

# Octavia Hill

## and the environmental movement

*Robert Whelan*

The competition between the political parties to present themselves as defenders of the environment has been ratcheted up a notch by David Cameron's call to voters to vote blue for green. The other parties have been forced to defend their own policies in this area as greener than those of the Tories, as this is felt to be a key electoral issue.

Environmentalism seems to be the most modern of causes, born of concerns about climate change and the depletion of the ozone layer that emerged in the 1980s. However, the feeling that we can and should do something to conserve the beauties and integrity of the natural world goes back nearly two hundred years.

The environmental movement began in the nineteenth century as the open spaces movement, and the open spaces movement had grown out of sanitary reform. Sanitary reform had been inspired by the terrible conditions in which many city-dwellers lived in the early stages of the industrial revolution. The massive movement of population which had followed the replacement of agriculture with manufacturing as the source of the

country's wealth had depopulated the countryside and created, almost overnight, massive metropolitan centres in areas like Manchester, Birmingham and Sheffield. The weavers and factory hands were accommodated in the cheapest, jerry-built structures, thrown up at terrific speed, which soon degenerated into stinking and fetid slums. In London, which was already the world's largest city at the beginning of the industrial revolution, the situation was different: to accommodate the huge increase in numbers, existing houses designed for family occupation were divided into tenements. The higher class of tenements had only one family in a room: the lower class had a family in each corner and one in the middle. These families would then take 'lodgers' to help pay their share of the rent.



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With no running water, privvies shared between dozens of households, no fresh air and no proper means of disposing of waste, the conditions in these tenements were, as people pointed out at the time, worse than those in which farmers kept their animals. The sanitary reform movement, which sounds slightly comical today, was a life-and-death matter for people living in the shadow of frequent outbreaks of cholera and typhoid that swept through urban centres.

Thomas Southwood Smith, one of the pioneers of sanitary reform and a member of the very first Board of Health (1848-54), was the grandfather of Octavia Hill, who became famous for her work in what we now call social housing, developing a system to provide decent accommodation for working-class people at affordable rents. Octavia had assisted her grandfather in his various campaigns when she was a little girl, and she remembered his precepts when she went into housing management in 1864, with the purchase, by John Ruskin on her behalf, of the leases of three slum tenements in the inappropriately named Paradise Place, Marylebone.

Octavia was providing accommodation for the lowest class of tenants, and she was determined to do it at a profit. The rents had to show a five per cent return on capital invested by the landlord, as Octavia was bitterly and permanently opposed to subsidies of any kind. This entailed a 'no-frills' approach, but there were some things that were non-negotiable for Octavia. Whatever had to be foregone by way of luxuries, houses had to be made sound, clean and healthy. Roofs, gutters, drainpipes and drains were fixed immediately. Waste disposal was arranged. Wherever feasible, windows were knocked though to give more daylight, and everything possible was done to create a flow of fresh air. In the days before bacterial infections were understood, the spread of cholera and typhoid were explained by the miasma theory. This held that diseases were spread by foul air, and that the answer was fresh air and plenty of it. But how to give fresh air to people living in back-to-back tenements, converted from houses in which even the gardens had been built over to provide more lodgings?

From the start, Octavia tried to arrange open spaces for her tenants. It was not possible in Paradise Place, but in Freshwater Place, the second group of properties bought for her by Ruskin in 1866, she was able to clear a patch of waste land between the properties and turn it into a garden.

This tiny plot, which still exists in Marylebone (although the original buildings have been replaced), was of enormous significance to Octavia and the development of her work. It was the first of her 'open-air sitting rooms for the poor', where tenants could get away from the noise and smells of their tenements and the children could play in safety.

Octavia was in the vanguard of what would become a major social movement: the provision of access to open spaces for all, including the poor. In 1865 the Commons Preservation Society (CPS) had been founded by a young barrister, George Shaw-Lefevre, at a meeting he had convened at his chambers in the Inner Temple. Shaw-Lefevre attracted the support of, amongst others, Thomas Huxley, the eminent scientist and defender of Darwin, John Stuart Mill, then at the peak of his reputation as a writer on social and economic issues, and, from the world of letters, Thomas Hughes and Leslie Stephen. Within a few months £1,400 had been raised for the new society, and on 24 January 1866 the Lord Mayor of London chaired a meeting at the Mansion House for the public launch of the CPS, which by this time had attracted the support of the Bishop of London, the Deans of Westminster and St Paul's, members of parliament, fellows of learned societies and Henry Fawcett, whose garden in Lambeth would later become the basis of Vauxhall Park. The CPS was Britain's first national conservation body and enjoyed enormous success in its campaigns to preserve public access to open spaces by insisting on the upholding of ancient common rights. It was involved with high-profile campaigns in Berkhamsted, Wimbledon, Wandsworth, Tooting, Coulsdon and Banstead, and it profited from the appointment of Robert Hunter as its solicitor in 1867, who was to wage spectacular legal battles to save Epping Forest and the New Forest.

