

# **The DEAD GOOD** SOURCE GUIDE:

the Fox and  
Gill Archive

## PARTICIPATORY SOCIALISM THROUGH ARTS ENGAGEMENT

by **Jude  
Hutchen**



# **The DEAD GOOD Source Guide:**

## **The Fox and Gill Archive**



### **Participatory Socialism through Arts Engagement**

**by Jude Hutchen**

Visual Artist, Community Facilitator and Time Traveller  
[www.judehutchen.co.uk](http://www.judehutchen.co.uk)

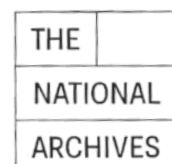
Visual artist Jude Hutchen has a background in art psychotherapy, arts development and community research, and specialises in community and participatory projects. As part of the Archives Revealed programme in 2026 she was commissioned to deliver a series of creative activities for the Alive community Gardening Group at Wellspring Settlement in Barton Hill, East Bristol. These were to be inspired by the John Fox and Sue Gill Archive located at the University of Bristol Theatre Collection. This paper presents her research and its application to the 'Dead Good Garden' project which is documented in the booklet 'Pathological Optimists - A Guide To A Dead Good Garden' available in the Archive.

# Source Guides at the Theatre Collection

This is the first of a series of alternative and personal guides by a range of artists, creative thinkers and researchers to help users navigate and engage with the collections. These guides will enable Theatre Collection users to experience its collections in new ways and highlight materials that they may not otherwise come across. Guides may explore a specific topic or theme across several collections, or provide a focus for one or two named collections. The aim is for the guides to become reference points that encourage and inspire future engagement.

This guide has been commissioned as part of "Dead Good Guides: The John Fox and Sue Gill Archive Project" funded by Archives Revealed, a partnership between National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, The Wolfson Foundation and The National Archives.

This guide was written and designed by Jude Hutchen in 2026.



# **Contents**

|                                                                   |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Source Guides at the Theatre Collection</b>                    | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>1. Introduction</b>                                            | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>2. The Power of Creativity</b>                                 | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>3. The Archives Revealed Commission</b>                        | <b>11</b> |
| <b>4. Cultural Activism - 'participatory Socialism'</b>           | <b>12</b> |
| <b>5. A New Role For The Artist</b>                               | <b>15</b> |
| <b>*Intermission*</b>                                             | <b>21</b> |
| <b>6. Rites of Passage</b>                                        | <b>24</b> |
| <b>7. Time Travelling</b>                                         | <b>26</b> |
| <b>8. The Time Capsule</b>                                        | <b>28</b> |
| <b>9. The conversation I would like to have had with John Fox</b> | <b>33</b> |
| <b>Illustrations</b>                                              | <b>42</b> |
| <b>References</b>                                                 | <b>45</b> |

# 1. Introduction

In February 2026 I was commissioned to design and facilitate creative workshops with a local community Gardening Group inspired by the values and activities of the Fox and Gill Archive housed at the University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

In 1968 John Fox and Sue Gill were amongst the founders of the experimental and radical theatre company 'Welfare State International', named in reference to their belief that art should be available for everyone on the same basis as health and education. Meeting in Bradford the couple and collaborators moved to Burnley and into vehicles on a disused rubbish tip to afford a creative and alternative life with regular touring - including an epic convoy tour of 'The Loves, Lives and Murders of Lancelot Quail' along ley-lines in the South West of England. In the early 1980s they moved to Barrow-in-Furness then Ulverston, settling their families in houses and school and continuing to develop creative projects and performance with local communities. For decades the company, a changing collection of multi-skilled individuals, pioneered ambitious large-scale, site-specific and immersive performances featuring dynamic pyrotechnics, huge puppets, lantern parades and political messaging. This included the epic shows 'Parliament in Flames' (1976-81), 'Raising the Titanic' (1983) and 'The Golden Submarine' (1990) as well as establishing the Ulverston Lantern Festival and presenting the enormous lantern parade for Glasgow's City of Culture called 'All Lit Up' (1990).

In 2006 John and Sue stepped away from Welfare State International to continue their work under the banner of 'Dead Good Guides'. They moved to the Beach Hut on Morecambe Bay, continuing to produce artist books and deliver community projects including the three year 'Weather Station' (2008-2011) creative environmental programme, with botanic observations of micro-organisms or 'Critters' (2010), and followed by 'Wilderness' (2014-15) elemental artist residencies, apprenticeships and public engagement activities. They also developed their 'Rites of Passage' practice, designing personalised secular rituals for weddings, naming ceremonies, funerals and

other important occasions. They continued to deliver educational courses on ceremonial practice as well as other art skills, including pyrotechnics, lantern and puppet making, sharing their experience and approach to support individual development and social creativity as a political practice. The Fox and Gill Archive, supported by Archives Revealed funding, is located in the University of Bristol Theatre Collection (along with the Welfare State International Archive) and offers public access to diverse artefacts generated during this phase of their artistic career.

This Source Guide is hopefully the first of many by artists and researchers sharing their experience of working with the Theatre Collection's archives. Borrowing the words of philosopher Alfred Korzybski, this is my personal '*map through the territory*'<sup>1</sup> of the Archive - or perhaps it is a travel guide - but it certainly does not describe the whole landscape. I am aware that John Fox's voice is far stronger in my research. I connect with his artistic output as a fellow print maker but a more likely explanation is that at the time of research his material was simply more available. My apologies to Sue Gill, whose creativity, vision and commitment to the projects is just as impressive. Her biography and notebooks have now also been catalogued and are available for deeper research. There are far more jewels to be found in this archive with different eyes and more time.

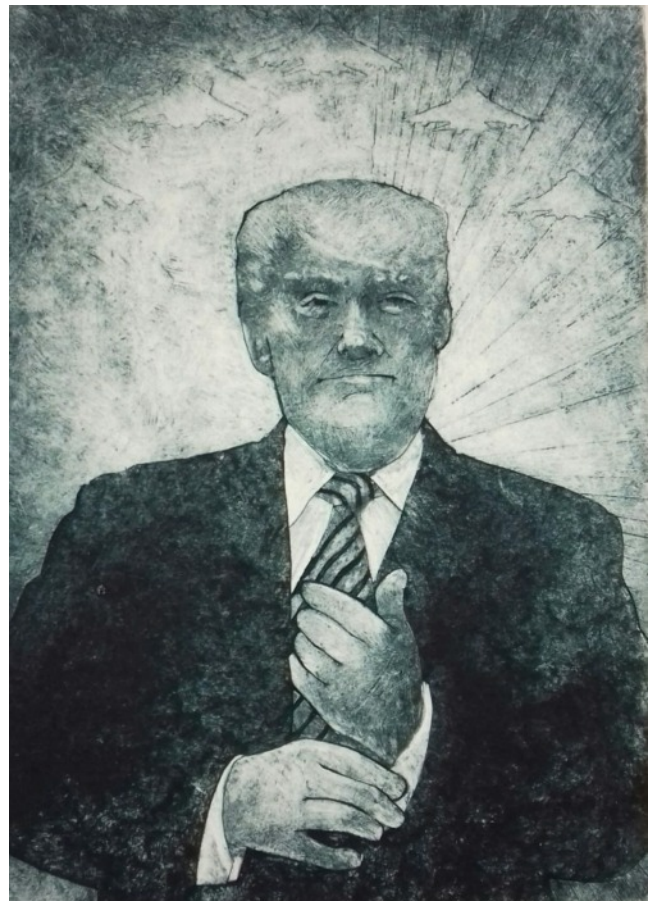
---

<sup>1</sup> Korzybski, A. (1933) 'Science and sanity: an introduction to non Aristotelian Systems and general semantics'. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Lancaster, P.A., New York,: International Non-Aristotelian Library Pub. Co.

## 2. The Power of Creativity

And who am I? I am a visual artist, painter, designer, bookmaker and 'impatient' print maker who brings visibility to social and political themes. I often work from archival material or historic research to explore themes such as UK militarism and culture, commemoration of World War One, conscientious objection, refugee migration, and dictatorship. I am interested in creating artwork which invites engagement with difficult issues, creating a space for reflection, discussion and hopefully energy for change. I also design and deliver or co-produce creative projects with communities in support of personal growth, inclusion, exchange as well as exploration around specific social topics. I am reluctant to use the term 'socially engaged' to describe my practice, as its meaning has been diluted, now a common requirement for most funders. I prefer 'Artist Activist', and recognise the value of art making:

- as an opportunity to build confidence, health, connection, ambition and identity for the individual, groups and wider community
- as a means to recognise and articulate injustice, as well as celebrate triumphs and strengths
- to amplify the voices of the minoritised to challenge the status quo
- for imagining together how to improve our world



1. Small Hands, Cold Heart (2018), collograph

More recently I have added 'sharing joy' to my community practice, as a galvanising experience which grows connection, resilience and hope in an era of anxiety and confusion. In parallel my facilitation career has also grown into more performative engagement activities. At the 'World Thumb Wrestling Competition', a fun, inclusive and wildly competitive event, you would be invited to don or make a mini thumb costume, create your wrestler name and battle it out in a mini wrestling ring to the cheers and hilarity of a crowd of fellow participants, compèred by myself in a badly stuffed muscle suit.

