



VALUING NATURE



WetlandLIFE, epistemological equality and a disciplinary theatre: the experiences of art approaches for valuing nature

13th / 14th November 2018

Valuing Nature Annual Conference, Cardiff



Case studies 12 case studies (3 include in-depth socio-cultural work) coastal managed realignment, arable reversion, urban wetlands, wet woodlands

WetlandLIFE study sites

364 views

SHARE

In-depth case study sites

3 sites

- Somerset Levels
- Bedford Wetland Parks
- Alkborough Flats

Case study sites

9 sites

- North Kent Marshes
- Cambridgeshire Fens
- Arne
- River Otter & Clyst Valley
- Greywell Moors
- Hurcott Pool
- Radipole Lake
- Milton Keynes Urban Wetlands
- WWT Steart Marshes



Conceptual framework

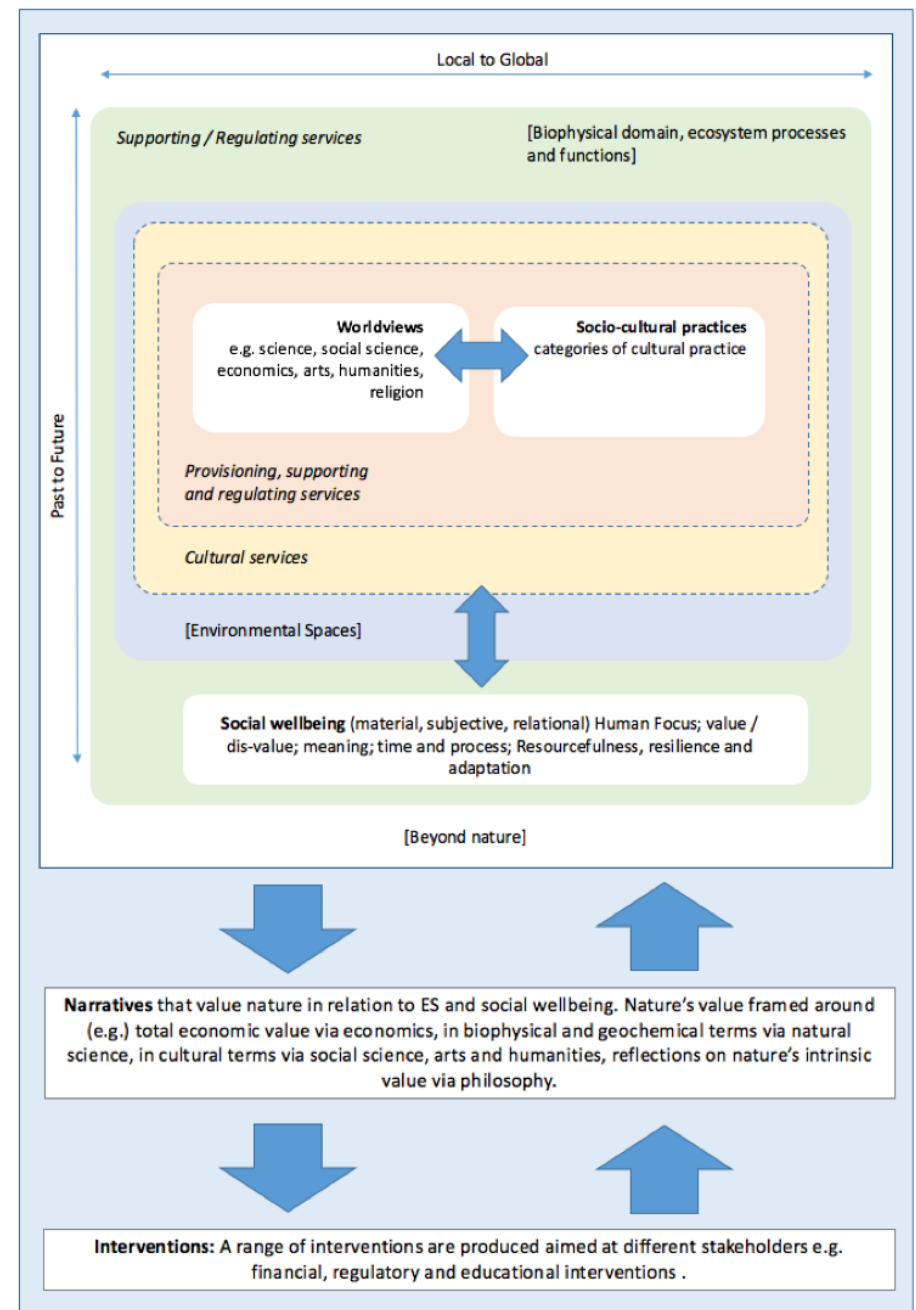


Fig. 5 Nested ecosystem services framework

Taking the bite out of Wetlands



Dr Tim Acott



Professor Robert A. Cheke



Professor Andrew Church



Professor Peter Coates

Taking the bite out of wetlands: managing mosquitoes and the socio-ecological value of wetlands for wellbeing or