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*The churchyard in Drury Lane was planted by the Kyrle Society and opened to the public on 1 May 1877.*

Seventeen years later, another major player emerged. The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association (MPGA) was founded in 1882 in response to the passing of the Metropolitan Open Spaces Act of 1881, which simplified the transfer of gardens and burial grounds to public authorities. This act was the result of several years of lobbying by open spaces activists, including Octavia Hill, Robert Hunter and the Commons Preservation Society. The passing of the act appears to have galvanised those who were agitating for metropolitan amenities, including Lord Brabazon, later Earl of Meath and chairman of the MPGA, and Ernest Hart, the first vice-chairman, who was also in charge of the open spaces sub-committee of the National Health Society. (Hart merged this NHS sub-committee with the newly-formed MPGA.) The MPGA advocated the physical regeneration of the people as a necessary prior condition for mental and moral improvement. The public garden would assist not only in the purification of the urban atmosphere but would help to reform habits and morals as well by 'encouraging country tastes'. In his desire to return the slum-dweller to the countryside, Lord Brabazon would be a keen advocate of state-directed emigration to the colonies, but, for the vast majority, the country had to come to town. The Association had clear links with the sanitary reform movement, working in conjunction with the National Health Society, and medical officers of health lent their support to appeals. This was more than simply 'parks for the people', as the MPGA envisioned playgrounds and recreation fields with gymnastic and games equipment, plus free instruction, all publicly funded. The Association was determined to use its influence to obtain the erection of baths, wash-houses and swimming baths.

However, between the foundation dates of these two important early manifestations of what we now call the environmental

movement, Octavia Hill and her sister Miranda had set up a little society, run mainly by ladies, with no office and no staff, that ultimately had a greater impact on the way in which the environment is perceived and cared for than any other organisation: it was called the Kyrle Society, and it had a peculiar genesis.

In December 1875 Miranda Hill gave a talk to the National Health Society called 'A suggestion to those who love beautiful things', arguing that the poor have need of beauty in their lives after the basic requirements of food, warmth and shelter have been met. Octavia had the talk printed as a pamphlet and circulated it. As a result, the Kyrle Society was launched in

1876, with Miranda as its nominal founder but with Octavia as the real driving force, to 'diffuse a love of beautiful things among our poor brethren'.

The Society was named after John Kyrle, the Man of Ross (1637-1724), who was celebrated by Alexander Pope in his poem *Of the Use of Riches* (1733). Kyrle had acquired a reputation for doing an enormous amount of good in his home town of Ross-on-Wye despite enjoying a modest income, but it must have been the creative deployment of limited resources rather than the precise nature of Kyrle's philanthropic work that recommended him to the Hill sisters as patron of their new Society, as none of his projects were of an artistic or environmental nature.

The Kyrle Society operated through four committees: open spaces, decorative, musical and literary. The literary branch supplied books and journals to hospitals, schools, literary institutes and working men's clubs. The musical branch had a choir that performed concerts, especially oratorios on religious themes, in the poorest parts of London. The decorative branch supplied works of art, especially murals depicting noble subjects and inscriptions of heroic verse, to public institutions that needed brightening up: hospital wards, church halls, the exteriors of churches. But it was the open spaces branch that would have the most long-lasting impact.

Miranda Hill's talk of 1875 which led to the founding of the Kyrle was an aesthetic manifesto: art and beauty have the power to transform lives, and they should not be the preserve of the rich. Although Miranda gave few specifics about how her aim was to be achieved, she did mention one particular campaign that got the Society off to a good start: the opening



*The Poores' Land in Bethnal Green was saved from development as the result of a campaign led by Octavia Hill in 1890. On 3 June 1895 it was opened to the public as a garden.*

up of disused London churchyards as places of relaxation for the poor. London churchyards had been closed to new interments following an act of parliament of 1852, when serious overcrowding underground had made them not only unpleasant but extremely serious health hazards. They were locked up and allowed to become rubbish-strewn and overgrown. The sight of these wasted plots was a source of great frustration to Octavia and her ladies, collecting rents in areas like Drury Lane where there were absolutely no open spaces to allow the poor to escape from the noise and smell of their tenements. The Kyrle campaign was almost immediately successful, resulting in the opening of the churchyards in Drury Lane and Waterloo, soon to be followed by Bloomsbury and Bethnal Green. By 1883 a list of 'public urban parks and recreation grounds' included no fewer than 62 London burial grounds turned into gardens. Other small spaces were soon commandeered for the poor, including the site of Horsemonger Lane Gaol and the Poores' Land in Bethnal Green, but the open spaces committee of the Kyrle society experienced its finest hour with the opening of Vauxhall Park in 1890.

