GROWING TOGETHER
AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF COMMUNITY GARDENING AS PLACE MAKING

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SUMMARY

This research examines relationships between people and place at three community gardens in Wales by studying processes of place making. Ethnographic methods explored gardeners' feelings, doings, and interactions with nonhumans to bring a critical perspective to the study of community gardens which better reflects their complexity and vitality. By expanding the range of gardens researched I show that urban and rural community gardens are not categorically distinct, challenging the narrative that city dwellers seek community gardens to reconnect with people and nature. The opportunity to feel good motivates participation but achieving this depends on the degree of control available to gardeners which varies with how a garden is made.

I contribute to relational theories of place an empirically grounded discussion which brings them into dialogue with notions of community, arguing that places are not wholly unpredictable as spatial processes can be deliberately directed and interact with feelings. Where Massey suggests places thrown together (2005) I propose a theory of place making as bringing movements together, guided by skill and feelings as we work to achieve goals and pull towards those we have affinity with. I demonstrate how a more dynamic sense of place can be conceived through attention to *qualities* of motion as the appreciation of a place's particular constellation of movements and feeling comfortable moving with these rhythms. The case studies show that people find comfort in feeling they belong somewhere but this is a dynamic sense of belonging as moving with others. Garden communities are not determined in place but form through making place, sharing experiences through which gardeners feel at home together. Finally, I question whether new relationships formed through gardening extend across time and space, suggesting that participation in garden life will not necessarily cultivate an ethic of care for others.

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

Digging, Seamus Heaney

1 INTRODUCTION

A CONTEXT OF GROWTH

"There's something in the air"[1] was how the chief executive of one environmental organisation described a boundless interest in 'grow your own' during 2009. Her sense that more people than ever were growing food was confirmed when seed companies reported fruit and vegetable varieties outselling flowers (HTA 2010) and allotment waiting lists reached unparalleled lengths (NSALG 2011). In a nation of gardeners growing plants has long been popular, but gardens and gardening were changing (Milbourne 2009: 945). An era of purchasing quick fixes for beautiful gardens segued into one of digging in and getting dirty (Mintel 2007, 2010). This seemed distinct from the 1970s celebration of 'the good life' during a similar economic downturn as more people sought to garden together- the rise of grow *our* own. The city of London endeavoured to create 2,012 new community growing spaces by 2012 (Capital Growth 2013). The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) saw 25% more community groups participating in their programmes between 2007 and 2008 (Milbourne 2011: 947). The nascent Transition Towns movement encouraged community food growing to launch the mission of reducing reliance on fossil fuels (Clavin 2011: 946, Transition Network 2012).

The footsteps of this march 'back to the land' were heard across the UK (Clavin 2011: 946, Firth *et al.* 2011: 555, Milbourne 2011: 947, Pearson and Firth 2012: 147) and echoed across other developed countries (Donati *et al.* 2010: 207-8, Draper and Freedman 2010: 458-9, Guitart *et al.* 2012: 364, Hou *et al.* 2009: 16, Kingsley *et al.* 2009: 209, Turner *et al.* 2011). A particularly dramatic rise in participation in Wales prompted the government to publish the UK's first national strategy for community growing (WAG 2010). The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG) a charity established in 1980 to support community groups working with plants and animals experienced unprecedented demand. Facing remarkable increases in membership in Wales from eight in 2008 to more than 300 in 2013, the FCFCG received government funding for a programme to support the nation's

[1] Quoted in press article http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2009/feb/19/national-trust-allotments (accessed 24/05/13).

activity (FCFCG 2013). It was an exciting time to be interested in community gardening.

Something was in the air, but where had it come from? Some suggested that by gathering together to garden people were finding a sense of 'reconnection' otherwise lacking from their lives[2]. One FCFCG Wales leaflet said: "Community growing spaces are projects that reconnect people with nature, food and each other." Another from BTCV (now called the Conservation Volunteers) suggested:

> *Connecting to nature leads to an increase in environmental awareness and environmentally friendly lifestyles and helps bring communities together.*

Academics echoed this sentiment suggesting an urge to reconnect with other people and with nature drives interest in community gardening (see chapter II). Allied to this was the hope that the grow your own movement would bring a move to more sustainable living if those who enjoy a very local environment realise the connection with caring about the environment more broadly[3].

This activity held plenty of interest for someone concerned with human relationships to the world, and it was amongst such buzz that I began this research. As I explored relevant literature two things became apparent. Firstly community garden scholarship centres on North America and describes a movement quite different from the one I knew in the UK where there have been far fewer intense political struggles over sites (see Chapter II). Secondly, whilst social scientists in the UK recognised the value of investigating gardens their work largely coincided with earlier gardening trends. Signified by the idea of 'outdoor rooms' gardeners in the late 1990s to early 2000s preferred a garden to look at than to work in, taking a more consumerist approach (Bhatti and Church 2001: 371, Bhatti and Church 2004: 43, Hitchings 2007a, Hitchings 2007b: 366-7). Although food growing on allotments endured as an alternative to more aesthetically driven home gardening (Crouch 1989, Crouch and Ward 1997, McKay 2011) these were different spaces again. The rise of community gardens alongside continued interest in allotments suggested people seeking diverse ways to garden.

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[2] For example see a local press article http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/pride-blooming-thanks-inner-city-1809119 (accessed 24/05/13).

[3] For example, a Defra programme supporting sustainable behaviour initiatives funded the National Trust to run food themed activities intended to encourage broader environmental action http://sd.defra.gov.uk/2010/08/eat-into-green-living/ (accessed 24/05/13). BTCV included a food growing campaign in their work to encourage people to reduce their contribution to the causes of climate change http://www2.tcv.org.uk/CA10_Report.pdf. (accessed 24/05/13).

Before discussing how these trends and other factors informed this research it is important to clarify what a community garden is, so the next section focuses on definitions. I will then outline how the design of my research evolved, and detail the research questions I arrived at. This chapter closes with an overview of the research and outline of the thesis content.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY GARDEN?

As others have noted defining a community garden is far from straightforward as the term is used so variably (Firth *et al.* 2011: 556, Holland 2004: 292, Pudup 2008: 1231, Rosol 2010: 552) and often discussed without definition (Guitart *et al.* 2012: 366). The term is perhaps more familiar in the USA which is often seen as its home, whilst it is relatively new to the UK[4]. In this section I consider some of the definitions offered for the term, identify key characteristics, and outline how I define a community garden for this research.

A useful place to start is Troy Glover's (2003) definition which has been adopted by others (Beilin and Hunter 2011, Glover *et al.* 2005, Milbourne 2009 and 2011, Ohmer *et al.* 2009, Parry *et al.* 2005). He defines community gardens as:

> *organised initiative(s) whereby sections of land are used to produce food or flowers in an urban environment for the personal or collective benefit of their members who, by virtue of their participation, share certain resources such as space, tools and water (2003: 264).*

Following their own review of the literature Guitart *et al.* echo this, describing community gardens as open spaces managed and operated by members of local community, where flowers or food are cultivated (2012: 364). Hou *et al.* suggest a broader definition, the key requirement being 'tillable land' available for groups to garden (2009: 11). Amongst the variety of scales and initiatives this can include they highlight the central characteristic of "a shared place for people to garden" (ibid). This flexible definition reflects those offered by organisations supporting or representing such groups. The American Community Garden Association (ACGA)

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[4] According to a search on the media archive www.lexisnexis.com (completed 24/05/13) the term made its first appearance in a UK newspaper in 1985. For the next decade there were occasional press mentions, with a steady increase until 1998 (170 articles). Press coverage increased rapidly through the early 2000s, reaching a peak of 1,987 mentions in 2011. For comparison, numbers of stories regarding allotments followed a similar trajectory but have consistently been more numerous.

defines community gardens as "Any piece of land gardened by a group of people" (ACGA N.D). This has been adopted by academics (Milburn and Adams Vail 2010) whilst their UK counterparts look to an equivalent body, the FCFCG (Holland 2004, Pearson and Firth 2012). According to the FCFCG a community garden can be any scale or type of location which grows plants, is managed by a community and provides educational and volunteering opportunities (FCFCG N.D.a).

It is apparent that shared space is fundamental to community gardens; they are not for individuals but a collective so are more public than private. Such a distinction is never straight forward (Hou *et al.* 2009: 183, Lawson 2004, Longhurst 2006, Milbourne 2009: 150, Schmelzkopf 1996: 379) and always raises the question of who constitutes the public (Staeheli *et al.* 2002) however it does signal the involvement of multiple gardeners away from home. Unlike public spaces such as parks it is not just access which is common as community gardens entail collective ownership and direct control (Pearson and Firth 2012: 149, Croucher *et al.* 2007: 24) by citizens volunteering long-term commitment (Rosol 2011: 243). This 'public' is unlikely to be solely the state or a government institution although they may be involved (Lawson 2005, Rosol 2011, Schmelzkopf 2002) as community support is required (Ferris *et al.* 2001: 562). The community may be local residents united by location or shared interest, acting through good will, or brought together more formally by an NGO or state institution (Pudup 2008: 1231). The public nature of community gardens also refers to property ownership with the distinction from private gardens being that sites are not owned by the gardeners (Ferris *et al.* 2001: 560, Schukoske 2000: 355). As public spaces community gardens entail cooperation as effort and results are shared (Glover *et al.* 2005: 79), and they are driven by altruistic motives (Ferris *et al.* 2001: 562) rather than legal duty or profit.

These broad characteristics encompass a wide range of initiatives which some have sought to shape into typologies. Ferris *et al.* (2001) devised eight categories of community garden in one American city according to purpose -leisure, training, entrepreneurship, therapy, crime diversion- and organisational basis –school or neighbourhood. Stocker and Barnett (1998) differentiated gardens where benefits are only for those directly involved from those benefitting the wider community, and gardens with individual plots from collective arrangements. More recently Mary-Beth Pudup identified a distinct breed she terms 'organised garden projects' (2008). These are likely to be backed by a third sector body or public institution with defined objectives for gardening often allied with state goals for citizenship. That she sees a

need for new terminology may reflect a shift from self-organised volunteers gathering near their homes (Lawson 2005: 243) to the increased involvement of established organisations (Pearson and Firth 2012).

If their communities are highly varied so too are the gardens. Some assume community gardens entail food growing (Evers and Hodgson 2011, Holland 2004: 291, Okvat and Zautra 2011: 374, Pearson and Firth 2012, Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004, Turner *et al.* 2011), folding them into the term urban agriculture (Beilin and Hunter 2011, Colasanti *et al.* 2012, Lekvoe 2006, McClintock 2010). Urban agriculture refers to various food provisioning activities in cities including commercial production, but tends not to be recreational (Sage 2012: 282). Whilst community gardens are a longstanding example of urban agriculture (Mougeot 2006: xiv) they are not necessarily urban and not wholly represented by the term. As Glover's definition indicates they may grow ornamentals, as is usually the case in Germany (Rosol 2010, 2011). The scale, appearance and aims of community gardens include:

> *anything from a shared greenhouse to a small-scale farm tending livestock; from a guerrilla-gardened floral roundabout to an education centre for socially excluded young people (Pinkerton & Hopkins 2009:79).*

Community garden spaces may be gardened as individual plots within a communal environment (Kingsley *et al.* 2009: 209) typically recognised in the UK as allotment gardens. Whilst allotments and community gardens have been treated as co-terminous with the former taken as the British incarnation of the latter (Bell *et al.* 2008, Milligan *et al.* 2004: 1783), this can gloss differences between them. Whilst allotments can be quite collective enterprises where materials and skills are shared (Crouch 1989: 262), allotment gardeners may have minimal contact with each other (Crouch and Ward 1999, Howe and Wheeler 1999: 22). They are distinguished from community gardens by the latter's greater public ownership, access and democratic control (Firth *et al.* 2011: 556), being less individualised and regimented places to garden (Milbourne 2011: 947). However, such distinctions are becoming blurred as allotment societies are encouraged to take control of sites (LGA 2010: 8), and community gardens establish on allotments (FCFCG N.D.b). Community gardens include those comprising plots for individuals, plots worked collectively, and combinations of the two (Hou *et al.* 2009).

In many regards the imprecise meaning of 'community garden' reflects their nature,

for they vary according to local need and context (Ferris *et al.* 2001: 560, Firth *et al.* 2011: 556, Holland 2004: 303, Hou *et al.* 2009, Milburn and Adams Vail 2010: 85-6). Heterogeneity is expected because:

> *Community is a protean concept and can take many forms and serve diverse interests. We should expect community gardens to reflect this pluralism and diversity (Ferris et al. 2001: 561).*

A deliberately flexible definition is not universally celebrated as it may make it difficult to assess success and mire us in the uncertain meanings of community (Pudup 2008). Rather than avoid reference to community as Pudup proposes, the word's imprecision can be embraced as an opportunity to consider its continued pull on our lives by asking 'why community?' (Panelli and Welch 2005). The breadth of places being called community gardens indicates the term's appeal; those who employ the term determine what it represents, and questioning how it is applied might say something about community today.

I propose a flexible definition of community gardens reflecting the characteristics outlined above whilst resonating with those used by practitioners:

> *A community garden is a place where people work together to grow plants and share rewards.*

This definition differs from that of Glover and others (Irvine *et al.* 1999: 45, Holland 2004: 291) in one key regard: I do not specify urban locations. Research into community gardens is dominated by city examples with some treating them as urban phenomena (Bartlett 2005, Hynes 1996, Lawson 2005), a trend perpetuated as they are framed as urban agriculture. But they occur in rural areas, and suggesting that such examples are best considered separately (Holland 2004) risks overlooking commonalities with their urban counterparts.

Although this definition could include sites divided for individual cultivation my interest is in collective activities of sharing and working together. This emphasis could differentiate community gardens from traditional municipal allotments with their lower expectation of cooperative effort. Allotments have received close attention from UK researchers so I chose to focus on the newer form of collective gardening where shared effort is more prominent. The definition could also include school gardens which are increasingly popular (Growing in Schools Taskforce 2012, WRO 2012) but they would introduce distinct issues making the scope too wide. Similarly whilst some of the literature I discuss considers urban agriculture I focus on work specifically addressing community gardening. The

recent increase in places being called community gardens in the UK – including some which might have previously been named allotments [5]- may itself be revealing. To interrogate this, and in line with an ethnographic approach my research includes places identified as community gardens by those involved.

ARRIVING AT MY RESEARCH

My interest in community gardens arose from my enjoyment of food and gardening, and professional experience with environmental organisations striving to encourage more sustainable behaviour. I worked on activities founded on the notion that involvement in gardening stimulates a shift towards pro-environmental attitudes, promoting community food growing and contributing to the Welsh government's action plan for the sector (WAG 2010). This gave me insight into the state of community gardening and a fascination with how it had become flavour of the day. It also fuelled an enduring interest in how people come to care so deeply for the environment which informed earlier research (Pitt 2004).

Given this background a PhD project proposed by Cardiff University on the topic '*Fighting social exclusion through community gardening: a comparison between urban and rural projects in the UK*' appealed immediately. One of several projects on the theme of food and sustainable city regions with a focus on urban-rural links, this was the starting point for my research design. As I explored academic literature and community gardens in the UK, I soon identified a lack of research into the upsurge of interest in community gardening. Whilst research of home gardens offered nuanced discussion of the meaning of nature and relationships with nonhumans the treatment of community gardens lacked such accounts. This work failed to convey what it is like being a community gardener, or give a sense of why people are so committed to these places. The refrain that community gardens reconnect people with nature and with each other sang out, chiming with my intrigue about environmental sensibilities. This notion of reconnection was strongly associated with assumptions about urban life, yet I saw how many rural people were seeking community gardens. Could community gardens reconnect people to nature, and given my schooling in dissolving human-nature dualisms, what might this mean?

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[5] One research participant suggested that local authorities are adopting the name community garden in hope of avoiding the liabilities of legislation protecting allotments.

The other significant influence on my research design was a belief in the value of ethnographic approaches for exploring phenomena without closing down what is of interest, and allowing participants' meanings to shine. Research into community gardening lacked such contributions with no detailed case study descriptions from the UK. I wondered whether reliance on verbal reports from select representatives was hiding some community garden experiences, a concern which resonated with moves in cultural geography to expand the worlds studied to include nonhumans and 'inbetween' aspects of life such as feelings and doings. More-than-representational (Lorimer, H. 2005) and more-than-human geography (Whatmore 2006) both encouraged me to take a broader perspective on what community gardens comprise and what it is like to be a community gardener. Having decided that an ethnographic approach focused on a small number of cases could enhance knowledge of community gardens I looked to Sarah Pink's methodology for researching sensory experience (2009). This approach might turn up the volume on silences in previous work on community gardening and seemed suited to understanding the multisensory experience of gardening (see Chapter III).

To theoretically position the research I draw on concepts of place and place making for several reasons. Those involved in community gardening and its advocates use the idea of place to communicate their benefits, arguing that gardens allow opportunities for place making and reconnection to place. As shall become apparent in the next chapter, although previous writing considers community gardens as examples of strong relationships between people and place it offers relatively thin descriptions of the kind of places they are. We are told that these are special places conferring benefits on those who visit but little about their spatial qualities or how these arise. As Cameron Duff has pointed out this is a common tendency in the treatment of places which are claimed to be good for us with descriptions tending to focus on characteristics of people and lacking theories of place (2011). This leaves us ill informed about how to identify or make such places and neglects material agency and affects. Pink makes a related point noting that writing on community gardens emphasises social relations over those with materials and nonhumans (2012: 90). She suggests that to understand everyday life requires attention to what people do and the wider context in which they act, using theories of place to situate human activity amongst a wider ecology which considers the difference that things make (2012). These two authors point to the value of thinking about place in order to understand community gardeners' experiences and the wide range of forces which influence them. My attempt to give due recognition to nonhuman processes is also

well served by this approach as theories of place have at their core the relationship between humans and others in the world.

There are methodological reasons for using place as a theoretical lens for understanding community gardens. A limitation of previous work on community gardens is that many studies sought to demonstrate particular benefits so had pre-defined parameters for what might be discovered. Looking for evidence of enhanced social capital or more sustainable food choices for example means that research might have been blind to other impacts of community gardening. In contrast thinking about them as processes of place making is open to emergent issues and allows for the flexibility of ethnography as an exploratory method. Following Pink (2009, 2012) theories of place also frame the process of research and its presentation. She describes ethnography as the effort to know other people's experience by being involved in making places similar to theirs in order to feel "similarly emplaced" (2009: 40). The ethnographer becomes part of the entanglement of things and events presented as an ethnographic place "combining, connecting and interweaving [of] theory, experience, reflection, discourse, memory and imagination" to allow others to imagine being somewhere similar (2009: 42).

Relational geography brings questions of relationships to the fore (Jones 2009), suggesting they are the driving force of place and community. This led me to identify how issues of relationships run through work on community gardens: who is relating, who is excluded, how are relationships formed through gardening, are these relationships what is meant by community? By opening up the concept of community to consider whether it is restricted to relationships between humans I extended the initial topic of social exclusion to broader questions of social relations: which others are relating, and how? In community gardens all manner of entities relate – people to people, people to nonhumans – thus offering an opportunity for research which treats different kinds of relationships as equally important. By framing the research in terms of place I could consider this complex of relations *en masse*, whilst speaking to debates which consider community gardens as examples of place making and attachment. Gardening has been called one of the most intense forms of place making (Crozier 2003: 81) suggesting it is suited to exploring concepts of human relationships to place. I approached community gardens with place as a lens, and more-than-representational thinking as a background hum (Lorimer, H. 2008: 556). This was not a process of testing theories for validity, but holding theoretical principles in mind to aid understanding, developing them

abductively by playing back and forth between literature and case studies.

As ethnography the research evolved through an iterative process of reading, writing and doing, moving between theory and practice (Crang and Cook 2007). Research questions were drafted and revised according to experiences in the field; investigations at case study gardens responded to what I was reading and writing. During fieldwork and analysis it became apparent that distinctions between the gardens are less a result of their location on the rural-urban continuum than their differing objectives and approaches. The rural-urban comparison faded as the research progressed and is less prominent in this thesis than the proposers of the initial topic might have intended.

To capitalise on my understanding of community gardening in Wales I located my research there, drawing on my networks to introduce me to projects and issues. This seemed worthwhile given the extraordinary increase in participation in community gardening the country has experienced compared with other parts of the UK (FCFCG personal communication). Getting to know these projects two distinct types emerged. The first centre on individuals coming together around an interest in the alternative food movement, often linked to Transition Town groups focused on environmental sustainability. The second are led by more formal organisations such as housing associations, community development and regeneration bodies, with many funded through government programmes to tackle deprivation. The former are often in small towns or rural communities neglected by studies of community gardening, whilst the latter dominate in towns, cities, and the many in-between communities of the south Wales valleys. This diversity and blurring of the rural-urban divide makes the nation a fertile ground for investigating community gardening in various guises.

As the Welsh government's strategy for community growing identifies the sector speaks to a range of policy areas and might contribute to numerous strategic goals (WAG 2010). Community gardens have been presented as solutions to problems ranging from poor diets to social isolation as I discuss in the next chapter. My focus positions them in relation to questions of human wellbeing – collective and individual- by considering ways in which people can be assisted to enjoy positive experiences and develop new relationships. Taking a more critical perspective on their impacts I identify limits to their potential which have been neglected in previous studies, and suggest issues to be addressed for the benefits of community

gardening to be maximised (chapter VIII). The case studies provide insight into whether and how people can be encouraged to care more for others including nonhumans. This speaks to debates about ecological citizenship and promotion of behaviour conducive to environmental sustainability.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As indicated above the research questions evolved over time with the final versions addressing gaps in existing research on community gardens which will be highlighted in chapter II. They draw on issues which emerged from the case studies although it would be impossible to address all of these comprehensively in the space available.

The overarching aim of this research is:

> *To examine relationships between people and place experienced at community gardens.*

Community gardens have been considered as places where people seek to reconnect with each other and with nature, benefiting individuals and collectives. I consider whether and how this happens by developing a rich understanding of experiences of community gardening and what these places mean. The research explores reasons for the recent upsurge in participation in community gardening in the UK, and contributes perspectives from beyond urban locations. It offers an empirical basis for relational theories of place and community, including relationships with nonhumans. This thesis presents how community gardens are made to evoke their character and the experience of being there, and considers the ethical implications of this. The research aim is addressed through four research questions.

1. *Why do people make community gardens?*

The proliferation of community gardens in rural locations challenges the assumption that these are sought as places to heal a rift between modern urban life and rural nature. To understand what motivates involvement I start from gardeners' perspectives on the aims and ideals they strive for. What motivates individuals and organisations, does this vary between locations, and how does this affect the kind of place which results?

2. *How are community gardens made?*

To understand how these places are made requires attention to the movements and actions of various human and nonhuman presences which shape forms and plans.

Conversely, actions which undo place making lead to questions about control over these processes: who decides what kind of place will be made, can everyone deliver their preferences?

3. How do people feel about community gardens?

What kind of places are community gardeners making? Understanding this means evoking their sense of place: how it feels to be *in* a garden, and how people feel *about* the garden. I examine what it is like to be there and how gardeners are affected by this as individuals and collectively, positively and negatively.

4. What kinds of communities result from community gardening?

Community gardens offer a specific context in which to consider what community means and whether new collectives form through making a place together. Who and what is included or excluded, on what basis? To evaluate whether new connections are made requires attention to the kinds of relationships which develop, and how gardeners feel about others. Considering whether these relationships extend beyond the garden or embrace nonhumans questions whether community gardening cultivates care for others.

WHERE HAVE I ARRIVED?

> *I take it that it is a task for cultural geography to engage with the everyday practices of animal, plant and geophysical natures, with all their geographical complexity, in order to recover what those resources are and how they might be instructive of other possibilities. Without, of course, seeking to have the final word (Hinchcliffe 2003: 222).*

This research is an ethnography of three community gardens in Wales; it centres on the experiences of community gardeners and what they find important about these places, portraying their feelings and doings. I endeavour to convey something about the role of nonhumans in these places and the relationships people develop with them through community gardening. I draw on my experiences of working alongside gardeners to understand aspects which are more difficult to put into words, also using visual materials to evoke these. Bringing these together with theoretical ideas produces an 'ethnographic place' (Pink 2009) evoking experiences of community gardens to show these places to others. Having examined the relationships central to community gardens I consider the extent of their benefits, questioning their ability

to spill across time and space to places and communities elsewhere. This approach brings a fresh perspective to the study of community gardens which draws out their complexity and vitality, without expecting them to always be beneficial.

Through the course of this research my assumptions were challenged as each garden surprised me. I revisited the question of whether community gardening can encourage more people to care about the world and am more sceptical about this than I was at the outset. Although I have endeavoured to treat human and nonhuman gardeners with parity it is too easy for people's voices to shout loudest, and to relate the experiences of those more like me. However, I hope that I offer something to the growing body of more-than-human geography, helping to redress its neglect of plants (Head and Atchison 2009). I offer the social science of gardens (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2010) a picture of gardening away from home, with other people. This is a different perspective for community garden research, reaching beyond its focus on deprived urban communities in the USA, and paying greater attention to action, processes and feelings. My research disrupts the notion that community gardens reconnect people with nature, showing gardeners to have diverse motivations and multiple relationships to nature. It reveals constraints to the connections gardens make between people and limits to the new communities which develop.

Treating community gardening as place making shows how spatial processes are sometimes deliberately directed and interact with feelings. This empirically rooted exploration contributes to relational theories of place, place making and sense of place, and brings them into dialogue with notions of community. I propose new conceptualisations of how places are made and sense of place centred on qualities of motion and rhythm. The case studies will show that people find comfort in feeling they belong to a particular place but this is a dynamic sense of belonging which requires a refreshed understanding of rootedness. From a focus on three quite small places I speak to questions of ethical responsibility for others which reverberate through relationships across every scale. That said, there are unlikely to be definite answers (Thrift 2008: 29) and I do not seek to have the final word – there is always more.

Thesis outline

The thesis has a further six chapters. In Chapter II, I review relevant literature to

analyse what has and has not been said about community gardens and how this relates to geographic debates. I outline the theoretical perspective to be followed, drawing on the work of Doreen Massey and Tim Ingold to understand places and place making, and how these relate to community. Chapter III focuses on methodology, detailing the approach for the empirical research, how this was decided and reflections on the process. This is where I explain how the three case studies were selected, before introducing them in Chapter IV which also includes profiles of research participants.

Chapters V, VI and VII answer the research questions through detailed description and analysis of what I encountered at the three community gardens, reflecting back to relevant literature. I consider what motivates participation in community gardening in Chapter V to begin answering the first research question. This chapter also responds to the second research question by detailing processes of making community gardens. Chapter VI focuses on the affective dimensions of community gardening to show how people feel about them (research question three), discussion which embellishes understanding of gardeners' motivations (research question one). Chapter VII addresses the final research question by focusing on the nature of garden communities, considering the quality and extent of relationships formed through gardening. The conclusion draws out themes emerging from the empirical content and suggests some broader implications for understanding relationships between people and place. It suggests practical lessons for policy makers and practitioners interested in community gardening, and identifies issues for further consideration.

The written text is accompanied by visual materials gathered during fieldwork. Where these are associated with particular sections of text they are captioned and referenced accordingly or accompanied by quotations. As explained in Chapter III, other images are intended to stand independent of text so are offered without captions, sometimes grouped in montages.

II PLACING COMMUNITY GARDENS

INTRODUCTION

There is now a considerable academic literature on community gardens with contributions from specialists in health, community development, identity politics, education, planning and more. There is substantial writing on related topics such as urban agriculture and school gardens but my discussion is limited to studies of community gardens as defined above. By far the majority of this work centres on the USA with the recent proliferation of community gardens elsewhere reflected in studies from Australia and Europe. Most students of community gardens are not geographers, resulting in a body of work which neglects the spatial complexity of these places and fails to consider how place making proceeds. I will argue that making appropriate links to geographical thinking on place and community can greatly enrich our understanding of community gardens, whilst they present an opportunity to develop theories for relational geography through empirical application.

A majority of work on community gardens has sought to demonstrate how individuals and communities can benefit from these places, arguing that they are special sites worthy of support. This fails to critically analyse their impacts whilst offering weak explanations of how and why they are special. Across the 40 year history of community garden studies there are common issues and perspectives; I shall present an overview of these identifying four key themes allied to geographic debates to highlight limits to how community gardens have been understood. The question driving this research is the nature of relationships between people and environment in the context of community gardens which I frame with theories of place for the reasons detailed above. Drawing on relational concepts of place sets community gardens within the context of processes stretching across scales, encompassing actors of all kinds. This approach challenges some assumptions about the benefits of community gardens which draw on the idea that they offer a fuller relationship to place than people otherwise experience in contemporary life.

Community gardens have been promoted as special places where good things happen but too little has been said about the kind of places they are or how they become so. Social processes have been interrogated more than people's interactions with the

material and nonhuman world. Where their spatial nature is considered community gardens are presented as local places for nature in the city counter-posed to mainstream spaces subject to urban decline. I propose an alternative conceptualisation of place as gathered movements including nonhumans, developing this to understand the collective feeling of being in place. This reinvigorates how geographers can envisage the relationship between place, community and ethics whilst allowing space for difference and dynamism. The next section reviews the literature on community gardens and draws out the limits to how they have been understood as places. I then summarise questions this leaves unanswered before introducing the theories of place to be employed here.

READING COMMUNITY GARDENS

The differences in the way these gardens serve as urban green spaces and arenas for community-building tends to be subsumed within a generalised advocacy for community gardening (Kurtz 2001: 659).

Writing about community gardens has drawn links to various policy issues and debates demonstrating the potential for them to flex their objectives and framing to suit contemporary issues (Lawson 2005, see Desilvey 2003 for a comparable discussion of allotments). Until recently the literature was overwhelmingly dominated by research into gardens run by and for a neighbourhood with the range studied geographically narrow and dominated by those in the urban USA (Guitart *et al.* 2012: 365, Milbourne 2011). Studies evidence the benefits of involvement reporting numerous positive outcomes for individuals and communities (Draper and Freedman 2010, Evers and Hodgson 2011: 585, Firth *et al.* 2011: 555, Hodagneu-Sotelo 2010: 499, Pearson and Firth 2012: 147) with a small minority mentioning negative outcomes (Guitart *et al.* 2012: 368). The literature suggests numerous contributions community gardens might make to society (see *Appendix 1*). Having reviewed literature from the USA Draper and Freedman conclude "community gardens have the potential to simultaneously alleviate multiple societal ills" (2010: 488).

It is suggested that community gardeners are likely to be healthier (Armstrong 2000, Clavin 2011, Hale *et al.* 2011, Teig *et al.* 2009, Twiss *et al.* 2003, Wakefield *et al.* 2007), eat more nutritional diets (Alaimo *et al.* 2008, Lautenschlager and Smith 2006, Litt *et al.* 2011, Wakefield *et al.* 2007, Wills *et al.* 2010), feel better about their neighbourhood (Alaimo *et al.* 2010, Comstock *et al.* 2010, Tan and Neo 2009) know more of their

neighbours (Glover 2004, Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004) or have more social interaction (Alaimo *et al.* 2010, Firth *et al.* 2011, Milligan *et al.* 2004, Teig *et al.* 2009). They are claimed more likely to be active in the community (Ohmer *et al.* 2009) and in political activity (Glover *et al.* 2005, Henderson and Hartsfield 2009), particularly in relation to the food system (Baker 2004, Corrigan 2011, Evers and Hodgson 2011, Lekvoe 2006). It is argued that the area around a community garden benefits from stability and positive attitudes (Tranel and Handlin 2006). As well as direct environmental benefits (Barthel *et al.* 2010, Holland 2004, Howe and Wheeler 1999, Irvine *et al.* 1999, Stocker and Barnett 1998) authors suggest indirect impacts as those involved are encouraged to demonstrate attitudes and behaviour more conducive to sustainability (Barthel *et al.* 2010, Macias 2008). A comprehensive survey in Wales found garden projects reporting wide ranging achievements including enhanced environmental awareness and social inclusion (WRO 2012: 33). If this long list of positive impacts for individuals and communities is not impressive enough it is argued that the efficiency of delivering multiple benefits through one garden represents impeccable value for money (Draper and Freedman 2010, Pearson and Firth 2012: 151, Quale N.D.: 79). The implication is that replication will spread the benefits to more individuals and neighbourhoods (Colosanti *et al.* 2012: 350) - more community gardens, more good.

Over time there have been shifts in the how these positive impacts are framed and the basis on which community gardens are promoted. The earliest work on American cities considered their emergence at a time of urban deterioration (Lawson 2005: 163) when residents motivated by the will to improve declining neighbourhoods made vacant plots into gardens (Kurtz 2001: 658). Researchers sought to demonstrate gardens' role in community development, presenting them as solutions to the negative effects of urbanisation and subsequent urban decay (Irvine *et al.* 1999). During this period gardens lacked recognition as a legitimate urban land-use and were vulnerable to eviction or resistance from authorities (Lawson 2004). In response advocates sought to demonstrate the value of retaining urban community gardens (ACGA 1992), taking up Patricia Hynes' challenge: "Let us study them, with the eye and the heart as well as the calculator, primarily to protect and promote them" (1996: 160). Given the number of high profile efforts to protect community gardens from development (see for example Schmelzkopf 1995 and 2002) academic advocacy for their preservation is perhaps understandable (Donati *et al.* 2010: 207-8).

A potential saviour arrived with government efforts to deliver local sustainability through LA21 initiatives as community gardens might deliver social, environmental and

economic benefits (Holland 2004, Howe and Wheeler 1999, Stocker and Barnett 1998). These policy programmes gave fresh impetus to community gardening (Ferris *et al.* 2001: 562, Irvine *et al.* 1999: 41, Martin and Marsden 1999, Stocker and Barnett 1998) with authorities encouraged to support them as "a model of sustainability in action" (Holland 2004: 304)[6]. More recently the emphasis has shifted to their role in alternative food movements (Baker 2004, Colasanti *et al.,* 2012, McClintock 2010, Pearson and Firth 2012, Turner *et al.* 2011, Von Hassell 2005: 100). Cities are recognised as crucial to a more sustainable food supply system (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999, Sonnino 2009) bringing attention to the potential for increased urban food production. Community gardens have been presented as a way to enhance food security for the economically disadvantaged (Corrigan 2011, Evers and Hodgson 2011, Metcalf *et al.* 2012, Wills *et al.* 2009) and encourage engagement with food issues (Baker 2004, Lekvoe 2006). One author suggests that the term urban agriculture is replacing 'community garden' as concern with food surpasses leisure provision (McClintock 2010: 192). Urban agriculture includes various systems of production (Mougeot 2005) including more commercial ventures so is not coterminous with community gardening, especially as this happens beyond urban locations.

Across these phases community gardens are presented as a minority interest striving for endorsement and perhaps power. Gardeners are seen to be "asserting their identity to reclaim space and engage in projects of citizenship" (Baker 2004), resisting mainstream food politics and wider inequalities through place based movements. Efforts to defend urban gardens from land-use change in US cities in the 1990s to 2000s have been interpreted as defending public space from privatization (Francis and Hester 1995, Schmelzkopf 2002, Staeheli *et al.* 2002) and reclaiming commons from hegemonic powers (Eizenberg 2011). The benefits long championed by researchers become use values disregarded by mainstream politics (Schmelzkopf 2002); gardeners become politically charged publics staking claims to the city by "carving out contested spaces in the large structures of economic and political power" (Schmelzkopf 1995: 380). Groups form and mobilise around their marginal position as economically disadvantaged (Severson 1995) or ethnic minorities (Irazábal and Punja 2009) and use their gardens to practice their identity (Lynch and Brusi 2005). But the intense political arguments over community gardens seen in USA cities have not been replicated in the UK raising questions about international comparability.

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[6] Domene and Sauri 2007 give an interesting account of some challenges around this and the interpretation of urban sustainability in Barcelona, Spain.

Whether because of their sustainability, their political radicalism or their potential to develop communities it is clear that community gardens are claimed to be special places where lives are made better and all manner of ills are cured. Although championed with different terminology as policy agendas shift there are commonalities in how community gardens have been presented as places. This work pays relatively little attention to the spatial qualities of community gardens as it focuses on their social features more than material forms and how they are made. Across the literature the grounds on which community gardens are claimed to be special has four related themes which demonstrate limits to their treatment as places. I critique these in turn before highlighting some unanswered questions.

1. The narrative of urban decline

At its core, the community garden movement in the late twentieth century is about rebuilding neighbourhood community and restoring ecology to the inner city (Hynes 1996: x).

A common claim is that community gardens are made at times of crisis to solve cities' social and economic troubles (Lawson 2005, Pudup 2008, Schmelzkopf 1995 and 2002, Turner *et al.* 2011). Their late-20th century proliferation in the USA is associated with urban decline when inner-cities experienced depopulation and reduced public investment resulting in crime, poverty and disorder (Hynes 1996, Kurtz 2001: 656, Smith and Kurtz 2004: 193, Martinez 2009: 327, Staeheli *et al.* 2002: 198), with more recent urban decay prompting similar initiatives (Colasanti *et al.* 2012). This phenomenon is described in emotive terms which portray community gardens as unique spaces striving against contemporary problems. Troubled city life is described as blight (Kurtz 2001: 656, Smith and Kurtz 2004: 193) decay and decline (Colasanti *et al.* 2012: 351), even death (Hynes 1996: vii) with the effected neighbourhoods seen to be damaged (Ferris *et al.* 2001: 567). Community gardens are "stemming decline" (Staeheli *et al.* 2002: 198) and stimulating revitalization (Hynes 1996: vii, Irazábal and Punja 2009: 9, Smith and Kurtz 2004: 193, Lawson 2005: 219, Staeheli *et al.* 2002: 198, Tranel and Handlin 2006: 151) or an urban renaissance (Hynes 1996: viii). So gardeners attempt to "rescue the neighbourhood from deterioration" (Martinez 2009: 327) and become "sanctuaries away from the dangers, stresses, and temptations of the street" (Schmelzkopf 1995: 379) providing "safe havens in the city" (Kurtz 2001: 658).

As well as physically enhancing blighted cityscapes community gardens are said to enhance social life by countering negative impacts of urbanisation (Irvine *et al.* 1999:

38). Cities are associated with isolation (Beilin and Hunter 2011: 524) and individualism (Hynes 1996: 114, Sennett 1994: 23) being where social relations of community break down (Day 2006: 95, Marsden and Hines 2008: 22) and different groups fail to integrate (Colding and Barthel 2013: 157). Such dystopic visions of city life are pervasive (Amin and Thrift 2002: 32, Thrift 2008: 198, Wolch 2007) with a history at least as long as urbanisation (Williams 1973) and Marx's critique of capitalist alienation (Bell and Newby 1971: 25, Day 2006: 4, McClintock 2010). This narrative of decline centres on the belief that urbanisation dissolves close-knit community with local interaction replaced by relations at a distance (Amin and Thrift 2002: 37, Day 2006: 10). It is rooted in concern regarding what Tőnnies termed the shift from village style *gemeinschaft* community modelled on kin relations to more formalised, remote social networks of *gesellschaft* ([1887] 2001). Strong harmonious community is associated with rural life, urban meaning the very opposite (Day 2006: 8 and 41, Williams 1973). Recently the yearning to restore broken community links has taken the form of communitarianism (Etzioni 1993, 2004) and championing of social capital (Putnam 2000), ideas which have influenced UK and USA policy (Amin 2005, Bond 2011: 780, Charles and Davies 2005: 674, Defilippis *et al.* 2006, Mayo 2006, Middleton *et al.* 2005: 1711, Smith 1999). The expectation is that greater interaction between neighbours is required to foster moral responsibility as community members care for each other and help themselves advance (Middleton *et al.* 2005: 1712, Smith 1999: 22) with proximity a prerequisite for ethical relationships (Massey 2004, Smith 1999: 32). But there are problems with this expectation as I will show.

Proponents of community gardens suggest cities as seas of social isolation and broken community amongst which gardens rebuild links and foster inclusion (Beilin and Hunter 211: 524, Colding and Barthel 2013: 157, Hynes 1996, Irvine *et al.* 1999: 38). Declining social interaction is associated with the loss or privatisation of urban public space reducing contact between strangers (Putnam 2000: 408, Sennett 2010) whilst community gardens offer new urban commons which forge social relations (Beilin and Hunter 2011: 524, Eizenberg 2011, Francis and Hester 1995: 5-6, Hou *et al.* 2009: 189). Community gardens are presented as places able to (re)build social relations by providing a space where strangers can gather and become familiar (Colding and Barthel 2013, Hou *et al.* 2009: 25, Shinew *et al.* 2004, Staeheli *et al.* 2002: 204) producing new forms of sociality (Milbourne 2009: 15). So authors emphasise the *community* aspect of the phenomena, even suggesting that this is more fundamental than the garden element (Glover 2004: 143).

The notion of social capital has been used to argue the value of urban community gardens which are found to increase its stocks (Alaimo *et al.* 2010, Firth *et al.* 2011, Glover 2004, Kingsley and Townsend 2006, Macias 2008). Community gardening is said to increase social interaction and cooperation forming support networks which benefit wellbeing. It is suggested that place plays a part in allowing these relations to develop (Firth *et al.* 2011: 565, Glover 2004: 150, Kingsley and Townsend 2006: 534) but no explanation is offered for how this occurs or whether spatial form is influential. The notion of social capital is more descriptive than explanatory and its utility is contested; it might help to identify the presence or emergence of social networks but the quality of these relations is also significant and not so easily counted (Middleton *et al.* 2005). There are questions about the durability and extent of relationships forged through community gardening (Kingsley and Townsend 2006) and we should not assume that increased connections equate expanded moral responsibility towards others. Strengthened ties within a group bring the risk of exclusivity (Kingsley and Townsend 2006, Middleton *et al.* 2005: 1715) and the benefits of increased social capital may only extend to those already in a more privileged position (Glover 2004). As I shall outline below gardens' social impact is not straightforward as community can mask difference (Panelli and Welch 2005: 1591, Staeheli 2008), so assessing benefits at the collective level conceals variations between individuals. If some gardeners do develop new social relations discussion to date does not account for the difference place makes.

The appeal to lost community has been criticised for romantic nostalgia (Amin and Thrift 2002, Brunt 2001: 82, Day 2006: 6, Defilippis *et al.* 2006: 676, Smith 1999: 25-6) which conjures a "phantasm" of ideal community life (Nancy 1991: 12). It is seen to result in totalising impulses as desiring unity extinguishes differences and masks power relations (Young 2010 [1986]). Arguing that community has been lost assumes a single version of it centred on direct personal interactions incapable of changing form when social conditions alter the basis for relationships (Day 2006: 20). But humans still harken back to idealised notions of harmonious communing (Amit 2000: 17, Bond 2011, Charles and Davies 2005: 681, Day 2006: 28, Rapport 1996: 116, Revill 1993: 129) with the need to rebuild local community commonly invoked by proponents of sustainability (Crane *et al.* 2013: 73, Marsden and Hines 2008). Community gardens demonstrate this aspiration to bring people together and form relations of depth and moral responsibility, for example Irvine *et al.* claim they "create a sense of stewardship among neighbours, through a sense of belonging and ownership" (1999: 42). In contrast to urban landscapes of distrust and fear they are perceived to represent relationships of care, mutual trust and responsibility which lead people to feel they

belong together (Eizenberg 2011: 15, Glover *et al.* 2005, Tan and Neo 2009, Teig *et al.* 2009).

The narrative of urban decline which community garden advocates have capitalised on is a rocky conceptual foundation for their promotion. The miserabilist notion of urban life to which community gardens are presented as counter-place may not represent most people's daily experience of city life which includes many hopeful elements (Thrift 2008: 198-9, Wolch 2007). The association between urbanisation and the decline of community is troublesome as rural life has been shown to be equally fractious (Milbourne 1997) whilst examples of strong urban communities persist (Amit 2000: 4, Charles and Davies 2005, Day 2006: 63). There can be no assumed correlation between location on the rural-urban continuum and the strength of community (Bell and Newby 1971: 51, Brint 2001: 5, Pahl 1966) particularly as the separation between town and country seems more permeable than ever (Woods 2009). Urban life does not necessarily require initiatives to encourage *gemeinschaft* relationships whilst rural dwellers are just as likely to be weakly tied together. Assuming that disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods need to develop social capital risks rehearsing highly normative notions of community and neglecting structural causes of disadvantage (Amin 2005, Defilippis 2006, Mayo 2006). Whilst the notion of community was once strongly related to place the links between the two have been loosened so location does not necessarily determine the existence of strong community and is not the only focus around which it can form (Brint 2001, Brunt 2001, Silk 1999: 29). The relationship between community and place is not as straightforward as literature on community gardens suggests, however the two are not wholly divorced (Amit 2000: 15, Brunt 2001: 83, Charles and Davies 2005: 683, Harvey 1996: 310, Panelli and Welch 2005: 1593) hence the need to interrogate more closely how a particular place shapes communities. Urban decline should not be assumed to motivate community gardening, but if gardeners say they seek antidotes to the loss of community the challenge is to understand what they mean. The lost community they long for may be phantasm but expressing desires in these terms reveals the ideals gardeners hold and how they imagine better places. Dreams of past idyllic communities are not idle nostalgia but how people construct what they would like communal life to be like today and in future (Charles and Davies 2005: 681).

Community gardens' association with urban decline has limited our understanding. The emphasis on initiatives in low income urban areas (Guitart *et al.* 2012: 368) leaves

experiences in other locations – suburban, rural, affluent - unexamined[7]. Community gardeners motivated by goals other than community development have not been studied, for example their association with the Transition Towns movement (Clavin 2011: 946, Pinkerton and Hopkins 2009). It is too often assumed that community gardens are everywhere the same (Kurtz 2001: 659) although more recent scholarship highlights their diversity (Clavin 2011: 945, Firth *et al.* 2011, Pearson and Firth 2012). What drives people to become and stay involved has received little attention (Turner 2011: 509) and surprisingly few studies spoke with gardeners about their experiences (Wakefield *et al.* 2007: 93). Where broader ranging motivations are suggested this is based on organisers' assumptions about participants rather than asking them directly (e.g. WRO 2012: 27). Attention to different kinds of gardens and how they are shaped by their context is necessary to offer a rounded perspective. In particular their recent proliferation in rural parts of the UK (FCFCG personal communication, Pearson and Firth 2012, WRO 2012) challenges the premise that community gardens are a response to urban crises. Starting from a narrative of decline tends to place community gardens as a counter to urban ills so the emphasis is on benefits to the neglect of challenges. Correlations between community gardens and positive outcomes have been identified with little explanation of causality or processes so we do not know how benefits are achieved. The argument that community gardens are "potential sites for community building" (Glover 2004: 144) treats place as a stage for social action without considering how it is shaped. Spatial influences require greater consideration as it is likely that the location and layout of a garden will limit participation and the depth of relationships (Kurtz 2001, Wills *et al.* 2009).

2. The power of nature

Community gardens [...] bring the soothing yet enlivening power of nature to the neighbourhoods where people live (Hynes 1996: xvi).

Closely related to the narrative of urban decline is the notion that gardens reduce a literal and metaphoric distance urbanisation puts between city dwellers and nature which relies on a similarly flawed dualistic presentation of city life. This stems from the deeply rooted belief (Wolch 2007) that people are 'out of joint' with nature (Hinchcliffe 2003: 207). Urbanisation is taken to mean separation from nature and its disappearance from daily life (Bartlett 2005: 3-6, Brook 2010, Holland 2004: 289,

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[7] In reviewing literature on community gardening Guitart *et al.* 2012 excluded rural cases, whilst Holland's 2004 survey of those in the UK also discounted rural cases on the grounds they would be better studied separately.

Irvine *et al.* 1999, McClintock 2010, Pretty and Bartlett 2005: 300, Tan and Neo 2009: 530). Community gardens are championed for countering this (Colding and Barthel 2013, Hynes 1996: x, Kurtz 2001: 658, Lawson 2005, Tan and Neo 2009: 530, Schmelzkopf 1995: 373) healing severed connections between people and nature (Irvine *et al.* 1999: 38, McClintock 2010, Turner 2011: 511). Their potential as a bridge to nature is cited across the history of urban community gardens and appeals to a supposedly better rural past (Lawson 2005: 289-91). It is assumed that the desire for such a connection drives interest in community gardening (Bartlett 2005: 6, Firth *et al.* 2011: 555, Guitart *et al.* 2012: 357, Hou *et al.* 2009: 24, Kurtz 2001: 658, Lynch and Brusi 2005, McClintock 2010: 191, Martinez 2009: 327, Schmelzkopf 1995, Stuart 2005: 62, Turner *et al.* 2011: 490, Von Hassell 2005: 91) particularly for those with rural heritage (Baker 2004, Lynch and Brusi 2005, Metcalf *et al.* 2012: 879, Schmelzkopf 1995, Tan and Neo 2009: 534, Wills *et al.* 2009).

The recent rise in interest in urban gardening is credited to peoples' will to heal their rift from nature (Firth *et al.* 2011: 555, McClintock 2010: 202, Turner 2011: 511). The role of community gardens is therefore to introduce nature to the urban environment (Beilin and Hunter 2011: 524, Hynes 1996: 156, Kurtz 2001: 658, Martinez 2009: 327, Schmelzkopf 1995: 373) to "restore the severed connections between the urban and natural environment" (Irvine *et al.* 1999: 34). This should allow residents to directly experience nature (Barthel *et al.* 2010, Colding and Barthel 2013, Hou *et al.* 2009: 24, Howe and Wheeler 1999: 13, Irvine *et al.* 1999: 38, Kingsley *et al.* 2009, Lynch and Brusi 2005, Martinez 2009, Tan and Neo 2009: 530, Von Hassell 2005: 91), to gain "a sense of nature" (Schmelzkopf 1995: 364) and learn about it (Macias 2008: 1098, Schmelzkopf 1995: 379). Although bringing ecological benefits (Barthel *et al.* 2010, Okvat and Zautra 2011: 38-1) greater emphasis is given to gardening's ability to (re)connect people with nature.

For community garden advocates their importance as places for nature in the city is argued on two fronts: its importance for human health and for the health of the planet. Contact with nature enabled by community gardens is perceived as good for human wellbeing (Bartlett 2005, Brook 2010, Hale *et al.* 2011, Kaplan and Kaplan 2005, Kingsley *et al.* 2009, Okvat and Zautra 2011, Quayle N.D.: 32, Wakefield *et al.* 2007: 97). Although it is not always clear on what grounds this is claimed some argue that humans have an innate need to connect with nature (Krasny and Tidball 2012: 269, Wills *et al.* 2009: 38) popularly known as biophilia (Kellert and Wilson 1993). Advocates draw on the long-standing idea that nature has power to do good and transform people (Parr 2007, Pudup 2008: 1230). At times when all else seems

uncertain nature provides stability and comfort (Lawson 2005: 290-1, Ulrich 1999) so gardens offer ontological security. The most developed attempt to explain how engaging with nature relieves stress and improves health is Attention Restoration Theory which argues there is something inherently calming about natural environments so they place less pressure on our exhausted cognitive capacities; gardens are naturally fascinating so induce relaxation (Kaplan and Kaplan 1995 and 2005).

The second reason for emphasising community gardens' capacity to connect city dwellers with nature is that this is thought to encourage pro-environmental behaviour (Bartlett 2005, Brook 2010: 309, Colding and Barthel 2013: 160, Milburn and Adams Vail 2010: 72, Okvat and Zautra 2011, Quayle N.D.: 62-69, Turner 2011: 513). The argument is that cities lack opportunities to experience nature so people do not understand it or the importance of caring for it, a tendency countered by opportunities for "meaningful interaction with nature" in gardens (Colding and Barthel 2013: 163, see also Barthel *et al.* 2010: 263). Engagement with nature is expected to result in the realisation that humans depend on it so inclining people to value it (Brooks 2010: 308, Hynes 1996, Macias 2008: 1090) making community gardens the basis for an urban environmental ethic (Hynes 1996). In particular, connecting with natural processes of food production is predicted to lead people to make more sustainable food choices (Lekvoe 2006, Turner 2011: 511). Community gardens are counted as cases of 'nearby nature' in cities with sustainability potential as feeling connected to nature is correlated with pro-environmental attitudes (Bartlett 2005, Brook 2010, Dutcher *et al.* 2007, Matsuoka and Kaplan 2008, Mayer and Frantz 2004). The processes by which this happens are not elaborated but it is assumed that active relationship with nonhumans lead gardeners to learn about and value 'nature'. It is not uncommon to expect contact with nature to have this effect (Harvey 1996: 429) with environmentalists reporting formative experiences of enjoying nature (Milton 2002). As proximity to people has been assumed to be the foundation of ethical relationships in community, getting closer to nonhumans is thought to result in care for them. In both cases a causal relationship between place and care is assumed.

The first problem with claiming community gardeners to harness the power of nature in the city is the lack of empirical grounding. The wish to reconnect with nature is cited as motivating today's community gardeners without reference to evidence (Firth *et al.* 2011: 555, McClintock 2010: 202, Turner 2011: 511). But this is not necessarily a universal desire as some urban residents resist attempts to make cities more natural (Colasanti *et al.* 2012, Domene and Sauri 2007). The benefits of engaging with nature

reported by garden organisers (Quayle N.D.) might be exaggerated or fail to convey what gardeners feel. Where gardeners do report enhanced wellbeing this may be due to influences other than nature such as the joy of socialising (Milligan *et al.* 2004: 1782). The claim that gardening makes people more environmentally minded has not been demonstrated empirically and it is not clear that sustainable garden practices effect behaviour elsewhere (Donati *et al.* 2010: 220, Turner 2011: 518). Those who garden may be inclined to environmental attitudes and sustainable behaviour but it is not clear which comes first (Schupp and Sharp 20012). Similarly those with positive environmental values may be more likely to find nature restorative (Pretty and Bartlett 2005: 308).

A related problem is the lack of clarity around what is meant by nature and failure to define 'nearby nature' (see Brook 2010, Matsuoka and Kaplan 2008). Reports of gardeners' experiences do not make clear whether they themselves spoke of connecting with nature or this interpretation comes from the author (for an exception see Kingsley *et al.* 2009: 212). A gardener talking about enjoying plants or touching the soil is described as enjoying "natural connection" (Martinez 2009: 328) which may not be what s/he meant; someone who likes plants should not be assumed to be connecting with nature for their understanding of what this means may be quite different or non-existent. What we mean by nature is so contextual and variable (Braun and Castree 1998, Macnaghten and Urry 1998) it is too big and complex a word to put into the mouths of others. Nor can it be assumed to always have positive connotations as Hester Parr demonstrates in her account of how 'nature work' like gardening has been used to control people with mental health issues, with nature masking the role of power (2007). The work of political ecologists demonstrates that the construction of nature is riven with power as it is presented to suit certain purposes so we must always be aware of the interplay between social and natural processes (Swyngedouw and Heynen 2003[8]).

The narrative of reconnection fails to recognise the complexity of relations between people and nature demonstrated in studies of home gardens. Research in the domestic context shows there is no single gardener understanding of nature (Bhatti and Church 2001 and 2004, Franklin 2002: 162, Freeman *et al.* 2012, Head and Muir 2007) and that gardens are not necessarily perceived as natural (Clayton 2007, Longhurst 2006). Bhatti and Church show that although some gardeners find important opportunities to engage with nature in their garden this is not true for everyone or without its ambiguities, they conclude that there is no simple association between gardening and environmental concern (2004: 49). Elizabeth Power (2005) and Russell Hitchings

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[8] See Milbourne 2011 for a discussion in relation to community gardens

(2006) both show how gardeners are equally rewarded and frustrated by what nature does having different relationships with its various components. Work on domestic gardens challenges some of the accepted wisdoms community garden advocates have adopted and shows how the nature of community gardens needs to be recognised as much more variegated through closer reading of gardeners' meanings.

The study of their domestic counterparts disrupts the spatial treatment of community gardens as where nature comes to the city by showing gardens to be hybrid spaces which trouble dualisms of nature-culture, rural-urban (Franklin 2002: 134, Head and Muir 2007, Longhurst 2006, Power 2005). If cities have falsely been equated with absence of community they have similarly been misconstrued as lacking nature, belonging to the social domain (Harvey 1996: 435, Murdoch 2006: 122, Sheppard and Lynn 2004: 54). The urban is seen to extinguish the rural as the social tames the natural (Braun and Castree 1998: 13, Keil and Graham 1998: 100) so cities become the antithesis of nature with no space for it (Longhurst 2006: 583-4). Once banished by urbanisation the return of nature is sought by city dwellers making places like gardens (Dolittle 2004: 398-9, Keil and Graham 1998: 101). This trajectory assumes humans are a different kind of animal located outside nature, our products unnatural, hence people need to reconnect to nature. These dualisms have long been dissolved by geographers and others (Harrison *et al.* 2004, Harvey 1996, Ingold 2000, Latour 2004a, Thrift 2008, Whatmore 2002) who would agree that there is nothing unnatural about a city (Harvey 1996: 186).

Arguing the need to bring nature back to the city (Hynes 1996) treats it as a spatially defined entity located in rural space or islands of urban greenspace. Natural processes become reified as 'Nature', their diversity smoothed out (Jones and Cloke 2002, Harvey 1996: 183, Hinchcliffe 2003: 207). Nature as 'thing' can be plotted on maps (Franklin 2002: 52), located in places which are always better than their unnatural counter-places (Duff 2011: 151). But ecological processes do not respect spatial boundaries such as city borders (Heynen *et al.* 2006) and urban places are a "giant socioenvironmental process" (Swyngedouw 2006: 37). Nature is not limited to specific locations (Hinchcliffe *et al.* 2005, Hinchcliffe 2007) and nonhumans are lively urban dwellers both shaping and shaped by city life (Hinchcliffe and Whatmore 2006). Throughout history city dwellers had contact with nature as they engaged in various pursuits -not least gardening- to enjoy wildlife and countryside (Franklin 2002, Gandy 2006). Whether starting from urban nonhumans or humans we see all kinds of lives always intertwined and influencing each other, the boundary between humans and nature a product of our imagination, albeit a powerful one.

