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IN THE NATURE OF LANDSCAPE

CULTURAL
GEOGRAPHY
ON THE
NORFOLK
BROADS

David Matless

WILEY Blackwell

CONTENTS

[Cover](#)

[Series page](#)

[Title page](#)

[Copyright page](#)

[Series Editors' Preface](#)

[List of Illustrations](#)

[Preface and Acknowledgements](#)

[List of Abbreviations](#)

[Chapter One: Cultural Geography on the Norfolk Broads](#)

[A Geographical Visit](#)

[Outline](#)

[Landscape Colloquial, Culture Resounding](#)

[Scenic Governance](#)

[Regional Cultural Landscape](#)

[The Broadland Scene](#)

[Broadland Scene](#)

[Chapter Two: Origins](#)

[Broadland with the IBG \(and RGS\)](#)

[Origin in Transgression](#)

[Artifice Discovered](#)

[Artifice Disputed](#)

[An Equivalent Pool](#)

[New Broads](#)

[Chapter Three: Conduct](#)

[Terry and Lydia](#)

[Regionally Self-Conscious: The Broads Discovered](#)
[Twentieth Century Pleasures](#)

[Policy Conduct](#)

[Icon I: Wherry](#)

[Emblematic Sails](#)

[Norwich Vessels](#)

[Restorative](#)

[Broadland, South Kensington](#)

[Chapter Four: Animal Landscapes](#)

[The Norfolk Room](#)

[Fauna Surveyed](#)

[Murder Most Fowl](#)

[Broadland Preserve](#)

[Species of Writing](#)

[Reserving Nature](#)

[The Public Animal](#)

[Icon and Intruder](#)

[Wings Conflicting](#)

[Chapter Five: Plant Landscapes](#)

[Plant Cultures](#)

[Becoming a Scientific Region](#)

[Science on Tour](#)

[Two Yare Valley Scientists](#)

[Plant Life in Reserve](#)

[Marsh Harvest](#)

[Succession: Experiment in Landscape](#)

[Icon II: Windmill](#)

[Mill Time](#)

[Wind Technology](#)

[Restorative](#)

[New Sails](#)

[Chapter Six: The Ends of Landscape](#)

[The Balance of Waters](#)

[The Death of Water](#)

[Broadland Drained](#)

[River Flood, Broadland Balance](#)

[Death by Water: Sea Flood](#)

[Broadland Sealand](#)

[Broadland Signs](#)

[Chapter Seven: Concluding](#)

[Definition: Regional Cultural Landscape](#)

[Provision: Geographic Particularity](#)

[Colloquial: A Geography of Voice](#)

[Six Vantage Points](#)

[References](#)

[Index](#)

[End User License Agreement](#)

List of Illustrations

Chapter 01

[Figure 1 Map of Broadland.](#)

[Figure 2 'Reedham Mill', by James Stark.](#)

[Figure 3 Museum of the Broads, Stalham.](#)

Broadland Scene

[Figure 4 Broadland Scene I \(Top: from Ranworth Church tower, August 2011; Bottom: Carrow Bridge, Norwich, August 2011\).](#)

[Figure 5 Broadland Scene II \(Top: Potter Heigham Bridge, August 2011; Bottom left: Tide gauge, Wheatfen, August 2010; Bottom right: Reedham rail swing bridge, May 2011\).](#)

[Figure 6 Broadland Scene III \(Top: Cantley sugar beet factory, May 2011; Bottom: Berney Arms railway station, August 2011\).](#)

[Figure 7 Broadland Scene IV \(Top: Norwich Yacht Station, August 2011; Bottom: Breydon Water, August 2011\).](#)

[Figure 8 Broadland Scene V \(Top left: Heron's Carr, Barton Broad, May 2011; Top right: How Hill gardens, May 2011; Bottom: West Somerton staithe, August 2011\).](#)

Chapter 02

[Figure 9 Bores in the Yare Valley.](#)