In 1888 it looked as if a row of eight houses fronting onto Lambeth Road, known as the Lawn, together with Carroun House next door, were going to be purchased for redevelopment. In view of the almost complete absence of open spaces in the area, a committee was formed to raise the money to purchase the properties and lay them out as a park. The major open spaces organisations and the leading figures

in the movement all became involved, including HRH Princess Louise, George Shaw-Lefevre and Robert Hunter, but the Kyrle Society took the lead in bringing them together and raising that part of the purchase price (£43,500) that had to be found from private donors (£9,400). The Kyrle undertook to lay out the land, and organised the ceremony at which the Prince and Princess of Wales declared the park open, on 7 July 1890.

It was a great triumph for Octavia and the Kyrle, but after all this effort the park had to be handed over to Lambeth vestry, because none of the open spaces groups were constituted to own and manage land. This was a problem, firstly because Octavia

was always suspicious of public bodies, and must have had reservations about handing over to them the fruits of philanthropy; and secondly because public bodies were often very unenthusiastic about taking on open spaces anyway. It was by no means taken for granted in those days that taxes and rates should be used to provide such amenities, and by the end of the 1880s the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association was in a financial hole, because the Metropolitan Board of Works was refusing to take on churchyards and other sites that the MPGA had acquired. (The situation was saved only when the London County Council [LCC] replaced the board of Works in 1889 and turned out to be more sympathetic to providing such amenities. In the year of its formation it accepted the 310-acre site of Parliament Hill Fields which had been purchased for £305,000 from contributions raised from public and private sources.) As late as 1907 the levying of a two-pence-in-the-pound rate to acquire Purley Beeches was so controversial as to require that a poll of the whole parish had to be taken, and 40 per cent of the ratepayers voted against it.

Prior to the creation of the LCC, the public body most likely to show an interest in open spaces was, rather surprisingly, the Corporation of the City of London. From the beginning of the 1870s, members of the Corporation were concerned that, as suburbs were built over what had been countryside, Londoners were becoming more and more cut off from the natural environment. City funds were therefore made available for the purchase and management of open spaces: West Ham Park in 1874; Epping Forest in 1878; Burnham

Beeches in 1880; Highgate Wood and Queen's Park in 1886. However, the generosity of the City fathers was not limitless, and there was no obvious reason for them to be taking on woodlands in Buckinghamshire.

Octavia and others came to the conclusion that a voluntary body was needed that would be constituted not only to raise funds for the purchase of open spaces but to own and manage them for the benefit of the public. This was the genesis of the National Trust.

In 1884 Mr W.J. Evelyn, a descendant of the famous diarist, had approached Octavia offering part of his ancestor's celebrated garden at Sayes Court, Deptford as a public park. He wished to include in his gift a garden building to be used as a museum. Octavia consulted her old friend Robert Hunter who warned her that there was no public body capable of receiving and managing such a gift. The fact that a building was included ruled it out for the local authority as it was not purely an open space, and none of the campaigning bodies such as the Kyrle or the Commons Preservation Society were

constituted to own and manage land. Hunter pondered on the problem and in September 1884 he delivered a paper to a social science conference in Birmingham calling for the establishment of a new type of body, capable of acquiring and managing land and buildings in the public interest. To illustrate the need for such a body he gave the example of 'a gentleman in the neighbourhood of London' who had 'offered to dedicate to the public a couple of acres of open land with a building capable of being used as a museum or lecture theatre'. Hunter's speech was printed and circulated, and on 10 February 1885 Octavia wrote to him suggesting that the new body should be set up as a trust rather than a company and called the Commons and Gardens Trust. Across the top of her letter Hunter wrote in pencil '?National Trust?' However, it took another decade for the Trust to come into existence, and Mr Evelyn got tired of waiting. He transferred over seventeen acres – either as gift or at below market rates – to the local authority and it is now Deptford Park. One of the reasons for the delay was the opposition of George Shaw-Lefevre who feared (correctly as it turned out) that such a body would draw support away from his Commons



*The churchyard of St John's, Waterloo Road, was planted and opened to the public as a garden in 1877. The Kyrle Society arranged for the verse by George Herbert, 'All may have, if they dare try, a glorious life or grave', to be inscribed in glass mosaic on the side wall of the church in 1883.*

