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A Thesis Project on,

Using Saint Stephen's Green as an Art Resource f Secondary School Education.

In partial fulfillment of the Principles of teaching Art, 1981.

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The undertaking of this Thesis Project is designed to be of benefit, not only for my own use as an art teacher, but also I hope, at the disposal of other art teachers and environmental planners, who may find it of value in their own particular area, or field of study.

I believe that given the proper consideration and attention e.g. Environment, social, physical, the art class can and should blossom forth and develop into a direct investigation and experience of nature which ultimately creates a better, happier person.

For this type of investigation to come about, certain important factors will need to be examined more closely, these I will go into and investigate more fully in the second chapter. As it says in the Bodkin report:

> "A love of Art is to be encouraged if only because of its strong tendency to direct mankind from the persuit of more brutish pleasures" (1)

Often we have heard people complain about 'young people' and their lack of ambition, direction, and their pre-occupation with superficiality, leading to vandalism, destruction of public amenities and a general lack of concern for their environment. An environment which is more often then not designed to suit the economic thinking of opportunists with little regard for aesthetic appearance or good design for the community at large.

The parents and teachers are generally blamed for their situation and little else is being don about it. The problem I feel is, that there is too much seperation of various groups, teachers, planners, parents with the blame been thrown around from on to the other. What they need is a collective coherance to discuss the needs of society at large and environmental design based on some aspect of nature. Education has a major part to play as a result of this educational process and should not be isolated as a subject but a support in ideas and techniques to the other subjects - English, Biology etc.

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I believe that education is not concerned only with imposing 'good taste', 'preparation for careers', or 'buying wisely; but with developing a critical 'understanding of human needs, and gaining experience in evaluating whether these needs have been adequately met. There is no such thing as good or bad education, I imagine it should be regarded rather as appropriate or inappropriate, efficient or inefficient solutions to problems with the art class as the corner stone in the solution of these problems.

It is my belief, that the art class can benefit from studies in Saint Stephen's Green and become the basis of investigation leading to the efficient solutions to problems concerning the natural environment. Traditionally landscape determined the shape of towns, buildings and the behaviour of the society concerned. Man himself can now shape large areas of his environment, determining not only the way he himself lives but also the pattern of life for thousands of other people as well, already at a universal level. How many people, teachers, planners of the environment, have realised the full potential of Saint Stephen's Green and other expanses of nature on the generations of people who pass through it every day ? Not many I fear.

It is quite common to see Saint Stephen's Green packed to capacity with people on a fine summers day, lying in the sun experiencing the solitude and richness of the many secluded areas, away from the noise of the city traffic and general hum - drum of urban activity, not that this may not be a rich and stimulating art experience for an art class, but the 'green' provides an alternative of which I hope, will be explored to its best advantage, by organised trips and excursions with the pupils in an educational approach. Peter Green says, and I agree with him;

"We need to look in new and critical ways at the changing world and become aware, not only of its visual appearance, but more important, the forces at work behind it which shape the man made environment".

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How can this changing environment be brought to benefit the art teacher who may use it as a source of investigation ? In answer to this, I hope to explore different avenues, make suggestions and comparisons - offer possible solutions. To do this I intend to explore the disign and layout of Saint Stephen's Green, and show how this can be used and integrated into the art class with the areas of study that will be pursued, Line, Shape, Colour, texture and three dimensional work etc. I will read relevant and related material plus Departmental publications and include with my findings visuals of Saint Stephen's Green and the pupils application of study and responses. This material collected through my research will be assembled logically in chapter two, and I will comment as an art teacher on my findings.

I would now like to explain why, in fact, I decided upon an area of study "Using Saint Stephen's Green as an Art Resource for Secondary School Education", as a basis for a Thesis project.

I am presently teaching in a secondary school, - The Assumption Secondary School, Walkinstown, Dublin 12, and coming from a rural upbringing, I found Saint Stephen's Green a major source of relaxation and inspiration in an urban environment. The 'Green' is accessible to most secondary schools in the Dublin area and all schools that are outside of this area are situated on or near a natural landscape which provides similiar experience in art education.

Saint Stephen's Green provides direct confrontation with nature at work, from the growth of the smallest shrub to the magnificance of the largest tree. Fifty or more different species or varieties of trees and tall shrubs grow in Saint Stephen's Green. Some are represented by one or two specimens only, while others make a major contribution to the landscape and character of the 'Green'. The artificial lake provides a home for a variety of waterfowl, including ducks, geese and moorhens. Other birds to be seen in the 'Green' are those adapted to life around the city streets and buildings, such as pigeons, sparrows and starlings, as well as song birds that flourish in city parks and gardens.

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It is worth observing the different species of trees and birds in the 'Green' area. It is somewhat dishcartening to discover how little many of the pupils, and indeed, people at large, know of these species which surround the area. identification seems to be the major problem as the majority of the pupils to be aware of their existance. "We visit the 'Green' at weekends", but as David Hockney says;

"By teaching children to draw we are teaching them to see ". (3)

With this aim in mind I intend taking my pupils on excursions into the 'Green' which will rpovide them with this opportunity to become more aware of their environment.



References.

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CHAPTER TWO

"The most exquisite delights of sense are pursued in the contrivance and planning of gardens, which with fruits, flowers, shades, fountains, and the music of birds that frequent such happy places, seem to furnish all the pleasures of the several senses, and with the greatest, or at least the most natural perfections".

Sir William Temple

"Miscellanea" (4)

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAINT STEPHEN'S GREEN

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On the south side of the city of Dublin lies a bright oasis of green grass, tall trees and many coloured flowers, surrounding a smooth lake, gay with the movement of water fowl. We pass it daily, and if fortunate enough to be on foot, its many gates invites us to brighten the job of the moment by walking along its tree shaded pathways. But how many of those who frequent the 'Green' ever stop to ask how it came to be what it is today or what it was before the landscape gardener began to work on it. Likely enough, no-one ever does; it is token for granted, as most things are that we see and use every day.