University of Greenwich: **Tim Acott, Adriana Ford**
Natural Resource Institute: **Gay Gibson, Frances Hawkes, Bob Cheke**

University of Bristol: **Peter Coates**
Cranfield University: **Anil Graves, Joe Morris**
University of Brighton: **Andrew Church, Neil Ravenscroft**
Public Health England: **Jolyon Medlock, Alex Vaux**
Forest Research: **David Edwards**
Independent artists: **Helmut Lemke, Kerry Morrison, Victoria Leslie**

Art consultant: **Chris Freemantle**

Supported by project partners:

Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust: **Nick Southerton**
Natural England: **Ruth Waters**
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust: **Ruth Cromie**
University of Sheffield: **Allister McGregor**
University of Gloucestershire: **Julie Urquhart**
RSPB: **Michael MacDonald**



Dr David Edwards



Dr Adriana Ford



Chris Freemantle



Dr Mary Gearey



Professor Gabriella Gibson



Dr Anil Graves



Dr Frances Hawkes



Helmut Lemke



Victoria H. Leslie



Dr Jolyon Medlock



Professor Joe Morris



Dr Kerry Morrison



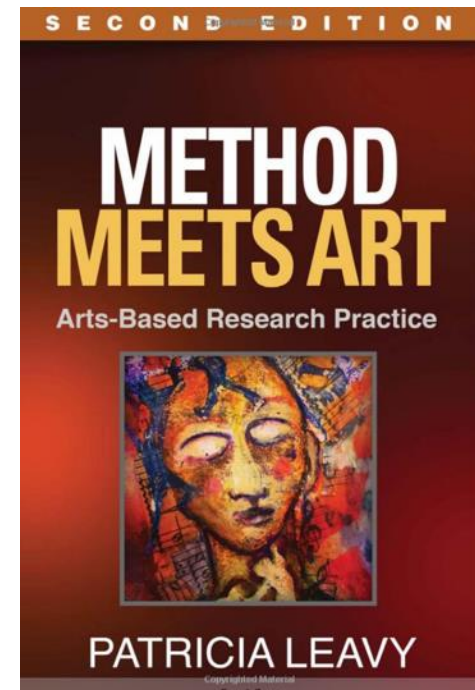
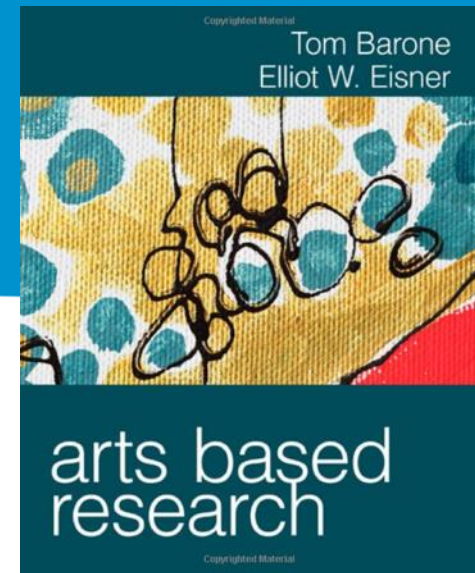
Professor Neil Ravenscroft



Alex Vaux

Arts Based Research (ABR)

- There is an existing discourse
- But this is contentious
- Leads into questions on what is research?
- How do we understand truth?
- How do we understand knowledge?
- How do we understand art?



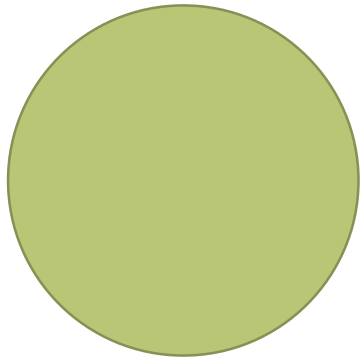
Cautionary note: from Journal of Artistic Research

The publication of this inaugural issue of the Journal for Artistic Research (JAR) coincides with a moment at which the term 'artistic research' has become ubiquitous. For some, this moment represents success, since, particularly in institutional environments, the production of objects, events or concepts is starting to lose its grip on the less tangible, intellectual and open-ended requirements of practice. For others this moment is viewed less favourably and represents an erosion of art's perceived autonomy and efficacy...

