

HUMAN SPACE

# UTOPIA



COLIN WARD



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# HUMAN SPACE

What would your ideal place be like?

Here are a million dreams of the good life. Pie in the sky, islands in the sun, super-cities, country cottages, the best of both worlds.

What about the reality?

With so many dreams to choose from, how do places come to be as they are? Do you live in someone else's Utopia?

## An Account of the great Plenty of that Fruitful Country.

There's all sorts of Fowl and Fish,  
with Wine and some of Brandy.

Ye have there what your Hearts can wish,  
the Hills are Sugar Candy.

The lofty buildings of this place

for many years have lasted,

With nutmegs, pepper, cloves and mace,

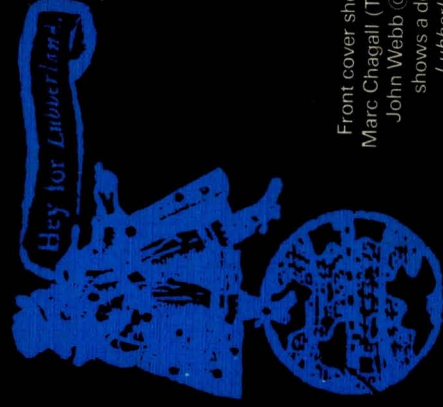
the walls are roughly casted,

In curious hasty-pudding build,

and most ingenious Carving.

Likewise they are with panicakes ty'd,

sure, here's no fear of starving.



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Front cover shows *Poet Reclining* by  
Marc Chagall (Tate Gallery); photo  
John Webb © ADAGP. Back cover  
shows a detail from *Invitation to  
Lubberland* (British Museum)

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POLITICS/ENVIRONMENT/GEOGRAPHY/SOCIETY

# Utopia

Colin Ward

Penguin Education



The first utopia?  
Hieronymus Bosch's idea of the  
Garden of Eden.

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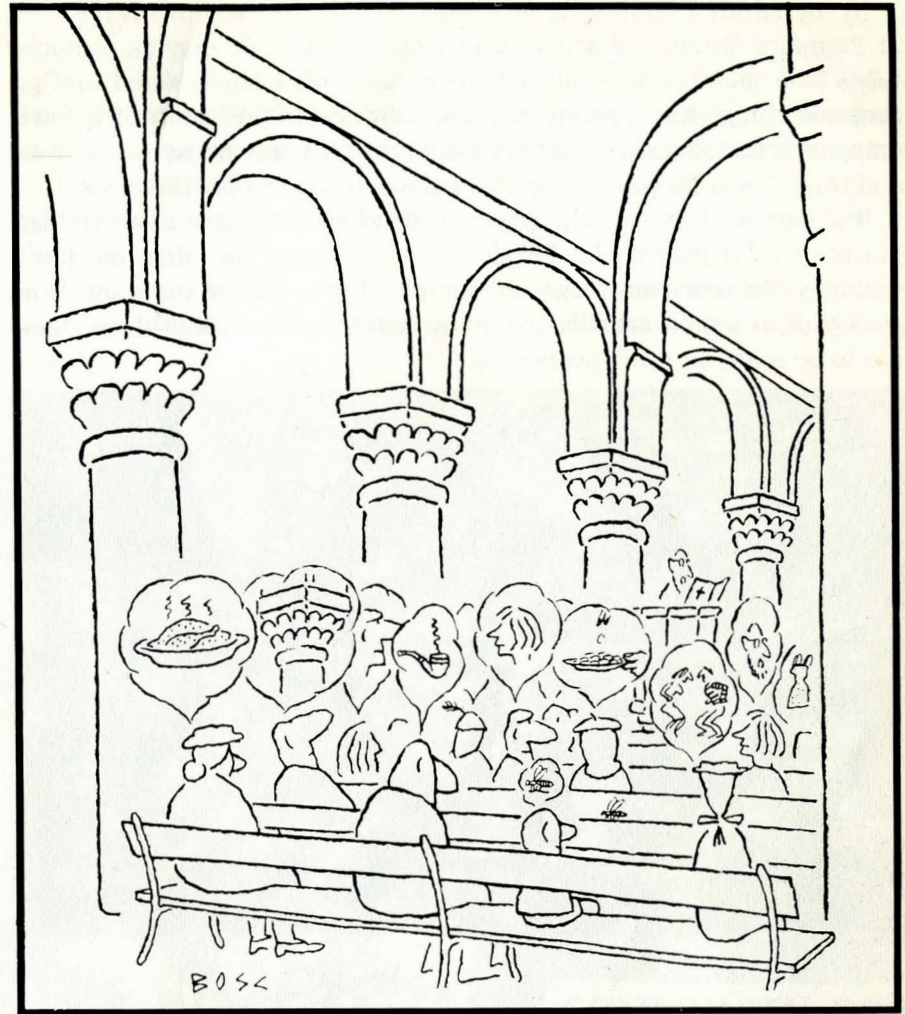
The author and son.

# BEFORE YOU START ON THIS BOOK



What is your ideal place?  
What would it be like there?.

Write a description of it and draw, map or model it before you go any further.

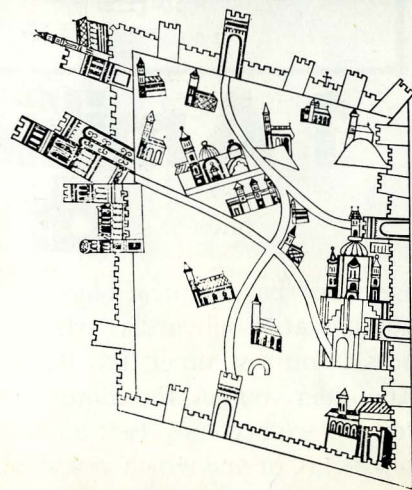


# 1 A million private dreams

Everyone has an ideal place. When you're five it is probably the sweet counter at Woolworths; when you're ten it might be a toyshop or the seaside on a summer day. But when you're fifteen, twenty, thirty, fifty? The older you get, the more varied and complicated your version of an ideal place becomes. Is it an ideal place just for you, or for your family or friends, or one which you want everyone to share?

In my family everybody's ideal place is different. Tommy's is the Shed at Stamford Bridge football ground when Chelsea are playing at home, Lily's is a giant jumble sale where you can rummage around and get fantastic things for a penny or two, Barney's is the cabin of a tower crane on a building site, Ben's is a zoo, Mum's is a little house in Cornwall, and mine is – well, you'll have to guess when you've read this book.

But none of them would want to spend *all* their time in these ideal places, even if they could. People's private dreams are often not just a building, but a whole imaginary country, town, village or island. And as few of us would actually like to be hermits in our ideal places, there has to be room for other people too.



What was important to the people who designed each of the places shown here? What kind of life are they suggesting? Have they left anything out?

We call these ideal places *utopias*, a word made up in 1515 by Thomas More from the Greek words meaning 'no-place'. But the trouble about utopias is that the people who think them up usually imagine themselves as the rulers and the rest of us as the ruled. And who wants to be a worker or a slave in someone else's utopia, where *he* is the boss or the king?

If you look carefully, you'll find that utopias always tell you something, often a great deal, about the people who thought of them. So do real places.



There are lots of different utopias and real places in the rest of this book for you to try these questions out on, and when you've finished you may want to look at your own utopia again. The real question they raise is, how could we or should we live?

# The big rock candy mountains

Ever since religions were invented people have thought of utopia in an afterlife – Heaven, Paradise, Valhalla, The Happy Hunting Ground, The Great Good Place – somewhere you go to when you die.

## In beauty I walk

Happily the spell is taken off for me  
Happily I walk, impervious to pain I walk, light within I walk, joyous I walk

Abundant dark clouds I desire  
An abundance of vegetation I desire  
An abundance of pollen, abundant dew, I desire

Happily may fair white corn come with you to the ends of the earth  
Happily may fair yellow corn, fair blue corn, fair corn of all  
kinds, plants of all kinds, goods of all kinds, jewels of all kinds;  
come with you to the ends of the earth

With these before you, happily may they come with you  
With these behind, below, above, around you, happily may they  
come with you

Thus you accomplish your tasks

Happily the old men will regard you  
Happily the old women will regard you  
The young men & the young women will regard you  
The children will regard you  
The chiefs will regard you

Happily as they scatter in different directions they will regard you  
Happily as they approach their home they will regard you

May their roads home be on the trail of peace  
Happily may they all return

In beauty I walk  
With beauty before me I walk  
With beauty behind me I walk  
With beauty above me I walk  
With beauty above & about me I walk  
It is finished in beauty  
It is finished in beauty

Navajo Indian poem from Jerome Rothenberg (ed.), *Technicians of the Sacred*

It's not a happy hunting ground, but a happy growing land. You could turn this Navajo Indian utopia into a song.

When the new states of the American West took over the Indians' land, they told the settlers that it *was* utopia. They put out advertisements saying things like 'The climate's so healthy, we had to shoot a man to start a graveyard', or they would declare that theirs was a state 'Where there are no aristocrats and people do not have to work hard to have plenty and go in the best society, where ten acres, judiciously planted in fruits, will soon make one independent, all varieties being wonderfully successful and profitable.'



Hoping for utopia. A nineteenth-century view of the new settlers' move across America. Perhaps out there they'd find the perfect place?

It sounded like utopia to the would-be settlers, but many of those who got there remained poor wandering workers on other people's farms and lumber camps. They were called hoboes, or bums, and utopia was as far away for them as it was for the Navajo Indians. The hoboes had songs about it too, and this is one of them: in what way is it like or unlike the Navajo vision from the same part of America?

## The big rock candy mountains

### INTRODUCTION

On a sum-mer's day in the month of May, A bur-ly lit-tle bum come a-hik-ing,  
 Trav-el-ling down that lone-some road A-look-ing for his lik-ing.  
 He was head-ed for a land that was far a-way, Be-side them cry-stal  
 four-tains. 'I'll see you all this com-in' fall In the Big Rock Can-dy Moun-tains.'

### VERSE

In the Big Rock Can-dy Moun-tains You nev-er change your socks, And  
 lit-tle streams of al-co-hol Come a-trick-ling down the rocks. The  
 box cars are all emp-ty And the rail-road bulls are blind, There's a  
 lake of stew and whis-ky, too, You can pad-dle all a-round'em in a  
 big ca-noe In the Big Rock Can-dy Moun-tains.

### CHORUS

O the buzz-in' of the bees in the cig-a-rette trees Round the  
 so-da-wa-ter foun-tains. Where the lem-on-ade springs and the  
 blue bird sings in the Big Rock Can-dy Moun-tains.

### INTRODUCTION

On a summer day in the month of May,  
 A burly little bum come a-hikin',  
 He was travelin' down that lonesome road,  
 A-lookin' for his likin'.  
 He was headed for a land that's far away,  
 Beside those crystal fountains,  
 'I'll see you all, this comin' fall  
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains'.

1 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains  
 You never change your socks.  
 And the little streams of alkyhol  
 Come a-tricklin' down the rocks.  
 Where the shacks all have to tip their hats,  
 And the railroad bulls are blind,  
 There's a lake of stew, and whiskey, too,  
 And you can paddle all around 'em in  
 your big canoe,  
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.

2 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,  
 There's a land that's fair and bright,  
 Where the handouts grow on bushes,  
 And you sleep out every night.  
 Where the box cars are all empty  
 And the sun shines every day,  
 O I'm bound to go, where there ain't no snow,  
 Where the rain don't fall and the wind don't blow  
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains. (Chorus)

3 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains,  
 The jails are made of tin,  
 And you can bust right out again  
 As soon as they put you in.  
 The farmers' trees are full of fruit,  
 The barns are full of hay,  
 I'm goin' to stay where you sleep all day,  
 Where they boiled in oil the inventor of toil,  
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains. (Chorus)

### CHORUS

O... the... buzzin' of the bees  
 In the cigarette trees,  
 Round the sodawater fountains,  
 Near the lemonade springs,  
 Where the whangdoodle sings  
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains.



The hoboes of the old American West had a far-from-easy life.



Downtrodden people have always consoled themselves with the thought of a good time coming, a place where 'all our troubles will be over': 'a land of milk and honey', 'out there over Jordan'.

## Come and go with me to that land

Musical score for the song "Come and go with me to that land". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "Come and go with me to that land, come and go with me to that land; Go with me to that land where I'm bound. Come and go with me to that land, — come and go with me to that land, — go with me to that land where I'm bound." The score includes several measures with chord symbols: A, E, B7, E7, and E.

Come and go with me to that land,  
come and go with me to that land;  
Go with me to that land where I'm bound.

Come and go with me to that land,  
come and go with me to that land,  
go with me to that land where I'm bound.

There ain't no moanin' in that land . . .  
There ain't no bowin' in that land . . .  
There ain't no kneelin' in that land . . .  
There ain't no Jim Crow in that land . . .

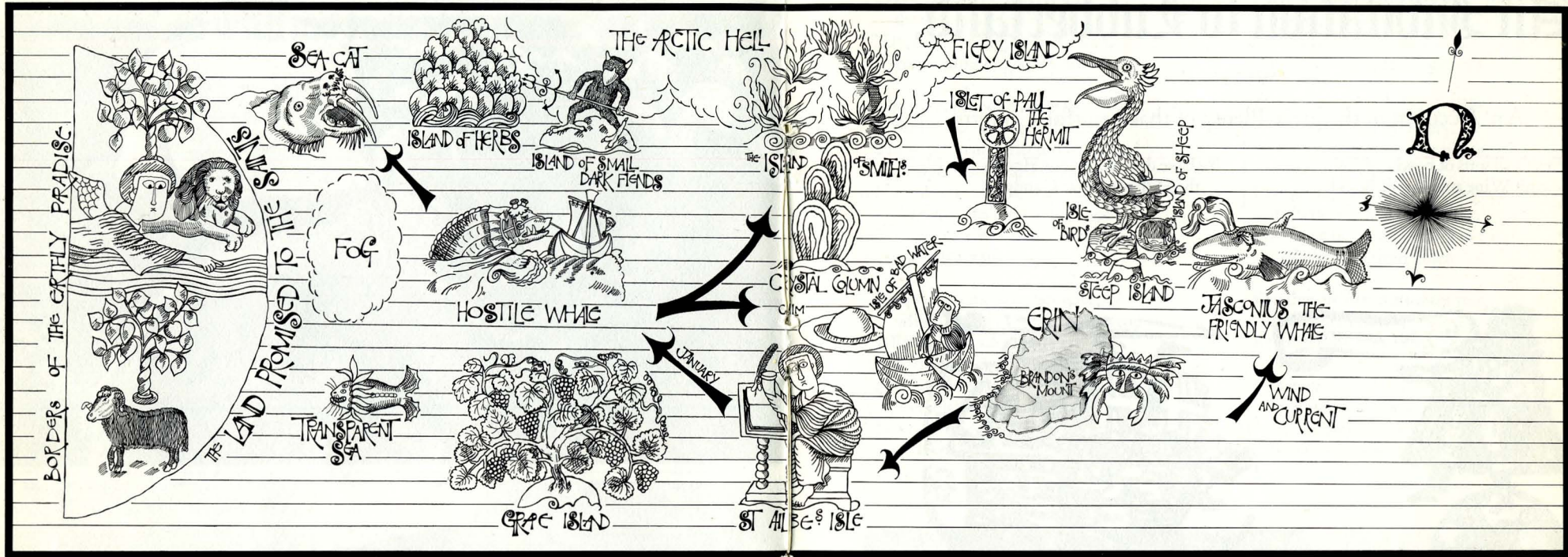
Songs for survival, like these, sprang from the sufferings of America's black slaves. They are still sung today, in the Texas prison farms shown in these 1968 pictures, for example.



# DISCOVERING UTOPIA

Many of the utopias that people have written about were 'discovered' by the early explorers.

Below: In the sixth century, the bold navigator-monk, St Brendan, is said to have sailed from Ireland far out into the Atlantic, where he visited many strange islands including a brief landing on the Land of Promise, which he called the Earthly Paradise, 'fruitful and warm, under a perpetual golden autumn'.



St Brendan's voyages, and the later journeys of exploration to the New World, were the equivalent of journeys into outer space today. You can imagine that when European sailors came back with stories about the civilizations of the Aztecs and the Incas, people listened open-mouthed with wonder, just as we would have done if the spacemen had come back to Earth with the news of life Out There, instead of just a handful of moondust.

If your ideal place is in outer space, or on the moon, you ought to be warned about the dullness of life Out There. John Christopher's book *The Lotus Caves* tells us a lot about the sheer boredom of moon-life for fourteen-year-old Marty who was born there.

Those who came here did not go on home leave: the cost of transporting a human being across a quarter of a million miles, although less than it had once been, was still fantastic. You contracted, usually in your early twenties, for twenty-five years' service. At the end of that time you retired to Earth, with enough money to make your retirement easy, even luxurious.

This meant living for a quarter of a century under the unnatural artificial conditions which the Moon enforced. As much as possible was done to make them tolerable. There was family life, for instance. Men and women were recruited in roughly equal numbers, with a preference for married couples or those engaged to be married. They could have children, though large families were discouraged. The children grew up in the Bubble never knowing anything else except at second-hand on a screen. At any time after early childhood parents could, if they chose, decide to send them down – send them back to Earth. The snag was that the trip was one-way and once-only. Parents and child would not see each other again, except on the expensive inter-world visiphone link, until the end of the parents' tour of duty. For Lunarites, sending down also involved several weeks of conditioning in a special unit, with gravity slowly built up to full Earth strength and muscles trained to bear the extra weight. John Christopher, *The Lotus Caves*

In later journeys of exploration too, sailors came home with amazing stories.

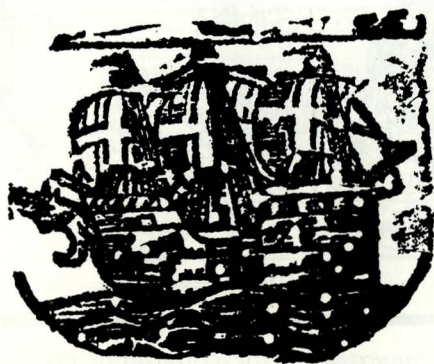
# An Invitation to Lubberland.

WITH

An Account of the great Plenty of that Fruitful Country.

There's all sorts of Fowl and Fish,  
with Wine and store of Brandy,

Ye have there what your Hearts can wish,  
the Hills are Sugar Candy.



There is a ship we understand  
now riding in the river,  
Tis newly come from *Lubberland*  
the like I think was never;  
You that a lazy life do love,  
I'd have you now go over,  
They say land is not above  
two thousand leagues from Dover.

The Captain and the Master too,  
do's give us this relation,  
And so do's all the whole ships crew,  
concerning this strange nation.  
The streets are pav'd with pudding-pies  
nay powdered beef and bacon,  
They say they scorn to tell you lies,  
who thinks it is mistaken.

The king of knaves and queen of sluts  
reign there in peace and quiet;  
You need not fear to starve your guts,  
there is such store of diet:  
There may you live free from all care,  
like hogs set up a fatning,  
The garments which the people wear  
is silver, silk and sattin.

The lofty buildings of this place  
for many years have lasted,  
With nutmegs, pepper, cloves and mace,  
the walls are roughly casted,  
In curious hasty-pudding boil'd,  
and most ingenious Carving.  
Likewise they are with pancakes ty'd,  
sure, here's no fear of starving.

The Captain says, in every Town  
hot roasted pigs will meet ye,  
They in the streets run up and down,  
still crying out, *come eat me*:  
Likewise he says, at every feast  
the very fowls and fishes,  
Nay, from the biggest to the least,  
comes tumbling to the dishes.

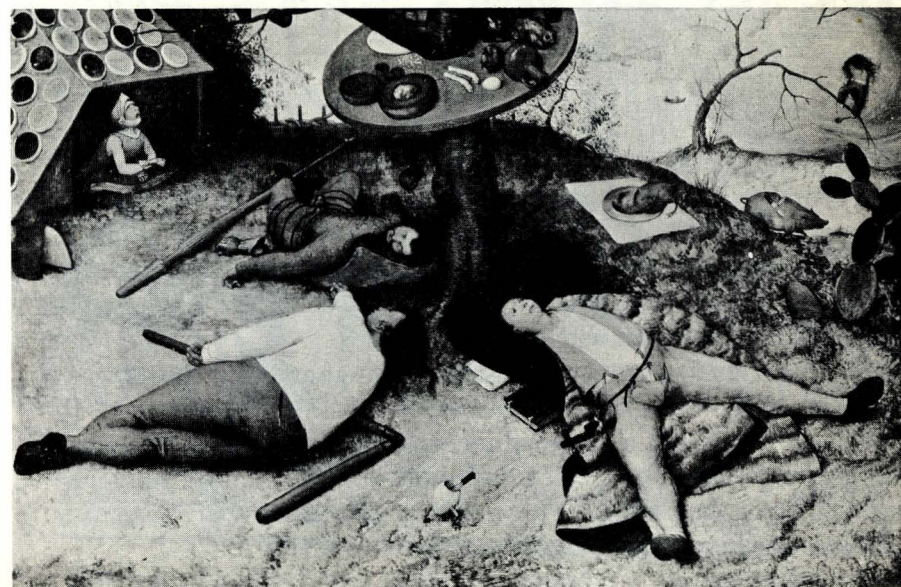
The rivers run with claret fine,  
the brooks with rich Canary,  
The ponds with other sorts of wine,  
to make your hearts full merry:  
Nay, more than this, you may behold  
the fountains flow with Brandy,  
The rocks are like refined gold,  
the hills are sugar candy.

Rosewater is the rain they have,  
which comes in pleasant showers,  
All places are adorned brave  
with sweet and fragrant flowers:  
Hot Custards grow on e'ery tree  
each ditch affords rich jellies  
Now, if you will be rul'd by me,  
go there, and fill your bellies.

There's nothing there but holy days,  
with musick out of pleasure;  
Who can forbear to speak the praise  
of such a land of pleasure?  
There you may lead a lazy life,  
free from all kinds of labour,  
And he that is without a wife,  
may borrow of his neighbour.

There is no law, nor lawyers fees,  
all men are free from fury,  
For e'ery one do's what he please,  
without a judge or jury:  
The summer-time is warm they say,  
the winter's ne'er the Colder,  
They have no landlords rent to pay,  
each man is a free-holder.

You that are free to cross the seas,  
make no more disputation,  
At *Lubberland*, you'll live at ease,  
with pleasant recreation:  
The caption waits but for a gale,  
of prosperous wind and weather,  
And that they soon will hoist up sail,  
make hast away together.



Pieter Bruegel's view of the Land of Plenty.

# THOMAS MORE'S UTOPIA

The book which gave its name to all our ideal places, Thomas More's *Utopia*, was given its setting by travellers' tales of the outer space of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The hero of the story, Raphael Hythlodaye, is supposed to be a Portuguese sailor from the crew which sailed with the explorer, Amerigo Vespucci, the man America is named after. Scholars think that when Thomas More began writing his *Utopia* in 1515 in Antwerp, he must have met there a traveller or mariner who had been with Vasco Nunez de Balboa when he reached the Pacific coast of Latin America, and heard from coastal traders about the wonders of the Inca Empire in Peru. But we can also see that More was influenced by the philosophers of ancient Greece, like Plato, who had left descriptions of their ideal republics.

More's book is in the form of a discussion held in the garden of his house in Antwerp with Raphael Hythlodaye and a Flemish friend, Peter Gilles. They talk about the sad state of England in their day, the sufferings of the poor and the luxury of the rich, the cruelty of the magistrates and the theft of the land from the common people. Hythlodaye remarks that life is fairer in Utopia where property is owned by the community. More replies that 'men cannot live conveniently where all things are common', while Gilles denies that 'any nation in that new world is better governed than those among us'. So to prove his point Hythlodaye describes the commonwealth of Utopia:

## The island of Utopia

The island of Utopia is in the middle two hundred miles broad, and holds almost at the same breadth over a great part of it; but it grows narrower towards both ends. Its figure is not unlike a crescent: between its horns, the sea comes in eleven miles broad, and spreads itself into a great bay, which is environed with land to the compass of about five hundred miles,<sup>1</sup> and is well secured from winds. ...

There are fifty-four cities in the island, all large and well built: the manners, customs and laws of which are the same, and they are all contrived<sup>2</sup> as near in the same manner as the ground on which they stand will allow. The nearest lie at least twenty-four miles distance from one another, and the most remote are not so far distant, but that a man can go on foot in one day from it, to that which lies next it.

Thomas More, *Utopia*

<sup>1</sup> surrounded with land five hundred miles across    <sup>2</sup> designed



The first page of More's *Utopia*. In the foreground, Hythlodaye is telling his tale.

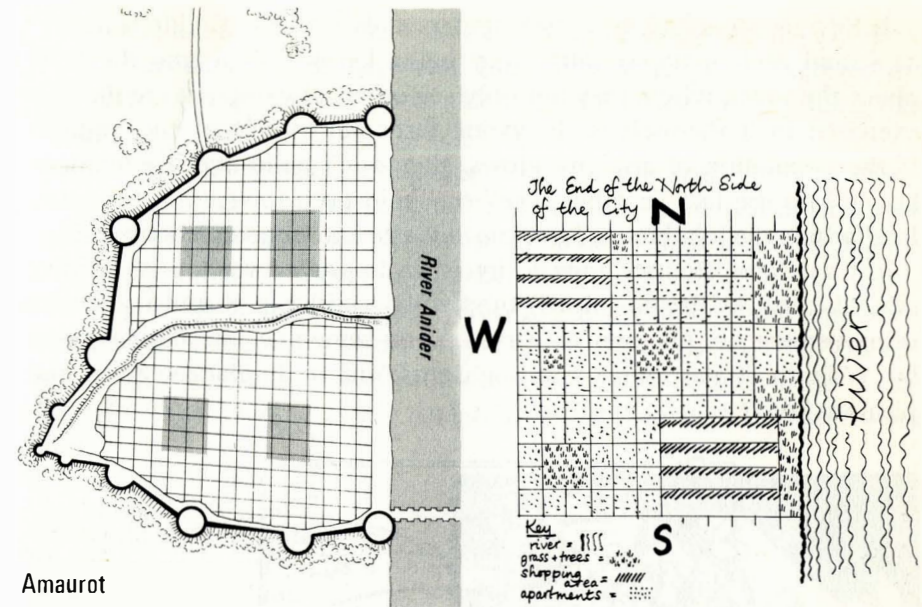
## INSIDE A CITY

This is how More describes one of the fifty-four cities, Amaurot. The name means 'shadowy town' – another way of saying that it doesn't really exist:

It lies upon the side of a hill, or rather a rising ground: its figure is almost square, for from the one side of it, which shoots up almost to the top of the hill, it runs down in a descent for two miles to the river Anider; but it is a little broader the other way that runs along by the bank of that river. There is a bridge cast over the river, not of timber, but of fair stone, consisting of many stately arches: it lies at that part of the town which is farthest from the sea, so that ships without any hindrance lie along the side of the town. There is likewise another river that runs by it, which though it is not great, yet runs pleasantly, for it rises out of the same hill on which the town stands, and so runs down through it, and falls into the Anider. . . . The town is compassed<sup>1</sup> with a high and thick wall, in which there are many towers and forts; there is also a broad and deep dry ditch, set thick with thorns, cast round three sides of the town, and the river is instead of a ditch on the fourth side. The streets are very convenient for all carriage, and are well sheltered from the winds. Their buildings are good, and are so uniform, that a whole side of a street looks like one house. The streets are twenty feet broad; there lie gardens behind all their houses; these are large but enclosed with buildings, that on all hands face the streets; so that every house has both a door to the street and back door to the garden. Their doors have all two leaves, which, as they are easily opened, so they shut of their own accord, and there being no property among them, every man may freely enter into any house whatsoever. At least every ten years they shift their houses by lots. They cultivate their gardens with great care, so that they have both vines, fruits, herbs and flowers in them; and all is so well ordered, and so finely kept, that I never saw gardens anywhere that were both so fruitful and beautiful as theirs. And this humour<sup>2</sup> of ordering their gardens so well, is not only kept up by the pleasure they find in it but also by an emulation<sup>3</sup> between the inhabitants of the several streets, who vie with each other; and there is nothing belonging to the whole town that is both more useful and more pleasant. So that he who founded the town, seems to have taken care of nothing more than of their gardens; for they say, the whole scheme of the town was designed at first by Utopus, but he left all that belonged to the ornament and improvement of it, to be added by those that should come after him, that being too much for one man to bring to perfection.

Thomas More, *Utopia*

<sup>1</sup> surrounded   <sup>2</sup> liking for   <sup>3</sup> competition



Amaurot

A friend of mine, Brian Goodey, drew a plan of Amaurot, basing it on More's description, and it turned out like this.

It is interesting to compare Amaurot with another ideal city, drawn in 1972 by David Bentley of Metro High School, Chicago.

### AN IDEAL COMMUNITY BY DAVID BENTLEY

My city would be built on flatland. There will still be four seasons. By then the pollution will have been cleared and seasons will come when they are suppose to.

I'm basing my city on Chicago. My city will also be along a lake. Except this lake will be much cleaner. I'm going to say there are the same amount of people in the city. People will still have jobs like they do today. I wish that there were less people in the city, the confusion would be a lot less.

There will be a complete underground transit operation for the city. It will be somewhat like the underground we now have except the one I have in mind will be electronic and updated. Because of the transit there will be less cars on the streets. Buses in the city will become almost extinct. There will only be a few on small streets.

The use of steel will be the main material used for buildings. The most buildings in the city will be apt. buildings. The frame of the buildings will be built first and then the individual can pick the location where he wants to live. Then he can design his own apt. to his own needs.

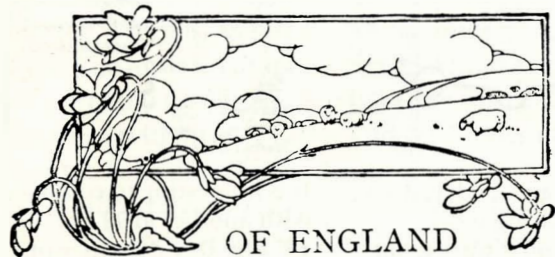
The city will be divided into one big grid. The grid will be divided into North, South, East, and West. Finding places will be a lot easier.