*Photo: Gavin Young*



*The opening of Vauxhall Park by the Prince and Princess of Wales, 7 July 1890*

Preservation Society. However, by the beginning of the 1890s it was becoming obvious that the CPS approach was of only very limited usefulness in preserving open spaces. Large tracts of land were coming onto the market which had never had any rights of commons, so that unless someone bought them they would be developed. This was particularly true in the Lake District which had become much more accessible thanks to the railways. In 1893 Hardwicke Rawnsley, who had worked for Octavia as a young man and was now vicar of Crosthwaite, just outside Keswick, travelled to London to tell her that unless some land-holding body could be formed, sites such as Lodore Falls would be lost forever. ‘Not ten minutes had elapsed before she said: “If Sir Robert Hunter will help us and the Duke of Westminster will allow us to meet in Grosvenor House, the scheme will go forward”’.<sup>1</sup>

The first meeting of the National Trust took place at Grosvenor House, the London home of the Duke of Westminster, on 16 July 1894 and the memorandum and articles were registered on 12 January 1895. It immediately received its first gift of land – Dinas Oleu, overlooking Barmouth harbour, from Mrs Fanny Talbot. From that point onwards, there is a shift in the accounts of Octavia’s open spaces work that appeared in her annual Letters to Fellow-Workers. First of all, it moves outside of London and its suburbs to cover the whole country. Second, the spaces involved get much bigger. Instead of six acres in Bethnal Green or eight acres in Vauxhall, Octavia was after 108 acres of Derwentwater and 700 acres of Ullswater. The only open space campaign which came close in the pre-National Trust days was Parliament Hill Fields at 310 acres, but that was so large and so expensive that even Octavia had taken it for granted that the bulk of the money would have to come from public sources. The National Trust properties, on the other hand, were privately funded and privately managed.<sup>2</sup>

‘Most of us are in no way urging that such purchases should lose their grace and spring and spontaneity by being made compulsory, nor, by being embodied in the nation’s expenditure, press hardly on those who are struggling for absolute subsistence. We are not asking that such areas should be acquired by rate or tax, but that, by the voluntary combination of many, great and permanent possessions should be acquired for the people.’<sup>3</sup>

The extraordinary aspect of the account which Octavia gives of the early days of the Trust in her Letters to Fellow-Workers is the speed with which the sites were acquired. With scarcely any staff and minimal resources at its disposal, the Trust acquired, in the 18 years of its early existence described by Octavia in her Letters to Fellow-Workers, the most important of its now enormous landholdings in the Lake District, together with very substantial areas in Kent and Surrey, Morte Point in Devon, the Cheddar Gorge and other properties spread around the country. It was as if a barrier had been broken through, and people suddenly found the sort of organisation they had been looking for ‘to keep for her people for ever, in their beauty and accessible to all, some of England’s fairest and most memorable places’.<sup>4</sup>

The formation of the National Trust was significant in another way for the development in Octavia’s treatment of environmental issues in the Letters to Fellow-Workers. In the earlier campaigns for open spaces in London, she had argued on the basis of health. People in crowded tenements needed some open space to sit in, to breathe some fresh air, to get away from the noise of the children, to rest after a long day at work. However, Octavia also regarded open spaces as having a moral and spiritual value. They could bring people, poor as



*Vauxhall Park today*

well as rich, into a frame of mind that made them open to transcendental reflections. Although Octavia had always held this view,<sup>5</sup> it comes to the fore in discussions of National Trust properties. She makes it explicit in her confidence that Gowbarrow will be ‘consecrated to the nation’:

‘There are too many who know that man does not live by bread alone; that when all material wants have been duly recognised and attended to, there does remain in England enough wealth for her to set aside a few areas where man may contemplate the beauty of nature, may rest, may find quiet, may commune with his God in the mighty presence of mountain, sky and water, and may find that peace, so difficult to realise in the throng of populous cities.’<sup>6</sup>

The casualty of the enormous and unexpected success of the National Trust was the Kyrle Society. In her Letters to Fellow-Workers following the announcement of the Trust’s formation in 1894, Octavia says little of the Kyrle except that it has been prevented by shortage of funds from carrying out much work. This was hardly surprising, as Octavia was going to the same people, with her appeals for thousands of pounds to purchase properties for the Trust, as would formerly have supported the Kyrle. Miranda Hill died in 1910 and Octavia in 1912. Without its two founders the Kyrle withered away, closing down in 1917. The value of its work had been recognised and largely taken on by other bodies, but it has suffered the sad posthumous fate of almost complete oblivion.<sup>7</sup>

Octavia’s posthumous reputation suffered a similar eclipse. She was regarded by her contemporaries as one of the outstanding women of her age, and she was one of only three women to receive tickets in their own right to attend the

celebration of Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee in Westminster Abbey in 1887 (the other two were Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler).