As to the name, St. Stephen's Green, there is no positive information to show how the park came to be named after the first Martyr. An obvious conjecture is that the name comes from the Leper Hospital of St. Stephen which stood at the North-Western end of the Green which was once a common pasture. In fact, Rev. C.J. Mc Cready gives this explanation in his "Dublin street Names dated and explained" quoting as his authority, Rev. W.G. Carroll's work on the succession of the Clergy in the parishes of St. Bride, St. Michael Le Pole and St. Stephen. Dublin 1884 P.J. Carroll in the same work gives 1224 as the earliest date for St. Stephen, so if we accept this as correct we would assume that the mame of St. Stephen was applied to the common pasture from about that time. It was then an unenclosed and marshy common. Along with two other open commons, Oxmantown Green, north of the Liffey and Hoggen Green (now college Green), it was used by the citizens of Dublin as grazing lands for their livestock. St. Stephen's Green is the only one of the three to have remained a green open space.

In 1663 the City Assembly or Corporation decided to develop Saint Stephen's green, then about 60 acres in extent, in such a way that it would provide some income for the city while still serving the poeple as an open space. By the following year, 1664, a central area of 27 acres had been marked out to be preserved. The remainder was divided into minety building lots, each with about 60 feet frontage, the rent for each to

"Be disposed for walling in the whole Greene and for paving the roads or streets"

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Each lessee was also required to plant six sycamore trees near the wall.

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The Corporation then levelled the interior of the green and enclosed it with a stone wall. Inside the wall was a gravel walk 35 feet wide lined with elms and limes. Further in again was a drainage ditch, with another walk bordered by hawthorn hedges between the ditch and the interior of the Green. The Green remained in this form for about a century and a half.

Throughout the eighteenth century the Green was a fashionable place to walk, particularly the gravelled walk along the north side, known as Beaux Walk. The main entrance at the time was at the west side, opposite York Street. The interior was used during this period for pasturage of cattle and horses, as a parade - ground for the yeomanry and other troops, and on occasions, as a place of public assembly. In 1749 a grand fireworks display was held to celebrate the conclusion of peace at Aix - La - Chapelle. As early as 1753 wooden seats were placed in the Green. In 1758 an equestrian statue of King George II, cast by Van Nost, it was erected in the centre of the Green, and it remained there until 1937. The seventeenth century drainage system was never adequate, so the Green was swampy in winter and attractive for snipe and corncrake.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the condition of the Green had deteriorated. The perimeter wall was broken, many of the trees were old and decaying, and the drainage ditch was full of stagnant water and rubbish. By act of Parliament in 1814 the maintenance of Saint Stephen's Green was handed over to the Commissioners representing the local householders. They put in new drains, filled the ditch, felled decaying trees and planted new ones, and laid out new walks in the interior to suit the tastes of the time, in place of the old formal perimeter promenades. They also removed the wall and replaced it with cast - iron railings. A broad walk outside the railings was seperated from the

road by granite bollards linked by iron chains. The bollards, without the chains and the railings survive to this day. The appearance of 'the Green' was greatly improved, but it became a private park, accessable only to those who rented keys. The iron railings and locked gates kept out the general public for the first time in history. This was widely resented but several efforts to open the Green to the public egain were resisted by the commissioners and the Corporation. The position remained unchanged until Sir Arthur Guinness, later Lord Ardilaun, took an interest in the matter, and offered to convert the Green to a public park at his own expense. He said that, "It was a dream of my early youth, I remember when as a lad walking in Saint Stephen's Green with a relative, long since dead. I told her of my determination that should it ever be in my power I would do my best to effect

the opening of that enclosure to the public". (5) He paid off debts and in 1877, secured the passage of an Act entrusting the maintenance of the Green to the Commissioners of Public Works. Sir Arthur took a great personal interest in the new design and layout of the Green. In this he was assisted by an engineer, A.C. Cousins, and the work was carried out under the direction of William Sheppard. It is said that a room was reserved for them in the Shelbourne Hotel during the works, with a scale model to assist them. The major features of the Green as it is now were cneated then including the artificial lake (A1) and waterfall with rockwork by Pulban and Sons, the Bridge. (A2) the formal flower beds (A3) and fountains (A4) and the superintendent's lodge (A5) designed, along with Swiss shelters which no longer survive, by F.J. Fuller.

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On the 27th July 1880 the transformed Saint Stephen's Green was opened, without formality, to the public. As the Daily Express reported the following day:

"The public streamed into it and enjoyed to their hearts' content the

rural charm with which it has been invested..... The picture is a truly delightful one and cannot fail to impress every visitor to the Green with the incalculable benefits which such an oasis must bestow on the city and its people ". (6)

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Only once since then has the Green been dramatically involved in historic events. On Easter Monday, 1916, the Green was occupied by soldiers of the Irish Citizen Army and Irish Volunteers led by Michael Mullin and Countess Markiewicz. Later in the week they withdrew to the College of Surgeons, but fighting continued around the Green throughout the week. The Park Superintendent, in his official report, described the dramatic events but was also mindful of his normal duties. Having mentioned deaths and injuries from military action on both sides, he added,

"I am sorry to say six of our waterfowl were killed or shot, seven of the garden seats were broken and about 300 shrubs were destroyed ". (7)

He was duly complimented by his superiors for having

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"Fed the birds in the green daily under considerable risk of being shot ".

As Saint Stephen's Green is a designed landscape, it is not all that different in structure from other parks and gardens that Man has developed over the centuries, consisting of spaces that re enclosed with walks and lakes as a major part of its design. All parks are the product of leisure. It is no good looking for parks in a society which needs all its energy to survive. As soon as a society has time and energy to spare, some of the excess is devoted to enjoying the residual aspects of enclosure, of cultivation, and of unhumanized landscape. A park or garden is mans idealized view of the world; and because most men are representative of the society of which they are a part, it follows that fashicnable parks of any community and any period betray the dream world which is the periods ideal. All history is one, and parks and gardens cannot be considered in detachment from the people who made them. It is the park as an experience in art that concerns us here.









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I would like to discuss at this stage, the way in which gardens and parks which are essentialy the same have developed, giving rise to the present construction of Saint Stephen's Green. The forerunner to a park was a garden which could be a little smaller in size to a park. It is legitimate to speak of vegetable gardens, hop gardens and zoological gardens, but these are all very different matters, they do not exist to appeal to the senses, their main aim is to fulfill some material aim. A garden in the sense in which I use it, is not a museum collection, nor a sort of pocket farm, it is a world made to our own measure.