[Figure 10 Double-Headed Eagle Pool, Long Gores, Hickling.](#)

Chapter 03

[Figure 11 Terry Scott, Hugh Lloyd and Sue Longhurst at the launch of the MV Woppy.](#)

[Figure 12 PH Emerson, 'The First Frost'.](#)

[Figure 13 PH Emerson, 'A Broadman's Cottage'.](#)

[Figure 14 'We Survived the Norfolk Broads', tea towel, purchased 1993.](#)

[Figure 15 Potter Heigham, River Thurne.](#)

Chapter 03-1

[Figure 16 'Rockland Trader' sculpture, at 'Three Ways Meeting Point', outside Vauxhall Station, Great Yarmouth.](#)

[Figure 17 Model wherry and diorama, with location map, 'British Small Craft' displays, Science Museum, London.](#)

Chapter 04

[Figure 18 The Norfolk Room, Castle Museum, Norwich: Top: Broadland diorama; Bottom left: Breydon diorama; Bottom right: Yare Valley diorama.](#)

[Figure 19 *Broadland Adventure*.](#)

[Figure 20 'The Cantley Roll'.](#)

[Figure 21 'Alfred Nudd Awaits his Turn of the Stereoscope'; Alfred Nudd and Emma Turner.](#)

[Figure 22 'The Skipper of the "Moorhen"'; Arthur Patterson.](#)

[Figure 23 'Map of Migration Routes', by Arthur Patterson.](#)

[Figure 24 Advertisement for the 'Pettitt Pack'.](#)

[Figure 25 Bittern, photographed in 1911 by Emma Turner.](#)

[Figure 26 Coypu, 'kept as a mascot by students of Joyce Lambert', Museum of the Broads, Stalham.](#)

Chapter 05

[Figure 27 Marietta Pallis and Arthur Tansley at Barton Broad, International Phytogeographical Excursion, 1911.](#)

[Figure 28 Wheatfen nature reserve, August 2010.](#)

[Figure 29 How Hill, May 2011.](#)

[Figure 30 'Norfolk Marshman, Eric Edwards MBE, surveys the How Hill Reed Beds'.](#)

[Figure 31 PH Emerson, 'Coming Home from the Marshes'.](#)

[Figure 32 PH Emerson, 'During the Reed-Harvest'.](#)

[Figure 33 'Calthorpe Domain', by Marietta Pallis, painting, probably early 1950s.](#)

Chapter 05-1

[Figure 34 'St Benedict's Abbey, Norfolk', by James Stark.](#)

[Figure 35 Berney Arms Mill and electric pumping station, August 2011.](#)

[Figure 36 'Wind Turbines - West Somerton', by Nicholas Ward, 1993.](#)

[Figure 37 'Broadland Sunrise', beer pump clip, Humpty Dumpty Brewery, Reedham, designed by Cherry Ann Burns-Salmond, c.2008.](#)

Chapter 06

[Figure 38 The Yarmouth Hutch Map, Norfolk Record Office, ref. no. Y/C 37/1.](#)

[Figure 39 'Flooded area, Horsey and district, 1938'.](#)

[Figure 40 Horsey, views out to sea and inland from the site of the 1938 sea breach, Bramble Hill.](#)

Broadland Signs

[Figure 41 Broadland Signs I \(Clockwise from top left: How Hill field studies sign, May 2011 / Wildlife Sightings Box, Heron's Carr, Barton Broad, May 2011 / Patterson Close, Great Yarmouth, August 2010 / Andrew Lees memorial plaque, outside Wickhampton church, May 2011/ Discarded RSPB tag, Strumpshaw](#)

[Fen, May 2011 / Display board, The Thatch, Wheatfen nature reserve, August 2010\).](#)

