





The Terra Firma team  
25th Anniversary May 2010  
photographed by Stephane Rocher

# Time piece: an introduction

Landscape architecture is often described as a four-dimensional design discipline. Clearly, in so far as it's about the creation of space, we deal in three dimensions, but a fourth dimension – time – is often overlooked. A landscape scheme is very likely to reach its desired effect many years after implementation and even then it will never be static. This is because we work with the living medium of ecology and plant life, with its capacity for growth and exciting ability to take on a life of its own. Understanding this, foreseeing and managing likely outcomes over time, is perhaps the greatest talent a Landscape Architect needs to develop.

So when we decided we wanted to produce a publication to mark the moment of our 25th birthday – to share reflections on our experience, on where we are now, and what is important to us going forward – this fourth dimension seemed an appropriate theme to explore.

The greatest thing about Terra Firma is that it has always had a family ethos and I believe this has only become more

so as the years have gone by. The team has never been stronger and I am blessed to have such a calibre of colleagues with which to share the working day. They are diverse, interesting, talented, thoughtful and hard working – something of which I think is reflected both in the extraordinary volume of high quality work they produce, and in what they write here.

So, as Terra Firma celebrates a quarter of a century of designing for a better world, this is both a celebration of the creativity and ideas that have shaped our achievement and a reflection on the passage of time, continual change, and the need for optimism as we face an uncertain environmental future.

**Lionel**





**Tittenhurst Park:** Originally built in the 18th century by Thomas Holloway (founder of London University's Royal Holloway College, in the 1960s and 70s Tittenhurst was famously the home to the Beatles, John Lennon and then Ringo Starr. Lionel Fanshawe has been involved with the estate since 1990 when it was bought by HRH Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi. Sixteen hectares of parkland, arboretum, waterbodies and formal gardens have been spectacularly enhanced in an enduring contribution to the English Country House tradition.



## About me...

I've been in the game longer than the 25 years Terra Firma has been in existence – which makes me feel terribly old. Having first heard of TF long before I came to be a part of it, it had the mystique of appearing to have always been there. Our coming together half way through its life was fabulously opportune, giving me the opportunity I'd yearned for to run my own practice, while also bringing me home to my much loved native area of East Hampshire. Since that time we have seen an exciting expansion of the firm's activities – in the last 5 years alone, we have worked on over 400 projects in 15 different countries. I genuinely believe we are unique among our peers in the breadth and variety of what we do and where we do it, while yet remaining a small, and I hope fun, independent unit.

### Things I love:

Variety – the spice of life – it's the thing I most love about people, our work, and indeed the world; it's precious and we should cherish, protect, encourage and enhance it in every aspect.

### What I hate:

Ignorance. Why do we continually surround beautiful historic city cores with mediocre rubbish, ignoring what's gone before? Same with all the big issues – we continue to fight the same wars, fail to face climate change... because we choose to ignore...

### Ambitions:

In spite of rumours my colleagues like to put around, my ambition is not actually to rule the world. I will be content if we can leave some little markers for the better in every continent – we've nearly done it, though Antarctica could prove difficult. In another life (and perhaps with a rather different talent set) I might have liked to have been a musician or perhaps a film maker in some modest way, but I have been very happy in this field and found it deeply fulfilling. I guess I would be disappointed with myself if I didn't get something from it into some kind of book before I peg out...but there's still plenty more to do before I'll be ready to do that.



*XIV, Commonwealth Games, Auckland, NZ: Lionel was Project Landscape Architect for the 1990 Commonwealth Games Village in Auckland, New Zealand, whilst working for Outer Space Exterior Design Group.*

# Lionel



# Times past...

Landscape is ever-present. Unlike the buildings and structures created by our peers in related disciplines, the landscape cannot be erased. It will change over time, but the outside world will exist in some form or other for all of history.

The landscape is the wealthiest bank of history we have. Lessons to be learned from our ancestors tend to address how they lived their everyday lives – lives which would have interacted with the outdoor world, and had consequences for the environment. Those past interventions would have been completely different to modern day interventions, but in some cases no less indelible.

For me, that has never been more apparent than at Rosia Montana, in the Transylvanian mountains, where the landscape today is despoiled and desperate for attention. It was that need for attention that had taken me to Transylvania, but before I could get on with day-to-day landscape design, I first had to gain an appreciation of what had caused the landscape to be in its current state. This would enable me to make informed decisions, ensuring that the consequences for the environment would not repeat the mistakes of history, but smoothly continue the story of the valley.

The valley has been an exceptional hub of activity for over 2000 years, and almost consistently ever since, as a centre for gold mining. There is evidence to suggest that the Dacians were mining there – and certainly Roman mining operations were extensive, with a network of Roman mine galleries surviving to the present day. The exploitation of the land continued through the Austro-Hungarian period, and intensified in the time of Ceausescu. All of this has left a legacy of

destruction, but also a heritage that had become part of the psyche of the people. My role was to guide the story of the valley onto a path that would start to reverse the destruction, but also ensure that the culture of mining, which had preoccupied the community there since history has been recorded, would be respected.

At Rosia Montana the effect of history is obvious to a shocking extent. At its most immense scale, in recent history open-cast mining has obliterated the top half of an entire mountain. Some evidence of the valley's more distant past is far more subtle though. Archeologists have suggested that the Roman operation in the area was so significant that it's almost inconceivable to think that no high-status Roman building existed, despite none being unearthed in the valley. However, whilst working in the field, gathering a sense of the local landscape character, I came across a large block of marble used in an Austro-Hungarian gateway. Why would a block of high quality stone be used in an ordinary dwelling? Perhaps it is evidence of a Roman villa that has long since been covered over by the present-day village?

When a feature in the landscape ceases to exist in the obvious sense, parts of it will almost always continue to exist in an indirect sense, because it is rarely practical to completely remove mankind's previous intervention. One of my most memorable interventions was the design of a monument at the birthplace of Isambard Brunel in Portsmouth. It is a 4 tonne solid block of granite, with a carved inscription commemorating Brunel. It would take a concerted effort to destroy, or even relocate, such a heavy feature, regardless of its sentimental significance. I don't know how long that monument I designed will be a feature somewhere in

the landscape, but I'm fairly certain it will still be around when I'm gone.

The predecessors of Landscape Architects were not always professionals, and did not always design for the sake of good design. Nevertheless, humans have designed and invented for the sake of function, necessity and survival, since man first walked the earth. Most of those interventions have left their mark on the landscape. The result is a constantly evolving scenery, which our profession has inherited and adopted. We continue the tradition of intervention in the landscape, and do so more deliberately than our predecessors. The evolution of our landscape continues, now under our stewardship. All the work we do will inevitably tell a story for future generations.

## Martin



*Topographical study for Rosia Montana*



Above: Martin in the historic tunnels of the ancient goldmine  
 Below: Panoramic view over Rosia Montana



