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THERAPEUTIC LANDSCAPES AS ASSEMBLAGES, ACTOR-NETWORKS AND CONTINGENT AFFORDANCES: THE EXAMPLE OF SALTWELL PARK

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THERAPEUTIC LANDSCAPES AS ASSEMBLAGES, ACTOR-NETWORKS AND CONTINGENT AFFORDANCES: THE EXAMPLE OF SALTWELL PARK

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Statement of Copyright

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Acknowledgements

Dedication

My mother Sylvia and father George;

My uncle Everton Worrell,

Cat Button;

Chaleo Yoovidhya.

Abstract

My doctoral research is situated within Geographies of Health, asking whether and how an urban public park is therapeutic. Specifically, the thesis is concerned with theorising what the physical, social and symbolic environments of the park consist of and how individual park users interact with those environments.

The thesis used Gesler's therapeutic landscape concept and typology as its starting point, but I have critiqued this typology for its boundedness, lack of temporal and material flux and implicit normative assumptions. The therapeutic landscape literature has rarely engaged with Post-structuralist and Non-Representational thinking, which are relatively rarely used within wider health geography discourse.

I sought to include all observable elements within the composition of the park fabric, including, for example, weather and wildlife, and cultural images and individual representations, following from assemblagic and actor network thinking. I sought to gain as many perspectives about the park's form and usage, obtaining empirical data through an innovative year-long mixed-methods approach of repeated ethnographic observation, participation observation, and purposive sampling semi-structured interviews, augmented where possible with an accompanying photovoice and mapping exercises. I spoke to nearly 60 people, respondents ranging from primary school children to new mothers to five male mental health service users. Within the text of this thesis, the empirical data has been mapped against the therapeutic landscapes' typology of natural, social and symbolic environments.

The ability of an individual to access and make beneficial use of the park depends upon their ability to gain physical, social and emotional access,. This is dependent upon factors such as physical proximity, social inclusion and the perception of the park. As such, the "therapeutic" is relational, a function of park-person interactions. The natural, social and symbolic environments typology should be seen as a series of assemblages of human and nonhuman elements that co-function under specific circumstances, and into which the park users situate themselves.

Key words:
Public parks, therapeutic landscapes, healing, actor-network theory, assemblages

Chapter One: PLACES THAT SHAPE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Introduction

In this first chapter, I undertake a number of tasks. The chapter starts with the research aims and associated research questions of the thesis. This is followed by a short summary of the first two theory chapters. and an outline of the contributions that the thesis makes in theoretical and methodological terms, with respect to the conception and study of therapeutic landscapes, and the application of post-structuralist theories. The substantive part of the chapter then examines the discourses around the social determinants of health and the specific concepts around health and well-being, and healing. This also includes discussion of the concept of therapeutic landscapes, accompanied by an outline of the particular form of "therapeutic" landscape that is the object of study of this thesis, a public park. The chapter ends by confirming the original contributions that this thesis makes to the literature on therapeutic landscapes, and a summary of each of the subsequent thesis chapters.

General research context:

The study of therapeutic landscapes has increasingly focussed upon everyday spaces, and how they play a part in the formation of health and well-being experiences. One space that has rarely been studied within this literature is the public park. In addition, the therapeutic landscape literature has rarely engaged with post-structuralist theories in the examination of human-environment interactions.

General research question

What is therapeutic about Saltwell Park in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear?

Thesis research aims

1. To critically assess the significance of the therapeutic landscape literature and post-structuralist on understandings of environment-space relations;

2. To critically assess the therapeutic nature of one park, Saltwell Park, in Gateshead;

3. To locate my research findings within the public health policy context of Gateshead

Thesis research objectives:

1. To use post-structuralist theories to inform the conceptualisation and observations of my study site;

2. To undertake a series of ethnographic observations of the features and usage of my park study site, over a year-long period;

3. Through the purposive sampling of park users and staff, to obtain a broad cross-section of the park's populations based upon gender, age, and lifecourse;

4. To use a suite of reflective qualitative methods to capture my own and participants' experiences of, and interactions with, the study site;

5. To use capture as many my own and park users' conceptions of health and well-being as possible, and how the park plays a part in their formation.

An outline of the theoretical stance of this thesis

Therapeutic landscapes

I start with the concept of the therapeutic landscape, a particular type of environment that is judged to have the capacity to positively affect human health. Originally developed by Wil Gesler (Gesler 1996; Gesler 2003; Gesler 1992; Palka 1999) to describe cultural responses to landscape and, in particular, responses to unique locations held to embody individual/ cultural belief systems about the restorative powers of Nature, the concept has moved towards more everyday locations where either modern medicine is practiced, or more general care practices and beliefs are enacted. Thus, the original description of therapeutic landscapes was applied to Bath Spa (Gesler 2003) or Lourdes (Gesler 1996), progressing onto care practices at street-level for the homeless (Johnsen *et al.* 2005), or how neighbourhood street life can have a positive effect upon well-being (Cattell *et al.* 2008), and the practice of care within the home (Donovan 2007). The Gesler framework suggests that there are certain characteristics that make up a therapeutic environment, that such a space can be identified by the characteristics of its three-four-fold typology of physical (natural / built), social and symbolic features. For example, this typology has seen an explicit use with regard to conceptualising how a particular in-patient mental health care facility could actually be made therapeutic (Curtis *et al.* 2007; Gesler 2007).

The concept of a therapeutic landscape has found a niche within the discourse of geographies of health as a framework for visualising human-place interactions. It was part of an explicit move away from biomedical conceptions within health geography, to one more in line with contemporary cultural and anthropological discourses, especially with a non-Western focus (Gesler 2003; Gesler 1992; Kearns and Gesler 1998).

An introduction to public parks

British public parks were actually a Georgian and Victorian policy response to series of discourses regarding personal and social health, a discourse which felt that urban residents needed to be brought into close contact with other social and natural neighbours. For example, it was felt that being near "nature" would be a cure for exposure to urban "bad air", or miasmas (Halliday 2001). This suggests that public parks could be seen as a form of "therapeutic" landscape. These neighbours were diverse in scope, such as fresh air, which would counter the effects of urban miasma (Halliday 2001) or wealthier people who, by their mere proximate presence, would illustrate superior comportment, deportment and lifestyle, and thus superior moral health (Blodgett 1976; MacMaster 1990 ; Olmsted 1873; Taylor 1999). As such, those characteristics of a public park that were felt to be healthy were not just inherent park design features, but were also ephemeral additions to that space. More recent commentaries upon public parks have highlighted their use within public policy initiatives for regeneration (Greenhalgh 1995), and improving social cohesion (Conway

2000; Forrest 2000; Peters *et al.* 2010), popular attitudes towards wildlife and the great outdoors (Goltsman *et al.* 2009), and public health (Wheater *et al.* 2007).

We all have an image of a public park. It perhaps should be bounded by iron railings, enclosed by trees, be a large space with different vistas, something that Boyd (2009) ascribes later in Chapter One. What I mean here is to question what is it that one experiences when in a park, in what form of environment. The presence, layout and form of the trees? The individual animals that make up wildlife? The presence and behaviour of other park users? Memories of previous visits?

In addition, the inherent design features of a park are themselves not stable. Vegetation is not, since it grows. Weather, an obvious feature of an open-air space, is not, especially in Britain. The composition, comportment, deportment and lifestyles of park users are not. When thinking about the Gesler typology, elements that might be located within it are not stable; some may appear, disappear and shift in form, during the course of the life of a park. As such, the park, or the environments that they are located in, alters in form and composition. Therefore, at what point is a location such as a public park, "stable", and thus within that "stability", does it acquire and retain its therapeutic qualities? For how long does the designation remain?

Healing and the therapeutic

There has been relatively little theorisation within the therapeutic landscape literature as to the mechanisms by which human-environment interactions may address particular issues of health and well-being. Pranikoff and Setha (2007) are two writers who propose that the therapeutic landscape literature should engage with environmental psychology to deepen understanding. In order to further address this gap, and to interpret my empirical data, I discuss a number of bodies of literature, including environmental psychology, that could point towards how human interactions with a particular space could have a therapeutic effect, as well as how, referring to the discussion above as to how the actual "place" itself could be materially constituted.

I did not use a specific set of *à priori* health and well-being outcomes to determine the qualities of Saltwell Park; I deliberately kept my research open. This is in keeping with Gesler's (2003) suggestion that such "healing" landscapes activate a wide range of dimensions of human existence and human "being". The effects and impressions that I recorded tended to encompass cognitive and attentional restoration (I have drawn health and well-being theories from environmental psychology, responding to the comments of Pranikoff and Setha (2007) and Milligan (2007)), physical exercise regimes, social connectedness and friendships (using the social capital concept), and some profoundly felt feelings towards the Park as a domesticated, homely space (using ideas centred upon home and topophilia (Tuan 1974)).

(Un)bounded spaces and post-structuralist theories

Reflecting upon the variability of the park landscape, I have turned to post-structuralist theories, and two in particular, actor network theory and assemblages. Both draw attention to a wide spectrum of heterogeneous elements within the social world, and that these include both human and nonhuman elements. In particular, assemblage is useful for theorising whole environments or cohesive, co-functioning collections that perform a role within the compass of human life (such as aeroplanes (Law 2002), or ships (Hillier 2009), or "driver-cars" (Dant 2004), or a landscape (Thrift 2007)). Assemblages are seen as not being fixed, bounded entities, but instead, permeable constitutions. Assemblages are also collectives that are in internal flux and contingent in function (see for instance Bennett 2005; McFarlane 2011; McFarlane and Anderson 2011), as opposed to the implication that therapeutic landscapes are stable in form and geographic situation. As such, assemblages, and some of those elements typical of actor network theory, constitute a useful device for re-siting a public park as not a singular spatial form, but instead as a series of interconnected heterogeneous objects, each in precarious flux and interrelations, and that a person may interact with one, or series of these within a location. Combined with the theory of contingent affordances from environmental psychology, where affordance is as much a function of the abilities of the person as of the features of the object (Scarantino 2003), the "therapeutic" in a therapeutic landscape might be the result of the relational, of a series of specific person-place interactions.

The original contribution of this thesis

I have seen fluidity to the characteristics of individual elements within Saltwell Park in time and space; as well as the overall form and function of the Park. People interact with a wide manner of entities in the Park – trees, weather, animals, the behaviours of the multitudes that any one individual encounters, images and imaginaries. I suggest that within the therapeutic-framework environments can be thought of as nested assemblages of their own. I have used a different conception of the Park study site, and to landscape in general, to the ones normally used in the therapeutic landscape literature, one that is derived from post-structuralist literatures, which have seen relatively little use within therapeutic landscape thought. Post-structuralism emphasises an environment that contains a wide grouping of humans, nonhumans, of sentient beings and non-sentient ones, of representations, of inter-connections between these elements, and of precariousness and contingency, and flux of both form and interrelations.

I suggest a nuanced set of interactions between individual park users and discrete elements therein, in time and space, and through time and space. It is through this webs of comings-together that the beneficial (and occasional negative) health effects are felt. In thinking about the term "therapeutic landscape", perhaps the therapeutic is not an inherent, fixed attribute of a location, but a function of relationships between various elements of landscape, including people, that interact with each other – it is relational. As such, the therapeutic is not a normative value of the landscape which is fixed and stable in space. To underline this suggestion, I incorporate the concept of contingent affordance as well (Scarantino 2003), which would suggest that the ability of a space to be therapeutic is also dependent upon the ability of an individual to make suitable contact and interaction therewith. This is pertinent to some of the social conflicts discussed within Chapter Five, as well as individual life histories in Chapter Six.

The Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991) model of the environmental determinants of health, suggests that particular wider determinants of health affect all individuals and social groups in fairly similar ways; yet of course, there is a substantial literature that points out how social conflicts around aspects such as lifestyle, ethnicity, gender, etc., affect health and well-being, through differential access to health care, increased risk of harm, or risk perception. There is a suggestion of a one-way directionality of agency within the model, that people are the passive subjects of wider forces. The empirical results of my research run alongside other research, to suggest room for counter-action and for some resistance to iniquitous situations. For example, my empirical data will illustrate how some people were able to defy social convention, or sudden abusive circumstances, in order to undertake biomedically beneficial activities or express aspects of identity.

There are implications of these results for public health. Future public health campaigns would seem to have to address issues of stigmatisation. Saltwell Park is the venue of a number of such campaigns. Working with the concept of the "assemblage" highlights the

presence of a social environment within the park within which individuals co-create and operate within social relations, with associated issues such as social position. This would imply that there is an important social policy dimension to public health campaigns, especially when issues of stigmatisation and discrimination are involved. Public health campaigns have a connection to individual health, through helping to create a favourable social environment for park users.

Methodological innovations

Conceptions of assemblage that have been highlighted include orientation to the world (McFarlane 2011; McFarlane and Anderson 2011) in which an observer should seek to be alive to the heterogeneity, multidimensionality and flux of the environments (Thrift 2007). I have used a suite of "ethnographic" methods to obtain perspectives upon the potentially "therapeutic" dimensions of Saltwell Park. Some methods have captured how some spaces have been used; others have provided an insight into personal perspectives upon usage patterns, and perceived effects upon the self. The methods' repeated use also captured the temporal dimensions to life in the Park, which varied from the short-term situated to the longer-term trends of lifecourses of Park and people. I interviewed members from a number of different social groups who have a place within the Park assemblage; purposive sampling and snowballing brought me into contact with Park staff, regular users, and people ranging in age from primary school children to grandparents.

In general, there are a series of temporal threads to the empirical data that I have obtained. I have incorporated a series of diurnal transect through the Park; another, a series of longitudinal threads through specific areas of the Park itself, with both intersected by the lifecourses of those who use the Park. As a result, person and place can be traced through time. This mixed methods usage seems to be not only innovative for post-structuralist methodologies, but also for health geographies and for the study of therapeutic landscapes. I will discuss the methods that I used for my study of the "therapeutic" and human interactions with the landscape within Saltwell Park in Chapter Three.

Health geography focuses on the relationships between human health, space, and place. This chapter is concerned with how places can be thought of as having particular qualities that are beneficial to human health and well-being.

I will first outline concepts of "health", "health and well-being" and ideas of therapeutic processes and healing, and also review the literature within health geography concerning "therapeutic landscapes". I then introduce the type of setting which is the subject for my thesis: the urban public park. Finally I show how parks were seen as "therapeutic landscapes" when they were first developed in the 19th century.

Wider Determinants in "Place Shaping" For Health

Two decades ago, Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991) produced a diagram that illustrated some of the geographic influences upon human health. A more developed version of their diagram proposed by Barton and Grant (2006), shown below in Figure 1.1, drew attention to the importance that a number of environmental factors have for human health.

Figure 1.1: "The Health Map" (Barton and Grant 2006: 252), based upon the diagram from Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991)

The version of this oft-cited diagram that I have included here makes a particular distinction between the macro forces that impact at the scale of the nation-state and at a global level; and more localised factors, that are felt at the scale of neighbourhoods and localities. It is at this neighbourhood level that I have located this thesis.

This "social model" of health and its wider determinants is consistent with the way that health is interpreted in this thesis. It also relates to the familiar World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of health:

> "[Health] as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being
> and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

(World Health Organisation n.d.)[1]

There is an ontological argument expressed here as to what human health and well-being is, which suggests that to be healthy involves a wide-ranging set of functions that extends beyond the merely physical, or biomedical. This broad theme has found some favour within the medical profession. There are parallels with studies from nursing (for example, Hoover 2002; O'Mathuna 2000; Whitehead 2003), and cultural studies (for example, Reiff *et al.* 2003). One dimension of what it is to be healthy is the absence of pain, which ranges from the prosaic and trivial, such as toothache or headache, to more severe forms that accompany more severe maladies. Bullington *et al.* (2003: 325) for example comment that pain is "a multi-dimensional phenomenon, at the intersection between biology and culture", adding that the modern understanding of pain must take into account the emotional, psychological, and physiological state of the patient, as well as the prevailing socio-political climate, and debates on existential or philosophical aspects. In a similar vein, Wendler, argues that our experience of pain and healing is varied and "*multi-dimensional, multi-relational*" (Wendler 1996: 838 emphasis added).

Such interest in seeing human health as being multidimensional has had applications outside medical spheres in fields such as health geography. Wil Gesler's (bio)physical-mental-emotional-spiritual-social model of healing (and, by extension, of "health"), also referred to as "PMESS", was proposed (Gesler 2003) to conceptualise what aspects of a human life healed by interaction with a therapeutic landscape (as outlined in the following chapter) – namely a range of attributes of human *being*. Gesler as well as others in the humanist therapeutic landscape field, wanted to move health geography away from a preoccupation with disease or illness, to focus on a wider human experience of well-being. The PMESS model involved considering cognitive, psychological, emotional and social functions that are important for well-being. There is therefore an ontological implication that "health" is not thought of simply as being free of disease or illness, but rather as a capability for a range of personal functions that are innate, or that are learnt and socially constructed, and that encompass states of body and mind. This wider conception of human health, as including attributes of a person's physical, psychological and emotional make-up, have led to consideration of the term "well-being".

Discourses around "Well-Being"

Some commentators have sought to 'unpack' the term "well-being". As well as referring to a personal capacity for a set of functions, well-being can be interpreted as referring to pre-personal concepts of individual functioning within societies, as well as ideas about 'relative standards' for quality of life.

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[1] This definition can be found at https://apps.who.int/aboutwho/en/definition.html. The original definition was written in 1948.

PLACES THAT SHAPE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

I take as my starting point a review of the well-being literature by Fleuret and Atkinson (2007). Citing Gough (2005), they observe that "well-being" is "a useful umbrella concept". As is apparent from their review of various themes, there is no one single (set of) definitions for well-being. The first concept that they turn to is **Maslovian Theory of needs** (see also Searle 2008), followed by the **Relative standards theory** (for example, Wilkinson and Pickett 2009) and then Amartya Sen's **Capability Sets** (1993).

With respect to Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs (Maslow 1970), there are certain themes that could be relevant to a discussion of the health and well-being benefits of a public park. The themes are: (1) existence of life; physiological needs; (2) psychological needs; (3) safety needs met; (4) belonginess and love; (5) esteem; (6) cognitive needs and the ability to acquire and use knowledge; (7) to be moved by aesthetics; and lastly (8) self-actualisation and self-expression. Maslow's approach has been critiqued for having allowing no personal conceptions of well-being, and for implying that well-being can be measured.

In terms of relative standards, the arguments are about income inequality and relative living standards, as exemplified by Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) in the *Spirit Level*[2]. This approach has been critiqued for having no objective measures of well-being. Public parks were intended to be public spaces that would give free, largely open access. There is a perhaps a spatial social justice argument as well, in that a public park, might be free, and give open access, but ought also to be physically accessible, in that it is as close to the poor as to the rich, and also be socially accessible to all, providing a socially inclusive setting. Moreover, a public park was intended to provide access to nature, clean air and open space in urban areas where these were limited. This would perhaps lead to the discourse of environmental justice and the thoughts of, in particular Swyngedouw (for example, Swyngedouw 2009; Swyngedouw and Heynen 2003)[3]. By comparison with the Needs Theory, the Relative Standards concept has drawn criticism for its relativist conception of needs and lack of objective standards and comparability.

Sen's (1993) combination of the two above concepts includes objective and subjective descriptors of well-being, together with combinations of functional capacity that make up a person's state. This has drawn critiques from absolutists and relativists. The concept is based on capability sets allowing one to flourish: these are (1) social opportunities to increase well-being; (2) the capability skills set required to undertake this; and (3) a person's

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[2] See also table 2.1 in Searle (2008) which compares changes in perceptions of necessities in Britain 1979-99; and see Bradshaw J (2008).

[3] Swyngedouw writes about socio-ecology. For example, in *Urban Political Ecology, Justice and the Politics of Scale* (Swyngedouw and Heynen 2003), he argues for a Marxist urban political ecology approach to the study of metabolic socio-environmental processes that make the city; in *The Antinomies of the Postpolitical City,* Swyngedouw (2009) argues that cities are environmentally unsustainable, and that actions to limit and reverse environmental damage on both a city and global scale is based upon a limiting post-political technocratic managerialism; he calls for a new politics that opens up a space for the socially marginalised.

latent capabilities. I note here that this concept is akin to contingent affordances discussed later (see Scarantino 2003). Finnis and Nussbaum both proposed an outline of what they saw as being the dimensions of human flourishing (see Figure 1.2 below).

Finnis	Nussbaum
Life itself – maintenance and transmission	Life: normal length of life
Knowledge and appreciation of beauty	Health: good health, adequate nutrition and shelter
Some degree of excellence in work and play	Bodily integrity: movement, choice in reproduction
Friendship, harmony with others	Senses: imagination and thought, informed by education
Self-integration, inner peace	Emotions: attachments
Coherent self-determination – self and actions	Practical reason: critical reflection and planning life
Transcendence, source of meaning and value	Affiliation: social interaction, protection against discrimination
	Other species: respect for and living with other species
	Play
	Control over one's environment, politically (choice) and materially (property)

Figure 1.2: Dimensions of human flourishing and basic capabilities (from Fleuret and Atkinson 2007: Table 1, 110)

Fleuret and Atkinson (2007: 113) reviewed concepts within a number of well-being discourses, drawing up a model of their own that introduces the spatial aspects to these dimensions (Figure 1.3).
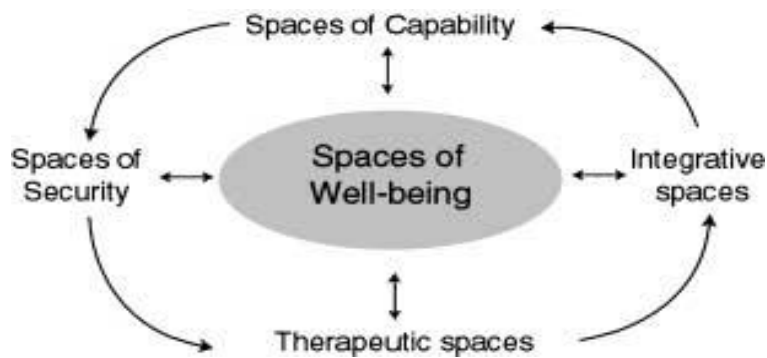
Figure1.1: Spaces of Well-Being, from Fleuret and Atkinson (2007: 113, Figure 1)

For example, Bodin (2000) comments that the idea of spaces of capability can be used to examine how social processes of stigmatisation, as well disability and aging, can affect

capability as originally defined by Sen[4]. Thus, by modifying those social processes that inhibit an individual's participation in healthy activities and in therapeutic events, a wider popular discourse can be created that includes, instead of excluding, the capabilities of those who would be marginalised. This refers back to the Dahlgren and Whitehead diagram, by implicating social factors in the health and well-being of humans. However, in the Dahlgren and Whitehead model, the social factors are presented as being communal and an expression of collective action without reference to discriminatory behaviours, whereas Bodin's comments bring those processes of discrimination to the fore. Some of these ideas are explored in more detail in Chapter Two, especially those relating to social integration, security and capability. My interpretation of an urban park later in this thesis uses elements of this model of 'spaces of well-being'.

"Healing"

So far, I have discussed literatures around "health" and "well-being". It is here that I wish to introduce another view of spatial influences upon health within the health geography literature by referring to healing. There is a view within health geography that suggests that landscapes can play an active role in changes to human health and are not merely geographical 'stages' across which wider forces range. These changes include positive 'healing' and enhancement of good health. This discourse is the therapeutic landscape literature, which I discuss in detail later on within this chapter.

Gesler makes particular reference to *healing* in developing his therapeutic landscape concept (Gesler 2003: 8), mentioning that healing is descended from the old English word "haelon", to make whole. He refers to Gross, who defines healing as:

> "To make whole / sound: to cure of a disease, wound, or other derangement, to restore to health;

> To cure or restore to a sound, healthy condition (a disease, ailment or wound); to remedy or amend, to repair;

> To restore to original purity or integrity, to make (a person) whole, to restore from evil."

(Gross 1958: 52)

Initially, Gesler suggested that healing landscapes have the properties to affect a wide array of health conditions, that included: the biomedical sense (physical healing); a sense of psychological well-being (mental healing); and feelings of spiritual renewal (spiritual healing) (Gesler 1996: 96). It has been suggested that possible healing manifestations are based around three threads of human experience of health (Williams 1998), namely recovery from

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[4] See for example recent work on "fat bodies" and discourses about their biomedical, political and popular construction (Colls and Evans 2008; Colls and Evans 2009; Colls and Evans 2010; Colls and Evans 2011; Evans and Colls 2009; Evans *et al.* 2011).

an ailment, the maintenance of a particular state of health (and its possible improvement), and finally making comfortable one's existence in the face of an irrecoverable situation (palliative experiences).

There are other possible ontological manifestations of healing, besides the personal and biomedical, such as conflict resolution or reconstruction. Of healing, Flexner (1987: 880-1) suggested that it "[Brought] to an end to conflicts between people or groups". In addition, healing is thought to be a long-term project, beyond a binary *healed-not healed* state. For instance, Draucker observed that healing was "an active, on-going, complex and time-consuming experience of hard work [which] involved building a new place in the world [for the self]" (Draucker 1992: 5). Thus, to experience continual good health and well-being was not a short term exercise, but was something that necessitated an on-going commitment. This idea is illustrated, for example, in one of the slogans for the public health campaign *Change 4 Life,* which is "Get Going Everyday" (H.M.Government 2011: Change for Life).

Allied to discussions about healing is the idea of conditions that are 'therapeutic'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word "therapeutic" as:

> **"**Relating to the healing of disease: *diagnostic: and therapeutic facilities;*
>
> Administered or applied for reasons of health;
>
> Having a good effect on the body or mind; contributing to a sense of well-being.*"*

<div align="right">(Oxford University Press 2011)</div>

This discussion around concepts of health, well-being, and healing therefore underpins an exploration of the body of literature that forms one of the central planks of the thesis, the therapeutic landscape concept.

Therapeutic Landscapes

In this section, I outline the development of the concept of therapeutic landscapes: settings that help to make a person free of disease, or that contribute towards healing or a sense of well-being. The conceptual frameworks underpinning the idea of therapeutic landscapes relate to "… man-environment relationships; humanist concepts such as sense of place and symbolic landscapes; structualist concepts such as hegemony and territoriality; and blends of humanist concerns, structualist concerns, and time geography…" (Gesler 1992: 735).

Allison Williams emphasises the increasing popularity of the concept of therapeutic landscapes, saying that it has been the subject of "several books … and the number of peer-reviewed research papers appears to grow exponentially as each year passes" (Williams 2007: 1). Not only does the therapeutic landscape concept have an increasing resonance within "health and social geography" (Williams 2007: 1), but also other disciplines have been

"formally employing [it] … kinesiology, sport sociology, midwifery and nursing are among these disciplines" (Williams 2007: 3).

Using Gesler's framework (Gesler 2003), there are four elements, or environments to a therapeutic landscape: natural, built, social, and symbolic. The natural comprises water bodies, weather and landforms, the built human architectural forms. Curtis suggests that these two environments are interlinked 'material' dimensions of a therapeutic landscape (Curtis 2010). As humans, we both encounter and create landscapes as we live our daily lives. Gesler (2003) described healing landscapes that came into being when beliefs of healing properties were ascribed to natural landscape features; an example of this is Bath Spa, where the Celts, Romans and Georgian Britons believed this to be the case; whilst at Epidaurus, a naturally beautiful site was imbued with religious symbolism. To a member of those societies, the prevailing cultural context would have encouraged the perception and usage of such sites as places to receive a healing experience. The cultural context would have encompassed contemporary biomedical knowledge, cultural norms, and the reputation of the site. These beliefs could have been passed on by significant others in people's lives: medical practitioners, priests, family members, friends, or generated through personal experience healing spaces.

At first, the therapeutic landscape literature concerned "special" or unique landscapes. In his discussion of Lourdes, Gesler suggested that:

> "A therapeutic landscape arises when physical and built environments, social conditions and human perceptions combine to produce an atmosphere which is conducive to healing."

(Gesler 1996: 96)

The term 'atmosphere' has rarely been used within the literature of therapeutic landscape research. Gesler does not venture into any more depth with his use of the term *atmosphere*. In the context of Lourdes, he adds that "the natural and built environments, the contrast between the sacred and the profane, a very strong bond of fellowship, and the working-out of personal problems while interacting with a group of sympathetic believers are all components of symbolic landscapes which contribute to a healing atmosphere." (Gesler 1996: 96)[5]. Engagement with the notion of a therapeutic landscape later developed to consider more "everyday" landscapes, such as the home, or a person's neighbourhood (Williams, 2007a). Moreover, creating some of these landscapes can be therapeutic as well. For instance, some of the psychosocial benefits felt by people individuals undertaking gardening seem to bear comparison to discussions of therapeutic landscapes (Milligan *et al.*

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[5] More recently, atmosphere has been the subject of non-representational inquiry. For example, in his review of recent thought on "affective atmospheres", Ben Anderson has recently asked "[H]ow does an atmosphere "envelop" and "press" upon life"? (Anderson 2009: 77).

2004), The garden landscape will emerge partly through human endeavour: beds are laid out, ground is tilled, fertilizer added, seeds planted, weeds removed, water added. This is a form of "therapeutic landscape" that is not just given, but which comes into continuous being, through the continued efforts of those who interact with it and benefit from it. There is a therapeutic benefit that accrues through the tending and attending to a garden-landscape, that is multidimensional, assigning for instance physical and emotional benefits.

Smyth (2005) draws a distinction between three types of therapeutic landscapes: namely, *places* (as in the "special places" mentioned above), and *spaces* (for example, where organised practices such as medical care are located (with reference to Massey, 2005). Such spaces are also created through an "ecology of place", which is "the interplay of location, internal design and architecture … people interacting ... [and] objects, artefacts and language" (Smyth 2005: 490). This is the same interplay of social relations and power structures that Gesler outlined in his 1992 article. Lastly, *networks*, which are outside of a formal health system, and can be "transitory spaces [for example] "the "soup run", or "alternative therapists" (Smyth 2005: 493).

Gesler (2003) commented that not all people would find a 'therapeutic landscape' therapeutic. It has been commented that some therapeutic landscapes are simultaneously healing and harmful (Williams 2007: 2). This again implies an existential dimension to our experience of health. Both Conradson (2005) and Milligan and Bingley (2007) suggest that therapeutic landscapes operate through the interaction between the person and the place and that this varies from one person to another. In the context of his study of 'Holton Lee', a retreat in England, Conradson discusses how the "self" is positively changed through an encounter within an "ecology of place". The self has a capacity to absorb encounters with other events and entities (Conradson 2005: 341); this self "relates" itself to others and internalises the embodied and psychological aspects of the encounters, "[re-]shaping the contours of the self". Healing is therefore a transformative process sensed by the individual that experiences it.

Milligan and Bingley (2007) noted that, although brought up in rural areas, some participants had been told by their parents that playing in woodland was 'too risky'. This may have had the effect of cutting them off from a potentially therapeutic experience of woodland areas. A parallel experience was reported in later urban studies undertaken by Carver *et al.* (2008) in Perth with regard to children's play areas. In both north-west England and in Western Australia, this distrust of natural spaces came from a "stranger danger" discourse, which emphasised the importance of not being out of (visual or audible) contact with parents.

In so far as such discourses are constructed at the social, rather than individual family level, this idea of therapeutic landscape could also interpreted through the idea of s*tructuration,* the mix of social structure and human agency (Gesler 1992). Gesler (2003) also relates his

view that a "therapeutic landscape" in a hospital will be more therapeutic if the hospital institution encourages staff within it to care about the holistic well-being of the patients. A related action is the creation of what are perceived to be less threatening, more welcoming environments in Western health care systems, both inside hospitals (Gesler and Curtis 2007) and outside, even on the high street (BBC1 2008; Channel4 2008; Gesler and Curtis 2007).

Therapeutic landscapes have also been interpreted as dynamic and emergent. Discussing his attendance at several sessions of Dance Movement Therapy, McCormack comments that:

> "By therapeutic spaces I mean those spaces emergent through the enactment of practices that explicitly attempt to facilitate a kind of transformation in awareness, thinking, feeling and relating."

> (McCormack 2003: 490)

This also mirrors Doreen Massey's (2005) suggestion that landscapes in general come into being through the continual of generative processes over the passage of time.

This outline of therapeutic landscape literature has encompassed particular spaces that are both accessible to the general public and those that are not. There is a difference between therapeutic landscapes that are private, or intended for private use, and those that are created for public consumption. In the latter category, there is more room for unexpected social encounters that provide either positive benefits or negative experiences and the space may be reflecting a more collective view of what is therapeutic. Such issues are considered in the next section. This thesis is situated in a park, which is a form of public space that was specifically intended to be therapeutic, is intended to be open to all, and in which encounters with the physical fabric of the landscape are also facilitated or moderated through encounters with other members of the public.

Public Parks

In this section, I outline the role that public parks occupy in the life of cities, their earliest roots in 19th century discourses about public health and social morality, then leading onto the various health benefits that are experienced by socio-cultural groups who use them. Public parks were a new form of urban space that was both available to the public, and which was intended to be of benefit to all members of the public, issues that I discuss in greater length later on.

The urban theorist Schaefer (2003: 5) comments that "a city without parks is not a city, at least not a modern one". Parks have a significant role in the lives of urban dwellers in the global north (Walker 2004), and in British life (Greenhalgh 1995; Schaefer 2003). Harding (2000) says that there are 30,000 parks in the UK, of which 5,000 have historic status.

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Harding does not define what he means by "historic"; he possibly means parks built during the period up to the start of the First World War, the period of greatest park construction (Conway 2000). In addition, a strict definition of what these "public" parks are is not offered – Harding may also have included country parks, cemeteries, verges, allotments, etc. Carr *et al.* (1992) offer a hierarchy of urban public spaces, including types of park, ranging from for example neighbourhood parks to large central parks (see Table 1.1 below).

Public or central park	Publically developed and managed open space, of citywide importance. Often located near the centre of an urban space. E.g. Central Park, New York, USA.
Downtown parks	In city centres; can be historic or new park developments.
Commons	A large green area developed in older British cities e.g. Town Moor, Nuns Moor, etc., Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.
Neighbourhood park	Open space in residential developments. May include sports grounds or play facilities.
Mini / pocket vest park	Small open spaces may be surrounded by buildings.

Table 1.1: A typology of urban park spaces (after Carr, Francis et al., 1992)

This illustrates that fact that there are various types of public park, of varying size, and that they fit variably into the framework of public space in and around our towns and cities. Public parks belong to a wider category of public open spaces, especially within the city, as illustrated by Schaefer's comment above, and into urban design, as illustrated by Carr's (1992) locating of parks into a particular hierarchy of urban spaces. Public open spaces are increasingly the focus of interest, for policy makers and those implementing public policy initiatives, as places where policy issues (such as public health) can be addressed. These are spaces which are close to concentrations of the population, and which are presumed to be accessible to all.

Public parks in the United Kingdom occupy particular niches in areas of public policy, urban design and media commentary. Parks are a form of collective investment and consumption, being dependent on local and national governance for funding (Barber 2000; Hankins and Powers 2009). The UK Government has run a National Lottery Fund since 1995; there are a number of "good causes" to which funds were committed, one of which includes "historic" parks and landscapes. This resource stream has funded the physical restoration and selected revenue upkeep of a number of historic parks. One funding stream, The Heritage Lottery Fund in the UK had "committed... £320 million" on parks, with over 200 parks regenerated" (Heritage Lottery Fund 2003: 3) between 1995 and the early years of the 21st century.

In the overview *People, Parks And Cities* (Greenhalgh 1996), parks are said to improve the quality of urban life. The authors say that their report's starting point is "regeneration of towns and cities" (Greenhalgh 1996: 4), emphasising the role of parks in the 'improvement' and 'rehabilitation' of urban landscapes. Parks are even suggested to have a higher local political priority, since parks can be the subject of various new forms of participative democracy, such as citizens' panels. The authors go on to comment that parks play a part in regeneration programmes, helping to meet the strategic needs of local authorities with regard to public health programmes, arts events and sports.

The History of Park Development

> "The more I have seen of them [parks], the more highly have I been led to estimate their value as means of counteracting the evils of town life."

(Olmsted 1997: 94)

Urban parks were borne out of the "horrors and social dislocation of industrial urbanism", that brought about a response of "romantic utopianism" (LeGates 2000: 301); concerns for necessary recreational space as seen in rural settings was translated into urban park construction. Wheeler (2004) comments that conditions in the 1830's and 1840's prompted a number of writers and commentators to discuss the rapid urbanisation of the United Kingdom, in publications ranging from Engels' condemnation of the living conditions of English workers (Engels 1845) through to the Romantic poets (such as Shelly, Keats, Wordsworth) extolling the virtues of nature. LeGates (2000: 301) add that "romantic notions of social perfectionism" helped bring about the parks movement. They point out that the parks' movement built on the Renaissance practice of patrons commissioning squares in cities. Local authorities and philanthropists (such as Lord Armstrong, builder of Jesmond Dene in Newcastle upon Tyne) were instrumental in park construction.

The 19th century included some significant years in the history of the development of UK parks (Conway 2000; LeGates 2000), as shown in Table 1.2 below:

1833	The Select Committee on Public Walks observed that the poorest in the overcrowded cities had the greatest needs of parks, which would afford physical, moral, spiritual and political benefits.
1833	Moor Park, Preston; Philips and Queen's Parks, Manchester opened.
1844	Birkenhead Park built by Joseph Paxton in Liverpool, later visited by FL Olmsted (see Central Park).
1845	Victoria Park, Stratford, East London opened (enlarged 1872).
1846	Peel Park, Salford opened.

1854	Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow opened.
1857	Central Park, New York, built by FL Olmsted and C Vaux.
1880's	Smaller suburban parks are built to provide greater accessibility.
1885- 1914	The greatest number of parks is built in the UK.

Table 1.2: Significant milestones in the development of British public parks (after Conway 2000; LeGates 2000)

The American writer Taylor (1999), in her discussion of the rationale of US public parks, commented that parks were created in order to achieve certain aims. She lists eleven benefits, but for the purpose of this study, the most significant of these could be summarised as: (1) spaces that bring natural features into the city landscape; (2) spaces that bring people into contact with particular natural entities and with members of local society that are different to themselves; (3) spaces that promote certain "approved" behaviours; and (4) spaces that produce particular healthy outcomes. These themes lead on to more general discussions of public open space in urban locales. Her outline of the rationale of public parks covers certain important conceptions of approved modes of social being and spatialised behaviours, contact with nature and natural elements in an open air space. These are tied to particular urban places that were separate from other urban locations that were considered to be harmful to health through the presence of pollution (often then seen as "miasmas")[6] and immoral behaviour. Parks were also open to all and intended to be democratic.

Spaces that bring natural features into the city landscape
MacMaster comments that having contact with the natural world in the industrialising world of the 19th century would maintain " the perception of nature as an expression of divinity with which men needed to retain an organic link" (MacMaster 1990 :118). Furthermore, the creation of public parks in industrialising cities should "be created in order to preserve open green spaces in the face of advancing lines of brick and mortar" (MacMaster 1990 :119).

The form of public parks reflected their era of construction. The Victorians were preoccupied by botanical order, as reflected in their park's planting displays (this may have been a particular middle-class vision (Green 1995)[7]. Green also suggests that viewing caged animals was thought to be educational for children.

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[6] Miasma theory was the idea that infectious diseases were transmitted through bad air (whereas in fact water was often the medium of transition). See for example Halliday (2001).
7 This preference may have changed markedly in the space of a century. At least in a Dutch context, de Groot and van den Born (2003) suggest that a preference for managed landscapes was greatest among poorer people .

In London, eight of the public parks are known as Royal Parks. In 2009, a number of artists were invited to create artworks based upon their experiences of these parks (BBC 2009). One such piece was an introductory article recently published in the Guardian newspaper. In this "A-Z of parks", William Boyd (2009: 3) proposed that parks can be seen as having five contemporary attributes: they have mature trees ("the older and taller the better"), the majority of which gave the impression of "random planting"; the topography must undulate "significantly"; parks should be so big that all boundaries could not be seen from any one place; and there is at least one gated entrance. He comments, using London's Battersea Park as an example, that when walking through it, "[t]he sense of not being in the city – yet knowing full well you are in its heart – is particularly intense. This fundamentally is what a park in a city is all about" (Boyd 2009: 3).   His comments are illustrative of the phenomenological separation that parks offer the urban dweller, a possible space of retreat away from some stressful aspects of everyday life. This is a theme that I return to in later chapters; empirical data from my study site suggested that it was seen as offering a certain seclusion from everyday routines, not just in the other public spaces of the urban, but from everyday routines and responsibilities in the private (for example, domestic) sphere as well.

Spaces that bring people into contact with diverse natural and social environments
Victorian cities were segregated spaces, with the rich living in larger properties away from pollution and noise, whilst the working classes working in heavy industry tended to live very close by to their places of work. There was a degree of social segregation that occurred in towns and cities in the UK, and in the US. Parks were intended to bring people from differing social groups together, in the one place that was deliberately configured as being egalitarian. For example, in New York, the commentator Henry James observed in 1905 that the diversity of scenery and humanity in Central Park, especially when so many users were new immigrants to the metropolis, made him think that "the alien was as truly in possession [of the environment], under the high "aristocratic" nose.[as the aristocrats]" (as cited by James 1968: 117). In addition, the architecture critic Paul Goldberger imagined that Olmsted:

> "[W]ould not likely be surprised to hear a dispute in the park today between Puerto Ricans wishing to play their transistor radios and whites demanding silence. In 1863 the Board of Commissioners wrote that the park's population was "reared in different climes, and bringing to the metropolis ideas of social enjoyment differing as wildly as the temperature of the various countries of their origin. The amusements and routine of the daily life of the Sicilian and the Scotsman are dissimilar. Each brings with him the traditions and habits of his own country."

> (Goldberger 1979: 193-4)

This point will be illustrated later in the wider geography of my study area, the town of Gateshead: workers were housed in tremendously cramped circumstances on the banks of

the Tyne Valley leading up from the river, towards where Saltwell Park would come to be sited, whilst the rich lived in large properties to the south of the town (Fraser 1977; Gateshead MBC 1998b; Stephens 1975). There is still socio-economic inequality today, and the park is used by a broad demographic-range, as well as by different ethnic groups who have come to live in Gateshead over time, so that the area shows social and cultural diversity that might generate diverse of views about "social enjoyment".

Spaces that promote certain "approved" behaviours.

In his discussion of Mousehold Heath (in the north eastern part of the city of Norwich, England), Neil MacMaster comments that one perceived result of public park provision would be that:

> "The lower orders, through proximity to the model of good behaviour and dress offered by the middle class, would pick up respectable values through a kind of mimicry or cultural osmosis."

(MacMaster 1990:119)

An example of this attitude was to be found in the comments of Andrew Jackson Downing in 1848, a landscape architect and horticulturalist who proclaimed abstinence from alcohol and social decorum in parks:

> "You may take my word for it. [The parks] will be better preachers of temperance than temperance societies, better refiners of national manners than dancing schools, and better promoters of general good feeling than lectures on the philosophy of happiness".

(Downing 1848)

It was clearly felt that the social mixing pointed to above would have a role in moral education, whereby an "example" would be set by the rich towards the poor as to the "appropriate" way in which to conduct oneself, especially in public space. Pertinent to the history of my research site, temperance movements arose in Gateshead, as well as elsewhere in the UK and the USA. In the case of Gateshead, these initiatives seemed to find only limited popularity amongst the public (Gateshead MBC 1998b).

There was however a sense that being in the park, one was on display, and that there were certain standards that one had to be seen to be meeting. "Sunday Best" for both clothing and behaviour was *de rigueur*. Green observes that the middle classes were worried about the behaviour of the other park users, and that rules against dancing, the washing of laundry, shooting and swimming were thus introduced (Green 1995). In Benwell, west Newcastle (also in north-east England, across the river Tyne from Gateshead), Hodgkin Park was bequeathed by Dr Hodgkin in 1899 on condition that "strong drink shall not be sold in the park" (Green 1995: 32). "Respectable" modes of recreation, such as brass band

concerts, quoits and cricket were thought to be attractive to the general public, whereas less 'socially acceptable' fairs, horse racing and protest meetings were not (Green 1995). However, horseracing was defiantly carried out in Gateshead's first public park, Windmill Hills. Military drills were also popular. Sports for women were also encouraged: skipping, archery, croquet, hockey, tennis and cycling, were thought to challenge contemporary cultural impositions surrounding gender and gender performativities.

Later on, Olmsted hoped that parks would generate communal feelings amongst all urban social classes, stilling any resentments regarding inequality; the park's scenery would "enable" the poor to raise themselves above their normal social status, bring more acceptable forms of decorum amongst all social groups and lessen urban anomie (Blodgett 1976). All the same, in the case of the New York parks at the end of the 19th century, there were a number of class conflicts over the construction of the parks, their location, and the proscription of certain behaviours. Rosenzweig (1987) also comments, for instance that in Worcester, Massachusetts, in the second half of the 19th century, the selling of beer in the working class East Side parks was tolerated although it was forbidden elsewhere in the city, and that public space was made the occasional setting for sexual activity that had spilled out from crowded working class accommodation.

A well as promoting a collective spirit, parks were also sites for the promotion and celebration of patriotic sentiment. For instance, in Bingley, the first turf of a new park was cut on 10 March 1863, the wedding day of the Prince of Wales, hence it was named the Prince of Wales Park.   Green (1995) further comments that statues and lodges were intended to promote civic and national/ imperial pride, and that the music played at bandstands promoted acceptable forms of entertainment .

Spaces that promote health and well-being
Rohde (1994) commented that parks were conceived of as "benefit[ing] health, reduc[ing] disease, crime and social unrest as well as providing 'green lungs' for the city" (as cited by Wheater *et al.* 2007:8).

Wheater *et al.* (2007) go on to comment that early public health legislation played a role in the creation of parks. Parliamentary acts such as the *Report from the Select Committee on Public Walks* (HMSO 1833), for example, enabled park creation and funding through the 1848 Public Health Act and the 1875 Public Health Act. Layton-Jones and Lee (2008) point out that Liverpool's parks were a response to cholera outbreaks in the UK in 1832 and 1846. The authors continue that through densely packed housing and poor sanitation the poor suffered particularly. There was general political concern over cholera and yellow fever outbreaks (LeGates 2000), since the richer classes were also suffering from these outbreaks, and the fitness of soldiers was being compromised. As a result, Liverpool's Corporation initiated a programme of green space development from 1850. There was a strong moral content to the parks and public health movements, led by pioneers, such as

Olmsted and Benjamin Richard Wood (designer of *Hygeia*, City of Health)[8]. Health benefits were thought to result from giving individuals access to clean air, opportunities for relaxation and places where natural vistas would be enjoyed (Wheater *et al.* 2007). In his *Instructions To The Keepers Of The Central Park*, Olmsted wrote that the park was intended to benefit New York's women, children and the sick (Olmsted 1873).

The Contemporary literature on the health benefits of public parks

More recently, the website of the Centre for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE[9]) paid the following homage to parks (and other green spaces) with an important potential role in promoting health and well-being and sustainable urban living: "Ninety-one per cent of people say that parks and public spaces improve their quality of life. Over 40 per cent of us visit our local green space each week." CABE (2009) goes on to comment that parks promote healthy lifestyles, as well as extolling the ability of public parks to play a role in a number of key current policy concerns, such as economic regeneration, climate change, and social cohesion – an echo of Flexner's socially focussed definitions of healing, discussed earlier.

The contemporary literature on wider determinants of health (linked to the social model of health (as shown in Figure 1.1 above) documents some specific benefits of engaging with public parks. Parks can confer physical benefits to users, for example, in tackling risks of obesity (Barnett *et al.* 2009). An example of an attribute beneficial to health and well-being is the concept of walkability, or how easy it is to walk to and through a geographical area, and the physical connectedness of a particular landscape to adjacent environments that a person may walk from. Walkability is associated with physical activity (Frank *et al.* 2007), and an environment that has a highly walkable character could be one that supports beneficial physical exercise (Gauvin *et al.* 2008). Walkable space is sometimes interpreted as public open space or a park (Wendel-Vos *et al.* 2004). Parks can also be spaces helping to promote physical activity amongst children (Roemmich *et al.* 2006) and women (Krenichyn 2006). The UK Government has run the 'Change 4 Life' programme since late 2008 (H.M.Government 2011); a substantive part of its advice is for adults, and children, to take up more physical exercise.

Emotional health can be derived from physical activity. With regard to stress reduction, jogging and running can restore psychological health for fatigued urban dwellers (Bodin and Hartig 2003); how adolescents' psychological health benefits in this way has also been highlighted (Crawford *et al.* 2008). Bodin and Hartig posit that running in a park has a

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[8] With regard to Olmsted, see Olmsted 1870; Scheper 1989.
[9] The Centre for the Built Environment is a public body which gives independent advice to community groups, local authorities and professionals to influence the built environment created through architecture, urban design and landscape design (up until October 2010, it was funded through central government).

positive effect on emotions, particularly anger (Bodin and Hartig 2003), whilst communal gardening can have similarly positive effects (Milligan *et al.* 2004).

Widening the discussion to consider other specific characteristics of parks, some writers have studied how design interventions can change park use (Coen and Ross 2006; Tester and Baker 2009; Wendel-Vos *et al.* 2004; Zannin *et al.* 2006); built-design disciplines tend to see these benefits as intrinsic to the praxis of urban planning (Jackson 2003). Some writers comment that parks are too manicured and should be recast in more informal ways to produce better health and well-being in children, who would become more nature-focused and physically active as a result (Goltsman *et al.* 2009).

More widely, general urban public space landscapes have been examined for the ability to support a variety of behaviours beneficial to health (Uslu *et al.* 2009). The characteristics and ambience of a wider urban environment can affect how park spaces are perceived (see for instance Baum and Palmer 2002; Goltsman *et al.* 2009; Hyslop and Thomson 2009; Lee and Cho 2009; Silva *et al.* 2009; Song *et al.* 2007). Within the urban and landscape design literature, Carmona *et al.* (2003: 123-4) outline four design approaches to create environments that are perceived to be safer: 1) *fortress*: walls, barriers; 2) *panoptic*: surveillance; 3) *management/ regulatory*: rules and regulations; and, 4) *animation*: peopling a space, creating an ambience. Carr *et al.* (1992) suggest that access can operate in three different ways. These are 1) *visual access* (visibility): an individual can see into a space and make a judgement about whether to proceed into it; 2) *symbolic access*: cultural cues and symbols as to what and who is using the space, and what or who is welcome; and; 3) *physical access* relating to the journey to and around the park. Other strategies for managing space that these authors outline include: 1) distinguishing between harmful and harmless activities, and increasing the latter; 2) increasing the general tolerance towards usages that are permissible; and 3) separation of different uses in time and space; the placing of particular uses that might be viewed negatively in marginal spaces, where "free behaviour" can cause little damage.

Some aspects of open spaces like parks can facilitate social interaction. Cattell *et al.* (2008) found that particular built and social environments of east London facilitated social contact amongst residents, whilst a perceived lack of social cohesion, or civil disorder in in parts of an urban location could affect the attractiveness of the area (Baum and Palmer 2002). Parks can also be an aid to restoring social cohesion to an area (Conway 2000; Greenhalgh 1995)[10]. Walker (2004) cites evidence from the US that park users who were over 50 years-of-age had a greater propensity towards collective community action than others. Parks as places to exercise social control that improves social behaviour have been the subject of historical accounts (Farrar 2000; Mirams 2002; Olmsted 1870; Taylor 1999) and in the

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[10] I will explore the idea of social capital in more depth in Chapter Two.

present commentaries (CABE N.D.) so that all groups within the population can derive certain benefits from the park experience. However, some writers consider that parks can be inclusive for some groups of users but exclusionary for others (Byrne and Wolch 2009), and that park characteristics and spatial distribution can play a part in how socio-economic and health outcomes are distributed throughout a population (for example, Byrne *et al.* 2009; Wolch *et al.* 2005). Doreen Massey commented that, during her childhood, a local Manchester playing field seemed a male-dominated space (Massey 1994). Byrne and Wolch (2009) also review the literature on the socio-cultural aspects of park usage, citing research by, for example Floyd (1998), Gobster (2002), Lee (1972), Shinew *et al.* (2004), and Tinsley *et al.* (2002). There are some disparities between groups defined, for example, by ethnicity, in terms of access to urban parks in the USA (Abercrombie *et al.* 2008).

In their review, Byrne and Wolch (2009) evaluate geography's contribution to park and leisure-focussed research. They refer to a number of previously published works that they group into five thematic areas (Byrne and Wolch 2009: 744): 1) the history and ideology of parks; 2) park access and utilization; 3) the potential of parks to foster sustainable urban livelihoods; 4) the ecosystem service benefits of parks; and 5) how parks benefit the health and well-being of urban residents. In particular, they argue that the literature is largely apolitical, assuming that access to such spaces as parks is simply a matter of personal choice, or cultural disposition. By contrast, they adopt a critical stance to the place-making that parks encompass, contending that, "past ideas and values about … parks continue to dominate and determine their present design and programming" (Loukaitou-Sideris 1995: 89). These past values, Byrne and Wolch contend, are elitist notions of the (deterministically) improving benefits of nature, and exclusionary social practices and conventions (especially in the USA, these are based on ethnicity and skin colour). They argue that differences in park usage are often ascribed to (sub)cultural difference and replication. This is contrary to their own interpretation of park usage as reflecting a wider social realm of entrenched discrimination. To illustrate their point, they propose a model of the decision-making process that potential users of parks go though in seeking-out, accessing, and re-accessing a public park (see Figure 1.4 below).

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT OF PARK PROVISION

Spatialized ethno / racial discrimination
Ideology of land use
History of property development
Philosophy of planning

• Park politics
• Ideology of park provision
• Racial politics of park development
• Differential accessibility to parks

POTENTIAL USERS
Socio-demographics
Socio-economic status
Location & mobility
Time resources
Attitudes to nature
Leisure preferences

PERCEPTIONS
Tolerance
Friendliness
Exclusivity
Danger
Access
Costs

PARK SPACE
Physical characteristics
Nearby neighborhoods
Service provision costs
Management philosphy
Maintenance & staffing
Signage

Use
Reasons
Frequency
Intensity
Duration
Costs & benefits

Park USE choices

Non-Use
Reasons
Alternatives
Costs & benefits

Figure 1.4: "Space, race and park use" (Byrne and Wolch 2009: 751)

According to Byrne and Wolch's critique, the most important factors influencing the decision to visit and use a public space such as a park, are in the box labelled 'perceptions', in the centre of the diagram. Perhaps for those park users who perceive themselves to be in the majority socio-cultural group, (in the West, young, white, middle-class), park use is determined more by factors such as physical access or cost, whereas for minority groups, the prevailing presence and nature of discrimination and hostility is of much more concern. Of particular interest with regard to their framework is an explicit suggestion that people may choose *not* to use a park.

Byrne and Wolch's (2009) examples of ethno-racial differences in park use have been found in all types of parks (e.g. Carr *et al.* 1992; Gobster 2002; Johnson *et al.* 1998; Tierney *et al.* 2001), and similar findings have been found in more recent research not included in these reviews (for example Babey *et al.* 2008; Kemperman and Timmermans 2006; Krenichyn 2006; Roemmich *et al.* 2006; Veitch *et al.* 2009). Some studies have reflected on how wider structural issues, such as racism can affect park use of certain populations (Abercrombie *et al.* 2008; Boone *et al.* 2009; Coogan *et al.* 2009), whilst Maroko *et al.* (2009) have felt that parks and similar spaces are places that should be investigated as sites that embody contested notions of social justice, especially since socio-economic status is related to health outcomes.

Occasionally, the park experience can be immensely problematic. In the UK, certain serious crimes, committed in public parks and open space, have made national news headlines. The murder of Rachel Nickell on Wimbledon Common in 1999 was one such, and was particularly shocking (Wykes 2009). These isolated events can heighten the public fear of parkland spaces, a fear which may be reinforced by reports of other crimes that often make local news headlines.

PLACES THAT SHAPE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

There are a number of themes discussed above that appear again later within this thesis. One theme is the importance of perceptions of a place with regard to its presumed attractiveness and safety. The design and public health literatures tend to frame park accessibility and use in terms of geographical proximity and "nearness" to residential areas, as well as design features. A more critical stance, which comes through the social sciences, takes issue with what might be seen as determinism and complacency on the part of those in positions of political power and influence, who pay relatively little attention to unequal access to parks for different groups of people.

Thesis Overview

In this chapter, I have outlined the therapeutic landscape concept and its application within the health geography literature. In this following section, I suggest some other bodies of knowledge that may be fruitfully applied alongside it.

In the second chapter, I discuss the bodies of literature that I have drawn on that theorise the processes of place-making. I outline concepts from environmental psychology, from theories of social capital, and from topophilia, regarding those attributes of the landscape that generally support health and well-being. Some of themes are particular to public space, and I explore some ideas relating to "public" vs. "private space". I conclude the chapter with a consideration of the potential of two complementary bodies of theory, actor-network theory and assemblages. Human geography has made great use of these theories that have re-cast the social world as more than just human and that encompass the nonhuman results of human labour as well as those nominally outside human control, such as wildlife.

Within Chapter Three I present the methodological approach to this work and introduce Saltwell Park as my case study area. I explain how I have employed a mixed methodology combining observation and interview techniques, and how this approach has been necessary for the task of building up knowledge of and thoroughly analysing a complicated, heterogeneous and variable space such as a public park over the course of my fieldwork.