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N owadays exploring a park is thought of more often as a pastime than an educational experience. One educational experience in taking the pupils onto St. Stephen's Green could be an exploration of pattern, the design of the footpaths form a pattern in relation to the rectangular shape of the park, and this pattern is rendered beautiful because it relates and is determinded by the earth and lakes which also fit into the picture and unite the whole. This could be followed by a closer study of the tree structures and the way in which different trees behave visually (A6) even closing in on the leaf structures with the relationship of the visual effects to the structural purpose of the veins.(A7) The usual comment from the pupils when this project was first mentioned was "But don't we pass that all the time" or "Isn't it all the same ". It is my job as an art teacher to get them to see with a fresh approach what they normally take for granted and to be able to use the visual character of their environment as an expressive force.

There was a time, in the sixteenth century in Italy, in the seventeenth century in France, and in the eighteenth century in England when it was considered a very important art, perhaps the most important of all, the one at which all others met, Painters, architects, sculptors, poets and philosophers gave their minds to the comprehenson of its nature and the perfecting of its practice, that is, the ideal of the garden or park. The word 'garden' is at root the same as the word 'yard'. It means an enclosure. Words may start with simple enough meaning but with use they loose it and end up facing a different direction. Today an enclosure is not necessarily a garden and the way in which gardens ceased to be enclosures is an essential stage in the development of parks. Although Saint Stephen's Green is an enclosure it has twelbe points of entrance which are open from eight a.m. until a half hour before dusk.

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In the fifteenth and sixteenth century western man had to relearn the art of designing parks as well as much else. No more than poems or pictures did the forerunner of the park, which was the garden, vanish entirely between the disentagration of Rome and the appearance of modern Europe, but gardening as a fine art virtually ceased to exist through out the greater part of the western world, and as Sir Thomas Browne says:

"Gardens were before gardeners and put some hours after the earth". (8)

Men were preocupies with the survival of their bodies in this world and their souls in the next to refine very much upon the art of living. It is only in the last five centure is that gardening has acquired a history.

The foundations upon which the Renaissance garden designer workded were physically Roman and spiritually Hellenistic. It has too often been said that the church was the repository of all that was left of learning and skills when the great central structure of society went to wreck. The monastic garden with its vegetable patch, its orchard, and its herbs for healing was a dead end.

Architecture in the service of Christianity put on pagan garments and continued to achieve great things such as St. Peters at Rome or St. Pauls at London, painting and sculpture commenced, even if they did not long continue, their new life under church patronage, but the church made little use of parks to promote its splendour. The garden grew up around the individual as a luxurious extension of the individuals private life, it was a purely secular achievement, although the cardinals and Popes of the late Guattro - cento in their capacity as temporal princes had a good deal to do with it.

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There were three threads which linked the gardens of the fifteenth and sixteeenth century to the gardens of the ancient world. The first thread was physical, the influence of the actu-al ruins amidst which men lived. The second thread was literary, the description of ancient gardens. The third was traditional, through Bygantium and the Moslem kingdoms of Spain. In a continent of ruins the monastic orders often settled on Roman Villa sites so that the traditional physical layout of a monastry was partly developed by force of what they found there. Cloisters, for example, are the gothic shadows of the Roman pevuistyles, an enclosed rectangle surrounded by a covered walk or arcade. Fortresses as well as monasteries developed among the ruins. Barbarian magnates settled in the places which had been of sufficient charm and convenience to attract their orginal owners, which still however ruinous, provided shelter, much superior to any that Vandal, Frank or Goth had leisure or ability to build. Medieval gardens, both monastic and secular, such as they were , were shaped by the roofless walls of an earlier time. The world we call medievalism was established and was deeply and ectensively a Roman world. The gardens that grew up at these times were functunal arather than ornamental although some of the more dlaborate ones developed higher qualities, for example, the source of water so necessary to the gardener was best placed for practual reasons in the centre of the garden, very rarely it became an ornamental fountain or well - head to which the garden beds bore a regular geometical relationship. This was not purely for convenience, but because the regularity, the orderly repetition, pleased the eye, as a rhyme pleases the ear. In order to keep off poultry and dogs and in some cases even people it became the coustom to fence the borders, these fences because decorative trellis- work destined to evolve oneday into stone balustrading.

Step by step the 'Vocabulory'of the gardener - working - as - an artist grew up out of the practice of the - gardener - working - as - a Craftsman while at the

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same time society was arriving at a state which permitted the art itself to flower.

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The plan of these gardens was rectangular, in countries such as Egypt where the ground is irrigated by canals the division of cultivation into small rectangles arises naturally, but when water is carried by hand from a well or pond a radial glevelopment leading to a circular garden and trapeizium - shaped beds is more logical. But that it was the influence of ruined buildings rather of irrigation that was the principal factor in squaring off European gardens is evident from the frequency in medieval illustration of circular gardens when control is not present, ore often than not the garden of Eden is represented as a small circle of ground surrounded by a paling fence and containing two trees, one snake, and two disconsolate human beings who would appear to have little to lose. These circular gardens are clearly based on the plot of cultivation with which the peasant surrounded his hut, they had no controlling archutectural foundation to link them on to an earlier and more civilized age.

Later, sophisticated gardens occured and the earliest European gardens occured in Padua in 1545, laid out on a radial principal. Given as a starting point this sort of garden which had remained fairly static for nearly a thousand years, one naturally ask s what galvanised it into life and why should this have first pulsed in Iraly rather than anywhere else in Europe where the Medieval pattern was similiar ? All art is a luxury in the sense that it is a by-product of necessity, its creation is imposcible without an excess of energy and an excess of time. So first amongst the reasons of its growth was the great commercial wealth of Italy which gave men a taste for display, and second was the the relative tranquility of that country (Compared with the rest of Europe) which gave men leisure and the physical remnants of the great past were thicker upon the ground than anywhere else. The first direct effect of a peaceful countryside was to allow the garden to escape confinment. The fortress began to coften into, the villa in Italy before anywhere else and the first consequence of the garden excaping its bounds was that it grew in size. Up to a very late date, indeed until long after the sophisticated developments of the cinquecento had become part of the accepted formula for garden design, we come across instances of great famous gardens which in conception are really little more than the medieval chessboard blown up on size and multiplies in sub-units until acres of ground were covered by rectangular beds and their parallel service paths. The medieval garden plan has never quite disappeared and forms the basis of most parks today including St. Stephen's Green.

