

APPENDIX A

Facts about *The Caer Llan Trilogy* (CLT)

Location (see www.caerllan.co.uk)

Caer Llan Field Studies and Conference Centre is situated 4 miles south of Monmouth, Monmouthshire, Wales, on the B4293 between Monmouth and Chepstow. It is in the hamlet of Craig-y-Dorth, although most would simply say it is 'near Trellech', the closest village.

Caer Llan sits above the Wye Valley, overlooking the Brecon Beacons and the Usk Valley. In Wales, but within a few miles of England, it is 'borderland'. Historically a highly contested corridor, castle fortresses from the middle-ages are dotted along this part of the Wales/England border testifying to that contest. It is within a noted beauty spot; visitors enter the area with certain expectations, therefore.

What is Caer Llan?

Caer Llan is a large Victorian country house, built in the 1830s. In 1970, the current owner, Peter Carpenter, bought the house (which had recently been a small private boys' school) and converted it into a conference and field studies centre. Further accommodation, (including an earth shelter, the Berm House) was added in the 1980s. The 24 acre grounds and gardens are extensive and varied including woodlands (designated a site of Special Scientific Interest), a swimming pool and an ancient millstone quarry.

The project: the Caer Llan Trilogy (CLT)

What was it and why?

The Caer Llan Trilogy comprised three annual performance intensive events of 4-5 days each over the August Bank Holidays, 2002-04 (with gestation periods between). These were:

- Caer Llan 1: The Caer Llan Sestina (2002);
- Caer Llan 2: Disrupting the Landscape (2003);
- Caer Llan 3: Performing Place (2004).

The format of the intensives varied. The first and second ended with outcomes to an invited audience, for example; the third comprised peer-viewed group and individual practical 'responses' across the five days. Originally, the research project was intended to be for one year, the Caer Llan Sestina of 2002. It became apparent, however, even before the first intensive commenced, that a trilogy would offer greater research opportunities.

The CLT was established to explore the performance of place. What might comprise a performance of place? Were there different impulses, processes or realisations in the performance of place to, say, site-specific performance, for example? This was part of a long term research interest into place and performance stemming from the late 1990s. The project at Caer Llan provided an opportunity to explore certain facets of the performance of place in explicit detail. The key research questions of the Trilogy were, broadly:

- To what extent can performance impact upon participants' understanding of place?
- Can performance have a function in articulating place?

Rooted in current and recent theories of place, the CLT provides a case study of place-related performance praxis, therefore.ⁱ

The trilogy received some funding from Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London. Otherwise, the group were self-funded. Some received funding from their own organisations.

Who was involved?

64 practitioners took part in the project across the three years with approximately 30-35 in each year including several 'staff' responsible for particular areas e.g. craft, design, research assistant, filming or myself as principal investigator. The core research group comprised mainly applied theatre practitioners and drama educators from organisations such as: Natural Theatre Company, Oldham Theatre Workshop, universities such as UWE, BBC, The Broadway (Barking), Big Fish Theatre Company, Full House Theatre Company and Central, as well as freelance practitioners and drama teachers. Most of the core research group had been undergraduates between 1993 and 2002 on a drama and applied theatre degree at Central. The research arose out of this commonality and mutual knowledges (of each other, working methods, interest in non-traditional theatre venues and so on). Their socio-economic backgrounds were varied; some had attended inner-city London state schools and colleges, others were privately educated, for example. Ages ranged from 22 to over 40. All had an undergraduate degree.

Some of the research group had stayed at Caer Llan for ten days in 2000. (See [Background Project](#). They had been part of a company performing a production rooted in the 5th century schism between Christianity and the pagan religions woven around the Arthur legend, touring ancient borderland sites. We had used Caer Llan as our base for nearly two weeks.) In addition to inviting these people to the research project, all graduates from the degree who were interested in working in this way were e-mailed. The original 2002 flyer/invitation explained that my colleague, Keith Ortonⁱⁱ and I were interested in exploring: 'working with, and in, a natural environment and how this drives and/or affects performance' and that we wanted 'to try and push some boundaries on the Caer Llan weekend' (Caer Llan flyer, 2002). 6 participants in 2002 were completely 'new'; they had not been part of the project when we stayed at Caer Llan in 2000. The majority in 2002, therefore, were people who had an investment in the place already. The pattern was similar in 2003.

In the last year of the project, 2004, the 'core' research group were joined by 12 MA students, taking a unit focussing on theatre in landscape on a part-time MA in Applied Theatre at Central. They had no physical knowledge of the place. The MA group were culturally more heterogenous and generally older than the core group with an age range of, approximately, 23 to over 45. I had taught them prior to the intensive at Caer Llan where they had engaged theoretically (and, to a certain extent, practically) with ideas of place, performance and landscape.

