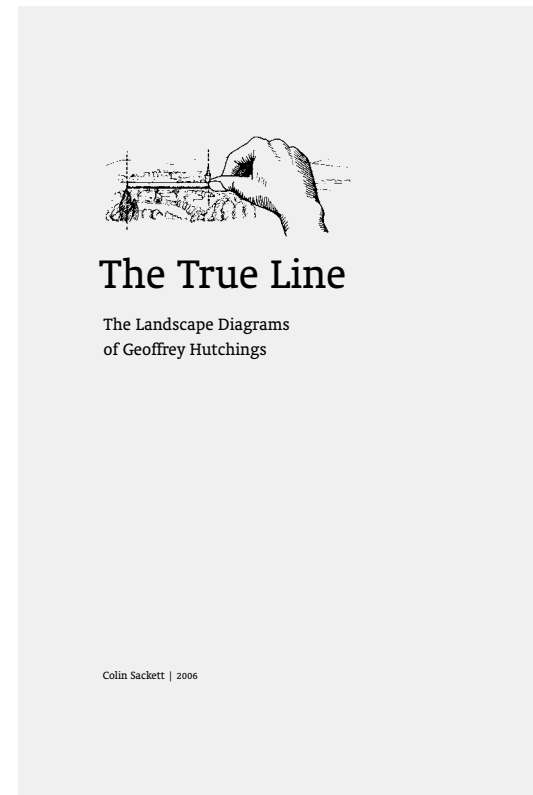
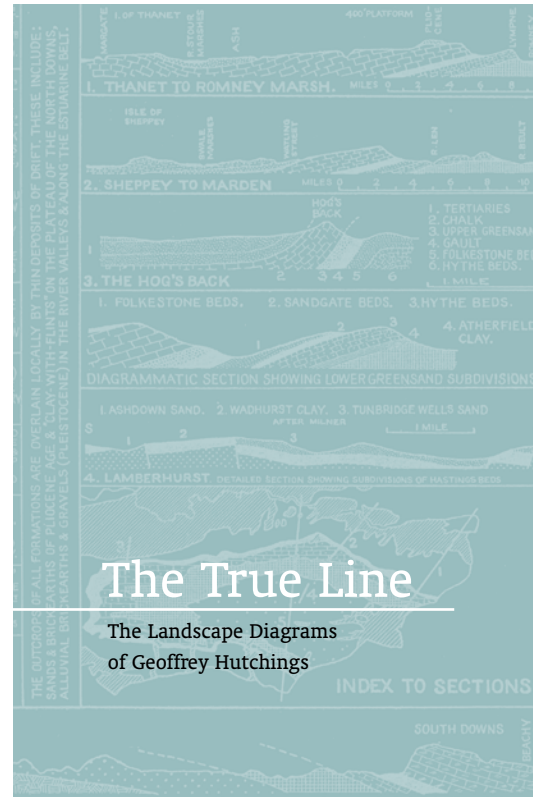


The True Line

The Landscape Diagrams of Geoffrey Hutchings

I first saw these printed diagrams and drawings over thirty years ago, and the particular care and certainty they convey has remained with me since. Hutchings published just a handful of books, all addressing the search for geographical and topographical truths, and for the ways of recording and depicting these truths precisely and economically by the handwritten word and line.

In addition to his contribution to the development of the teaching of field studies in Britain in the late 1940s, with its emphasis on the direct observation and interpretation of landscape, he achieved a masterly ability to 'read' and transcribe a place in a graphic composition—be it a sketch-map or a plan, a tabular profile or a section, or an annotated panoramic drawing. In all of these compositions he integrated line and text in a perfect balance of brevity and detail.



The first borrowing and re-use of Hutchings' drawings is in the panorama model *sidesaddle* (p.46–47) from 1994; and 'Measurement with a pencil held at arm's length' from *An Introduction to Geographical Landscape Drawing* (1955) is amended in the card *Double-check*, 2005–6, (p.139–40). More recently an article on Hutchings, 'Drawing landscape' is in *Unifarm* magazine no.4 (2015).

40pp, 210 x 140, offset on matt-coated cartridge, textured cover board with flaps, sewn paperback; Axminster, 2006.

Biographical Commentary

1900

—Geoffrey Hutchings born at Strood, near Rochester in Kent, his father was a builder and amateur geologist.

1916

—Leaves Rochester Technical Junior School to begin an engineering apprenticeship at the Royal Dockyard Chatham.

1921

—Qualifies and works as an engineering draughtsman for five years. —Joins the Rochester and District Naturalist Society. His early scientific interest was in geology and his first publication was a geological report in the society journal *The Rochester Naturalist*. At a meeting of the society he becomes acquainted with C C Fagg, an exponent of Patrick Goides methods of regional surveying and an outstanding amateur field scientist. —Converted to the educational and scientific objectives of regional surveying as a framework for his own field studies, coinciding with his increasing interest in teaching.

1921–1926

—Teaches science and engineering to evening classes at Medway Technical College. —Studies at Birkbeck College, where he attends the lectures of the eminent geologist C M Davies; later he studies botany and zoology but does not proceed to a qualification. —Meets S W Woodriddle, then Professor of Geography at Birkbeck College. Both Fagg and Woodriddle were to remain lifelong friends and collaborators of Hutchings, and they profoundly influenced his career and geographical thought.