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The peculiar nature of the Renaissance was the discovery of an astonishing past by men of abounding creative energy. Ancient thought, ancient literature, and architecture all became uncovered in the course of one generation.

But the gardens of the great I perial days were evased long before the fifteenth century and could not be recovered.

One primitive source of gardens was the rough enclosure of thorn with which man the hunter protected himself and his family from wild beasts while he slept. This enclosure grew in the course of ages into a fortress or eastle, but it also became a garden. Man as a herdsman reached a similiar point for different reasons, his enclosure was to protect himself from the trampling of his own herds. In either case the homestead, whether hut or cave needed water and shade so that both spring and tree were included within the protective belt. For countless generations these enclosures were associated in the human mind with safety from enemies, shade from the sun; refreshment from hunter and thirst, coolness after heat, lover after fear, and sleep after exhaustion.

A quite different source of gardens lay in that sense of awe which primitive man felt in certain natural scenery. This is a state of mind for which there is no precise term but one which most men can feel especially in circumstances remote from the dulling effect of everyday ecperience, for example, in the bows of a ship, a sunrise on a mountain peak, at dusk in a forest clearing. These sensations of awe led men to worship the genius of the place from which it emanated. To such Spots men truurned again and again, ostensibly to please the spirit with offerings, but really in order to enjoy the sensation, a sensation close to fear, but not fear, not unlike that which a note might feel when included in a symphony. Not only were the more remarkable scenes the homes of great deities, but every small stream became in time the manifestation of a nymph and every tree had a resident dryad. Where this spirit was alive a garden was not only a sanctuary but a temple for gods. These two emotions, joy is relief from stress and hunger from spiritual reawakening, are the remote sources of leisured man's garden - making.

From the point of view of an artist working as a manipulation in sensation the use of woodland gave an increased range, though not so great an increase as was given by water. Water can be flung up and tumble down, it can roar and it can make small bell - like noises, it can be all surface or all depth (A8) it can be of incomparable stillness far exceeding that of stone (A9) or it can boil with the torment of perpetual motion. In the hands of great fountaineers water was a tactile material and they enevitably found themselves working in partneship, statues were no longer motionless in riches, but became involved in the whole life and movement of the waters.

Water gives a sense of spaciousness even within the limits of an enclosed court yard, by its use as a mirror, also the ripples and movement of water gives relief from the stagnant and firmness of pavements, walls etc. The lakes in Saint Stephen's Green cause an enormous amount of curiosity due to the variety of waterfowl which can be an excellent source of study. (B1) B2)

It is becoming increasingly important for education to give pupils a feeling for what is sincere. One of the main functions of excursions to Saint Stephen's Green is to observe the elements of design which is the establishment of harmonious relationships. At this age it is vital that we stimulate children's thinking and provide them with opportunities for discoveries relating to the

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beauty of materials that are found unspoiled within our environment. This means developing a feeling for differences in rocks, pebbles, shells, barks, all the wealth we can find in nature. Discussing the different shapes and flifferent colours, noticing how the light tries to shine through some varieties but not through others, all this can be a real discovery and awaken perceptual sensitivity.

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An introduction to pattern in nature could be introduced to the pupils here, we are surrounded by an enormous number of natural patterns, (B3) patterns produced by nature without any influence by the hand of man. They have all one thing in common, they are the result of nature's attempts to achieve her purposes in the most efficient way. Take the pattern of a leaf as an example, and there are numerous varieties present in Saint Stephen's Green, of which I will deal with later in the project, the main vein which runs up the middle splits into a number of smaller veins, and they in turn into yet smaller ones. In this way the whole area of the leaf can be covered and the sap be carried to and from any part. This is a good practical arrangement and one which is often copies by man. But this is not the only cause of the leaf pattern. What is the purpose of the leaf ? It contains cells which catch sunlight needed by the plant for its food production. These cells must be able to absorb as much light as possible. To allow for this the leaf spreads out as widely as it can. If the leaf were of uniform thickness it would not spread far without becoming too heavy at its edges and tip. But leaves are constructed in such a way that they grow thinner and lighter the higher it grows, so that the top of the main stem has less weight to carry than the lower part. If this were not so the top of the plant might be too heavy and break the stem as it sways in the breeze. As regards the amount of light falling through the tall trees, being very little nature has designed the smaller plants in a manner that allows them to make maximum use of this light or lack of it. Certain shrubs that cannot grow tall to reach adequate light, spread out over a large area to together as much available light as possible (B4)

One of the commonest and largest trees in Saint Stephen's Green is the London

plane, from about 1650 A.D. (B5) It is scattered throughout the open lawns and in plantations. It is a very good city tree, being tolerant of air pollution and having strong branches that rarely break and fall, and is widely planted in Dublin city. Sycamore, a native of central and southern Europe, is equally common in the Green, particularly in the plantations just within the railings.
It has a long association with the Green, as the original lessees of the adjacent building plots in 1664 were each required to plant six sycamores near the wall.

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Two other trees, elm and lime also have a long association with Saint Stephen's Green, having lined the fashionable walks around the Green in the eighteenth century. Within the Green elms, principally wych elm but with som English elm, are widely planted particularly in the eastern half. Weeping elms (B6) a cultivated variety of wych elm with drooping branches, enhance some of the more formal parts of the landscape. Wych elms have for many years had another important role in Saint Stephen's Green. About ninety of them, planted about 1895, have lined the edge of the wide walks between the railings and the streets on all four sides. (B7) Unfortunately Dutch Ehm Disease, a virulent fungus spread by bark beetles, has recently struck many of these elm trees. A programme of felling and replacement with a variety of lime, began on the west side in the spring of 1980. The loss of the elms is regrettable, but all trees must eventually be replaced and it is appropriate that the renewal of the perimeter trees commenced in its centenary year. Lime trees already form another formal avenue in the Green. The lime walk, lined on both sides with common limes, runs for most of the length of the Green close to the railings on the northern side (B8)

Two of the other tall trees present in Saint Stephen's Green in substantial numbers are natives of different parts of southern Europe, holm oak, with small evergreen leaves, dark green above and grey-green below, and horse chestnut, with prominent white blossoms and distinctive sticky buds, and its 'conkers' that have made.it the favourite three of generations of school boys. Two other characteristics trees of the green, ash and birch are native to Ireland. Ash flourishes on limestone soils and was probably common in the vicinity up to



















medieval times. Cultivated varieties of ash in the Green include weeping ash, a tall tree with branches decending straight down towards the ground. Silver birch is is a graceful feature of the landscape at all seasons, with its yellow catkins, delicate foliage, and silvery-white peeling bark.