Thereafter, I present three chapters of empirical data that focus on my interpretation of Saltwell Park as a 'therapeutic landscape'. These correspond roughly to the typology suggested by the therapeutic landscapes model discussed above, seen as interlocking dimensions of physical (natural and built), social and symbolic environments.

In the fourth chapter, I discuss those elements of the natural world that contribute to the fabric of the park, but I also focus on the experiences of users who encounter these elements when visiting the park. This chapter could be seen as reflecting the natural and built environment that Gesler describes within the therapeutic landscape typology. I suggest that this "natural environment" of Saltwell Park is comprised of three different sets of natural forms, which are the topography of the valley into which the park is built, the "weather world" and those plants and animals that make the park their home. Human encounters with and negotiation of these different entities can lead to positive outcomes, for example, by (literally) supporting physical exercise, tangling with the wind via one's model boat, or coming up-close-and-personal with a grey squirrel or an African tree snail. Encounters with natural elements, and (beneficial) experiences with them, are facilitated through social action, and in the case of some of the social activities I show that there is an explicit aim of challenging and changing social attitudes amongst the population.

In Chapter Five, I discuss how the "social environment" of the park is both comprised of, and also creates, groupings of people, based upon shared activities and social-cultural-

demographic characteristics, attitudes and representations of social relationships. There are also some problematic aspects to Saltwell Park's social life that can be socially divisive. However, the social environment of the park can also challenge some exclusionary social conventions and behaviours. In some respects, the park gathers various individuals together and re-orientates them into new social groupings and environments that are beneficial to health and well-being. I discuss the underlying social forces that bring this about – order and discipline, challenges to social convention, and friendship and common purpose.

In the sixth chapter, I discuss the sense of place that the park users experience and what the park 'means' to them. Saltwell Park is a place in which one can grow and develop aspects of 'self' supporting a positive and reassuring idea of identify and of feeling 'at home'. However, this is not always the case, and for some, it offers little sense of home. It is in this chapter that I discuss a series of behaviours and material forms that I interpret as being suggestive of people 'coming to rest' in the park, both temporarily while relaxing there, and more permanently through memorials. There is a sense of people finding themselves a place to express themselves and their family and cultural roots, as well as some more problematic experiences that suggested that the park was not always a home for people.

Finally the concluding chapter comprises a discussion of "overarching" findings and key original contributions in terms of theory and method, limitations to the research carried out, policy or similar recommendations that might be made based on the findings and consideration of possible future research agenda that this thesis points towards.

Chapter Two: THERAPEUTIC LANDSCAPES RE-SITED

Theories of How a Landscape Can Be 'Therapeutic'

This chapter considers the places that have a bearing upon the health and well-being of individuals and groups. Academic thought in geography and in environmental psychology posit that certain types of place produce positive benefits for health, in both the short-term and in the longer-term. I have already considered "therapeutic landscapes" which pertains to health geography. Here I consider three sets of processes through which people interact with a "therapeutic landscape". Firstly, I consider the particular forms of, and interactions with, natural environments that have positive effects upon health. I focus in particular upon the theories from environmental psychology. Then I go on to consider how a place can be therapeutic partly through the social interactions of humans, but also how social conflicts can affect how a person is able to make use of space. Thirdly, I briefly consider a sense of place that individuals and groups may have towards a location, in effect turning a *space* in to a *place* that has the qualities of a home, and one where a life story is created and becomes intertwined with that location through beneficial interactions.

Ideas based in phenomenology suggest that our sense of place, and of a place, is formed through 'being in the world', over the course of time. The theories that I outline below mainly take this conceptual framework as their starting point. As Hall (2009) argues, the researcher must be located in an environment in order to attempt to grasp its complexity, and he draws upon the comments of Candea (2007: 179), who views a place as being "not an object to be explained, but a contingent window into complexity". I draw upon post-structuralist theory to represent an ontology of a materially complex location, such as a public park.

Experiencing the Natural Environment With Regard To Health and Well-Being Outcomes

The Supportive Potential for Environmental Psychology With Regard To Therapeutic Landscape Theory

Environmental psychology seeks to explain why individuals interact with particular spaces and how their health and well-being is affected. Conradson (2005) and Pranikoff and Setha (2007) have drawn attention to the complementarity of environmental psychology theories to the therapeutic landscape concept. Environmental psychology draws attention to the desirability and usefulness of certain landscapes for certain forms of action, and the resultant outcomes that are generated. I outline some of these theories below.

THERAPEUTIC LANDSCAPES RE-SITED

Landscape Preference

I start with a consideration of those theories that pertain to a human's emotional and psychological connection to nature. These are likely to be relevant here since public parks, as I stated in the preceding chapter, were intended to be a device that brought nature into the expanding industrial cities, and that would allow for a (re-)connection to be established between urban dwellers and natural aspects of landscape.

The theory of biophilia suggests reasons for what was originally argued to be a rather universal human affinity to natural landscapes. In his later work, however, Edward Wilson (1993) discusses how biophilia is not entirely innate, but could be considered as a set of learned as well as innate behaviours. This is consistent with some of the therapeutic landscape literature; for example, Milligan and Bingley (2007) who showed that adolescents' responses to woodland scenery varied according to responses they were taught as children.

Other environmental psychologists have argued in support of Attention Restoration Theory (ART), postulating that humans generally respond positively to environments that restore *fatigued attention*. The Kaplans (see for example Kaplan 1989; Kaplan 1991; Kaplan *et al.* 1989; Kaplan 1995; Ouellette *et al.* 2005) have researched a number of aspects of human interactions with nature. They suggest that if scenes afford the viewer sensations of *Fascination, (being) Away, (visual) Extent,* and *(psychological) Compatibility*, then the scene meets the criteria for a restorative setting according to ART. Natural green spaces such as woodland has been argued to have particularly strong restorative properties (Kaplan 1989). Many examples of the research in this field seek to isolate particular features of landscapes that are especially attractive to most people, using experiments in controlled laboratory environment.

Gardens are felt to be restorative to cognitive function if they have features indicated by ART (Kaplan 1991). The early park designers were clearly of a similar opinion, as discussed in Chapter One. For some individuals, gardens are also important because an attachment to nature and natural spaces can be tactile and creative. Francis and Hill (1991) interviewed gardeners in California and Norway, noting what personal gardens meant to their creators. They collated the responses, determining that being in, creating, and stewarding gardens led to the following outcomes, where the garden was a place where one is able to: (1) simply 'be'; (2) care for growing things; (3) control; (4) exert creativity; (5) reflect one's personality; (6) experience freedom; (7) undertake productive work; (8) own; (9) occupy a space that develops over time; and (10) retreat to. It could be thought that a garden is the result of a collaboration between nature and humans, rather than just another expression of the natural world; these were gardens that were the results of cultivation of course. Other researchers have also seen cultivated gardens as having therapeutic qualities, for example, allotments (Milligan *et al.* 2004).

Contingent Affordances

A number of other researchers have applied JJ Gibson's concept of *affordances* (Gibson 1977; Gibson 1979) to the study of individuals' response to their environment. An affordance is a quality that offers something necessary or valued in a way is available and accessible to the user, or that makes an object "*something*-able`'" (Scarantino 2003); e.g. food is *edi*-ble. This edibility is a quality that an observer perceives in an object. In environmental psychology, (natural) landscapes are seen to afford restoration most strongly (Berto 2005; Hartig *et al.* 2003; Hartig and Staats 2004; Hartig and Staats 2006), and this affordance comes from landscapes that have particular characteristics of "being away", "extent", "coherence" and "fascination" (Herzog *et al.* 2003; Kaplan *et al.* 1989; Kaplan 1995).

A healing landscape could be said to have a "healing" affordance to someone experiencing healing from it, and a naturalistic landscape that "heals" by affording restoration could be seen to be a particular example of this type of affordance through its natural vistas and being away from sources of urban fatigue. Elsewhere, being away from particular social structures can be seen as desirable as well. For example Clark and Uzzell's study (2002) of adolescents' motivations and use of spaces found that local neighbourhoods, schools and town centres all afforded opportunities for both social interaction and retreat behaviours, whilst the home environment provided two different types of retreat affordances, retreat involving close friends and retreat involving the seeking out of security.

Scarantino (2003) writes of affordances being contingent, rather than universal responses, as earlier affordance literature had tended to suggest. This idea of contingency is almost mathematical in expression (in the formula in Figure 2.1 below):

In given circumstances C, an organism O can engage at time T in an event that qualifies as a doing or a happening M and involves X, leading to an affordance with manifestation M relative to O in circumstances C.

Figure 2.1: contingent affordances (after Scarantino, 2003)

Scarantino goes onto explain that this contingency includes such conditions as *O*'s current and latent abilities or the reliability of the event. In the case of a therapeutic landscape, the healing affordance could be also contingent. Thus, the contingency of healing affordance landscapes could depend on the abilities of *O* to come into contact with that landscape, landscape *X* to have the particular healing properties that *O* is looking for, and for *O* to recognise landscape *X* as healing in the first place. In other words, an affordance is relational. This contingency helps to explain, for examples, why for different people rather different urban landscapes can be restorative (for example, Scopelliti and Giuliani 2004).

THERAPEUTIC LANDSCAPES RE-SITED

It may be that Gesler had in effect revealed three main categories of affordance, through the physical, symbolic and social elements of a therapeutic landscape. Environmental psychology may therefore help us to how certain therapeutic landscapes are "chosen" or preferred, interacted with and the benefits that accrue. There is a further important point to be made with regard to the importance of physical and psychological engagement with a place and use of a place. I would not wish at all to dismiss the laboratory-based work on Attentional Restoration Theory that was focused around the viewing of scenes; indeed some subsequent work in this field has captured the real-world experiences of participants (for example Berman *et al.* 2008; Kaplan *et al.* 2008). However, there would seem to be an importance in considering how an individual life history, knowledge (or prejudice) of a location, general personal attitudes, etc. influence the decision to interact with specific "therapeutic" landscapes. Particular locations can have varying therapeutic effects for different individuals, as has been demonstrated above. This has had an effect upon my research through data collection – as explained in Chapter Three, I did not seek out particular areas with my study site that may have been seen as having a therapeutic effect, nor did I ask people to comment upon specific categories of character areas that I had chosen. Instead, I let people comment upon their general experiences of Saltwell Park, letting them determine, for example, whether their encounters were "restorative", creative or had been circumscribed by initial (or on-going) prejudice. This made for a quite broad range of responses, some of which touched upon more ephemeral influences such as weather and microclimate within the park, which are not given much consideration in the literatures considered above.

Experiencing the Social Environment With Regard To Health and Well-Being Outcomes

In the following part of this review, I move away from theories about human responses to the natural environment to the second environmental type, the social. This is, as stated previously, important for my study site, in that it is a public location, free to all through civic intention. I outline discourses about how certain social groups are able to access social space, for a public park must be accessible to the public in order to serve its purpose. For instance, the accessibility that I focus upon is not geographical (how near or far a park is from a given location), but upon political and social accessibility, drawing for example, upon critical studies of marginality in public space and of social inclusion and social capital.

Social Exclusion and Inclusion in Public Space

> "You may talk of the tyranny of Nero and Tiberius; but the real tyranny is the tyranny of your next-door neighbour."

> (Bagehot 1995: 4)

Nigel Thrift is one writer who has commented upon everyday urban life, and how city dwellers interact. :

> "I want to argue that cities are full of impulses which are hostile and murderous and which cross the minds and bodies of even the most pacific and well-balanced citizenry. Perhaps, indeed, we need to face up to the fact that this underside of everyday hatred and enmity and malice and vengeance may be one of humanity's greatest pleasures, sieved through issues as diverse as identity (as in who belongs and who doesn't), sexuality (as in unfettered masculinity) and even the simple turn-taking of conversation (as in rude interruptions and the like). In other words, humanity may be inching towards perfectibility but, if that is indeed so, it is an even slower progress than we might have thought, worked through daily lacerations and mutilations of social relations. In turn, perhaps we cannot simply explain away this malign background but must learn to tolerate it, at a certain level at least, as a moral ambiguity which is part and parcel of how cities are experienced, an ambiguity which cannot be regulated out of existence."

> (Thrift 2005: 140)

Thrift thus suggests that this violence and spite is not just structural (imposed by the state or agents of the state), but is a part of what makes us *human*, or at least a *human urban dweller*. This a "violence" that is not just expressed as physical violence but also more generalised "active dislike … more particularly as malign gossip, endless complaint, the full spectrum of jealously, petty snobbery, personal deprecation, pointless authoritarianism,

various forms of schadenfreude, and all the other ritual pleasures of everyday life" (Thrift 2005: 140). Thrift draws upon other works, such as those of Lane (2004) whose discussed Victorian urbanity, to suggest that urban misanthropy is an innate condition. As Thrift implies elsewhere in his piece, this spite can be extended towards animals as well.

There are some examples of the potential for such behaviour to impact upon health. Illustrating Thrift's theme directly, The London School of Tropical Hygiene reported that in some cities across the world (ranging from London to Buenos Aires), the children of the rich and wealthy live lives entirely separate to their poorer fellow citizens, and that contact, when it arrives, is marked by violence and confrontation (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine 2012). More generally, the recent *Cities, Health And Well-Being Urban Age* conference (London School of Economics *et al.* 2011) suggests that future global health will be determined by the health of urban dwellers, since 70% of humanity now lives in conurbations. The conference preamble outlines that in urban areas internationally there are significant health issues such as high suicide rates amongst isolated elderly people, substance abuse amongst deprived urban youth, and social deprivation within newly arrived migrant communities[11]. Some groups in the population suffer from combinations of these problems. For example, Hankin *et al.* (2010) screened African-American women who were seen in an urban emergency department (ED)[12], finding that among those women who were victims of "intimate partner violence", additional substance use and abuse (alcohol, tobacco and drugs), and depression and social isolation indicators were found[13].

Relative power of social groups in public space
The experience of public urban space by an individual is strongly influenced by one's social position relative to others that one may encounter in public space, and on how they behave towards one. In the light of the discussion above, it perhaps not a surprise to think that urban public spaces are spaces of contestation and social conflict, and that where people can move within the urban space is regulated according to which socio-economic group they belong to (Edensor 2000), where these groups have a particular social position and set of power relations relative to others. Thus, Edensor believes that those groups with the weakest relative power relations, such as women and those from ethnic minorities, have their movement regulated the most[14]. Carmona *et al.* (2003: 120) comment that people may fear victimisation; affecting where they go in the public realm: dark alleys, deserted areas,

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[11]http://urban-age.net/conferences/hongkong/media/ua-conference-hongkong-2011_briefing.pdf
[12] In the UK, an "ED" is known as "Accident and Emergency" (A&E).
[13] It is far beyond the scope of this study to discern the wider breath of pathologies between urban and rural life. It maybe that for certain instances of health and well-being risk, that the urban is not more uniformly harmful to health than the countryside. For example, Basta *et al.* (2009), in researching the effects of psychosocial isolation among young people with HIV, found that feelings of isolation and stigmatisation are greatest amongst those living in rural areas.
[14] The groups that I talk about below here are women, visible minorities, people with mental illness, etc., and do not include men. For instance, the empirical data that I obtained from Saltwell Park did not suggest that male park goers as being susceptible to violence.

places with "the wrong kind of people". They comment that users of space want to use places that offer a choice of exits, or that are controlled or surveyed. They also draw a distinction between the "fear of victimisation, or incivilities", which affects certain social groups and individuals, who perhaps stay away from public space the most, leaving actually criminal activity to make victims of others, mostly young men. There are a number of groups that such literatures focus upon with regard to the experience of a number of "weak" groups in public space, and I review these below, giving particular attention to women, visible minorities, certain age groups and those who share certain health conditions or disabilities such as mental illnesses. Experiences of these groups will be shown later to be especially relevant for my research findings.

Women in public space

Increasingly, the experiences of women in public space have drawn the attention of writers. Perhaps focussing upon the spatial distribution of people in public space, Whyte (1988) considered the usage of public open space; using time-lapse film, he reported on the usage of a number of New York plazas. Like Toon (2000) above, he found women were more circumspect in their choice of seating position. He also found that women were more disturbed by annoyances; and sought more secluded places in plazas.

Feminist literature has sought to highlight more problematic dimensions of women's experiences of public space, with an attendant focus upon wider gender relations within society (for example, Koskela and Pain 2000; Pain 1995; Pain 1997), extending to more recent commentaries on imaginaries surrounding, and architectural responses to, perceived fear (Prather 2006). Women in Edinburgh and Helsinki, interviewed about their usage of public space, including public parks, often commented on their avoidance of certain parts of the cityscape, including parks (Koskela and Pain 2000). The reputation of spaces, and a certain imagery attached to them, did provoke avoidance. Koskela and Pain (2000) comment that exercises that "design out fear" of women being attacked ignore structural violence against women within society, and such a design framework is predicated on violence and abuse being situational and opportunistic, and not as an engendered ingrained and aspatial behaviour.

Day (2000: 109) gives examples of how women can feel threatened in public space, especially when in caring roles. The space in question may instead produce a defensiveness within public space:

> "Let's say I'm out in a park, and a man just walks by. I always think about, okay, where am I going to go? Where am I going to run? I don't know if it's because my mom has always said, `Be careful. There's strangers out there'. And she's always worried about us. (Woman, aged 18-25)."

The example that Day gives illustrates the possibility that people can learn to fear unpredictable encounters in particular forms of public space. Public parks are not just a

place where a member of the public can go, they are unpredictable places where the unknown members of the public may be encountered, and their unwanted attentions dealt with. She quotes another respondent, who talks about an aspect of gender dimensions involved in affect within impromptu social interactions. To be friendly might invite, at the very least, unwanted friendliness:

> "I think [my husband is] just concerned, and he likes to be very protective of me, and he thinks I'm very like, may be too friendly sometimes. And he says, you know, maybe sometimes people might take it the wrong way. Or - I talk to all men, or men in general, if they talk to me, you know, strangers, and he sometimes feels that, you know, you have to be careful. (Woman, aged 46-55)."

> (Day 2000: 110)

What was interesting about the examples that Day outlines was that in the first case, the respondent switched into a defensive mode, assessing the general male passer-by as a potential threat. In the second example, the answer might be to not invite any casual contact at all? Brooks Gardner noted the complexities of circumvention, of initially meeting the gaze, then averting that gaze of a stranger when passing (Gardner 1980: 329-30). In noting that both men and women are affected, she opens up the politics of passing strangers into something that is not entirely gendered.

The majority of my fieldwork respondents were female, and some commented upon troubling past encounters experiences in the Park. It seemed that restoration in the early 2000's had made a difference to both perceptions and outcomes.

Public breastfeeding is at another discursive intersection of corporeal proximities. There is a wealth of websites, pamphlets and articles of public health material regarding the benefits of breastfeeding, which I will outline later; yet nursing in public is still experienced in a negative way (for example, Acker 2009; BBC News 2010b; Corrigan and Watson 2002; Gallo 1994; McFadden). Smyth (2008b) outlines some of the public debates in the UK, conducted in the media; her examples are hostile:

> "For example, a recent radio discussion of the idea was less than enthusiastic, with commentators claiming that 'there are … things that are best done privately', and that 'you don't quite know where to look if it's there before you on the bus or some environment like that.' (BBC Radio 4 2007)."

Within the recent past, some writers proposed that the solution is to confront critics directly through the occupation of the physical space from where nursing is discursively made absent, to defy social pressure:

> "The way to break the taboo is to do the taboo thing -breastfeed in public spaces, without fear"

Breastfeeding is one of a number of issues through which female experiences of Saltwell Park could be examined. There were other gender dimensions that I will comment upon in Chapter Five, such as social constructions of the body and corporeal relationships involved in exercise and the subversion of traditional gender relations.

Visible minorities in public space

Byrne (2011) adds to his previous work (see Byrne and Wolch 2009) to further suggest that public parks are the site of racial discrimination. He comments that in the USA, legally sanctioned exclusionary housing practices which were in place limited the personal geographies of non-whites in terms of a person's starting point, and then on top, access to public space in the Deep South was circumscribed through the imposition of "Jim Crow" legal discrimination. He presents the experiences of Latinos in parts of California, which were generally ones of exclusion, citing a fear of African-Americans and white Americans as well, that made participants limit their use of local parks.

My research is based in Gateshead which has one of the largest UK Hasidic Jewish populations outside of London, due to the presence of seminaries of international repute (this was the view of one of my respondents). Jews have suffered hostility in the UK for centuries, ranging from a pogrom in York in the Mediaeval ages, to some public and newspaper-based hostility to refugees from eastern European pogroms in the late 19th century and then leading onto persecution in Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. Currently, anti-Jewish violence has been highlighted (Community Security Trust 2010; Community Security Trust 2011a; Community Security Trust 2011b; Solomons 2011). Indeed, anti-Semitism has recently called the "hatred that won't go away" (Freedland 2011).

Young people in public space

As for young people, Conway (2000) claims that from the construction of the earliest urban parks, play facilities were provided for children, yet little was provided for slightly older children. Toon (2000: 141) comments that young people in particular are involved in a struggle for the use of certain urban spaces with authorities who judge them to be "deviant, imperfect and marginal in public space". There appears to be a "game" played with various official actions for access of public spaces, where young people come into conflict with those who control public space and they deploy tactics to evade control mechanisms like CCTV or human agents of control. A quote from Herbert is apposite here: "[The police] are engaged in an on-going game of cat-and-mouse, an ever-shifting struggle [with youth on the street] where they do not always win." (Herbert 1998: 236). Toon (2000) does point out that "self-surveillance" by young people themselves could in effect mean that young people restrict themselves to certain spaces which separate them from other groups. In the process their

transgressive behaviour may generate a sense of unease or disapproval on the part of other users of public space.

People who have forms of mental illness and their experiences in public space

Some people have health conditions such as mental illnesses that affect their interaction with other people and their use of public space. Foucault (1965) commented at the start of his "archaeology of silence" in *Madness and Civilisation,* that from about 1500 until the late 18th century, there was a dialogue between the "man of madness" and the "man of reason" [sic], and that their beings were inextricably linked; however that dialogue had since broken down, with the psychiatrist inhabiting the break in between their conversations. This break has had the effect of leaving the "sane" as being those more fully possessed of their humanity than those afflicted by mental illness. In contemporary life, this has a certain irony, since one-in-four UK citizens can expect to suffer at least one episode of diagnosable mental illness during their lifetime (MIND 2011a). A number of writers have considered the way in which people suffering forms of mental illness have particular experiences in society (for example, Corrigan and Watson 2002; Gallo 1994; Hayward and Jenifer A. Bright 1997; Sartorius 2002). Corrigan and Watson (2002) comment that stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination are common social barriers that people face. Karen Gallo graphically wrote about her illness:

> "I perceived myself, quite accurately unfortunately, as having a serious mental illness and therefore as having been relegated to what I called "the social garbage heap.". I tortured myself with the persistent and repetitive thought that people I would encounter, even total strangers, did not like me and wished that mentally ill people like me did not exist.

> Thus, I would do things such as standing away from others at bus stops and hiding and cringing in the far corners of subway cars. Thinking of myself as garbage, I would even leave the sidewalk in what I thought of as exhibiting the proper deference to those above me in social class. The latter group, of course, included all other human beings."

> (Gallo 1994: 407-8)

The preceding section has drawn attention to the role of membership of social groups within a given social structure, and how this can lead a person to occupy disadvantageous social positions. The social forces of discrimination, whether directed at women, the young of age, or older people, minority groups identified by ethnicity or health status, or even perceived performance at work, can lead a person to exposed to situations that affect their health and well-being, through either being able to access goods and resources that support a fulfilled life or access to health-supporting resources. In the following section, I outline how health

geography has suggested that responses that remove barriers to inclusion and access through the medium of social capital.

Social Inclusion and the role of Social Capital

Health geography, including research on therapeutic landscapes, makes extensive use of the concept of social capital, to help explain the linkages between social environments and health and well-being outcomes.

One frequently cited source concerning social capital is Coleman's work within sociology (Coleman 1988). He comments that social capital is a form of structuration, namely that it is in part an aspect of a particular social structure, in another part, an aspect of individual or group agency within that structure. He defines three forms of social capital: the first being degrees of obligation and expectations; the second information and knowledge flows within that structure; and the third, forms of normative behaviour, with degrees of sanction.

Social capital can be seen as a problematic concept. For example, Coleman (1988) comments that it is under-theorised, and that the theme of normative values can emphasise the values of certain dominant social groups while casting potential stigma upon subordinated groups with different values. In addition, what "social capital" actually means is socially constructed and can have heterogeneous definitions in time and space. There is a tendency to conflate the term with others such as "social cohesion"; and there is no consensus upon how to determine its nature in methodological terms. For example, it has been suggested that recording of one aspect of social capital can obscure the presence of others and can lead to misleading judgements made about presence and absence (Coleman 1988).

Writers have interpreted social capital in varying ways. Fulkerson and Thompson (2008) examine the concept's place within sociological thought. They define two camps of thought (see also Curtis 2010). Firstly, there are "normative social capitalists" (Fulkerson and Thompson 2008: 540), who work within the discourse of Durkheim (1917 [1951]), whereby some forms of social interaction are not utilitarian, but can be a generalised sense of duty and mutual benefit. Secondly, "resources social capitalists" Fulkerson and Thompson (2008: 540) mobilise explanations of differential access to and accumulations of resources (inequality). Bourdieu (1979/ 1984 for example) is cited as a particular exemplar of this latter camp. Fulkerson and Thompson (2008) observe that critics of the normative camp have commented that the personal or group resource theme can be used to obscure long-standing structural inequalities – that, in effect, disadvantage is endogenously chosen, not imposed exogenously.

The difference between normative and resource conceptions would appear to relate to themes within health geography and epidemiology (see for example, the explanation given by Bernard *et al.* 2007)[15]. For example, Shortt's review of the literature's usage within health

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[15] Contextual views of health and well-being attribute health outcomes to structural conditions within society, such as the prevailing environmental and political conditions,

(Shortt 2004) draws attention to the work of Richard Wilkinson and his research into income distributions within societies around the world[16]. Elsewhere, the contextual theme of social capital could include conceptualising the nature of the physical environment in terms of its health affecting characteristics, or the nature of the wider social environment. Bernard *et al.* (2007) suggest for example that the natural environment has potential hazards that affect human health through proximity (or exposure), whilst aspects of the social environment could include availability of particular types of store or health-related infrastructure, or how governance structures interact with citizens with regard to determining a person's eligibility to access health-affecting resources or the distribution of risk throughout society. Within conceptions of resource / compositional effects upon health might also be included examples cited by Curtis (2010) of research undertaken by Cattell (2001) and Ornelas *et al.* (2009) of the mutual support networks that particular social groups employ to alleviate the effects of ill-health. In these two cases, respectively, residents of deprived neighbourhoods in east London[17], and African-American males' perceptions of their North Carolina neighbourhoods, themes of self-generated narrative-based empowerment where drawn out which provided health and well-being benefits. However, the normative social capital critics may see these examples as suggesting a "blame the victim" motive, and wish to draw more attention to deindustrialisation and racism (something Ornelas *et al.* 2009 draw particular attention to). However, there are the questions to whether there is such a thing as normative values around which social capital can cohere. Without explicitly enunciating him as part of a resource-based strand, Shortt (2004) does comment that Bourdieu draws attention to conflict and disadvantage that the resource-based theme implies. Gruner (2009) uses the work of Weiß (2001) to comment that, in Germany at least, racism can be seen the mechanism for enacting differential symbolic, cultural and economic capital by white Germans against those from different ethnic backgrounds. Even to attempt to fully assimilate (however that might be constructed socially, legally, etc.) non-white citizens are still not to be seen as being German.

In terms of what such constructions bring to health and well-being studies, Curtis (2010) lists a number of studies that have made use of the concept. As well as the studies from Ornelas *et al.* (2009) and Cattell (2001) that she cites, she uses an example of the work of Gatrell *et al.* (2004) to suggest that "capital" can be thought of in terms of the potential to accumulate economic capital (personal income and goods and services consumed), protecting one against poverty or financial worries, or it may relate to other emotional security gained through a network of social connectivity. Cattell *et al.* (2008) found that the nature of the street life of Newham, east London, in terms of the types of communal activities, their layout, and the generally perceived hospitality of residents, allowed people to make and maintain

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whereas compositional views attribute health outcomes at group or individual characteristics, such as risk characteristics, etc.
[16] See the later book, *The Spirit Level* (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009) .
[17] In this vein, Wakefield and McMullan (2005) study the cultural responses of residents of deindustrialising deprived neighbourhoods in Hamilton, Ontario.

casual and longer-lasting social contacts outside the home that were important for their sense of well-being. The research of Carlisle (Carlisle and Hanlon 2007; Carlisle *et al.* 2008) point towards possible ways in which public health initiatives may have to take into account cultural constructs of what is appropriate for maintaining personal fitness and health.

As discussed later, Saltwell Park was the site of a number of formal and informal social actions that seemed to have threads of normative and resource-based social capital running through them. Some sought to challenge social norms and behaviours, either through indirect invitations to reflect upon current behaviour, or through prompting exchanges of information. I also suggest that friendships and social coalitions around common interests that are found in the park can also be interpreted in terms of social capital.

"Symbolic" Environments With Regard To Health and Well-Being Outcomes

This thesis also draws on theories which suggest that humans can imprint a (public) space with individual and collective meaning. I use one main body of theory, topophilia, with an attendant constellation of research around the theme of "home" and homeliness.

The theories that I wish to discuss are phenomenological. I suggest that meanings are creating in, and attached to, space through engagement of individual and social groups with that space itself. In the context of discussing the creation of urban landscapes in Mumbai, McFarlane (2011) uses arguments by Ingold (2000) to observe that the process of creating dwellings come through an "on-the-ground" practical engagement with its possibilities and affordances. As I suggest in Chapter Six, close personal relationships in, and in effect *with*, Saltwell Park are created and sustained, not just though a single Heideggerian *dasein* or "being there" (Moon 1977) which is a temporally limited situatedness, but through a life course that involves multiple *daseins*; one following the other.

Topophilia: a culturally conditioned emotional response to landscape

Topophilia is a conceptualisation of an affective bond with place, being the "Affective bond between people and place or setting. [It is] diffuse as [a] concept, vivid and concrete as personal experience." (Tuan 1974: 4). Tuan places considerable emphasis upon the role of culture as a factor that shapes attitudes and behaviours towards environments (with an attendant focus upon non-Western cultures and value systems). There are more recent examples of studies of affective ties to a location that have focussed upon contemporary Western experiences. For example, shared communal support and affection for a local football team can be seen as a vehicle for emotional ties to a locality (Houtum and Dam 2002). Of particular interest is the work of Beatriz González who spoke to women in rural south-west Spain regarding their feelings about their homes and home life (González 2005). She reported that her participants discuss their homes in contradictory ways, and also experienced similar emotions about them. She highlights the highly gendered possessive and demonstrative discourses and differences amongst and between the men and women that she spoke to. Home can be both a form of captivity by chores and an expression of an exclusion from the public realm, and also the expression of female tastes and creativity.

Home and homeliness

In a similar way, studies of *home* suggest locations as something other than a mere dwelling space, but instead as a care-giving space. With regard to home as a site for caregiving for specific conditions, dementia is one particular health condition that has been considered in this context (Donovan 2007); home as part of a life-course and a life lived has also been examined (Shenk *et al.* 2004), along with attendant feelings of belonging that a home space generates (Wiles *et al.* 2009). Home can of course be a disrupted notion in terms of being a

stable, physically rooted, bounded material entity (a flat or house); when home is manifested through being *home*-less, feelings of ownership and possession still apply, as if to a dwelling (Hodgetts *et al.* 2008; Johnsen *et al.* 2005), with attendant opportunities for social connection (Rowe and Wolch 1990), as well as streetscapes which themselves can also be the site of care-giving activities (Johnsen *et al.* 2005).

Gross and Lane (2007) looked at the benefits people derived from their family gardens. Their cohort was 14 people of all ages, who recalled their past and current garden use. Derived from Kaplan's work, their study drew out three themes of usage: *Ownership*, where creative control was exercised; *Escapism*, where people could find solitude; and *Social Relationships*, where family and close friendships were maintained. It is worth suggesting that the presence of significant others such as parents, may encourage people to view and use gardens as therapeutic.

The gardens that were discussed above are domestic – of course, not only are they legally "not public", but are intended to be for private use. There are some who have suggested that public space can be imbued with a significance that mirrors the private. Of particular interest here is the work of Lieberg (1995), which described how teenagers use public spaces in their local environments to create meaning and context in their existence. He felt that there were two reasons why teenagers made particular use of public open spaces. One reason was for *social interactions* with friends and acquaintances, then for *retreat* from situations that might have been stressful or problematic.

Broadly, the idea of home can be experienced at different scales, whether it is the micro-scale of the individual in a dwelling, or the macro-level, a sense of attachment to the totems, artefacts and buildings of a cultural group or nation-state (Curtis 2010). The concept of "home" however is not just seen as a material expression in the form of a home space, but is also, and perhaps most fundamentally, an emotional one. Rowles (2006:26) defines home in the sense of a "being at one with the world, with Wiles and colleagues extending that to a "sense of belonging" (Wiles *et al.* 2009). The list of existential manifestations that Rowles (2006:27) identifies includes "familiarity, comfort, security, mastery, ownership and identity" bear some similarities to the ownership, escapism and social connectedness benefits identified by both Gross and Lane (2007) and those outlined by Francis and Hill (1991) discussed above.

The positive affective emotional role of home in the lives of people, and especially women, can be seen elsewhere (Curtis 2010 provides a brief overview). Some of the literature that she reviews is centred on domestic spaces, where a person lives, and has some form of legal tenure over. The expressions of the home used above however do not ordinarily apply to a public park, for the park is of course municipal, and is a public space open to all. The sense in which I apply the concept of "home" to the park is in keeping with Curtis' comments regarding the geographically "public" as well as geographically "private" home, a space

where emotional ties are created to and between one's family and friends through shared activities, and where aspects of one's social identity are forged.

The existing therapeutic landscape literature has drawn attention to how, in certain situations of social breakdown or duress, humans are able to adapt and unearth comfort and a sense of self-worth and defiance (DeVerteuil and Andrews 2007; Sperling 2007). This suggests that therapeutic landscapes exist within a wider social matrix of flows and processes beyond those that they support within their own boundaries. Once inside a healing landscape, there are particular ways in which interactions can be fashioned, both with the fabric of the landscape itself and with those (in public space) who are encountered. It would appear that to think of certain types of space as having a therapeutic value as part of a set of social relations in and with, a therapeutic space.

Assemblages And Actor Network Theory: The Roles and Interplays of the Human and Nonhuman in a Single Location

At this point, I will introduce the last set of theories that looks at the construction of the social world. This last section seeks to underline one of the major contributions that I wish to make to the concept of therapeutic landscapes, through making use of assemblage and actor network theory. These theories speak to the heterogeneous nature of park spaces in terms of their physical fabric, as well as the complexity of the attendant lived experience. Non-representational theories, increasingly common within human geography, include "beliefs, atmospheres, sensations, ideas, toys, music, ghosts, dance therapies, footpaths, pained bodies, trace music, reindeer, plants, boredom, fat, anxieties, vampires, cars, enchantment, nanotechnologies, water voles, GM, landscapes, drugs, money, racialised bodies, political demonstrations." (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 14). To comprise the social world that the park both inhabits and begets, a wide typology would seem useful. The "promise" of assemblages and actor-network theory is that they can link and articulate the natural elements, social processes and meanings imposed upon objects, thus providing a coherent view of the various therapeutic environments that make up Saltwell Park. I outline here a discussion of 'assemblages' that I will later use to frame some of the characteristics of Saltwell Park and of the results of my fieldwork.

An introduction to assemblage theory and to actor network theory: humans, nonhumans, interconnection, flux and intentionality

Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1983) define an assemblage as a form of functional connections and flows of force and power relations which construct social phenomena. Anderson and MacFarlane comment that an assemblage is more applicable for thinking about the coming together of entities through a common relationship than to their "final" result, that "the key task of an assemblage based analysis of social-spatial relations [is] to understand assembling as a process of 'co-functioning' whereby heterogeneous elements come together in a non-homogeneous grouping." (Anderson and McFarlane 2011: 5). An assemblage is a site of "continuous organization and disorganization", with its constituent parts, social groups, and regulatory framework, creating the 'an ad hoc grouping, a collectivity whose origins are historical and circumstantial' (Bennett 2005: 445); Bennett added that an assemblage is also "a living, throbbing grouping whose coherence coexists with energies and countercultures that exceed and confound it", constituted by "a web with an uneven topography" where "power is not equally distributed across the assemblage".

These various entities act in concert with each other, leading to the concept of actor network theory (or ANT). The original conception of ANT was to trace the flow of ideas in scientific discourse (Latour 1999). Actor-network theory has sought to widen the net of those beings that can affect social interaction, and have done so thorough looking beyond humans to the nonhuman (Latour 2005). Drawing on ideas of actor networks and concepts of

assemblages, a public space such as a park could be seen as being 'made up of many types of actants: humans and nonhumans; animals, vegetation, and minerals; nature, culture and technology' (Bennett 2005: 445) [18]. Wolch (2002) discusses the agency that animals can give to human actions. In her discussion of action to rescue injured eagles and their starving eagle chicks, she posits that efforts to nurture responsibility and attentiveness to animals among children, through eagle rehabilitation and children's wildlife education constitute "... personal politics of both animal and human social reproduction that asserts the agency of wildlife in defining pathways to human-animal coexistence and shared places" Wolch (2002:732). She uses these ideas to comment that we should see the city as a space that is shared with all manner of " animate, sentient beings with legs, wings, antennae and tails" (Wolch 2002: 722). A public park could be seen as a space where "social nature" (Braun 2005), as opposed to wild or "external" nature, may find a home; as we have seen, a public park was intended to bring "nature" into the city. Matless (1998) uses Latour's terminology of a "quasi-object", an object that cannot fit wholly on either side of the nature-culture dualism, and is a delicate shuttle that weaves together the natural, the built, the cultural, the social.

Transformation occurs in an assemblage and the networks that connect various entities. Drawing upon her planning background, Jean Hillier discusses the case of the "Ghost Ships" and the (local, national and international) political, cultural and environmental controversies surrounding their dismantling in Hartlepool (Hillier 2009). She describes the land-use planning system as a form of transformation of (geographical and social) space, where it "attempts to perform a kind of controlled folding, bringing some uses in proximity to each other and keeping others (such as potentially toxic industry, sensitive environmental features and residential areas) apart" (Hillier 2009: 646). Transformation can alter the social, through bringing objects into forms of proximity, or pushing them apart. Transformation can be natural (through decay) or through human agency, and can generate presences and absences as entities and their rhizomic networks are brought together or shifted apart. Rhizomes connect separate, heterogeneous entities together, which themselves can be assemblages. Hillier gives the example of Hartlepool Borough Council's development application system, which connected the ships, seals, waterbirds, local workers, Able UK, the British House of Commons, Asian beaches and so on. It would seem that an assemblage is more of a coherent whole than a rhizome, in that an assemblage is a functioning phenomenal whole, whereas the "Ghost Ship" planning application simply brought various actors and actants together within its sphere of influence and view. As I describe in the later results chapters, forms of folding take place, whereby ideas and

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[18] In a related discussion of vitalism within geography, Philo discusses the work of Georges Canguilhem, a teacher and an inspiration to Michel Foucault (Philo, 2007). Canguilhem discusses how the environment and bodies ("nearly equal norms and forms of life temporarily brought together": Canguilhem, 1978: 93) come into temporary stabilities; in addition, Canguilhem flattened the ontologies of which organisms were considered within the view of the social scientist.

representations about Gateshead's natural and social worlds are brought into the park, to be channelled amongst park users, and then distributed amongst the wider population.

Cloke and Jones (2001) critique some facets of ANT through a discussion of a Somerset orchard. They suggest that within ANT the precise role of the human and nonhuman actants in a given situation is left unclear; given the nature of their research – the significance of trees to place – an emphasis on the "creative, unique qualities that differing nonhuman actants possess" (Cloke and Jones 2001: 649-50) is apt. Saltwell Park has such creative and unique qualities: those people that I spoke to during the course of my research spoke of a location that was more than just a collection of vegetation, water, tarmac, brick and wood: respondents spoke of it as a location that allowed engagement with the "great outdoors" in the midst of a urban landscape, and a space imbued with great personal and collective significance during the course of a life. The authors use the concept of dwelling[19] to animate their sketching of place, an outline that is dynamic, that fully acknowledges an embedded nonhuman dimension to landscape, incorporating a temporal dimension ("where past, present and future are incorporated" (Thrift 2007)).

Writers have deployed the assemblage concept to explore forms of social being and to theorise place. For example, Dant (2004) uses assemblage to comment upon the social being that is the "driver-car" (slightly different to the more common linguistic description of a person as a "car-driver"). A driver-car is described as being something that does not arise from a "chance mating", but instead from a conscious coming together, a co-functioning of design, manufacture, choice (and it might be added, human corporeality and capability[20]). Dant questions the theorisation of intentionality in ANT (perhaps a lack of theorisation), as do other commentators (for instance Thrift 1999; Whatmore 1999). Dant feels that intentionality lies outside human capacity, commenting that Latour (1999) oddly suggested that jumbo jets do not fly, but instead, only airlines[21]. What this means is that the nonhuman within the assemblage is imbued with human intentionality, and that there is not symmetry within the human-nonhuman relationship. Dant further suggests that, in the particular case of a motor-car, human intentionality can create an affordance in such vehicles, and in humans themselves. As I suggest below, it is possible that talking of a therapeutic landscape implies that one only has to approach a given location and be "cured" or "made better" in some way; Dant's arguments above suggest that agency and intentionality come into play, and that a human intention to use such a space requires and equivalent mutual

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[19] Dwelling is not used within this study it has been used elsewhere recently, when discussing assemblage, by Ingold (2000); and McFarlane (2011).

[20] I recall, as a child, that a school friend's, and neighbour's, father had lost one of his hands. He had an automatic transmission car, to the steering wheel of which he had attached a spherical knob, as some lorry drivers and operators of plant machinery use, with which he turned the steering wheel with a stirring motion with his left hand.

[21] What Latour seemed to mean was that, without the organisation and personnel brought to bear around a typical Boeing 747 aeroplane, that it would not be able to fly, and to "work" as intended as a social being; instead, it would tend to sit on the runway as mere adornment.

agency to be generated, between landscape and person. A beneficial affordance may be a quality of the landscape, but a person must be able to access and interact with that location.

The implications of assemblage and ANT theories for my study

There have been some select usages of these poststructuralist theories within health geography. For example, the idea of assemblage has been used in health geography. For instance, Foley (2011) seems to use the term more than the theory behind it, in a discussion of a water well with healing qualities, with only a passing reference to the nonhuman elements – most obviously here, water. Duff (2011) sketches out ANT as a way of thinking about relationality between humans and nonhumans within an affective landscape (similar arguments to Cummins *et al.* 2007), with networks providing routes of circulation of resources, and of the wider ontology of forms of nonhuman materiality. Both examples make fairly limited use of the ANT and assemblagic literature, especially those referenced within this section of Chapter Two, though Duff (2011) does recognise other relevant attributes of place for example, as being more than just backdrop for the activities of the everyday.

ANT has been used to shed light on the processing and flows of information within health care systems (Australasian Conference *et al.* 1999; Hanseth *et al.* 2004), an approach that does not seem currently very prevalent. More recently, ANT has used to suggest more relational social relations when considering human-environment interactions that occur when considering personal geographies, and resultant health effects (Cummins *et al.* 2007), a shift of focus from relations based on Cartesian distance.

The implication for my study of Saltwell Park is that the Park creates affordances for therapeutic interactions and for therapeutic experiences, and, by implication, an affordance in the person using the park. This use of affordance is in accordance with that of Scarantino (2003), in that it is relational, a function of the interactions of subject and object, human and nonhuman (Scarantino herself does not use the term "relationality"). There is a difference of course between driving a car and being in a park, in that car driving involves the performance of a set of coordinated sensory and embodied manoeuvres, whereas going to a public park does not have to. However, as I suggest with respect to the data discussed in the empirical chapters, some park users talk of routines and particular sets of behaviours that involve the park as an actant in the formulation of therapeutic experiences: routines such as those of the Pushy Mothers (Chapter Four), or of other parents (Andrew's, or Catherine when she was a new mother – Chapter Six) to take their young families to the park in order to gain positive health and well-being benefits. Sebastiano brings an obvious intentionality to the park, as is discussed in Chapter Four, again activating the park as an actant in his therapeutic routine. Unlike driving a car, where the intentionality of transport is obvious, to discuss one's presence in a (therapeutic landscape of a) public park does require either some outward desire to seek benefit in such a space, or some space given

over to reflection, that categorises the interaction of person and park (a "park-user", or "park-person", or "person-park"?) as "therapeutic".

An important dimension of ANT, and of assemblage, is the ephemeral and precarious nature of connections and co-functioning (McFarlane 2011; McFarlane and Anderson 2011). The various elements that co-function, or that are brought to bear within the network of action, must each play their part, or be able to play their part, otherwise the co-functioning breaks down. The assemblage that I ascribe Saltwell Park to be is dependent upon the abilities of, for example, the local council to be able to fund adequate staffing of the Park in order to maintain the physical fabric of the Park and police social activities therein; such a crisis occurred in the 1970's. In terms of the location known as Saltwell Park "behaving" as a public park, able to cater for as diverse a social profile, as broad a sweep of interests and tastes, then the Park failed somewhat, being at times up until the restoration the repository of real and imagined fears of the unruly and lawless Other.

A public park is not just a location on a map, nor just a destination. In actor-network terms, it is made up of metal, brick, stone, trees, grass and tarmac in a form that looks like a "public park", in particular arrangements in relation to each other. Each of these components has their own life, independent of the life of the wider park: some will last as long as the park is in a useable state (a tree perhaps): others will be replaced by other components that perform better (a live tree for a dead tree). In order for a park to exist as a public park, or to "work", it requires the action of humans, to manage the growth of the plant life (i.e. interfere with their natural states and processes). In addition, it requires the action of weather to add precipitation, sunlight and wind to water, add nutrients and warmth to make the vegetation grow. A park can have diverse functions, for example, it may be simultaneously a home to wildlife, a consumer product, a source of topographical difference to the surrounding urban landscapes, an occasional cultural icon, and a designed social space. This vision of a public park shows parallels with the way that Law (2004) described how a ship is comprised of many elements, each with their own origins and histories.

In later chapters, I will bring these ideas back in to view again, to illustrate the interconnectedness that exists in my study site, between the entities that make up the park's fabric, and also between human and nonhuman actants that inhabit the park. Some of these human actants engage in particular behaviours that occupy and transform space in terms of its social use and significance. I discuss these below.

an overview of the literatures discussed within Chapters One and Two

The therapeutic landscape framework discussed in Chapter Two suggests that there are certain characteristics which make up those environments that have positive health effects upon a person who interacts with it, and that such a space can be identified by the characteristics of its three-or-four-fold typology of physical (natural / built), social and symbolic features. The concept of a therapeutic landscape has found a niche within the discourse of geographies of health as a framework for visualising human-place interactions; here a particular form of space is described, and by implication, a form of space with which we would have particular relationships that benefit aspects of health and well-being.

Originally, Gesler developed the concept around "special" locations (Gesler 1996; Gesler 2003; Gesler 1992; Gesler 1993); the subsequent literature has moved to more mundane and "everyday" ones (Williams 2007; Williams 2007a). An example of such an everyday location is a public park, such as my study site, Saltwell Park. One of my original contributions to the literature of is to expand the on the idea of everyday therapeutic landscapes in terms of public open space and neighbourhood locations, as well as locations that are more private ones, such as home.

I have included an overview of conceptions of health, well-being and healing, all of which have pertinence to therapeutic landscapes. Receiving relatively little attention within the literature is an explicit thread as to what positive effect a therapeutic landscape should have upon human health. Gesler (2003) uses the terms "healing" and "therapeutic" with a degree of interchangeability. Healing is suggested as a synergistic process of making the human self whole (the PMESS themes), yet within the later literature, the processes and results of "social" healing (see Draucker 1992) can be seen (see DeVerteuil and Andrews 2007; Wakefield and McMullan 2005), or its absence or ambiguity (see DeVerteuil *et al.* 2007; Gesler and Curtis 2007; Sperling 2007). Healing is, by implication, sometimes a situated and contingent characteristic of such locations, something to be created and fought for within existing social relations at a particular environment.

It would seem that in the sense in which Gesler introduces Draucker, there should be a sense of a therapeutic landscape offering some social reconciliation and peace. This has some implications for health promotion policies when one thinks, not just of extreme situations where there is an absence of law and order and severe civil strife, but of situations

afflicting a number of societies where there is social inequality based around for example, income, ethnicity, gender relations[22].

As a result, it would seems that the literature places humans and landscape on opposing sides of an equation, with healing pertaining to humans in terms of known effect upon the self, and therapeutic attached with the specific location in question.

In the second chapter, I discuss the bodies of literature that I have drawn upon that theorise the processes of therapeutic place-making. Regarding those attributes of the landscape that generally support health and well-being, I have outlined concepts from environmental psychology, from theories of social capital, and from topophilia. I conclude the chapter with a consideration of the potential of two complementary bodies of post-structuralist theory, actor-network theory and assemblages. Human geography has made great use of these theories that have re-cast the social world as relational, more-than-just-human and that encompass flux and issues of agency and intentionality. With these in mind, I suggest that a therapeutic landscape is a location where there is an emphasis upon connectedness between a person and human and nonhuman elements of environments, and where such elements are always in flux. The human desire and ability to gain a therapeutic benefit from that space are not necessarily the same, and are contingent.

(Un)bounded spaces and post-structuralist theories

One aspect of note within the therapeutic landscape literature is that the typology is rarely used; exceptions are Curtis *et al.* (2007); and Gesler and Curtis (2007).   Within environmental psychology, the Kaplan-based literature offers a spatial typology, in common with Gesler. The typology of natural-built-social-symbolic relies for its categorical veracity upon an inherent stability. The composition of elements within each typology is a function of the location in question, something that Gesler did not seek to be prescriptive about. However, Gesler did offer some examples of what could be found within each form of landscape type (Gesler 2003: 8), some of which suggest that the healing aspects of the four environments seem to reflect not so much their own inherent characteristics but also how they are viewed, with for example, positive aspects of the natural environment including "belief in Nature as a healer, [as well as] remoteness", bringing an anthropocentric implication to their origins.

Whilst reflecting upon the positive effects of a therapeutic landscape, it is worth understanding the stability of the term "therapeutic". Gesler (2003) comments that there can be a lack of consensus as to how such locations may be viewed and by whom, whilst

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[22] Of particular recent widespread interest has been the income inequality–based work of Pickett and Wilkinson (2009); see also Wilkinson and Pickett (2009); and Wilkinson and Pickett (2006) for example.

contenting himself to simply present "successful" examples (see my point earlier regarding special places). This would imply that there is a criterion of space that can be objectively denoted as a therapeutic landscape and if issues of conflict or confusion arise, then the designation simply remains. To speak of a healing landscape implies a definite improvement in human health, yet therapeutic landscapes can also offer palliative effects which generate comfort and important comforts and pleasures. Also, therapeutic landscapes imply that there are other locations that are un-therapeutic; such a distinction would carry an essential difference that is stable and easy to recognise. The work on relational affordances by Scarantino (2003) is pertinent, since it draws attention to the ability of an individual to make use of the positive qualities of an object, a relational interaction and not simply a one-way interaction.

Relational considerations are important to actor network theory and assemblages; as a result, there are interactions that create a new form of social actant (for example. Dant's driver-car, as outlined earlier), as well as processual outcomes, within social life. Both theories draw attention to the heterogeneity of elements within the social world, and that these include both human and nonhuman elements. Assemblages are seen as not being fixed, bounded entities, but instead, permeable constitutions. Assemblages are also felt to be a relational actant when "exterior" humans are introduced as a co-partner of an interaction; this also draws agency into purview. Assemblages are also collectives that are in flux and that are seen not being unstable in form and function. In totality, assemblage was a useful device for re-siting a public park as a location that is the sum of heterogeneous elements (such as trees, weather, social groupings and cultural representations), whose form is not static. The separate elemental lifecourses come into proximity, and intertwine to create environments that can have the potential to be therapeutic for park users.

Conclusion: A Proposed Model of a Therapeutic Urban Park Landscape

It is at this point that I want to propose a model of how a therapeutic urban park landscape may work in practice. This model would incorporate the preceding theories and concepts that I have outlined and that draw upon the position that urban parks occupy in terms of their heterogeneous materiality, their gathering of the heterogeneous human and nonhuman, as sites of spatialised behaviours, their place in social space and urban geography, and then their place as potential healing landscapes, with additional support from environmental psychology. The final component is the healing effects for individuals and groups in terms of corporeal health, well-being, social cohesiveness, and health-based discourses. The model is outlined below.

An urban public park is a landscape or environment that has a fabric made of a heterogeneous set of entities, which have been brought into place through a combination of human agency, through the medium of design and construction, and through natural processes. These entities are either nonhuman or human in origin (for example an original landform) and materiality (planted and controlled vegetation, water bodies, weather, and wildlife). Each entity has its own agency (an ability to influence other entities), life course (birth, life-cycle and death) and trajectory in relation to the park (how it comes into being in the park), and also an affect upon the fabric of the park more widely. A park is not only a space whose fabric comprises that material heterogeneity, but is intended to gather and channel social heterogeneity, bringing it both into contact with the heterogeneity of the park's fabric and with its own diversity – i.e., to bring people into contact with nature. This diversity of entities and heterogeneity of fabric is deemed to be unique in the city, part of the city, yet different to it, bringing a natural diversity into the city, and also creating a geographically concentrated diversity within it.

Using non-representational thinking, Saldanha (2010) uses the idea of geometrical axes to model the positionality of people in society according to molar categories (for example, "black", "female", "young") which produce an individualised molecular categorisation (someone who is "black, female, young"). He implies a geography of molecular situatedness based around social position. As discussed earlier in this chapter, particular experiences may be strongly shaped by the social groups that a person who enters a public space comes from, and is reacted to by others. As in other social spaces, public parks reveal some of the tensions and divisions within a local society, between comparable social groups. Not only will access to the park and the ability to use the park for one's one legitimate purposes be subject to the possible circumscription of the political elite, but also by people of similar social position, who through their unwanted actions, may create and perpetuate fear amongst individuals certain marginalised social groups. Park users engage in particular sets of behaviours within the park, which may not be sanctioned by the park authorities. Some of

these behaviours may be deemed acceptable to the authorities, others not. In order to ascertain what behaviours occur, in line with other public open spaces, parks may be the site of surveillance of park users. That surveillance may be deemed as being general and impartial, others may feel that it is intrusive and partial, and is determined by (their) social position as opposed to (their) actual behaviour. If the aims of park to benefit the community are upheld, then the health and well-being of whole local populations may be improved. Some populations may be able to experience healing benefits, despite having a disadvantaged position in wider society.

Finally, a public space such as a park could engender feelings of attachment and homeliness to a person. Important social relationships can be formed and nurtured in such spaces, and acts of kindness and sharing performed. The park may also be a place of escape, from various social pressures of responsibilities that are conferred upon one in the domestic and work spheres. How a person may come to view and experience a location may be culturally conditioned, as Tuan (1974) and Milligan and Bingley (2007) suggest.

An ontological question and an epistemological question arise with regard to knowing what a therapeutic park landscape is, and how its effects are known. It may be thought that a therapeutic landscape is known through its positive effects upon health and well-being of humans and more recent therapeutic landscape literature reviewed above suggests that these experiences are individually variable. This has a parallel to the idea of contingent affordance.

In summary, the therapeutic qualities of a public park may be imagined through various comings-into-being, individual states of being and movements that either flow alone of collectively, that intersect, curb or reinforce of the states and movements of others. The park comes into being in a Derridian manner, since its forms, supportive experiences and social meanings do not just appear in the form of a "Big Bang" that is fulfilled and ever-present, but perhaps instead through a constant state of change (perhaps evolution) that may at times be imperceptible to an observer, sometimes sudden. This state of change may perhaps be perceptible through a sense of the whole or a constituent part. As such, the park is "alive", is vital in space (form) and in time (from one form to another). Into this mix and through this mix come park users, also undergoing their own comings-into-being. They too have their own trajectories in time-space, and these form intersections with the park, and with other park users, that create, reinforce or curb. It is perhaps at these points of intersection that the therapeutic is found in a public park, through the creation of beneficial opportunities and protection from harmful situations. These intersections are perhaps forms of physical interaction, or perhaps the social representations of and values attached to actions and objects.

This overall conception of how a public park may work will be used to inform the discussions in subsequent chapters. In these chapters, I outline how I have applied this model of a

"therapeutic" public park to one particular Park in Gateshead, north-east England called Saltwell Park. I then go on to illustrate the variety of actants that include natural and manufactured features as well as human actants and show how these act in concert, in ways that may be important for their health and wellbeing.

As a result, within the ensuing chapters, I will be bringing a new, post-structuralist, perspective to the examination of the origins, form and action of an environment, to ascertain whether it can be seen as "therapeutic". I will seek to draw attention to the origins, interactions and lives of the events, people, natural phenomena, symbols and representations that are to be found within my study site. I will be highlighting the constitutive elements of the park environments, locating them, for ease of description, within the Gesler typology. Within such a framework, I will look to examine whether these elements can be thought of as having a positive relationship with park users that is indeed therapeutic.