However, Octavia spent the last part of her life fiercely resisting the tendency to involve the state in social welfare. She opposed municipal housing, the old age pension and free health care. As the march of the welfare state became unstoppable in the twentieth century, she became a pariah of the social policy academics, who tend to be centre-left in their political alignment. Her great achievements in housing the poor were actually decried as holding back the advance of state provision. The fact that she had vehemently opposed female suffrage did not endear her to feminists.

Things have changed a bit now. First of all, there is widespread recognition that the rights-based, cradle-to-grave welfare state carries its own problematical baggage, and a recognition that we need a plurality of providers, including the voluntary sector. Secondly, the rise of Women’s Studies has stirred interest in those women who succeeded in making their voices heard in a man’s world – even if they were decrying votes for women.

However, if we are into revisionist mode, Octavia Hill deserves rehabilitation at least as much as a founder of the modern environmental movement. There is a tendency to think that environmentalism was invented in the 1980s, or in the swinging sixties at the earliest. There has been very little scholarly work done on its antecedents, most of whom are to be found in the Victoria era. Together with her mentor John Ruskin, Octavia Hill did much to awaken and articulate a view of nature and its resources as being of more than practical use.

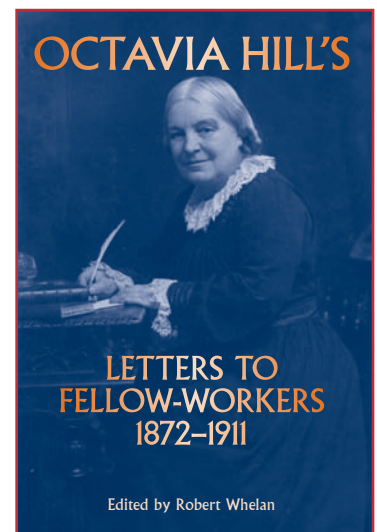
Of course, she began in a fairly instrumentalist way, using the fresh air of her little inner-city spaces to cleanse the lungs of slum-dwellers. But it became much more than that as she came to regard the natural world as a locus for transcendental values, bringing us closer to God, to peace and to reflections on our shared heritage as citizens. She was amongst the first to realise that the natural world doesn't always have to be tidied up for our use. When 53 acres of Churchyard Bottom Wood in Highgate were acquired for the public in 1897 at a cost of £30,000, Octavia asked that some of it be left as what we would call wilderness:

'Churchyard Bottom Wood is a real wood; and if the local authorities will only be sensible enough to leave it unspoiled in its natural beauty, instead of turning it into a conventional park, it will be a source of special delight to Londoners.'<sup>8</sup>

I never can see why open spaces dedicated to the public should be elaborately fenced from them with iron railings. Hampstead Heath is not enclosed, nor Blackheath, nor Wimbledon Common. Why should the public be forced to go far round to enter through rare gates, instead of reaching their open space at the nearest point to their own homes? Again, why spend large sums draining with pipes, and so destroying some plants and some beauties? Surely, if paths are well and solidly made up with stones, and a good crown to them, that would do well for a path through a wood! Why should there not be some damp hollows for the marsh-marigolds and some look of nature left?<sup>9</sup>

Of course, Octavia did not share the globalist environmental view that we should be as concerned about rainforests in South America, which we will never visit, as with Hampstead Heath, which we may, but then no one else did either at that time. Nor would she have gone along with the view, held by many in the modern environmental movement, that the natural world can have 'rights' against man. Octavia was a devout Christian and put human well-being first in all things. However she was far from being a utilitarian who regarded everything in terms of maximising profits. In spite of her rift with Ruskin in 1877, she retained enough of the master's teaching to regard quality of life as being of prime importance – in Ruskin's most famous phrase, 'there is no wealth but life'. In this sense Octavia is still overdue for a re-assessment by those who pigeon-hole her as the fierce landlady who evicted tenants when the second week's rent fell due, and who opposed pensions and votes for women. There was more to her than that.

Octavia Hill's Letters to Fellow-Workers, 1872-1911, edited by Robert Whelan and Anne Anderson, is available from Civitas at the special offer price of £30.00 plus £2.75pp.



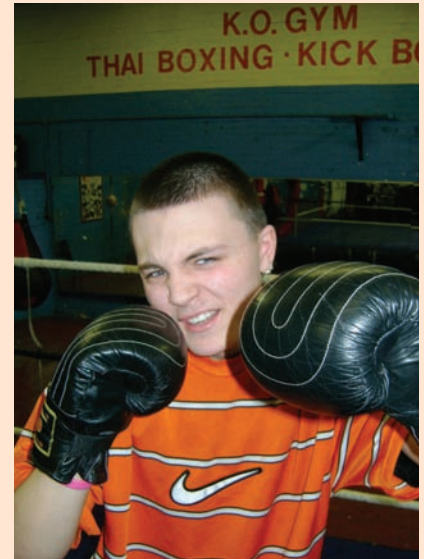
- 1 Rawsley, H., 'A National Benefactor: Sir Robert Hunter', *Cornhill Magazine*, vol. 36, 1914, p.237.
- 2 When Octavia was working with Robert Hunter on drawing up the National Trust's memorandum of association she sought advice on the American movement to preserve open spaces from Ellen Chase, who had been one of her housing managers before moving back to the USA. Yellowstone had been established as the world's first national park in 1872, and there were other bodies set up in the USA to acquire and preserve land. However they were all public bodies, run by departments of national or local government. The National Trust, by contrast, was an independent charity, and, in the words of its historian Jennifer Jenkins: 'has proved well suited to the British wariness of state intervention'. ['The Roots of the National Trust', *History Today*, Vol. 45, January 1995, pp. 3-7.] As Octavia put it in one of the Letters to Fellow-Workers: 'It is a principle of modern life in free countries that we are not directed from above, as a tool, but have to think out what is best to do, each in his own office'. ['Letter to My Fellow-Workers, 1874', in Whelan, R., *Octavia Hill's Letters to Fellow-Workers, 1872-1911*, London: Civitas, 2005, p.39.]
- 3 Octavia Hill, 'National beauty as a national asset', *The Nineteenth Century and After*, vol. LVIII, 1905, p.938.
- 4 Hill, Octavia, 'Letter to My Fellow-Workers: Work Among the Poor During 1896', in Whelan (ed.), 2005 p.393.
- 5 In 1877 she had argued for open access to common land as a means of encouraging patriotism and improving character: '... the love of being connected with the land is innate; it deepens a man's attachment to his native country, and adds dignity and simplicity to his character... It will be a link between the many and through the ages, binding with holy happy recollections those who together have entered into the joys its beauty gives ... into one solemn joyful fellowship.' (*Our Common Land*, pp.205-06.)
- 6 Hill, 'Letter to My Fellow-Workers, 1904', in Whelan (ed.) 2005, p.527
- 7 There is no Kyrle archive and almost no surviving material at all in any of our major public collections. When I was working on the edition of Letters to Fellow-Workers the only substantial collection of Kyrle Society Annual Reports (1887 and 1890-1912) was in, of all places, the New York Public Library. The Kyrle is unknown even to most of those with an interest in the history of environmentalism and civic amenity bodies. This is an extraordinary fate for an organisation that was so influential in its day that its activities were regularly reported in *The Times*, and which was able to get together on a platform for its first public meeting the Socialist revolutionary William Morris and that pillar of the establishment Lord Leighton, PRA.
- 8 In 1990 Queen's Wood was designated a statutory local nature reserve by Haringey Council. It is also listed as a site of metropolitan importance by the London Ecology Unit.
- 9 Hill, Octavia, 'Letter to My Fellow-Workers, 1897', in Whelan (ed.) 2005, pp.404-05.



# A Memorable Event

*Samuel Bracey*

*Since 2006, Civitas has been working with the London Boxing Academy in Tottenham to help young people who have been excluded from school by using a curriculum that combines sport and academic work. In the academic year 2007/08, 90% of students achieved GCSE pass grade. Sam Bracey joined the London Boxing Academy Community Project in October 2008 after being expelled from his school in Islington. In this essay, which formed part of Sam's coursework for English GCSE, he writes about the way in which the LBA's approach to education has helped him to deal with anger management issues.*



'YO three o'clock!' I shouted to scare Annie into turning.

'Ahhh', as she turned physically quivering like a shaken bottle, 'what you do that for?'

'I'm just messing about'.

'Did you hear what Marjac was saying about you and Claire?'

'Na blood. Tell, man init.'

'Well basically he's been saying how you got Claire up the duff.'

'OK don't say no more.'

I will find out the truth at three o'clock!

\* \* \* \* \*

**BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP** as the bell goes for registration.

'Miss, it's registration.'

'Why did you have to raise your voice?' said Sam.

'Who are you to tell me how to speak, Samuel?'

(He said it in a vicious, nasty way)

'Don't get rude Chris', said Sam.

'Prick', said Chris.

'Sam Bracey!'

'Yes miss.'

'Where is your homework?'

**BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP**

'Miss I really need to go! I need to talk to someone and its important!'