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Two kinds of small trees are abundent in the Green. Holly is the commonest, just as it was probably the commenest small tree in our natural forests long ago. Being an evergreen, it is an important component of the fringing screen of trees and shrubs inside the railings. A cultivated variety of holly with yellow leaf margins is also quite frequent. Hawthorn is also common, and like some of the other trees provides continuity with the early years of the Green, when harthorn hedges lined the inner walk.

On excursions into Saint Stephen's Green, the pupils were surprised to see how textures taken in the form of rubbings from a variety of trees, could be incorporated into a picture - composition. Week by week we collected information on the Green by exploring and recording the colours found there, recording a variety of textures, exploring the patterns of footpaths and general design of the area. The art class can be of great benefit to children in such surroundings. Projects could be based on this environment. Discussions based on the pupuls ideas - how they cope with art work out in the open air - away from benches and sinks etc. There is a great feeling of excitment and urgency in approach to work when bringing the pupils on an excursion to the outdoor environment. Saint Stephen's Green was ideal for such excursions as it is relatively safe from noisy traffic and curious spectators trying to catch a glimpse of the pupils at work. In fact, with people circulating around the green it can be a good exprience to enlighten them as to art activities there and there can be a healthy response with their own ideas contributing to the project. Children who have problems expressing ideas in words can find new ways of communicating with the great variety of coloured paper, markers, chalks etc. on the market today. These can all be used to their best advantage out in the open. (B9)

Projects of this nature will provide the pupils with new experences, build up greater
understanding of something taken for granted. It will help them see the need for conservation, and as Bertrand Russell says:

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"If a child has access to a garden, it is easy to cultivate a more elaborate form of constructiveness. The first impulse of a child in a garden is to pick every attractive flower. It is easy to check this by probubition, but mere probabilition is inadequate as an education. One wants to produce in the child the same respect for a garden that restrains the grown up picking wantonly. The respect of the grown up is due to the realisation of labour and effort required to produce the pleasing result. By the time a child is three years old, he can be given the corner of the garden and encouraged to plant seeds in it. When they come up and blossom, his own flowers seem precicus and wonderful, then he can appreciate that his mothers flowers also must be treated with care ". (9)

At the present time we have only to look at our daily newspapers to see what is happening to our countryside. Some of the most beautiful areas I have seen are scar marked with unsightly dumping of non-decaying materials, such as, plastic bags, rusty fincans, anything from the size of a sardine tin to car bodys. Of course searching through dumps can lead to valuable art activities but this should not camorflage the obsenity of dirty eyesores. The superintendent of Saint Stephen's Green said that vandals are a major problem in the area as they tend to destroy shrubs and leave unsightly graffite on the pavement and trees. Why is destruction so much in vogue at this time, of course it always existed from stamping on the smallest insect to the great world wars ?. Is there a relationship between destruction and violence leading to world wars and terrorism ? I feel that there is, and that environmental factors are major force behind it. As it says in the Primary School Curriculum:

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"When a child is born into the world he bears the stamp of his heredity, but his development is influenced not merely by his natural endowments but also to a very great extent by his environment". (10)

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Obviously the environment has a large infuence on every child, and I feel that bad planning suited only to the profits of the speculators is responsible for a lot of this fandalism. I feel that areas like Saint Stephen's Green are a badly needed treatment for vandals and that areas like it should be a major part of every large housing estate and industrial zone. This is where the art class can make use of the Green, in providing children with the means and the facilities to explore it and develop a respect for nature, especially those children who come from a background of high-rise towers and cramped housing estates, helping to make their lives more colourful. It is ultimately the better living conditions for people which would lead to a better human race, that a deep rooted respect for nature would inculcate, not just the preservation of nature, but a better quality of life for everyone.

Now more than ever we need to make young people aware of Ecology and Conservation. Our environment will be destroyed unless we take steps to protect it from careless planning. It is only recently that we have become industrialized as we have been traditionally an agricultural community with emigration as our main export. So there is still time to protect the countryside from industrial waste when adequate measures are taken by 'An Taisce' and other such bodies that monitor the situation. We must start educating the children accordingly because a great deal of change is constatly taking place in the pattern of living.

In the course of change man has not paid enough thought to the destruction brought on by change. His environment has become taken from granted. He has polluted the air with smoke and gas, afrecting the wildlife around him by destroying vegetation, and rivers essential to the reproduction of rare species of birds, fish and natural wild growth. Becoming aware of the need for conserving the environment is a relatively new direction in this country and children are being encouraged to get involved in one way and another. There are numerous posters, stamps concerning conservation being circulated, bodies such as An Taisce have junior branches in their organisations, the new curriculum in the primary school allows for the pupil to be made aware of his environment and surroundings at an early age and to learn to respect them. The scope for this type of experiences for the pupil is more limited in second level education in this country due to the format of the curriculum but I believe that the art class can still be used to give the pupils these necessary experiences. With this in mind I devised these lessons using a natural environment i.e. using Saint Stephen's green as a basis for the artistic development of my pupils.