Chapter Three: SEEING THE WOOD AND THE TREES

Research Methods and Study Site

In previous chapters, I explained my aim to interpret an urban park as an assemblage with relevance for health and well-being. In this chapter, I explain the methods used to collect and interpret observations to achieve this goal. I explain the methodology I used in order to interrogate the nature of a park and its significance for health and well-being from an assemblage point of view. This involved discerning what the constituent components of the park were, and utilising appropriate ways to understand their emergence, nature, and interconnectedness.

Colin McFarlane (2011: 652-3) suggests that when thinking about assemblages, there are a number of perspectives and approaches that can be deployed, depending upon the research objective. He suggests that the notion of assemblage can involve the use of methods that are "attuned to practice, materiality and emergence" about a particular phenomenon. He continues that:

> "We can think of assemblage as both orientation to the world (e.g. a form of thinking about urban policy production) and as an object in the world (e.g. an urban policy, house, or infrastructure)."

> (McFarlane 2011: 652-3)

A number of methodological questions arise from this. The first is ontological: is a park solely a location or a form of landscape, or is it the idea of a place with particular meaning in the minds of those who know and use the park? As I discussed in Chapter One, parks were originally born from a discourse surrounding relations between humans and their urban environment, the natural environment outside the city limits, as well as relations between humans and their own bodies and their relations to each other. As discussed in Chapter Two, a park was intended to be a transformative location within the physical fabric of the city. The park landscape itself was borne from a particular discourse about the urban, physical, and social environments that would facilitate healthy engagement with natural, human, and representational entities, producing positive human health and well-being outcomes. Within such locations a particular set of individual and collective attitudes were to be promoted, with certain attitudes being literally left "at the gates" and new behaviours adopted, born out of encounters with the natural and social environment of the park.

SEEING THE WOOD AND THE TREES

Phenomenological Methodologies for Studying the Park as an Assemblage

My research methodology used a phenomenological approach, based upon being in the park and experiencing it first-hand as well as gathering information on the ways in which other people experience the space. Although I do not mean to suggest that health and well-being benefits cannot come through vicarious means, through knowing about or experiencing the park indirectly, say, in one's imagination, the model that I use throughout this dissertation relates to benefits from direct engagement with the park space itself, which I have recorded through participant observation and other methods.

To become a therapeutic landscape, the park requires the presence of humans who interact with the park in diverse ways. How and why one experiences the park landscape as therapeutic is the fundamental question considered here.   The therapeutic landscape concept proposed by Gesler suggests four constituent environments, the natural, the built, the social, and the symbolic. I considered that these environments might be part of an assemblage. This allowed me to take a dynamic view over time, and to be attentive to how each constituent aspect of the environment emerged and developed over its life-course with a temporal-spatial trajectory of its own while contributing to the wider assemblage of the park. A metaphor for this could be that a flick book might give the impression of the variations from one form to another, from one position to another, of the components of a cartoon drawing. The park is therefore seen as a multiple entity, being several parks at once, each capable of being experienced from different perspectives, and that has implications for choice of method for studying a therapeutic landscape. The therapeutic landscapes literature that focuses on urban parks is relatively limited and the idea of assemblage has not usually been deployed in research investigating parks, though some ideas of assemblage are reflected in other studies, which suggest suitable methods to use. In one example, the design and usage of a psychiatric inpatient medical facility was examined using interviews and discussion groups to show how it functioned as an holistic therapeutic landscape, experienced by patients who receive treatment for mental distress and as a workspace for its staff (Curtis *et al.* 2007; Gesler and Curtis 2007). A more specific way of thinking about the therapeutic value of a hospital was provided by Crooks and Evans (2007), through critically analysing the potential for the therapeutic experience through the perception of certain textual and visual symbols and representations of public information messages in waiting rooms. Cattell *et al.* (2008) provide another example of a study based on the presumption that potential beneficial social interactions and connectedness would be located within any everyday social setting within the public realm of the borough, and that particular social groups would vary in their perceptions of therapeutic spaces. They used an approach that involved observation and interviews to discover the settings that local people perceived as important for well-being. The researchers made no *à priori* assumptions about whether to focus on particular parts of the study area that might be therapeutic. Authors such as Ornelas *et al.* (2009) deployed members of a North Carolina African-American

community as fellow researchers, who using 'photo-voice' techniques to assess what elements of their local environment benefitted health.

In trying to determine the therapeutic within Saltwell Park, I treated my study site as a place promoting non-specific, wide-ranging, health benefits. I saw my study site as a space in which any number of health-related interactions and occurrences could take place. Following Curtis *et al.* (2007) and Cattell *et al.* (2008), no prior assumptions were advanced as to what aspect of therapeutic effect should be considered. In other words, I asked the question: '*How might this space be therapeutic and for whom?*' Those individuals and groups who use the park, and who would obtain health and well-being benefits, through interactions either with the landscape or with other people, were not specified in advance. I also asked the question: *Where within the park landscape might be therapeutic?* I looked at the park as a space within which multiple sub-spaces could be imagined as locations for the production of health and well-being effects that might affect any individual or group amongst all the populations using the Park.

SEEING THE WOOD AND THE TREES

The Saltwell Park Study Site Introduced

Saltwell Park was opened in 1876, and is also known as the 'People's Park' (Gateshead MBC 2010a). It is 55 acres in size. The Park is open from dawn until dusk throughout the year, but has several gated entrances that are locked upon closing. Figures 3.1 illustrates the location of Saltwell Park in Gateshead, whilst 3.2 and 3.3 below illustrate layouts of the Park during 2005 and 2012; Figure 3.3 shows that the Park is located in a residential area; whilst Figure 3.5 provides outlines of a number of the features of the Park, such as tree planting, layout and contours. Appendix One shows a series of photographic images taken from my fieldwork.

The Park has been the subject of a number of national, high-profile awards, listed in Table 3.1 below. This illustrates the fact the Park is the focus of civic pride, and is locally and nationally prestigious, especially since it was the subject of a large restoration project:

Green Flag Award 2006;
Civic Trust Park of the Year Award 2006;
Gold Laurel Award by the Institute of Maintenance and Building Management 2006;
Scala Commendation for Saltwell Towers 2005;
Britain's Best Park 2005;
Civic Building of the Year (Saltwell Towers) 2005;
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, Northern Region Building Conservation;
Gold Award (Saltwell Towers) North East Renaissance Awards 2005;
Green Flag Award 2008 & Green Heritage Award 2008;
Green Flag Award 2009;
Green Flag Award 2010.

Table 3 1: Chronology of awards for Saltwell Park **(**Source: http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/Leisure%20and%20Culture/parks/Saltwell%20Park/Award s.aspx , accessed April 25th 2012)

The wider borough is a mixture of the urban and the rural; the west and the south-west of the borough is largely made up of villages and smaller dormitory towns set in the rolling hills of the Derwent Valley. Many of these were former mining settlements, so they share a heritage of industrial decline and restructuring which is also evident in the urban area of Gateshead which formerly relied on now declining industries such as chemicals and heavy engineering. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the area now covered by Gateshead town was essentially rural in character (Gateshead MBC 1998b).

Benneworth (2004) argues that North East England is a peripheral region in both economic and European spatial terms. Recently, a number of regeneration initiatives have been undertaken; some based on the attraction and support for high technology industries and on

the development of the Tyneside area as a destination for home and overseas tourism and short-break holidays. Both of these initiatives have been accompanied by a strong branding of the north east through large-scale art and cultural initiatives.

Saltwell Park sits within central Gateshead. The park is contained within the electoral ward of Saltwell, with Low Fell ward to the south. The locality houses a diversity of populations, socio-economic conditions, and a number of community facilities of local and regional significance.

The surrounding neighbourhood

Figure 3.1 A map of the locality of Saltwell Park (from Gateshead MBC and GVA Grimley (2006: 5), outlined in red)
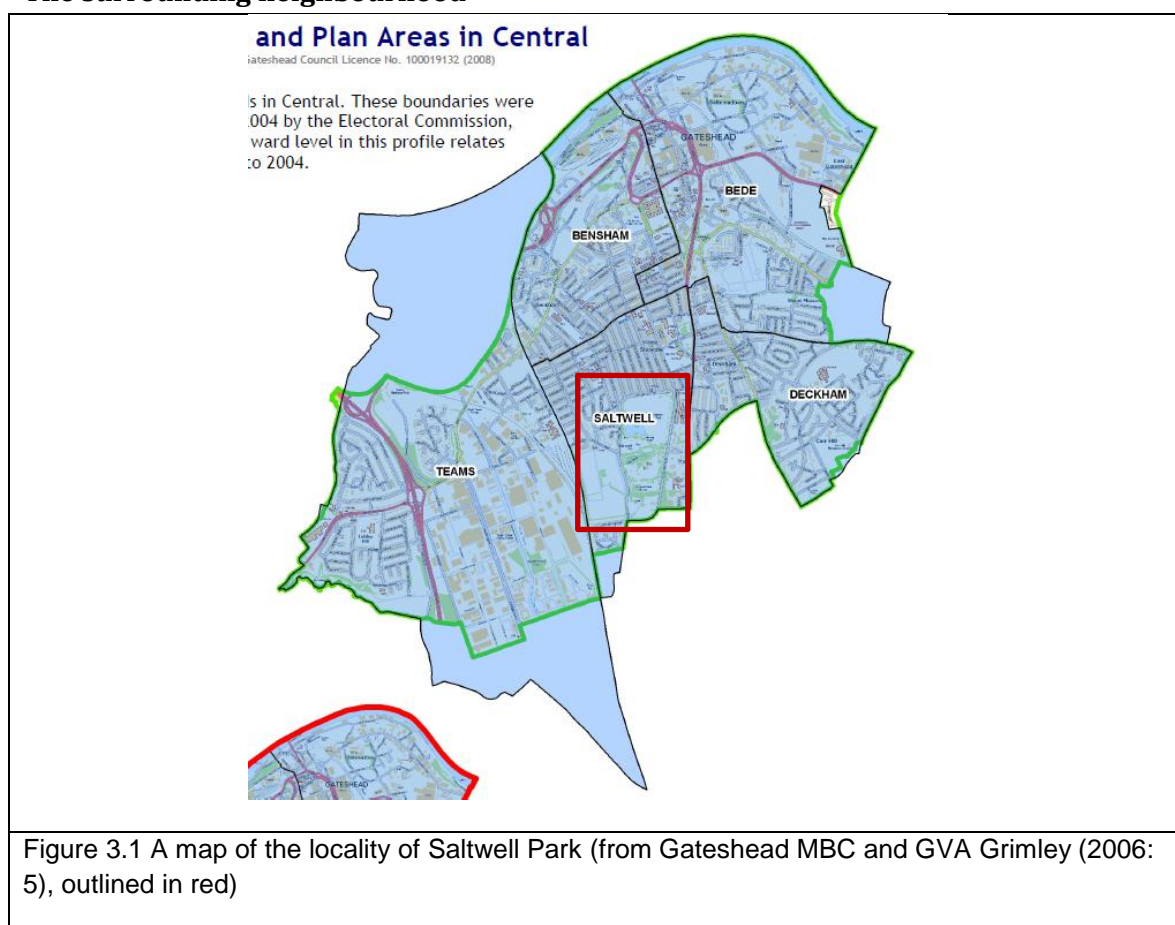
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) tends to treat Bensham and Saltwell wards as a collective[23], which will be reflected in some of the data provided here. This locality is promoted as a site for potential economic and community development. The sources of the information used in this section are often local authority reports and commissioned consultancy reports. Bensham and Saltwell have been the subject of initiatives that have sought to address issues surrounding the quality of housing provision and poor socio-economic conditions (Gateshead MBC n.d.-a). As a result of marketing initiatives

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[23] Gateshead MBC uses areal divisions of neighbourhoods and neighbourhood planning areas (Gateshead MBC and GVA Grimley 2006). Neighbourhoods are demarcated as a grouping of about 1000 dwellings, whereas neighbourhood planning areas are neighbourhoods with adjacent open spaces.

surrounding new "eco-homes" and what seems to be a "rebranding" of the locale, the area has been marketed by the local council as an area attractive to potential incomers and existing residents (Gateshead MBC n.d.-a), with a range of community attractions and good quality facilities, close to a number of regionally significant attractions . It is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into detail regarding the housing initiatives[24], but I will discuss some participants' comments regarding some of the housing stock surrounding the Park in Chapter Six. For some participants, their own housing lacks domestic green space, such as gardens, for which the park then operates as a substitute.

With respect to Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) scores, the Gateshead was ranked 43rd out of 326 local authorities in terms of overall deprivation (where 1 is most deprived), compared to a rank of 52nd out of 354 local authorities in 2007 (Gateshead MBC 2012), a ranking which is relative rather than absolute[25]. This is an area of quite poor health within one of the worst-performing UK regions for health and well-being outcomes[26]. There are some apparent contrasts to be drawn between the standards of living of the neighbouring suburbs. For these residents, the Park would seem to be a site for social congregation and mixing, fulfilling one of the original aims of public parks. The Park was the site of some public health initiatives, such as passive leafleting campaigns on alcohol and cigarette consumption, as well as temporary stands, staffed by public health professionals, which were set up in the park during the Saltwell Park Shows to ask passers-by to consider these dimensions of health.

The neighbouring streets around the Park largely comprise dense layouts of housing units (GVA Grimley 2006), especially true of the area to the north of the Park. As I will discuss in

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[24] Saltwell and Bensham are part of a wider housing initiative on Tyneside known as Market Renewal (Gateshead MBC and GVA Grimley 2006). The Tyneside wide area of housing renewal is known as Bridging NewcastleGateshead, one of nine Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders which "which aim to create more choice and quality in homes and build sustainable neighbourhoods" (page 3).

[25] This report comments that compared to 2007, there are fewer people living in the 10% most deprived areas in the borough in 2010 compared to 2007, but there are more people living in the 10% to 20% most deprived areas within the borough.

[26] *Income Deprivation Domain*: the proportion of the population experiencing income deprivation;
Employment Deprivation Domain: "involuntary exclusion of the working age population from the labour market";
Health Deprivation and Disability Domain: "rates of poor health, early mortality and disability in an area and covers the entire age range."
Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain: Relating to education, skills and training in a local area;
Barriers to Housing and Services Domain: barriers to housing and key local services.
Crime Domain: the rate of recorded crime for four major crime types;
The Living Environment Deprivation Domain: the 'indoors' living environment (quality of housing), and the 'outdoors' living environment (air quality and road traffic accidents).
From
http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/DocumentLibrary/People/genie/imd/IMD2010/DomainIndices2010.pdf, accessed March 20th 2012.

SEEING THE WOOD AND THE TREES

Chapter Six, some of my participants refer to this tight street layout, drawing particular attention to the lack of domestic garden space to be found with the housing units (GVA Grimley 2006). This consultancy report suggests that the lack of private garden space is a negative factor for larger families desiring to stay in the neighbourhood. Though such considerations did not arise with regard to how individuals saw the two wards, the comments of Zara and Taco did refer to a perceived need by some residents to access to Saltwell Park, due to its provision of green space in an area with so little else, beyond street trees along Durham Road and in Low Fell to the east.

Demographic characteristics

Saltwell and Bensham are cited as having particularly socially and ethnically diverse populations. GVA Grimley (2006: 3) cites a bold prediction from the Audit Commission that as a result of the Market Renewal programme, localities once suffering from low demand in the housing stock will be transformed into ones where socially diverse populations decide to live, work, and spend both time and money.

There is a large and prominent Hasidic Jewish population within the borough, the third largest in Britain (Gateshead MBC 2005); this population is concentrated immediately to the north of the Park. A short report for local business (Gateshead MBC n.d.-b), quoting figures from the 2001 Census, observes that the borough's largest religious minority is Jewish (0.8% of the total population), compared to the North East's largest religious minority being Muslim (1.1% of the total population). Zara, one of my participants, asserted that the concentration of specific facilities in the Saltwell and Bensham wards that served the Hasidic community, such as globally renowned schools, was an attraction to newcomers as well as those who lived in the locality already. The Hasidic community was a particularly prominent social group in the neighbourhood and within the Park.

Relevant to this thesis are some of the issues that this Orthodox Jewish population faces in living within the locality. The local authority published a report "A Neighbourhood Plan for the Orthodox Jewish Community of Gateshead" (Gateshead MBC 2005), which was partly developed from a community consultation event with local Jewish residents. Community safety was of particular concern, with anecdotes of verbal and physical harassment of individuals of all ages and genders reported. Saltwell Park was one location mentioned where such events occur. The report was published soon after the refurbishment of the Park had taken place; the sixteen CCTV cameras that are now to be found in the Park are mentioned, as well as the uniformed staff presence within the park. Zara discussed some of these personal safety issues with me.

A health commentary
Certain health and well-being indicators relate to my earlier discussion of the ways in which parks and green space can positively affect health. Gateshead MBC (2011) illustrates some

of these. Within the Gateshead area, some 45% of adult males and 40.2% of females undertook 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on 5 or more days each week in 2008[27] (compared respectively to the English averages of 42% and 30.6%). When rates of physical activity are viewed by ward area, Lobley Hill and Bensham ward has an average for adults (aged 18 years and over) of 35.8%, with Saltwell having an average physical activity rate of 41.7%. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Four, the Park is a site of importance within the neighbourhood for outdoor exercise and physical activity, with a number of individuals and groups making particular use of its physical characteristics, such as its topography and various design features for exercise classes such as Pushy Mothers and sponsored exercise events like *Pants in the Park*.

There are some other health indices that are pertinent to activities within Saltwell Park. Within Gateshead borough as a whole, 68.4% of mothers initiate breast feeding, compared to an English average of 74.5%[28]. The Park is one of a number of locations where breastfeeding initiation initiatives have taken place.as I remark with regard to campaigns for challenging popular attitudes towards those who have poor mental health, one of priorities for NHS South of Tyne and Wear (2010a) is "Changing the provision of Mental Health services", commenting that poor mental health is a major cause of poor health and a poor quality of life within the Trust wider area; also the report suggests that there is an increasing prevalence. The North East Public Health Observatory (NEPHO) reports that with Gateshead borough that the Percentage of the adult population (aged 18+) with depression is 18.49, compared to an English average of 11.19[29] [30].

One initiative is to "Increase numbers in receipt of psychological therapies". In Chapter Five, I discuss the comments of, for example, one particular participant, someone who suffered a bereavement, who has formed a close personal relationship with another Park user, something she values greatly. Other participants referred to their usage patterns keeping them "sane".

Although this thesis does not aim to quantify levels of activity in the park among research participants and I did not enquire systematically about this, participants such as Sebastiano and Zara, as well as the Pushy Mothers, did draw attention to the positive features of this location that support physical activity (Chapter Four).

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[27] http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/DocumentLibrary/Care/JSNA/2011/FullDocument/Section17.pdf#page=19 (Gateshead MBC 2011), accessed September 18th 2012.

[28] Mothers initiating breast feeding where status is known, 2010/11

[29] http://www.nepho.org.uk/cmhp/index.php?view=E08000020, accessed September 26th 2012.

[30] This figure is only a little better than the worst English ward percentage of 20.28.

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Saltwell Park

1	Sports Pitches
2	North Shelter
3	Almond Pavilion
4	Lucas Memorial
5	Boating Kiosk
6	Training Centre
7	South Shelter
8	Rose Garden
9	The Dene
10	Charlton Fountain
11	Stable Block
12	Aviaries
13	Octagonal Garden
14	Saltwell Towers
15	Maze
16	South African War Memorial
17	Bandstand
18	Park Depot
19	Crematorium and
20	Garden of Rest

Specimen trees and stands of specimen trees

Strategic tree and shrub planting

Bedding areas and horticultural displays

Pedestrian circulation, access and drives

Play areas

Car parking

Water features

N

Scale: Metres
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Figure 3.2: A 2005 map of Saltwell Park. It shows a number of the different character areas that I refer to throughout this thesis. See also the slight contrast with the more recent map in Figure 3.3: Courtesy of Gateshead MBC.

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Saltwell Park show

Activity Locations

- A Portaloos
- B Face Painting
- C TA 72 Engineers Regiment
- D National Trust
- E Gateshead Thunder
- F Main Marquee
- G Rowing Boats
- H Catering
- I Model Boats
- J Arts and Crafts Activities
- K Bowling Demonstrations
- L Bird Hide
- M Floral Art Displays and Exhibition of Children's Paintings
- N 'Beat It' Drumming Performances
- O Gateshead Council Mobile Library
- P Road Respect
- Q BBC Digital Switchover
- R Metro Radio
- S BBC Newcastle

Park Features

1. Sports Pitches
2. North Shelter
3. Almond Pavilion
4. Lucas Memorial
5. Boating Kiosk
6. Training Centre
7. South Shelter
8. Rose Garden
9. The Dene
10. Charlton Fountain
11. Stable Block
12. Aviaries
13. Octagonal Garden
14. Saltwell Towers
15. Maze
16. South African War Memorial
17. Bandstand
18. Park Depot
19. Crematorium and Garden of Rest
20. Dog Exercise Area
21. Children's Play Area
22. Komatsu Friendship Garden

Figure 3.3: The Park as laid out for the 2012 Spring Saltwell Park show. In the intervening time since 2005, some new additions had been made to the Park's layout, such as the Friendship Garden. Some permanent features are illustrated, such as the Model Boat Club hut ("I"). Courtesy Gateshead MBC

Figure 3.4: The residential environs of Saltwell Park. The built-up nature of the Park's location is clear.

Ground Survey

Ground Survey and Contours

Eye Point Co-ordinates = 3900.000 , 4471.000 , 500.0
Target Point Co-ordinates = 4767.470 , 4474.956 , 57.107

Saltwell Park   Plan 3
THREE DIMENSIONAL VIEWS
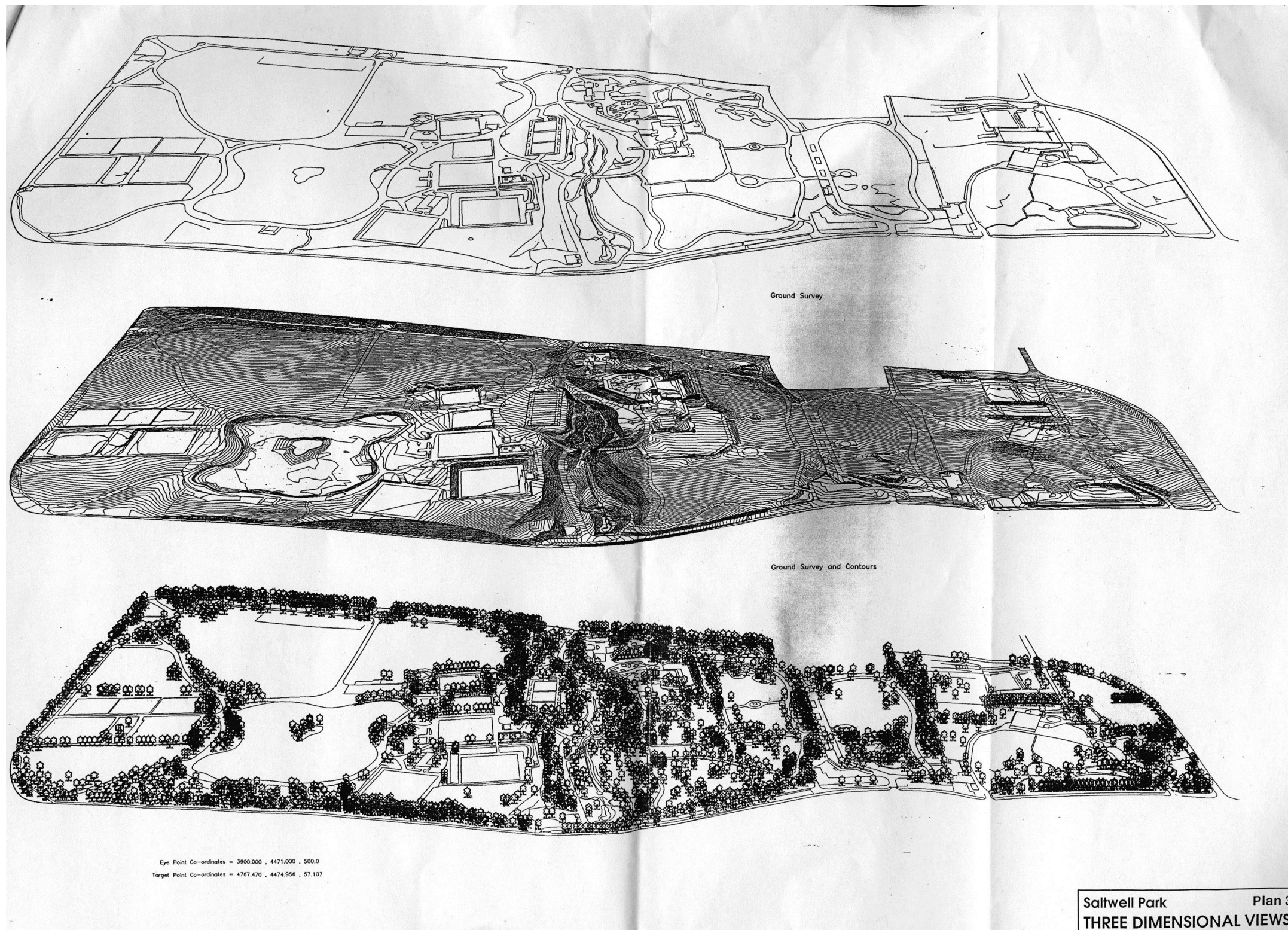
Figure 3.5: These maps were enclosed with Gateshead MBC's Heritage Lottery Fund application. They show the outline of restored features (top), the topography (the contour lines, middle) and the treescape (bottom)

(Gateshead MBC n.d.-c).

SEEING THE WOOD AND THE TREES

Overall, Saltwell Park is situated within a number of the most deprived wards within the borough and in England (Figure 3.6). Appendices Two to Five details the health measures for the borough. Appendix Five shows how that the overall IMD indices of Gateshead are comparatively worse than the English and regional equivalents. Within the overall picture of dimensions of Gateshead health (Appendix Two), there are some indicators that have a relevance to some of the public health initiatives that were staged in Saltwell Park during the period of my fieldwork. For example, breastfeeding initiation (index 8) is worse than the English average, which might have produced the desire to stage the awareness Picnic in the Park, supported by NHS staff.
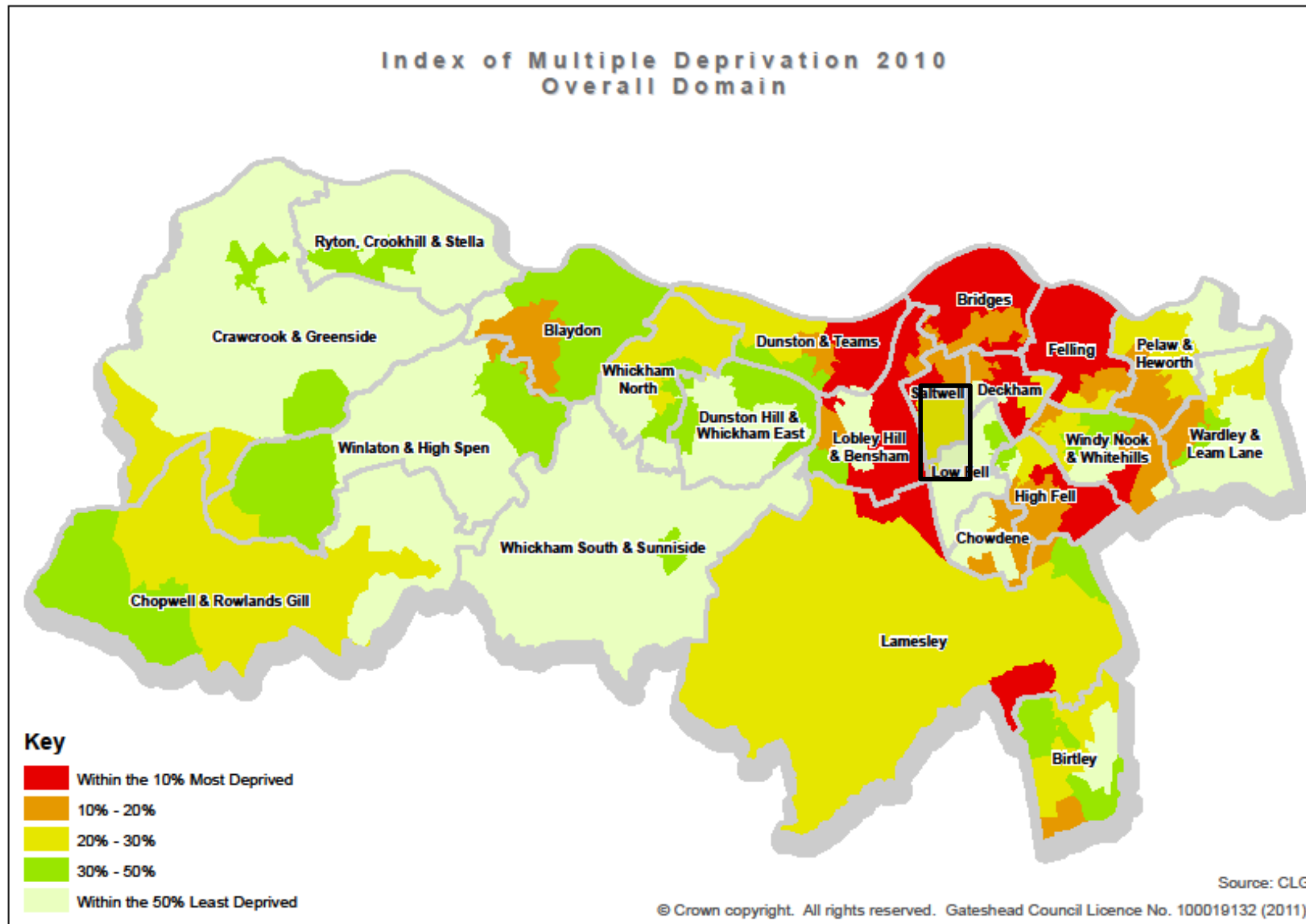
Figure 3.6: The overall IMD ranking for Gateshead electoral wards. Saltwell Park is within the box in the eastern half of the map (source: http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/DocumentLibrary/People/genie/imd/IMD2010/IMD2010-Overall.pdf , accessed April 23rd 2012).

SEEING THE WOOD AND THE TREES

The Choice of Saltwell Park as a Fieldwork Site

When selecting my case study, I was conscious of choosing a park that offered a number of advantages for both generating an appropriate amount of suitable data and the ease of its collection. I discounted small parks due to a concern that singly they might not produce sufficient data suitable for a thesis, so I looked for a suitably large park within the Tyneside area. I rejected some candidates since they might not have groups of regular and frequent users that could be easily approached and interviewed. In addition, I needed a park that was reasonably accessible from my home in terms of travel time and cost. The best resultant fit from that sifting exercise was Saltwell Park, central Gateshead.

Saltwell Park (also known from this point on as "the Park") was selected as the focus of study since it is: a large urban park, offering a range of different settings; used regularly by a large number of people, and users were organized in various activity groups focused on different ways of using the Park spaces; and accessible, so that I could make regular visits over an extended period.

The space in the Park was expected to seem different at different times, being subject to variations in weather, with attendant changes in the appearance of vegetation, and usage, throughout the course of the day and over the course of the year. When undertaking pilot work at Saltwell Park to assess its suitability for undertaking the fieldwork, I visited it one day in July 2008. That day was sunny, and the Park was busy. By early December 2008, I had decided to go ahead with a pilot study using the methods that I would intend to use in the main fieldwork period; at that time, a visit to the Park revealed it to be virtually empty of visitors. These variable patterns in usage were also underscored by the Park's events calendar. This drew my attention to the need to study the Park throughout the year. This dimension of the research approach was designed to examine the dynamic life of the Park that changes over time, partly in association with annual cycles of seasons and events.

The Constitution of Saltwell Park as an Assemblage

Ben Anderson and Colin McFarlane comment on a way of thinking about spaces that is expressed through the idea of 'assemblage':

> "In short, part of the reason assemblage is being increasingly used across a wide range of contexts is its very manipulability: it can be used as a broad descriptor of disparate actors coming together, as an alternative to notions of network emerging from actor-network theory, as a way of thinking about phenomena as productivist or practice-based, as an ethos that attends to the social in formation, and as a means of problematising origins, agency, politics and ethics."

> (Anderson and McFarlane 2011: 126)

My approach was therefore to develop a method that would allow me to interpret the Park in this way. Through observational visits to the Park, as well as through talking to the Park staff, I built

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up a picture of these various components of the 'assemblage' of the Park, including both the physical and social 'actors' in the assemblage.

Not only was the physical landscape being subject to some variation of interest to me, but also the populations using the Park. This meant there was a dynamic aspect to the social as well as the physical environment in the Park. For example, I noted variation in the hours of public admittance through the year. Normally, the Park is open from roughly dawn to dusk; but in July, this time window is about 13 hours, whereas in December is only about 7 hours. Public events took place at different times and ranged from the big, official events, such as the two Saltwell Park Shows to smaller events focussed on particular groups or themes.

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The Physical Fabric of Saltwell Park

Saltwell Park is a location that is divided into several different designed spaces. However, with regard to the therapeutic landscape concept, Saltwell Park cannot be easily divided into sub-areas based around solely natural or built elements[31] . For example, the lake is a built feature, yet it replicates a natural landscape feature. At any one time, the space would also be constituted by the people making use of the Park in different ways. An official classification of the Park spaces reflected in the plan for visitors is based upon a particular view of design and usage. As discussed in the later chapters, each part of the Park can be thought of as comprising areas with varying character, each of which are constituted of different entities, such as vegetation, water, shrubs and flowers, wildlife, constructed features, and individuals' behaviours.

Consistent with the idea of an assemblage, I also took a dynamic view over time; each of the various constituent components of the sub-areas will have their own spatial and temporal trajectories. I assumed that there would be changes in each of these constituent entities, such as growth of vegetation, and the variability and influence of weather upon the landscape and on human activities. I also assumed that there would be a seasonal variability to these features that might create or limit opportunities for beneficial contacts and interactions.

The Human Actors in the Assemblage

Taking this dynamic perspective on Saltwell Park led me to focus on certain aspects of the social as well as physical aspects of the space: the social calendar, the affiliated and more *ad hoc* social groups using the Park and the casual visitors were all important to consider.

The Social Calendar

The Park staff that I spoke to during the fieldwork revealed an annual events calendar that had particular events throughout the year, with the bulk of these during the Spring and Summer. The events in the calendar were aimed at different groups of park users, as can be seen later on in this chapter. The calendar would draw into the Park some of the people that I would later speak to in interviews. Table 3.2 lists the events for the year 2009 that I attended. This events calendar suggested that there might be a series of regular, irregular, or novel opportunities for park users, to engage with either the Park fabric, or other park users, undertaking particular sets of activities, at particular places and times, and often occurring as once-only events in the year.

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[31] Curtis (2010) comments that the four therapeutic landscape environments cannot be easily separated.

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Saltwell Park Show is a bi-annual event, staged over a weekend during each of the spring and late summer Bank Holidays. It is aimed at being a family day out. In the pavilion, there are stands that sell local food and crafts, as well as others that promote official aspects of health and well-being, on topics such as resilience, home fire protection, etc.

Workers' Memorial Day **(April 28th)** is an annual event, which originated in Canada, and has found expression in the UK, including Saltwell Park. The memorial is located in the Rose Garden. It is intended to commemorate the victims of industrial accidents.

The media launch for the inaugural *Gateshead Together Week* was held on 7th May 2009. It was launched at Saltwell Park with the *Picnic in the Park*. It was an event intended to promote "community inclusion" and "community cohesion".   Thirty people from eight community groups brought food that they had each prepared and shared with the others. Other activities took place around the borough that week.

Breastfeeding Awareness Week **picnic** Is also is an annual event. I attended on May 12th 2009. At its height, 100 women with children gathered near the bandstand from 11.30am-2.30pm. Initially, the activities aimed at both children and mothers, such as a picnic, raffles, and tombolas. Attendees could take away "goody bags" of both medical information as well as more commercial items donated by local stores.

Race for Life is an annual fun run organised by Cancer Research UK. The 3km course was marked in pink tape, and occupied most of the northern part of the Park. As well as using regular staff, members of the public were asked to undertake voluntary duties such as setting out the course beforehand and handing out water and goody bags to participants afterwards, something that I did.

Pants in the Park was a sponsored 3km fun run first staged at Saltwell Park on Sunday 28th June 2009. The organisers told me that the Saltwell Park run was the first time that a race had been held outside the south of England. It started in the morning, lasting until early afternoon with participants including men, women, and children. It was staged on the northern half of the Park.

Zoolab took place on 13th August 2009 in two lunchtime sessions in the Training Centre. It was an annual pre-booked event for children, accompanied by their parents. The children could observe and occasionally be invited to touch exotic animals. I attended the first session for 3-6 year olds, which lasted about an hour; the second was for 7-12 year olds.

Green Festival is an annual event. In 2009, it was held on August 21st, next to the Towers. It promoted nature conservation opportunities, and aimed to make people aware of their local countryside.

Table 3.3: The events for the year 2009 that I attended as part of my fieldwork.

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The Affiliated Social Groups of Saltwell Park

There are some groups who regularly populate the Park, such as the Park staff, the Bowls' Club and the Model Boats Club. These groups were of interest to me, as they might have been expected to have particularly intimate interactions with the Park, through employment, or leisure activities. In addition, they played a part in the life of the Park by virtue of their personal or collective official status, allowing them to influence both the physical and social fabric of the Park. During the course of my fieldwork, what also became apparent about the individual members of these groups was that they had long personal histories of connections with the Park.

Regular Unaffiliated Park User Groups

It became apparent when I investigated the feasibility of using the Park as a research site, that it was also populated by other groups who undertook activities within the Park, but which did not have a particular official, affiliated status. These groups did not take part in, or stage, official timetabled events in the calendar, but they were still regular users of the Park. The Park management was aware of their presence, and could supply me with an outline of their activities and schedule. Examples of such groups were a new mother's exercise and fitness group, and the *Get Fit Outdoors Company.*

Casual Visitors

I also observed or spoke with a number of people using the Park in more informal ways, some of whom had used the Park quite regularly and over quite long periods, and who could speak about how the Park space being interwoven with their own life histories. Initial scoping revealed that some 100,000 visits are made to the Park on an annual basis. This visitorship consisted of people who would also influence the nature of an individual's park experience from the perspective of others, as well as experiencing the Park for themselves. There is a diverse range of socio-cultural groups who live in the areas immediately surrounding the Park; these groups include, for example, members of some distinct socio-cultural groups, such as the large orthodox Jewish community in nearby Bensham ward.

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Selection of Suitable Methods

Methods were selected so as to capture the nature of Saltwell Park, how individuals who entered the Park interacted with it, and how their experiences of the Park might be important for their health and well-being. I needed to study Saltwell Park as an environment that comprises a material landscape, part-natural, part-built, and a variety of social groups and individuals with different social positions and engaging in different activities in the Park.

In terms of an epistemology of a public park, and following on from the discussion earlier regarding assemblages being in multiple states of being, we can extend the argument regarding methodology. My research required multiple perspectives to be brought to bear upon the interactions that such assemblages afford and sustain. This suggested that I would need to use a range of suitable methods to capture these multiple perspectives.

I selected a suite of methods, designed to record both my own observations and reflections, and those of others within the Park space. I wanted to capture the state of phenomena in the assemblage, both in terms of their own nature, and how they might have come into being, but also in terms of how they might interact with each other. I found that I needed to use a range of different methods suited to each type of 'actor' that I was aiming to record in my study.

The methods that I chose were intended to give me intersecting visions and representations of the various environments of the Park. In therapeutic landscape terms, one would expect different aspects of environments to be relevant: natural, built, social and symbolic. I did not consciously try to map these environments at the outset because I did not want to prejudge what I might find were the key aspects of assemblages, and their importance for well-being.

The intention was to capture as much information as possible on form, function, interconnectedness and the dynamism of the physical and social lives of Saltwell Park. I did this by using myself as an observer and enquirer about the Park, and also as someone who experienced aspects of the Park's life directly. I asked the respondents engaged in this study for their accounts of their recent and current experiences. By making repeated observations in the Park throughout the year, I employed methods that captured two different types of timeframe: one set that captured rhythmic change on a diurnal, weekly, and seasonal basis, and another set that captured single events. Interviews with people who had used the Park over a long period also gave me insights into historic change, both in the Park and in park users, over longer periods of time (e.g. through life history accounts of the place and the people using it).

Most empirical work on "therapeutic landscapes" involves short periods of observation and focuses more on capturing the views of those who are already intimate with the landscape. In some other cases researchers have adopted the perspective of participant observers and were able to experience the effects of the landscape for themselves. For example, Darby (2000) conducted an ethnography of the Lake District in the mid-1990s, joining walking parties as an "inlooker" (page 212), and conducting questionnaire surveys (pages 287-90) of walkers' feelings towards the landscape and each other. Although that study was not using a conceptual

framework based on therapeutic landscapes, it is relevant since it is an example of a study in which the focus was on long-term relationships between those people that Darby interviewed and the actual and imagined landscapes of the Lake District (she focused on perspectives garnered and sustained by participants during their lives, which were then related as narratives). The interviews were undertaken over a long time period with Darby participating in several walks through the Lake District over the course of the research. I used Darby's work as a template for my own field work methods. I used two broad categories of approach: participant observation and interview methods. The methods that I describe below were first tested for their suitability during pilot work, and then applied in the main study as described below.

Observing the assemblage of Saltwell Park
Observational methods such as ethnography and participant observation allow a researcher to develop a deeper and more nuanced understanding of people's everyday lived experiences (Cook 2005). Within the therapeutic landscapes literature, observational methods have been used to study, for example, the practices, motivations and outcomes of religious pilgrimages (Gesler 1996), as well as practices and outcomes for local residents making use of their east London neighbourhoods (Cattell *et al.* 2008). Ingold (2004: 331) argues in his essay *Culture on the Ground* that "locomotion, not cognition, must be the starting point for the study of perceptual activity". It is this mode of locomotion that I used to observe the various facets of life within Saltwell Park.

As a participant observer in the Park, I reflected on my own positionality. I too was an individual who had a physical trajectory through the Park, and a history associated with that. In addition, I formed part of the assemblage of the Park when I was there; for other people, I formed part of the Park's public, park of the fabric of the place. Ellingson (2006) asserts that in qualitative health research, the research is (wrongly in her view) bodiless, and the presentation of research is passive. Yet, I occupied multiple positions within the life of the Park, at times as a participant observer, sometimes as an unintended subject of an event that I comment upon. The multiplicity that I occupied was actually complex: black (outsider), male (insider). Before commencing fieldwork, I acquired an enhanced CRB clearance form, in personal and supervisor anticipation that I would asked for proof of not posing a possible criminal or reputational threat to any participant, gatekeeper, or Durham University. My clearance was of interest to the primary school that I visited, but not to other bodies and organisations. My status as a Durham researcher was of particular interest to George; more generally, almost all people that I approached for interviews were willing to participate. The research was of interest to them, especially since most had positive comments to make about the Park. Ordinarily, I do not have to undertake the reaffirmation of a personal "black" identity during my life in the north-east of England that Christine A. Stanley has recently had to make upon immigration to the USA from Jamaica (Stanley and Slattery 2003). The authors imply that a colleague thought that their complex social identity - white male, black female, would cover all positional bases for uncovering the experiences of female and visible minority students in a US college of

engineering. Yet, I had no such "advantages" – I was at times a male, a black male, a young-ish black male mainly talking to whites, often to white females, sometimes to older white people. Yet, at no point did I feel that I was treated with suspicion. Perhaps the Park was seen as a neutral topic to talk about – I was not asking "sensitive" questions about respondents' bodies, or political views; yet, at one point, I was a young-ish male stranger talking to four attendees at a breastfeeding picnic about why they were at the event, and the benefits that they derived therefrom, which still occasionally, amuses academic colleagues. At another point, I was a young-ish male stranger talking to five women about the breastfeeding picnic. One of whom suddenly fed her baby next to me. I did not detect any essentialist discomfort or surprise from respondents; as Srivastava (2006) noted, all dimensions of a social identity can come into play when negotiating the social spaces of a research project.

I also undertook ethnographic observations of casual users in the public space of the Park. As part of my visits around Saltwell Park, I would observe those individuals who were using the Park for some particular activity, such as running, or feeding animals, or meeting with people. Without being intrusive, I recorded their actions and behaviours. In the pilot phase, I devised a number of different routes through the Park that allowed me to observe as many different sub-areas of the Park as possible during each visit. I would walk through the Park, noting what I saw on notebooks, digital camera, and digital audio recorder.

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Table 3.3 illustrates my two main routes around the Park (refer to Figure 3.2).

Route 1	Route 2
Crematorium	Crematorium
Bandstand	Bandstand
South African War Memorial	South African War Memorial
	Stableblock
Maze	Almond Pavilion
Towers	Sports Pitches
Dene	The Lake And Sports Courts
Rose Garden	Rose Garden
Sports Pitches	Dene
	Belvedere And Maze
Almond Pavilion	Towers
The Towers, *and return*	Past South African War Memorial*, and return*

Table 3.3: Two typical Data-Gathering Walking Routes through the Park.

I would interrogate anything that I saw, heard or smelt that attracted my interest. Broadly speaking, I would ask: "What is it? What does it seem to do? What is its history? How do people interact with it? What effect does it seem to have upon those people?" Thus, I would ask this of diverse features such as vegetation, wildlife, memorial plaques on park benches, leaflets, and posters around the Park. I did not approach any visit with a pre-determined list of things to look for; instead, I tried to be open to the presence and operation of prominent features, as well as exploring areas and elements that were off the beaten-track (an example of this can be seen in my observations of some signs of drug use in Chapter Six).

Some questions that I posed to participants related to their observations about their general experiences of 'everyday' use of the Park, or those of other users like themselves, or with whom they shared activities. For example, I could ask George about the activities of the Model Boat Club, since he was a long-term member of the club and was conversant with the activities and experiences of each of the members of the club, together with the rules by which the entire club membership operated within Saltwell Park. More broadly, my visits to the Park on days other

than when a known activity was taking place were based upon a presumption that I would see the general, 'routine' life of the Park, typical of the 'everyday' environment. Sometimes, an unusual event would occur, such as certain weather events. However, I had no prior knowledge of what I might see in the Park, who I might find there, and what conclusions I may draw from those observations. I was effectively 'sampling' the life of the Park, through repeated observations of its form(s) over time, its constituent actants and their interconnections and actions upon others.

The capturing of the dynamic qualities of a landscape and resultant outcomes seems to be relatively rare. Whyte (1988) used time-lapse photography to trace diurnal patterns as to how members of the public used a public square; such equipment was not available to me, and also would not have been practicable in so large an area. However, the frequent trips that I made into the Park, observing the same features over the course of the year had a similar purpose.

Not all of my observations were focused on routine, everyday activity in the Park. As discussed below I also took part in various organized events as a participant observer, so that I could combine my direct experience of these events with material collected from participants. Among the events in the calendar, only Saltwell Park Show was a publicly listed event that was repeated during the course of the year. Other events were singular in terms of their conception and organisation: i.e., there was one *Zoolab*, one *Pants in the Park*, one *Race for Life*, staged during the course of a year. Thus, if I wanted to see how these events operated, I had to attend the one staging of that event during the year, in order to understand how the particular event transformed the space of the Park. To some extent, also, the information collected from individuals relate to their own (specific) lives, showing me how their individual, singular experience was interwoven with their experiences in the Park.

With regard to most events, I undertook ethnographic observations. I would record what I observed on notebooks, digital camera, and digital audio recorder. In the case of *Pants in The Park*, I was a participant observer, actually taking part in the running event. In other cases I was drawn into the participating group as a member of the public able to join in.

Gathering Data on the Life of Saltwell Park from other Park users

Here, I outline the specific methods that I used to recruit participants, record the experiences of other people using the Park, and gain insights of how they interacted with the Park and what it meant to them. The participants I recruited to this study included people with a wide range of gender, socio-cultural and life-stage characteristics, which reflected my purposive sampling strategy to record the diversity of Park users. I was also aiming to represent the different types of activity for which the Park was being used at different times during the year of fieldwork.

As mentioned above, there are some established, "affiliated" groups who populate the Park on a formally organized, continuing basis: staff, the Friends' Group, Bowls' Club and Model Boats Club and others taking part in regular, organized activities. I looked to gain the viewpoints of

members of these five groups, so approached each of these three groups for people willing to grant me interviews. I was able to approach these groups through official contacts, such as a secretary or managers, or through other personal contacts that I had developed.

What became apparent about the members of these groups was that they had long personal histories and perspectives on the Park, and so were able to give me an impression of how the Park had changed over their lifetimes. In addition, they played a part in the life of the Park, by virtue of their personal or collective official status within the Park, allowing them to influence both the physical and social fabric of the Park. Unaffiliated groups of people using the Park for more *ad hoc* events also sometimes had a long association with the Park, though they might be more occasional visitors, drawn in by a particular event. I approached participants at these events on an opportunistic basis, trying to include interviewees who appeared typical of the group for whom the event was organized.

Initially, I sought the permission of the Park authorities to conduct my research in Saltwell Park, and to approach users. I was armed with an introductory letter from both park management and the university, conferring upon me the status of being a *bone fide* researcher. I sought out group leaders and representatives and, in some cases, data collection took place after negotiating "access" to potential respondents through a gatekeeper whose routines and wishes I had to comply with. Often, certain individuals were identified for me by these gatekeepers, and I was encouraged to approach them. One person, Ruth, sought me out and asked to take part in the study.   These diverse individuals have acquired information, knowledge, and representations about the Park; have a trajectory through the Park, and a history associated with it. When in the Park themselves, they form part of the Park assemblage. From their perspective, they told me about the fabric of the Park, what the Park meant to them, and what they thought about other people using the Park.

Table 3.4 outlines some of the characteristics of all my participants. They are referred to by using pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

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Andrew was aged 77 at the time of the study. He is retired and a grandparent. He is a Friend of Saltwell Park and Bowls' Club member. He is a very frequent visitor to the Park. I asked him to undertake the photovoice exercise and walking interview. Interview lasted about an hour.

Barbara was aged 74, and is the wife of Andrew. She too is a Friend of Saltwell Park. She undertook the photovoice and walking interview, and also repeated the photovoice exercise later in the year. First interview conducted with Andrew; second lasted about an hour with just Catherine.

Catherine did not disclose her age. She is retired and a grandparent. She is a close friend of Barbara and Andrew, also being a Friend of Saltwell Park. She moved to the Saltwell area in late 1960's; she is one of a group of prominent park users and overseers. The exercises that I asked to undertake were as with Barbara above. First interview conducted with Barbara and Andrew. Second interview with Barbara lasted about an hour.

David was aged in his 50's, and is employed at the Park. He came to the Park as a child, living near it, and being acquainted with it all his life. He is a frequent 'outward-bound' activity leader. He undertook a photovoice exercise. An initial walking tour that orientated me around that park was recorded and transcribed, and then I interviewed him for an hour.

Esther is in her 20's. In her professional role, she creates habitat spaces at the Park with volunteers and community groups. She undertook a photovoice exercise. Our recorded and transcribed interview lasted an hour.

Francis was aged 49 at the time of fieldwork, and in employment. He is a Model Boat Club member. He just wanted to be interviewed face-to-face, despite having agreed to photovoice. Our recorded and transcribed interview lasted an hour.

George was aged in his 50's, and is employed as a member of staff at the Park. He undertook a longitudinal photovoice exercise, but talked without reference to his images. Our recorded and transcribed interview lasted just under an hour.

Heidi, Irene, Julie, and **Karolina** were aged between their late 20's and early 30's, and were new mothers. I interviewed them at the *Breastfeeding Awareness Week Picnic* that they were attending. They were interviewed collectively at the picnic.

Liz works as a fitness coach. She is the organiser of the new mothers' exercise group at Saltwell Park. She was interviewed face-to-face after a training session for about 20 minutes.

Martina, Naomi, Petra and **Orlaine**, were in their 20's or 30's. They were new **m**others. They are members of the above mothers' group in Saltwell Park. They were interviewed

face-to-face after a training session with Liz for about 20 minutes.
Students from a class at a local skills' training provider. Included four white males, one black male, and one white female. Ages ranged from 16 to 19 years at the time. They were interviewed collectively after a teaching session with their tutor. The interview lasted for about 20 minutes.
Local primary school children in a mixed gender class, in Year 4. As I do not quote individuals' comments, I have not given them pseudonyms. They undertook a reflective workbook exercise, and I interviewed them collectively in class, for about 20 minutes.
Ruth aged 29 at the time of the study is a mother with a 17-month old daughter. She used to come to the Park as young girl. Later she left the area for a while before returning to live nearby. She is a twice-weekly visitor with her daughter and also visits with her husband. She annotated a map. We spoke for about 20 minutes.
Sebastiano was 27 years old. He works as a fitness coach on Tyneside. I interviewed him after he had taken me for a training session. We spoke for about 30 minutes.
Taco was aged 25 at the time of the study. He is an Iraqi-born, UK resident. He had some typed notes that he referred to. We spoke for about 20 minutes.
Uriah, Victor, William, and **Xander** are men of varying youth and maturity who have long-term mental illnesses. They were clients of a support charity. They visit various North-East parks including Saltwell. . They were interviewed face-to-face after a teaching session with their tutor. We spoke for about 20 minutes.
Yeardleigh was aged in his 70's, probably retired, with a long history of activity in the local NE sports scene. His wife has dementia. He is a member of the Bowls' Club. . He just wanted to be interviewed face-to-face. We spoke for two hours.
Zara was aged 60-possibly in her 70's, and a Jewish grandmother. She was US–born, and **is** a member of the 'Zayis Raanon' society. She just wanted to be interviewed face-to-face. We spoke for about 30 minutes.

Table 3.4: List of Study Participants

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I developed a series of information sheets to be given to participants; these explained the amount of time that I expected to spend with them, and which reflective methods would suit the time that they could give me. For those who I could reasonably expect to return with a completed reflective exercise, I gave them either the camera or map, with attendant instructions.

For all respondents I gave them a "Thank You" letter, and a reiteration of the processes through which their data would be used.

Methods for collecting information from participants

I used a variety of methods to collect information from this diverse group of participants including photovoice, walking interviews, 'participatory mapping' and 'conventional' individual or group interviews. Within the therapeutic landscape literature, using participants' photographic representations of landscapes (Ornelas *et al.* 2009; Sperling 2007), known as photovoice (van Hove *et al.* 2008) has seen wide use. Images of affective characteristics of a local environment can then be used for later sharing and reflection, with a group of other participants and the researchers. For instance, Cannuscio and colleagues used a mixture of researcher and participant photographs to elicit local residents' health concerns (Cannuscio *et al.* 2009).

I did not use a standard method to collect information from all participants, as this would not have been feasible or appropriate in this study. As I explain below, the circumstances of recruitment of individual participants, together with the amount of time that I could spend with them, and whether they were amenable to undertaking a reflective exercise beforehand, largely dictated the most appropriate methods to use. Initially during field work, I sought to give each participant a disposable camera and asked them to complete a photovoice exercise that Conradson (2005) and Sperling (2007) suggested for reflection on the self-landscape encounter. During this exercise, I asked the respondent to photograph phenomena relating to aspects of their health and well-being; these phenomena could have been within the Park, or outside. I arranged to collect the cameras, and have the film developed. Then, meeting with the participants at the Park, I sought to conduct the walking interviews (Anderson 2004; Kusenbach 2006), and used the photographs as a prompt, asking participants to talk me through both the photographs and their experiences of the Park. This would help me gain an insight into their particular spatial routines, especially their visits to different parts of the Park, building up a sense of their relational, perceived 'map' of the Park space (see for example Cummins *et al.* 2007).

The photographs prompted commentaries about park histories and usages. With Andrew, Barbara and Catherine (see the description of the participants above), I conducted walking interviews by the lake. Individual walking interviews worked better than group discussions.

I also used photovoice with some other research participants on occasions when I could arrange to meet them in advance of the interview in order to issue equipment and instructions needed for this approach. In one case, George (see above), used his own digital camera. In

the end however, only Andrew, Barbara, Catherine and George undertook photovoice exercises.

I asked a number of other participants to annotate a copy of the GMBC map of the Park, marking on it places that they liked and disliked. This was expected to generate the same pre-interview reflections as photographs, but at a fraction of the cost. The map was used by Taco and Ruth, as well the organisers of Outdoor Fitness Company (participant groups explained below). I again used the maps to steer the semi-structured interviews, and as the basis for understanding and interpreting their comments.

For those adults (the majority of respondents as it turned out) who had a limited amount of time to spend with me, I simply arranged to meet them at a convenient time and would digitally record their thoughts and did not use the more reflective exercises, such as the cameras and maps. Examples of such participants were mothers with children; their routines would be liable to change and irregularity, so I worked with those individuals using single interviews.

I also conducted an exercise engaging children from a local primary school: the class's teacher suggested that I turn the exercise into a workbook format, so following her suggestion, and the teacher used that as a basis for their work in the Park. I enclose a copy of that workbook later on in Appendix Eight.

There were two groups who were underrepresented within my sample. These are as follows:

Families who use the Park: I was able to engage with some "family" usage of the park, but in the context of individuals' comments about how their families used the Park. I had wanted to recruit family groups to comment upon their collective and intergenerational use of the Park. an intergenerational grouping would have offered a perspective upon the presence of both continuity and change within the park as well as between generations. Families of people at different "ages" would have been able to offer perspectives on their use of the park. With young families, there is probably a greater sense of collective usage; with older families, possibly a more divergent usage. A family group, especially an intergenerational one, would have acted as a form of focus group, with contrasting and also similar usage patterns, all threaded through by the Park. Arranging to speak to family groups was not always not always feasible, given the need to make advance arrangements to interview groups.