'SAM' she said in a furious tone.

'OK Miss, I will bring it in tomorrow.'

'Thank you Sam, be good over the weekend.'

'I will miss you too.'

'Bye'.

'Bye.'

\* \* \* \* \*

'Sam!... Chris! Stop it at once!'

Bang! Bang! Can't hear anything around me no more, not stopping just going on like in a race. Someone grabbed me like a fly and threw me off him onto the hard, rugged floor, feeling more mad and surprised as I saw a teacher, Mr. Smith,

was the one who threw me like that. I'm just lying down on the floor feeling an electric pulse through my body. Mr. Smith holding me down like a prisoner.

'AAAARRRRR!' as I pushed him off me like a ton of bricks.

'Chris, this isn't over yet!'

It's a fight to the finish - like in a film!

**BANG! SMACK! THUD! CLICK!**

Punches and kicks being thrown all over the body like rain on a winter day...

'Stop it, stop it!' I can see the fear in Chris's eyes, like a crying baby.

A massive rugby tackle by Mr. Smith and another teacher forces me to the ground. I could hear two more teachers shouting and see them fly across, holding my arms and legs. I just felt paralysed - couldn't move a bone or muscle.

'Calm down, Sam, calm down. Just breathe.' My breathing was rapidly moving up and down, breathing in and out. I'm sitting in the head teacher's office, holding a cup of water that felt like a frozen cup of water, holding a ice bag on my head and jaw. 'Sam, I tried everything for a different timetable, and you just throw it back in my face. I have no choice: you're expelled.'

\* \* \* \* \*

For the first couple of weeks, staying at home eating my guilt away on the sofa, I felt so frustrated and annoyed by what I did. On a positive point I am now attending a place called the London Boxing Academy (LBA), which has progressed my anger management and helped me a lot. It also gave me confidence in my education.

‘Oi Chris, wait there!’

‘Now what do you want? Everywhere I go you’re there. What do you want?’

Watching phlegm come from his mouth, falling and finally hitting the floor, it felt like the world stood still for a second. I could feel my voice getting louder as someone was turning their mobile phone.

‘What you been saying about Claire?’

And don’t chat shit.’

‘Don’t chat ’bout you two, anyways why should I chat ’bout you two, waste of my breath.’

‘Just tell me the truth! ARRRRR!’ in frustration. ‘Tell me the truth or it WILL get physical.’

Crunched as Chris turned away from me. I pulled off, a rapid grab to Chris’s shoulder.

Bang! I felt this thunderous anger splash out of me like a bit fat man smacking a pool of water. The enormity of the punch cannot be described. As quick as I could I pounced on Chris and bang bang! On all kinds of places over his entire face. Somehow we both ended up on our feet. Suddenly he pushed me. I grabbed onto a piece of his clothing—ripped into two like a lion tearing apart a bit

of zebra. Hearing laughter from all around me... Click, as he kicked me in my chest, which felt like my ribs have been broken. Gasping for air like I’m locked in a cupboard, tasting my salty blood in my mouth. My head spinning and turning, my eyes seeing red, getting more vexed. Got up slowly, with a last gasp of energy I sprint towards Chris’s back. Smack! Smack! Continuously punching, hitting him until blood pours from the cracked skin. Thud into my jaw—that felt like a brick what really was his knee. My blood splats on the floor like a raindrop.

‘SAM! SAM!’

BANG! SMACK! THUD! As I’m punching a boxing bag, that has helped me drain my anger out of me. Now I am continuing my GCSEs AND MY ANGER!

## Are exam questions a joke?

### THIS IS A JOKE

#### 1. Teaching Maths In 1970

A logger sells a lorry load of timber for £1000. His cost of production is 4/5 of the selling price. What is his profit?

#### 2. Teaching Maths In 1980

A logger sells a lorry load of timber for £1000. His cost of production is 4/5 of the selling price, or £800. What is his profit?

#### 3. Teaching Maths In 1990

A logger sells a lorry load of timber for £1000. His cost of production is £800. Did he make a profit?

#### 4. Teaching Maths In 2000

A logger sells a lorry load of timber for £1000. His cost of production is £800 and his profit is £200. Your assignment: Underline the number 200.

#### 5. Teaching Maths In 2009

A logger cuts down a beautiful forest because he is totally selfish and inconsiderate and cares nothing for the habitat of animals or the preservation of our woodlands. He does this so he can make a profit of £200. What do you think of this way of making a living? Topic for class participation after answering the question:

How did the birds and squirrels feel as the logger cut down their homes?

(There are no wrong answers. If you are upset about the plight of the animals in question counselling will be available.)

### THIS IS NOT A JOKE

Generating electricity causes problems for the environment.