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When I first visited Saint Stephen's Green I was struck by the variety of trees, shrubs, waterfowl and a wealth of organic material which I felt would be of educational value to my pupils in the art class. I know a project could be based on one aspect of the Green in isolation, say, explaining the waterfowl, where they come from, the colouring of their plumage, discussing the reasons for such colouring in melation to their environment - camaflage, mateing etc. discussing their resting habits - their methods of building nests. This could be followed by drawing the nests and making a construction in the art room based on the nest using a variety of materials such as straw, twigs, feathers etc. Futher work could include explaining the movement of the birds, the way they land in the water using their wing span as air brakes and comparing it to the techniclogical wonders of man aeroplanes, kites etc. (C1)

I felt Saint Stephen's Green had more to offer the pupils than the specialization of knowledge in just one area. They could always study the gulls on their own fooftops at home and the way their relationships work in that particular environment, quite a valuable project. The Green encompased so many different but related areas inside one enclosure that I felt it should be used in its totality, not forgetting that it is a designed garden or landscape, by man.

How could we go about developing a project that would give the most educational benefit to the pupils, and myself included. One way of finding out was by discussing the environment with the pupils, talking about growth in the environment - growth of buildings, roads, and population growth, comparing it to organic growth, the reclaiming of land by trees and shrubs and the way in which they develop from tiny seedlings to tall trees, moving on to seasonal change which is really a new layer of growth starting from buds and flowering into blossoms each new leaf having the same structure with a different personality or character.

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The next stage of the project was bringing the pupils on a tour of Saint Stephen's Green. We all agreed to meet after School at the Grafton Street entrance at a said time bringing notebooks, sketchpads, anything that might be of some particular use in taking a lasting memory back to the classroom for discussion. One girl brought a taperecorder to capture some of the atmosphere of the Green, by taping a variety of sounds - the breeze blowing through different densities of foliage - the sound of the waterfall - birdsongs on the lake - the sound of wings beating against water when about to take off in a florry.

There was a general air of excitment as it is a good experience for pupils to get out in the f esh air in a complete confrontation with nature. One of the first problems to arise in a place like the Green is where to start looking, we decided to follow the path and see where it leads to, we crossed the bridge and viewed the lake on both sides with its waterfowl feeding silently and the elms and willows drooping down over the lake in sweeping curtains breaking up the evening light in glorious fragments on the formal flower gardens amidst two fountains surrounded by a complex network of footpaths making up the focal point of the Green from which every entrance led to. On the right hand side of the bridge was the island at the upper corner of the lake looking like a wildlife sanctuary untouched by man and beyond this was the magnificant waterfall, artifucally designed with the lake, but not unconvincing as being completely natural. On the left hand side of the bridge we could see the lake winding past the shelter towards the entrance at Baggot Street with the massive Wolfe Tone memorial. (C5)

On our route we took in the Henry Moore's tribute to W.B. Yeates situated on a designed area of stonework overlooking the lake and the flower gardens. (C6) We

then came across the childrens playground which provided plenty of stimulation for the pupils as there was plenty of activity with kids swinging and jumping around. It is also out of sight of the main part of the Green by a thick hedge which also lessons the noise from the children as it is contained within that area. (C7) We ended our tour by taking a walk towards the entrance near the superintendents house which is based on a swiss style of architecture and secluded from the main road by a dense covering of foliage which gives it a feeling of being miles out in the country in a forest clearing.

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The next day in class we discussed the events of the previous evening. All the pupils were eager to have their opinions and ideas heard as their minds were still fresh with the atmosphere of the Green, with the usual question "When we go there again". The impression that came across was that they regarded the Green as belonging to them, an entension of the classroom or a material that could be manipulated without any elaborate teachniques, just looking - questioning and assissing. Primary School Curriculum says:

"The child expresses himself in pictures long before he can do so in words or writing. His natural interest is in investigating materials and objects, his efforts to shape, mould or arrange them so as to express his own imaginings, and his enjoyment of sensory experience - these are the sources from which his pleasure in Art and Craft derives. ". (11)

These sources can be extended throughout the educational spectrum, not as a substitute for the other subjects like writing or maths, but as a central core or aid in support of these cubjects. For instance, in drawing and exploring the structure of the sycamore tree which is a native of Central and Southern Europe, the Biology class could be used to explore the cell structure of the trunk and leaves, the geography class could explore and compare the conditions of its native environment in Southern Europe. The History class could trace the changing social conditions during the life-span of the tree. In discussing project possibilities of Saint Stephen's Green with the pupils in class, we decided on the making of a reduced model of the Green, a variety of materials could be used to simulate the main elements constituting its make -up. We decided that the materials being used could wait until a later stage as a thorough knowledge of the Green must be undertaken before attempting the reduced model. At least six excurstions in to the Green for research preparation by the pupils under supervised conditions with properly prepared sequental lessons was in order.

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The relationship of the model to reality may be best described by the notion 'Reduced Model'. The discussion of this notion may enlighten the role and effect of such a model as a media of mon-verbal communication.

> "The innate power of the reduced model lies in the way it makes up for a lack of sensual dimensions by an increase in intellectual dimensions ". (12)

The representation of a physical object or the image of a real situation which includes its graphic or plastic transformation, invariably includes a renunciation of volume, in sculpture of colours, smells, even tactile impressions; and in both cases of the dimension of time, since the whole of the image is fixed in a size lend the reduced model an understanding of the whole of it's parts. The image of the object can be grasped, understood, held in one's hand, taken in at a glance. The crucial effect is, that the object loses its power to frighten us because it has been reduced to human proportions. This transformation increases and multiplies our power over the image of the object.

This feeling of power may provoke us either to make direct use of it - manipulting the object or to change it in an aesthetic sense, by making us want to touch it, play with it, put it to some use or alter it. The fact that this desire is so universal led me to adapt the reduced model for this project. Knowing the pupils were prepared to make a number of excurions to Saint Stephen's Green in order to observe and explore all of its qualities for transformation into the reduced model, I had a number of educational objectives in mind which would structure their preparitory trips. First objective was to expose the pupils to an activity which could be expected to sharpen their sense of colour, second, to stimulate and focus their visual appreciation of the structure of the trees in that particular environment, thirdly to use their sense of line to do this, forth, to engage their sense of pattern and shape by structuring a situation which would call differentiation between the various species of leaves and, fifth, to test their visual reaction to texture by providing them with a means of abstracting the markings of the trunks, lakes, monuments etc. and applying them to the context of their own group model.

