

## **PREFACE**

The industrialisation of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was based on the twin economic pillars of iron and coal. The one hundred and fifty years between 1750 and 1900 saw massive exploitation of minerals, expansion of industry and the urbanisation of large populations.

Expansion and economic development has been followed by a period of general decline since the 1920s. This overall decline has affected different regions of Europe in a variety of ways. The contraction of the industries has also been accompanied by the concentration of the industries into larger production units. The impact of this contraction and concentration is characterised by scars on the landscape, unemployment for large sections of the population and a reduction in the quality of the environment. The traditional wealth-producing areas of Europe have become centres of decay and decline.

Some regions have been taking positive action for many years, renovating landscapes, replacing worn out infrastructure and creating the environment in which new industries can develop. These initiatives have produced marked improvements in the quality of life for people in those areas and many lessons have been learned by the professional people involved. Innovative techniques for dealing with technically demanding situations have been developed. Models are available which can guide administrations in areas where reclamation work is yet to begin on a significant scale.

Each generation leaves its brief pattern as a record of the interaction between environment and society. Some patterns are benign, others not so. Unless they are attended to, the relics of industrialisation will mar the environment and quality of life of many future generations.

This book is the result of studies undertaken by Richards, Moorehead and Laing Ltd on behalf of the European Commission. The principal

objective was to examine the current 'state of the art' techniques for the restoration of despoiled lands arising from the coal and steel industries. In addition, the results of this work were to be disseminated via technical conferences in Nottingham, Dusseldorf, Milan, Bilbao and Brussels, and by publications, the most important of which is this book.

This book provides technical guidance to aid the process of regeneration in the coal and steel communities of Europe.