Heavy traffic areas like the loop and some expressways will have a double road. Ground level for local traffic and the upper for express. Traffic jams will be a lot fewer.

The four sections of the city will almost be the same except for the location of things.

In More's ideal city everybody understands farming. Children learn it at school and in the country 'they being led out often into the fields about the town, where they not only see others at work, but are likewise exercised in it themselves.' Everyone turns out to help at harvest-time. If the population of any city grows, they don't build over the gardens, but 'fill up the lack in other cities' or 'build up a town . . . in the next land where the inhabitants have much waste and unoccupied ground.'

Just as David Bentley's ideal city is an improved version of his own city, Chicago, so Thomas More's Utopia was a criticism of, and a suggested improvement on, his own country. Do you remember the famous poem by William Blake about building Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land?



AND did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountain green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pasture seen?

And did the countenance divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among these dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold,  
Bring me my arrows of desire,  
Bring me my spear, O clouds, unfold!  
Bring me my chariot of fire!

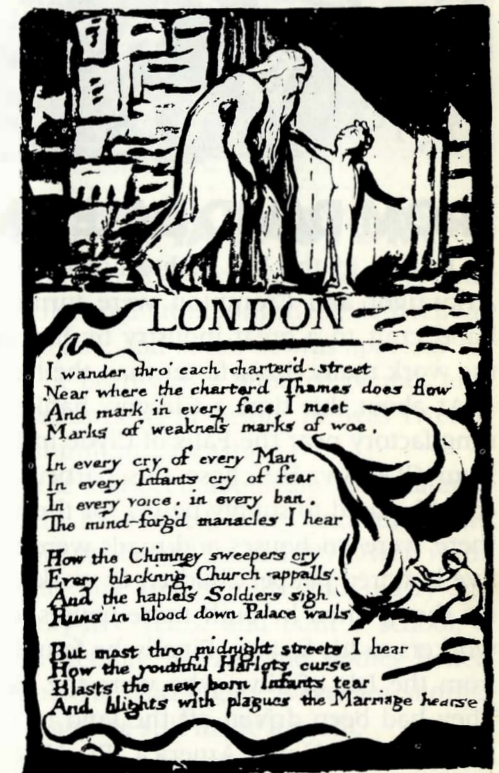
I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land.  
WILLIAM BLAKE.

This is what More's Utopia is really about. But though he later became Lord Chancellor for Henry VIII (and was eventually executed by that ruthless king) he was never able to turn England into anything like his Utopia.

Not many other utopians manage to change the real world into their ideal place either. Looking at some of their ideas in the rest of this book you may be quite glad. Some perhaps put a bit of their plan into action; most of the others don't get any further than the drawing board.

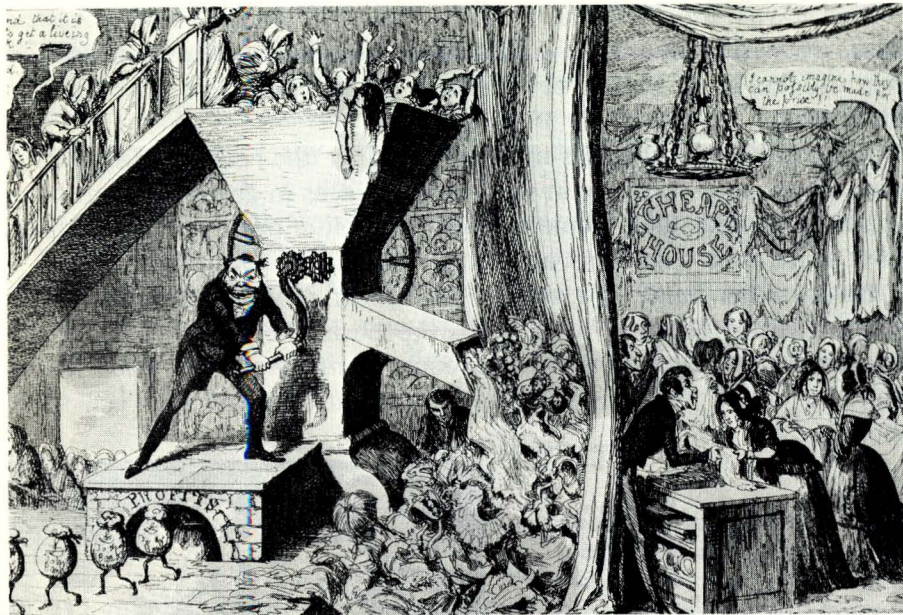
On the other hand, in a way we all live in a utopia – someone else's utopia: this is because, when we were born, the world was already organized the way it is now, and someone, many people, made it that way. So whose utopia is it? And how did it happen? Can you work it out?

The world Blake actually found himself living in was far from Utopia. This poem from his *Songs of Experience* gives an idea of the reality that drove him to dream of 'Jerusalem'.



## HOW DO PLACES HAPPEN?

How are settlements formed? Here is the story of one place which came about in a way typical of many other places in eighteenth-century Britain; at least, that is, until another utopian – Robert Owen – took a hand:



## FROM DAVID DALE'S MONEY SPINNER...

In Britain in the late eighteenth century the inventions of Hargreaves, Arkwright and Crompton were turning the spinning of cotton from a hand craft to a great industry by harnessing new kinds of power to do the work many times faster than the handweavers could.

At about this time a Glasgow banker, David Dale, built a cotton spinning factory near the Falls of Clyde in Lanarkshire, about forty kilometres from Glasgow. He chose this particular place because the falling water could be used to supply power for the factory. But few people lived there, there were no houses and roads were bad. So Dale sent to Edinburgh for five hundred pauper children to work in his factory and built a big house for them. Then he built more houses to attract the poverty-stricken farm workers to his factory. Finally he found at Greenock a shipload of families from the Isle of Skye who were the victims of the Highland Clearances. They had been driven off the land by the landlords to be shipped away like cattle to North America. By 1796 Dale had four mills with 1340 workers, 750 of them children, half of whom were under nine, working in the mill from six in the morning until seven at night. He called the place New Lanark. From a deserted country area with a waterfall, a new settlement had been created.

David Dale + waterfall for + pauper children = £££££  
power

# THE CRISIS,

OR THE CHANGE FROM ERROR AND MISERY, TO TRUTH AND HAPPINESS.

IF WE CANNOT YET

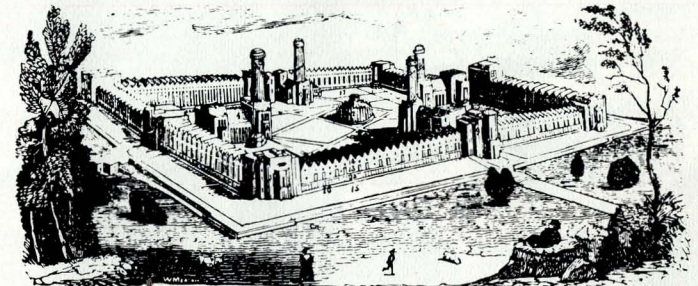
LET US ENDEAVOUR



RECONCILE ALL OPINIONS,

TO UNITE ALL HEARTS.

IT IS OF ALL TRUTHS THE MOST IMPORTANT, THAT THE CHARACTER OF MAN IS FORMED FOR—NOT BY HIMSELF.



Design of a Community of 2,000 Persons, founded upon a principle, commended by Plato, Lord Bacon, Sir T. More, & R. Owen.

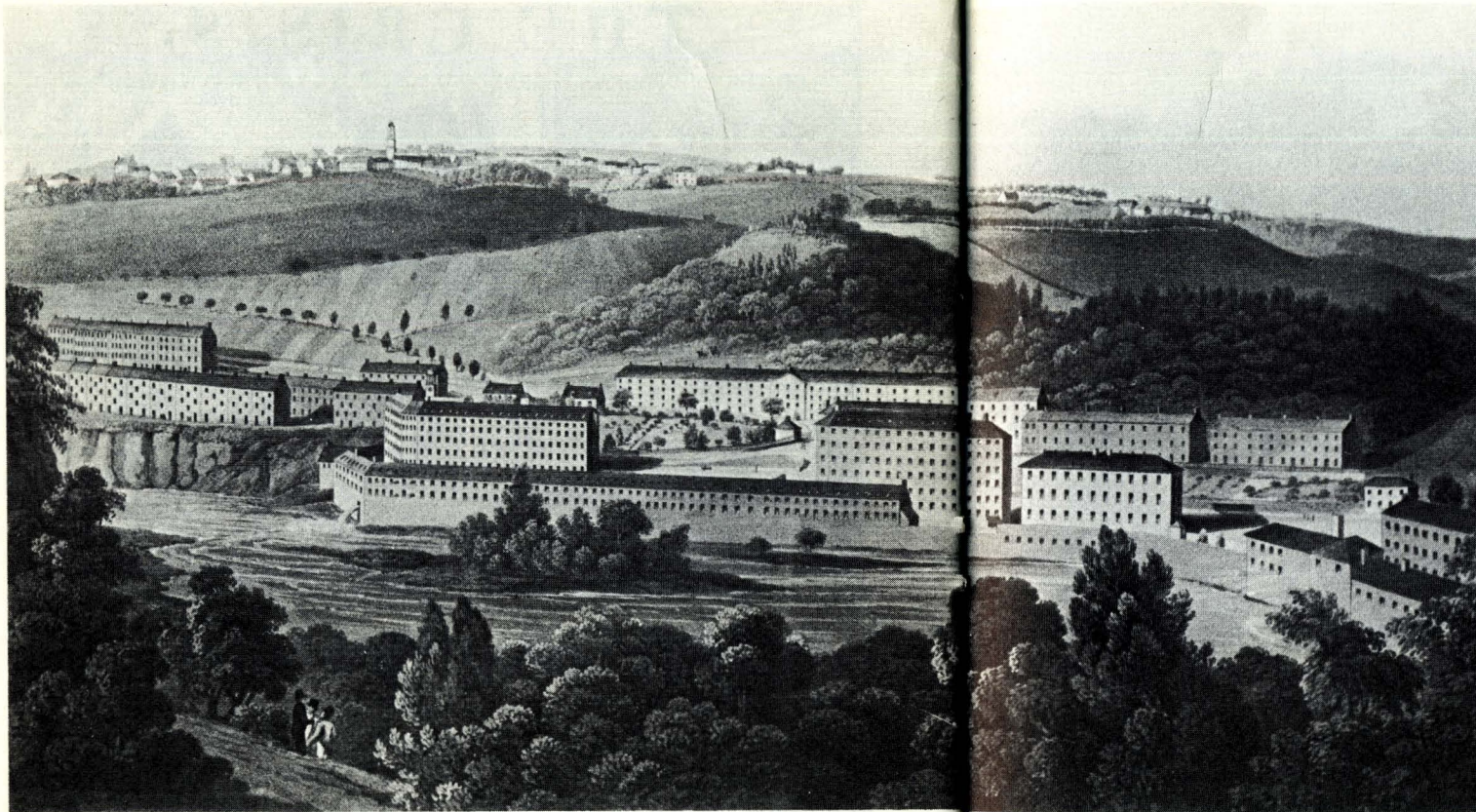
## TO ROBERT OWEN'S UTOPIA FACTORY

Robert Owen was born in 1771 at Newton, Montgomeryshire, in central Wales, where his father was a saddler and ironmonger. He left school when he was nine to work as a shop boy, and at ten he was apprenticed to a draper. When he was eighteen he borrowed a hundred pounds and started a firm making spinning machines. And before he was twenty Owen was the manager of the biggest mill in Lancashire.

But Owen was as troubled as Blake had been about the 'dark satanic mills' of the new industrial age and he wanted to try and turn their power to better use and create utopia on Earth. So in 1799 Owen went up to New Lanark and arranged to buy Dale's mills and marry his daughter. He stayed there for twenty-five years, and built a school, a cooperative grocery, a laundry, a vegetable market and homes better than any workers' houses in Scotland. He paid higher wages for shorter hours than any other manufacturer – and he still made a profit.

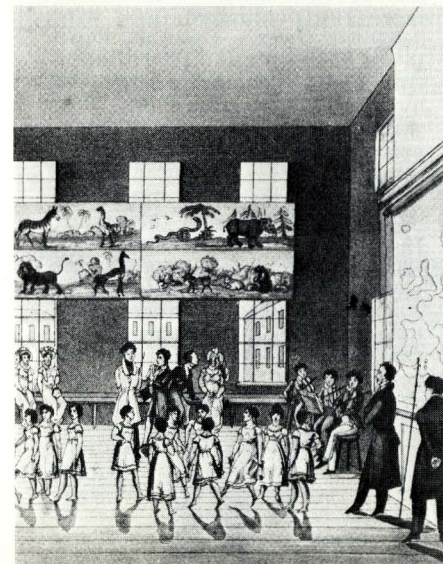
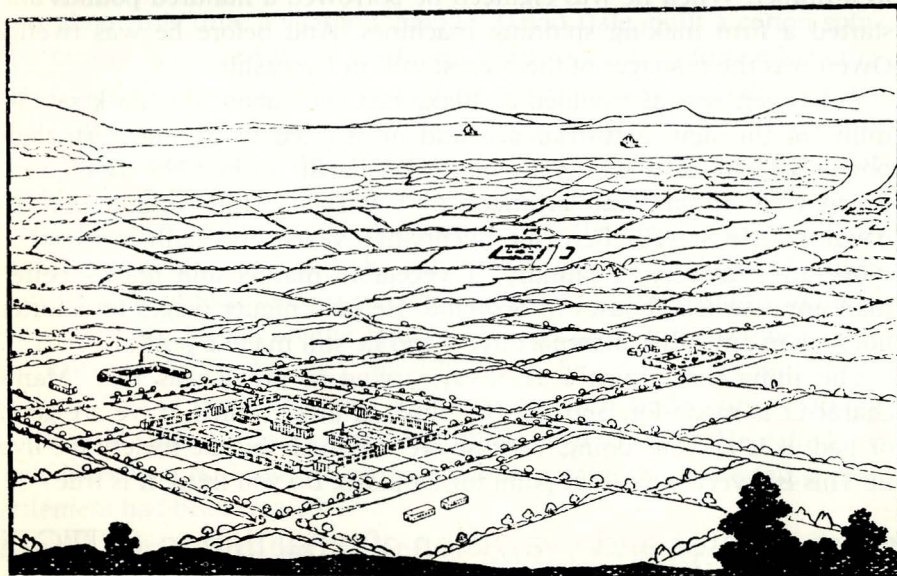
The thing that Owen was always trying to prove was that 'Man's character is made for, and not by, him'. In other words, if we are good or bad, it is not our doing, because we are made by the society we live in. This is a very important point for utopians. Do you think it is true?

Robert + water and + a vision of what things = UTOPIA?  
Owen workers should be like



## NEW LANARK

Robert Owen claimed that what he had set up at New Lanark was a community which was 'a self-employed, self-supporting, self-educating, and self-governing population'. What the workers at New Lanark thought about it, we don't know. It is true that he went there to find people who were ignorant, dirty and drunken, because, as he said, 'circumstances had made them so', and left them with the best schools, the best wages, and the cleanest surroundings of any workers in Britain at that time.



Dreams come true?

Above: New Lanark in 1825.

Left: Life inside the school in Owen's day.

Far left: Owen just couldn't stop planning utopias. In 1818 he made plans for villages of Unity and Mutual Cooperation, which combined factories and farming. This is what they would look like. Later, he founded the Cooperative Community of New Harmony in the United States, put all his money into the scheme and came back to Britain a poor man.





But places also die. If you go to New Lanark today, you can still see all the buildings, solid as rock, but they are empty now because the Gourrock Ropework Co., which used them from 1903 to 1967, has been forced to close them down. The textile industry has moved to other centres; it has other sources of power so the waterfall is no longer needed and there is nothing to keep New Lanark going.

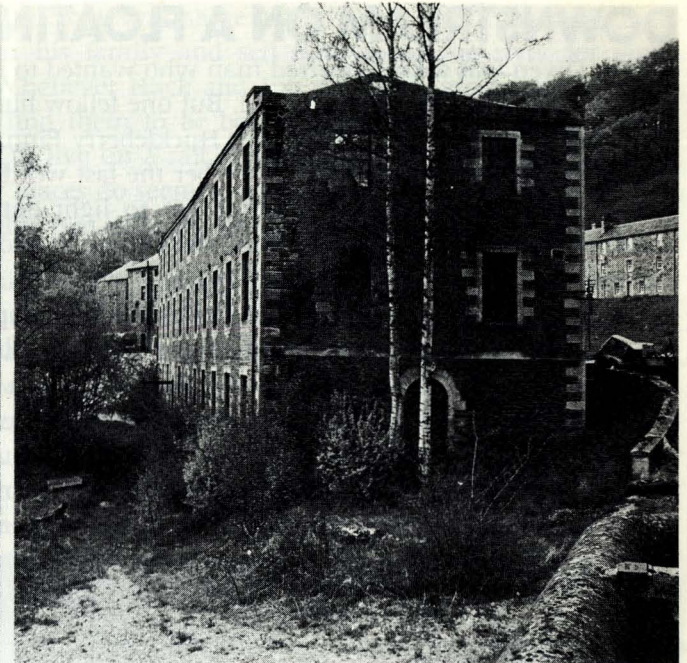
New Lanark today:

Above: the school now.  
 Above right: the workers' houses.  
 Below right: Brasilia – a ghost town in the making?

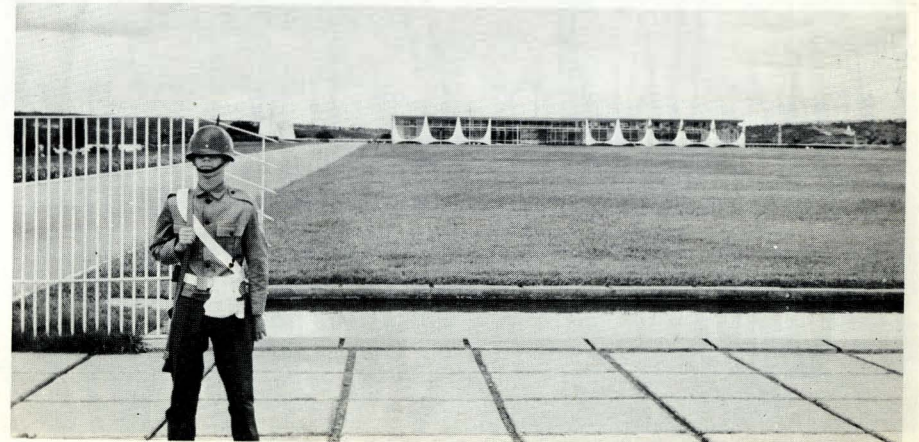
### Ghost village

SINCE the closure of the cotton mills in 1968, caused largely by foreign competition, New Lanark has become almost a ghost village. The population, well over 2,000 in Owen's time, is down to 82 adults and 18 children. Only eight of them are employed by Metal Extractions, the firm that acquired the mills three years ago when no one else was interested.

A Lanark archery club holds occasional sessions in the stately Institution for the Formation of Character, focal point of Owen's vigorous welfare scheme for his workers, which included daily folk dancing. But saddest is the School for Children he built in 1817 and which created a nationwide stir by providing compulsory and highly unorthodox education for children from infancy to the age of ten. Disused for over half a century, part of the roof has now caved in and the interior is a shambles.



If you go to the ghost town of New Lanark today, you are reminded not only of how situations change, but also that one man's utopia is another man's Deadsville. A forgotten Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, built a Third Rome so that people would remember him. Today they remember the sheep grazing among the marble columns of the Third Rome. A Brazilian dictator built Brasilia, the new capital of his country. A friend of mine who went there remembers only the real life of the place in the Ciudad Libre or Free City where the people who built Brasilia live in their home-made sheds and shanties, sixteen kilometres out of town.



## DOWNSTREAM ON A FLOATING UTOPIA

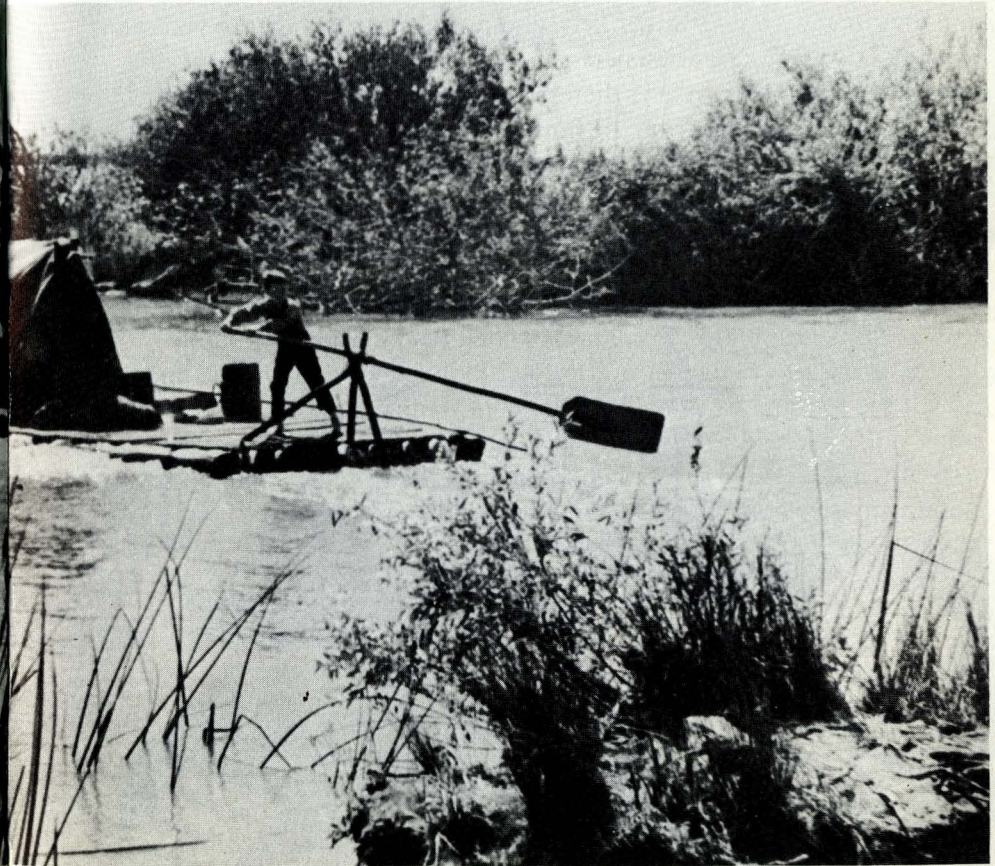
Robert Owen was a kind-hearted man who wanted to improve his fellow human beings and the whole world. But one fellow human whose utopia consisted of not being improved was Huckleberry Finn. He just wanted to be left to himself. Maybe you remember the last words of Mark Twain's story, when Huck says, 'I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can't stand it. I been there before.'

Huck couldn't have stood Owen's Institute for the Formation of Character any more than he could stand life in the smug little towns of the Mississippi Valley. His utopia was *on* the Mississippi, 'a whole mile broad, and awful still and grand', away from other people and large towns, on the raft on which he and the runaway slave, Jim, are drifting downstream. Huck is escaping from his brutal father, and from Miss Watson and the Widow Douglas, who want to teach him to spell and to pray.



Jim is escaping from that very same Miss Watson who has decided to separate him from his family and sell him down the river for eight hundred dollars. Whenever Huck and Jim go ashore among the respectable people, they find them to be boasters, tricksters, thieves and murderers. 'It's lovely to live on a raft,' thinks Huck. 'There warn't no home like a raft ... other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft.'

Two or three days and nights went by; I reckon I might say they swum by, they slid along so quiet and smooth and lovely. Here is the way we put in the time. It was a monstrous big river down there – sometimes a mile and a half wide; we run nights, and laid up and hid daytimes; soon as night was most gone we stopped navigating and tied up – nearly always in the dead water under a towhead; and then cut young cottonwoods and willows, and hid the raft with them. Then we set out the lines. Next we slid into the river and had a swim, so as to freshen up and cool



off; then we set down on the sandy bottom where the water was about knee-deep, and watched the daylight come. Not a sound anywheres – perfectly still – just like the whole world was asleep, only sometimes the bullfrogs a-cluttering, maybe. The first thing to see, looking away over the water, was a kind of dull line – that was the woods on t’other side; you couldn’t make nothing else out; then a pale place in the sky; then more paleness spreading around; then the river softened up away off, and warn’t black any more, but gray; you could see little dark spots drifting along ever so far away – trading-scows,<sup>1</sup> and such things; and long black streaks – rafts; sometimes you could hear a sweep<sup>2</sup> screaming; or jumbled-up voices, it was so still, and sounds come so far; and by and by you could see a streak on the water which you know by the look of the streak that there’s a snag there in a swift current which breaks on it and makes the streak look that way; and you see the mist curl up off of the water, and the east reddens up, and the river, and you make out a log cabin in the edge of the woods, away on the bank on t’other side of the river, being a wood-yard, likely, and piled by them cheats so you can throw a dog through it anywheres; then the nice breeze springs up, and comes fanning you from over there, so cool and fresh and sweet to smell on account of the woods and the flowers; but sometimes not that way, because they’ve left dead fish laying around, gars and such, and they do get pretty rank; and next you’ve got the full day, and everything smiling in the sun, and the song birds just going it!

A little smoke couldn’t be noticed now, so we would take some fish off of the lines and cook up a hot breakfast. And afterwards we would watch the lonesomeness of the river, and kind of lazy along, and by and by lazy off to sleep. Wake up by and by, and look to see what done it, and maybe see a steamboat coughing along up-stream, so far off towards the other side you couldn’t tell nothing about her only whether she was a stern-wheel or side-wheel; then for about an hour there wouldn’t be nothing to hear nor nothing to see – just solid lonesomeness.

Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*

<sup>1</sup> a large, flat-bottomed boat    <sup>2</sup> a long oar, used for propelling and steering

Huck and Jim, safe on their raft, are a community of two, and when they get rid of unwelcome visitors, Huck reflects that ‘what you want, above all things, on a raft, is for everybody to be satisfied, and feel right and kind towards the others.’

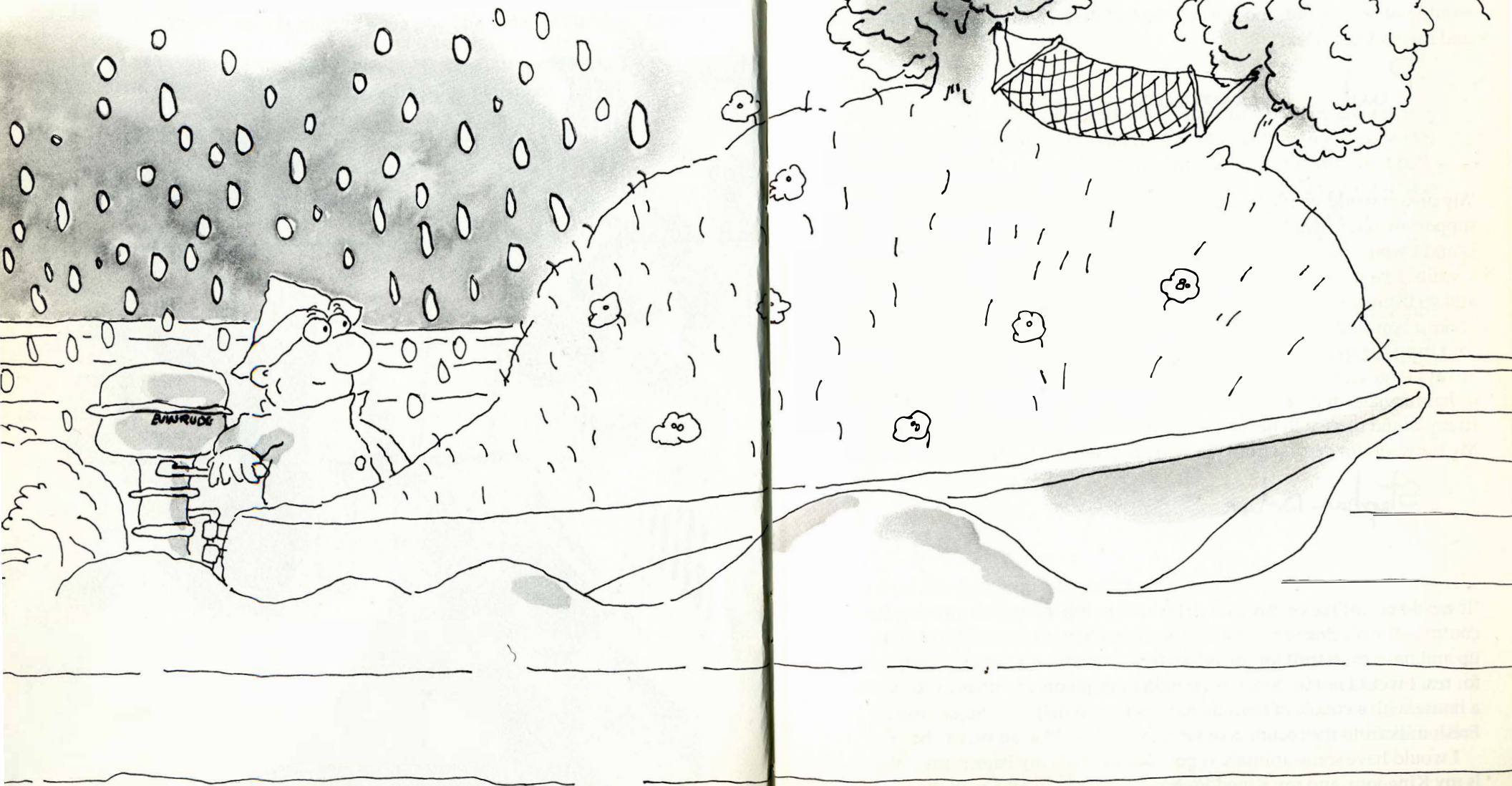
This is the problem of any attempt to set up a utopian community in real life. How hard it is for everybody to be satisfied! Few of us dream of living on a raft. But plenty of people long for a desert island, or for a supercity, or a cottage in the country with roses round the door, or for a mixture of town and country.