... how did I get here?



2. World Thumb Wrestling Competition, SPACE Bristol (2015)

The power of creativity to change lives was fairly bluntly demonstrated to me during my time working in post war Bosnia Herzegovina (1995 - 2002). I was deeply moved by the disintegration of former Yugoslavia, a diverse Federation whose Socialism had seemed to be so effective yet which imploded into horrific localised violence along ethnic lines in

1991. As a student I was heavily involved with campaigning for the arms embargo to Bosnia to be lifted and ethnic cleansing by the larger nation states Serbia and Croatia in the carve up of former Yugoslavia to be halted and recognised as war crimes. I explored different ways to contribute, including delivering humanitarian aid by truck to students in a multi-ethnic university and undertaking human rights and reconciliation work in the heavily damaged Krajina and Eastern Slavonia regions of Croatia. In 1997 I was asked to translate - as I was a proficient Serbo Croat speaker by then with detailed knowledge of the area - for a convoy of DJs and sound systems travelling from the UK, touring dance events across former



3. Freedom Festival, Tuzla, Bosnia (1996)

Yugoslavia. Cultural life had virtually collapsed during the war, communities had been violently split so social activity was tense if not unsafe and the threat of danger was never far. However I witnessed young people re-find freedom, connection and empowerment on a dance floor. The impact on their confidence, nervous systems and sense of hope was tangible.

I committed to developing my own routes to supporting creativity and building dialogue as a pathway through the postwar wreckage. Between 1998-2000 I joined a dedicated team of local staff and foreign volunteers at 'Young Bridge', to coordinate cross community art activities aimed at supporting reconciliation between teenagers in the very damaged and still divided town of Mostar in South Bosnia Herzegovina. I set up a sculpture studio group and on practically no budget we developed as a loose collective, exploring ideas, creating work from found objects, making installations and taking photographs in destroyed buildings and occasionally exhibiting work publicly. During this time there were many devastating teen suicides, mental breakdowns from extreme anxiety and despair along with parental deaths as well as ongoing police intimidation and pressure from residents seeking to maintain divisions. The art activities aimed to offer neutrality, opportunities to build individual identity beyond nationalism, process trauma, connect young people across ethnic divides, support confidence in others and start to imagine the future.

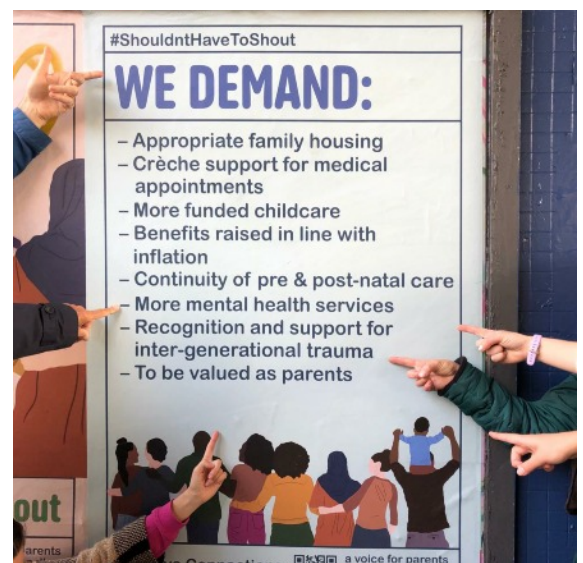
Weighed down by vicarious trauma and regular burnouts I returned to the UK and took a step away from the political towards the psychological. I trained as an Art Psychotherapist in Edinburgh, specialising in group work, learning theory and approaches for working particularly with trauma and mental



4. 'Blago Ti Pameti/ Smart Thinking' sculpture recycling project, Mostar, Bosnia Herzegovina (2000), procession across the former front line. Photo credit: Luke Jerram.

health issues. This provided frameworks and skills for future community facilitation which require relationships of trust, containment, conflict resolution and clear boundaries. After several years I took a break, and ran away to the circus to be a middle manager of a training and performance venue for Circomedia in Bristol. It was a fantastic experience, immersed in student and professional physical theatre, dance, contemporary circus and clowning which no doubt informed my own character based performance roles. It was also my introduction to Welfare State International.

In 2019 I returned to community development joining Wellspring Settlement in the diverse and deprived neighbourhood of Barton Hill in East Bristol. In partnership with Professor Josie McLellan at the University of Bristol we developed projects blending my artist facilitation skills with psycho-dynamic group work and co-produced research within an Assets Based Community Development framework. This offered meaningful creative activities to engage and amplify minority voices around key social inequalities, including parenting during the pandemic, health creation and community health resources. This safe space for reflection, personal story sharing and valuing individual creativity also built trust and community networks. Alongside policy papers and reports for key decision makers we created billboard campaigns, walking tours, short films for communities to be heard and their struggles and triumphs to be publicly acknowledged.



5. 'Shouldn't Have To Shout To Be Heard' Creative Research into Parenting during the pandemic for worst affected families, placards and poster campaign, Bristol (2021)

### **3. The Archives Revealed Commission**

The Fox and Gill Archives Revealed Artist Commission brief:

*The University of Bristol presents an exciting opportunity for an artist to co-create and deliver a series of up to 6 creative workshops fostering creativity and social connection inspired by the Fox and Gill Archive.*

The workshops were to be delivered in collaboration with the Gardening Group run by Alive, a social and therapeutic horticulture project for adults experiencing a range of needs including social isolation, physical and mental health challenges, learning disabilities, addiction recovery as well as low quality and overcrowded housing, economic struggles, caring responsibilities and other frustrations navigating the contemporary world. The group meets weekly at the Micro-Settlement, a community engagement space run by the University of Bristol at Wellspring Settlement. It was a setting and neighbourhood I was very familiar with but my curiosity was piqued by how to bridge the creative expectations of the commission with participants attending to garden rather than make artwork?

The project was short and to be started quickly. I was faced with many questions: what could be offered in such a short time frame? How to entice people into art making? How much relationship and trust building which supports participation would be possible? The group was pre-existing the commission and would continue beyond my role. I would be a temporary guest - how could I integrate into their culture? Where was the opportunity for discussion and co-producing the activities? My knowledge of Fox and Gill was also mostly from their earlier Welfare State International immersive outdoor performances, but pyrotechnics, parades and large puppet or lantern making wouldn't work in this setting or for this particular population.

What could the Archive offer me as inspiration?

## 4. Cultural Activism - 'participatory Socialism'

Daunted by over 200,000 items in the Archive I pick up 'Eyes on Stalks' (2002) as a first step. This is John Fox's autobiography which he evidently enjoyed writing as it is filled with juicy phrases and hearty descriptions of how he, Sue and fellow artists shifted emphasis from experimental theatre into community engagement to fulfil their political and artistic ambitions. It presents the framework of a manifesto for 'participatory Socialism' (Fox, Eyes on Stalks, p.3) where art is for everyone, as a civic right and part of the social fabric of a nation '*as accessible as dentures, and coffins*' (p.3). Art is presented as key to our existential liberty and health:

*[to] open up our consciousness, stimulate and liberate the imagination so that people can dream their own dreams and make their own journeys and feel better* (Eyes on Stalks, p.35).

His critique of culture is familiar for its time but sadly still stands for our contemporary crisis of community: the pervasiveness of social isolation, particularly post Covid, and the increasingly dominant role of technology, particularly screens, in promoting '*solo experiences with one way communication*' (p.33). I later find a comedic and satirical list of concerns 'Now' and 'Then' in 'The Fishing Hut' postcard set II (2008)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Sets of illustrated postcards by John and daughter Hannah of colourful seaside cartoons featuring the nuclear submarines made in Barrow-in-Furness.

| THE WAY IT GOES                           |                        | Set two: 9                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| THEN                                      | NOW                    |                                                                                    |
| Family in community                       | Social Media           |                                                                                    |
| Poverty                                   | Benefits system        |                                                                                    |
| Seasonal rhythm                           | Foreign holidays       |                                                                                    |
| Killing for food                          | Ready meals            |                                                                                    |
| Knowledge of nature                       | TV Documentaries       |                                                                                    |
| Elemental physical work                   | Leisure                |                                                                                    |
| Children playing outside                  | Anxiety                |                                                                                    |
| TB                                        | Health Service.        |                                                                                    |
| Manual housework                          | Domestic machines      |                                                                                    |
| Hands on skills                           | Depression             |                                                                                    |
| Work and play entwined                    | Internet               |                                                                                    |
| Malnutrition                              | Food Banks             |                                                                                    |
| Cold houses                               | Central heating        |                                                                                    |
| Self sufficiency                          | Bureaucracy            |                                                                                    |
| Austerity                                 | Obesity                |                                                                                    |
| Tradition                                 | Nail bars              |                                                                                    |
| Life expectancy:<br>65                    | Life expectancy:<br>80 |                                                                                    |
| THE FISHING HUT<br>Hannah Fox<br>John Fox |                        | Morecambe Bay Partnership<br>www.hannahonthehill.co.uk<br>www.deadgoodguides.co.uk |