Non-users of the Park: I had, in fact, tried to recruit a particular community group whose members did not use the Park, especially those mentioned when I was speaking to some of the staff who worked with local community groups. It proved impossible to arrange for the group leaders to organise some members to speak to me. It would have been interesting to gain the perspectives of wider groups of people who did not use the Park. I was able to speak to a Jewish woman who did comment on some fellow members of the Hasidic Jewish community who did not feel able to come to the Park.

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There were some young people who did use other spaces close to the Park. For example, young people engaged in skateboarding and BMX cycling, using spaces under the nearby Durham Road (A167) flyover as it is close to the town centre. I did not see such activities take place in the Park so it might have been interesting to talk to members of this group who may also have felt excluded from Saltwell Park.

I discussed the possibility with my supervisors of seeking to undertake a door to door survey to recruit possible non-users but we agreed that for such an exercise to be useful it would need to be more extensive than was feasible within the confines of this project. A number of the participants who did take part in the study came from various parts of Gateshead, as well as from the immediate proximity of the Park. To have recruited a reasonable number of non-users – perhaps at least five to ten – might have necessitated many more speculative visits to neighbouring properties over a widely dispersed area.

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Themes covered in conversation with participants: during In-depth, semi-structured interviews

For further information on the structure of, and themes covered in the interviews, please see Appendices Six - Eight.

I interviewed people in a semi-structured manner: i.e., I had a series of themes that I wanted to explore with participants, but did not restrict the interviews to "Yes"-"No" questions, and left the interview encounter open to the possibility of relevant digression. I encouraged participants to discuss how they perceived the Park as relating to their well-being, and how participants' personal biographies were interwoven with the history of the Park as a place, to uncover the dynamic aspects of interaction between people and places.

I asked questions about what the respondents did in the Park, what it involved, and what opportunities this presented for interaction with other people, areas, or features within the Park. I asked what part the Park broadly played in the respondent's life, and how the activity affected the respondent's health and well-being. By asking these questions, I sought to capture how individuals and groups saw the Park as affording opportunities for activities and interactions, both in a positive sense (opportunities created), and negatively (opportunities circumscribed). Some lines of questioning were geared more towards exploring the influence of other people upon behaviour. For example, I asked people whether their own behaviour had ever been influenced by the behaviours of other people.

Throughout the therapeutic landscape literature, such methods have found particular favour (two particular examples for the solicitation of the experiences of inhabitants of a space are provided by Curtis *et al.* 2007; Gesler and Curtis 2007). There are a number of occasions when this lead to participants providing useful accounts that I could not have anticipated – for example, it transpired that Ruth enjoyed reading the memorial plaques on the benches, that Yeardleigh's wife, suffering with dementia, enjoyed walks in the Park, and that Esther wanted to tell me about her newly developed running regime.

For those interviewees who had also been engaged in using photovoice and / or participatory mapping, I also asked what their photographs or cartographic annotations were about, and how the subject of the photograph affected the participant's health and well-being.

When attending organized events, I would make observations to address questions such as: what the event seemed to be about; who it was aimed at; what was its history; what opportunities the event presented to people for interaction with other entities in the assemblage; and what apparent health and well-being effects this seemed to have upon the people involved. I would sometimes seek to have conversations with participants.

I asked a few of my participants to repeat the reflexive exercises later on in the fieldwork period, to see if there were any longitudinal changes in their relationships with the Park and its features, in a way intended to assess the dynamic aspects of their relationships with the place.

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Ethical issues

The parts of my research involving human participants were reviewed by the departmental research ethics panel at the University. I considered the following ethical issues specifically.

In order to gain informed consent from participants, I gave all participants similar information. All prospective participants were made fully aware of the nature of my research – what I was seeking information about, what I wished the participants to do, and the fact that they did not have to participate.

I gave all participants a letter explaining the research more fully, for them to take away and consider. I enclosed a slip for a signature that would be torn away and that I would keep. The letters were slightly different, depending upon whether I had asked for a photovoice exercise or an annotation of a map, for example. With regard to photovoice, I asked people to be sensitive around other park users and not to photograph others. This was especially the case with child respondents. Child respondents were given a letter to take home to parents and guardians to request their agreement.

One set of potential participants that I was not able to include was a group of adolescent students that had some learning difficulties. I was made aware of their use of the Park for rehabilitation and learning activities, and approached them and their tutor. They were all keen to participate. I asked for written parental and guardian consent, but the tutor did not cooperate because she felt she could act *in loco parentis*; despite repeated requests for the submission of written consent, I did not receive any, and had to omit this group from my study.

Interpreting material from a mixed methods approach

These methods of data gathering allowed me to produce knowledge about both the specific and the general aspects of the Park environment during the period of time covered by the fieldwork. The sampling that I undertook, with regard to the careful selection of events, of sampling of those who attended the Park as staff, as regular users, and the sampling of days and times to visit the Park, was also matched by my selection of walking routes through the Park (Table 3.3). By choosing two routes, and then repeatedly following a random pattern as to their use, I was seeking to observe a range of different aspects of the Park. I carefully reviewed all the different types of information I had collected, and sought to identify common themes often illustrated by different sources of information and at different points of time during the study. Through this process of triangulation of different impressions, a composite picture was built up of how in different ways and in different times and places, certain underlying aspects of the assemblage of, and actants within, the Park seemed to be evident. These appeared to broadly map onto the environmental typology predicted by therapeutic landscapes, relating to one's experience of space as combining physical/ material, social and symbolic attributes of the assemblage. While, as explained in later chapters, these attributes were clearly closely related, these themes provided a way of organizing my knowledge of the Park and my interpretation of how the Park related to human health and well-being.

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I used an interpretive method very similar to the implicitly iterative methods used by, for example Cattell *et al.* (2008), Ornelas *et al.* (2009) and Curtis *et al.* (2007); Gesler and Curtis (2007). As in those pieces of research, I let themes emerge from the data. I reviewed the material several times, looking for the strongest themes of place-element-park user, interaction, affordance and potential / actual health and well-being benefits to emerge.

My *interviews* were semi-structured, and were guided by my asking participants to comment upon why, in the case of reflective exercises, they chose to refer to particular spaces in the Park, why they referred to particular activities (to outline the history and nature of their routine). In the case of impromptu interviews, I asked participants to describe the activity that they were undertaking, what it involved, what part the Park environment played, and how the participant's health and well-being was affected. These interviews were then transcribed and the hard copies of text highlighted with marker pens to give prominence to items of interest, and with regard to comparative dimensions, similarity, and difference.

I analysed my *participatory maps* by talking them through with each participant. I asked participants to comment upon why they chose to refer to particular spaces in the Park, why they referred to particular activities (to outline the history and nature of their routine), and, with regard to those spaces and activities, to comment upon how being in these spaces, and undertaking those activities in the Park affected their health and well-being. These interviews were recorded and the material reviewed as above.

The creation of my *field notes* were guided by my noting my impressions of the ambient environment into a voice-recorder, often supplemented by photographing particular scenes. Sometimes, I would actually record the ambient noise. I would later review my recordings and photographs, and ask make written notes as to why particular activities, items, etc., were in the Park, who was interacting with them, and what the potential health and well-being benefit might be. I compared and contrasted similar activities and phenomena, for similarities and contrasts.

In the next chapter, I discuss my empirical results for the observations about the natural elements of the Park.

Chapter Four: THE 'NATURAL' ENVIRONMENT OF SALTWELL PARK

TOPOGRAPHY, "WEATHER-WORLD" AND WILDLIFE

Part of the assemblage of Saltwell Park is comprised of its terrain, weather and wildlife. Although these are not all entirely 'natural', being modified through human intervention in many respects, they at least emulate aspects of nature. As discussed previously, Boyd (2009) asserted that urban parks are human creations that incorporate natural elements as integral parts of their design. Existing topography is normally retained, trees are planted but in a layout that partly suggests the chance happenings of nature. They are also separate from the city, yet are part of it. Though Boyd did not mention it, public parks are exposed to the open air, in contrast with other built social spaces that can be enclosed. In this chapter, I explore some aspects of the interactions between these aspects of the physical landscape of Saltwell Park, and the people who work in and visit it. I particularly focus on the ways that the physical fabric of the Park and the people come together at certain moments to form 'assemblages' that are beneficial for health and well-being. I draw on some ideas from phenomenology to provide a perspective on how humans, being in the world of the Park, themselves form part of these assemblages.

In Chapter Two, I discussed biophilia and attention restoration theory as ideas from environmental psychology that may partly explain human responses to natural environments. Also, Tuan's classic text *Topophilia* (Tuan 1974) discusses the cultural dimensions of responses to physical landscapes.   These theories generally anticipate that humans have positive engagements with naturalistic landscapes, which lead to positive therapeutic experiences in such settings. Furthermore, ideas based in phenomenology (see my comments in Chapter Two, drawing upon anthropologists Candea (2007) and Hall (2009)) suggest that our sense of place is formed through 'being in the world'; our experience of engagement with the physical world, as we move through it over the course of time, is important to the way we perceive our environment. In this chapter, I draw attention to a number of different naturalistic entities within the landscape and explore how human interaction with these creates assemblages at certain points in time that frame and prompt therapeutic, or non-therapeutic, experiences within Saltwell Park. I present these in the course of a discussion about human interactions with topography, the "*weather-world*" and animals. I focus first on an assemblage in which the Park acts as an

open air gymnasium, through the coming together of the body and topography of the Park, producing beneficial and therapeutic effects of physical exercise. Then I examine how for human bodies, being in the variable "weather-world" of the open air can relate to well-being. Finally I discuss how people interact with animals in the Park in ways that may be important both for the health of the people involved and for the ways that, wildlife is impacted by human society more generally.

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Exercise in the Topographical Space of Saltwell Park

Boyd's description of the characteristics of a public park, as a space both within the city, yet separate from the city, and following existing terrain and topography, pertains to Saltwell Park. This 'retained topography' of Saltwell Park led to the creation of an extensive space of 55 acres (or 22.25 hectares) of Park-land, connected by an extensive footpath network. Here I exemplify how the topographic landscape interacts with human bodies to form assemblages that support the process of healthy physical exercise.

Doing the Locomotion

Recently, Latham (2010) drew attention to the athletic training methods of his fellow New Zealander Arthur Lydiard (Lydiard n.d.(a)); Lydiard used the natural topography around him to improve his own athletic capabilities and those of many international runners that he worked with. Lydiard suggested a week's schedule that ran as shown in Figure 4.1 below.

"Monday: 15km on an undulating course;

Tuesday: 25km on reasonably flat;

Wednesday: 20km on hilly;

Thursday: 30km on reasonably flat;

Friday: 15km on flat;

Saturday: 35km on reasonably flat; and,

Sunday: 25km on any terrain."

(Lydiard n.d.(a): 10)

Figure 4.1: Lydiard's Training Regime

The above schedule pointed to the need for regularity of exercise in order to obtain the necessary physical benefits that lead to improved performance on the running track, and also that these practice sessions were performed on a variety of slopes that offered differences in resistance to the muscles and joints of the legs, resulting in varying loads being applied to the musculoskeletal and respiratory system.

Some of the 'healthy assemblages' that I observed involved using Saltwell Park as an "outdoor gymnasium" in a way that is comparable to the exercises described above by Latham and Lydiard. In the examples that I give below, I explore how this gymnasium assemblage is actually experienced by a person taking exercise and what are the various elements that together make the Park setting effective in promoting physical exercise. I progress through an exploration of various forms of exercise, starting from the more sedate to the more energetic.

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The interaction between one's body and the landscape, that Lydiard incorporates in his exercise regimes, is experienced in ways that could be interpreted using geographical perspectives deriving from phenomenological perspectives on 'being in the world'. For example, as I walked around the Park I considered how from the perspective of authors such as Ingold (2010), I was experiencing the terrain by moving through it. I could feel the different ways in which my body engaged with the terrain of the Saltwell Park through the rhythm of my footsteps. In undertaking either a walk or a run on the flat, the stepping pattern may resemble something like this: *step, step, step, step*. Going downhill, the stride pattern lengthens, in rough proportion to the gradient, almost to a bound: *steppe, steppe, steppe, steppe*. Uphill, the pattern is more truncated: *stp-stp-stp-stp*. This was noticeable when walking up towards the Long Walk from either the north or the south, and then walking along it, and then walking away on the other side. The Long Walk is one of the few truly flat walking surfaces in the Park, and a place where the *step, step, step, step* pattern could be experienced. Walking up towards the Long Walk, the pattern is *stp-stp-stp-stp*, on the other side *steppe, steppe, steppe, steppe*. Through my shoes and my joints, I could feel the stride pattern that I employed transmit the unevenness of the terrain up through my body, whilst having to cope with the physical effort that was required to push my body up slopes, and then let it coast downhill safely. This effort of lifting the body up and down slopes must counter the force of gravity: one is aware of the efforts through which the body is lifted upwards as well as propelled forwards, and then is lowered down as well as propelled forward. In other words, there is a direct interaction between body and terrain, (via my shoes, which were another part of the assemblage) through which I could 'feel' the topography, and which contributed to my experience of it.

Walks in the Park

In general, public parks, and attractive public open spaces, are thought to provide suitable spaces in which to walk (Giles-Corti *et al.* 2005; Giles-Corti and Donovan 2002; Librett *et al.* 2006), though some contradictory evidence has emerged (see for example, Maas *et al.* 2008). Walking is known to be beneficial to a number of aspects of a person's health (Lee and Buchner 2008), being associated with reduced risks of obesity (Barnett *et al.* 2009). From a public health perspective, the supportiveness of the outdoor environment to walking has received extensive attention (Frank *et al.* 2007; Gauvin *et al.* 2008; Pretty *et al.* 2007; Wendel-Vos *et al.* 2004). Walking is also judged to have benefits to other areas of health and well-being, such as restoring cognitive function (Berman *et al.* 2008; Mayer *et al.* 2009). Ordinarily any person who has a moderate degree of physical mobility can engage in walking, and this is judged by some researchers to be a fairly easy public health measure to encourage (Gauvin *et al.* 2008).

With reference to Lydiard's work above, varying types of terrains, create different bodily demands. Most of the people perambulating within the bounds of Saltwell Park use the footpaths; this network takes a visitor to most corners and areas of the Park. Since the Park was built on an existing slope (within the valley between Low Fell and what is now Team Valley Trading Estate), the gradients have been retained. Every journey into Saltwell Park, from any

particular entrance to any destination within, involves at least a little physical exertion. Up to the Towers, around the Lakes, from one Bowls'' green to another, to the Pets' Corner, all require climbing and descending slopes or steps. From the point of view of physical exercise, the topographical gradients, often quite steep, mean that walking from west to east in the Park works the heart and lungs much more. Footpaths and grassy areas in between share these gradients: footpaths climb up the gradients, instead of perhaps running with them, alongside the contours, which would make it easier to climb up the slopes, but a little longer.

In Figure 4.2 below, I outline a way in which the Park authorities explicitly tried to promote perambulatory use of this terrain in a manner thought to be beneficial to health. Saltwell Park also appears on other maps of walking routes in Gateshead. On my many visits to the Park, I did not see anyone looking at the sign and contemplating sampling any of the routes. None of the official publicity material for the Park pointed out their existence either. Nevertheless, this signage may form part of the overall assemblage of the Park, by which a visitor might be given a 'nudge' to set off walking as suggested by the sign.

The Saltwell Park *Healthy Heart Walks*

At some point in the recent past, after restoration, some signs were placed beside the footpath outside the Towers, suggesting particular routes that visitors could follow for a walk. These routes were graded according to duration and degrees of difficulty. In making use of the topography, the walks are quite distinct in terms of physical effort required (and scenery encountered). The shortest, to the Rose Garden, is fairly flat, with some undulations. The views are tree lined all the way, and one of course ends in the Rose Garden, and should one want to, one is able to sit on trellis seats amongst the plants. The second follows the Rose Garden route, and then plunges down one of the steepest gradients within the site to go through the Dene. There are few seats provided. The scenery in the Dene is of dark vegetation and one hears the babbling of the artificial stream through the Dene. The third route continues on from the Rose Garden and makes use of the relative flatness of the centre of the Park, circuiting the lake. The lake (and park centre) has open views around, and occasionally, out the park, offering unrestricted views matched only really by the South Park.

In terms of the requirement to expend physical effort, the Dene route is the most strenuous, especially as performed as a circuit. The other two could be performed much more as a stroll. The signage also seems to cater for the varying ability of the potential walker, making suggestions as to what route is easiest and suited to their abilities.

Figure 4.2: Saltwell Park Healthy Heart Walks

Individual's motives for walking in the Park seemed quite complex and individually variable, judging by the comments of some of my participants. For example, Catherine was one participant who used the wider footpath network for her exercise regimes; at one time, she created her own 'long distance event', built up over repeated unaccompanied visits to the Park:

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> "I do about three-and-a-half miles a day round the Park. I'm a member of the Women's Institute, [some time before] it was their ninetieth birthday, so I done ninety miles around the lake.

> [Catherine]

For David, his warden's rounds entail him walking some three-and-a-half miles per day; his motivation is intrinsic, and the job allowed him an opportunity to satisfy that need. The Park is important to him in that he wanted an outdoor job, one that brought into contact with a part of the natural assemblage :

> "I said to my wife that I wanted a job that was outside, she felt it too. The wardening job was one she saw and said was perfect for me... I have been outdoors all my life, working with [youth outward bounds projects] and the like. This is a lovely job, being part of [Saltwell Park], and keeping active."

> [David]

Companionship is also part of the walking experience for many people. For some people, a non-human companion was a part of their experience of walking in the Park. Since pet dogs have to be walked, they create exercise routines for their owners as well as themselves. For example, Andrew described walking the family dog as his "daily chore". Saltwell Park seems a favourite space for dog walking and Catherine commented to me that dog owners had lobbied for the provision of an exercise area within the Park, though I would often pass people, mostly adults, walking dogs in all parts of the Park. Other pets were sometimes part of the walking experience as well; one summer's evening, a family group included a young girl who led a pet ferret on a lead.

These examples illustrate the additional elements in the assemblage that is configured around each individual 'walk in the Park' – in addition to the interaction of the human body and the terrain. This assemblage may include, for example, signs, social and working roles, animal or human companions in varying combinations. These other elements contribute to the motivation and the experience of the walk, which will be different for each person.

Quickening the Pace: The Park as a 'Race Track'

In surveying the life of the Park, I walked around it more than 60 times. On a few occasions, I experienced the Park while moving at a faster pace. The first of these was as a participant on a sponsored charity event, *Pants in the Park*, described in Figure 4.3 which illustrates the public health theme. The risks of prostate cancer to men in general are commented upon, and men are represented as having a low knowledge of the risks; that needs to be improved through eye-catching stunts associated with a charity fun-run.

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Pants in the Park had been advertised around Saltwell Park in the few weeks leading up to it being staged. Speaking to one of the organisers after the event, the 2009 event was the first time that a similar race had been held outside the south of England, with the reputation of Saltwell Park as an attractive space drawing the charity north.

On prostate cancer, the *Pants in the Park* website commented that:

> "Prostate disease affects one in two men at some stage in their life. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men with over 35, 000 affected annually. 10,000 men die of prostate cancer annually – the same number as women who die of Breast Cancer [sic] each year, yet awareness of prostate cancer is much lower.

> This is why we hold Pants in the Park, men need to be Prostate Aware."

<div align="right">(Pants In The Park 2010)</div>

Pants in the Park was specifically conceived of as an event where the participants performed a role in awareness raising through a particular performativity:

> "Pants in the Park started 5 years ago in Battersea Park when our [Chief Executive] decided that nothing would get attention like runners decorated with *Superman*-style pants worn outside their normal running clothes. We continued this vision and Pants in the Park has become a national event."

<div align="right">(Pants In The Park 2010)</div>

Figure 4.3: Extracts from publicity material for the *Pants in the Park* event.

I enrolled to take part in the *Pants in the Park* event, and arrived on the day at the Park to find that I had to go to the playing fields to find the race start-area. Several 'elements' were especially 'assembled' to make up this event. I estimated that about 30 people were taking part as runners, including men and women with small children). This was a much smaller event than the *Race for Life* (with some 3000 participants) that I discuss later. The atmosphere at *Pants in the Park* was quite 'low-key', without the crowd, the excitement, and public profile of *Race for Life*. Some balloons had been tied to benches and some blue cartoons chalked onto the footpaths, to mark out the route. The race track comprised a 5km course made up of four circuits that started near the Almond Pavilion and went anticlockwise up towards the Gate 1 entrance, then down towards the sports courts, around them, past the lake, up past the Rose Garden and up onto the Playing Fields again. This took the runners over a variety of terrain (along-down-along-up, along grass-tarmac-grass surfaces).

We were asked to join in some warm-up activities first. The day was wet, and I was conscious of the way my contact with the ground was improved by the trainers I wore, that afforded more

grip across the wet grass and tarmac than my normal running shoes. Especially whilst running, the feet are only momentarily in contact with the ground, and I was aware of the sensation of contact with the ground: *Touch-drive-lift-touch-drive-lift* and the risk of losing my footing on uneven surfaces where the foot is not always placed flat to the ground.

As the race got under way, the flat and downhill sections were a comfortable start to each lap of the course, but I soon started blowing hard on the gradients, though I was able to keep station with those around me. I was aware of people watching who were encouraging me as I ran. Barbara had known about the event, and that I was taking part, so as a spectator, she took some photos as I ran past her spot, and shouted some 'unflattering' encouragement. An older male stranger watching the spectacle also adopted me as his 'favourite' to cheer on. One of the organisers quickly learnt my name, and she also shouted encouragement as I pounded through the start-finish line. I became part of a group of four / five men and, after a while, one woman; two men set off like hares up ahead and I did not see them again. In the end, I finished about 5th among the runners holding off the first female finisher (I can be competitive when the mood takes me), and a group of us, blowing and doubling-up, signalled mutual congratulations to each other. As explained later, this sense of completion I experienced (perhaps a male trait), was in contrast to the atmosphere in the *Race for Life*, where there was no sign of overt competitiveness.

Other people who ran in the Park preferred to do so, on a solitary basis. Esther was one, finding that running was 'exhilarating' and also gave her health benefits she had not anticipated, in that it helped her to reduce her smoking:

> "I used to smoke, yeah? Not that much ... about 5, maybe 10-a-day. But I got into running as well, and I found that with the exertion of breathing that I could not smoke straight afterwards. So that started to stop me having a smoke. But what was more, I started to really enjoy running, it was really exhilarating? So I started to give up smoking and I still keep up running. I love running in Saltwell Park, it's really calming for me, especially when no-one's here."

> [Esther]

Esther had said that her mind was always 'buzzing' and that her running helped her restore her sense of calm. It seems also that she enjoyed being physically fit, and discovering new capabilities to her body. However, Esther, who worked in the Park, seemed to enjoy the 'restorative' effects of open space most intensely when walking her dog in countryside areas, away from the Park and its human crowds. It is also interesting to note how for Esther, travelling in her car represented freedom of movement, away from the confines of the city.

> "I love my dog. I've got this little car, and it gives me freedom. I love that … freedom ...I can go where and when I want. We go for walks in countryside ... like the coast, or fields

and the like. I find that the walks calm me down, away from here. It also calms [the dog] down as well."

<div align="right">[Esther]</div>

Power-Walking and Working Out: The Park as an Outdoor Gym

For some people, at particular times, the Park assemblage acts as an 'outdoor gym' providing an environment for concentrated physical exercise. I discuss here some of the activities that I observed or was a participant in. These tend to occur regularly, in contrast to once-a-year events like the Pants in the Park race, and they vary in terms of who takes part and the type and intensity of physical activity. As I discuss later in Chapter Five, the social organization of these activities also expressed processes of social control and regimentation.

For example, the new mothers' exercise group undertake a power-walking regime on Thursday lunchtimes in the Park, described by the organiser, Liz. The local organiser explained their regime as shown in Figure 4.4 below.

Saltwell Park is one of the sites used for this organized activity. An important element of the exercise regime is expert coaching, with an accredited pedagogical approach to exercise, imparted through an individual who is formally recognized to lead a group.

> "[We are] a postnatal workout class for new mothers and [meetings] take place outside in their local parks, using the facilities and we're here at Gateshead in Saltwell Park... it is a national organisation. We've got 14 [licensed] instructors around the UK, all qualified level 3 fitness instructors, and we're experts in postnatal fitness. I run a franchise for the NE of England."
>
> [Liz]

Liz went on to explain what the activity consisted of:

> "We do a warm-up, obviously, and we go up and down the hills at various speeds, so we do power-walking (we do everything except run during the class). We also do upper body work with resistance bands; so we help the mothers get their arms into shape for lifting the baby, and also to get their legs and tummy muscles into shape; also strengthening their bodies up. Also teaching them how to bend and pick up correctly. So overall, a full body workout."
>
> [Liz]

Figure 4.4: Description of the new Mothers exercise group outlined in Saltwell Park

Liz's comments are interesting here for the way that the new mothers' exercise group' walking regime makes use of the hilly terrain of the Park. The women actively engage with the topography of Saltwell Park in order to gain health benefits. Other actants in the assemblage that come into play include the elastic, reactive force of resistance bands, and the gravitational pull of the baby's weight, that must be supported. A further point that can be made here is that there is the reproduction of knowledge amongst the women, as to how to safely and effectively undertake exercise. Knowledge reproduction as a social process in the production of health and well-being effects amongst social groups is something that I return to in Chapter Five.

One member of the new mothers' exercise group reinforced the benefits that the severe gradients proffered to exercisers in Saltwell Park:

> "… We come to the Park every day, even, like in the winter, it was hard to push the pushchair in the snow, but I still managed [it]. It's very good exercise as well, after the birth, if you don't do any other exercise, pushing the pram up the hill, down the hill, everywhere in the Park ..."
>
> [Karolina]

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Here, snow becomes another agent in the exercise regime, making the surface more resistant and increasing the effort required (a point which connects with the discussion of the 'weather world' below). The successful negotiation of the snow also produced a psychological sense of achievement and satisfaction for Karolina. The physical sensation of exertion and 'becoming' and 'being' more healthy were part of the perceived benefits, as well as the knowledge that the exercise would enhance fitness, as also illustrated by the following comments of other the new mothers' exercise group:

Wayne	"What would you say are the benefits of [the new mothers' exercise group programme]?"
Martina	"Losing weight hopefully!"
Liz	"It's the first time that she's been; nine weeks postnatal, and she didn't puff much! I tell you, it does come back, it comes does back!"
Wayne	"How long have you been doing this?"
Orlaine	"2-3 months?"
Wayne	"And having done it, how would you say that you feel afterwards?"
Orlaine	"Tired! [laughs]. But you can feel the benefits of it. Especially the next day, we do feel achy, having done something. I think that it's like toning muscles and things, rather than just getting fit. It's making a difference."

While part of the attraction of the new mothers' exercise group for its participants is that it is reserved for mothers with babies and is especially tailored to their needs, other groups are open to a more diverse group of participants, including men. I myself took part in other 'outdoor gym' classes in Saltwell Park. The first was organised by a trainer called Sebastiano, the others were with *Outdoor Fitness Club* (ODFC). Sebastiano was a local gym instructor for a neighbouring local authority. He used go to Saltwell Park and train by himself, and later began to invite passers-by to share his training routine with him. Sebastiano would make use of the Park landscape around him; not only the grass space around him, but also features such as trees to hook things around, sculptures to lean on, barriers and footpaths as targets to do shuttle-runs to[32]. This is what he encouraged me do on the occasion I joined him.

Similarly, the ODFC, which runs outdoor circuits classes in the local area, uses a number of different locations in Newcastle and Gateshead. With regard to the use of outdoor spaces, the company's website commented that:

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[32] This video offers an example of what circuits training is like
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dk68kmJQRAI&feature=related

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> "A lot of the training style comes from [personal] experience in the army ... The gym [that was utilised] was very basic and the vast majority of exercise is done outdoors using the body as its resistance [together with just] simple equipment. But it gets results, and shows you don't need a treadmill to improve your stamina or energy levels."

> (Outdoor Fitness Company 2010)

This description echoes some of the points made by Liz of the new mothers' exercise group, in that without much technical equipment the environment can be used to produce resistance that strengthens the body. The ODFC went onto suggest that parks offer a more attractive environment for exercise than conventional indoor fitness centres:

> "Parks also offer changes in terrain which throws up different challenges and a better workout ... And some people tell me they really don't like the gym ethos."

> (Outdoor Fitness Company 2010)

This contrasts the potential of the varied topography of the Park favourably with an indoor gymnasium, which could be imagined as a flat, smooth, controlled, almost sterile, set of surfaces on which to exercise, somewhere that works the body, but not as much, or as beneficially as a somewhere with a varied terrain.

Not all Saltwell Park exercisers required the discipline and guidance of a coach and for some people more solitary exercise seemed preferred. For example, Taco would perform backflips in the Park as part of his martial arts routine. He also said he preferred the Park to a gym space, where there was less room. On two separate occasions, I also observed a man (it might have been same person on both occasions) using the trellis work seating in the Rose Garden as a substitute for pull-up bars or a chin-up bar. The man had apparently devised his own workout regime and was executing it by himself, without the guidance of a coach. When he saw me, he immediately stopped and shook his arms out, evidently inhibited by the fact that I was watching. The Park was not closed at the time and his activity did not contravene any written rules about use of the space. Most studies of self-consciousness in exercise routines seem to focus on gendered issues affecting women, relating to female body image and the desirability of taking part in physical exercise (Auweele *et al.* 1997; Dishman *et al.* 2005; King *et al.* 2000); here instead was a man who seemed self-conscious about being seen by a stranger as he worked through his routine.

These examples show that Saltwell Park could be seen not just a passive 'container' in which exercise activities take place, but instead as an active participant, sculpting exercise activities. It is not just the Park's physical extent that is of importance to its supportive qualities for physical exercise, but also the variability of its terrain, its mixture of slopes, ranging from the flat to the steep. As each step is taken by the visitor, the physical loads on the body's skeletal,

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blood circulatory and respiratory systems alter. These loads are beneficial, with exercisers having to overcome variable degrees resistance.

My observations showed how the Park terrain performs a similar function as a stadium racetrack or an indoor gym, but adds extra dimensions. The Park landscape offers a "lent-landscape" of benches and trees that facilitate exercise routines. A grassy area might be re-imagined as a huge alternative to the indoor rubber mat absorbing impacts between the body and the ground. Objects far away within the Park turn into targets for sprints and relays. Raised surfaces, such as the seat of a park bench are used to perform variations on existing exercise routines ("inclined press-ups", for instance). When walking or running, the Park becomes part of an assemblage with a body moving through the landscape and engaging with its diverse physical elements. The Park's terrain thus presents a series of potential affordances to the exercising body, for those who are motivated to use it, and it has features contributing to the health benefits of the exercise taken.

Malins (2004) discusses an unhealthy assemblage of drug use, seen through the lens of theories put forward by Deleuze and Guattari considering how the body and the drug, two independent entities of separate existences, come together temporally in order to turn the human self into a drug user, through an unstable "mechanic" combination. I would suggest that Saltwell Park serves as a 'healthy mechanic combination' that facilitates the body to become a healthy exerciser. The Park has to be used in a particular assemblage in order to facilitate more strenuous, and more beneficial, exercise.

The discussion above also suggests there is a social process of discipline involved in gym-based exercise classes (for example, Aycock 1992; Fusco 2006). This martial organisation of activity is taken up in Chapter Five.

As mentioned earlier and further discussed later in Chapter Five, this "athletic" assemblage of the Park is also composed of other, less active bodies of people who look on and either offer encouragement and motivation, or in some cases, inhibit the kinds of physical activity discussed above. Social interactions can create spaces that are permissive and encouraging towards various forms of physical exercise. The welcome but unsolicited encouragement of strangers during my *Pants in the Park* race draws attention to the incentives offered by the Park as a public space for exercise. For some people, however, the Park functions as a private space to perform individual 'projects' like exercise regimes. In a gym, exercise is normally undertaken in a room reserved for the sole use of an exercise class. The Park location has potentially problematic aspects, that deter individuals from undertaking exercise in public space, such as unwelcome observation of one's efforts at physical activity (Chaudoir and Quinn 2010).

Throughout the discussion above it is clear that the interactions between the physically active person and the rest of the Park assemblage is not the same for each individual, but varies according to the person's characteristics and preferences. Furthermore the other elements of

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the physical activity assemblages in the Park are very dynamic and variable and often ephemeral.

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The "Weather-World": Weather as an Element of the Topographical Life of the Park

Tim Ingold contends that human life on Earth is lived in the "*weather-world*". Life is lived *in* the world of weather, in a realm of moving air, and *not just under* a sky. This variability is an important component of our experiencing of the world about us. As he puts it:

> "[Earth's] inhabitants, I contend, make their way through a world-in-formation rather than across its preformed surface. As they do so, and depending on the circumstances, they may experience wind and rain, sunshine and mist, frost and snow, and a host of other conditions, all of which fundamentally affect their moods and motivations, their movements, and their possibilities of subsistence, even as they sculpt and erode the plethora of surfaces upon which inhabitants tread."

> (Ingold 2008: 1082)

These observations apply to the surfaces within Saltwell Park; they too are shaped by the passage of weather on day-by-day and seasonal bases. The Saltwell Park assemblage thus incorporates the "*weather-world*". The previous discussion of the Park as an outdoor gymnasium, illustrated how the weather changes the nature of the surfaces, from hard to soft, or dry and grippy to wet and slippery and effects the experience of the Park as a space for physical activity. On occasions enough snow accumulated for Park visitors to create symbols in the snow, representing aspects of their lives. A mother and her young daughter made up replicas of themselves in snow. The bowling green was put to use in an unusual way in the wake of snowfalls, as the site for snowmen and graffiti, left behind by two teenage women who were walking in the Park. While these Park visitors seemed to enjoy the snowy conditions this was not the case for some other people. For example, Andrew and Barbara commented that they preferred to stay indoors during such weather. As part of his photovoice exercise, Andrew took two photographs of spring flowers coming through. Barbara's comments displayed a similar mind-set:

> "It made me come alive when I saw [..] Snowdrops, I hate the winter, when I see the snowdrops, them and pansies crocuses, come up, I really made me come alive again."

> [Barbara]

Weather can determine the experience of scheduled events in Saltwell Park. Sunny weather presented favourable circumstances that enhanced the experience of events like the *Race for Life*, the Saltwell Park Shows and also the *Breastfeeding Awareness Picnic*, as reflected in Julie's comments:

> "It's been the chance to meet other mums; and also the chance to do something different, to enjoy the weather, to enjoy the Park.

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> We've been really lucky with the weather, so it's nice to get outside and see all the mums and whatever, to get all the people together in one place."

> [Julie]

In contrast, at the *Junior Games* in June a downpour threatened the entire staging of the event, and the organisers played several tannoy announcements to that effect if the rain did not stop, the event would have to be cancelled, though the rain did eventually cease and the races got off at their planned time. One Saturday in October the Park was closed mid-morning due to high winds. I was attending a Friends' talk at the time and the meeting had to be curtailed as we were ushered out by one of the Park wardens.

Francis had always been involved in hobbies involving making models ("once a modeller, always a modeller"). He enjoys using the Park to sail his model boats, commenting that "I get a thrill out of the making and the sailing of them too". Part of the attraction for him of sailing in Saltwell Park is its variable microclimate, and the particular conditions that it creates on the lake:

> "[The attraction for me] is sailing with a lot of thought goes into it, because of the elements, the conditions...Every time I come to the Park, they're different, the conditions change. It's actually quite a tough park to sail in, because of the trees and the way the wind blows. It's quite variable ... you have flat spots where you lose the wind, others where it suddenly changes direction ... but that adds to the fun, it makes it more challenging."

> [Francis]

This microclimatic variability allowed Francis to acquire and hone his skills in navigating his model boats. For him, the attraction was not just the sailing of boats, but also the challenge of sailing them in such varying conditions.

A number of participants referred to "fresh air" as another therapeutic aspect of the "*weather-world*". For example, Andrew felt that felt that the local authority should play a more active role in promoting Bowls' as a healthy activity for all age groups, especially as it was played outside on the bowling green. He described the Park as affording an opportunity for healthy exercise in the open air:

> "… **just an open lung and you want a bit of fresh air** and you come and walk around and also play Bowls' in the Park during the summer, which, to my mind needs to be promoted. So if you know any councillors and whatnot, tell them to get it advertised in the schools and whatnot… promote the sport. It's not what the youngsters think it is; it's a good exercise, and **it's out in the fresh air**, it has a bit of competition and a little bit of banter. **So it's got everything that a good healthy sport** has and it's just a pity that younger people don't participate. So they could boost things by advertising it. **Bowls' in**

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> **open grounds and open grounds doesn't seem to have that attention."** [Emphasis added]

> [Andrew]

The *Breastfeeding Awareness Picnic* organiser and also remarked on the work that she does in the town, playing a wider role in the lives of new mothers in the area, beyond the Awareness week. She runs a group in nearby Bensham and regularly brings mothers up to the Park for walks and "fresh air" benefits; thus the idea of the picnic in the Park was born. One new exercising group mother who attended the Breastfeeding Awareness Picnic also recounted her feelings that:

> "It was quite nice for [the children] to be outside, in the fresh air, and not being in their prams, playing all around on the mats and things ... it's good, yeah."

> [Orlaine]

The weather-world is therefore one of the natural physical elements that makes the Park a dynamic assemblage. It impacts upon surfaces that are found in the Park, changing the way they are experienced by people using the Park. Potentially therapeutic experiences in the Park are affected by elemental sun, wind, rain and snow and the quality of the air. As proposed by literature on affordances reviewed in Chapter Two, the experience of therapeutic experiences in the Park depends partly on the interaction between the weather-world and people's individually varying propensity to use the Park in different conditions.

My observations are also consistent with other commentators writing about the perceived benefits of green and open space. Vesely (2007: 1083) interviewed residents in cities in New Zealand who included "fresh air" as one of the benefits of green elements in the landscape. Furthermore, this is a long held belief; parks have historically been seen as helping to counteract what in the 19th century were believed to be miasmas carrying infectious disease[33].

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[33] See Halliday (2001) for a discussion of the discourses surrounding miasmas in Victorian Britain.

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Wildlife in Saltwell Park

In Chapter Two, I introduced several theories about 'therapeutic' responses to the natural environment including 'Biophilia', suggesting that humans can respond positively to other animals as well as naturalistic flora and waterscapes, albeit subject to cultural conditioning. It has been frequently claimed that the urban is the antithesis of the natural and that this makes it 'unhealthy' for humans. As I outlined in Chapter One, there was concern amongst Victorian social commentators that the new industrialising cities were taking humanity away from the countryside and diluting a corresponding affinity with Nature. It was partly this concern that originally gave rise to the development of parks like Saltwell. Such concerns regarding a divide between the human and the nonhuman have been expressed again more recently; for example, Pyle recently wrote that:

> "At the outset of the 21st century there is no longer any doubt that a strong individual sense of connection to nature and natural processes is utterly essential to the healthy coexistence of humans and their biological neighbours and physical setting."
>
> (Pyle 2003: 206)

Pyle is also dismissive of spaces such as public parks, seeing them as a form of "offical countryside" which "fails to deliver intimate contact because of fences, mandatory paths, no-let rules and other restrictions" (Pyle 2003: 208). However, for urban schoolchildren, who are the focus of much of his concern, an urban park can be a first location to explore the 'natural world'. Also, other arguments, centred around unbounded spaces and a blurred urban-countryside / natural-built dialectic, by writers such as Thomson (2007), question the simple conceptual and theroretical divides between natural and urban settings.

Saltwell Park is welcoming to various species of wildlife, although it is not a wholly natural landscape. There are a number of different ways in which animals and nonhuman bioloigical entities impact upon the social world of Saltwell Park, providing opportunities for human activities in contact with nature that are therapeutic. I will illustrate these through selected examples that illusrate the ways that Saltwell Park helps people to engage with animals.

Animals in Saltwell Park as the Focus for Attentiveness to Nature

Some animals are caged in the 'Pet's Corner' in Saltwell Park: peacocks, rabbits and guinea pigs and some reptiles. Many visitors will look with interest and amusement at these animals, as they move about their cages or return the visitors' gaze. The majority of visitors to the Pet's Corner are family groups. As well as these tame, restricted animals, the Park is home to animals that live wild within the Park, and that are free to move around the space in their own time and in their own rhythms. Talking about wild geese in the Park, Taco commented that:

> "If you feel sad, [the geese] give you a different atmosphere [sic], you watch something else. Birds and stuff, give you different imagination, how they eat, how they walk."

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[Taco]

Taco's comments seem consistent with ideas from Attention Restoration Theory, introduced in Chapter Two. In a similar way, Ruth, seemed to see the Park as a space where she and her husband could engage in "virtuous" activities with their toddler daughter, educating her about "Nature":

> "I suppose we're always looking out for squirrels and things and wildlife, and [our daughter] loves seeing dogs! Pointing out flowers, she's at that age [18 months at the time] when we try to point everything that we can out to her.
>
> Both me and me husband are very much into nature, that's things that we tend to watch out for.
>
> My husband tends to come down on a Sunday morning with our daughter (we take it in turns to have a lie in!): there's a robin near the bird-feeding area, and he likes to think it's the same one that he comes back to feed every week!"

[Ruth]

Ruth's comments recall ideas put forward by Hallman (2007), who discusses the role that zoos are seen to play in activities contributing to constructive family time, arguing that they are culturally defined as "family friendly" places, that could strengthen positive cross-generational experiences. As an emotionally meaningful activity, a zoo visit creates a sense of well-being through social and emotional interaction and connection between family members, especially between young children and their adult caregivers, united in their enjoyment of wildlife. On one occasion (January 10th 2009), I listened to a woman discussing with another, possibly her mother, that she recognised some of the nearby ducklings. Ruth and her husband were also influenced by intergenerational family interest in wildlife:

> "His Mam was always into wildlife, and I suppose my parents were quite [interested in the] outdoors to some degree, and we've always gone walking and camping. So we always had an interest, he definitely brought it out in me more."

[Ruth]

Ruth conceded, however, that her daughter was not, so far, very interested in the wildlife that they pointed out to her, being more interested in pet dogs that were walked in the Park.

Some other specific interactions of the human and the nonhuman perhaps fitted into the category of a "zoo". "Zoolab" was another facilitated set of nature-child encounters. It took place on a day in August, timed to take place in two lunchtime sessions in the Training Centre. It was a pre-booked event for children, accompanied by their parents. I attended the first

session for 3-6 year olds, which lasted about an hour; a second event was held for 7-12 year-olds. The organiser, Esther, introduced the event to the children and their parents.

Esther had arranged for a collection of "fantastic creatures from all over the world" to be brought in - for example, a giant African tree snail, a rat, a large beetle. The children were allowed to observe these at close quarters, and occasionally to actually touch and hold them. A contact of Esther's, based in Falkirk, had brought the animals for the audience to see; they were brought out, one-by-one, for the children to gather around and see. The handler explained what the animals were and where they lived, but warned that the animals could be scared by any noise from the children.

The children were certainly fascinated by all of the animals; I glanced at the parents, and noticed that they were interested, but were not as obviously excited as their children. As I also observed in the context of a local primary school Year 5 class visit to Saltwell Park, it seems that "excitement" is a common child's response to seeing animals and other natural objects.

Fascination was not restricted to young children. Yeardleigh, after many years of observation, was still fascinated with the Park's wildlife, remarking that:

> "I enjoy the foxes and the squirrels, early in the morning!"

> [Yeardleigh]

Meanwhile, David also commented on his sense of wonder for animals in the Park, especially pronounced when the Park is empty of visitors:

> "When I finish in the Park on an evening, and I lock up, the foxes appear in the Park. It's great watching them."

> [David]

These reactions recall Brook's discussion of the diary of the naturalist Gerald Durrell, published as *The Corfu Trilogy* (Durrell 1956)[34], drawing attention to what she sees as the salient human affect that interacting with wildlife created in Durrell. Of immediate relevance to my observation of the children at the Pets' Corner and *Zoolab* would be, for example, the altering of timeframes that attentiveness to animals imposes upon humans. Brook comments that:

> "… [through noting Durrell's] very focussed attention for long periods to observe the minutiae of life, be it snails mating or seas slugs doing nothing almost at all, we seem to

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[34] A short biography of the naturalist and writer can be found at
http://www.wildfilmhistory.org/person/145/145.html?personid=145.
A 1973 *Time* magazine interview can be found at
http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,907955,00.html
and http://www.time.com/time/magazine/printout/0,8816,907955,00.html.

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> inhabiting a very different world from our own … we get a glimpse of his ability to just be
> with the other in its world rather than caught up with himself…"

<div align="right">(Brook 2010: 296)</div>

Like Durrell, Yeardleigh and David both seem to appreciate a view of the "wildlife" assemblage of the Park which creates "another world" in the space when human visitors are absent. Another affect that Brook considers is wonder, discussing Durrell's account of watching a trapdoor spider. The *Zoolab* animals also were animals that, in other social contexts, might be seen as "creepy-crawlies", to be feared and exterminated. The children showed no fear or trepidation at all: perhaps the attendant adults either were as interested as their children, or did not transmit to their children any disgust that they might have felt about the animals. This introduces an aspect as to how the Nature assemblage maybe viewed within society. The concepts from environmental psychology (discussed in Chapter Two) consisting partly of *fascination*, might be glimpsed here. In the case of *Zoolab*, there was perhaps a "morbid fascination" with certain monstrous and creeping animals (Wilson 1993) that is also part of the Biophilia idea. *Zoolab* in Saltwell Park was also an attempt to bring a form of sublime nature into a more mundane urban setting, albeit a manicured, tame version of nature (Chapter One). Milligan and Bingley (2007), discussing the activities of young people at outward-bound activity centres in the English North West, highlight the fact that attitudes to the countryside can be fearful, inherited from parents. As Wilson (1993) pointed out with regard to his concept of biophilia, it is not automatic that a given natural space, widely socially constructed as being beneficial, will be found as such by all-comers, something that has also been noted by other authors (Conradson 2005; Gesler 2005; Kahn Jr 1997).

Some other authors refer to a discursive circumscription of what is "acceptable Nature" in urban areas. Thomson (2007) discusses social constructions of imperilled nature in the form of flying fox bats in Melbourne; she quotes from *The Melbourne Age*'s commentary on the colonisation of parts of the Royal Botanical Gardens by the bats, a commentary that suggested that "[The Gardens are] not a zoo or an animal sanctuary, it is a garden. A garden is a place where plants grow, in order that people might enjoy them. Of course animals — swans, ducks, eels, frogs and even bats — may live there too, and they add to the attractiveness of the place. But if any of those increase to the point where they threaten the survival of the gardens, they must be removed" ((Editorial) 2001: 14). This exemplifies a discriminatory human attitude to the nonhuman. Instead of embracing the nonhuman in its myriad forms, and seeing the whole wildlife assemblage as having a right to exist in the city, we segregate, allowing some to be close by and removing others, or representing them as limited to certain parts of the city. Thomson (2007: 87) sees the city as a "patchwork of material places that might be more or less accommodating to wild animals".

In Saltwell Park, this tendency to distance people from wild animals did not seem apparent; indeed, the heterogeneity of "acceptable nature" was something that appealed to visitors and

that afforded them different pleasurable experiences. As part of this wide interpretation of Saltwell Park's "acceptable" nature, there have been more recent attempts to create some new habitats for wildlife in the Park. As I outline a little later, these have a dual purpose; not only to attract and provide homes for particular wildlife species, but also to facilitate close contact between park visitors and these species.

The lake in the Park is home to a fairly wide selection of birdlife, including swans, Canada geese, moorhens, ducks, and urban pigeons. Birdlife is a year-round feature of the life of the Park. Humans have found a number of ways to interact with that birdlife; for example, in May 2010, I observed a woman feeding a family of mute swans, who gathered on a section of footpath (and almost blocked it for a while) while they had their fill of food. Francis told me that the model boat club members restrict the speed of their boats, and power them using electricity (which is thought to be quieter and less intrusive than other forms of propulsion. Members were said to be careful in how boats are sailed so as not to harm the birdlife.

In a space behind the middle and lowest bowling greens, Esther had managed to create a new wildlife habitat in 2008. It consisted of a small lake and a boardwalk, surrounded by railings. It was in a part of the Park that is not obvious to visitors casually walking around that area (or at least, it was not obvious to me, until I was lead there by one of the wardens). It is an out-of-the-way space that is more suitable for organised visits, led by Esther. She also created another habitat in the form of a bird-feeding garden near the Bowls' Pavilion. Esther commented that these spaces were intended to be a contrast to what she felt was the amenity-focussed design of the Victorian park, also feeling that some wildlife was scared away by the presence of visitors to the Park.

Esther organizes school and community group visits over about 30 weeks of the year (perhaps up to 100 groups visit per annum). One local primary school's Year 5 class (male and female eight-year olds) visited the Park one day in March 2009, having been taken there as part of their class studies. They were taken by their form teacher, for a visit that lasted an hour or two. Esther had arranged for the children to see a number of outdoor features, such as the bare-branched trees, the shrubs, some of the wildlife that could be seen and emergent flowers such as snowdrops, as well as looking at those activities that take place to look after the Park landscape. When I spoke to the class in June, some three months later, the most frequent comments made by the children were that they had felt "excited" by the visit. They enjoyed having a behind-the-scenes visit, and the opportunity to see new objects within, presented in an interesting manner. A number of the children revealed that that they had been to the Park before, with parents, so a visit to Saltwell Park was not novel. However, it seemed that the nature conservation work was interesting and indeed captivating for them.

While discussing the pond, Esther outlined her thinking in creating it:

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> "I wanted to create somewhere on people's doorsteps where children could come in and see wildlife that they may not necessarily see. Some people don't, like around this area, the children haven't even been to a park, or to a woodland, so how are they meant to understand about looking after things if they've never seen it? Because if you've never touched something how can you really appreciate it? So if we create somewhere like this, then the children can come in and get closer and not just think about [the Park] as just tarmac."

> [Esther]

Esther perhaps wishes to impress a certain sense of duty upon her students, something that I return to below. She went onto comment that, in her eyes, Nature was "honest", whilst humanity was not, being destructive instead. She would rather the Park was not a municipal setting, but a more like a country park, where the human was less in evidence. She hated the Towers because the building emphasised the urban nature of the Park. There was certain edge to her comments: I wondered if therefore the habitat creation was a way for her to be at home on the Park, surrounded by her beloved wildlife assemblage. Perhaps these habitats were a form of created gardens for herself. Her ideas seem to recall those discussed by Francis and Hill (1991) or Kaplan (1991), introduced in Chapter Two.

Esther's actions could be seen as more lasting extensions of the situated and time-limited actions of *Zoolab*. *Zoolab* is an annual event that seeks to bring children (and their parents?) face-to-face with individuals from Nature's assemblage. Elsewhere in Saltwell Park, Esther has sought to make a more permanent arena for human-animal encounters by shaping parts of the Park's landscape to create permanent homes for animals, and more frequent opportunities for encounters, a more everyday contact with nature. This highlights Esther's role in these encounters, as an agent of change and opportunity, a facilitator of encounter, another agent in promoting opportunities for humans to experience positive senses of well-being through proximity to nature. Saltwell Park contributed to a wider social discourse; attitudes towards wildlife in society more generally were actively challenged through social action and public activities in the Park.

Other aspects of Esther's activity in organizing the education programme in Saltwell Park also seem designed to promote a sense of "duty" and moral responsibility towards Nature and the environment. For example, Esther remarked that in the packs that she has put together for schools, she has included a workbook entitled *Human Impact on the Environment*:

> "So that we can do litter surveys, so that they understand exactly how much has been dropped, and the impact that it has on the wildlife that lives here."

> [Esther]

This sort of education might help to change children's attitudes early in life, when they are more open to messages about protecting the environment.

"If you can reach children when they are really little ... as for them being older, I dunno. I think that little people are **just vessels**, and if you can fill them with the right stuff, [so much] the better. When they are older, they are pretty much set in their ways." [Emphasis added]

[Esther]

Esther described the example of one small girl who had attended on a visit, and who initially was frightened of handling insects, but come the end of the day, the girl enjoyed ticklish tactile sensations. Esther felt that this helped to established lasting 'biophile' attitudes:

"That really gave me a buzz, because I thought that if she enjoyed being with the animal, then she's less likely to hurt it...

"I don't get feedback on whether an attitude has changed [only on the quality of the teaching]; that will only develop as they age."

[Esther]

Esther also recalled another success story in which the effects of her intervention seemed clearer:

"I was working with a young lad [one of three] and I got them to build a pond in the community garden. And they were a little bit naughty when they came down, and possibly someone who might come and vandalise [it and the Park]... that's maybe making assumptions, but from little things that they were talking about, I got that impression, but at the end, they had so much pride at the effort that they had put into it, and what they had learned, and what the pond was going to be about, and a couple of weeks later after they had finished, one of the lads brought his dad down to have a look at his work, and he was so proud, that I was so happy, because I thought, 'This little lad, this young lad, feels like he has contributed, and the chances of him coming back and damaging this pond, or a pond somewhere else are probably now massively reduced, because now he sees the value of why the plants were there and everything'. I don't know how long lasting it would be, but he was certainly over the moon about what he had done. And it made me feel good, because I had helped him to do that."

These educational activities illustrate a process of social production and disciplining of children's attitudes that aimed to inculcate a set of socially acceptable, "correct" attitudes and dispositions towards the wider nonhuman world. There was a sense that Esther wanted to promote 'respect' for the Park and, by extension the wider environment, in ways that might counteract behaviours which are damaging to the environment. She explained:

"To be honest, I don't think that we really have a massive litter problem in the Park, certainly in contrast to some other places. I think that those people who are local to the

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> Park, who really love the Park, really look after it. And that really makes me feel quite ... *happy*, that people seem to love and respect it. But there are some people who don't and they just drop things and it is very annoying."

> [Esther]

In Chapter Five, I return to the idea of the assemblage of Saltwell Park as one which imposes forms of discipline that promote healthy behaviours. Here I note that there is a connection between Esther's educational role and the kind of schooling that Pyle (2003: 208) calls for when he demands that "our schools should inculcate widespread public equanimity towards nature … This is the only stance that long-range human adaptability will tolerate". Pyle suggests that the coming existential crisis of human life could be averted by implementing his Nature Matrix, which is made up of six societal steps, and includes one of nature study. Also, in Edwards' (2008) discussion of lifelong learners, Foucault is invoked. The learner is positioned as an object of knowledge by an authoritative instructor, who subjects the learner to temporally (and geographically) situated practices of subjection, based around elicited self-revelation of learning needs, constraints and histories. The core of Edwards' discussion concerns the practices and discourses that interact with each other. Power and knowledge are correlated – neither external to each other, nor identical. Power requires knowledge of the subject, knowledge gives the basis for the operation of power, whilst power determines which knowledge is legitimised and (re)produced. These arguments underline how children's engagement with nature in Saltwell Park need to be considered through the lens of processes of social control as well as from the perspective of environmental psychology.

Saltwell Park Animating Aid to Imperilled Nature: the Green Festival

Further evidence of the ways that the assemblage of Saltwell Park 'engineers' processes of engagement with nature was provided by the *Green Festival*. In addition to arguments put forward by Pyle and Thomson, already alluded to, (Lorimer 2006: 549), for instance, has considered how 'practical understandings of biodiversity … emerge from the messy and situated practices of biodiversity conservation' (see also Lorimer 2007). Biodiversity is thus 'the discursive and material outcome of a socio-material assemblage of people, practices, technologies and other non-humans' (Lorimer 2006: 540). Wolch (2002) discusses the agency that animals can give to human actions. In her discussion of action to rescue injured eagles and their starving eagle chicks, she posits that such efforts constitute "[p]ersonal politics of both animal and human social reproduction that asserts the agency of wildlife in defining pathways to human-animal coexistence and shared places" (Wolch 2002: 732).

The *Green Festival* was an information exchange and children's activity day that brought together members of the public with those staff from local authorities and charities who worked in nature conservation. The staging of the *Green Festival* took place one sunny Friday lunchtime in August 2009, next to the Towers. The Festival was part organised by Durham Biodiversity Partnership, to which Gateshead MBC was a partner. The festival was afforded a

certain official council status with the reported opening by the Deputy Mayor of Gateshead, who then spent some time visiting the stalls and taking part in some of the activities.

The festival started mid-morning, lasting until early afternoon, and was open to the public. The festival layout consisted of an arc of small tents erected to house stalls. Behind each stall were representatives of various wildlife-focussed organisations. There was a certain pride in the event, through the display of successful past and present interventions, with reference made to "... some of the projects and achievements that have been undertaken over the last decade." (Durham Biodiversity Partnership 2010). The main visitors to the Festival were children, accompanied by "caring" adults (often people who appeared to be mothers) and they seemed to be from a fairly wide range of social backgrounds.

One display banner said "Enjoy Gateshead's Countryside". Another directly paired with it said "Your Countryside Needs You!", and suggested that volunteers could do practical tasks, help with events, undertake surveys, and make new friends. Groundwork South Tyneside's banners referred to "changing places: changing lives", issues such as economic well-being, and their green gym. Later, the festival was described as follows: "The event featured a host of attractions, with lots of entertainment for children including face painting, willow weaving, making insect homes and bird seed cakes, wireworks activities and birds of prey. **One of the highlights of the festival was the creation of a giant puppet representing Mother Nature** [emphasis added]" (Durham Biodiversity Partnership 2010).