The disjuncture between unnatural urban life and natural rural life should be dismantled for all these reasons, and yet community gardens are commonly presented as oases of nature in the urban. This raises the obvious question of what rural community gardeners are seeking; if community gardens are not just urban in nature can they be nature in the urban? If closer engagement with community gardeners shows that the narrative of reconnection to nature *is* important to them then we should seek to understand what it means in their terms. Where interaction with things like plants is found to be a beneficial aspect of community gardening attributing this to the power of nature does not explain what happens and perpetuates human-nature dualism. Rather than assuming community gardens are natural places we should interrogate the kind of places they are to uncover the natural and social processes shaping them. This requires recognition of nonhuman nature as active everywhere yet not everywhere the same (Hinchcliffe 2007). All rural and urban lives are then treated as more-than-human meetings which mingle in all manner of ways (Hinchcliffe *et al.* 2005, Hinchcliffe and Whatmore 2006).

3. Gardens reconnect people and place

Community gardens may have a significant role in facilitating the development of embodied and embedded relationships to place, the food system and, consequently, in promoting sustainable urban living practices (Turner 2011: 513).

The place focus of community gardens is central to their far-reaching benefits (Kaplan and Kaplan 2005: 289).

The potential for community gardens to forge new communities and relationships to nature combine in the expectation that they connect people to place; these are a better kind of place countering trends detrimental to urban spaces and their occupants. Urban life is popularly conceived as highly mobile and too fast to allow deep engagement with others (Sennett 1994: 18). Speedy lives of constant motion are taken to mean rootlessness, with everywhere the same particular places no longer matter (Relph 1976, Seamon 1985). If city life is hyper-mobile leaving urban residents floating free community gardens root them in place (Hynes 1996: 156, Schmelzkopf 1995: 364). People might feel a sense of belonging through gardens where they feel connected to somewhere in particular (Bartlett 2005, Hynes 1996: x, Kingsley 2009: 215), their "little territory" (Lynch and Brusi 2005: 196). Unlike supposedly characterless,

interchangeable urban landscapes, community gardens are seen as locally specific 'spaces of dependence' gardeners have personally invested in (Smith and Kurtz 2004: 200). Community gardeners gain "a heightened sense of attachment to place via a tactile relationship to the land and nature" (Martinez 2009: 327) so regain a sense of place (Bartlett 2005, Crozier 2003, Stocker and Barnett 1998: 183, Turner *et al.* 2011: 490). The resulting emotional bonds –neighbourhood or place attachment - are seen to enhance individual and community wellbeing (Comstock *et al.* 2010). Gardeners make these places so become attached to them and embedded in place (Bendt *et al.* 2012: 28, Domene and Sauri 2007, Eizenberg 2012: 107-9, Stocker and Barnett 1998, Turner 2011: 516), a form of vernacular creativity (Milbourne 2009). This hands on approach is said to result in better understanding of how nature works and how food is grown, hence reconnection to place is a vital step in promoting ecological citizenship (Baker 2004, Corrigan 2011, Howe and Wheeler 1999, Jones *et al.* 2012, Lekvoe 2006, Turner 2011).

Here we see another narrative of loss: lost connections between people and place through the rise of 'placelessness' (Relph 1976). There are two aspects to this argument, the first being that 'placeless' people lack ties which nurture human life. Geographers such as Relph (1976) and Tuan (1977) popularised the idea that humans need to feel rooted somewhere familiar, and worried that contemporary life loosens connections to particular places. Emotional bonds or place attachment are seen to beneficially counter the detachment of urban life. Community gardening as a way to reconnect to place is therefore seen to benefit human wealth and wellbeing (Bartlett 2005, Comstock *et al.* 2010), especially for city dwellers because:

> *Who and what we are has historically been constructed through relationships with both people and nature. Thus, if we lack these relationships and connections in contemporary urban settings, we may lose a potential part of our sense of personal identity and self esteem (Pretty and Bartlett 2005: 312).*

Such reconnection to place is not defined and this argument lacks a well developed theory of place on which to ground its claims. It assumes an opposition between mobility and belonging when the two are not mutually exclusive (Gustafson 2001). The processes through which gardeners develop emotional attachments are not explained and the spatial qualities which make particular places conducive to such positive affects are not detailed.

Cameron Duff (2011) has identified these tendencies in work on 'healthy places' which treats them as ready-made rather than in production and focuses more on qualities of person than space. Despite their spatial complexity (Milbourne 2011) different

experiences of community gardens are treated as homogenous (Kurtz 2001, Pearson and Firth 2012), whilst lack of attention to how individuals experience them (Donati *et al.* 2010, Turner 2011) means their multiplicity (Hinchcliffe 2010) has been overlooked. As a result we do not understand how community gardens are made, what it means to make a place and how this leads people to feel connected to others. There is a lack of research on how community gardeners garden (Guitart *et al.* 2012: 370). Accounts of gardening in the community context are relatively silent on the nature of its bodily practices, relying on verbal accounts which will struggle to convey the full sensory experience of the feeling of doing (Crouch 2001). As Donati *et al.* suggest (2010) the liveliness, pleasures and pains of doing community gardening deserve exploration.

The second element of the narrative of lost connection is that place is taken to determine collective identity so lives stretched across great distances are blamed for the decline of community (Charles and Davies 2005, Day 2006: 189). Ideas of place and territory are strongly associated with community hence more mobile lifestyles are taken to challenge its foundations (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). Following this logic strengthening ties to somewhere in particular is expected to (re)build community as people develop common emotional bonds to a place which binds them together, so 'local action' can rebuild community (Crane *et al.* 2013: 73, Marsden and Hines 2008). But as I have shown there is no definite relationship between place and strong community: "'place' and 'community' have rarely been coterminous" (Massey 1994: 147). There are non-spatial identities around which communities form (Anderson 2006) whilst those who live near each other do not necessarily equal a community (Massey 1994, Panelli and Welch 2005, Staeheli 2008). Feeling emotionally connected to a particular place is not a wholly individual affair but it cannot be assumed that those attached to the same place constitute a community. Relationships between place and community are fluid (Silk 1999: 10) and the processes through which they form need re-examination.

By failing to explicate what they mean when appealing to sense of place community garden advocates risk being allied with its reactionary connotations of stasis, nostalgia and exclusion which falsely assume mobility is always threatening (Massey 1994). This second narrative of loss neglects how even the most mobile lives do not preclude place attachment as people find belonging in various ways (Anderson and Erskine 2012, Cheshire *et al.* 2013, Fallov *et al.* 2013, Gustafson 2001) and some modern lives are not very speedy (Amin and Thrift 2002: 36, Cresswell 2012). It relies on the notion that some places are inherently better able to support human flourishing, distinguishing authentic and inauthentic places (Relph 1976) in a manner which does not hold

empirically or theoretically (Jones and Cloke 2002: 133-4, Harvey 1996, Massey 2005). This construction of community gardens calls on problematic dualisms of mobility versus belonging, local versus global, place versus placelessness. Places with the power to do good become fetishized obscuring the processes they comprise which are always in flux (Harvey 1996: 320). But it does seem that people might find comfort through associating with somewhere in particular. Community gardeners express the importance of emotional bonds to their place, so we require a way to describe these attachments without shutting down change or seeing them as the antithesis of motion (Butz and Eyles 2010, Cloke and Jones 2001: 652, Massey 2011). Nor should we forget issues of power: sense of place should always imply the questions whose sense, and who might have alternative identifications with that place (Harvey 1996: 309)? Again we see that community gardens need to be understood by beginning from a different place, seeking to understand how they become identified as special without fixing one form of how to identify with them.

4. The ripple effect

The final theme across previous studies of community gardens is the expectation that although centred on a particular site their effects touch the surrounding area and wider population. There are three ways this is seen to happen, firstly that those who live near to a community garden will feel its benefit without directly participating. It is claimed that a neighbourhood enjoys improved community relationships as the garden stimulates broader engagement (Glover *et al.* 2005: 80, Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004: 408, Wakefield *et al.* 2007). Patricia Hynes sees them as the nexus of a movement of urban renewal stimulating wider actions (1996) through what Teig *et al.* call "the ripple effect of collective efficacy from the garden outward" (2009: 1121). However, these claims are based on reports lacking perspectives from non-gardeners so we cannot be confident that such impacts are felt. Feelings of place attachment do not necessarily lead to wider social engagement in a neighbourhood (Lewicka 2011). GIS analysis identified a correlation between neighbourhood resilience and the location of community gardens but it cannot be confirmed that gardens determine this[9] (Tranel and Handlin 2006). Community gardens may have limited impact on an area's cohesion as they reinforce pre-existing social divisions and create new cliques (Glover 2004, Kurtz 2001). Community development approaches have been criticised for

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[9] The authors analysed community gardens supported by an organisation who will only work with groups in locations where there is seen to be a good chance of revitalisation hence positive trends cannot necessarily be attributed to the presence of a garden, a factor the authors fail to consider.

masking differences within communities and ignoring those who do not engage in the process (Mayo 2006). Gains in social capital may remain garden-focused with outsiders having limited opportunities to engage in new relationships (Kingsley and Townsend 2006, see also Bendt *et al.* 2012: 27). A garden might stimulate new social interactions but these are facets of individuals which only spread by drawing others into participation (Alaimo *et al.* 2010) which can take considerable effort (Stocker and Barnett 1998: 187) and may not be an objective (Eizenberg 2012: 116). Public spaces like community gardens might allow people to mingle but there is no guarantee such contact nourishes deeper relationships of care or citizenship (Amin and Thrift 2002: 137, Valentine 2008). Whilst gardens might increase social contact it is not clear that these are community relationships of care and responsibility rather than superficial interactions.

The second predicted ripple effect is that garden participation changes people in ways which spread across their lives. Community gardeners might develop a more holistic understanding of health so make healthier choices (Hale *et al.* 2011, Litt *et al.* 2011) or become more inclined to be active in other community initiatives (Ohmer *et al.* 2009). Participants who learn about food issues through gardening are expected to become food citizens making more engaged interventions in the food system (Baker 2004: 308). A related spread effect is the idea discussed above that gardeners become more ecologically aware so tend towards more sustainable choices in non-garden behaviour. Again we see claims being made on behalf of community gardeners which they may not themselves experience or identify with, and an assumption that each gardener is broadly the same. These ripples will only be effective if individuals act consistently across their lives so they rely on actions 'here' in the garden influencing those 'there' in the shop or home. But individuals do not hold discrete pro-environmental values independent of context (Macnaghten and Urry 1998); habits in different realms can be driven by quite different forces (Barr and Gilg 2006, McKenzie-Mohr 2011) so we cannot assume that transfers between garden and elsewhere are inevitable (Turner 2011: 518).

The third ripple is that from place centred politics at community gardens out to the *status quo*. Transforming vacant lots into gardens is interpreted as marginal groups' claims to power (Martinez 2009, Schmelzkopf 1995, Severson 1995) as they resist dominant expectations of public space and who shapes it (Schmelzkopf 2002, Staeheli *et al.* 2002). Community gardens are presented as opportunities for ethnic minorities to assert their identity making "an immigrant landscape of resistance to discriminatory governance institutions" (Irazábal and Punja 2009). High profile cases of impassioned

resistance to eviction have been interpreted as examples of Lefebvre's notion of the disempowered claiming their right to the city (1996) as small patches of land allow marginalised groups to assert their right to be a public (Eizenberg 2011, Irazábal and Punja 2009, Martinez 2009, Schmelzkopf 2002, Staeheli *et al.* 2002). Although centred on quite small spaces gardeners' actions are taken to be more widely significant with potential to effect broader change (Pearson and Firth 2012, Turner 2011) empowering gardeners to "challenge dominant structures of power" (Martinez 2009: 327), particularly the mainstream food system (Baker 2004, Lekvoe 2006: 93).

It is not always clear how effective this is or whether political significance is felt by gardeners themselves. We must trust claims that people have been transformed into food citizens through gardening without hearing from them directly (Lekvoe 2006), or accept that even if they do not understand gardening as political mobilisation it can still be interpreted as such (Baker 2005: 305). But a garden alone cannot solve a problem like food security (Corrigan 2011, Evers and Hodgson 2011: 599, Lawson 2005: 294); locally focused activity can not reach structural causes of societal problems and is at best a stop-gap (Lawson 2005: 292). The heavy expectation on community food activities reflects a wider belief in the power of community centred solutions to social problems. This neglects processes of global political economy which have caused neighbourhoods to decline (Defilippis *et al.* 2006) so falsely situates the cause of and solution to problems at the local level whilst failing to address the role of state and capitalism (Amin 2005, Defilippis *et al.* 2006). Presenting community gardens as a source of regeneration assumes that economic power increases with enhanced social capital when it is more likely that the causality is the reverse as the affluent tend to acquire more social capital (Middleton *et al.* 2005). Critical analysis of community development activities demonstrates that they have limited impact on problems not caused by community-level processes; as Defilippis *et al.* (2006) argue the effect of local actions has to be considered in the context of wider forces which constrain them (see also Mayo 2006, for a community garden example Tan and Neo 2009). Community centred solutions risk forcing normative notions of community and state co-option (Amin 2005, Day 2006) whilst falsely imagining a pre-existing 'community' to work with (Hinchcliffe 2007: 166). Community gardens may offer marginal groups space but the scale of site based struggles are far from the radical seizures of power and fundamental shift in socio-spatial relations Lefebvre envisaged (Harvey 2003, Purcell 2002, see also Marcuse 2009). It is not clear that community gardeners gain enduring empowerment (Lawson 2005: 294) and there are certainly limits to how far their ripples spread.

There are examples of community gardens seeking an alternative to mainstream politics and economy (Rosol and Schweizer 2012) but they are often not radical social movements and enjoy considerable state support (Lawson 2005: 3). Examples in the USA (Pudup 2008) and Germany (Rosol 2010, 2011) show they are used to deliver government objectives, whilst local and national authorities in the UK support community gardening (Capital Growth 2013, WAG 2010). Mary-Beth Pudup (2008) argues that the radical potential of community gardens is compromised by their enrolment in neoliberal roll-out through which state norms of citizenship are promulgated. Her claim does not seem to fit all examples (Milbourne 2011: 955) and may over-state government's success in directing voluntary activity (Rosol 2011) but it is clear that community gardeners do not always oppose the state. The relationship is complex with their potential to empower always limited by political-economic context. What Pudup rightly points to is the need for a more critical edge to studies of community garden which questions limits to their potential to deliver change and does not assume gardeners to have radical political motives (see also Lawson 2005).

Failure to recognise barriers to the ripples emanating from community gardens is further evidence of flaws in how they have been spatially conceived. The emphasis is on local relations to the neglect of wider processes, dividing local and global without recognising the inevitable interactions between them (Massey 2005). Making a community garden requires good relations between gardeners *and* links out to others such as funders (Hinchcliffe 2007: 169). Rethinking these as places comprising social processes would better reflect their condition and acknowledge how they interact with forces across various scales. Treating community gardens as local places with an emphasis on what happens inside expects individuals to be similarly bound and stable. For the effects of a community garden to stretch across participants' lives practices and feelings tied to one place must apply elsewhere. The narratives community gardens draw on assume that how humans have been through history lives on; whilst places have changed humanity has not hence the new kinds of – or lack of – places are ill-suited to meet their needs. Failure to consider community gardens in their wider spatial context is confounded by the tendency to neglect differences between gardens and between people, and disregarding that identity and place are contingent. Geographers have highlighted that communities are complex and varied reminding us to attend to differences underlying an outward appearance of unity (Panelli and Welch 2005: 1591, Staeheli 2008). One community member may be quite different from the next; there is no typical community gardener or single version of the community garden place (Hinchcliffe 2010).

We need to know more about who gardens and why, as much as how they garden (Guitart et al. 2012: 370).

Across these four themes we see a lack of critical reflection on what community gardens can achieve and whether they truly represent a better kind of place. Their champions rely on assumptions about city life which rehearse problematic dualisms between urban-rural, local-global, mobile-fixed and natural-social and simplify their spatial characteristics. Knowledge of community gardens is dominated by examples from deprived urban communities in the USA to the neglect of those in other countries and rural areas. Differences between gardens and gardeners are too often smoothed out, and there has been a lack of opportunities for those involved to describe their experiences in their own terms. As a result we have a poor understanding of what is important about community gardens in the opinions of those directly involved, what motivates them and how the benefits they note are achieved - that is what they do and how it feels. Their broader impact has been lauded without considering the perspective of people not directly involved or acknowledging limits to what can be achieved, and their potential to forge environmentalist sensibilities has not been empirically demonstrated.

Existing literature tells more about the people involved than the qualities of the places they enjoy with the gardens treated as sites for social interaction. At best we have a list of conditions associated with involvement in community gardening - wellbeing, sense of community, environmental stewardship - but no clear picture of how such impacts arise, or how community gardens are made. Many authors note that place contributes to these effects without suggesting the process or considering different garden spaces. More negatives aspects of these experiences have not been detailed so we do not know how to mitigate against them, or the difficulties of seeking to deliver multiple, possibly conflicting outcomes (Pearson and Firth 2012: 154). This suggests a need for greater attention to processes and practices in order to understand what happens in community gardens. Any such understanding of experience has to be situated in the context of its places (Pink 2012). Plus these processes and practices involve lively nonhuman actors whose contribution has been little celebrated to date.

I have criticised flawed spatial conceptions of community gardens and suggested a need to consider them through a more nuanced understanding of place and place making. Most authors entered a garden already formed to consider what happens, treating it as a finished site which people tend and attend. This is place considered as "simply location. It is where people do things" (Rodman 2003: 204); fetishized places with

power to make people feel good and build community. I have begun to show that there are problems with this treatment of the relationship between community and place, and that an individual's feelings about both are likely to be complex. It is difficult to sustain the dualisms required to conceive community gardens as places of local connection in contrast with placelessness. The logic of authentic-inauthentic places assumes that community gardens are inherently good so someone arrives and receives benefits; this does not explain how benefits arise or account for varying experiences of the same place. Where geographers discuss community gardens as places they show them to be more complex than advocates suggest, finding that spatiality makes a difference (Milbourne 2011, Parr 2007). As Hilda Kurtz demonstrates a garden's physicality, particularly its boundaries, influences relationships (2001) indicating the importance of considering the interplay between people and environment. A focus on place brings these processes and variations into relief without pre-empting the kind of relationships which might emerge.

To critically evaluate the potential of community gardens also requires greater attention to the experiences of individuals involved, setting them in context to recognise how processes beyond the local push and pull a garden. This opens the way for a more fully developed concept of community garden as place founded on a relational rather than dualistic understanding. Place is not expected to determine the existence or form of community but may initiate new relationships which might have the depth and quality of caring communities. Next I introduce this perspective and demonstrate how it offers a more rounded understanding of the experience of community gardening. In turn this will indicate how community gardens might elucidate theories of place through empirical application.

RE-PLACING COMMUNITY GARDENS

Local-global, rural-urban, individual-community, humans-nature, social-natural, rooted-placeless....discussion so far has shown that such dualisms are rehearsed in analysis of places like community gardens, yet they fail to account for life's complexity and hybridity. In contrast post-structuralist geography allows for multiplicity and change, emphasising connection over rupture (Murdoch 2006). This goes beyond the narrative of reconnection which courses through what people say about community gardens to a point where disconnection between humans and nature never existed (Ingold 2000, Latour 2004a, Whatmore 2002). In this relational ontology connection

is all, nothing precedes relationships, nothing can be disconnected; community gardens might still be special places but this requires an explanation which avoids identifying certain spaces as 'more natural'. Accounts of nature in general are replaced by more vitalist notions of place and its nonhuman components (Harvey 1996, Hinchcliffe 2007, Jones and Cloke 2002). This resonates with the call from Donati *et al.* (2010) to reveal the liveliness of community gardens with their bugs and dirt and sweat. A more-than-human account means recognising the dynamic potential of nonhumans in "awareness of the complexity and interconnectivity of life" (Panelli 2010: 79). More-than-human geography pays attention to nonhuman presences and how they make a garden, whilst also listening to what nonhumans mean to humans (Panelli 2010: 80). It endeavours to "work beyond nature/culture binaries" (Panelli 2010: 85) to see the world as an ongoing complex of relations and flows both ecological and social (Harvey 1996, Ingold 2000).

Sweeping nonhumans into understanding place requires that cognitive thought is removed from its central position as *the* generator of meaning. If thinking is thoroughly bodily and representation is not the sole transmitter of significance (Ingold 2000, Thrift 1996) nonhumans can be meaningful social actors. For geographers this approach is characterised as more-than-representational (Lorimer, H. 2005) drawing in particular on the work of Nigel Thrift (1996, 2008) and Tim Ingold's understanding of bodily immersion in the world (2000). Looking beyond representation means considering unspoken often hidden aspects of life such as "shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities" and more (Lorimer, H. 2005: 84). Meaning is not the product of bodies receiving sensory information to be sorted into categories according to cultural norms (Ingold 2000: 163), instead a whole person is active in an environment. Person and place emerge together with meaning immanent in their interactions (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 7, Ingold 2000), so processes matter more than final forms (Ingold 2011, Lorimer, H. 2005: 85). Places are not the context in which actions occur but practiced interactive events – they take place (Anderson and Harrison 2010, Thrift 1996). Meaning is not a product of the internal but courses through the external (Thrift 1996, Dewsbury 2003) so "thought is placed in action and action is placed in the world" (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 11). The whole body is capable of generating significance whilst much of what we do is unreflexive (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 9), making attention to moving bodies and all sensory faculties crucial to knowing what is going on (Harrison 2000, Thrift 1996, 2008). Recognising these nonverbal experiences brings actors without words a fresh significance for meaning does not rely on cognitive powers located in a human mind. A raft of

community garden experiences and actors matter and help to understand why they are special.

So what is place and how can it aid our understanding of community gardens? It is difficult to find a way in to such a complex topic so I shall start from the perspective which reverberates loudest through literature on community gardens before outlining its flaws. As an alternative I take Doreen Massey's spatial theory as a basis for a relational understanding of place and embellish its account of place making with assistance from Tim Ingold. I then suggest how sense of place can be interpreted within this framework. As community gardeners are never alone I suggest how this is shared between individuals, then consider where this leaves the relationship between place and community. Relational geography often lacks empirical grounding (Jones 2009: 296) so I endeavour to develop some of the more abstract theories of place for application on the ground.

What is place?

The simplest construction of place defines it as space plus meaning (Tuan 1977), assuming a physical substrate onto which human ideas are overlain to make somewhere meaningful (Cresswell 2004: 10). There is a site, then there is human activity, the former is a location for the latter but the two are somehow separate. This thinking is implicit and sometimes explicit (Stocker and Barnett 1998: 183) in narratives on community gardens: space is vacant lots onto which gardeners apply effort and care to make a place which means something. To humanist geographers such processes meet innate human needs; we cannot function in space for it is too open and blank (Casey 1993, Relph 1976 and 1977, Seamon 1985, Tuan 1977). From their perspective place is a necessity providing security and comfort as a fundamental aspect of identity and something people can attach to. Relph saw the world becoming increasingly 'placeless' as homogenisation through globalised mass production erases 'authentic' places which reflect local identities (1976). Together with increased mobility he felt this loosened attachment to place leaving people without rootedness (Relph 1976), or displaced (Casey 1993). When space takes over people seek comfort and belonging by making a place (Casey 1993: 109, Friedman 2010). These ideas inform community garden advocates who see them as anchors in chaotic cities re-attaching people to their locality (Hynes 1996, Pretty and Bartlett 2005, Schmelzkopf 1995).

To humanist geographers place offers fulfilment which space cannot as it is comes only at the tangible local scale. This argument has been criticised for:

a notion of place which some see as essentialist and exclusionary, based on notions of rooted authenticity that are increasingly unsustainable in the (post)modern world (Cresswell 2004: 26).

This is David Harvey's view as he criticises celebration of the 'power of place' for fetishizing processes and spatial relations (1996: 301, 320). He proposes that places are no more than temporary 'permanences' in the ongoing flow of spatial processes, always subject to flying apart (p261). These elusive, intangible places have no agency as a mere sub-category of the socio-ecological processes comprising space, not a counter to them. Like Harvey, Doreen Massey rejects the idea that authenticity distinguishes place from space; local places do not need protecting from globalisation and have no singular authentic identity closed to the outside or better than the global (2005: 66-7). Rather place and space are always interrelated and influencing each other (2005: 102). Massey argues "there cannot be a dichotomy between meaningful place and a space which is abstract because space is meaningful too" (2004: 8). Spaces also comprise practice and relations which must be grounded in the everyday and local, they are nowhere abstract but somewhere real (Massey 2004: 7-8). As noted above even apparently empty landscapes are riddled with liveliness, there is no truly blank space because things have meaning too (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 5). In relation to community gardens Paul Milbourne argues that 'empty' sites were still meaningful "as sites of neglect, waste, crime and anti-social behaviour and as powerful symbols of urban disadvantage" (2011: 946). These were places before they were gardens then became *different* places.

Place as a bound space, sites containing meaning or action does not fit a world where things constantly come and go, connections abound and each locality is under the influence of places afar. It has been flung apart by relational conceptions (Casey 1997, Cresswell 2004: 40) which now dominate geography (Jones 2009, Murdoch 1998, 2006). If absolute space as mappable, saleable locations suited the projects of capitalist empires (Harvey 1996: 238, Lefebvre 1991) then more fluid, processual notions are required for a networked world (Cresswell and Merriman 2011, Sheller and Urry 2006). A contingent version of spatiality suits lives which feel mobile and connected, where scale seems irrelevant (Jones 2009: 493) for everyone is virtually around the corner from each other. Having highlighted some of the failings which relational ideas replace I shall present Doreen Massey's theory of place in some detail as it has been particularly influential and demonstrates the core features of a relational perspective (Murdoch 2006: 25). But I suggest that in seeking to over-turn humanistic geography she fails to account for the continued power of place in people's experiences and feelings.

Massey starts from the now pervasive idea that space is made through interaction, not a surface upon which relations play out but comprising interrelations which are always ongoing and open to change (2005). The space she describes is "a heterogeneity of practices and processes" which criss-cross, connect, disconnect (p107). If space is the simultaneity of these 'stories-so-far' places are where spatial narratives meet:

> *Their character will be a product of these intersections within that wider setting, and of what is made of them. And, too, of the non-meetings-up, the disconnections and the relations not established, the exclusions. All this contributes to the specificity of place. To travel between places is to move between collections of trajectories and to reinsert yourself into the ones to which you relate (p130).*

Everything is moving, 'here' is where particular stories meet but these places are only temporary gatherings which go on dispersing (p141). Places are always on the move so cannot have a singular unchanging identity, but they can be differentiated because each constellation is a unique 'throwntogetherness', not necessarily coherent or uniform but a specific event (p140). Massey's spatiality draws nonhumans into the mix for they also move; hills have trajectories, just much slower than our own (p133). This has two implications for my presentation of community gardens: it offers a route for nonhumans to be place makers for all which moves make places. Secondly, Massey argues that if nature is moving there is no option of going 'back to nature' for we would find it had moved on (p137). By acknowledging the temporality of nature, that it always changes, Massey further troubles the narrative of reconnection for there is no permanent nature, no historic version to rediscover as a foundation for human place attachment (ibid).

This is place as more fluid and unsettled than envisaged by Relph or Tuan who saw it offering respite from chaos whilst Massey finds it inherently disorganised and haphazard. As suggested by her term 'throwntogetherness' Massey sees place as rather chaotic for there is no telling who/what may be thrown into "the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-how" (p140). Place as happenstance indicates three limits to Massey's argument which can seem too abstract from lived experience. Firstly, Massey emphasises political spatial forces which shape place and fails to appreciate the role individuals play in actively shaping their environment (Manzo 2003: 56). Whilst there may be a degree of chance in how a place comes together there is some selection and deliberation as people endeavour to make the kind of place they prefer. As I shall illustrate in the case of community gardens some places are a 'bringingtogetherness' as actors shape movements, pull trajectories together and direct them towards imagined

outcomes. Relational geography often lacks an account of how places comprising social processes are formed (Cresswell 2004: 32, Pierce *et al.* 2010: 58) so requires suitable theories of place making. Pierce *et al.* (2010) develop Massey's idea to suggest that individuals 'bundle', making places by selecting and bringing together materials and processes. But they fail to describe how bundling occurs and focus on framing and representation in conflicts over place identities rather than more mundane material place shaping.

Besides the force of human will places are not as chaotic as Massey suggests because chance is narrowed in a second way. Whilst things are always in motion these movements are not wholly haphazard, there are routines and rhythms such as life-cycles and seasons which mean many journeys follow regular patterns (Edensor 2010: 3). Acknowledging these rhythms mediates between the dynamism of movement and certainty of stasis for their regularity offers a sense of consistency without fixity, repetition with difference (Lefebvre 2004, Edensor 2010). As Edensor describes, moving along familiar routes people encounter views or scenes in a certain sequence so they develop a sense of mobile place (p6). Emphasising the eventful nature of place (Anderson and Harrison 2010, Massey 2005, Thrift 2008) should not mean everything is a surprise as some things endure or are fairly predictable; although a place is always changing it has a degree of obduracy and repetition (Cresswell 2012; 103, Merriman *et al.* 2008: 195). As we shall see community gardens constantly change whilst remaining somehow the same, and rhythm helps understand this "apparent immobility that contains one thousand and one movements" (Lefebvre 2004: 17).

The third way in which haphazard places of throwntogetherness need refining is that in rejecting any fetishism of place Massey fails to address their emotional potency. She offers no account how places are experienced (Pink 2009: 31), leaving an abstract vision which may not resemble how people feel (Cresswell 2004: 74, Jones 2009: 494). We see in the example of community gardens that certain places are so profoundly important that people endure embittered battles in the effort to hold onto them. For Massey the question of whether people feel they belong somewhere is not as important as to whom land belongs (2011) hence she does not consider how people feel attached to places. The journeys comprising places are treated as of a kind when they may have very different qualities and affects; as people return again and again to favourite spots or retrace familiar routes because they feel a pull to be somewhere in particular some trajectories become much deeper. It must be possible to acknowledge this emotional power without forgetting that it is exerted by a constellation of processes, a mobile sense of place. The problem with humanistic defence of place was not the argument

that they are important to people but taking certain kinds of places to be more authentic and requiring protection from globalisation. We can leave aside questions of authenticity or localism and allow place – in all its fluidity- an affective role; people feel affinities with certain places without essentialism.

Massey's work is a useful counter to phenomenological accounts of place drawing attention to the political context which shapes everyday spatial experience (Pink 2009: 31-2). But to make sense of empirical examples requires a middle way which rejects the essentialism of authentic place whilst allowing for the will to shape places and belong somewhere. The work of Ingold is a useful mediator (Pink 2009: 32-33) and he notes the spatial ground he shares with Massey (2011: 141). His work has been embraced by geographers looking beyond representation (Anderson and Harrison 2010, Thrift 2008) as he sees meaning as "immanent in the relational contexts of people's practical engagement with their lived-in environments" (Ingold 2000:168). Like Massey he treats place as a constellation of movements, knots of journeys which weave together and trail off to elsewhere (2011: 148-9). Despite the suggestion that he risks "a rather 'earthly' romanticism" (Hinchcliffe 2003: 220) this is not a return to ideas of being locally rooted and bound for his emphasis is "comings and goings" which make place (Ingold 2008: 2806, see also Cloke and Jones 2001: 139). Ingold uses rhythm to explain what gives places their particular character (2000: 197) so can contribute to a dynamic sense of place. Unlike much recent spatial thought he also suggests how places are made so I look to Ingold's description of taskscapes made by skilled actors (2000) as developed by Jones and Cloke (2002).

How are places made?

I have suggested that whilst places are always in flux we need to account for a degree of coherence and continuity which allows people to develop particular feelings about being in a place they have shaped. This requires a theory of how places are made by bringing movements together, a process I argue is guided by skill and feelings as people seek certain goals and affects. Although community gardens have been reported as instances of place making (Bendt *et al.* 2012: 28, Domene and Sauri 2007, Eizenberg 2012, Milbourne 2009, Stocker and Barnett 1998) we have been told little of how community gardens are made. Stephen Hinchcliffe offers an account of these processes highlighting the diverse practices involving everything from forms to weather which must be combined in productive ways (2007 Chapter 10, for a comparable approach see Pink 2012). His account of things coming from all over echoes Massey's idea of throwntogetherness but suggests some determination as things are deliberately

brought through hard work. This work does not apply meaning to a space, rather "the practice of gardening creates trajectories, movements, constellations and entanglements" (Pink 2012: 96). The moving body of a labouring gardener is one form of motion and it shapes other movements, bringing them together as a place.

Ingold's description of taskscapes (2000) offers a framework for understanding how movements are shaped into material forms[10]. He begins from a critique of production understood as the imposition of human will onto nature, the modernist notion that a culturally informed mind works at a remove from the world to conjure orderings which are laid onto it to shape and control nature (2000, 2011). He terms this a building perspective for it conceives making as productive work which "serves merely to transcribe pre-existent, ideal forms onto an initially formless material substrate" (2011: 10). In this construction thought occurs in a mind separate from body which is the human point of entry to the world, and as the only beings capable of cognition humans are a privileged kind of animal. In contrast Ingold follows Heidegger (1971) to begin with humans always amongst the world, not building but dwelling as a "rich ongoing togetherness of beings and things" (Jones and Cloke 2002: 81). Humans do not make things by 'doing to' nature, as dwellers they work *with* materials to bring forms into being (2011: 10); worldly processes are ongoing as flows which people participate in, sometimes bending them to a certain purpose (2011: 211). Ingold uses the analogy of weaving to suggest things are made:

> *not so much by imposing form on matter as bringing together diverse materials and combining or redirecting their flow in the anticipation of what might emerge (2011: 213).*

Life means continual change, a world always transforming itself which humans do not make rather they "play their part from within the world's transformation of itself" (2011: 6). Humans are not wholly in control as nonhumans are equally active participants in the socio-natural world, emerging together from a field of relationships (Ingold 2000: 87).

If human life is dwelling then places arise as familiar patterns and traces of its processes (Jones and Cloke 2002: 83); tasks are practical operations which beings perform so a taskscape is an ensemble of these activities (Ingold 2000: 195). These are places performed by people and things engaging in activities of dwelling (Cloke and

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[10] Ingold often uses the words place and landscape interchangeably; for the sake of consistency I refer only to place. His notion of taskscape is intended to replace representationalist versions of landscape (2000: 192-3) which echo the space+meaning construction of place so can be taken as a useful critique of this. Paul Cloke and Owain Jones offer a precedent for applying Ingold's ideas about landscape to place (2001, 2002).

Jones 2001: 653, Ingold 2000: 197). But there is solidity because movements leave durable traces (Anderson, J. 2010) as 'collapsed acts' congealed in a place's features (Ingold 2000: 198). Humans do not inscribe meanings onto the land's surface for one does not precede the other, rather life weaves into the environment as each shapes the other in a never-ending entanglement (2000: 198-9). Ingold offers an example: the shape of a hill is realised through the exertion of climbing whilst the upward bodily motion shapes muscles so the incline is incorporated into the body (2000: 203). It is paths which make such daily movements visible as "the accumulated imprint of countless journeys" (p204). Motion congeals both in muscle memory and a network of paths which people tend to follow so journeys are ordered, habits form. It is not just people who are moving: fauna leave tracks, trees become points of gathering and reminders of the past (ibid, see also Jones and Cloke 2002).

There are two significant features of task movements, firstly they are the achievement of *skilled* agents (Ingold 2000: 195). Skill is a quality of movement, the ability to follow the world's lines of motion – becoming or emergence – and bend them to a particular purpose (Ingold 2011: 211). A simple example would be positioning a rock in a stream to direct the flow into a pool, something human or animal might attempt. To achieve this agents must attend to change in the environment and respond accordingly, so perception and motion are closely attuned (2011: 94). The skill of making is to gather and move others into fruitful arrangements - placing seed in soil for example - which establish the conditions for desired changes to occur (Ingold 2000: 86). By moving things into place one shapes the environment in such a way that the speed and course of further movements are altered - roots will grow through that soil. The skill of making is to lay down paths to channel desired movements or to place obstacles to block unproductive motion.

Such skill is not reserved for humans as any organism perceives its environment and moves in response (Ingold 2011:94). A plant 'knows' there is light above and shapes its movements to grow towards it (Chamovitz 2012), roots snake towards water (Fogg 1963: 77). Automated repetition of the same motion will not succeed as the environment changes: water may have moved, the root must sense where it is – perceive its environment- and move accordingly. Skill is not repetition but the ability to improvise (Ingold 2011: 60-62). Such abilities develop through practice and may become so heightened they can dramatically shape the environment by directing many forms of movement across great distance. But the foundation is always attentive engagement with others (2000: 353) to perceive the environment and act accordingly, a practical mode of knowing Ingold terms 'knowledge how' (2000: 316). Although not

limited to the craftsmanship popularly associated with skill Ingold uses examples such as carpentry and weaving to describe how skill is learnt, practised, and enrols tools (2000, 2011). The characteristics he identifies can be seen in the work of making community gardens as I show in chapter IV, whilst the bodily experience of practising skill contributes to the special feelings of being in a garden (chapter V). These examples should not imply that skill means traditional artistry as highly contemporary movements of machine technology and practices of marketing –moving ideas- contribute to place making (Jones and Cloke 2001: 658-9). The point to emphasise is that movements which form places are skilled as human and nonhuman actors follow the worlds' flows, perceive motion, move in response and in anticipation of the results. Skill is the ability to shape movements according to a purpose.

The second characteristic of movements making taskscapes is that they are sociable so places are social environments. The actions of many people make a taskscape, more than this, places are inherently social "because people, in the performance of their tasks, *also attend to one another"* (Ingold 2000: 196). These others include past and future actors whose traces are apparent: the man whose chisel marks pock an old building or the child expected to pluck the apple once ripe. Traces influence present activity (Anderson, J. 2010: 38) as with the example of well trodden paths which guide future journeys; going about our business we "feel each other's presence" and adjust our movements in response (Ingold 2000: 196). The material forms which are left offer cues to what behaviour is expected so shape future movements (Richardson 2003) and prompt spatial habits which tend to be reproduced (Cresswell 1996). Ingold draws analogy with an orchestra seeking to play in harmony, arguing that in everyday practice people resonate with each other's rhythms through "mutually attentive engagement" (*ibid.*) People sense the tempo of others -not just human- moving around them, fall into step and synchronise movements (Ingold 2000: 199-201). This echoes Lefebvre's argument that synchrony is the healthy mode of life as rhythms unite into eurhythmia whilst discord tends to result in suffering (2004: 16). But rhythm is not precise repetition as each beat is slightly different, so each inhabitant of a taskscape interprets the movement of others and improvises along the way. It is this variety which prevents a taskscape implying community sharing an 'authentic' identity rooted in their locality, for there are many ways to move (Jones and Cloke 2002: 139); each journey varies according to the mood of the walker or the purpose of her trip even if along the same path.

Beyond the often unconscious synchronisation of bodies sharing places there are more explicitly social aspects to place making. A novice is taught how to complete skilled

tasks by more experienced practitioners (Ingold 2000: 37, 415) and guided to attend to useful features of the environment (2000: 21-2). Sociality is inescapable hence the making and experiencing of place is amongst relations with others. The flat ontology of the dwelling perspective means that fellow humans and their actions form one component of an individual's environment, social relations cannot be separated from ecological ones (Ingold 2000: 4). Platial experience is social, so we might expect there to be shared or collective meanings associated with particular places, and it is this to which I now turn: how do people come to agree that community gardens are special places?

Sense of place: character and feelings

Ingold's taskscapes reveal place making as the active practice of skilled movement by humans and nonhumans seeking to bend life's flows towards particular goals. I have suggested the need to account for some continuity and coherence amongst so much motion: how is a taskscape identified, how might I know this place from another? Ingold does not devote attention to how places feel, what is often referred to as sense of place. By this I do not mean an innate human capacity to recognise our situatedness (Relph 2008) but the meaning particular places have for people (Mayhew 2009). Some geographers have shied from the idea of sense of place for being reactionary (Massey 1994) implying static, closed places of exclusion (Cresswell 2004: 26, Harvey 1996: 301-9). More progressive notions of place have not been applied to empiric contexts whilst Massey and Harvey do not address personal relationships to place (Long 2013: 52-3). To address the challenge of reconciling emotional ties to specific places with a fluid, mobile world (Lewicka 2011: 226) it is helpful to clearly differentiate sense of place from concepts with which it is often conflated such as place attachment (DeMiglio and Williams 2008, Lewicka 2011: 208). To be clear what I mean by sense of place and strip out problematic associations I want to emphasise two related aspects.

The first is the character or identity of a place derived from a unique combination of physical features, activities and meanings (Relph 1977: 61), which determines "what it means to be here rather than there, now rather than then" (Geertz 1996: 262). This is what Massey means by character as a place's particular constellation of relations (1994). We know places have distinct characters because a community garden is perceived to be different from the rest of a city. Ingold indicates what this comprises:

> *A place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time*
> *there – to the sights, sounds and indeed smells that constitute its specific*
> *ambience. And these, in turn, depend on the kind of activities in which its*

> *inhabitants engage. It is from this relational context of people's engagement
> with the world, in the business of dwelling, that each place draws its unique
> significance (2000: 192).*

A place has its specific ambience because it comprises a certain constellation of movements which are unique. This is local distinctiveness, the many contrasts between here and there which together give somewhere a degree of coherence over time (Jones and Cloke 2002: 9). Things are added or taken away so the place is dynamic but recognisably itself (ibid. p134), like a personality which is not constant across someone's lifetime but hangs together sufficiently for us to know who they are.

Again the notion of rhythm is instructive: the movements making a place have particular tempos and speeds which weave into a unique composition of interrelated rhythms (Ingold 2000: 197). Rocks move slowly, insects rapidly and erratically, the sun steadily and predictably, patterns and tempos which are steady yet encompass change:

> *rhythms are essentially dynamic, part of the multiplicity of flows that emanate
> from, pass through, and centre upon place, and contribute to its situated
> dynamics (Edensor 2010: 3).*

Geographers have drawn on rhythm to convey the nature of mobile places but have focused on regular journeys such as commuting (Edensor 2011, Jiron 2010, Spinney 2001). In contrast I will use the concept of rhythm to understand humans and others moving *in* place, and constant change encountered when repeatedly visiting somewhere. By sensing these rhythms bodies feel the sense of a place (Edensor 2010: 4) then move according to them, synchronising with environment and others (Ingold 2000: 207, Lefebvre 2004: 75) so sense of place reaches beyond individuals. Although sense of place has been identified as a collective experience (Altman and Low 1992, Basso 1996, Butz and Eyles 2010, Dixon and Durrheim 2000, Relph 2008, Stokowski 2002) its inter-subjective dimensions are often neglected (Dixon and Durrheim 2000). Community garden advocates exhibit a common tendency to suggest sense of place is shared without explaining how this develops. Those who suggest processes behind collective sense of place emphasise discourse and communication (Dixon and Durrheim 2000, Larsen and Johnson 2012, Long 2013) to the neglect of physical activity or interaction with materials. Following Ingold there is no need for a coherent group to form an agreed meaning for a place, rather those who move through the same place are likely to sense similar rhythms, so agree to a degree on a place's character. But rhythm is simultaneously individual and social as each person enacts his/her version of common routines (Lefebvre 2004: 75). People agree how a place feels because human bodies tend to react similarly to the same stimuli (Damasio 1999: 56, Lewicka 2011: 223) and individuals imitate other's reactions (Thrift 2008: 237). People step in time,

walk the paths so an individual's experience of a place is shaped by others who accompany or precede them on those routes, they are moved in similar ways and mimic habits.

So far I have shown how places comprising movements have a sense of place as in distinctiveness or character which can extend beyond an individual without becoming fixed or monolithic. The second dimension of sense of place is affective potential or emotional impact. A wealth of studies suggest certain places are visited in order to enhance wellbeing (see Atkinson *et al.* 2012, Williams 2007) a phenomena which relies on place's ability to affect people. Whilst some authors continue to associate sense of place with rootedness and yearning for local attachments (Bartlett 2005, Friedman 2010, Relph 2008) this creates untenable dualisms between authentic-inauthentic, local-global places, and suggests a deterministic relationship between people and place. Conversely to reject any notion that places exert a pull on people, to deny them any agency (Harvey 1996: 320, Massey 2004: 17), does not fit evidence of people's continued tendency to identify with particular places (Cresswell 2004: 79, Jones 2009: 494). The middle ground lies in recognising how people identify with places in all their fluidity (Cloke and Jones 2001: 652), that places have an emotional affect because the relations they comprise shape feelings (Conradson 2005). Here the body comes into focus, for it is through the body that we sense and make sense of places (Carolan 2008, Casey 1997, Crouch 2001, Edensor 2000, Merleau-Ponty 2006, Pink 2009). Sense of place is how it feels to the bodies moving through and in place (Spinney 2006).

Bodies are moved by places in both senses of moving so motion is crucial to sense of place (Seamon 1985, Spinney 2006, Stokowski 2002). If places are made through skilled movement then understanding their affect requires a focus on qualities of motion: places feel a certain way because of *how* they move bodies and *how* bodies move through them. In the continuous interaction between body and place each shapes the other:

> *people mark and map it [place] through their bodies, through their repeated experiences – such as the feel of the pull or push of the hill as they walk back and forth from work to home – (re)making all the while, the path itself (Cloke and Jones 2001: 653).*

There is porosity to the interface between person and place (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 7), exchanges both material and affective shape muscles and feelings (Conradson 2005: 106-7). As Conradson shows people go to certain places for their emotional impact, some places – a community garden for instance- feel good so people develop affinities for them and are pulled back there. Understanding this need not rekindle the

humanist notion that certain places meet a need for authentic belonging, instead we look to how people move. Moving through a familiar landscape exerts fewer demands on our attention so we feel more at ease (Edensor 2010: 6 and 2011, Quayle *et al.* 1997, Tuan 1977: 184). Habits and paths choreograph movements so it feels comfortable (Crang 2000: 305, Edensor 2010: 8, Ingold 2000: 204) and routines make the place meaningful (Lewicka 2011). Routines reduce the need to process information as the body acts unreflexively through habits which offer consistency (Harrison 2000) and allow cognitive faculties to rest (Bissell 2011). As habits take over things feel right, the comfort we associate with belonging (Edensor 2010: 8, Lewicka 2011: 226). It seems that each place inclines bodies to move in certain ways which sometimes feel right as I shall demonstrate through considering how people move through community gardens. But habits are not constrictive and can be disrupted or changed (Edensor 2000: 101, Harrison 2000) and dominant spatial rhythms are accompanied by counter-rhythms with different emphases (Conlon 2010) so individuals might still have unique spatial experiences. A dynamic sense of place means appreciating somewhere for its particular constellation of movements and feeling comfortable moving with these rhythms.

There is a further factor to the emotional potential of places. Ingold suggests that we most often move through places already built for us on pavements where we leave no footprints (2007: 102) so we "skim the surface" (2004: 329). Much of the world does not feel our own which causes angst so we endeavour to lay down claims (Rose 2012). Whilst rejecting the argument that we make places to counter the chaos of globalised space (Casey 1993, Friedman 2010, Relph 1976) we should not overlook the significance of wanting to leave an impression. Shaping one's environment is a source of security and comfort because it offers a sense of control which is important for wellbeing (Csikszentmihalyi 2002: 60, Kaplan and Kaplan 2005: 278, Matsuoka and Kaplan 2008, Relph 2008, Ulrich 1996: 38). The opportunity to make places is significant not for its authenticity but its creativity, the satisfaction of making something tangible (Sennett 2008). Leaving traces makes memories which link us to a place so it becomes ours (Anderson, J. 2010: 41). The wish to identify with somewhere in particular does not seem to have faded (Cresswell 2004: 74-9) and may benefit wellbeing (Lewicka 2011, Manzo 2008, Eyles and Williams 2008). This need not be attachment to one bounded site or restricted to the local as people can develop complex attachments to many places across different scales (Cheshire *et al.* 2013, Larsen and Johnson 2012, Lewicka 2011, Williams and Patterson 2008). But the processes by which attachment to place(s) develops have received little attention (Lewicka 2011: 224) with shared meanings particularly neglected (Dixon and Durrheim 2000, Stokowski 2002). Studies suggest that community gardens lead people to feel more

attached to an area (Comstock *et al.* 2010) but the process through which this develops is not explained. The experience of community gardeners is a useful opportunity to investigate feelings of belonging and how these develop whilst also addressing the gap in understanding emotional ties to places other than the home (Manzo 2003).

Trajectories of motion have varying qualities so places feel different, and affects influence how places are made as people seek to feel a certain way or are drawn back to places they experienced positively. Rather than reject the notion of rootedness (Massey 2005: 154) I suggest a dynamic concept of belonging is possible through revisiting what it means to put down roots. Rootedness has been interpreted as fixed connection to a single location to the exclusion of others (Gustafson 2001), but this metaphor falsely conceives the characteristics of roots. Plants are rooted but they move as they grow and reproduce (Chamovitz 2012, Hall 2011, Head *et al.* 2012, Jones and Cloke 2002). Roots also move, groping through the soil (Fogg 1963: 77, Ingold 2011: 162). Root formations vary between plants, each has many roots and they evolve by extending branches or sprouting fresh sections; they mingle with their surroundings, disintegrating into the soil, gas and water molecules constantly crossing cell walls (Fogg 1963: 228). So to be rooted is not to be inflexible or bound to the spot, and can mean being dynamically but significantly related to place. This is rootedness not as fixity but as a dynamic belonging of reaching towards others and moving together in a continual exchange.

Does making place make community?

To conclude this discussion we need to consider the relationship between place and community and whether place forms communities. Advocates assume an increase in social contacts generated by a garden demonstrates that communities have formed but they do not question the quality of these relationships or how sharing a place generates community. I have shown how people might share sense of place by moving together and Ingold suggests the very social practice of making place could be the foundation of sociality (2000: 196). This is not a community of 'oneness' with those who live in the same place sharing a single coherent identity as there is space for multiplicity (Cloke and Jones 2001: 137). Even without a deterministic relationship between place and community the two are linked because experiences of place are never solitary hence common meanings and identifications develop (Altman and Low 1992, Basso 1996, Casey 1993: 31, Pierce *et al.* 2010, Relph 1976: 34). Places are made collectively and collectives tend to form around particular places (Gray 2000, Harvey 1996: 310) or mobilise to represent them (Larsen and Johnson 2012, Long 2013). It is not through being contained in place that Ingold sees potential for community to form, but through

sharing experiences of living together. This emphasis on doing suggests a taskscape community formed through practice.

Communities of practice are described by Etienne Wenger (1998) as those which develop coherence and feelings of belonging through mutual engagement, by doing things together and negotiating the meaning of these actions. A group engages in a joint enterprise, learns together and develops common practices which distinguish how they do things. This shared history of learning is reified in tools and symbols which contribute coherence, as do repertoires of routines and jargon. Signs that community has developed include members' ability to quickly exchange information and slot into conversations which might include familiar stories or jokes, knowing the capabilities of other members and the appropriate way to engage, and agreement over who belongs to the community (p125-6). The foundation of these communities is engaging in practice together; activity not location is the driving force but place is an influence for proximity makes mutual engagement easier. One can see how a group engaged in place making might form a community of practice, a notion applied to community gardens by Bendt *et al.* (2012). They suggest gardeners demonstrate the core components of a community of practice as they collaborate to manage a garden and exchange learning in doing so.

Place making as described here is a collective experience of doing things together which demonstrates the mutual engagement Wenger sees as a foundation for community, however some argue that co-practitioners do not necessarily hold an agreed vision of good so do not constitute communities (Lewis 2006). Practice might foster interaction and form communities of interest but communities also have an affective power which contributes to its continued appeal. Vered Amit highlights the felt and embodied nature of community, the pulls people feel towards each other as "the capacity for empathy and affinity" (2000: 18). People seem to pull together to counter feelings of isolation (Panelli and Welch 2005, Welch and Panelli 2007) suggesting sense of community is visceral. Practice is only one aspect of experiencing community for it might include relationships with other foundations, and what is significant is how people feel towards others as a result. Community relationships are expected to entail respect and responsibility (Bauman 2001, Brint 2001, Day 2006, Etzioni 1995, Smith 1999, Tuan 2002). Community is perceived as a source of values and moral education (Smith 1999) hence its popular and political appeal as an ideal way to live; their moral quality distinguishes community relationships from those of other groups (Bauman 2001). Whilst studies of community gardens show that new social relations form as a result there are different modes of relating, and connections may only constitute community if they offer a depth of feeling and responsibility. Attending to the way community

gardeners relate, how relationships form and the qualities of these relationships can show something about processes of communing and the grounds on which people unite.

As discussed above community garden advocates suggest participation does lead to a sense of responsibility towards others, echoing the expectation that place attachment brings ethical regard (Heidegger 1971, Relph 1976, 2008, Seamon 1985). But place attachment may not result in a particular ethical outlook (Harvey 1996: 303, Lewicka 2011: 219). Community gardens' ability to generate social capital is expected to bring democratic dividends by making more engaged citizens who respect difference (Glover 2004, Glover *et al.* 2005, Shinew *et al.* 2004). But Gill Valentine questions the expectation that bringing people together cultivates more caring relationships as prejudices and disrespect seem to endure even when contact increases (2008). She suggests deeper encounters of purposeful engagement *might* foster care – giving community gardens as an example (p331) – but the question remains how to scale this sensibility out from the encounter across time, space and other influences (p332-3). Through increased mixing people are required to negotiate as those thrown together are forced to get along, but the resulting relationships will not always be positive with conflict as possible as care (Amin 2004, Massey 2005).

The power of the encounter or dialogue with difference (Popke 2007: 510) has also been considered as a route leading nonhumans into the community of care. It has been suggested that the embrace of community now encompasses nonhumans (Whitehead and Bullen 2005, Wolch 2007), as 'we' become a heterogeneous collective (Whatmore 2002: 166). Although Wenger excludes nonhumans from communities of practice it is unlikely Ingold would agree as dwelling with others implies stewardship (Cloke and Jones 2001: 653). This may not reflect how people imagine community today so community gardens offer grounds to examine whether it includes nonhumans. As discussed above community gardens are presented as places where humans learn to care for nonhumans with proximity assumed to be the basis of this moral community. No mechanism is suggested for this transformation whilst experiences betraying this trajectory have not been examined.

Several authors suggest that ethical regard for a wide range of others can start from encounters or gatherings which encourage awareness of difference (Bennett 2010, Cloke and Jones 2001, Hinchcliffe 2007, Latour 2004a, Whatmore 2002, Wolch 2007). If this is the case then community gardens as places gathering humans and nonhumans could foster attitudes of care. Latour's (2004b) idea of learning to be affected as an

outlook of openness to others developed by tuning one's body to register more and more difference is taken as a basis for this process[11]. The hope is that attentiveness to the needs of others is a step in the direction of careful relationships which allow others to flourish (Bingham 2006, Gibson Graham and Roelvnik 2009, Hinchcliffe 2007, Lorimer, J. 2008a). Rather than a schema of moral rules this employs the skill of a generous sensibility to make judgements in each situation (Thrift 1996: 36, 2004: 93). Cloke and Jones suggest that the firmest foundation for ethical regard for nonhuman others is engagements which lead us to realise "human embeddedness in co-constructive relations with the non-human world" (2003: 200). This echoes Massey's argument that connectedness is the optimal grounds for responsibility as care follows links to multiple others across great distances (1994, 2004). Such communities are founded not on place but connectedness, what Nancy calls the inescapable fact of our being in common (2000). By realising our immersion amongst relations with others, including nonhumans we might be more likely to see the value in protecting them (Anderson, J. 2009).

However, the link between ontology and ethics is not necessarily direct; recognising connectedness is not an unequivocal moral compass pointing towards nonhumans (Lulka 2012). A generous sensibility of openness to others is a mercurial foundation for ethics at the collective scale and requires a vision to adjudicate between alternatives (Popke 2009, Rose 2010). Bringing things into relation might have many outcomes because things can relate in different ways and relationships are complex (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 16, Hinchcliffe 2010: 314-5). If Valentine is right about the limited capacity of the encounter to shift attitudes between people, human meetings with nonhuman others might face similar barriers to fostering care (see Collard 2012). Jon Murdoch suggests that in addition to realising connectedness humans require separation to reflect on their moral choices and a degree of critical distance in respect of their unique ethical responsibility (2006). His argument suggests community gardeners might require some deliberate consideration of the nature of their gatherings with nonhumans if they are to have an ethical dividend. There are many unanswered questions regarding the connections between place, community and ethics; addressing these requires attention to the qualities of relationships between others to note who/what relates and whether these are caring interactions. So far we can say communities are where we learn how to live together because we live together.

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[11] Cameron 2011 considers learning to be affected in the context of community gardens but focuses on appreciating differences between gardens rather than becoming open to different kinds of others.

