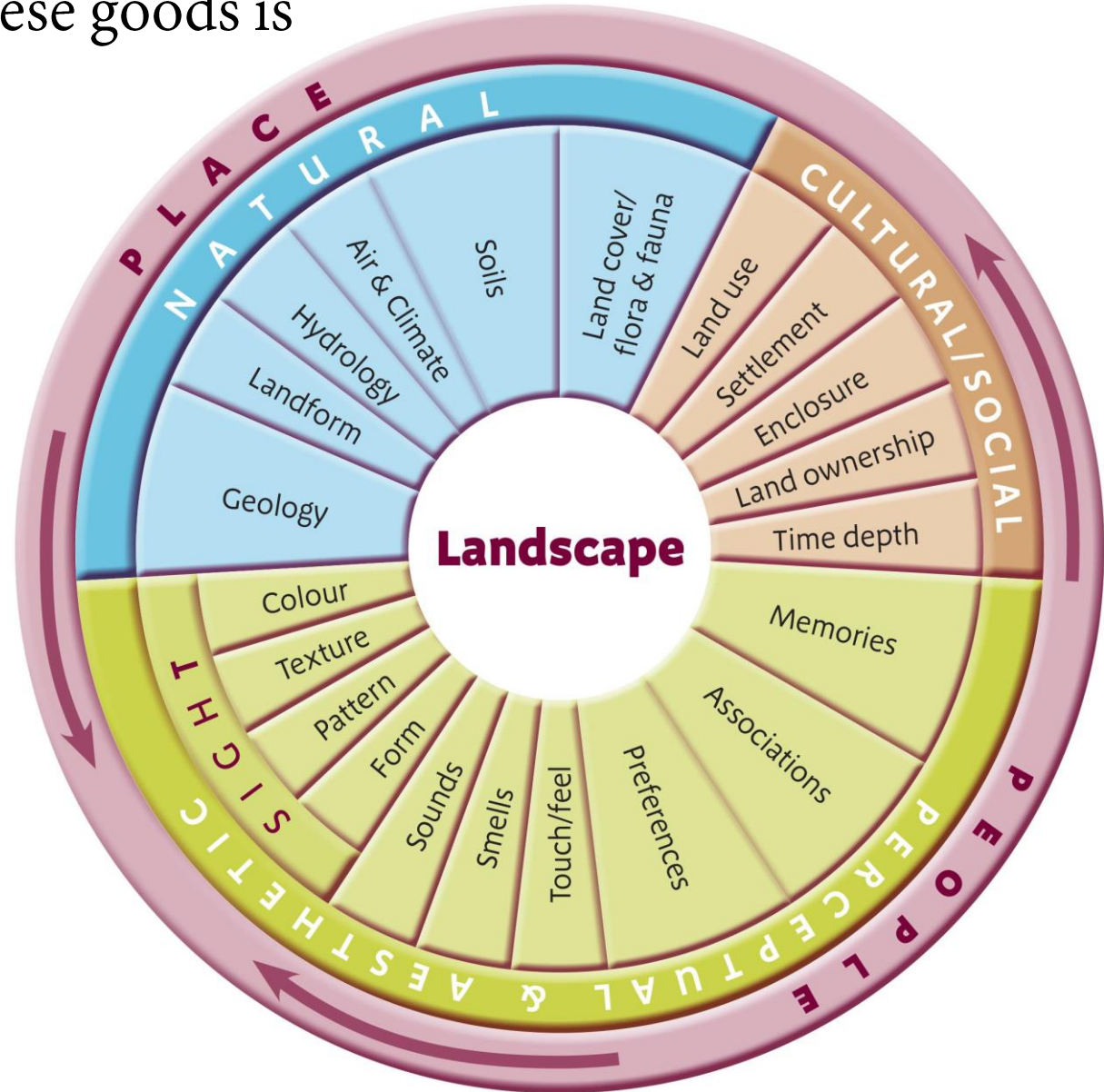
- ‘Preserve rural resilience & traditional farming & landscapes in uplands’
- ‘Public access, enjoyment of nature, protecting historic environment’

There's also time to identify other goods.