It would seem that the event encompassed both a celebration of the achievements of the Partnership (with high-level Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council approval) and a degree of evangelising about the worth of nature and the idea that nature's welfare required active human intervention. This intervention included experiencing certain management crafts, making shelters and food parcels for particular species, alongside other activities that were intended to be fun, such as face painting.

Bird (2007), together with Pretty *et al.* (2009), comments on the creation of new forms of environmental consciousness created through contact with nature. At the *Green Festival*, even more than at the *Zoolab* event described above, the aim seemed to be to create an association in the minds of children of wildlife equating to "fun". One of the highlights of the festival was the creation of a giant puppet representing Mother Nature and also the spectacle of some birds of prey. Further comments on the Festival suggested that visitors would be both entertained and educated, and "…It is hoped that all the visitors on the day enjoyed the fun activities and entertainment but also took away a message about the importance of continued action for wildlife." (Durham Biodiversity Partnership 2010). By briefly drawing participants together with engaging, knowledgeable and friendly strangers a longer lasting attitude might be established so that the assemblage of "wildlife", and caring for wildlife, is seen as creating and sustaining pleasurable feelings.

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Secondly, skills were intended to be learnt by children and their parents, which would be beneficial to wildlife, such as willow weaving, and making insect homes or bird seed cakes to feed the birds in winter. The result might be to create a new set of habiti and practices amongst the attendees, which would benefit wildlife as well as the practitioners. Michael Schwalbe (2010) surveys the ontology of craft. He draws on Sennett (2008) to outline that craftwork entails the marriage of ethics and practice, which both expresses the human desire (and ability) to make things (to transform the material from one form into another), and that that transformation be an action done to the fullness of one's circumstantial ability. To Sennett (2008: 9), one should ''do a job well for its own sake'' (as cited by Schwalbe 2010). As a result:

> "Practice, craft entails not only the acquisition of deep knowledge and skill, but also a transformative dialogue between thinking and doing, a dialogue driven by the problem-finding and problem-solving inherent in complex, variable work."

> (Schwalbe 2010: 109)

There is also a connection to the studies of gardening that I referred to earlier (Francis and Hill 1991; Milligan *et al.* 2004), whereby desired, self-initiated, directed and focused work and effort can be restorative and therapeutic.

It is interesting to contrast this 'nurturing' way of interacting with wildlife and nature in the Park with the different kind of engagement with nature that George most enjoyed, which involving hunting in rural settings, away from the Park, during his leisure time. He was unhappy with his lot at the Park, feeling that the job was not what he signed up for (and suffering from bullying at work). In previous roles before his employment at the Park, he had learnt how to stalk deer and do larder work[35], which he said he found very interesting. He cited shooting as an important recreational hobby but he also saw it as a way of maintaining healthy nature. George asserted that he "loves animals" and cites nature conservation in African game reserves which involves management through culling to removal of the "excess", keeping the best examples. He added that:

> "You want the herds to be good. I'm well into it. I do a lot reading on the subject."

> [George]

Cartmill is one of few writers to discuss this connection between what it is to be human and to hunt. He points out that hunting can only involve wild, non-docile, animals, that can run away and yet can "strike back" at the human assailant Cartmill (1996: 29). In addition, hunting has to involve some form of violence inflicted directly at a targeted animal that comes into the view of

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[35] For example, http://www.theruralist.co.uk/page24/page21/page31/page31.html

the hunter, with Cartmill adding that there is premeditation: stalking, trekking, and lying in ambush. He goes onto to define hunting as:

"An armed confrontation between humanness and wildness, between culture and nature."

(Cartmill 1996: 30)

Cartmill also comments that for some hunters the point of hunting is relaxation, to be away from certain roles and responsibilities:

"[It] is a for them mostly a pretext for being outdoors, an "excuse to get out into the hills, away from the crowds, to live, if only for a few days, beyond the wall" (cited from Audrey 1961: 325). Such hunters relish the pursuit of the quarry because it disciplines and focuses what might otherwise become a careless stroll through the woods (cited from Leach 1966)."

(Cartmill 1996: 324)

George concurred with Cartmill:

"I can really relax. Tonight, I'll be going rabbit shooting. I'll be showered, changed into me clothes what I wear for rabbit shooting, then I pick me rifle up, my ammunition and the lamps[36], I pick up another two guys I go out with, and we just chill out. The comradeship between the guys itself, you know, you have a cup of coffee and a bit of a laugh with each other. Then we actually go stalking. We put the light on, we take the shot, we kill [the rabbit humanely]."

Cartmill comments that hunting:

"... Is intelligible only as symbolic behaviour, like a game or a religious ceremony, and the emotions that the hunt arouses can be understood only in symbolic terms."

(Cartmill 1996: 324)

Similarly, George commented:

"We enjoy it ... It's not the thing at the end, it's the actual challenge; it's the preparation beforehand [that may last for hours]. The very last thing is the squeeze of the trigger – you've got to get the wind direction right, so hopefully it's a good clean kill, down it goes and you're out in the fresh air and you've [got something to take back to the kitchen]."

[George]

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[36] For example, http://www.basc.org.uk/en/how-to/pest-control/lamping-part-1.cfm

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This account from George recalls the argument that not every individual reacts in the same way to the environment. A space like Saltwell Park, which offers therapeutic engagements with nature for some people I observed and spoke to, does not afford a restorative setting in the same way for everyone. It is also interesting to consider George's comments alongside those from Esther about rural settings *outside* the Park where she felt especially relaxed, and about the way she tries to recreate in the Park elements of a 'wilder' natural setting elsewhere. For those for whom the Park assemblage was a place of work, or a weak imitation of the natural world, the restorative value of the Park may not be seen in the same way as by others who take part in educational or recreational activities in the Park setting.

Conclusion: The Park Assemblage as a Therapeutic 'Natural' Setting

I have used the idea of an assemblage to examine Saltwell Park as a landscape, or environment, combining human agency and natural forms and processes. These entities have their own agency (an ability to influence other entities), a life course (birth, life cycle and death). Many elements are spatially, as well as temporally dynamic; moving and changing in the space of the Park over time. Many aspects of the assemblage are ephemeral, though they may have lasting effects on their constituent elements. These entities are not restricted to the Park, but are actants in the formation of the wider social world, through their fluid reassembling and co-functioning.

There are a number of different possible modes of engagement between the Park visitor and the naturalistic landscape afforded by the Park, inviting the possibility of therapeutic experiences. For example, the topography is potentially part of a corporeal self-care regime based around physical exercise, in which the human body is a zone of engagement and interaction, through the limbs and the through the senses. My own experiences of taking exercise in the Park, and those of other people included in my research, operate on different temporal scales, and in different ways. Awareness raising events harnessed this interaction between the body and the environment of the Park in ways that served to draw attention to one's own body, the risks of certain diseases, the value of exercise in building a healthy body, the need to raise money for health related research. Even more routine, and relatively sedate forms of bodily interactions with the landscape, such as walking or sailing model boats, can confer therapeutic benefits and, as predicted by environmental psychology, these derived from psychological engagement with the relaxing and cognitively stimulating aspects of nature, as well as the physical exercise.

I have also noted how these interactions with the topography of the Park are influenced by the 'weather-world' as part of the more complex assemblage. The weather constantly alters the topography and the ways that people interact with it. Also the atmosphere of the weather world is physically and psychologically experienced as "fresh" air, associated with health and well-being. It is a key element of the Park as an *outdoor* therapeutic environment, offering different benefits from indoor settings.

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Lastly, there are the therapeutic experiences that coalesce around wildlife and human interactions with other living things in the 'biosphere' of the Park. The literature on environmental psychology often focuses most on green vegetation and waterscapes, so it is interesting that, although some of my participants mentioned their enjoyment of plants, a green setting, and water bodies in the Park, they spoke more often of their engagement with animals. Potential benefits here included losing oneself in pleasurable sensory moments with animals: listening to birdsong; watching the darting of a grey squirrel; handling a *Zoolab* rat. There is the fascination of animal corporeality (and perhaps the charisma of exotic or interesting species) that interrupts one's preoccupation with human lives for a moment, offering a non-human form of companionship.

These examples show that Saltwell Park becomes a welcoming home for bred and captive creatures, prompting human curiosity and attentiveness to animals – in effect, a small zoo. Wildlife provides additional sensory variety to the space of the Park; which draws in humans and actively shapes their attitudes to nature. The Park affords opportunities for contact with animals which are exotic to the local area, providing a subject around which human intergenerational activities take place. The Park is a space that is (re)-imagined as a home for Nature, and a space in which a conscious sharing of the environment by humans and wildlife takes place. Saltwell Park also becomes an location of educational and social control: helping to convey social constructions of an imperilled,marginalised nature, that requires human intervention to rescue and protect it. These textual, visual and verbal constructions prompt new flows and networks of human agency, such as the flow of money, in the form of charitable or governmental donations, and / or the movement of humans to sites of intervention in the natural and social worlds. Saltwell Park becomes a node within a wider, international network of agentic flows of resources and labour devoted to protecting nature and wildlife. Activist concerns are promoted, given a public platform and solutions generated through collective action.

It is also apparent from the discussion above that the social world is influenced by, and influences these interactions. Caring for an animal confers pleasure and can encourage people to become attentive to wildlife and adopt a more 'responsible' and 'educated' approach towards the ecosystem, in ways that may also benefit human societies that depend on the ecological sustainability of our world. Some of the events in the Park calendar bring visitors close together with wildlife. The spatiality of the Park was altered to create locations where wildlife could be more easily viewed by the public, whilst not disturbing animals in their everyday routines. By instilling the "correct" behaviours and views early on in their lives, and through making a "space for nature" in the lives of Park visitors, both physically on the ground and cognitively, actors in the Park assemblage such as Esther hope that they will be able to influence longer term social action to protect and preserve the natural world. These processes involving construction of social norms of behaviour are considered in more depth in the next chapter.

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Throughout the examples considered in this chapter a further theme is the variable way that different individuals engage with the 'natural' world of the Park. Some elements of the original theories of rather 'universal' therapeutic 'affordances' and 'restoration' offered by natural settings, reviewed in Chapter Two, are apparent in the ways that the Park benefits individual health and well-being. However, it is also clear from my research that such benefits are very contingent on the individuals' own body, their beliefs and, attitudes and their own personal life course and history of interaction with the natural world.

Chapter Five: THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT OF SALTWELL PARK

Introduction

My participants were members of groups such as women, visible minorities, people with mental illnesses, and demographic groups such as older people. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two suggests these groups are among those at risk of marginalisation and exclusion in public space, with an attendant effect upon their health and well-being. Some of the comments from individuals that I spoke to illustrated the social risks for health in terms of marginalisation and social exclusion and social discrimination, and the 'protective' effects of positive social connections and organised action.

Here I locate their experiences within a conceptual framework based on ideas of social capital discussed in Chapter Two. A large body of literature reviewed in Chapter Two suggests social capital can have a positive effect on health of individuals and groups; it should be borne in mind that some authors suggest that these benefits are not universal and vary for different people depending on their social position.

In this chapter, I discuss the experiences of some of my participants within the social environment of Saltwell Park. These narratives relay both positive and negative experiences, which would appear to be based upon belonging to particular social groups, defined by gender, age or ethnicity, or by shared leisure practices and interests. In analysing these narratives, additionally informed by my own observations and experiences, three themes of social activity emerge, taking place within the compass of officially sanctioned events and activities or unofficial groupings. These forms of activity created different types of 'assemblage' within the Park that generated social capital in different ways. I refer to this in terms of the following 'themes': *social order and discipline*; the *challenging of social conventions*; and groupings based around *common interests and friendships*. The social interactions that I observed can be located within these themes, mainly because they are positively illustrative of them, but also on occasions, social interactions displayed a problematic aspect, undermining processes which help to build and maintain social capital. Each theme is therefore comprised of social interactions that can potentially have either a positive or a deleterious effect upon the social position and health and well-being of a person or group. The themes reflect ideas of social capital that I discussed in Chapter Two, and they relate to notions of "normative" and "resource" social capital, since they involve, for example, reinforcement of social norms, or processes affecting individual capacities to access particular fields of social action and social resources. Some of the social structures supporting these forms of social interaction, whether formal and institutional or informal and based on kinship and friendship, also recall the observations of urban life made by Thrift (2005) regarding misanthropy and friendship and the attendant micropolitics.

Order and Discipline in the Park

Saltwell Park assemblages include a number of different actants which seek to control a number of behaviours of the people using this public space. Their roles seem to fall into the following categories: controlling behaviour of park users in relation to the physical environment and controlling the social behaviour of park users when encountering each other within in the Park.

An ordered landscape

Women make up a large proportion of the visitors to Saltwell Park, especially those in some form of caring role. It has sometimes been suggested that in the past parks were not inclusive spaces for women: for instance, I referred in Chapter One to Doreen Massey's assertion that parks catered in the main for men. Saltwell Park has also sometimes been an uncomfortable space for female visitors in the past. One of my regular participants once told me that she had had an unpleasant experience with a male stranger in the Park. She did not go into any depth about what had happened but she did comment that she found the Dene far less intimidating since more active management of the planting had taken place after restoration. In addition, whilst I was a participant on a guided walk about memorials in the Park and Saltwell Cemetery, with a group of older women, the guide also drew attention to the landscape of the Dene and how it was previously perceived as being threatening because it was overgrown. The Dene is a dark place still, often quiet and with few people there. It tends to be a place traversed on the route between the Towers and the play areas, though on occasions I observed groups of people lingering in the space: e.g., parties of children and their female supervisors, or young people jumping onto and balancing on top of rocks.

It seemed from my observations and from comments made by my participants that the therapeutic experience for women in the Dene (and elsewhere in the Park) depends on their perceptions of safety and management of the space. The restoration of the Park seems to have made a difference to the way in which it is perceived and the way in which it is used by women I spoke to. To further underscore the comments of some of the female participants above, I add some observations from Ruth regarding the aspects of the Park that made it seem unsafe in the past, and how changing perceptions of the space related to her sense of the health and well-being benefits of being in the Park:

> "I'm from the area, and I can remember when I was younger coming to the Park, but not half as much as now; it was so underused when I was younger, it was quite ... well dangerous ... and you couldn't see the [Towers], it was quite overgrown."

> "There were public toilets that were closed, but were quite notorious and you hear stories about people being attacked and things, and you certainly wouldn't come down on a winter's evening. It was possibly more a perception than an actual danger, about 25 years ago."

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[Ruth]

Whilst talking to other female respondents, a pattern seemed to emerge of attentiveness to features of one's environment as signals of possible dangers. One of the primary schoolgirls that I spoke to contrasted Saltwell Park with playing fields near to her home where some older children would set fires. Visiting those playing fields myself, I saw some evidence of this, in the form of a scorched litterbin. The observations made by this girl had an echo in those of a female student who was a member of a privately run training class in the central Gateshead area. Her comments on her local park in another part of Gateshead indicated disgust, that parts of the grounds had used needles in them, from illegal drug use, and that she did not like taking her younger sister there. Violating the fabric of a landscape may imply a lack of care towards landscape and those who use it, and a more obvious physical threat to others. None of my male participants talked about either Saltwell Park, or any other public space, in these terms, which would suggest that these issues are of particular concern to female users of public space (Allender *et al.* 2006).

Visible signs of policing and management in the Park

A Saltwell Park visitor may not necessarily come into direct contact with uniformed wardens on duty, or the occasional police officer whose patrol encompasses the Park. The presence of these reassuring social actors as part of the Park assemblage was seen as welcoming by women in particular, especially those with caring roles.   Other signs of control and management of the space that were attractive to women included levels of cleanliness, and facilities that are centred on the needs of women with children. These are reflected in the comments of the local organiser of the new mothers' exercise group already described in Chapter Four:

> "At the [new mothers' exercise group], we all like to use proper parks, and then we work with local council for health and safety reasons, so that we all know where we are. We're all women, and we want to know that we'll be safe in the Park and looked after correctly. Here, the Park is fantastic, people on the premises and we know there is beauty as well; it's very well looked after. We had to be careful, that mums could be feeding out in the Park, and we had to be conscious that mums sometimes like to come back on their own and feed, so safety is really important as well. So all that has to be taken in to consideration. [Also the Park affords] amenities, to go to the toilet, or change the baby, that's why we will start and come back to a place like this, so we've got facilities like this as well, 'cos it's really important."

[Liz]

Figures of authority safeguarding and managing life and limb and infrastructure were part of the assemblage of discipline. They may be more in evidence today than in the past, though during my observational walks around the Park I noticed that one might typically see a

warden once in the course of a half hour walk, and more often I would see members of grounds maintenance team. In Chapter Four I described how Julie remembered that in her childhood she and her younger brother were able to get onto a frozen lake and have an experience that was a mixture of humour and risk. I also commented in Chapter Four that I once observed a young man who tried to replicate this passage across the lake, but was loudly and abruptly warned off the ice by one of the wardens. The wardens also intervened when, during a visit to the Park, I alerted a warden that some adults were throwing sticks up at the autumnal horse chestnut trees to dislodge conkers.

Comments from the wardens suggested that they exerted a 'soft' form of control that was more consensual that coercive. This seemed to be underlined in their reply to my question as to whether the Park had employed any female warden staff; I was told that they had had a female warden, whom they admired for her "people" skills. Though they were not part of the staff, police officers sometimes were a presence in the Park, generally patrolling in vehicles, as opposed to being on foot. On one day in February for example, I noted how a police van cruised around the lake with some other officers on foot nearby. There was no obvious concern on the part of visitors who witnessed this scene; a warden later claimed, though, that members of the public could be alarmed by the presence of the police in the Park. I did not observe any interaction between members of the public and officers on routine patrol in the Park. However, when special events transformed the Park into a different type of social, uniformed private security staff would be in evidence.. Uniformed police officers and staff in civilian dress did attend the Saltwell Park show in April 2010, handing out crime prevention information to the public and letting children start up a patrol car's siren, and all parties seemed to get on well. Again we see a style of policing which aimed to blend relaxed interactions with the public and a watchful and reassuring presence.

CCTV

Another actant in the assemblage of discipline and control is the presence within the Park of CCTV cameras. In general in this country, the prevalence of CCTV cameras in our public space has been the subject of increasing debate (for example, Graham *et al.* 1996; Norris 1999; Surette 2005; Toon 2000; Welsh and Farrington 2009; Williams and Johnstone 2000). Koskela (2000), echoing Foucault (1975/1977), likens CCTV systems to Bentham's *panopticon* (Bentham 1995; Bowring 1843). Bentham seemed to see the panopticon as a two-way social interaction: the warder could see the prisoners, and the prisoner was aware that at any time the warder might be watching them. This induces 'self-discipline' among prisoners even when they are not actually being watched and CCTV cameras in modern public spaces also rely partly on this self-disciplining behaviour to prevent civil disorder or disobedience. On the other hand, Koskela makes some valuable points in drawing attention to the fact that the power of surveillance through cameras is really only as strong as the discipline and attention of the operators (Koskela 2000; Koskela and Pain 2000).

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In Saltwell Park, a CCTV system of 16 cameras watches over specific areas of the Park. The rationale given for the installation of cameras within the Park was that their presence would improve personal security (Gateshead MBC 2002), which was also constructed as "accessibility". It is not clear, however, that the Park is being watched all the time; a warden commented that the cameras are being watched by operators 2-3 miles away, who also watch areas such as Gateshead town centre, and they prioritised some areas over others for surveillance, so the panopticon was temporally and spatially variable in application. Much commentary has been passed on who is most likely to be watched when they are within public space and what this tells us about the way that they are socially constructed by the watchers. This literature suggests that as a black male, I was likely to be a prime target for being watched. Other groups likely to especially targeted by CCTV include women and young people (Surette 2005; Toon 2000; Williams and Johnstone 2000) and there may be different reasons why these groups are likely to receive different attention[37]. On one occasion, I found that I was being tracked by a camera near the bowling greens; I tested whether this was a deliberate tracking by resorting to an impromptu side-step. The camera followed me. It struck me that that the cameras did not always seem to track movement within the Park; I watched their movements when I was in the Park both before and after, and they rarely moved. This was the only occasion when I observed anyone within the Park being tracked.

The feeling of selective and perhaps oppressive social control through CCTV, (that I experienced on this occasion) is criticised by some commentators, but can be subject to some more nuanced consideration in the case of Saltwell Park, where it surveillance seems to have benefits for some visitors. In 1998, a demand was made for a CCTV-policed route to be created from certain locations in the nearby neighbourhood of Bensham to the northern end of the Park (Gateshead MBC n.d.-c). This route appeared in the minds of some Hasidic Jews as akin to running the gauntlet of anti-Jewish violence; the experiences of some individuals who were attacked became embedded in the minds of others through a narrative of imminent threat for all Jewish people daring to walk along that route. Thus the Jewish community would possibly have disputed general assertions that cameras are located regardless of what a community wants (Williams and Johnstone 2000).

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[37] Implicit within this discussion is that members of the public should be able to trust those entrusted by the state, either directly or indirectly, to observe their movements. When moving within public space, we should be able to feel that our actions, only if illegitimate or suspicious, should attract attention. recently, two camera operators were investigated for allegedly being part of an attempt to sell close-up images of those who had participated in artist Spencer Tunick's nude public art installation on the nearby Gateshead Quayside in 2006 (Duff 2006). This case highlights the fact that we can be vulnerable when watched, even if we behave in ways that could attract attention, and not just subject to oppressive control, but voyeurism (common within feminist commentaries about CCTV), but other forms of exploitation.

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It would seem that CCTV in Saltwell Park itself has not completely deterred abusive encounters, and indeed Zara commented that many of the community living to the north of the Park still do not come into the Park at all, for fear of attack. Nonetheless, Barbara commented that CCTV had reduced the threat of antisocial behaviour:

> "We don't have very much now, but the vandalism was terrible, before they got the cameras in, the CCTV in. The kids used to come in round the maze and whathaveyou, with their bottles of wine, young children, the kids, some of them were 12 year-old, and that was [concerning] if you were coming for a walk; but I think that the cameras put a stop to all that. There is still a little bit going, on, but the Park keepers know what's going on, with the cameras."

> [Barbara]

For her, surveillance has acted as a deterrent to civil disorder, and aids the policing practices of the wardens. Thus surveillance could be seen as being overall a benign part of the Park assemblage, providing an impartial social control system protecting everyone using the Park. There is an implication that all visitors within the Park space should submit themselves to the possibility of surveillance at some point in order to make the space more inclusive for all groups of users. In social capital terms, we therefore see surveillance as part of a system of discipline and management that imposes majority social norms of behaviour that benefit health and well-being of a minority, reflecting collectively constructed normative ideas about ways in which the Park should be utilised. The actual, as well as the imagined gaze of the warden and CCTV camera personnel, should act as a brake upon the actions of the potential transgressor. These processes of surveillance help to reinforce what Coleman (1988) saw as normative social capital, that should be advantageous to the community as a whole.

In addition to these examples of maintenance of order and discipline, I also reflected on some of the rather regimented exercise regimes already considered in Chapter Four. One interpretation of these might see them as further examples of 'benign' social control, helping people to achieve healthy lifestyles and reinforcing healthy social norms. However, as they were also part of a collective activity chosen by certain individuals, I have considered them in more detail below in my discussion of shared interests and activities as a way of generating social cohesion.

Challenging Social Conventions

Some aspects of the Saltwell Park assemblage stand in contrast with the processes of control and regimentation of human behaviour, consistent with dominant social norms, which were discussed in the previous section. I next consider how social capital was also constructed in Saltwell Park through assemblages that challenge prevailing social conventions and norms which are unhelpful for health and well-being. Other authors have suggested that such challenges are necessary to ensure healthy political development in societies. Thrift (2005: 144) argued for a macropolitics of urban care, a product of the agents of the welfare state, together with an affirmative micropolitics that "attempts to inject more kindness and compassion into everyday interaction". I explore how some of the actions that took place within the Park would seem to fit into these points. In order to change unhealthy social conventions and behaviours, collective action sought to create permissive spaces where people could adopt a challenging stance promoting social change.

A "Permissive" Space in Saltwell Park: Challenging Conventions about Breastfeeding in Public

Gateshead Council had come to see that their public spaces should be supportive of new mothers wishing to breastfeed their children and were intervening to try to change prevailing social norms that discourage this practice. Boyer (2011) and Bartlett (2002) talk of social conventions that make nursing a baby in public a practice unacceptable to many people who see the female body not as performing a "natural" reproductive, nurturing task, but instead as on display, sexualised and immodest. In 2006, the council website carried an article entitled "Breast is best for business" (Gateshead MBC 2006), suggesting that a grassroots movement had gained support from local businesses and elected councillors. The attendant sticker for participating businesses to display gave this practice a certain visibility and declared permissiveness, a sticker which declared that feeding was "*acceptable here*":

> "Breastfeeding Friendly businesses sign a charter saying that they will make breast feeders welcome, and provide non-smoking areas where necessary. They agree to inform their staff about it and not ask mums to move to another area."

(Gateshead MBC 2006)

One such business is Saltwell Park, with the result that one of the Towers' windows sports a "breastfeeding friendly" sticker. Next came the staging of the *Breastfeeding Awareness Picnic*, which also helped to establish Saltwell Park as part of a network of action that seeks to change discourses regarding the practice of mothers nursing in public.

The Park was chosen to host the picnic (partly because of its central location), and was held in an open, public part of the Park. A description of the event was given in Chapter Three.

Whilst it possibly was not fully apparent to passers-by what exactly was going on, it seemed a statement was being made, through the picnic being staged in a public park and in a prominent part of this public space. A permissive public space was being created that sanctioned breastfeeding in public. Coupled with other public pronouncements such as the 'breast feeding friendly stickers in the Park, and the widely publicised council policy we can see this as part of an assemblage of actions in the Park which challenge conventions to promote healthy change and aim to include all members of the public in the process. Other observations I made in the course of my research reinforced this impression of the Park as a place permitting and encouraging this healthy behaviour. One of the new mothers' exercise group commented that other facilities such as the presence of wardens and baby-changing spaces within the toilets in the Towers and near the play areas, suggest that Saltwell Park is a space that actively welcomes mothers and their young children. Whilst I was interviewing the respondents from the new mothers' exercise group, one of the mothers fed her child without any signs of embarrassment. One of the women on a stall at the *Picnic* enthused to me about breastfeeding, saying that if it was good enough for animals, then it was good enough for humans, and that it was perfectly natural. Nonetheless, unlike other events that took place at the Park, there were no banners or other publicity material in the physical park landscape that might have sent a public signal as to what was going on. There may be a balance between encouraging a healthy personal act that happens to be undertaken in public, as against using women's bodies as 'billboards' for the public health agenda in a way that might provoke hostility rather than acceptance. On the other hand, shortly after the event, the council newsletter carried a full page article that mixed reportage on the picnic with other NHS-*Change For Life* publicity (Gateshead MBC 2009a).   The picnic was presented as part of a Breastfeeding Awareness Week, a national initiative that has been running since 1993 (NHS 2010). Thus we might consider these activities in Saltwell Park as part of a wider, national process of social change aimed at the creation of a new politics of corporal self-expression of healthy behaviour in public space.

To conclude, the staging of the breastfeeding picnic was part of a national programme of action to enforce a situational micropolitics of care by changing the social relations affecting nursing mothers. It did seem that the women that I spoke did feel that the social climate with in the Park did permit them to nurse their babies and maintain a sense of the self-efficacy as well. The claiming of the Park, both permanently through the sticker in the window, and more ephemerally through the presence of feeding bodies in the Park, was intended to produce a new well-being discourse. Smyth (2008a) uses Plummer's concept of *intimate citizenship* (Plummer 2001) to discuss how breastfeeding could take place in public spaces. Plummer himself describes intimate citizenship as:

> "Drawing from various traditions of citizenship studies, it examines rights, obligations, recognitions and respect around those most intimate spheres of life - who to live with,

how to raise children, how to handle one's body, how to relate as a gendered being, how to be an erotic person."

(Plummer 2001: 4)

Furthermore, the political aspect of the debates that Plummer raises point towards:

"A recognition that politics is about difference and ways of living life, about dialogues between different groups, about not bringing fixed closures or strong agendas, but keeping things open."[38]

(Plummer 2001: 8)

On one level, the Park may be just a setting – a convenient location for various individuals bound by the same or similar circumstances or outlooks to come together in, and share these experiences. However, the Park also plays an enabling, facilitating, role.

"Girls against Boys": Race for Life

There were other situations when female bodies in the Park formed part of an ephemeral assemblage, designed to promote women's health by challenging masculine norms, as evidenced by the *Race for Life*. The *Race for Life* organisers hoped to attract 3000 entrants, with the national advertising specifying female entrants. Children could take part with female guardians, so a number of male and female children were pushed in chairs or lead around by female adults. There was a distinction made in terms of competitor pace made, with runners at the front, joggers behind, then walkers, with the rear made up of those with children ("pushchairs"). Interviewing an organiser afterwards, she commented that feedback from competitors had indicated that these female-only fields were very popular. The presence of men was felt to introduce a competitive edge to the event that was seemingly not widely appreciated. In Saltwell Park, the first two entrants were two women dressed as angels who scooted through in about 25 minutes; I say "about", since there was no clock at the finish. The race organiser said that that was deliberate, to further reduce the emphasis

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[38] As of 2010, new legislation passed by the UK Government, known as the Equality Act. UK, has now made it an offence to afford:

"less favourable treatment of a woman [which] includes less favourable treatment of her because she is breast-feeding;"

Equality Act (2010).

This legislation could perhaps be seen in these terms. These enshrine a principle that different ways of being are possible – how to handle one's body, and how to raise one's children.

on times and performance, and competition[39]. The Cancer Research UK webpage pointed out that there was no first prize (Cancer Research UK 2010). Most of the rest of the finishers that I observed, whilst helping to thrust bottles and bags in their hands, were at walking pace - maybe two-thirds? For most of that Sunday, Saltwell Park was pink for cancer (pink for women and femininity?).

Various aspects of the event seemed to challenge ways that the female gender is constructed in wider society. For example, King (2004: 36), refers to "myths about woman: as duplicitous, over-sexualised temptresses; delicate and weak or narcissistic, frivolous and obsessed with trivialities". Just before *Race for Life* started, the competitors were gathered together in front of the DJ's stage. A female DJ from a local commercial station got the field to warm-up, through running-on-the-spot, and made a ribald observation about the bodily hazards she faced as she took part. Together with the fancy dress of some of the competitors, the atmosphere had a strong flavour of fun and of not taking things too seriously. Some of the participants dressed as members of a hen party, like those one might see on the streets of Newcastle. A hen party is felt to be a way of collectively celebrating entry into the "respectable" and "responsible" social institution of marriage for one of the group, through a ritual emphasising public behaviours such as fancy dress, a pub-crawl, and resultant escapades which challenge 'polite' social conventions. Whilst the night-time economy of Newcastle upon Tyne seems to actively encourage hen parties as a significant consumer group[40], the female participants are culturally degraded as "tasteless, loud, vulgar display [which makes] them intolerable" (Skeggs 2005: 966). However, hen parties could also be seen as acts of resistance against "historical-representational moralizing, pathologising, disgust-producing register attached to working-class women [with] disparate discourses of familial disorder and dysfunction, fecund and excessive femininities, of anti-social behaviour, and of moral and ecological decay combine[d]" (Skeggs 2005: 967). Invoking the hen party at the *Race for Life* introduced a similar element of resistance in an event combining female camaraderie and celebration (Eldridge and Roberts 2008) with a social experience that was serious at heart[41]. Adding to this 'carnival' aspect of the race, participants were given a goody-bag at the end of the race, to promote awareness of *Change 4 Life*, a government healthy lifestyle campaign. These contained what appeared to be an overweight naked male torso in the form of a hand-held stress relieving toy. This seemed to be cheekily poking fun at those men present, who were largely in-the-background.

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[39] In my personal experience however, I have met many competitive amateur female exercisers and athletes. See my account of *Pants in the Park* and of exercise classes for example in this thesis.
[40] Newcastle City Council (2010); www.NewcastleGateshead.com (2010).
[41] There are very many stag parties with costumed men to be seen on the streets of Tyneside, attired in matching t-shirts or as comic-book and cartoon-characters.

The forms of social capital expressed in this event seemed designed to promote interests of women as a social group. Men are further marginalised, and feminine solidarity is evidenced through emphasis on a light-hearted atmosphere of collective sisterhood. It is interesting to compare it with the "Pants in the Park" event described in Chapter Four, which was targeted to a male population and included a stronger sense of competition. At that event there was also an emphasis on making the practice of being a vigilant, health attentive person seem enjoyable (*public health is fun)* and it also involved elements of carnivalesque behaviour such as fancy dress.

Promoting a more cohesive, multicultural society to reduce social conflict: Gateshead Together Week's Picnic in the Park

When I completed my risk assessment for undertaking the fieldwork, I wrote:

> "Being a black researcher could possibly bring problems of racism"

My physiognomy of skin and facial features would make me judged not by the content of my character, but by the colour of my skin. Knowledge and experience informed me, as well as wider experiences internationally for black men in societies that have white majorities. Ornelas *et al.* (2009) and colleagues looked at how, for African-American men, perceptions of hostility affected their view of their locale. With specific regard to parks, within their wider-ranging review of parks, park use and socio-cultural processes that connect usage patterns, Byrne and Wolch (2009) reviewed research that posits that an individual's usage of parks may be circumscribed by hostility that may make "people of colour" feel unwelcome, and that leads to inequality of access for these groups. I hoped for the best, though for risk assessment purposes, expected the worst. As it was, I myself experienced nothing that lacked for welcome. To other park users, I must have seemed to be a sort-of-young, black male, walking along, occasionally talking photographs and talking stealthily into some hand-held device. Some people said "Hello" to me, as I walked past them, I replied in kind. When participating on the *Pants in the Park* "fun" run, puffing and labouring around by the burger trailer and the recycling bins, an older white male would smile and shout something vaguely encouraging to me on each of the four circuits. One of the (white, female) organisers quickly learnt my name, and shouted noisy encouragement each time I pounded through the start-finish line. Having lived in the north-east of England for more than two decades, I have come to expect strangers passing me on country walks to smile and verbalise a greeting to this Afro-Caribbean stranger passing, and not, as some research work would imply, instantly resort to abuse. This said, the unsolicited encouragements of the older man during my participation in *Pants in the Park* contrasted with the racial abuse from teenagers that I suffered when participating in an *Outdoor Fitness Club* class in Jesmond Dene in July 2009.

On one occasion, I observed a number of South Asian groups strolling through the Park, on occasion, past groups of people who were different ethnically and culturally to themselves,

without any apparent incident or expressed tension, expressed in the form of words, facial expressions or other bodily gestures.

Does that mean that Saltwell Park does not have an unpleasant, hostile side, even racist? When I was helping to staff a Friends' Group stall at the 2010 Saltwell Park Show, we Friends asked members of the public to sign a petition to have the Park awarded a *Smooth Radio* prize for nominating Saltwell Park as being the best in the region (GMG Group 2010). A woman in her 50's-60's was happy to sign, but expressed her concern to me about "outsiders coming to the Park". She went to chide me for having a red and white jersey on, and that it must be "Sunderland" (as opposed to Newcastle United). My jersey was not "Sunderland"; it was a red rag to a bull - or red V-shape across my chest - so to speak. It was possible that she was indirectly signalling that I did not fit in for other reasons.

The comments below originated from my gentle questioning of Zara as to whether the Park was seen as a safe place for Jewish people to try to access:

> "Past the Library and the Shipley Art Gallery [to the northern side of the Park, the other side of the Park from Zara's home], there used to be a lot of [threatening] people who used to hang out, and it used to be very, very hard, and the people who lived down there had a lot of issues [suffering from violence and intimidation] .. They go to school and they hear what the other kids say, and there are some people who are very, very timid, and very, very frightened."

> [Zara]

Within this is comment is the suggestion of a production of a cultural geography of fear. Zara told me about two incidents of overt racist behaviour. She told me about an occasion when a father and son were at a set of swings in the Park. A man approached and said that they should leave, saying that they "did not belong here"[42]. She said:

> "I've only experienced one incident and been party to two [refers to that incident above]. That was a real eye-opener, because nothing like that had ever happened to me before. And the other time was I was in the Park and I was walking with another lady and someone started shouting "Hitler!! Hitler!!" - You know, all this kind of thing ... we tried to show that we weren't paying attention.

> And I know that in Gateshead there are a lot of people who have things done to them: sometimes shouting … sometimes throwing … sometimes spitting. A lot of spitting."

> [Zara]

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[42]   The irony of that the Jewish Council website comments that a Mr Wise, renting a lodge on the Wailes' estate, was the first Jewish man in Gateshead, in 1856 (Wise 2008); thus, in a sense, a Jewish presence is concurrent with a Christian presence in the Park.

One participant also claimed that he had to intervene when a Jewish woman got into an argument with another adult over the use of a swing. The incident was recounted as a dispute between a Jew and non-Jew.

So what might be done to counteract such racist attitudes? *Gateshead Together Week* was an attempt to forge both a small-scale and large-scale collective consciousness through the mode of "neighbourly" connections between individuals. A small-scale consciousness-raising event in Saltwell Park centred on a picnic: *Gateshead Together Week*'s picnic, intended to bring together residents of Gateshead from different ethnic groups. One of the organisers told me about the two strands that had led to the event's conception: firstly, the fascist British National Party[43] had been campaigning in one of the neighbouring electoral wards, and secondly, there was a perception of intergenerational conflicts about what constituted legitimate use of street space by young people, and attendant conflicts with older people. Gateshead MBC asserted the following of its citizens and their attitudes to their locale and each other:

> "Many people in Gateshead have a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood and want to live in a community with a sense of pride. We want our communities to be sustainable and cohesive – they need to be places where people share values and aspirations for the future."

> (Gateshead MBC 2010b)

These normative notions of social capital hark back to the definitions of healing that I observed earlier (Gross 1958); namely that healing also involved bring individuals together and removing civic divisions. Multiculturalism has been discussed in other contexts, for example in terms of religious difference and sectarianism, in Northern Ireland (Nagle 2009). Nagle agrees with Cole (2009) and Tyler (2010) that contemporary nation statehood includes ethnic inequity as part of its functioning. His brief discussion of multiculturalism points to an on-going debate as to whether contemporary citizenship can be forged through the blurring of socio-cultural difference and undifferentiated rights proscribed by the state, or through the celebration of socio-cultural difference, as affectively a form of defence against an over-powerful majority. To this end, Taylor (1994: 64) demands that:

> "We all recognize the equal value of different cultures; that we not only let them survive, but acknowledge their worth'."

Gateshead Council commented that:

> "Bringing people together to share stories and experiences can provide opportunities for people to celebrate their local identities and to welcome new arrivals to

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[43] The British National Party has been studied recently. See for example, Ford and Goodwin (2010); Halikiopoulou and Vasilopoulou (2010); Mammone (2011); Rhodes (2010).

neighbourhoods. They also provide opportunities for people to share and learn about different cultures. Local communities should be encouraged to explore ways of bringing people together, creating opportunities to meet new people and renew old acquaintances, and to build strong and positive relationships within neighbourhoods."

(Gateshead MBC 2008: 15)

This strategy of specially facilitated neighbourliness has echoes elsewhere. Kalra and Kapoor (2009) discuss the community cohesion agenda in the UK, whilst Phillips (2009) examines the pan-European debates on integration. Gruner (2009) discusses the state of race relations in Germany, and the reaction of Germans to ethnic difference, using Bourdieu to suggest that ethnic difference is constructed as another (symbolic) form of capital that can be translated into other forms. Throughout these discourses, the dominant political / popular assumption of self-segregation of non-white populations is critiqued.

Publicity for *the Gateshead Together Week* did not directly discuss any issues of supposed self-segregation of either religious groups; or of mutual antagonism based around age. Instead it emphasised positive messages about promoting a multicultural vision of citizenship in the borough. *Gateshead Together Week* aimed to:

"[b]ring people together through arts, music, and community events that allow people to share experiences, get to know their neighbours, and have fun! "

(Gateshead MBC 2009b)

The first year that *Gateshead Together Week* was staged was in 2009, and it was launched at Saltwell Park with an event which, like other events discussed in this chapter was presented as a *Picnic in the Park*. Other similar events had been staged in other areas outside Gateshead, so this was a model which was not unique to this area[44].

The 'Picnic' consisted of eight groups bringing food that they had each prepared and sharing it with the others. In fact it did not take place entirely out of doors as the food was consumed in an upstairs room in the Towers. I wondered whether some of the food should not have been taken downstairs and offered to those in the café below, to make the event more widely inclusive. In all, about 30 people attended. The atmosphere was fairly low-key, with some mingling of participants; The local authority maintained that the event was a success (Gateshead MBC 2009c), and it was reported that there had been positive feedback from participants. However, although the organisers had apparently hoped to attract wider media attention, the only references that I could find to the event came from the council website, declaring that:

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[44] See also Kye Askins' description of a similar event in the Peak District (Askins 2008).

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> "Gateshead's first ever celebration of neighbourliness gets underway this month – and absolutely everyone's invited!"

> (Gateshead MBC 2009b)

By bringing the picnic participants together the picnic seemed to be aimed at inspiring the wider Gateshead public to bring themselves together to achieve the aims of the Week. Interpreted through ideas from Bourdieu (Gruner 2009), both the Picnic and the wider Week were attempts to invest particular bodies with symbolic capital; by placing those bodies in Saltwell Park, thought of locally as '*The People's Park'*, the Picnic launch imagery was an attempt to say that these bodies belong together, and that they belong in Gateshead. Cultural understanding events elsewhere have also had a focus upon food sharing, and there is a wider literature on the sociology of communal eating[45]. Here we an example of the symbolic significance of Saltwell Park which will be considered in more depth the next chapter. Saltwell Park also provide an accessible, pleasant physical setting for a picnic event. There are clear parallels with the *Breastfeeding Awareness picnic* discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

This was a council initiative promoting aspirational messages that sought to promote particular normative behaviours among the wider public. However, the picnic was not staged as a very visible public event; speaking to some of the staff, they seemed unaware of it and, in some cases, seemed upset that they knew little about it. The food was consumed upstairs at the Towers out of sight of other Park visitors. The leaflets that advertised the Week were also kept upstairs during the picnic and not taken downstairs and placed in and around the café, where leaflets normally are displayed for general public consumption. For me, this raised questions about the true purpose or effectiveness of this event in changing public attitudes.

Increasing social inclusion for people with mental illness

Another event designed to raise public awareness and social inclusion of marginalised groups took the form of a temporary exhibition themed on mental health. Saltwell Park is one the locations in Gateshead where campaigners seek to challenge and alter the representations and discourses that circulate about those with mental illnesses[46]. In 2007, an art exhibition was organised by art and service provider organisations, including St Nicholas Hospital in Newcastle, with pieces exhibited that had been made by service users. This was repeated again in 2009, using photographs from around the Gateshead area. These were displayed on the walls of the cafe for several days. A caption for the entire

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[45] Food sharing has been discussed in the past with respect to hunter gathering societies (Winterhalder 1986). More recent discussions (Fischler 1988; Miller *et al.* 1998) have focussed upon the social function of food. An eye-catching journal paper title (Stead *et al.* 2011) suggests this is perhaps quite pronounced with regard to young people's food choices, with an attendant implication for public health.

[46] Newcastle and North Tyneside Altering Images of Mentality (AIM) Group (2008); Northumberland NHS Care Trust (2007).

exhibition declared that the aim was to challenge negative stereotypes of people with mental health illnesses. In this respect there seemed to be parallels with the kinds of social action discussed earlier which challenge discriminatory social norms. None of my participants mentioned the arts exhibition, however, and when I visited the cafe during the exhibition, I did not observe cafe users examining the photographs; thus, whether it achieved its normative capitalised aim was uncertain. Nonetheless, the fact that Saltwell Park is used for this purpose seems to imply that there is a perception that such work needs to be undertaken in Gateshead, and that Saltwell Park is a suitable place to initiate such action.

Certainly Saltwell Park provides a setting where people with mental illnesses have opportunities to meet together in supportive social groups. I spoke to a worker from a north-east-based mental health service provider that organises weekly day-trips, taking small groups of "clients" to local parks who explained that Saltwell is on the destination rota. I spoke to four men taking part in one of these trips. They said that visits allowed them to get "away from life" in their locality and have a "nice day out". In Saltwell Park, they could "get a cup of tea"; on one occasion, they had "tried their hand at playing Bowls'". In terms of health and well-being benefits, the trips to the Park were part of a series of organised activities designed to help the participants become more engaged with their immediate environment, and regain some measure of independence. All the same, the worker did comment that they "like to keep themselves to themselves", an expression of people with mental health problems feeling that they need to be mindful of the opinions of others (Ryan 2008).

Unlike some of the other activities discussed in this chapter, including the exhibition on mental illness, these trips to the Park do not seem designed to challenge opinions and have more in common with other shared interest groups discussed below.

Nevertheless, in response to the kinds of issues raised by individuals like Gallo (1994), MIND engaged on a national campaign to bring people together, called "Time to Get Moving" which declared that:

> "Research has shown that when people with and without experience of mental health problems come together in a social situation, you get to know one another and the stigma around mental health problems gets broken down. And getting active benefits everyone's mental health!"

(MIND 2011b)

This suggests that in an unobtrusive way these regular, organized visits to the Park had potential to change stigmatising social attitudes towards mental illness.

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Changing behaviour to protect public hygiene in the Park

During the course of my fieldwork, a number of campaigns were launched with a strong public health and hygiene focus. One was focussed specifically reducing dog faeces left in Saltwell Park by visitors' pets. Dog waste can present a significant health hazard to humans, especially to children, and around the time of my research other public media had concentrated on these risks (for example BBC News 2010a). Pupils from a local primary school had produced A4 sized posters on the issue that were displayed in the Towers café for a number of days. These posters exhorted dog owners to clean up after their pets and expressed the children's point of view, through their own drawing and handwriting with colouring pencils.

Children's art had also been displayed elsewhere in Gateshead to promote public health messages. The Arts Council drew attention to an arts project called *The Whoops! Child Safety Project in Gateshead* that used children's drama, music, storytelling, puppet-making and sculpture with individuals from schools, colleges, nurseries, youth and community groups, parent and toddler groups, family centres, health visitors, midwives and nurses, promoting safety issues in the home, at school and outside (Arts Council England 2006). The website commented that these methods are "creative and imaginative ... mak[ing] the learning experience more engaging, memorable and fun" (Arts Council England 2006). This action replicates many others using children's art in health promotion campaigns worldwide[47].

Children's art is thought to be a powerful way to communicate public health messages because it is: "expressive and the emotions revealed have so much force" (Bowman 1993: 1324). The local drawings displayed at Saltwell Park were arresting, since they were not professionally drawn and made me feel that the drawings were drawn by those people who could at especial risk from *canine toxicaris;* the vulnerability of the artists had a strong emotional appeal. Lee (2007) cites commentaries (see Furedi 2001; Jackson and Scott 1999; Rozin 1997) which observe that the social construction of children is as innocent and vulnerable to the actions of others. This suggests that the poster campaign was designed to modify dog owners' behaviour by provoking a sense of guilt through emotional identification with the bearer of the message, a form of resource capital-based action that crosses over into the strategies of disciplinary action and social control enforcing normative social capital discussed earlier.

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[47] For example, In South Santiago, Chile, an art project was undertaken with young children to highlight The Skills for Life intervention, designed to strengthen the school environment by making it conducive to learning and by protecting children's mental health. The project was intended to prompt community awareness of violence against children, the city's Health Promotion Unit of the municipality undertook a campaign using children's commentaries of their drawings of how they perceive they are treated (Bowman 1993).

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The examples considered above could all be considered in the light of Valentine's (2010) "narratives of cultural injustice", whereby a normative dominance is assumed, and that physical and social space is assumed to be made in one's own image. Such personal emotions and opinions, may lead to a direct mobilisation through some form of violence. To counter this, Valentine (2010) comments that Allport (1979) supported the intergroup contact hypothesis, through shared contact and goal-setting, a call echoed elsewhere (for example, Amin 2002). Askins and Pain (2011) also used participatory action research with a community art project to draw refugee and local children together in nearby Tyneside (with varying results the authors note). The events I have described here show Saltwell Park as an actant in the social production of 'contact zones' for different social groups to mix, in settings which also permit them to express their aspirations and concerns in ways which are intended to achieve healthy changes in widely held social norms or conventions.

Common Interest and Friendships

Several of the social groups I observed and engaged with in Saltwell Park were based on friendship and common interest. There is an implication of a therapeutic effect in friendship; most people instinctively know that close personal relationships are good for them, as evidenced in in some of the research that I have referred to previously (for example, Clark and Uzzell 2002; Deci *et al.* 2006; Dunn 2004; Hutchinson *et al.* 2008; Klineberg *et al.* 2006; Oldenburg 1991; Pahl 2000). Thrift comments that:

> "Cities have survived trauma because they are concentrations of knowledges of routine as found in activities like repair and maintenance, and also of the kind of energy and resourcefulness which has a large part of Bloch's quality of hope engrained within it, mediated by mundane but crucial social ties like friendship."

(Thrift 2005: 146)

Klinenberg (2003) described how a week-long heat wave in Chicago in July 1995 caused some 739 excess deaths, a large number of whom were isolated males in geographical areas that had been largely abandoned by the authorities [48]. In this case, friendships are meant not just social phenomena based around pleasurable sharing of time, but the fact that there was someone who cared enough to be curious as to another's well-being.

Examples of this close and warm social connection can be deduced from my observations in the Park, and from my participant's comments. I interpreted these observations in terms of two themes; the first being examples of common interest that support particular forms of activity that have a health benefit (so forms of enablement, that would correspond to normative entitlement and reciprocity, as well as accessing beneficial information). Secondly, examples illustrated friendship that is built around pleasure and common experiences, which, again, may be indicative of entitlement and reciprocity, as well as degrees of resource-based social capital considered in Chapter Two.

There is evidence of the health and well-being benefits that accrue through social capital and supportive networks. For example, Fiorillo and Sabatini (2011) comment that friendships can be beneficial to good human health through four mechanisms: 1) transmission of health information; 2) mutual assistance mechanisms; 3) promotion of healthy behaviours; and 4) a buffering effect. All four of these will be seen in the examples below.

I noted that the physical environment of the Park (already detailed in Chapter Four) was supportive of the development of forms of social capital. For example, I conducted the majority of my interviews in the Towers cafe. On those occasions, and on others when I had conducted participant observation, I saw many groups of families and friends enjoying

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[48] An interview with Eric Klinenberg can be found at University of Chicago Press (2002)

refreshments there. Ruth was one participant who commented that she met friends there. Barbara and Catherine added that the building of a café was a boon to the Park, through its provision of shelter, refreshments and a social gathering space. There were other gathering spaces where interest groups could meet, such as the training centre, as well as outdoor spaces, such as the playing fields. The whole Park afforded a resource supporting social through its physical infrastructure and natural features.

Common interest and social capital enabling healthy actions

A number of supportive social interactions took place around sport and enabling participants to undertake such activities both safely and in degrees of physical and emotional comfort. For example, I had one-to-one coaching when I took part in Sebastiano's circuit's class, as I mentioned in Chapter Four. He performed the tasks easily enough himself, both to illustrate how I ought to do them myself, or whilst I was struggling to do them myself. His influence could also be viewed as a disciplinary role, encouraging me perform the routines to the (then) maximum capacities of my body, and to make sure that I didn't suffer an injury whilst performing them. Tiredness and trying too hard can lead to injuries; hence the cliché of "listening to your body". Other coaches within Saltwell Park promised to "listen" to their charges' bodies; see example, this comment of the founder of the Outside Fitness Company.

> "At the same time I'm not a military instructor and there's no cruel shouting. People need to be encouraged in a positive way, which is what I do."

> [Director of Outdoor Fitness Company]

This form of discipline is a rather more benign, as well as voluntary, form compared to those discussed at the start of this chapter. both of these coaches seek to confound popular images of military fitness instructors as incessant barkers of orders, as almost sadistic torturers characteristic of popular media through film characters such as Head Drill Instructor Marine Gunnery Sergeant Emil Foley in *An Officer And A Gentleman*[49], or Gunnery Sergeant Hartman in *Full Metal Jacket*[50]: These characters bullied and cajoled their charges to create better performance within the military corps. When I performed circuits with the ODFC, the coach would pick people out all of a sudden and publically comment on their performance, but only to the extent of perhaps being cheeky, rather than behaviour that could seem belittling. I suffered in such a manner a couple of times; for perceived slacking, not keeping up with him. Those taking part in exercise classes in Saltwell Park are paying customers, not signed-up or conscripted recruits, and could walk away if they felt uncomfortable with the exercises or the tone of the teaching.

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[49] Hackford (1982)
[50] Kubrick (1987)

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Although these exercise classes were therefore not coercive, there seemed to be a certain mutual reinforcement gained from exercising collectively in the Park. Groups would base themselves there, and members would attend as they were able, with no coercion. Zara implied that such mutual reinforcement was also the driver of the walking initiative within the local community (Chapter Four): a gym had been set up in the Jewish Men's Academy, and had not got off to a good start, "because there's no supervisor". In part, perhaps, a jointly set target, mutual encouragement and accomplishment, and the social aspect of shared time made walking in the Park more attractive.

Andrew was a member of the Bowls' Club as well, but he had referred me to also speak to another senior member, Yeardleigh. He too seemed keen to be welcoming to potential new members. One of the things that Yeardleigh talked about was social inclusion. Yeardleigh was proud of Saltwell Park's blind Bowls' club, which is the newest Bowls' club. For instance, Yeardleigh told of the successes the blind Bowls' club had had: that two years before, the Park had a world champion playing for Gateshead. Yeardleigh seemed to have a particular wish to have sport cater for all; to set up Bowls' for those with impaired sight, he had contacted another bowler in Preston and was sent some equipment that allowed the bowler to plot a trajectory for each delivery. This eventually led to the national blind Bowls' championship being held at Saltwell Park. The comments that Yeardleigh made pointed to the impact that a single individual could wield in creating opportunities for others who could be in the margins of participation.

During the course of my research, it also became apparent that a number of social actants operated as guides introducing others to the Park. Within the borough of Gateshead, organisations support new mothers, such as *Bosom Buddies*. I spoke to the main *Breastfeeding Awareness picnic* organiser and she remarked on the work that she does in the town, playing a wider role in the lives of new mothers in the area, beyond the Awareness Week. The organiser meets women both antenatally and through word-of-mouth. She went to say that some women need reassurance or help at particular stages of their motherhood, and that they are paired up with other mothers. She runs a group in a nearby electoral ward and regularly brings mothers up to the Park for walks and "fresh air" benefits; thus the idea of the picnic in the Park was born. By bringing them to the Park for a walk, a coffee, a chat and the organiser shows them:

> "What's on their doorstep… and get out and about. It is important postnatally… if they are feeling a bit down, it helps them not hit rock bottom."

> [Picnic organiser]

There was an explicit acknowledgement that getting out of the house and into the Park would be good for the mothers. The women are apparently of various social backgrounds, in terms of socio-cultural demographics at the Bensham group. Jewish and Muslim women

were included as well. The organiser commented that some women had not gone to the Park before her interventions, especially women from overseas (such as the Polish women who attended the groups and picnic, who had not known each other before starting). She felt that the physical variety of the Park was important for "all age groups". Some women did eventually have the confidence to go to the Park without her.

In the run-up to the Breast Feeding Awareness picnic discussed earlier, the NHS South of Tyne and Wear PCT Trust website had issued an open invitation to "Any nursing mums and their babies [who] are welcome to come along to the event" (NHS South of Tyne and Wear 2010b). There might have been a number of social effects that arose from staging the picnic. One was the point made that breastfeeding is good for the health and well-being of both mother and child, both biomedically and psychosocially. Another, relevant in this discussion of social capital is that mothers have a lot of collective wisdom to share and do not always need medical professionals to tell them what is best for them. The organiser said the emphasis was on "empowerment" of the women by the women themselves, apart from some midwives, and no-one official playing a role of expert as to how to feed the children, or on other aspects of rearing. A third effect would seem to be that through shared circumstances and experiences, supportive friendships can be made, that last beyond the time period of the event itself.

The picnic provided an opportunity to meet other people blessed with motherhood. A picnic normally is a sharing of food; in this case, it was a sharing of time and friendship:

> Julie: "It's been the chance to meet other mums; and also the chance to do something different, to enjoy the weather, to enjoy the Park.... "Not being by ourselves … it's just nice to… especially with being young mums, you often… you often feel quite isolated, so the social aspect is quite good. And also, the extra information that's here. Stuff like that."

> Wayne: "So is it more contact for relatively new mums, information sharing, or anything like that?"

> Julie: "Support, yeah… like just asking about the cups. It's just nice to ask "well, how have you got on with this?"; "well, I'm doing this", or "this works really well for me"."

Children were also felt to play a role in the wider social life of the Park, through providing a common purpose through which mothers could meet each other:

> "You can meet the people here as well. When my baby is a little bit older and can go on the playground, I can meet the other mums as well in the breast feeding groups…."

> [Heidi]

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Thus for many of my participants, the benefits of the picnic were seen in social terms, meeting others like themselves, sharing problems and building kinships around the isolation of motherhood.

The new mothers' exercise group recruited participants by word-of-mouth, through social networks as well as numerous online adverts on the community website[51] and leaflets left in the Towers. Orlaine commented that in her case:

> "One of the girls that I was in the hospital with had [recommended it] and that's why I'm here. It's on the website. It's a bit different to just walking around by myself."