Add them all together and you get a million private dreams.



## 2 An island in the sun

Some people reckon they could sort everything out and create their utopia on Earth if only there weren't so many other people in the way. If only things weren't so complicated and they could just be on their own. . . .



When you look closely at such people's plans, is an island what they really mean? How much are these boys' utopias really cut off from the 'complicating' world, and if yours is an island utopia, what about you?

'I would like to live on an island. It would be quiet and always sunny and the sea all round would be pure blue and at night there I would fish for my food, and some supplies would be sent in every month. There are never any people coming in by boat without my permission. The nearest land is seventy-eight miles away, and it takes a day by boat. The island would not be very big, and it would be half desert and half good land, and I would just relax.'

Paul Adamson

'My dream world would be on a desert island where I would have to support myself instead of my Mum and Dad looking after me. On my island I would build a fort and make my own food, such as bread and biscuits. I would be able to stay up as long as I like. I would make spears and go fishing. But best of all, and the most exciting thing of all, I would make a bow and arrows and go after wild animals. And I will pick fresh fruit from the trees (whereas in the city the shops close and there are always large crowds waiting to be served, and worst of all the fruit is stale or has maggots in it). Every day that goes by I shall cut a groove in a tree. In my island there will be no pollution because there will be no factories. My transport for getting from place to place will be a giant turtle.'

Stephan Dolan

'It would be just me on my island. I would name it England after my home country. The blazing sun would shine fifteen hours a day. I would wake up and have fresh fruit for breakfast, fresh meat for dinner and fresh fish for tea. I would not be bored as I would have plenty of things to do. Make a house with a couple of friendly natives from a neighbouring island. Fresh milk from the coconuts or perhaps even wild goats on my island.

I would have some animals as pets. My house is my Palace, my Palace is my Kingdom, and my Kingdom is my Island. It would be in the middle

of the Pacific. Sometimes I would dream of my homeland but I would never go back from my paradise.

The sea is warm, crystal clear, a reef is a few hundred yards out. I plant crops: corn, wheat, barley. I am a second Robinson Crusoe, except I *want* to be here. As night falls, the birds begin to sing louder, then fade. The sun is cherry red and I wait for another morning.'

David Paley

'I would wake up to a beautiful morning, the sun would be golden, the sky a lovely blue. My cabin's situated on a small cliff with a rope ladder leading to the beach. I can see for miles around. I climb down and pick a coconut for breakfast. I sit watching the sea go by. It's a beautiful day: every day's a holiday on my island in the sun. Alone, the silence is deafening, but that's the way I like it. No city, no sky-scrapers, no pollution, clear running water, fresh to drink.

The day goes by without a care in the world. I go hunting, fishing, swimming. The night soon falls. I light a fire, and have a meal. I climb down to the beach and feel like a walk. The night sea cools my feet, the sand soft like a carpet. I go back to my cabin to sleep, to wake refreshed next day.'

Mark Harrison

'I would like to live on a desert island where it's all quiet, and have food supplies sent to me every day. I wouldn't mind making a few friends so I wouldn't get bored just messing around. I wouldn't have to go to school and I wouldn't hear all the cars whizzing by and all the builders building, and the dustmen emptying the dustbins. When it comes to going to the beach it would be right on my doorstep and then again if I did get bored I could always go back to proper civilization with all the noise and bustle.'

Jeffrey Taylor

## ISLAND STORIES

They had guessed before that this was an island: clambering among the pink rocks, with the sea on either side, and the crystal heights of air, they had known by some instinct that the sea lay on every side. But there seemed something more fitting in leaving the last word till they stood on the top, and could see a circular horizon of water.

Ralph turned to the others.

'This belongs to us.'

It was roughly boat-shaped: humped near this end with behind them the jumbled descent to the shore. On either side rocks, cliffs, tree-tops, and a steep slope: forward there, the length of the boat, a tamer descent, tree-clad, with hints of pink, and then the jungly flat of the island, dense green, but drawn at the end to a pink tail. There where the island petered out in water, was another island; a rock, almost detached, standing like a fort, facing them across the green with one bold, pink bastion.

'While we're waiting we can have a good time on this island.'

He gesticulated widely.

'It's like in a book.'

At once there was a clamour.

'Treasure Island. . . .'

'Swallows and Amazons. . . .'

'Coral Island. . . .'

Ralph waved the conch.

'This is our island. It's a good island. Until the grown-ups come to fetch us we'll have fun.'

William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*

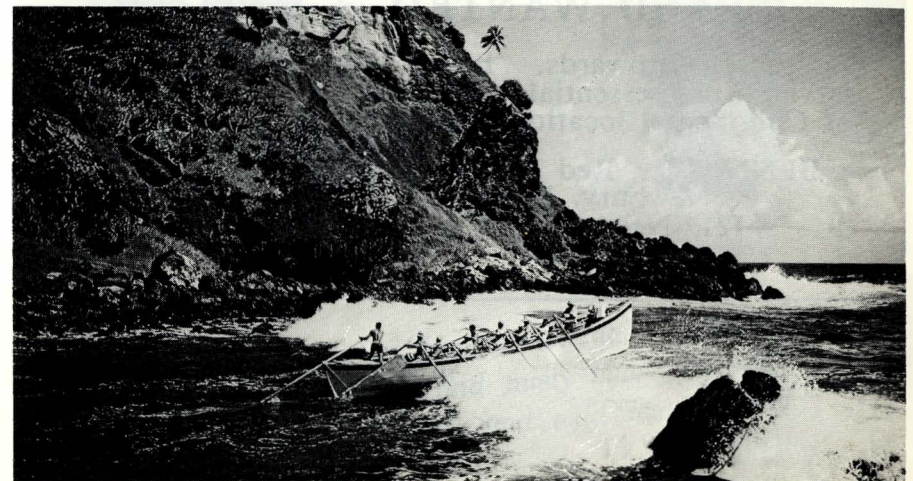
Can you draw a map of the island in this description?

The boys in the story, marooned on an island, bring with them ideas and expectations from all the tales they had read or heard about desert islands. So do the five real boys whose ideal place is an island in the sun. You can bet they've all read *Robinson Crusoe*. But, unlike him, most of them have a safety hatch. Paul has supplies sent in every month, David has help from those friendly natives from a neighbouring island, and Jeffrey can leave whenever he gets bored and has his food sent in every day! He's just like the rest of us. Our desert-island utopias depend on the rest of the world existing but not getting in the way.



Above: after disposing of Captain Bligh in the *Mutiny on the Bounty*, Fletcher Christian and his followers sailed off in search of an uninhabited South Sea island where they could settle down, and no one would find them. They found the place they wanted in Pitcairn Island.

Below: now, 200 years later, their descendants are regularly visited by the military and ships charting nearby nuclear tests. One elder complained, 'it's this depending on the outside that's ruined the island, because half the people now think they're going to starve if they don't get a bag of flour off the ship. Well, in the old days we made arrowroot and ground the corn. Now we're too blooming lazy. The island will be ruined soon.'



## THE FASCINATION OF ISLANDS

My haunting passion was the Island. I ransacked libraries for the literature of Islands, and the more desolate they were the better I was pleased. I pored over great maps till Polynesia and Melanesia were more familiar than the geography of the county in which I lived. I found that the men who had written of Utopia and other impossible things were as mad as I was about Islands, and I loved them all and read their books over and over again. I knew the Hebrides by heart, I was at home in the archipelagos of the Pacific, I could thread my way among the smallest groups of the Indies, East and West, and a navigator of the Cyclades might almost have used me for a pilot. . . .

It was always the little islands I loved the best, and if they were not only small but very remote, like St Kilda, Kerguelen, or Juan Fernandez, so that a mariner shipwrecked on their shores might have a reasonable chance of being unrescued for years, I rejoiced like the man who discovered a treasure hid in a field. Australia interested me not the least – it was too big. No castaway of twelve years could be expected to manage such a place. The Channel Islands were contemptible; they were too near. They suggested the odious possibility of being rescued by a steamer! But the Isles of Aru, Tinian and Tidore, the Dampier Group, the Solomons, the Celebes – these were the places where a castaway of merit might make his mark.

L. P. Jacks, *Among the Idol Makers*

### ISLAND WANTED

25 acres upwards, house and services not essential. Any British or Continental location considered.

**BENNETT, Red Farm House,  
Newbury, Berks.  
Tel. Newbury 392 or  
01-736 8615**

Where do we get our ideas about islands from? Can you think of sources other than these? Do you think that's really what they're like?



Sitting on the equator like a flawless emerald . . . Ponape is a place of opalescent water and misty blue-green hills, of parakeets, orchids, hibiscus and wild lemons, and attractive people . . .

THE DAILY  
**TELEGRAPH**  
MAGAZINE



## SOUTH SEA ISLAND MAGIC

The idea of a South Sea island paradise first hit Europe in the eighteenth century. Swiss and French thinkers, tired of the civilization that seemed to them like a prison, dreamed of the Noble Savage or Natural Man, who lived in the freedom of the jungle. 'Man is born free, but is everywhere in chains,' wrote Jean-Jacques Rousseau, just at the time when James Cook and Louis de Bougainville were exploring the South Pacific. Bougainville visited Tahiti in April 1768 and wrote in his log-book, 'I thought I was transported into the Garden of Eden. Everywhere we found hospitality, ease, innocent joy, and every appearance of happiness.'

The French writer, Denis Diderot, wrote a book called the *Supplement to Bougainville's Voyages*, which pretended to be a conversation between one of the sailors and an old Tahitian, comparing the marvellous freedom of life on the island with the miserable slavery of life in France.

More than a century later, this was to lead another great Frenchman to look for utopia in Tahiti.

The painter, Paul Gauguin, spent his lifetime following his dream, always moving on in search of a more primitive, natural life. 'I always had a yearning to run away,' he wrote. 'At Orléans, at the age of nine, I set out for the forest of Bondy – carrying a handkerchief filled with sand and slung on the end of a stick over my shoulder. The picture of a traveller with bundle and staff over his shoulder had always excited me. ...'

As a young man, he worked at various office jobs: insurance agent, bank clerk, stockbroker, while teaching himself to paint. But he hated city life and was determined to get away. First he went to Brittany in north-west France where, among simple farmers and fishermen, he hoped to find a more natural life. Then in 1887 the dream of a place in the sun led him to Panama. On the way there, the ship put in at the island of Martinique – might this, he wondered, be the ideal tropical island? In Panama he was miserable. The Panama Canal was being constructed, and to Gauguin's mind this was destroying the people's way of life as well as destroying the landscape. To earn a living he had to take a job working as a labourer on the canal, planning to get away as soon as he could. Then he made his way to his next tropical paradise, Martinique. But there he was taken ill with malaria and dysentery.

Desperately he wrote to his friends in Paris, 'Sell forty of my pictures at fifty francs each, everything I possess at any price. I must get out of here, otherwise I shall die like a dog.' He got a job as a deckhand on a sailing ship and finally got back to France.

There, another painter, Vincent van Gogh, invited him to share his house in the beautiful southern town of Arles. Van Gogh, too, had a private dream of utopia. He hoped for a Community of Artists of the South, growing up around the yellow house in Arles. But for Gauguin, life there was just a stepping stone to the ideal of a tropical island. 'May the day come,' he wrote in February 1890, 'when I can flee to the woods on a South Sea island, and live there in peace and for art, with a new family, far from this European struggle for money.'

First he thought of going to Madagascar, but settled for Tahiti because he had read that 'the Tahitians have only to lift their hands in order to harvest the breadfruit and wild bananas. While men and women on the other side of the globe toil to earn their living, contend with cold and hunger, and suffer constant privation, the lucky inhabitants of the remote South Sea paradise of Tahiti know only life at its brightest.'

On 31 March 1891 Gauguin set off from Marseilles, taking with him a shotgun, a French horn, two mandolins and a guitar. When he arrived at Tahiti's capital, Papeete, he was horrified. 'It was just like Europe – a cheap imitation of the Europe I thought I had escaped,' he wrote. 'It was the Tahiti of former times which I loved. That of the present filled me with horror.' He decided to move from Papeete to Mataiea, forty-two kilometres away on the south coast of the island. Here he would build a bamboo hut and sow and plant his fruit and vegetables.

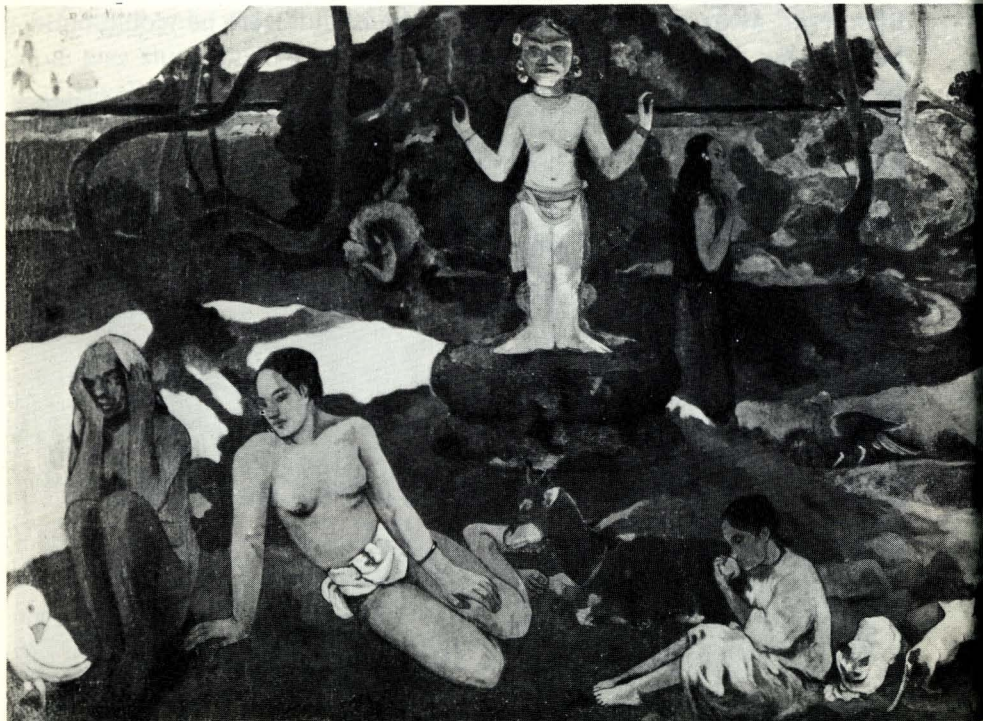




But even in Mataiea life was not simple. Gauguin found that he wasn't as clever or agile as the Tahitians at hunting, fishing or gathering wild bananas, and in order to survive he had to pay high prices for imported tinned food, because it had to be brought to the island from other countries. Even when he dived into the sparkling mountain stream, he was arrested by a French gendarme for having no bathing costume.

In spite of this, he still hoped to find his utopia in the South Seas. When he went back to France to sell his paintings, a newspaper reporter asked him, 'Why did you make your journey to Tahiti?' Gauguin replied, 'I had been fascinated by this idyllic island and its primitive and simple people. That is why I went and why I am now going back there again. In order to achieve something new, you have to go back to the sources, to Man's childhood.'

He arrived back in Tahiti on 8 September 1895. By this time Papeete had electric light, bicycles and a roundabout outside the royal palace. He decided to move further on, to the Marquesas Islands.



Still an optimist, he declared, 'If I am hard up there for a while, I can live by hunting and the few vegetables I shall trouble to raise.' In the end, on 15 September 1901 he landed at the Marquesas and got the local carpenters to build his dream house. This is how he described it:

It has everything any modest artist could dream of. A large studio with a little corner to sleep in; everything handy and arranged on shelves raised about two metres from the ground, where one eats, does a little carpentering, and cooks. A hammock for taking a siesta sheltered from the sun and refreshed by an ocean breeze that comes sifting through some coconut trees about three hundred metres away.

There, two years later, he died.

Paul Gauguin called this painting, *Where have we come from? What are we? Where are we going?* He spent his life travelling in search of utopia. Try marking his route on a map of the world. (You'll need to know that although he lived at Orléans as a child, he was born in Venezuela.) Did he find your ideal place?



## REAL ISLANDS

Plenty of us dream of islands. Few of us actually go and live on one!

Not many of us get a chance. Suppose you did, before you swop it all make a list of what you would actually have to give up – the luxuries you enjoy now. Would you miss these things; would it spoil utopia?

*Tim Andrews, an American professor at Helsinki University, owns Timsö, an island in the Baltic:*

Less than four acres, it lies seven miles off the coast of Finland.

And if there is a prize going for the world's most enthusiastic island owner, it has got to be Tim Andrews.

He lectures from Monday till Wednesday in Helsinki, then moves out to Timsö for the rest of the week. In spring this means a 60-mile journey to the coast, then a seven-mile sail by open boat. In winter it means driving the 60 miles then *ski-ing* over the frozen sea in temperatures sometimes minus 30 degrees centigrade. And he has been doing this for more than 15 years.

"Islands! God, I'm just crazy about them!" he said. "I started off by renting a tiny part of one, and lived there for two years – in a sauna bath hut. Then one day I was exploring around in my boat when I ran on to a rock. I couldn't get the damn thing off, so I got out and started to pull. Then I saw I was close to an island, so I thought, what the hell, I'm in the water anyway. I might as well swim over and have a look.

"And that's how I found *this* island! Oh, God; it was so, so tremendous I just couldn't tell you. I just *had* to have it! I found out who owned it, and *then* began the wooing. God, it was like trying to get an heirloom from an old spinster – they just *wouldn't* let go." But Tim Andrews

was not the kind to let go either, so he kept on pestering for months. At last they gave in. After waiting another nine months for government approval it was his. For £800.

"It's idyllic," he sighed. "All summer long I just fish and read and sail." But what is it like in the winter, when the whole sea is frozen over?

"No problem," he said. "I've got a huge log fire in the lounge and those marvellous Finnish stoves in the bedrooms. I've got all my stores and plenty of food. My mail's delivered, there's a cow on an island close by for milk and I melt chunks of ice for my water. And I ski off and on the island. Absolutely no problems."

He hesitated for a moment. "There's only one thing worries me. I originally came to Finland for a year, but it looks as though I'm gonna have to stay till I can think of some damn way of towing the island with me."



One man's utopia is another man's headache. Clough Williams Ellis in Portmeirion, his substitute for an island.



An architect called Clough Williams Ellis went in search of an island where he could build what he liked – a house for himself and some cottages for visitors – where he could live *his* utopian life. He was surprised to find that small islands round the British coast are quite often advertised for sale.

But he made the sad discovery that almost all these delightful islands have one thing in common: sooner or later they come up for sale again. People buy them, make a heroic effort to settle in them and then give up. He looked at twenty-four different islands around Britain and found that, for his purposes, they all had five snags:

- 1 Hard to reach;
- 2 Harder still to get away from;
- 3 Little shelter;
- 4 No timber;
- 5 Difficult and expensive to build on.

In the end, Williams Ellis built his dream place, not on an island, but on the coast, buying bits of demolished buildings to re-erect there, so that on the coast of North Wales, you suddenly come across the squares and towers of a Mediterranean town: one man's utopia come true.

## YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A MILLIONAIRE TO BUILD YOUR OWN UTOPIA

Tully Crook is an artist who actually set about making his own ideal island utopia – in miniature. He used everyday bits and pieces, mounted on a cork base – twigs and different kinds of sponge dyed green for trees, cotton-wool, cut-up plastic bags, cardboard.

*'My island is roughly a third of a mile square. It's on the Equator in the Indian Ocean north of Malagasy, and the climate is hot and humid. Large parts of it are covered with fallen rock, caves and cracks, and there are coral reefs around it. The soil is black and very rich and lots of different plants and trees grow there – from tall forest trees, festooned with vines and creepers, to smaller trees and grass and low scrub on the flat land.'*

There are six houses on his island. Five are together on a strip of land by the sea – close together so as to damage the natural environment as little as possible. They are all different – a Russian folly, a geodesic dome made of concrete, a tower with a golden dome in a walled garden, a bungalow and a set of concrete and glass tunnels and rooms shaped like a boulder on the outside. The sixth is a glass house built round a living tree in the wood.

He has planned his island so that services are self-contained. Water is brought down from a crater pool in one of the rock hills. Electricity is provided by solar energy. Refuse is ploughed back into the land which provides 95 per cent of the food. Only the small area of flat land is needed for cultivation, because the methods of 'The New Agriculture' are used. With these and everyone's help, plus the rich soil and the continuously warm climate, two harvests of crops like taro, manioc, pawpaws, sugarcane, rice, bananas, oranges and lemons, avocado pears, coffee, melons and pineapple are produced a year. The only livestock are hens, but there are fish in the lagoons.

He says the island would be connected with the outside world in a number of ways: by a radio link, and a seagoing motorboat, for a start. A battery-run mini tractor would be used for the farming, a few foods like tea imported in bulk, and also books, films and medicines.

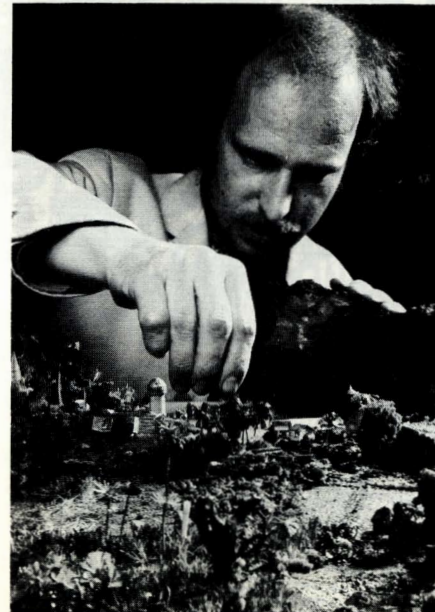
The island is meant for eighteen people, varying in age from one to forty-five, and they all take it in turns to do everything – swapping jobs like doctor, teacher or builder every year. But his idea is that they do whatever they like for most of the time.

What do you think of Tully Crook's island? Would you like to live there? What would you do? Why not make a model of your own ideal island as he did?

The first-year pupils at Gosford Hill School, Oxfordshire, made their own islands too. Starting with a sheet of cardboard, they modelled volcanic islands:

- '– You work out the lines where the island's going to be, the shape.*
  - We used a lavatory roll for the tunnel where the lava comes out.*
  - Then you start screwing up these pieces of newspaper and stick them along the shape and then you get flat pieces of paper when you've raised it to the height you want it, flat pieces of paper and lots of glue and you stick them over so they keep it all there.*
  - When it was dry we painted over it. The sea and the rivers blue, the green's the forest and we put the yellow down there for where the sand is.*
- If you'd had more time would you like to have gone on?
- Yes, it's good fun, it really is.*
  - I would put pebbles . . . put glue round here and put real sand or . . . have a bigger board, a great board . . . and for the forest get little twigs and stick them in.*
  - Or make models of trees. It would depend on where you were. I mean if it was a hot desert island well then you wouldn't want much vegetation, just cactuses and things . . . out of plasticine or it might have been better with clay.'*

Tully Crook and his island.  
'I call it New East Finchley because even somewhere like East Finchley could be a paradise if everyone wanted it to be.'



Pupils from the first year at Gosford Hill School:  
Nicky Scarfe, Richard Taylor, Gregory Rose, Stephen Read and their island.





# 3 Supercity

A desert island is a one-person utopia, but others think the only way to the ideal life is through the combined effort of vast numbers of people gathered together in cities.

Saint John, in the very last book of the Bible, saw the new Jerusalem coming down from Heaven.

The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its breadth; and he measured the city with his rod, twelve thousand stadia; its length and breadth and height are equal. He also measured its wall, a hundred and forty-four cubits by a man's measure, that is, an angel's. The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every jewel; the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.

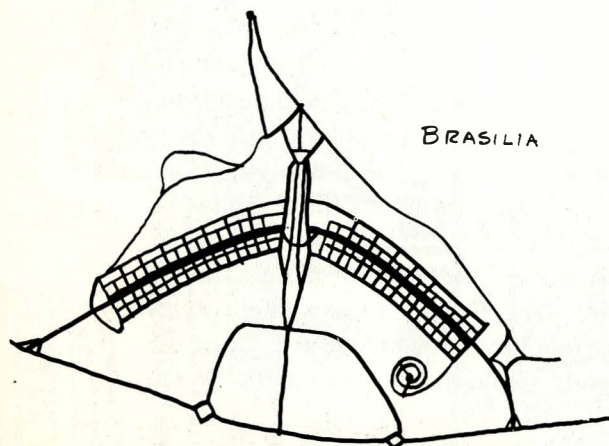
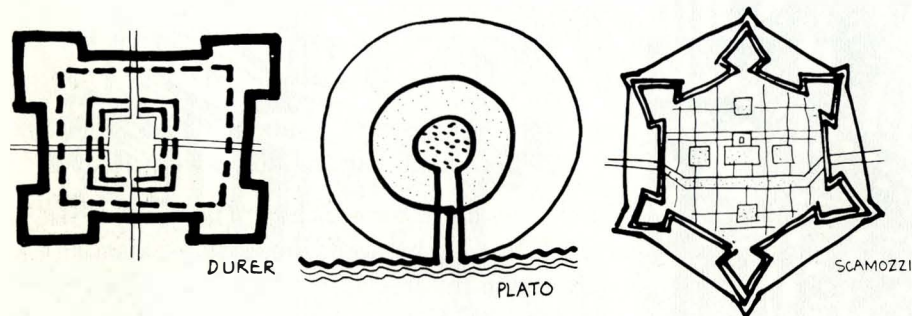
Revelations 21

All through history, the city has been some people's utopia. When the first towns were built, men must have been amazed that there was time and energy left over from the hard task of scraping a living from the earth to build houses and streets and make fancy clothes and ornamental things that you would never see in the country. Compared with their own mud huts, they would really think that the city must be Paradise, with its streets paved in gold. It is easy to see why people thought of Heaven as a city.

## WHEN IS A CITY A CITY?

In Thomas More's *Utopia* the cities were just there. Did he give any reasons for having cities or any clues as to why they grew up in those particular places?

The story of New Lanark has one kind of answer. But would you call New Lanark a city? Come to think of it, when is a city a city? How many people, buildings, square kilometres make a city?



Left: different ideas of the best shape and layout for a city.  
 Right: mobile homes near Santa Fé, New Mexico, USA.  
 What's your definition of a city? Is it the shape or what's in a place that is most important in deciding whether it's a city or not?

Here's one view:

Cities, through history, have been of all sizes and shapes and have come about for all sorts of reasons to serve all sorts of human needs.

They can be small as a village and yet be 'cities'. Canterbury and St David's are cities in a way that hundreds of large nineteenth- and twentieth-century towns are not.

There are cities which are world capitals, continental capitals, national capitals, regional capitals and county capitals. There are sea ports, railway cities and those at road junctions or river crossings.

Among the finest cities are the resorts – Bath Spa, Buxton and their successors – and the seaside towns – resplendent with stucco crescents, piers and promenades.

Splendid among cities are the 'fair' towns, Leipzig, Hanover and a dozen other European cities of international repute.

There is now a restless shifting change population constantly in and around airports. There are transit camps for the military or refugees, but these are not cities. There are places for heavy industry; company towns: commercial and trading estates; office towns: government towns. Strange, tough, isolated pioneers are even now clinging on to platforms in the North Sea or weather ships in the Atlantic. How many of these are cities?

Leslie Lane, *Humber*



# THE FIRST CITIES

According to one historian of cities,

As far as is known, the world's first cities took shape around 3500 BC in the Fertile Crescent, the eastern segment of which includes Mesopotamia: the valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates. . . . These early cities were much alike . . . wheat and barley were the cereal crops, bronze was the metal, oxen pulled ploughs and there were wheeled vehicles. Moreover, the city's leader was both king and high priest; the peasants' tribute to the city god was stored in the temple granaries. Luxury goods recovered from royal tombs and temples show that there were skilled craftsmen, and the importation of precious metals and gems from well beyond the borders of Mesopotamia shows that there was a class of merchant traders. Gideon Sjoberg, *Origin and development of cities*

As far as is known . . . he said, because we have to guess from the work of the archaeologists how cities first began.

## Large city dating back 5,000 years uncovered in Iran

From David Housego  
Tehran, Dec 10

After six seasons of excavations an Irano-Italian archaeological team has discovered in the remote province of Seistan, south-east Iran, what they believe is one of the best-preserved early cities in the world.

The site, Sharh-I-Sokhta, was noted by British travellers in the last century. Locally it is known as "Burnt City" because of the thick coat of pottery sherds that cover the surface and which probably gave rise to the legend that it had been destroyed by fire.

Sir Aurel Stein, the Oriental scholar, visited it in 1916 but reached the conclusion that the thick hard crust that lies beneath the dust was a geological structure and that if there had been a city there its walls had long since been eroded entirely by the wind.

From a distance the site looks like a large sand-coloured plateau. It is about 120 hectares (about 300 acres) large and lies between Zabol and Zahedan, close to the Persian-Afghan border, at a point that had strategic significance in the last century as a result of the conflicting British and Russian ambitions to dominate Central Asia and control the routes to India.

Initial excavations by the archaeologists under the direction of Dr Marzio Tosi penetrated beneath the hard crust (a compound of salt, sand and clay) and uncovered a city some 5,000 years old.

Summing up his findings at an archaeological congress here organized by the Iran Bustan Museum, Dr Tosi described the city as being preserved like pickles in a pot. The reason for this extraordinary state of preservation is the radical change in the course of the Helmand river, once the source of the city's prosperity, followed by the abandonment of southern Seistan around the second millennium BC.

But on the evidence of what has been uncovered Dr Tosi believes it is possible to speak of a Helmand civilization evolving as a centre of urban development independently of that in the Mesopotamian plains, which has until recently been thought of as the cradle of modern civilization. At the same time Sharh-I-Sokhta seems to have had extensive trade connections with what is now Soviet Turkmenia, Afghanistan and the Mesopotamian valley.

Early excavations uncovered rectangular buildings, often separated by winding alleys,

with doors, windows, staircases and, in some cases, burnt roof beams.

