

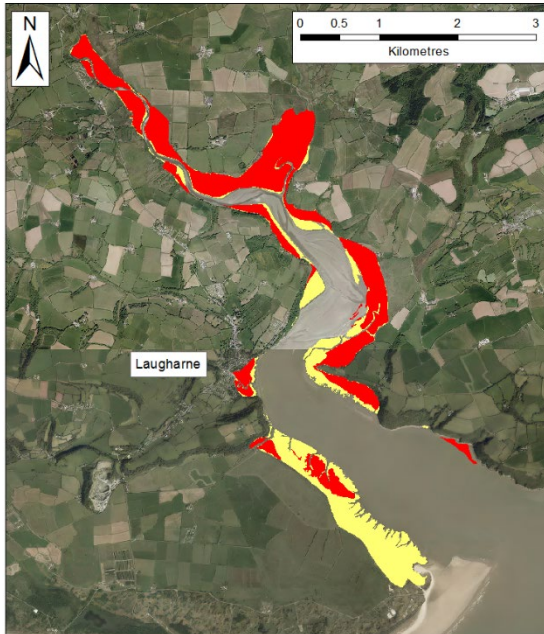
# The place that saltmarsh occupies in the popular psyche

Angus Garbutt

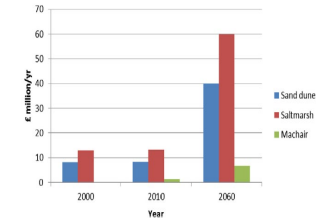
UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Norwegian Church, Cardiff Bay. 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020

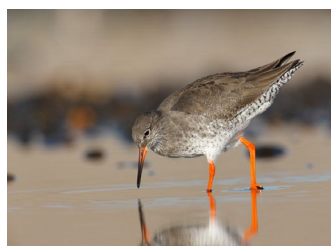
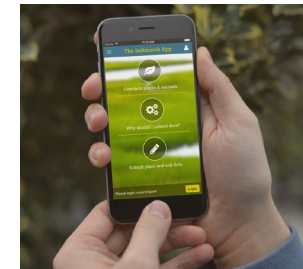
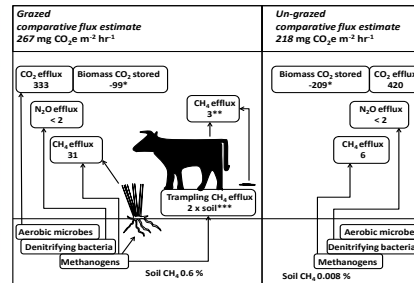
# Saltmarsh science



■ Saltmarsh extent 1947  
■ Saltmarsh extent 2014



Sequestration capacity to 2060 valued at ~£1 billion



# Saltmarsh as a stage set for human drama

Liminal territories, including saltmarsh, are cast in the cultural subconscious as neutral, contested and uncertain territory



Byrhtnoth died in 991 in the battle of Maldon.



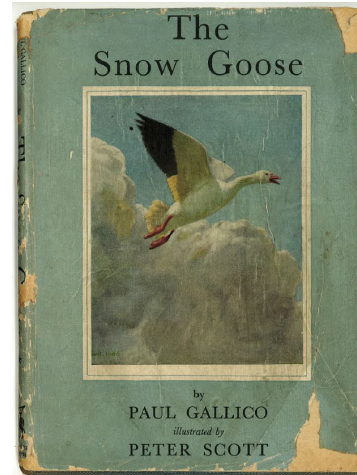
Marsh landscape is both final fastness and refuge



A nation overrun and on the brink

# Saltmarsh in fiction: popular wastelands .....

..... where the extraordinary  
can happen.