Community gardens where many different lives intersect provide fruitful ground for interrogating the kind of relationships which develop when others coexist.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

A considerable body of literature shows that community gardens are felt to be a special kind of place, but understanding is limited by a tendency to neglect the variety of experience of gardens and gardeners. In part these limits can be overcome by expanding the type of gardens studied beyond urban locations, and considering a wider range of personal experiences. In particular there is a need for greater attention to processes as correlations between participation and benefits have been suggested without proposing mechanisms of change. Whilst place is said to have a role in the impacts of community gardens it is not clear what characteristics are significant or how places should be made for benefits to be replicated. This can be redressed through greater attention to the spatiality of community gardens and how such places are made, treating a garden not as a site for social interaction but emerging through relationships. Making places includes the representation of meanings in political battles like those some community gardeners have been part of but it is more than this as community gardens include more material meanings. Informed by more-than-representational thought places are processes of spatial experience understood through more-than-words so we should attend to doings and feelings. A more explorative methodology which embraces a wider range of experiences should improve our understanding of community gardens.

I have argued the need to re-place community gardens by moving beyond problematic dualisms to understand them as entangled socio-ecological processes. Taking place as a lens through which to examine community gardens allows various kinds of relationships under the microscope. In line with turns to a more-than-human geography I have presented an understanding of place which treats nonhuman and human agency as of a kind, and argued the need to recognise nature as a complex of processes without borders. Encompassing humans in nature in this way is not unusual for social scientists, but others may believe that we *have ever* been modern (*cf.* Latour 2004a). A careful balance must be sought between recognising the actions of nonhuman community gardeners, and considering how humans regard their nonhuman accomplices.

Drawing on the work of Massey and Ingold I suggest movement is central to understanding places and how they are made. Rather than reject notions of sense of place and belonging which have been taken as antithetical to motion I have presented ways to reformulate them through a focus on qualities of movement and how these feel. In contrast to Massey's haphazard 'throwntogetherness' I suggest places are made by bringing movements together, a process guided by skill and feelings as people work towards certain goals and seek certain affects. To elaborate the affective context of Ingold and Massey's spatial theories I propose a mobile or dynamic sense of place means appreciating somewhere for its particular constellation of movements and feeling comfortable moving with these rhythms.

Through this chapter the nature of the relationship between place and community has been a question seeking resolution. Studies of community gardens might demonstrate that they are places which increase social interaction but the processes are not interrogated so it is not clear how space influences community. The speculative answer I offer is that those who make a place together might be inclined to become a community as they move together and synchronise with spatial rhythms. But the qualities of garden encounters have not been interrogated to demonstrate they equal relationships of a caring community. It is not certain that shared spatial experience results in care, hence the need to evaluate the relationships which emerge through place making in empirical examples such as community gardens. Understanding the collective experience of place requires attention to the qualities of relationships between others, their diversity and limits. As a very tangible form of place making at a scale which is relatively easy to grasp community gardens present a useful context for developing these theories through empirical application. In subsequent chapters I use these ideas to understand how community gardens are made and experienced to improve understanding of what people seek through community gardening and how a garden makes a difference to them.

III METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

As outlined in Chapter II previous research of community gardens has offered a narrow perspective by seeking to demonstrate their benefits and relying on methods which do not actively involve community gardeners. Where researchers have engaged with gardeners a reliance on interviews excludes non-verbal communication and insights which might only emerge through a researcher's extended presence. Nonhumans are notably silent in this research, for although their presence has been noted they are rarely treated as active agents in garden life[12]. I sought a more holistic, exploratory approach which would allow significant meanings to emerge rather than be selected at the outset. The need to reach beyond talk to the activities and experiences of garden life including those of nonhumans pointed towards ethnographic methods.

Ethnography is suited to studying 'hows and whys' without pre-empting the end result for it "emphasises discovery, it does not assume answers" (Schensul and Le Compte 1999: 33). Ethnography is emergent (Lofland and Lofland 1995), and exploratory (Schensul and Le Compte 1999), so the researcher is not sure at the outset exactly what s/he is investigating and uses the method to discover significant questions (Schensul and Le Compte 1999: xiii, Spradley 1980: 39). Mike Crang and Ian Cook (2007) challenge the norm of reading then doing then writing, suggesting we always combine the three, refining questions through playing them out in field. This resonates with grounded theory (Charmaz and Mitchell 2001) which constantly retests ideas against observations (Schensul *et al.* 1999) and sits between inductive and deductive reasoning, looking for the 'surprise' (Willis and Trondman 2000). Following Crang and Cook's advice I spent time in community gardens relatively early in my research to understand what questions may be usefully asked.

It is never possible to fully know events (Law 2004) and no method can grasp the complexity of life (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 21) particularly as so much of what people know about places is unconscious (Latham 2003). Ethnography's strength is seeking to understand from the inside (Grills 1998, Schensul and Le Compte 1999: 12) using various routes to tacit and explicit knowledge (Herbert 2000: 552, Spradley 1980: 8). To understand what it is like to be a community gardener requires participant

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[12] For an exception in the context of domestic gardens see Hitchings 2003.

observation, studying life in its usual setting in some depth (Dowler 2001: 158, Herbert 2000). I could volunteer at community gardens to experience them from within, do what community gardeners do and learn through this. Participation places the researcher's body alongside others to understand how they know and experience the world (Pink 2009: 25). This is particularly important for understanding feelings people struggle to convey in words (Hayes Conroy 2010, Macpherson 2010, Wait and Cook 2007). Gardening is often done without cognitive reflection and whilst the 'feeling of doing' (Crouch 2001) such practice can be explained through talk (Hitchings 2012, Latham 2003) this is not always possible (Pink 2012: 41). By moving my body like a gardener and reflecting on the full range of sensory experiences I might come close to feeling like them (Pink 2009: 40). So I should do what gardeners do, and think about how my body was changed by the garden (Coffey 1999, Dewsbury and Naylor 2002) and what can be known through a researcher's bodily feelings (Crang 2003 and 2005, Hayes Conroy 2010, Longhurst *et al.* 2008, Paterson 2009). The goal as Sarah Pink describes is "to seek to know places in other people's worlds that are similar to the places and ways of knowing of those others" in order to "come closer to understanding how those other people experience, remember and imagine" (Pink 2009: 23).

Although I arrived at the gardens with ideas about what techniques I would use some methods proved less fruitful than the literature led me to expect whilst others were called on when unexpected opportunities emerged. At the heart of this experimentation was being in community gardens, doing what gardeners do, the 'deep hanging out' fundamental to ethnography. By being there I had space to play a little (see Latham 2003) and might chance on serendipitous learning (Pink 2009: 65). In this context I shall outline how research proceeded, justify the choices I made and reflect on the process. I begin by explaining the selection of three case study community gardens, then detail how I addressed my ethical responsibilities. Next I describe the fieldwork which entailed five ways of being shown the gardens, and efforts to include people around each site. The final sections offer reflections on fieldwork, explanations of my analytic process and presentation of the research.

LOCATING THE GARDENS

Ethnography requires sustained regular contact with a group in its usual setting (Atkinson *et al.* 2001) to gain familiarity and a rich understanding of lives over time (Grills 1998: 3-4, Lofland and Lofland 1995: 18). This has been challenged for offering a limited view which is only revealing about the example studied (Herbert 2000: 559).

Such criticism assumes that general lessons are desirable and require representative examples (Gobo 2004) neglecting the value of contextualised knowledge (Flyvbjerg 2004: 423). Studying the particular allows questioning of theories and generalisation (Flyvbjerg 2004, Gobo 2004) and reveals how the micro and macro mingle (Herbert 2000: 564). Cases are always multiple as they include numerous individuals (Stake 2005: 451) and a small number of cases considered in context offer insight to wider issues by comparison with theory or other investigations (Stake 2005: 454, Yin 2003: 32). Selecting suitable case studies is not an attempt to identify representative examples as representativeness is virtually impossible when studying people (Gobo 2004: 440). Choices are guided by the need to gain meaningful information about the issues (Mason 2002: 121) so cases should offer the opportunity to learn about one's foreshadowed problems (Stake 2005: 448).

The need to understand a broader range of community gardens and whether they are sought for city dwellers to reconnect with nature suggested selecting urban and rural case studies. Having decided to focus on Wales introduces many places which straddle the rural-urban divide (Statistics for Wales 2008). To encompass this variety and understand the recent upsurge in rural community gardening I decided to study three community gardens, one each in rural, urban and semi-urban locations. By studying multiple sites I could address gaps in the literature such as the neglect of non-urban examples. It also increased the opportunity to gather sufficient knowledge as I was conscious that some community gardens involve few people. The need to study each case in sufficient depth without the research becoming unmanageably large (Mason 2002: 136) suggests three cases as appropriate. My intention was not a formal comparison of case studies and their variables (Stake 2005: 457) but to treat them collectively in order to increase understanding (Stake 2005: 446). Studying three gardens allows me to consider reasons for variation and what their similarities suggest about community gardens more generally.

I located my study in Wales for reasons noted in chapter II. The recent and significant proliferation of community gardens in the UK was most dramatic in Wales where there was a notable increase in numbers in rural areas. The Welsh Government introduced the UK's first policy for community food growing in 2010 adding a unique political context. These factors offered potential to address gaps in understanding community gardens; also the most comprehensive study of community gardens in the UK to date focuses on Wales (WRO 2012) providing useful context. I also had an established network in Wales to help identify and access suitable case studies. Finally, the need for

repeat contact at multiple sites over a sustained period made accessibility influential (Rice 2010: 239).

I began 'casting the net' for case studies (Crang and Cook 2007) at an early stage by meeting key contacts, visiting projects and attending events around the UK. I encountered a variety of community gardens which I summarised on a matrix of key characteristics (e.g. land tenure, gardening system, funding, target groups) to help identify variables and commonalities. This showed a number of environmentally motivated gardens had recently emerged from the Transition Towns movement, with many others created by more established organisations with regeneration and community development objectives. I felt it important to try and understand both types, particularly as participation in the latter is not always voluntary, an issue neglected by previous research.

From the gardens in suitable locations I selected three:
- defined as a community garden by those involved;
- fitting the definition outlined above;
- allowing study of people gardening collectively;
- offering opportunities for regular contact all year;
- varied in origin, operation, management and funding; and
- happy to engage with the research.

The Maes was chosen as the rural case as an example emerging from the Transition Town movement with environmental ideals. The Cwm offered an opportunity to engage with community gardeners other than volunteers at a garden with a formalised management structure and organisation in a semi-urban location. The Oasis is a contrasting example of a garden associated with community development in an inner-city neighbourhood.

Whilst scoping I occasionally volunteered at two of the selected gardens, having informed people that I may ask them to become more involved in my research[13] . To initiate fieldwork I identified gate-keepers to discuss participation and potential implications; each contact agreed or invited conversation with others. With the agreement of each group I began volunteering between one day per month and once a week. Although the focus of my interest was those actively involved in gardening I

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[13] Jacqueline Watts discusses some difficulties of a similar approach and potential ethical implications (2011). My situation was less complex as I sought to understand the experience of being a volunteer whilst she volunteered to access patient experiences so had more difficult issues of confidentiality and working with vulnerable groups.

wanted to hear from others so asked gate-keepers and gardeners to suggest who I should contact such as past volunteers, stakeholders or partner organisations. This allowed me to understand the wider context from the particular outwards, a 'snowflake sampling' of networks radiating out from the garden.

During fieldwork I combined volunteering with research activities, using a range of techniques I discuss below. At times I felt pre-dominantly volunteer, sometimes more researcher, juggling ethnographic roles (Coffey 1999: 24). Regular contact and co-operating on physical work helped build rapport so people might show a 'normal' version of themselves (Schensul *et al.* 1999: 74, 281). I interviewed 32 people involved in the gardens in various capacities (Cwm 13, Oasis 12, Maes 7), with second interviews in nine cases (Cwm 4, Oasis 4, Maes 1). I visited each garden at various times of day and week to encounter a range of people and activities, and was involved for more than a year to experience seasonal change. After each visit I made detailed fieldnotes including events, conversations, things I had observed or learnt and personal reflections.

MY RESPONSIBILITIES

Prior to fieldwork I secured ethical approval from Cardiff University by outlining how I would prepare for and address potential issues. Although this provided a framework there are no rules for ethical fieldwork (DeLaine 2000: 17) as what is right depends on context (Crang and Cook 2007: 32, Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 279, Hay 2010: 36) and cannot be predicted (Lofland and Lofland 1995: 30). The best guidance is to seek to do no harm (Hay 2010: 38, Murphy and Dingwall 2005) by developing caring relationships of trust, empathy and respect (DeLaine 2000). With ethnographic research over a sustained period it is questionable whether informed consent is possible (Schensul and Le Compte 1999: 193, Murphy and Dingwall 2005: 342) especially in public places (Watts 2011: 305) placing extra responsibility on the researcher to act with integrity. To remind myself of this I kept note of any ethical concerns and how I had responded to encourage reflexivity, questioning whether I was treating people fairly. I used informed consent procedures to alert people to their choice to participate but am aware that once others had agreed some may have felt awkward about objecting, and it was not practical to inform everyone visiting the gardens. Anyone regularly at each garden was given an information sheet explaining my research and implications for them which we discussed. Most were happy to participate, the small number who declined were not included in field records, and are

not mentioned here. Prior to interviews I highlighted potential issues and asked for written consent to use interviewees words, and to share copyright of photographs they had taken (BSA 2006: 2). Interviewees were given the opportunity to amend transcripts and participants were advised to inform me of any events from garden life which they would prefer I not write about.

All participants were told at the outset that information would be treated as confidential, with gardens and individuals referred to by pseudonyms, and whilst I would seek to ensure no one could be identified in published materials this is never guaranteed. Some participants replied that they would be happy to be named as they were telling the truth, others said they trusted me to treat them appropriately, but some were reassured that they would not be identifiable. My concern was repercussions if participants identified each other so I have not attributed potentially harmful comments. I have also considered potential harm to the gardens and written accordingly. All place, organisation and personal names are pseudonyms.

As each garden relies on charitable, voluntary efforts I was conscious of placing additional burdens on people and that I was benefiting most from our interactions. Helping as a volunteer allowed me to offer something in return (Watts 2004: 308) and I asked if I could assist otherwise. Two gardens asked for summaries of local people's opinions so they might encourage others to become involved and one asked for practical advice. This raises the issue of impartiality and whether I became advocate for the groups rather than researcher (Grills 1998: 13), a difficulty of the ethnographer's inside-outsider position (Crang and Cook 2007: 38). I was aware that by becoming close to participants I may become partial, so used reflexivity to balance the risks of immersion (Crang and Cook 2007: 48). When negotiating access I discussed the possibility that my findings may not be positive which people received as an opportunity for constructive criticism. Each group was already aware of and discussed their flaws and failings which created an environment where I need not feel compelled to advocate success.

An ethical responsibility not often noted by researchers is to nonhumans (Franklin and Blyton 2012: 8). I was particularly conscious of the environmental impacts of my activities as I was working with people concerned with these issues so it felt disrespectful to disregard them. When gardening I followed their practices for environmental conservation, and to reduce my impact I travelled by public transport, walking or cycling when possible.

GETTING TO KNOW THE GARDENS

Ethnography is the endeavour to understand as others do by observing, asking questions and participating; I wanted to know what is important about community gardens for those involved. As a novice being inducted into the world of a community garden I sought to learn as others learn (Pink 2009: 34), an apprenticeship similar to that through which child or novice is taught (Ingold 2000 and 2011). I was inducted to these places by following paths, listening to stories and finding my own way with the help of experienced guides who *showed* me the community garden:

> *to show something to somebody is to cause it to be seen or otherwise experienced – whether by touch, taste, smell or hearing – by that other person. It is, as it were, to lift a veil off some aspect or component of the environment so that it can be apprehended directly (Ingold 2000: 21-2).*

I was shown things others thought important which guided my attention so I became more expert in exploring and discovering the environment myself (Ingold 2000: 20-22). I invited others to 'show me the garden' through words, images, actions and more using processes I shall now describe.

The risk of using a variety of methods is shallow research in which each method tells different things (Crang and Cook 2007: 128). But diverse methods have always been integral to ethnography's endeavour to account for the multiplicity of social life (Atkinson *et al.* 2008). I would argue that the strength of combining various techniques is that individuals responded to each differently, favouring certain methods of showing the garden. Offering several ways to communicate increased the likelihood of finding a way for everyone to express themselves.

Show me the garden 1: learning by doing

To understand community gardens I followed the tradition of ethnographer adopting a pre-defined role (Crang and Cook 2007: 38) and became a volunteer. Working with and like others helped me develop relationships with gardeners by easing conversation and providing common ground. The value of this became apparent at the Cwm when I was the only female on site, and where physical work had always been done by men. At first I was treated as a special case, not given the worst jobs or expected to be strong, but by showing I was willing and capable of doing what they did they accepted me as "one of the lads". Through work I was able to relate to them as colleagues, and reflecting on this offered insight into how they perceive physical labour.

Volunteering allowed me to 'do' community gardening hence learn beyond what I could observe (Pink 2009: 64) by imitating the bodily practices of others (Pink 2009: 40). I completed tasks such as weeding, reflected on how I had done it, what it felt like, what I had learnt. This auto-ethnography allowed 'bodily empathy' (Hayes Conroy 2010: 739) with things which people find difficult to describe such as skills, actions and feelings. As a novice I asked people to show me how to do things or observed and imitated what they did, so I learnt from the ways they learn (Pink 2009: 34). Asking for instructions and explanations prompted people to show me how they know the garden so I could mimic theirs movements to emulate experiencing their place (Pink 2009: 40). For practices which have become routinized so awkward to speak of (Hitchings 2012) it helped to film people talking whilst doing to encourage them to describe actions as if making an instructional film, making a record I could watch for additional insights.

Show me the garden 2: walking

As outlined in Chapter II a community garden is made through movement so it might be understood by following movements which make places (Anderson and Moles 2008, Hall 2009, Pink 2009, 2011, 2012). Moving by walking was to experience community gardens as others do – taking the dog, gathering equipment, moving between tasks- so walks were participation. Walking to each garden I experienced how people move to and around it and encountered daily motion. Walking about and through the gardens encouraged me to observe for motion stimulates perception (Ingold 2000: 166). 'Going for a look around' I mimicked and joined the common garden practice of moving to note changes or jobs to do; people often led me on such tours, showing me things along the way.

Moving with others is useful for interrogating relationships to place (Anderson, J. 2004, Hall 2009, Kusenbach 2003), my most contrived use of this being 'walk and talks'. I used interviews whilst walking to elicit talk about place in a relatively unstructured manner (Evans and Jones 2011) to understand how people engage with their environment (Kusenbach 2003) and how biography entwines with place (Hall 2009). Talking in place allows things such as plants to provide prompts (Hitchings and Jones 2004) and encourages discussion of a place's features (Evans and Jones 2011: 856) which may be associated with certain memories (Anderson, J. 2004: 258). Walking together harnesses the empathetic sociability of stepping in rhythm and sharing a route (Pink 2009: 76) with lack of eye contact easing the encounter (Anderson, J. 2004: 258). I am sceptical about the claim this is more naturalistic than

other methods (Kusenbach 2003) for it remains affected by the researcher's presence and explication of what s/he wants. It is never wholly directed by the participant or free of power imbalance as has been suggested (Carpiano 2009: 267) for the researcher initiates, interprets and presents the encounter. But it can be more collaborative as place, researcher and researched guide what and where is said (Anderson, J. 2004, Hall 2009). So people took me on a tour of a familiar place (Carpiano 2009), invited to 'show me the garden'. The result is a performance with interviewee as guide (Latham 2003) choosing to show a place in certain ways. This is also part of community garden routines as visitors are given tours of a garden through which it is displayed and the host shows what s/he is proud of.

Show me the garden 3: telling

Once people were familiar with me I invited regular gardeners and those often present in other capacities to be interviewed. This allowed me to probe their thoughts in a focused discussion and understand things I cannot observe (Pink 2009: 87, Stake 2005: 453) by hearing how they interpret their experiences (Heyl 2001: 370).   It is logical to discuss relationships to a place *in* that place so the environment can more directly show the knowledge it holds (Anderson, J. 2004, Anderson *et al.* 2010) so my preference was to interview people whilst walking in the garden. I prepared questions to guide a seated discussion as a warm-up which elicited background information; I then asked to be shown around the garden, going anywhere, talking about any features. In most cases this was readily understood and people enjoyed the opportunity to act as guide; if people struggled to know what to talk about I suggested they might show favourite spots or areas with particular memories. Contacts who do not usually spend time at the garden – funders, partners- were interviewed at a location of their choice; one former volunteer (Kate, Oasis) answered questions by email. Em (Oasis) and Derek (Cwm) chose to be interviewed in their offices so I took printed plans of their gardens to show me around. This allowed a virtual tour as we imagined being in places corresponding to those on paper.

In all interviews I used open questions to encourage discussion of what the garden is like and how it feels: "how would you describe it to someone who had never been there?" and "imagine if the garden was no longer there, what would you miss?". These gave people space to mention what is important to them, and encouraged them to verbalise the experience of being there. Walking interviews focused more on the garden than personal experience so I added questions like "can you describe what it is like being here?", "does it feel different here from elsewhere?". Discussions were digitally

recorded with a hand-held device with range sufficient to avoid microphones which might restrict movement. They lasted between 45 minutes and two hours. All were fully transcribed, appended with a description of the route and notes of significant non-verbal aspects such as areas not visited and possible reasons. In addition to providing a rich seam of conversation about the garden I mapped the routes to overlay them and seek patterns.

Gardeners involved throughout the year were invited to participate in a second interview, whilst Maggie and Toni (Cwm) were interviewed at beginning and end of their welfare-to-work placements. These allowed me to revisit issues and discuss emerging themes using impartial prompts: "some people say that gardens benefit communities, what do you think?". Second interviews focused on personal reflection so I used photo elicitation, showing people images I had taken of their garden over previous months. Elicitation uses images to trigger reminiscences or new perspectives as interviewee, interviewer and image cooperate to discover new meanings (Banks 2008: 70, Harper 2002: 23, Guillemin and Drew 2010, Pink 2006: 69). Photographs encourage the viewer to remember or imagine what it was like to be when/where the photograph was taken (Pink 2009: 112). Participants were invited to bring their own photographs, but only those who had completed photo diaries did so (see below). I chose pictures of typical garden presences and activities or to raise certain issues, for example, a group of men shown working at the Maes to prompt discussion about gender. I invited people to look at the pictures and talk about anything that came to mind, or to say nothing. Photographs prompted some incredibly rich discussion and raised points that may not have emerged otherwise, but some people spoke freely with or without photographs, and others found elicitation vaguely ridiculous. Letting someone talk through their photographs is desirable for sharing control of discussion (Guillemin and Drew 2010: 177) but was sometimes reminiscent of being shown holiday snaps with little depth to the accompanying account as we sped through.

Discussing photograph no.14

John: *D'you know what no.14, this is weird and it's nothing to do with the garden essentially but purely related to recent circumstances. But looking at 14, the first thing I thought- that actually made me feel really sad and looking at no.14 really made me think about how it's been four weeks since I last went to the garden. And looking at no.14 really makes me miss it.*
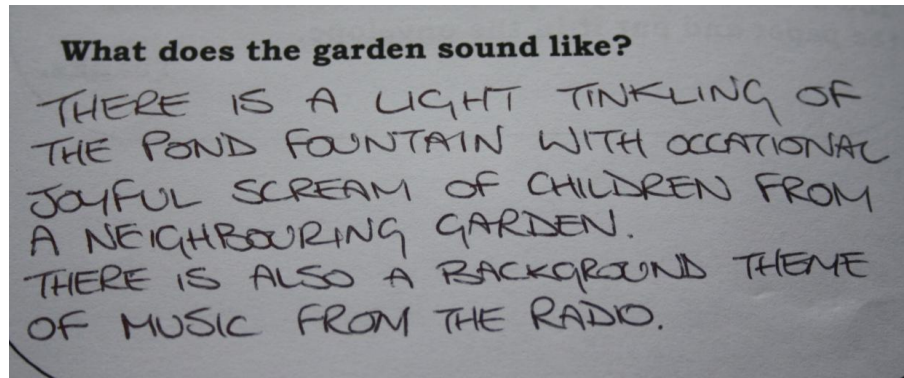
Hannah: *Why that one particularly?*

John: *D'you know why? And I suppose subconsciously without even realizing it, I think I've said this all along, that's probably made me realise that the biggest element of it for me is the social aspect. And the picture is of you know, our tea and biscuits and cigarette butts. So the picture in a way erm is a symbol of the social side of the garden club (volunteer, Oasis).*

Sally: *Ah and snacks. D'you know one of the things I'd like to do with the snacks and things is – I'd love to be able to make sure that there was enough like, always enough milk and always enough snacks for every group (volunteer, Oasis).*

I had not planned to invite participant writing so found photo diaries a pleasant surprise; Toni enjoyed contributing in this way and recorded thoughts I would not otherwise have encountered. Inspired by this I experimented, asking people at the

Oasis one afternoon to write down how they were experiencing the garden through different senses. I was surprised how seriously they took what I conceived as a playful exercise and found they words beautifully evocative so would consider expanding this approach in future research.

What does the garden sound like?

THERE IS A LIGHT TINKLING OF THE POND FOUNTAIN WITH OCCATIONAL JOYFUL SCREAM OF CHILDREN FROM A NEIGHBOURING GARDEN.
THERE IS ALSO A BACKGROUND THEME OF MUSIC FROM THE RADIO.

Show me the garden 4: picturing

Visual methods are exploratory so might take the researcher down unexpected routes (Banks 2008: 10, Knigge and Cope 2006, Pink 2006: 35). As the investigation of "what the eye can see" including objects, physical traces, images, bodies and their gestures (Emmison and Smith 2000) visual research assists with the search for more-than-representational meanings and non-verbal ways of knowing (Banks 2008: 31,75, Crang 2003). Images might prompt insight to memories (Hurdley 2007), affective experiences (Lorimer, J. 2008b) or non-cognitive aspects of life (Garrett 2011, Guilleman and Drew 2010, Harper 2002) providing they are accompanied by suitable reflection (Simpson 2011). Senses are connected (Ingold 2000, Pink 2009, Rodway 1994) so looking can evoke multisensory experiences of place (Pink 2009). A camera can heighten attention to what can be seen, help catch snippets of events which might be missed (Garrett 2011) and can be present where/when the researcher is not (Allen 2011: 492). Photography features in garden life as people take pictures for mementos and share them online, pictures are displayed on site and in written materials. This imagery showed me how people want to present and remember the garden, and what is believed worthy of display.

Selecting a photograph indicates what someone believe is worth recording (Crang and Cook 2007: 109) so at the end of each interview I asked how I should photograph the garden as another way of showing. I did invite participants to take photographs for me but volunteers and staff chose not to or forgot. The group of welfare-to-work placements at the Cwm were on site regularly for a limited period so I offered

disposable cameras and photo-diaries, inviting them to show their experiences of the garden. Several agreed although only two completed diaries and follow-up interviews; I then offered this to all volunteers and one at the Cwm accepted. Although photography is claimed to empower research participants (Garrett 2011, Guillemin and Drew 2010: 177, Pink 2006) I would argue that the researcher retains control of the process. However it can prompt reflection and may reveal 'unknown unknowns' (Allen 2011: 492) so usefully complements talk and observation.

With other research participants I had been able to establish rapport prior to interviews but the limited duration of the welfare to work placements at the Cwm did not allow for this. Offering the trainees a photo diary was a useful way to overcome this by providing them a relatively unobtrusive way to share their thoughts. Photo diaries offered an opportunity to gain insight into experiences of those who were at the Cwm for a short, fixed period, and had the advantage of capturing information from occasions when I was not present. For those who completed a photo diary the pictures they took formed the basis of photo elicitation during second interviews; in other cases these interviews included photo elicitation based on images I had selected from my own records. I chose pictures illustrating themes emerging from the first round of interviews and to probe further issues which had arisen in previous discussions.

I also used cameras to make memos of things not easily written about such as motion and aesthetics. I filmed people doing and talking about tasks to make multisensory records, using filming to encourage people to talk me through mundane practice. Carrying a camera helped draw attention to my role as researcher (Crang and Cook 2007: 107, Garrett 2011: 526, Pink 2006: 65) to maintain informed consent. It signalled to me I was researching so I felt more comfortable loitering and observing. The resulting imagery evokes memories which take me back to what it was like (see Pink 2009: 101). As outlined below photographs are knowledge sources in their own right which can stand independent of any text; for this reason they are presented here without captions or accompanying descriptions. Allowing the image to stand alone is intended to stimulate active engagement with them and to encourage interpretations other than those which I envisaged when selecting the photographs to be included.

Taking and showing photographs

Number on camera: 17
Date: 26/4/12
Time: 11-10 am

What is the photo of?
So A wheel barrow being mended

Anything about your day here?
Morale low. Equipment broken as
usual

Toni: That's somebody on the scheme trying to mend the wheelbarrows because nobody else umm mends any thing so we've got people wheeling wheelbarrows with -some with disabilities- that technically shouldn't be used. So he used his own pump - I think it was his own pump- to pump them up and mend it coz nobody else could be bothered (staff/volunteer, Cwm).

Show me the garden 5: attending

To understand "the livingness of the world" (Whatmore 2006: 603) more-than-human geographers must broadly define what counts as a research participant (p. 606-7). There is no specific method beyond "cultivated patient sensory attentiveness to nonhuman forces" (Bennett 2010: xiv). As Bennett and Whatmore indicate, shifting and expanding attention is a skill for researching nonhumans so I looked to guides other than people to show me the garden. Learning about nonhumans requires a fine tuning of perception, feeling the environment by engaging with it (Ingold 2000: 416). I tuned in to nonhuman agency with assistance from knowledgeable colleagues who showed me what flora and fauna do in gardens. In fieldnotes I recorded the activities of nonhumans, guided by a list of prompts directing attention to processes such as weather and decay.

To shift focus towards and turn up the volume on nonhuman presences I used photography, filming and sound-recording: walking around, looking, listening, noting or recording sensory experiences, seeing what had changed, looking for traces of recent activity. Cameras help show nonhumans who cannot speak (Hitchings and Jones 2004, Lorimer, J. 2008b) but I was conscious that aesthetic norms might shape selection so deliberately included the ugly, repellent, and rainy. Sometimes I took photographs or recordings with no purpose in mind, part of the experimental approach facilitated by visual methods (Banks 2008: 10). At each site I selected one vista to photograph on each visit to see what might become interesting, and did not realise what they showed until I included these images in photo elicitation and found they presented change and continuity (see chapter VI).

MEETING THE NEIGHBOURS

Previous research has focused within community gardens so I sought to include a wider range of people by endeavouring to speak to all staff and volunteers who are regularly at the gardens, also visitors, customers, and passers-by. Observing daily life gave me an impression of who uses the gardens which I embellished by occasional conversations with garden-users. I put posters about my research at each site and delivered leaflets along neighbouring streets inviting people to tell me what they think of the community garden. This prompted two phone conversations about the Cwm; although a disappointing response those with strong opinions had been given an opportunity to contribute.

To meet more neighbours I canvassed those living closest to each garden assuming they would be most aware of it. I called door-to-door along neighbouring streets, checking to include variations such as homes without gardens, social housing, and private homes. Those answering were invited to "help with university research about gardens" and some extended conversations resulted during which people were surprisingly frank. I asked where people spend free time, whether they have a garden, their opinion of local open spaces, then about the community garden: were they aware of it, what did they think about it, had they considered getting involved. In Johnstown volunteers from the community project assisted as they wanted more dialogue with local people. I spoke to a small sample of people in each locality (Cwm 10, Oasis 24, Maes 15) to gain a flavour of local opinions. The views expressed soon became repetitive giving some confidence that further responses would not have brought additional insights.

REFLECTIONS

I was not sure how to be ethnographer and adapted as I went, becoming more skilled and confident at being 'nosey' about awkward things like feelings. Over time I moved further inside each garden to be accepted as – and told I was- 'one of them'. This form of relationship has been criticised for skewing research findings (Dowler 2001: 158, Mason 2002: 85) but there is no reason to assume detachment offers greater truth (Coffey 1999: 22). Personal attachments are probably inevitable during field work and providing the ethnographer retains reflexivity the benefits of closeness (Coffey 1999: 39, Grills 1998: 4) outweigh the risks. As 'personal' work ethnography always entails emotions and requires us to negotiate our identity in relation to others (Coffey 1999) so alongside garden labour I had to work at relationships and consider my impact on others. This was most awkward where there were conflicts between others so I made particular efforts to engage with everyone to avoid being associated with one faction. I listened to criticisms without offering my own, being sympathetic without colluding; I cannot be sure I succeeded but everyone continued talking to me and about each other. As a researcher who had offered confidentiality I may have become confidante, heightening my responsibility to treat others with respect.

Over the year numbers at the Maes declined which left few people to engage with; I had come to this garden last and worried that by waiting to build rapport I had missed the chance to interview gardeners who had now disappeared. However, dwindling numbers

is a common community garden experience I can learn from. The opposite challenge was deciding the boundary of inclusion: how much attention should I give other activities run by Johnstown and Abercwm associations, how far up their management chains should I go? Practical constraints of time and lack of response excluded some, otherwise I focused on those engaged in practical gardening or regularly using the space.

A continuing challenge is giving due attention to nonhumans as there is little methodological guidance on this, and I had no prior experience of researching these actors. The techniques I outlined above have helped bring nonhumans into the frame but as a relatively new area of study there is a need to develop methods for more-than-human geography. When trying to combine study of humans and nonhumans it is too often those who shout loudest who are heard.

FINDING THE PATTERNS

Taking down the bean canes: I picked at knots looking for a free end, tried ways to manoeuvre the cane to release it from the ties, working out which was most effective. I ended up with a bundle of string to sort. I pulled at pieces and wound them into loops as they eased out of the mess. Sometimes I tugged a piece and started coiling it only to find it stopped after a few inches, not worth pursuing. Longer lengths worth persevering with made fairly neat coils which I fixed with a knot. I found a flower pot to gather them but the coils kept springing out, spilling onto the floor. There was no way to get it all to stay in (fieldnotes, Cwm).

From fieldwork I had a collection of notes, interview transcripts, photographs, film, sound recordings and printed materials. The aim was to analyse this interpretatively to consider what is meaningful about community gardens and how it becomes so (Mason 2002: 149). I did not set out to test particular theories but held some in mind which may or may not resonate with my experience, developed through abductive reasoning

(Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 156). Analysis continues throughout ethnography (Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 6, Crang and Cook 2007: 133, Pink 2009: 95) and I had been revisiting materials throughout fieldwork in order to refine my attention. But I needed a dedicated phase to become familiar with and reflect on fieldwork using an ordered, systematic process whilst allowing for surprise and creativity (Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 10, Crang and Cook 2007: 132). I progressively decontextualized then recontextualised information to identify "themes and patterns" (Crang and Cook 2007: 137) seeking links to the world beyond the sites studied (Pink 2009: 120), a process of getting to know the material, looking for connections within it, and out to elsewhere.

First I sorted materials to gain familiarity and organise them whilst noting ideas to revisit; I logged all photos and recordings so I could consult them alongside other texts. I entered all materials into NVIVO which provided an "electronic filing cabinet" to aid efficiency (Fielding 2007: 466) and allow me to move between types of material. I created an annotated index of all field notes to allow me to include them in data analysis, and this was entered into NVIVO along with interview transcripts and visual materials. I used NVIVO's coding functions to link images and text to nodes identifying significant concepts. I began with a list of concepts from my research interests and added others to reflect the content being coded. This open coding (Punch 2005: 208) combining emic and etic codes (Crang and Cook 2007: 140) allowed participant meanings to speak and kept concepts rooted in field materials.

Once all materials were coded I refined the concepts by considering links between them to sort them into families and using the codes as tools to think with (Coffey and Atkinson: 32). To further familiarise myself with and think about this information I retrieved material tagged with each node (Fielding 2007: 458) and looked for patterns or irregularities, counting recurrent phenomena, listing and ranking occurrences. I reflected on coherence across cases and variation between them (Yin 2003: 135), questioning what those expressing similar ideas might have in common. I reflected on how I may have affected events in the field and what external ideas I was bringing to materials. I considered possible silences and absences: what had not been spoken about, what was I not shown? The volume of material was occasionally over-whelming but having a systematic process guided by NVIVO helped. I risked relying on more familiar text based analysis so pushed myself to consider all forms of knowledge, including nonhuman. As I developed more coherent conceptual ideas and theories I revisited materials to check for inconsistency or resonance. I played with these ideas by drawing diagrams, writing memos and thinking them over, seeking patterns and

connections (Crang and Cook 2007: 143). Some led nowhere, others led me back to particular texts and theories, some remained as puzzles or inconsistencies.

Analysis proceeded through interplay between data and initial research questions as I considered what was of interest in the coded material and revised the questions accordingly. Codes were grouped into families according to links between them (e.g. sub-categories, causal pathways) and these suggested themes by which to organise the analytic chapters. The structure for thesis chapters emerged through bringing these themes together with the research questions, by matching themes from the data to appropriate questions and dividing them into logical sections. The rigour of this process was enhanced by checking the draft text against the list of codes to ensure that no codes had been omitted from the data presented.

PRESENTING THE GARDENS

Hannah: *So that's [touching photos] kind of a summary of a year in the garden. Is there any thing missing from what makes it what it is?*

Sean: *I don't think there's – if you were to look at it as an outsider you're always gonna miss something because it's the experience of being there [...] You know there's a lot of things that I don't think you can really represent very well in a photograph that you would have to come to the garden to kind of experience (volunteer, Oasis).*

This combination of methods showed me various aspects of each garden with discussion helping me understand gardeners' motivations and participant observation and giving insight into community garden experiences and feelings. Emplaced methods meant that relationships with place and spatial processes were always apparent, generating a range of materials relevant to the research aim. The product is an ethnographic place, a text to "create routes to and bring together selected sensations, emotions, meanings, emotions, reflexivity, descriptions, arguments and theories" (Pink 2009: 134). I am now showing the gardens to others to initiate the next generation of novices. Materials communicate in different ways (Banks 2008: 40, Pink 2009: 137, Rose 2007: 10) so combining forms of 'text' reflects ethnography as bricolage (Crang and Cook 2007: 177-8) and life as fragmented and ruffled (Banks 2008: 119, Crang and Cook 2007: 184). Garden experiences are multisensory so I reach beyond words for felt embodied knowledge (Crang 2003) and use images to evoke multisensory experiences (Pink 2006, 2009, 2012: 35). I realised how images can evoke other senses during

photo elicitation at the Oasis: a picture of a snail reminded me of the sound of shells hitting the wall when Melissa threw them against it. The image prompted this memory for other volunteers, and when I suggested to John that it needed a sound effect he knew immediately which noise I meant. But no presentation takes you back to the same place (Pink 2011: 8); as Sean said photographs are not the same as being there.

As I try to write sentences which 'read well' I show images which are pleasing to look at (Crang and Cook 2007: 108). Photographs can do more than illustrate text (Hurdley 2007, Pink 2009: 137) and are equally valid sources of knowledge (Guillemin and Drew 2010: 183, Pink 2006). I use deliberately sparse captioning or separate photograph from text to encourage engagement with the image and retain some of its ambiguity (Pink 2006: 126). I hope this invites active engagement of viewer with image (Harper 2003) perhaps prompting the question 'what am I being shown?'.

My presentation of community gardens can never be a comprehensive or true account (Crang and Cook 2007: 149); multiplicity, partiality and mess are part of the story (Latham 2003, Law 2004) which is a product of my experiences and relationships (Coffey 1999: 127, Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 15, Law 2004, Pink 2009). Certain perspectives are missing so these versions of the Cwm, Maes and Oasis are from a point of view at a point in time. Bringing them into the frame of academic work I create new places which might be evocative for those who were not there (Pink 2009, 2012). I can show how they resonate with theories (Law 2004: 111) combining particular experiences with those from elsewhere to make something interesting and meaningful which conveys the kind of places these are, what they mean to people and how they might relate to other places.

IV THREE COMMUNITY GARDENS

INTRODUCTION

To show some of the multiplicity and fluxes of the three case study community gardens I offer montages of information from and about each, indicating the bricolage of knowledge through which social worlds are understood (Crang and Cook 2007: 179). A comprehensive account of each garden's characteristics is in *Appendix 2*. Some research participants are introduced here as a cross-section of people encountered at each garden; the focus is on those actively involved in gardening and prominent characters in garden-life during fieldwork. A list of all interviewees is in *Appendix 3;* all names are pseudonyms.

THE CWM

Cwm means valley for this garden sits on a valley floor in post-industrial South Wales, looked over by steep hillsides of terraced housing crowned by rough mountain tops. Although one of country's most populous regions (Jones *et al.* 2009: 28) open countryside, forest and agricultural land mix amongst ribbons of urban development (Statistics for Wales 2008). Abercwm town is one of the country's most deprived (WAG 2011) with high unemployment persistent since the decline of mining. In 2008 Abercwm Association, a community development charity, began converting a patch of wasteland to a garden as a horticultural social-enterprise. It is managed by paid employees with staff and volunteers on a range of work placement and training schemes.

> *"Abercwm Association's prestigious community greenspace project [that] has developed from a derelict overgrown wilderness into a thriving community garden" (Abercwm Association website, 2012).*

"As a local community greenspace there are a host of things to see and activities are available to local people and visitors. Whatever your interests there's something here for you!" (Information board, The Cwm 2012).

Soil

Black, gritty and coarse, loam with some clay, in places rich in green waste, pH7.The soil tells the site's history, spiky with coal, the waste of past industries as a hard darkness and glistening in a turned forkful. Digging down might reveal china and bottles dumped on the allotments which followed, or rubble fly-tipped when they closed and it became a waste ground. To support today's industry – horticulture- the soil needs enlivening with compost delivered by the truck-load.

Abercwm Association focuses on regenerating the local area through a holistic approach including efforts to improve the local environment. A community garden contributes by creating "vibrant local greenspace" and bringing "social, and economic benefits to a very deprived ward" (Association website). The Cwm is described as a resource for the community where they can gain skills or engage with the environment, with the site acquired "on behalf of the community" (leaflet). The Cwm should provide learning and conservation, be a social enterprise "providing locally grown vegetables to the local community at affordable prices" (Association website and leaflets), and offer access for walking or fishing.

An immaculate minibus picked us up for the tour, driven by Derek the manager. A huge sign just the other side of the rather ugly 6ft metal fence made it a bit more welcoming, and displayed numerous funders' logos. The place seemed huge. So many raised beds, big polytunnels of cucumbers, intricate woven string trellis for the pea plants, little picket fences. Bits looked messy or unfinished, like the empty pond. Derek pointed out the latest vandalism with a resigned shrug (fieldnotes 24.06.11).

Emailed Derek to ask about volunteering, he phoned immediately and virtually bit my hand off. He wasn't there on my first day but the other staff were friendly, bit awkward waiting whilst they chatted to the young people.

Will took me off to dig over a bed where the broccoli had finished. I felt bad pulling the plants up as they didn't look finished. Wasn't sure whether to collect up the litter as Will wasn't bothering. No toilets on site, no tea breaks. At lunch time the others discussed what they'd spend their Lottery winnings on: "I'd bulldoze this place and make a go-kart track" (fieldnotes 21.07.11).

People

On a typical day between one and four staff work on site, helped by a handful of trainees or volunteers. There are never enough regular volunteers so occasionally groups on working holidays or from local businesses are brought in to complete major tasks. Sunny days see a steady stream of local people walking through the Cwm, mostly dog-walkers or parents with pushchairs and grandparents with toddlers. In peak season a few local people call in weekly to see what produce is available to buy.

The Staff set-up changed several times over eighteen months, usually with little warning. In summer 2011 four full-time staff were employed at the garden, and a youth worker supervised groups on an alternative curriculum project. Doug was the horticultural specialist, Derek the manager, Will and Jonesy the labourers. Through the winter difficulties and tensions developed, not helped by uncertainties about funding and the prospect of redundancies.

By spring 2012 Will and Doug had moved on to other jobs. Jonesy stayed a little longer, taking charge whilst Derek was away, before being made redundant. Maggie, Arthur, Toni, Michael and others did the bulk of the work on three-month welfare-to-work placements. The garden became quite lively but tensions between staff persisted, as did the lack of plans for the future.

Late spring saw Doug's replacement Rhys gardening full time, assisted by a handful of new volunteers. Things settled down a little, but there were worrying rumours about the Association and funding.

Toni came to the garden for her welfare-to-work placement which was ideal as she loves gardening and was looking to ease back into work after illness. Straight away Derek realised how useful she was and put her in charge of planning the crops, so the polytunnels became her domain. It was a challenge to grow on such a scale for the first time, especially when things seemed so disorganised and she felt un-supported. Seeing all those crops she had grown for the first time felt good, but she was frustrated that things were messy and that nothing was being done to encourage wildlife. After her

placement ended Toni decided to come back to volunteer once a week, which meant she could do the gardening she enjoyed without having to tell others what to do, leaving the decisions to Rhys.

Graham happened upon the garden, then started volunteering and it was easy to pop down most days as his flat is so close. Having been unemployed for a couple of years he enjoyed getting out and being helpful, conscious that at his age – in his fifties- his chances of a job are not good. At first he wondered what on earth he would be able to do in a garden, knowing nothing about plants, but he was willing to try and soon took over watering and strimming. Graham's mission is to make the place look pretty so more people will come and enjoy it. He makes an effort to chat to people passing so they feel welcome. When his health deteriorated he still visited, preferring to sit in the garden amongst others to being stuck at home.

A favourite view of the Cwm

> *"It's nice down here, I like it here"* Will.

> *"It's nice and calm down here, it don't need nothing down here"* Jonesy.

> *"We spent three hours sitting here the other day. We call it our hideaway"* dog walkers.

THE MAES

A Maes is a field, an appropriate name for a garden on an organic farm just outside a rural market-town, looking across countryside to distant mountains. In 2010 a group of friends and friends-of-friends were inspired by the Transition Town movement to rent land for food growing. The host farm is organic so the garden must be; it also follows permaculture principles. The group of volunteers has registered as a Community Interest Company but operates informally with crops shared amongst anyone who helps out, and anyone welcome.

> *"Welcome to the garden. The Maes is a half-acre community garden on the edge of Maybury. It was established in 2010 by a group of local people as a way to grow food and have a beautiful space to enjoy. All sorts of different people from a diversity of backgrounds and life experience as well as age groups participate in the project" (leaflet 2012)*

> *"The garden is a hub of community activity which aims to create a beautiful and productive social space rich in biodiversity" (website 2011-12)*

The Maes' founding principle is the "desire to increase localised food production" (leaflet) as an alternative to the mainstream food economy, using minimal non-renewable resources. The group who created the garden saw a need for a public open space in Maybury so endeavoured to make a beautiful "outdoor space where people can gather". They also decided not to seek external funding at the outset, aiming for self-sufficiency and allowing the project to evolve steadily.

> *A blackboard saying 'Organic Veg' pointed me to the track. Pulled into the field and could see Simone walking over with a basketful of beans. Some holidayers arrived, amazed to be able to buy herbs- "who needs Waitrose?". Simone made coffee and we sat on the caravan step to chat about how she'd started the garden as we looked across it. It all looked really lovely in the sun, bright flowers, so much growing. Intriguing freezers for composting and milk cooling in terracotta flower pots. A couple of other people strolled up from town and joined us, asked what to do and went off to weed. Simone said to bring my dog next time, "if you want to come again that is". I was immediately taken with the place and said I'd like to (fieldnotes 27.08.11).*

Soil

Red Devonian sandstone, silty clay, stony, certified organic, pH 6.8. This soil is a gift, a fertile alluvium given by years of flooding, careful husbandry, and generous clover. The gardeners describe it as their precious resource to be conserved and replenished with nutritious composts and manures as each year crops take more out of the ground. The crumbly soil says we are *here* as it is not the sticky clay of further up the river and is redder than surrounding valleys. The loose texture is a reminder to water the beds for there as the last downpours have already drained down to the river below.

People

Many times I visited the Maes it was just Simone and me gardening. A friend might call by for a chat or to help for half an hour, then a customer may stop to see what was on offer. But Simone was often there alone or with one or two volunteers who came once a week in spring and summer. It had been different in the first two years with more regular helpers and work days when as many as 20 people attended. But these took effort to organise and peoples' enthusiasm seemed to be fading.

Simone dreamt up the idea of the Maes and remains its driving force. She was frustrated that the town's Transition group was doing nothing practical, and knew that lots of other places had fantastic community projects. She grew up on a farm helping with gardening so has the practical knowledge. She would much rather work in the garden than at her job in town, but cannot survive from gardening at the moment, although she no longer needs to buy vegetables.

Simone spends up to three days a week at the Maes, and has become over-whelmed by the responsibility. She has asked friends for support, but would really like a couple of other like minded people to put in as much as she does. She is proud of what she started, and loves seeing people working together but worries that it is not ideal, too centred on her. She hopes that more formal systems and funding will help, and maybe it will be possible to pay her to garden so she could focus on working the land.

Rob helped Simone get things going, contributing money and labour. He is not really a gardener and sees the Maes more as an opportunity for people to connect with each other, not just superficially but at a deeper level which he sees as an essential human need. He knows that any group will have its conflicts, and when friction developed between him and Simone he felt it best to step back and give her space. Now he sees that she needs more support and will try to be more involved. In Rob's mind the garden should be allowed to develop steadily along its natural course, not seeking to attract people – just let them come.

Anne-Marie retired to Maybury a couple of years ago and one of the first things she did was go to the Maes. She has always enjoyed being outdoors and previously grew her own food, but it would be too much work and commitment for her to have an allotment so the Maes is perfect. As she lives alone it is nice to work with other people, and she can do what she is asked without making any decisions. She thinks it is a beautiful place and regrets that she has had so little time to be there this year, especially as she knows Simone needs help.

A favourite view of the Maes

"Sitting by the caravan, doing nothing" Rob.

"Outside the caravan, perhaps with a mug of coffee and viewing everything. Just enjoying it, enjoying what we've done and what it's turned into" Anne-Marie.

"This view from here, with Maybury in the back ground and the hills, says it all to a large extent I think" Bill.

THE OASIS

Hidden behind a shabby row of inner-city buildings is a garden people call an oasis as it is a tiny walled space, unseen from the street. The surrounding neighbourhood, Johnstown, is one of the 150 most deprived wards in Wales (WAG 2011) with an ethnically mixed population described as transient. Following community consultation Johnstown Community Project converted an empty space behind its centre into a garden for community groups to use. The intention was always for staff to hand management to volunteers who are now responsible for maintaining the garden.

> *"Johnstown Community Garden. A space for the local community including school groups to learn about growing food and try it out for themselves" (leaflet, 2011).*

> *"Gardening Club provides you with a great opportunity to meet like minded people who share your enthusiasm or interest for gardening, it's a warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere with a relaxed and sociable approach to maintaining and improving our beautiful garden. We can't wait to meet you!" (newsletter article, 2012).*

Johnstown Community Association focuses on community development with environment as one stream of its work which is supported by government funding for regeneration. The idea for a community garden emerged from consultation regarding ways to use space behind the community centre to convert vacant space into somewhere useful for groups using the centre, whilst helping local residents "lead a greener life" (Association management plan).

Soil

Light coloured, lumpy, thin clay-loam, rocky and containing building debris, pH 7.8. This is a thin stony layer over a substrate of recent urban archaeology-bricks, concrete, waste somehow associated with the surrounding buildings acting as barriers to roots and labour. In patches nothing seems to grow, hinting at remnants in the ground beneath. Deep fertile areas made in containers or raised beds filled with purchased organic goodness or worked by the labour of sifting hands and churning worms make the ground soft and yielding.

The community centre is in a drab bleak terrace, noisy dirty street. I thought twice about leaving my bike outside. Lots going on inside, everyone was really friendly, including Megan the employee I was meeting. You'd never guess the garden was at the back, you can only get to it through the centre. Going through the back door Megan pointed out the 'before' photo next to it, a nice reminder of the gravel dead-space it used to be.

For a cold grey January day the tiny garden looked nice: lavender just holding on, pink rhubarb tips emerging, and robust looking broccoli heads. Megan described the various events they run and some plans for expanding. It was hard to imagine all this activity going on when there was no sign of anyone, no one passing by or looking in, the only hint of other people being the large table surrounded by chairs (fieldnotes 26.01.11).

My first gardening club. A small core-group obviously knew each other already, some new members. Em (staff) was nominally in charge but it was all very informal, her catch phrase "it's up to you". She let us drift off to work when we felt like it. It got dark and cold once the sun sank behind the buildings so we packed up. I went home, hands smelling of new rubbery gloves (fieldnotes 27.03.11).

People

Gardening happens on a weekend afternoon when between two and six volunteers spend a few hours working, although sometimes there are more breaks than work. A couple of times each year the group organises social events to encourage others along and celebrate what they have done. On weekdays other groups from the community centre spill out into the garden to sit, smoke or in the case of children to play.

John and Sean are old friends, both in their thirties and working in the city. Neither lives near Johnstown, they came to the garden to help Megan, an old friend. They started coming regularly to do a gardening course; Sean wanted to learn, John came to socialise. But over the year they both got more involved and became part of the management committee, keen to get the garden back into shape after a year of neglect. They took over running weekly gardening sessions, and were rewarded with a volunteer award. They know that one of them has to be there so others can garden, which is fine as it makes them feel better to get out and do something.

John was determined to win an In Bloom award so was instrumental in planting more flowers. He is still far from an expert gardener and gets frustrated waiting for things to grow. He defers to Sean who is officially in charge of garden club and spends his spare time researching gardening. Both like going to the garden if only to sit chatting, drinking endless cups of tea accompanied by as many cigarettes. They are incredibly proud of the garden, their one regret that more local people are not involved. Both would balk at being described as greenies, they make fun of Melissa for loving weeds, and both love cars.

Melissa has her own garden at home, not far from the Oasis. She works for an environmental organisation which means working outdoors amongst the wildlife she has always been interested in. She has done various gardening courses and got involved in the community centre to stop being lazy and do something useful. She now prefers gardening at the community garden because her own is too messy, and it is nice to spend time with different people.

Ideally Melissa would fill the Oasis with herbs for medicinal and culinary use. She was really pleased the meadow attracted lots of bees and insects, and was disappointed when people started using bug-sprays. She argued against this but accepts majority rule, particularly as she does not want to take on any responsibility.

Sally is the longest standing volunteer, a stalwart of the community centre environment group. She got involved to boost her CV after graduating, but has always believed that if something needs doing why not help it happen. The others tell her she spends too much time volunteering. She is happy others are taking over some responsibility but still steps in when others let the administration slip. Sally has picked up a fair amount of gardening knowledge, and is confident to get on with things without asking. She is keen that children learn in the garden and runs sessions for them to grow things.

Anj, Megan and Tom work for Johnstown Community Association which aims to make it a better area to live in. They leave the volunteers to run the garden, but can offer support as necessary. They use the garden most regularly as it is just outside their office and is perfect for cigarette and tea breaks, or –weather permitting- for meetings.

A favourite view of the Oasis

"Those flowers, I've never seen such an array of colours" Anj.

"I just like seeing all the flowers and the plants and it just makes me feel you know, it's nice that we've created this little haven" Melissa.

"That is the main focal point but also the most changing part of the garden, and probably the most part that when new people come along that they'll have the most influence on" Sean.

Hannah was drawn to gardening through a love of food and being outdoors. She knew a bit about gardening but learns from other volunteers, who in turn ask her advice. Hannah told everyone of her other reason to go to community gardens: she was researching them and wanted to understand as an insider. She enjoyed becoming part of the gardens and meeting people she would not have other wise. Autumn 2012 she had to return to the office, reluctant to say goodbye she still visits the gardens occasionally.

V HOW COMMUNITY GARDENS ARE MADE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on how and why community gardens are made, to redress the neglect of activities and processes in accounts of community gardens and present place making in practice. I have argued that places as temporary gatherings of trajectories of motion (Ingold 2008, Massey 2005) are sometimes purposefully selected and ordered by *bringing* movements together. Following Ingold's description of how taskscapes are made by skilled agents dwelling together I consider the making of three community gardens through various skilled activities. By shaping motion for a purpose gardeners and others make traces and direct movements which coalesce as a place with a certain character.

The first question I address is why people are moved to make community gardens, to better understand individuals' motivations and how these differ from those expected according to the literature. I then compare these to organisational objectives and consider potential conflicts. In this discussion it will become apparent that the three gardens have varying approaches to place making which particularly influence how decisions are made, hence who feels they have control. These sections address my first research question as they focus on why people are involved, with subsequent sections focusing on the second question presenting how gardens are made. I highlight various kinds of skill as actors move things into place and shape the movement of others. This discussion elaborates on the nature of skill, and demonstrates how it can apply to humans and nonhumans, moving materials or ideas. I show how the resulting forms shape motion through the gardens particularly through the making of paths and boundaries, a theme to be developed in chapter VI. Finally, I examine forces working against the gardeners' wishes or beyond their control - pests, weeds and vandals - and what the treatment of these reveals about relationships between gardeners and others. Although I present these as distinct phases they are never discrete or in strict sequence.

Together the discussion and examples in this chapter present how community gardens are made, demonstrating consistencies and divergences across the three case studies. It will be apparent that location in rural, urban or semi-urban location is not as significant in determining the character of each place as the objectives for the garden

and the gardeners' ideals. In presenting the kind of places these gardens are we will start to see how they comprise various qualities of motion which feel different and afford particular experiences.