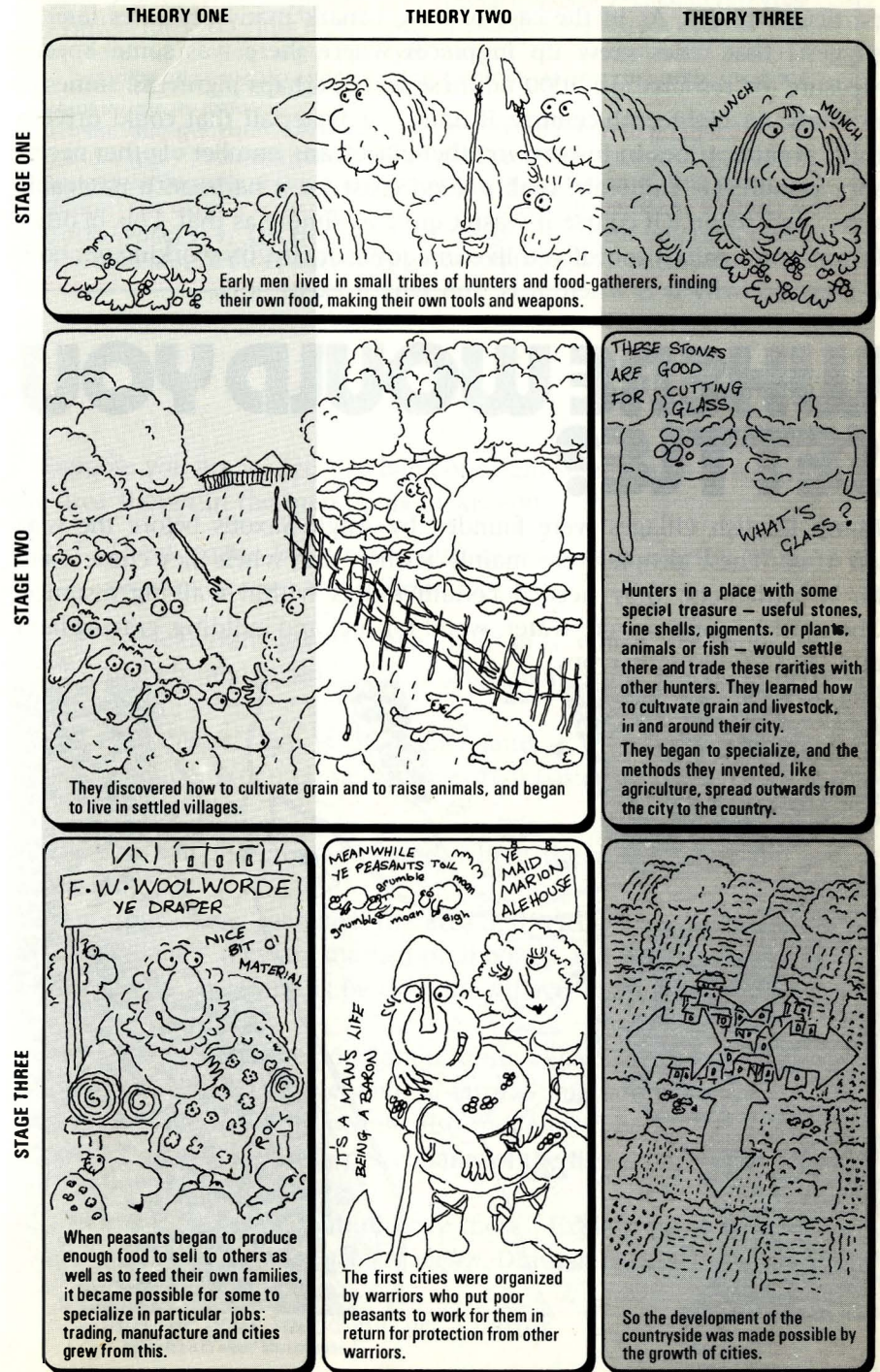
Dr Tosi said that every room contained objects. Entire pots had been used to fill abandoned rooms as a prelude to the reconstruction of a house. Mixed with the pottery were ropes, baskets, dyes, textiles and wooden objects—"a whole incredible collection of crafts that we had supposed were forever lost in south-west Asia".

Over two million sherds have now been examined, together with some 25,000 stone tools and a massive collection of bones, as well as micro-faunal remains, drawn from the sewers of the town.

As the importance of the site grew the research team working on the site expanded to 25.

Distrustful of radiocarbon tests for dating early objects, the Italians obtained help from the Japanese who provided a team of geologists and nuclear physicists, who detached samples for paleo-magnetic and uranium-238 determinations. Their conclusions, together with other evidence, have convinced Dr Tosi that the city was founded some time between 2900 and 1900 BC—the period of the growth of the first extensive urban communities.

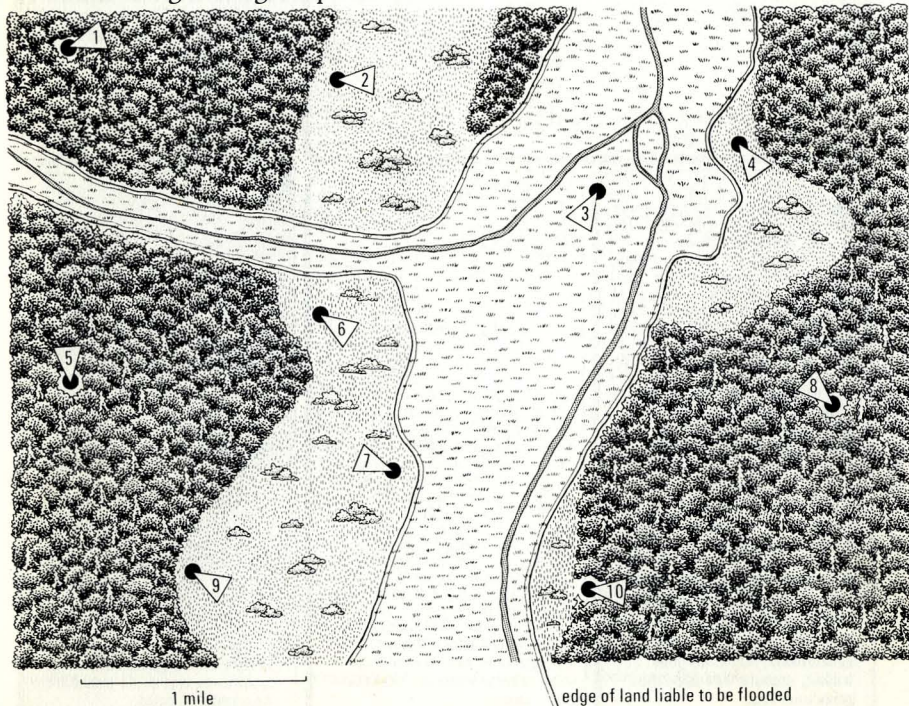
The three main theories as to how the first cities came to be.



The third of these theories gives an idea of why cities grew up in certain particular places. As in the case of New Lanark many centuries later, it suggests that cities grew up in places where there was some 'special treasure' or resource. In 5000 BC these were perhaps pigments, stones or animals; in eighteenth-century Britain – a waterfall that could drive a mill; at other times in history, in other places, any number of other necessary resources – minerals, coal, a good coast for a harbour, a navigable river, and so on. Of course it wasn't quite as simple as that. Lots of other factors come into it too; if you live in a town or city, try working out how it grew up, why it is where it is, and why it exists now.

# WHERE WOULD YOU SETTLE?

Many English villages were founded by Anglo-Saxons before the year AD 1000. These people were mainly farmers and when they chose a site for a settlement, they needed certain things within walking distance. The most important were water, wood for fuel and building, grazing land and land for growing crops.



These Anglo-Saxons might well have chosen differently, even in this area. A valley of the River Ouse where there are lower good terraced sites, and some of course some sites on both sides of the river. In other parts further away from the river there are no villages in the river valley on this map, there are villages, and boulder clay (100). The sixth village on the map is Olford (100). Barton (100) has settlements where both sides (2000), now a deserted brookside village (2000), followed by both sides (1000) and Great Brook. The earliest settlement in the area (using the names as a guide) was the village (134). The river marked as the River Ouse and Diddington. The map is of an area between St Neots and Huntingdon (Oxfordshire).

Suppose you are leaders of a band of Anglo-Saxons who have arrived in the area shown in the map in about AD 600.

These parts, *low terraces and alluvium*, are marshy areas with swampy grasses and willow trees.

These *terrace gravels* have light soils which are quite easy to plough, and many areas of grass, with some woods in between them.

The *boulder clay* is on higher land in this area and is mainly wooded. When cleared it gives rich pastures.

The best soil for crops is found where the *boulder clay* and *terrace gravels* mix.

Your scouts have 'searched' the area and selected ten possible sites for the first village – they are marked on the map and numbered one to ten. Which site do you think is best for the village? Explain why this site is so good.

The years pass and the population in the village increases; there is not enough land nearby for everyone to farm. Some families move out and found new villages. More people also move into the area from outside. Eventually, by AD 1000, the descendants of the first groups to arrive have established five more villages.

Which five sites do you think they chose? Explain what is *wrong* with each of the four sites you *have not chosen*. Draw in the tracks which might have connected the villages.

Now turn the book round and get a mirror.

## CITY AND COUNTRY

Jane Jacobs, who believes in the last of the three theories, thinks that the importance of it is that it shows how city and country have depended on each other, not only in early days, but also much later in our history.

The goods purchased by the little cities from the hungry countryside were largely materials that went into crafts: raw wool, hides, horn. The food of the little cities was, in large part, not agricultural produce but wild food: chiefly wild fowl and fish. Salt fish was as much the staff of life as bread; often more so. . . . The mills and the bakeries of early medieval cities were not copies of village or manorial industry brought into the cities. They were, rather, the fore-runners of village and manorial mills and bakeries. Some of the grain of the little cities probably came from the rural world. But much of it, likely most of it, the city people grew for themselves in the fields both within and without the walls; throughout Europe, such fields were standard facilities of early medieval cities.

Jane Jacobs, *The Economy of Cities*

One of the things we can see from her idea about how cities grew, is that the country *needs* the city. She believes, for example, that new inventions and techniques were first developed in the cities (like the mills and the bakeries) and then passed out into the country areas, enabling them to develop in their turn. Is that still true today? Next time you're in the country, look around. Where do the farm machines (tractors, harvesters, milking machines), the fertilizer or the containers for the farm produce come from? Look for the trademarks: where were they made? Or if you want to be really thorough, where were they invented and by whom? If you write to the manufacturers, they may be able to help you. Their addresses alone may give you some evidence. Map them and you may find a pattern.

## COUNTRY AND CITY

An idea that connects with this is that the city and the region around it are one. Saint Thomas Aquinas, writing about *his* ideal city in the thirteenth century, saw it as exactly this kind of city region, where the land around the city itself could provide food for the people without depending on trade from far-away places.

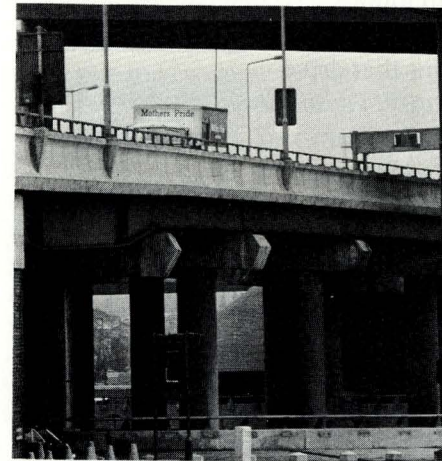
Now there are two ways in which an abundance of foodstuffs can be supplied to a city. The first is where the soil is so fertile that it nobly provides for all the necessities of human life. The second is by trade,

through which the necessities of life are brought to the towns from different places. But it is quite clear that the first means is better. For the higher a thing is, the more self-sufficient it is; since whatever needs another's help is by that very fact proven inferior. But that city is more fully self-sufficient which the surrounding country supplies with all its vital needs than is another which must obtain these supplies by trade. A city which has an abundance of food from its own territory is more dignified than one which is provisioned by merchants. It is safer too, for the importing of supplies can be prevented whether owing to the outcome of wars or to the many dangers of the road, and thus the city may be overcome through lack of food.

St Thomas Aquinas, *De Regimine Principum*

Is this still true? What is the region around a city now? Where, for example, did your last meal come from?

Many things have changed since the thirteenth century, above all, the speed and ease with which resources can be transported from one place to another and food and services can be brought into our cities.



Which comes first, the country or the city? In Britain most bread is now made in cities and then distributed all over the country in lorries like this. But what about the corn to make the bread in the first place?



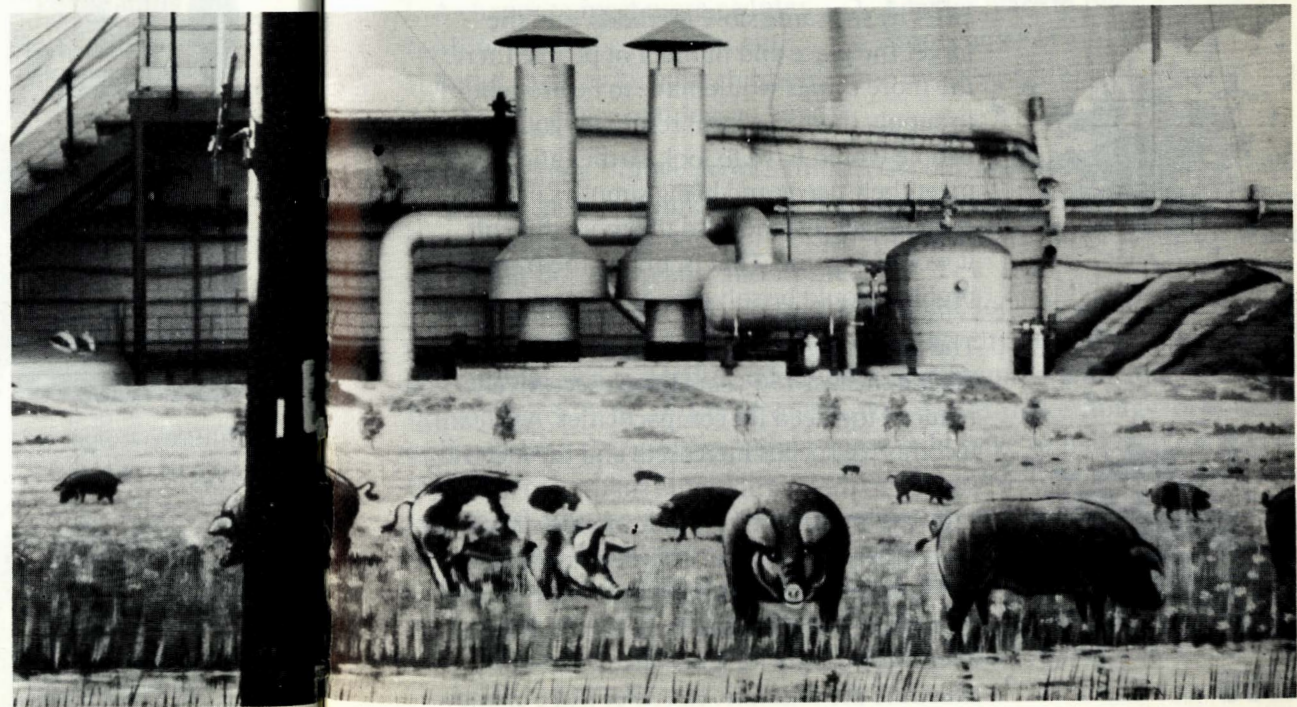


## WHO ARE WE KIDDING?

Despite our dreams of fresh 'natural' food and the close-to-nature life of the country, there is probably not much difference between the food eaten by people in the cities and those in the country. No matter where you live a lot of the food you eat is likely to have been produced or at least processed and packaged in a town.

But it seems that people still want to imagine that the rural utopia exists. The country is where 'good, wholesome' food comes from.

This is the centre of a rather drab town – Vernon, a few miles from Los Angeles in the USA. Inside these walls, painted with happy scenes of 'natural' pig-rearing – a piggie utopia – are the stockyards, slaughterhouses and packaging plants of Farmer John, one of the largest companies in the USA producing and selling pig products. On the outside, 'contented-looking pigs grunt and frolic in muddy pools under a painted blue sky fluffy with white clouds'. The real pigs arrive in freight trains that drive straight behind the pretty walls to the factory. There they are slaughtered and turned into sausages, ham and bacon which are then packaged and loaded into lorries for distribution to supermarkets all over America – country and city alike. No doubt many of those supermarkets are in the country too. The company even employ an artist to keep the painting in good condition.



The Farmer John Pig Products factory in Vernon, USA. The myth of the country utopia is being kept alive in the middle of the city. But don't we want to know how it really is?

London growing.



1850



1914



1939



1958

## HOW BIG?

Over seventy years ago, H. G. Wells wrote a book prophesying the changes that would happen by the year 2000. One of the things he discussed was the reason why towns and cities grew up where they did.

... agricultural districts have their towns at about eight miles, and where grazing takes the place of the plough, the town distances increase to fifteen. And so it is, entirely as a multiple of horse and foot strides that all the villages and towns of the world's countryside have been plotted out.

H. G. Wells, *Anticipations*

While people could only get from place to place on foot or by horse, it's not surprising that settlements remained fairly small and within walking distance of each other. After all, resources could only be brought into the cities by the same slow methods, and the larger the place and number of people there, the more things would have to be brought in to supply them. As local resources got used up, people would have to look farther afield to meet their needs and bring supplies in over even longer distances, so the more difficult it would become. That is, unless the transport problem could be solved:

The technological revolutions in land transport during the last 150 years have successively reduced the need for compact cities. As steam locomotive speeds increased, and the electric street car, the omnibus, the suburban electric railway, and the private automobile succeeded each other, so the links between home and workplace widened. Living above the shop or workshop was replaced by daily commuting over increasingly long distances. We can illustrate the dramatic effects of these changes

in the exploding size of London. In 1800 London, Europe's largest city, could still be crossed on foot in little more than an hour. Even at its greatest diameter, the built-up area extended only ten kilometres. As the sequence of maps shows, this area expanded so rapidly that by 1914 the diameter reached thirty-five kilometres, and today approaches seventy kilometres (despite the restriction of a Green Belt policy).

Peter Haggett, *Geography: A Modern Synthesis*

Today people are still moving to the cities all over the world:

In 1850 there were four cities of the world with more than one million people. In 1950 there were about a hundred cities with a million or more population. By 2000 – less than three decades away – there will be over 1000 cities of this magnitude.

Gwen Bell and Jaqueline Tyrwhitt, *Human Identity in the Urban Environment*

## WHAT FOR?

What are people looking for in the city? What does the city give them? Here are seven reasons for living there. Can you think of any more? What order of importance would you put them in?

- 1 A chance to meet more people;
- 2 A better place to live;
- 3 More kinds of entertainment;
- 4 More choice of jobs;
- 5 Better chances for your children;
- 6 Always something happening;
- 7 A bigger choice of things to buy.

But is that what other people think? Go out and ask a group of twenty people what they think the city has to offer and how they would rank these reasons. What kind of person wants what? How much of what they want do they really find in the city?

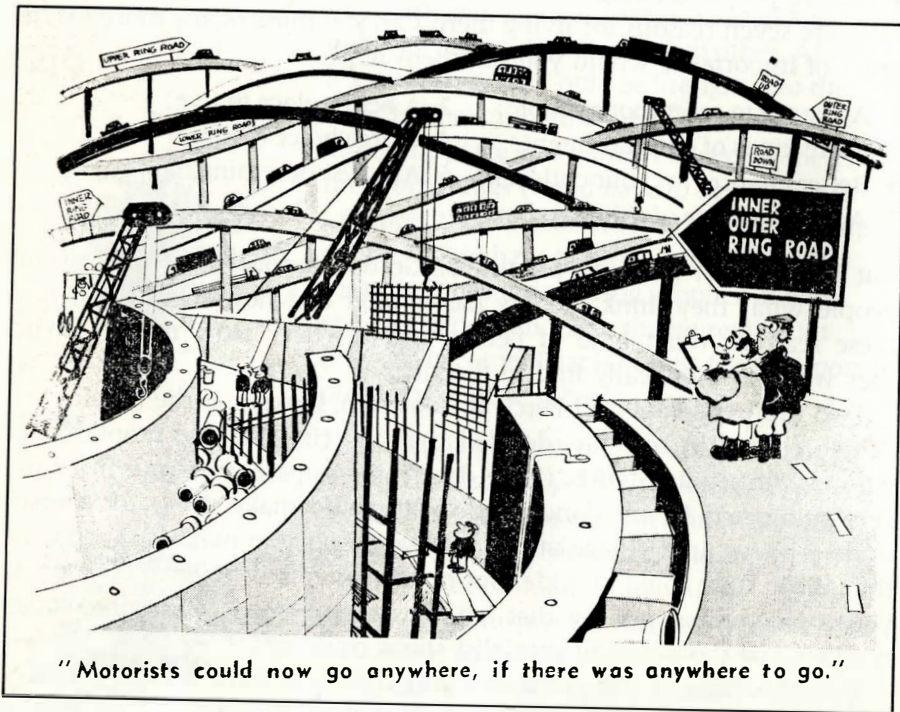
Two brothers, Paul and Percival Goodman, looking at the utopias that people choose in real life, decided that the city was the utopia of the person who wants MORE. (How does this compare with your findings? Do you agree?) In an island utopia you would make things for yourself or do without. In a village utopia you would have to make do with what the village store could provide. But in a city utopia (if you had the money) you could buy everything that ten department stores, a hundred supermarkets and thousands of specialist shops could sell.

But, they said, if your idea of a good life is to have MORE THINGS, you ought to do it more efficiently. So they thought up the City of Efficient Consumption, where the whole centre of the city is one big roofed-in supermarket.

The cities that we do live in grew from isolated buildings in tiny settlements to bigger and bigger buildings in more and more densely built and crowded streets.

To try to get the traffic through now, roads have to be made wider and wider, or put above the ground or pushed underground, but all the cars still pour into the city centre. The driver doesn't want to go to a *street*. He wants to go to a *building*, so he has to drive to somewhere as near as he can get to the building, look for somewhere to park his car, and then walk through the streets and the corridors and lifts of the building to get to the place he actually came to visit.

With bigger and bigger buildings and more and more cars, the street becomes pointless, say the Goodmans. Useless for travelling because of traffic jams, unfit for walking, or for window shopping or just hanging around, because of the noise, fumes and danger of cars. They are a waste of space too. Street space takes up more than a quarter of most European cities and more than a third of most American ones. And it is expensive to pave and clean them, and to control the traffic.



Right: part of an advertisement for Fiat cars. It goes on to urge people to buy Fiats because they're smaller and use up less road space. What do you think of that argument?

# The car designed society. There's a chance it may destroy it.

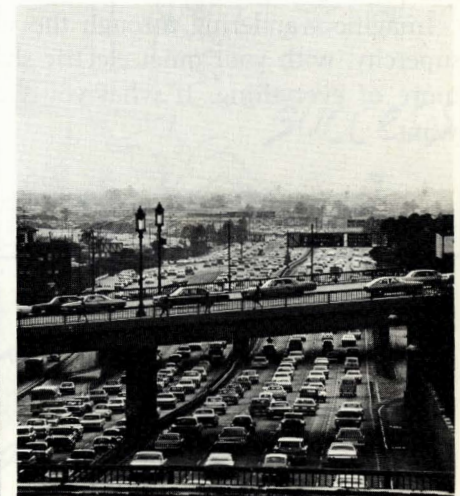
1918

WILSHIRE BOULEVARD,  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.  
BEFORE THE IMPACT  
OF THE CAR.



1972

WILSHIRE BOULEVARD,  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.  
AFTER THE IMPACT  
OF THE CAR.



## How the car designed Los Angeles.

Unlike the great cities of Europe, Los Angeles grew up in this century, in fact, in the last 50 years. Simply put, Los Angeles grew up in the Age of the Car.

As a result, the way Los Angeles was laid out, the growth of suburbia and exurbia, the nature of where people worked and where they lived was determined by the car.

Roads began to crisscross the countryside. More of them every year. Two and three tier motorways became commonplace. The people of Los Angeles bought more cars than people in any other city in the world. (Two or four cars to a family weren't rare.) They also didn't buy just any kind of car. They bought the biggest, most powerful cars that America had to offer.

## How the car almost destroyed it.

The consequences were disastrous. Motorways in Los Angeles weren't only congested when people were traveling to work or going home from it, they were

congested all day long. Los Angeles became a world leader in accidents and traffic fatalities. A word was coined for the kind of pollution the car had created there: smog.

## Will Europe become another Los Angeles?

Car sales in Europe over the last several years have been burgeoning.

It seems almost like Los Angeles all over again. Except, if anything, the situation can become worse than it was there.

## Fiat's thinking on the subject.

At Fiat, we are painfully aware of this trend.

There is nothing we or any other manufacturer can do about the number of cars on our roads. Everyone who can afford a car should have a right to own one. Only the government has the ability to change that.

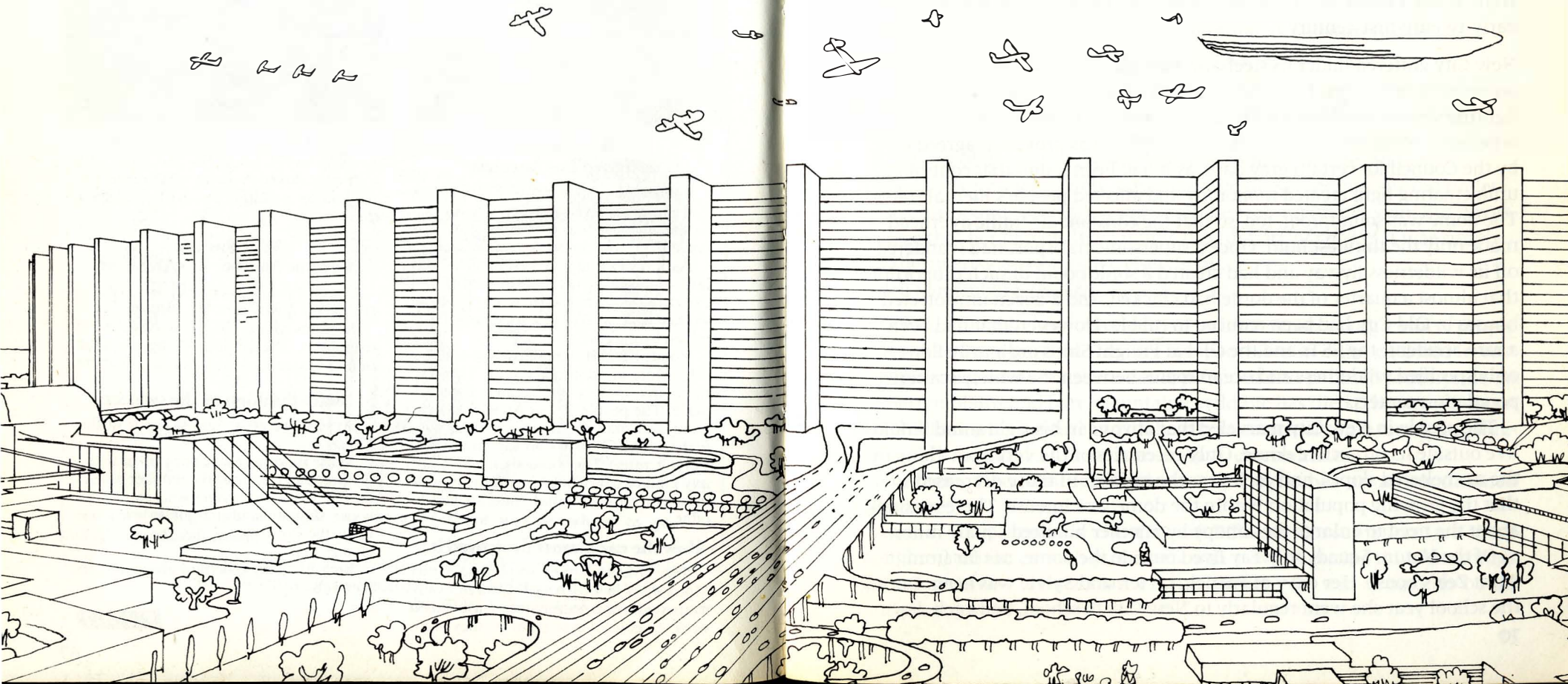
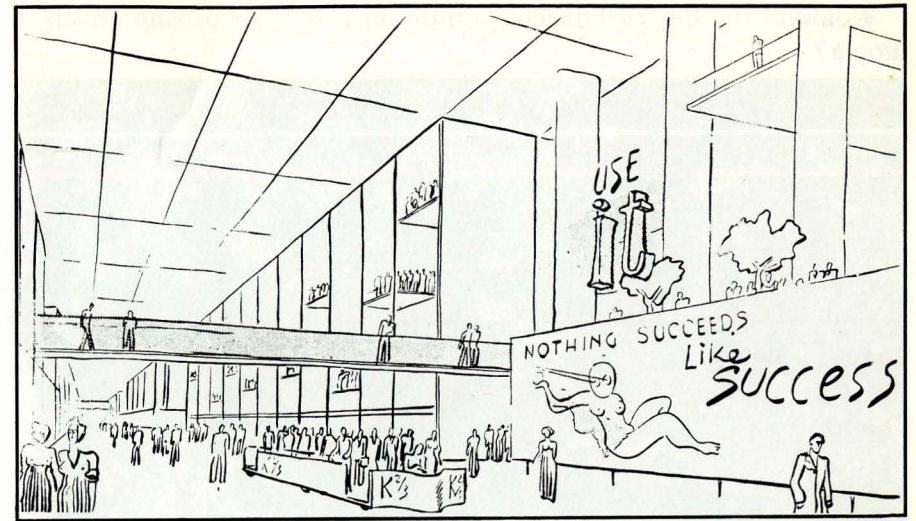
But we can do something about the cars themselves.