1926

—Returns to Rochester Technical Junior School as a full time teacher, where he experiments with the teaching of biogeographical field studies at a time when science in schools was mainly confined to physics and chemistry. —Continues to apply himself to regional surveying and acquires a detailed topographical knowledge of Kent and other parts of the south east. As Honorary Secretary of the Regional Survey Section of the South East Union of Scientific Societies, edits and writes papers describing the results of regional surveys or investigations into physical geography.

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1947

—Appointed Warden of Juniper Hall Field Study Centre. From the beginning Hutchings identifies himself more closely with geography, and his concept of educational field studies was strongly influenced by S W Woodriddle, then Chairman of the Juniper Hall Committee and later on the CPFS Council. They both conceived of geographical field work as a method of acquiring 'an eye for country', through scientifically observing the countryside and learning to interpret the evolution of landscape. To this process Hutchings contributed his geographical landscape drawing technique derived from his early training as a draughtsman and his ability as an artist.

1949

—He describes his geographical philosophy in an address to the School Nature Study Union: 'The geographer as field naturalist', arguing that the insight of the natural historian combines with that of the physical geographer to explain the inter relationships expressed in the regional division of the earth's surface and the appearance of landscape. For him the study of landscape emphasised the ideas of geography as a field science, and he was critical of what he called 'paper geographers' who culled their facts from documents only.

1952

—Writes *The Book of Box Hill*, an account of the geography, history, flora and fauna of the chalk scarp immediately south of Juniper Hall. The pamphlet is published by the 'Friends of Box Hill', an association formed in the previous year.

1955

—Publishes from Juniper Hall Field Centre the instructional booklet: *An Introduction to Geographical Landscape Drawing (Lowland Country)*.

The central panoramic spread:

'Example of a landscape drawing with selected detail'—looking north east towards Box Hill and the North Downs—is a *tour de force* in the rendering of foreground and distance, and the integration of locative descriptions.

1956

—Retires from Juniper Hall partly due to ill health. Appointed CPFS Senior Tutor in Geography, enabling him to travel to the various field centres to advise the Wardens.

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1928

—Association with the Centre for Rural Education at Hill Farm, Stockbury, in Kent. Collaborates with Christine Pugh in describing the surrounding topography in a privately published book: *Stockbury, a Regional Study in North East Kent*.

—Contributes chapters on topography to two Kent Regional Planning Schemes.

—Collaborates with C C Fagg in writing and illustrating the chapter on 'The South East' in *Great Britain, Essays in Regional Geography*, edited by A C Ogilvie. This work for many years became a standard university textbook. The other contributors were academic geographers, but Fagg and Hutchings were invited on the basis of their practical survey work.

1930

—Collaborates again with Fagg on *An Introduction to Regional Surveying*, a manual for teachers and students. This book did much to introduce geographical fieldwork into the curricula of schools and colleges as an interpretative activity rather than one of scientific research.

1937

—Explains the use of Hill Farm as a training place for teachers and students in regional survey in a manuscript prepared to propose its adoption as a field study centre by a local education authority or the University of London.

1938–1945

—In the Middle East serving as the Principal of Technical Schools, first in Baghdad and then Bahrain.

1943

—Writes to F H C Butler, with whom he had worked before the war on the Executive Council of the School Nature Study Union, enquiring about the possibility of establishing field study centres as part of the envisaged post-war reconstruction programme in education. Hill Farm was referred to as an example of the kind of centre that might be set up. In December, Butler calls the inaugural meeting of the Council for the Promotion of Field Studies, now the Field Studies Council. From the beginning, Hutchings is recognised as a strong candidate for the Wardenship of one of the Field Study Centres that the CPFS begins to establish.

1946

—The National Trust leases Juniper Hall, near Dorking, Surrey to the CPFS, and Fagg is made Honorary Warden until Hutchings can take up the full time post in the following year.

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1957

—Collaborates with S W Woodriddle in producing *London's Countryside*, which became a model for writing up fieldwork excursions in rural areas and was subsequently adopted by numerous geographical publications.

1960

—Five years after publication of his landscape drawing booklet he expands the study into a full-scale primer, *Landscape Drawing*, with an introduction by D I Linton, Professor of Geography at the University of Birmingham and also an exponent of field sketching. Combining the exactitude of observational science with the interpretative power of an artist, the chapters compare photography and drawing, the process of setting out drawings, light and shade, perspective, panoramas, the rendering of mountains, trees and buildings, and guidance on materials. Perhaps more than any other publication arising from the work of the CPFS, it summed up the twin aims of the Council in its efforts to encourage field studies in the widest sense having both scientific and aesthetic objectives. In particular it typified Hutchings' own interdisciplinary interests, which were those of a gifted amateur who could express his scientific observations through a combination of drawing and precise prose.

1964

—Dies after a short illness. His account of a field trip by S W Woodriddle, who had died the previous year, appeared posthumously in *Guide to London Excursions*, published by the 20th International Geographical Congress: '[Hutchings] contribution to the teaching of geography from field observation was as distinctive and remarkable as that of S W Woodriddle. This account, with Hutchings' own maps, stands as a memorial to them both.'

Much of the detail was obtained from the article on Hutchings by Keith Wheeler in *Geographers Bibliographical Studies*, Volume 2 (London, 1978).

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