BEING MOVED TO MAKE A COMMUNITY GARDEN

To understand how community gardens are made is to start from what moves people to make such places or brings them to a garden. Introducing each garden I outlined the objectives which drove its creation, but the reasons individuals become involved can be quite diverse. This variety influences what type of place people hope to make and how the process of place making is envisaged as I demonstrate by drawing out some differences between the three gardens. In this section I discuss why people become involved and their collective aims for the gardens.

Bringing people to the garden: gardeners' motivations

> **Bill:** *it's nice just to have a bit of company with a few people, just for a while. Feel like you're getting out in the fresh air (volunteer, Maes).*
>
> ---
>
> **Sean:** *There's a couple of things I enjoy, most of it's just being outdoors but umm I also enjoy learning about how to grow stuff and ...and I ... I dunno, I just like keeping busy, [...] having a laugh, meeting people, messing about (volunteer, Oasis).*
>
> ---
>
> **Sally:** *I think I do it because I like to see...I like to see... projects that positively impact other people's lives succeed. And it makes me really sad when they don't purely because maybe something that could've easily been done by somebody had they had the time, doesn't get done (volunteer, Oasis).*

As the profiles in Chapter IV show people have varied reasons for community gardening: to meet people, to get fit, to learn about gardening. All volunteers noted more than one motivation and some altered over time. Such idiosyncratic motives are difficult to categorise but there was a consistent response when I asked why people community garden: because they enjoy it. What brought people to their community garden was very individual but what keeps them involved is the common experience of enjoying positive feelings. Volunteers choose to spend free time community gardening because it is pleasurable, it helps them to 'feel good'. Each may find different aspects of

the experience rewarding but the emphasis is on positive feelings attained through involvement. The experience of those with less choice about being there is distinct as I discuss later.

What people enjoy about community gardens includes the activities, the environment and the people in various combinations with varying degrees of emphasis. When asked what keeps them involved the most common response from volunteers was the opportunity to socialise, spending time with the other gardeners. For John:

> *one of the biggest draws to it is the social aspect, I like that, I like being able to come down here with a purpose, but at the same time being able to come down here and talk to other people, you know have a chat and just enjoy that social element of it as well (volunteer, Oasis).*

Sarah, a new volunteer at the Maes does not want to go there on her own as "there's no point, the point of it is that it's a social activity." She joked about not doing enough gardening because of enjoying socialising, a sentiment echoed by Melissa who is one of the Oasis' regular volunteers. She has her own garden – as did all volunteers at the Oasis and Cwm- but gardening somewhere else means being with other people. In fact "it's not just all about gardening see" Sean explains: "you can come along and just have a chat and a cup of tea and just enjoy being outside with people you don't really know very well, pretty good". Graham (Cwm) and Anne-Marie (Maes) both noted that as they live alone going to their community garden offers a chance for company, conversation and being with others which is pleasurable. A few volunteers noted the benefit of these as collective enterprises which allow them to leave the responsibility they do not want to others. This is a distinction from home gardens which can be places to seek refuge from other people (Bhatti and Church 2004). For Bill, Sarah and Simone (Maes) this is not an option as they lack home gardens, whilst Anne-Marie's health and lifestyle prevent her using hers for growing food (Maes). Otherwise lack of garden space was not a motivating factor, highlighting that the social characteristics of community gardens are significant (Glover *et al.* 2005, Kingsley *et al.* 2009, Teig *et al.* 2009).

The Maes and Oasis attract people to events with special activities such as learning a craft or celebrating Halloween; with food provided for attendees these are fun occasions with less emphasis on completing work. Some people only visited the gardens for such events, suggesting that pleasure and socialising are their prime motivations. Sunny days and milder seasons proved the most popular times to visit the three community gardens with volunteers noting that the bad summers of 2011-12 seemed to deter involvement. Although staff at the Cwm could not avoid gardening in inclement weather they would try to find indoor tasks to avoid the worst. Seasonal variation will

be discussed further in the next chapter, but it is worth noting that climate affected participation with more pleasant weather encouraging gardening as this suggests that discomfort is a de-motivation.

Another significant source of pleasure is that people enjoy gardening, with different aspects contributing to this as a motivation. By going to the garden they are 'doing something' so not being lazy or bored, "keeping busy" as Sean put it; for Graham volunteering is "something to do you know rather than sit on your back side". But it is not just any activity, it is outdoors, with the chance for some 'fresh air' commonly cited as enjoyable. Claire said of her time at the Oasis:

> When I come down here I love it…Its just …oh its hard to say actually. I like coming down here coz it's like something different to do for me. […] I do enjoy being outside and for me working outside- I don't always get to do it very often and I've always loved doing that (volunteer).

Sally finds she starts to feel "a little bit antsy" at home and needs to get out somewhere green so goes to the Oasis which is more relaxing than Johnstown's other greenspaces.

The obvious distinction between the gardens and other greenspaces is the opportunity for pleasurable physical work. In John's words:

> I've always said gardening can be therapeutic. And I think it is in the sense that it does help when you're feeling a bit crap, to do a bit of gardening. (volunteer, Oasis)

Sarah uses the same term explaining what is good about the Maes:

> I think there's something about nurturing and I think in terms of mental health and sort of therapeutic benefits of growing, it's something about nurturing something and seeing things come up (volunteer).

Previous studies suggest that this therapeutic effect comes from the power of nature, as discussed in chapter III, so is this motivating volunteers? Sarah, Anne-Marie and Simone (Maes) expressed a belief that community gardening is important for experiencing contact with nature and felt that the connection through gardening is more profound than with other outdoor activities. Volunteers elsewhere did not cite a desire for contact with nature although Sally (Oasis) thinks humans need to access greenspace. Melissa emphasised how she has always enjoyed being amongst wildlife and likes the opportunity to continue this in a city by going to the Oasis. It may be that some people were uncomfortable to express such a desire, for instance John's reluctance to explain the therapy of gardening: "I mean I might get all spiritual and say maybe it's being close to nature or something. But that's not me. Maybe it is but." Bill, Rob, Anne-Marie, Simone and Sarah, all the rural gardeners, spoke of wanting to

connect to, have contact with, or be closer to nature through gardening which counters the expectation that a rift from nature is an urban phenomenon. For no volunteer was contact with nature, wildlife or greenspace the sole motivation. It is difficult to disentangle what some term reconnection to nature from the complex of what they enjoy about community gardening - the achievement of growing things, being somewhere beautiful- and claim one as most significant.

Some are motivated by helping others, the pleasure Graham takes thinking he can "make a difference" at the Cwm. Melissa thinks the idea she is "sort of giving something back" through the Oasis keeps her motivated as she gains "the sense of achievement that I'd actually got off my bum and done something useful". For some gardeners the motivation is as much the possibility to benefit the environment, perhaps by growing their own food. All those involved at the Maes mentioned this, so Anne-Marie expresses a common sentiment:

> I thought it was an extremely good idea to err to eat erm locally, to use what
> you had in your own area. I don't think it's a good idea to – all this trucking
> and flying for thousands or hundreds of miles (volunteer).

This was not significant at the other gardens, although Sally did see growing food at the Oasis as part of her effort to "try and be as sustainable as possible". Environmental motivations were less prevalent at the Oasis and the Cwm, with Melissa the only other volunteer driven by a nonhuman interest: "I love plants, I love wildlife and you know the fact that you can actually grow things to encourage wildlife into your garden."

Being motivated to help others and the environment shows that 'feeling good' through community gardening is a complicated combination of focus on the self and selflessness. The desire for pleasure and enjoyment from being active outdoors shows community gardens as places to seek hedonic wellbeing as experiences of pleasure and positive feelings (Conradson 2012: 16, Reid and Hunter 2011: 2). But they also provide the opportunity to gain satisfaction from doing something useful for others. The benefits for individual and collective tangle together and reinforce each other as publicly minded altruism is partially a self-centred hedonism (Soper 2007), what volunteers give and receive are inseparable (Cloke *et al.* 2005). Simone suspects certain volunteers help out to prevent guilt at the thought of leaving her too much to do. She thinks some may also be involved in order to gain "kudos" from being involved which suggests that altruistic acts may be motivated by self-image as much as selflessness.

Community gardening goes beyond momentary hedonism when volunteers focus on longer-term satisfaction. One of Sean's motivations was to "kind of learn how to plant and propagate and things" because "it might help me a little bit that way kind of because I've decided to change career" (Oasis). Simone is similarly interested in her own development and:

> sense of personal growth that it's giving me in doing this project. There's a satisfaction in that, in that I'm learning things and I'm not just stuck in one place (volunteer, Maes).

Such goals bring pleasure but have a broader time-scale: the desire to learn, enhance health and fitness, satisfaction from being part of a project through working hard. They represent euadaimonia distinct from hedonia in their perspective beyond the moment which allows momentary negative experiences to be endured *en route* to happiness (Conradson 2012, Reid and Hunter 2011: 2). Eudaimonia highlights that longer-term experiences of 'feeling good' can include times when community gardeners 'feel bad'.

Over time involvement results in a sense of commitment as John found:

> *I've become more involved in it because the more I've been coming down here the more umm, the greater sense of ownership I think you develop umm and the more you do the more you want to come and look after what you've done (Oasis).*

This is not necessarily unpleasant but it can shift a volunteer's motivation as I discussed with Simone at a time she felt the garden had become a burden:

> **Hannah:** *So what's kept you going then? Why have you kept coming?*
>
> **Simone:** *Don't have a choice. It's my responsibility.*
>
> **Hannah:** *Well you do have a choice really. You could just stop.*
>
> **Simone:** *Well yes I do have a choice. I couldn't do that, I couldn't just stop.*
>
> **Hannah:** *Why not?*
>
> **Simone:** *… I would let myself down, I would let everybody down. I would … sort of in a funny way to put it, I would be throwing away two, three years of work, my own, plus a lot of other peoples'. There is something here to be built on.*

Simone's feelings of duty towards the Maes show that motivation is not a simple case of free choice even for volunteers with no obligation to participate. A sense of commitment towards others can seem to reduce one's control over being a community gardener, so the pleasures become tainted or constrained by expectations.

This paradox brings me to a distinct group of community gardeners who further blur the boundary between choice and duty. What some called 'coerced volunteers'

participate at the Cwm in return for incentives such as driving lessons, or as part of a rehabilitation programme for long-term hospital patients. Young people excluded from school were placed there for alternative learning opportunities, whilst unemployed people could join a welfare-to-work programme. Each of these cohorts had varying degrees of choice about their participation; the young people and unemployed had to do some form of placement but they had selected the Cwm and gardening from the options. Many 'coerced volunteers' found pleasure and satisfaction in community gardening and did more than the minimum commitments required of them. Michael thought he might volunteer after his placement because "it's like something to do, get out the house" and he enjoys the chance to "make conversation with any one really".

The experience of staff at the Cwm further demonstrates that voluntary involvement is not a pre-requisite for enjoying community gardening: they like outdoor work so were motivated to seek this particular employment. For Dog and Rhys gardening is "a vocation", something they had trained for, are good at and enjoy. Will much prefers outdoor work and Jonesy finds the garden better than other place he has worked:

> I used to ... work on sites innit, big noisy sites, tractors, JCBs going around the site. A lot a men shouting. Down here you don't see none of it, it's nice and quiet, peaceful.

Whilst staff at the Cwm were not strictly *motivated* to be there by the pursuit of pleasure enjoying the garden and being with colleagues is important to them. In a sense they *have* to work there, it is their job, they need an income, and if the Cwm closed, Jonesy adds: "you can't think about 'oh I'll miss it' you've got to go and find more work". But it is important to staff that they enjoy their work and being in the garden, like volunteers they noted the pleasure of being outdoors, the relaxing nature of gardening and camaraderie.

This discussion illustrates that there are many aspects which make community gardening enjoyable, with a clear emphasis on gardeners being motivated by the opportunity for positive experiences; these are places people seek for the chance to 'feel good'. As Sally said of the Oasis people come seeking whatever it is that they love and "the benefits are whatever you wanna get out of it". I shall examine how community gardens feel good in the next chapter, but first it is worth considering the implications of individuals' motivations for the collective enterprise of making a community garden. The emphasis on personal pleasures and rewards could imply Pudup is right to suggest community gardens are now about transforming individuals not collective action (2008). For these volunteers motivations associated with the self are more prominent than the desire to benefit others or the environment suggesting that personal wellbeing

dominates collective good, but I have suggested it is not easy to separate the two. As I shall demonstrate in chapter VII certain individuals see their own wellbeing as related to that of others including nonhumans so there is no distinction between individual and collective goals (Clavin 2011: 948); Pudup implies a clear separation between individual and collective transformation which is not easily drawn, however individual and collective aspirations are not necessarily aligned. There is potential for conflict as whilst volunteers emphasised the opportunity for enjoyment none of the gardens have this as a stated objective. There is a risk that gardens fail to provide the good feelings which motivate involvement (Rosol 2011: 247), or of conflicts between organisational and volunteer objectives. Whilst as Sally suggested, it might be a strength that community gardens can offer many benefits (Draper and Freedman 2010, Holland 2004) these can be difficult to balance and may prove incompatible (Kurtz 2001: 667, Lawson 2005: 11, Pearson and Firth 2012: 154). The extent to which this is problematic will be seen to depend on the degree of flexibility and volunteer input.

There are signs that organisational objectives do not resonate with gardeners, and that they are not impacting individuals in the way envisaged. Abercwm Association states provision of affordable local food in its objectives for the Cwm but no volunteers noted this as a benefit of involvement or stated food issues as a motivation. Johnstown Association saw the Oasis as an opportunity to engage people in environmental issues but only one volunteer included this as a reason for involvement. These projects use food growing to deliver other goals (Holland 2004: 303) such as training provision. For the Maes there is no body beyond the group of volunteers so its collective ideals are those they agree, but the other two cases demonstrate that motivations and benefits reported by organisations do not always equate those on the ground. This suggests that studies not directly engaging with garden volunteers may not accurately reflect gardeners' motivations. For example a recent survey in Wales asked representatives what they think motivates community gardeners, the top two answers were meeting people and improving wellbeing (WRO 2012: 27). My findings could be interpreted to accord with this but 'wellbeing' is not necessarily the same as enjoyment and does not convey the range of feelings volunteers described. This may be symptomatic of the difficulty of capturing the essence of community gardening in terms which make a difference to policy (Donati *et al.* 2010: 211).

I have already questioned the assumption that reconnection with nature is behind the recent interest in community gardening (Bartlett 2005, Firth *et al.* 2011, Guitart *et al.* 2012, McClintock 2010, Turner 2011) and shown that the drivers are likely to be more varied and complex. It is worth noting the absence of other motivations identified in

previous studies as this illustrates the variety of community garden experiences. Food politics is not as explicit a driver as suggested by links made to alternative food movements (Baker 2004, Corrigan 2011, Evers and Hodgson 2011, Lekvoe 2006, Turner 2011). This may reflect a difference between the USA and UK where community gardens seem to have food issues as a lower priority (Holland 2004: 297). Only gardeners at the Maes expressed a desire for alternative food sourcing. Even here no participants cited the garden helping them access *enough* food, just *good* food, suggesting they are not assisting with food security (*contra* Metcalf *et al.* 2012, Wills *et al.* 2009). Whilst there are people living near the Oasis and Cwm on low incomes alternative food projects can struggle to engage this target group (Franklin *et al.* 2011). For the Maes I would be reluctant to agree that community gardeners become more engaged food citizens (Baker 2004, Lekvoe 2006) as the gardeners were already aware of problems with the mainstream food system hence their wish to grow local organic food. Other than this implicit critique of the status quo political drivers for participation were not apparent; these gardeners are not engaged in the fraught contests over space reported elsewhere (Martinez 2009, Schmelzkopf 2002, Staeheli *et al.* 2002). Gardeners expressed no rights agendas or assertion of resistance (*contra* Eizenberg 2011, Baker 2004, Irazábal and Punja 2009, Severson 1995). Although the Cwm and Maes are in deprived areas similar to those discussed by Milbourne (2009, 2011) participants did not interpret these gardens as attempts to restore social justice. Community development is an objective for the organisations behind these two gardens but they expect this to be achieved by bringing people to the garden, not through a ripple effect out into the neighbourhood (Teig *et al.* 2009). Gardeners see the community benefit as offering local people a garden to enjoy, as shall be explored in more detail later.

A final motivation not acknowledged in the literature is self-perpetuation as community gardening begets community gardening. As noted above my research took place at a time of proliferation and significant promotion of community growing. Gardeners noted this on occasion, with Simone suggesting it could be encouraging people to volunteer as they want to be part of something currently "trendy". Those working across numerous projects expressed the sense that community gardens were experiencing a surge of interest: Rachel sensed "a real buzz" (designer, Oasis), Ruth said in recent years "they've been flavour of the month" hence the funding organisation she works for is supporting many more. She mentioned various TV programmes encouraging people to garden, as did Emilie who works for a community growing network which has dramatically expanded to meet interest. She identified factors converging to make this "the right time" for lots of people to want to get involved. She

noted wide-ranging organisations looking to capitalise on the potential of garden projects and the funding available, as did Em who works for an environmental charity involved with the Oasis. These discussions suggest that greater recognition draws organisations and individuals to community gardening, creating more opportunities and an air of excitement around them. As discussed in chapter VII this does not appeal to everyone (Colasanti *et al.* 2012) so community gardening will never make everyone feel good.

Ideals for place making

Having established what brings individuals to community gardening I will consider how this shapes them. Given the strong motivation gardeners have to 'feel good' one would expect this to be influential in what community gardens are like, and that those which cannot offer this lack participants. Comparison of the Oasis and the Cwm suggests this is the case: a model of participatory place making allows flexibility at the Oasis whilst a focus on the final form limits this at the Cwm. On the surface the gardens' aims are quite similar as both arose from community development and opportunities to make multi-functional greenspaces on derelict land. Community consultation exercises generated a list of features people wanted at the Oasis which Rachel was employed to incorporate into a design:

> *there were lots of things and within that list it needed to be designed so that everything looked good and it was all there, in quite a small space.*

The result is a garden which, according to Sally is "a massively multipurpose space that's used in so many different varieties of ways that it'd be almost impossible to list them all" (volunteer). For the Cwm Derek (manager) wants to "have something of everything" to meet its wide-ranging objectives. The association had numerous functions in mind and to fit them in required a plan which Doug described:

> *The area where we're sitting now is going to be sort of a more parky sort of area with a bit more open space and grass and err places to sit […] and then as you walk further on down through the site you come into the horticulture zone where we grow all the vegetables and we're sort of trying to concentrate all the growing in that area. […] And then the next area further on down from that will be a bit more of a sort of erm wilder, more sort of a conservation area with sort of trees and err stuff, yeah more indigenous plants sort of stuff, a bit more wild (staff).*

Both gardens were designed to accommodate numerous functions to meet varying community development objectives, making pleasant greenspaces in order to 'tick

many boxes' for the organisations (Pearson and Firth 2012: 151). Yet their ideals are not the same so they measure success differently and approach place making differently, resulting in places which feel very different as we shall see.

Abercwm Association refers to the Cwm as 'prestigious' and 'award winning' as they seek "a sort of high profile environmental project" according to Derek. In ten years it should "emulate best practice from across the sector" and "be on a par with the best that's out there in south Wales". For the Cwm to be the best and offer numerous activities requires a detailed design to shape gardeners' actions and achieve the desired end product. Derek says community participation is not yet a priority as the Association will make the garden then "see who we can get in the community to adopt it". He often referred to the garden as a resource for the local community provided for them to use. This is place making to create an end product, as illustrated by this discussion:

> **Hannah:** *So what would you say the idea behind this place is? What's the aim of it? Or aims?*
>
> **Rhys:** *Mm. Good question … Erm. Used – you know it's a very good question that, very good question. What is the point? What is the aim in the Cwm? As far as I'm concerned it's to have a um – well my funding's from Countryside Wales I think. I don't know who funds it, I'll find that out.*
>
> **Hannah:** *[names funder]?*
>
> **Rhys:** *No, [names another funder] they fund us to actually improve the riparian – a big part is the ecological side of it so we've got a wetland area so it's a riparian environment, means bank in Latin. So that's a big part of it. But once again the back bone will always have to be the production, because that's what – when that funding runs out in a year or so's time, they can keep the place going only if you're making money. So the ecological side of it and the wetland areas are great but they don't make any thing do they?*
>
> **Hannah:** *So is that what you see as the aim then, that it's got to be -*
>
> **Rhys:** *It's got to be long- term to have a self-sustaining one job at least. It's got to be the aim.*

It is revealing that Rhys - who had at this point been working for Abercwm Association for almost five years - struggled to identify the Cwm's aims. More significant is his conclusion that the goal of the garden is to keep it going, its continued existence being an end in itself. The pressure to be the best and emphasis on the end product affects the process of place making. Making the garden requires volunteers who will only

participate if they want to, yet more than one person told me that they had planned to volunteer after their welfare-to-work placement but were deterred by bad feelings on site. One said:

> *I wanted to help community, an organisation is my only priority […] but it seems they only sort of use you rather than – I don't know, you don't get any appreciation.*

The need to maintain income and associated requirements undoubtedly create some of this pressure, particularly as Derek noted it is always easier to fund capital works than maintenance and engagement activities. Staff have begun to question whether the "micro-management" approach to creating the Cwm was mistaken from the outset. Although other organisations have used a similar approach (Eizenberg 2012) some suggest that bottom-up processes are more successful in the long term (Holland 2004: 303, Irvine *et al.* 1999, Milburn and Adams Vail 2010, Pearson and Firth 2012: 150). Offering a well developed site is no guarantee that people will become involved (Lawson 2004: 170, Milburn and Adams Vail 2010: 79), something Emilie and Em are concerned about as more organisations make community gardens without necessarily starting from a local need.

In contrast the Oasis seems able to offer volunteers a range of pleasures and flexibility to gain what they seek, which seems to be important to volunteers (Cloke *et al.* 2005: 1099). This is possible because the garden was founded through community development which typically has an ethos of empowerment (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004: 400). Tom and Megan see their role as community development workers as encouraging people to come forward with ideas then offering support to achieve them. For the garden Tom explained:

> *Well we've got the gardening club now so we let them own it. I mean they're going for the In Bloom this year so there's a lot more flowers and its looking really pretty. But our job over all is about empowering individuals and groups within the community so you know if they want to do that and are happy to then we take a step back.*

Success is measured by whether people use the community garden and are engaged in making it, its form is less significant. Volunteers decide what the place is like:

> ***Megan:*** *I am in love with it as a space, it's got its foibles but it makes people happy and that's kind of the purpose of it. There's always opportunities to do so much more with it which is an exciting thing, it's never going to have an end.*
>
> ***Hannah:*** *Yeah, that's true. And as you say, different people'll want to do different -*

> **Megan:** *Different things. It'll change the next group of people that get*
> *involved. [...] I'd like to see the development come from the*
> *volunteers that give time, they give their time they should have*
> *reign to say 'I want to do this' or 'we need this'.*

Rachel designed a low-maintenance garden but it has evolved to give the current volunteers more work to do, and now looks little like her original drawings. The garden is not an end in itself and will never have an end, it is the process of participating which is important. As will become apparent a less 'top down' approach seems to encourage a sense of ownership (Eizenberg 2012, Irvine *et al.* 1999: 42, Lawson 2005: 300). The emphasis on process not product is apparent in the group's plans to spread from the Oasis to garden across Johnstown; their goals are not confined to a site, they aim to benefit people and will work however best achieves this.

The origin of the Maes is different again and driven by difference; the wish to create an alternative results in a third approach to place making. Compared to the other gardens there is a relatively singular goal voiced by everyone I spoke to: producing food somewhere beautiful, sociable and diverse. Translating this vision into a place is guided by permaculture, a philosophy for environmentally sustainable design strongly associated with gardening (Clavin 2011, Holmgren 2002, Pinkerton and Hopkins 2009). Permaculture seeks self-sufficiency by integrating multifunctional features as Rachel - who teaches permaculture - outlined:

> *It's thinking about things in a holistic way, it's thinking about things not in*
> *isolation so that things are interconnected and so that can mean anything*
> *from you know inter-connecting plants and animals and wildlife into your*
> *design, or it can mean also how you inter-connect elements within a*
> *community as well. So it's about um integrated design, its about um ...*
> *essentially um... it's about thinking how you can make something better and*
> *stronger and more fit for purpose by incorporating lots of connections.*

Different elements mingle at the Maes and Simone extends this so there should be "diversity of people as well". The project seeks self-sufficiency as Simone says "we set the garden up without any external funding hoping that it would be self sustaining, that we didn't have to have any external input to set it up or to keep it going." Rob agrees: "it's just grown, yeah. I mean it's not saying 'come on this is wonderful come along', it's just being there and people come any way." The garden and its form evolve organically, developing to suit the conditions it finds with no particular vision of the end form. This too is place making as process, taking the Oasis' vision further so it is not just volunteers who can adapt the garden as it flexes with natural processes. The combination of letting the garden evolve as it will, and seeking an inclusive community

leaves space for volunteers to 'feel good' which can be lacking at the Cwm, but as we shall see volunteers drift away for other reasons.

These three examples show how visions for a community garden vary with different organisational aims (Beilin and Hunter 2011: 533) and by adapting to local conditions (Pearson and Firth 2012: 153). Each community garden has its own approach to place making: treating the garden as an end product, focusing on the process of making it, or letting the place evolve as it will. It does not seem to be the garden's location -urban or rural - which determines these differences, rather the group's objectives and aspirations. These ideals have implications for how the three gardens are planned, the forms they take, and how people relate to them as shall become apparent.

Figure 1: Garden Jobs

This image lists jobs worked on at the three gardens according to those mentioned in my fieldnotes. Whilst not comprehensive and reflecting how I chose to label different work, it indicates the variety of tasks most often undertaken with relative text size indicating frequency of mentions. Note all are verbs, indicating the varying forms of motion comprising place making as various things are brought together and moved around. (Image created at wordle.net)

SKILLS OF PLACE MAKING

People are moved to make a garden, they must then imagine how it should be and bring things together into appropriate forms. In this section I will consider how these places are made by skilled actors directing motion towards a goal. First I consider the materials and spatial forms shaped to make gardens where motion is organised into certain patterns. Then I apply the same notion of skill to the movement of ideas and finance through planning as the more representational work of place making. This introduces issues of who has control as decisions must be made about how things will be brought together. It will become apparent that the varied approaches to place making result in places of distinct character as boundaries and paths channel movements in different manners. This section focuses on human aspects of place making, with the next covering nonhuman skills; it considers the more deliberate efforts involved but things often go awry as I will show in the final section of this chapter.
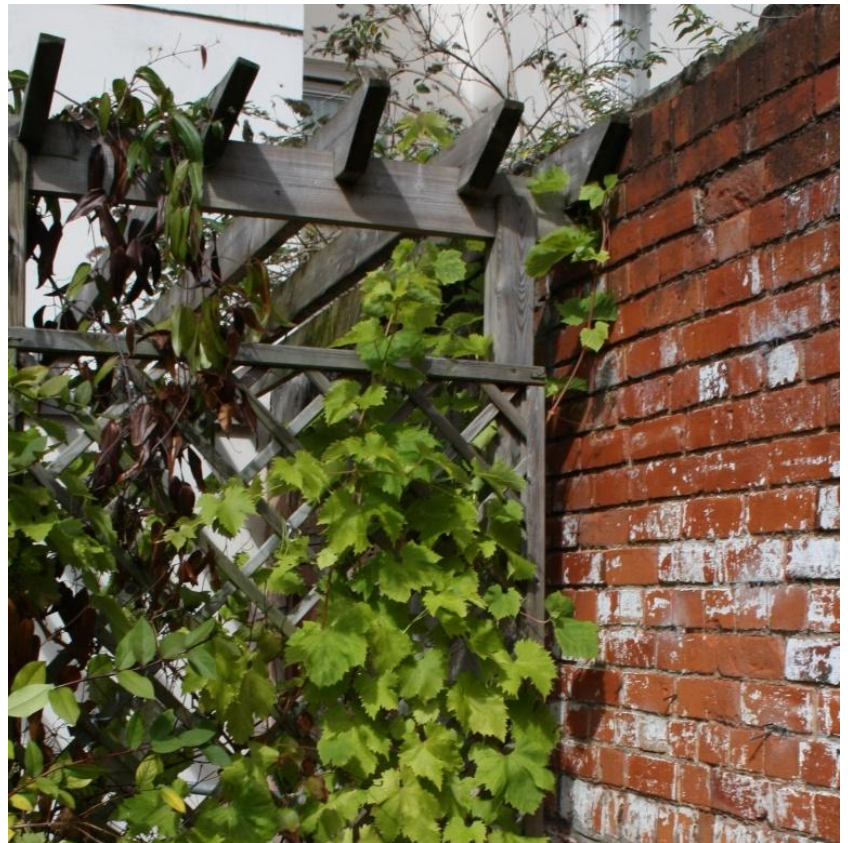
Making by moving

Showing me their gardens people spoke about how it is, what had gone before or might yet happen. The past is present as memories such as Megan's description of the day a local politician tried to plant the Oasis' first fruit tree and struggled to make a hole in the rocky ground. Each feature she pointed out "has a bit of a story connected to it" like Em hurting her back whilst moving rocks to edge the pond. Those involved in making the gardens remember the work done, they know the stories embedded in the place. The rocks are there because Em moved them, they embody her past activity (Ingold 2000: 199) and past movements are shown through telling the story of a taskscape. Places as taskscapes entail motion of varying qualities as things arrive, quiver on the spot, tangle together (*Figure 1)*. Gardening is a series of small purposive movements - repeated pushing down of a spade, back and forth of a saw- repetitive motion of working bodies shaping movements according to their purpose. As garden dwellers human and nonhuman carry on their daily activities they shape materials and flows into patterns which make the place and embody their actions.

Megan describes how this has happened at the Oasis:

> each of those individuals [who] are willing to give their time and give their
> hopes and aspirations to make it what it is. So that's why - is one reason it's
> evolved in the way it has: because of the different personalities that have been
> involved along the way. [...] It's built on year on year, each one is a new layer

of people who've been involved and making their mark and leaving their mark here. And that's – it's just really beautiful (staff).

One corner of the garden reveals how skilled movements make these marks (see photograph *A taskscape*). Em was employed to lead the construction phase and she wanted angled ends on the pergola beams so she measured and sawed each one with skill. She enrolled wood and saw (Ingold 2011: 56), anticipating how they

A taskscape

behave and the desired result in order to move accordingly (Ingold 2011: 213) a simple illustration of Ingold's conception of skill. The pergola now supports a vine planted in memory of a former volunteer who died so Megan says "she's always going to be part of the garden". Plant, wood and memory tangle together, developing through ongoing work of pruning and weathering. The brick wall is an earlier layer of taskscape now seen by John as a "blank canvas" which he can paint: "that'll be my stamp so I can say 'yeah I did do the community garden, see the back wall? We did that'" (volunteer). The garden is a 'relational achievement' (Jones and Cloke 2002: 124) shaped by gardeners, plants and materials, resulting in a hybrid place of people, nature and technology (Jones and Cloke 2002: 126). Various timescales are apparent and the place is never finished as it always changes (Hinchcliffe 2010, Ingold 2000).

Sawing wood is one example of skilled movement and part of the broader task of organising space with boundaries and defined areas which direct motion to bring a place together. Each garden has areas dedicated to particular functions, parts of the Oasis are devoted to flowers, other sections are for vegetables which pleases John:

I think it's a lot more organised now, there's a more definitive separation of what grows and where it grows, I think it's more planned than it was, tidier, better kept (volunteer).

This arrangement allows everyone's preferences and a range of uses to be accommodated within a very limited space, Melissa has her herbs, John has his wildflowers. It also helps organise efficient work as Sean explained: "we've got an area where the more longer lasting shrubs and herbs are kept so they're not going to be disturbed when we're constantly digging up" (volunteer). He persuaded Melissa that it was better not to mix vegetables and flowers as people could not see where things were and kept digging them up by mistake. Similarly, creating three zones at the Cwm was a way to "fit all those functions into the site" according to Derek (manager). Also when the horticulture was spread out people wasted time going between areas to water: "lets cut that down to an hour and bring all the polytunnels together it makes the whole thing much more efficient". Defining areas for certain activities and materials reflects the intention for the Cwm and Oasis to serve numerous functions and provide for a range of people. As noted above, Abercwm Association has ambitious and varied aims for their community garden which may not easily cohere within a single space, so different objectives are directed to specific locations. As a result the site includes various boundary markers – fences, wooden edging, changes to path surface, variation in grass length- which direct people with a certain purpose to the appropriate area: long grass is not for walking, gravelled path is.

In the community gardens certain forms of movement are undesirable or welcome only in particular areas, hence the need to partition space and direct motion along particular routes (see insert *Coordinating Movements*). The Cwm is bound by a 6ft metal barrier with sharp points topping each strut intended to keep out vandals, a large gate allows entry during visiting hours. Any one determined to scale a fence can as proved by numerous break-ins, it is as much a symbolic impediment communicating that mischief-makers are not welcome and that someone is committed to the site. Physical enclosure can reduce engagement but foster sense of place and cohesion inside (Kurtz 2001: 665-7). Within the garden low picket fences indicate ownership –a section for school pupils – or draw attention to proximate risks such as the wetland. A similarly low fence around the Maes keeps rabbits away from crops whilst a sinuous line of woven willow indicates the space where children can play without trampling plants. The smallest boundaries within a garden are the edges of each growing space, the wooden frame of a raised bed or interface between soil and grass marked by sharply cutting through the clod. These organise or curtail movements by acting as barriers to weed roots which seek to encroach onto crops, or showing a volunteer the area to dig, hence a place is brought together. Bringing materials together into these formations in turn directs peoples' future movements, which -as I discuss in the next chapter- feel a certain way.

At the Cwm and Oasis people could quickly identify features they particularly liked and could distinguish zones or landmarks. The Maes is different, a more open space with few distinct paths or features as became apparent from the way gardeners talked about favourite aspects of the garden. No one at the Maes noted individual elements and where they were able to define a favourite aspect the answer was always the same. In Anne-Marie's words:

> *Do I have a favourite spot? Um I like sitting on the bench outside the err-*
> *outside the caravan, perhaps with a mug of coffee, and viewing everything.*
> *Just enjoying it, enjoying what we've done and what it's turned into*
> *(volunteer).*

This garden is appreciated as a whole and its spatial character reflects its ethos as Anne-Marie explained:

> *it's meant to develop by itself, it's not just the ground that's organic but the*
> *ideas behind the garden and the development of the whole project is meant to*
> *be organic so it kind of develops as and when, whatever happens.*

This relates to permaculture principles, in Bill's terms "that thing of watching of nature and that nature knows best and adjusting its trajectory to make it work". Permaculture emphasises interconnection hence space is not to be divided for separate functions (Clavin 2011), but integrated for mutual benefit: flowers attract insects which pollinate adjacent crops, guttering on the polydome gathers water for the plants inside (see photographs *Mixing and Mingling)*. Anne-Marie says this controls pests: "it's just the idea that inter-mixing with flowers like this it err it tends to kind of sort itself out". The Maes has few distinct zones, wildlife and humans mix and move although there are still constraints on roaming - crops grow in beds, grass inbetween, slugs are scooped up. It is more integrated than the other gardens, engaged with as a complete tapestry rather than as interlinked pieces of a jigsaw; movements are less controlled and as the volunteers say things 'go with the flow'.

Mixing and mingling

"Well all that purple bit is the um- hm- is nurturing the soil. I mean apart from nurturing the bees as well which is a good thing. Err yeah that was the idea to doing a lot of flowers but also the fact that flowers have ... they're kind of mixed with herbs down here. It is such a wonderful mix of flowers. If you stand here and look out across, the veg almost get lost in the flowers" Anne-Marie (volunteer, Maes).

Co-ordinating movements

The third polytunnel had been erected at the weekend. I watched Derek and Will making raised beds inside, positioning lengths of wood to make the edges. They sawed pieces to the right length, moved them into place, nailed them together. Then Derek put a stob to hold it in place. He swung the large hammer to knock it down, Will held a block of wood to protect its top from the force. He judged when it'd been driven far enough down, watching for shifts in Derek's body position indicating the same. They built up a flowing rhythm of hammering and synchronised movements, Will sensing the right moment to move the block to cover a second stob, just as without a word Derek shifts to bring the hammer down over the same.

The beds divide growing space from walking space, and make it easier to allocate areas for different crops. Next they will add compost delivered from the greenwaste recyclers, and the beds will be ready for planting.

(Fieldnotes, the Cwm)

Shaping movements

Geographers regularly note the role of boundaries in shaping places, with Hilda Kurtz demonstrating their influence on community gardens (2001). During my fieldwork I was struck by the parallel role of paths which also work to select and direct trajectories hence making place. If boundaries exclude by inhibiting movement paths smooth passage and ease motion, so both shape future movements into spatial patterns. The Cwm's main entrance opens onto a wide tarmacked path which invites people in, paths and boardwalks allow visitors to explore with careful attention to ensuring wheelchairs can move easily. Two main thoroughfares which run the length of the site are the spine of daily activities with staff and volunteers constantly going 'up to the top' to gather tools, or 'down' to the tunnels to work. Everyone who showed me the garden centred the tour along them, diverting only where drawn to areas of particular interest[14]. Local residents use the Cwm as a pleasant cut-through and the path leads people through without lingering. Walking through is a significant form of interaction with place (Pink 2012: 98), as is walking past for a path runs along the perimeter fence which is regularly travelled by local people who can see into the garden as they pass.

The circular path which rings the central space of the Oasis similarly directs movements and most people remain on it, only those most comfortable there step off onto the beds. The exception to this regulated pattern of motion is play-time for the activity club when children charge outside. Within a moment the space is transformed by a buzz of zigzagging movements, darting forms pursuing each other, clambering on railings, disappearing down passages no one else visits, the air rippling with squeals and shouts (see photograph *Playtime*). Summoned back inside they fall quiet and still, become sitting bodies indoors where the freedom and speed of the garden is not appropriate.

In contrast to linear walks round the Cwm and Oasis which follow familiar routes when people showed me around the Maes journeys had no discernible pattern, there are no paths to indicate a 'normal' walk or distinct landmarks to pass between. The less legible space of the Maes lends itself to wanderings, guided by a turn in conversation or sudden wish to pick a strawberry. Unlike the Cwm there is no expectation that local people will use it for a pleasant walk so regular routes are not set out, passing-through is not part of how people experience the place, it is somewhere to come, to do. In the garden movement is intended to be free, less routine so there is less need for paths; the

[14] I sketched the route of each walking tour onto maps of the gardens and overlaid them to identify patterns and anomalies.

ethos for place making seems to result in a certain pattern of motion. Observing how people move around the three gardens I noted different tendencies and how each seemed to instil different habits of motion. Being in each garden is to move in certain patterns with particular routes retraced until they become familiar, particularly when obvious paths instil routines of motion. This led me to reflect on how variations in pattern and rhythm contribute to sense of place (chapter VI).

Playtime

The skill of planning the garden

It is not just materials which are brought together to make a place as ideas and finance must also be aligned if a garden is to emerge. If stories reveal the past layers of a taskscape then plans introduce the future as dreams of what could and should be done. John looked at the blank wall at the Oasis and gestured where he would like to paint a mural so we imagined how it might look, projecting a possible version of the wall onto the one in front of us. That mural has not been painted but may be in future so a different version of the wall is always present in absence. Some visions remain just that, others become plans for action like the idea to make a children's area at the Maes. An expert was invited to teach people to weave a willow fence, he and Simone walked the

proposed boundary as he described in words and gestures the shape he thought would look nice, motioning the undulations of the rail, standing at the likely corner arms out to indicate the lines. Bringing ideas together through planning and converting visions into material forms is not typically thought as skilled work but it also employs skill to direct movements. Planning at the three gardens could be informal discussions whilst gardening to decide minor or spontaneous matters, more formalised talk at meetings with actions allocated and minuted, or spread sheets and charts outlining projects to funders. These tasks move ideas and information, the more representational aspects of a taskscape (Jones and Cloke 2002: 139). To illustrate the nature of plans I present an example from the Cwm as the most sophisticated and formalised example of planning I encountered at the gardens which highlights the degree of office work in community gardening and network of actors involved. I use it to demonstrate the less obvious aspects of place making and illustrate the continuity between intellectual and manual skills.

As the Cwm's manager Derek spends most of his time 'up the office' planning projects and securing funding; in his words he works to make "a blank slate basically, *tabula rasa*" into "a thriving community garden". To help me understand his "creative process" I asked Derek to describe planning the pollinator garden which was in progress:

> *we had that area of the site that was completely derelict, formerly had a polytunnel on it that was a mess. […] We were looking for a project that was – to put on there, to bring that back into use as a valuable area of the site. So we thought we'd have a sensory garden, lots of sensory plants: things that smell nice, things that touch nice, feel nice, things that taste nice, for people [to] come in to enjoy and experience.*

> *So we put a proposal together thinking of [funder name]. We've had a lot of project funding from, they've done the pond, they've done part of the horticultural set up.[…] Erm so as I do, part of my role is to raise funding for projects, and look for project opportunities. And that's what I did so that's where the pollinator garden comes from, out of my networking, finding out ideas, looking at what other projects are doing and then writing applications and getting the funding in.*

Derek completed a standard form for the funder specifying the intended outcomes, budget and project plan. This was submitted to the funder to assess whether it met their criteria and deserved a grant:

> *And erm they said 'yes we'd like the idea of the garden and people coming but we don't do sensory. Change the word sensory for pollinator and erm and there you go'. They don't do sensory, they do pollinators.*

So he altered the application, resubmitted it and:

> *They give the funding. Um then I've got to think how is this going to be constructed? What materials do I need? Which I've put in the funding application as a broad outline but now how's it gonna be constructed, who's going to do the work? Are we going to rely on the two volunteers that come in every week and it's going to take two years to do. Are we going to use you know disgruntled former employees or [laughing] disgruntled employees to do it? Um but we're very lucky we can tap into [organisation names]. And erm we've just gone through the process of going through all the primary construction. And they've done a cracking job of it, the volunteers. And erm by the end of the year it'll be planted up [...] and we'll seed it up next year and then that'll be a finished project.*

Planning required Derek to know about pollinator gardens so he researched and visited similar projects; he needed knowledge of potential funding which he gained through networking and keeping informed about the voluntary sector. He pays attention to the Cwm's wider context so he can 'story' the proposal in terms which demonstrate value (Hinchcliffe *et al.* 2007). The funder had one idea of what was appropriate, Derek another, but the funder's pull was stronger (Hinchcliffe 2010: 311). Funding bodies are a key feature of a charity's environment and Derek was attuned to noticing and understanding what they afford the Cwm and adapting his actions, hence he perceived the environment and moved accordingly to direct motion towards his goal. Tom displayed a similar skill managing to match ideas from the community into what the Communities First programme would fund. I asked him whether the removal of an environment theme would affect the Oasis, he replied they would simply move those activities to a different heading: "you can make anything fit in health and wellbeing". He envisaged a straightforward flexing of language and reporting to allow volunteers to do what they wanted.

Despite being quite a different form of craftsmanship the process of planning the sensory garden exhibits the characteristics of a skilled task identified by Ingold (2011: 51-62). Derek worked within a field of relations (Ingold 2000: 347) between other organisations and the garden. He employed tools – computer, internet, forms- which extended his body's capacity to meet its goal (2000: 315) and mediated his engagement with others (2000: 319). Although he had previously applied for funding Derek could not merely replicate those actions but had to tailor them to specific conditions, attend

to the environment and judge how to adapt to change (2000: 353). The intention of this task was immanent to planning and evolved as he improvised his way (2000: 352) bending his vision of a sensory garden to the funding environment. These skilled movements brought ideas and money to the garden, demonstrating that skill moves representations as well as materials to bring a place together.

However, ideas do not neatly translate into garden forms, and nor is there clear disjuncture between the intellectual skill of planning and the manual work of gardening. Derek handed the design for the pollinator garden to Rhys to mark out on site but the sketch did not match the space and he struggled to see where the features should go. He marked the shape on the ground as best he could, hoping Derek would accept it. We agreed that the plan had probably been drawn in the office and not checked against the site. Rhys explained to volunteers how to lay lengths of wood to define the path edges and which areas should be dug over ready for planting. They did their best, getting to grips with new tools and tasks, translating instructions and demonstrations into their own labour, or waiting for materials to be delivered. People make mistakes, a plan does not become manifest exactly as it was conceived (Hinchcliffe 2010: 308), it does not determine material form but guides and sets parameters for the practical work of making (Ingold 2000: 345).

This work illustrates further the nature of skill. Firstly, the skilled work of making flower beds and paths is not the transcription of a design from mind, to page, to surface of substrate materials (Ingold 2000: 340). Designing *and* making are whole body engaging with environment, and the design is modified throughout, adjusted when a rock cannot be moved or someone accidentally makes the bed the wrong shape. Second, skilled work is not a solo achievement as the worker draws on information and resources, and co-operates with others be it a knowledgeable colleague or spade used to cut through soil. As activity immersed in relations (Ingold 2000: 315) skilled practice is not within the control of an individual. To make her product she is reliant on the timber company delivering on time or volunteers working hard, or a funder paying for plants. The more skilled the practitioner the less the risk of things going awry (Ingold 2011: 59) but risk cannot be eliminated for materials and actors with other intentions are involved (Hinchcliffe 2010: 309).

Planning the pollinator garden was an extended and complex process, but plans are made at all three community gardens. Considering an example in detail indicates the skill involved and demonstrates that the notion of skill need not be confined to traditional crafts, manual tasks or tools. By demonstrating that even 'intellectual'

human work is actually embodied, social and entwined with materials it is possible to draw parallels with nonhuman skills and treat all actors as equally skilled movers. This shows that skill captures the varied agency and forms of motion involved in place making. It also introduces questions of power as not everyone exerts equal pull over how a place is brought together.

Decision making

After he had described planning the pollinator garden I asked Derek: "when you say 'we' who do you mean?" The answer was him, he had decided to make a pollinator garden and how to proceed. Contrast with one of the welfare-to-work placements, Maggie, who imagined a lovely woodland garden at the Cwm she could make but suggested "I don't think it's organised enough around here for people to have that kind of vision". She knew nothing about plans for the garden and was frustrated that things planned "in offices" were not communicated down; Maggie's idea stayed just that because she lacked influence. Continuing the idea of 'bringingtogetherness' making a decision is the point at which different options are brought together and shaped into a choice. This process happens differently at each garden which is significant as the opportunity to influence place making is associated with a sense of ownership for a community garden (Eizenberg 2012). Other staff and volunteers thought Derek's plan for the pollinator garden quite strange: "it'll look like a stately home", "it's like an American garden. It's a *community* garden, there shouldn't be fences everywhere." But it went ahead. It will become apparent that a lack of opportunities to influence such decisions limits people's sense of belonging.

The Cwm has a clear organisational structure and hierarchy with defined roles. Derek plans, Rhys leads practical tasks, Derek manages Rhys, Rhys manages volunteers. Control over decisions is concentrated towards the top of the structure with significant choices –large expenditure , structural changes - taken higher up the hierarchy than those relating to more mundane decisions. As they showed me around the site those on the welfare-to-work scheme described how they would like to improve the garden, suggesting where decking and a shelter would allow people to gather. They had visions of how the garden could be but were not in a position to progress them. Disagreements are resolved according to position in the hierarchy so a volunteer might mention to Derek not liking the fences but could not tell him to remove them. This top-down process indicates that community gardens are not necessarily democratic and non-hierarchical (*contra* Glover *et al.* 2005: 80, Hynes 1996) as participation is not always a

central objective (Eizenberg 2012), with more formal structures a potential barrier to participation (Bendt *et al.* 2012: 27). Not everyone has power to make the place they want.

The process at the Maes is similarly centred on a key person but for very different reasons. Volunteers ask Simone what needs doing, she suggests tasks and advises how to do them, she knows the overarching plan and what should be done. The other gardeners are clear that they look to her for instruction, Sarah would struggle to know what to do otherwise; Anne-Marie likes not having to decide. All are nominally equal volunteers but decision making sits with Simone because, as Sarah sees it:

> *there's somebody who's really the key behind it all, Simone. [...] she's done a phenomenal amount [...] she's the one who really knows, she's got the real horticultural knowledge.*

It was her idea and she is there most so influence has flowed to her. Having to adhere to organic certification is a factor as it is easier for one person to liaise with the landowners and for them to trust her. This concentration of control does not seem to result in tensions within the group rather people are grateful that Simone does so much, and there is strong consensus about what the garden should be like. Simone explained to visitors asking about possible disagreements that the key is to establish core principles "and stick to them". One or two individuals with different opinions have withdrawn to avoid upsetting the equilibrium but the main difficulty with the degree of control Simone has is that it feels like "a huge weight". Whilst not mentioned by others, Simone wonders whether "I kind of hold control more and maybe that means that people don't feel that they can come in and have more input." She may be right as access to decision making is a key contributor to feeling included (Glover 2004: 159) so projects centred on an individual can struggle for long-term sustainability (Holland 2004: 302).

The difference between Simone and Derek as key decision makers is that one has gained influence as relationships evolved whilst the second was placed into that position by an organisational structure. The challenge with this became apparent when Derek was absent from the Cwm for an extended period. Maggie and two other staff tried to plant potatoes but could not agree how which:

> *really summed up everything that is wrong about the lack of organisation and the lack of direction because planning has been done for all these things but it's never passed down from management [...] so you're kind of working blind, total mess up.*

Without Derek decisions could not be made, no one else knew what was planned which resulted in "a lot of frustration". When someone nominated themselves in control they were resented by others, alternatively, the group turned to someone experienced like Toni and expected her to lead which she made her uncomfortable because "I'm the same as them really". The Cwm relies on hierarchies of responsibilities rather than trust and when the system was disrupted there were no ties of respect through which the group could function. These are two very different garden communities with relationships of quite different qualities.

Turning to the Oasis, can we see how a collective of equals makes decisions? The project's ethos of engagement means, as Megan says: "it doesn't belong to any one individual, there's no one person in charge or control, it's made by a collective". When I asked volunteers how they make decisions they described a democratic process of discussion towards consensus through meetings with a chair who seeks to ensure everyone had a say. Sean showed me areas the group had designed as part of a training course, their first chance to influence it and feel ownership, adding that new volunteers should have similar opportunities. But decisions are not always made collectively: occasionally someone acted without consulting others, or Sean as nominated head gardener made a plan. This was only problematic if there were strong opinions, hence Melissa being upset that bug spray had been used when she wanted to avoid pesticides. The most common point of contention was aesthetics but different views have been accommodated by dividing the space into wilder beds and an area of formal planting. Tensions have also been avoided by Melissa conceding to others, possibly to avoid conflict or in recognition that they put in more work and take more responsibility. If she did not concede it is not clear how it would be resolved.

All three gardens touch people who have no voice in decisions such as local people who live alongside and may like to see certain things there. During the conception of the Oasis and the Cwm there were consultation exercises to ask local people what they would like, but there are no on-going mechanisms for their input. Decisions are influenced by

> *Sean planted bedding plants in neat rows, when he finished Melissa went along and filled in the gaps making a less formal pattern. When he realised Sean pretended to hit her with the rake. Melissa said she wants it to be more natural. John said natural meant messy and doesn't belong in a garden. Megan chipped in that there are two kinds of gardeners and Melissa is the 'bucolic' kind.*
> ---
> *Melissa sowed some salad seeds in circles- "straight lines aren't natural" – joking she was hiding them from Sean. "This is the first step, next I'll get him to mix everything up.*
> *Fieldnotes, the Oasis*

what the community is expected to want – hence planting more flowers at the Oasis as Sean thinks people will prefer looking at these- but this is based on assumptions not dialogue. Things are done to benefit nonhumans, such as planting flowers to attract pollinating insects; the bees have no voice in decision making yet they influence outcomes because people have them in mind. Influences come indirectly and from afar like the requirements of organic certification which exert pressure on the Maes through rules and inspection. So multiple 'orders' are sorted and negotiated through garden making, but they do not necessarily neatly cohere (Hinchcliffe 2010).

Decision making takes different forms at each garden according to who is included in the vision for place making and ideals for how a collective should function. Choices are influenced by the aims of the garden so are simpler where there are fewer potentially conflicting goals or space can be divided to accommodate different options. Also influential are the personal preferences of key decision makers, be they individual's with a powerful status, those with greater expertise or who contribute most. To make decisions a group must communicate so decision making reveals something about the types of relationships which have been formed; I shall return to this in chapter VII. So far I have emphasised the more deliberate movements which led me to question Massey's idea of throwntogetherness as skilled work, planning and decisions move things and ideas bringing a place together. Equally there are many forms of garden activity which happen without conscious decision or direction, habits of behaviour as people follow familiar paths or things going awry as humans fail to control life's motion.

Growing broad beans

Doug asks me to sow broad beans, they should really have gone in by now. He doesn't want to sow them direct into the bed as "the mice will have 'em". He shows me how to fill the pot with compost. Break up any lumps and tap the compost down to allow good contact between compost and seed. He points out the black line on one end of the seed where the shoot and root grow from. He recommends putting them on their side otherwise water collects on the flat surface and "he will go mouldy". He pushes the seed a couple of centimetres into the soil, covering it so the darkness will bring it out of dormancy.

The next week Doug tells me "your broad beans have sprouted" so I go and admire the shoots of intense fresh green. Another week passes, and another, and I look again to see how much taller the shoots are and notice that some pots have no plant. The shoots have that unique colour of fresh growth. I think about the chlorophyll which makes this blue-green and is somehow converting sunlight into food.

On my fourth visit the plants are a few inches tall and sturdy enough to be planted out according to Doug. He's cleared a bed in the polytunnel, not where beans went last year "coz of the rotation". He's dug the soil to loosen it, releasing compaction so roots can penetrate and spread into spaces where they will be surrounded by the air they need. I can see the fresh compost he's mixed in for nourishment and comment on some lighter soil. Doug says it's clay, good for holding nutrients and jokes that he could tell me all about its cat-ions.

Doug shows his younger colleague Jonesy how to plant out the beans. They fix two lines of string along the length of the bed so the plants can be aligned in rows- partly "coz it looks pretty", also so it's easier for volunteers to spot weeds. He works out the right spacing, not too close allowing air to circulate between the plants. This helps prevent fungal disease in winter.

Doug makes a hole with the trowel then shows how to "tease" the plant from the pot. He points out the largest, thickest root, the one the seed "sends out first" for some reason called the tap root. Plant in hole, he pulls soil around the base of the stem, firming it to anchor the roots. Jonesy's turn. He makes the hole, is passed a plant and starts to pull it out by the leaves. Doug calls out "no!". Jonesy stops, inverts the pot into his other hand, cupping the plant and squeezes the pot to allow it to ease free. He handles the young plant delicately with his large hands, then tosses the plastic pot to the floor where I notice it still lies the following week.

Doug says that left-over plants will be used to fill any gaps as plants die. Last year 80% were lost to the cold. We bring cans of water to soak the bed, washing soil around the roots to help the plants establish.

Over the next few weeks the plants are bigger at each visit. Weeds have started to grow around the beans. Apparently there are bacteria in the soil which get into the bean roots and form nodules. These fix nitrogen from the air so the plants can use it. In return the plant supplies carbohydrates to feed the bacteria. Doug is worried the plants have come on too quickly in the late warm weather. On a cold day the plants droop because "their sap isn't up" he says, so their cells lack the osmatic pressure which keeps them turgid. It's worse because they've grown leggy during the shorter days, going up in search of light. For support we erect canes and carefully weave the plants through lines of string.

Looking at the verdant leaves I remember the pods I picked at the end of last spring, carefully holding the plant whilst pulling it off to avoid damaging it, as Doug had asked.

Fieldnotes, Cwm

MOVING NONHUMANS

So far I have focused on human motion contributing to place making, in this section I emphasise how nonhumans – particularly plants- move and are moved in making community gardens. As outlined in chapter II plants can be conceived as skilled actors shaping worldly movements according to their needs and in response to changes in their environment. The difficulty of researching these is that I could not ask what they are doing, but some gardeners could explain what was happening. Doug shared what he had learnt about plants during his horticultural training showing me how plants grow. I present what he taught me about growing one plant to highlight some plant skills and how gardeners work with these to achieve their goals (see insert *Growing Broad Beans).* The process we followed is fairly typical for growing a plant from seed, illustrating how human and plant skills combine. It also introduces some of the affective power of being involved in growing plants which will be explored later.

To grow broad beans materials were assembled and assimilated for growth is the binding of substances (Fogg 1963: 23, Ingold 2011: 120). Doug's skill was knowing what conditions encourage materials to combine, following the ways of seed, soil, water, weaving together a "field of forces set up through the active and sensuous engagement of practitioner and material" (Ingold 2000: 342). As a skilled practitioner he exercised "care, judgement and dexterity" (2000: 347). It was a social process as Doug shared with me and Jonesy years of learning from other gardeners and books, tweaked each season, learning from successes and disappointments. I was developing what is perhaps the most vital part of a gardener's skill: the ability to attend to a plant's activity and understand how to respond.