[Figure 42 Broadland Signs II \(Clockwise from top left: Water ski sign, River Yare, Strumpshaw, May 2011 / Ranworth village sign, August 2011 / Motor Boat Racing poster, Oulton Broad, August 2011 / Potter Heigham riverside bungalow, August 2011 / Swallowtail butterflies notice, by Martin George, Strumpshaw, May 2011 / Everitt Road, Oulton Broad, August 2011\).](#)

[Figure 43 Broadland Signs III \(Clockwise from top left: Berney Arms railway station information board / Oulton Broad, August 2011 / Berney Arms Mill ancient monument direction sign \(detail\) / Wherryman's Way marker, Berney Arms, August 2011 / Bridge over Muck Fleet, Stokesby New Road, August 2011 / Reedham Ferry, May 2011 / Wayford Bridge, August 2011\).](#)

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In the Nature of Landscape

Cultural Geography on the Norfolk Broads

David Matless

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List of Illustrations

[1](#) Map of Broadland

[2](#) 'Reedham Mill', by James Stark

[3](#) Museum of the Broads, Stalham

[4](#) Broadland Scene I (Top: from Ranworth Church tower, August 2011; Bottom: Carrow Bridge, Norwich, August 2011)

[5](#) Broadland Scene II (Top: Potter Heigham Bridge, August 2011; Bottom left: Tide gauge, Wheatfen, August 2010; Bottom right: Reedham rail swing bridge, May 2011)

[6](#) Broadland Scene III (Top: Cantley sugar beet factory, May 2011; Bottom: Berney Arms railway station, August 2011)

[7](#) Broadland Scene IV (Top: Norwich Yacht Station, August 2011; Bottom: Breydon Water, August 2011)

[8](#) Broadland Scene V (Top left: Heron's Carr, Barton Broad, May 2011; Top right: How Hill gardens, May 2011; Bottom: West Somerton staithe, August 2011)

[9](#) Bores in the Yare Valley

[10](#) Double-Headed Eagle Pool, Long Gores, Hickling. Top: aerial view, 2006; Bottom: ground view,

[11](#) Terry Scott, Hugh Lloyd and Sue Longhurst at the launch of the MV Woppy

[12](#) PH Emerson, 'The First Frost'

[13](#) PH Emerson, 'A Broadman's Cottage'

[14](#) 'We Survived the Norfolk Broads', tea towel, purchased

[15](#) Potter Heigham, River Thurne

- [16](#) 'Rockland Trader' sculpture, at 'Three Ways Meeting Point', outside Vauxhall Station, Great Yarmouth
- [17](#) Model wherry and diorama, with location map, 'British Small Craft' displays, Science Museum, London
- [18](#) The Norfolk Room, Castle Museum, Norwich: Top: Broadland diorama; Bottom left: Breydon diorama; Bottom right: Yare Valley diorama
- [19](#) *Broadland Adventure*
- [20](#) 'The Cantley Roll'
- [21](#) 'Alfred Nudd Awaits his Turn of the Stereoscope'; Alfred Nudd and Emma Turner
- [22](#) 'The Skipper of the "Moorhen"'; Arthur Patterson
- [23](#) 'Map of Migration Routes', by Arthur Patterson
- [24](#) Advertisement for the 'Pettitt Pack'
- [25](#) Bittern, photographed in 1911 by Emma Turner
- [26](#) Coypu, 'kept as a mascot by students of Joyce Lambert', Museum of the Broads, Stalham
- [27](#) Marietta Pallis and Arthur Tansley at Barton Broad, International Phytogeographical Excursion,
- [28](#) Wheatfen nature reserve, August
- [29](#) How Hill, May
- [30](#) 'Norfolk Marshman, Eric Edwards MBE, surveys the How Hill Reed Beds'
- [31](#) PH Emerson, 'Coming Home from the Marshes'
- [32](#) PH Emerson, 'During the Reed-Harvest'
- [33](#) 'Calthorpe Domain', by Marietta Pallis, painting, probably early 1950s
- [34](#) 'St Benedict's Abbey, Norfolk', by James Stark

[35](#) Berney Arms Mill and electric pumping station, August

[36](#) 'Wind Turbines – West Somerton', by Nicholas Ward,

[37](#) 'Broadland Sunrise', beer pump clip, Humpty Dumpty Brewery, Reedham, designed by Cherry Ann Burns-Salmond, c.

