

***In a nature region (2002/2011)***  
**Matt Rogalsky & Laura J Cameron**

**Field recording, Norfolk Broads, August 23 2002**

*Matt:* This is a recording without edits made during an 'artists and experts' field trip around the Norfolk Broads on August 23 2002. I managed to find half an hour between 1 and 2 PM to sit undisturbed on a deteriorated pier close to the Broadland Conservation Centre at Ranworth Broad, by a channel where pleasure boats made long, slow entrances and exits from left and right. The title of the piece is borrowed from an unpublished essay by David Matless, "Sonic Geography in a Nature Region" which reflects on the place of sound in the Broads. My recording sometimes seems comical to me in its documentation of the almost incessant roaring of boat motors which pass from one speaker to the other in broad stereo (pun intended), in their occupants' quest to enjoy the "natural."

*Laura:* And what is "natural"? Matt's introduction to the Norfolk Broads was through my ongoing research (in collaboration with David Matless) on the historical geography of the concept of "nature" in this region, focusing on the work and life of the early British/Greek ecologist Marietta Pallis, who lived near Hickling. On her marsh, she dug a 3/4 acre swimming pool (1953) into the peat, outlining the shape of a double-headed Byzantine eagle. It is still extant. The digging prompted Pallis to reengage with local ecological debate, related in *The Status of Fen and the Origin of the Norfolk Broads* (1961), giving support to the theory of Joyce Lambert and others concerning the origin of the Broads as a medieval peat diggings. Matt and I initially made an overly ambitious plan for the Broads field trip to design and fly a kite in a similar shape, equipped with a small video camera which would look down on the pool, and Pallis' grave, which is at the heart of the eagle. When we considered the cost and logistics of the kite project, we realized it would have to wait. Unlike this unfinished piece which explores the visual and the "bird's eye view", Matt's recording privileges the aural and the "bird's ear view".

**About the accompanying audio documentation**

This recording is the piece. It has been presented in various contexts, first of all in a large medieval barn in Norfolk, UK, and more recently at the Centre for Art Tapes in Halifax NS.



Waxham Barn, Norfolk UK  
Medieval thatched barn, site of installation, 2004





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