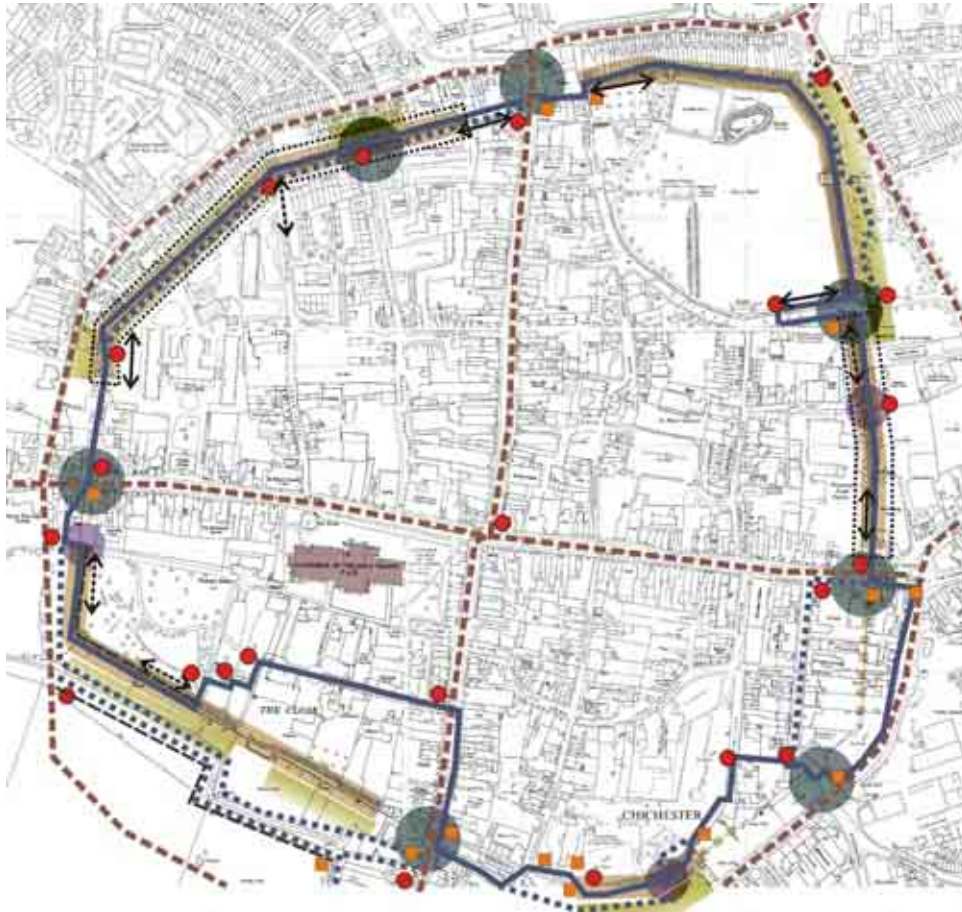
**Rosia Montana:** Terra Firma were commissioned in 2007-8, alongside Dr Gerry Wait, then of Giffords by a joint Romanian-Canadian mining venture to undertake a landscape assessment for Europe's largest open-cast gold mine, within the setting of a Cultural Heritage landscape, to include recommendations for future restoration works.

Above: Illustrative landscape proposals plan





**East Beach, Selsey:** Terra Firma led the production of this culturally-led regeneration masterplan with a team that included Architects Marks Barfield, designers of the London Eye, and Leisure Consultants, Planning Solutions. This was commissioned by Chichester District Council for the eastern hub of the Selsey peninsula in 2009, focussing on the East Beach hub. The masterplan would see Selsey's East Beach area become an important centre for fishing, marine research and coastal heritage, a top diving spot, a gastro-destination, with an adventure play and sports area for all ages. It is hoped that the project will become a catalyst for further regeneration of Selsey in the future.



**Chichester City Walls:** the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan and a Design Framework and Heritage Impact Assessment with Gifford for the Historic Walls in the centre of Chichester. Proposals included increased access and legibility; the enhancement of night-time views with the installation of floodlighting; and the construction of linking bridges between higher level walkways to create a continuous pedestrian route.

## About me...

As somebody who's had their sights on the profession since being a child, I'm something of a rarity in Landscape Architecture. I still have plans of imaginary landscapes I drew when I was 6 years old, and I haven't stopped designing since. In my early teens I got involved with the local council's plans to regenerate the legacy of derelict land left by the closure of the mining industry where I lived. At 18 I started the process of gaining an education in Landscape Architecture, never diverting from my ultimate goal of becoming a Chartered Landscape Architect, which I achieved when I was 25. Three years later I joined Terra Firma, and at 31 I became chair of the South East Branch of the Landscape Institute.

### **Best work moment:**

Being thanked by an old lady in a council flat for bringing her the joy of birds singing in a tree where previously she saw tarmac. That feeling of satisfaction beats winning any design competition.

### **Other things I love:**

Seeing my 'interventions' on Google Earth.

### **What I hate:**

When I don't have control (yes, I'm a control-freak!).  
The 'instant answer, no time for explanation' culture.  
When I'm wrong!

### **Ambitions:**

To reach old age without feeling I've missed out on life, with the conviction that there is still plenty to do, and to have the means to do it.

**Martin**



# Time for a change?

Hands up if you remember how the world functioned without the internet. I'm sure there are plenty of digits in the air, but that's not to say it's something that's easy to recall. Nevertheless, only a hundred years ago we got on pretty well without our instant global network and could surely never have predicted what the world would be like in 2010. It's something we take for granted, failing to realise just how much we depend upon such amazing technology – a point highlighted each time we suffer a power-cut!

So it is with fossil fuels – we rely so heavily upon them and yet undervalue them every day. We jump into our cars when we could often walk, seldom considering the costs in every sense, nor the incredible process required to get fuel into the vehicle in the first place. Whilst standing at the pump filling the tank, can you honestly say you think about how the fuel got there? Or are you busy watching that person on the next pump across to see if they'll get to the counter before you? In brief: exploration, extraction, transportation, refinement, then transportation again. All this phenomenal effort and we expect to be able to hop on a plane and cross Europe in comfort for under a pound! The mind of Christopher Columbus would surely boggle at the thought of flying over the Atlantic, munching on a lightly warmed panini, just as many of ours would at the thought of undertaking a journey like his. But with fossil fuels running out and the need to reduce our carbon footprint more pressing than ever, should we brace ourselves for the possibility of tall ships replacing Airbuses?

I sometimes try and imagine how people will be living in 2110, but the last couple of centuries have shown that the Earth and man are so unpredictable and capable of

incredible things, which makes it impossible to say what the future may hold. When designing places I think it's important to use foresight to make a design as sustainable as possible, but maybe it's possible to use a sort of 'virtual hindsight' too... launch yourself into the future and imagine looking back on what you've done. Try and envisage how well your legacy will endure in the face of constant change. Perhaps you will see that there are things you could do another way. We must think not only about how a design will fit our lives now, but also how it might fit the lives of future generations who may live very differently from us. Ecotowns could be an example of this, having all the elements of a traditional town but combining them in a different way, using a different approach to adapt to the new challenges we face. Green infrastructure is one thing, but I get the feeling that a radical approach, coupled with a complete change of mindset, is needed to make the most of the opportunities that lie before us. For instance, some find it hard to accept wildflower meadows over a neatly mown lawn, particularly when they're brown, but hopefully this can change. Similarly, we may find it hard to imagine growing food on every available roof, wall and vacant piece of street now, but this may be commonplace in 30 years time.

If there's one thing that we as a species have proved over the millennia, it's that we can not only survive, but flourish, even in times of hardship. We are once again living in a time of change. Exhilarating, terrifying, unpredictable change. We must adapt, just as our ancestors have done for countless years before us, although we now have the advantage of being able to pool our global resources. Great civilisations have fallen to the effects of climate change in the past but we are fortunate to be armed with the tools to make a

difference. Now all we need to do is find the courage to stop clinging obstinately to our current lifestyle and take the plunge – embracing the need to make real changes at every level and accepting that we may not be able to weather the storm in the comfort we've grown accustomed to.

**Tom**



*Above: Illustrative Urban Design Framework plan for Chichester Canal Basin*

# About me...



**Chichester Canal Basin:** In February 2008 Terra Firma were appointed to carry out an Urban Design Framework Study for the Chichester Canal Basin on behalf of clients, Chichester District Council & West Sussex County Council. Through rigorous site analysis and consultation with key stakeholders, a masterplan vision was developed with short and long term proposals, enabling the Joint Councils to commit £250,000 of Section 106 money towards a first phase of landscape improvements to the Canal Basin, incorporating an arts strategy, which was designed and overseen through construction by Terra Firma.

As a fairly practical person who enjoys being outside, I fancied an 'outdoorsy' sort of career, but wasn't 100% sure what form it would take. I thought about game keeping, considered being a warden or ranger in a national park, pictured myself in charge of a country estate, but never committed to a path. I suppose I 'fell into' Landscape Architecture, via the accredited Landscape Management degree at Reading, which I felt could open a wider variety of doorways than the other qualifications that I was initially drawn to.

Happily for me this turned out to be true when I was lucky enough to walk through the door of Terra Firma in 2008, oddly enough for the second time. The first was when I was looking for a summer job to bolster the work I was doing at Reading and Lionel was kind enough to invite me along to meet the team, despite not being able to offer me work at the time.

Although I'd never had much interest in design, I was inspired by what I saw and began to consider the possibility of becoming a Landscape Architect. When the opportunity arose to join TF four years later, with more knowledge and experience behind me, I seized it with both hands and haven't looked back.

Two years on, my design skills are improving. With such a wealth of experience within the team and an extensive portfolio of projects I can't think of a better place to be learning from. I've heard that a Landscape Manager is usually a 'jack of all trades, master of none'. Working on a fantastic range of projects at Terra Firma is certainly putting this claim to the test!

## Things I love:

Capability Brown landscapes; design that doesn't look like design; every season for its individual beauty and variety; beech trees; the smell of grass cutting; the South Downs Way; rustic materials and crafts.

## What I'm not so keen on:

Excessive signage and other 'safety' clutter; litter; brownfield sites; oversized egos and using lots of long words when a few short ones will do; dog poo; the orange glow of street lighting obliterating the beauty of the stars.

## Ambitions:

To specify a tree so big that it gets a mention in Horticulture Week; to design a scheme with maximum sustainable credentials; to always remember why I do what I do, and to think of the people and wildlife that will live with the places we shape and the impact our designs will have on their lives; to eat more vegetables (except cabbage).



Tom



# Time in the future...

Ask a landscape architect whether their work is 'environmentally friendly' or not, and the answer is probably 'yes'. Ask the same question of anyone who knows what landscape architects do and the answer is probably 'of course it is'. We are, after all, responsible for planting lots of trees and other green stuff...

Yet when landscape architect Craig Pocock challenged this assumption, he proved it unfounded (*TOPOS, January 2008*). Pocock discovered that the total carbon cost of his work over 14 years was worryingly high: he was some 120,000 trees short of being carbon neutral, despite being involved in a number of large reforestation projects! The key factor affecting the high carbon cost seemed to be the short-lived nature of many designed landscapes, and Pocock concluded that the most important thing to strive for when designing the built environment is to ensure that the things we build are not going to have to be rebuilt in 5, 10 or 20 years' time.

I wondered if the appearance of a place affects its lifespan. Is there a particular aesthetic intrinsic to spaces that are successful for 50, 100, 200 years? Are places designed with their appearance as the most important design influence (particularly if that is heavily influenced by contemporary fashions and at the expense of other design factors) less likely to last? Once its look goes out of fashion does it become less loved, less cared for, less used?

According to Roger Scruton (*Why Beauty Matters, 2009*) beauty is an 'essential resource' – key to creating something lasting. He rates beauty so highly that, in condemnation of the 'form follows function' credo of the modernist architects of the 20th century, he believes if you put usefulness first you will fail. If you put beauty

first, however, what you produce will be useful forever. It turns out that there is 'nothing more useful than the useless'. But who can tell what might qualify as being beautiful? And surely it is too simplistic to say that beauty itself is sufficient to carry something as complex as a public open space a long way into the future?

Flicking through images of public spaces that have endured, some common features emerge. The colours are generally muted, earthy. There is lots of natural stone making up the paving and walls. Many have a predominantly hard landscape, some have more soft features though hard features are more enduring in the older spaces.

What is beautiful about the spaces? Often it is the buildings associated with the space: the Piazza San Marco, Venice, is a viewing platform for appreciating the Basilica. It is a hard space with no trees or other planting. Sometimes the beauty is in some fine detailing or a focal feature, such as the fountain in the Trevi Square, Rome. A small space, again without vegetation. Beauty can be inherent in the scale or proportions of the space. Like the Champs Elysees, Paris, as it fades into the distance, terminating in the Arc de Triomphe, with the trees emphasising the scale and creating a stunning visual rhythm. The charm of the artists' square at Montmartre, Paris, is primarily in its bustling activity, but also in its proportions and its secluded, hidden character. Also important are its context within the wider city and the area's historical connections. In cities, areas of simple lawn with shade trees have their own special beauty, inviting escape from the noise and heat and allowing contact with nature and appreciation of the seasons. London's Hyde Park is a wonderful, enduring example. Gaudi's Parc Guell in Barcelona has survived for 100 years but

differs in its bright, whimsical aesthetics, which may not be universally considered beautiful. The park's elevated location allows dramatic views over the city, but the mosaic seats, fountains, buildings and sculptures are the main attractions.

These places have endured through time, and are likely to endure into the foreseeable future. They are certainly beautiful, but often in multiple ways, and more than just purely visually. In broadening a place's beauty to include its use or urban context maybe I have found accord with Roger Scruton's belief. Or nearly. I have redefined his 'useless' and revised his declaration: 'there is nothing more useful than the ... multifariously beautiful'. Not quite so catchy!

Perhaps it doesn't matter what a space looks like as long as it is beautiful in several ways? I have raised more questions than I have offered solutions here, but my reflections have helped me look at design work in a slightly different way, and I hope I might contribute by creating something beautiful that can be enjoyed by future generations.

## Alison





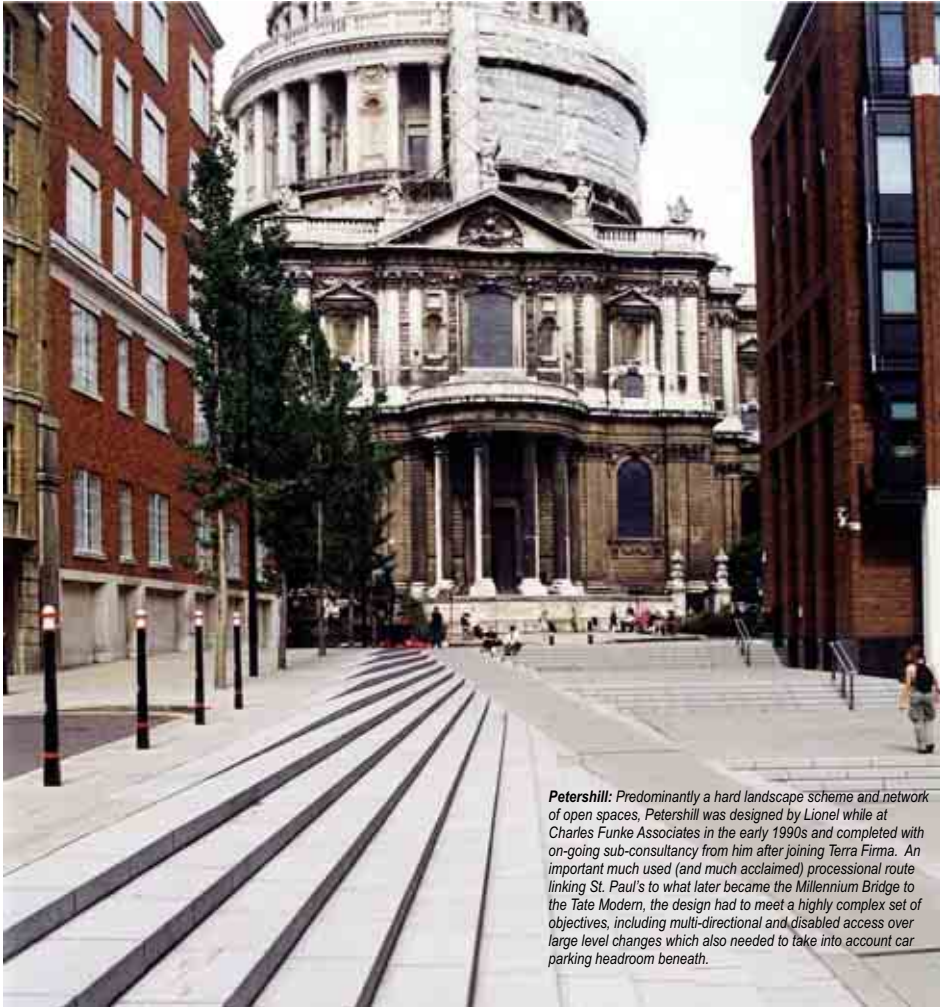
*The Dropmore Estate: Terra Firma worked on the redevelopment of the listed estate, with Papa Architects, carrying out masterplanning and detailed design as well as the production of a Landscape Conservation Plan and key management plans. The site's redevelopment involved the restoration and rebuilding of the house and ancillary buildings to create new luxury residences, and the addition of a new modern wing and underground car parks.*





**Leonard Cheshire Memorial Garden, Le Court:** The garden opened to the public in August 2008 and was designed as a memorial to former residents of Le Court, the original Leonard Cheshire home and its founder. The design was approached with particular sensitivity as the garden of the former care home was a focal point for remembering residents who had lived and died at Le Court. As well as scattered ashes there were many donated memorial objects and plants in the grounds. Original soil was imported from the former garden and a beehive hut has been sensitively restored to house mementoes. A reflective pool and calm, contemplative space is contrasted with a more colourful flower garden with seating. The garden is open to the public all year round.