Ingold describes how a skilled carpenter sawing a plank constantly attends to the feel of the wood, the direction of the cut and how the task is progressing; sensory engagement with the environment by body extended through a tool allows the skilled worker to respond to things going wrong and adjust his movement accordingly (Ingold 2011: 58-9). Similarly, a skilled gardener pays attention to a plant and its conditions in order to respond in ways which increase the chance of the plant continuing to grow. Toni taught Graham to lift pots of seedlings in the polytunnel to feel their weight which would indicate how moist the compost is, to know whether they should be watered. She checked the weather each morning to see what temperature was expected then calculated how quickly the compost would dry out, sensing the plant's environment in order to work for the plants benefit (volunteers, Cwm). This attention and ability to respond to environment is so important because growth is not constant so the skilled

worker must improvise (Ingold 2011: 62). There are so many variables each crop and season is different:

> **Hannah:** *You were saying some things have not done well and it might be fertility-*
>
> **Doug:** *It could be fertility, it could be just down to being a poor year. Certainly, I think it's just a poor year in that all our fennel has bolted and I'm really not quite sure why.*
>
> **Hannah:** *Right.*
>
> **Doug:** *Possibly next year I might try direct sowing it rather than transplanting it but I've always transplanted it before and I've never had a problem (staff, Cwm).*

Following rules by rote does not work because each plant assemblage is unique which is what John, as a novice, struggles with:

> *See now this is what I find frustrating coz I haven't yet experienced that, in general in most of my life, if you follow the instructions it works out. So in gardening I know it doesn't always do that and I think that's why at the moment I've got – I keep moaning and whingeing (volunteer, Oasis).*

Sean has found the best way to learn gardening is "trial and error" and finds:

> *talking to people who actually do it rather than write about doing it does make a hell of a difference, because they can say 'well last year I planted so and so at this time, and I didn't have a great crop. I'm going to try it a little bit earlier or a little bit later this year and see what happens'. And I think that's the difference, it's the kind of 'I don't know every thing but this is what I do know' and I find a lot more confidence in that information (volunteer, Oasis).*

The infinite number of variables means Maggie thinks the best way to teach people is to "just say 'gardeners do this usually but there are so many variations so you can work it out for yourself'" (staff, Cwm). She had been taught "things that broke the rules but that worked", Simone also learnt by doing: "I just kind of - I wing it basically" (volunteer, Maes). She is always learning: "as you do it year in year out you get more detailed knowledge of what – how – what works and what doesn't".

Information alone does not teach a gardener to grow tomatoes, she has to realise what is happening with a particular plant and judge how to react becoming more adept at noticing environmental cues (Ingold 2000: 415). This is typical of skilled work which combines knowledge and practice, not rules to be communicated but context-dependent "'knowledge how', typically acquired through observation and imitation rather than formal verbal instruction" (Ingold 2000: 316). Such skill is difficult to verbalise (Sennett 2008) as illustrated by an occasion when I tried to help Graham dig

over a bed for the first time at the Cwm, something I have done many times. I took a spade, positioned myself on the bed and attempted to describe what he should do but found it almost impossible to put into words what motions he should make, how he should handle the tool. Graham said he would watch what I did so I began putting the spade into the ground, and uttered a few words to elaborate what I was doing. After a few repetitions of my digging motion Graham began his own, mimicking what he had observed, trying it himself and adjusting his movements according to the results. The motion and changes in the surface of the bed spoke, he learnt by feeling the interaction of spade and soil. The ability to grow plants and other garden skills are best learnt this way for they are sticky or tacit knowledge, highly context dependent and embodied learning spread through imitation in "close encounters" between novice and expert (Carolan 2011: 138). Gardeners recognise this, distinguishing between learning by doing and from a book: Simone did not see Bill as an expert in composting because he had never done it practically: "its just theory". Derek's colleagues thought some of his plans failed because he had not tried them: "He worked in an office, what's he know?".

Even with all his experience Doug was not always sure what was happening or whether he would achieve the desired result as he could not control the broad beans, they too were active agents. I was repeatedly told how people love the excitement of things growing, the anticipation, how amazing it is that a tiny seed becomes a huge plant. One of the joys of gardening is this wonder at a process not fully directed by the gardener (Hitchings 2006). Sean was surprised how easily it happens: "I didn't think it was literally just a case of plant and it grows. It is – it's just that simple." Simone is keen more people realise "its not like you have to put *years* of work in and then you can grow a lettuce. Its like no, just chuck the seeds in the ground". The gardener's actions do not make plants, her skilled movements combines with a plant's skilful growth. She positions seeds which exchange with air and soil as human and non-human actions combine in "messy and malleable configurations" (Head and Atchison 2009: 236). The most a gardener can do is establish conditions which allow growth to occur, so as "fellow participants" with plants (Ingold 2000: 87) humans follow what others do and seek to direct the flows by "play[ing] their part from within the world's transformation of itself" (Ingold 2011: 6). Plants have their own skills, sensing change in their environment and responding appropriately (Chamovitz 2012, Fogg 1963, Head *et al.* 2012: 30) movements which contribute to making place (Jones and Cloke 2002: 96).

GARDENWATCHCAM 2012/09/02 18:21:45

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Growth

The time lapse photography of seeds are amazing. A few days transformation from bare compost to tray of seedlings takes minutes. Most surprising is watching the shadows play over them so I can see each day pass, and the seedlings rotating in time (fieldnotes).

Neglecting Broad Beans

I'd been away a couple of weeks so went to check the broad beans. Some looked quite straggly, others had died. It could have been the cold but also the soil looked quite dry and I wondered if any one had watered whilst Doug wasn't around.

The broad beans were ready to pick, nice plump pods. Someone picked them and left a pile heaped on the bed. They stayed there a good few days, slowly browning and shrivelling. With no one really in charge they weren't sold. It felt wrong that they went to waste, I knew they would have sold for a few pounds, or at least one of the volunteers could have had them."

The lads had been told to pull up the broad bean plants even though there were still plenty of beans on them. There were chocolate spots on the leaves and a few pods but the beans would have been fine. When Maggie realised what they'd done she couldn't believe it "such a waste".

(Fieldnotes, Cwm)

Un-making a community garden

Community gardeners cooperate with each other and with others - water, weather, seed, soil, bacteria - to make a garden but things also 'go awry' (Hinchcliffe 2010: 308). The coda to the story of growing broad beans shows how the weaving of growing and making can unravel (see insert *Neglecting Broad Beans*). Weather and pests both teased apart the broad bean assemblages that Doug and I had brought together; confusion and disorganisation at the Cwm also pulled on them as lack of funding took people from their jobs. Even if Doug had stayed to care for the plants they would not have lived forever. Death is the inevitable culmination of growth as a co-operative enterprise: a carrot takes in too much water, splits, slugs and carrot fly enter to kill it. On the numerous occasions I asked a gardener what was wrong with a sick looking crop or why a plant had died the most common response was "I'm not sure". The other side of the amazing delight of growth is the frustration and disappointment of equally mysterious processes of dying. Death, decay, erosion are inevitable and are tangible reminders that a gardener is never fully in control (Hitchings 2006). In this section I detail some movements beyond the control of community gardeners, and how they seek to retain the garden they desire. This introduces the issue of sense of control which will be further developed in the next chapter.

Placing plants

Perhaps the most apparent indication of community gardener's struggle for control is the amount of time spent attempting to organise weeds' movements by weeding (see *Figure 1)*. Despite Will's claim that weeds are the one's which "look nasty" (staff, Cwm) nothing inherent makes a plant a weed, they are just plants in the wrong place (Mabey 2010: 5). Simone is reluctant to call clover a weed even though she does not want it in the beds "because it's useful, a useful plant. I suppose a weed is a weed when it's somewhere where it's not wanted" but clover is "a nitrogen fixer so hopefully there's nitrogen going into the beds as well, one would hope" (volunteer, Maes). Clover would be a weed if it was not contributing to Simone's plans, taking from the vegetables. Melissa pulls up weeds because "it just means that we can plant something else there and that won't be taking all the nutrients out or shading it or anything so it gives everything else a better chance to survive ". Context is all: "plants become weeds when they obstruct our plans" (Mabey 2010: 1).

The effort to remove plants not contributing to place making is continuous because they keep coming back being highly skilled at reproducing and spreading (Mabey 2010: 213). Jonesy (staff) points out various areas of the Cwm where he has repeatedly cut-back "stingies" and brambles which keep returning. Plants' agency or power to move others (Jones and Cloke 2002 Chapter 3) is highlighted here:

Doug:　*Its just getting that balance right…But I mean err one morning-*

Hannah: Ehh!

Doug:　*Ooh you alright?*

[I stop walking and point to the hedge running along the edge of the boardwalk.]

Hannah: Something just jumped off there.

Doug:　*I'll tell you what it would be. That would be erm….this.*

[He takes hold of a plant stem which is poking through the fence towards us.]

Doug:　*Oh, it'll come to me in half a sec-its balsam, Japanese erm, Himalayan balsam.*

Hannah: Oh yeah.

Doug:　*See if we can find a ripe seed pod.*

[He cups one of the dangling seed pods]

Hannah: Oh my god!

Doug:　*They just pop and throw the seeds everywhere.*

Hannah: I thought it was something jumping out at me.

Doug:　*Yeah, you'll have just brushed against one and the seed pod it'll have popped.*

[He laughs.]

Hannah: Oh. I never knew they did that. Now that explains how it spreads so much.

[Another seed pod pops and I shriek with surprise. Doug laughs again.]

*Doug:*　*Yeah, the seed pod is under tension, and if it gets disturbed it just pings-*

Hannah: God, dear me. Anyway, what were we talking about?

Himalayan Balsam is seen as highly invasive and subject to mass eradication programmes (Mabey 2010: 258). The Cwm was covered with this and Japanese Knotweed, an even more vigorous species which they are "controlling [the knotweed] by the skin of their teeth" according to Ruth who works for one of their funders:

I do absolutely understand that when you're struggling to combat knotweed that you are going to have to end up being very tidy. However in the longer term I would like to see them making more space for wildlife, to feel confident

enough to feel that they've controlled nature enough that they can let go a little bit if you see what I mean [...] because if they let it go for a season it's the knotweed that's going to come back.

Weeds do not conform to human wishes and are capable of surprising or frustrating humans by moving around. Deciding what to do about them can indicate beliefs about where 'nature' belongs and the extent to which it should be controlled (Head and Muir 2007, Mabey 2010). In terms of place making the presence and persistence of weeds demonstrate the power of nonhumans to 'push back' against human actions (Jones and Cloke 2002: 6). Weeding also demonstrates that nature is much more variegated than is sometimes imagined (Jones and Cloke 2002, Harvey 1996: 183) for not all plants - just one part of what has been called nature- are treated the same. As gardeners become more skilled in distinguishing plants they relate to weeds differently, their relationship to 'nature' is not singular and coherent, an idea I develop in Chapters VI and VII.
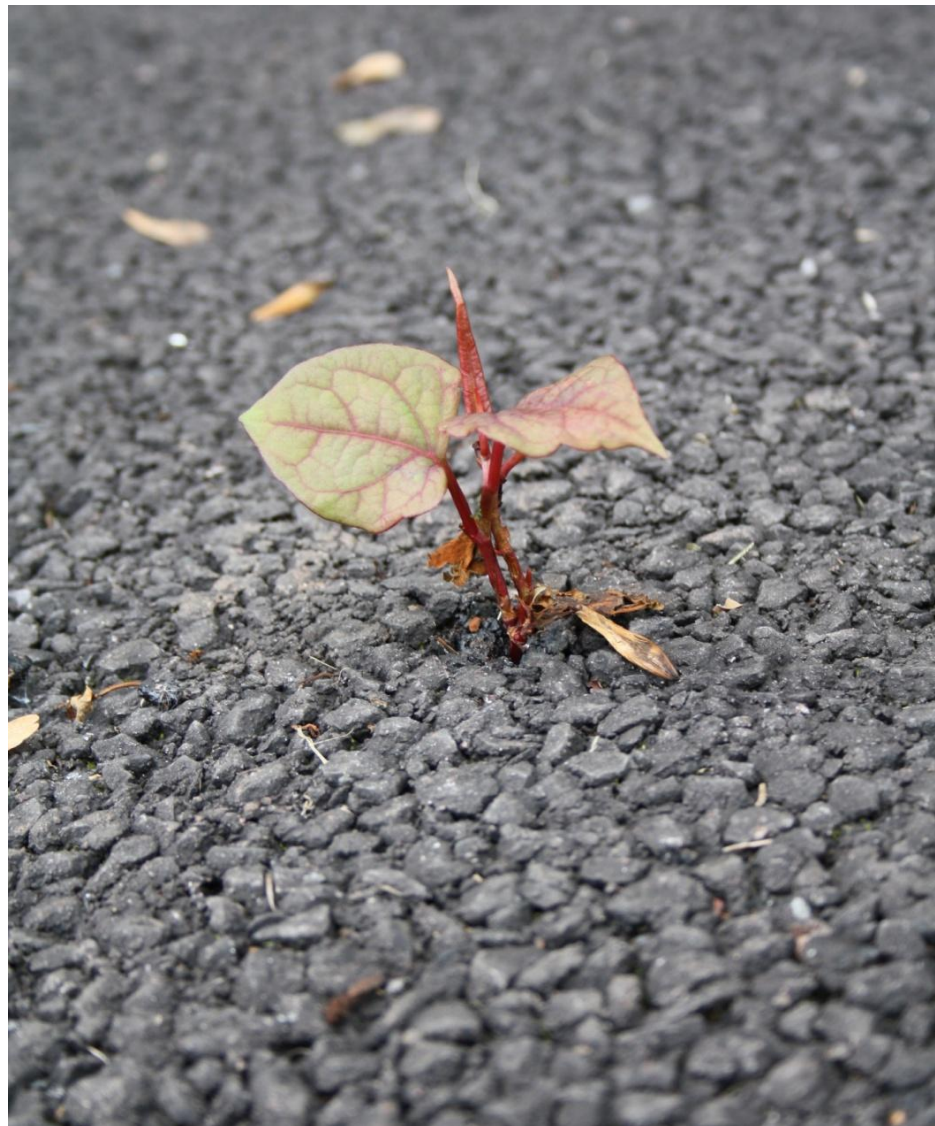
Pest control

Ecological processes and the power of plants represent some of those unmaking a community garden, there are other uninvited visitors:

> **Hannah:** *Can you think of any particular problems that you face?*
>
> **Will:** *Sort of going towards the construction side of things, if we build stuff, you know, there's always a chance of it getting vandalized over the weekends or in the nights when there's no one here. Just out of spite, you know, kicking you know panel fences apart you know slashing the err polytunnels […]*
>
> **Hannah:** *Did you say also that it's sort of not as bad as it used to be now?*
>
> **Will:** *Oh it's got better now, now you know people can see things coming along they seem to leave it alone so.*
>
> **Hannah:** *Yeah. So any other problems?*
>
> **Will:** *Err …Only with invasive weeds, with knotweed and Himalayan balsam on the site, shifting that (staff, Cwm).*

A perimeter fence was constructed to exclude vandals and staff devise ways to deter thieves such as using short timber not worth stealing. Doug thought the problem eased as the garden developed: "I think there's people can see what's happening now, its not so much of a mess, everything's getting tidied up and its beginning to look like something" (staff).

Vandalism is not a problem at the Oasis which people attributed to the physical layout of the garden: it is completely enclosed by buildings, invisible from the street and over-looked by residential buildings. But access is possible as Megan's story demonstrates:

> *we assume that it must've been one of the residents from the flats above- they got into the garden over the wall and we'd seen that there'd been a couple of drinks cans, all very tidy, they never made any mess - so people had been accessing it in the evening and I and Tom the administrator at the project thought 'oh I don't see any problem with them using it, its another person using the space that's great'. We came in one day and they'd left two little watering cans in the shape of frogs, a green one and a pink one and had donated it to the garden and the kids loved them and it was just a very strange and very sweet thing to happen (staff).*

In contrast the Maes is completely open and visible from the road with no locked gate or fence, no houses nearby so anyone with the will to vandalise could easily do so, yet nothing has ever been taken or broken. Simone compared her experience with other gardens and thought the difference may be that everyone around the Maes knows who

is involved and the "local delinquents" know her or her friends so are deterred. Whilst physical enclosure undoubtedly influences how local residents perceive and treat a community garden (Kurtz 2001) they are never impenetrable. Whether people breach boundaries and what they do inside indicates how they feel about the garden, with persistent vandalism suggesting troubled relationships between the community garden and people nearby.

The impact of vandalism is also revealing about what community gardens mean to gardeners as I witnessed when the Cwm received its worst damage yet. One weekend the large polytunnel was burned down by what the local paper described as "mindless arsonists". The plastic cover melted onto the beds, the crops were covered or scorched by the heat so the season's tomatoes, peppers and aubergines - the most valuable crops - had to be thrown away. As I worked with Graham and Toni to remove the plants we discussed "what a waste" it was. Toni pulled up a substantial plant, shaking her head as she recalled planting it, then pointed out others that Maggie had grown, remembering the history of each plant, who was involved and would be sad to see them like this. It was not just the plants or polytunnel which had burned as Graham said: "people's hard work, gone into flames". The traces they had made were being erased and this upset them.

In a sense arsonists are another pest for gardeners to deal with like aphids or slugs which undo their work; the difference in gardeners' minds is malicious intent and that vandals harm deliberately. Graham called the arsonist "an idiotic person", probably some "bad kids", relating to them more personally than he would pests whose actions are not morally framed. Damage by people is more upsetting because it is seen to be driven by disrespect or malice whilst a slug just does what it does. We cannot know what drove the "mindless arsonist" to put a match to the polytunnel, but it may have been as unthinking as a slug eating a ripe tomato. When Graham blamed the vandals' parents he indicated a web of influence which leads to actions in a particular moment. Agency is not wholly with the individual, not least because no fire is possible without the flammable reaction between match and plastic. The arsonist's decision to start a fire may be less deliberate and reflexive than we assume for not all traces are made with particular intent (Anderson, J. 2010: 172, Thrift 2008: 7). "Human action is entangled with the unconscious, the subconscious, the habitual, the accidental and the spontaneous" (Jones and Cloke 2002: 64). The actions of slug and vandal remain equally mysterious, all we really know is that the impact pests have matters to gardeners because they do not contribute to their goals. From my perspective as

researcher it is interesting to consider vandals and pests as kin for it challenges received wisdom about who or what has agency.

There is an alternative interpretation of vandalism which shows them to have more in common with gardeners as I realised following an idle conversation with a youth worker at the Oasis. We watched a group of children playing as a number had taken a cane and trailed it behind them as they walked leaving a pattern in the gravel (see photograph *After Playtime*). The youth worker shook his head in mock regret, and joked that even at this early age they were trying graffiti, wanting to make their mark. Graffiti makes a claim for a place (Cresswell 1996), says 'I was here', leaving a trace which subverts the dominant version of it (Anderson, J. 2010). Although community gardens have been described similarly as alternative or subversive claims to space (Certoma 2011, Eizenberg 2011, Martinez 2009) this requires some to be excluded (Schmelzkopf 1995: 376, Staeheli 2008). Gardeners make a place so does a vandal, one leaves traces which are encouraged, the other does not; making a community garden entails claims about whose movements are welcome. The young people who used to play amongst the junk when the Cwm was a wasteland are no longer allowed to use the space as they would like to. Some see this exclusion as legitimate, others may disagree.

This discussion of weeds, vandals and pests serves to illustrate that gardeners do not have complete control of place making, their agency is relational and their work can unravel. These processes remain mysterious as the gardeners do not quite know what plants are doing or why certain things happened. Developing skills and learning to be a better gardener might allow them to limit the impact of the 'unmakers' but an element remains outside the gardener's control. I have compared vandals and slugs, and vandals and gardeners in ways which may not resonate with how gardeners interpret these presence, but I believe these etic perspectives are enlightening challenges which question the power dynamics of place making. Things cannot always be brought together as skill may be limited or might fail to direct motion away from other forces exerting a stronger pull.

After playtime
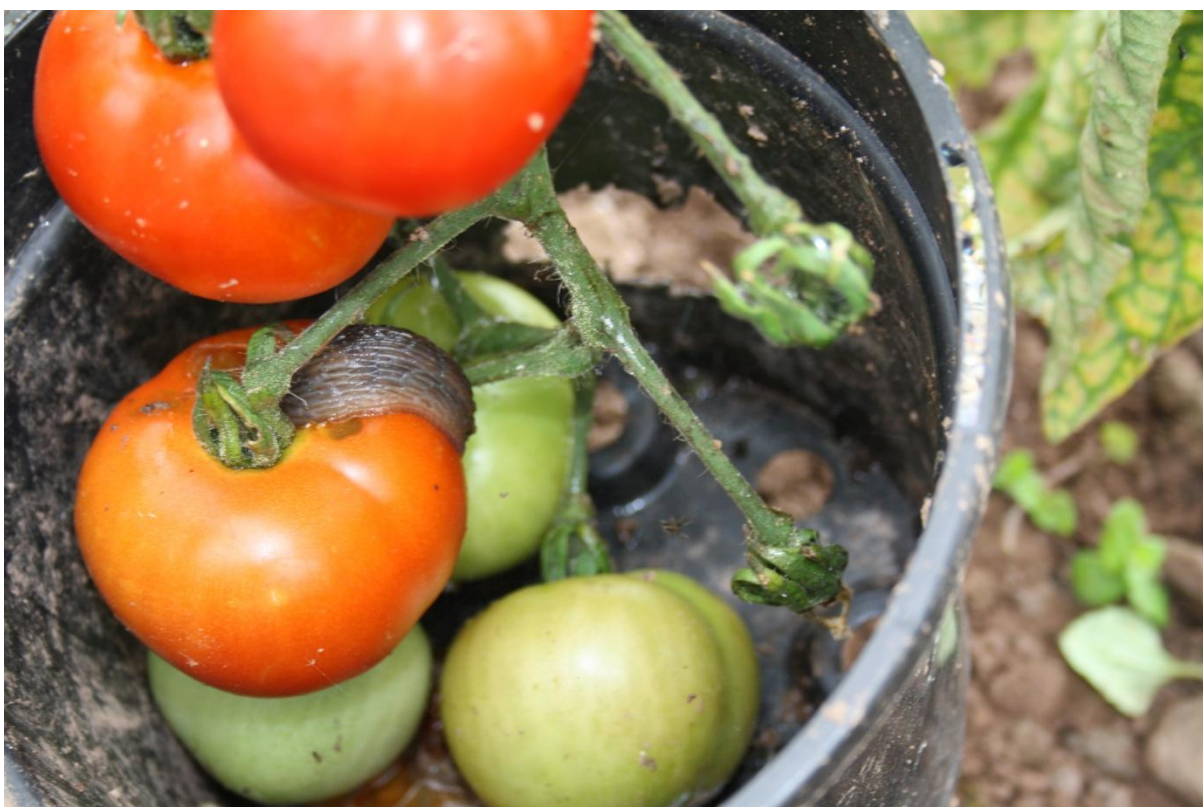
CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter began by considering why people make community gardens. This revealed that these gardeners do not conform to the expectation that they participate in the effort to counter a rift from nature experienced in urban life, particularly as it is rural-dwellers who are most driven by the desire for contact with nature. Individuals are moved towards community gardens and brought back repeatedly primarily by the wish for positive experiences I term 'feeling good', but this is not necessarily matched in organisational objectives hence potential for conflict or lack of participation. I have demonstrated that people and organisations bring multiple aims and expectations to community gardens, so there are different visions of the type of places they should be and what form place making takes. It will become apparent that this influences how people feel about these places and the kinds of community which develop. I have begun to show how top-down decision making and a focus on end products can limit the sense of ownership people develop for a garden, an issue to be developed in the next chapter where feeling in control becomes more significant.

By treating three gardens not as sites where things happen to people but as places they are constantly making we see how gardeners experience place and interact with others of all kinds. We have begun to see how people, materials, nonhumans and ideas move, bringing trajectories together to make a place. This is not a throwntogetherness (Massey 2005) happening wholly by chance as there is some intention to processes of organising, coalescing and directing movements so they weave together in certain ways. To understand how community gardens are made I have presented various skills of place making: shaping materials, planning which brings ideas and funds to the garden, and growing plants through the combined action of nonhumans and gardeners. Through these place makers shape the worlds' movements towards the forms they desire, using paths and boundaries to channel motion. Skilled movements leave traces both material and imagined which together make a community garden taskscape, a place with a particular character which in turn guides future motion. I have highlighted the skill of sensing change in the environment and responding accordingly which gardeners –human and nonhuman- practice as a relational achievement. The example of planning demonstrates that ideas are part of the environment to be attuned to, and that influences from afar pull on the garden's form. But there are limits to this skill as actors such as pests and vandals work to move things out of formation, unmaking the garden. This discussion has brought Ingold's notion of a taskscape (2000) to community gardens, demonstrating how places are made through skilled movement with a purpose.

Whilst I understand place making as bringing together movements alternative narratives course through the gardens. The Cwm and Oasis are both described in ways resonant of the space+meaning model of place, being previously "empty" with "nothing there", made something through transformation. Neither site was ever truly vacant as children used to play amongst the Cwm's junk, both spaces hosted abundant flora and fauna, and any empty space still has meaning. But these were not the desired presences and the gardeners have made them mean something else: better, tidier, more useful, cared for as I expand on in the next chapter. I have also shown that how place making progresses influences a garden's character by determining future patterns of motion and excluding or enclosing certain movements. The Cwm is place treated as a product to be made and later handed to the community, whilst the Oasis is place making as process engaging people and continuously building relationships. For the Maes place making is not an express goal, the focus is providing better food with natural processes allowed to play their part. These ideals and intentions influence the form each garden is taking, how movements to, within and around the garden are directed. The three different approaches indicate a diversity of community gardening and communities, and reveal that the gardens are not a scene which people enter and which is inherently beneficial for gardeners actively shape the places.

This chapter has shown how motivations bring people to a community garden, and that various skilled work brings movements together to make a garden. The next will focus on how feelings play a part in this as kinds of movement feel different. As a garden is made it affects gardeners, a process not chronologically linear as may be suggested by first presenting the making of a garden and then how it feels, I divide the two only to allow fuller discussion. To elaborate on why people draw to community gardening - what it is that 'feels good'- we move on to consider the affects of making a garden and how it feels to bring a place together.
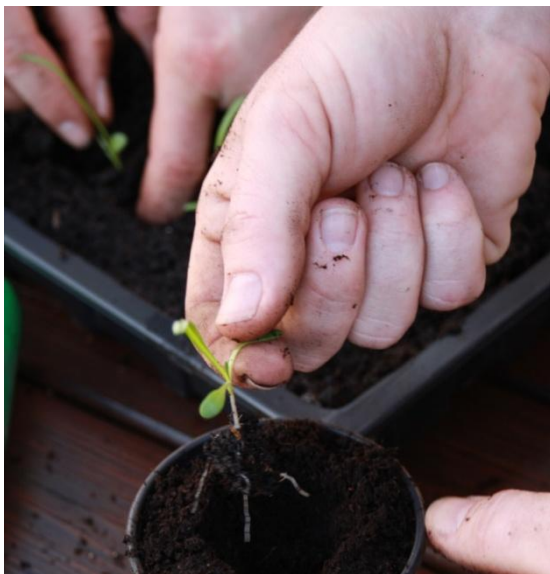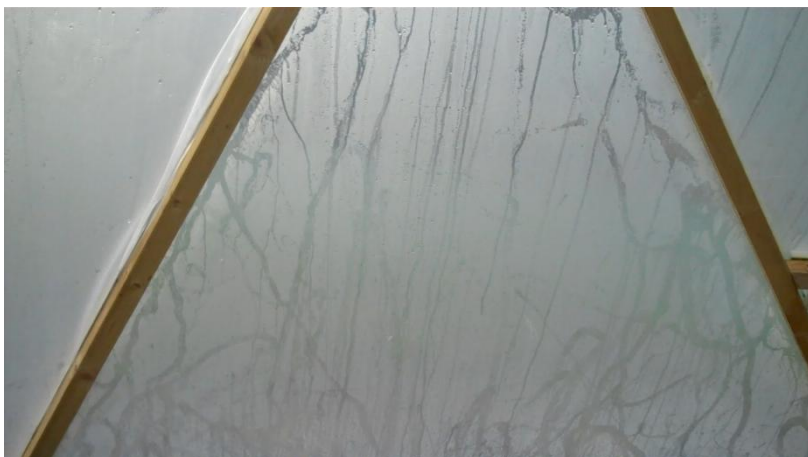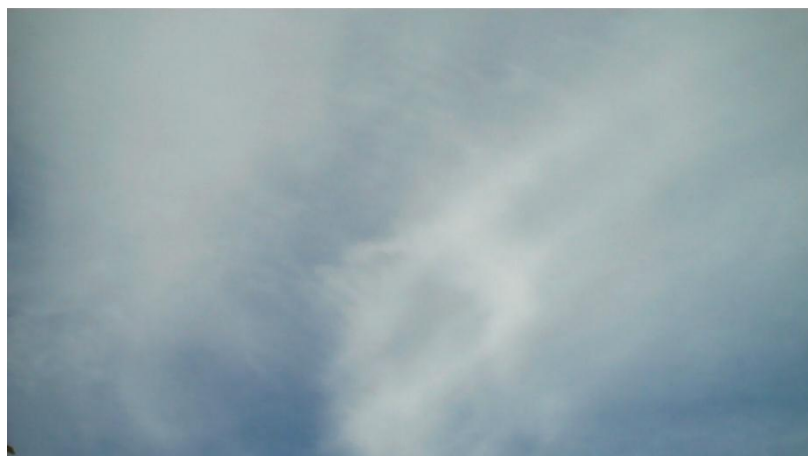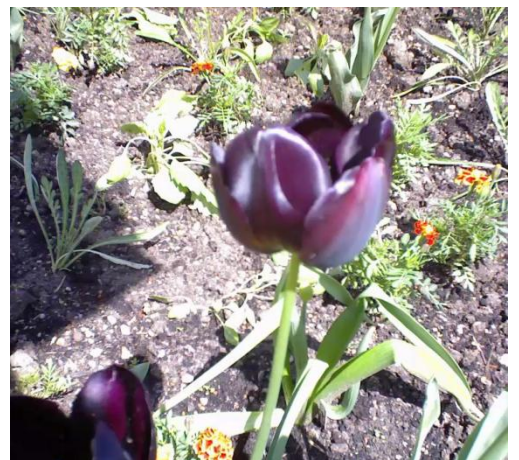
*Movements 1: Water falls
and flows*

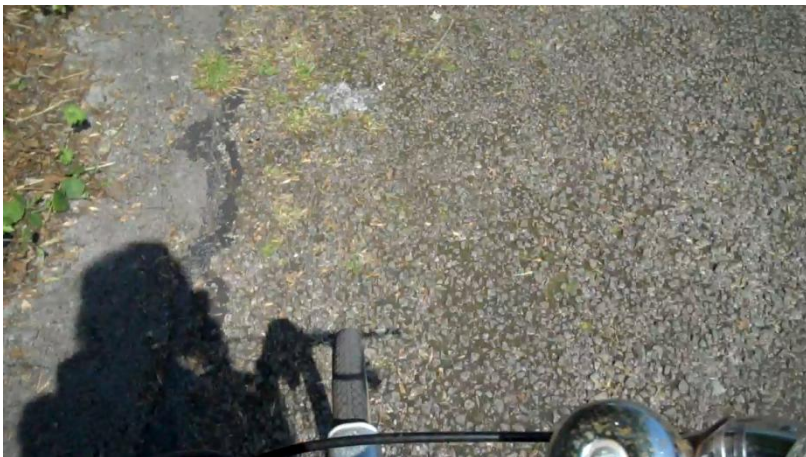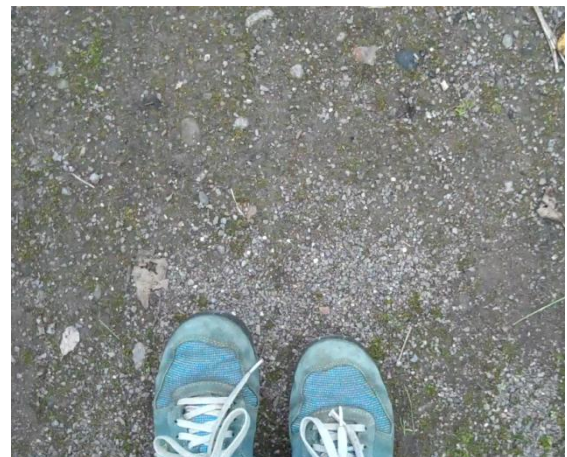*Movements 2: Plants sway in the breeze, petals open and close*

Movements 3: Creatures leap, fly and crawl

Movements 4: People come and go

VI THE FEELINGS OF COMMUNITY GARDENS

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I demonstrated how places are made through movement, and that it is very important to people that being in a community garden feels good. To understand how and why community gardens are suited to feeling good requires a focus on their affect on people. Where the previous chapter centred on how people make places the emphasis shifts to how places change bodies through the senses and emotions. This chapter will delve deeper into the question of why people make community gardens by exploring how they feel about them and presenting how they are experienced to answer research question three. It develops the theoretical understanding of place from chapter II by considering the role of feelings in place making, and how change and continuity are sensed through rhythms. I suggest how we might understand the feelings which develop through place making as a mobile sense of place and dynamic sense of belonging. This unpacks further the relationships between people and place, and shows more about the spatial experiences of community gardens.

The degree of consensus that these gardens are places to feel good suggests a shared sense of place. If places are made through movement they might feel a certain way because their motion has qualities which afford particular experiences. To understand whether this is the case I consider how people describe their community gardens and what is important about them. I detail the presences and sensations which comprise sense of place, and find that patterns and rhythms of movement have certain affects. I consider how different people come to have a common sense of place whilst individual experiences still diverge. Subsequent sections reflect on what people enjoy about being in community gardens and factors which enable positive experiences. This shows how the environment, activities and the social relations contribute, all of which can be understood as qualities of motion. I then consider why negative feelings can arise and find sense of control emerges as an important variable associated with approaches to place making. Interaction with nonhumans is the focus of the next section, introducing some variegated relationships with nature. The chapter closes with a comparison of feelings of belonging and attachment at the three gardens which seem to be influenced by the place making ethos.

What kind of place is a community garden?

> *In the garden I feel...*
> *"Happy and contented."*
> *"Peaceful and relaxed. I enjoy helping with the garden, making it look even better"*
> *(anonymous written comments, Oasis).*

We know these community gardens are distinct places for they are agreed to offer somewhere to feel good. They have characteristics or distinctiveness (Jones and Cloke 2002, Massey 1994) which can be called the sense of *a* place (Relph 2008). As discussed above sense of place need not be associated with chauvinism or essentialism but can be fluid and mobile. I came to realise this through noticing how people appreciate change and delight in constant variation at the gardens, a theme which surprised me. Yet they also expressed a sense that they remained their particular gardens. I will detail how characteristic movements contribute to sense of place to unpick the apparent contradiction between mobility and constancy and propose how to conceive a dynamic sense of place. I then consider how community gardens are experienced through sensory engagement and the special place of touch. This section closes by considering how sense of place might be collective whilst allowing individual divergence.

Dynamic sense of place

I have suggested that previous writing on community gardens fails to convey their spatial character, so what kind of places are these? Asked to describe their community gardens some detailed physical characteristics from the ground up so the Maes is "half an acre of land" on a "west facing, southerly slope". Next might come things on the land including plants and structures, the features Derek plots on his design. Presences induce certain feelings: colourful flowers are said to make the Oasis and Maes beautiful, a secluded spot by the river is where people enjoy calm at the Cwm. Material forms have certain associations so each garden has its typical adjectives. The Maes was most commonly described as beautiful and with words denoting pleasure, for Bill it is "enjoyable and relaxing", for Anne-Marie it "has good vibes". The Oasis was also described as calm with "a friendly atmosphere" good for finding a "bit of peace and quiet" Claire said. Descriptions of the Cwm emphasise quiet and green, it is open space for people to enjoy "some where to get away" Michael said. These descriptions suggest that although not a deterministic relationship places shape people's feelings (Conradson 2005: 107).

Material features carry histories of their making, recall how Megan presented each landmark at the Oasis through a story bringing the past forward as looking across a site is to remember people and activities that have passed (Ingold 2000: 189). Activity and material entangle hence how Sally describes the Oasis depends on the moment:

> *Relaxing, private. …. Erm… educational or informational or interesting. … Err… come at the right times and its exciting. Err a sun trap, often in the summer. Erm. Useful coz we grow stuff here. Err… Yeah I think I quite like the word tranquil, at times. Again, if you come at the right time (volunteer).*

Activities imbue the place with the feeling of others having been there (Richardson 2005) and hint at future potential (Duff 2010). Mrs Green's description of the Oasis indicates this:

> *there's something about the space. It's very peaceful and I think a lot of creativity and a lot of love has gone into that space, and you can kind of feel that when you go in. And I liked that it's not… its not ever so sort of prim and proper and there are tangly bits, and wild bits, and things you know growing out of tyres, and … you know parts of it that look like they're a work in progress. I thought it was quite an inspirational space to be in, I liked a lot (teacher).*

She is affected by what others have done and how they feel about it which is reflected in its forms. Various people use similar words to describe a place because they perceive the same traces, and forms have been shaped to induce a particular atmosphere (Anderson 2009: 79).

If places are made through motion then each garden comprises a unique constellation of movements (Harvey 1996, Ingold 2000, Massey 1994, 2005), tangling trajectories of various velocities (Harrison *et al.* 2004: 48, Jones and Cloke 2002, Massey 2005: 133). The sudden leap of a frog or steady ambulation of a colleague may be more obvious than wafting grass or skittering ants but all are there and making there (see video stills *Movements 1-4*). When I asked volunteers at the Oasis to write anonymously about movements in the garden they showed plenty:

Describe a movement in the garden:

daisies + purple + pink flowers
nodding in breeze

Describe a movement in the garden:

THERE IS MOVEMENT CONSTANTLY ALL OVER THE
GARDEN WITH BEES PERUSING THE FLOWERS, HOUSE-
SPARROWS OPERTUNLY DARTING TO SCAVENGE DROPPED
SEEDS, THE SWAY OF THE GRASSES IN THE WILD
MEADOW.
I PREFER THE SKITISH HOUSE SPARROWS FLOCKING
ON THE WILLOW DOME ESPIEING THEIR CHANCE WHEN THEY'LL
DART DOWN EN-MASS TO THE GARDEN FLOOR BEFORE DARTING
BACK SAFETY.

Describe a movement in the garden:

There are lots of bees & butterflies &
other insects, and some birds.
As well as volunteers for gardening club.

A garden never stands still, even more steadfast presences such as buildings sway and decay on their foundations. Each of these movements has a different rhythm which together makes that place's character (Edensor 2010, Ingold 2000: 197). Places lead people to move in certain ways and as movement stimulates perception (Gibson 1979, Ingold 2000) it is through motion we know a place (Lewicka 2011: 226). I demonstrated above how boundaries inhibit motion whilst paths channel movements to organise space. Paths and boundaries suggest norms for motion so patterns develop then perpetuate as new arrivals fall into step. The gardens are made to enable certain modes of being – gardening, playing – and paths, boundaries and zones facilitate these types of motion. In turn they affect how people experience the garden by shaping movement: walls around the Oasis' perimeter and paths through mean children feel safe to run around. People do not follow rules imprinted on the place or read meanings from its surface but engage in activity alongside others and amongst features of the environment (Ingold 2000: 193). New volunteers mimic the routes of regulars, taking cues about the appropriate way to use the space (Ingold 2000: 196, Richardson 2003).

Staff at the Cwm repeatedly walk up and down the paths which impose habits on their mobility and bear the imprints of previous journeys (Ingold 2000: 204). The gardens are experienced in light/sound/texture of what has gone before, and each movement shapes those which follow. By moving repeatedly along the same route places become familiar (Edensor 2011) so it becomes easier to relax and garden movements feel good. Garden journeys have routes and rhythms which afford certain experiences, a unique combination of movements which move bodies and comprise sense of place.

What makes this garden good

"Look around you, you've got vegetables growing, you've got wildflowers growing, you've got tinkling of the fountain going, you've got house sparrows going nuts. You've got cats chasing bloody squirrels. And then you look up, and you're surrounded by flats, and the backs of peoples' houses, there's a church. And unless you're in that garden I don't think you're going to realise that.

"And that is what I think makes that particular garden special, is because it's almost like you've cut out – you've got - say imagine you've got a mass of houses all thrown together, really densely, and then you've just got a cake cutter and just taken that bit out and just put a garden there and that's the kind of feeling you get when you're in there. Because you're in a little tiny oasis. Very accessible, but a very kind of open place but at the same time very closed. Coz you're barriered in on every side, erm whether it be with fence or trees or walls. Or flats. But it's a very … very urban place, very kind of central city feeling to it, until you sit down and relax. And I think that's what makes this garden good" (Sean, volunteer, Oasis.)

The streets immediately behind and in front of the Oasis.
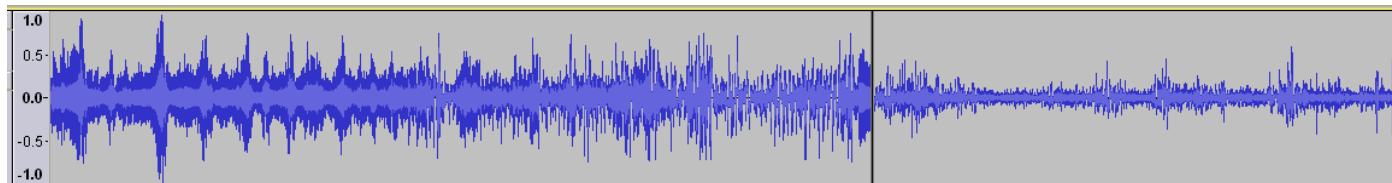
Soundscape of a journey to the Oasis: The vertical black line indicates the point of transition from street to garden when ambient noise levels decrease in volume and intensity.

Inside the Oasis.

Journeys from elsewhere

It is not just motion within the gardens which lends them a certain character but journeys to them. The Oasis is defined by contrasts with the surrounding city (see insert *What makes this garden good)*. Several people called it an oasis because as Em put it "you don't expect it to be there", it is hidden from the street and according to Tom "it's just different from everything else around here" which is "noisy and concrete". They appreciate journeying from a busy grey cityscape to a garden of colour and relative calm. The Maes also makes sense in relation to its surroundings but for the opposite reason. Simone says it is "in a very beautiful aspect, looking over the mountains", a "beautiful" or "stunning" view according to Anne-Marie and Susan respectively. The Maes lacks an imposing boundary because distant views make the garden special, whilst the walls around the Oasis indicate disjuncture from the city. No boundary is completely closed (Massey 2011) and both perimeters are permeable to birds, noise, or visitors so the wider setting contributes to the gardens' character.

When I asked Bill what he liked about the Maes he looked across the garden, indicated distant hills saying "look around" (fieldnotes).

The Cwm's setting was rarely mentioned, perhaps symptomatic of its enclosure between river and railway with limited views from the valley floor, or reflecting a lack of connection with people nearby. The comparison more important to the garden is across time not space, not contrast with elsewhere but with what is no longer there. A narrative of transformation is central to how people describe the garden so Doug begins from it being "an abandoned allotment site [...] completely overgrown". Emilie says it was "like a wreck, it was shocking" but through "a lot of work" they have shown "you can *actually* transform a site" (staff, network organisation). Derek, Doug and Ruth were all keen that I see how it had looked originally in order to understand this transformation as it is highly visual: 'see how much better it looks' (see box *Before and After*). Local residents who had followed progress expressed their admiration but such praise was not offered by newcomers: Toni's first impression was "what a mess!" because "nothing's finished". Not having seen the site 'before' they could not appreciate 'after' and saw only current mess. The Cwm's present character depends on knowledge of past and future as the other gardens are appreciated in awareness of their spatial continuum; the character of each garden extends beyond the immediate time-space to be defined by historic-spatial context.

A garden's boundary is not impermeable and inside one is amongst things from all over: timber from Hereford makes beds where seeds from Carmarthenshire are sown in compost transported from across the county, watered by river water from miles upstream, to grow beans which the chef in the pub in the next town has asked for, all made possible by money gathered from around the country (see box *Who owns the Cwm?)*. A *local* garden is always connected to other places some a considerable distance away and making a small place does not mean local confinement as materials and ideas travel; the immediacy of here now is influenced by processes acting at the global scale (Harvey 1996: 315-6, Pink 2009: 33). The obvious example is finance as global economic troubles shape the funding environment within Wales meaning Derek finds it more difficult to source funds for the Cwm. Local places are shaped by quite extensive forces hence there is no meaningful distinction between space and place (Massey 2005); equally the phenomenology of particular places is not localised as culture and upbringing intervene in how an individual experiences somewhere (Hall 2003,

> ## Who owns the Cwm?
>
> *Abercwm Association received a grant from the Big Lottery Fund to help establish the horticultural enterprise. The fund distributes income from the sale of tickets for the National Lottery. More than 951,000 people around the UK who bought a lottery ticket have invested in the Cwm and enabled its development.*

Ingold 2000). Experience of a place is not rooted to the local spot for as I illustrate later sensory engagement draws on other places as tastes evoke memories from elsewhere and visual appreciation draws on norms of good design. 'Here' and 'there' are always mingling as one arrives at a community garden having travelled from somewhere else and this journey shapes how one feels there.

Before and after

Doug: *Somewhere up in the office is a really nice photo actually of the gates there [pointing to them] erm looking from the car park into the site and basically you can't get through the gates (staff, Cwm).*

Hannah: *What do you think I should take a photo of that you think kind of gives your impression of what the garden is?*
Derek: *[looking towards gate] Haven't quite finished, I've got another sign to go up there. You haven't got a before and after though have you?*
Hannah: *I've a photo of before any thing was done here.*
Derek: *I think that – from that [photo] to that [gesturing towards entrance].*
Hannah: *So it's the kind of before and after of how it looks?*
Derek: *Yeah yeah (manager, Cwm).*

Always changing

> **Megan:** *It looks different every year and throughout the year (staff, Oasis).*
>
> ---
>
> **Simone***: It's* completely *different because when we started here it was just a field. There was nothing here, it was a bare field. So it's changed completely (volunteer, Maes).*
>
> ---

I have suggested that understanding these places means following movements across space and time, but through this motion each garden remains somehow the same. In chapter II I suggested this interplay between dynamism and continuity can be understood by recognising rhythms as the ordering of repetition and change (Lefebvre 2004). Many gardeners noted the pleasure of following a garden's change, so how are community gardens dynamic? The over-arching change is of progress, what I call the transformation narrative. The Cwm was derelict wasteland now "transformed into a productive horticultural unit"; the Oasis went from "nothing" to "green lovely space"; the Maes was previously "a patch of barren land". The shifts from nothing to something were achieved through, in Simone's words "a lot of people's work". Gardeners celebrate this forward trajectory so Sally says "we run the risk obviously, of the garden just staying the same and never changing" whilst Graham was disappointed that the Cwm was "going backwards". Geographers have previously characterised this as the transformation of space to place (Cresswell 2004: 10, Tuan 1977: 136) but these were never empty just different (Milbourne 2011). However, transformation narratives indicate that more traditional ideas of space+meaning=place have purchase in daily life with place making commonly understood as layering human meaning onto blank surfaces. The ability to transform a site to a garden is part of the appeal of community gardening (Lawson 2004: 165) so I would challenge Sarah Pink's argument that a community garden should not be mistaken for a site with a location and boundary (2012: 92). Although we might understand places as constellations of processes there are sites on the ground which people treat as a concrete place; whilst Pink is right to emphasise the flows and events of place they also have representational aspects and are treated as bound locations.

Toni: Oh that was the leaves emerging on the tree, so it was a sign that the weather's improving that one. I quite like that, the buds coming out and blue sky. Mm. So that cheers you (staff/volunteer, Cwm, photo by Toni).

Sean: See that shows seasonal change better than any thing I think. The willow dome almost skeletal, that's gotta be early, very early spring, surely, I can see just a few leaves here. It just shows the incredible difference in the seasons (volunteer, Oasis).

John: Oh my god. Wow. … […] It's so bizarre because you don't really appreciate how much the garden has – how much better it looks in the summer than it does in the winter. I'd almost completely forgotten that it was that bare at one point. […] But yeah, it's such a strange photograph, to see the contrast, because although you know that in the winter things die back and it gets all bare, you kind of don't realize that it gets that bare, that's really you know – it's such a difference (volunteer, Oasis).

Within the onward movement from 'nothing to something' are changes at different timescales. At a steady pace with a cyclical pattern is seasonal variation so in winter things look "bare", "a bit neglected" or "a bit sad" (see box *Seasons*). Sally thinks volunteers drift from the Oasis over winter; Simone cannot wait for spring as people will return and she will have more energy. Getting through winter is aided by knowing seasonal cycles, for as Sarah says of the Maes "in a month or two it will look totally transformed". Cycles are another kind of motion making the gardens and shaping how people feel. Although people are fundamentally aware of this continual change it is hard to appreciate because they are always amongst it and it is so gradual. But noting change is enjoyable so weekly visits to the Oasis begin with a walk around to see how plants have changed, enjoying the magic of a garden 'just happening' (Hitchings 2006: 373). Celebrating a favoured place need not be reactionary reference to a static past (Massey 1994) but can be through anticipation of change. The epitome of this is the intention to let the Maes "evolve" and "develop organically", with Simone reminding herself that change is inevitable so she has to accept it. However, change is not always welcome and whilst it is not necessarily resisted a degree of control is sought so John was frustrated when seeds did not germinate joking it is "mother nature's fault but we will be the ones who have to rectify her mistakes" (volunteer, Oasis). Different approaches to place making are fundamentally decisions about how change should proceed and how much to control it.

People can identify with places in all their fluidity because they have a semblance of coherence which remains through the dynamism (Casey 1997: 44, Jones and Cloke 2002: 81). They sense continuity amongst change as the following conversation illustrates: John discusses images I took of the same vista every week for a year (see photographs *A Year of the Oasis*). These showed gradual change and the gardeners enjoyed studying them to reflect on progress:

> **John**: *… Ah this is interesting. [looking at pictures] … … … … That's really cool, that's quite err … yeah wow. … That's really weird isn't it, to look at the garden over a year. …*
>
> **Hannah**: *It is quite – like you compare this time last year, it's quite different.*
>
> **John**: *D'you know what: it's weird actually. You look at the very first photograph September 2011 and the very last photograph August 2012 and yeah, what's planted is different. But it hasn't actually changed that much. … Erm [looking] … … wow. … … … … Yeah, I could just look at that for ages, it's really bizarre. Supposed to be talking about – cool photos, I just want to look at them.*
>
> **Hannah:** *What is it that's so fascinating about it?*

> **John**:   I suppose it's just being – when you're there and it takes such a long time to happen you don't really take it in. And then you look at the photographs and you can – it illustrates how much things have changed. I mean the very first question that you said was 'how do you think the garden's different?' And I was like 'no it's the same'. And then you look at this and you realise OK well it is the same but over this period of time so many different things have changed. Erm and even thought they've changed it still looks the same. But I suppose a lot of – a lot has happened and it always - I mean it looked good in 2011 in that summer. And I think it looks equally as good now.

John's impression of the Oasis combines change and constancy, he was not always conscious of change and sees also enduring elements which make the garden he loves. It is in flux yet steady, he appreciates both stillness and motion without the two being in opposition.

Continual change means a place is never exactly the same (Massey 2005: 124-5, Pink 2009), each time John arrives at the Oasis has moved on, some plants will have died, a new volunteer has arrived, and because he knows it so well he notices how it differs. But a great deal will not have moved on as some things move quite slowly and do not stray very far (Hall 2009, Massey 2005: 139). Some motion is more a quivering on the spot than lengthy journey so we encounter similar presences over time; a tree sways in the breeze and gradually enlarges but its pace is slow. These relatively still forms mean that over time each visit to a garden includes familiar presences so people can build emotional attachments. Whilst we can never truly return to the same place (Massey 2005: 124, Pink 2009) we do retrace our steps along well trodden paths. Through repetition these become familiar and comfortable and the frequent traveller is more likely to notice what is different *en route* (Edensor 2011: 197). So consistency and change combine in a dynamic sense of place.

A dynamic or mobile sense of place means appreciating somewhere for its particular constellation of movements and being familiar with these rhythms. Everything in a garden - as in life - is always changing but this is not random or unpredictable as there are cycles and repetitions. We know what is likely to have changed since our last visit as plants turn from seed to flower to decay, seasons move across the calendar. As people regularly spend time together they develop routines so an afternoon at the Oasis divides into greetings, work, rest, work, rest, goodbyes, and knowing to expect this allows people to relax as they synchronise to the rhythm. At the Cwm this is more formalised

in a working day which trains bodies to a regime of social timings (Lefebvre 2004: 39-41). Routines offer a sense of dynamic consistency to *this* place which feels right (Edensor 2010: 3). Order is also gained as people seek particular changes and organise movements through skilled place making. Non-representational understandings can emphasise chance and events to the neglect of continuities and deliberate actions (Cresswell 2012: 103). I suggest that attention to patterns and repetition balances this by showing how change is regulated and makes some events predictable as places are *brought* together.

Changing bodies: Sensing place

I have started to show places' characters comprise particular kinds of motion but they are not just sensed kinaesthetically. Sounds of footsteps on gravel, tapping of hammers and rustling leaves, smells of fragrant flowers or rotting compost, sights of colourful flowers all contribute. Through bodies people sense a place so on an autumn afternoon in the Cwm we know the warm sun will soon drop behind the valley sides bringing a chill. Sensory information crosses the garden boundary as traffic noise wafts over from the distance and plants in the garden evoke those elsewhere. When Doug picked coriander in the polytunnel at the Cwm the plants released their fragrance, he inhaled deeply: "smell that coriander, mmm. I think I'll have a curry later". It was common when handling edible plants for the smell to prompt discussion of food and favourite ways of eating different crops. Flavour and aroma link the garden to memories of past meals or imagination of one's to come, and also to other places like the house Sally thinks of every time she smells lavender. Flavours are conjured by looking at their source as when Claire admired fruit ripening and anticipated making jam, 'oohing' at the memory of last year's. Maggie imagines how lovely the Cwm could look by picturing other gardens she has seen, linking here to elsewhere.

The phenomenology of a place is never wholly local but shaped by connections to other places which bodies carry with them, and each person draws on different histories so senses place differently. Toni loves vegetables but when she persuaded Michael to try some beans he pulled a face and ran off to spit them out shouting "they taste like soap". Sensory experiences are not homogenous biological reactions but bodily encounters shaped by social processes beyond the individual (Hayes Conroy and Hayes Conroy 2013). The same place is not sensed identically because each individual's journey to the garden brings a bodily comportment or set of habits (Harrison 2000). This is most apparent with physical ability and capacity: Anne-Marie prefers to sit on a stool when everyone else sprawls on the floor at the Maes because she is arthritic whilst Doug walks slowly and cannot weed for too long because of problems with his knees. Again we

> ### Sounds
>
> *Chatting to Anne-Marie near the caravan we heard the familiar squeak then clunk of the gate at the bottom of the field opening then closing. We instinctively looked over to see who had arrived (fieldnotes, Maes.)*
>
> ---
>
> *Work over we gathered around the table. Once everyone was sitting the garden became still, the noise of tools gone. A family of sparrows soon swooped down to the bird table as if summoned by the quiet. The noise of our activity was replaced by their merry chirruping (fieldnotes, Oasis).*

see how a 'local' place is never completely such as bodies bring spatial characteristics from afar. But habits are not fixed because the garden changes bodies as they shape the garden (Hinchcliffe 2007: 175, Turner 2011). There are obvious traces such as the scar Derek got when part of the polytunnel struck his face when moving it, or the dirt, scratches, blisters and splinters I often went home with. Under the skin are aches and pains as when Will and Maggie dug so hard that the next day he could not use his arms and she was exhausted. Steadier changes to the body are made as habits develop so it becomes used to moving in certain ways (Ingold 2000: 204) as I detail below.

Experience of the garden is through bodies which enjoy rich sensory experiences not available elsewhere (Stenner *et al.* 2012, Tilley 2006). Gardens seem peculiarly tactile (Bhatti *et al.* 2009) compared to contemporary places which are rather 'hands-off' (Sennett 1994: 15). Despite this people rarely talked about enjoying a garden's touch which is not unusual (Tilley 2006: 324). I became interested in touch through watching people put gloves on and off, and observing that some people choose to garden without gloves. I discussed this with Graham as he sowed seeds:

Hannah: Do you ever wear gloves when you work here?
Graham: No. Oh very rare. Very rare.
Hannah: Do you prefer that?
Graham: Yeah.
Hannah: How come?
Graham: Get my hands dirty.
Hannah: Yeah? That's really it? What's so good about getting your hands
        dirty?
Graham: Dunno. You just – you can feel what you're doing.
Hannah: Oh right. ...So what you doing there that you feel?
Graham: Well I mean you're just getting down onto it like you know it's –
        with gloves there's no kind of contact is there? (volunteer, Cwm).

Similar conversations with other gardeners showed that to work they needed to know through touch. Toni said she needs to feel the plants, Doug likes to get his hands in the soil, Maggie could not weed in gloves as she could not tell what she was doing. By touching the soil a gardener knows texture and moisture content so can judge how it should be changed; such computations are often not verbalised or cognitive as a gardener knows soil which 'feels right'. The soil of the Cwm feels quite different from that of the Maes and Oasis, textures which tell bodies about the place and reveal its character. But this is also about getting dirty: for Simone not wearing gloves was a deliberate statement of being a gardener who does not mind touching soil, for Graham dirty hands represent employment. This may be why Michael enjoyed going home

"dirty and stinking" as it marked him as working a manual job associated with masculinity which shows in a man's rough, dirty hands (Walkerdine and Jimenez 2012: 92-3).