Match words, **A**, **B**, **C** and **D**, with the numbers **1–4** in the sentences.

- A** acid rain
- B** global warming
- C** noise pollution
- D** radioactive waste

**D** radioactive waste

Nuclear power stations produce ... **1** ...

Wind farms produce ... **2** ...

Coal-fired power stations produce sulfur dioxide which causes ... **3** ...

All fossil-fuel power stations produce carbon dioxide which causes ... **4** ...

*From an AQA GCSE physics paper, 2008*

# Manufacturing matters and will matter even more in future

*Ruth Lea, Director,  
Civitas Manufacturing Renewal Project*

Britain's manufacturing sector matters as it always has done, and I always thought it bizarre that some policy makers thought otherwise. It still accounts for 13 per cent of GDP; is a major employer (three million directly); provides business for the services sector; and is well-represented in high-tech sectors. Over half of our exports (current account credits) are manufactures, but even so Britain is running a horrendous and worsening structural deficit on the current account. We have been increasingly 'living beyond our means'.

As the country buckles down for the worst recession since the 1980s (it may even be worse) many questions are being asked about the shape of the British economy as it recovers. One thing is certain. The bright chatter about the desirability of developing a de-industrialised, 'post-industrial' services economy, almost completely dependent on knowledge services such as the City, will be consigned to history.

This is not to say that the City, London's 'jewel in the crown', will cease to be important. The City currently accounts for 3.5 to 4 per cent of GDP and is a very major contributor to the exchequer. It will remain important but with major regulatory changes expected in the wake of the ongoing financial crisis, the sector is not expected to be a major source of growth in the foreseeable future – on the contrary it is likely to contract. Another major pressure point in the British economy in general, and the

balance of payments in particular, is the depletion of our oil and natural gas reserves. For too long, such riches have fed complacency about our energy supplies. For too long the commitment to the renewal of our nuclear power stations, for example, has been delayed, thus leaving the country dependent on imported gas and vulnerable to ageing and inadequate electricity supplies. But we now have to face up to some very bitter truths. As the balance of trade on oil and gas deteriorates, then other sectors of the economy will have to take up the slack – not least manufacturing.

The economy is badly unbalanced. The manufacturing sector should, will, inevitably play a major role in its rebalancing. This is not to decry or dismiss the potential role played by the 'knowledge based' services (including finance, business services and education) – but on their own they will not be adequate.

The time is ripe for a major discussion on what should be done to assist the development of manufacturing industry. It is encouraging to see that the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) has recently reinvigorated its manufacturing strategy programme<sup>1</sup> and all the major parties have expressed interest in the issue. It is also vital to consider the competitiveness issues facing businesses in the more traditional areas



of manufacturing such as steel and chemicals, which are high energy users. In the enthusiasm to encourage hi-tech industries, vital, basic industries must not be neglected.

As part of the debate, David Green and I have recently established the Civitas Manufacturing Renewal Project which will analyse the current state of the sector and assess a wide range of policy recommendations. The health of the manufacturing sector is vital to the future health of the economy. Given the extent of our current economic difficulties, the Project could not be timelier.

## References

1. BERR, *Manufacturing: New Challenges, New Opportunities*, September 2008, available from [www.berr.gov.uk](http://www.berr.gov.uk).



## David Copperfield School

Saturday 14 February was a red-letter day for the supplementary school in Great Yarmouth. Viscountess Knollys, High Sheriff of Norfolk, visited the school to rename it the David Copperfield School, evoking memories of Charles Dickens's great novel that is partly set in the town. The children, under the direction of Dr Jenny Benham, the Norfolk Coordinator, had prepared displays of Great Yarmouth in the nineteenth century and gave a reading of one chapter from a children's version of the novel. The event was also attended by Sarah Knollys, head of Maple Walk School, and representatives of the local community including Theodore Agnew, founder sponsor of the David Copperfield School.

## Maple Walk grows

### Two new schools planted in New Model School expansion

Our photograph shows Sarah Knollys, head of Maple Walk School, together with children and teachers on the freshly cleared site of the new building which will accommodate the school from September. The site, in Crownhill Road and close to Roundwood Park, formerly housed a social club and will be ideal for our small, one-form-entry primary school. The demand for places is higher than ever, in spite of the economic downturn, and a new school – Stephenson School – will be opening in the former Maple Walk premises. Another new school – the Faraday School – will be opening in Canning Town in September. Now that many parents find themselves unable to afford high fees, the appeal of low-cost independent schools with high standards becomes more obvious.



*Sarah Knollys, head of Maple Walk School, with teachers and children on the newly-cleared site in Roundwood Park.*

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