***Petershill:** Predominantly a hard landscape scheme and network of open spaces, Petershill was designed by Lionel while at Charles Funke Associates in the early 1990s and completed with on-going sub-consultancy from him after joining Terra Firma. An important much used (and much acclaimed) processional route linking St. Paul's to what later became the Millennium Bridge to the Tate Modern, the design had to meet a highly complex set of objectives, including multi-directional and disabled access over large level changes which also needed to take into account car parking headroom beneath.*

## About me...

I came to landscape architecture in a roundabout way, starting with the delicious childhood ambition of being a sweetshop owner, moving on to more down-to-earth thoughts of becoming a rich horse owner, and then a spy. Boringly, though, I studied secretarial and business studies, then later trained and worked as a nurse.

Still not happy, I did some serious soul searching, discovered landscape architecture, and fifteen years later am happily still at it!

I came to Terra Firma via college at Cheltenham and work in the USA, where I spent two very happy years. I interviewed with several practices in the south, but Terra Firma had the biggest impact on me. After meeting Lionel and Robyn for the first time, I remember thinking this was somewhere I could work until I retire. And sure enough, eight years later they can't get rid of me!

### **Best work moment:**

Taking my small son to the opening party for a tower block garden, where we worked with the residents to plant up the new raised beds with colourful summer bedding, after which we admired our work over tea.

### **Things I love:**

Veggie gardens, winter landscapes, the Australian outback, chunky timber seats, big trees.

### **What I hate:**

Litter, vandalism, dog poo, yellow foliated plants.

### **Ambitions:**

To create special little landscape gems that I can be proud of.

**Alison**



# Time is money...

Every penny counts, or is that every second counts? In fact both are true. Time is money. In business, if our time is not something we can charge to a client, then it is something that is a cost to our business.

Over my working life, businesses have become more and more automated and greater detail is required on how each individual employee spends their time across a working day.

The endeavour is to calculate the most cost-effective way for tasks to be completed and for the business to utilise an employee's skill set as much and wherever possible.

In the past, I have worked with telesales companies where costings are calculated to the minute of what an agent on the phone will be doing – even down to toilet breaks! Price is always a driver, though there does seem to be a small shift back towards quality being a commodity worth paying for.

I have worked in and around the financial and publishing sectors for over 20 years; I have seen both times of feast and famine across a spectrum from large global companies through to small family-run businesses. The one constant, no matter what the organisation, is that time and money count.

In the current financial climate in 2010, as a business we at Terra Firma have continued to enjoy success because we react quickly to change and run a tight ship to enable everyone to hold their head above water and concentrate on the tasks to hand.

**Ally**



*Paddington Central Canalside: Terra Firma obtained runner-up in the Local Government News Waterside Awards in 2004 for this scheme to improve the rear elevations of industrial units backing onto the canalside in full view of the prestigious Paddington Central development on behalf of Development Securities Plc.*





**Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel, Pangbourne:**  
*The Chapel at Pangbourne College was built to commemorate the lives and sacrifice of all those who died in the 1982 Falklands War and as a permanent and 'living' memorial to remember the courage of the thousands of servicemen and women who served with them to protect the British sovereignty of the Falkland Islands.*

*The Memorial Chapel was opened by Her Majesty The Queen in 2000. The building's design, a result of a nation-wide competition won by Crispin Wride Architectural Design Studio, is reminiscent of the shape of a ship – almond or 'mandola' shaped – denoting hands 'cupped' in prayer. Terra Firma worked with Crispin on the design of the building's garden and surrounding landscape context. The scheme is underlaid with symbolism and references to the South Atlantic and aims to provide an area of comfort and contemplation.*



## About me...

### Past and Present:

My career history spans 28 years. I have worked in UK and International Banking, computers, advertising and printing, through to outsourcing and insurance. I was fortunate enough to progress into Senior Management roles and enjoyed the diversity that this entailed.

Since the arrival of my daughter and moving to Hampshire, my work – life balance has changed in favour of my family, but I have been fortunate enough to work for two companies where my past experience and input have been welcomed with open arms. None of us are indispensable, but it is great feeling to know that you make a difference and take some of the strain from others.

### Personal history snapshot

I am lucky in that I have an amazing daughter, a very wise older sister and two wonderful parents. All of which keep me grounded and make me appreciate just how fortunate I am.

### Ambition for future

My ambitions for the future are not industry specific but more in terms of an ethos on life. I want to make a difference in whatever ways possible, however large or small. I strive to be happy and be a role model for my daughter to be proud of. I am working hard at a flexible approach to everything that I do and not fearing the unknown.

**Ally**



# الشامسي تيرا افيرما alshamsi terra firma

## التخطيط الهنسي

Terra Firma set up an office in Dubai, nearly five years ago, in January 2006, in partnership with Alshami Holdings. Under the leadership of Resident Director Alistair Walby, the team works throughout the Middle East on prestigious projects at all scales.

*Al Falah: Alshamsi Terra Firma developed the landscape concept for a new 1,250 hectare, 100,000 population community in Abu Dhabi, including infrastructure, urban design and parkland areas, for Architects and Masterplanners, GHM, and Client, Aldar, in 2008. Detailed design for the city centre and for two of the six villages is underway.*



**Saadiyat Cultural Centre:** One of the first buildings to complete on Saadiyat Island for TDIC is the Al Manara cultural centre, the temporary home to the Louvre and Guggenheim museums. Alshamsi Terra Firma designed the outdoor spaces and exhibition areas currently completing on site.





*Um Al Quwain Visitor Sales Centre: completed by Alshamsi Terra Firma for Emaar complete with water features, shade structures and landscape with generous plantings.*



## About me...

I came to Landscape Architecture through post-graduate studies at Newcastle after a first degree in Modern European studies – the sort of course you embark on having had no idea what you want to do.

With a farming background and an inherent love of the outdoors, which I had taken to extremes courtesy of the Royal Marines Reserve, the field of landscape architecture opened up some wonderful, previously unthought of opportunities when married to an increasing need to draw and be creative.

My subsequent career has taken me through several private practices, including spells overseas in Turkey and Malaysia,



*Alistair gets to grips with the Al Falah new town site in Abu Dhabi*

ending up as an Associate at Cloustone, then running my own practice for nearly a dozen years. The opportunity to join Terra Firma's recently opened office in Dubai was a timely opportunity to meet a new challenge... and it has certainly been that!

### **The best of working in the Gulf:**

The quite extraordinary projects. While there are inevitable climatic constraints, big scale thinking, larger budgets, lesser contextual references or planning related interference allow far more design opportunities. The scale and speed of delivery can be frightening, but is also immensely satisfying compared to that back home. It's amazing to think that within less than 4 years of starting up out here, Alshamsi Terra Firma have worked on just about every type of development project – from private villas to 5 star hotels, 100,000 population new towns to leisure, mixed-use and residential developments in over a dozen countries. It's a particular coup to be working on the first phase of MASDAR in Abu Dhabi which has the aim and ambition of becoming the world's first purpose-built, zero carbon footprint city.