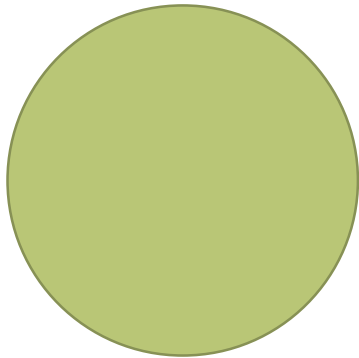
Not knowing what exactly artistic research is, however, is a good thing for a number of reasons.

- Firstly, it reminds us of artistic research's transdisciplinary character, which makes it difficult to predict where and under what circumstances such activity might be located, adding to a sense of institutional openness within the academy and between academic and non-academic sectors.
- Secondly, it emphasises artistic research's transpersonal character, which applies not only to its discourse amongst a community of practitioners, but also to its relationship to materials, forms and contexts.
- Thirdly, it enhances artistic research's transformative nature, making the experience of a change of knowledge count, even as the mode through which this change was evoked remains undefined.
- And finally, it poses an artistic and intellectual challenge, since, due to the lack of approved methods and criteria, no external scaffold can replace the work that is required to inform others that, and how, research has taken place in a given proposition.

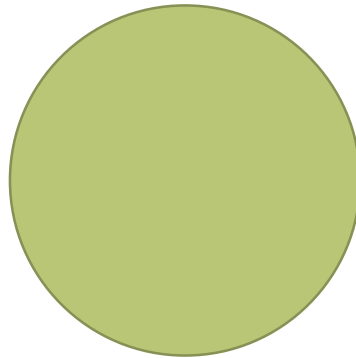
Different ways of knowing the world: A compartmentalised perspective



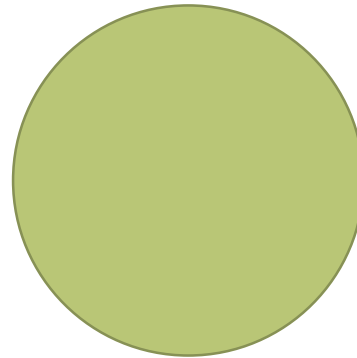
Natural Science:
Positivism, reality
consists of knowable
truths, neutral,
objective research...



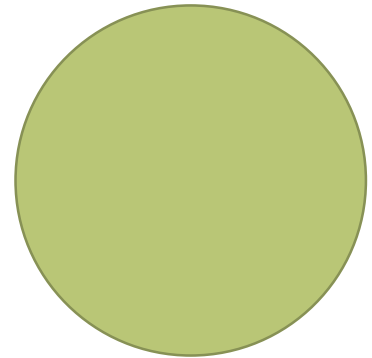
Social Science
(quantitative):
Positivism, reality
consists of knowable
truths, neutral,
objective research...



Social Science
(qualitative): diverse
approaches, words,
pictures, sounds,
phenomenology,
hermeneutics (being in
the world)...