[38](#) The Yarmouth Hutch Map

[39](#) 'Flooded area, Horsey and district, 1938'

[40](#) Horsey, views out to sea and inland from the site of the 1938 sea breach, Bramble Hill

[41](#) Broadland Signs I (Clockwise from top left: How Hill field studies sign, May 2011 / Wildlife Sightings Box, Heron's Carr, Barton Broad, May 2011 / Patterson Close, Great Yarmouth, August 2010 / Andrew Lees memorial plaque, outside Wickhampton church, May 2011/ Discarded RSPB tag, Strumpshaw Fen, May 2011 / Display board, The Thatch, Wheatfen nature reserve, August 2010)

[42](#) Broadland Signs II (Clockwise from top left: Water ski sign, River Yare, Strumpshaw, May 2011 / Ranworth village sign, August 2011 / Motor Boat Racing poster, Oulton Broad, August 2011 / Potter Heigham riverside bungalow, August 2011 / Swallowtail butterflies notice, by Martin George, Strumpshaw, May 2011 / Everitt Road, Oulton Broad, August 2011)

[43](#) Broadland Signs III (Clockwise from top left: Berney Arms railway station information board / Oulton Broad, August 2011 / Berney Arms Mill ancient monument direction sign (detail) / Wherryman's Way marker, Berney Arms, August 2011 / Bridge over Muck Fleet, Stokesby New Road, August 2011 / Reedham Ferry, May 2011 / Wayford Bridge, August 2011)

Preface and Acknowledgements

The research informing this book has been undertaken over two decades or more, beginning as a sideline, moving through various divergent projects on specific themes and individuals, and coming together as a regional monograph in recent years. My thanks to the commissioning editor of the book for the RGS-IBG series, Kevin Ward, and his successor, Neil Coe, for seeing the work through to overdue publication. Their patience and comment have been appreciated. An anonymous reviewer of the manuscript also provided extensive and insightful commentary, and helped clarify empirical discussion and extend theoretical argument.

Research for the book has drawn upon many sources, and has not been without incident. In 1994 I was awarded a 'New Lecturers' grant from the University of Nottingham to begin some Broads research, with Norwich Central Library a key resource. The grant commenced on 1 August, and on the same day the library burned down. For the next few years the library and county Record Office had an itinerant existence before finding separate permanent homes, the library in a new building on the former site, the Record Office on the city outskirts at County Hall, now also housing the East Anglian Film Archive (formerly at UEA), drawn upon here for television and holiday promotional films; thanks to Katherine Mager for enabling access there. The Norwich library's Norfolk Heritage Centre has re-gathered material lost in the 1994 fire, alongside the holdings which survived, and is the key resource for rare Broadland works, common texts, newspapers and ephemera. Clive Wilkins-Jones has been an especially valuable source of advice and information concerning