### **The worst about working in the Gulf:**

Poor cashflow, cultural misunderstandings, variable ethics of some of those managing projects out here.

### **What I miss:**

The family and old friends of course, but also walking the dogs, UK countryside, a log fire, Eccles cakes.

### **Ambitions:**

To create a fabulous, distinctive portfolio of work out here in the region, marked out by quality and sustainable ethics. I am glad to say I feel we are heading in the right direction.

# Alistair

# Time's up

I have always been impressed by human beings' resilience, the energy with which we progress and evolve, our ceaseless invention of ways to improve our lives. Today, in the face of such a gloomy world prospect, it is easy to become jaded and to believe there is little we can do to make a difference anyway. Why bother? Fortunately such negative attitudes do not stop our evolution and adaptation. Positive energy or effort to progress continues to shape our lives today. That driving force has a new urgency as we face global climate change, and with greater awareness of our social responsibility. Time may be running out, but it is not yet up: what can we do on a practical level?

As someone who has both a deep love of the natural world, and a professional's eye for how one hedge around a field is linked to an adjacent woodland or meadow, for the relationship between a stream and the gardens that back on to it, I cannot fail to see the integrated nature of the environment. Professionally, of course, I have to work to boundaries, but I am always conscious that in reality these boundaries are artificial. As a landscape architect it is my responsibility to be always looking over the fence, to the environmental impacts on what is beyond.

At Terra Firma we deal with all manner of projects, from tiny pockets of green to large urban master-planning projects, so we are constantly considering where our actions fit in to the grand scheme of things, and how they affect the environment. Sustainable principles, enshrined now in codes such as that for Sustainable Homes, and Building Regulation Standards for Excellence, have introduced many timely new developments in landscape design. Green roofs and living walls, walls that photosynthesise and form their own microclimates and habitat cycles; permeable

paving and attenuation systems for water run-off; implementation of multi-functional landscapes, which provide wildlife habitat or produce fruit; landscapes that provide relief from the local climate, providing cooling or shade; the use of recycled materials, leaving a lighter carbon footprint: all timely ways of redressing the balance, reconnecting with the natural world, and re-establishing our proper place within it.

As I have explored the use of these new features of landscape design, a number of guiding principles have emerged that I hope will shape my future design practice. First, balance in the landscape between its practical, functional aspects and sustainability is usually a compromise: so I need to be prepared to fight for what's really important, and to let other features go when push comes to shove. Second, look for natural value: tree planting is a good example of this principle in practice, providing both the longevity and the multi-purpose functionality that other landscapes can't match. Third, respect the native habitat: bringing in native species recalls the beauty of birdsong, and the delight of butterflies and insects. Finally, I try to remind people that the experience of landscape is

multisensory. The landscape benefits people in other ways than the merely functional, in ways we all need and enjoy, through its seasonal changes, smells, textures, colours and patterns.

Looking to the future, I'd like to explore ways of introducing water imaginatively as a core component of a future design scheme. Water is intrinsic to life, and reminds people of something fundamental to their own make-up and nature. Its inclusion in a landscape signifies issues of wider environmental importance, and it is often forgotten as a design tool.

Finally, I think it is time that people faced up to death in the landscape as something we need to accept and integrate. All living things have a cycle: accepting that wildflower meadows will not look like much in the winter time is what adds poignancy and enjoyment to the experience of them in the summer. Some dead relics, by contrast, should be abandoned. Preservation has its place, but time may be almost up, we have new and more pressing priorities, and we cannot save them all.

## Vincent





**'EnviroPark', North Harbour, Portsmouth:**

Created by the Portsmouth Partnership, the vision is to develop a "sustainability showcase" park on the 90 acre landfill site at the main gateway into Portsmouth. Terra Firma worked closely with the Portsmouth Partnership and HGP Architects to produce a feasibility study for this exciting project.

This provided a means for Portsmouth City Council, in partnership with Veolia, the landfill operators, to develop the site into a truly inspiring and exemplary public open space for the people of Portsmouth and the surrounding region. The park included an outdoor amphitheatre space, panoramic viewpoints

set on mounds overlooking Portsmouth Harbour, an urban farm, an adventure play area, a conference centre, exhibition space and restaurant facility, as well as offices and car parking, all linked by foot and cycle paths, and connected to the proposed tram route between Portsmouth and Gosport.

Central to the park would be the demonstration of sustainable energy generation, featuring wind turbines and solar panels. The whole park would be run on the energy made from the methane gas emissions of the slowly decomposing landfill, carefully monitored over future years.



**Masdar, Abu Dhabi:**  
Alshamsi Terra Firma are involved in Phase 1 of the internationally important Foster-masterplanned Masdar City project in Abu Dhabi, where they are working alongside Aedas Architects. Designed to be the world's first carbon-neutral town, Masdar aims to reduce domestic water consumption to 100 litres per person per day (more than 5 times less than the current Abu Dhabi average); to recycle 50% of rubbish, eliminating the need for landfill; to convert 33% of rubbish into energy; and to compost 17%. It is also intended that more than 70% of the city's energy will be generated by solar power.



### **Butterfly World, St Albans:**

*Designed in the shape of a giant butterfly's head, this project is set to become an iconic landmark. Client Clive Farrell's vision is a focus for conservation issues, for cutting-edge scientific research and above all a valuable educational experience for schools, colleges, community groups and families.*

*Working with garden designer Ivan Hicks and Chrysalis Architects, the scheme includes three leaf gardens, a series of competition gardens shaped as a caterpillar, and a chrysalis-shaped pond, all integrated with a butterfly friendly landscape.*

*Work on Phase 1 was completed in 2009 with the opening of the 'Future Gardens' competition gardens. Phase 2 is on the horizon with the construction of the 100m diameter tropical dome with internal butterfly area, café and chrysalis pond.*



## About me...

When I was 16, I thought Landscape Architecture would be a good balance of my interests in the outdoors, the arts and people. I still think it is. I'm also a musical person, I like languages, I have four kids, I love the natural world, I love to have a good laugh. Life is full, and yet sometimes it is the quiet times that count most, the chance to reflect.

### **Likes:**

Natural bathing in lakes, rivers and the sea (in my other life I must have been a dolphin). Thank God for our beautiful coastline in Britain. Why don't we do more natural bathing in lakes and rivers as a culture? Other countries do it and it's wonderful, but we don't seem to. Understated landscape design, simplicity, but also places that surprise or delight me by their innovative use of materials. Public access in the countryside – having lived in the States I realise how lucky we are here; it's one of the best things to come out of our history.

### **Dislikes:**

Most new housing developments, where everything is packed in tight. This is no good for allowing people storage space, project space or decent gardens for kids to run around in. Contemporary public art when it appears meaningless or does nothing for the soul. What happened to expressing beauty? Our obsession with fencing and boundaries in this country – fencing seems often to serve no purpose. I'd like the principles of naked street design to be applied to public open spaces generally. Most play areas in UK are unstimulating, inhibited by H&S restrictions, but we can't seem to do anything about it. Come on people, let's sort this out.

# Vincent



*Vincent left TF in the summer after a very happy six years with us.*

# Who's time is it anyway?

Ticking away the hours that make up a dull day... Funny old thing time – pretty straightforward really wouldn't you think?

Well apparently it can fly, run away, drag, a stitch in it saves nine, it said nothing 'but I told you so' to Auden, Blake claimed to be able to see eternity in an hour, it won't wait for anything or anybody, and on top of that it costs money! As I sit here my watch, if I could be bothered to wear a watch, would tell me that it is 7.12 pm Greenwich Mean Time, except it's not because I don't live in Greenwich. Where I live 7.12 pm 'happened' just over 5 minutes ago – oh dear.

So what is time? The Little Oxford Dictionary (1967) defines time as 'the successive states of the universe regarded as a whole'. Wow, that's a pretty big statement. Except that it isn't exactly true. Time isn't absolute and time is not the same whether you are on Mars or sitting in the pub. The time you experience can be very different from mine.