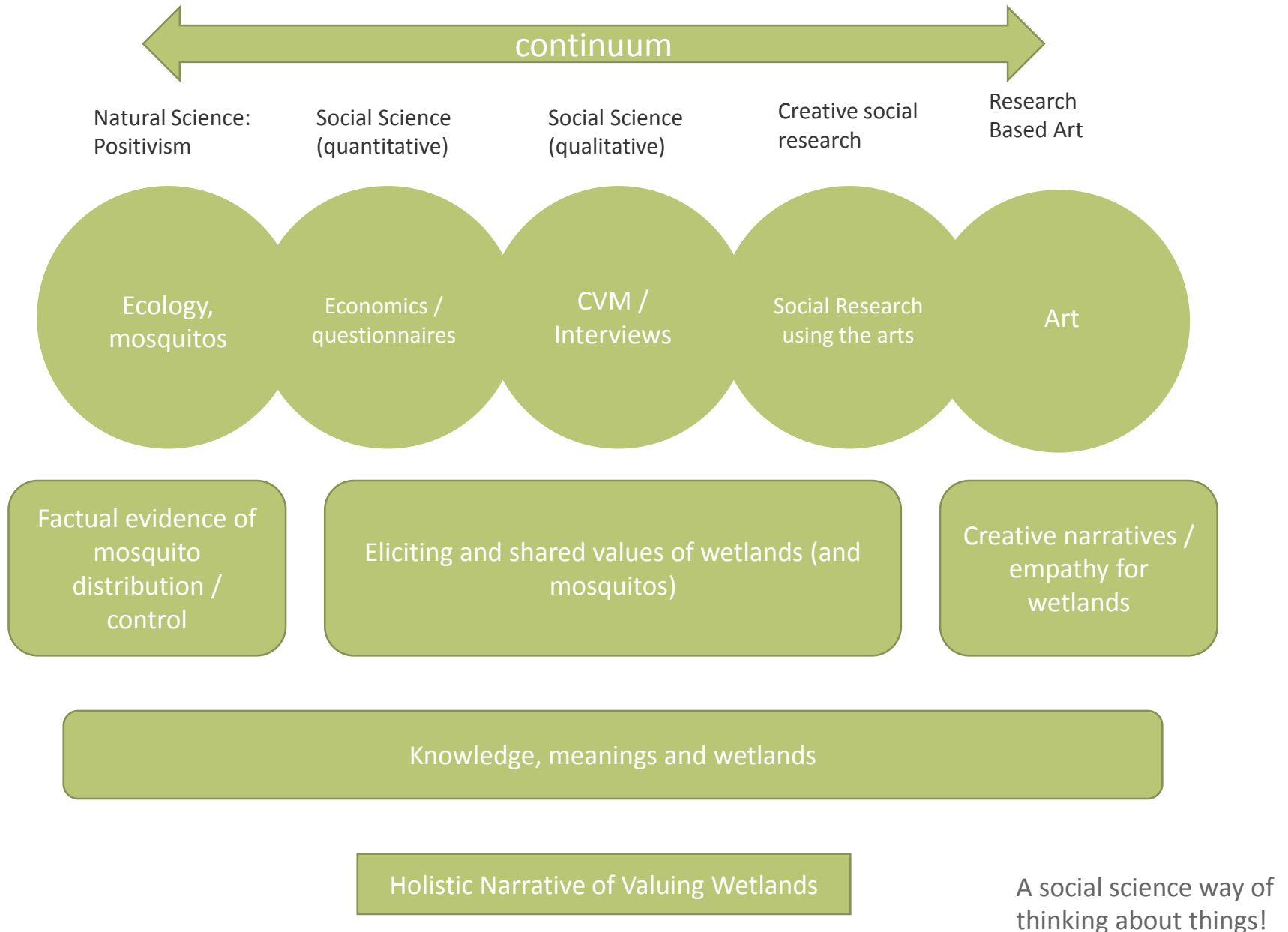
Arts Based Research:
Expressive forms that
enlighten??? Is ABR a
subset of qualitative
research (Leavy,
Barone) or is it a
separate paradigm
with some shared but
separate
characteristics?



Research Based Art:
RBA is the use of
research in any
modality that will
serve as a basis for
creating a work of art

Useful but not sufficient!

Epistemological Equality (WetlandLIFE example so far)



Epistemological Equality (WetlandLIFE example so far)

Perhaps still need a better way of understanding, conceptualising and presenting these relational associations

A different metaphor?

Rhizomes, networks, river, fire???