> [Orlaine]

Orlaine's additional comment was that "It's [like a fitness class]. I don't think that you'd walk as much as fast, or as much, if you were just be yourself", suggests that company when exercising provides a social benefit. It has been suggested that women are more likely to walk as a form of exercise when they have either human or nonhuman company (Biddle and Mutrie 2008). Orlaine concurred:

> "It's probably the social side... everybody's in the same situation, struggling with the same things. So it's nice to talk to other young mothers ... while you're exercising."

> [Orlaine]

Naomi added that:

> " ... Well, it's just getting the fitness back after having the baby. We decided to come because it's something different than just walking yourself.... So it's worthwhile that way."

> [Naomi]

The influence of social others can play a deleterious effect upon participation in exercise (Allender *et al.* 2006; Biddle and Mutrie 2008), for example when the people in question are teenagers. Martina commented that she had previously lost her motivation for cross-country running as a teenager:

> Martina: "I did [run] up until I was 14, and I'm 27 now! I was a runner! [General laughter]"

> Wayne: "What made you stop?"

> Martina: "When I got to being a teenager, I got in with a different crowd, and I just got bored of it. It was three nights a week and weekends, every

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[51] www.saltwellpark.co.uk

> week and all me friends were going out. And I just decided I didn't
> want to do it any more.... it was with a club [mentions name]."

Wayne: "Where you quite good?"

Martina: "I was actually! I was district champion."

This suggests that the role of the Park in supporting like-minded people who want to exercise, and who perhaps share similar circumstances, is an important one. In the case of the new mothers' exercise group, they seemed to socialise after the class in the Towers' cafe, where (as we have seen) they might also feed their children if needed. As anticipated in Chapter Two, and earlier in this chapter, the new mothers' exercise group' own personal feelings of safety were also important.

Earlier, in Chapter Four, I suggested that dogs can perform a mutually constitutive affect upon their owners through shaping a route over the terrain of the Park. Another action that pet dogs perform is to facilitate social interaction between owners, especially amongst older owners (Knight and Edwards 2008; Nagasawa and Ohta). On some occasions, groups of owners and dogs would encounter each other on the footpaths, frequent routeways for walkers around the Park; dogs would patiently sniff each other, or just quietly pass each other, and not snarl or antagonise each other. I noticed two sets of behaviour in the enclosed dog exercise area during my fieldwork sorties: owners playing with their dogs, and groups of owners in conversation whilst their pets amused themselves.

Friends, social capital and healthy outcomes

My first fieldwork encounter with the Park was through the Friends Group, and through a Bowls'' club *Pie-And-Peas* night in June 2008. I had previously spoken to Barbara by phone, saying that I would like to join the Friends Group. I was invited to come along. Upon arrival at the Bowls'' event, I stood by the side of the uppermost bowling green. There were several dozen older men and women playing about five parallel Bowls'' games. The event was really an event for members of Friends of Saltwell Park, and would-be members, like me. I was, feeling a little uncertain, apprehensive: yet at no point did I detect an accusing glance, as to why the likes of *me* (a black person) / *"them" ("one of those black people")* should be within the social space of the likes of *them / "us"*. Two people who came over revealed themselves to be Andrew and Barbara. I was invited by both of them to join in a game, which lasted about two hours. I had never played Bowls' before, but both Andrew and my fellow players taught me some of the basics, and I enjoyed both the game and the company.

I was made to feel welcome by the Friends Group: they wanted to enrol me, and I have attended a number of events since. Perhaps in part, they are motivated by the thought of bestowing positive publicity upon their beloved park (that I had resource-based capital), as

hinted at by some members. All the same, that was not a thought uppermost, or hindmost, in my mind, when I attended an organised talk or visit.

There were a number of occasions when I encountered participants Barbara and Catherine together in the Park; even doing the photovoice exercise, they came together. This relationship was in partly aided by a set of outside circumstances[52]. The existence of the Friends' Group had also played an important role in their friendship, with a shared desire to become involved in these public activities. Catherine is a widow, and it is possible that, for her, friendship with Barbara helped to prevent social isolation. Already known to each other, they had drawn closer as friends through their shared interest in the Park, as Barbara commented:

> "We've always been friends, but since we've been coming to the Park, we've got close, even close friends. Must be since the Friends Group started, we've become more friends. Even closer… We were close friends before that. And since the Friends Group started, we enjoy coming to the Park when we have the talks on the Saturdays, and we have the Bowls' Night, and that's very good; we enjoy that, and we promote the Park at the same time. So we enjoy coming to the Park, and walking round the Park."

[Barbara]

Friendship was also an important aspect of participation in the Model Boats Club for Francis, who commented that the social benefits are as follows:

> "There's quite a cross-section of what people get out of modelling ... we provide ourselves on being a friendly club. The competitive edge, about "you're building better models than me, it just isn't there at all. It's about sharing experiences, enjoyment, sharing ideas and supporting one another."

[Francis]

Francis commented that some of the older members lived alone, and that the club was an important source of social contact for them. More widely, they were seemingly conscious of the need to regenerate the membership of the club: like the Friends' and the Bowls', most members are seemingly in their sixties and above. Francis told of how club members would construct a temporary lake at local schools and sail their boats there for the children to see and experience. This was with the aim of promoting interest and encouraging new members to join. This account also speaks of the reciprocity and access to advantageous information

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[52] Before undertaking this thesis, as a source of employment, I used to apply for grant monies for an employer from a number of sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). This fund had a frequently expressed desire to see that its grant money was attached to organised community involvement in projects. A major source of funding for the funding for the restoration of parks during this past decade was from the HLF.

that helped to comprise the resource based social capital for this group. The comments recall points made by Pettit *et al.* (2011) that close friendships can act as normative conduits of information and resources, as Fiorillo and Sabatini (2011) have also suggested.

Conclusions

I referred to Nigel Thrift's commentary of city life in Chapter Two, and three of his four areas of social life, misanthropy, micropolitics and friendship, appear to be in evidence in the life of Saltwell Park. The Park's social landscape is also comprised of complex assemblages that include people from different demographic and social groups, occupying various roles in the Park as park users, staff members, for example. Within this complex social landscape are smaller constellations of people with similar personal circumstances or interests. The social capital concept leads us to conceive of each of these smaller groups being positioned relative to each other, and relative to a conception of a normative social whole.

Some aspects of social norms and conventions may, however, be damaging for health and well-being of some groups and individuals. The Park plays a role in attempting to heal a the dysfunctional aspects of normative Gateshead society, through seeking to control or modify the actions of the general public, both when they are "park users", engaged in activities therein, and as wider members of the public outside. Residents are encouraged to reassess the social position of both themselves and others, and, instead of thinking of notional social hierarchies, to find common group between themselves and others, within a nominally inclusive society, and also to facilitate beneficial exchanges of information.

These initiatives often seemed based upon strategies to build forms of normative and resource-based social capital. These do not always appear to be part of a deliberative strategy, and the degrees of success in some cases are unclear within the timeframe of fieldwork. However, taken as a whole, there is some recognition of some of the issues raised earlier, and there are some grounds for optimism with regard to the importance of the Park for playing a part in the borough's collective biomedical and psychosocial health. Some initiatives do raise questions regarding whether normative values truly exist within Gateshead or whether social norms are really very variable between different groups and different settings. This variability may also be important for health and well-being.

In this study I am not able to evaluate what the health and well-being outcomes may have been from participation in the Saltwell Park Assemblage. Indeed the very complex nature of the relationships involved may suggest that it would be very difficult to attribute health benefits for particular people or groups to one or another specific part of the assemblage. This leads back to my discussion of contingent affordances in Chapter Two, in that an affordance is a relational condition between useful attribute and person able to take advantage of it.

Chapter Six: THE SYMBOLIC ENVIRONMENT OF SALTWELL PARK

Home, Retreats and Lost Lives

In this chapter, I discuss some ways in which the 'therapeutic assemblages' in Saltwell Park incorporate imaginary or symbolic spaces. Various themes that emerged from this research relate to the Park as a set of spaces through which participants could recall their past lives. These spaces were constructed for different individuals through experiences of being in the Park with others and reflected the role the Park has played in shaping individual lives over time.

Saltwell Park is a location within Gateshead that has become for some people an extension of their domestic space, a place to feel secure and retreat from imposed responsibilities and stresses of the wider world, and also a setting where past lives can be recalled, reinforcing collective and individual memory and sense of identity. One theme that runs through this chapter, therefore, is that of *home*. This is partly reflected in the ways that the Park exhibits a feeling of 'homeliness' that participants associated with past and present experiences of sharing time and activities with family members. Narratives indicate that Saltwell Park can help people feel 'at home' in the neighbourhood, and in Gateshead a whole, and also, for some people, their attachment to the Park transcends their marginal social position, providing comfort and reinforcement of their sense of belonging in the town.

People also use the Park to create and assert aspects of an identity that runs parallel, and sometimes counter to adult or official authority. This 'transgressive' imagination of the Park allowed them to use the Park to escape stress, though in some cases, the Park was a source of stress on its own. In some ways, this chapter considers how people use the Park to express forms of their own life history and their humanity.

In addition, through its role in evoking memories, the Park allows people to express important aspects of their social world, for example by paying material or behavioural tribute to other people who were important to them. The Park is a place where love of, and remembrance of, the dead can be expressed in material and behavioural forms and practices. In some cases, people also pay tribute to lost, or to precarious, aspects of their own health.

Saltwell Park is thus constructed as a place imbued with unique sets of meanings for those who encounter it, and especially those who have been in close contact with the Park space

for a long time. *Topophilia* is a way to conceptualise this affective bond with place, since as we recall from Chapter Two, this perspective helps us to understand the:

> "Affective bond between people and place or setting. [It is as] diffuse as [a] concept, vivid and concrete as personal experience."

> (Tuan 1974: 4)

As noted earlier, Tuan places considerable emphasis upon the role of culture as a factor that shapes attitudes and behaviours towards environments (with an attendant focus upon non-western cultures and value systems). There are also links in this chapter to geographies of affect proposed by Thrift (2004) who shows how social processes and social relations depend on affective associations with place.

In this chapter I also draw on other authors using a more individual perspective on the affective bonds between place and person. For example, Madeleine Bunting considers the way in which understanding about a person can come through understanding the place that means most to them (Bunting 2009). She considers the life of her late father, with whom she had had a strained relationship. Upon his death, she researched his life, focusing on a plot of land in North Yorkshire that he had bought. This helped her to better understand "the plot" of the man and his life story, as well as the history of "the Plot" of land.

> "I began to wonder if this acre of land, so full of ghosts, could help me piece together a new way of understanding my father and the family's history."

> (Bunting 2009: 5)

She continues:

> "Dad loved to tell his guests the stories of the Plot, the ones he found and the ones he brought with him; he eavesdropped on the tales of the battles, the travellers, the faith, and the heroes. Now it is my turn to dig out what I remember from my father, finding new stories and see if I can piece together the plot. …. Can I discover the Plot for myself, and in doing so find the difficult man who was my father, and finally lay all the ghosts to rest?"

> (Bunting 2009: 6)

Thus Bunting seeks to understand her father through understanding his relationship to a place. Some of the biographies of the people that I spoke to could be partially understood in those terms – one can understand them through their relationship to the Park. One can become acquainted with their motivations for visiting (or not visiting) Saltwell Park at certain points of time. Personal biographies can be glimpsed through current and past usage of the Park, and the biography of the Park can be in turn glimpsed through the biographies of people who use it. The Park is a place my participants have grown up with and,

furthermore, they have brought their own children back to the Park in later life, suggesting a perpetuation of affection towards the Park across generations.

I explain below how I observed and discussed with my respondents various material expressions in the Park of their emotional and cultural lifeworlds. I explain the ways that the Park represented an extension of "homespace" for some people, how it offered memories from across the lifecourse that were important for emotional well-being and how material representations of identity were created and expressed in the Park.

Homes, "Homes" And Homeliness

Many Park visitors appeared to be in groups based around family ties or friendship ties (the people one might also expect to share the domestic home space with). On some days that I walked around the Park, some groups could be found on folding chairs, with windbreakers around them, in the same way that families 'mark out' a protected space on a beach, and use it as though it was an 'outdoor room'. People would play games, such as football, cricket, or *Frisbee*, or chase after each other, as they might in their own domestic gardens.

Barbara talked about time in her childhood spent in the Park with her extended family, showing an historical continuity with the current family usage of Saltwell Park that I observed. She remembered these visits as being occasions that brought together the whole family (including numbers of people that it might be difficult to accommodate in a single domestic dwelling):

> "Well, I remember coming to the Park, erm, when I was a child; not just with my family, but my mother was one of four sisters, and we all came together. So her sisters and their children, we were all about the same age, and the whole lot, the four sisters – well five – used to come, and bring all the children..."

> [Barbara]

Andrew was another for whom early visits to the Park were a collective family experience. He thought that his parents found visits to the Park restorative:

> "So if the parents decided to go for a walk on a nice evening, then they'd come to The Park. Then they'd push me around… with the other siblings. I'm one of seven kids in the family, you know, it was a full-time job; so a bit of relaxation in the Park was ideal."

> [Andrew]

It seemed for Andrew's parents, that the Park offered a space to *escape* from the confines of the family dwelling where the pressures of domestic roles could be stressful and enjoy family live in a more relaxed way in a restorative setting. Thus the Park was acting as an extension of family space that was *different* from the home space. This would be similar to Gross and Lane's use of escapism, with a regard to the "psychological feeling of being away from the

usual routines and demands'' (Herzog *et al.* 2003 :160). This point is also underlined by the comments made by Catherine, who said that "[Saltwell Park] is the place to come when the children's young; you meet all the young mothers with the prams and that; so when the kids get older, you find other things to do, and there you go." This suggests that there was some form of common knowledge amongst parents who regarded it suitable for young children. The tone of further comments suggested that visiting the Park may have played a part in helping her "cope" with her new family, especially as it was in easy reach:

> "If they were getting fractious and naughty, I'd put them in a pushchair, push them down to the Park, and that would diffuse it, then take them straight home. Because we were so close. If I had to get a bus and whatnot, then maybe I wouldn't have."

> [Catherine]

What was common to all these participants was the replication of ways of viewing and using the Park through experience of family life. Not only had Andrew and Barbara been taken there as children, but they had taken their own children there, and then in turn their grandchildren. Similarly, Catherine had introduced another generation to the Park:

> "You see the 'toddler parks' [enclosed play spaces for young children]; I could see them from my house, and I used to bring my granddaughter when she was a baby..."

> [Catherine]

When I spoke to some mothers visiting the Park during the *Breastfeeding Awareness* picnic, it became apparent that they too saw the Park as a space for intergenerational family activity. The Park was a place they had also known as children, and they associated it with the process of childrearing. Also the reputation of the Park made it an attractive place to bring the family.   These points were reflected in Irene's comments:

Wayne	"How long have you been coming to the Park?"
Irene	"Since [son's name] was born, so 6 months."
Wayne	"So what made you come?"
Irene	"I think that it's good to teach them about parks and gardens. And as a child, I remember running around, so for my baby to have that same experience. It's a nationally known park, so it was worth the shot."

These comments correspond with findings reported by Kernan (2010), who reviews the benefits that children derive from impromptu as well as organised encounters with their surroundings. She cites the work of Reed (1996) in that children thrive in surroundings that are overlain with some form of meaning and value (Nabhan and Trimble 1994), and the

child's surroundings should also stimulate their interest (Blinkert 2004). She goes on to cite the work of, for example, Hayes and Kernan (2008) suggesting that the presence of adults and other experienced guides help children to navigate their surroundings drawing on shared experiences and transmitted wisdom. Irene saw the Park as a pedagogical setting, where the value of green space, or of sharing green space, can be learnt.

For others, there was a comfortable feeling associated with sharing with one's children a place that brings back happy memories of being a child oneself. Julie explained this, talking about times in her past life spent in Saltwell Park:

> "Well I grew up around here, so I've been coming here since I was about three. So I've got a lot of memories with me, which is nice. It feels nice to bring my kid here."

> [Julie]

Julie too felt that the Park was a space where a child could learn about the world though exploring adventurously, but in a safe setting. For example, Julie's past escapades were remembered with affection, even when those moments contravened park rules and perhaps ran counter to her contemporary life roles:

Wayne	"So what sort of things did you do when you were younger?"
Julie	"We used to dare each other to go out on the lake when it froze over… my brother fell through once (That was fun), and I had to walk home with ice-frozen trousers. Ah, part of the fun of growing-up…. The paddling pool was quite dirty, but it was still fun to go out in that. I've fallen off many swings and slides, but that's part of the fun of growing-up. They used to have a tall slide here, a really tall slide, that was good. The play areas are very safe, very sensible."
Wayne	"Have you been coming consistently, or did you stop?"
Julie	"We moved over to Newcastle so it wasn't so handy. Then [went to London], so I've only been back a few years. In that time, I've been making the occasional visit now here's here. "We need to go out for a walk! Where shall we go? We'll go to the Park!" It's convenient for living in [her locality], and it's a lovely place to come to."

Saltwell Park also had particular associations of "home" and belonging for Zara, for it had played a role in her early married life, as a place where her husband could easily help her make friends in a new community, making her feel 'at home' in a new town.

> "[My husband would] take me for a walk! We would go on a Saturday afternoon and meet half of Gateshead there! I'd just come [from America]... and it was just lovely.

> I was a newcomer here, and [her husband] would keep introducing me to people, and
> it was all very nice and very lovely."

> [Zara]

These examples suggest that ways of using the Park were influenced by family activities and traditions, practiced through intergenerational kinship networks and closely bound up with individuals' emotional lives, and were not only a response to wider processes of social conditioning. In recalling these historic accounts of their own experiences, therapeutic episodes can be replicated through time. The landscape that is "therapeutic" has remembered dimensions as well as dimensions that are experienced at one moment. Being in the Park was associated with pleasurable memories that could be replicated through the subsequent generations.

The Park also seemed to serve as a location through which the family's relationship to its existing domestic space was refracted. There seems to be a parallel with Gross and Lane's (Gross and Lane 2007) gardens study, which also showed that early life relationships were recalled with a degree of warmth, showing these experiences were important in forging identification and an emotional bond with a place; this was certainly seemed the case for Barbara and Zara. Furthermore, the place helped to foster social connectedness within the family unit, which could be forged through the undertaking shared activities; if they are pleasurable, then it is possible that family bonding is reinforced. Yet, at the same time the Park also served as a place where the extended family could escape the weight of its own responsibilities to itself and the confines of limited domestic spaces.

Creating a Sense of Belonging and Identity through Saltwell Park

Here I move on to a consideration of the Park as a 'home' space in the sense of a place that reinforces one's sense of social and cultural identity. Some of the experiences relayed to me by members of the Hasidic Jewish community in Gateshead are an illustration of this. Their accounts show how Saltwell Park provides spaces whereby, for this group at least, ethic and cultural differences can be expressed in ways that help to foster a sense of belonging within the wider Gateshead community.

When I met with Zara, she gave me a copy of *The Kitchen Suitcase* (Moore *et al.* 2004), which contains accounts of the lives of the women who would make the embroidered map of Saltwell Park, as discussed later on in his chapter. In it, a story is relayed of a Hasidic Jewish man, who when in the Park with his son, was confronted by man shouting that *they did not belong* **here**. The man was quoted as saying:

> "How dare he? I know every blade of grass!"

> (Moore *et al.* 2004: 24)

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In one sense, he was standing up to a bully. In another, he was resisting wider social problems of racism and discrimination, and laying claim to his right to occupy territory, the territory of Saltwell Park that belonged to him as much as to anyone else. He also seems to be emphasising his legitimate claim to use Saltwell Park because of a long established, detailed knowledge of the place. This land was *his* land, not just because he was a "citizen" of Gateshead in the present, but he was a *citizen of Saltwell Park,* and had a long established sense of identification with the place. The comment speaks of an emotional bond to the Park for someone who felt at home with it, and expected *it* to be at home with him. A stranger railing in his face was enough to make him feel angry, but did not make him feel displaced, or unwelcome, in this public space. The space was part of him, and he of it.

Zara expressed similar sentiments in her comments to me. When I spoke to her about her experiences in Saltwell Park, she asked whether I had seen the *Zayis Raanon* tapestry exhibited within the Park, at the Towers. She proudly told me about it, and how it had come about, resulting from the work of the Jewish women's group [53]. The introduction of *The Kitchen Suitcase* comments that the *Journeys to Gateshead* tapestry arose from Jewish women who were each born overseas coming together to tell their stories of migrating to Gateshead. Their accounts are reproduced in the form of *The Kitchen Suitcase* and a tapestry. This seemed to be symbolising that they are now part of the fabric of the local Jewish community; as the introduction in *The Kitchen Suitcase* explains, the women were of:

> "…all different ages, all coming from different homes, with different journeys, different backgrounds and different stories. Each an individual thread to add to the tapestry. Each a different motif represented in the work. All bound together by the golden glow of the Shabbos candles at the centre of the tapestry."

> (Moore *et al.* 2004: 4)

This was a collective work, undertaken by a private group of citizens of Gateshead. Its collective meanings of shared experiences seem to have been given a greater power by the fact that this work was placed in a public location, as the co-initiators of the work, "Equal Arts"[54], noted:

> "The finished tapestry was installed in the newly restored Saltwell Towers in Saltwell Park at the heart of the Jewish community in Gateshead."

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[53] http://archive.balticmill.com/index.php?access=&itemid=31477
http://www.equalarts.org.uk/pages/our-work/projects-archive/journeys-to-gateshead.php

[54] The Equal Arts website says that "Equal Arts is a registered charity with 25 years' experience delivering arts and older people's projects. Our mission is to improve the quality of people's lives by helping older people participate in high quality arts activity." (http://www.equalarts.org.uk/, accessed March 26th 2012).

(Equal Arts 2011).

Saltwell Towers is, in principle, a space for all of those in Gateshead to access; the display of the tapestry in the Towers seems to serve to symbolise that the Hasidic population is a part of the locality. In addition, the fact that the Towers is the home of this material representation of Jewish identity in Gateshead shows how Saltwell Park is chosen as the location to express this multi-cultural aspect of the local community. This illustrates the official role of the Park as a space that is accepting of such expressions, and may help to promote well-being through greater social cohesion (see Chapter Four).

There were signs, however, that this commitment to promoting multi-culturalism in Gateshead was being balanced with other priorities. When Zara told me about the tapestry, having also just told me about experiences of racism in the Park, I felt a little guilty that I had not, in fact, noticed the tapestry recently on display in the Towers. I found that it had been moved to the staff office in the attic, and when I asked about it; the explanation that I received for the move was that displays had been moved around to make room for other exhibits to be hung on the walls in the public spaces.

Accompanying the tapestry was the embroidery map (shown in Figure 6.1 below), with a poem sewn around the circumference which expresses affection for the Park and the pleasant times spent there by the makers. These exhibits reflect the fact that this Jewish group associates the Park with happy family memories in the same ways as other non-Jewish participants in this study and that they emphasise their emotional and historical links to the Park through these exhibits.

"Reflections Of The Park"
Saltwell Park is our community garden, we don't have gardens of own,

Remembering cart-wheeling on the big green,

Ha! Ha!

Supper-time in the rose garden,

It's a place where you can forget all your troubles;

We are fortunate to have such a well looked after park,

So close at hand;

In the park, there really is a tree that is blue,

When you sit on the green in the evening and close your eyes, you can drink in the perfume of the lilacs;

On an early morning walk six swans came gliding towards us, it was beautiful."

Figure 6.1: *Reflections of The Park*, the tapestry, displayed in the Towers. The first image (1) shows the complete tapestry, the next four images (2 - 5) are of close-up details of the tapestry. The poem is embroidered around the edge, and is transcribed in the final section (6).

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Embroidered artworks are commonly used to express communal stories. Native American cultures have made use of embroidery to express certain cultural values and create representational narratives (Carocci 2010). Other studies refer to works that have been created by those who have contracted AIDS (Borowsky Junge 1999; Kerewsky 1997; Valdon *et al.* 1990). Personal experiences and shared circumstances are brought to the fore, and given a materialised form.

The *Zayis Raanon* work seems to express a sense of pride in the locality chosen as the subject of the tapestry. The images and the poem were inspired by the present and the past experiences of the women – it combines an image of the Park as a visual form of relief map, showing the Park as it is today, with a textual narrative recalling past days and years spent exploring the Park, observing its features, and feeling about Park as a highly personal, as well as a cultural space, a place of individual and collective importance. Not only that, but the completed tapestry was chosen to be displayed in the Towers once the restoration was complete. The tapestry was in one of the most important and now best known locations in Gateshead, and was now given a share of this importance by being displayed there. Zara and her fellow collaborators were invited to the opening to the 2005 opening of the restored Park. She was very proud of this event and talked about the handwritten invitations and being introduced to the Princess Royal, which she found very "grand":

> Zara: "... Oh, it was really something special when they told us that [the tapestry] was going to be displayed in the Park! And the launch of the book as well."
>
> Wayne: "And when you say pride, was it pride in making it, or that it was displayed in the Towers?"
>
> Zara: "That something that we had made was good enough to be displayed for public consumption. After all, we were just a bunch of amateurs.. That whole project was something unusually special, to work with those people and with that artist that was something unusually special. At the end of the year, we were just a very, very tight group, and we felt very much attached to each other ... which was exactly what we wanted."

Zara also referred to Bensham and Saltwell being "not a very high-class neighbourhood [with] some not very nice people", but that her participation in the arts project had "restored her faith in people of the north-east". This was in line with her observations about the abuse that non-Jews had meted out to Hasidic individuals. It seems that the arts project had reconnected her to the two wards of Bensham and Saltwell on an emotional level and reflected her long established connection with an area where she had lived since 1971. Implicitly within her comments was the impression that she had seen a Hasidic community isolated and marginalised by the wider community, on both collective and individual levels.

It was a source of sorrow to Zara that three participants had since died and possibly the tapestry also had a role as a memorial to them.

Through this arts project, there seemed to be an effort, perhaps mainly on the part of local political and artistic elites, to make public gestures to help reintegrate the two communities. For Zara, life in Gateshead might have seemed a little less uncomfortable and problematic as a result. Also, the subject matter of the art pieces has significance – relating to personal experience of migration into this new land, from outside the UK, from outside the North East, into Gateshead, and attribution of a public space to exhibit the story of this experience of making one's home in Gateshead, was of clear personal and communal significance likely to promote a sense of social inclusion, that seemed helpful to Zara's sense of well-being). Finally, this was an intergenerational project bringing together women who, although they share a similar culture may have originated from different parts of the world, and were of different ages and experiences, and expectations. Thus as an element of a therapeutic landscape, the tapestry was both a symbolic representation and celebration of the Park, and also a way to publicly recognize and support the Hasidic Jewish minority in Gateshead.

I previously discussed in Chapter Five visual representations by particular social groups that are often marginalised from the social mainstream. These representations, the photographs produced by people with mental illnesses, as well the "naïve art" of children, are similar to outsider art". Parr's (2008) discussion focuses on the *social* importance of outsider art, which generally concerns art forms created by people who are socially excluded due to their mental illness. However, the tapestry discussed above may be a symbolic reflection of Rhodes' discussion (Rhodes 2000), of the *artistic* importance of work produced by people who are self-taught and are not considered to part of an artistic mainstream. Those who decided that the tapestries should be displayed may have seen these women as people to be patronised with an official interest, or perhaps wanted to display the wealth of diverse cultural strands within the borough, without reflection upon the insider /outsider status of the artists.

Cultural diversity was not often discussed by my other participants who belonged to the majority White British community of Gateshead. However, Ruth was one person for whom an aspect of her sense of self seems derived from forms of openness to cultural diversity at work within the Park. Ruth is perhaps an example of Simonsen's (2010) use of *affective cosmopolitanism* (from Nava 2002), whereby a person is open to the different and the exotic. Ruth expressed her "pride" that the Park had been restored, and also her pleasure at the fact that the Park attracted people with diverse accents. (Among those I talked to in the Park, apart from my own Kent accent, I noticed Zara's Lower East Side New York accent, Taco's Iranian Kurdish accent, as well the Plymouth accent of a fitness instructor from *Outdoor Fitness Company.*) Ruth was a 'born-and-bred' Gatesheader, but had moved away to Leeds to study at university, had married and had a daughter, and then had returned with her family to Gateshead. She talked to me about cultural events like the *Mela*s she had

experienced in Leeds as something that she would welcome in Gateshead and in Saltwell Park:

> "[The Saltwell Park show] is not that great, but we still come down, we think it's got a lot more potential. It's seems a lot of council-run stuff... we used to live in Leeds, and they used to have really big Melas[55], just really vibrant, and you don't get the sense of it here ... though the events [in Saltwell Park] are good, they're not on the scale of what we're used to in other areas.
>
> We're proud that [the council's spent the money on regeneration of the Park], and the way that they've done it"

[Ruth]

These examples show that Saltwell Park has potential to provide a multicultural space that helps people from different cultures in Gateshead feel 'at home' in the area. Zara's comments suggest this can be important for the sense of well-being of people from minority groups in the area, and for some of those in the majority population it is something to be welcomed. Perhaps this potential for feeling at home, both in and through the Park, is perhaps not fully realised however. The launch party for *Gateshead Together Week* was much muted in comparison to the civic energies channelled into the breastfeeding awareness campaign, for example; yet both could thought of as intended to make people feel comfortable in the same public space.

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[55] **Mela** is a Sanskrit word meaning 'gathering' or 'to meet' or a Fair. It is used in the Indian subcontinent for all sizes of gathering and can be religious, commercial, cultural or sports. In rural traditions, melas or village fairs were (and in some cases still are) of great importance. This led to their export around the world by south Asian diaspora communities wishing to bring something of that tradition to their new countries (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mela). See also http://www.bbc.co.uk/asiannetwork/events/melas/2011/ from the BBC Asian Network, http://makarmela.com/ regarding the largest Mela in Nepal.

Escaping From Some Contemporary Responsibilities through Retreats

As outlined in Chapter Two, certain spaces are found in the literature on therapeutic landscapes to be associated with retreat behaviours. Some of these attributes of spaces for 'retreat' can be found in Saltwell Park. Writers have described, for example, how working in domestic gardens allows people to express aspects of their personality and also enjoy a sense of solitude.   In a similar vein, some researchers have talked about aspects of childhood spent and enacted in family gardens. Parts of the discourses on gardens describe behaviours such as being able to "control" a part of the landscape, inviting only selected individuals to share the area, to relax by exercising creativity and skills that are different from those demanded in other areas of life, and to escape (or 'retreat' from) adult responsibilities. In this following section, I discuss how Saltwell Park, as a public space, affords a place in which to engage in activities that allow people to retreat from their routine responsibilities and other commitments while they engage in forms of restorative relaxation, or retreat from restrictive social relationships while they take part in activities that facilitate alternative, freer social interactions. I start with a discussion of young people's use of Saltwell Park for what seem to be retreat behaviours, then move to other examples including how forms of craft are facilitated by in the Park offering a respite from ordinary daily practices.

Retreats within the Park for Young People

Esther commented that she had become friends with a girl on her street when she and her parents had just moved from another part of Gateshead to live near the Park, and together they became frequent visitors to the Park. Their visits to the Park seemed to be special to Esther, prompting a childlike reimagining of the Park setting. Esther's new friend had introduced her to a new way of seeing the Park space through what became their shared interests. Esther had come to the Park before, but that was with parents; trips seemed to get more exciting when away from parental oversight and control:

> "I used to come before with me mam and dad, but this became my playground. [The friend] used to live [by the Park], so we used to climb over the fence and sneak through."

> [Esther]

She started her interview with me through a meditation on a photograph of hers of the "octopus tree", which is on old open-bowled cedar, next to the Belvedere. Esther and her friend climbed it as children. The tree was an exciting, arresting physical challenge to climb, and also a vantage point from which to see the world below, which perhaps explained why

they were so attracted to it. Esther commented that "There wasn't a day goes by when we didn't climb [that] tree[56]".

Esther and her friend set up camps in hidden parts of the Park, the inspiration for them was perhaps the privacy of the domestic space, for Esther said that in their form "We just used to replicate our houses. You just use your imagination." It seems that the use of imagination was especially important for these activities. There was an element of transgressing the Park rules with Esther's story: of sneaking into the Park, through reimagining the Park as a place of adventure that necessitated adventurous means of entry (instead of using the open gates). Esther said that she and her friend also used to swim in the lake (which did not look very attractive to me, being quite small and not very clean), and seemed to be excited by the expanses and diverse features of the Park. David, who is still one of the current wardens, would chase them away (playfully it seemed, and not very effectively).

Thus Saltwell Park would seem to have afforded Esther and her friend the kinds of spaces that were valued as 'retreats' when they were young. The Park provided the opportunity to be away from home, to be away from parental control, to express their collective imagination in the Park. The Park is large, and there seemed to be both space and spaces in which to hide and appropriate spaces where they could create their own imaginary dwelling. The Park was a real space reimagined, in which a new home could be created, like their own homes, but also different. Perhaps of relevance was the fact that they could decide the rules of this alternative 'home space' – it was not just a camp, nor a pretend house, but *their* house, without the real parents that came with their real homes, and the real rules and authority that their real parents exercised. Adult authority, in the shape of David was kindly present, but not very intrusive. Kernan (2010) cites a number of commentaries on aspects of the development of belonging in childhood with a real importance afforded by children to peer relations, friendships and play (Dunn 2004). Esther's early time spent in Saltwell Park revolved around the undertaking of shared tasks and their successful completion (Van Oers 2001), and that through these common tasks, they formed a pair, a group; maybe like other children, being "part of the group" was important (Jans 2004).

Tandy (1999) comments that adults can hold contradictory views about the freedom of children's play, often reminiscing about their own unsupervised childhoods, yet exercising strict supervision of their own children. Esther was able to retreat from such supervision, and was able to operate relatively freely in the Park as a child; yet perhaps now, seeks to control aspects of contemporary childhood experiences and attitudes towards the Park, if at

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[56] The Octopus Tree has a particular tentacular profile, and also its nickname could inspire imaginary games. The views from the top of the tree were of the Towers, the Maze, of comings and goings around the Belvedere. I observed many other children still climbing the Octopus Tree today, sometimes under the watchful eye of adult women.

least through the medium of suggestibility through *Zoolab* and school visits (as discussed in Chapter Four).

Esther's love of Saltwell Park started with this childhood experience of her creation of camps there. It seems that her love of the outdoors, and of activities outdoors, started then as well (she made an aside that she had a sister, who was "girly", whilst she, Esther, was "a bit of a tomboy"). This action in the outdoors, starting with the tactile closeness with the Octopus Tree, seemed to lead to an identification with Nature and the outdoors that would lead to her strong biophile attitudes, as well as her current employment in the Park, as detailed in Chapter Four.

Esther was not the only one of my participants who recounted these types of experience in Saltwell Park. Some other participants, such as Julie (see the section above) remembered past escapades with affection, even when those moments contravened park rules and perhaps ran counter to her contemporary life roles as a protective parent.

During the times I was making fieldwork observations, young people, or adolescents seemed to be under-represented among the groups using the Park. Teenagers may have come to Saltwell Park in relatively large numbers on Sunday afternoons in the past, but that did not seem to be the case while I was making observations. However, I did see some groups of young people at the Park at various times (mainly weekends) throughout the year, mainly playing football and basketball, or occasionally tennis. On a couple of occasions when I was in the Park early in the morning during the working days of the year, I would see some groups of uniformed secondary schoolchildren strolling slowly past the Lake from Gate 1 (the north east of the Park) towards the south west corner. I would also see some Jewish schoolgirls, in pairs, marching quickly through the Park on the same footpath. These sets of young people would be deep conversation.

At later times of the day, I would observe other groups of adolescents in the Park. For example, my diary of observations records that on one occasion, three teenagers, two female and one male, were chatting on one of the metal seats. On another (September 15th 2009), I witnessed a group of about 12 Jewish teenage girls walk along the Long Walk and sit down on the swings in this area, chatting amongst themselves; this was about 6.30 pm. On these occasions when I observed adolescents meeting in the Park, they were in isolated groups away from any other people. They seemed to be meeting to mix with their peers and talk, not to take part in organized games or other activities. Any seating was utilised as a social space, whether it was ordinary metal seating or swings. What was perhaps useful about these seats was that there were many seating spaces close together, so it was possible to sit as a group and join in a conversation.

The adolescents I spoke with seemed to have varying attitudes about going to parks generally, and Saltwell in particular. I interviewed six 16-19 year olds at a local training

company. As part of their social development (part of their "E2E", or *Entry to Employment* programme), they would often be taken by the trainer to nearby Saltwell Park. Two boys said that they liked going to parks for a (football) kick-about. The other three boys were more ambivalent; one took his young female cousin when she came to visit the north-east, so that she could play on the climbing equipment, whilst the "Jew bashing" boy that I referred to in Chapter Five, viewed the Park in terms of avoidance, since he did not want to mix with younger children. He more generally dismissed parks as spaces that had: "young kids under [my] feet ... urgh!" From this young man's account it seemed that a park was not attractive for him as it as was a place that he would be sharing with groups of people from whom he wished to distinguish himself, whether it was young children or Hasidic Jews. Thus in a negative way he was also acknowledging that Saltwell Park symbolised processes that helped to break down social barriers.

Overall, it would seem that the Park offers young people opportunities for activities away from adult supervision. For some, it is joyful and playful, though laden with an imitation of adult life. For some others, the Park seems the Park is place to rehearse what may later develop to be adult hatreds.

The Park as a Liminal Space, and a space of transitional feelings

The term liminal is Latin in origin," limen", referring to a boundary or threshold (Brenda 2011). Van Gennep is seen as one of the most important students of the concept, through his studies of cultural rituals (Gennep 1960). He comments that luminal space has been likened to the threshold of a doorway, a place of transition from one state to another, or between states, that leads to change, and to something new. Changes may be consciously chosen, or may, be thrust upon individuals, communities, or nations under involuntary circumstances. A new set of circumstances may involve the dissolution of a former identity and the formation of a new identity. Between these two states, the condition of liminality suspends a person or a system in what may appear to be an ill-defined state. Some interpretations of luminal spaces extend this idea of a space of temporary 'suspension' of normal rules and restrictions, linked to a sense of 'escapism', which can help to relieve stress or allow people to express emotions that they normally suppress.

In the context of Saltwell Park, I interpret luminal space as a transformatory space, where one is aware of moving from one psychological state to another. Catherine made a general observation about the role of the Park in her life; the "sanity" that she refers to below comes from the whole of the Park:

> "Keeps you sane! Coming here to the Park keeps you sane! You can look at something [elsewhere], and think "that can wait", put your hat and coat on, and come here, then go back and face it, whatever it is."

> [Catherine]

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The liminal sensation that the Park confers to Catherine could be seen as phenomenological, through the sense of being away from the pressures of everyday life at home. For example, Catherine had taken a photograph of a Park bench for her first photovoice exercise. She enjoyed it as a place to listen to the sounds of water, invoking ideas about natural landscape elements discussed in Chapter Four, Her description also emphasises ideas of retreat, away from other people, in a calming environment:

> "This is the nicest place in the Park, this is my favourite seat in the Dene, and you can hear the water and it's, it's, lovely. Not many people sit there. Grand!"

> [Catherine]

Other participants also described how they valued quiet, naturalistic places in the Park where they could relax and 'day dream'. For example, Taco commented that:

> ""I like walking and looking at nice trees ... If you have [something that you want to do], you can do it in the Park. You can have nice imaginations [sic]. Even as you enter the front gate, you feel a different atmosphere, nice place. And your head go ... you're not thinking about anything, just the Park. [When I leave] I feel different ... because of a different atmosphere, you're thinking about nature, then you see houses, noise. Your head is very clear.

> I would miss walking, nice trips, [I would] miss bringing my daughter."

> [Taco]

In these cases, relaxation is to be found in the Park, partly because it allows people to distance themselves from domestic routines and strenuous activities and thoughts. In the next section, I outline one person's use of both the Park and the domestic space to facilitate the demanding tasks that are in fact held to be relaxing for the subject.

The application of work and craft to gain relaxation

Figure 6.2: An image of a man making model boats (Courtesy St. Aidan's College, Durham University)

In this section I consider a slightly more energetic engagement with spaces in the Park that offered restoration of fatigued attention through, paradoxically highly focussed cognitive effort and physical craft. The example is drawn from the model boat club. It involves men who are both in work and retired. Those in work may find this activity is a way to relax after work through physical effort.

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Francis is a schoolteacher who is a member of the model boat club[57]. He recalled that his interest in 'things-with-engines' started as a small boy and that he soon developed an interest in model boats. For Francis, the opportunity to sail model boats keeps him "sane", possibly in allowing an almost all-consuming (certainly domestic-space-consuming) passion to be fully expressed. His favourite activities were:

> "Relaxing at the edge of the lake, sailing model boats, chatting to like-minded [people]; just taking in relaxing, winding down."

> [Francis]

Francis described the model boat building that he undertook as a member of the model sailing club at Saltwell Park (also discussed in Chapter Four). He observed that while one can buy a radio-controlled boat and "within a day or so, have it in the water", his modelling activity was much more involved. In Chapter Four, with reference to the hunting of George, I referred to the thoughts of Sennett (2008), who commented upon the application of crafts and highly focusses concentration towards a task that could be therapeutic. The work that Francis seems to undertake in the creation of his model boats would seem to be another application of this. Francis expressed in his comments that the model building activity affords him a sense of well-being that comes from being completely absorbed in the model making providing a form of escapism:

> "Yer have a research phase, which is a lot easier with the internet [in the past, time was spent in libraries]. You have to get the plans, perhaps draw them up yourself. There's the construction process, which, depending on the model, could involve buying parts and fitting them together to even making them yourself. I tend to do the latter .. The models are all scratch-built, but that's the fun of it; though] some people want to get the boats on the water as quickly as possible. And then there's the fun of sailing [he refers to the particular microclimate of the Park that I discussed in Chapter Four]. The research is quite a lot of the fun, thinking how you're going to make it.

> It's massively time-consuming. If somebody said at work "you've got to put these many hours in to do this", you'd chase them [tell them to go away], but when it's for pleasure… And also to get any kind of quality in models, you've got to be ready to throw a lot away. Often you see a progression in the models, and it's not that the modeller is any better, or the skills are any better, but they are prepared to throw more pieces away until they are properly satisfied! (I'm not patient), but I'm actually bloody-minded, and I won't give up."

> [Francis]

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[57] http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/spmbc/index.html

There is a spatiality involved in the making of models as well. An *Airfix* kit, or *Revell* kit, or the like, comes with all its constituent parts in the box; you pop them out and assemble them, being careful not to get the liquid cement on either fingers or component. Yet for Francis' labours, modelling was akin to a full-sized construction of a real ship, with a localised sourcing of each part (for example, perhaps for the price of a pint of beer, scrap brass parts could be gained from contacts in old manufacturing Gateshead, now long-gone). Similarly, a farmer, 20 miles away in Hexham, is his source of the native hardwoods that he likes to work with. Other modellers would mail-order their timber, but Francis was not satisfied with that quality, and thus sourced his himself and finished the raw timber off to his "fanatical" standards:

> "My modelling is quite legendary within the club ... In terms of the dining area ... The children have eaten off their knee for the last three years. The dining table has lots of burn marks, cuts. It does tend to invade the household.
>
> You know, when I'm making rope, and every door in the house is opened up, and the rope machine is running, the kids have to trip over it, their friends when they come for sleepovers, have to accept that they're going to leave with wood shavings in their socks."[58]

[Francis]

Francis expressed in his comments that the model building activity affords him a sense of well-being that comes from being completely absorbed in the model making providing a form of escapism. In order to gain the relaxation that he outlined, francis seemingly created a series of interlocking geographies, knotted together by the materiality of the model. At each of these locations, a part of a complex set of transformations took place: currency into material; one form of (raw) material into (desired) material; a domestic home into another work space. These transformations allowed him to change role, from teacher to craftsman, working on something of his choosing, applying as much labour as he desired, acheiving the result that he desired, allowing homself to be master of circumstance.

Hillier (2009) introduces the subject of the *Ghost Ships* by referring to them as assemblages – a form of the social organised in to a particular form, after Law's discussion of aircraft (Law 2004). A combination of steel, wood (and, according to her, perhaps rats) that floats on the high seas, and is used for transportation, is a "ship". She uses the Deleuzeguattarian term rhizome to denote the networks of social action that connect different elements together that ordinarily do not co-function. In this case, the assemblages of home, forest, Saltwell Park lake, Saltwell Park model boat club, and other assorted materials that go into the construction of a typical model are connected by Francis, through his vision, construction

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[58] Perhaps Francis's house looked something like this: http://youtu.be/024aWbB2fwE

plans, and his constructor's skills. Whether they want to or not, the family becomes implicated and involved in the spatiality of model boat construction:

> "I must admit, I drive the wife and the kids crazy, with the obsessiveness that I go about this. But that's part of the fun of it actually. It's not that expensive to build a model in terms of the materials. However, in terms of the actual equipment to make some of the pieces... now that's scary.
>
> They're very tolerant, they're grudgingly interested, and they'll admire the work that's done and they know that I'm obsessive about it, but they know that that's me, it's part of my character. But I have to hold me hands up and say that they're very tolerant."

<div align="right">[Francis]</div>

The sum of the labour, the moment of truth, arrives when the craft is laid into the water.

> "There is a nervous anticipation: "Will it work, will it look right, will it move in the water [the way] I want it to do?" ... actually, a friend who's a fisherman I think summed [what I think about when I'm sailing the boats] up best - "I don't think of anything! You just think about fishing!" Sailing a scale sailing boat is a bit like patting your head and rubbing your tummy, all you can think about is just the sailing.
>
> It's a pure escapism, you get locked into the thing that's in front of you. It isn't mulling over what you've done at work, the row that you've had with the wife or the kids, it's purely the sailing of the boat that's in your head at the time."

<div align="right">[Francis]</div>

Francis who referred to the Park as a 'third space', another form of retreat, commenting that, In terms of his health and well-being, that:

> "I think that it's very important to have a set of activities that you can do outside of home and work. In the old days, it was family-work-pub. I've [always enjoyed] the creative side of things. I used to do water-colour painting and it's those sort of activities. To produce something innovative adding to the enjoyment of the experience."

<div align="right">[Francis]</div>

This example shows how therapeutic work, in the form of hobbies, is an additional element to be considered in discussing attention restoration theory in a setting such as Saltwell Park. Francis saw modelling as good activity to take up, as a way of occupying one's time, after one's children have grown up – "once the family's out the way, once the young 'uns out the way". The modelling also provided a sense of continuity of practice over the lifecourse; Francis commented that he had been modelling all his life. Symbolically, as well as in a

material sense, modelling takes place in another place, in another time frame, in another mind-set from other routine activities. This is a different sort of 'retreat' from those described above by Catherine, Taco, and Esther. However, all these people have framed particular spaces as places where relaxation and liminality can be found in activities located in or connected with the Park.

Continuing Bonds: A Home for the Memories of the Departed

This section largely details death and the dead, and is more broadly concerned with themes relating to awareness of mortality. This awareness is expressed partly terms of vulnerability to illness, disease, and simple old age, all of which that threaten healthy life, but also in terms of a sense of continuity of life through memories of the departed. Within Saltwell Park, space is made for commemoration, both in material forms and practices. As outlined in Chapter Three, Saltwell Park is a place of memorials – statues, bridges, plaques – to the Great and Good. This section also examines the outward routines of recalling past lives, which does not involve just solely inert materials of wood, stone and bronze, but also live people as well. Two examples are also discussed in the course of this section – one is *Race For Life*, where people not only recognise lives lost in death, but also the vulnerability (and resilience) of life. The second is the situation of a woman with a form of dementia, narrated to me by her husband. Her cognitive function is slipping away, but recollections of her past life with her husband, can be summoned through being in the Park.

Mourning and Melancholia, and Continuing Bonds

Theories of the role of grieving processes include: *Mourning and Melancholia*, by (Freud 1917 (b)) and, more recently, *Continuing Bonds* (Klass *et al.* 1996) In *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud asserted that the process of grief was necessary to allow a person to move on from a lost focus on a loved one:

> "In the first place, normal mourning, too, overcomes the loss of the object, and it, too, while it lasts, absorbs all the energies of the ego."

> (Freud 1917 (b): 254)

He went on to suggest that this process can be long and drawn out. For some of the participants in their research, Klass and colleagues found that the drawn out nature of grief was not due to the time needed for the *resolution* of this separation, but instead, its *maintenance*. They quoted one participant, who in verse, asked of her dead child:

> "Will you forgive me if I go on?
> If you can't make this earthly journey through time with me,
> Will you then come along in my heart and wish me well?"

> (Klass *et al.* 1996: xvii)

They add, whilst talking of not only bereavement, but of the feelings of losses incurred through adoption, that:

> "Remaining connected seemed to facilitate both adults' and [children's'] ability to cope with the loss and the accompanying changes in their lives. These connections provided solace, comfort, and support, and eased the transition from the past to the future."

> (Klass *et al.* 1996: xviii)

As I suggested earlier in this chapter, parts of one's own lost self can be recalled through geography. This point is central to *The Plot*, (Bunting 2009). Will Self has also written about how his past can be retraced in walking through particular landscapes. In his magical realist book, *The North London Book of the Dead*, he recalls an imagined encounter with his recently deceased mother walking down Crouch Hill towards Crouch End. His mother did not believe in life-after-death, but had found it all the same, in north London:

> "Mother sighed with exasperation: "Look, there aren't any 'people in charge of death'. When you die you move to another part of London, that's all there is to it. Period."

> *"But Mother, what about that performance at Golders Green? Weren't you in that coffin?"*

> "All right I'll admit it, that part of it is a bit obscure. One minute I was in the hospital -- feeling like shit, incidentally -- the next I was in Crouch End and some estate agents were showing me around this flat."

> (Self 1991: no page)

Whilst I am not suggesting that the Dead move from one part of Gateshead to move into Saltwell Park, in some ways there is a similarity to the "adventures" of Will Self's mother. The dead are not buried in Saltwell Park, their bodies are not placed there, but an important part of their social life is placed there instead, in the form of the memorial statues, plaques and other tokens of remembrance that can be seen there. As Will Self found his mother living a quiet life-after-death in Crouch Hill, some of the dead of Gateshead can be found having their own quiet life-after-death in Saltwell Park. Part of the Park's social status is as a representative form of a necropolis, where these lives of the borough's dead are laid to rest and can be visited and recalled and revered. The Park seems to act as the population's focus for expressions of individual and popular grief. In this context, I cite Self here because this aspect of his work on "psychogeography" seems to express the comforting experience of happy or poignant memories of loved ones provoked by particular places. By wandering through Crouch End, Self is able to "meet" his mother in his imagination. It is possible that

for many people, a similar effect is to be felt by going through the Park. This is the aspect of Saltwell Park that I explore in this section.

Memorialisation

Various material forms of memorialisation are found in the Park. They encompass both communal and personal memorials. War memorials give form to collective grief. In this relatively small area of Gateshead that makes up the Park, there are three: the Angel war memorial, the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) wall, and Primosole Bridge. It would seem that the Park is a very important focus of official commemoration, whether it is because it one of the oldest public spaces, or because it is so heavily populated with visitors, it is hard to say; perhaps both. Only at the Durham Light Infantry (DLI) wall did I see any recent evidence of commemorative action. It appears to be the focus of wreath-laying and cross-laying at various times of the year, including Remembrance Sunday; new crosses, and tokens would appear on occasions throughout the year. What I found striking was that these were left at the memorial all-year round, and were respected by passers-by; they were not interfered with.. Primosole Bridge did not show such obvious popular recognition of the bridge's wartime symbolism, such as flowers or wreaths. On one occasion, I observed a young family playing, around the bridge, with children hiding under the bridge, then rushing out on their mother. They did not seem to treat the memorial bridge with any particular veneration.

Other memorials were more personal. In addition to the memorials in the cemetery a number of plaques have also been installed on most of the benches within the Park, some of which record the names of armed service personnel. There was a particular seating bench, with a dedication to "Tommy Sergison", whose commission into the Durham Light Infantry during the Second World War, as well as his marriage to the late Viola, were outlined in a metal plaque. A bunch of flowers would often appear, tied to the side of the bench, to the arm-rest, at all times of the year, not only associated with major military anniversaries (such as Remembrance Day, November 11th). Other plaques have the names of local councillors, a former royal ornithologist, and others with less prominent roles.

The plaques often seemed to be commissioned by friends and family members, showing that in this public space, individuals are allowed a degree of private memorialisation. Gateshead MBC does not publish information as to its policies with regard to commemorations. Other local authorities do comment upon the rationale for doing this. For example, Wrexham County Borough Council provides a particularly good summation of why a bereaved person may choose to commission a plaque:

> "Wrexham's Country Parks are beautiful and relaxing places. They are a perfect location in which to remember someone close. The scheme allows you to sponsor a new bench in one of Wrexham's Country Parks, dedicated to a loved one, or in celebration of a special occasion."

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(Wrexham County Borough Council 2010)

Similarly, a memorial garden in Walsall has a memorial bench is thus described:

"The memorial bench is a lovely idea and will be a focal point where everyone can come and sit and reflect."

(Walsall Council 2006)

Thus, these park benches have two different uses: a functional seating place (an object to use as one might use any other bench or seat: to rest, to pause, to share company), and also a symbolic object, to recall, or embody the memory of an absent person. The site for a commemorative bench is often one that was a favourite place for the deceased person, or in a location that overlooks a particularly poignant view, as in the situations described by John Wylie below. Thus, sitting on the bench, one may sense, in a number of different ways, what the deceased felt, or be able to recall time spent with them. A mundane object is transformed into something more personal through the plaque or inscription or the laying of flowers. In describing another set of memorial benches, albeit set into a natural landscape on the Cornish coast, John Wylie comments that sitting on them was more than just a physical act, it is also an action that is shared with other presences:

"And I knew from experience that most if not all of them would come with names attached, letters burnt into the wood, or etched onto small brass plates. That is, they would be benches dedicated to somebody, in memoriam. They would be sites set aside for looking and remembering, and in so being they would vex together in complex fashion landscape and gaze, visible and invisible, presence and absence, blindness and flight, love and loss. So the whole scene was already a watching. Nothing simply visible-in-itself. Without realising it we had been looking at – or, better, looking-with – a host of ghosts and memories. **These benches: eyes without bodies, or rather shapes and frames that embodied eyes anew, giving new sites for seeing, re-placing here and prospecting out there too eyes now closed and buried elsewhere.** Like a dense net of searchlights sweeping through the dark, sweeping over the waters. Thus the benches watched, in some cases they watched over. This wasn't metaphorical, not at all; it was an actual incorporation. **We do not simply disappear when we turn into ghosts, Jacques Derrida [(Derrida 1994)] notes; rather we pass into and are incorporated by other states and forms."**

(Wylie 2009: 277, emphasis added)

The memorial bench somehow 'immortalizes' the life and experiences of the person commemorated, partly because of its location in a place that was special to that person, where they used to spend time and enjoy during their lives. This is recognised and marked by the loved ones "left behind" who transform "simple" seating devices into memorials. On a
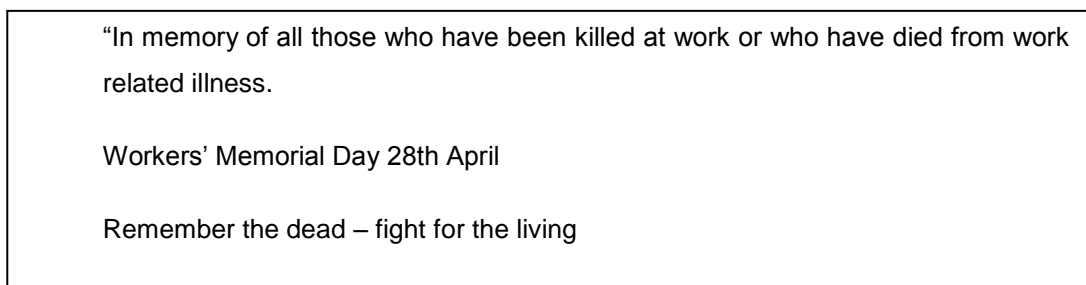
number of occasions, I noticed bunches of flowers left on a bench seat, or tied to the seat back; these were on benches that had plaques on already, so possibly flowers were additional tokens of "remembering and loving". The Park authorities did not feel it appropriate for me to speak to any of the people leaving these tributes, feeling that it might be too sensitive to discuss the emotions surrounding these actions. However, in another context, Catherine told me that she viewed another site in the Park a commemorative setting. She took a photograph of a jetty by the lake and commented that:

> "[Here] is the little landing strip, the model boat men come there, which I like. Me and my husband used to come here and sit there before they put the seats in, but he died unfortunately before they put the seats in."

[Catherine]

The photograph did not happen to have a seat: the space itself as it was constituted in the photograph at the time of her husband was enough to bring the memories back.

The memorials discussed so far seemed designed to convey a commemorative rather than a political message. A more overtly political form of commemoration, was to be found in the form of the Workers' Memorial, located in the Rose Garden. It was in a stone oval in a wooden tray with some flowers arranged around it. The stone was inscribed with the following words (Figure 6.3):

"In memory of all those who have been killed at work or who have died from work related illness.

Workers' Memorial Day 28th April

Remember the dead – fight for the living

Figure 6.3: Workers' Memorial wording

This memorial is associated with Workers' Memorial Day, which commemorates those who have died in the course of their work, to make absent a presence deemed to be absent from certain levels of political debate and employer practice. Unison highlights that "70 per cent of workplace accidents are due to the poor management of health and safety"[59], a failing on the part of employers, which was being allowed to happen through government inaction. Worker's Memorial Day highlighted this failure in workplace practice, taking public

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[59]

http://unionsafety.eu/docs/HSNewsItems%2011/WorkersMemorialDayWarningCutsCostLives.html

awareness of these apparent management failures into the realm of the commons. The reasoning continued that without national government recognising a particular date in the calendar, these management failures would continue since, by implication, these failures would be hidden from (popular and national legal- perhaps the Health and Safety Executive?) view. This campaign would be supplemented through the observance of a minute's silence, in the same way in which the public is invited to observe "sacrifice", generally to those of the two World Wars, but also in the initial aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

A local online commentator gave a number of statistics to convey the scale of the issue, according to the Trades Union movement (Butcher 2010): in 2008/09, nine North East workers were killed or fatally injured at work with a further 1,362 seriously injured. An estimated 55,000 people claimed to be suffering from a work-related illness, 4.5% of the region's total workforce. In the North East, 45 offences were prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive, and four by local authorities, in 2008/09.

Butcher (2010) provided a narrative acknowledging those who the Saltwell Park memorial was intended to commemorate, and their sacrifice to the economy of the North East, and describing the establishment of the memorial in Saltwell Park.

> "Their hard work built a Tyneside we can be proud of. In the mines, shipyards, railways, building sites and factories they created the foundations that the region still relies on today. But all too often the thousands of workers who have lost their lives while grafting go forgotten. Tomorrow is International Worker's Memorial Day, and Gateshead Trade Union Council [is] set to unveil a new tribute to the borough's lost workmen and women. The memorial, which will take pride-of place in Saltwell Park's Rose Garden, remembers local people killed at work or as a result of their jobs, from the start of industry right up to the present day."

> (Butcher 2010)

This focus for grief was perhaps a reflection of the town's traditionally working class politics. The same theme of long-term struggle to bring geographically widespread private suffering to the attention of national government was highlighted (Butcher 2010). The significance of the memorial was also expressed in terms of social justice:

> "The group will work with other interested organisations to create a focus for campaigning on health and safety and social justice issues to deal with the legacy of asbestos in the region."

> (Butcher 2010)

In common with the *Race for Life*, the unveiling of the memorial in 2010 celebrated the living as well, as Butcher explained: "It will also celebrate living workers...". There was a

collective wreath laying by various Trades Union branches, and the Mesothelioma Self-help Group laid a wreath (Mick Knighton Mesothelioma Research Fund 2010). In common with the practice of ribbon wearing for particular diseases – pink for breast cancer, for instance - UNISON members in attendance apparently wore a purple ribbon (Mick Knighton Mesothelioma Research Fund 2010).

The memorial seems to express something of the communal identity of Gateshead, rooted to its industrial past, but still pertinent to its present. It seeks to stress the psychological importance of work-related hazards for all populations in this region and acknowledges the working lives of those lost to accidents. The commentary of Butcher (2010) suggests that these risks afflict men disproportionately, listing industries that have workforces that are male-dominated, which perform dangerous jobs. More broadly, this memorial therefore probably also celebrates aspects of male identities expressed through their work, as well the acknowledging the risks that they were exposed to and their sacrifice. It is possible that older male workers, many of them now retired, and their families, would find this memorial especially important.

Commemoration through Action

Some commemorations are not fixed into the ground of Saltwell Park. Instead, they are actually human in form and materiality. Performances serve as recalls, best seen with *Race for Life,* which also differs from the previous example because it focuses more on commemorating the lives of women as well as protecting human health.

Before the race, people milled about on the grass. In one part of the course, was simply a wire mesh fence, stretched out between some iron stakes, in the middle of the playing field. Prefaced by a sign (Figure 6.4) that said:

> "I race for life for ...."

Figure 6.4: I Race for Life for...

On the fence were attached pink sheets of paper on which participants had summarised their reasons for participating. By 1 o 'clock, these sheets were full. Other statements of purpose were pinned on the backs of many of the competitors. These pieces of paper advertised participant's motivation to take part, and were perhaps sources of inspiration to them, helping to maintain their enthusiasm as they were pounding around a five-kilometre course. To help supply the need to commemorate and promote, was a local radio stall near the Start/ Finish that handed out paper to a queue of waiting people. To further this point, Cancer Research UK comments that:

> "Everyone has a different reason for taking part in *Race for Life*. That's why so many women choose to wear a back sign at their *Race for Life* event. This is a very moving part of the day as they are often dedicated in memory or in celebration of loved ones.

> Whether you are remembering someone lost to cancer, celebrating survival or demonstrating hope, you can inspire others by leaving a message on our interactive back sign board below."

> (Cancer Research 2010: What's your reason?)[60]

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[60] There are other examples of people using their own bodies as parts of acts of remembrance. In contemporary Greece, ancient Greek drama performances are held by modern citizens as a type of commemorative ceremonies that produce, reproduce, and transmit social memory of a glorious national cultural past (Lalioti 2002). During the military repression in 1970's Argentina, a group of women whose children had been kidnapped by agents of the junta became known as the "*Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*", earning this name by gathering at a square known as the *Plaza de Mayo* (Navarro 2001). Their protests had been prompted by the official denials of the disappearances and the loved ones' whereabouts. Their protests included carrying the photographs of their loved ones. Meanwhile, La Flamme relays the work of Canadian Aboriginal performance artist Rebecca Belmore, who created a performance art installation titled *Vigil* that commemorated missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Vancouver (La Flamme 2008). Setting her performance

THE SYMBOLIC ENVIRONMENT OF SALTWELL PARK

A significant number of those who participate in *Race for Life* race on behalf of others, or motivated by the experiences of others: "Mum", "Dad", "Aunty", "My Wonderful Gran". Thus the Race for Life symbolised care for others and celebrated their survival or commemorated those who had died.

These examples all show how individual lives can be traced through their interconnection to particular places, whether passing through it for a few hours, or over several decades. Human lives leave traces behind, whether through metal plaques, flowers or other human bodies. Through such action, we can recognise the importance that that such places play in our lives, and also the people that introduce us to them, that we share these places with, and the importance of places to those we love.

Dementia and Memory

My final example is of another form of loss, and how Saltwell Park again serves to revive memories, in this case, for someone suffering from dementia[61]. A body of opinion holds that people suffering with dementia will benefit from close contact with significant objects from their past. The Alzheimer's Society (Alzheimer's Society 2011a) suggests that those who share the lives of sufferers should try to provide opportunities to share memories by looking at photographs and souvenirs together, prompting memory, and helping creating a general sense of agency. Talking about the past is pleasurable, and may help the person retain their own sense of self. Collecting significant objects in a 'memory box' is thought to be useful (Dementia Web 2011; Gooch 2011)[62], as are the interventions of artists (South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust 2011) and sessions with educators (University of Sunderland 2010). Actions that can be helpfully undertaken with a dementia sufferer are described in terms of particular types of therapies (Patient UK 2011). These include *reminiscence therapy, regular physical activity, and sensory stimulation.*

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in an alley where Aboriginal women's bodies have been found. Belmore wore a white tank top that revealed the names of some of the murdered women written on her body in black. To close the performance, she read the names of the women from her own body, one at a time; with the recitation of each name, she used her mouth to rip the thorns and leaves from red roses.

[61] Dementia is a family of particular degenerative illnesses that affect the brain, whose symptoms of include loss of memory, confusion and problems with speech and understanding. There are over 100 separate diseases, of which Alzheimer's' in the most common (Alzheimer's Society 2011b), and perhaps the best known to the general public. Symptoms of memory loss include remembering recent events, taking in new information, remembering people, and processing information (Alzheimer's Society 2011a) [61]. Louise Lakey *et al.* (2012) comment that in the UK, as of the year 2012 are some 800,000 people with dementia in the UK, with an estimated 670,000 family and friends acting as primary carers; their report goes on to state that the current financial cost to the National Health Service and local authorities of dementia is £23 billion a year, which is expected to rise to £27 billion by 2018.

[62] Esther Gooch works for Age UK in South Staffordshire
http://nhslocal.nhs.uk/story/features/explanation-memory-box-dementia-project

THE SYMBOLIC ENVIRONMENT OF SALTWELL PARK

Yeardleigh's wife has dementia. It seems that Yeardleigh employs these therapies in Saltwell Park with his wife, and that she feels the benefits:

Yeardleigh: "She enjoys [the Park] ... She's on this new medication, called Aricept [as of January 2010]. I thought there was maybe a case for sending her away, she was getting that bad [she was assessed medically]. She was on the borderline for being put on Aricept, and it just changed her... tremendous! Then, different times of the day, we came around the Park.. She'll be in the house, trying to get her words out. But we come to the Park, we go around the bandstand, around that Japanese garden – her favourite part of the Park is along the promenade – and she's walking along there, and suddenly she'll start speaking."

Wayne: "So you actually feel there's a change in her coming to the Park?"

Yeardleigh: "Yes, yes!"

[Yeardleigh]

It seems that for Yeardleigh's wife, the Park is as much a deeply familiar space as it is to him. With reference to the observations made by the Alzheimer's Society regarding memory, there would seem to be a possibility that being in a familiar location such as Saltwell Park, for someone who has long-term associations with it, that these are brought to the fore of the memory and perhaps the sensory aspects of the visits to the Park are the prompt for longer-term memories to return.

Loss of memory raises profound questions about what constitutes 'a person' or death of a person. About death, Paul Auster writes:

"Death takes a man's body away from him. In life, a man and his body are synonymous; in death, there is the man and there is his body. We say, 'This is the body of X,' as if this body, which had once been the man himself, not something that represented him or belonged to him, but the very man called X, were suddenly of no importance. When a man walks into a room and you shake hands with him, you do not feel that you are shaking hands with his hand, or shaking hands with his body, you are shaking hands with him. Death changes that. This is the body of X, not this is X. The syntax is entirely different."

(Auster 1982: 14 (original emphasis); as cited in Harrison 2011)

In November 2011, the NHS funded a TV campaign on dementia that sought to raise awareness of early recognition of the signs of dementia, and prompt diagnosis is vital (Hitchcock 2011). The advertisements showed a man fading into the background as he performed various everyday tasks. This advertisement would imply that dementia is a

condition that confounds Auster's observations, being a condition whereby the body remains, but the [person] slowly exits from life.

When thinking about a deceased person, the body and social self are seen to separate. The actions of people in the Park recall the social selves, separate from the body. Whereas in the immediacy of death, Auster was confronted by a something (a body) that was not a 'someone' (a person; his father), the Park helps people recall the person through 'something'; a material object such as a piece of paper, a carved stone, a metal plaque. What perhaps is relevant here is the postmodern questioning of the subject-object distinction. Whereas Cartesian thought invoked an object, in terms of its social meaning through a human subject ("I/you/we do something to this/that/them"), the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962) in particular sees objects in the world around us help to create the "flesh" of our physical selves, through action and reaction to the world around us. Non-representational theorists are particularly interested in this, conceiving of the self, the individualised "body", as emerging through an "active, productive, and continual weaving of the multiplicity of bits and pieces that we emerge" (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 8). The weaving that they speak of is the past, current and future sum of our individual interactions with the world about us, a set of mutually constitutive, relational, interactions based upon a person's responses to their senses, attitudes and emotions. Anderson and Harrison (2010:8-9) comment that "worlds" emerge from this, usually taken to mean, in popular discourse, of for example, "the "world of business", or "the world of radical politics"". In the case of an individual, we could talk of having an individual "world" as well? – We each create a world, whereby we link, in a rhizomic manner[63], we link different aspects of our environment together, and out of that, the "I" of our selves emerges. In the case of dementia it seems, the world that one has experienced in the past can help the "I" to be reconstituted, through being in renewed contact with it; memories are reactivated, the "world" that we each create remerges.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed how Saltwell Park plays a part in the creation of aspects of a person's identity. It does so through providing the opportunity for close personal relationships to form and to flourish; for attachments to place to be formed; for more private dimensions of the self to be expressed; and for those people close to us to be commemorated, with aspects of their social selves publically recalled.

The examples above suggest that the Park can function as an expression of "home" to park users". Sheehan (2010: 546) suggest that the idea of 'home' implies more intimate practices and relationships than say 'comradeship' or 'community.' Rowe and Wolch (1990: 190) comment that an individual's successive paths in time-space in a locality resemble each other, and thus reinforce each other, thus '[shape] personal identity and its subjective

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[63] See my discussion of Hillier (2009), in Chapter Two.

connotation.' (Hodgetts *et al.* 2008: 190) through and creating social connectivity. We can see these demonstrated in the Park.

There are occasions when an individual may lay claim to the public space in Saltwell Park as being "their" private space, and their symbolic or imagined 'home'. Esther's camp was not a real home, but was imagined as being one, was decorated as if it was a real one, as much as the shelters that other park visitors erected through putting windbreaks up on the grass to shield against wind and temporarily delineate 'their' space. Some families would bring toys into the Park as well; not just things to play games or sports in, but also scooters and tricycles for toddlers, which made me think of a child and its parent playing in a domestic garden, as outlined by Gross and Lane. Through such actions, I see the Park being transformed into a form of domesticated space (Kumar and Makarova 2008), especially resonant with the comments of Taco and the words of the poem on the *Zayis Raanon's* needlework map. The Park becomes domesticated through a mixture of taking objects from the home into the Park, and the erection of boundaries, recreating forms of the domestic for a specific time period for particular groups of people. The Park may have also been a substitute for the lack of domestic gardens in housing around the Park.

The domestic can also be represented in other material forms and practices, such as *Zayis Raanon*'s needlework pieces. The material recalls the directly experiential, the feelings of making a new, foreign destination into a home. Zara seemed to feel that three sets of experience made her feel at home in the north-east: her husband introducing her to his associates and prominent figures from the Hasidic community in the Park; being in Saltwell Park with friends and family, leading to the subject of one of the tapestries; and seeing the tapestry displayed in prominent civic locations in the Park. Thus, 'home' means 'community", for Zara, who perceived a wider sense of social acceptance emanating from the results of the 'comradeship' that produced the tapestry, as well as other intergenerational needlework projects.

What should hopefully be apparent in the section above is that the Park and park users who are longer-term residents in the area have lives that intertwine over time. This is evident in the accounts provided by Andrew, Barbara and Catherine, as well as Esther and Zara, as they do in the life of the Park. Their commentaries about the Park reveal a long-term relationship expressed in a number of material forms (the needlework, the Octopus Tree, the jetty), as well as actions (bringing grandchildren to the same park that they had been to as children). See for example the following comments from Barbara and Catherine, which suggested a sense of continuity as reassuring and important for their sense of well-being:

Barbara   "I don't know where I would want to live if I moved away from here. People say that your house is too big for you once you retire; but I keep thinking that I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. We're lucky."

Catherine   "We're lucky and we know it."

I asked Esther what part she thought that Saltwell Park played in the production of her health and well-being. Her comments were quite profound, and touch upon issues of belonging and the part that being in particular locations play in the creation of a self, and the recall of how that self was created:

> "I think that it's important to have a link to the past, 'cos it reminds you of who you are. And the opportunity to come here, to see that, plays a massive part for me..., and in turn, that's good for your mental health ... Because ... It's like a natural journey that you can retrace, and you can see it and you can touch it, and .. If you move from where you live to [somewhere] miles away where you cannot remind yourself of who you are, then it's really, really easy to feel cut off and isolated? But I don't have that, 'cos when I come down here, I can remember all of those times. And they become more real for me… I don't how else to put it other than that."

[Esther]

Chapter Seven: CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this final chapter is to draw together some of the key themes and findings contained within this thesis. I start by first outlining the key contributions that my findings make towards future research within the therapeutic landscape field. Then, I move onto a discussion of the limitations of the study, before considering areas of future research.

A brief overview of the three empirical chapters

In view of my conceptualisation of the Park as a 'relational' therapeutic landscape, I have organised the discussion of the empirical data through the physical-social-symbolic framework. This draws attention to the diversity, as well as the similarity of the entities and practices that are to be found in the Park, and that seem to have an effect upon the production of known and possible health and well-being effects. Using the physical-social-symbolic framework also made for an ease of written presentation here. It is also the interactions - deliberate, accidental, desirous, unwanted - with these that produce the health and well-being effects discussed.

The natural landscape of Saltwell Park is topography, "weather-world" and the lives of animals and wildlife. The social landscape of the Park is partly comprised of constellations of social groups and how these groups relate to each other. I have proposed that, in keeping with previous usage of the concept within health geography, social capital may help in understanding relative social positions of groups within (and without) the Park, how these are played out, and how imbalances in social status can be alleviated through organised official action, (in)formal subversion and challenge, as well as friendships and common purpose. Finally, the Park can be seen as a landscape of meaning; important since, as Eyles (1985) observed, having a positive sense of place is important to health and well-being. The phenomenological outline that I deployed in Chapter Two suggests that meanings ascribed to Saltwell Park arise from people having lived their lives in, and closely associated with, Saltwell Park.

The Original Contribution of My Research

This thesis has considered the question: 'What is therapeutic about a particular public park?' I have addressed this by considering the life of Saltwell Park - the changing nature of the physical environment and the social activities and practices that take place there - over a period of time.

In this thesis, I have looked to uncover how a location may be thought of as being therapeutic. In many pieces of research within the field, the therapeutic qualities are assumed to be *à priori* features of the space in question; hence, it is assumed to be a therapeutic landscape already. In the main, therapeutic landscapes are defined with regard to the health status of the person who interacts with them, or the intended outcomes that are presumed to precipitate therefrom. In studying a public park, once built on the assumption that it would confer health benefits, I did not presume that therapeutic characteristics were obvious features of the Park.

A re-examination of therapeutic environments

The geographies of health field has made extensive use of the therapeutic landscape concept, a specific place where we can feel "well" (Gatrell and Elliott 2009). In this thesis, I have sought to uncover how such a location may "work". To this end, I have deployed a number of conceptual and methodological devices. Kearns and Gesler (1998) commented that the cultural turn within health geography included a conscious close realignment to prevailing thought elsewhere in the wider human geographical sub-discipline.

Instead of seeing the wider park landscape as comprised of three implicitly homogenous environments – physical (natural and built), social and symbolic – I have suggested that each of these therapeutic landscapes is comprised of heterogeneous human and nonhuman entities, and these co-function to form assemblages. This suggestion is in line with the ontological considerations of post-structuralist theories. In common with post-structuralist thinking, the three environments - physical, social and symbolic – are populated by a wide ontology[64] of entities. The materiality of these entities complements the Gesler environment typology.

However, when thinking of the environment of the park, there is a tension between Gesler's (2003) conception of a therapeutic landscape and the post-structuralist theories that I have used. The therapeutic landscape implies a series of bounded environments, which are populated by beneficial entities that are supportive of positive health and well-being experiences.

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[64] Here, I use ontology in the sense of post-structualist and non-assemblagic thinking that ontology means collection of elements that comprise subjects of knowledge within the particular concept.

It seems that this literature has not fully engaged with the post-structuralist literatures that I have outlined in Chapter Two, except, at times, co-opting some of the network-based thinking of actor network theory and some of the terminology of assemblages.

The constituent parts of a therapeutic landscape

Finally, post-structuralist thinking has long posited that our "world" is not "out there", separate from us, but is part of us. Each person who has come into contact with Saltwell Park will possibly have a unique set of images and memories of the Park. Each of the participants mentioned unique activities and interactions with the Park, as well as memories. Some loved being in the Park during Spring as opposed to the winter (Andrew and Barbara); Barbara and Catherine saw the Park as a very important social space; only Zara was involved in the creation of an art piece that celebrated a love of the Park. The symbolisms, the representations, which people have of the Park, are as much forged through individual experience of the Park, as through shared perceptions. The Park is *seen* as a place in which certain activities can take place, especially when recalling the living of a life, whether one's own or the parallel lives of others. These comments point to the conclusion that the various environments are not just heterogeneous in form, but are also in flux, with elements that have effects across boundaries (such as Esther appearing in all three environments as an instigator of new wildlife habitats and nature conservation and learning opportunities, as well as someone with a profound love of the Park, gained through a long personal history of use). As such, the boundaries of the environments are also porous, the environments unbounded in post-structuralist terms, with elements that move in and move out of the realm of the assemblages within the typology.

How a therapeutic landscape functions through time

Each of the different entities that comprises the environment of the Park has its own set of origins and life course. In the case of an open-air space such as Saltwell Park, the 'natural/physical environment' includes a variable weather component; the social environment is subject to deliberative change with respect to legislation and council policies. Instead of the collective form of the three landscapes being uniform through time and space, they are instead complex, varied and, at times, unpredictable.

Within each of these landscapes of physicality, sociality and symbolism, the various human and nonhuman entities interplay, sometimes taking multiple roles, appearing in one assemblage, and then in another. Assemblages, like actor network theory, are ways of describing how the social is arranged (see for example Farias 2009; Hillier 2009; Latour 2005). Farias (2009) points out that Latour (2005) uses the verb *assembling*, as opposed to the noun *assemblage*, to signify that there are social associations between the human and nonhuman. For example, Esther appears in all three environments, through creating new habitats, initiating physical proximity to and pedagogical interactions with wildlife, and, in common with many other respondents, has a long personal association with the Park. In line with McFarlane's (2011) use of the term dwelling within a discussion of urban

assemblages, Saltwell Park is a place that is a *dwelling* (in the sense of having homely qualities), and that is also *inhabited* (in the sense of occupation by a person, and a life lived through and shaped by the Park). A key approach to take to the consideration of a therapeutic landscape is that, though there exists a typology for conceptualising the form of the space, it is difficult to separate one environment from another, that entities occupy and take on multiple roles within the life of the wider landscape, and that consideration of both the whole, as well as the individual parts is important.

How humans interact with a therapeutic landscape

Therapeutic landscapes literature also implies that these landscapes are separate from the individuals that inhabit them, in classic Cartesian terms – we are not part of them, nor they of us, but "out there".

People interact with a wide manner of entities in the Park – trees, weather, animals, and different social groups and of individuals, as well as symbols, and emotional responses to place. Sebastiano makes a tree into a replication of gym equipment, Francis is entangled with the microclimate through his model boat, and with the model boat through the microclimate, and with the embodied skills that he has gained (Conradson 2005; Dant 2004) to control the boat and to derive satisfaction therefrom from successful deployment of those skills.

Just as a public park maybe thought of as comprising a fabric of heterogeneous entities, each with their own life courses and trajectories, then perhaps the same could be said of the user groups of a park. Each person who encounters the Park and moves through it can be thought of in the same manner as actor network theory does of the nonhuman, as entities with their own origins, life courses and trajectories. Not only do these trajectories bring them into and through the Park, but then also take them *to* the Park as part of a personal geography (Cummins *et al.* 2007); i.e. the Park is one of several destinations or nodes, within an overall personal spatiality. Locations within the Park can also be destinations within their own right.

How human-environment interactions can be therapeutic

To talk of a landscape being "therapeutic" implies a certain degree of stability, of an inherent quality of place. Throughout the three empirical chapters, there has been an obvious flux revealed in the form of the Park and the assemblages that comprise its form.

The characteristics that Saltwell Park has at times proffered have been quite fleeting (a diary event, the effects of weather, the proffered greeting of a stranger). Also, the ability to make use of such characteristics can be fleeting too (such as the social acceptability of being able to go to the Park as a new mother with one's baby, breastfeed one's child, and not draw an askance, shocked reaction). Prior to its restoration, Saltwell Park did not confer widespread therapeutic benefits to, for example, women who feared for their safety and comfort. Thinking back to the contingency that I spoke of earlier, a therapeutic landscape is perhaps

not a beneficial space that remains stable in time, that the "therapeutic" term can imply, but is instead is a continual series of summations of contingent affordances that concern the experiences of individuals, and which can prove positive to health and well-being.

Affordance is seen as an important attribute of a person's interactions with an object within assemblage thinking (see Dant 2004), as well as within affordance theory in environmental psychology (Gibson 1977). As is the case with assemblagic thinking, for Scarantino (2003) affordance is relational too. Thus, the affordances that are found within the characteristics of the Park are only really fully exploited by the particular characteristics of the individual Park user in turn. For example, the reader may recall the comments of Francis with regard to the microclimate around the Lake and how he, his model boat, water, and wind, would interact together to generate within him a relaxing effect).

The therapeutic landscape concept has traditionally focussed upon just one side of the person-environment equation, namely the environment, postulating that there are particular forms of environment, with beneficial characteristics that fit a therapeutic landscape typology. The characteristics of the people that use this space are less clear, beyond an implication that they have a need for a form of healing or therapy. Instead, I wish to reframe the equation in different, relational terms. This is and in line with more recent thinking in health geography, as typified by Cummins *et al.* (2007) and Conradson (2005). Through the close examination of person-environment relationships situated within the Park, I suggest a nuanced set of interactions between discrete elements therein and individual park users, in time and space, and through time and space. It is through this webs of comings-together that the beneficial (and occasional negative) health effects are felt. In thinking about the term "therapeutic landscape", perhaps the therapeutic is not an inherent, fixed attribute of a location, but a function of relationships between various elements of landscape, including people, that interact with each other – it is relational. As such, the therapeutic is not a normative value of the landscape which is fixed and stable in space.

The implications for the therapeutic landscape literature

My empirical data has revealed a sense of health and well-being that varies from the biomedical to the emotional and social, in line with the PMESS model that Gesler (2003) proposed. I have sought to uncover a wide set of health and well-being outcomes that have emerged from the data, as opposed to limiting the empirical data set through à priori participant recruitment or the research being located in a space that works within specific conceptions of health and well-being.

Designating a landscape as therapeutic would seem to depend upon the observer, as would whether a visitor to that landscape can obtain "healing" or "therapy". In that vein to approach a space and simply expect to feel better, could, in assemblagic terms, require the landscape assemblage to share agency with the person in question (see my earlier comments, drawn

from Dant 2004). Both person and assemblage must work in concert to impart the healing experience to the human user.

I have answered the calls of Pranikoff and Setha (2007) and Milligan (2007) to consider the contribution of environmental psychology to therapeutic landscape research, especially with regard to interactions with the physical landscape of Saltwell Park, beneficial health outcomes noted in including the restoration of fatigued attention (ART).

When further thinking of the deployment of the term "therapeutic landscape", one could talk of a landscape *being* therapeutic, having *been once* therapeutic, or of *becoming* therapeutic. I suggest with regard to Saltwell Park that a therapeutic landscape must operate through time, or at least for as long as the benefits are required. In Saltwell Park; "therapeutic" would imply long-term salutogenic effects.

Within the therapeutic landscape literature, few studies have made explicit reference to the more routine experience of therapeutic landscape 'dimensions' (Cattell *et al.* 2008 are exceptions; Curtis *et al.* 2007; Gesler 2007 are as well), which raises questions as to how other researchers see them. Some research on therapeutic landscapes focuses on 'exceptional' places with a special reputation for healing (e.g. Gesler's work on Lourdes or Epidaurus). In post-structuralist terms, also with possible regard to non-representational theory, the Park is not just simply an everyday place, but is a(nother) place where the everyday *is* (see Thrift 2007). Put another way, this thesis has considered not just how health and well-being outcomes occur within an everyday space, but *also how therapeutic the everyday life of a public park is*. The activities that take place there are not particularly exceptional within the fabric of life in Gateshead; indeed, one of the essential rationales for a public park is that whilst it may offer respite from some of the vagaries of urban life, it is still a compatible and complimentary part of such life, similar to the description of an attentional restorative landscape (Kaplan *et al.* 1989).

CONCLUSIONS

Methodological innovations

In order to begin to grasp the totality of the assemblages of Saltwell Park and how people interact with them, I have used mixed methods to bring multiple perspectives to bear on the Park's environmental form and function, as well as the experiences of those who make use of the location, with resultant health and well-being outcomes. Often therapeutic landscape research has used one of these different methods, but rarely each of these in concert within a single work.

I have used a suite of "ethnographic" methods to obtain perspectives upon the potentially "therapeutic" dimensions of Saltwell Park. I responded to the conceptions of assemblage that have been highlighted, that include orientation to the world (McFarlane 2011; McFarlane and Anderson 2011), by seeking to capture the heterogeneity, multidimensionality and flux of the environments (Thrift 2007), or worlds, of the Park over time. Some methods have captured how some spaces have been used; others have gained an insight into personal perspectives upon usage patterns, practices and perceived effects upon the self. Some methods have captured the researcher's interactions and effects, others methods have captured the interactions and effects of others. Their repeated use also created a series of series of temporal dimensions to the data gathered, that varied from the short-term situated to the longer-term trends of lifecourses.

In general, there are a series of temporal threads that can be imagined to illustrate trends of change in landscape features, their appearance within the Park, disappearance from the Park, and in the people who regularly inhabit the Park. I have incorporated a series of diurnal transects through the Park, another series of longitudinal threads through specific areas of the Park itself, both intersected through by the lifecourses of those who use the Park. As a result, person and place can be traced through time.

The utilisation of the methods was also very useful for capturing current characteristics, ambient circumstances, personal motivations and longer-time period narratives. These were utilised over the course of a long-time period, a period of a year, in order to capture cycles of variation and interaction. Given the diverse nature of the participants, their circumstances at the time of the research, as well as, more prosaically, their routine at the time at which I approached them, not all methods suited all participants. Some politely ignored requests to undertake any of the reflexive exercises, yet were able to discuss long term relationships with the Park.

I used the metaphor of David Hockney's video installation which uses multiple cameras to capture the forms and movement of the physical form of a country lane near his east Yorkshire home (Jones 2012) to illustrate the complexity of the collective that is comprised of the elemental. To fully capture the variable forms and effects of a "therapeutic" landscape in a space as physically extensive and complex as a large public park, and that is subject to elemental, as well as collective change, especially through a year-long time frame, has

required several multiple perspectives to be deployed, and the perspectives of the researcher placed alongside those of others.

This mixed methods usage seems to be not only innovative for post-structuralist and non-representational methodologies, but also for health geographies. To take one particular study, Cattell *et al.* (2008) is a rare study that uses a number of used a mixture of ethnographic observation of neighbourhoods as well as focus group interviews; another from Ornelas *et al.* (2009) uses photovoice and focus group interviews. Few studies however use more than two methods, and seek to capture any dimensions of change within the environment through time, though Darby (2000) did utilise repeat surveys when accompanying walking tours through the Lake District to examine notions of Englishness and landscape.

The Limitations of the Thesis

Conceptual considerations

The generalizability of results

This is an examination of the singular that is Saltwell Park, and the populations that use it. Each other Gateshead park and other green space has its own sets of particular characteristics, in terms of location, design features, surrounding neighbourhoods and attendant populations. In keeping with most research within the therapeutic landscape literature, the particular is examined in great depth and a rich description is produced, and the resultant empirical data that produces themes that can be used to inform themes to be used in further research, but not to predict the results of research elsewhere.

The impact that Saltwell Park has upon particular biomedical conditions

It is not possible for me to comment upon the impact that Saltwell Park has upon the biomedical constructs of health. Fieldwork participants were, for the most part, not chosen for their biomedical status, the only exception was the client group from the mental health service user group. They were included simply to provide another set of perspectives that added to the diversity of the perspectives of as how individuals experienced Saltwell Park. The inquiry that I pursued with them followed a similar line of inquiry as with other participants, and did not try to elicit whether their illness was specifically alleviated by their activities in the Park in such a way as to meet some psychological or psychoanalytical criteria.

This study was not a systematic review of a biomedical concept or quantifiable outcome. More broadly, the therapeutic landscape literature has rarely considered longer-term or biomedical impacts upon humans through engagement with such locations, to the extent that particular levels of health may be quantitatively noted.

Whether Saltwell Park makes a difference to long-term health of individuals
In heath research, longitudinal studies are fairly commonplace. Usually used in quantitative research (Sim and Wright 2000), empirical data is collected at discrete points in time, with a view to identifying change in health and well-being outcomes. Commentaries by Shortell (1999) and Holland *et al.* (2006) make the point that qualitative studies can make use of such methods (see for example, Baldacchino and Draper 2001; Saldaña 2003). It was not my express intention to assess such differences that the Park would make to such outcomes.

I attempted to undertake some longitudinal research with the participants. I asked a number of participants whether they would be prepared to undertake an initial reflective exercise

early at one point in the fieldwork period, and then participate again later on. The intention was to see if either change in the three Saltwell Park therapeutic environments or in the circumstances of the participant, had precipitated a change in the person's related health and well-being.

Due to the nature of participant recruitment, I had very limited opportunities to make renewed contact with participants; it was only a small percentage that I could approach for repeating the reflective exercises that would make up a longitudinal study. One additional factor was of course that the fieldwork period was relatively short, and that longer-term trends would have been difficult to discern.

In repeating attempting to undertake a longitudinal exercise with some of the participants, it became clear that one was still very dissatisfied with his employment, and it was at that point that he discussed hunting with me.

Whether Saltwell Park has an impact upon the health of Gateshead

In view of its large geographical scale within the borough, there is a possible question as whether the Park plays a role in wider area determinants of health within Gateshead. This is relevant, since I commenced Chapter One with a reference to the Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991) diagram of differing geographical scales within which particular risk factors and beneficial phenomena are geographically located, and across which particular affective processes operate.

It is not possible for me to pass definitive comment upon the actual impact that Saltwell Park may haves upon health trends within the immediate localities around, and across the wider borough. My fieldwork sought to uncover how the Park operated in such ways that could be described as being therapeutic, and how, over the course of a relatively short period – just one year - how some of the potential and actual contingent affordances came into being. There are clearly some fieldwork results that have implications for the wider borough, such as the presence of official initiatives that sought to change public attitudes whether of visitors to the Park, or using the Park in borough-wide awareness raising campaign. I have made reference to potential therapeutic effects, since it was not possible to see how widespread intended positive outcomes arose from those events that were staged; in order to describe actual outcomes would require knowledge of how people responded to them, and for example, whether the intended beneficiaries of those interventions found that they were subject to a lessening of social stigmatisation and discrimination.

Methodological considerations
Also of consideration in a study of health and well-being is a consideration of whether the Park has a long-term effect upon the health of individuals. This dimension of the benefits of a therapeutic landscape has been the subject of occasional pieces of research. In biomedical terms of references, this would imply the cure of an identifiable illness or

condition, or in public health terms, the removal or lessening of a particular risk factor. Those who I invited to participate were not selected based on the scope of their physical health, i.e. whether they had a known pre-existing condition that could be quantitatively measured that a causal link between an interaction with the Park and the status of that condition could be asserted.

Of additional consideration to the research was the fact that Park users, once they entered into the Saltwell Park, became part of the assemblage itself. That is, their presence became an additional feature and element within the Park's environment. Other humans had the potential to create, or suppress, the therapeutic potential of the Park. This has theoretical implications for considering the more general fabric of the environments. In post-structuralist thinking, a person is not separate from the environment that they are in, they become part of it. As a result, the assemblages that comprise the Park are in flux through the entrance, presence and exit of the populations that use and staff it. To seek to interview people who were not part of these assemblages would, arguably, have run counter to this conceptual premise. However, there might have been value in talking to people who did not use the Park, or were rarely present there.

The purpose of the fieldwork was to gather perspectives upon the usage of the Park. The methodology was developed through purposive recruitment of individuals and groups already known to use the Park. This was done by making contact with Park staff, who could direct me towards those groups known to them as Park users, as well as participant observation of those events that took place therein and speaking to participants there.

The rationale behind the purposive sampling undertaken here was to seek to speak to as many participants from the diverse user profiles and groupings that I could find. The use profile of the Park seemed to be dominated by females, and, to a lesser extent, by people of both genders in caring roles. There were some people who did seem under-represented within the wider Park profile, such as males if working age (18-65 years approximately), and young people (16-19 years of age); the likely explanations for their relative lack of numbers would centre around such individuals being at work or further education during the week. It was possible to see some Park users who fitted these profiles in the Park at certain times of the week, making use of the grassy areas, café or playing areas.

How the thesis contributes to the literatures and wider public policy interests in health and well-being

During the course of this research, I have suggested that a set of corporeal, cognitive and affective experiences, contributing to "health", come into being through Saltwell Park. I suggest that these experiences are encountered by all my respondents (including myself) when interacting with the environment of the park, making it a therapeutic landscape.

One of the ways in which this thesis adds to conceptions of health and well-being is through discourses of possible "healing" effects. Some of the activities that have taken place within the Park have sought to "bring people together", to lessen adverse social conditions, as well as to heal biomedical conditions and injuries. The Dahlgren and Whitehead (1991) model of the social determinants of health suggests that particular wider determinants of health affect all individuals and social groups in fairly similar ways. Yet of course, there is a well-developed literature that points out how aspects such as lifestyle, ethnicity, gender, etc., affect health and well-being, through differential access to health care, increased risk of harm, or perception of risk. What this research highlights is that other social processes are required to give greater equality of health opportunities – a certain healing effect. The presence of social conflict, or of adverse attitudes, compounds the sufferance of particular conditions, i.e. stigma towards those with mental illness. The thesis suggests that, for some individuals within particular social groups, a therapeutic landscape must provide both an equality of social opportunity (social healing (Draucker 1992)), as well as an opportunity for biomedical therapy or restoration.

Returning to the Dahlgren and Whitehead model of health, there is a suggestion of a one-way directionality of agency within the model, that people are the objects of wider forces. The empirical results of my research, as Wakefield and McMullan (2005) also suggest, is that there is room for counter-action and for some resistance to some iniquitous situations. The model was probably intended to be illustrative, yet there is scope for reading further nuance into the relations within the Park. For example, my study of Saltwell Park has illustrated how some people were able to defy social convention, such as breastfeeding children, or sudden abusive circumstances, such as some of the experiences recounted by Zara, in order to undertake biomedically beneficial activities and express aspects of identity.

In public health terms, an attendance to the milieu in which people live their lives is important. The mere presence of Saltwell Park in itself does not make it desirable, or supportive of actions that have a positive impact upon biomedical health.

Public health campaigns would seem to have to address issues of stigmatisation in three areas: populations with particular health issues and conditions, populations which try to behave in healthy ways, as well those populations who try to indulge in the everyday life of the rest of the community yet are discriminated against. I have illustrated a number of the campaigns which have taken place in the Park which have sought to address these three

areas. Assemblage thinking, by means of thinking of a space as a "world", highlights the fact that a person enters into a wider social environment into which health interventions are inserted. Unless a person subject to forms of stigmatisation can claim equal access to that world, then public health interventions may fail[65].

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[65] Briant *et al.* (2011) draw attention to a marked increase in the reporting of disability-related stories in the written news media over the period from 2004-5 to 2010-11 with a far more hostile tone being set in both stories and language used; attendant focus group research suggested that some readers felt that people with disabilities were guilty of fraudulent behaviour, a "burden" in these recessionary times, or had even caused the recession. some left-leaning publications as the Guardian publish its own and highlight others' (for example, http://www.guardian.co.uk/social-care-network/2012/sep/19/paralympics-legacy-end-prejudice-attitudes) dissent against Coalition Government proposals to limit benefits amounts, entitlement and duration of receipt; with perhaps a greater reach, the London 2012 Paralympic Games was judged to be a great success by its organisers, in terms of achievement and logistics, but also with respect to challenging popular attitudes to disability. it will remain to be seen whether this change comes to pass. The charity Scope (2012) surveyed disabled people in the run-up to Paralympics, and obtained results that suggested that the sample groups felt that the Games' coverage would be greatly beneficial to their lives in challenging popular attitudes.

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Possible New Areas of Research

Though I have used the broad typology of therapeutic landscapes, I have not sought to create a new ontology of those elements that should be included within an assessment of a therapeutic landscape. The frequent call within the assemblages and actor network literatures for alertness to the heterogeneity of social phenomena implicitly seems to proscribe a fixed ontology. All manner of items may be deemed legitimate for inclusion when consideration of assemblages is made (see Chapter Two).

When for example, considering the effects of environment upon human health, different aspects of environment seem to be of interest dependent upon the scale of the geographical area under consideration. The therapeutic landscape literature typically considers environments from an implicitly intimate, close-at-hand, view, where the uniqueness of (a) space and the quality of interactions within, are of importance. Other studies, typically with an epidemiological focus, tend to identify and examine quantifiable characteristics of larger-scale space. An interesting observation within a review from Pearce and Maddison (2011) is that, amongst a notional set of quantifiable environmental indicators from global research is the inclusion of more intangible assessments of environmental characteristics, such as "mental maps" and other systematic social observation.

Pearce and Maddison (2011) also suggest that generally with respect to socially deprived neighbourhoods, such as those within Gateshead that surround Saltwell Park, some open spaces are actually of good quality. This may suggest a conscious civic investment in facilities; if so, this would be of special importance at a time of restricted state funding, especially true at the time of writing in a UK context.

This study suggests that the "quality" of a green space can include factors such as the social processes and interactions that operate within that space, and that an assemblage approach would allow this broad diversity to be conceptualised. The molar characteristics of certain individuals, such as those of low-income women, when viewed alongside health outcomes (see for example, Ball *et al.* 2007; Lee *et al.* 2007) may also require a consideration of aspects of their life circumstances, such as child-rearing responsibilities, and whether relevant needs can be met safely and comfortably, through accessing local open and green space; for example, whether these spaces have facilities for new mothers, such as exercise classes, or the local promotion of the acceptability of breastfeeding on-site. In a similar vein, street connectivity, or "walkability", may not just be a value ascribed to geocoded data, but also of the day-to-day presence of social support when walking (Duncan and Mummery 2005), or of problematic neighbourhood social relations and perceptions of fear (see Chapter Four). Possible future research could look to more frequently combine quantifiable area-based data with neighbourhood-level qualitative focus group commentaries. Pearce and Maddison (2011) decry the lack of data that captures environmental change upon physical activity, and make reference to regeneration activity. This research suggests that regeneration of the Park has increased opportunities for a human presence within the Park,

and for physical activity within, through the decreasing of fear (see Chapter Four). In a relatively controllable and manageable space, such as a public park, the development of a calendar of social activities may increase flows of social capital, through bring diverse populations into the park and allowing them to access the park's therapeutic landscapes.

The politics of local health provision has been touched upon here in Chapter Five, illustrating further that there is a socio-political context to health care, and would seem to be an important dimension for future research. Pierce *et al.* (2012) discusses the politics of mental health provision in Worcester, Massachusetts. In effect, the potential therapeutic landscape is contingent upon another, political, environment. The authors comment that an explicit examination and discussion these local politics is important. as part of a further conception of human-environment "therapeutic" relationships, Pope (2012) comments upon policies towards HIV / AIDS in Cuba and Brazil, through a study of "therapeutic imaginaries" and how a combination of, for example, national political philosophies, images and economics, and gender politics, shape personal and collective responses to therapeutic landscapes.

Saltwell Park, and the continuing importance of Green space in Gateshead

Figure 7.1: The creation of temporary parks in Gateshead.

The local authorities in both Newcastle and Gateshead have recently commissioned a strategy document (Entec UK 2011) that connects green space to health outcomes. Page 20 of the *Green Infrastructure Strategy Report* observes that "use of green infrastructure for relaxation and exercise can improve health levels, provided: convenient, open spaces are accessible; people are aware of what is available; [and that] people feel comfortable in these spaces and with everyone they meet in them". These comments do carry an echo of some the findings that I have presented within this thesis, but whether the evidence for these assertions is representative or widespread public opinion[66] is not known.

The creation of new parks more widely in the borough is an activity that is still seen as

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[66]

http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/DocumentLibrary/Building/PlanningPolicy/Evidence/GI/Green-Infrastructure-Strategy-Report-Consultation-Comments-January-2012.pdf

desirable. Figure 7.1 is a copy of a flyer that advertises the installation of new pocket parks, but draws direct connection to a notion of restored mental function and an explicit sense of well-being to be gained from a visit.

The message of the flyer above, when coupled with the conceptualisation of a park space as an assemblage, carries a suggestion that interactions with green space are highly contextualised and circumstantial, and indeed, personal, and that resultant health and well-being outcomes are as much a function of the personal as of the structural.

There is reference made in the flyer to the opportunities for social connections, possibly through the growing of food. As detailed earlier, this would carry an echo of previous research (Francis and Hill 1991; Milligan *et al.* 2004) with respect to a connection to the a cultivated space and a connection to fellow cultivators. It would seem that parks are still seen as having a relevance to social policy and community activity in Gateshead life.

A therapeutic park in an untherapeutic town, or the making of a more therapeutic town?

As I discussed earlier in Chapter Three, Gateshead is a town with significant socio-economic problems – it is ranked relatively highly on the national IMD score, in terms of the overall suite of indices and also in terms of specific indices such as health and well-being.

Saltwell Park would seem to occupy an important place within the life of Gateshead, by providing a set of unique affordances to the borough – it is a large area of public open space, setup to provide recreational opportunities, set quite conveniently within the mass of the urban population. I have shown that, on the whole, it could be considered to be a therapeutic landscape.

Such a suggestion raises a question as to the park's place in the wider context of Gateshead. Does Saltwell Park provide an positive affordance for the borough, irrespective of, and in contrast to, conditions in the neighbouring localities, in accordance to the original intention of park developers (as outlined in Chapter One)? For instance, does the fact that the park provides a location in which local people can experience green space, near to their homes, obviate the need for individual domestic space to be provided to those residents that are without? In another context, it could be suggested that the park operates as a collective therapeutic landscape by operating as a site in which those large numbers of the population who visit it can be exposed to certain public health measures, campaigns that are centred on issues of relevance to local health – such as low rates of initiated breast feeding, of regular physical exercise and poor mental health, issues discussed in Chapter Three. At present, the Park is a site which people use as part of a personal routine; there they are exposed to these occasional public health campaigns; visitors are intended to imbibe the messages concerned, and then activate those learned actions and routines away in the geographies of their own localities. Through some of the initiatives that take place in Saltwell Park, we can

CONCLUSIONS

see the Park attempting to positively affect everyday life of Gateshead, and not simply operating in isolation. Saltwell Park operates with an everyday life of its own, yet has an impact on the everyday life of Gateshead. As such, the Park seems to operate as a therapeutic environment for the wider borough, as well as within its own boundaries.

APPENDICES

Appendix One: IMAGES OF THE PARK

(See also Figures 3.1 and 3.2)

The Car Park and Crematorium

It was my normal starting point of my survey visits, since I would I often arrive by car.

The Grove

Figure Appendix 1.1: The Grove

The shelter is in an area known as the Grove. It seems that historically, it has been an area of the park that has served as a meeting point; there is seating under The Shelter. The Grove has been part of the park since 1920, the shelter since 1931.

The shelter is in an area known as the Grove. It seems that historically, it has been an area of the park that has served as a meeting point; there is seating under The Shelter. The Grove has been part of the park since 1920, the shelter since 1931.

The original bandstand was transported to the Beamish Museum in 1976 (Gateshead MBC n.d.-c).

The normal use of the bandstand was for the performance of music, normally by brass band concerts. The Breastfeeding Awareness Picnic was held nearby.

Figure Appendix 1.2: The Bandstand

Figure Appendix 1.3: The friendship Garden

Komatsu Friendship Garden

During the autumn of 2009, a Japanese garden was been designed and built next to the bandstand. It was intended to be a symbol of civic pride within Gateshead at the borough's links to Japan. A notice on a fence that encircled the construction works said that "Gateshead twinned with Komatsu City, Japan, in February 1991. This garden is a gift from the people of Komatsu city and is being built by gardeners from Komatsu Gardening Association".

South Park

Figure Appendix 1.4: The South Africa War Memorial

Figure Appendix 1.5: the Belvedere

Figure Appendix 1.6: Part of South Park

Figure Appendix 1.7: Primosole Bridge

Within the South Park area, and within a very small area, there are three different commemorations to local servicemen who have died from 1899 onwards. One is the **Boer War Memorial***:* This is the biggest, most prominent and oldest of them all. Second is the **Durham Light Infantry (DLI) wall**, third is **Primosole Bridge,** a relatively new footway through the South Park, coming from the due south towards the Towers. This main entrance into the Towers was moved from its original location as part of restoration. The Durham Light Infantry's Second World War record is carved onto the balustrades. Primosole Bridge crosses the dry moat (or ha-ha) that surrounds the south of the Towers. As well as being used as a footpath, I observed a young family playing, around the bridge, with children hiding under the bridge, then rushing out on their mother.

There is a large grassy expanse , used in much the same way as the Grove's grass. I observed the following events being held on this space:

1. A photo shoot for the Gateshead Together Week on May 7th 2009, near the Angel memorial;
2. Occasional spaces for the Get Fit Outside fitness sessions, utilising the slope for shuttle runs and the ledges for other exercises;
3. Some of the existing sculptures were reinterpreted for the Enchanted Park festivals 2008 and 2009, as well the grassy area being used for performance art installations for the 2009 Enchanted Park.
4. On the hexagonal lawn, above The Towers, was held the Green Festival.

The belvedere accommodates quite severe changes in level.

Maze

There has been a maze in the park since some of the earliest years of the park.

Figure Appendix 1.8: The Maze

Sensory garden

According to David, it seems that after the Second World War, a plan was accepted on July 1954 for the creation of a sensory garden. It would seem that it was built high up on the South Park slope, above the Towers. It was uprooted, as it was deemed not to be part of official restoration plan.

Figure Appendix 1.9: The former sensory garden

The Towers

Figure Appendix 1.10: The Towers

Figure Appendix 1.11: Upstairs in the Towers

Figure Appendix 1.12: A Leaflet Rack

Figure Appendix 1.13: A Green Flag Award

Figure Appendix 1.14: An AV Display of the Restoration

Figure Appendix 1.15: The Upstairs Gallery Space

The park provides opportunities for employment in security, catering, grounds management and event management. Once the Towers held a museum up to its closure 1968-70, which imply that there might have been museum staff, and there used to be more grounds maintenance staff than there are now.

As part of the restoration works, a cafe was created on the first floor. The cafe is used to sell Refreshments during the opening hours of the Towers; it is available for hire, as well. There is a sticker in one of the windows that advertises the space as being a breastfeeding friendly location ("Breastfeeding friendly"), something that was remarked upon by the new mothers' fitness group. The cafe is also used to display and sell artworks. At the top of the stairs is a glass cabinet that holds temporary exhibits. Another holds the trophies that local Bowls' clubs have won down the decades.

Stableblock

Figure Appendix 1.15: The Stableblock

This is a gated off area (but un-padlocked) space, private from the rest of the park.

When School and community groups arrive, they are taken there by staff, using it, as a reception space. The space can be used for group craftwork. The officers of Esther are there.

Pet cages and stables

Figure Appendix 1.17: Pte cages and stables

There had long been an animal presence in the park, since 1881, since the days of the Chief Constable of Gateshead keeping animals there, including a monkey (Gateshead MBC n.d.-c). Peacocks, rabbits, guinea pigs and exotic animals are kept.

The Dene

Figure Appendix 1.18: The Salte Well

This bears some similarities to Jesmond Dene in Newcastle, and Cragside, in Rothbury, Northumberland. It is a based around stream with an artificial flow. It is heavily wooded and shrubby. It is a quiet space within the park, with relatively pedestrian traffic all year-round it seems.

Figure Appendix 1.19: The Dene

The vegetation is a mix of alpine trees and rhododendrons.

There are some small bridges across the Dene. There are some signs warning people that the rocks are slippery; nonetheless, I observed some people, particularly young people stepping on them.

The Lake

Figure Appendix 1.20: Model Boaters

Figure Appendix 1.21: The Lake

Figure Appendix 1.22: The Model Boat Hut

The lake is one of the major features of the park, which along with the Northern Playing Fields, dominates the northern half of the park..

In order to feed birds, visitors either stand on the footpaths, or on a wooden pier.
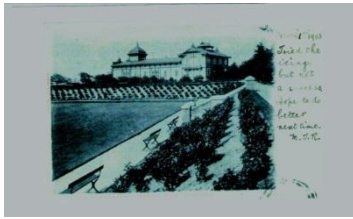
The Bowling Greens

Figure Appendix 1.23: A postcard of one of the bowling greens

There are three greens: in terms of altitude, from lowest to highest, they are the *Saltwell*, *Avenue* and *Borough*, arranged up the slope of the park.

The grass is of a different

Figure Appendix 1.24: The bowling greens today

quality to other grassy areas. Andrew was not impressed with the quality of the lawns though, saying that they had been allowed to deteriorate, all the same, the National Bowls' Festival was held there in late June 2009.

As part of the restoration plans of the 2000's, a new proposed pavilion was not built; instead, an existing pavilion that looks in need of repair is used, together with the Training Centre for tournaments. It is a private space that the general public cannot enter.

Small children's and Older children's areas

Figure Appendix 1.25: The Small Children's Play Area

The main users of this space seem to its intended up-to-age-eight-years-old demographic, with children who seemed to me to be within the age bracket, frequently accompanied with what seemed to be parents and guardians. Another space is from-age-eight-years-old upwards.

Ice cream van and Burger trailer

Figure Appendix 1.26: The Burger Van

An ice cream van is driven into the park for long sections of the year. A burger van trailer is left all year-round.

To conclude with respect to the semi-presence of an ice cream van and a burger trailer, large events staged at the park often have other invited fast food vans and trailers providing refreshments. These events tend to those held in the Northern Playing Fields, such as *Race for Life*, Saltwell Park Shows and the fireworks display. The main food outlets in the park are the Towers (open all year round, but maybe a ten-minute walk away), and the Almond Pavilion (at the top of the eastern slope of the fields, but open during the summer season only, and which does not provide hot food).
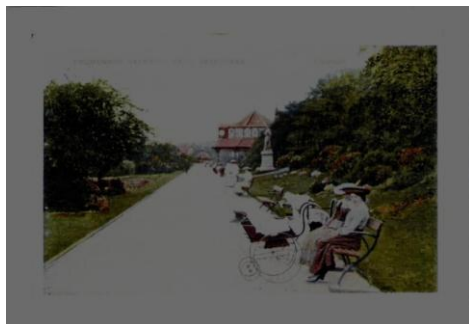
The Long Walk

Figure Appendix 1.27: The Long Walk, 1900

Figure Appendix 1.28: The Almond Pavilion

This is the north-eastern edge of the park.

Rose Garden

Figure Appendix 1.29: The Rose Garden from the east

This is the site of seating, floral displays and the Workers Memorial.

Playing Fields

Figure Appendix 1.30: A Picnic in Progress

It is the largest open expanse within the park. As well as the stage for several major staged events, individuals use it for a range of private activities such as seating, physical activities such as informal sports (group play activities). Dog walking is a popular pastimes; a number of owners were observed letting their dogs off the leash, which is against park rules. I observed some owners teaching obedience activities. During warmer summer days, the hexagonal benches that were dotted about in some corners of the fields were populated by family and friend groups who picnicked. On some other occasions, visitors brought their own deckchairs and foldable seats along, together with windjammers.

On the park were staged a number of events: Saltwell Park Show, *Race For Life*, *Pants In The Park*, Junior Games, Saltwell Park Flower Show, and the Firework Display. During the summer, a bouncy castle was brought in.

Sports Courts

Figure Appendix 1.31: Sports Courts

There is a football court, a tennis court and another for badminton. Users do not have to book to use them. Other grass areas are frequently used by users for ball sports. Users tended to be either older children or family groups. A tennis coaching session was held in June 2009, using the tennis courts.

The nearby grass was the site for fitness activities by the *Get Fit Outside Company*, and Sebastiano.

The Training Centre

Figure Appendix 1.32: The Training Centre

It is a bookable space within the park. It is the venue for some private club activities, normally talks by the Friends of group, and the model boat club's winter home. During the Bowls' tournament, it even served alcohol to participants. There is a galley kitchen for room users.

Dog Exercise Area

Figure Appendix 1.33: the Dog Exercise Area

Footpaths

Ordinarily, they provide perambulatory connectivity between designed spaces. They also serve as exercise spaces for private and organised exercise regimes (walkers, races and organised classes). The speeds on the footpath were normally walking pace, and apart from races, not faster than jogging pace. Only rarely did people bring bicycles into the park, and these were mainly toddlers and small children accompanied by supervising adults. Almost every member of the various demographics that use Saltwell Park could be encountered on footpaths, unlike all other spaces within the park. Because of the topography of this part of Gateshead, some paths were quite steep, which suited those leading exercise classes. During icy weather, grit was often put down, but only in patches, here-and-there.

Seats

Figure Appendix 1.34: Flowers on a Bench

Figure Appendix 1.35: An example of a Memorial Plaque

All around the park are located benches: by the side of footpaths, arranged around spaces of activity (the Bowls' lawns, for example) and focal points (the lake). People who visit can sit on these and watch the scenes unfold around them, as well as engage in a particular activity.

Many of these seats also were wooden benches that had commemorative plaques on. One of the park staff commented to me once that he was wary of asking people to move these bunches of flowers after a certain period, even though the apparently restricted the space on which other park users ocould sit on the benches.

Images and outline of Saltwell Park

Security Cameras

There was a fixed security presence within the park, made up of security cameras. Plans were originally announced for some 16 cameras before restoration. Cameras are to be found not only mounted on high green-painted towers at certain points around the park (car park, shelter, children's play areas, almond pavilion, play courts, some of the entrances), but also other public spaces such as in the Towers cafe.

Figure Appendix 1.36: One of Saltwell Park's Security Cameras

David commented that the system is monitored away from the park, by council employees, who might not always decide that what is going on in the park is of the utmost importance, compared to the town centre.