It's all down to a thing called special relativity: basically the faster you go, the slower time is, sort of. So if you fancy a bit of lunchtime time travel, get yourself a spaceship, one that goes very fast – just below the speed of light should do it. There is only one small problem, you can only go forward, not back in time.

So what has time got to do with landscape architecture? Well, we deal with plants, seasons and contractors. All of which have their own timetables and schedules and all of which are particularly sensitive to time.

Being a plant is tough and competitive, it's a constant battle for light and space, and often a case of 'he who grows fastest lives'. A plant's life is a constant race to flower, attract insects, reproduce, and ultimately dominate the surrounding area. Plants may be nice to look at but they are like mini-dictators and your garden is their battlefield. They really mean to take over the world. Incidentally, the fastest living thing on the planet is a dung-loving mushroom, and the largest a 2,400 year-old fungus covering nearly 900 hectares.

The seasons have very little regard for GMT or your time schedule and deadlines. You may have a scheme that needs to be planted by a certain date, and come that fateful day the ground resembles a Connemara peat bog or an arctic wasteland. Annuals, biennials, perennials all allude to a given time frame, but plants can be awkward and they don't wear watches. It is impossible to predict the start of spring for example, or to predict when a plant will come into flower, or for that matter survive at all. Common questions include how long will this plant take to grow – 3 years, 5 years or maybe never – who

knows? Your guess may be as good as mine. Bulbs may refuse to appear on cue; flowers refuse to bloom in profusion; the promised 'stunning' visual effect turns out to consist of a few weedy flowers and a rather pitiful looking plant.

Time moves on: there are deadlines to meet, plans to be submitted and buildings to be built – but there is no rushing plants, they will do whatever they please.

So who's to blame for our dependency on time? The Chinese for inventing clocks? The Railway Clearing House for GMT? Or the first human who became aware of the phases of the moon, or was impressed by a particularly fine sunrise and felt compelled to thrust a stick in the ground and watch the pencil thin shadow move around?

I challenge you all not to look at a clock all day, to leave your watch (and your mobile phone while we are at it) at home, pack a rucksack with food and drink and head out the front door for a walk... and don't come back until it gets dark. The only thing you can really be sure of in this life is that a stopped clock is always right twice a day. Or is it? Oh dear...



**Paul**



**Cumberland Street Homezone, Portsmouth:** Following Portsmouth City Council's 'Planning for Real' programme in North Portsea, Terra Firma were appointed to look at a series of Environmental Improvements to the area including work on Cumberland Street, Ward House and Sarah Robinson House.

Cumberland Street was re-designed as a retrofit homezone, incorporating a traffic calming solution along the main route through the area, realigned parking, improvements to the central courtyard that included the provision of a gathering space, play area, the thinning of tree cover to allow more light to high-rise properties, and the installation of a teen shelter and ball court. The scheme won the Local Government Street Design Award for Homezones in 2004.

## About me...

Left education to join the wonderful world of work as a trainee architectural technician, made redundant, worked for Ministry of Defence, left to join NTL, made redundant, worked for Arts Council, office moved to Brighton, made redundant.

Having got a bit bored of work and redundancy, and as the chances of becoming an astronaut were becoming a bit slim and I was getting a bit too old for running away to sea, I decided to enroll on a foundation degree course in Garden Design.

Why Garden Design? Because I wanted a career where my destiny was not controlled by someone in HR or accounts wielding a big fat red pen. Becoming a fishmonger involved getting up at 3 am every morning and archaeology doesn't pay the bills, so Garden Design it was.

I have always had a passing interest in design and gardens – so why not combine the two, I thought. After being completely underwhelmed by the cack-handed garden design shows on TV, I thought 'surely I could do better'? How hard can it be? And that is how I found myself working at Terra Firma. Time to find out!

**Favourite landscape:** People-free wide open spaces, mountains and coastlines.

**Least favourite landscape:** Roads, car parks and suburban front gardens

**Favourite plant:** Weird and spiky stuff.

**Least favourite plant:** Variegated plants and dwarf conifers.

**Ambitions for the future:**

To own a piece of woodland and a log cabin and maybe a few pigs... I like pigs.

**Paul** 

# Time to reflect...

*'The control which modern man is able to exert over his landscape is so great that we easily overlook the power of the environment over man.'*

Brenda Colvin's words. Powerful stuff. We have immense power over the landscape. We shape and change our surroundings for benefit and gain and sometimes for the worse. We despoil and ruin our environment and run the risk of leaving a planet that leaves little for future generations. And yet the landscape still manages to exert an immense power on us. A sense of place. A spirituality. A 5th dimension. Raw emotion.

I travelled to the US in 2009 and saw the Niagara Falls, and despite the hordes of tourists and despoiled scenery, marvelled at the stunning natural scene. As I struggled for a foothold on the Maid of the Mist, ferried to the foot of the Horseshoe Falls, my senses were assailed by the roar of the water, the rush of the wind, the sheer unstoppable force. Stupendous.

I have no religious leaning. I was brought up as an Anglican and attended a Methodist School and yet the spirituality of these religions has never touched me in the way that the sense of place in a landscape can. As a child I spent holidays on the coastline of North Devon south of Hartland Point. It was a rugged and wildly beautiful coastline with towering cliffs, tumbling waterfalls and constantly pounding waves. Fighting to stand upright on the cliff top on a windy February afternoon, I was always stunned by the amazing colours, natural beauty and energy of the scene. This was my religious moment, my spirituality, my eye-opening experience, when the environment showed me its immense power.

As landscape architects we have the ability to consciously create, shape and control the land. We have the unenviable task of trying to balance land use and beauty. And sadly, be it through lack of funds, vision, or simply time, we often fail.

Sense of place can be so important in creating places where people are happy, comfortable, safe. Vernacular designs can contribute to this but are not always everything. We all appreciate the harmony and beauty of a village in Dorset where the local stone radiates a golden glow, where the roses climb up the wall and the traditional pub still flourishes – but how can we create a sense of spirituality in an industrial estate in the Thames hinterland, where there is no golden stone, roses would be suicide, and the local is boarded up?

We have to dig deep. Emotionally. We have to look to the basics. We have to create a breakout space that allows the employees to appreciate the natural environment on a micro-scale and work upwards. Christopher Alexander's planning theories advocated design from the bottom up. Find the sunny side and put in a bench. Give the person a scented bush next to the bench. Plant a tree over the bench to give a dappled shade in the heat of the summer, autumn colour, a beautiful winter bark that can be seen from a window. Create a natural buffer around the edges that will become home to small birds. Put up a bird feeder in the tree so that it can be seen from someone's desk. Make sure the windows open so as to hear birdsong. Even in an overpoweringly industrial landscape there can be the opportunity to create havens where nature can touch our lives and give us time out from the hustle of working life.

Designed landscapes can evoke emotion too. The beauty of a herbaceous border in the first frost, the cathedral-like feeling of an avenue of beech trees in the summer, the satisfying touch of warm stone under bare feet around a pool, the soft whisper of a bamboo grove in the breeze. Think big and the list is endless: Stourhead, Studley Royal, Ground Zero, Parc Andre Citroen, Hidcote, Sissinghurst, Christopher Columbus Seafront Park in Boston... Where to stop?

We all need to take time out to dwell on the beauty that nature can give us – time out to appreciate our surroundings, from the bottom up. Time passes so quickly; our rapid motorway of life gives us little time to turn off. Opportunities to appreciate our surroundings should be grabbed with both hands, be it a lingering glance out of the window at coffee break or a walk through the bluebell woods at the weekend.

They say the passage of time is healing. Time spent drinking in and reflecting upon the power of the environment is even more so. We need to find that time.

## Robyn





**Air Traffic Control Centre, Prestwick:**

*Won in competition by Crispin Wride Architects, with whom Terra Firma have collaborated before on many projects, the design of the air traffic control facility included the design of the 12 hectare external environment for this important secure facility.*

*Terra Firma detailed both the hard and soft landscape across the wider parkland areas, and the complex building curtilage. The site was a former colliery with complex site soil issues. Terra Firma and sub consultant Tim O'Hare successfully put together a strategy for the amelioration and reuse of soils on site, negating the need for large-scale import of new materials.*

*The external design included sustainable drainage systems, large-scale car parking areas, circulation routes and access, all designed to be fully accessible to all. Extensive planting areas include a wide variety of native woodland and locally appropriate planting, with a more ornamental scheme within the immediate building curtilage. BAA guidelines on planting were adhered to throughout the scheme.*

*The project was completed in Autumn 2008 and the building officially opened in February 2010. Terra Firma continues to be involved with overseeing the long-term management of the grounds.*



**Lion Square and the Dennis Sciama Building,  
University of Portsmouth:**

*Terra Firma designed the external environment for the Dennis Sciama Building and redesigned the adjacent Lion Square as part of the first phase of the redevelopment of the Anglesea Campus, in Portsea.*

*Terra Firma were asked to look at the masterplanning of the campus area in order to set out the wider principles and aspirations for a long-term vision for the area and its public realm, ensuring that maximum benefit was achieved in the layout and design of the external spaces.*

*The design of the space in front of Richmond Building, the Building One scheme, by architects, Van Heyningen Haward, and the layout of the original square have informed the new scheme for Lion Square, incorporated both re-used and new paving materials, banding and alignments, preservation of existing trees and relocation of the centrepiece sculpture by Michael Lyons.*

*The project won commendations in both the Portsmouth Society last year and the Civic Trust Awards this year.*





**Above: Sinah Warren, Hayling Island:**

*Terra Firma have worked on the site on various phases of the upgrading of this popular holiday resort over the last 15 years, with architects PWP, successfully helping to transform the former chalet-style holiday camp into a modern and vibrant hotel complex. Initially, Terra Firma undertook a Visual Impact study which determined the site plan, and the size and appearance of the buildings. The subsequent award-winning scheme included the retention of stands of mature pine trees, maritime planting and flood protection. Inward-looking courtyards were given a strong central landscape focus. The most recent phase has also included an Environmental Impact Assessment.*

**Right: Expert Witness for Cornwall Council**

*Robyn has recently appeared as an Expert Landscape and Visual Impact witness in the largest Public Inquiry ever held in Cornwall, on behalf of Cornwall Council who are opposing a proposal for a 240,000 tonnes Energy from Waste Plant in a controversial location near St Dennis. A decision on the application has yet to be reached.*



# About me...

It's a funny thing to have had one job since leaving university. I did have one short break during which I worked for a maze designer and a landscape contractor before returning to the reformed fold, but I sometimes I wonder whether I should have gained more experience elsewhere; whether my attitude to life is complacent for having been at Terra Firma for so long? And then I think of the things I have done in the last 15 years... an award winning homezone, expert witness at a huge public inquiry in Cornwall, travel to Lebanon and Beirut amongst other things, and continually remember that 'if it ain't broke, don't try and fix it...!'. So my CV remains extremely out of date and I continue in my rut. And what a splendidly comfortable and wonderful rut it is!

**Things I love:**

Wind farms in the distance; dandelion clocks; fantastic cloud formations; goldcrests, nuthatches and thrushes feeding in my garden; classic and simple landscape designs; long, long water rills like the one at the Arts and Crafts house Collaton Fishacre in South Devon; my daughter's curls; walks in the countryside; memories of childhood beach holidays on the coast west of Hartland in North Devon; frosty mornings when the sun shines and everything seems crystal clear...

**Things I love to hate:**

Woodpeckers outside my window at 5 am; plants with yellow variegation like Aucuba; people who say 'landscaping'; double yellow lines painted retrospectively over our award winning Homezone project (grrrr...); milkshakes; tomato ketchup; cars that belch out black fumes; places with designs that could be anywhere and look the same as the next one...

**Things I dream of list:**

Accurate typing [sic]; projects that run perfectly on the ground; a self-writing specification programme; an old cottage in a fishing village to escape to...

**Robyn**



# Time in between...

Life has given me an opportunity to understand and appreciate the landscapes of two countries: my native Lithuania and England, the country in which I currently work and live. Different history in these two countries is shaping the landscapes in different ways and at different speeds. It seems to me that historic English landscapes have been changing moderately and continuously over the centuries. In my country development has always been heavily influenced by a continuous battle for independence. I am observing now how our planning system is rushing forwards with not enough time for real thought, in the effort to catch up with the 50 years lost to the Soviet occupation.

It makes me wonder sometimes about the imaginative moment in time, where Lithuanians should stop to reflect and look at the bigger picture, to learn from experiences that the western world has gone through and avoid making mistakes that waste our landscape assets.

At the same time here in England more reflection could possibly be beneficial as an opportunity to relax over-zealous health and safety rules in the natural environment and allow us to celebrate its beautiful landscapes, as our ancestors did in this country centuries ago. They were closer to the land – growing their own food, bathing in rivers and lakes, making fires in the wilderness – in tune

with nature. We are very fortunate in Lithuania to be able to do all these things, but I am also in the position to understand the great risk to the landscape, if the general public does not enjoy the landscape responsibly.

Wherever I work, I hope to be able to protect and create landscapes of true beauty with a sense of place, allowing opportunity for sustainable change for future generations.

## Ramune

***Domeikava Church, Kaunas, Lithuania:***

*A recently built church in Kaunas, Lithuania's second city. Terra Firma were involved, via Ramune's contacts, in providing designs for the grounds, which provide additional public open space for the city.*



# About me...

## Background

Landscape architecture is the profession which helped me to join two things I love – nature and composition. I was in my third year of architecture studies when it became clear that I did not want to design blocks of concrete, with provision for vents, pipes and other similar things. Using landscape elements to create visionary compositions seemed so much more exciting, so I decided to travel abroad to learn about the profession, with the intention of bringing home the benefit of my experience. I've spent 6 years at Terra Firma, growing as a professional. I have learnt that there is so much more to Landscape Architecture than just arranging landscape elements together.

## Things I Like

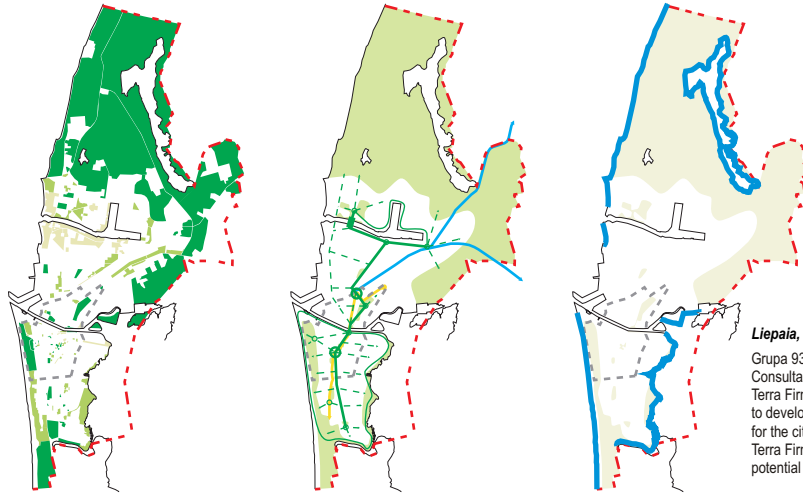
I love the variety of the things I can choose to do being a Landscape Architect. I appreciate the places where the *genius loci*, the spirit of the space, is enhanced by the new design and tells me about the times in history that a space has gone through. Landscape elements that you can sit on or walk over are great and, I believe, wake up the child in most of us. Seasonal changes of nature.

## Dislikes

Places that are too healthy and too safe, and eliminate a spontaneous enjoyment of our environment. Notes telling us what NOT to do. Selfish ambitions taking precedent over the wider benefits for all. Dumping of rubbish in the countryside.

## Ambitions

To travel more; this helps us to understand things beyond our back gardens. I don't feel a future need to retire; I work and enjoy life at the same time. To have a feeling in the end that I've done what I could to leave things better than I found them.



### Liepaja, Latvia:

Grupa 93, a Latvian Planning Consultancy with close links to Terra Firma, were commissioned to develop the new structure plan for the city in 2010, and invited Terra Firma to advise on the potential for green infrastructure.