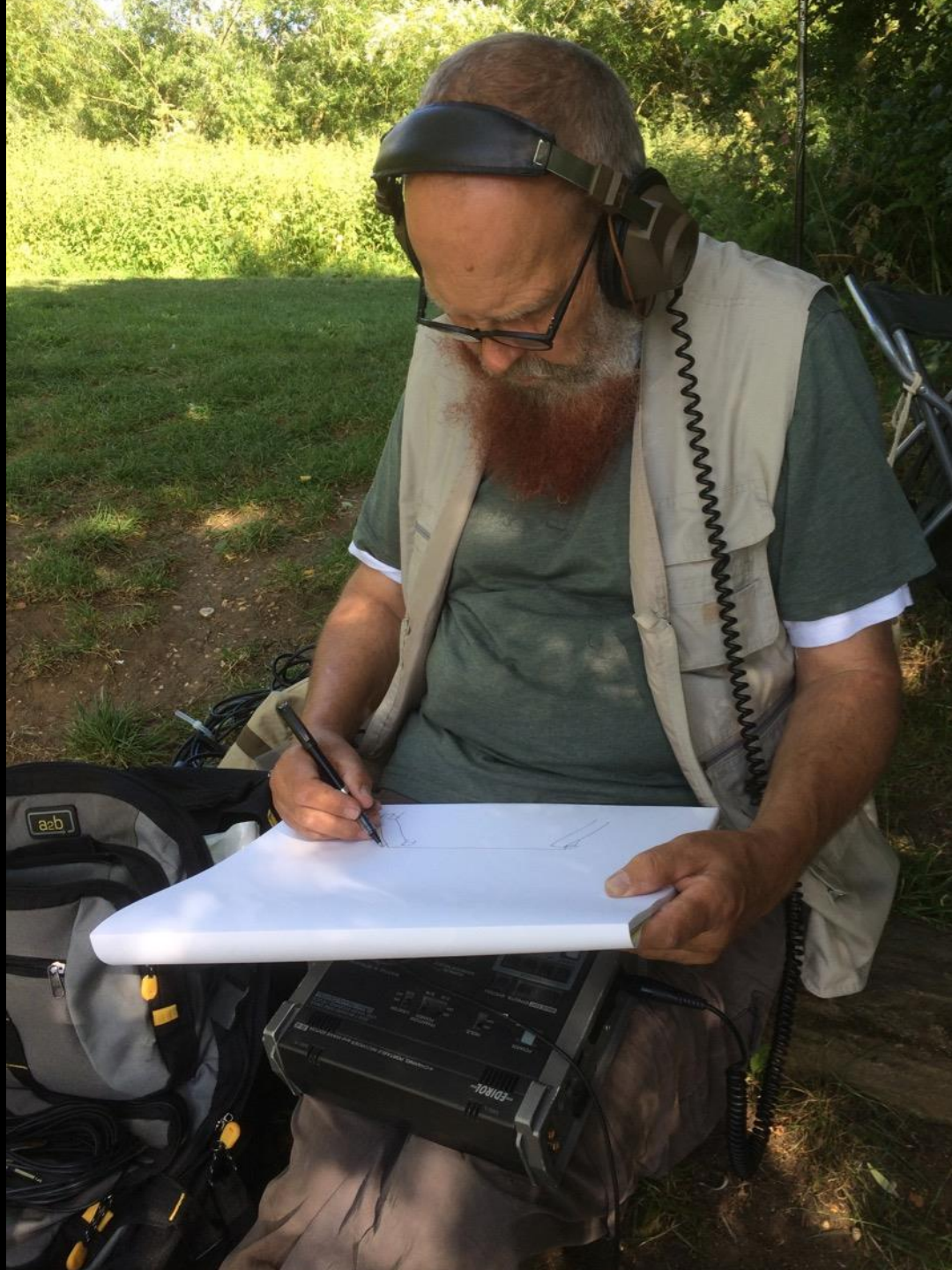
How to emphasise process?

Trying to represent the relational associations between epistemologies, ontologies and narratives of valuing wetlands

Holistic Narrative of Valuing Wetlands

Examples from WetlandLIFE: Kerry Morrison and Helmut Lemke





[A dense, horizontal scribble of black ink, likely representing a signature or a heavily obscured line of text.]



