Canucks Edgelands
– A Journey
Welsh poets use the word ‘hiraeth’, which describes an anguished sense of separation from home ground, from the land you know and love. It is much deeper than ‘homesickness, but it is a kind of sickness. And the only cure, we’re told, is to go back.
... many of our key venues for sport, music, expos and even religious worship are to be found here.
And so the low-rent edgelands themselves are good places for storage to take root... CCTV and fences and 24-hour security means our things are safe, out in the edgelands, and we can sleep soundly.
Rubbish is part of the texture of edgelands. It can be encountered singly here, often in surreal juxtaposition: a fly-tipped sofa in a corner of a turnip field; an electric cooker rusting under a bridge arch; a mattress anywhere open to the elements.
But underneath this long, extended bridge, this complex of flyovers, is another world ... dark, damp, intense and menacing.
Any private lands abutting edgelands creates a sense of unease and uncertainty for the den-builders who have chosen to occupy it.
Escapees are common, seeds finding their way into a new corridor of opportunity, and blown along the tracks by the timetabled movement of trains.
Approached at ground level, all is absolute fenced-off functionality, and in this way sewage farms also seem to resemble landlocked tanker decks, or chemical refineries, grassed over. ...they toil anonymously in the edgelands, never to be looked at, hidden away from business and residential areas, unvisited.
Listen to them whisper as they pass through you. Take on the cares of the world.
Whether we make them or not, the things we want to buy still come, from places where such things are still made, and when those things come, they come to the edgelands, to be targeted at our shops and homes.
The edgelands are a complex mix of fiercely guarded private ground and common land by default, or by neglect. And the history of these places is held in their wires.
This is the paradox of edgelands. Feral as they are, a non-man’s-land between the watched and documented territories of urban and rural, the edgelands are a passing place, backdrop for countless commuters, shoppers, rail travellers. Seen but unseen. Looked at but not into
Credits

All captions are from the book *EDGELANDS Journeys into England’s True Wilderness* by Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts.