

## **‘Twenty Moments on Mynydd Bach’**

In the early 1820’s Augustus Brackenbury, a young Englishman from Scremby in Lincolnshire, purchased 850 acres of peat-bog and mountainside from the Enclosure Commissioners. The area, south of Aberystwyth and close to the village of Trefenter (‘Venture Town’), is known as Mynydd Bach (‘Little Mountain’). Resistance to Brackenbury’s attempts to enclose and partition the land was fierce, as they were seen to transgress customary ‘rights of common’. In what became known as ‘The War of the Little Englishman’ were worked out all the fears and uncertainties which the erasure of familiar topographies, which the change in the very nature of place, brought to Britain : all that plunged poet John Clare into despair.

‘Twenty Moments on Mynydd Bach’ revisits this contested landscape.

As a series of slides, it traces a walk across the hills.

As a series of texts, it incorporates different orders of narrative : historical, theoretical, local, anecdotal...

As a format, it evokes the random meanderings of thought, recollection and reflection which often accompany such a walk: the way in which different orders of information spring to mind. As a project, it proposes an alternative ‘way of telling’, a mode of archaeological, performative interpretation which is at once romantic, phenomenological, partial and personal.

As a presentation, it abandons the notion of the ‘lecturer-as-interpreter’.

Each presentation of ‘Twenty Moments on Mynydd Bach’ will follow a unique path through the material.

‘Twenty Moments on Mynydd Bach’ works with that which is still apparent, that which is lost and that which the casual visitor will barely discern. It is at once a reading ‘from’ and a reading ‘onto’ and ‘into’ landscape, complementing rather than subsuming local knowledge and traditions of interpretation. At this marginal location, where claims and counter-claims have long been made, it proposes innovative approaches to inscription and exposition.

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For several years, Mike Pearson has been examining points of convergence between performance and archaeology. In a project entitled ‘theatre/archaeology’, the two disciplines are no longer held discrete. They coexist within a ‘blurred genre’, ‘a deliberate erasure of the finely etched line between the academic and the artistic’ or a science/fiction, an alternative approach to recording, writing and illustrating the material past. And they are jointly active in mobilising the past, in making creative use of its various fragments, in forging cultural memory out of varied interests and remains and - in their joint address to particular sites and themes - a significant resource in constructing and energising contemporary identities : personal, communal and regional.

‘Twenty Moments on Mynydd Bach’ is created by Mike Pearson, Professor of Performance Studies, University of Wales Aberystwyth, and Mike Brookes, Tutor in Theatre Studies, University of Wales Aberystwyth.

Recorded in Chapter, Cardiff by Stewart Lucas.

Mike Pearson is currently completing a volume with Professor Michael Shanks on convergences of performance and archaeology.