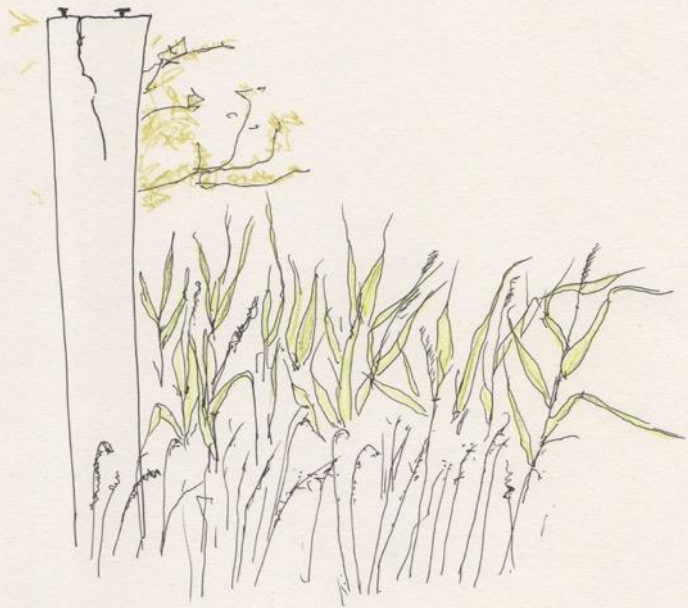




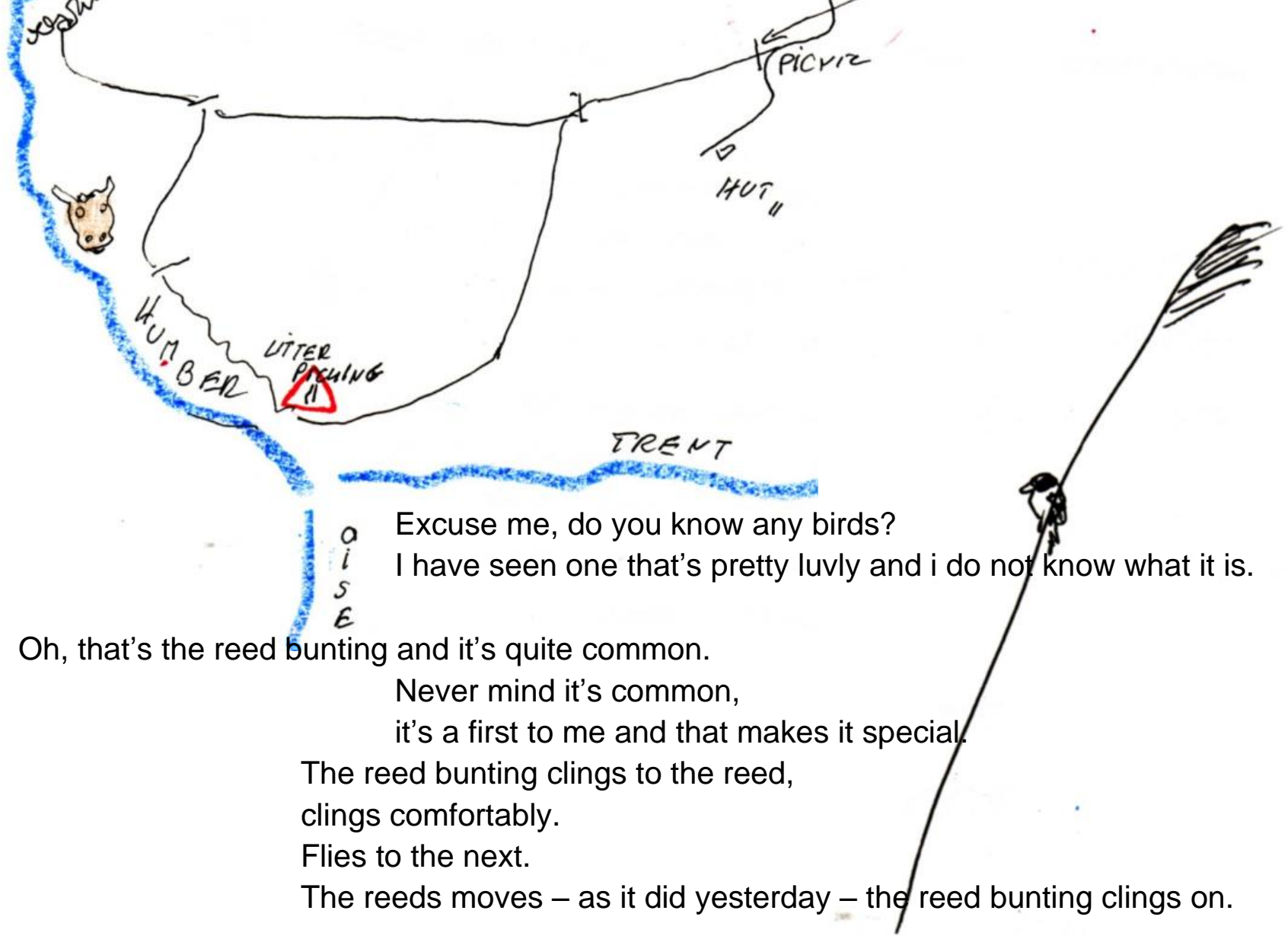
part squished
lying dying
on the paper
an *Anopheles plumbeus*
perhaps

wetlandLIFE 04 06 18 12:52 1
Location: Alkborough Flats
Inquiry: Walk look listen see

sitting
reed warbler chirping
somewhere
in reeds
in front
of me



wetlandLIFE 10 07 18 12:50
Location: Alkborough Flats near bottom hide
Inquiry: (reed) warbler in reeds heard not seen



Excuse me, do you know any birds?

I have seen one that's pretty lovely and I do not know what it is.

Oh, that's the reed bunting and it's quite common.

Never mind it's common,
it's a first to me and that makes it special.

The reed bunting clings to the reed,
clings comfortably.

Flies to the next.

The reeds move – as it did yesterday – the reed bunting clings on.

And that, over there, that's a marsh harrier, the man says. They are out hunting for their young and the male passes the prey to the female in flight and she takes it to the nest to feed the young.



Kerry Morrison and Helmut Lemke
(in their own words written for an
<https://ecoartscotland.net/blog>)

An extract from Kerry Morrison #art4wetlands ...the way I view mosquitoes

Collective behavior became visible
As if in a choreographed dance

The small swarm
To start
Disorderly
Then
As two came into close proximity of one another
Millimeters apart
Their movements synchronized and mirrored
Two darted sideways in unison
Three spiraled upwards at an angle in unison
then together semi circled downwards
Two more spiraled upwards and outwards
then back into the swarm
When all came together
In close proximity
The whole swarm
Spiraled down
As one collective mass
As if a murmuration

Beautiful
Awe-inspiring
Experience
Walking into mosquitos
For the first time
Seeing
Male mosquitos Dance
No longer misunderstood as biting beasts
But seen as dancing males
Moving in murmurations
Waiting for females
to charm with their songs

My vision might not yet be clear
My understanding still murky
and not yet fully informed
Yet
What I see has shifted
And in shifting
My views have expanded

An extract from Helmut Lemke #art4wetlands ...My Role in the WetlandLIFE project

wherever I work I communicate,
that might be with people, with the environment or with (and through) my
material and equipment.

I have learned to understand that my role as an artist is not that of a creator
and maker, but to be promoter and advocate of what is very often already
there and more often neglected, over'heard' and/or over'looked'.

the process of communication and sharing has replaced the obsession with
the product.

therefore when I am asked, "*what (do) you think you can contribute and also
what (do) you actually do to connect, ie your approach to connecting with
the scientists and their research, wetlands and mosquitoes...*" my answer is
quite simple: I do what I always do.

I meet,

I share thoughts
 observations
 impressions
 experiences
 knowledge
 emotions

I wait for shared thoughts
 observations
 impressions
 experiences
 knowledge
 emotions of others

I share through talk,
 listen,
 draw,
 write,
 read,
 sound,
 image
 poetry

some of the above is everyday medium
some is attributed to artists
all is interchangeable.

by being in a collaborative environment, where all participants through
untested communication processes aim to create new, sometimes
unpredicted outcomes those processes will flow on all levels in diverse
directions. wherever communication media (language, image, other) need
translation the collaborators will do so.

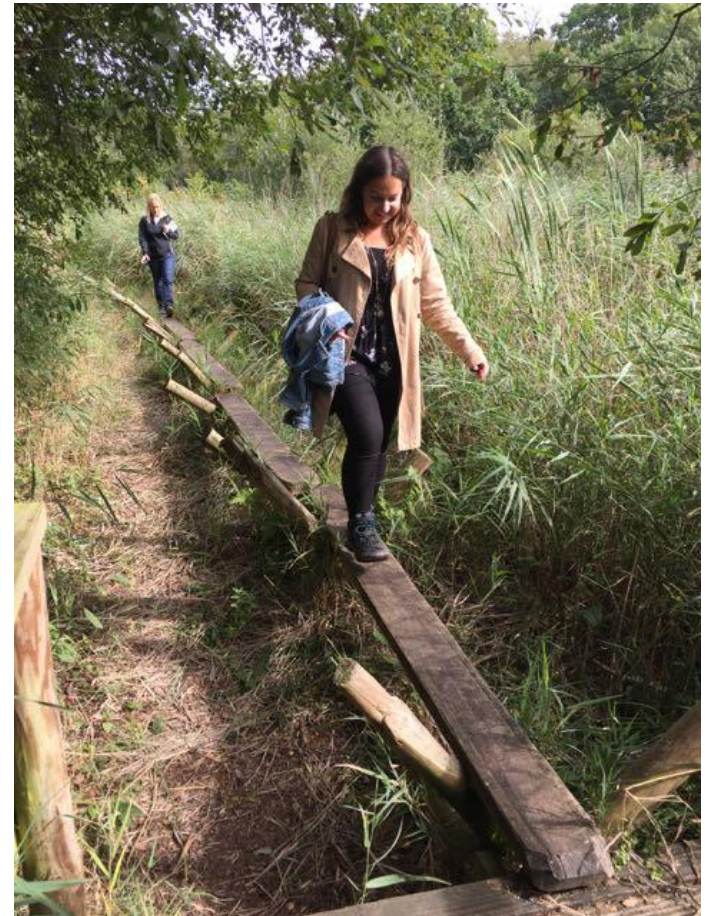
my contribution will be 'me' - where and what aspects of 'me' are useful will
be determined by a collective process and by demands of the project group.