# Disease and death



Daniel Defoe

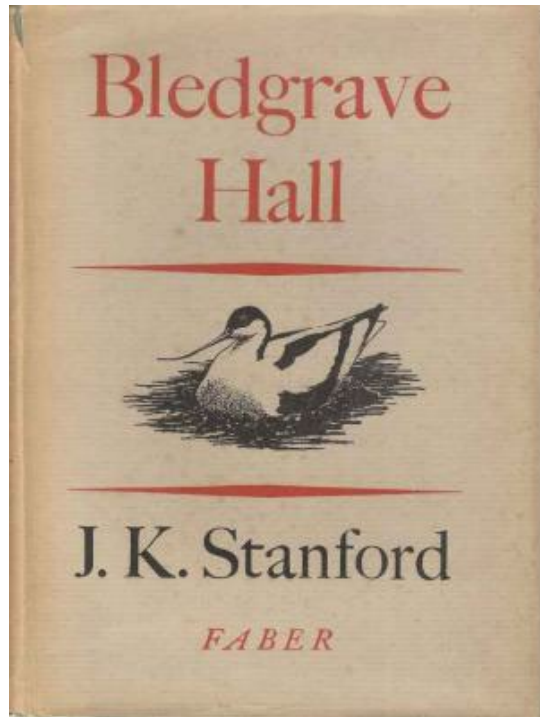
*“This side of the county is rather rich in land, than in inhabitants, occasioned chiefly by the unhealthiness of the air.....*

*“The reason, as a merry fellow told me, who said he had had about a dozen and half of wives, (tho' I found afterwards he fibb'd a little) was this;.....*

*That when they took the young lasses out of the wholesome and fresh air, they were healthy, fresh and clear, and well; but when they came out of their native air into the marshes among the fogs and damps, there they presently chang'd their complexion, got an ague or two, and seldom held it above half a year, or a year at most; and then, said he, we go to the uplands again, and fetch another*

.....

# Wartime, patriotism and celebration of nature

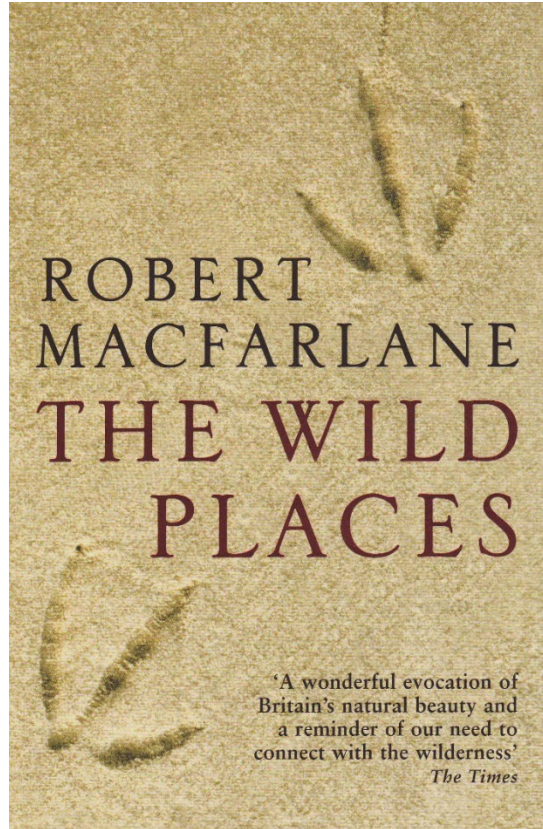


The therapeutic effect of an isolated coastal environment upon combat stressed soldiery is appropriate to this study and remains pertinent today:

Osea Island. A military rehabilitation and recuperation facility after the Iraq war.



# Post-war writing and lyrical ecology



*"I walked south along the seawall for five miles and in all that time I met no-one, and only saw a farmer, turning distantly in his tractor. I stopped to pull fruit from a wild apple tree..... I ate salty leaves of sea-kale and sea-beet, and chewed upon the liquoricey feathery fronds of the abundant fennel. Once, a weasel emerged from the long grass at the foot of the sea wall, looked warily around and made off in its hooping run for cover in the long grass."*

# Health and Well-Being

The 'highs': freedom and meaningfulness



The 'lows': fear and isolation





# Thank you

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