**FIAT**

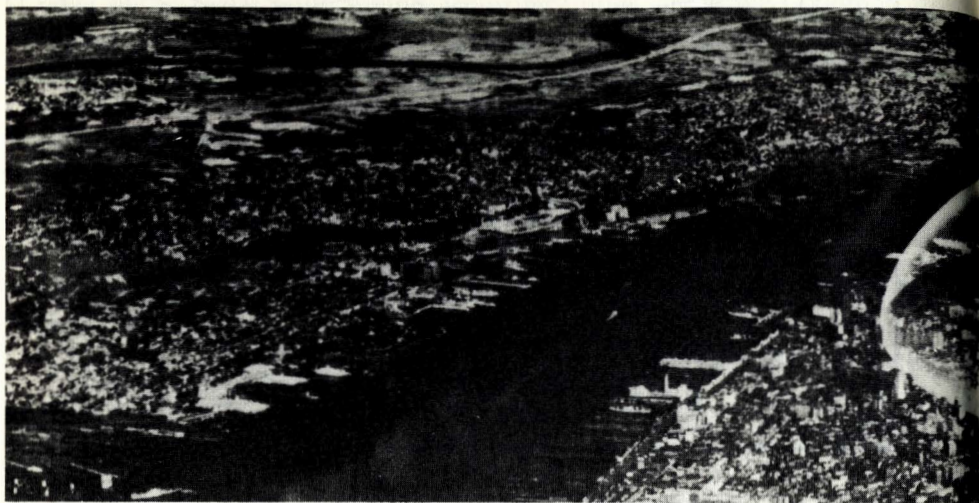
## IF WHAT YOU WANT IS MORE...

If your life is really built around acquiring things, argue the Goodman brothers, why not do it efficiently, abolish the street and make the city one vast container, full of goodies? They designed their City of Efficient Consumption as one big air-conditioned cylinder, two kilometres wide, many storeys high, with everything you could possibly want, all under one roof.

Imagine wandering through the wide, brightly-lit walkways of their supercity, with your quiet electric shopping trolley, collecting more and more of everything. If what you want is more, what more could you want?



Wouldn't the City of Efficient Consumption fit your private dream of utopia?

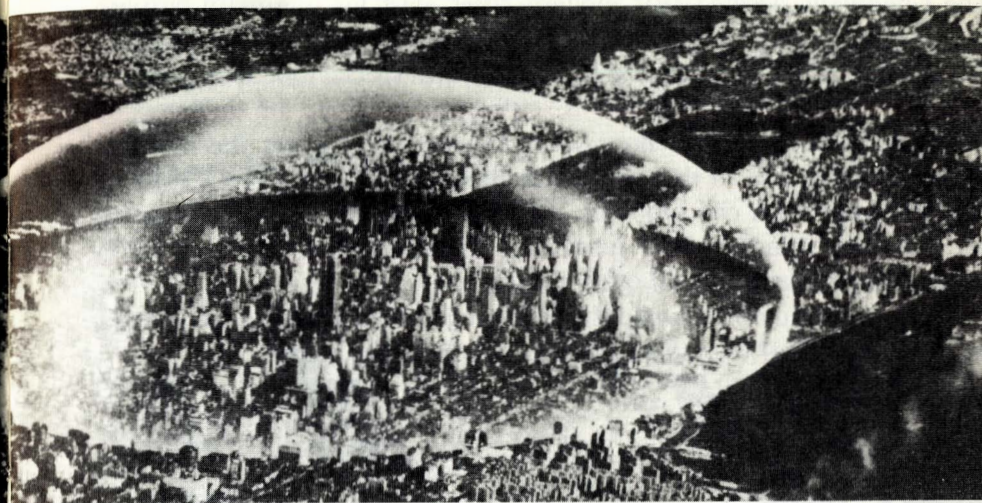


Here is an extract from a story called *Out There*, which happens in the early twenty-first century:

New City glittered under its steel-and-Plexiglas dome, eternally air-conditioned, forever beyond the reach of rain, snow, or frost. Its lighting system provided for the same amount of illumination daily whether the sun shone or not. However, there was provision agreed on by the Council for certain gray days, as it had been found that continual, unfluctuating light created monotony and affected people's mental states. The dome was soundproof, too, so that the constant air traffic overhead made only the faintest hum. Once a supersonic transport had wandered off its wilderness flyway and had created a sonic boom of such proportions that almost a quarter of the dome had cracked, and a dozen unprotected houses in Old City had been reduced to rubble. However, that had been a rare accident; the SSTs and the Global Freight Ships ordinarily flew only specified wilderness and ocean routes between the widely scattered population centers.

The people in New City marveled that anyone in his right mind would live outside its protective dome. Only eccentrics or the very poor clung to the unsheltered slopes, and each year the number of those decreased so that the growing population within the dome was intense. There was talk about the need to enlarge the canopy by another hundred square miles.

Of the Nature Squad, only Fay lived outside the dome, not far from Aunt Zeb's house. Her envy of Patrick, Lester, and Sylvie was keen. During the school year she went regularly to New City to school, and each day



when she had to board the Turbo-van that took her and other Old City children back to their homes, she felt humiliated. Outwardly, she pretended that she much preferred life under the open sky.

'My mother and father love the wind and the rain,' she would declare with desperate boldness to questioning classmates. 'And so do I; I'd hate to live all bottled up, without ever hearing the wind or anything.'

That part of it was true. Aside from the dome's prestige, and its protection from sonic booms, lightning, and disease germs, she did prefer the natural sounds of wind or rain, and the real sun on her skin. But it was not true that her parents lived where they did out of choice. It was simply that they were too poor to live elsewhere.

Adrien Stoutenburg, *Out There*

As you can tell from this part of Adrien Stoutenburg's story, people (unless like Fay's parents, they are too poor) live in cities enclosed in vast plastic domes, while out there in the poisoned and polluted countryside, in the barren plains and bare mountains, wild life has died. The story is about five children who venture out of the city in search of some remaining fragment of the natural life which men have exterminated.

For them, New City has become, not utopia, but an air-conditioned nightmare.

And if your utopia is the City of Efficient Consumption, are there enough materials, enough power, enough ways of getting rid of the things you throw away, for it to last on this planet? Or will it have to be on another, anyway?

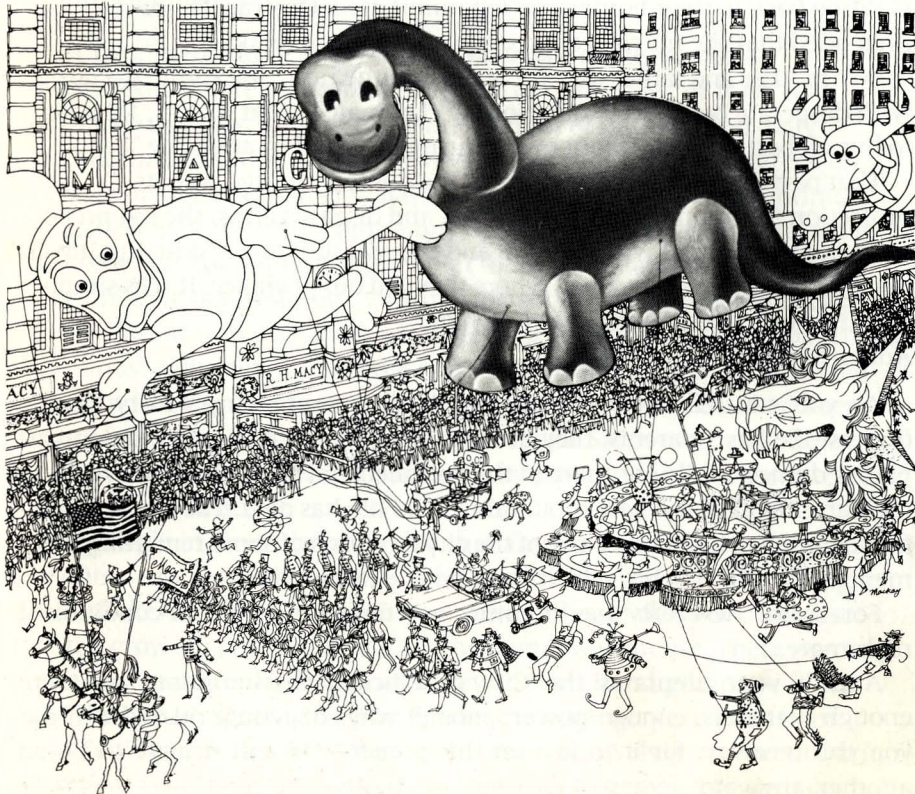
## ONE-TRACK MINDED?

The Goodmans decided that modern cities exist for one main purpose – shopping – and so the logical thing to do was to design everything around this. There have always been cities with special functions, perhaps you live in one – market towns, cities for worship, for defence, for manufacture. Some cities now seem to exist only to get the motorist through. But is that all that goes on in these places?

The trouble with city utopians, say the Goodmans, is that they tend to get one-track minded about what they think cities are for, what life is about. They forget about all other things.

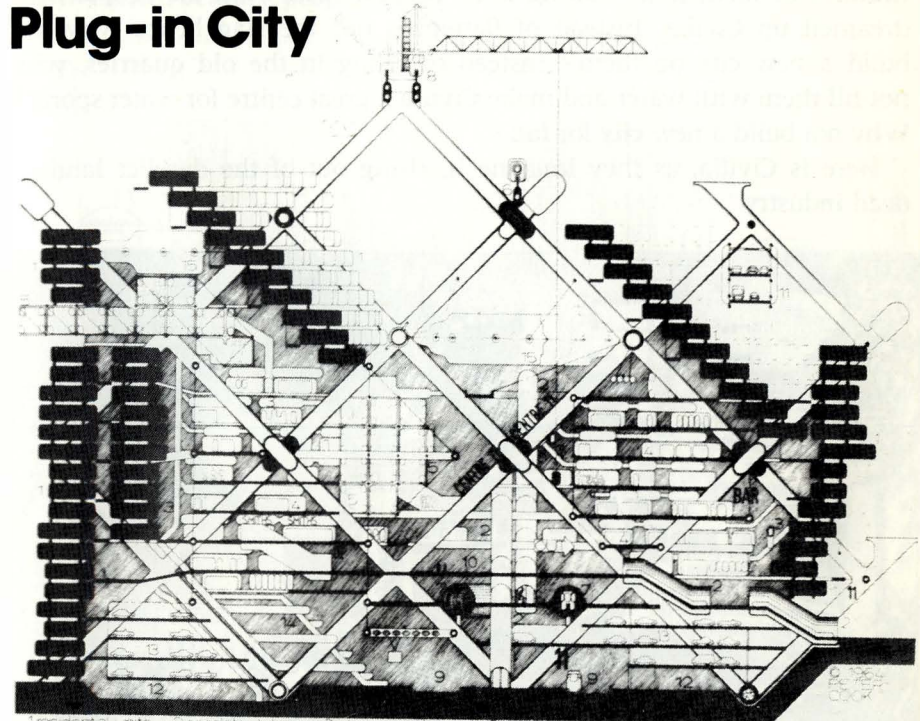
What kind of utopias would the following be for the people who would have to live there? Would you like to live in any of them?

### Fun City



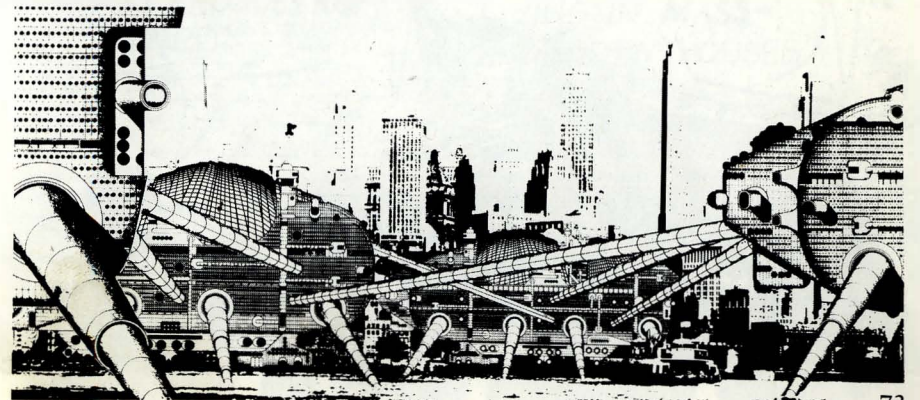
A group of architects who called themselves Archigram designed a whole series of Fun Cities, like Plug-In City, where, at the wish of the owner, each capsule-home could be lifted by crane or helicopter and plugged in higher or lower or elsewhere in the network of services – heating, power, water and transportation. Or like the Walking City which wanders on its giant legs for a change of scene.

### Plug-in City



1 residential units 2 escalator tubes 3 shop supply 1,2,3,4 5 shops 6 shops and unit shops  
7 fast monorail 7 local monorail 8 renewway 9 heavy duty railway 10 maximum circulation area  
11 fast rail 12 local road 13 local parking 14 dual double writing 15 environment sea labour

### Walking City



## Civilia

Civilia is an imaginary new city suggested for a site of industrial dereliction – old slag heaps and quarries near Nuneaton, in the middle of a triangle formed by Birmingham, Coventry and Leicester.

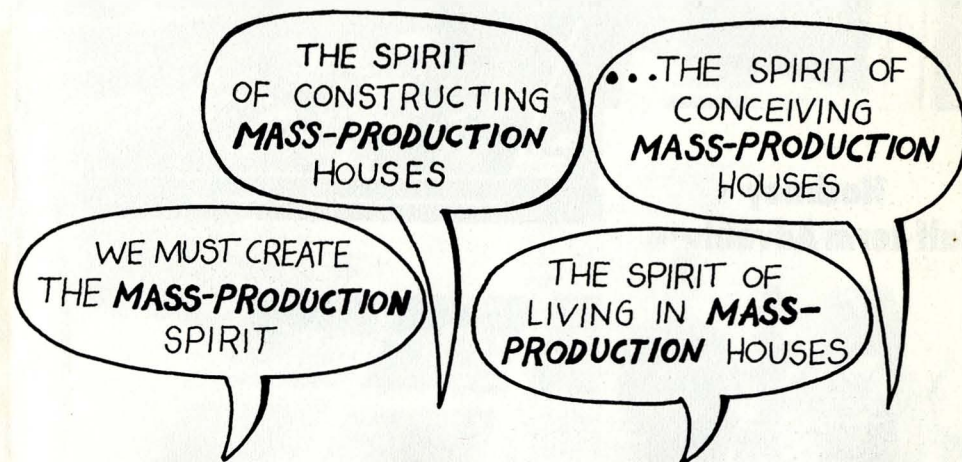
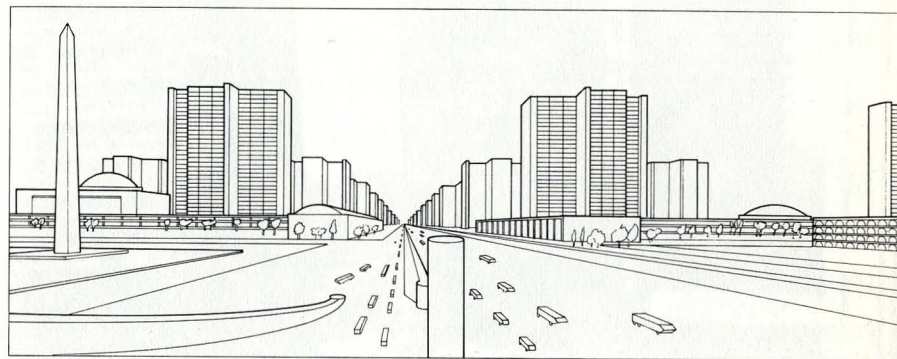
Why build new towns on farming land, when there are thousands of hectares of spoilt land waiting to be properly used? ask the people who dreamed up Civilia. Instead of flattening out the slag heaps why not build a new city on them? Instead of filling in the old quarries, why not fill them with water and make Civilia a great centre for water sports? Why not build a new city for fun?

Here is Civilia, as they imagine it, rising out of the derelict land of dead industry.



## Mass-production City

Fifty years ago the French–Swiss architect, Le Corbusier, designed *his* utopian city. The twentieth century, he said, is the age of machinery and mass production. We need houses as efficient as machines, mass production houses in skyscraper cities set in parkland. Twentieth-century homes for twentieth-century people.





Years later, architects began to build Le Corbusier's dream, but what people usually got was the skyscraper without the park. Here they are, in Ken Worpole and John Boler's story, living in someone else's utopia. Do you?

Eventually they left the park and made their way through the new flats.

"I wouldn't mind living in one of those flats," said Terry. "I reckon they're all right."

"Yeah, all right for a goldfish," said Dave.

"Better than a flat in one of our rotten old blocks."

"At least you've got somewhere to play where you live," replied Dave. "If you lived in one of those it would take you ages to find somewhere to play football."

"Anyway," interrupted Vic, "I bet your parents couldn't afford one of them. My dad says nobody round here can."





# 4 Roses round the door

A cottage in the country with roses round the door. This is utopia for a whole lot of people. They yearn for the peace and quiet which life in the country promises.

In the month of June the grass grows high  
And round my cottage thick-leaved branches sway.  
There is not a bird but delights in the place where it rests  
And I too – love my thatched cottage.

I have done my ploughing :

I have sown my seed.

Again I have time to sit and read my books.

In the narrow lane there are no deep ruts :

Often my friends' carriages turn back.

In high spirits I pour out my spring wine

And pluck the lettuce growing in my garden.

A gentle rain comes stealing up from the east

And a sweet wind bears it company.

My thoughts float idly over the story of King Chou

My eyes wander over the pictures of Hills and Seas.

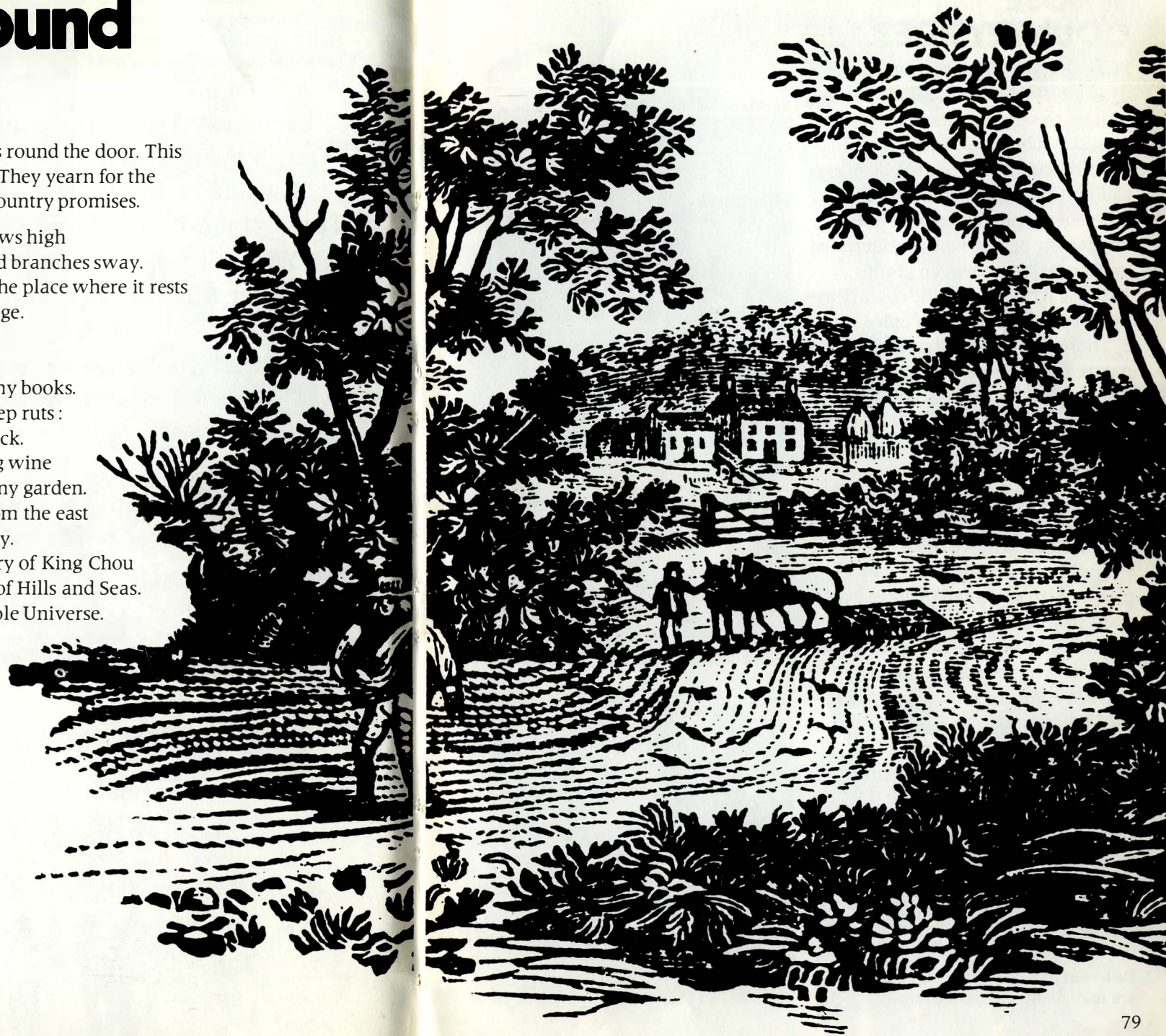
At a single glance I survey the whole Universe.

He will never be happy, who such

pleasures fail to please!

T'ao Ch'ien (AD 365-427)

*Reading the book of hills and seas.*



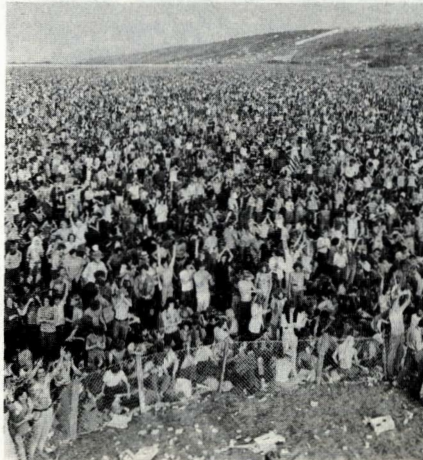
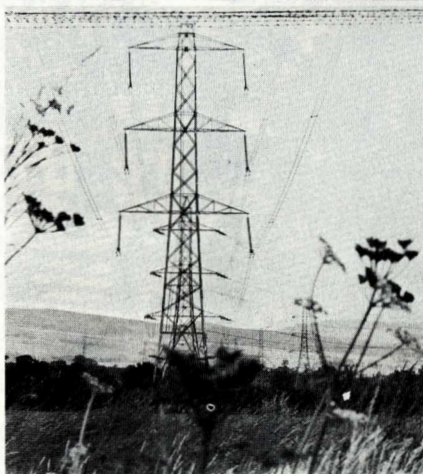
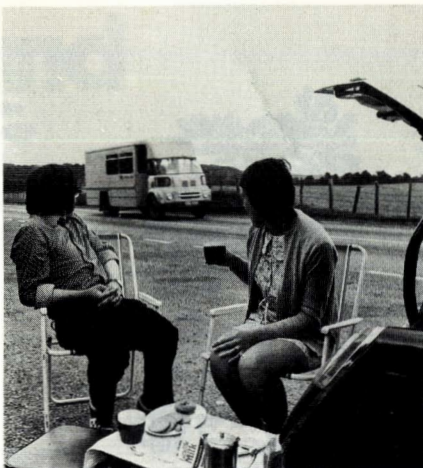
## WHOSE COUNTRYSIDE?

People expect different things from the countryside, and it is hard for the country to satisfy all these needs. Gerald Wibberley tried to sort out the differences between the countryside as it really is, and as different people think about it. He divided the people who are interested in country life into seven groups:

- 1 Those who think of the country as a playground for townspeople.
- 2 Those who see the country as a nature reserve for animals, birds, insects, plants and trees.
- 3 Those who would like the country to look exactly like it did when their parents were young.
- 4 Those who want their particular village to stay just how it was when they decided to move there.
- 5 Those who are so harassed by the pace and stress of modern life that they want the country to be a refuge of solitude and peace – at the weekend.
- 6 Those who see the country as spare land for the growth of towns, road-building etc.
- 7 Those who think the most important thing about the country is that it produces food.

Organize a survey of your friends to see which group they belong to. Try it on some grown-ups too. Which attitude has the most supporters?

Different uses for the countryside, but are they really different users?



Lorraine O'Sullivan Age 13.

## My Ideal world.

My Ideal world would be to live in a beautiful stretch of country. It would be a place of peace and pleasure. I would live in a little cottage with roses creeping up the wall. No more thick unclean air to breathe in but instead fresh, sweet air. No longer the hums and noises of cars to terrify one but just now then the noises of hoofs of a horse passing by. Food ~~was~~ would be beautiful just nearby waiting for you to pick it. Then visit the stream and have a drink of that pure, crystal clear water. Then one could visit the cow and sip some of her warm fresh milk. How lovely all<sup>it</sup> would be. Best of though everyone would be at peace with another, in harmony no more wars at all in fear of losing your loved ones. Animals would be all around us for company when ever we are feeling low. Life would indeed be sweet for me like this. This is my dream of paradise.

I live in a big city  
I do not like the city  
I like to live in the country  
That's where I'd like to live.

The country is so peaceful  
The birds they sing and fly  
They fly from tree to tree  
And then they finally die.

Derrick Green, 14, from *Stepney Words*

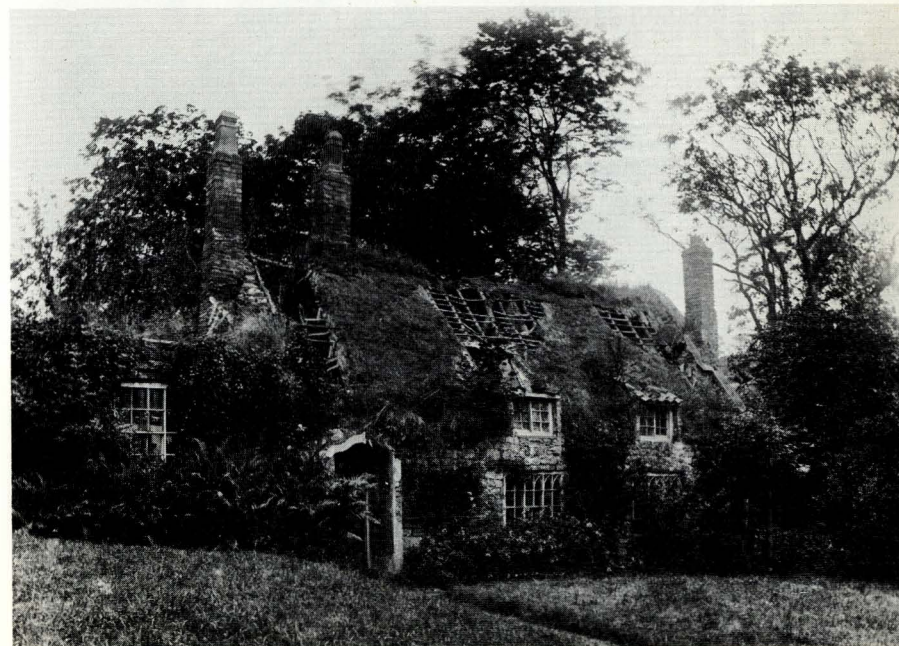
Derrick comes from Stepney, and if you've ever been there, you may know why he feels like that about the country.

Inside every Englishman is a villager struggling to get out, with such success that scarcely a dank hovel remains in the remotest hamlet that has not by now been turned into a gadget-happy country cottage, a Jaguar resting where the privy used to be. Even when the imprisoned cottager can't break out he shuts his eyes and, deep in the heart of Bermondsey or Brum, pretends to be a cottager. . . .

Elspeth Huxley, *The Sunday Times*, 15 December 1968

The house that I would live in  
Must be big and white  
The gate at the bottom of the garden  
I would paint it bright.

I'd have trees around the garden  
A pond right in the middle  
I'd walk along the gravel path  
And watch the flowers grow.



I asked two friends of mine, who moved from the city to the country years ago, how they felt about it today. Would they ever move back to the city?

They replied:

Pooter's End  
Suffolk  
20 April

Dear Colin,

No! We would never move back to town. We couldn't afford to anyway, because house prices are even higher there than they are here.

But we have learned a lot of things from living in the country.

Most important: if you don't have a car nowadays you are terribly isolated. When we first came here there was a bus every hour both ways. Now there are two a week and the fares are enormous.

There used to be a station here, but it closed down six years ago, and they have pulled up the railway track, so it will never re-open. There used to be a village school, but now the children are collected by the school coach in the mornings and don't come back until tea-time.

There used to be two general stores, one of them a post office, where you could buy anything from cheese to paraffin. Now the post office

has closed down and the other one has become an antique shop for passing motorists.

And talking of passing motorists, the other day a huge lorry came round the corner too fast and demolished our greenhouse. So it isn't really very quiet what with the traffic and the planes.

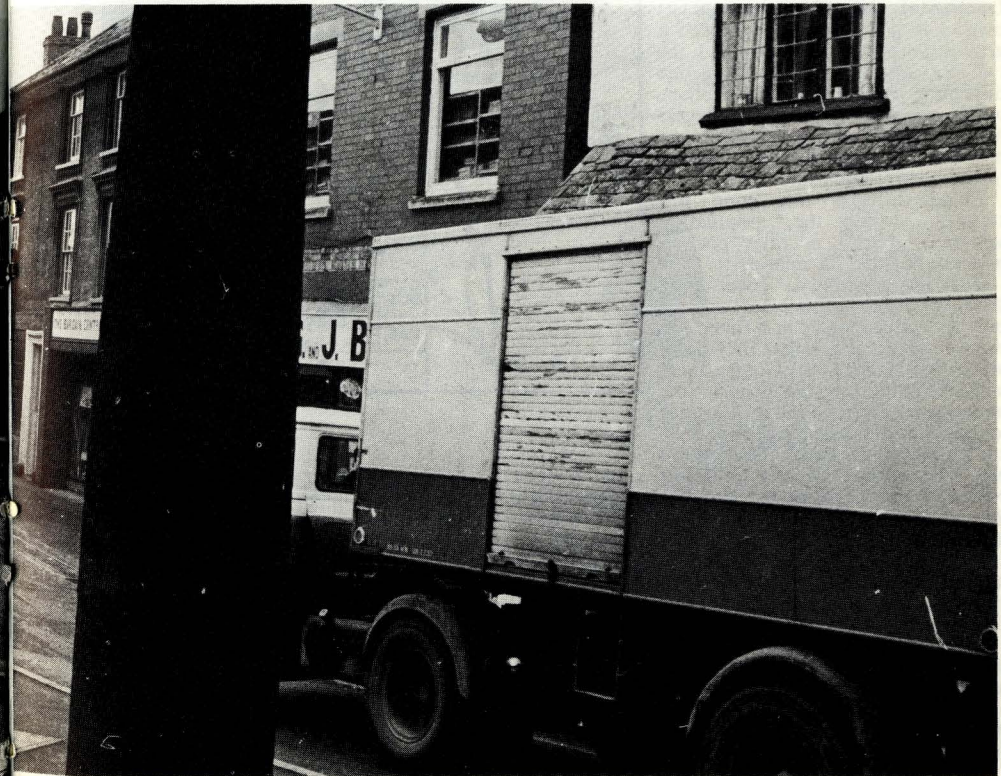
The farmer next door has grubbed up his hedges and sprays his crops with pesticides from an aeroplane. At certain times of the year we have quite a dust-storm as the wind sweeps across blowing away the topsoil. The birds and insects have a pretty thin time, and as ours are the only tall hedges left for miles around, they all come to our place to feed off our fruit and veg.

We don't have much life in the village nowadays as most of the cottages have been bought by people who use them for weekends. Young people growing up here can't afford them and have to go on the waiting list for the council houses six miles along the road. So during the week it is a ghost village.

So, in spite of the fact that the roads are better than they have ever been, if you are poor you are more isolated in the country than at any time in the last hundred years.

Do come down and see us, but please bring food as shopping is very difficult.

*Jack and Mary*



# The last bus to Donington-on-Bain

JOHN FRYER reports on the local problems of a national crisis—how people without cars can move about in the country

LAST MONDAY the little village of Donington-on-Bain, deep in the Lincolnshire wolds, lost its last contact through public transport with the outside world. Once, Donington (pop. 236) boasted its own railway station. That closed a generation ago, and on April 1 the two bus services, to Lincoln in one direction and Louth in the other, were withdrawn. Now the villagers of Donington, a third of whom do not own a car, face a three-mile trek to the nearest bus route.

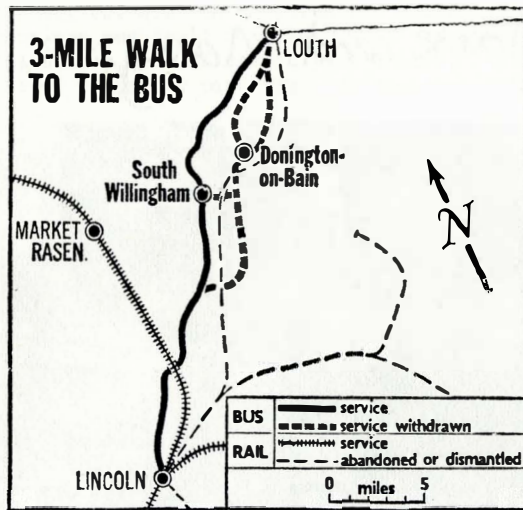
Lincolnshire is not good bus country, with the population scattered around in little pockets over the flat, rich farmland.

The buses have to cover long distances from place to place carrying only a few passengers at a time. The bus companies argue that they don't make enough money on these journeys, and that even using the money they make on the busy routes to pay for the less busy ones they can't make ends meet. So they cut back the services. There are fewer buses. Fewer people find the service they need. For some the car has taken over.

In 1952 21% of people travelled by rail, 45% by bus and 34% by car. In 1970 9% went by rail, 14% by bus and 77% by car.

But what about that 14% who still use the buses? What are they going to do when the services stop?

It came as a shattering blow to Donington-on-Bain. "They've got no right to leave us here without a bus,"



said Eva Traves, a 56-year-old housewife who has lived in the village for 36 years. "We've ever such a lot of elderly people here. How are they going to get out?"

"My husband Ron was in hospital at Louth recently and I visited him every day. I couldn't do that now, unless somebody took me in their car. The nearest bus is at South Willingham, three miles away."

Donington's local councillor, Charles Turner, was one of the first to be hit by the lost service. Unlike

Ron Traves, who rides on a scooter to the local gravel pit to work, he cannot drive. "There were two committee meetings in Louth this week," he said. "I couldn't get there." Turner says that some 35 per cent of the Donington people, especially in the old people's bungalows and the council houses, do not have a car.

All hope, however, is not lost. Louth Rural District Council is trying to persuade a local firm to run a bus service to and from Donington two days a week. The trouble is that it will not do so unless the council

underwrites the costs at the rate of £7 a day. The council has refused, but its clerk, Bryan Spence, is trying to talk the firm into having a few experimental runs to see what happens.

Unless something is done, the drain of people from the villages to the towns will continue, which cannot be healthy. If there are more people in the villages it will be easier to justify running buses to them. Many councillors seem to cling to the mistaken belief that all villagers are two-car families, when in fact many do not even have one.

Eva Traves starts on the long trek for the bus

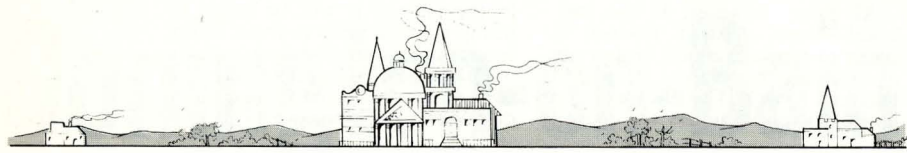


Make a study of a rural area yourself. Is this kind of thing happening there?

Is the cottage in the country in danger of becoming a desert island?

# WHOSE UTOPIA IS WINNING OUT?

The city and the cottage in the country may seem to be opposite utopias, but in the real world they are closely connected and very much affected by those people who want the best of both.



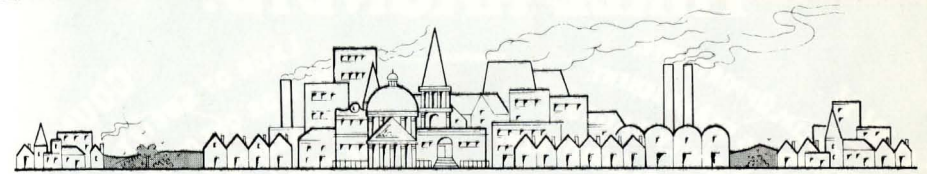
**1750**

Towns were isolated and self-sufficient because travel was difficult. Each place had its own life and identity, though it might be very small. The people living there had to produce and consume most of their own food, furniture and clothing.



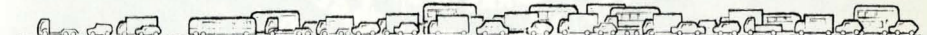
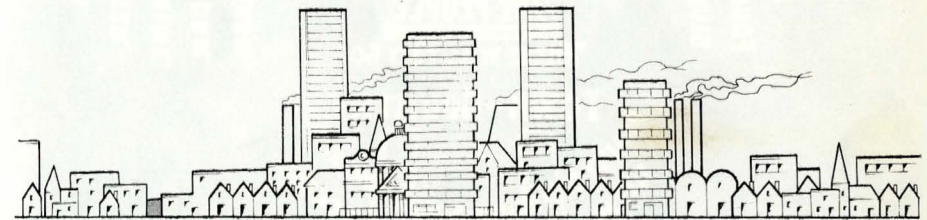
**1825**

As methods of communication and travel improved, supplies as well as people could be transported more easily. Each place did not have to be as completely self-sufficient as before. More people could live in towns because local supplies could be supplemented from outside. Gradually the towns grew towards each other along the main lines of communication.



**1900**

By this time communications – travel and transport – between towns had grown enormously, even to the point of becoming congested. The towns had grown almost completely together. Special goods and services started to concentrate where most people were – in the centres of the cities. If people didn't live there they could travel in to get what they wanted.

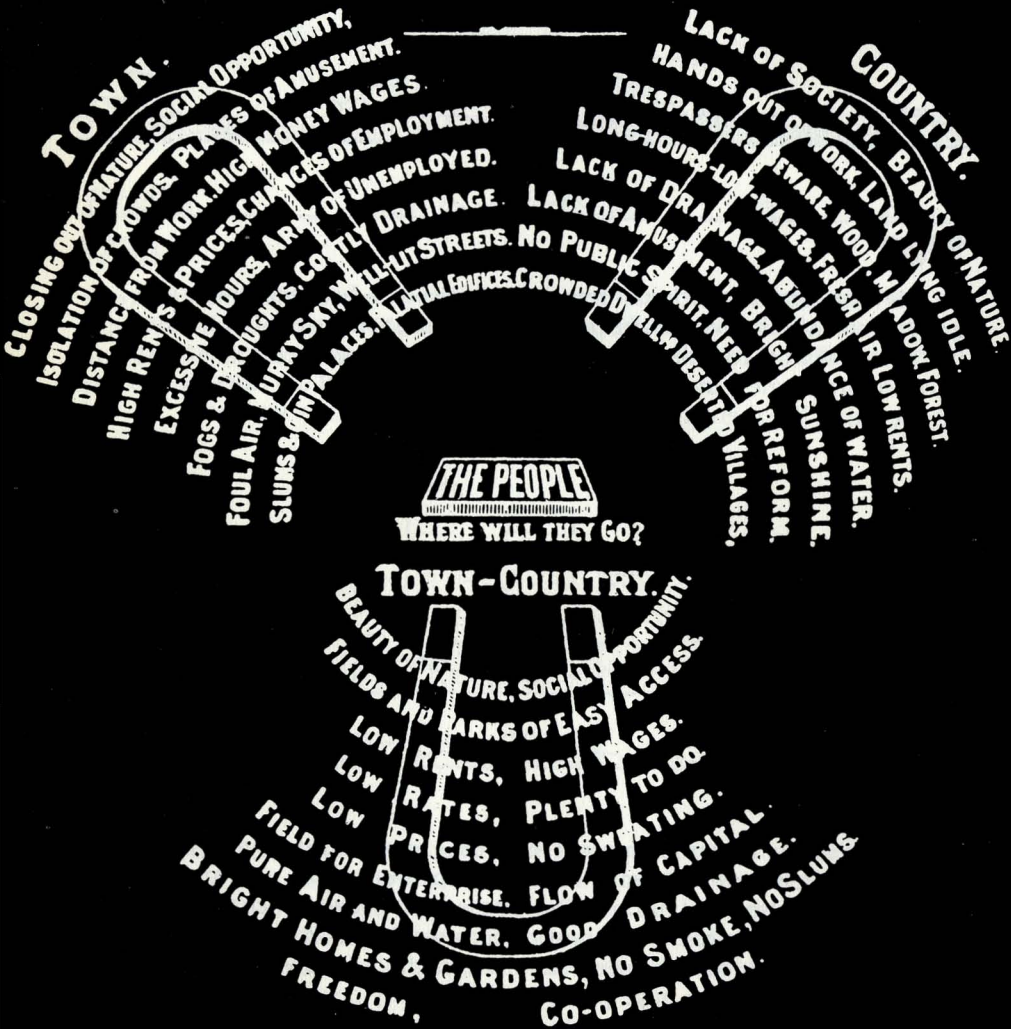


**1970's**

The enlarged city has problems: overcrowding, overloaded travel systems, endless streets. People want to escape but still be within reach of the good things the city has to offer. Those who get a chance move out to the suburbs in search of the best of both worlds. Eventually, so many people do this that suburb meets suburb and city, town, village and suburb all run into one huge place. With so many people the travel systems get even worse and people living in the outermost areas are quite cut off. But most goods and services are still centred in the city. People without transport are in big trouble.

Are the supercity utopians or the cottage-in-the-country fans winning out? What about the best-of-both-worlders? Whose utopia is it?

# THE THREE MAGNETS.



# 5 The best of both worlds

The country cottage may not sound ideal, but on the other hand it appears that the city isn't either. We know that when people get the money or the chance they tend to move out, not to the heart of the country maybe, but still out of the centre of the big cities. Here is a table showing one of the things we learned from the Census taken in Britain in 1971.

Population

|                | 1961      | 1971      |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Greater London | 7,992,443 | 7,379,014 |
| Liverpool      | 745,750   | 606,848   |
| Glasgow        | 1,057,679 | 897,848   |
| Birmingham     | 1,110,683 | 1,013,365 |

But doesn't this contradict what was said on p. 65 about the way that everywhere in the world people are moving *into* the cities? In one way it does, but in most ways it doesn't. People do move into the city from outside to seek their fortune; but if they are lucky, they very often move out – to the suburbs beyond the immediate boundaries of the city (which are the boundaries for the population figures in the table). In effect, the city just gets bigger though it may take a while for the boundaries to be adjusted and the figures to catch up. Such people stay near enough to enjoy the benefits of the city without getting cut off like the country cottager. But they get far enough out to have some of the benefits of the countryside. They try and get the best of both worlds but in doing so, they affect what life is like in both city and country.

Left: Ebenezer Howard's diagram of the forces affecting people's choice of where to live (see p. 110).

**NEITHER  
ONE THING**



**NOR  
THE OTHER**

Right: Jonathan T. Carr, founder of Bedford Park.

Below: Priory Gardens, London W8, part of Bedford Park.

Bedford Park was a settlement of small houses in Turnham Green which was neither town nor country. 'About 1876-77 a Mr Jonathan T. Carr undertook the construction of an artistic suburb which was called Bedford Park, and employed Mr Shaw to design a church, houses to be built there, etc.' Mr Carr hoped to attract people by small, well-designed, well-built houses suitable for persons of moderate means. Designs were got out for semi-detached houses with two sitting-rooms, three or four bedrooms and three attics, 'detached villas' with balconies and better bedrooms, a stores, a club and an unusual church, dedicated to St Michael and All Angels, with a belfry in two storeys perched on the roof. All this created a great sensation at the time.

In London town there lived a man  
a gentleman was he  
Whose name was Jonathan T. Carr  
(as has been told to me).

'This London is a foggy town'  
(thus to himself said he),  
'Where bricks are black, and trees are brown  
and faces are dirtee.'

'I will seek out a brighter spot,'  
continued Mr Carr.  
'Not too near London, and yet not  
what might be called too far.'

'Tis there a village I'll erect  
with Norman Shaw's assistance  
Where men may lead a chaste correct  
aesthetical existence.'

With that a passing bus he hailed  
(so gallant to be seen)  
Upon whose knife-board he did ride  
as far as Turnham Green.

'Oh, here we are,' said Mr Carr  
'No further will I roam;  
This is the spot that fate has got  
to give us for our home.'

'Tis here, my Norman, tried and true,  
our house we'll erect;  
I'll be the landlord bold, and you  
shall be the Architect.'

'Here trees are green and bricks are red  
and clean the face of man.  
We'll build our houses here,' he said,  
'in style of good Queen Anne.'

And Norman Shaw looked up and saw,  
and smiled a cheerful smile,  
'This thing I'll do,' said he, 'while you  
the denizens beguile.'

To work went then, these worthy men,  
so philanthropic both.  
And none who sees the bricks and trees  
to sign the lease is loth.

Richard Norman Shaw, *The Ballad of Bedford Park*

Thus was a village builded  
for all who are aesthetic  
Whose precious souls it fill did  
With utter joy complete.

For floors were stained and polished  
and every hearth was tiled  
And Philistines abolished  
by Culture's gracious child.

And Abbey (he the artist,  
malicious little wretch)  
Said it made him feel like walking  
through a water-colour sketch.

And Jonathan and Norman  
found so much work to do,  
They sold out to a Company  
to put the business through.

Now he who loves aesthetic cheer  
and does not mind the damp  
May come and read Rossetti here  
by a Japanese-y lamp.

While 'Arry' shouts to 'Hemmau':  
'Say, 'ere's a bloomin' lark,  
Thems the biled Lobster 'ouses  
as folks calls "Bedford Park".'







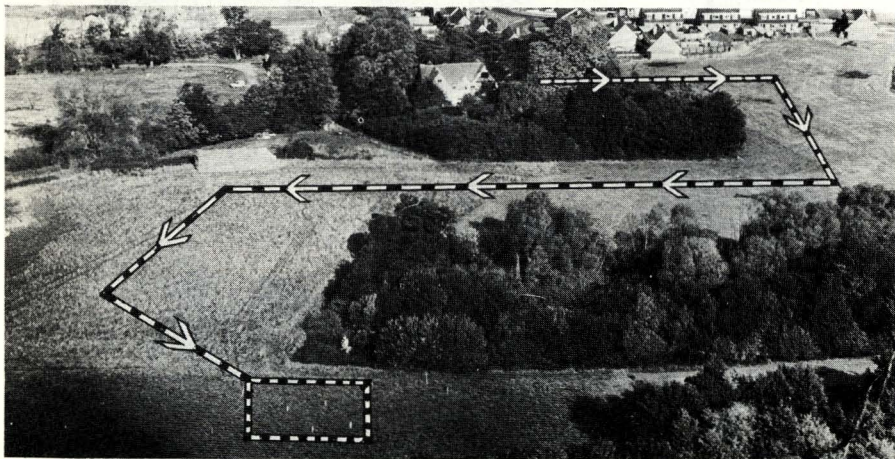
# SUBTOPIA

Some people hate the 'best of both worlds' trend and the spread of the cities. It leads, they say, to an endless suburban sprawl from one end of the land to the other, and in a small country like Britain, where 20,000 hectares are lost to farmland every year, we just cannot afford to let it go on. They also point out that it defeats itself. If you move to the very edge of town so as to have one foot in the city and one in the country, someone else is likely to leapfrog over you in a few years' time anyway:

The estate where I had first built my own house was by now rapidly becoming built up and the house was almost surrounded. My wife and I had talked this over and, if we could find a spot more suitable, we decided to make a move as we had been in the house now about ten years. We went around the district at weekends to see if we could find a less-crowded spot in the country and eventually found a suitable site. 'Recollections of a life in the building trade', *Illustrated Carpenter and Builder*



Too good for Subtopia? When houses and a warehouse were built nearby, the owners of Ballingdon Hall, an Elizabethan manor house near Sudbury, moved the whole place to a new, hillside position where they wouldn't have to endure such close company.



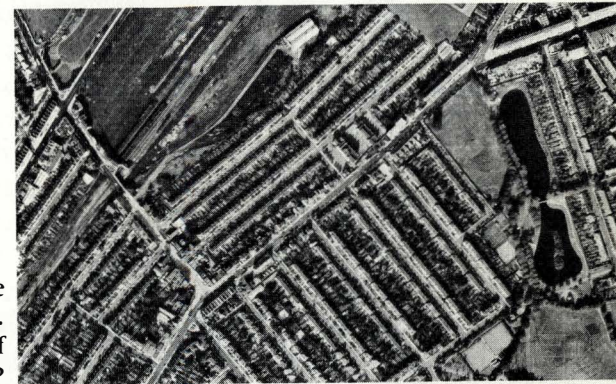
Ian Nairn invented the word 'subtopia' – a mixture of suburb and utopia – to describe this kind of development.

But not everybody thinks it's so bad. Below is someone's village utopia from 1848: a plan for a village to be built at Ilford in Essex. Ilford, which is now a suburb of London, was then a tiny hamlet which had been 'opened up' by the building of the railway.

Air and space, wood and water, schools and churches, shrubberies and gardens, around pretty self-contained cottages, in a group neither too large to deprive it of a country character, nor too small to diminish the probabilities of social intercourse.

Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, December 1848

A modern writer calls it 'the suburban commuter's Dream City, in which even the railway, essential to the function of this project, is magically made invisible amidst the privets.' It never actually got built. But thousands of other suburban utopias did. Most of us live in them.



Below: The plan for the Ilford village utopia.  
Right: The same part of Ilford today – utopia?



H. G. Wells wrote in 1901, 'it is not too much to say that the London citizen of the year AD 2000 may have a choice of nearly all England and Wales south of Nottingham and east of Exeter as his suburb, and that the vast stretch of country from Washington to Albany will be all of it "available" to the active citizen of New York and Philadelphia before that date.'

He thought that the words 'town' or 'city' would become as out-of-date as the stage coach, and that we would replace them with the idea of 'town provinces' or 'urban regions', and he thought that most of Great Britain apart from uplands and highlands, would become one continuous settlement.

Here is his particular town-plus-country utopia :

It will certainly be a curious and varied region, far less monotonous than our present English world, still in its thinner regions, at any rate, wooded, perhaps rather more abundantly wooded, breaking continually into park and garden, and with everywhere a scattering of houses. . . .

Each district, I am inclined to think, will develop its own differences of type and style. As one travels through the urban region, one will traverse open, breezy, 'horsey' suburbs, smart white gates and palings everywhere, good turf, a Grand Stand shining pleasantly; gardening districts all set with gables and roses, holly hedges, and emerald lawns; pleasant homes among heathery moorlands and golf links, and river districts with gaily painted boat-houses peeping from the osiers. Then presently a gathering of houses closer together, and a promenade and a whiff of band and dresses, and then, perhaps, a little island of agriculture, hops, or strawberry gardens, fields of grey-plumed artichokes, white-painted orchard, or brightly neat poultry farm. Through the varied country the new wide roads will run, here cutting through a crest and there running like some colossal aqueduct across a valley, swarming always with a multitudinous traffic of bright, swift (and not necessarily ugly) mechanisms; and everywhere amidst the fields and trees, linking wires will stretch from pole to pole. Ever and again there will appear a cluster of cottages about some works or workings, with the smoky chimney of today replaced by a gaily painted windwheel or waterwheel to gather and store the force for the machinery; and ever and again will come a little town, with its cherished ancient church or cathedral, its school buildings and museums, its railway-station, perhaps its fire-station, its inns and restaurants, and with all the wires of the countryside converging to its offices. . . .

There is no reason why the essential charm of the countryside should

disappear; the new roads will not supersede the present high roads, which will still be necessary for horses and subsidiary traffic; and the lanes and hedges, the field paths and wild flowers, will still have their ample justification. A certain lack of solitude there may be perhaps. . . .

H. G. Wells, *Anticipations*

It sounds very bright and attractive in the way Wells described it over seventy years ago. But is the real thing like that? Are our motorways like he prophesied them? As for his wires (he was thinking of telegraph and telephone wires) stretching from pole to pole, we certainly have them though we can get rid of them just as soon as we are ready to spend the money.



The village of Lavenham in Suffolk, before and after the anti-wires campaign.



## HOW MUCH POWER?

Wells thought, as you can see from his description, that we would have learned to generate electric power from little local windmills and watermills, rather than by methods which use up scarce fuels or pollute the atmosphere. He might still turn out to be right. An American friend of mine, Murray Bookchin, who studies cities by way of the energy they use, writes:

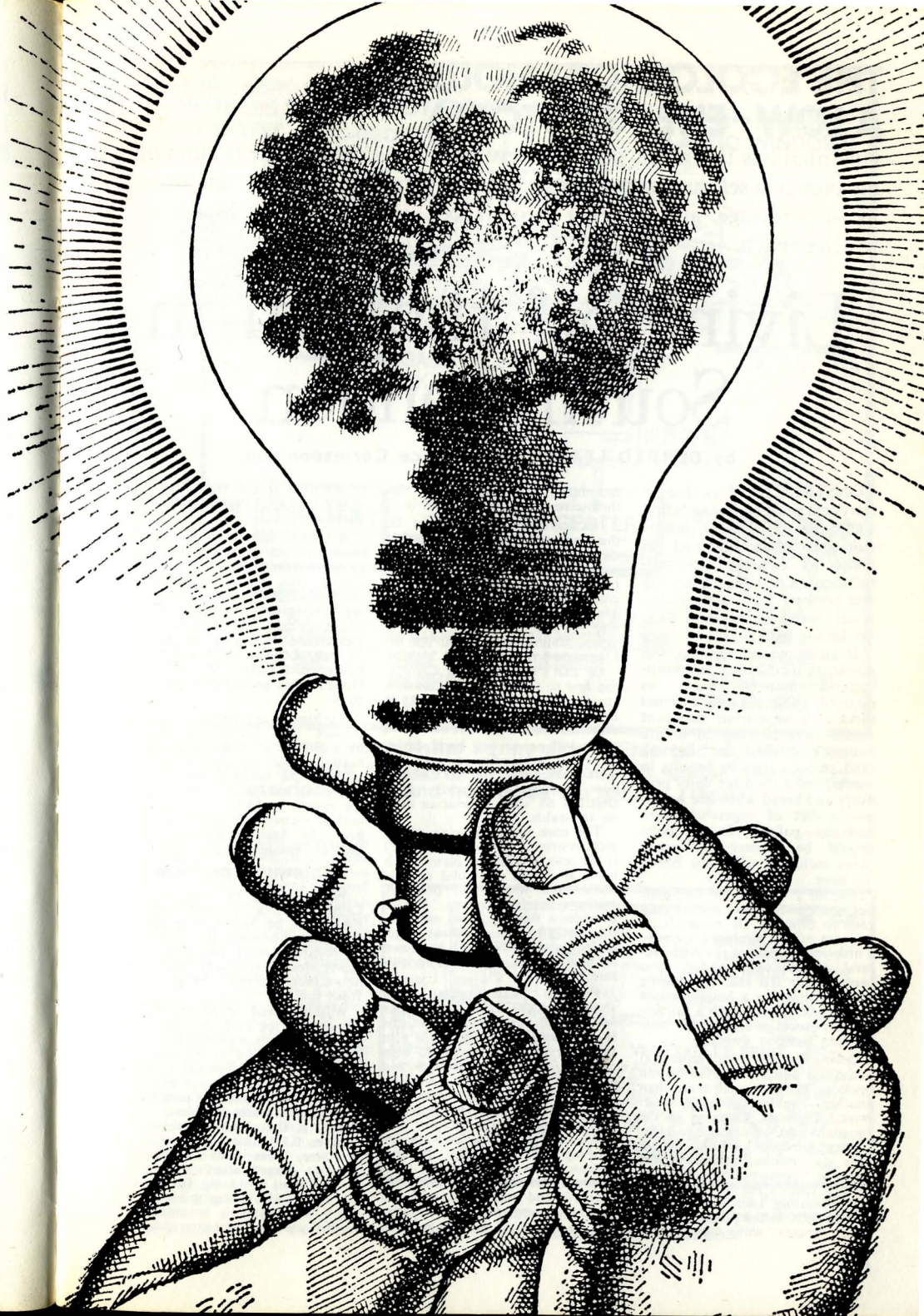
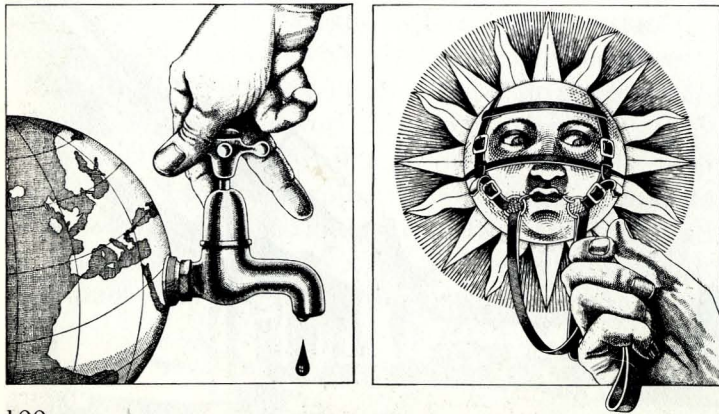
To maintain a large city requires immense quantities of coal and petroleum. By contrast, solar energy (from the sun), wind power and tidal energy reach us mainly in small packets. Except for great dams and turbines, the new devices seldom provide more than a few thousand kilowatt-hours of electricity.

It is hard to believe that we will ever be able to design solar collectors that can furnish us with the immense blocks of electric power produced by a giant steam plant; it is equally difficult to conceive of a battery of wind turbines that will provide us with enough electricity to illuminate Manhattan Island.

If homes and factories are heavily concentrated, devices for using clean sources of energy will probably remain mere playthings; but if urban communities are reduced in size and widely spread over the land, there is no reason why these devices cannot be combined to provide us with all the amenities of an industrial civilization. To use solar, wind and tidal power effectively, the giant city must be dispersed. A new type of community, carefully tailored to the nature and resources of a region, must replace the sprawling urban belts of today.

Murray Bookchin, *Towards a Liberatory Technology*

The Energy Crunch: Oil, the last drop. Harnessing the Sun. Nuclear power. Are there new solutions still to come?



# THE ECOLOGICAL HOUSE - A LOW-ENERGY UTOPIA

One man has taken this point of view further. Graham Caine is building his utopia, a self-supporting house, heated by the sun, purifying and using its own sewage, and growing its own food, not on a desert island but in Greenwich.

## Living off the sun in South London

by GERALD LEACH, our Science Correspondent

CONSTRUCTION is due to start next week on Britain's first Ecological House—a home-cum-greenhouse designed to make its occupant as self-sufficient as possible for heating and cooking fuels, sewage disposal, water supply and food (including bananas).

If all its waste recycling, sun power, rain-collecting and horticultural systems work as planned, about the only external services a vegetarian occupant would have to plug in to are mains electricity for lighting (and perhaps standby heating in winter) and a shop for dairy products and bread when the home-grown diet of vegetables—and bananas—palls. Even pups should be unnecessary since plans include a plant for brewing beer.

The 40 x 37-ft timber-and-plastics house and garden, costing only £600 to £700 for all materials, is the idea of Mr Grahame Caine—a fifth-year student at the Architectural Association, London, who caused a stir last year by entering a competition for a housing estate in Bracknell, Berks, with a deliberately provocative scheme for self-growing bamboo dwellings.

Ostensibly, his new ecological house is a final-year examination project. But it is much more than another bright examinee's blueprint. Grahame Caine is in the vanguard of the 'alternative technology' movement, which aims not only to reduce pollution and resource consumption but to replace today's heavy reliance on big, alienating, centralised technocracies such as the power, gas and water boards with human-scale

techniques that people can run themselves—and get involved in.