Examples from WetlandLIFE: Victoria Leslie

- Exploring how narratives, both those read by people and those that Victoria writes, helps shape meaning and understanding of places.

“Being part of the WetlandLIFE team in an artistic capacity, I am interested in local storytelling traditions, customs and folklore and am engaging with this material to produce new narratives for the wetlands in writing both fiction and non-fiction. My creative approach usually involves plumbing the depths of the archives but in working with Adriana I have also had access to a wide range of people, keen to talk about their experiences and to share stories belonging to the wetland’s past”.

- ‘Marginal Spaces’ is the first in a series of short stories about wetland palces





<https://www.facebook.com/humansofthelevels/photos/a.1621442547941616/1909143875838147/?type=3&theater>



Hide and Seek initiative

Cross-site project designed to encourage wetland visitors to share stories they associate with the wetlands. This could include personal stories, oral histories, snippets of folklore, as well as narratives they consume about the landscape in the way of both fiction and non-fiction.

This would see the bird hides on various sites transformed into story repositories, where book recommendations are displayed, alongside postcard-sized narratives that visitors have volunteered to share.

Possible development would include content for our website and potential collaborators. And to provide inspiring spaces for creative workshops.





In Search of Squelch

Near it, but not part of it
On it, but not within it
Slow, imperceptible flow
Surface ruffling, hidden depth
Immobile lily pads
Not floating down to the Severn Sea
Water softened wood rot
Damp, gentle, tranquil decay
Windless rain and rainless wind
Frogs growing smaller (shrinking?)
Turning from yellowish green to chestnut brown
Not so solid, squishy realities
Trying to tug off a boot
Peat caked right leg into the bog, up to the knee
Coal-black peat like wet, heaving, heavy brownie mix
Heavenly substance
Tiny brown froglet nestled on bright, pea-green
duckweed
Lovely scum
Gently pressed down with a firm palm, oozes clear
liquid
Subtle but dispiriting rise up the path to a glade of
dryness
I dry out too quickly, too easily
Now, happily, I'm rewetted, catching the glance of two
arrowed frogs eye-balling me
Unblinkingly as I write hunkered down just above their
and our water.

*[Written at RSPB Ham Wall, from notes taken on and around
the Sweet Track at Shapwick Heath NNR, 18 September 2018]*

Examples from WetlandLIFE: Frances Hawkes



BRITISH
ECOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

DO MOSQUITOES REALLY SUCK?!

Play 'Mosquito Jenga' to see how mosquitoes support the food chain

Mosquitoes can be a bit of a nuisance! But they are actually an important part of the ecosystem. They are at the foundation of the food chain, so lots of other animals depend on them.



Male mosquitoes have the most sensitive hearing of any insect. They use this incredible sense to find females in mating swarms, honing in on their wingbeats.



Mosquito larvae develop in water and pupate into a free-flying adult form. Frogs, fish and other insects will feed on mosquito larvae, while birds and bats eat adult mosquitoes.

There is a tropical genera of mosquitoes, *Toxorhynchites*, that does not bite at all. Their aquatic larvae feed on the larvae of other mosquito species, while adults feed on nectar and fruit juices.

The Western Mosquitofish, *Gambusia affinis* or *gambezi*, found in North America, can eat large numbers of mosquito larvae as its main food source. They are often used to control mosquitos in domestic ponds and pools.

There are over 3,500 species of mosquitoes worldwide and they are found on every continent on Earth, except Antarctica.

Did you know, male mosquitoes do not bite, but play a role in pollination! They feed only on plant nectar, saps, and juice from fallen fruit. It's the females that bite as they also feed on animal blood.



Examples from WetlandLIFE: Adriana Ford and Community Voice Method



Examples from WetlandLIFE: Tim Acott + team WetlandLIFE Photo Essay

Wetland Reflections meaningful places

Expansive Places
Intimate Places
Past Places
Liminal Places
Places for Others
Places of Remembrance
Constructed Places
Places of Work
Places of Leisure
Places of the Imagination