The following list gives the relevant factual information about the attendance of the participants.

performing place: the Caer Llan trilogy

Name	2002	2003	2004	Notes; graduating year
Anstead, Anna*	/		/	01
Anstead, Simon	/			Anna's partner – runner and craft.
Atherton, James*	/		/	96
Ayres, Harriet*		/	/	00
Ayres, Nina			/	Design and craft – working with MAs.
Baker, Paula			/	MA student
Baxter, John	/			Lucy's partner. Filming. Audience in 2003.
Baxter, Lucy	/		/	99. Audience in 2003.
Bell, Mike	/	/	/	Keith Orton's partner. Craft.
Borsten, Michelle			/	MA student
Boulton, Sophie*	/	/	/	98
Canon, Shaun*		/	/	97. Visited in 2002.
Cater, Nic*	/	/		99
Clayton, James	/			Lucy Baxter's nephew. Craft
Clayton, Katherine	/			Lucy Baxter's niece. Craft
Connelly, Claudia	/			01
Connor, Steve		/	/	Matt Hemming's partner. Filming
Coshan, Adam*	/			98
Curtis, Barney	/			99
De Gabriel, Lara	/			96
Delight, Richard			/	Staff, technical
Dominic, Louise*	/	/	/	99
Donnelly, Jack		/		Had worked with Full House TC, summer 2003,
Douek, Michelle			/	Design student
Eden, Brynn*	/		/	00
Farrier, Steve		/	/	Research assistant.
Fellar, Anton			/	MA student
Flynn, Natalie			/	MA student
Foley, Izzy*	/	/	/	00
Green, Ruth			/	MA student
Harvey, Colin		/		Media
Hemming, Matt*		/	/	99
Howe, Alex		/		99
Ison, Tania			/	MA student
Jessup, Jemma		/		01
Josephs, Carmen			/	MA student
Lamming, Liz*	/			01
Latter, Eddie		/	/	97
Laverty, Al		/		03
Lee, Beth*	/	/	/	01
Mackey, David*	/	/	/	Sally Mackey's partner. Runner.
Mackey, Sally*	/	/	/	Principal Investigator
Matthewson, Darren		/		Shaun Canon's partner. Runner. Visited in 2002.
McGill, Catherine			/	MA student
Miles, Ben*	/	/	/	99
Nelson, Sarah	/			96
Oliff, Sam			/	MA student

performing place: the Caer Llan trilogy

Name 2002 2003 2004 Notes; graduating year

Orton, Keith*	/	/	/	Co-researcher - design
Papadopoulos, Dionysios			/	MA student
Pollitt, Cass	/			98
Price, Craig*	/			PGCE 96
Puzone, Roberto		/		03
Redelsperger, George		/	/	Steve Farrier's partner. Filming
Rees, Lorna		/		01
Smith, Mal*	/			96. Audience in 2003.
Tait, Ben*	/	/	/	01
Taylor, Danella		/		99
Thornton, Andy			/	MA student
Toumazou, Lydia*	/			98. Audience in 2003.
Verard, Kelly			/	04
Wedderburn, Elly		/		03
Wedderburn, Laurie		/		Elly Wedderburn's son (aged 10)
Wilson, Zievrina	/	/		01
Wingrove, Sarah*	/	/	/	01

Those asterisked took part in the original 2000 background project.

** Whilst not in the background project of 2000, Baxter had been one of five in a series of workshops touring primary schools in the area in June 1999 and 2000. The other four had been Cater (replaced by Coshan in 2000), Smith, Dominic and Hemming. These workshops had been set in 5th century AD and had enrolled pupils as villagers of the time. The workshops acted as support to the touring production of August 2000. Baxter was closely connected with the original project therefore.

Personal Biography

Caer Llan was already a part of my (Sally Mackey) biography before the trilogy. I had known Caer Llan and its owners since childhood as my parents had viewed the house when moving to the area in 1970 and I had taken part in a geography/geology field trip as part of an A level group from a local school in the 1970s. We knew Peter Carpenter through friendship groups locally and introduced our local drama company to Caer Llan, performing a compilation piece of theatre on the lawn (*Seven Deadly Sins*). I had visited the site on other occasions although had little contact since the early 1980s until I was looking for a company base in 2000.

ⁱ This research follows a different path to that of, for example, Jen Harvie (*Staging the UK*, 2005) where the performance of place is aligned with the performance of - 'culturally produced, dynamic' (p. 3) - national identity.

ⁱⁱ Keith Orton is a design colleague at work. We had worked on several projects together and had developed a mutual interest in working in non-traditional, open air spaces. Having formulated the ideas for a research project in 2002 at Caer Llan, I invited Keith to join me. He was seminal to the work.