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I obtained ordanance survey poster size maps of Saint Stephens Green which was ideal for all wing the pupils to know exactly the different parts of the Green when exploring it. An approach which would allow groups of pupils to use the maps to position themselves in different areas simultaneously. (D1)

On our second excursion into Saint Stephen's Green the pupils were to bring with them white cartridge paper and suitable flat crayons for their first actual art lesson in the 'Green'. As in the previous excursion, we met at the Grafton Street entrance known as the 'Fusiliers' arch which is a memorial to the officers and men of the Royal Dublin Fusilies who lost their lives in the Boer War in South Africa. (1899 - 1900) I gave a map of the 'green' to each pair of pupils and designated certain areas on the maps that they were to explore visually. Explaining that they were to record the surface texture of pathways, tree trunks, benches, for us in making the reduced model at a later date. I demonstrated how to make a rubbing of a surface with a tactile quality by placing a sheet of cartridge paper over a pavement stone and with a flat crayon stroking gently until an impression of the surface appeared. They were then to go to the required areas and make rebbings from every tactile surface that rendered itself suitable (D3). When they had finished their work for the evening they arrived back at the entrance arch and displayed

"Famine". (D7) There is also a bronze to the poet William Butler Yeats by Henry Moore, entitled 'Knife Edge' and stands on a paved platform, formerly at the site of old glass houses. Among other statues is one that commemorates the man who made Saint Stephen's Green available to the people in its present form as a public park, none other than Lord Ardiluun by the Sculptor James Farrell (D8) All of those memorials represent many strands of Irish history and culture, being an excellent source of historical and social studies for the pupils with their history teacher as part of this project. Also the english teacher could take the poetry of William Butler Yeats and compare it to the poet himself represented by the sculptor Henry Moore. In the art room pupils took some of Yeat's poetry and placed it on the wall with the rest of the project material. Discussion in the art room can be based on the many styles of statues representing different era's in Irish history, from the representational study of James Clarence Mangan 1909 by Oliver Sheppard to the abstract study of Yeat's by Henry Moore. The study of three-dimensional form in the ' 'Green' by the pupils was essential to the making of the reduced model, as simulations of these structures must be included in the end product. The appropriate materials being discussed by the class as they were in the process of drawing and painting the three-dimensional objects.

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Some of the pupils had drawn the stark black and white of the silver birches while some had taken the less highly contrasted green and yellow patches of the plane trees. Others had drawn the pitted surface of the chestnuts and still others the crazy-paving of the sycamores. They translated their own texture motifs very freely. Some girls found their becoming aware of the varying growth rhythums of the branches and trunks, the varying colours and textures of the trunks. (D9) This new awareness was an enriching experience and might well col ur their looking at trees in general in future, and might spread to other 'areas of looking'. Some of the pupils were amazed at the way in which a tree trunk could have a twist Like a rope and compared it to Henry Moore's Knife Edge' which has a twist as part of its character. This 'twist' could have been designed to fit in with the background of trees, helping to make it a good environmental design. Discussions were held in class on design in the environment, by telling whether materials have been put to good use by the patterns which are formed. Objects made of the same material bore patterns in common, and because of this underlying unity a group of objects made of the same material forms a larger patternof its own and different materials make different patterns. A landscape seems beautiful when the things in it have something in common, and this gives a untip to the whole. The pupils agreed that St. Stephen's Green was a beautiful place and it was accounted for by the fact that it was made of the same earth, the pattern of vegetation being related to the movement of the landscape.

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A number of excursions by the pupils at this stage consisted of exploring the patterns of vegetation combined with the network of foot paths surrounding the lake. They spent time observing the reflections of the water with its variety of waterfowl coming and going naming and identifying some of the species of ducks, geese and moorhens. The majority of the ducks are mallard, but there are some Muscowy ducks, and wigeon and pintail have been present within the last few years. Geese are less numerous but more varied, with specimens of barnacle, whitefronted, Canada, greylag and bar-headed geese to be seen. Some of the pupils were attracted by the Mollard and moorhens breading as their yound are a great attraction in early summer. Other birds that were familiar to the fupils are those which are adapted to life around the city streets and buildings, such as pigeons, sparrows and starlings etc.

The colouring of these birds was a good excerise for the pupils because in a situation like that, each birds col uring has a particular function, it could be to distinguish it from other birds as a mating signal or to act as a camaflage with the environmental colouring.

The waterfall proved a good source of study as the pupils were to observe and understand the patterns of moving water under different conditions, why does the water move fast in certain areas ?, what makes it still and smooth in other places ? looking at the pattern of waves and ripples as it tumbles over the rocks with the formation of splaches and foam, contained and enclosed by the surrounding landscape from their twelve points of entry to their route and design around the interior of the 'green'. (E5) We used a grid system to transfer the network of footpaths from the ordanance survey map to the aerboard, after which, the pupils cut out the shapes make by the paths in black cartidge paper and glued it on to the aeroboard. They then painted glue on the paths before pouring salt over it to give the effect of tarmacadam. When it set and dried the paths bad an interesting texture almost like the real ones in the 'Green'. The footpaths gave shape to the surrounding features such as the lake and flower gardens.

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A number of art lessons were devoted to shaping out the lake bed and making notes where the different species of trees should be situated. As regards the lake, lino cutting tooks were ideal for digging away the aeroboard which was, in effect an excercising in carving, requiring the introduction of basic cutting techniques similiar to lino cutting. A valuable suggestion was made by one of the pupils when she said that blue wax could be used as the water in the lake. A number of other suggestions were offered such as real water, jelly, paint, etc, but these would not prove authentic or permanent. Water would evaporate or spill, jelly would get mouldy and attract rodents and paint did not appear very exciting. The next day blue candles were brought in and melted in a saucepan on the hot ring and then poured into a test piece of aeroboard. An interesting result then happened, but one which did prove adequate, the hot wax melted the aeroboard going right through it. This called for other solutions to the problem to be discussed and tested., as working like this is a continual process of trial and error. Solutions have, and should be encouraged in a wide range of materials as this gives experience of their widely varying qualities. The changes brought about in the aeroboard after soaking it in hot wax caused a new insight into the nature of aeroboard. New lessons and excerises could be structured around this, Is it the wax that melts the aeroboard or is it the heat, would hot water have the same effect and what type of patterns exist in the melted aeroboard.

However, the immediate problem was the filling of the lake bed with wax without

the bottom melting out of it. A suggestion was offered by a pupil as to the use of cement on the lake bed giving it a hard surface. Cement was not available but there was a supply of polyfiller which I felt would be better as it is not geared to heavy duty work. I demonstrated how to prepare polyfiller and its application to the aeroboard surface as they went about finishing the lake bed. Near the end of class it had gone hard and it looked as if it would contain the blue wax. The wax was heated and poured into the lake bed giving the impression of water on a sunny day as it began to harden into the contours of the aeroboard containing it. (E6)

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The next stage in the development of the model concerned the foliage and tree stuctures. References were made to the research drawings on displayifor an indication as to the colouring most suitable and the materials that could be used to its best advantage. Discussions and suggestions took place as to the most suitable materials available for the trees. There were subgestions such as, wire, straw, tissue paper, tea bags and wool. All of the ideas were tried out on a small scale as a test to the most suitable solution to the problem. One answer to the problem came from a group of pupils who discovered cushion foam in the form of small coloured pieces. (e7) The foam was immersed in a basin of cold-dye of the colour green and resulted in variety of green tones being produced which could simulate the variety of trees needed. Tooth-picks of a wooden type were used as the tree trunds with the foam stuck on one end and the other end stuck into the aeroboard. The map was refered to when checking the density of trees in dilferent areas while they were being put in place.

All that remained for the completion of the model was the placing and choosing of materials for the additional foliage and shrubs. Tissue paper and pieces of the coloured foam came in usefull in this area. A class was reserved for making the threedimensional objects such as the 'Fusiliers Arch' the bridge over the lake and other momuments in Saint Stephen's Green. Aeroboard was chosen as the material most suitable for rendering the three-dimensional objects as it is easily carved with craft knives. Photographs and drawings were refered to when carving the entrance arch and the bridge as well as scale being an important feature under sonsideration. In carving the bridge and entrance arch the pupils had to come toterms with structure and the architectual qualities involved, this could be entended into lessons on carving techniques using different materials such as plaster, soap and wood. Seeing how the same problem can be solved in a variety of materials can give a greater understanding of these materials.

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CHAPTER THREE:

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"The trees which moves some to tears of joy in the eyes of others only a green thing which stands in the way..... As a man is, so he sees".

William Blake (13)

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While work was proceeding on the reduced model of Saint Stepten's Green, the pupils were involved in discrimination, about creative expression of colour, methods of achieving colours, combinded in visual exploration of the 'Green'. The model bridged the gap between an objective visual exploration of the 'green' through sequential lessons and becoming aware of the 'green' as a place of interaction between a natural environment designed by Man, as an essential alternative to the urban environment, or rather within the urban environment, for the well-being of society.

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By confronting many individual ideas, the model revealed a great deal about pupils common needs and desires. It was a stimulus to creative thought, as the model could be extended and developed in many different directions by the use of different materials etc. It gave them a place to start comparing individual contributions in the context of the whole, new ideas, associations, insights were stimulated as to speculations never thought of before, by the pupils. Questions were asked such as, What would happen if the 'green' area was used for building office blocks or just cemented over ?. What effects would it have on the people who use it as aplace to visit ?, and what would happen if all the natural environment became built-up ?. Such questions were answered in the art class by relating nature ot the problems at hand, using textures from a variety of trees as inspirations involving pattern and shape. Seeing the way a leaf is shaped by its network of veins could be used as inspiration for the shaping of landscape based on the water and rivers in the area.

I have no doubt as to the many possibilites of Saint Stephen's Green, as an example of a natural environment, for the art class. Nature is limitless in its varietes of colours, textures, structures and pure inventivness of design. There is no reason why pupils in the art class, as part of their development, should not end up with forms and structures that are linked to natural law. They are, after all, part and parcel of the world, and it is difficult to evade them. The art room should serve as a kind of creative microscope. Leonardo da Vinci advised artists to contemplate ancient walls, the grain of wood and other natural structures. A girl aged ten wrote.

"The trunk is grey With fawn peeping here and there Silver takes a look out Dark fawn is round the edge. The trunk is like a rhions skin, All bumpy everywhere The bark is blunk and rotting here and there A smell of nature is the smell And a kind of moss grows up. The bole is big and bumpy and gose under the ground The nature smelling trunk Gose up till it stops And branches spred out With green leaves hanging." (14)

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The pupils were faced with a series of situations which called for a problem solving approach as they were the coming together of a team combining the unique ideas of each individual. It required new ways of looking which pinpointed and particularised their visual awareness of growth, rhythems, textures and three-dimensional qualities. Their exploration, and development of visual awareness undertook a new dimension when being transferred into the reduced model, as they then had to come to terms with assorted materials, making decisions as to the best use that could be made of these materials. How could cushion foam be of use in the model ? is an example of a typical problem this was solved in its use as foliage in trees. Then what could be used to form the tree trunks ? and the solution could be tooth-picks of a wooden type. This type of situation results in the testing of hypothetical solutions until one is finally chosen. Each pupil who worked on a seperate piece within the group will always put some part of himself into the work, resulting in the expression of private worlds and values. On the level of model building everyone can express themselves without feeling hampered by a lack of confidence, or best in the class' ideas.

-34-The values of the project in terms of art education were in providing: (1) Increased sensitivity to Colour, Line, Shape, texture, pattern and 3D (2) Increased awareness of the environment. (3) The development of an attitude of critical appraisal of their own work. (4) A critical appraisal of a designed environment. (5) An introduction to the concepts of problem - solving. (6) Provided experience of working as individuals with the context of the group. The pupils I taught this past year are a good example of most young people today in their concern for the environment adn the changes been brought about by the planners and people in the construction business. Near the completion of the model of Saint Stephen's Green the pupils were interested in other areas of the environment such as the 'Phoenix Park' and some urban areas, even makingbreduced models of these. In providing the pupils with the opportunity to investigate the environment of Saint Stephen's Green I believe it made them more aware of the possibilities it presents. Its beauty, its qualities - how it affects us and how we should protect and use it for our artisitic development.









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A1	LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS Artificial lake in Saint Stephen's Green.
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A4	One of two fountains " " "
A5	Superintends lodge " "
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A7	Vein structure in a particular leaf.
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Completed model of Saint Stephen's Green.

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