Touch also became significant when comparing community gardens to other greenspaces nearby which seem to have less varied textures (see photographs *Greenspaces: Keep off the grass)*. Gardens seem to invite more tactile engagement. (Bhatti *et al.* 2009: 69) which might distinguish them from other places as in many daily engagements close contact is reduced by the intervention of design, the market or fear (Rodway 1994: 173, Thrift 2008: 72, Sennett 1994). I want to suggest that the haptic experiences of community gardening convey something about how people are relating. Touch is intimate and empathetic because it is a close contact in which we feel almost as one with the other we are touching (Coward 2012: 478, Ingold 2000: 133, Paterson 2005). This closeness expresses a certain depth of relationship which requires familiarity and comfort, for social interaction usually respects personal body space (Hall 2003). As I walked across the Maes with Anne-Marie she responded to a joke by touching my arm which made me feel welcome. Claire arrived at the Oasis with a fear of frogs but her fascination grew until she wanted to touch one and became comfortable enough to hold one. Simone cannot resist stroking fresh green seedlings because something appealing draws one closer whilst revulsion pushes away. Melissa leapt away from a slug she accidentally touched, John recoiled from a disgusting stench of stagnant water, and children ran away from plants they were told are poisonous. Proximity and contact are signs of comfort with others: watching Sally wander off paths to stand on soil, stroke a plant and pluck a leaf to smell suggests she feels at home in the garden. Visitors less at ease remain on the paths and don't touch, not even rearranging the furniture so they can sit comfortably. Touching signals affinity and comfort with another and as somewhere the gloves come off a garden offers plentiful opportunities to know others through touch.

Touch and texture

Simone stroked her hand across a tray of seedlings: "they're doing well" (fieldnotes, Maes)

"My favourite texture in the garden is that of freshly riddled compost. If you let it fall between your fingers it feels granular and light, but with the slightest squeeze it takes the form of a soft, smooth almost spongy consistency" (anonymous writing, Oasis).

Maggie told me Arthur had pointed out a poppy and said how delicate it looked. "He's got a soul bless him" she joked (fieldnotes, Cwm).

164

Flavour and aroma

A new young person on a placement was trying to persuade Rhys he could go early: "I don't like it here, it stinks of vegetables" (fieldnotes, Cwm).

Maggie was pottering around seeing what was growing. She snapped the seed head off an onion, held it to her nose, took a deep inhalation: "ooh, smell that, I love the smell of all these vegetables" (fieldnotes, Cwm).

Simone and one or two others had prepared lunch, a stew of vegetables from the garden. We all gathered around the fire, glad of a chance to sate the appetites our morning's work had created. We passed round steaming bowls, the group fell quiet, starting to eat. There were occasional "mm" sounds then calls of thanks to Simone with compliments on how tasty it was. She replied that it was probably so good because the vegetables are so fresh (fieldnotes, Maes).

Greenspaces: Keep off the grass

Sharing sense of place

Sensory place experiences centre on bodies but descriptions of each garden suggest common experiences extending beyond individuals. As discussed in chapter II places made collectively and experienced with others will have a degree of shared meaning but collective sense of place is often unaccounted for. At these gardens many people seem to agree to a degree the kind of place they are so how does consensus emerge? Equally where there are divergences from the common view we can question why. Many people feel the Oasis is calm and friendly, the Maes pleasant, the Cwm unhappy, there is continuity between individuals. Put simply, gardeners have a shared sense of place because they make these places together with several factors contributing. Firstly, the presence and pattern of material forms encourages

> ### A bad day
>
> *I arrived and walked over to where the others were working. I sensed something was up, they were too quiet. I tried to help making a path but no one was quite sure what we were meant to do. The others were annoyed that their work had been criticised and disagreed with the instructions they'd been given. They're all under pressure to finish work in time for a funding deadline. Everyone seemed to be in a bad mood not helped by the frustrating task. They all took a turn moaning to me about each other. It was freezing on site and I couldn't get warm. Jonesy's skin was blue in places. On the way home I wondered about stopping going there, it's too tense (fieldnotes, Cwm).*

sensory experiences which are to some degree similar because there is a high degree of commonality in how different bodies react to stimuli (Damasio 1999: 56, Lewicka 2011: 223). People are highly imitative so on perceiving a particular reaction in someone else we are likely to feel it ourselves (Thrift 2008: 237). I noticed this at community gardens when individuals who arrived looking down became brighter amongst the friendly activity of other gardeners. Some days I sensed a certain mood not caused by one person or thing but 'in the air' (see box *A bad day)*. The character of the place, what Anne-Marie calls "good vibes" comprises aesthetics, layout, and signs of care which move different people in similar ways. Such atmospheres are not confined to an individual, rather hover somewhere indistinct amongst the relations of people and place (Anderson 2009, Duff 2010, Richardson 2005).

A second factor is that in community gardens people move in similar ways – walking the same paths, digging the same soil. Patterns and rhythms are induced by paths and boundaries, and people adjust their movements to resonate with others (Ingold 2000: 196) or are trained to move to a certain routine (Lefebvre 2004). Movement is often

synchronised as people work together on a task, one instructs another, or a tool habituates bodies to certain motion. People in place together develop rhythms, such as the routine of a gardening session repeated week after week. By building routines the place develops rhythms which synchronise individuals (Edensor 2010, Lefebvre 2004) until bodies moving in concord share sensations. This is also influenced by expectations derived from social norms, a third contributor. Numerous gardeners mentioned that being in a garden is therapeutic, demonstrating the pervasive idea that they are healing and restful places (Cooper Marcus and Barnes 1999, Ward Thompson 2010). There is a strong cultural narrative that the outdoors offers healthy refreshment (Dawney 2011, Parr 2007) so it would be reasonable to expect that people imagine their community garden to feel good and are inclined to feel them as such.

Communication is the fourth contributor to shared sense of place as people talk about what a place means (Basso 1996, Dixon and Durrheim 2000, Stokowski 2002). I showed earlier that people discuss plans for their garden then make decisions, through doing so they develop a shared understanding of the garden they want. An example from the Oasis: during 2012 volunteers discussed how to attract more people to the garden and some suggested planting more flowers as a beautiful space would be more useful to non-gardeners. As they discussed their plans the association between useful and beautiful was repeated and became a consensus which was reinforced by a programme they watched on the importance of planting flowers for bees. The emphasis of the garden shifted from food to flowers with a large bed becoming a wildflower meadow like one featured in the programme, a result of wider cultural discourses informing conversations which then shaped the garden. At the Cwm many people lack input to plans or decisions, but shared meanings develop as people gossip or moan and agree what is wrong there.

Talk also contributes to a shared sense of place through stories (Basso 1996, Ingold 2000: 21, 2011: 162) as new arrivals are shown and told garden histories which induct novices in shared meanings. Each garden's transformation narrative might be on display as before and after photographs, or recounted to new arrivals. Induction is related to a final aspect in the process of sharing a sense of place, learning. As people are taught by more experienced gardeners their attention is guided to certain presences and they are encouraged to know certain things. Once told by Toni that the texture and moisture of the soil makes a difference Graham is more likely to notice it; once I had shown him how to distinguish hogweed from other plants he could see it and avoid it. Knowledge of a place is shaped by what it affords (Gibson 1979, Ingold 2000) so those with shared goals are likely to know a place for certain characteristics and agree what

makes it important. Through making then experiencing a place together people exchange knowledge and meanings, hence a shared sense of place.

Diverging senses of place

As noted in chapter II although experienced together a taskscape does not determine individual journeys; Lefebvre calls this "unity in diversity" as people move similarly but with difference (2004: 77-8). A place's rhythms do not fix each individual's engagement (Spinney 2006: 729) and there is always scope for counter-rhythms or syncopation (Conlon 2010). But people tend to fall into step with the beat, so sense of place mingles individuality and consensus with aesthetic taste being a clear manifestation of this at community gardens. When speaking of beautiful gardens people expressed widely agreed characteristics: lots of colour, diversity, flowers, curves, 'natural' forms, silky textures and the soft green of lush growth (see photographs *It's beautiful*). Conversely unattractive views are drab greys, bare ground, human constructions, decay or disorder (see photographs *It's ugly)*. But opinions diverged around how much order should be imposed like Melissa and Sean's disagreements about planting in straight lines. Neighbours of the Maes disagreed over whether it is a wonderful example of a garden being not too controlled or just a mess (see photographs *Is it beautiful?*). The difference between bucolic and neat gardeners is not just about taste: Melissa prefers mess as good habitat for insects whilst her preference for planting things randomly mimics how seeds fall from a wild plant to imitate nature. Sensing place draws on values and knowledge from elsewhere and depends on what one perceives a garden to be for.

Assessment of a garden's character also depends on one's position. The neighbour who thought the Maes messy and over-grown wrongly assumed it had received funding so expected it to look better maintained. Having not spoken to anyone involved he did not know that the mess of dead plants encourage biodiversity. As an 'outsider' his knowledge was derived from passing by and looking so he did not know the garden's principles. Like Toni who had not been involved in the Cwm's history long enough to appreciate its successes his assessment of a garden was based on its present form. How people know the garden determines their sense of the place so insider and outside perspectives diverge. As part of the Cwm's networks Emilie and Ruth have been shown around but know only what is presented to them by Abercwm Association. As a result they perceive the Cwm's place making as involving the community, others disagree:

Ruth: I can see there is a sense of ownership, now that it is really important. If you want the community to join in well you've gotta let them in haven't you? (staff, funder).

Emilie: I'd like to say it's community run and community led, which it is because it's from the Association which are a community partnership. [...] it is embedded, it is there in the community and it's been getting I think more and more engaged with the local community (staff, network organisation).

Toni: I don't think they've been involved - I feel that they haven't been involved much, the community, in having a say (staff/volunteer).

Maggie: they're not inviting the community in [...] This so called community association – should be doing that for the community. I don't think they've thought that far to involve the community (staff).

Arthur: Well a community garden is everyone gets involved innit? But at the moment it's not. [...] But if it's supposed to be – this is supposed to be for the community, there should be more stuff here for the community. And then they might take pride in the place and look after it (staff).

Outsiders praise achievements whilst an insider described it as "a very challenging place to work [...] a place of very bitter work relations [...] a very unhappy place to work". When presented to outsiders the emphasis is on the positive, visitors are shown what people are proudest of not the mess or failures 'behind the scenes'. This is not surprising for the gardens need funds and endorsement from outsiders like Emilie and Ruth so must demonstrate positive impacts. The variance between insider-outsider perspectives also arises from what counts within formal systems: whether or not the garden feels good is not an organisational objective to be measured or reported so it remains invisible to Ruth and Emilie. The feelings of community gardening are not easily captured for more formal discourses of policy and funding (Donati *et al.* 2010) but these less calculable aspects are equally important (Hinchcliffe *et al.* 2007). The two perspectives also reflect different understandings of community with insiders focusing on whether the Cwm feels like a supportive community place, whilst outsiders equate community with local voluntary organisations and effort. Whilst feelings matter hugely to gardeners they do not count for others.

The contrast between insider and outsider perspective arises from different ways of knowing a garden. A gardener feels it directly through multiple senses including affect, whilst a passer-by looks from a distance and knows nothing of its making. A community garden exists in multiple versions (Hinchcliffe 2010); each person has her own according to her experiences, which histories she was part of, which stories she knows. Some versions are absent such as neighbours too polite to say they do not like the garden, or the unvoiced motives of vandals and slugs. Some versions are presented as the 'official' garden in press coverage, funding applications, or guided tours for visitors. I did not encounter overt challenges being made to consensus views on each garden but there is potential for sense of place to be contested, as suggested by the vandalism discussed in chapter V. Planning and decision making are not equally distributed so some individuals lack influence over how a place is brought together and this affects how they experience them. I have presented versions of these community gardens informed by my experiences of being there with others, and shown that there is a degree of consensus about their sense of place but space for individuals to feel differently.

"It's beautiful"
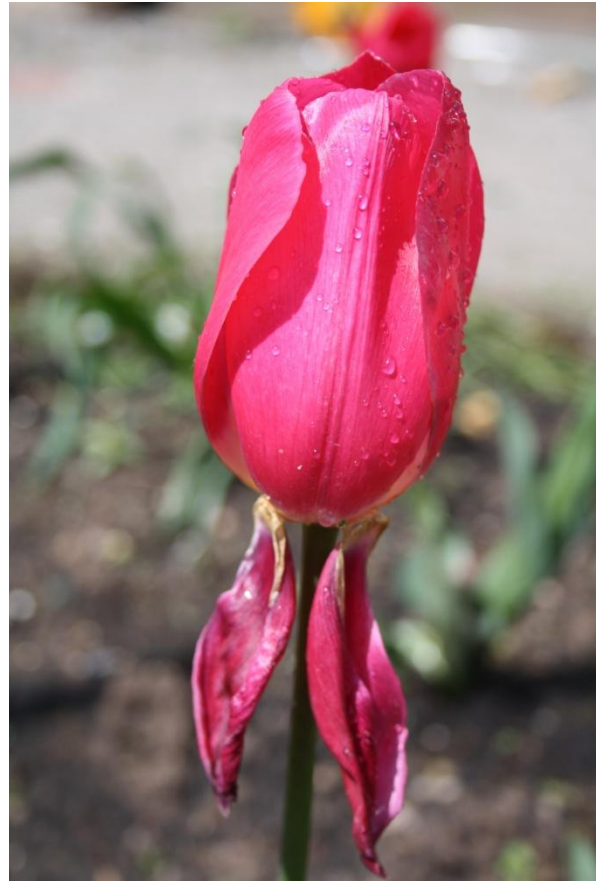
"It's ugly"

"Is it beautiful?"

HOW DOES A COMMUNITY GARDEN FEEL?

Simone: When I come here in the morning and there's no one else here and I put the kettle on and I have a cup of tea and just look over everything and think yeah this is really good I like this, it feels right (volunteer, Maes).

Bill: It's an enjoyable and relaxing place to spend a bit of time really (volunteer, Maes).

John: It feels relaxed, safe, enjoyable. ...Erm I dunno – I have a good time, it's ... What does it feel like to be there? That's such a strange question. ... Relaxed and comfortable I think (volunteer, Oasis).

So far in this chapter I have shown that each community garden has a distinct character or sense of place. From the earlier discussion of motivations we know these are places enjoyed for feeling good; to understand the processes behind this I will consider the experiences people enjoy. It will become apparent that the affects are not wholly positive, and that there are limits to the potential for pleasure. When gardeners explained what brought them to their community garden they noted features of the environment, the activities and the people. I now consider these in more detail, exploring qualities of movement which make these special places and how feelings play a part in place making.

A home from home

When community gardeners discussed what they like about their gardens they focused on relaxation, calm, lack of stress and feeling at ease. Volunteers at the Oasis and Maes showed this in smiles, pottering around, bodies lacking tension moving with ease. Visitors or new volunteers were more restrained, but by taking cues from others they developed confidence to take equipment from the shed or put the kettle on. Staff at the Cwm displayed less comfort for reasons I shall explore, but did enjoy occasions of relaxed banter and happy meanderings. Being amongst a place's familiar rhythms and routines feels comfortable and like one belongs (Crang 2000: 305, Edensor 2010), often thought of as feeling at home (Manzo 2003).This is how Sean feels about the Oasis:

the community garden is a place where you can go and you can do that social stuff at the same time as feeling quite comfortable and relaxed and at home a bit I suppose (volunteer).

As somewhere familiar where one knows and is known intimately (Ingold 2000: 330, Tuan 1977: 144) community gardens can feel like home. Various factors contribute, first the nature of the space as Anj who works in the community centre at the Oasis describes: "it's just that place of a space which is nice, it's nice to sit, especially now with all the different plants, it's so colourful." This was Sean's intention: "we wanted to make it a nice place to *be*". To make the space enjoyable the group planted more flowers so those not interested in crops could appreciate it to make it "more welcoming". A pleasant environment is the first contributor to a community garden feeling good as was most noted at the Oasis where effort had gone into making it relaxing.

In contrast Arthur complained that the Cwm was messy with nothing attractive for people to appreciate:

Should be all flowers so when people come past it's not just – coz it's not just to grow stuff is it? It's supposed to be for people to enjoy. Well you're not going to be able to enjoy stuff- well you don't want to see carrots and that growing do you? (staff).

He feels appearances shape people's relationships with the garden, as does Toni:

I mean that tree that's just been uprooted and left, I mean that somebody's just left. It doesn't look cared for does it? I think the environment - um maybe the community think 'why should we bother?' you know when they see that (staff/volunteer).

Toni, Maggie and Arthur believe that if the Cwm appeared cared for others would care, but there are no pretty flowers or benches to "invite people in" and Graham rued the lack of a sign to welcome the public. A lack of visual cues can discourage positive perceptions of a community garden as its identity and intention are unclear (Hou *et al*. 2009: 179). A good proportion of the neighbours I spoke to did not realise the Cwm is open to them. It does not look like public spaces they know such as parks and those who do pass through walk along the main paths without lingering as it is not somewhere they want to rest.

A place like home should also feel safe (Tuan 2004: 164). Sean thinks the Oasis' seclusion helps:

I think because you've got this enclosure where you kind of feel that you're
away from the public view people feel more relaxed, more safe, you know that
kind of thing. You can do and say whatever the hell you like.

He and John feel this distinguishes it from other greenspaces which are more exposed
so harder to relax in. For children this is particularly important as Mrs Green explains:

they love going there its simple as that because they're quite free. […] because
it's completely enclosed they can have a little- they can be free in there and it's
- especially the little ones (teacher).

Physical layout creates a sense of freedom by facilitating certain motion, but freedom is
balanced with safety as boundaries offer a sense of security (Kurtz 2001, Massey 2011).
An appropriate welcome is also necessary which Tom thinks people feel at the Oasis:

Nobody has an individual stake over it, although gardening club maintain it.
Then a lot of groups – and the same with the centre I think – feel that it's their
own? Erm and are comfortable with it (staff).

The garden's ethos is that people should be encouraged to make it as they wish so many
people can feel at home there.

Feeling comfortable requires inclusion, also familiarity as Sarah noted:

if I came up here without any body being here I wouldn't really know what to
do or where to start coz I don't know my – you know, I'm sure I could find
weeding but don't really know what the priorities are or what's going on
(volunteer, Maes).

She has found people welcoming but having not spent much time there she does not
know enough about the garden. The garden's spatial characteristics may contribute
as the lack of paths or distinct features makes it less legible so harder to identify
with. Simone has another explanation:

I suppose I'm quite a perfectionist in a certain way and I want every thing to
be done in a particular kind of way so I do it so I make sure it's all – yeah
that's not very good is it? [laughs] But maybe that contributes to um – so
maybe that does mean that I kind of hold control more and maybe that means
that people don't feel that they can come in and have more input (volunteer,
Maes).

She is aware that to feel at home people need ownership and that she may be inhibiting
this.

The opportunity for place making encourages people to feel a garden belongs to them
(Eizenberg 2012, Milbourne 2011) so the approaches discussed in the previous chapter
influence how each garden feels. Limited opportunities to influence place making may

explain why comfort is lacking at the Cwm: Toni had expected that at a community garden everyone would "get involved in all aspects of it and a choice of what it looked like, and what went on" but "they don't communicate to tell you what's going on". Staff and volunteers are often not aware of plans or involved in decision making so cannot influence change; some had never been to one end of the garden before their interview with me. Maggie thought this lack of communication and participation made the whole operation precarious; other examples suggest she is right (Lawson 2004: 170, Pearson and Firth 2012: 150).

Although pleasurable feelings of community gardens are 'homely' we know most are deliberately gardening away from home. In addition to their comfort community gardeners described enjoying the chance of escape or getting away. These places are different as signalled by what people wear. When volunteers bumped into fellow gardeners elsewhere they often did not recognise each other being used to seeing someone scruffy and dirty. Simone never wore her ugly wool coat in town but she felt more at ease in the garden instead of "putting on a persona". Community gardens seem comfortable enough to feel like home whilst also offering escape: a home away from home. Domestic gardens have been found to offer feelings of escape or 'being away' through a break from routines and contrast with everyday stresses (Bhatti and Church 2004, Fieldhouse 2003, Gross and Lane 2007, Stenner *et al.* 2012, Ulrich 1999). Fascination with things such as plants distracts from "more determined undertakings" (Hitchings 2006: 375). So how are community gardens relaxing and escapist? It is a mixture of environment, activities and socialising which people enjoy and when I reflected on how these feel good it became apparent these experiences can be interpreted as forms of motion. Some clothes belong in the garden because bodies move differently there: Maggie found her new boots ideal for work but when she walked home she had to change into trainers half-way as they were too heavy for walking, outside the garden she moves differently so boots do not feel right. This suggests that considering the qualities of the movements comprising a place might help to understand the feeling of being somewhere; trajectories are not all of a kind and attention to their qualities helps

Toni told me that after our interview she'd gone home, opened her patio doors and gone into the garden. Thinking back on our discussion she realised "that's what it is, sanctuary, coz not everyone's got that have they? So places like this are a sanctuary for them." I pictured her relaxing at home after a day of work and bickering (fieldnotes, Cwm).

"While you are with us just sit back, relax and enjoy a moment away from the bustle of town" (event leaflet, Maes).

address Massey and Ingold's neglect of the emotional experience of place. The next sections introduce four further contributions to good community garden feelings, followed by discussion of less positive experiences.

Escape: Moving out

Going to a community garden is movement from indoors where people spend most of their time. John likes how gardening pushes him to go out:

> *I just generally feel a sense of wellbeing from not being in a house all day, you know, it's just being outside is nicer (volunteer, Oasis).*

Outdoors for Simone means "being out in the elements", the "fresh air" she and Bill enjoy, or for Tom being in "natural light". Moving from home or office to outdoors offers a break from routine which Megan calls an "escape from our computers". The location of the Oasis contributes as Melissa explains:

> *you don't sort of feel as though you're in town any more when you come here its sort of quite umm… you know natural, you can get away from it all I suppose so it's a quiet space, most of the time. […] you know you don't feel as though you're in the centre of town, you can't hear traffic so much, its not full of exhaust fumes, its umm you know its more green than if you were walking through Johnstown most of the time you'd just be seeing buildings and traffic and shops and things whereas here it's more of a sort of natural environment so there's lots of green and there's the pond and umm yeah it's more sort of countrified I suppose (volunteer).*

The contrast is partly material – greenery, pond, no cars- but also imagined so the air seems fresher despite the proximity of urban congestion as she remembers the countryside. Melissa thinks green is a relaxing colour hence the garden feels calmer than the rest of the city; Toni agrees greenery helps:

> *if I see a plant it just makes me de-stress, I'm sure my blood pressure comes down. I used to take my monitor when I went in and it used to always be down after gardening, my blood pressure (volunteer, Cwm).*

Rural life also benefits from counterpoints offered by community gardens as Sarah explains:

> *It just gets you away from the sort of – it just helps - being removed physically is somehow erm it's just somehow helpful. You can see Maybury but you're not right in the middle of it. […] And it's a fabulous space and it's outside of the town and I think, for me, that's helpful. […] Sometimes when you live in*

Maybury and you work in Maybury you just need a bit of time. Out (volunteer, Maes).

Maybury is calm compared to Johnstown, the Oasis hectic in comparison to the Maes but both gardens offer a sense of psychological distance. Their significance comes partly through their relation to elsewhere hence sense of place is relational.

Moving to a community garden offers escape to a calming environment where one can enjoy fresh air and contrast from routine spaces associated with stress. This is why Sean enjoys having to travel to the Oasis:

I've never lived local to here to be honest with you. Umm it's just – in fact – that's almost one of the attractions. Coz you're separated from all the troubles and what not you have at home aren't you? So it's kind of handy. Umm I'm not sure I would have got so involved if it was right on my doorstep (volunteer).

The sense of remove is heightened for Melissa because the Oasis is not wholly her responsibility whereas her own garden feels over-whelming. Sean enjoys "just the freedom to mess about" doing things "at your own speed", whilst Sally talks of "pottering around" doing whatever she fancies. As does Simone:

it's quite nice to please myself, I can just sort of go – get into my flow, just do this and then do that, and then do that and little jobs here and little jobs there. I do quite like that. If there are people here then I can't do that because I need to direct people (volunteer, Maes).

When Toni went from being employed to being a volunteer at the Cwm she gained greater freedom, work became more pleasurable because she was "left to my own devices". Enjoyment seems to require choice as Bill says:

sometimes you feel like it and sometimes you don't feel like it. You know it's a – and that's quite a nice thing, that you're not locked in that every single week you've got to be there at a certain time doing a certain thing (volunteer, Maes).

Simone agrees people should only help if they want to: "it's got to come from the heart". Sean seeks this at the Oasis:

I hope that a lot of people in the gardening club do feel that way, that they can come along and they can pretty much do what they want when they want and that's what I want it to be like. I don't want people to come in and ask my permission if they can make a cup of tea, I want them to just do it and to enjoy being there. [...] I want people to kind of belong to the garden, and the garden to belong to them. But at the same time have the free and easy feeling that they don't have to come every week if they don't want to (volunteer).

Being free and easy is good but having responsibility can prevent this: when Sally handed over responsibility for the Oasis the "stressful bad feelings" went so she no

longer feels "that kind of pressure". Escape through community gardening conveys movement without burden or constraint which is associated with duty or lack of choice; people draw towards comfortable motion and select routes they can travel with ease.

Keeping busy: Moving around

Community gardeners do not just arrive and stay still, they work and activity feels good whilst inactivity can result in self-consciousness which bring negative moods (Csikszentmihalyi 2002). Graham is unemployed and says that without being able to go to the Cwm he'd be bored "stuck indoors". John also appreciates "that distraction from work and from other things. I think it's nice to have things- to have a lot of different things going on in your life". Several gardeners told me that they found their involvement countered mental health problems by distracting them from worries. Certain activities seem to relieve stress and were often described as therapeutic, as Claire says whilst weeding "you're getting away from it all". Sarah expressed this sentiment:

> *I think there's a lot in digging and doing whatever you're doing with the land, there's something about being close to nature, something very therapeutic about that. You're not sitting at a computer, you're not – you can kind of just take your mind off any other worries in life and I can totally see why it's a really good activity for every body and any body (volunteer, Maes).*

Digging is Will's favourite job because "just mentally it's easy and umm it's quite peaceful doing it really". It is physically hard but "mentally it's quite relaxing", similarly weeding is "nice, tranquil" because "it's easy, easy work and err... you're just there doing it with your thoughts to yourself" (staff, Cwm). For Toni sowing seeds is "quite therapeutic and relaxing, you can just drift off, I don't have to think". She concentrates but is relaxed as little can go wrong: "you've got to make sure you're doing the right distance but that's not hard". Tasks are relatively simple and within the gardeners' proficiency, entail a degree of repetition which can build into a rhythm, involve physical rather than cognitive exertion and yield tangible results relatively quickly - a neat tray of compost, green shoots emerging. Movement becomes rhythmic and pleasing so the gardener become "absorbed", "time passes", the "mind switches off" and they "let go".

These garden movements are suited to an optimal experience of happiness or feeling in control of one's consciousness which Csikszentmihalyi terms 'flow' (2002). As Melissa described, concentrating on weeding you cannot think about work or other preoccupations so you become distracted from stressful thoughts. In a flow state attention is focused on the current goal, not distracted by things which soak up limited

resources of attention so maintaining the ordered consciousness of wellbeing (ibid.). Removal from everyday life and places to be alone or outdoors helps achieve flow (2002: 74) but it usually entails activity. Various activities help– including socialising enjoyed by community gardeners- and the characteristics Csikszentmihalyi identifies chime with descriptions of garden work as enchanting (Bhatti *et al.* 2009). Capacity to do the job is not exceeded by its difficulty or scale, nor is it so simple that no concentration is required, hence one is challenged and remains focused. The goals are clear and there is relatively quick feedback on success. Will does not achieve flow whilst struggling to construct something but while digging he feels in control, no longer thinks about the action, relaxes then admires the result. Concentrating on the task it becomes seemingly effortless and there is no opportunity to dwell on everyday worries so gardeners spoke of time passing quickly and losing the sense of themselves as separate beings which characterise flow (Csikszentmihalyi 2002). As Maggie described through gardening "this idea of me and mine, of who I am and what I think I am, it just drops away". The appeal of such activities is evidenced by the tendency for volunteers to let administrative tasks slip, "people want to garden not do accounts" Kate said (volunteer, Oasis) because they are not restful escape.

Physical work: Moving with skill

One appeal of gardening is physical work which many said contrasts with their usual daily tasks. Some noted that this offers healthy exercise but it was mental benefits which were appreciated most as tasks were found to induce relaxation and flow. The easy movements of flow require bodies to move rhythmically and smoothly which takes skill (Csikszentmihalyi 2002: 52). Through repetition bodies become able to move efficiently so complete tasks with apparent ease (Edensor 2010: 15, Ingold 2011: 60, Sennett 2008) as the mind seems to switch off. When I asked how she plants onions Simone said she "just pushed them into the ground" but she had an accomplished technique:

> Simone took an onion set from the bag, held it between thumb and two fingers, pushed the base a little way into the soil. Then with her hand still over it she crabbed her fingers down around it until they touched the soil then pulled them in towards her palm so they dragged earth around the onion, just covering the base. As her hand raised back up she lifted a small amount of soil which she crumbled between her finger tips so it fell lightly over the onion. Done. Back to the bag for the next (fieldnotes, Maes).

This looked easy, Simone did not pause or seem to contemplate what to do next, her hands appeared to move without thought, it happened too quickly for her to be cognitively processing decisions. But skill takes practice:

> *The willow fence expert taught me to cut sticks so they had a point on one end and were bevelled at the other. I swung the billhook several times before managing to strike the stick, and when it did cut into the wood I could not seem to achieve the long smooth strokes he had made. My arm soon tired from lifting the tool. When I eventually managed to slice off a curl of wood it was incredibly pleasing (fieldnotes, Maes).*

Practice and repetition means one's movements adjust to be more effective, a rhythm develops so body and tool seem to move of their own accord:

> *Claire and I stood together on the flower bed, a sieve each which Sean loaded with soil. We shook our sieves side to side to move the soil across the mesh, both stooping a little, backs bent. A rhythm developed of two sieves swinging left, two bums swinging right, then directions reversed, over and over (fieldnotes, Oasis).*

As one becomes more expert in a task it is completed more quickly with fewer inefficient movements and less concentration, it feels good as satisfying eurhythmy develops (Edensor 2010: 15). Familiarity and habit result in easy motion which allows one to feel comfortable.

Moving in a particular way develops the body as muscles remember prior movements so are likely to repeat them habitually (Ingold 2011: 47); these practices are non-cognitive, thinking not through contemplation but bodily action (Thrift 2008: 166). Skills do not seem to engage the mind in processing information and indeed people describe feeling their mind switching off. Understood as thinking through the body this demonstrates thought coursing through bodies and thinking without pause for contemplation (Bissell 2011). I did not stop to plan each movement of weeding, it was only through reflection afterwards that I could detail what I had done (see box *Multisensory Skill*) and any verbal account is an inadequate description (Sennett 2008: 95). Doing a job well is rewarding and where there are tangible results it feels especially good, a process not possible in many contemporary occupations (Sennett 2008). When gardening little intervenes between person, plant, soil or tool allowing direct and immediate feedback not available in many daily interactions (Thrift 2008: 167). The touch of garden technology is tangible as we comprehend how our body changes that directly in front of us which is more satisfying than operating the opaque circuitry of computers.

Multisensory skill

The bed was large and very weedy. I looked along its length to identify a row of similar plants and distinguish infiltrators. I gripped one with my fingers, tugging gently to feel how loose it was, then harder to ease it from the soil, pulling directly upwards to avoid snapping the root. If there was resistance I used a trowel to free the soil around the weed's base. These larger plants gave a satisfying noise like suction released from a vacuum as they came out of the ground. A faint snapping sound said that I had left a root behind. Shake the plant to allow soil to fall back onto the bed, throw it onto the pile. Locate the next (fieldnotes, Cwm).

Skilled garden movements are enjoyable because they have tangible results; visible results signal success which feels good (Csikszentmihalyi 2002, Kaplan and Kaplan 2005: 278, Sennett 2008). As Bill notes you can "do something that actually has an end result, like growing a few things or doing a bit of weeding" then "you can see a physical result so you've got a sense of achievement" (volunteer, Maes). Hoeing weeds off a path Graham called out "this is *so* therapeutic" because he soon saw the difference he made. At the Cwm people complained about jobs which did not make anything or would soon be undone by weeds returning. Jonesy quickly found digging tedious and told me he hates it; he prefers making things as weeding does not seem to make an impact, perhaps because he had not been told how it contributes. Satisfaction can also be limited by the collective nature of community gardening. Sarah would rather follow a

plant from beginning to end so would like her own garden: "I need to see what I've sown coming up, and then I can eat it". Individuals were not necessarily involved in a process from inception to completion which some found less satisfying. Such frustration was only mentioned at the Cwm and Maes, I think because at these gardens control was not evenly distributed. Social relations make a difference to how a place feels.

Socialising: Moving towards others

> *Arthur: Yeah I enjoy being here coz we've got a good bunch of people here like (staff, Cwm).*
>
> ---
>
> *Toni: They are nice, every body's nice to work with, it's a good laugh (staff/volunteer, Cwm).*
>
> ---
>
> *Sarah: I met some really lovely people and I thought yes these are people I'd like to see again and this is some where I feel I like to come and hang out. […] I suppose it's about, it's about doing things together. It's something very simple isn't it? And eating together and enjoying the place together (volunteer, Maes).*

Calm pleasure is often sought through solitude (Csikszentmihalyi 2002: 173, Edensor 2000) with home gardens enjoyed for their privacy (Bhatti and Church 2001, 2004). But socialising was one of the main attractions reported by community gardeners who go there to enjoy the pleasure of "companionship", "fellowship", the "social aspect". Community garden soundscapes include ripples of laughter and bubbling chatter, calls drawing attention to a new discovery, shouts of hello as a familiar face arrives. Those who complained about having to be at the Cwm found pleasure by "having a laugh" with colleagues, and working together helped the days pass. Will was happiest working with someone he could "talk nonsense" to, getting stuck into a task to the accompaniment of light hearted chat so he did not notice the time. Many afternoons at the Oasis were spent sitting drinking tea "having a bit of a banter" as Sean described it, with no pressure to do more. Lunch times at the Maes and Cwm were when everyone gathered to share conversation and perhaps food. Sarah saw this as central to the joy of the Maes:

> it's a space where people can come and plant together, learn together. Err don't know, there's something for me about fellowship because – and this is partly the way Simone organizes it – you know very often a day or an hour of

> *work will result in eating together and most of that food will have come off the*
> *ground and there's something very fabulous about that (volunteer).*

It seems that feeling good is assumed to involve other people, for Sean and John this is
a matter of pleasure:

> **John***: It's the –it's an opportunity to do gardening but with other people. Coz*
> > *essentially gardening's fun but when you do it on your own it's not as*
> > *fun -*
>
> **Sean***: It's boring innit?*
>
> **John***:-as if you've got someone else there as well and I think that's – even if I*
> > *had my own garden it wouldn't be the same coz it wouldn't be with*
> > *other people. And gardening on your own just isn't that much fun*
> > *(volunteers, Oasis).*

Other people pull them towards the garden because they prefer company; solitude
allows boredom and distraction which results in heightened self-consciousness such as
stress and worry (Csikszentmihalyi 2002: 169). For Simone it is more than pleasure,
she *needs* others because people "belong together" and on her own she feels "cut off".
Rob and Maggie also spoke of gathering together as a necessary part of being human; I
will consider some implications of this difference between wanting or needing to be
with others in the next chapter. Going to a community garden is a deliberate movement
towards other people; the importance of being together is a pull towards others by
affinity. Sarah expresses this as magnetism bringing certain people to the garden, a pull
which strengthens as a volunteer establishes relationships which make him likely to
return. These affinities are another way in which the trajectories comprising places are
purposely pulled not thrown together, as gardeners' will to socialise directs bodies
towards each other.

This section has shown how qualities of movement elicit different feelings which
influence how a place is brought together. Moving out to a garden, moving around with
flow and skill which produces results contribute to positive feelings. These movements
feel good in part because they are a refreshing break from everyday routine (Lea 2008),
"something different" as Claire put it, yet familiar enough to feel like home. Community
garden movements are described as having particular qualities: 'you can just flow', no
longer 'feel hemmed in' or 'confined'; this is motion with ease, without friction and
offering a sense of freedom. Such unimpeded mobility is not typically associated with
modern life as contemporary urban life is popularly thought as "highly regulated,
defensive, passive, sensually deprived, performatively inert and therefore, not
conducive to reflexive practices" (Edensor 2000: 85). Moving otherwise brings

different experiences of place and self which are enjoyable. In contrast feeling bad is the boredom of 'getting stuck', the stress of being 'caught up' in too many demands, 'weighed down by' the 'burden' of pressures, impeded movement which feels bad. For Emilie and Maggie gardens are a necessary chance to slow down because the rest of life moves too fast. Slowing down can be refreshing (Conradson 2007, Thrift 2008) but sedentarism enforced by lack of power over one's own mobility is frustrating (Cresswell 2012: 648). Control was noted in each form of feel-good movements suggesting community gardeners can feel constrained or forced to move in ways which hinder positive experiences.

Feeling bad: losing control

Social relations at community gardens are not wholly harmonious (Kingsley and Townsend 2006: 534) as was most evident at the Cwm. People blamed conflict and bad feelings on "difficult" characters who do not treat others with respect or communicate openly. Tensions were heightened by pressure of deadlines and perhaps the ambition for the garden to be the best. When relationships deteriorated those with the option ceased volunteering or looked for another job, but not everyone could do so which led to stress and unhappiness, suggesting that not feeling in control prevents people from feeling good. Staff had to be in the garden even when it felt unpleasant, one joking that it came to something when you enjoyed a relative's funeral for a day away. Their degree of self control is a significant distinction between staff and volunteers, so Graham can take time to chat because he is "not on the clock" but for staff this would be "skiving". Staff and coerced volunteers can enjoy community gardens (Donati *et al.* 2010) but this is not the purpose of them being at the Cwm where results take priority over staff enjoyment.

It has been suggested that people turn to community gardens at difficult times to feel a sense of security and control over life (Lawson 2005: 291, Turner *et al.* 2011). Emilie suggested this is one reason people are turning to community gardens (staff, network organisation). Gardening is seen as a source of ontological security (Ulrich 1999) because it represents control over nature (Francis and Hester 1995: 6, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2010: 511). But the effect is not so clear as gardeners find they cannot and may not want to control others (Cooper 2006: 100, Hitchings 2006, Power 2005), and remain subject to life's uncertainties (Bhatti and Church 2004). To this complexity community gardens add the element of duty to others as sense of responsibility can be stressful because one feels less in control. As mentioned in Chapter IV, Simone bears responsibility for the Maes which leads her to feel she has no choice but to carry on; she

still enjoys being outdoors and gardening but the shadow of stress hangs over this reducing her sense of control. Similar limitations apply to staff at the Cwm who are required to do tasks they do not enjoy with people they do not like. Will and Jonesy can not always do their favourite jobs or take time to enjoy the riverside view, whilst Doug finds he has too much work which is stressful. If they could freely control how they move in the garden they would feel better about being there, like volunteers who choose what they do.

Community gardens as places of many people limit the potential for escape as Maggie explained (see box *Maggie's Photo Story*). She sought solitude through a job which would distract her but there were others she could not keep away; at first this lack of control was frustrating, but she restored her good feeling by letting go. Letting go contributes to flow but not everyone is equally able to achieve it (Csikszentimihalyi 2002: 63-4). Simone was striving to "let go" by realising it is impossible to control the garden or other people, and that she would feel less pressured by stepping back. Maggie has learnt how to achieve this so when things go wrong she moves beyond them; lapses in hedonism do not prevent euaidionism as she is able to put moments into a wider context (Csikszentmihalyi 2002: 215-7).

This is more difficult when relations beyond the micro-scale pull on a community garden as is apparent in the case of unemployed gardeners. Graham was unemployed and enjoyed volunteering at the Cwm as it "stops me being a couch potato" and "takes your mind off day to day stresses". But it did not result in employment or adjust his experiences of disadvantage, he still survives on scant benefits and really wants employment. Michael hoped the welfare-to-work scheme would lead to a job, but the chance of this is very limited in a deprived area. Horticultural jobs are especially scarce as Ruth said: "there aren't endless jobs in that sector and I do worry that people need to have their expectations managed" (staff, funder). Others on the welfare-to-work programme were cynical about its benefits, according to Arthur: "it's a load of crap, it's just to get you off the list innit? In June I'm back to the same dole again, it's bloody ridiculous". He liked the people at the garden and enjoyed helping but it was only time and space out from the continued struggle to support his family. To really understand how a place feels it has to be set in its social and economic context (Conradson 2007: 46, 2012: 26), which reveals the limits to a garden's potential. Being in the garden enabled Graham, Michael and Arthur to feel good for a time, but each day they returned to the unhappy search for a job.

These limits were noted by Sean who thinks a place like the Oasis can only help a deprived area so much:

> *so they leave the garden and they walk down a shit strewn street and they're thinking 'yeah I feel better but the area I live in is still exactly the same' (volunteer).*

Going to somewhere like a community garden places someone amongst different relations but she remains tied to other relations which constitute her and this limits the degree of transformation (Conradson 2005: 341). Gardens are not confined to the local and do not easily influence wider social forces such as high unemployment which pull a gardener towards less pleasant feelings. As discussed in chapter II the ripples from a community garden have a limited impact as there are wider processes driving the problems they seek to counter which are difficult to direct, limiting a gardeners' control.

Maggie's photo story
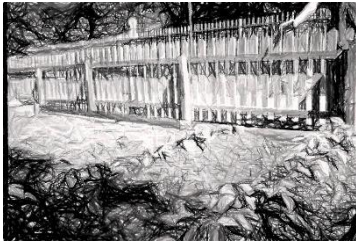
These are a sequence of things. When everybody was getting stressed and upset about the lack of direction and the fact that there were an awful lot of rumours so there was a lot of distress in certain areas, I volunteered to weed the children's garden, because I thought I'd be shut in that nice little area and I would just do that.

And then when you do that people come along who were equally frustrated and they start to chat. And then first of all you're thinking 'well I wanted to get away from this'.

And then you realize that actually they're extremely nice people. And then when two other extremely nice people turn up. And I just sat on the grass and I thought 'actually this is really nice'. If you let go of all the nonsense, this is a really nice experience, sitting here weeding in a community garden with all these really nice people turning up to chat.

And that was really nice, and I just sat back and said 'I'm going to take a photograph of you lot' and again that kind of - it's that kind of feeling of connection with nice people, good people you know. People that you like to chat to and you're all different, different personalities, different characters and that but there's a connection there and you think yeah this is nice.

It was sort of – it reminds me it's like that Buddhist thing- you get caught up in things and then the mind suddenly steps back and becomes objective rather than the subjective, all the stuff going on and looks at it and thinks 'just drop this because actually this here and now is really lovely'. And that was one of those moments I thought 'oh I really like these people, this is really nice' (staff, Cwm, photos by Maggie).

BEING WITH NONHUMANS

Jonesy: *Oh I love gardening, yeah. [...] The fact that you plant the seed and then you've got a plant coming. [...] It's amazing (staff, Cwm).*

Sally: *I think I just like being quite close to grass. I like the smell as well. And I like the things in the grass. Worms and stuff (volunteer, Oasis).*

In discussing how community gardens feel I have outlined experiences distinct from the rest of gardeners' lives which enable people to find pleasure; this section focuses on feelings about nonhumans. As discussed in chapter II this is often attributed to gardens' naturalness as places for reconnecting with nature. So was this apparent from the case studies? I deliberately did not ask gardeners about nature so any discussion emerged from them unprompted. I was surprised how little the topic came forward with people were more likely to speak of wildlife, biodiversity or greenspace. The word was often accompanied by " " as gestures or tone of voice suggesting they know it is a troublesome notion. Simone followed it with "whatever that means" whilst Will began singing *The Circle of Life,* and others apologised for sounding "fluffy" or "hippy". It has already been noted that gardeners have varied understandings of and relationships to nature (Bhatti and Church 2001: 380, Head and Muir 2007, Longhurst 2006). To this I would add that today's gardeners are well aware that nature is a social construction which does not easily describe the world and has contested meanings.

However, some did mention the importance of being with nature or express the pleasure of gardening with nonhumans. Some feel nature contributes to positive feelings, reflecting the strong cultural narrative that green places are inherently healthy (Parr 2007, Ward Thompson 2010). As previously noted it is rural gardeners who most sought to be 'closer to nature', for example:

Anne-Marie: *I think everybody who works here feels better for being here.*

Hannah: *Right. … And I wonder what it is that gives you that kind of feeling?*

Anne-Marie: *Mm.*

Hannah: *Can you put your finger on it?*

Anne-Marie: *… Well I mean apart from the –it's difficult apart from the obvious thing that you are in touch with the earth, you're being natural and you're not out in the consumer lifestyle, at least not for this period of time that you're here. It's very calming. … And it feels good to make things grow (volunteer, Maes).*

A more natural place is away from negative presences which for Anne-Marie means consumerism, for Sarah computers, and for Melissa city streets. Maggie thinks they are "simpler" because "all of the things that are stressful for people don't really exist in a natural setting or a garden". People are demanding but "if it's just you and plants and you've got this kind of natural environment you let go of that kind of getting caught up in things". Nature is associated with the absence of stressful demands and paring down so a garden's value is how it contrasts with other places.

Part of the appeal of community gardens is the abundance of nonhumans offering the pleasure of beautiful plants and fresh air or delight at the exciting process of growing things. The Oasis was famous for its frogs with children and adults excited to see the first frogspawn. Toni loved seeing butterflies at the Cwm and often rescued them from the polytunnels, cupping them gently in her hands to scoop them outside. Wildlife and plants engage people in pleasing moments as when Arthur pointed out a single poppy with almost translucent petals in a scrubby area at the bottom of the Cwm, or Sean watching a bee land on a snapdragon so the petals open to reveal the nectar inside. These instances of appreciation are part of the relaxing pleasure of being in a garden, but there are complexities to relations with nonhumans and not all are welcome as I detail in chapter VII.

Psychologists suggest it is fascinating qualities which make natural places calming as they invite passive absorption which allows cognitive faculties to rest and recover from the exhaustion of processing modern life (Hartig *et al.* 2003, Kaplan and Kaplan 1989). It was only Maggie who conveyed an experience of becoming absorbed in the sights and sounds of plants and birds, but even she wanted a more active relationship with nature and sought to "pretty it up a bit". Interactions with nonhumans were described as active engagements or participation in nature, like Anne-Marie's pleasure at "making things grow". Toni and Melissa find plants calming but in the gardens they do not just stand and stare, they touch them and work with them; nature is not going on at a remove as gardeners get amongst it (Bhatti and Church 2004, Bhatti *et al.* 2009, Degnen 2009, Head and Muir 2007). This participatory relationship explains why rural dwellers who are surrounded by plentiful greenery seek gardens. To explain the difference between working at the Maes and looking at a country view Bill draws analogy with the difference between having a pet and going to the zoo, a more involved relationship. Simone expressed a similar sentiment:

> *it's lovely to go for a walk up in the hills and connect with nature in that way but for me it's more – you're more involved if you're actually working, on the land doing something, whether its gardening or its chopping wood. [...] So for me gardening here, it's a way of being outside and working in it, its kind of a deeper connection really (volunteer, Maes).*

Gardeners' relationships with nonhumans are active with pleasures arising from a combination of what they do, the characteristics of nonhumans and the sense of achievement.

Whilst doing nothing is always welcome at the Oasis and Maes being there usually involves activity and always entails a trip out from home. These groups celebrate

community gardens as places for 'doing something' so they do not enjoy nature through observation, and the nature they experience is far from passive.

Seeing these relationships as reconnection to nature is misleading for there is no homogenous block of natural entities related to consistently (Harvey 1996, Jones and Cloke 2002). Presences commonly equated with nature are not treated equally and do not induce uniform affects; plants and wildlife are celebrated more than water, soil or weather. Not all plants are related to identically: Sean enjoys looking at flowers more than vegetables, Melissa sees weeds as part of nature but pulls them up because they compete with nicer plants. The more time someone spends in gardens the more differentiated nature becomes so after years of experience gardeners can distinguish plants which to a novice look similar. For Maggie the garden is more alive because her attention is tuned in (Ingold 2010: 416) so one lunchtime she suddenly pointed to the distance: "ooh a brimstone". We had not sensed any fluttering and had no idea what it was but guided by an expert we could now distinguish this butterfly. Through educating one's attention the garden becomes a more varied environment, so 'nature' becomes more differentiated (Latour 2004b). Gardeners experience a place teeming with all kinds of lives which are related to in different ways, and over time the garden is sensed as more diverse. This challenges the idea that natural environments invite passive attention and present fewer stimuli than urban environments (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989). Those who spend time in gardens become more aware of what is there, so receive more stimulus which means these places are far from still.

Being with nonhumans is not always pleasurable or relaxing because they do not necessarily cooperate (Power 2005). John was frustrated that flowers bloom at different times when he wants a mass of colour at the Oasis; he and Sean complained when things died too soon as their efforts were wasted. The vagaries of natural processes can reduce a gardener's sense of control over their actions limiting positive feelings (Csikszentmihalyi 2002: 152). Maggie deals with this by 'letting go' but this lesson is hard learned, with novice gardeners struggling to accept that they cannot fully direct what is happening (Hitchings 2006: 378). The advantage for community gardeners is that they share the risks and failures so frustration and disappointment are also shared, and novices can learn from others to increase their skill at directing nonhuman processes. The joys and frustrations of gardening show that it is difficult to separate any pleasure in 'being closer to nature' from the rewards of 'making things grow'. Community gardens are not places which 'naturally' feel good as they are shaped through the combined efforts of humans and nonhumans, and deliberately made to afford positive experiences.

Making belongings

A final factor in whether people feel at home in a community garden is how much they have shaped it. In chapter II I discussed how community gardens are expected to (re)connect people to place, offering beneficial feelings of attachment. Experiences from these case studies show that attachment can be felt to the whole garden, parts of it or not at all. Sense of ownership was most apparent at the Oasis: Sean says the garden "feels like mine, honestly it does". When asked how they feel about the garden Sean, Melissa and John said "pride" and "sense of achievement" as they are glad to have helped improve it. Sean particularly likes the main flower bed because they planned it together once Em left them in charge:

> *everything in there we did [...] so it's kind of 'look what I've done'. So it really kind of brings out the pride (volunteer).*

Knowing the garden's stories and makers volunteers feel connected to it, so John says "I feel too much involved to not come any more". Going there is part of who he is because "the more a garden takes shape, the more entangled it becomes with gardeners" (Hinchcliffe 2010: 309). A gardener's past and future movements are present as traces in the garden, features they have shaped embody their work so the garden becomes part of gardeners' identities. Those who make traces feel it is their place (Anderson, J. 2010: 41) and claiming territory feels good (Gesler, 1993 and 2005).

Making a taskscape feels good because like vandals, people enjoy making their mark (Cresswell 1996) and feeling they can change things (Sennett 2008: 120). Gardens are an opportunity to live against the grain of expert design (Hinchcliffe and Whatmore, 2006: 127) in worlds increasingly thought for us (Ingold 2008: 1801, Thrift 2008: 168). Community gardeners make their mark and gain satisfying feelings each time they return to be reminded of how their lives are caught up in the place. Gardeners could not easily substitute these places as their involvement is as significant as the space (Smith and Kurtz 2004: 200) and gardeners seek self expression through place making (Donati *et al.* 2010, Eizenberg 2012, Milbourne 2009).

Attachments expressed at the Cwm and Maes varied with the approaches to place making. Note Sean spoke of what 'we' had done indicating a collective enterprise and ownership. An individual's favourite feature at the Oasis was not necessarily one that s/he had made as volunteers feel connected to the whole garden. Contrast with the Cwm where pride was in personal work and favourite things tended to be those individuals had worked on. Will and Jonesy favoured things they had made and showed

me areas they had changed, taking pride in their personal contributions. It was common for staff to leave litter around the Cwm, behaviour unthinkable at the other gardens. I take this to indicate that staff did not take pride in the whole garden or care much about how it looked and who might have to tidy up.

Toni and Arthur could not name a favourite part of the Cwm as having played no part in the site's transformation they felt little connection to it. Toni cared about the plants she had raised, but if 'her' plants were damaged it was an insult to her not the Cwm as they were part of her autobiography (Degnen 2009). This is not surprising given her frustration that she did not know what was happening; when she was asked to organise the crops and instruct others she resented being expected to take responsibility without the corresponding salary or appreciation. Lack of attachment may have resulted from the Association's failure to share influence and appreciate volunteers who therefore felt little commitment and might drift away after a bad day. A sense of attachment to the Cwm comes with certain roles: Derek takes pride in the garden because he must know the whole site and its evolution. Those who do not know the plans or make decisions and have never been to parts of the garden lack this attachment. If they feel attached to parts of the garden it is through association with their personal history, 'I did that' not 'look what we've done'. Doug, Rhys, Toni and Maggie were very committed to gardening but it was the activity they sought, if not at the Cwm they would pursue it elsewhere. Graham said he would happily volunteer anywhere, the Cwm just happened to be nearest. Attachments to certain practices are distinct from ties to a particular site and only one aspect of place attachment (see Cheshire *et al.* 2013 for the case of farmers).

Attachment to the Maes is apparent in Simone's pride at having made something good and Anne-Marie enjoying seeing "what we've done and what it's turned into". None of the volunteers favour part of the garden but enjoy looking over the whole, not distinguishing who had made or grown things because ownership is collective. Ideally 'we' the volunteers feel the Maes is 'ours', together 'we' have made it. But pride was conveyed much less than at the Oasis; although it is nice that people enjoy going there and feel a sense of achievement the Maes is not intended as place making for personal fulfilment as the garden should go its own way. Simone particularly likes "those wild flower bits that have just kind of made themselves" as something with minimal human intervention. Nonhumans also belong there and their agency in place making is celebrated as much or more than human achievements.

The aspiration for collective effort is why Sarah feels guilty about wanting to eat her own plants: "some times I think that's terrible, that's a very Western and individualist way of thinking". But individualism has developed because so much rests with Simone:

Hannah: *Do you want to change how it is at the moment with so much falling on you?*

Simone: *Yeah, it's a funny one because – almost because it was my idea and I started it and I've carried it so far and done so much, it's almost like I shouldn't expect then anyone else to do it. And it's almost like I need to be grateful to people when they do things. And people feel like they're helping me, personally, rather than the community project. It's a subtle difference. Maybe it's not that subtle actually.*

Hannah: *Would you rather it was that they didn't feel like they were helping you?*

Simone: *Yeah. I would rather that people felt it was theirs. Jointly. And that they were doing something for the benefit of that community, for the benefit of the project.*

Hannah: *And you'd rather it would be like that because?*

Simone: *… Um… um. Coz it's supposed to be a community thing. It's not supposed to be Simone's garden. Coz that's not the point at all. … It's not – it's not something for me personally. I don't really know how to explain it.*

Although the intention is for a group to take ownership Simone is most strongly associated with the garden and some people are attached to her not the garden.

Each approach to place making results in a different sense of ownership: attachment between group and their collective achievement, or personal attachment to aspects made by the individual. There is no single experience of attachment to a place but various modes of emotional connection (Cheshire *et al.* 2013, Lewicka 2011). Where people's contribution to place making is limited they may feel attached to the experience of gardening, but this floats free from ties to somewhere in particular. Continuing the theme of motion we can interpret attachment as enjoying having shaped movements, bringing things together, feeling some control over life's flows. When community gardens afford feeling good this makes them meaningful places and cultivates attachment (Lewicka 2011: 226). In the pursuit of happiness gardeners keep returning and seek to preserve future opportunities for pleasure. For those able to shape the motion of others this becomes a sense of ownership. Alternatively some people feel it is undesirable to attempt control, so instead celebrate nonhumans who move freely without them. People enjoy a sense of attachment to a particular place or

certain features of it but I have shown that this does not require it to be always the same, mingling fixity and mobility (Cresswell 2004: 79, Fallov *et al.* 2013, Williams and Paterson 2008). Massey claims that places change people not through belonging but as they negotiate the mass of trajectories (2005: 154). Gardens of bringingtogetherness - places brought rather than thrown together – suggest otherwise. Here bonds are made through the effort to direct the movement of others and by retracing favourite journeys to shape familiarity and comfort.

Gardeners do not enter a ready made place and develop attachment to it, rather they are in an ongoing relationship of exchange with others as they move together and are moved by each other. These bonds are not exclusive, are flexible and vary between gardens and gardeners as different relationships develop. Because gardeners often retrace their steps to the garden the place is familiar as repeat journeys make deeper impressions on land and body. The resulting comfort amongst others is what we think of as a sense of belonging. The case studies show that people find comfort in feeling they belong to a particular place but this is a dynamic sense of belonging as moving in synchrony with others. This is rootedness not as fixity but as a reach towards others and mutual exchange.

Sean laid out a display on the table: "Hannah, did you get a photo of the onion harvest?" (fieldnotes, Oasis).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has deepened understanding of what draws people to community gardens by detailing the character of these places and how they feel good. I have presented how people feel about community gardens and how this varies with the three approaches to place making. In doing so I have suggested sense of place develops as certain movements are brought together and establish distinctive patterns with predictable rhythms leading bodies to move differently from how they might elsewhere. Although there is variety between how individuals sense the gardens there is a degree of consensus about their character which develops through the social relations of place.

