

Agriculture and Art: Cultivating Successful Outcomes

Speaker and Contributor Biographies in conference order.

Morning Speakers:

Martin Stimson has been Dean of Faculty for Business Management and Horticulture for ten years, having previously been Head of Amenity Horticulture with the Faculty, and taking responsibility for the development of the College's plant collection and landscaped grounds. The Faculty is the largest horticultural department in the UK and provides education and training at all vocational and academic levels. Martin specialises in landscape management at undergraduate and postgraduate level and retains a keen interest in the selection, use and management of plants in the landscape, and the management of public 'green space'.
www.writtle.ac.uk

John Vipond worked in farm management before joining Booker Seeds (research and development farm) as Farm and Services Manager in 1975. He joined Writtle College in 1991 and is currently Course Manager for Higher Education Agriculture, teaching specialisms include: arable crop husbandry, farm diversification and agricultural policy issues. John has an MSc in Environment, Science and Society.
www.writtle.ac.uk

David Wright has been Director of Commissions East since 1992 following a feasibility study into the development of public art in the Eastern region for Eastern Arts Board. Commissions East has undertaken numerous projects both within the East of England and elsewhere. These have included both temporary and permanent commissions, the provision of policy advice to a wide range of public and private organisations, residency and fellowship programmes and the devising of a professional development programme for artists. He is currently a Trustee of the Cambridge Architecture and Built Environment Centre and the Hosking Trust, and a Course Advisor for the University of Hertfordshire.
www.commissionseast.org.uk

Ian Hunter is Project Director and lead artist for Littoral Arts Trust. He was Curator and acting Director with the National Art Gallery in New Zealand until 1980. In the early 1980s he set up the ANZART Australia/New Zealand artist exchanges, and after moving to London was employed as Arts Officer at the National Council for Civil Liberties until 1984. He came to live in the North West in 1986 on a pioneering artist residency with Rossendale Groundwork Trust. In 1989-90 he established Littoral/Projects Environment as an arts trust for social and environmental change. Littoral is interested in opening up new critical territory for contemporary art practice in the context of agricultural and rural change, and supports organisations and artists interested in working on arts projects to do with agriculture, farming and other rural issues. Agricultural change and the crisis in farming are important new areas for cultural practice and research, and provide a focus for future cultural debate, critical art practice, and aesthetic discourse.
www.littoral.org.uk

Gillian van de Meer is Chairperson of the Rural Cultural Forum and President of the Women's Food and Farming Union (WFU).
www.wfu.org.uk

Biographies continued:

Kim Jameson has been Cultural Services Manager, Colchester Borough Council since 1999 and is responsible for cultural development in Colchester in order to create a destination of choice for business, residents, students and visitors. She is the Chairperson of the Haven Gateway Partnership Tourism Sub-Group and is studying for an MSc in Management with APU.

www.colchester.gov.uk

Janette Porter is an Environmental Artist who works with a broad range of rural and cityscapes as well as a diverse breadth of community groups. She has developed and implemented projects and environmental workshops with respect to the communities open spaces. Janette is a keen community collaborator who works sensitively with her groups; she develops trusting relationships to ensure high standards of work throughout. www.envart.co.uk (coming soon).

Jim Buchanan has been developing his art practice since graduating in landscape architecture, at Leeds Polytechnic in 1990. He has since become one of the world's leading creators of labyrinths. Recent projects in the USA, Holland and the UK, have born labyrinths of ice, fire, earth, water and light. Current commissions are with several European dance festivals. He lives near Dumfries, South West Scotland, and shares a tenanted farmstead with numerous livestock.

www.landartist.co.uk

Afternoon Discussion Contributors and Speakers:

Nick Jones works freelance in Cumbria. He is involved in both the organic movement and cultural development in rural areas. He set up Eden Arts - a small rural arts development agency. His recent report "Cream of the Crop" (for Arts Council England) highlighted case studies of good practice in arts development in rural areas of northwest England. His current focus is on how the arts can raise awareness of the ecological crisis.

www.njarts.co.uk

Jane Hadley is a dairy farmer's wife, who has diversified into ice cream production at the 100 acre family farm. Following the fall in the price of milk in the late 1990s, Jane became involved with many agricultural committees regarding the future of dairy farming. The result was the creation of their own on site processing facility. 'Farmer Bill's' and 'Hadley's' ice cream brands are now on sale at farm shops and delicatessens in Essex and Suffolk.

www.farmerbills.co.uk

Jane Frost is a textile and environmental artist. She trained in woven and constructed textiles and now works in a wide range of fibres and forms, woven, spun and felted. Materials are often recycled or adapted from other uses such as blankets, jumpers and wire; they also include living plant material, in particular, willow. Because the nature of her work is influenced by and benefits from community projects, she deliberately alternates periods of time spent working with communities with time spent working alone in her studio.

www.FrostArt.co.uk

Biographies continued:

Michael Holcombe is Education Officer at Ashlyns Organic Farm, North Weald in Essex since 2003. He studied Environmental Management as an undergraduate at Northumbria University. After a period in New Mexico working as an Environmental Guide he went on to do post graduate in Environmental Management at Sunderland University. Michael has expanded the education visits programme at the farm hosting over 90 groups. The groups have been from a variety of schools, adult and community groups and visiting foreign tours. Visits range from learning about the basics of organic farming to habitat surveys. During most school breaks he holds day clubs, and two large public open days a year. The farm is open to the public year around and encourages people to visit and look at organic farming at work.

www.ashlyns.co.uk

Peter Jones is a member of the Cuckoo Farm Studios Management Committee and is leading the development of new studio space at Cuckoo Farm. In 1998 he was part of the working party that initiated and organised Colchester and Tendring Open Studios. He continues as the main organiser and is involved with Open Studios on both a regional and national level. As Base2 in partnership with Jayne Knowles, he takes on public commissions, design and consultation work.

www.cuckoofarmstudios.org.uk

Peter Siggers is the farmer at Cuckoo Farm, Colchester. Having worked at Cuckoo Farm for many years when the tenancy became vacant in 1989 he took on the whole farm. Since then he has expanded the farm from 160 to 300 acres. In 1991 he started a project to convert some of the farm buildings into artist's studios. Working with a group of artists the project developed, and with various grants and workers from NACRO, the conversion was completed in a year. Further building conversions for studios are planned.

www.cuckoofarmstudios.org.uk