material held in the library, while Clare Everitt facilitated the reproduction of images from the library collection. Yarmouth public library also provided source material. The papers of key Norfolk naturalists, notably EA Ellis and Robert Gurney, have been consulted at the Castle Museum, Norwich, with current and former curators Tony Irwin, Rob Driscoll and David Waterhouse providing valuable intelligence. The Museum's displays of art and natural history remain a fine indoor introduction to the region. The archive of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust has also been a rich source of material on naturalist cultures. Richard Denyer insightfully discussed his photographic studies of Broadland, Brian Moss answered queries on his ecological studies, Peter Marren generously shared notes on the 1965 New Naturalist Broads publication, Bridget Yates pointed me towards material on the Thurne bungalows at Potter Heigham, and Peggy Rand shared private archival material on her relative Drew Miller. Stephanie Douet facilitated participation in the 2002 Field Day excursion of artists and scientists on the Broads, and the subsequent 2004 exhibition at Waxham Barn, where I collaborated with artists Anne Rook and Chloe Steele. Simon Partridge of How Hill Trust, Lesley George of Humpty Dumpty Brewery, artist Nicholas Ward, David Waterhouse of the Castle Museum, and aerial photographer Mike Page provided access to images, as did Jenny Watts of the Norfolk Record Office, and Maria Erskine of Nottingham City Museums and Galleries. Nicola Hems of the Museum of the Broads facilitated permission for the use of photographs of the Museum's exhibits. Broadland material also occupies national collections, including the BBC Written Archives at Caversham Park, Reading, and the Post Office Archive, the Science Museum and the Linnean Society in London. I am grateful to archival staff at all of those institutions.

Research on one Broadland figure, Marietta Pallis, has been conducted with Laura Cameron, with a small grant from the British Academy generating several publications (Cameron and Matless 2003; 2011; Matless and Cameron 2006; 2007a; 2007b). Pallis sources included the Norwich Castle Museum, the British Ecological Society in London, the Northamptonshire Record Office (where Pallis's letters are included in the collection of her friend Joan Wake), the Bodleian Library in Oxford, and the King's Lynn Consortium of Internal Drainage Boards. Staff at all institutions were very helpful. Pallis's private papers are held at her former home near Hickling, Dominic Vlasto kindly allowing access to documents and images, and giving insight into Pallis's private landscape. Ivor Kemp of the Hickling Local History Group also provided valuable assistance. At a 2001 presentation on Pallis to the Group in Hickling Village Hall, questions from a primarily local audience prompted several subsequent oral history interviews, showing other dimensions of Pallis's public and private persona. I am grateful to Laura Cameron for prompting our work on Pallis, and for all our subsequent revelatory excursions and discussions.

Interviews with key individuals also inform this book. The late Clifford Smith, Phyllis Ellis and Humphrey Boardman discussed their Broadland works and lives, while Martin George provided valuable insights into the work of the Nature Conservancy, alongside informed comment on events in the region over the past 50 years. His published work, along with that of Tom Williamson, Brian Moss and John Taylor, has been an important reference point. A key interviewee, who became both a source of research material and a commentator on research as it developed, was the late Joyce Lambert, whose role is discussed in Chapter One, but to whom I am immensely grateful for her generosity and insight. One each of the interviews with

Lambert and George were conducted as part of an ESRC funded research project at the University of Nottingham with Charles Watkins and Paul Merchant on post-war cultures of nature in Norfolk and Herefordshire, which also involved interviews with other key figures in nature conversation in the counties. Archival research on Hickling conducted for that project has been drawn upon in this book, alongside some of the interview findings. Project publications are listed in the References (Watkins, Matless and Merchant 2003; 2007; Matless, Watkins and Merchant 2005; 2010).

Broadland research has over the years benefitted from discussion with colleagues at Nottingham and beyond, including Charles Watkins, Stephen Daniels, Mike Heffernan, George Revill, Daniel Grimley, Mike Pearson, Hayden Lorimer, Simon Naylor, Caitlin DeSilvey, Colin Sackett and Tim Boon. Events organised by Simon Pope, Helen MacDonald, and James Mansell and Scott Anthony, highlighted new research dimensions which shaped the direction of the work. Parts of Chapter Two were presented at the 2002 Jay Appleton lecture at the University of Hull, and I am grateful to Jay Appleton for sharing his own Norfolk memories. Tim Dee enabled the broadcast of three 'Essay' talks on Broadland naturalists (Ellis, Day and Pallis) on Radio 3 in 2008. An Edward Clarence Dyason Fellowship at the University of Melbourne in 2006 allowed productive discussion on regional cultural landscape with Fraser MacDonald. Many audiences have had my Broadland research presented to them over the years, and I am grateful for all comments made in response, but the first academic audience was perhaps for a seminar in the Geography department at Lampeter around 1993, organised, if memory serves, by Chris Philo. The response to that initial presentation helped convince me to pursue such work, and 20 years later here is a book.

Research has also been shaped throughout by family support. My parents, Brian and Audrey Matless, have contributed support, advice, press cuttings and excursions, and I cannot thank them enough. I hope they will enjoy reading about an area with which they are very familiar, though one which we tended to bypass in my childhood in favour of the beach. My wife, Jo Norcup, has provided love, wit, intelligence and field accompaniment, and has put up with the book's slow finishing. The book is dedicated to her, and to our son Edwyn, whose own skills of field observation have illuminated things since 2012.

List of Abbreviations

AWA	Anglian Water Authority
BA	Broads Authority
BAAS	British Association for the Advancement of Science
CPRE	Council for the Preservation of Rural England / Council for the Protection of Rural England
<i>EDP</i>	<i>Eastern Daily Press</i>
<i>EEN</i>	<i>Eastern Evening News</i>
FoE	Friends of the Earth
GYPHC	Great Yarmouth Port and Haven Commission
IBG	Institute of British Geographers
IDB	Internal Drainage Board
IPE	International Phytogeographical Excursion
IWA	Inland Waterways Association
<i>LLNB</i>	<i>Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads</i>
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
NC	Nature Conservancy
NCC	Nature Conservancy Council
NFU	National Farmers' Union
NNNS	Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NNT	Norfolk Naturalists Trust
NRC	Norfolk Research Committee
NT	National Trust
NWT	Norfolk Wildlife Trust

RGS	Royal Geographical Society
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SBL	Sutton Broad Fresh-Water Laboratory
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
<i>TNNNS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society</i>
UCL	University College London
UEA	University of East Anglia

Chapter One

Cultural Geography on the Norfolk Broads

A Geographical Visit

In the Nature of Landscape offers an excursion around an eastern English wetland, the Norfolk Broads. This chapter introduces the region, and gives an account of cultural geography on the Norfolk Broads, ideas from a field of enquiry put into play. For over a hundred years people have taken boat excursions on the Broads; here cultural geography goes on the Broads, investigating landscape, finding how it might shape regional understanding.

This is not the first geographical visit to the region. In 1927 Albert Demangeon's *Les Iles Britanniques* examined the Broads:

The peaty swamps, the still sheets of water hidden by reeds, the wide channels overhung by willows, and the lonely marshes frequented in winter by water-fowl exhibit Nature in all her wildness, loneliness, and melancholy. But in the summer these solitudes are full of holiday-makers, and the Bure, Ant, and Thurne, together with Wroxham, Salhouse, and Oulton Broads, are dotted with motor cruisers and sailing yachts. Away from the Broads and swamps, the ground is covered with grass and forms a rich pastoral district in which graze thousands of cattle. Green fields, grazing cattle, windmills, willow-lined channels, boats sailing among trees – all these remind one of the scenery in Holland. (Demangeon 1939: 282-3)

Demangeon shows an early twentieth century French regional geographic sensibility abroad, his passage signalling lines of enquiry followed throughout this book; the aesthetics of regional description, the geographies of regional discovery, and Broadland as a region whose 'curious features' are reminiscent of somewhere else (Demangeon 1939: 282; Clout 2009).¹ The landscape features itemised too warrant continued geographic scrutiny; reeds and birds, marsh pastorals, cheer and melancholy, seasonal shifts.

This chapter gives an outline of region and book, conveys the possibilities of thinking through landscape and culture, examines early accounts of regional scenic governance, and considers regional cultural landscape as a term worth revisiting for its theoretical, political and poetic potential. The chapter concludes with a survey of Broadland institutions and scholarship, and an introductory Broadland tour.