I then showed how positive feelings of comfort and escape arise and distinguish community gardens from other places. Several processes facilitate these feelings with the qualities of the environment and activities contributing, including the significant presence of others both human and nonhuman. But there are limits to positive feelings with a constricted sense of control leading to bad feelings. For this reason the three gardens' varied approaches to place making have different affects, with the limited participation offered at Cwm and Maes leading to lesser feelings of ownership and belonging. This chapter has introduced ideas to be developed in the next chapter about the limits on what community gardens can achieve, and the nature of relationships.

Through these discussions I have continued to use the idea of movement to interpret events, attending to qualities of motion, constancy and change. A mobile sense of place means appreciating somewhere for its particular constellation of movements and feeling comfortable moving with these rhythms. Experiences which feel good involve free and easy movement without constraint or getting stuck; being able to direct the movements of others is satisfying whilst failure to do so is frustrating. Affinity for moving amongst others helps pull trajectories together to make a place, and a favoured place pulls people back along familiar routes so they retrace their steps leaving deeper paths. Hence places are brought not thrown together, with feelings influencing peoples' trajectories. If places comprise movement we need to consider the qualities of different motion – how fast, how far, how close- because different speeds and rhythms move bodies differently. By repeating movements many times they become habits which can be practised with less effort, hence become relaxing. Gardeners do not always forge new routes but follow well trodden paths which feel comfortable, bringing a sense of belonging. Sense of place can be understood as how places move bodies, and how this feels.

It should be apparent that there are many varied experiences of these places, and numerous factors which make them special. They present both positive and negative affects, and individuals will feel them differently according to the way in which things are done. This suggests that both spatial qualities and processes of place making make a difference to community gardeners. The proposal that community gardens (re)connect people to place glosses a complex of processes as people enjoy connections to other people, the work of gardening, its results, and being somewhere they feel comfortable. Place attachment is not a unitary, fixed bond between person and site rather an ongoing exchange as person and place move each other.

COMMUNITY GARDEN
Opening times

Monday --------- 09.00 - 17.00
Tuesday --------- 09.00 - 17.00
Wenesday --------- 09.00 - 17.00
Thursday --------- 09.00 - 17.00
Friday --------- 09.00 - 17.00
Saturday --------- 09.30 - 12.00
Sunday --------- 09.30 - 16.00

COMMUNITY GARDEN
COME + GROW
FEEL GOOD THROUGH GROWING!
BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS
LEARN NEW SKILLS — SOCIAL
                           — EDUCATIONAL

MAKE NEW FRIENDS —
MEET OTHER GARDENERS
NO SKILLS NEEDED - JUST ENTHUSIASM
LEARN HOW TO REUSE, RECYLE ON OUR
     INNOVATIVE PROJECT

GIVE BACK TO SOCIETY, LET'S GROW
          A BETTER WORLD

VII RELATING TO OTHERS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the question of whether community gardens form new communities, and if so what kind. It responds to the suggestion that participation in community gardening reconnects people to each other and instils a more caring attitude to others. This discussion will deepen understanding of why people are drawn to gardening together and how this can feel good. To address this I focus on relationships formed and expressed through community gardening, considering the qualities and extent of gardeners' relations with others. I treat 'others' in a wide sense to address relationships between people, and between people and nonhumans simultaneously to understand whether garden communities extend beyond humans. The discussion explores the links between place, community and care which I discussed in chapter II; long thought coexistent these may not arise together.

The chapter begins by presenting what ideals community gardeners express about community including what sense of community feels like. These discussions show that those at the Maes and Oasis felt the gardens had formed communities so I consider what contributed to this and why it had not happened at the Cwm. Having established that new relationships can form through gardening subsequent sections focus on the qualities of these relationships and how different kinds of others relate to understand if these groups equal communities. I consider whether relationships are likely to require homogeneity and whether some are excluded from the garden community. I find that inclusion depends on whether one can contribute to making the garden, and that this criteria results in varied treatment of different nonhumans. This discussion reveals that whilst garden relationships include care for others this is not always the case, so I consider what might incline people to a more caring sensibility and whether a relational outlook on the world results in greater care for nonhumans. I close the chapter by considering the extent of garden relationships in order to understand their potential to bring benefits beyond this specific place.

IDEAL GARDEN COMMUNITIES

> *Anj:* Well it's for everybody, that's what I feel a community garden is. You know, it's for everybody, it's for the community. So it should be accessible. And it is (staff, Oasis).

> *Michael*: Any people can come. [...] it's open to all kinds of people (staff, Cwm).

> *Hannah*: What does that expression mean to you, a community garden?
>
> *Susan*: I would think it of being a- an area that the community, members of the community have access to for erm -
>
> *James*: Purposes of gardening.
>
> *Susan*: Yeah, purposes of producing food.
>
> *Hannah*: So when you say 'the community' that means?
>
> *Susan*: Anyone who's here.
>
> *James*: Anyone who wants to effectively. I mean it shouldn't even be locally restrictive.
>
> *Susan*: No, visitors, it could be visitors to the community as well (land owners, Maes).

Calling a place a community garden associates it with certain ideals and expectations of community activity and spirit (Kurtz 2001: 661, Pudup 2008: 1231) which are not always delivered (Kurtz 2001: 663, Pole and Gray 2013). In this section I explore what people envisage to be a garden's communities and what feelings they associate with this. When asked what it means for a place to be a *community garden* the simplest answer was somewhere public as distinct from private, described as open and accessible. Inclusivity is emphasised so the garden community should be anybody; as Graham said the Cwm is "for everyone, you know, people to come in, walk around". Similarly Rob said the Maes is "for everybody, anybody who wants to come. Literally." Further elaboration may introduce geographic qualifiers: local people, those nearby, anyone in the neighbourhood, residents or "people that live just round the corner, people that lived across the road" (Em, staff, Oasis). Many then acknowledge diversity: groups within the community distinguished by age, ethnicity or interest, with people with disabilities most often identified as having distinct needs. Whilst entry is influenced by enclosure (Kurtz 2001) especially in the case of the Oasis which is hidden from passers-by, anyone has a right to enter. But these ideals are not always achieved and it is not a simple case of making a place for *the* community.

Offering access is thought insufficient to make a garden communal, it should also be used. John overcame his anger at children breaking things in the Oasis: "it is a community garden and if you didn't have kids coming out here and playing in it then there'd be no point" (volunteer). Those who fund community projects, like the organisation Ruth works for, expect them to involve local people as volunteers. The ideal is summed up by Megan's description of the Oasis: "it's a garden created by the community for the community" and Anne-Marie describing the Maes as "worked by people in the community and providing food for the community". In fact engagement varies: many said the Cwm is not a community garden where in Jonesy's words "the community come and run the gardens their selves, where they can grow things, learn about things" (staff). According to Maggie local people "should be encouraged here, and they should get benefits" (staff) but are not. Derek (manager) thinks this will come when Abercwm Association hands ownership to people in the community, whereas Maggie, Jonesy, Toni and Arthur expect community engagement at the outset. Emilie and Ruth who have been involved in numerous similar projects expressed a common idea that success requires the initiative to come from people on the ground (FCFCG N.D.b, Holland 2004: 303, Milburn and Adams Vail 2010, Pearson and Firth 2012: 150). Em (staff) sees the Oasis as a community garden in "probably more the truer sense" because "it was actually an idea developed by people in the community" and worries that gardens initiated by an organisation – perhaps like the Cwm- may not meet people's needs. Derek tells me the Cwm has no one "coming here and wanting to – to really get involved or get involved in the planning of it" because the Association has "micro-managed" the garden. His feeling that there is no participation there suggests a distance between the Association and local people as can emerge with increased professionalization of the voluntary sector (Milligan 2007: 189). This demonstrates that labelling something as 'community' does not denote engagement and may convey various meanings.

Engagement is not just about numbers involved as community relationships are expected to have particular qualities. Many identified allotments as individualistic, as one neighbour of the Maes said allotment gardeners "are a bit like 'get off my carrots', more competitive" whereas at a community garden "everyone just mucks in". Being community means sharing responsibility and ownership, and willingness to act collectively (McMillan and Chavis 1986). As Kate sees it you need "people who love it enough to want to share it -and the love of it- with others" (volunteer, Oasis). Sarah thinks the Maes is of the community because "there are people who are very committed" (volunteer). People share responsibility for the Oasis and many people have an input which Megan and Tom think results in a shared feeling of ownership

(staff). Ownership is shared not through attributed property rights but because people feel it is collectively theirs as they made it together (Bendt *et al.*2012, Teig *et al.*2009). The Oasis' ethos of engagement offers people freedom to participate as they wish, integrating individual and collective interests (McMillan and Chavis 1986: 7) resulting in a place where many people feel they belong. Maggie expected this at the Cwm:

> *If it's a community garden there should be that feeling – a park belongs to everybody and everybody feels that, you see any park anywhere in Britain you know that you are allowed to go in there, that it's not somebody else's, you're not trespassing, you're not unwelcome. You go there and you feel as comfortable as if it were your own front garden. This doesn't have that (staff, Cwm).*

As I showed in previous chapters the Cwm's place making is not actively involving a range of people and lack of influence impedes development of a sense of belonging (McMillan and Chavis 1986: 7). The Cwm's focus on product over process does not proffer feelings of community apparent at the Maes and Oasis, hence gardens can result in different or no form of community (Kurtz 2001).

There are certain expectations of something of the community which rehearse typically positive associations of it as an aspiration equated with good living (Bauman 2001, Brunt 2001: 82, Day 2006: 28, Rapport 1996, Smith 1999). Few community gardeners gave an account of how this is to be achieved or acknowledged that it can be troublesome to bring people together. Through long experience of community work Rachel (designer, Oasis) expects groups to encounter conflict and require processes for resolving disagreements, but this has not been considered by these three groups, perhaps in the expectation that community is harmonious. Most referred to *the* community as if speaking of an entity already existing and coherent.

A common expectation is that a garden's community comprises people who live nearby, often referred to as 'the community' implying singularity and completeness. This discussion is fairly typical:

> **Hannah***: Who is the garden for?*
>
> **Claire***:   Erm I'd like to say it's definitely for the community but at the moment I'd say its people that are outside the community that come regularly?*
>
> **Hannah***: So what do you mean by that?*
>
> **Claire***:   Erm so the people who come each week are [from] outside of Johnstown (volunteer, Oasis).*

Claire and others thought 'the local community', as in residents of Johnstown should use the Oasis. Simone had similar expectations for the Maes:

> *when I first thought of doing it and calling it a community garden I thought it meant for the community that is already there. But actually what it is, is a community that comes out of this place, that is born of the people that end up coming here. Do you see what I mean? It's actually different. The community of this garden is - that is the community. Rather than the garden is for that community over there [pointing towards town] (volunteer).*

She now thinks that those involved in the Maes constitute its community as there was no pre-existent group for whom the garden was created. One could argue the same is true of all gardens because there is no such thing as a community 'out there' ready formed (Hinchcliffe *et al.* 2007: 273). Through gardens people constitute and understand community (Eizenberg 2011, Kurtz 2001: 668, Staeheli and Mitchell 2007: 802). But this process is not always reflected in gardeners' expectations which can imply they make a place for 'the community'.

Volunteers at the Oasis are concerned that 'the community' is not involved; I discussed this with them and whilst agreeing that they constitute the garden's community they feel pressure for it to be otherwise. John feels guilty enjoying something not created for him because:

> *the objective behind it was that it was for the people of Johnstown, that's the point of having the garden. And I feel a bit that if the people of Johnstown aren't going to come here and help out then its kind of missing its objective (volunteer, Oasis).*

He and other volunteers not resident in Johnstown are not the garden's original target group. Although this was explained in terms of residency I think it is a concern about disadvantage: as part of a programme in an area of multiple deprivation receiving government support for tackling poverty the garden should be supporting disadvantaged people but the volunteers do not see themselves as requiring help. In the context of community development programmes and government funding community is geographically determined by levels of deprivation (Adamson 2010, Adamson and Bromiley 2008). Such policies treat communities as units with agency (Day 2006: 235) and employ normative ideas of community as local, cohesive neighbourhoods (Amin 2005, Bond 2011). These policy ideas influence how people construct community (Charles and Davies 2005: 674) so John prioritises 'local' community over communities of interest such as gardeners. The Maes is not immersed in the regeneration discourse so Simone can regard anyone who comes as community.

Another pervasive understanding of community people expressed was the narrative of lost community associated with urbanisation and contemporary life, the sense that 'things ain't what they used to be' (Charles and Davies 2005, Nancy 1991). Maggie links strong communities with rural life, whilst Rob – a rural dweller- said I would find "real community" in the Valleys. City residents said communities were stronger when people worked together as in mining areas, so there are also associations with socio-economic dynamics, and perhaps class. Reference to supposedly better communities of the past or elsewhere is part of how people imagine better ways of living (Charles and Davies 2005: 681). Such aspirations for more cohesive communities remain pervasive (Cohen 2000) with academics' disquiet about more idyllic notions of unity not matched by public opinion (Rapport 1996: 116, Staeheli 2008). On reflection many concluded that their garden collectives constitute community because people share experiences, goals and a sense of belonging, conversely where community was not apparent it was these feelings which were seen to be lacking. It seems that experience of community is identified through feelings of connection with others who share experiences which result in emotional attachments and empathy (Amit 2000). To understand this requires attention to how people feel about mixing with others at community gardens.

Sense of community: what community feels like

Asked to define the abstract idea of community people rehearsed typical notions of it being a place or interest based group, but they also expressed community as something felt, a group which feels like a community. This affective dimension (Amit 2000) shows that people are still keen to belong to such groups (Charles and Davies 2005, Day 2006: 157, Revill 1993) as community conveys feelings of warmth and familiarity (Bauman 2001, Brint 2001, Rapport 1996, Tuan 2002). The feeling commonly described as sense of community or community spirit is taken to be positive and contribute to feeling good, and it is these affects by which people know they are part of communities. At its most basic this means recognising people and seeing the same faces often, what John called "familiarisation", how he can "bump into" people he knows in the city. Where neighbours pass each other with no interaction (Painter 2012: 524) those in a community interact with some intensity (McMillan and Chavis 1986). Hence John thinks his neighbourhood lacks community spirit:

> I know the name of one neighbour and that's it, and even then in all honesty I think I've passed her in the street and I've smiled but we've never really had a conversation (volunteer, Oasis).

Knowing something about people, at least their name is significant to Sean:

the whole point of community is getting to know each other isn't it? […] that's
the crux of community is knowing and being able to feel comfortable to talk to
people. And a lot of that is lost because a lot of the time people feel anonymous,
when they're walking down the street (volunteer, Oasis).

Where neighbours can feel uncomfortable living in proximity community members interact so feel more comfortable and secure (Painter 2012), which creates a basis for collective action (McMillan and Chavis 1986).

The most mentioned form of interaction is conversation:

Hannah*: Would you say you're part of the community here then?*
Graham*: Yes, I do- oh strongly.*
Hannah*: How do you know? What's it feel like?*
Graham*: Um it's just people that walk through every day and they'll take*
time out to come and talk to me. And you know other people as well
(volunteer, Cwm).

Even brief moments of conversation demonstrate sufficient comfort with another to feel like a community. The quality of these interactions resonates with the feeling of being at home, in Graham's words "there's no animosity whatsoever. People treat me with respect, I treat them with respect". Melissa who lives in Johnstown feels it is a strong community because her neighbours are friendly:

I think it's because people look out for each other and you know you talk to
people in the street, like people down my road […] and I'd say that's sort of the
community spirit that I get in my street and near me (volunteer, Oasis).

The key for her is feeling able to turn to people if she is "in need". Being comfortable to "turn to" and "rely on" fellow garden volunteers is why John feels the group is a community; they offer support and mutual rewards which encourage cohesion (McMillan and Chavis 1986, Teig *et al.*2009). Conversely not feeling supported causes the Cwm's lack of community spirit according to staff and volunteers: "you always imagine a community project to be nurturing, but it's not", the difference would be if people "were valued, spoken to properly". Some staff help each other as when Arthur brought his tools to mend the wheelbarrows (see chapter IV) as they cared about each other even if 'the management' did not. Community gardeners' expectations of care and support demonstrate a moral dimension to their understanding of community which implies respect and empathy.

Community members are friendly but people distinguished these relationships from friendships particularly through associations with place. Friends are chosen but

community of place implies living amongst people one is thrown together with (Massey 2005). Sean describes this in his neighbourhood:

> *my dad grew up in the house that I live in now and there are still some people lived there when my dad grew up and still live there now, and we still don't talk to them. Coz they've never had any thing in common apart from they've lived close to each other (volunteer, Oasis).*

He thinks the garden can overcome difference because it is for anyone from Johnstown and by going there they "find more connections with people they wouldn't normally connect with". Melissa sees this value with the Oasis enabling "mixing with" different social circles, "people with different backgrounds" united by gardening. By working with communities of place gardens might unite different people of that place which is seen to be positive (Alaimo *et al.*2010, Comstock *et al.*2010, Firth *et al.*2010, Teig *et al.*2009). But there are limits to this mixing so I shall return to the question of difference.

A garden which brings people together to form communities of difference (Panelli and Welch 2005) was not foreseen as problematic. Most gardeners did not recognise tensions as inherent to collectives (Staeheli 2008, Wenger 1998) or that unity is impossible (Nancy 1991, 2000). But Maggie expects that "people rub up against each other all the time"; there are always difficulties when working with others according to Simone. Rob agreed that people do not necessarily get along and there are inevitable challenges, but working through them results in "a deeper connection" (volunteer, Maes). It is significant that these were the only three gardeners to speak of negative feelings of community as it relates to their understanding of self as I discuss later.

Sense of community or the feeling of community includes place attachment (Tartaglia 2006) such as the shared sense of place described in the previous chapter as feeling at home together. But community seems to entail more than this as community relationships involve caring for and/or about each other which requires a moral framework (Bauman 2001, Lewis 2006). Neighbourhoods where people do not care for each other or about the place are said to lack community spirit, and gardens where people do not take responsibility for others are felt to lack community. Groups formed through gardening should not be assumed to be communities as the quality of relationships may not demonstrate the values expected. I shall consider the nature of these relationships in more detail after examining how those involved in a garden come to feel like a community.

HOW A GARDEN MAKES A COMMUNITY

As discussed in chapter II a perceived benefit of community gardens is that they form communities, but it is not clear how this occurs. Emilie believes this happens at projects in her network:

> *you've got this break down of communities. And part of me is really – well we're seeing it – that these community growing spaces are becoming little communities. Where you can interact with people, all different types of people, and that bonds people together [...] it's actually creating little communities. It's recreating that sense of community and I think that it's essential (staff, network organisation).*

In this section I consider whether the three gardens display a sense of community and how this arises. Neighbours of the three case studies saw community-building potential, suggesting gardens might bring people together and foster sense of community. People involved in the Maes and Oasis think this has happened to form communities of interest which do something together. Simone sees the Maes' community as "people who regularly see each other with a common kind of goal, common pass time, there's some thing in common that they meet for". The volunteers who care for the Oasis take collective responsibility and meet often to garden so they feel like a community. The factors which result in a shared sense of place at the gardens encourage sense of community as people feel supported and establish norms through their collective activity and increased levels of trust (Teig *et al.*2009). New forms of sociability have developed around a shared sense of belonging (Milbourne 2009: 150), as those who place-make together come to feel like a community (Gray 2000, Harvey 1996: 310). Feeling comfortable amongst others in a familiar place means one can fall back on habit and rhythm to relate so less effort is required to negotiate contact and it feels right to be together.

How do we know that communities have formed? Firstly, those involved describe them as such; they speak as 'we', a sign of cohesion and collective identity (Tuan 2002: 310). Secondly, at the gardens people speak of and display feelings of comfort and safety expected of community (McMillan and Chavis 1986). They are relaxed in each others' company and used to doing things together, secrets are offered, physical contact is permissible, someone absent for a while misses the others. Behaviour includes indicators of a community of practice as gardeners slip easily into conversations which include shared jargon and jokes or references to their common history (Wenger 1998: 125-6). The shared sense of place described above indicates that a common language and set of meaning have developed. Engagement in practices such as gardening builds

relationships as people regularly convene, negotiate how to proceed, learn together and develop routines of doing things together (Bendt *et al.*2012, Wenger 1998). Through interaction these individuals become comfortable to move closer and linger alongside, knowing who everyone is, exchanging smiles, calling someone by name. I have suggested that touch requires and conveys a close relationship so haptic interaction between gardeners - a playful jab on the arm or warm touch to the shoulder - demonstrates the quality of their relationships. Certain behaviour indicates a degree of familiarity and comfort with others which are signs of community (see *Figure 2*).

Most community gardeners did not know each other prior to involvement so signs that a garden collectives feel like community suggest they have fostered new relationships. To understand this process I shall consider how gardens can be conducive to forming community which shows both environment and activities are significant.

Relationship	Typical engagement	Indications	Nonhuman example
ENEMY	disgust, fear	killing, criticising	killing slugs
STRANGER	suspicion	observe, avoid	unidentified plants
KNOWN OTHER	notice	eye contact, called 'them'	"look at those flowers"
NEIGHBOUR	recognise	talk to, called by name	"there's a poppy"
COMPANION	enjoy	touch, relax, celebrate	"I'm holding this frog"
COMMUNITY MEMBER	co-operate	exchange gifts, called 'us'	planting for bees
DEPENDENT	care	understand needs	tending crops

Figure 2: The nature of relationships

Relationships between others at community gardens exhibit various qualities of engagement and communication as indicated by sensory experience and talk. These have varying intensities with deeper engagement possible once familiarity and understanding of the other is sufficiently developed. Similar variation can be identified in people's relationships to nonhumans. Good feelings are more associated with these deeper relationships. For community gardeners relationships between members and dependents are felt to equate community.

Somewhere to gather

Public spaces like community gardens have been celebrated for facilitating gatherings which form community (Firth *et al.*2011, Staeheli *et al.*2002: 204, Thrift 2008: 216). To Simone the Maes was important as Maybury's first "outdoor space where people can gather" as people can "just be outside and have somewhere that they can congregate if they want to". Graham thinks the Cwm should capitalise on the power of outdoor space to "bring people together" by being somewhere people can "hang out" and "have a chin wag". A place where people can gather facilitates encounters (Amin and Thrift 2002, Painter 2012, Sennett 2010). But one off encounters are insufficient as sense of community requires familiarity (McMillan and Chavis 1986). Community gardens as sites for return visits offer continuity; the same people encounter each other often so a sense of comfort and belonging together develops.

Midday. Will passes calling out that it's lunchtime. I head to the polytunnel to get Toni. Together we walk up to the top, finding Maggie on the way. By the time we reach the top everyone is there. Those on the bench squeeze up to fit others on, someone goes to find a chair. Arthur returns from the shop and hands Maggie the sandwich he's collected for her. For half an hour we gossip, groan at Will's jokes, inspect each others lunches and wonder about the afternoon's weather. Then we know it's time to go back to work. Slowly people pack up and disperse (fieldnotes, Cwm).

Community's sense of stability (Revill 1993: 120) is why mobility is often seen as its antithesis (Amin and Thrift 2002, Bauman 2001: 13, Brunt 2001: 82, Day 2006: 182, Charles and Davies 2005: 681, Marsden and Hines 2008: 25). This was reported by Maggie who thinks people around the Cwm used to live in the same settlement all their lives but now move around and without "shared experience" of growing up in the same landscape they feel more isolated and "displaced". Following similar logic Johnstown was often referred to as a difficult community because of its transient population which supposedly does not invest in relationships. Movement is seen as a barrier to the development of community as shown in Em's explanation of why she did not like living in Johnstown:

> *at the time I didn't really feel it was very much of a community. It always just felt a bit like somewhere that you passed through on the way to the city centre (staff, Oasis).*

Making a place somewhere to linger and return is perceived to counter this free-floating, so a community garden provides an anchor allowing a group to cohere (Comstock *et al.* 2010). The habit of visiting a garden establishes a routine, the rhythm

which constitutes a sense of belonging to that place with those people (Edensor 2010). As discussed the aesthetics and spatial features make a difference as they can encourage people to linger and return, whilst somewhere to sit and relax enables socialising. A place becomes somewhere people belong not because it is 'local' or 'authentic' but through being familiar and somewhere they can build enduring relationships which feel comfortable. This is belonging as comfort among others and relationships of dynamic exchange with place.

It was all young mothers who came to the willow weaving workshop. Their children quickly made friends playing safely in the garden. The women had not met before but soon struck up conversation about how hard it is raising children in the town, chatting as they worked, eye's cast down on the billhooks chiselling away at the wood (fieldnotes, Maes).

It has been argued that open spaces should be preserved in cities because they facilitate encounters with others (Amin and Thrift 2002, Massey 2005, Ward Thompson and Travlou 2007) but the specificity of gathering outdoors is often over-looked. Being outdoors is an escape as outlined above and this seems to put people at ease amongst strangers. Toni wondered if this is why staff of all ages get on at the Cwm:

we just you know work as a team and people pitch in and stuff. Whether it's
coz you're outside as well. You haven't got to sort of – you can behave – you're
not sort of restricted are you as [to] your behaviour, you're not in an office or
whatever (volunteer/staff).

As outdoor spaces gardens seem capable of bringing people together; only Maggie had
an idea why:

when I'm outdoors I don't kind of feel [laughs] I don't feel like me, the sense of
self drops away a lot. [...] Especially when you're on your own with just trees
and grass and stuff around you – there's nothing to reinforce this idea of me
and mine, of you know who I am and what I think I am and what I think I'm
going through and it just drops away (staff, Cwm).

This is what she spoke of as letting go, a loss of self-consciousness which allows her to
relax and not worry about the awkwardness of getting along with others. By feeling less
separate from others it is possible to feel more together "not only internally but also
with respect to other people and to the world in general" (Csikszentmihalyi 2002: 41).
Therefore the conditions which promote flow in community gardens might lead people
to feel more connected to others as borne out by the effects of working together.

Working together

The loss of self-consciousness Maggie described was a result of being outdoors *and* the
activities of gardening:

Physical work is great. If you're working together with a group of people
indoors somewhere you can drive each other up the wall. But there's
something about – even if you're working in a large group and you're all
rabbiting on about something different or you're disagreeing, something about
doing physical work and being outdoors, it just dissolves.

Focusing on work seems to ease the formation of relationships by giving strangers a
common-ground for conversation; silence is equally welcome so work might continue
to the soundtrack of bird song and tools clattering. Work obviates awkward eye contact
as the tool or plant at hand absorb attention which can ease talk: Will found when I
interviewed him he became nervous so we chatted whilst digging together, he relaxed
and spoke freely. Weeding with volunteers at the Maes three pairs of eyes were cast
down at the soil as they moaned about a shared acquaintance, agreeing it is easier to
"vent" whilst weeding.

Activities which facilitate conversation aid effective communication which is necessary
for community relationships (Tuan 2002). Those who felt a lack of community at the

Cwm blamed failure to communicate as the absence of reliable information created a web of rumour and speculation which made it difficult to trust others or plan for the long-term. Ideally gardening facilitates communication but it need not be verbal: shared rhythms are not spoken as workers develop empathy and intuit how to help each other. Recall Derek and Will making the raised beds (chapter V) working almost wordlessly, watching, sensing then responding to the other's movements. Gardeners move in similar ways as they work so they understand how another feels, discuss how heavy the tool, how painful their muscles. The common repertoire of gardening means gardeners can understand each other and have shared experiences as a touchstone for their relationships.

Gardening together requires cooperation through division of labour as Rob explained:

> *you also get that thing of exchange, you get – you're working with other people, it's easier to work with other people, you can create more when there's more of you (volunteer, Maes).*

Gardeners have reason to be together to be more efficient, also certain tasks require co-operation so they must engage and communicate. As shared places and activities people rely on each other for success, so individual and collective needs become integrated, and when met the resultant positive feelings reinforce commitment to the group (McMillan and Chavis 1986).

Two volunteers make a willow arch. Neither is in charge, they discuss technique, each making suggestions, spotting things going wrong and responding to the other's actions. When on the second attempt the arch holds in place they stand back to admire it, congratulating and thanking each other (fieldnotes, Maes).

Gardeners can be seen as communities of practice because they learn and do together through the shared enterprise of making a garden, developing their way of gardening

and establishing shared meanings (Wenger 1998). This sense of community is not built on shared characteristics but what they do together and how they do it (Eizenberg 2011: 776). Cooperation results in things being made and grown which reinforce relationships as Kate describes:

> *you get the sense of ownership, and pride in developing something beautiful, and functional, and you get to share those feelings with everyone else involved (volunteer, Oasis).*

Having cooperated in place making gardeners share pride in the results, and have an enduring reminder or reification of their relationships (Wenger 1998). The gardens shape people's movements and synchronises individuals which leads them to feel comfortable together. These sentiments require individuals to feel they can influence events and the group (McMillan and Chavis 1986: 7) hence approaches to place making which preclude participation are less likely to foster sense of community. The lack of shared attachments at the Cwm seem to inhibit sense of community perhaps because relationships are more formalised with cooperation directed by delegation and roles. There is less discussion or joint decision making and a lack of trust, so individuals do not feel rewarded for their input to the collective. The feelings of community which do emerge are between colleagues who perceive themselves as equals, who like each other and exchange help informally. They pull together in part by distinguishing themselves from 'the management', using 'us' versus 'them' identifications to bind the group. Community gardens do not necessarily form communities as the process of making them and qualities of relationships can inhibit feelings of being at home with others.

Communities of difference?

So far in this chapter I have shown how community gardens can facilitate new relationships through providing a space to gather, enabling cooperation and a collective sense of achievement. Other cases suggest not everyone is equally welcomed into a garden's community as pre-existing divisions are reinforced (Glover 2004, Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004, Tan and Neo 2009), or new ones emerge (Kingsley and Townsend 2006). Excluding some may be necessary to allow a group to congregate safely (Iveson 2003, Kurtz 2001, Staeheli 2008) so we should question whether gardens form exclusive communities. This section focuses on qualities of relationship at the gardens in terms of differences between those included, grounds for inclusion, and whether gardeners care for others. Their ideals about community showed that gardeners celebrate the potential for diverse people to come together, be it neighbours who never meet or workers of all ages. It has been suggested that gardens can mix and

unify diverse people (Colding and Barthel 2013, Firth *et al.* 2011) so are they achieving this?

Like minds

Volunteers at the Maes and Oasis comprise fairly homogenous groups. According to Rob the Maes attracts no 'locals', significant in an area where they are sharply distinguished from 'incomers'. During my fieldwork Maybury was riven with conflict over a major planning proposal which reinforced these divisions as incomers and locals took opposite sides in the debate. Everyone I met at the Maes shared a view on the project, indicating a degree of homogeneity in values if not age or income; as Sarah noted the garden attracts "a sort of like mindedness". Rob told me that one or two people who were involved had other ideas for the garden and to avoid continual disagreements they drifted away. To achieve the connection with others so important to Simone she felt the need for a group of like minds, and wished the Maes had more people of similar age and commitment to her. Although celebrating diversity of people there are signs that gardeners are more comfortable amongst homogeneity.

Despite Johnstown's diversity and the community centre targeting various ethnic groups all of the Oasis' regular volunteers are white. Whilst Johnstown has high rates of unemployment and social housing the volunteers are employed, living in private homes. These absences were not mentioned by the volunteers although the desire for more 'local' volunteers may have been coded reference to the lack of diversity. A number of residents expressed strong views that Johnstown has deteriorated since 'foreigners' moved in and that the neighbourhood was better when it was the 'old' community, whilst non-white residents had experienced racist abuse. The Oasis volunteers were shocked and disheartened by these attitudes, confirming that there are differing views about whether community is better when homogenous (Charles and Davies 2005). In line with its policy context (WAG 2007) Johnstown Association aspires for a local community of difference but the homogeneity of volunteers at the garden allows them to bypass issues of managing diversity. There is no singular Johnstown community and the garden has not united groups with different identities, the inherent agonism of community (Staeheli 2008) is not addressed.

There are also forms of monoculture at the Cwm. Until I arrived there were no females involved as young women offered placements opted for beauty therapy leaving the garden to the 'lads' who were amazed any female would muck in with physical work. Gardening has been perceived as a male domain and the association of men and

physical work persists even when more women participate (Buckingham 2005, Parry *et al.* 2005). Most gardeners at the Cwm were present through training or welfare-to-work programmes so had shared experiences of unemployment. This was conducive to forming relationships as they empathised with each other about the vagaries of the benefit system, but affected perceptions of the garden. Maggie laughed that someone on the bus was surprised to learn where she was heading as locals assumed certain types go there:

> *I think the reason that they walk around the side and not come through the site is coz they thought that they were with a load of ex-cons (staff, Cwm).*

Associations between community gardens and disadvantage may mean somewhere like the Cwm does not increase inclusion rather keeps excluded people together and away (Parr 2007: 557-8).

As suggested above the need for gardeners to cooperate can bring different people together (Colding and Barthel 2013, Firth *et al.* 2011, WAG 2010: 2, 4), as with me becoming 'one of the lads' by mucking in. However, distinctions between people seem to constrain the formation of relationships, so colleagues at the Cwm were friendlier with others of similar status whilst anyone regarded as 'the boss' was kept at a distance. Simone noted that work days often divide along gender lines with men doing more technical jobs together. Humans tend to draw towards those similar to themself so groups are likely to have a high degree of homogeneity (McPherson *et al.* 2001) hence a community of gardeners may not be very diverse. The likelihood of *everyone* getting on is very small as Rachel impresses on groups:

> *you've got a mixture of allowing everybody to be individually expressive but also coming up with a cohesive thing which is sort of the tension if you like. It's always a tension (designer, Oasis).*

She expects conflict but this recognition is rare as people focus on the positive associations of community to the neglect of dealing with difference; community retains an expectation of unity and agreement so difference is hidden or ignored.

A related challenge is attracting new people as Rachel is acutely aware:

> *what happens is that then it's almost like a group thing you then find it difficult to – you form bonds which is necessary – but then that sometimes makes it difficult to be open to others and for a group to evolve and have a flow through of people leaving, people coming, joining, leaving. That's another tension which needs to be resolved.*

The group at the Oasis discussed needing more volunteers but some hinted they prefer a small number of regulars, or were relieved when someone they did not like stopped

volunteering. Although they had endeavoured to attract people to the garden they may not have understood barriers to participation (Quayle N.D.: 26), including cultural and economic factors likely to deter those on low incomes (Franklin *et al.* 2012). Melissa wondered if they were always "welcoming" enough to new people; here and at the Maes I noticed newcomers not drawn into conversation or shown how they might help. It is difficult to access the opinions of people who come once or twice then drift away so I can only speculate whether they felt unwelcome. These groups form through what they do together so newcomers should gain membership through participation, but they must first be treated as potential members (Wenger 1998: 101) by being welcomed. Gardens can develop a core membership which leaves some feeling left out and can be difficult to penetrate (Bendt *et al.* 2012: 27, Glover 2004: 159, Kingsley and Townsend 2006).

If feeling good is an important aspect of being at a community garden people may seek others they can be comfortable with, and as it takes time to develop familiarity it may be easier to stick with those you know. One neighbour of the Oasis said she did not want to go there because everyone would be "strangers"; it is intimidating to meet new people so many do not act on an invitation to a community garden. I felt guilty but relieved when others at the Cwm revealed they did not like a new volunteer as I found him annoying but felt obliged to welcome him. Those who go to a garden to feel good may not bother, hence a group of like minds who like each other is likely to form.

Inviting others in

The intention is that each garden is open to everyone but it takes active effort to bring people in (Teig *et al.* 2009). As discussed the Cwm is felt to lack features to entice and welcome the public, whilst the Oasis has been designed to encourage engagement. Speaking to those who live around each garden it became clear that the main reason for not going in is lack of awareness they exist and are open so invisibility and ignorance limit access. Once aware that a community garden is available many do not want to garden or do so elsewhere; they do not feel excluded but are not interested. Although gardening and food are claimed to be levelling and accessible so perfect for forming community (Firth *et al.* 2011) not everyone agrees (Colasanti *et al.* 2012) or enjoys getting involved (Guthman 2008, Parr 2007).

It is only in the case of the Oasis that local residents perceive barriers to engagement. A minority of neighbours feel that the garden and community centre are used by certain groups –young people, ethnic minorities- amongst whom they would feel

uncomfortable. People seem to prefer to interact with those like themselves (Glover *et al.* 2005: 87, McPherson 2001) so voluntary participation might only attract homogenous groups. A small minority in each neighbourhood were vocally opposed to the principle of the gardens. In Maybury this was because some had wanted allotments and saw the creation of the Maes as a lost opportunity to provide enough plots for the town. Near the Cwm the few objections centred on the lack of apparent impact for the amount invested, and supposed favourable treatment over issues such as planning. Some of these opinions were based on misinformation and there were few principled objections to the notion of community gardens.

The views of people not currently using a community garden suggest there are few who would like to but are prevented from belonging. Whilst more people might be encouraged to visit the gardens by better promotion few local residents would engage in gardening. This is significant for it is clear that participating in place making is at the heart of garden communities; working together, sharing decisions and achievements are fundamental to the shared sense of belonging at the Maes and Oasis. Those who garden are seen as more engaged than people who visit the gardens so the group at the Oasis share an ambition expressed by Sally that more people "come and help it to be". Encouraging visitors is not an objective for the Maes, it is for people to garden and this is the way to join its community. Passing a garden does not feel like community in the same way as helping to make it so Derek said there is no community at the Cwm. Shallow relationships to a place do not feel like community and remain towards the top categories in *Figure 2*. A neighbour who walks through might be greeted with a smile and hello, a customer who buys produce may be told about the crops, but there will be no empathetic touch or shared understanding of what it is like to garden here. The presence of a community garden in a neighbourhood might only form weak ties between neighbours and those engaged enough to form a community may be a select group.

NONHUMAN OTHERS

So far I have focused on differences between people, but it is suggested that community garden communities include nonhumans (Okvat and Zautra 2011: 375, Von Hassell 2005: 104). The expectation is that by reconnecting people with nature ethical responsibility for others extends to nonhumans (Bartlett 2005, Bendt *et al.* 2012, Brook 2010: 309, Cameron 2011, McClintock 2010: 203). Despite the suggestion that community is no longer exclusively human (Whitehead and Bullen 2005, Nancy 2000,

Wolch 2007) no one spontaneously suggested this to me. If I asked whether a garden's community might include nonhumans the first response was often a puzzled look or laughter. Melissa and Toni love plants and wildlife but do not see them as part of community for they cannot communicate, the grounds on which most people exclude nonhumans. But Maggie, Sally and Simone readily accepted that animals could be part of community; ideally Simone would have animals at the Maes to contribute fertility and company so it would feel "more rounded and full". Derek included plants, anything "you've nurtured", someone grows a plant then "they're part of these objects" which become part of community because "well you just care and tend for them". Nonhuman others with whom people are familiar can form meaningful relationships like those of community.

Most discussion of community focuses on people but other social relations such as friendship have been extended to nonhumans by focusing on qualities of relations (Bingham 2006). If community is equated with a particular quality of relationship – closeness, care, cooperation- then others in the widest sense might be included. Sense of community develops as relationships move someone from stranger at a distance to closer companion; a similar progression might be identified in relations between gardeners and nonhumans (*Figure 2*). A more-than-human geography of community gardens considers all relationships from a similar standpoint, focusing on processes rather than entities. Following relationships and their qualities rather than types of beings reduces the risk of treating nonhumans as an undifferentiated mass of 'nature' or assuming people have a consistent 'attitude to nature'. Examining relationships shows an individual relates variously to nonhumans, not because s/he reacts in contradictory ways to parts of the same, rather s/he differentiates affective potentials then relates differently (Latour 2004b). Some creatures draw people closer, others drive them away. Although this interpretation may only resonate with some community gardeners I felt it important to consider whether relationships between different kinds of beings are equivalent to question the expectation that care for nonhumans emerges from community gardening. To understand whether garden communities include nonhumans the next section considers the basis for inclusion without assuming it extends only to people. I then explore the varied relations between humans and nonhumans to understand whether they exhibit the care expected in communities.

Those who contribute

Reflecting on how people relate to others it seems that a welcome extends to those who help make the garden. A reciprocal relationship of contribution is expected hence the

premium on working rather than merely attending the gardens. Simone does not feel certain people are part of the Maes' community:

> *maybe he has dropped in once or twice over the year, and that's lovely to have his support at the meeting but it doesn't feel like he's part of the community because … there's not regular contact and he's not actually physically contributing to what's going on (volunteer).*

Inclusion comes through contributing to place making with those who work earning trust, as manifest in the reciprocity of sharing of crops between those who help (Teig *et al.* 2009). Volunteers at all three gardens are offered produce in return for their labour; Sally described a typical system:

> *if you want to come and do more in the garden and get more active in it then you get more of a share. Because you've done the work it's kind of like your payment or your reward. Or your cut of how much you did in the garden (volunteer, Oasis).*

This is akin to gift exchange as returns may not be immediate but input earns the right to claim benefits in future (Hinchcliffe *et al.* 2007: 266). There is no formal system for calculating earnings as Anne-Marie explains: "you come and work and you take and if you're here more frequently you take more frequently" (volunteer, Maes). This is not formalised but people judge when taking exceeds giving: certain regulars at the Maes were secretly chided for always arriving just before lunch and eating without working. A minor scandal erupted at the Oasis when one infrequent volunteer did no work before taking home the *whole* pear harvest. Contribution should be proportionate to benefits to maintain the goodwill which a gift system relies on (Mauss 2002 [1967]). Sean and John kept certain gifts for the regulars with new volunteers expected to prove their commitment to demonstrate they deserve rewards[15]. Gifts need not be material: Jonesy said volunteers at the Cwm "should have something at the end of it […] enough thanks and praise" (staff). Input deserves output even if only a gratitude so lack of appreciation was felt to explain why so few volunteers return.

The importance of contributing means laziness is held in very low regard. At the Cwm skiving colleagues are complained about because it is not fair to be paid and leave work for others. Lack of physical capacity is acceptable but those able to do more are criticised and disliked. At the Oasis and Maes it is fine to come and relax as these are places to 'hang out' and everyone has times they do not feel like doing any thing, but there is disdain for people who never help. It is a matter of fairness: am I putting in

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[15] The exception is visitors offered a share on a first visit without having worked, gifts which bestow welcome to someone special or from the network of community gardeners in the expectation of a future contribution such as return favours. Likewise I often went home from a first visit to a garden with a bag of produce.

more than others and equal to what I receive? Toni was willing to help a community project voluntarily but would not do so for the Cwm unless she felt that others cared about her and the garden as she did not see evidence of fair gift exchange.

The antithesis of contributing is destroying as with vandals who actively disrupt gift exchange by un-making the work of others. The distinction between contributors and detractors extends to nonhumans: pests take from the garden so are excluded whilst creatures which contribute joy or benefit the ecosystem are welcome. Gardeners do not always agree whether a nonhuman is contributing as knowledge about others and priorities influence assessments. John sees dead plants making a garden ugly whilst Simone thinks they offer fertility, so they are banished from John's garden but welcome in Simone's. The sharpest distinction between contributors and detractors is apparent in treatment of gastropods and bees which illustrates that gardeners and nonhumans do not always collaborate (Power 2005). Although sometimes done with regret I cannot think of a single gardener who did not kill slugs. In contrast bees are celebrated, plants are chosen with them in mind and the sight of them buzzing around is enjoyed.

The basis for deciding whether to exterminate or include is brought into relief by considering those for whom killing seems uncharacteristic. Melissa is the most vociferous champion of wildlife at the Oasis, objecting to chemicals and encouraging others to leave mess for insects. Yet she went on killing sprees prompting John to call her a murderer:

> **Melissa**: *everybody [being] was horrified that someone that's a vegetarian and into saving the planet can kill snails quite easily. I do get satisfaction out of killing the snails.*
>
> **Hannah**: *Do you? So that's the complete opposite of what people would expect of you.*
>
> **Melissa**: *I know, I'm very embarrassed about it.*
>
> **Hannah**: *What's so satisfying about it?*
>
> **Melissa**: *They do so much damage in my garden at home I think that the fact that I'm reducing their numbers, even by one.*
>
> **Hannah**: *Like revenge?*
>
> **Melissa**: *Yeah, it's just [mimes throwing them] 'that's one that's not going to get my lettuce'. 'That's another one that's not going to eat that'. Coz they eat anything in my garden. I haven't got a lot of veg, as I said, I don't really grow lettuce or anything which is their favourite but they'll eat herbs that are really strong scented and the things you*

> *wouldn't have thought that they'd like. They- oh, I hate them*
> *(volunteer, Oasis).*

I had a similar discussion with Simone as she collected slugs to drown in her "pot of death", there were so many she felt it the only option: "they're eating our food, you grow your own food and they come and take it". Consensus was that if they ate weeds no one would mind, but by taking crops slugs lose the right to inclusion.

Bees are the very opposite of gastropods as they are invited in by the pollinator garden at the Cwm, the meadow at the Oasis and wild flowers at the Maes. I was particularly interested in the decision to make a meadow at the Oasis because John and Sean were its advocates despite their preference for formal planting. They had previously been dismissive of suggestions to dedicate parts of the garden to wildlife so I asked Sean what had driven the creation of the meadow:

> *I think initially because there was a very big push media-wise to kind of step*
> *away from the formal gardening of like the very closed up flowers, crysanths*
> *and things like that. Because the – the very publicised downfall of the British*
> *bee and things like that. But also I think it um it encourages a lot of – a lot*
> *more produce in the garden because obviously if you're pollinating the*
> *garden'll produce immeasurably better (volunteer).*

Whilst celebrated as bee habitat the new meadow became a favourite spectacle so human goals coincided with apian needs so their needs aligned. The welcome extended to bees is also due to good understanding of their contribution: as Sean mentioned, during 2011 -12 numerous campaigns about the plight of bees promoted insect friendly gardening. John and others had seen how beautiful it could be and understood bee needs so the nature of engagement deepened and could be more nurturing. In contrast the role of slugs is invisible and they are not known to contribute, but Simone told me "they break things down... everything has its role". This value is not understood or promoted so slugs seem to take from the garden hence they do not belong.

If making a contribution earns acceptance to these communities inclusion is not determined by type or limited to those who are similar, but dependent on willingness to contribute to place making. Applying the metaphor of rhythm we can understand this as a group forming through synchronisation and the exclusion of those moving to a different tempo to avoid arrhythmia. This may be a less exclusive form of community as anyone who acts appropriately should earn inclusion, including nonhumans. But it is not clear how gardeners would deal with human counter-rhythms. Also reactionary attitudes or chauvinism might arise through dismissing non-participants as lazy-good-for-nothings without considering why they are/can not contribute. As in the case of

slugs it is not always easy to determine how another is contributing and it may be easier to recognise the contributions of those we resemble. Therefore learning about different things makes a difference to community.

Different kinds of relationships

Part of the skill of gardening discovered in Chapter V is understanding beings quite unlike oneself to know what they need. Various examples show novices not understanding how to help or distinguish different kinds of others. Graham could not tell weeds from carrots, I could not distinguish a fluttering form as a brimstone and was guided by a more expert companion who tuned my attention. Such awareness is part of what Ingold calls skill and is essential for successfully improvised engagement with an environment. I see parallels between this and what Latour calls learning to be affected (2004b). Learning how one thing differs from others, making a garden of 'plants' somewhere with nigella, nasturtiums, cornflowers, courgettes is to go through the process he calls articulation. He describes how bodies learn to become increasingly sensitive to contrasts so differentiate between things: "new entities whose differences are registered in new and unexpected ways" (p210). To be articulate is to be affected by such difference as the body learns to "register and become sensitive to what the world is made of" (p206) making a world with more difference. Different things elicit different behaviours as bodies are "moved into action by the contrast between two entities" (2004b: 209). Affect has effect so flower is left in place, weed is pulled up. As attention tunes into the subtle ways different things manifest themselves the world becomes 'more full' (Bingham 2006). For example, with her ability to differentiate plants Toni knows cucumbers need little moisture so despaired when people drenched them. She put a sign alongside the seedlings saying 'I am cucumbers' to alert people not to water them, but no one else understood that being cucumber means needing dryness so daily soakings continued.

Those who are more 'articulate' find the garden much more alive: Toni and Maggie often noticed insects, perhaps picking them up to identify or marvel at some unusual colouring whilst for

What's great about having frogs is that I would have said before coming to the community garden if I'd been out and about and had seen a frog I would have been a bit 'oh my god' and not you know wanting to touch it or go any where near it. But they don't bother me now and I'm a bit more intrigued by them and I think that because there's so many of them around and there's little ones and there's big ones um... yeah I'm not bothered by them, and more fascinated by them than sort of scared I suppose (John, volunteer, Oasis).

those less affected by such tiny presences they do not exist. From visits to the Cwm Heidi guessed certain areas were wildlife habitat but she does not understand these in the way she appreciates seeing familiar vegetables (staff, partner). Observing differences between novices and experts as people become more adept at differentiating others demonstrates Latour's idea and a discussion with Sally suggests some gardeners see this happening. I asked her to explain what she meant by saying gardens are good places to interact with nature:

> *I think Johnstown's so ... I dunno, I think if you've got a certain mentality and you're not sort of maybe open to external stimulus then you don't notice that Johnstown's full of wildlife, it's full of interesting things. Even if you don't go near the greenspaces there's interesting stuff that's going on, even in like the densest residential building places. But I think the garden opens it up a lot more. And I think one of those things – the obvious thing is the actual stuff that's there, the wildlife, the plants and that stuff. But it's the people that tend the garden, and inhabit the garden – you can kind of get this feeling that there's a lot more sort of ... appreciation, openness.*

She thinks that gardening encourages this awareness:

> *Because I think to go in the garden for say another purpose other than gardening club, or a meeting, then you have a meeting and you look at your papers and you do your agenda and stuff like that. But for gardening it's about appreciating the garden. And I think if people are brought into that then it opens up wider. So I think it's just a lot more obvious in the garden, whereas it takes a lot more effort round on the streets of Johnstown to – to appreciate and focus on the good things.*

So gardeners are perhaps more likely to be aware of variety:

> *I think when you're in your house or your flat – in this kind of area- you go to work then you come home and you do nothing outside your sort of bubble, then those kind of thoughts don't enter your mind at all. [...] I think it's just the focus. I think – I think things like if you're in the garden and you can hear birds then you actually sit and listen to the birds, and you realise that there are birds. Whereas you can walk around and you can hear birds all over the place but like there's, yeah the focus and the appreciation of it, I think that it's a central focus when you're in the garden. And you can – you can ... I don't know. Like know that it's there more, and that it's not just sort of like ... I don't know (volunteer, Oasis).*

The openness Sally describes has parallels with the notion of learning to be affected, as does her feeling that gardeners know more different things making the world more full. As Maggie told me, if you pause in the Cwm you hear blackbirds singing, or notice a

pattern of light through leaves. This is more than increased awareness as once distinguished different others are treated according to their particularity (Latour 2004b)- cucumbers do not need so much water.

The process gardeners described of getting to know their neighbours is also learning to be affected. A neighbourhood presents an unknown mass of strangers amongst whom one is indistinguishable from another. Through attention to difference we distinguish faces in the crowd, recognise their distinctiveness, then choose to become more familiar with some. As familiarity increases individuals are differentiated then related to according to different affects: I do not recognise you so I avoid eye contact, I know you so I say hello, we are comfortable together so I touch your arm. This progression forms different types of relationship parallel to those with nonhumans who begin as strangers but may become cared for (*Figure 2*). Graham epitomises this as he arrived at the Cwm never having gardened:

> *years ago obviously I had no time to do gardening or anything, I'd walk past a flower, if I walked over it I wouldn't think twice about it. But now I watch, look and think 'ooh that's growing there' (volunteer).*

Now he knows wildflowers he skirts round them with the mower, having differentiated between plants he engages with each differently. With increased differentiation and familiarity the intensity of engagement with another increases until co-operation and care are exchanged so forming community.

Learning to care?

Articulation through learning to be affected is useful to understanding relationships because it accommodates humans and nonhumans, implying a mode of relating which starts not from similarity but being open to difference (Bingham 2006). As Nick Bingham shows social relations such as friendship need not rely on similarity so a bee can become friend; what counts is being open to others. In the case of natural scientists it has been suggested that this openness brings "a particular ethos of engagement" which respects nonhumans (Lorimer, J. 2008a: 398). Such attentiveness to difference is thought to be a sound foundation for ethical relationships to nonhumans (Hinchcliffe 2007, Hinchcliffe and Whatmore 2006, Whatmore 2002). If this is the case and if Sally is right that gardeners are open to being affected by others then we might expect gardening to cultivate ethical regard for nonhumans, bringing the responsibility and care required for community (Bauman 2001, Tuan 2002). We should be cautious in assuming this as learning to be affected does not point to a particular outcome: a hunter alert to the presence of birds is as open to difference as the scientists Lorimer

studied, with opposite results for nonhumans. As Bingham explains articulation puts us amongst a world full of other things but we then have to determine whether we can live together and work through various ways of coexisting (2006: 495, see also Gibson-Graham and Roelvnik 2009). What Sally suggests is that community gardens can provide one space for negotiating the morality of killing or caring.

Previous authors expect involvement in community gardening to lead towards attitudes of stewardship for 'nature', and I did encounter instances of care for nonhumans. An expert gardener like Simone understands what different plants need and provides it (see box *Tending tomatoes*). Sean spent a whole afternoon scooping up tadpoles stranded in a puddle by the Oasis' pond so they might survive; Toni often picked up insects trapped in the polytunnel and released them outside, not letting Graham help as nicotine on his hands would harm them. In Toni's opinion gardening is good because "it teaches people to care for things", which for her includes plants because "they can feel you know". She and Melissa consider what will make a plant "happiest" and seek to offer it by identifying with their needs. But this is not necessarily selfless; part of the reason Toni cares about flora and fauna is that:

> *if we don't look after our wildlife, one they'll be extinct, they'll be no pollinators, our food'll be in trouble. And um wildlife's important as well for the bio- you know – it's all in a chain isn't it, it all goes round. And it we lose our wildlife that'll be the plan- well that could be the planet, you don't know do you. [...] I wanna keep the butterflies, we need to keep the butterflies, keep bees, and all wildlife. And they're good for your garden.*

Caring for biodiversity is in part care for self, mirroring the difficulty of separating altruism and selfishness (chapter V); people feel good through growing and being amongst plants so gardening might be as much selfish as selfless. I watched Sean pull up a marigold plant that had been eaten by slugs shaking his head: "what a waste of work". It was his effort and time that he cared about not just the plant. Contrast with Melissa who lobbied for herbs not to be moved to somewhere more convenient because "they're happy there". There are those who regard nonhumans as deserving in their own right, but a fair amount of care for them may depend on a human need to feel good. Nonhumans not known to contribute to the garden need not be cared for and are ripe for killing.

The idea that community gardeners share an ecological worldview (Von Hassell 2005) or that gardening encourages this through reconnection to nature is challenged by evidence of very un-nurturing attitudes. Much of Toni's photo diary drew attention to neglected plants as she despaired that others did not seem to care. She and Maggie

> *Jonesy came over to chat. He noticed some tiny red insects running on the bench and began squashing them with his finger, saying as he did "what are these?" (fieldnotes, Cwm).*

tried unsuccessfully to intervene when someone strimmed along the river where they knew birds were nesting. I observed people trampling plants, not noticing creatures, and plenty of plants allowed to die. It is not easy to explain the disparity between care and neglect as there are likely numerous causes. The approach to place making may make a difference as this can result in weak feelings of attachment and someone not attached to a place may not care for its others. Those most likely to neglect flora and fauna were people at the Cwm who do not feel attached to the whole garden; they might tend plants they had grown but not those with which they had no personal involvement. Those who did care had worked most directly with crops so felt personally attached to them. Gender may also have been influential: technical construction or heavy physical work was thought by some men to be "proper work" whilst horticulture is done by women. Toni expressed the expectation that caring for plants is feminine when she watched a male volunteer handling seedlings and said "it's nice to see a man being gentle with plants". Men who want to learn to care for plants may have been discouraged from doing so by associations between heavy work and masculinity (Buckingham 2005, Parry *et al.* 2005).

A novice gardener will not necessarily intuit how to care for others or spontaneously know their needs but must learn or be shown. When John roughly handled tiny seedlings or Graham blasted rows of just-sown seeds with the hose they did not know otherwise. Graham went from not knowing how to water vulnerable seedlings to doing so gently because Toni taught him. Mixing with experts and opportunities for instruction seem to help, so gardeners may learn to care by being amongst those who already know how. John told me how before going to the Oasis he had been the antithesis of an environmentalist - littering, driving a huge car- but by mixing with people with different attitudes he became more considerate. It was not greater contact with nonhumans but with people with caring attitudes which instilled care. However, even if encouraged to care for others neglect and killing continue. John still likes flashy cars and has not changed his whole lifestyle because the garden is not his only source of priorities. Disregarding others may be a difficult habit to change as Maggie suggested: "you still hope that adults are going to be influenced by something like this but you know you wonder how much they will be, and if they will be". What one learns in the garden is not the only influence on behaviour and other demands – being in a hurry, wanting lettuce for tea- may take precedence. Involvement somewhere like the Cwm may not change attitudes because care-full gardeners did not necessarily learn care

through a community garden. As Melissa suggested "I think most people that come here [the Oasis] are pretty environmentally friendly any way". Whilst Simone could see that people might care more as a result of gardening she was not sure about the causality: "Maybe it's that you already are and that's why you garden any way". For people who already perceive nonhumans to be important a garden might not teach this, rather reinforce what they already think. For those yet to learn the need to respect others increased contact with them as facilitated by gardening may not be sufficient to stimulate enduring care for difference[16].