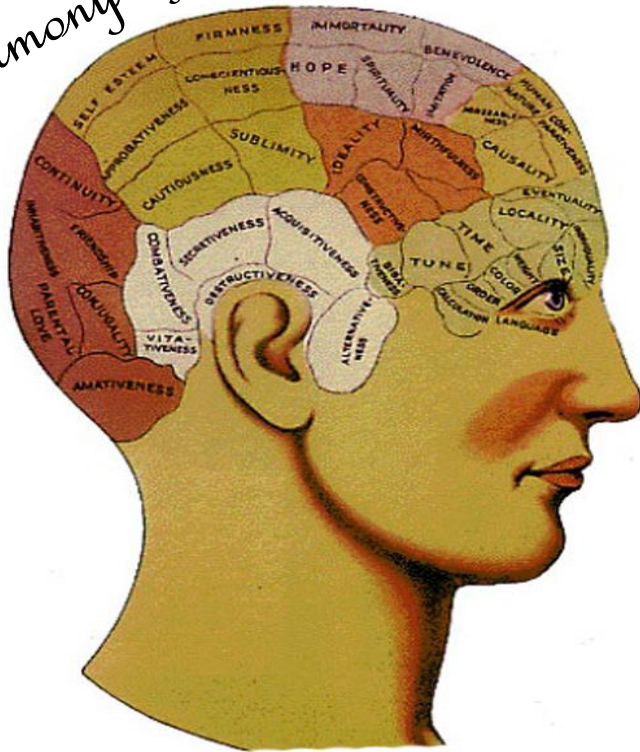
One device sure to inform some of the evaluation of these goods is Natural England's

Landscape Character Assessment wheel

The 'Perceptual & Aesthetic' lower half is still rooted in the Kantian aesthetics that relies on the 'disinterested' stance of the expert judge.



Harmony of faculties



The Kantian Model of Aesthetics and Perception

- The basis of the Romantic movement
- The root of landscape tourism

To have a utilitarian relationship to a place (e.g. to work the land) is, according to this tradition, to fail to be 'disinterested' and so to compromise claims to intersubjectivity.

Philosophers are challenging this historic erasure of the local aesthetic.

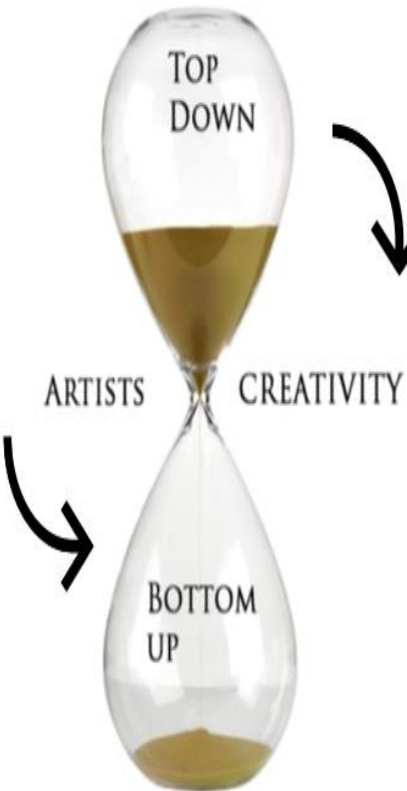
“the intimate and long-term relationship between farmer and land...(has).... the potential to be a norm.... of an aesthetic appreciation of landscape”.

Isis Brook: ‘Aesthetic Appreciation of Landscape’ in Howard, P. Thompson, I and Waterton, E (Eds) *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies* (London: Routledge 2013)

(the farmer’s) *“quality of attention and the levels of discernment are what, in some other realms, we would refer to as connoisseurship.”*

Pauline Von Bonsdorff. ‘Agriculture, Aesthetic Appreciation and the Worlds of Nature’ *Contemporary Aesthetics* vol 3 2005

Hefted To Hill is concerned with facilitating movement between top-down and bottom-up approaches in helping to articulate public goods. I have developed the table below to help frame that work. I foreground philosophy because I believe it to be the key to giving weight to local knowledge and nous. I cite Dewey because I believe he has the heft to act as a worthy counterpoint to Kant in giving authority to that local voice.



PHILOSOPHY	POLICY	GOVERNANCE
Kant Environmental aesthetics	Top Down -Reports/Papers - <i>General</i> -Ecosystem Services	Top Down 'Experts' <i>coercion</i>
Dewey Everyday aesthetics	Bottom Up -Nous/Testimony/ Conversations - <i>Particular</i> -Attachment & identity	Bottom Up Locals <i>collaboration</i>

I am currently recording conversations with the farmers taking part. Once I have some findings to share, I'll first do so by putting on a sausage casserole night at the local farming charity and invite gathered farmers to give a response. I can be fairly sure they'll be candid about letting me know whether this represents public money well spent!

Over the last couple of weeks, photographer Louise Taylor has been out and about spending days with some of the seven farmers, with a brief to 'capture values at work'. Here's some of her photos:

Meanwhile, watch this space and contact me via

info@northernheartlands.org



























#HeftedToHill