His eco-house is meant to be the first living proof in Britain that this 'people's technology' can work. Mr Caine is therefore building the house himself—in a corner of the playing-fields of Thames Polytechnic, Greenwich—and will live in it for at least two years, testing and improving its life-support systems.

Or that's the hope. Mr Caine is the first to insist that the house is strictly experimental and may not provide the hoped-for self-reliance. So, as fail-safe measures, water and power will be piped in, there will be standby gas cylinders under the cooker, and Mr Caine is now investigating what long stretches on strict vegetarian diets do to health.

The core of the house's ecological systems (see diagram, page 2) is the sewage digestion plant which takes all liquid and solid organic wastes and scraps and produces methane gas for cooking. It also provides a flow of liquid nutrients for the greenhouse, where vegetables and some fruit will be grown by hydroponics, or soilless agriculture.

Previous experiments have shown that the sunlight algae tanks will kill off any disease organisms in the sewage. The algae will also take oxygen from the air to help bacteria digest the sewage and nitrogen to enrich the 'fertiliser solution' for the greenhouse. To keep paper out of the system—and save water—the lavatory provides a two-pint squirt of water for flushing and cleansing. Normal lavatories use two gallons a time.

Mr Caine has done his sums carefully and reckons that with 500 sq ft of warm, moist greenhouse, and a theoretical maximum yield

of about 8 lb. of vegetables per square foot each year, he shouldn't starve.

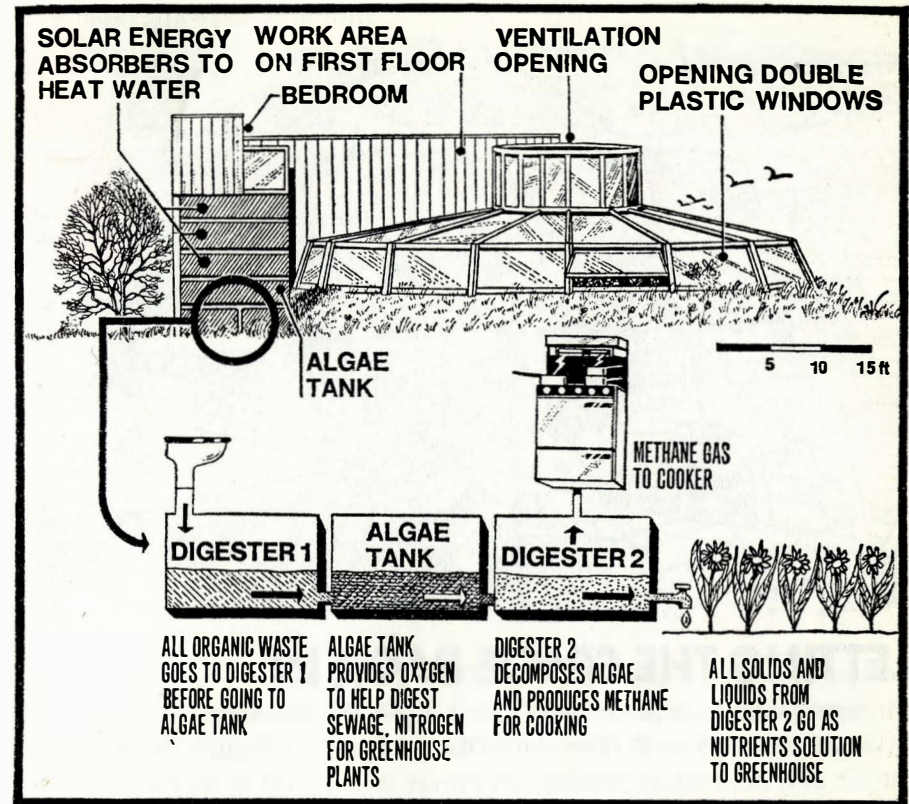
A special feature is that warm air will collect in the central dome to make a hothouse for growing tropical fruit. Hence the bananas: the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew have given some banana trees, which are now sitting in a Dulwich greenhouse belonging to King's College, London. And a friendly hydroponics expert, Mr J. Sholto Douglas, has promised some paw-paws.

For heating and hot water there's the sun. Solar heat will be trapped by an array of blackened central heating radiators down the south wall of the house. Tests on a sunny day last January showed that the system could heat a 30-gallon tank of water to 77 degrees Fahrenheit. In April it managed 140 degrees—enough for a hot bath.

### Rainwater problem

Winters could be cold, so Mr Caine is letting principles slip to the extent of having supplementary electric heating. But he hopes to install a wind generator and power storage system to make the house independent of the grid and fossil fuels.

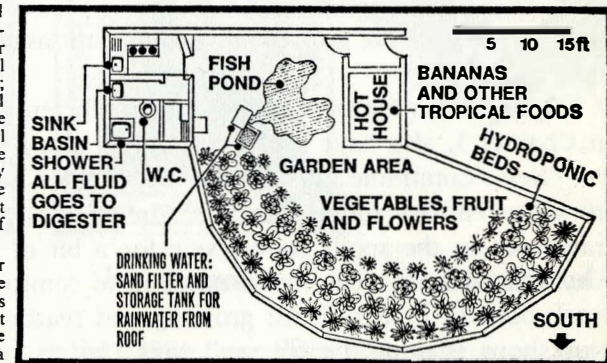
Washing and drinking water comes from the roof: with a mean rainfall of 25 in. a year in London, the supply should be an average 20 gallons a day—toughly half normal consumption but enough in a system designed for economy. The biggest water problem, says Caine, is that London rainwater contains 0.11 milligrammes of lead per litre, more than the World Health Organisation's recommended limit of 0.1 mg. for drinking water. He is hoping his body won't mind and is investigating sophisticated metal-filtering gadgets.



Ecological house: view of the sunny side. Enlarged detail shows three-stage sewage recycling plant which fits under the living quarters (left) and nourishes the garden (right).

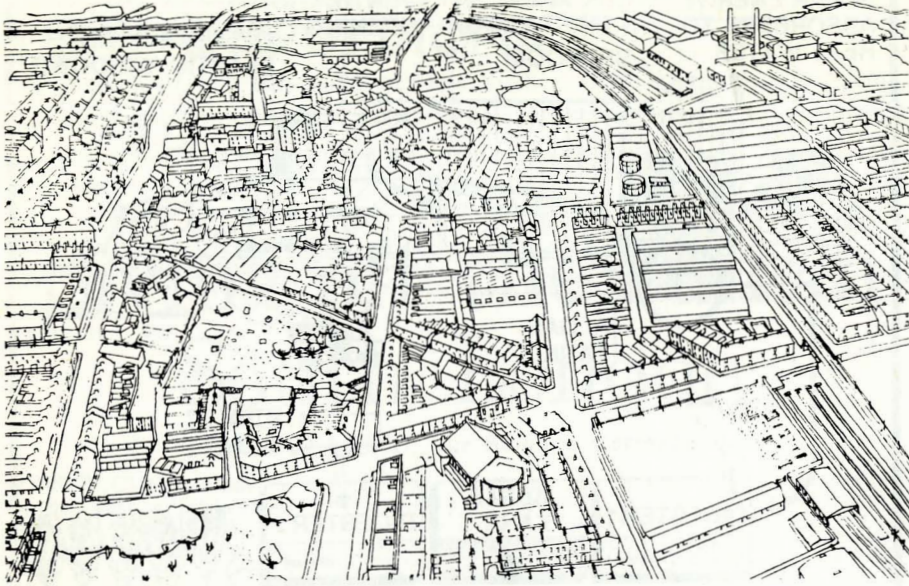
Perhaps the greatest surprise in the whole project—which has taken Grahame Caine two years to plan—is the enthusiastic support its novel ideas have received from officialdom. Greenwich and Greater London Councils have given all necessary planning permissions; firms such as ICI and Commercial Plastics have come up with free materials; the Electricity Council has promised to lay on power free (though Caine will have to pay meter charges); and even the Department of the Environment has given him a warm pat of approval.

Ironically, the only cold shoulder has come from the Royal Institute of British Architects. But then, as a member of the anarchist architect group called 'Street Farmer,' he hopes that his eco-house will be a tiny step towards smashing the 'wasteland urban culture' that he feels official architecture has been largely responsible for creating.



Eco-house plan view: flowers will grow among the vegetables for decoration.

Instead of sprawling suburbs ...



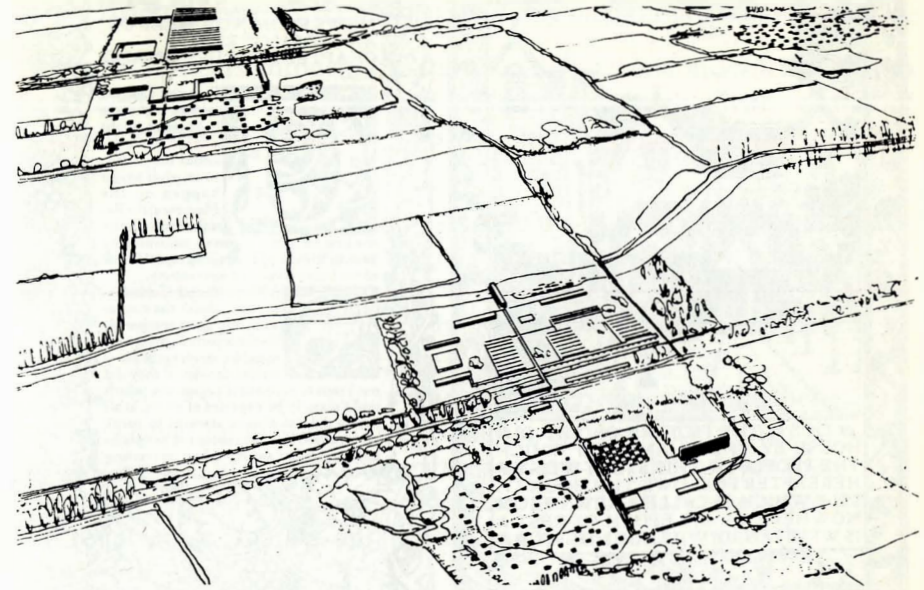
## LETTING THE SPACE BACK IN

Murray Bookchin and Graham Caine reject the supercity utopia because it uses up energy and raw materials at a rate we cannot afford in the future, and because to produce its power and get rid of its wastes causes pollution which we cannot afford, either.

At the same time they reject suburban utopia or subtopia, because it makes the same demands as the big city and also wastes an enormous amount of materials and energy (and lives) in transporting goods and people in a never-ending shuttle service from the city to the suburb and back. They favour self-sufficient units – a bit like the small towns might have been before the growth of communications perhaps – but with many modern aids too.

The Goodman brothers, whose City of Efficient Consumption we visited in Chapter 3, also have a plan for utopia along these lines. They call it The New Commune. Instead of huge cities where people travel in from the endless suburbs to their dreary jobs all the week, and then travel out to the spoilt countryside for a bit of fresh air at weekends, why not make the country a network of communes where people can work both in mixed farms, growing and rearing animals, *and* in small workshops, making the pots and pans, clothes, tools and television, that they want? Their idea is that it is just as cheap in the long run to make your tables and chairs, refrigerators and record players in a small workshop,

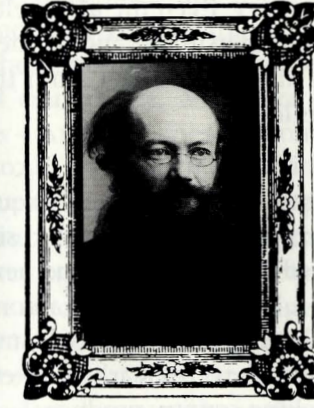
a network of communes.



as to work in someone else's factory or office at a job you hate, making one bit of them on an assembly line all day long, or slaving away for the money to buy them. Their idea stems from three wise utopians of the



**William Morris**

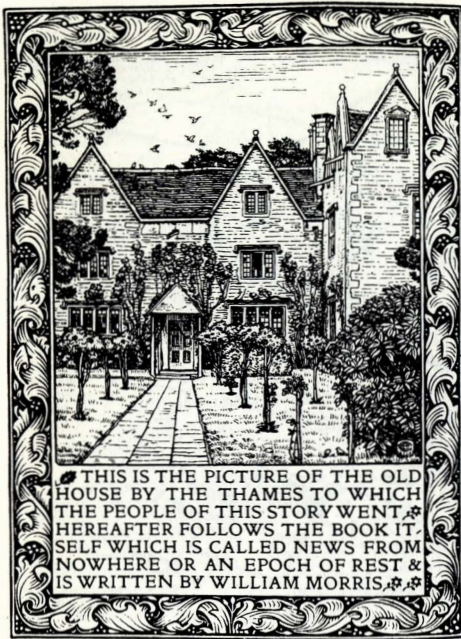


**Peter Kropotkin**

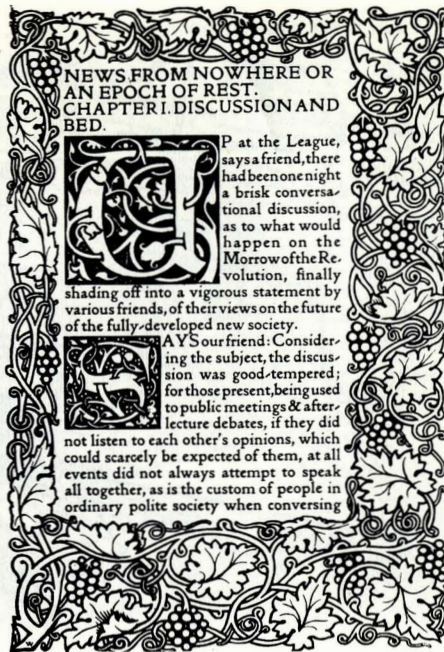


**Ebenezer Howard**

nineteenth century. Back in the 1890s, these three men were angry about the world they were living in, its injustice, its unhappiness and its ugliness. So they wrote their own versions of how they would like to change it.



THIS IS THE PICTURE OF THE OLD HOUSE BY THE THAMES TO WHICH THE PEOPLE OF THIS STORY WENT. HEREAFTER FOLLOWS THE BOOK ITSELF WHICH IS CALLED NEWS FROM NOWHERE OR AN EPOCH OF REST & IS WRITTEN BY WILLIAM MORRIS.



## NEWS FROM NOWHERE

The first was William Morris, who in a book called *News from Nowhere* (remember what the Greek word *utopia* means?) described how he woke up in the twenty-first century. Even the air smelt different as he wandered out of his house at Hammersmith, and as he came to the Broadway across fields which he didn't remember from the 1890s, he was amazed by the beauty of the buildings.

This whole mass of architecture which we had come upon so suddenly from amidst the pleasant fields was not only exquisitely beautiful in itself, but it bore upon it the expression of such generosity and abundance of life that I was exhilarated to a pitch that I had never yet reached. I fairly chuckled for pleasure. . . . We had pulled up amongst a crowd of carts, wherein sat handsome healthy-looking people, men, women and children, very gaily dressed, and which were clearly market carts, as they were full of very tempting-looking country produce.

I said, 'I need not ask if this is a market, for I see clearly that it is, but what market is it that it is so splendid? And what is the glorious hall there, and what is the building on the south side?'

'O,' said he, 'it is just our Hammersmith market; and I am glad you like it so much, for we are really proud of it. Of course the hall inside is

our winter Mote-House; for in summer we mostly meet in the fields down by the river opposite Barn Elms. The building on our right is our theatre.'

Morris wanders through London, but it is a London which seems to have been painstakingly cleared of everything ugly, with groups of children camping under the oaks, chestnuts, planes and sycamores of Kensington.

We went on a little further, and I looked to the right again, and said, in rather a doubtful tone of voice, 'Why, there are the Houses of Parliament! Do you still use them?'

He burst out laughing, and was some time before he could control himself; then he clapped me on the back and said:

'I take you, neighbour; you may well wonder at our keeping them standing, and I know something about that, and my old kinsman has given me books to read about the strange game that they played there. Use them! Well, yes, they are used for a sort of subsidiary market, and a storage place for manure, and they are handy for that, being on the water-side.'

Gradually Morris realizes that he was woken up in an England which has given up factories, money and government. It has become a nation of craftsmen, delighting in making beautiful things, whose idea of a holiday is to take a trip up river to work in the fields at harvest-time. The 'big murky places which were once the centres of manufacture' have disappeared, and there had been 'little clearance, though much rebuilding, in the smaller towns. Their suburbs indeed, when they had any, have melted into the general countryside, and space and elbow-room have been got into their centres – And how does this compare with work today?

The wares which we make are made because they are needed; men make for their neighbour's use as if they are making for themselves, not for a vague market of which they know nothing, and over which they have no control. . . . Nothing *can* be made except for genuine use; therefore no inferior goods are made. Moreover, as we have now found out what we want, so we make no more than we want; and as we are not driven to make a vast quantity of useless things, we have time and resources enough to consider our pleasure in making them. All work which would be irksome to do by hand is done by immensely improved machinery; and in all work which it is a pleasure to do by hand machinery is done without. . . .

William Morris, *News from Nowhere*

## FIELDS, FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS

The second of the three wise utopians of the 1890s was Peter Kropotkin, a Russian, who wrote a book called *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, where he argued for mixing factory work with farm work, brain work with manual work, town jobs with country jobs.

The scattering of industries over the country – so as to bring the factory amidst the fields, to make agriculture derive all those profits which it always finds in being combined with industry and to produce a combination of industrial with agricultural work – is surely the next step to be taken. . . . This step is imposed by the necessity for each healthy man and woman to spend a part of their lives in manual work in the free air; and it will be rendered the more necessary when the great social movements, which have now become unavoidable, come to disturb the present international trade, and compel each nation to revert to her own resources for her own maintenance.

Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories and Workshops*

He meant that the day will come when this country, which in his day and ours depends on exporting factory-products to pay for the food we import, will have to produce its own basic foods, and manufacture goods for its own people, because the countries we now export to will make their own.

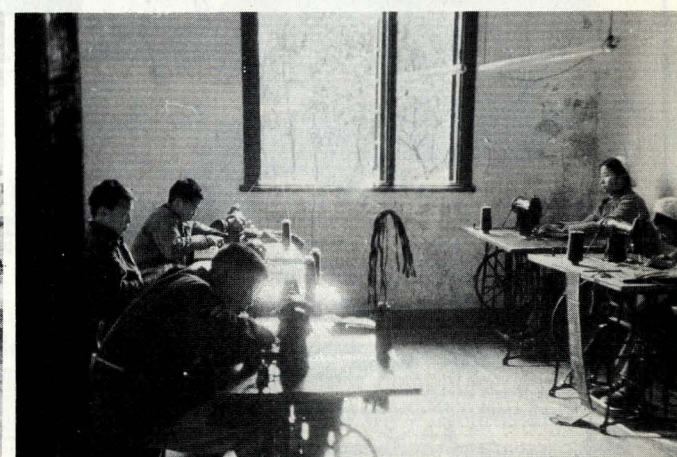
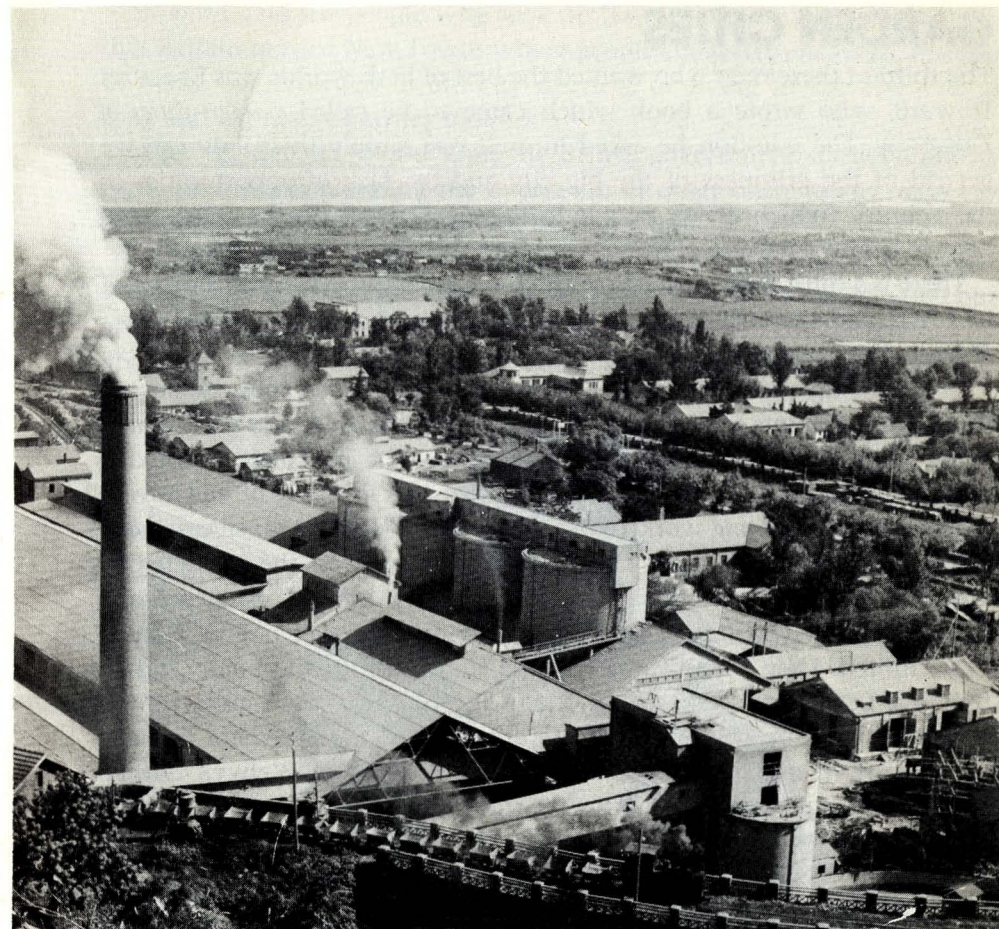
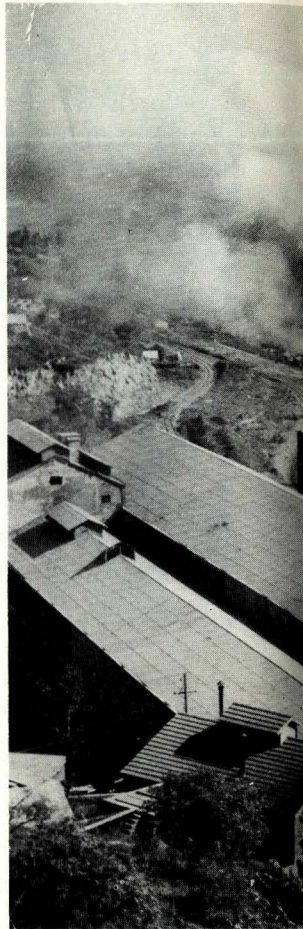
Both Kropotkin and Morris thought this would be a good thing. What difference would it make to the kind of work you are likely to do when you leave school? Do you think it would be a better life?

In China today the people are trying to break down the barriers between town and country, factory and farm, brain and manual work.

Top: Kiangnan cement works, Nanking, East China.

Right: going to a commune in south Canton.

Far right: the workshop of a middle school in Nanking, and outside, the school farm.





# GARDEN CITIES


The third of these men who wanted the best of both worlds was Ebenezer Howard, who wrote a book which came to be called *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. The question he asked himself was simply this: how can we get rid of the grimness of the big city and the lack of opportunities in the country (which drives people to the city)? How on the other hand can we keep the beauty of the country and the opportunities of the city?

There is a third choice, said Howard, if we are willing to try it: a mixture of town and country. And he drew the famous diagram of *The Three Magnets* (see page 90).

Try drawing your own 'Three Magnets' diagram, to show what you think are the points to be scored for and against the town and the country. What do you think are the good things, and the bad ones, of mixing town and country? (Remember that Howard was thinking of new towns where people lived *and* worked, not commuter towns just for sleeping in.)

To prove that his mixture of town and country in the Garden City was the answer, Howard, who had no money himself, badgered and bullied people who had some, to form a company called First Garden City Limited. They bought some land in Hertfordshire and boldly started building Letchworth, the first Garden City. His new town grew slowly, and after the First World War, Howard saw an advertisement for land and borrowed more money to build his second town: Welwyn Garden City. This is how it was advertised in the 1920s:

Reproduced from the pages of "Punch" Christmas Number, 1920.

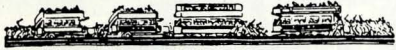


In the Hertfordshire Highlands

Twenty-one miles from Kings Cross

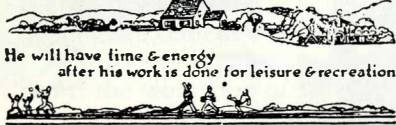
**The New Town for Residence & Industry.**

It is not good to waste two hours daily in trains, buses and trams to and from the workshop, leaving no time nor energy for leisure or recreation.




**At Welwyn Garden City a man's house will be near his work in a pure and healthy atmosphere**

He will have time & energy after his work is done for leisure & recreation




**Yesterday**




*Living and Working in the Smoke*

**To-day**



*Living in the Suburbs - Working in the Smoke*

**To-morrow**



*Living & Working in the Sun at WELWYN GARDEN CITY*

Howard, and the people who took up his idea, slowly persuaded others that Britain needed New Towns where people could live *and* work, instead of being overcrowded in old city districts, or living in suburbs with a long and expensive journey to work.

After the Second World War, the British government started building New Towns and planning the expansion of other older towns, with the idea of moving families *and* jobs at the same time.

Perhaps you live in a New Town. Does it feel like Ebenezer Howard's utopia come true? If you don't, try and visit a New Town and find out what the people who do live there think of them. You could even pair up your class with a class in a New Town school and exchange ideas. Is it their utopia?

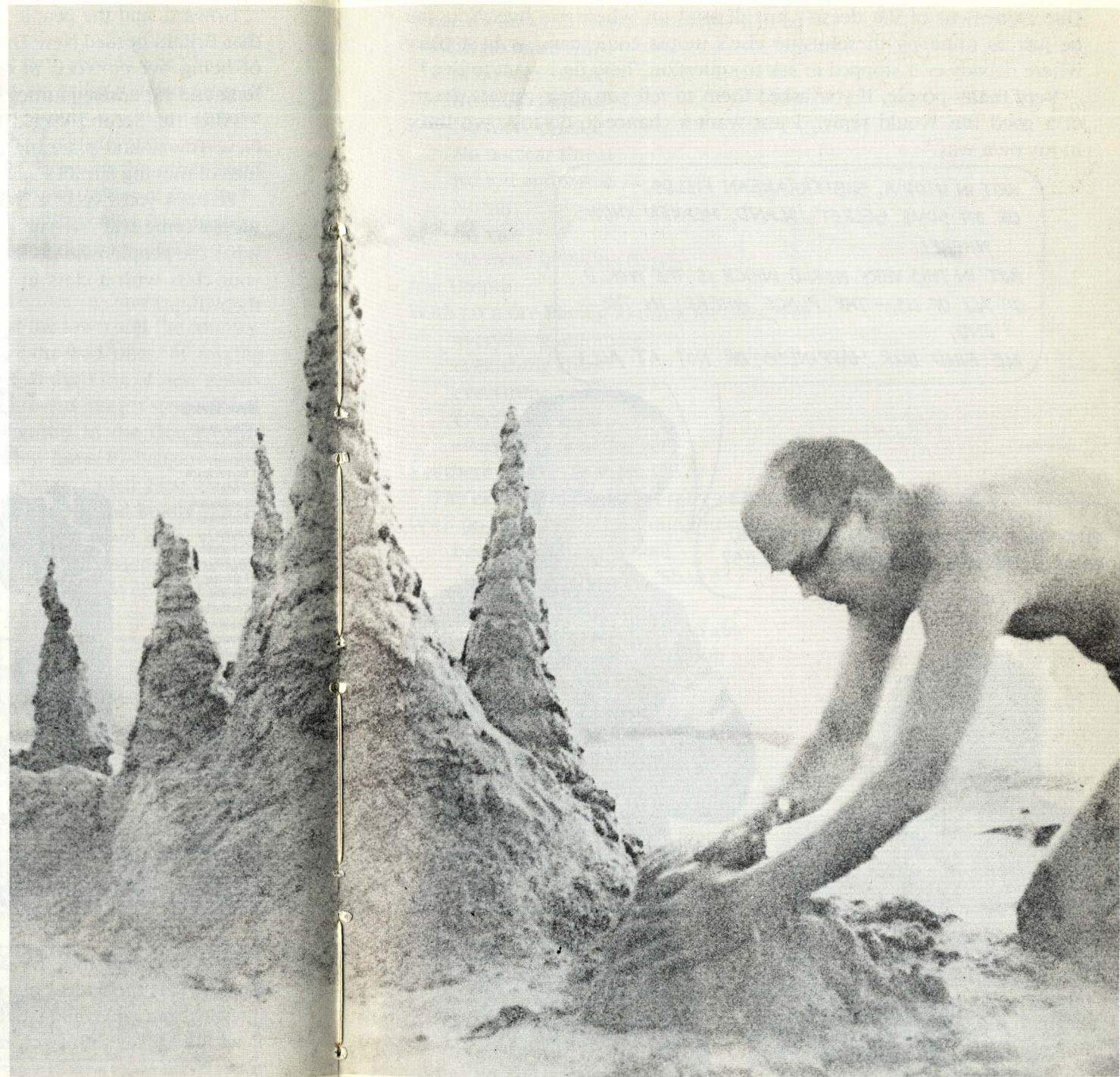
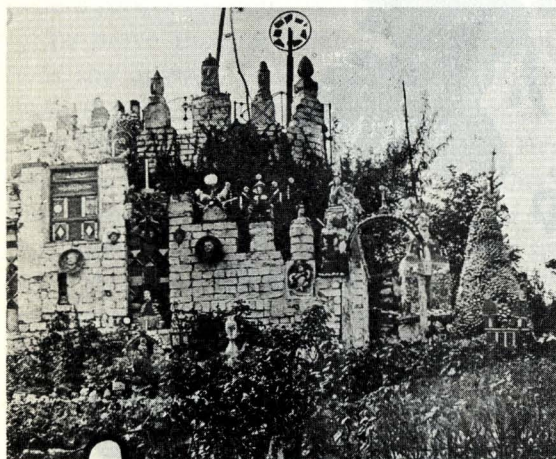
## New Towns

- 1 Glenrothes
- 2 Cumbernauld
- 3 Livingston
- 4 East Kilbride
- 5 Irvine
- 6 Londonderry
- 7 Ballymena
- 8 Antrim
- 9 Craigavon
- 10 Washington
- 11 Peterlee
- 12 Aycliffe
- 13 Central Lancashire
- 14 Skelmersdale
- 15 Warrington
- 16 Runcorn
- 17 Telford
- 18 Newtown
- 19 Redditch
- 20 Corby
- 21 Peterborough
- 22 Northampton
- 23 Milton Keynes
- 24 Stevenage
- 25 Welwyn Garden City
- 26 Harlow
- 27 Basildon
- 28 Hatfield
- 29 Hemel Hempstead
- 30 Bracknell
- 31 Crawley
- 32 Cwmbran
- 33 Llantrisant



Wherever you live, try asking your parents whether they live there because it is their ideal place. You might be told not to ask such a stupid question, but you could still find out what *is* their ideal place, and compare it with your own. But you might also find that their dreams aren't about *places* at all.