Tending tomatoes

I asked Simone to tell me how she grows tomatoes. She explained about regular watering and feeding, removing leaves when the plant is a certain size, watching for signs of blight. As she talked I watched her take the upper foliage in hand and gently wind the support string around it, allowing it to hold upright without the leaves being squashed or caught. I asked about a piece of paper wrapped around the stem. She told me it had snapped almost through so she used the paper like a plaster to hold it back together. I was surprised it could survive this, but she said tomatoes are actually quite robust (fieldnotes, Maes).

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[16] See Valentine 2008 for this argument in relation to differences between people

Wanting or needing community

So far I have concentrated on wanting to be with others to feel good or achieve collective goals; this majority understanding suggests that people begin separate from others then draw into relationships forming communities. Relationships are desirable for support and pleasant sociability, the assumption being that people can live alone but prefer not to. This favours bonding through similarity between those who share an interest or goal, but I have indicated another perspective amongst gardeners who believe that living with others is not a choice. This was expressed by those who describe the human condition as social and relating as essential. In Rob's view "it's part of the human condition to be with others, we're not meant to be on our own" (volunteer, Maes). Similarly for Derek community is fundamental because: "finding others interested in the same thing and sharing that experience, you know, it's what it is to be human really" (staff, Cwm). This outlook also expressed by Maggie and Simone has parallels with a relational understanding of self with individuals not prior to relationships but constituted by relating (Ingold 2000, Murdoch 2006, Nancy 2000, Whatmore 2002).

Gardeners with this view see human life as necessarily immersed in that of nonhumans. For Rob the importance of the Maes is:

> you're reconnecting with nature. And nature is how it all works isn't it? It's what we're part of. ... And our separation from it is part of what causes us all the problems we've got (volunteer, Maes).

Simone's view is similar:

> when I'm here with other people and we're - we've got out heads down and we're doing work, and I look up and I can see a few people or a bunch of people...doing something my heart fills up. And I just think 'that, that is what I wanted to see'. That's where, you know... that's where we belong. I'm getting emotional. [laughs] Coz it, you know, I do think it's a really deep need for human beings. You know. It's that spiritual, philosophical kind of ...thing, where I - that's where I come from. You know, it's not just about...erm...you know what you do with your time it's about deep human need (volunteer, Maes).

Expressions of essential human relatedness ran into discussion of immersion in nature as equally fundamental aspects of being. For Simone working in a garden and being "part of the cycles" is not a choice as without it she "doesn't feel real":

a really necessary part of being a healthy human being, is to be in touch with
nature. I'm sure. And I think a lot of the dis-function in the world is because
we're not. In general.

Maggie considers it essentially human to feel connected to nature:

We don't live enough as an animal in our bodies and [we] enough in the spirit,
in the pure mind side of it. We live far too much in the human, the me and
mine, and this that and the other. And we believe that's what we are. And I
think what I'm trying to say is that community gardens, any thing that
connects us with the more animal side, but it also gives us that spiritual
connection as well. It actually lets go. Suddenly that kind of – the bit about
who we are and what we think we are shuts down and the other things come
into play (volunteer, Cwm).

She has a highly relational understanding of human existence but sees how this is easily obscured in contemporary life, a tendency gardening can counter:

Especially when you're on your own with just trees and grass and stuff around
you – there's nothing to reinforce this idea of me and mine, of you know who I
am and what I think I am and what I think I'm going through and it just drops
away [...] that experience of loosing the sense of self when you're with nature.

She and Simone feel more themselves gardening because they stop focusing on 'self' and reconnect with others, or rather remember that everything is connected. For those who understand the world as constituted of relations the forms of engagement outlined in *Figure 2* sit over this inescapable connectedness. Certain relationships may feel more intense or have different moral qualities but underlying these engagements is an indelible relating connecting everything. One may *feel* like a stranger but others are all related.

I noted in discussing gardeners' motivations that all those involved in the Maes see it as an opportunity to reconnect with nature, and all but one (Maggie) of those who expressed a relational view of the self were from that garden. It has been noted as common amongst organic gardeners (Kaplan and Kaplan 1995), and resonates with permaculture's relational ontology (Holmgren 2002: 2). Indeed Sarah says permaculture is "a whole life philosophy". Rachel defines it as about everything being connected with the joy of gardening being how it leads to the feeling that "you're not separate from the world, that you are part of it" (designer, Oasis). Permaculture centres on a non-humanist collective with human existence interrelated with nonhumans (Puig de la Bellacasa 2010: 153). This entails respect for others because existence depends on them (Holmgren 2002: xxv). People are inter-subjective so personal actions affect others and vice versa hence one should act with care (Puig de la Bellacasa 2010: 160).

Gardening accordingly Simone thinks about closed cycles: "you can't keep taking without putting something back", maintaining balance, encouraging diversity, and treating things with kindness. She will not use slug pellets because every action has an impact on the system: poisoned slugs harms birds that eat them or taints the soil they live in. Tension between individual and collective, the supposedly conflictive core of community (Bauman 2001, Tuan 2002) is avoided because the individual can only thrive as part of a healthy community so care for self and others are interdependent (Puig de la Bellacasa 2010).

Permaculture ethics centre on "awareness of interdependency" with care "embedded in the practices that maintain the webs of relationality" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2010: 167). It is interdependence that it is important not categories of being so care extends towards people and seedlings. This demonstrates the possibility of rethinking community as processes of relating and connection amongst diversity, what Jean Luc Nancy calls being singular plural (2000). Being singular plural is not a choice to reconnect with others for we are all of the same, I cannot be alienated from you as we can only exist in common. What Simone and others describe as a need to reconnect speaks to this; they are not necessarily seeking to remake broken connections, rather realising and affirming the essential connectedness of all and celebrating the inescapable diversity of being together.

There are several implications of this outlook which given it's prevalence at the Maes shed light on differences between the three gardens. Firstly, if living with others is inevitable then a group cannot choose to comprise only those they like and find easy; difference is expected and community as a collective unified by sameness is impossible (Nancy 1991: 81). Maggie, Simone, Rachel and Rob recognise that working with others is difficult because people are different, not everyone gets on. If being together is a condition of existence rather than an option it necessarily brings difference together so communities will not be harmonious and pleasant. A relational self is not in relationships because it feels good so relations are not always easy.

The second implication relates to nonhumans: if all lives are interconnected the good of the whole determines the fate of the individual. Nonhumans are important whether we like them or not, irrespective of whether they contribute to our plans; flora and fauna which make us feel bad are equally important. So nonhumans are free to go where they will at the Maes – it is not for humans to control other beings as they have their own modes of being which makes sense within the system. Practice falls short of this ideal as Simone kills slugs knowing this might disrupt the ecosystem and difficult people have

been squeezed out. Some needs are prioritised over others – slugs which eat human crops must die, individuals who devote more effort and attention to the garden hold more influence. Although volunteers at the Maes may believe strongly in the importance of connecting with others it is not easy to enact this as their lives are influenced by other pressures which may pull them in other directions. The permaculture community of the Maes is not divorced from socio-ecological processes which extend elsewhere. However, the garden is significant as a place where connectivity is highly apparent: plant assemblages combine human and nonhuman action, and human actions have tangible impacts on others. A gardener's ability to influence plants can remind that all is related so gardening might enforce a relational understanding of self and community, so encourage care for a wide range of others.

THE EXTENT OF COMMUNITY

I have shown that through community gardening various relationships form which may result in beneficial tendencies to care for others, addressing the question whether these places form communities. To close this chapter it is important to consider whether care is limited by propinquity (Massey 2004, Smith 1999, Staeheli 2008: 14). I suggested in chapter II that previous studies have neglected limits to the impact of community gardens so now consider this in these three examples. I have already highlighted how some are excluded from community gardens so limiting the numbers benefiting. Benefits to an area come through individual participation so community enhancement depends on involving a critical mass of individuals (Alaimo *et al.*2010). In addition the extent of community is limited by how far community garden relationships stretch across time and space.

The most obvious temporal limit to garden relationships is that people tend not participate for very long: volunteering averages less than a year with very few involved for more than two years. Gardeners often participate for a growing season, enjoy the crops they sowed and disappear after harvest. The diminishing returns of an enjoyable pastime or pleasant natural environment have not been examined; there may be temporal limits to feeling good in a garden. For those who stay year after year the annual cycles of labour repeat so perhaps become boring and less rewarding. The opposite possibility is that lengthy engagement is encouraged by deferred rewards - the anticipation of seeing a seed finally flower, harvesting crops worked for many months. A longer period of involvement would seem to be beneficial as it takes time to become

familiar with a community garden and relax enough to feel good there. Time also allows people to learn and understand enough to develop deeper relationships which can become caring.

Working together to make a community garden and developing a shared sense of place establishes relationships of friendship and cooperation, what we might call community. It has been suggested that these connections benefit a neighbourhood by increasing collective action (Alaimo *et al.* 2010) and social capital (Glover 2004, Teig *et al.* 2009). But like Kingsley and Townsend (2006) I observed that relationships established between gardeners are tied to being in the garden. Co-gardeners tended not to see each other elsewhere and do not do things together unless associated with gardening, the exception being those who were already friends. It took a considerable amount of time before fellow gardeners discussed personal matters as conversation focused on garden matters. On occasion a group went from the Oasis to another garden or event and it felt strange to be together somewhere different, the usual cues for our habits – seating where we chat, flower beds we discuss, kettle for our drinks- were missing and we had to find new norms of being together. Our relationships are tied to place and elsewhere the rhythm of our co-operation is difficult to feel. With relationships linked to the garden it is likely that those who cease going there fall out of the community, as happened when volunteers and staff stopped gardening and were unlikely to be seen again. The majority of time I spent with the people involved in this research was in the gardens and I cannot be sure how they interacted with the wider community. But my experiences with them and how they spoke about their communities questions the extent to which involvement in community gardens fosters a more comprehensive network of relationships or sense of community beyond the garden.

Belonging to a garden community is tied to being at the garden, particularly given the importance of working together. This means gardeners may only be connected to each other whilst connected to the same place, and that non-gardeners in the vicinity may not be affected. Relationships may spill out from the garden only through efforts at wider engagement (Bendt *et al.* 2012: 27, Teig *et al.* 2009: 1120) which can take considerable skill (Stocker and Barnett 1998: 187). As Simone said the Maes had made a community but it is "*this* garden's community" not "*the* community out there". This is confirmed by recent decisions at the Maes and Oasis to take their activity beyond the gardens. Simone is taking responsibility for some flowerbeds in Maybury in the hope of showing more people the benefits of edible gardening. The Oasis volunteers have plans for a greenspace on a busy street which they hope will engage residents who pass daily. Sean thinks this will be a more fruitful approach: "if you're looking to enrich a

community, a residential community, I'd not necessarily err - a garden is not the best way of going about it". People have to actively choose to go into a garden and become involved whilst areas that are visible parts of their routines may more readily become engaging "because you're enriching what they see, you're enriching the areas they walk past every day". These two groups have realised that the relationships they benefit from come through engaging with a place they value which not everyone relates to so they need to offer more opportunities for place making.

Understanding community gardens as places for escape reinforces the logic of this approach: somewhere which offers escape and contrast may not affect parts of life from which separation is sought. If behaviour in a garden is away from other daily practices then learning to care for others in a community garden may not translate to care for others elsewhere. As noted above, John and Graham think what they have learnt in the garden *has* led them to act with greater environmental responsibility, but such shifts in behaviour are not definite (Bartlett 2005: 307, Turner 2011: 518). If relationships to others are closely tied to being in place then one could assume that different relationships form elsewhere which may not entail care.

Making a place by bringing materials from all over has impacts on other places so carefully choosing things enacts care for elsewhere. By using peat-free compost a gardener cares for peat bogs far away; 'local' actions are connected to other locations so they can care for others at a distance (Massey 2004) or interactions with those nearby might be used to make sense of wider relations (Amit 2000) so garden relationships help shape more stretched out connections. There is potential for care-full gardeners to protect far-flung others but this is not inevitable. They have no attitude of care for nature *per se* because becoming a community gardener means learning to differentiate between the others we lump under the label of nature, developing particular relationships with certain things.

The most extensive feeling of care for others seems to be associated with a relational ontology which recognises the importance of maintaining the integrity of the whole (Puig de la Bellacasa 2010). An ecological outlook like permaculture encourages care at a distance, including regard for others who are different from ourselves who are often neglected (Massey 2004, Smith 1999). I have shown that not everyone involved in a community garden takes this perspective. The power of community gardens could be their potential to convey the connected nature of being, as realising the self as relationally constituted might foster ethical regard for others (Anderson, J. 2009, Cloke and Jones 2003: 200). This revelation might be encouraged by exposure to

permaculture philosophy which starts from a relational ontology, or through gardening which reveals each human action to make a tangible impact on others and how things influence each other. Garden practices might also lead people to lose their sense of self so 'let go' of the idea of being an individual disconnected from others. Such ethical epiphanies seem feasible but may not be guaranteed, and it would be difficult to demonstrate that involvement in community gardening is the source of a relational ethical sensibility. We cannot assume that there is a community garden ethic of care for a broad community of others, or that making a garden together results in more caring communities.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have shown that community gardens do seem to create new relationships and that gardeners can develop sense of community by establishing rhythms and moving in synch therefore feeling at home together. Affinity with others and good feelings of being together are a significant part of community gardening's appeal, repeatedly pulling people back along paths to their place. Crucial to this is the activity of making a place together, but achieving deeper relationships requires a participatory process including honest communication and trust. This may be more likely when those involved are similar to each other as gardeners find comfort by being amongst familiar others. Those who are unwilling or unable to contribute to place making are most likely to be excluded from the garden community because cooperation is so central to the formation of trusting relationships. Processes of relating evolve differently at the gardens so each has its own kind of community, or none at all.

By attending to the qualities of the relationships gardeners develop two key points emerged. First, relationships with nonhumans vary according to the kind of nonhuman and how much its contribution to the garden is understood. Through learning to be affected (Latour 2004b) the garden environment becomes more differentiated so full of more kinds of beings which are related to variously. Second, some of these relationships have a caring quality as gardeners understand and tend the needs of others. This is most likely when gardeners understand that care for self entails care for others as all lives are related. However, considering the extent of relationships developed through community gardening shows they have a limited reach across time and space so care developed in the garden does not necessarily extend to care for others elsewhere.

This discussion shows how community is interpreted in a particular context as conveying a group of familiar and supportive people, and that this remains appealing despite academic disquiet. Returning to the question of the relationship between place and community it seems that cooperating in place making can offer a route for the formation of new communities. Whilst spatial characteristics make a difference – being outdoors, somewhere to gather, facilities for socialising –engaging in joint activities is crucial. Working together people develop their rhythms, their ways of doing things, they can empathise with each other, make things which embody their cooperation and are a shared achievement. These processes help people to feel good about each other, giving them good reason to be together so they feel they belong somewhere together. When these activities do not feel right - no one knows what is happening, effort is not distributed fairly, there are no rewards - the group is less likely to feel like a community. Affinity is stronger through similarity hence some people are excluded or not pulled in; this suggests community gardeners may require assistance with skills of bringing different people together if they are to form heterogeneous communities.

By focusing on relationships I have endeavoured to discuss community without excluding nonhumans. This may not resonate with how all community gardeners understand the nature of community but there is value in exploring this version to further the pursuit of more-than-human research, and to question the assumption that gardening results in communities which include nonhumans. We discover that many people perceive nonhumans as separate from humans and do not include them in their conception of community, but that there is potential for gardening to embrace care for nonhumans and result in greater understanding of the connections between all beings.
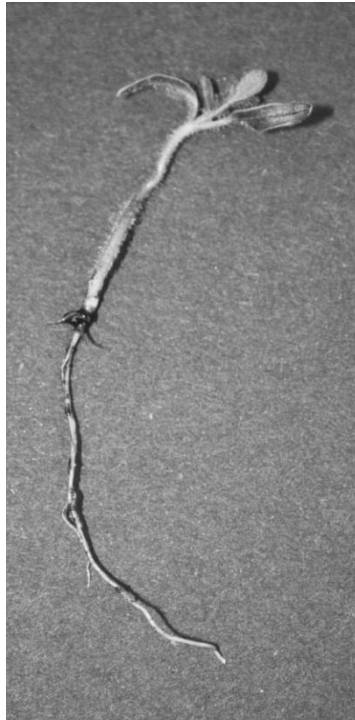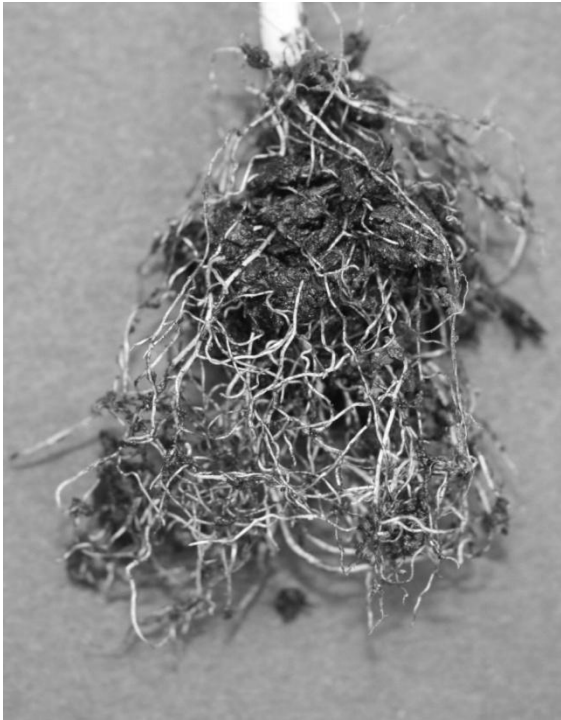
VIII CONCLUSION

The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world (Foucault 1986:26).

The task for this conclusion is to look from three small community gardens to the worlds beyond. It begins with an overview of findings and themes regarding community gardens and what this study reveals about them. I then outline the distinction of considering community gardening as place making and how this contributes to relational theories of place. The third section looks ahead to further research and how practitioners might apply lessons from this research. The question of how relationships in community gardens link to elsewhere hinges on whether gardeners develop ethical sensibilities which travel with them, so I close by addressing whether they come to care for others more widely.

COMMUNITY GARDENS RE-PLACED

The aim of this research was to explore relationships between people and place experienced at community gardens. Through ethnographic study of three examples I have come to understand the kind of places they can be and how people can change through being involved. Using place as a lens offers a fresh perspective on community gardens, highlighting the difference space makes to their effects and affects, revealing a multiplicity of spatial relationships and processes. Attention to how places are made reveals more about what gardeners do, their interactions with the nonhuman environment, and how nonhumans contribute to garden experiences. By selecting case studies of a kind not previously studied and through close attention to what they mean to gardeners I contribute knowledge about the diversity and complexity of community gardening. These examples illustrate the variety of places called community gardens with notable contrasts emerging between voluntary and coerced participation. They show that not all community gardens are at the vanguard of sustainability or the alternative food movement as a range of organisations use gardening to achieve multiple goals. This study begins to counter the dominance of research from the urban USA and draws attention to how an international phenomenon has various local manifestations. It illustrates that whilst the potential benefits of community gardening are numerous they are not inevitable or easy to attain and depend on the approach to place making.

The case studies demonstrate that community gardens outside urban areas are not categorically distinct from those in cities and that people in rural and semi-urban locations seek similar benefits of gardening together. This dislocates the long-standing narrative that people turn to community gardens for sanctuary from problems of urban decline and unnatural cities (Bartlett 2005, Hynes 1996, Turner *et al.* 2011). What motivates participants at the Cwm, Maes, and Oasis troubles the assumption that community gardeners are seeking to reconnect with nature (Bartlett 2005, McClintock 2010, Turner *et al.* 2011, Von Hassell 2005) as this is not the main driver for involvement. The wish to reconnect with nature is a factor for some, but counter to the narrative of urban decline it is residents of rural areas for whom this is most important. Two conclusions can be drawn from this. Firstly community gardeners seek sanctuary not because of *where* they live but *how* they live; it is everyday lifestyles which are found lacking as urban and rural dwellers rue too little time outdoors doing practical activities amongst others. Secondly, the proximity of nature is insufficient to benefit human wellbeing for gardeners emphasised the importance of working with nature, being actively engaged in its cycles. Providing 'natural spaces' will not guarantee the positive impacts community gardeners enjoy as the type of activities they engage in are so central to the benefits.

The experiences I have presented make it difficult to agree that community gardening connects people with nature resulting in greater care for it (Bartlett 2005, Brook 2010, Hynes 1996, Macias 2008). People exhibited varied relations to different components of what we might call nature, with gardeners becoming more adept at differentiating these through the skill of learning to be affected (Latour 2004b). Whilst gardeners like John and Graham became more aware and respectful of nonhumans this is not a universal trajectory, and where it does occur the influence of fellow humans is perhaps more striking than that of nonhumans as gardeners teach each other to care. Caring attitudes towards the nonhuman environment are strongly associated with an ecological world view like permaculture (Puig de la Bellacasa 2010). But it is not clear whether recognising humans as an interdependent part of nature is a product of community gardening or that this outlook lends people to becoming gardeners.

To understand community gardens I used an exploratory methodology inviting various actors to 'show me the garden'. Getting beyond talk to experience the doings and feelings of gardening better reflects gardeners' experiences to help bring the gardens alive (Donati *et al.* 2010). Allied with a more-than-human approach this allows due recognition of the role of nonhumans instead of treating them as a passive stage on which social life plays out. This offers a depth of understanding not seen in previous

research as prolonged and direct engagement with a number of people enable close reading of what is important about community gardens. This contact showed me both positive and negative aspects offering a much needed critical perspective on community gardens (Milbourne 2011, Pudup 2008). It became apparent that although there are benefits of community gardening, participation entails negative experiences like Simone's burden of responsibility and staff unhappiness at the Cwm. The case studies also illustrate that garden communities can be quite small and may not easily embrace difference or build relationships which extend beyond the garden, so any ripple effects (Teig *et al.* 2009) may be quite limited.

To understand why people make community gardens I studied gardeners' motivations which revealed the importance of being able to feel good, resonating with literature proposing that community gardens enhance wellbeing (Clavin 2011, Hale *et al.* 2011, Kingsley *et al.* 2009, Milligan *et al.* 2004). I challenge the suggestion that this derives from community gardens' location on the favoured side of oppositions between nature-culture, local-global, authentic-inauthentic which allows them to meet a human need for local rootedness (Bartlett 2005, Hynes 1996). Following the work of Massey and others who dismantle such binaries I have questioned their utility as an explanation of what makes community gardens special. Whilst there are ways in which community gardens offer an escape by contrasting with other places people encounter in their daily life, this is not because of inherent qualities which make them categorically distinct and which are fixed prior to the gardeners' engagement. Instead garden and gardeners continually and actively shape each other as people seek to make a place which affords positive experiences. In this active engagement it is not that community gardens make people feel good, rather people make places which will feel good, and *making* community gardens itself feels good. This must be qualified further to say that making community gardens *can* feel good, for they also afford displeasure.

The closest I come to explaining why so many people are now making community gardens is to suggest they are seeking to feel good which means various things and is achieved in several ways. As Sally said of the Oasis "the benefits are whatever you wanna get out of it". She saw the garden providing opportunities to do something you love be it meeting new people, growing things or some other personal passion. It seems that the strength of community gardens is that they can be many things to many people; their flexibility and multiplicity allows people to find what they seek and make them according to what they enjoy. To be successful those involved require the improvisational skill of understanding their environment – including people- and responding to its needs. These three gardens have different visions so we see how other

245

people might use the fundamental act of growing things together to meet needs elsewhere. But this strength is also challenging for one garden cannot offer everything to everybody which brings potential for conflicts (Pearson and Firth 2012: 154), unrealistic expectations (Lawson 2005: 11-13) or the exclusion of those who disagree. The opportunity to feel good relies on being able to exercise choice and have a sense of control over one's community gardening and as we have seen not all approaches to making a garden offer this and sometimes organisational objectives take precedence. The processes of place making determine the benefits achieved and whether gardeners gain a sense of belonging.

MAKING GARDENS, UNDERSTANDING PLACES

In light of previous research of community gardens I have suggested a need to consider them not as sites ready made for people to attend, but as places always in the making (Hinchcliffe 2010: 306). In Megan's words a garden is "never going to have an end" so it should be studied as a nexus of on-going activities. It is not novel to acknowledge that places like community gardens are not sites but complexes of processes or movements, and relational geography promotes such an understanding. But I suggest that the *qualities* of these processes are variable, and that recognising this helps to understand how places change people; not all processes feel the same, not all places are made in the same way so people relate to them differently. Place making is experienced differently at the Cwm, Maes and Oasis with implications for their impacts, a crucial variable being the extent to which people seek or are able to feel in control of events. By being able to collectively shape the Oasis gardeners are more likely to feel attached to it, whilst the lesser degree of control offered at the Cwm or sought at the Maes result in fewer feelings of attachment to them as places. How people relate to place depends on how it is made and their involvement in this process. The Cwm provides limited opportunities to influence place making whilst the Oasis has a more inclusive approach which offers fulfilment as people feel able to direct change. Making the Maes is a less contrived process with the garden left to make itself and gardeners learning to let go of the effort to shape the world. This suggests that it is not a garden *per se* which makes a difference to people, but participating in processes of making it - skilled work, growing, deciding. So it is not that gardens make communities, rather *making* gardens makes communities.

Considering how community gardens are made reveals some of the many actions through which space is shaped, including planning, making, growing and deciding,

whilst certain actors work to undo these orderings. Discussing these experiences of place making I have deliberately focused on processes - moving, relating, controlling, contributing - for two reasons. The first was to understand how benefits reported in previous studies of community gardens and at the case studies arise. Attention to processes shows that as important as offering community gardens is the manner in which things are done with communication and cooperation being particularly influential. Secondly, focusing on qualities of processes rather than types of beings allows us to consider humans and nonhumans in the same frame (Bingham 2006). I would argue that such approaches are required for research to bridge divides between humans and nature, and to reflect a processual world in which everything mixes and binds (Ingold 2011). What difference might it make to research not relations between plants and people but questions of what it is to grow?

Attention to the making of community garden places embellishes and empirically grounds theories of interactions between people and place. Community gardeners work to move materials and ideas into forms which suit their preferences, suggesting that some places are not random or unpredictable – Massey's throwntogetherness (2005). People direct life's movements into particular patterns in the effort to make things and facilitate certain affects - bringingtogetherness. Hence places are made by bringing movements together, a process guided by skill and feelings as we work to achieve certain goals and pull towards those we have affinity with. This skill is apparent in the laying down of garden paths and making of fences which create zones and order different forms of motion. Exercising this ability elicits positive emotions as people enjoy the sense of control over motion, hence place making feels good. As they direct garden movements gardeners shape their bodies by becoming more skilled in certain tasks and developing habits of being amongst the garden.

The difficulties and failures community gardeners encounter indicate limits to their ability to make place as some motion resists channelling or is pulled off-course by other forces. The case studies suggest that certain trajectories are more inclined to pull towards each other through affinity between those who are similar, hence garden communities attract like minds. The easy pull towards affines is in contrast with the struggle to draw in far-flung others, for example money flowing through the circuitry of the economy which charities struggle to redirect. Non-representational thinking can falsely suggest that anything is possible in events without limit (Cresswell 2012: 103) but gardeners' control over their places often unravels. I have sought to recognise limits by tracing how gardens are unmade by actors across all scales, and acknowledging forces beyond the garden which pull on people's experiences.

Recognising limits to control sets place making within context of a broad spread of socio-ecological processes which can pull places out of shape. This led me to recognise that the ripple effect through which community gardens might benefit individuals such as the unemployed is likely to encounter barriers which prevent impacts spreading very far.

To understand how people experience and feel about places like community gardens it is insufficient to recognise the contribution of multiple trajectories as we should also differentiate their qualities. Journeys are of varying lengths, speeds and durations, some are retraced regularly, others are rare expeditions, and all feel different. Affinities pull certain kinds of others together making some journeys more likely and frequent. Ways of moving have varied affects with community gardeners finding motion of ease or freedom pleasurable; community gardens can enable flowing movements and this draws people to them, who return in the knowledge of how they can move there. Returning to the garden they retrace steps they have made before, with these familiar journeys along well trodden paths making deep impressions on land and body. Retracing a path is to move along with recognised rhythms and this is relaxing as one requires less cognitive exertion to negotiate a well-known environment (Edensor 2010: 6, Quayle *et al.* 1997: 102, Tuan 1977: 184) or to move habitually (Bissell 2011, Crang 2000: 305, Edensor 2010: 8, Ingold 2000: 204). Spatial experiences are not wholly random or unpredictable because forces of skill, affinity and habit pull movements together into places with familiar and ordered patterns. I have suggested this can be understood by thinking about rhythm, the cycles and patterns of change which bring some predictability to motion (Edensor 2010, Lefebvre 2004) and give a place a recognisable character (Ingold 2000). Places are not chaotic for there are patterns to their motion so they exhibit both dynamism and continuity; mobility and fixity are not opposites (Edensor 2010, Massey 2011) so people can become attached to somewhere special whilst recognising that it always changes. A dynamic sense of place means appreciating somewhere for its particular constellation of movements and feeling comfortable moving with these rhythms.

I have emphasised that community gardens are never experienced alone to highlight how a shared sense of place can develop, a process often neglected or assumed to risk essentialism (Harvey 1996). By moving together in similar ways people come to experience a place as having a certain character with significant overlap in what it means to them. Whilst this is to a degree collective it is never exclusively so as there is space for individual divergence as each body walks paths in its own way. I use notions of rhythm to express this for it leads us to recognise synchrony as individuals tend to

fall into step with each other, whilst allowing for the potential of arrhythmia if others choose their own tempo. A dynamic sense of belonging means pulling towards others and moving in synch with them. It seems that making a place together can synchronise peoples' movements so they become comfortable moving together, a feeling we might know as sense of community. The three gardens show it is not inevitable that people who share a sense of place feel like a community, but somewhere like the Oasis can help by facilitating gathering and urging people to cooperate. Practices of working together are conducive to empathy and a sense of shared achievement, so new community relationships form through doing things together (Eizenberg 2011, Wenger 1998). These communities are not determined in place but form through making place, sharing experiences and moving alongside each other so people come to feel at home together.

Comfort and homeliness were found to be desirable community garden feelings which arise from being amongst familiar others whose movements have become synchronised to "feel right"(Edensor 2010). Massey should not assume that belonging arises from negotiating difference (2005: 154) because the emotional bonds people develop for their community garden come through cultivating familiarity. This version of person-place bonds is more open to change than the attachment celebrated by humanist geographers, whilst being important in a way not acknowledged by critics. Unlike Massey (*ibid.*) I do not dismiss the notion of belonging through rootedness, providing the metaphor recognises the true characteristics of plant roots. Rooted plants receive succour from their environment not through fixity but dynamic exchange: gases and water flow back and forth in a continuous flux amongst which it is never possible to delineate where root ends and soil begins. Roots and soil flow and a rooted plant is never immobile as it sways in the breeze, grows, and scatters seeds. So we might understand people amongst constant exchanges with place, drawing in materials and affects, reaching towards what they need and pulling it closer. As plant roots swell and shift, disintegrate and branch, groping through the ground, so we might understand human rootedness as a similarly flexible reach towards others with whom we constantly exchange.

The final aspect of place I have tried to unravel is its potential to change people: the suggestion that community gardens foster environmental concern by bringing nonhumans into community. At each garden people change by learning new skills and attuning to the environment to develop the important gardener aptitude of openness to difference. These changes form new bodily habits – the tendency to feel soil moisture, notice a brimstone butterfly, or fall into a relaxed composure. Bodies change as they

move differently with the ways of the garden and move in synch with its rhythms, including those of other gardeners. Some gardeners seem to form new habits of caring for others as they are shown more about their needs and understand how best to tend them, or mimic the actions of those who already care. But these dispositions arise from and are perpetuated by the interaction between person and place, so are particular to being in the garden. This might mean that a body relocated to another place could move differently and act according to other habits; interaction with a different kind of place may not dispose bodies to act with care.

PATHS FROM HERE

In the introduction I claimed not to seek the final word, so what remains unsaid, what future paths might this research point towards? It is impossible to present here everything about the Cwm, Maes and Oasis for as Sean reminded us even a photograph cannot convey the experience of being there. The ethnographic places (Pink 2009) I present are shaped by my interpretation and interests as is the nature of ethnography as personal work (Coffey 1999). Whilst I am comfortable that the gardens presented here are recognisable to those familiar with the three, others might have placed different emphases and noticed other things. It is particularly difficult to research feelings which we are unaccustomed to presenting in daily life (Wait and Cook 2007) or representing in academia (Crang 2003) hence these aspects may be inadequately treated.

With hindsight I would adjust the research process, firstly as greater success in involving non-gardeners might have enhanced it through better understanding of outsider perspectives. Through contact with neighbours of each garden I gained enough knowledge to question some assumptions about the wider impacts of community gardens, an issue worth pursuing. Amongst the perspectives I would like to include more are nonhuman presences such as soil, water and weather which I have hinted at but not dwelt on. It is difficult to bring out the role of nonhumans in ethnographic research led by participant meanings as if people do not show me much about nonhumans they fade into the background. These silences are exacerbated by my position as a social rather than natural scientist with skills of understanding other people, compounded by the fact that as a human I relate more significantly to other humans. The will for more-than-human geography seems to be in advance of methodology so I entered into this research with a spirit of experiment, and now realise

other techniques I might have tried. On reflection I also recognise the value of facilitating discussion between gardeners at each site to see how they compare and contrast their own interpretations as I have done for them. It would also be interesting to follow them over a longer period to establish whether it is possible to sustain feeling good through continued involvement. This might improve understanding of whether changed attitudes and habits endure when someone is no longer a community gardener. I expect it would be difficult to test such findings as I am not sure it is possible to know how and why people come to care for others.

Although I believe it has been beneficial to bring quite diverse places to the study of community gardens it may be that the case studies differ in too many ways to allow full comparison. Variables include location on the rural-urban continuum, strength of environmentalist principles, staff or volunteer leadership, involvement of formalised bodies, scale of site, demographic profile of participants, and degree of external funding. This complexity can make it difficult to distinguish what has a significant effect on events and experiences, although the positive counter to this is that it allows for a fuller understanding of the multiplicity of community gardens. One variable I had not foreseen which proved most informative was the difference between a garden people feel quite negative about and those which really does feel good. This leads me to agree the merit of greater attention to projects' failings and difficulties alongside efforts to replicate good practice (Franklin *et al.* 2011: 771).

The case studies demonstrate that places called community gardens might have little in common which should make researchers mindful of their potential diversity (Kurtz 2001). We may not have reached the point when 'community garden' refers to so much to be meaningless (Pudup 2008) but we should already be conscious of the difficulty of generalising. Emilie told me that her organisation's ambition is for every community to have a garden so they become the norm; such proliferation would bring even greater diversity and weaken the coherence of work on 'community gardens'. By becoming normal community gardens may no longer be radical (McKay 2011), but conventional or even conformist (Pudup 2008). Future studies should not assume community gardens as radical alternatives but question their political potential and ability to challenge the *status quo* through small scale activity.

For practitioners to capitalise on the potential benefits afforded by community gardens the case studies highlight factors to consider. The key message is that it is not just *that* community gardens are made which is important, but *how* this proceeds. Given their reliance on volunteers it is important to recognise that keeping people engaged depends

on being able to offer enjoyable experiences, so organisations may have to temper their expectations of the end product. Greater benefits are enjoyed through providing flexible opportunities for involvement which allow individuals to contribute their ideas and feel some control over making a garden. I would suggest a need for greater attention to likely negative experiences of community gardening such as negotiating differences of opinion, and managing exclusion of different kinds of people. Positive connotations of the word community seem to create an expectation of harmonious relationships when in fact disagreements are not unusual, and people do not find it easy to be amongst those who are unlike themselves. Those involved in community gardening might benefit from instruction in skills for developing communities of difference and managing conflict.

The case studies provide examples of good practice and evidence of benefits as sought by government (Scottish Government 2011, WAG 2010: 2) and suggest that impacts on wellbeing offer the firmest justification for support. But policy makers should be wary of expecting multiple impacts given the difficulty of managing numerous priorities whilst maintaining volunteer engagement. Current policy and statutory support focuses on stimulating new community growing initiatives by addressing capital barriers to their establishment (Capital Growth 2013, DCLG 2012, Scottish Government 2012, WAG 2010). This research suggests the need for a broader perspective which considers how to enable projects to maintain momentum for the long term, meeting needs for softer resources such as skills for working with communities. I have highlighted some limits to what locally focused initiatives like gardens can achieve by way of community development and changing people's lives. These should temper expectations of what gardens can deliver, a lesson which may be instructive for related policy concerns such as wellbeing and sustainable living.

In terms of questions of place this research points to issues for further consideration. I suggest that how place making is attempted influences whether those involved gain positive experiences due to differing degrees of control which they feel. Although I have included moments of displeasure and disharmony from community garden experiences they are places focused on enjoyment. To fully understand how certain forms of motion afford feeling good it may be useful to draw comparison with less pleasurable places which are under-represented in studies of emotions and place (Manzo 2003: 48). It would also be instructive to follow the theoretical perspective I have taken through further empirical examples in order to understand other ways in which processes of place making vary, and discover other significant qualities of motion. Empirical examples with more extensive networks of relations would test whether the non-

essentialist version of people-place bonds suggested here remain possible when scaled up. Whilst I have included some representational aspects of place making gardens and gardening led to an emphasis on shaping materials; the notion of skilled movement might be developed by applying it to motion such as flows of information and finance. In the context of community gardens the notion of skill helpfully blurs the boundary between human and nonhuman work, it could similarly dissolve a divide between manual and intellectual work with political implications worth pursuing.

COMING TO CARE

In closing I want to return to the question which sparked my interest in community gardens: how might we encourage people to care more for others, including nonhumans? A community garden where people watch fauna, feel soil, help flora and enjoy growth is redolent with lively presences which might remind gardeners they are never sole agents (Cooper 2006: 137-8) so challenging "human mastery" of the world (Bennett 2010: 122). There are other places where such encounters are possible but gardening is different for involving people in actively shaping assemblages of humans and nonhumans which blur boundaries between the two (Degnen 2009, Head and Muir 2007, Power 2005). Gardening can make it readily apparent how our actions affect others and *vice versa* (Cooper 2006: 157) as beans which are not watered die and bees which are fed thrive. We might hope a gardener who reflects on this will come to recognise the links between him/herself and other beings in the world so seek to temper harmful effects on the whole. Those who have a relational understanding of the world seem to realise the importance of considering their influence on the system, so might be more likely to have a habit of environmentalism which extends through non-garden aspects of life. But it is not inevitable that gardening directs one toward a relational ontology, or that this leads to a certain ethical sensibility (Lulka 2012). Whilst I have seen how community gardeners' bodily habits can change I am not sure I agree that these bring new attitudes and values (Cooper 2006: 90, Crouch and Parker 2003: 404) for the case studies offer little evidence of such transformations. If garden practices *do* stimulate such shifts in thinking there is no guarantee they apply beyond the garden.

We can be fairly confident that through community gardening people establish new relationships with others including numerous nonhumans who they encounter more than they would elsewhere. To understand the ethical impact of community gardens we should consider not just increased contact but the kinds of relationships formed- how

caring, how deep, how respectful, how extensive. To become communities of care garden relations need a moral quality of regard for others. Valentine suggests that close encounters between different kinds of humans may be insufficient to instil respect for others and will struggle to instil caring attitudes which stretch from the specific encounter out across time and space (2008). If the same is true of garden encounters with different kinds of others they may similarly fail to generate care for nonhumans. The environmentalist celebration of increased mingling with nonhumans has perhaps been over-optimistic and too quick to set aside more definite moral frameworks such as questions of justice (Lorimer, J. 2012). To encourage gardeners to carry any care-full disposition beyond the garden walls may require more conscious reflexive distancing to consider what it is to care for the world in recognition of the harm humans can do to others (Murdoch 2006). Such reflection may not spontaneously occur through engagement with nonhuman others in the garden, but mixing and dialogue between community gardeners might stimulate discussion which leads towards it.

It is perhaps disappointing to conclude that whilst community gardening is unlikely to discourage care for others there is no guarantee that it will form more caring communities. More positively, we might expect people to value and seek to preserve places and processes which enable them to feel good so (non)human others recognised as contributing to community gardens may well benefit from greater protection. Some people do seem to be changed through their participation in ways which have positive repercussions for the nonhuman environment more broadly, but it is difficult to identify a definitive cause of this, if indeed there is one. Nor can we conclude that such a trajectory is possible for everyone as it depends on the journey which brings someone to the garden, who they are travelling with and their experiences of elsewhere. There is perhaps cause for optimism in knowing that community gardeners enjoy contact with others, including getting closer to flora and fauna. If such close encounters *are* able to open up an ethical sensibility of concern for a wide range of others then community gardens are well placed to provide the

Theme	Authors	Location(s)	Type of Study	Key findings
1. Community Development	Ohmer *et al.* 2009	Pennsylvania, USA	Participatory evaluation of one organisation's activities	Involvement in community gardens results in increased social interaction and community involvement whilst contributing to community development.
	Saldivar-Tanaka & Krasny 2004	New York City, USA	Participatory action research	Community gardens are sites for social and cultural gathering for Latino gardeners and the benefits extend to others in the community.
	Shinew *et al.* 2004	St Louis, USA	Telephone survey of gardeners	Community gardens facilitate interaction between people of different ethnicities.
	Tan & Neo 2009	Singapore	Case study	Community gardens increase social interaction and sense of community but this is limited by their close association with national government which deters some from involvement.
	Tranel & Handlin 2006	St Louis, USA	GIS analysis of census data	Neighbourhoods with community gardens demonstrate more stability and resident investment than other areas.
2. Democratic participation	Glover *et al.* 2005	Missouri, USA	Telephone survey of gardeners	There is a relationship between leadership of community gardens and strong democratic values but the direction of causality is unclear.
	Henderson & Hartsfield 2009	Urban USA	5 city case studies	City governments can use community gardens to engage citizens.
3. Ecological	Barthel *et al.* 2010	Stockholm, Sweden	Survey plus interviews	Allotment gardens support the retention and sharing of ecological knowledge and so support ecosystem services in cities.
4. Food	Alaimo *et al.* 2010	Michigan, USA	Household telephone survey	Those involved in community gardens were likely to have a higher intake of fresh produce.

	Baker 2004	Toronto, Canada	Participatory research with 3 case studies	Community gardening enables people –particularly immigrants- to be more informed food citizens and address food security.
	Corrigan 2011	Baltimore, USA	Interviews and observation with case study	Community gardens engage people with food systems and contribute to food security.
	Evers & Hodgson 2011	Perth, Australia	Interviews with gardeners and coordinators	Community gardens contribute to food security by directly providing food and through education about the food system.
	Hill 2011	Mindanao, Philippines	Interviews with project associates and gardeners	A regional programme of community gardens takes collective responsibility for providing food for malnourished children.
	Lautenschlager & Smith 2006	Minneapolis, USA	Focus groups with community gardeners and non-gardeners	Participation in a garden program made young people more receptive to nutritious and unfamiliar foods, and increased interest in cooking and gardening.
	Lekvoe 2006	Toronto, Canada	Participant observation at case study	Growing food collectively helps educate consumers to become food citizens with an interest in the politics of food justice.
	Metcalf *et al.* 2012	London borough, UK	Practitioner report	Minority ethnic women participating in food growing projects benefit from enhanced food security and opportunities to grow crops related to their cultural identities.
	Wills *et al.* 2009	Johannesburg, South Africa	Project evaluation	An urban community garden contributed to improved food security for people with poor nutrition.
5. Health and Wellbeing	Armstrong 2000	New York State, USA	Interviews with garden coordinators	Community gardens facilitate an integrated approach to community based health promotion activities

	Clavin 2011	UK	Interviews with gardeners at five sites	Sustainable design principles are well suited to promoting wellbeing for those involved at community gardens.
	Comstock *et al.* 2010	Denver, USA	Household survey	Those who participate in community gardening have higher levels of attachment to their neighbourhood which is psychologically beneficial.
	Hale *et al.* 2011	Denver, USA	Participatory research	The sensory and aesthetic experiences of gardening promote behaviour with health benefits.
	Kingsley *et al.* 2009	Port Melbourne, Australia	Interviews with gardeners at one garden	Gardeners reported wide ranging benefits to their wellbeing as a result of participation.
	Litt *et al.* 2011	Denver, USA	Survey of neighbourhood residents	Community gardeners have higher levels of fruit and vegetable consumption than their non-gardener neighbours.
	Milligan *et al.* 2004	Carlisle, UK	Ethnography including health assessments	Communal gardening has health and wellbeing benefits for older people particularly through fostering social interaction and as a more manageable way for them to enjoy gardening.
	Teig *et al.* 2009	Denver, USA	Interviews with gardeners	Gardens foster collective efficacy and act as a community catalyst in ways which help promote health.
	Twiss *et al.* 2003	California, USA	Survey of program impacts	Participants reported health benefits as a result of gardening activities supported by the program.
	Wakefield *et al.* 2007	Toronto, Canada	Participatory community research	Nutrition, exercise and mental health were all reported to improve through participation in gardening, although concern about site tenure causes stress.
6. Social capital	Alaimo *et al.* 2010	Michigan, USA	Household survey	Community gardens increase social capital, especially when allied with existing neighbourhood organisations.

	Firth *et al.* 2011	E Midlands, UK	Interviews with managers and stakeholders of 2 case studies	Community gardens can increase social capital through interest or place based bonding.
	Glover 2004	Urban neighbour-hood, USA	Community narrative inquiry	Community gardens can be a source and consequence of social capital but inequality between individuals may continue.
	Kingsley & Townsend 2006	Melbourne, Australia	Interviews with gardeners at case study	Participants benefited from social cohesion, support and connections but enhanced social capital was restricted to the garden setting.
7. Social Justice	Hess & Winner 2007	Urban USA	Case study interviews and review of materials	Supporting community gardens is an affordable policy for tackling economic injustice and environmental sustainability.
	Milbourne 2011	Urban UK	Case study interviews and participant observation	Community gardens use environmental activity to redress social injustice.
8. Sustainability and resilience	Holland 2004	Urban UK	Survey of projects	Community gardens are a model for sustainable development but economic goals are less achievable than environmental and social objectives.
	Howe & Wheeler 1999	Leeds & Bradford, UK	Comparison of 3 project types	Urban food projects have social, environmental and health benefits, with potential for economic and education benefits. Community gardens offer greater social, education and economic rewards than traditional allotments.
	Irvine *et al.* 1999	Toronto, Canada	Case study	This community garden delivers the needs of LA21 and is an example of responding to the environmental and economic problems resulting from urbanisation.
	Macias 2008	Vermont, USA	Comparative case study of community food projects	Community gardens offer an appropriate context for people to develop understanding of the natural world.

	Martin & Marsden 1999	England & Wales	Survey of local authorities	Community gardens can promote sustainable development, and are recognised as part of the LA21 process.
	Quayle N.D.	UK	Participatory evaluation	Community gardens offer a range of social, environmental, health and economic benefits.
	Stocker & Barnett 1998	Fremantle, Australia	Case study	Community gardens present an exemplar of LA21 process and deliver social, economic and environmental benefits.
	Turner 2011	ACT, Australia	Ethnography of 7 gardens	Community gardening develops bodily engagements with nature and food production which might be the basis for more sustainable lifestyles.

APPENDIX 2: GARDEN CHARACTERISTICS

	Cwm	Maes	Oasis
Purpose	Create an excellent environmental project offering opportunities for training, work experience, and enjoyment.	A beautiful place where people can help grow organic food to be eaten locally.	Provide a useful greenspace for the community project and local people where anyone can learn about gardening.
Established	2008	2010	2006
Location	Semi-urban, between allotments and railway line, approximately 0.25 miles from centre of valleys town.	Rural, organic farm, approximately 0.25 mile from town centre.	Urban, behind community centre on an inner-city main road.
Nearest settlement	'Abercwm'- valleys town, population 2,500, one of the 150 most deprived wards in Wales.	'Maybury' - rural market town, population 1,500 plus significant tourist trade.	'Johnstown'- inner-city neighbourhood, one of the 150 most deprived wards in Wales.
Land	4 acre, owned by Abercwm Association, previously derelict allotments	O.5 acre, rented from private land owner, previously grazing pasture	15M x 20M, rented with community centre from housing association, previously empty yard
Labour force	Volunteers, paid staff (2-4), trainees (0-8), welfare-to-work placements (7).	Volunteers.	Volunteers, supported by community centre staff (4)
Approximate number of volunteers annually[17]	12, plus groups on working holidays (2x10) and Business in the Community volunteer days (2x10).	15	10
Management	Abercwm Association employ manager reporting to chief executive	Board of voluntary directors for Community Interest Company	Management committee of volunteers, supported by Community Association

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[17] Figures include those who volunteered on more than one occasion for at least a half day, not including those attending social events or did not work.

	Cwm	Maes	Oasis
Partners	Training providers, local school, local charities, international volunteering organisation, local hospital, FCFCG.	Town twinning charity, town and county councils, Transition Town group, FCFCG.	Other community centre groups, Communities First network, local primary schools, FCFCG.
Access	Public access 9-5 weekdays.	Open access at all times, gates and polydome unlocked, caravan locked.	Access through community centre, during opening hours, by appointment, events.
Site amenities	No running water or electricity, no kitchen, compost toilet.	Mains water stand pipe, bottled gas for kitchen, compost toilet.	Kitchen and toilets in community centre, outdoor mains tap and lights.
Users	Volunteers, trainees, dog walkers customers, families, fishers, vandals.	Volunteers, friends and family, customers.	Volunteers, children's group, centre users, community groups, centre staff.
Features	Woodland, coppice, boardwalk, bridge, wetland, pond, toilet block, storage cabins (2), car parks (2), water tower, log-seat circle, bench (2), compost heap, children's area, polytunnels (3), fishing platform, pollinator garden, info signs (4), paths, raised beds.	Polydome, compost heaps (2), compost containers (4), water tanks (2), sculpture/bird table, benches (2), storage shed/toilets, pond, caravan, willow weaving fence and arch, children's area.	Table and chairs, willow sculpture, living willow dome, compost bins (4), raised beds, pond, mosaic, artistic floor tiles, shed, pergola, hanging baskets, potted trees, potting bench, bike rack, plastic mini-greenhouse, water butts (2), cycle rack, paths.
Design	Initial design by professional permaculture designer modified during construction, second version by staff member not yet fully implemented.	None, evolves in accord with permaculture principles and crop rotation.	Original plan by professional permaculture designer informed by community consultation, subsequent changes to planting and features by volunteers.
Gardening system	Pesticide and herbicide free, certified by Whole Food Association.	Permaculture, organic status as part of farm certified by Soil Association.	No official status, largely organic.
Use of produce	Sold on site and at local farmers markets, delivered to local customers.	Taken by volunteers, sold on site and in local shop.	Taken by volunteers, left in community centre for anyone to take.
Soil	pH 7 loam with little clay, includes coal and debris from ash pit, areas rich in green waste compost	pH 6.8 Red Devonian sandstone, flood plain alluvium, stony, organic, significant clay content, some on-site compost and green waste	pH 7.8, thin clay-loam, rocky and containing building debris, some bought compost and on-site compost

	Cwm	Maes	Oasis
Fauna[18]	Bees, beetles, brimstone butterflies, caterpillars, chicken (dead), dogs, ducks, dragonflies, flesh eating fly, orange tip butterflies, rats, slugs, worms.	Aphids, bees, birds, butterflies, dogs, gold finches, mice, rabbits, sheep, slugs, snails, worms.	Aphids, bees, cats, caterpillars, frogs, pigeons, slugs, snails, sparrows, worms.
Research interviewees.	**Volunteers:** Graham, Toni **Staff:** Derek, Doug, Jonesy, Rhys, Will. **Welfare to work placements:** Arthur, Maggie, Michael, Toni. **Partners:** Emilie, Heidi, Ruth.	**Volunteers:** Anne-Marie, Bill, Rob, Sarah, Simone. **Landowners:** James, Susan.	**Volunteers:** Claire, John, Kate, Melissa, Sally, Sean. **Staff:** Megan, Em, Tom, Anj. **Designer:** Rachel. **Teacher:** Mrs Green.

[18] Those listed are the fauna noted by research participants or which I encountered during fieldwork so are not exhaustive or representative.

APPENDIX 3: RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Name	Garden	Involvement	Age	Gender	Background
Anj	*Oasis*	Staff	40s	F	Employed as education worker at Johnstown Association, lives in Johnstown.
Anne-Marie	*Maes*	Volunteer – gardener & board	60s	F	Retired, lives in own home near Maybury, previous garden experience, some physical health difficulties, volunteers 1-2 days per week.
Arthur	*Cwm*	Welfare-to-work scheme placement	50s	M	Unemployed, 16 week placement of 30 hours per week, single parent living in social housing near Abercwm, some previous garden experience.
Bill	*Maes*	Volunteer- gardener	60s	M	Semi-retired, lives between Maybury and overseas, previous garden experience, volunteers 1 morning per week.
Claire	*Oasis*	Volunteer – gardener	20s	F	Employed, family home outside Johnstown, no previous garden experience, volunteers occasionally.
Derek	*Cwm*	Staff	50s	M	Project manager since 2010, mostly office based, occasionally works in the garden, family home outside Abercwm.
Doug	*Cwm*	Staff	50s	M	Employed as horticultural specialist since 2009, in the garden full time, left to other employment Spring 2012.
Em	*Oasis*	Staff – partner organisation	30s	F	Employed by environmental organisation to organise practical construction and offer volunteer training until Spring 2012, involved similarly with other community gardens.
Emilie	*Cwm*	Staff – partner organisation	30s	F	Employed by community growing organisation of which the Cwm is a member, has advised the garden and held networking activities there.
Graham	*Cwm*	Volunteer	50s	M	Unemployed and receiving sickness benefits, lives in social housing in Abercwm, no previous garden experience, volunteers 2-3 days per week.

Heidi	*Cwm*	Staff – partner organisation	30s	F	Employed by a charity placing volunteers on working holidays at the Cwm, visits occasionally.
James	*Maes*	Land owner	50s	M	Farms and lives on land hosting the garden, occasionally volunteers.
John	*Oasis*	Volunteer - gardener & management committee	30s	M	Employed, family home outside Johnstown, no previous garden experience, volunteers 1 day per week.
Jonesy	*Cwm*	Staff	20s	M	Employed as environmental worker since 2009, in the garden full time, left through redundancy summer 2012, family home in Abercwm.
Kate	*Oasis*	Volunteer - gardener & management committee	30s	F	Employed, volunteered 2008 until moving from Johnstown Spring 2012.
Maggie	*Cwm*	Welfare-to-work scheme placement	60s	F	Unemployed, 16 week placement of 30 hours per week, lives in rented house near Abercwm, previously trained and worked as a gardener.
Megan	*Oasis*	Staff	30s	F	Employed as community development worker at Johnstown Association until Spring 2012, lives in Johnstown.
Melissa	*Oasis*	Volunteer- gardener	40s	F	Employed, own home in Johnstown, previous garden experience, volunteers 1 day per week.
Michael	*Cwm*	Welfare-to-work scheme placement	20s	M	Unemployed, 16 week placement of 30 hours per week, lives with parents in Abercwm, no previous garden experience.
Mrs Green	*Oasis*	Teacher	40s	F	Employed by school in Johnstown, takes pupils to the garden for educational activities, volunteered with Johnstown Association children's group until 2011.
Rachel	*Oasis*	Staff- partner organisation	40s	F	Permaculture specialist contracted to design the garden, involved in several community gardens in Wales.
Rhys	*Cwm*	Staff	50s	M	Employed in various roles by Abercwm Association since 2008, horticultural specialist from Summer 2012, in the garden full time, family home near Abercwm.
Rob	*Maes*	Volunteer – gardener & board	60s	M	Retired, lives in rented home in Maybury, no previous garden experience, volunteers occasionally.

Ruth	*Cwm*	Staff- partner organisation	50s	F	Employed by funder of the Cwm, liaised with Derek on project development, similar role with other community gardens in Wales.
Sally	*Oasis*	Volunteer - gardener & management committee	20s	F	Employed, chaired committee since 2010, lives in rented house in Johnstown, some previous garden experience, volunteers 1 day per week.
Sarah	*Maes*	Volunteer – gardener	30s	F	Employed, lives in rented home in Maybury, previous garden experience, volunteers 2 days per month.
Sean	*Oasis*	Volunteer - gardener & management committee	30s	M	Unemployed/temporary employment, family home outside Johnstown, some previous garden experience, seeking further experience to enable career change, volunteers 1 day per week.
Simone	*Maes*	Volunteer – gardener & board	30s	F	Employed part-time, lives in rented home in Maybury, previous garden experience, volunteers 2-5 days per week.
Susan	*Maes*	Land owner & board	50s	F	Farms and lives on land hosting the garden, occasionally volunteers.
Tom	*Oasis*	Staff	30s	M	Employed as community development worker at Johnstown Association from Spring 2012, lives in Johnstown.
Toni	*Cwm*	Welfare-to-work scheme placement / volunteer	50s	F	Unemployed, 16 week placement of 30 hours per week, own home near Abercwm, previously trained as a gardener, seeking transition to employment following ill-health, volunteered 1 day per week until Winter 2012.
Will	*Cwm*	Staff	20s	M	Employed as environmental worker since 2008, in the garden full time, left through redundancy summer 2012, family home in Abercwm.

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