One of the restoration's supporting Heritage Lottery Fund bid documents (Gateshead MBC n.d.-c) which contained some material from a document called *Northumbria Community Safety Annual Report 1995/6*. A photograph shows four men looking approvingly at two TV screens, with an attendant caption of "CCTV: The Way Forward in Crime Prevention" (Gateshead MBC 2002). Previously, Gateshead MBC commented that increasing harassment that the local Jewish community had been experienced in the park, including "verbal and physical abuse" (Gateshead MBC 1998a) . Some Jewish leaders had asked for effectively a CCTV "corridor" from the park to the nearby Jewish Nursery and Alexandra Terrace; it would not appear that this proposal was ever carried out, marked out in red dots in the map above.

Planting

There are some 3000 trees on the site that provide screening and delineation of different areas of the park. The planting does not quite suggest William Boyd's randomness Boyd (2009), since they tend to follow "designed" features such as boundaries and footpaths; there is not a copse-type feature. Some of the trees are horse chestnuts; during the autumn of 2009, some park users, including some adults with young children would throw sticks up at the branches and try to knock conkers down.

There are approximately 3000 trees on-site (Gateshead MBC 1998b). Trees and shrubs include beech, horse chestnut, black poplar, rhododendrons, holly, and ornamental cherries.

The trees also provide habitats for grey squirrels to live in. Some of the planting made my trips pleasurable, through the sense of smell, particularly mahonia shrubs.

In terms of flowers, Saltwell Park has "has flowers for every season – blossoming French Marigolds, Roses and Phlomis in spring and summer, charming Sedum in autumn, and magical Silverdust in winter." (Taylor 1997: Things to see and do in the Park).

Animals in the Park

Gateshead Birders' website talks at some length about the types of species that can be encountered. Wildlife in the trees includes owls, bats, woodpeckers, and squirrels (Gateshead Birders 2002). The lake holds some captive wildfowl, such as Mute Swans, Canada Geese and Tufted Ducks. Teal and Pintail have been noted there. Around the rest of the park are Collared Doves. Also noted are a variety of "typical suburban park species" such as Greenfinch, Chaffinch and Wood Pigeon. In late spring large numbers of Spotted Flycatcher arrive and can be seen feeding around the bowling greens and open areas. Nuthatch is found in the oak woodland below the castle; also found have been Hawfinch and Tree Sparrow (Gateshead Birders 2002), coots, urban pigeons and seagulls. There is an area of old oak woodland which is the best for wild birds (Gateshead Birders 2002).

In the aviary of the "pets corner" are caged finches and other species (Gateshead Birders 2002).

Esther's Communal Garden

During 2009, Esther built a wildlife pond and viewing platform behind the Bowls' pavilion. The bird garden and pond were semi-private spaces for the public, in that they were not widely publicised (not at all on signposts and maps), and seemed to be predominantly spaces for organised parties.

Figure Appendix 1.37: The Nature Pond

One of the management staff told me that a new allotment space would be created in the north-west part of the park, which would allow the growing of vegetables, salad and flowers. This might serve as a community development space. At the time of writing, that did not appear to have been started.

During the spring and summer, about two school groups would arrive per week (about 30 weeks), comprising up to 65 pupils, to visit the park and either observe the wildlife or engage in craft activities. Community groups were all year-round visitors (about 24 p.a.).

Appendix Two: INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION – OVERALL SCORES
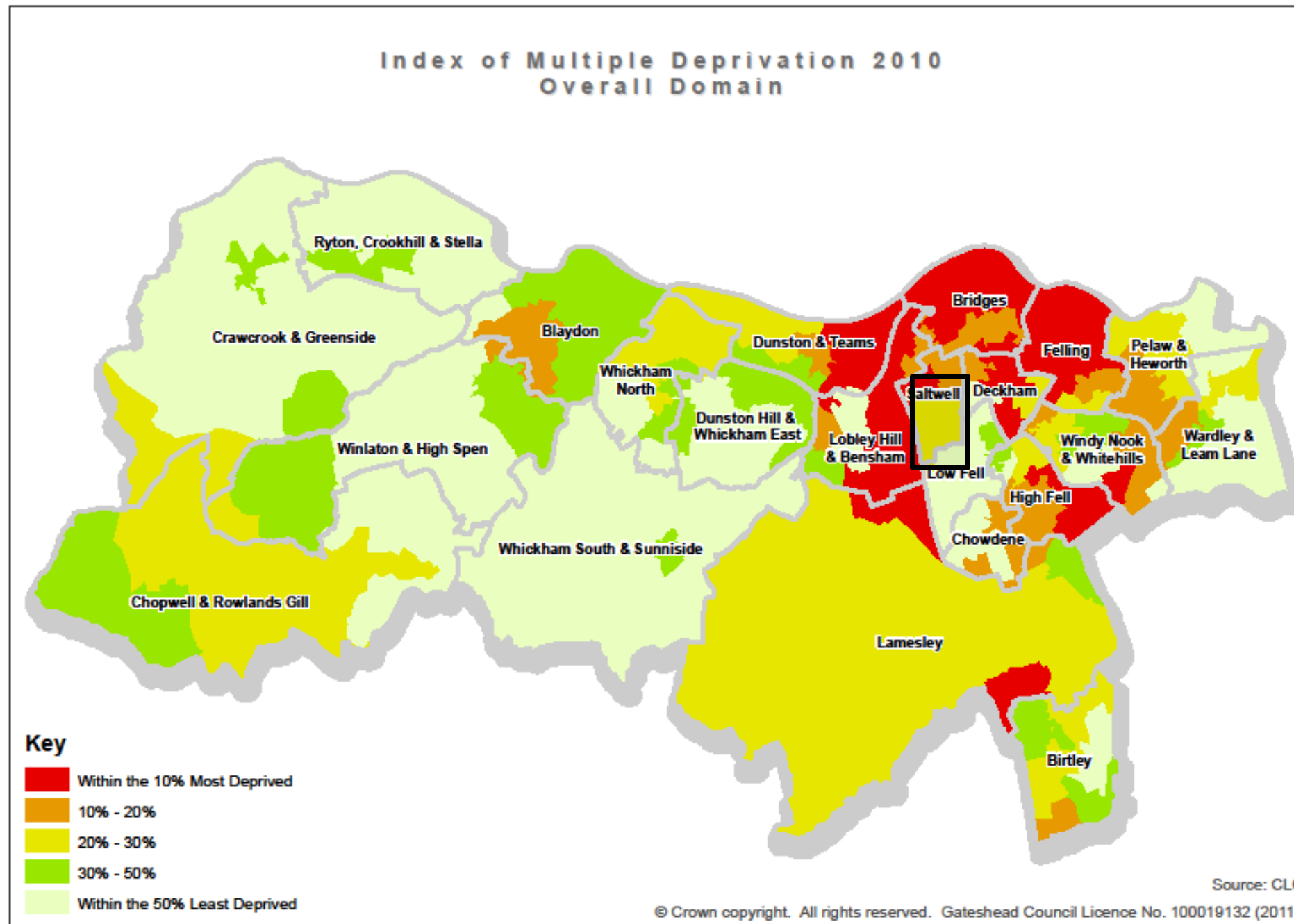
Figure Appendix 2.1: The overall IMD ranking for Gateshead electoral wards. Saltwell Park is within the box in the eastern half of the map (source: http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/DocumentLibrary/People/genie/imd/IMD2010/IMD2010-Overall.pdf , accessed April 23rd 2012).

Appendix Three: INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION – HEALTH SCORES
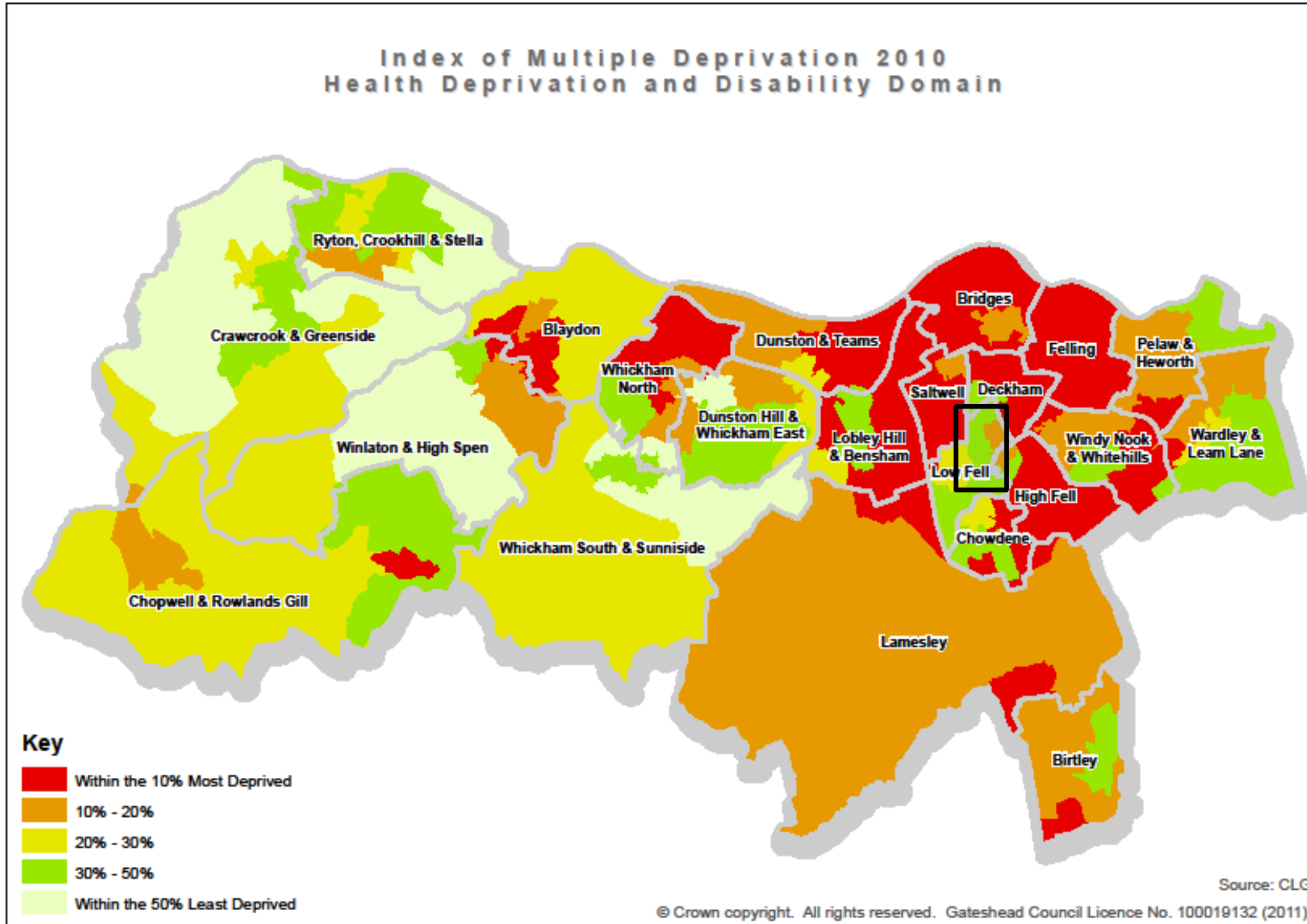
Figure Appendix 3.1: The IMD health ranking of wards in Gateshead, with respect to health indicators. Again, Saltwell Park is in the box (source: http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/DocumentLibrary/People/genie/imd/IMD2010/IMD2010-Health.pdf , accessed April 23rd 2012)

Appendix Four: INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION – COMPARISONS WITH THE NORTH EAST REGION AND ENGLAND

Deprivation:
a national view

This map shows differences in deprivation levels in this area based on national quintiles (of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 by Lower Super Output Area). The darkest coloured areas are some of the most deprived areas in England.
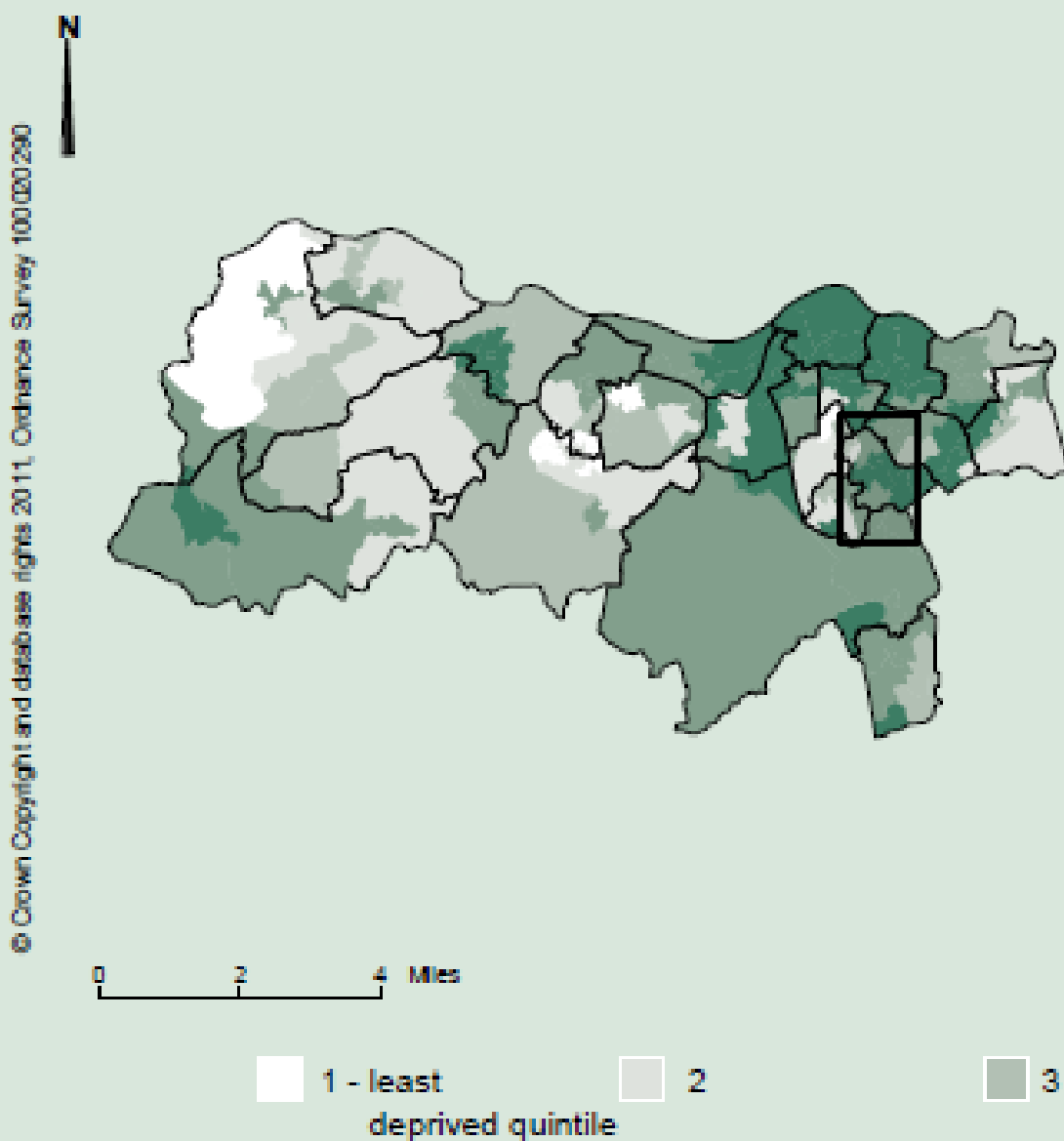
This chart shows the percentage of the population in England, this region, and this area who live in each of these quintiles.

N

© Crown Copyright and database rights 2011. Ordnance Survey 100020290

0   2   4 Miles

% Residents

England   North East   Gateshead

☐ 1 - least
deprived quintile
☐ 2
☐ 3
◩ 4
■ 5 - most
deprived quintile
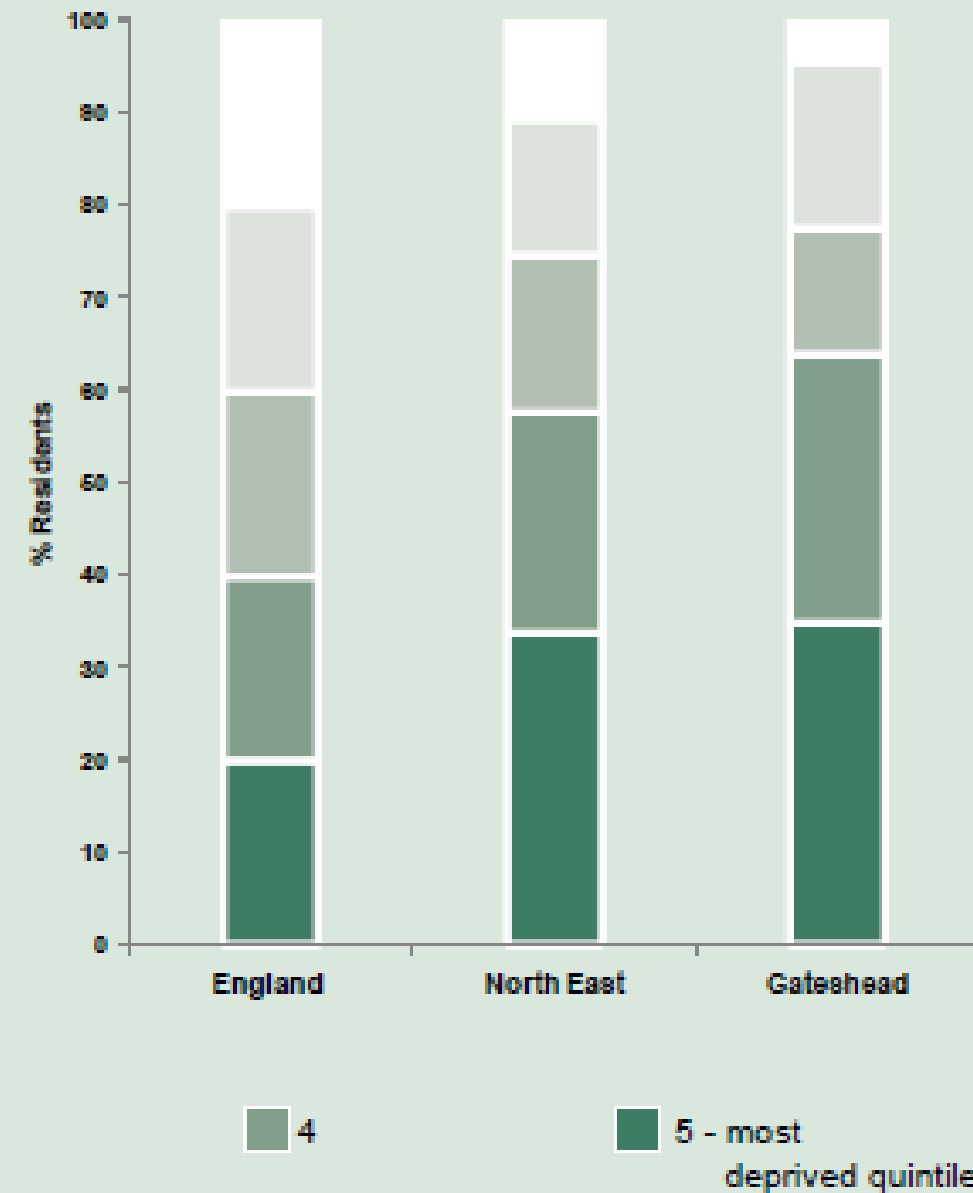
Figure Appendix 4.1: The comparative IMD map of Gateshead for 2011. (Source: http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=50215&SEARCH=gateshead , accessed April 23rd 2012)

Appendix Five: INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION – COMPARATIVE HEALTH INDICATOR SCORES

Health summary for Gateshead

The chart below shows how the health of people in this area compares with the rest of England. This area's result for each indicator is shown as a circle. The average rate for England is shown by the black line, which is always at the centre of the chart. The range of results for all local areas in England is shown as a grey bar. A red circle means that this area is significantly worse than England for that indicator, however, a green circle may still indicate an important public health problem.

- ● Significantly worse than England average
- ● Not significantly different from England average
- ● Significantly better than England average

Regional average⁺ ◆ England Average

England Worst — 25th Percentile — 75th Percentile — England Best

⁺ In the South East Region this represents the Strategic Health Authority average

Domain	Indicator	Local No. Per Year	Local Value	Eng Worst	Eng Avg	Eng Best
Our communities	1 Deprivation	66279	34.8	89.2	19.9	0.0
	2 Proportion of children in poverty	9655	24.3	57.0	20.9	5.7
	3 Statutory homelessness	365	4.24	8.28	1.86	0.08
	4 GCSE achieved (5A*-C inc. Eng & Maths)	1159	54.2	38.0	55.3	78.6
	5 Violent crime	1862	9.8	35.9	15.8	4.6
	6 Long term unemployment	815	6.6	19.6	6.2	1.0
Children's and young people's health	7 Smoking in pregnancy	461	20.1	31.4	14.0	4.5
	8 Breast feeding initiation	1437	62.8	39.9	73.6	95.2
	9 Physically active children	10452	44.7	26.7	55.1	80.3
	10 Obese children (Year 6)	401	22.4	28.6	18.7	10.7
	11 Children's tooth decay (at age 12)	n/a	0.6	1.6	0.7	0.2
	12 Teenage pregnancy (under 18)	166	47.0	69.4	40.2	14.6
Adults' health and lifestyle	13 Adults smoking	n/a	22.8	34.7	21.2	11.1
	14 Increasing and higher risk drinking	n/a	26.3	39.4	23.6	11.5
	15 Healthy eating adults	n/a	19.9	19.3	28.7	47.8
	16 Physically active adults	n/a	10.2	5.8	11.5	19.5
	17 Obese adults	n/a	30.7	30.7	24.2	13.9
Disease and poor health	18 Incidence of malignant melanoma	23	11.6	27.2	13.1	3.1
	19 Hospital stays for self-harm	616	340.0	497.5	198.3	48.0
	20 Hospital stays for alcohol related harm	5705	2526	3114	1743	849
	21 Drug misuse	1437	11.5	23.8	9.4	1.8
	22 People diagnosed with diabetes	9605	5.83	7.87	5.40	3.28
	23 New cases of tuberculosis	9	5	120	15	0
	24 Hip fracture in 65s and over	222	514.7	631.3	457.6	310.9
Life expectancy and causes of death	25 Excess winter deaths	104	16.0	32.1	18.1	5.4
	26 Life expectancy - male	n/a	76.4	73.7	78.3	84.4
	27 Life expectancy - female	n/a	80.6	79.1	82.3	89.0
	28 Infant deaths	12	5.20	10.63	4.71	0.68
	29 Smoking related deaths	457	299.1	361.5	216.0	131.9
	30 Early deaths: heart disease & stroke	192	86.6	122.1	70.5	37.9
	31 Early deaths: cancer	283	127.7	122.1	112.1	76.1
	32 Road injuries and deaths	85	44.8	155.2	48.1	13.7

Figure Appendix 5.1: The comparative health summary for Gateshead for 2011. Relevant themes that pertain to initiatives at Saltwell Park are breastfeeding initiation (8), physically active children (9) (source: http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=50215&SEARCH=gateshead)

Appendix Six: RESEARCH ETHICS AND DATA PROTECTION MONITORING FORM

Research involving humans and environmental impacts by all academic and related staff and students in the department is subject to University requirements for ethics and data protection review. The Department's Research Ethics and Data Protection Peer Review Group will assess research against the guidelines given by the British Sociological Society Association and the Natural Environment Research Council.

It is a requirement that prior to the commencement of all research that this form be completed and submitted to the Department's Research Ethics and Data Protection Peer Review Group. The Peer Review Group will be responsible for issuing certification that the research meets acceptable ethical standards and will, if necessary, require changes to the research methodology or reporting strategy.

A copy of the research proposal detailing methods and reporting strategies is attached   YES

Name of principal investigator or main applicant: WAYNE MEDFORD

Title of research project:

Urban Parks and Their Relation to Local Residents' Health & Well-being

Main subject area: **Human**   Physical   Interdisciplinary

		YES	NO	
1.	Does your research involve living human subjects?	X		Users and non-users of the two parks, staff at both, officials from the two local authorities and from funding agencies.
2.	Does your research involve only the analysis of large, secondary and anonymised datasheets?		X	It will gather observational, interview and photo-voice data from participants. In addition, historical and contemporary material ranging from council records to newspapers to publicity material will be analysed.
3a.	Will you give your informants a written summary of your research and its uses?	X		I have drafted out an introductory letter below. I have another to each local authority.
3b.	Will you give your informants a verbal summary of your research and its uses?	X		In the course of introducing myself, I will do so.
4.	Does your research involve contemporary covert surveillance (for example, participant observation)?	X		Yes, I will be undertaking participant observation in my two parks, and also walking interviews with participants. I intend to carry my campus card, introductory letters from the authorities, assuming they grant permission for my presence. I will ask photovoice participants to sign over copyright to me.
5a.	Will your information automatically be anonymised in your research?	X		Yes. In the case of more identifiable individuals in positions of authorities, I will ask / be sensitive to requests for potential controversial topics being avoided. In my letter to photo-voice participants, I intend to ask that they follow certain guidance in picture-taking; these will be developed collaboratively with each authority.
5b.	IF NO Will you explicitly give			

	all your informants the right to remain anonymous?		
6.	Will monitoring devices be used openly and only with the permission of informants?	X	In the course of my projected pilot, I intend to experiment with videoing interviews with individuals and groups, as part of gaining data from photovoice respondents; I will use these to back up written notes. If I chose to use any stills / footage, I will seek further permission.
7.	Will your informants be provided with a summary of your research findings?	X	I anticipate that pilot-project respondents will be interested in knowing what data has revealed. Where necessary and appropriate, I may arrange separate meetings for individuals and groups, to check meanings and to allow removal of any identifiable data.
8.	Will your research be available to informants and the general public without authorities restrictions placed by sponsoring authorities?	X	N/A (pilot research)
9.	Have you considered the implications of your research intervention on your informants?	X	Please see my note below. As part of trialling participant observation techniques, I will not photograph anyone in a way that allows them to be identifiable. With regard to trialling photovoice with some select participants, I will distribute some guidance that includes suggestions for keeping themselves safe and on the right side of the law and social conventions.
10.	Are there any other ethical issues arising from your research?		X	None seem apparent at the moment, though if any come up during the trial, I will include these for the main fieldwork.

Further details (please include any potential risks to the environment from your research and the steps taken to address the consequent ethical issues):

A pilot study will allow me to trial a number of aspects of my study:

1. Introducing myself and the study to the relevant authorities;
2. Discussing the logistical and operational aspects of a pilot and full study;
3. Introducing myself to some potential on-site aides (a member of a Friends Group, or a warden);
4. Walking around the park with such a person to gain an insight into the park and its usage;
5. Trialling photo-voice techniques with a small number of users);
6. Trailing methods to manage the data, in accordance with Appendix F (Data Protection).

Possible methods identified so far are participant observation, interviews, and photo-voice and discussion groups. This will require a pilot so that I can be truly comfortable with being sure what I am asking is comprehensible to respondents, and yields useful data.

Steps for the pilot study will be:
Observational work in the park

Contact made with:

1. Advertised council officer contacts responsible for each park:
   - Permissions;
   - Involvement in the study; and,
   - Request for an interview regarding the policy context of the park
2. Friends of the Park;
   - Introduce the study; and,
   - Ask for contacts with groups of park users; and,
   - Ask for help in securing a space for conducting interviews.

Trialling the photovoice method with:

   - A single park contact
   - A group in each park

Validation, through appropriate feedback meetings.

APPENDIX SIX: RESEARCH ETHICS AND DATA PROTECTION MONITORING FORM

Having a "social infrastructure" of on-site staffing and possible Friends' Group to each park may afford me personal safety and "legitimacy"; draft Letter 1 below is such an introduction of my study to the park authorities. Ideally, I would seek to undertake interview work at selected times of the day; at night, especially in winter, would pose a greater risk of attack to myself and respondents. Being a black researcher could possibly bring problems of racism. Before undertaking any participant observational and photovoice work, I would seek to make contact with the on-site management and the local police, seeking their advice with regard to risk assessment, and also seeing whether I could be accompanied at potentially hazardous times of the day or year. I also envisage that, out of courtesy, the park staff and management should know about, and be comfortable with my work, and that a possible collective labelling of my survey work could give me an additional kudos in bothering people enjoying the park. I will also need to obtain two separate Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks for each local authority, to be renewed every 12 months.

I see four main ethical criteria to meet:

1. To be open about my purpose in the park and about the fieldwork;
2. To afford respondents anonymity in data collection and in writing up;
3. To allow respondents to pull out at any time, allowing for any personal safety and comfort issues for myself and my participants; and,
4. Ensuring that informants and members of the public observed are not inconvenienced, and that I will be unobtrusive.

I will draw up an introductory letter (draft No. 2) to each participant reiterating this (I have drafted an indicative letter (draft No. 3) covering some issues relating to this; it is below as well.

Durham Geography Department

Risk Assessment Form for Research Postgraduates

Name of Research Postgraduate   Wayne Medford
        Date: Monday, 16 February 2009

Fieldwork Location: Saltwell Park (Gateshead) Grid (if known) Reference/Map Sheet: (if known)

Signature of Supervisor_ Professor Sarah Curtis, Drs Sarah Atkinson and Christine Dunn_____ Date__ November 2008 - July 2010_

Hazard category	Hazard	Who might be harmed?	Precautions
Physical: Weather	Hypothermia	Field workers	During participant observation: Will wear appropriate clothing and carry spare and change itinerary or activities to prevent exposure.
Physical: Terrain	Slips, trips and falls	Field workers	During participant observation: Adequate footwear will be worn. I will avoid steep slopes in parks, and stick to footpaths.
Physical: violence	Assault or harassment	Fieldworker	Will get an introduction from an experienced local council contact to park, particularly on-site. At this time of year (winter), I will seek to walk around park in pairs with on-site staff. Will get specific fieldwork mobile phone (and will disseminate the number with on-site staff and Geography Department office staff). Will take an alarm. Will follow Departmental advice to back off and leave the area immediately if threatened. I will report regularly to Department office staff, so they are aware of my location, especially when finished.
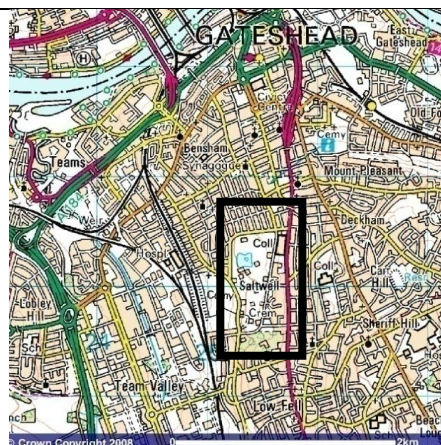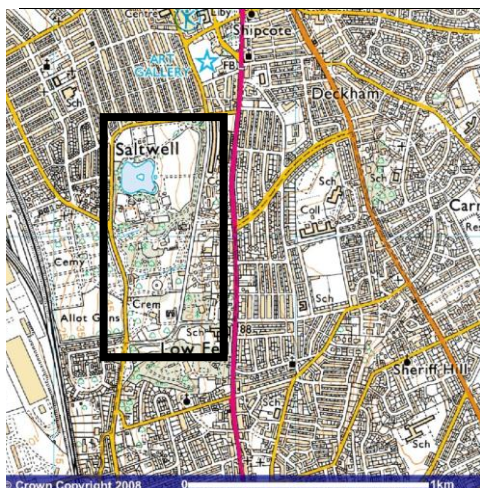
ALTWELL PARK LOCATION MAP, GATESHEAD

ttp://www.gateshead.gov.uk/Leisure%20and%20Culture/parks/Saltwell%20Park/Home.spx

<u>Appendix Six: RESEARCH ETHICS AND DATA PROTECTION MONITORING FORM</u>

Detailed Information (If Known):

Mobile telephone contact number <u>and</u> nearest landline telephone	07532306180: project mobile phone	Source of local weather forecast	TV, local / national radio
Nearest doctor / local surgery	unknown	Communication Procedure	
Nearest hospital	**SALTWELL PARK**: Queen Elizabeth Hospital Sheriff Hill Gateshead 0191 482 0000 NHS Walk-In Centre Bensham Hospital Gateshead For treatment and advice on minor illness and injuries. Open daily 7am - 10pm. No appointment necessary.	*(Means of alerting another party in event of a change of plan, incident or emergency)*	I will give my supervisors and the Departmental Office a schedule of attendance at meetings, and park visits. I will purchase a new mobile phone that allow me to contact the department, for the department to contact me, and for use with park authorities, residents, etc.
Landowner	Saltwell Park: Gateshead MBC	Emergency Procedure	I will purchase a new mobile phone that allow me to contact the department, for the department to contact me, and for use with park authorities, residents, etc.
Is permission required for access?	As a courtesy, yes	*(Protocol used in an emergency)*	

APPENDIX SIX: RESEARCH ETHICS AND DATA PROTECTION MONITORING FORM

Possible agenda for introductory meeting with council officials for Pilot Study

Observational work in the park

Contact made with:

1. Advertised council officer contacts responsible for each park:
   - Permissions;
   - Involvement in the study; and,
   - Request for an interview regarding the policy context of the park
2. Friends of the Park;
   - Introduce the study; and,
   - Ask for contacts with groups of park users; and,
   - Ask for help in securing a space for conducting interviews.

Trialling the photovoice method with:

- A single park contact
- A group in each park

Validation, through appropriate feedback meetings.

Ethical considerations

Risk assessment

Council requirements

Appendix Six: RESEARCH ETHICS AND DATA PROTECTION MONITORING FORM

Letter 1: Draft Initial Introductory Letter to the Park Authorities

DU headed paper

Dear X

My name is Wayne Medford, a postgraduate student at the Department Of Geography, Durham University. I am undertaking a doctoral study into the links between urban parks and local resident's health and well-being. By doing this work, I will be able to determine what people think of their local park, whether and how they use it, and how and why the park may benefit their mental and physical health. The aims and concepts are overleaf.

I am looking to study a number of public parks across Tyneside, to see if they share particular features that allow local residents to enjoy good mental and physical health.

I have selected Z Park as a good place to study because.... This work would broadly consist of three aspects:

1. Descriptions of features of Z park, including, hopefully, some brief interviews with suitable council staff;
2. Observing how different parts of the park are used; and,
3. Asking a small number of local residents, including select staff at the park, to take photographs of things that they like or dislike about the park, on cameras provided by me, and talking about their photos.

At all times, in line with university ethical guidance, respondents will be under no obligation to participate, and their anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. I will also ensure that informants and members of the public observed are not inconvenienced, and that I will be unobtrusive.

I therefore would like to ask whether I can meet with you to explore the feasibility of undertaking this research. The study is located within the academic field of health geography, and should provide insights into the beneficial effect of Z Park to local residents;

as such, we would wish to share results with yourselves and other interested parties, as research progresses. A member of staff from Durham University encloses a covering letter.

Yours sincerely,

Wayne Medford

The Concept of the study

To examine how parks across Tyneside benefit local residents' health and well-being.

The aims of my study are as follows:

1. Note different features within each park that may be important to health and well-being;

2. See how people use these features;

3. To see how people behave in different parts of their park;

4. To see how important parks are to people's daily lives; and

5. To find out what mental and physical benefits people talk about.

Letter 2: Draft Invitation to Local Park Residents to Take Part in the Study

Council

headed paper

DU stamp

Laminated

Dear resident,

This letter is to introduce a study being conducted at Z Park, looking at how this park benefits local residents' health and well-being. It is being undertaken by me, Wayne Medford, a postgraduate student at Durham University. Your help in with this project is sought.

You will be one of asked to participate over the next 12 months. You are under no obligation to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time, and your anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained.

There are a number of things that I will ask you do:

1. **Take photos of things that you like about the park, or like doing in the park.**
2. **Take photos of things that you do not like about the park, or that you do not like doing in the park.**
3. **A single-use camera will be provided to you so that you can take your pictures;**
4. **I will contact you, to arrange a time at location X to discuss your photos with you.**

Let me stress that though you are being asked to participate, you are under obligation to do so, and you anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. All costs relating to the provision of camera and film development will be borne by the project. If you wish to participate, please note the suggestions made below for using your camera in the park.

Contact numbers for me [and others] are provided below, should you have questions or concerns.

Enclosed guidelines

Signed

Wayne Medford

Z Park Council representative

Draft letter 3: instructions for photovoice exercise

Dear participant

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. You are under obligation to do so, and you anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. All costs relating to the provision of camera and film development will be borne by the project. If you wish to participate, please note the suggestions made overleaf for using your camera.

1. **A single-use camera will be provided to each person;**
2. **Take a picture (or pictures) of something that you like doing in the park, or that you like about it;**
3. **Take some more of things that you dislike about the park;**
4. **Take some more of another place that is important in your life;**
5. **Return the camera, by the deadline given, to location x in the park, upon which time, the film will be developed;**
6. **Wayne will contact you, to arrange a time at location X to discuss your photos with you.**
7. **Afterwards, should you wish to continue, a new camera will be provided about 3 months later, and you will be asked to repeat steps 2-6. You can take pictures of either the same activity or features that caught your eye before, or something entirely new.**
8. **In later presentations and reports, in order to illustrate a particular point about the conversation, I may ask to use a photo that you have taken in either presentations or the written photo. You will within your rights to refuse, or later withdraw permission for usage of a photo.**

Contact numbers for me [and others] are provided below, should you have questions or concerns.

Signed

Wayne Medford

Z Park Council representative

Important

Guidelines for using taking pictures for this study.

At all times, please:

1. **Do not put yourself, or others, in any danger, in order to take photographs;**

2. **Do not break the law in order to take photographs;**

3. **Observe the rules of Z Park at all times;**

4. **Observe the rules of any other places that you wish to take photographs in;**

5. **Do not take photographs of any individuals, in which they will be identified (e.g. avoid close-ups of people's faces);**

6. **Avoiding taking pictures of children individually or in groups;**

7. **Respect the privacy of other individuals, especially when around children;**

8. **If you want to photograph something that relates something that to someone has done, where possible, photograph the results of their actions (e.g., vandalism, park staff at work; instead photograph the work that park staff have done);**

9. **If you are asked about what you are doing, be polite and open, and show the enquirer this letter.**

APPENDIX SIX: RESEARCH ETHICS AND DATA PROTECTION MONITORING FORM

Declaration

I have read the Departmental Guidance on Research Ethics and Data Protection and believe that, where appropriate, the research proposal complies fully with the requirements of the documents listed (Appendices B-F) and The Durham University Principles for Data Protection (http://www.dur.ac.uk/data.protection/dp_principles/). I will not deviate from the methodology or reporting strategy without further permission from the Department's Research Ethics and Data Protection Peer Review Group.

Signed…………Wayne Medford…………..   Date……Tuesday, 11 November 2008

Signed (Supervisor)…………………………………………
        Date………………………….

Submissions without a copy of the research proposal (see below) will not be considered.

Summary of Research Proposal: NB this is for Pilot Research work
To be completed by Department of Geography Postgraduates in consultation with their supervisors and to accompany the 'Research Ethics and Data Protection Monitoring Form'

This 1 page summary research proposal should be submitted along with your completed 'Research Ethics and Data Protection Monitoring Form'. The summary should not exceed 1 page in length and should demonstrate that you have thought carefully about the ethical issues to do with your research. Please read the notes provided for each section and then delete them before completing the form yourself.

Name of Student: Wayne Medford

Please provide a <u>brief</u> summary of your proposed research under the following headings:

(1) Context and Research Questions

Notes: In this section you should include a short statement (one paragraph) detailing the broad aim of the project and the significance of your proposed research within current literature. You should also include up to 4 key research questions that you intend to address in the course of your research

The Thesis Concept
To examine psycho-social factors surrounding use of a residential public park on Tyneside, and derived benefits.

The Thesis Aims
1. To identify the possible healing and health-promoting characteristics of the park;
2. To use the concept of spatial habitus to examine the park;
3. How factors such field, capital, and habitus, may affect how the park is conceived of, both within and without each park;
4. To relate each park to other significant spaces to residents; and,
5. To investigate whether equitable healing takes place in the park.

Urban parks fit into four discourses, relating to: (1) therapeutic and restorative spaces, (2) individual and social constructions, leading into practices and "habitus" (3) social position and power relations, and (4) urban public spaces. I seek to try to link these discourses together to provide a wide-ranging theoretical framework.

(2) Proposed Methods

Notes: In this section you should provide details of the type of methodologies that you are proposing to use rather than exact numbers, duration etc. Details of your proposed field sites should also be provided so that ethical consideration can be given to any site specific issues i.e. working in vulnerable physical environments, accessibility, confidentiality, covert/overt researcher roles etc.

Saltwell Park, Gateshead (54 ha)

My intended qualitative mixed methods are (participant observation, interviews, photo-voice, discussion groups), to allow residents to explain whether and how they see each particular park as "therapeutic".

(3) Communication of Research Findings

Notes: In this section you should provide information about how you intend to disseminate your research findings i.e. written, oral and other formats. You should pay particular attention to the ways in which your data will be made available to different audiences and issues surrounding confidentiality and anonymity.

Appendix Six: RESEARCH ETHICS AND DATA PROTECTION MONITORING FORM

The general format of interviews.

	Question
1.	How does this activity/ phenomenon affect your health and well-being?
2.	What made you start your activity?
3.	What made you start the activity here in this park?
4.	Did anyone help you start the activity here in this park?
5.	What does it involve you doing?
6.	Do you notice anything different about yourself after a trip to the park?
7.	Have you ever seen anybody doing anything in the park that you wanted to try?
8.	Have you ever seen anybody doing anything in the park that you have not wanted to try?
9.	In general, do you think much about your health and well-being?
10.	If so, what aspects of health and well-being are important to you?
11.	What part does this park play in your health & well-being?
12.	What would you miss if the park was not here?

Appendix Seven: ADULT ANNOTATED MAP INFORMATION PACK

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Date: Monday, 05 November 2012~~Sunday, 04 November 2012~~

Dear _____,

Urban Parks and Their Relationship to Local Residents' Health and well-being

This letter is to introduce a study being conducted at Saltwell Park, looking at how this park benefits local residents' health and well-being. It is being undertaken by me, Wayne Medford, a Durham University researcher.

I am asking whether you would mind taking part in a simple exercise. You will be one of a number of adults and children asked to participate over the next 12 months.

There are a number of things that I would ask you to do:

1. **Think about what you like about Saltwell Park, or what you like doing in the park;**
2. **Think about what you do not like about the park, or what you do not like doing in it;**
3. **Make some notes on the map provided;**
4. **Then, I will ask you some questions about your opinions and memories.**

You do not have to take part. If you do, your anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. All costs of material will be borne by the project.

If you would like to take part please sign and date the form below. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the project then feel free to contact me on the number below.

Best wishes

Mr Wayne Medford

- -

I am happy with the information set out in this form and agree to participate in the project.

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Participant number (for completion by project): _____
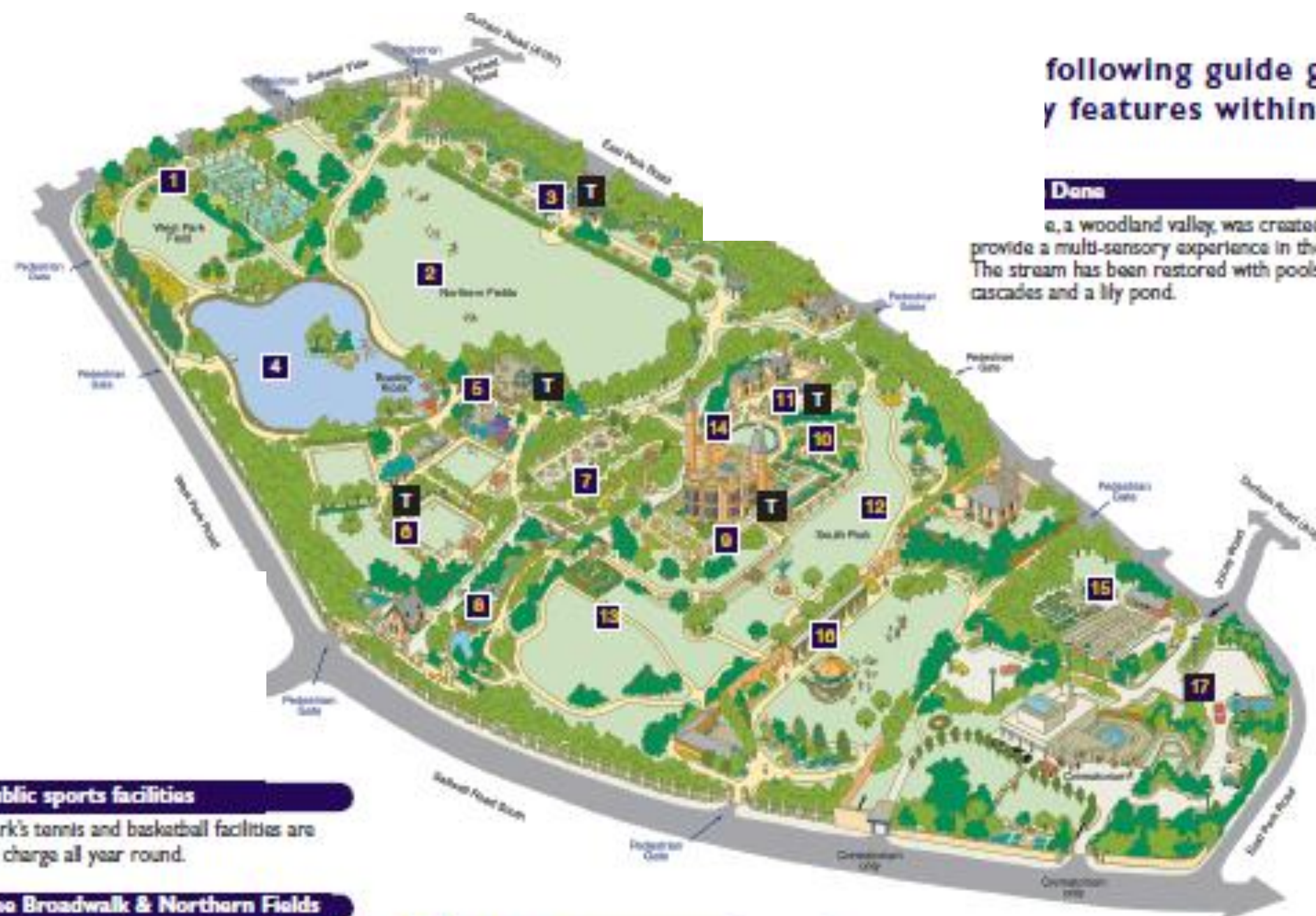
following guide gives
y features within the

Dene

e, a woodland valley, was created to
provide a multi-sensory experience in the Park.
The stream has been restored with pools,
cascades and a lily pond.

Public sports facilities

Park's tennis and basketball facilities are
of charge all year round.

The Broadwalk & Northern Fields

Northern Fields is the main area for picnics

Thank you for taking part!

What is the purpose of the project?

To find out what people like about Saltwell Park, why, and how it affects their health and well-being.

Why was I selected to take part?

You visit Saltwell Park

What procedures is the project observing?

The outline of the project has been approved by Durham University Geography Department. Information will be given to those taking part.

Those taking part will be asked to sign a consent form, confirming that they understand what the project is about, and that they are willing to take part.

Interviews will be recorded using a digital voice recorder, written up, and used, together with people's notes, to produce new theories. At all points, it will be made clear that people can withdraw consent to continue.

Wayne Medford has a current Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau clearance form.

How will confidentiality be assured?

In future talks and reports about my project, I may wish to use some of your art or a quotation; nothing that identifies a particular person will be used. Nothing that identifies a person will be shown to anyone outside the University and all data will be held securely and will only be used for the purposes of the project.

You do not have to take part; you can withdraw from the study at any time, and your anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained.

Participant number: _____

Adult Information Park for impromptu meetings

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APPENDIX EIGHT: PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT INFORMATION
PACK FOR CHILD PARTICIAPTION

Date: Monday, 05 November 2012~~Sunday, 04 November 2012~~

Dear Sir / Madam,

Urban Parks and Their Relationship to Local Residents' Health and well-being

This letter is to introduce a study being conducted at Saltwell Park, looking at how this park benefits local residents' health and well-being. It is being undertaken by me, Wayne Medford, a Durham University researcher.

I am asking whether you would mind taking part in a simple exercise. You will be one of a number of adults and children asked to participate over the next 12 months.

There are a number of things that I would ask you to do:

5. **Think about what you like about Saltwell Park, or what you like doing in the park;**

6. **Think about what you do not like about the park, or what you do not like doing in it;**

7. **Then, I will ask you some questions about your opinions and memories.**

You do not have to take part. If you do, your anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. All costs of material will be borne by the project.

If you would like to take part please sign and date the form below. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the project then feel free to contact me on the number below.

Best wishes

Mr Wayne Medford

– –

I am happy with the information set out in this form and agree to participate in the project.

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Participant number (for completion by project): _____

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Monday, 05 November 2012 ~~Sunday, 04 November 2012~~

A big "Thank You" to you for taking part!

What is the purpose of the project?

To find out what people like about Saltwell Park, why, and how it affects their health and well-being.

Why was my child selected to take part?

You have visited Saltwell Park.

What procedures is the project observing?

The outline of the project has been approved by Durham University Geography Department.

Information will be given to those taking part and parents/ guardians. Those taking part and parents/ guardians will be asked to sign a consent form, confirming that they understand what the project is about, and that they are willing to take part.

Interviews will be recorded using a digital voice recorder, written up, and used, together with the notes, to produce new theories.

At all points, it will be made clear that people can withdraw consent to continue.

Wayne Medford has a current Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau clearance form.

How will confidentiality be assured?

In future talks and reports about my project, I may wish to use some of what you have said; nothing that identifies a particular person will be used. Nothing that identifies a person will be shown to anyone outside the University and all data will be held securely and will only be used for the purposes of the project.

You can withdraw from the study at any time, and their anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained.

Participant number: _____

Child informant material

[Use Official Durham Letterhead]

Date:

[Parental Address]

Dear [Parent's Name]

Urban Parks and Their Relationship to Local Residents' Health and well-being

This letter is to introduce a study being conducted at Saltwell Park, looking at how this park benefits local residents' health and well-being. It is being undertaken by me, Wayne Medford, a Durham University researcher.

Your child's class is undertaking visit to Saltwell Park, as part of its studies, **on Monday, 02 March 2009**. I am writing to you to ask your permission for your child to take part in a 1-2 week-long project activity alongside their classmates. Your child will be one of a number of children and adults asked to participate over the next 12 months.

There are a number of things that I would ask your child to do:

8. Your child thinks of things that they like about the park, or like doing in the park, and will be asked to draw a picture, or find an object, or makes notes on a map;

9. They do the same, with things that they do not like about the park, or do not like doing in the park;

10. Your child makes notes on why they chose the things that they liked or didn't like, and what they feel about them;

11. Some plain paper and a map will be provided to your child; and,

12. I will contact your child's school, to arrange a time, to discuss your child's pictures and notes with them. I anticipate that this will take place either at the school, or during a further visit to Saltwell Park; a teacher will be present during this session.

Your child is does not have to take part, to do so, and their anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. All costs of material will be borne by the project.

If you are willing for me to ask your child to take part in the project then please sign and date the form below and return it to me in the pre-paid envelope enclosed. If

APPENDIX EIGHT: PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT INFORMATION PACK FOR CHILD PARTICIAPTION

you would like to discuss any aspect of the project then feel free to contact me on the above number.

Best wishes

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Mr Wayne Medford

APPENDIX EIGHT: PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT INFORMATION PACK FOR CHILD PARTICIAPTION

[Use Official Durham Letterhead]

I am happy with the information set out in this form and agree to you asking my child to participate in the project.

Signed: _____

Date:_____

Print Name: _____

Participant number: _____

Instructions for Children

This letter is about a study taking place at Saltwell Park, looking at how this park benefits local residents' health and well-being. It is being undertaken by me, Wayne Medford, a researcher at Durham University. Your help in with this project is sought.

You do not have to take part, you can withdraw from the study at any time, and no-one will find out that you have taken part.

There are a number of things that I would ask you to do:

At Saltwell Park

1. Please think of things <u>that you like about the park, or like doing in the park</u>, and either:

    Draw a picture, or

    Find an object, or

    Makes notes on a map;

2. Make notes on <u>why you chose</u> the things that you liked, and <u>what you feel about them</u>;

3. Please think of <u>what you do not like about the park, or do not like doing in the park,</u> and either ;

    Draw a picture, or

    Find an object, or

    Makes notes on a map;

4. Make notes on <u>why you chose</u> the things that you didn't liked, and <u>what you feel about them</u>;

5. Some plain paper and a map will be provided to you,

After you have been to Saltwell Park

6. I will contact your school, to arrange a time, to discuss your pictures and notes with them. I anticipate that this will take place either at the school, or during a further visit to Saltwell Park; a teacher will be present during this session.

If you understand what the project is about and you are happy to take part, then please sign and date below.

Best wishes

Mr Wayne Medford

APPENDIX EIGHT: PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT INFORMATION PACK FOR CHILD PARTICIAPTION

I understand what the project is about and what I am being asked to do and I am happy to take part in the project.

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Signed: _____

      Date:_____

Print Name: _____

APPENDIX EIGHT: PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT INFORMATION PACK FOR CHILD PARTICIAPTION

Participant number: _____

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Hello, welcome to Saltwell Park! Hopefully, you will enjoy your visit

There are a number of things that I would ask you to do:

At Saltwell park

1. Please think of things <u>that you like about the park, or like doing in the park,</u> and either:

    Draw a picture, or

    Find an object, or

    Make notes on a map;

2. Make notes on <u>why you chose</u> the things that you liked, and <u>what you feel</u> about them;

3. Please think of <u>what you don't like about the park, or do not like doing in the park,</u> and either:

    Draw a picture, or

    Find an object, or

    Make notes on a map;

4. Make notes on <u>why you chose</u> the things that you didn't like, and <u>what you feel</u> about them;

5. Some plain paper and a map will be provided to you.

After you have been to Saltwell Park

6. I will contact your school, to arrange a time, to discuss your pictures and notes with them. I anticipate that this will take place either at the school, or during a further visit to Saltwell Park; a teacher will be present during this session.

Important

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Some suggestions for using taking part in this project.

At all times, please:

1. Do not put yourself, or others, in any danger;

2. Do not break the law;

3. Observe the rules of Saltwell Park at all times;

4. Observe the rules of any other places that you wish to make notes in;

5. Respect the privacy of other individuals, especially when around children;

6. If you are asked about what you are doing, be polite and open, and show the enquirer this letter.

Use This Sheet for Notes at Saltwell Park

1. Please think of things <u>that you like about the park, or like doing in the park</u>:

> My first picture is of
>
> _____
>
> _____

> My second picture is of
>
> _____
>
> _____

> My first object is
>
> _____
>
> _____

> My second object is
>
> _____
>
> _____

       Makes notes on a map.

2. Make notes on <u>why you chose</u> the things that you liked,

> I chose my first picture of _____ because
>
> _____
>
> _____ _____

I chose my second picture of _____

because

_____

_____

I chose this first object _____

because

_____

_____

I chose this second object _____

because

_____

3. And what you feel about them;

This first picture of _____ makes me feel:

_____

_____

_____

This second picture of _____ makes me feel:

_____

_____

This first object _____ makes me feel:

_____

_____

_____

> This second object _____ makes me feel:
>
> _____
>
> _____
>
> _____

4. Please think of things <u>that you don't like about the park, or don't like doing in the park</u>:

> My   first   picture   is   of
>
> _____

> My   second   picture   is   of
>
> _____

> My   first   object   is
>
> _____

> My   second   object   is
>
> _____

Makes notes on a map;

5. Make notes on <u>why you chose</u> the things that you don't like,

> I chose my first picture of _____ because
>
> _____
>
> _____
>
> _____

I chose my second picture of _____ because

_____

_____

_____

I chose this first object _____ because

_____

_____

_____

I chose this second object _____ because

_____

_____

_____

6. And what you feel about them;

This first picture of _____ makes me feel:

_____

_____

This second picture of _____ makes me feel:

_____

_____

This first object _____ makes me feel:

_____

_____

This second object _____ makes me feel:

_____

_____

_____

The following guide gives many features within the

8 The Dene

The Dene, a woodland valley, was created to provide a multi-sensory experience in the Park. The stream has been restored with pools, cascades and a lily pond.

Public sports facilities

Park's tennis and basketball facilities are of charge all year round.

The Broadwalk & Northern Fields

Northern Fields is the main area for picnics

APPENDIX EIGHT: PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT INFORMATION PACK FOR CHILD PARTICIAPTION

Thank You for Taking Part!

What is the purpose of the project?

To find out what people like about Saltwell Park, why, and how it affects their health and well-being.

Why was my child selected to take part?

Your child visits Saltwell Park

What procedures is the project observing?

The outline of the project has been approved by Durham University Geography Department. Information will be given to those taking part and parents/ guardians. Those taking part and parents/ guardians will be asked to sign a consent form, confirming that they understand what the project is about, and that they are willing to take part.

Interviews will be recorded using a digital voice recorder, written up, and used, together with the children's notes, to produce new theories. At all points, it will be made clear that children can withdraw consent to continue.

The interviews will be conducted in the presence of a child's teacher or group leader. Wayne Medford has a current Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau clearance form.

How will confidentiality be assured?

In future talks and reports about my project, I may wish to use some of the children's art or a quotation; nothing that identifies a particular person will be used. Nothing that identifies a child will be shown to anyone outside the University and all data will be held securely and will only be used for the purposes of the project.

Your child does not have to take part; your child can withdraw from the study at any time, and their anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained.

Participant number: _____

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