# 6 The do-it-yourself utopia kit



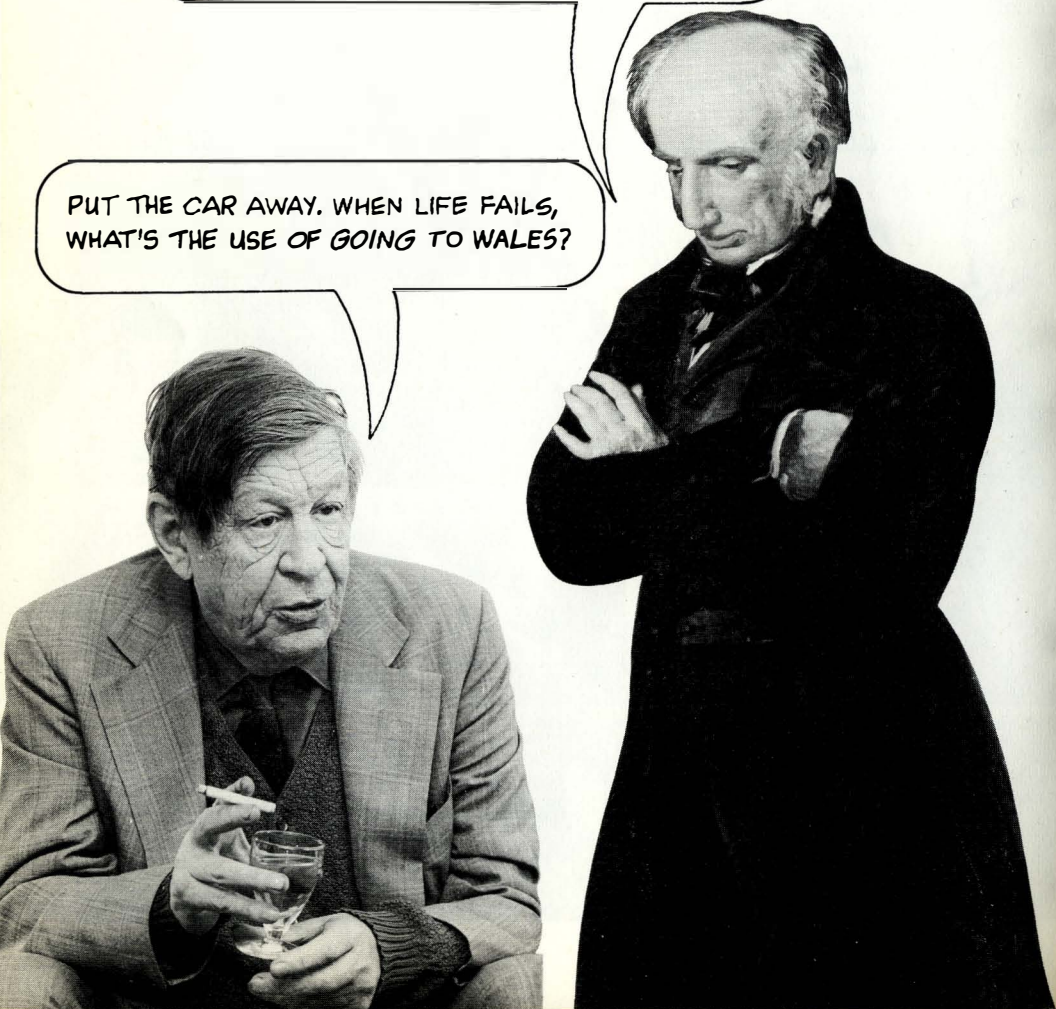
Our enjoyment of life doesn't just depend on where we live. You can be just as unhappy in someone else's utopia come true, as in a place where nobody ever stopped to ask the question, 'how do I want to live?'

Very many people, if you asked them to tell you their private dream of a good life, would reply, 'I just want a chance to do my own thing in my own way.'

*NOT IN UTOPIA, SUBTERRANEAN FIELDS, -  
OR ON SOME SECRET ISLAND, HEAVEN KNOWS  
WHERE!*

*BUT IN THIS VERY WORLD, WHICH IS THE WORLD  
OF ALL OF US, - THE PLACE WHERE, IN THE  
END,  
WE FIND OUR HAPPINESS, OR NOT AT ALL!*

*PUT THE CAR AWAY. WHEN LIFE FAILS,  
WHAT'S THE USE OF GOING TO WALES?*



What a wonderful world tomorrow will be

With no more war

And no more strife

No more famine

No more disease

No nuclear threat

No toil and sweat

No sin

No vice

No more irritating things

Just Utopia

With no more having to think for ourselves

everything automated

everything clean

everything possible

everything good

everything done for you

Yet there will be no more fun

The exciting exhilarating spice of life

With no more mucking around in school

because no more school

No more 'Shall I?' or 'Shan't I?'

because no more questions

No more cowboys and 7th cavalry

because no more imagination

No more fun with girls

Just Utopia -

Is that so good after all?

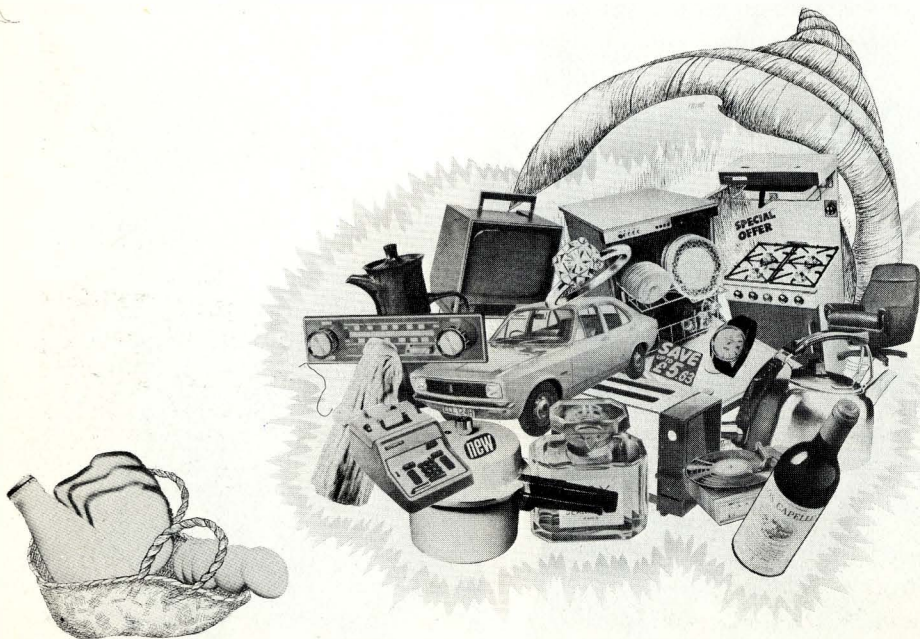
Richard Harrold, 14

## FREE CHOICE

The Goodman brothers, who have already cooked up two completely opposite utopias for us, have another one to fit this private dream too. They call this one Maximum Security with Minimum Regulation, or the City of Free Choice.

It is so easy, they say, in a modern industrial country, to provide the needs of life: food, shelter, clothing, transport and medical care, that the sensible thing would be to provide these free for everybody, in return for three years of work in a 'production centre' paying for them. Once you had done your three years of compulsory work in a factory, churning out other people's blue jeans or fish-fingers, or on a railway, running other people's trains, or in a hospital, looking after other people, you would be able to do what you liked with the rest of your life. You would get the basic needs of life free, because you had helped to provide them, but if you wanted anything extra, you would work for it, like anyone else.

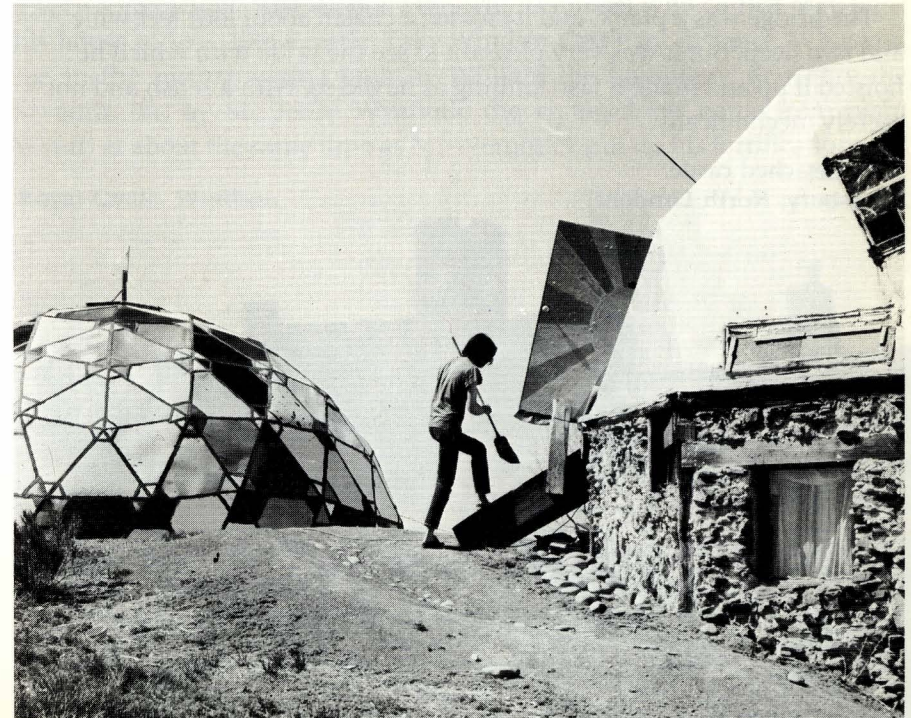
Basic needs, like food, shelter and clothing, take up a very small part of a rich country's work and wealth. Why not separate the basic things from the luxuries, let everyone have the basics free, and work for whatever they want among the luxuries? What do you think are the basics and what the luxuries?



In this way, Paul and Percival Goodman think, most people would get most freedom. Once you had done your three years work you would be able to do what you liked with the rest of your time and the rest of your life. If you wanted more things, you would work for them in the usual way. People could then live however they liked, instead of being tied to a job. If they wanted luxuries they could work for them. They could *choose* to do whatever their hearts desired.

The Goodmans think that most people would choose to live a quiet and simple life, doing their own thing, devoting their time to whatever hobby they most enjoyed. They would be like those young Americans who built Drop City, outside the city of Trinidad, Colorado. They live in domes which they built out of car tops, taken from the scrap heaps outside the big city, attached to a framework made from scrap timber. They grow beans and sweetcorn, and buy cheaply the food that the supermarket can't sell because the tins are dented or the packets broken. 'Since there are no compulsions,' says Bill Voyd, a Drop City dweller, 'each eventually discovers how *he* wants to lead his life.'

Part of Drop City, Colorado. Here people have chosen to lead a quiet, self-contained life using the throw-aways of the rich society they reject.



## KING OF THE CASTLE

This question is the key to utopia. The truth is that utopia is all around us. Some people dream of being the king of the castle, and if they try hard enough, the dream sometimes comes true. In Charles Dickens's story *Great Expectations*, Mr Wemmick builds his castle, not in a wild country, but in Walworth, south of London Bridge, in what Dickens calls 'a collection of back lanes, ditches and little gardens'. In the middle of all this suburban clutter of 150 years ago, the story-teller comes across one man's utopia:

Wemmick's house was a little wooden cottage in the midst of plots of garden, and the top of it was cut out and painted like a battery mounted with guns.

'My own doing,' said Wemmick. 'Looks pretty; don't it?'

I highly commended it. I think it was the smallest house I ever saw; with the queerest gothic windows (by far the greater part of them sham), and a gothic door, almost too small to get in at.

'That's a real flagstaff, you see,' said Wemmick, 'and on Sundays I run up a real flag. Then look here. After I have crossed this bridge, I hoist it up – so – and cut off the communication.'

The bridge was a plank, and it crossed a chasm about four feet wide and two deep. But it was very pleasant to see the pride with which he hoisted it up and made it fast; smiling as he did so, with a relish and not merely mechanically.

Semi-detached castle,  
Kingsbury, North London.



'At nine o'clock every night, Greenwich time,' said Wemmick, 'the gun fires. There he is, you see! And when you hear him go, I think you'll say he's a Stinger.'

The piece of ordnance referred to, was mounted in a separate fortress, constructed of lattice-work. It was protected from the weather by an ingenious little tarpaulin contrivance in the nature of an umbrella.

'Then, at the back,' said Wemmick, 'out of sight, so as not to impede the idea of fortifications – for it's a principle with me, if you have an idea, carry it out and keep it up – I don't know whether that's your opinion. . . .'

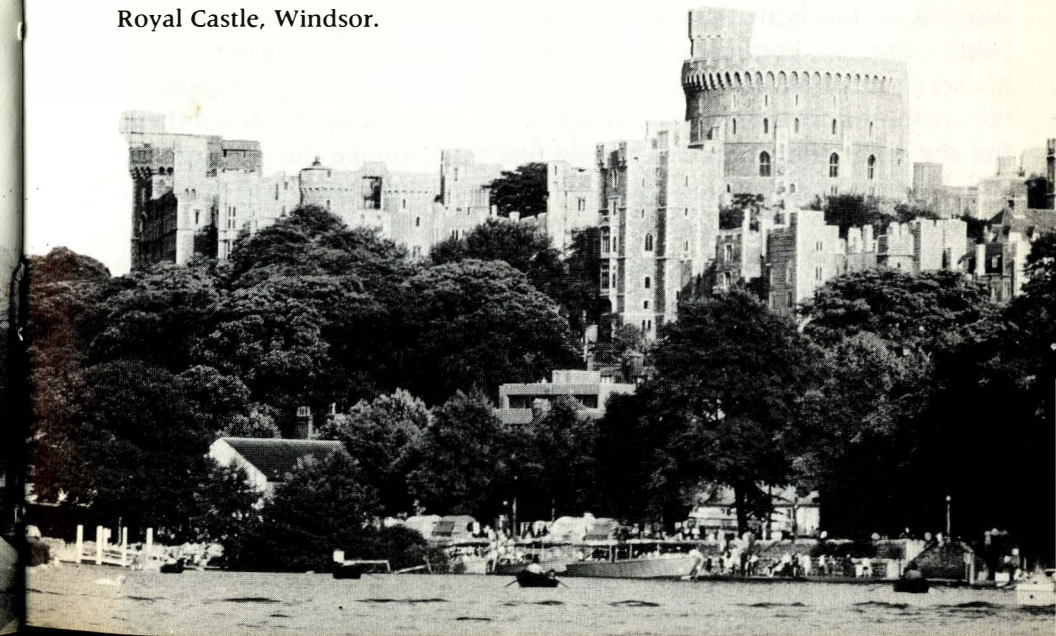
I said, decidedly.

'... At the back, there's a pig, and there are fowls and rabbits; then, I knock together my own little frame, you see, and grow cucumbers; and you'll judge at supper what sort of a salad I can raise. So, sir,' said Wemmick, smiling again, but seriously too, as he shook his head, 'if you can suppose the little place besieged, it would hold out a devil of a time in point of provisions.'

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

The story of Mr Wemmick, living out, his private dream of a castle, in Walworth, was only funny because he was a poor man and couldn't build a very convincing castle. Nobody thought it comical when a rich man built his house to look like a castle. Take Windsor Castle for instance. What you see in the picture wasn't built by William the Conqueror or Henry the Seventh, but by Sir Jeffry Wyatville (he changed his name from plain Wyatt) at about the same time as Mr Wemmick put up his fortifications.

Royal Castle, Windsor.

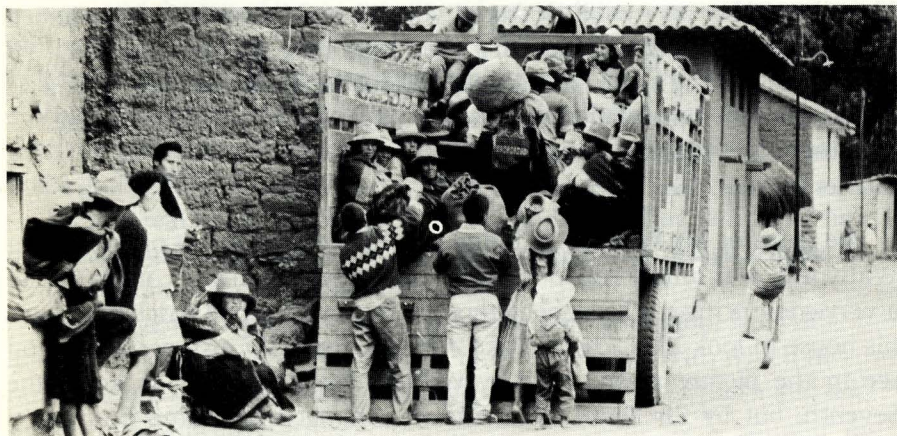


Any poor man's utopia includes the idea of a place of his own. An old American song has a chorus which goes:

In Poor Man's Heaven we'll own our own homes  
And we won't have to sweat like a slave,  
But we will be proud to sing right out loud,  
The land of the free and the brave.

Here are the stories (they are true) of two poor men who played the utopia game in their own way, not in dreams but in real life.

## TWO ROADS TO UTOPIA



Blas Quispé's father was a Quechua-speaking Indian who lived on a *hacienda* or ranch in the mountain district of Paucartambo in Peru in South America. Fortunado Quispé couldn't earn enough there to feed his seven children, so he signed on to work on a sugar plantation on the coast, and the family moved into a two-room *adobe* (mud) hut there. But the sugar plantation was buying machines to take the place of men and, by the time the oldest son, Blas, was eighteen and was due for a man's wage, he was told there was no work for him.

He decided to go and seek his fortune in Lima, the capital city. Blas got a lift in a lorry to the edge of the valley where the city stands and then took a bus to the city centre. He had never seen such a huge and wonderful place, nor so many other poor people. He did as his father had suggested and sought out the secretary of a club called the Sons of Paucartambo, who found him a room in the city and a job waiting in a hotel (where he got no pay, only tips).

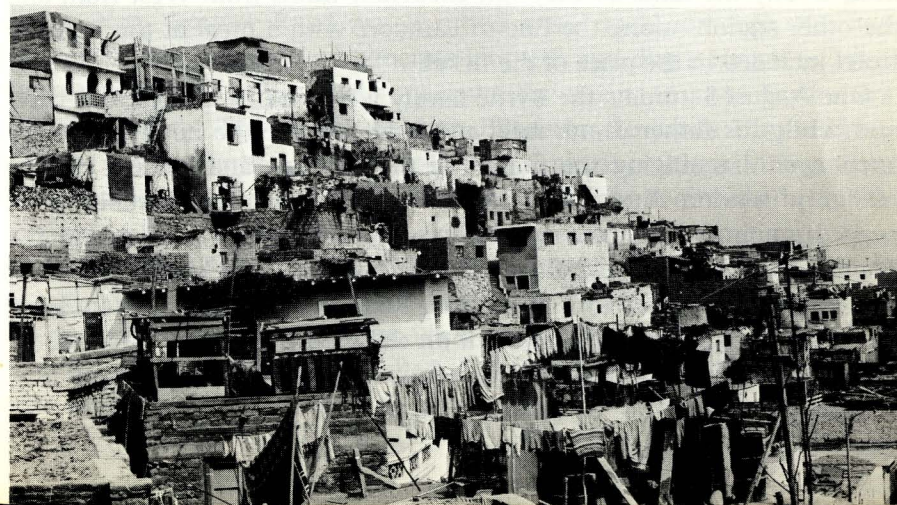
There he met Carmen, who worked as a maid in the house next door and who had come to the city from the southern highland province of

Ayacucho. Together they rented a tiny flat. The rent was high and they shared one water tap with ten other families. The paths between the buildings in the area where Carmen hung out the washing were less than one and a half metres wide. Sometimes even the washing got stolen. Blas and Carmen decided to join a Squatters' Association which was planning to join an invasion of empty land outside the city.

At dawn one day, Blas and Carmen took a taxi (the driver was a friend) and loaded it with all their belongings and their children as well as poles and straw mats. They drove out to the new settlement, or *barriada*, pegged out a plot fifteen by thirty metres, and built a wall of straw mats around it. They camped for the night inside their wall, and next morning the police came and pulled it down. So they built it up again, and this time the police did not come back.

In the next few months, with the help of friends, they replaced the straw mats with a wall of concrete blocks, strong enough to support a floor above, and Blas put down the payment of \$45 for a big, beautiful front door of cedar wood. Gradually he and his neighbours built a sewer and put in water pipes and wired up the house for electricity which they bought from another squatter who ran a diesel generator. Then they started to build a school.

A few years and several children later, Blas built an upstairs for his house. By this time it was no longer a squatter shack, but a fully-equipped family house. Carmen runs a shop in the front room and Blas works in the city. (One of his neighbours runs a bus service.) He plans to build another storey on his house and to run his own restaurant on the ground floor. He is going to call it Utopia. For Blas and Carmen that is just what it is: a place of their own, a way of making a living, and a future for their children.



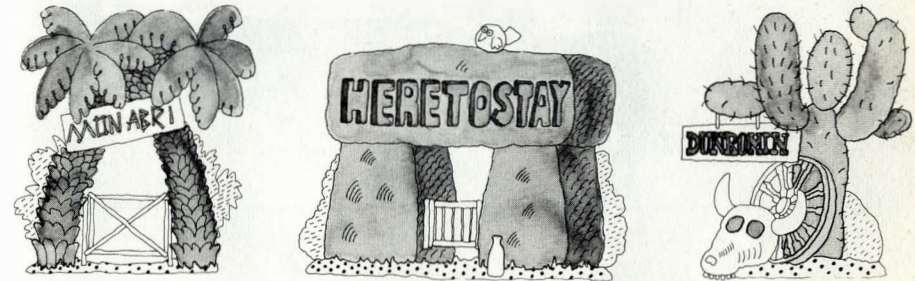


Thomas Byrne lived on his family's farm in Kerry in the west of Ireland until he was eighteen, when he went to look for work in the city of Cork. Soon afterwards he moved again, now to London, staying with relations in Canning Town. His uncle got him a job in the Royal Albert Dock. After a while he got married and rented the top half of a house in Freemasons Road, where his son, James, was born. Years earlier a railway had been built (the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway) linking London with the mouth of the Thames. Farmers who couldn't make a living from their land sold their fields near the stations on the new railway to a land company, who divided it up into plots. But nobody was very keen to buy the land, so they ran excursion trains from West Ham and the other stations along the line to Laindon, with a meal at the Railway Hotel included in the price of the ticket.

One August Saturday, the Byrne family went on one of these day trips, and while his father drank mild-and-bitter outside the hotel where the auctioneer was singing the praises of the fresh air and bracing climate of sunny Laindon, Jim and his sisters were exploring the scrubby fields pegged out into plots. When they tumbled out of the train that night, Thomas Byrne had bought, for £6, two plots of land six metres wide and thirty metres deep in New Century Road. He put the important-looking piece of paper behind the clock on the mantleshelf and forgot about it, until next summer, when Jim reminded his dad that he was now a landowner.

They spent a marvellous week there (it was the first holiday the family had ever had), in a First World War, army-surplus, bell tent. They planted apple trees and roses, which cost 2½p each at Woolworths in the Barking Road. 'Why, we could keep chickens and a pig here,' said Thomas Byrne, 'just like *my* father did in County Kerry.' Instead, they built a little cabin, or chalet, as they called it, and added a bit to it every summer.

Then came the Second World War. Jim was in the army, and when the bombs rained down on Dockland, Thomas moved the rest of the family from the rubble of their home in Freemasons Road to Laindon, where, with second-hand timber and corrugated iron he built three more rooms. After the war, Jim came home and built another room, and since all the other houses down the street had sprouted names like



he painted a signboard on the gate,

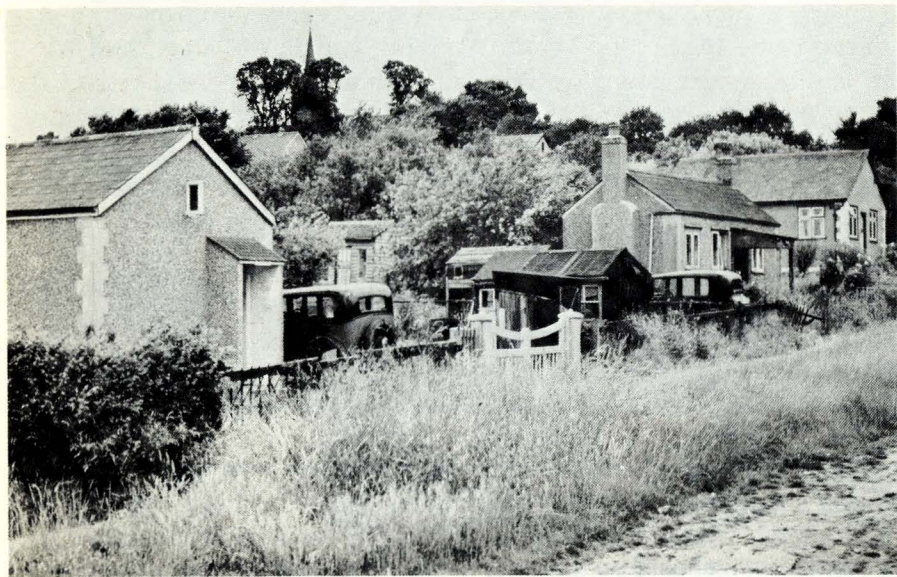


By this time the area of Pitsea, Laindon and Vange had a population of 25,000 in 8500 dwellings, most of them without electricity, water and drains. New Century Road was a rutted grass track, although Jim and the neighbours had made a concrete footpath and dug a trench to bring the water to a stand-pipe halfway down the street. In 1946 Parliament passed the New Towns Act, to turn Ebenezer Howard's Utopia (from Chapter 5) into reality, and Essex County Council petitioned the government to make the area a New Town to build the roads and bring the services to the scattered do-it-yourself town which had sprung up. They called the New Town Basildon. The Byrne family were worried at first. Would THEY demolish Utopia? 'No,' said the General Manager, 'we realize that every shack is somebody's home.'

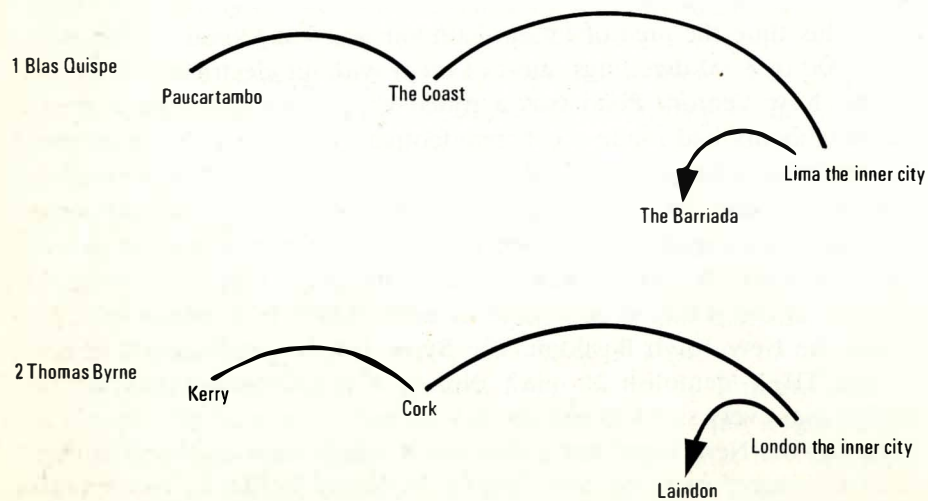
In fact the New Town has pulled the whole place together. 'The planner's task here,' says the new General Manager, 'is like a jigsaw puzzle,

with the new fitting into the old, instead of being superimposed on it and wiping it out.'

Today Jim Byrne's children have grown up in the house that started life as the shack that he and his father built. He turned down an offer of £10,000 for it.



Above: 'unplanned' utopia. A 1940s view of part of the area that later became Basildon New Town.  
Right: 1973. Sunday at Hyde Park Corner, London.  
Below: is there a pattern to the search for Utopia?





# Index of Themes

While reading this book you may find that there are certain ideas or themes in it that you want to explore further or base a project on. Many of them appear again in the other books in the *Human Space* series. This index is to make it easier to follow up ideas across the series in this way. It doesn't attempt to be a comprehensive guide to everything that appears in the books, or every aspect of the themes listed. Instead it offers some pointers and some possible lines to work along.

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You will find the same themes listed at the end of the other books in the series – *Where You're At*, *Survival*, *Exploration* and *Maps* – giving the relevant pages to follow up in each. This should make it possible to pursue any of these themes across all five books and to use each book in a number of different ways. There is other follow-up material, ideas, book references and information in the *Human Space* handbook and the *Games and Simulations* book.

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