### Hanza City, Latvia:

Terra Firma were commissioned by Grupa 93 in late 2008 to prepare a Landscape Strategy for the future development of the New Hanza City, 27 hectares of land located next to the historic centre of Riga, Latvia.

The Strategy, based on an initial Masterplan prepared by Schaller Architects, aims to set out clear guidance for the future development of the green infrastructure of the New Hanza City. The goal is to create a high quality public environment based on principles of sustainable development.



Dental Outreach Centre, University of Portsmouth and Kings College London, in Portsmouth: Reaching practical completion at the end of this year, Terra Firma worked on this scheme alongside MH Architects.

# Ramune



# Time together...

Collaborations are at the core of our work, whether with long-term clients, architects or other fellow design team members. We have been fortunate to work with a huge number of talented people over the years and no project can be seen in isolation as the work of one hand. We have not the space to list them all, but you know who you are... and thank you all!

We would like however, to make exception for our most regular sub-consultants over the years: **Jamie Liversedge**, Co-Director of Alshamsi Terra Firma and frequent contributor to larger projects both here and abroad; **Bernie Harverson**, an Arboricultural Consultant who shares offices with us and assists with his invaluable specialist input on most projects; **Rob Craine**, Ecologist; **Tim O'Hare**, Soil Scientist; and **Bim MacKay**, Landscape Manager.

Specific projects have had invaluable input too from **Alice Cooper**, **David Wade** and **Rod Gabriel**.

We thank all previous TF staff over the last 25 years who have helped to build this company to what it is today, and also remember **Denise Bird**, our office administrator for 6 years, who sadly passed away last year.

We have had several occasions to collaborate with other Landscape Practices and practitioners: **Steve Dawson** has assisted on several projects in the north, as have **FIRA** in the Midlands, **John Davey** and **Graham Stevenson** in Beirut. We have collaborated

on projects or prospective projects in the Middle East with **Alison Hainey**, **EDCO**, **Capita Lovejoy** and **Townshend**; with **Neils Balgalis' Grupa 93** in Riga; with **Ivan Hicks** at Butterfly World; alongside local Hampshire Garden Designers **Taylor Tripp** and **Jane Brown** (who also shares our offices and is a frequent freelancer with us), and most recently **Kim Wilkie**, who so kindly invited us to take his concept forward for the new Maggies Centre at Swansea currently under construction.

And lastly for assistance with this document; its conception and final edit we must thank **Tracy Van der Heiden** (our occasional PR adviser) and **James Croft** (author and publisher who shares our offices) for their input; the TF graphic style that was created with the assistance of **Visual Assets** and to **Robyn** here who laid it all out and pulled it all together.



**Maggies Centre, Swansea:** At the invitation of the concept designer Kim Wilkie, Terra Firma took on the detailed landscape design of this prestigious scheme for a new centre in Wales, designed by the late Japanese Architect, Kisho Kurokawa, and detailed by Garbers & James.



**Novartis, Humberstone:** This centrepiece, the focal point of wider landscape improvements set amidst this vast industrial complex, was designed in collaboration with Jacobs, with the central sculpture by Michael Dan Archer.



**Hayling Island Seafont Masterplan:** Terra Firma led a team including HGP Architects, designers of Portsmouth's Spinnaker Tower, and Planning Solutions, leisure and viability consultants, in creating a regeneration masterplan strategy for the Hayling Island Seafont, on behalf of Tourism South East and Havant Borough Council. The team have since been involved in the first stage of development, at West Beach, for an extreme sports centre.



## Old timers...

**Jamie Liversedge** and **Bernie Harverson** in Cyprus, relaxing between site visits to the Nicosia Cyprus Cultural Centre and Ayos Tychoras Villas projects last year.

**Jamie** (on the left) works as a lecturer at Greenwich University and freelance landscape consultant, often collaborating with Terra Firma on major projects and overseas work. He is a Director of Alshamsi Terra Firma.

*'Within Terra Firma the team possesses a thoroughness of thought, an ability to collaborate and engage, to synthesise context and concept, to develop a clarity of vision and its communication, to produce a designed landscape with all its potential to enliven and evolve into a 'sense of place'. These landscapes are memorable, fulfilling and often understated, reflective of context, client and concept, directed with knowledge and experience with an understanding of the sequence of change. This team feels right.'*

## Jamie

**Bernie** (on the right) works as an arboricultural consultant and sublets offices from Terra Firma. He is frequently a key member of the design team on Terra Firma projects.

*'As an independent consultant leasing office space for the past five years, I have found my close working relationship with Terra Firma to be enjoyable on many fronts. From a business perspective it has been mutually profitable with a sharing of knowledge and appreciation of each others skill sets. From a personal perspective there is a relaxed and fun working atmosphere and I not only have a whole new set of work colleagues but also a collection of people I count as good friends.'*

*Congratulations Terra Firma on your 25th Birthday and here's looking forward to many more to come.'*

## Bernie

# Buying time...

A quote from **Toby Hunter**, client for over thirty Terra Firma projects since 1996 (including those illustrated on this page).

*'For the last 14 years I have used Terra Firma on many projects, ranging from London offices to coastal gardens. I use them for three reasons. Firstly, where the tight urban public areas require life and style, the use of hard landscape, water, lighting and plants can add real value to adjacent commercial property, such as offices or hotels. Secondly, their ability to understand the drivers of good landscape as an integral part of urban or rural schemes is critical to achieving planning consents. And thirdly, their breadth of work experience allows them to bring to my projects real ideas, that are creative and viable, and which add to property both monetary and emotional value.'*

**Shopping Centre, Kingstanding:**  
Terra Firma headed up the design proposals for Newbridge with the upgrading of the external spaces in this Birmingham shopping centre, which included installation of new signage, paving, furniture, lighting and trees.

**The Forbury Hotel, Reading:**  
Terra Firma designed the restaurant garden with a pomegranate tree and water wall as its central focus for this boutique hotel in the city centre. The restaurant garden was part of a larger project to upgrade the external areas and entrances to the refurbished premises.



**Work Hotel, Hemel Hempstead:**  
Refurbishment of this office block by EGS Architects with hotel facilities and café open to the general public, including the upgrading of the external spaces by Terra Firma.



**Curzon Street, Mayfair, London:**  
This courtyard refurbishment, for a 1970s mixed use office and penthouse development, was designed by Terra Firma, for Toby Hunter's Waterbridge, in 1996. A semi-public oasis in central London, the planting, water features and lighting made use of a prime space, which also required appropriate technical detailing with roof garden technology.

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# About us...

The Terra Firma Consultancy is a Petersfield-based firm of landscape architects, launched in May 1985, and since 2000 under the directorship of former partner Lionel Fanshawe. We have a branch in Dubai, Alshamsi Terra Firma LLC, which was opened in partnership with Alshamsi Holdings Dubai in January 2006.

Simple solutions and strong sense of place are the Practice's trademark. As a small, personal firm, we pride ourselves on the very highest standard of service, undertaking excellent consultation, thorough and inclusive design, attention to detail and effective budget control. All projects are treated with care and sensitivity so as to strive to reach the best possible outcome.

The scope of the Practice's work reaches across every sector: strategic masterplans, private estates and gardens, upmarket flats and houses, prestigious corporate headquarters, health and community care complexes, sports and leisure centres, school, college and university buildings, heritage schemes, retail schemes, industrial and office complexes, public parks and open space, theme parks, urban streetscape, waterside, inner-city action programmes, and community initiatives.

Terra Firma's current work includes projects across England, Wales and Scotland as well as overseas in the Baltic, Gulf and Mediterranean regions.

Terra Firma is a Landscape Institute registered practice, a Law Society registered Expert Witness, a member of the Urban Design Group and an Associate of the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment. The Practice is a registered Limited Company and is Quality Assured to ISO 9001 (2000). Terra Firma has been awarded 'Investor in People' status (December 2004). We are currently in the final stages of ISO 14001 Environmental Certification.

October 2010