6. The Way It Goes (2008), postcard, Fox and Gill Archive

John sets out his view of state oppression, his version of Žižek's concept of 'objective violence' (Žižek, S., 2009), where citizens:

*try to grow ourselves and rear our families while our imagination and abilities are continually bombarded, controlled and undervalued by outside agencies* (Eyes on Stalks, p.xiv).

He describes the need for inspiring experiences which are non-digital, hand-crafted, more contemplative and spiritual to combat this assault:

*there is also a need to demonstrate accessible beauty and stillness directly at close quarters; to take audiences away from frenetic hype to slow them down, to reveal hand-made surprises at first-hand* (Eyes on Stalks, p.35).

Performing outside of theatres was a radical early commitment by Welfare State International to democratise theatre and fits well within the model of 'Cultural Activism' in the activist guide 'Do It Yourself: a Handbook for Changing Our World' (2007, p.172) 'where art, activism, performance and politics meet'. The Trapeze Collective authors locate artistic production within the spectrum of activism, recognising its great potential for illustrating injustice, building solidarity and resistance, challenging power structures and disarming dominance:

*to take back control of how our webs of meaning, value systems, beliefs, art and literature, everything, are created and disseminated* (p.173).

In 'Eyes on Stalks' I am moved by John's raw critique of his company's work and role within culture. He describes 'spectacle' (p.6), even politically critical spectacle, as being diminished when absorbed into the capitalist consumer machine: when citizens are passively moved, dazzled and distracted rather than galvanised to action. Recognising the anarchic challenge of their early experimental theatre was not landing in the same manner he describes the need to adapt, reinvent and to engage with 'the real world' (p.xiv).

According to long term artistic collaborators Tony Coult and Baz Kershaw in 'Engineers of the Imagination' (1983) the choice to move to Barrow-in-

Furness was highly political, as a low resourced area of intense deprivation with limited, low paid and high risk employment building Trident nuclear submarines for BAE Systems. In John's words:

*'radical art cannot be escapist, but has to engage with the socio-economic and geopolitical reality of our time.'*

(Theatre Quarterly online quoted at Unfinished Histories (2026)

*The Trials of Lancelot Quail - Unfinished Histories.* Available at:

<https://unfinishedhistories.com/history/companies/welfare-state-international/the-trials-of-lancelot-quail/>

(Accessed: 10 September 2026).

It reflected their commitment to a new phase of work *'stimulating the desire for creative outlets of 'ordinary' people'* (Coult & Kershaw, Engineers of the Imagination, p.206) through grassroots engagement around social issues aimed at supporting greater autonomy from state control and redressing the subjugation of the workforce. It was also no doubt a cheaper part of the country where the network of artists could *'afford to be radical'* (Fox, Eyes on Stalks, p.4).

I put my pencil down and reflect for a moment - I can see so many parallels between our values and ambitions. We cross over directly at the point that Welfare State International's emphasis on performance shifts to engagement, bringing art a step closer from being offered outside *for* communities to developing projects *with* communities. They are building *'a role for art that weave[s] it more fully into our lives, allowing us to be participants rather than spectators'* (Dead Good Guides, New Ground, Lost Seeds, p.4). The site of *'insurrectionary imagination'* (The Trapeze Collective, Do It Yourself Handbook, p.175) has shifted to the participating citizen with the aim of individual liberation and healing, social cohesion, community empowerment and building a different shared reality.

## 5. A New Role For The Artist

'Socially engaged' may not have been the overused descriptor for artists when Welfare State International transitioned from performers to facilitators. Their experience as described in the archival material is raw and instructive, raising a set of questions and challenges which continue to be familiar. The 'engagement' aspect of community arts work is far more difficult than generally credited. It is a sensitive process requiring confident, pro-active targeting and listening, particularly in order to reach people who are minoritised, unconfident or distrustful of institutions and to dismantle the barriers which usually exclude people. A common attitude is 'I'm no good at art' or 'I was rubbish at school' defining who is 'good enough' to participate.

Another challenge is that 'Art' is mystifying, exclusive and belongs in the monied world of concepts and lofty culture which is often entirely remote to poorly resourced, often working class communities or the non arts educated: 'it's not for me'. There is fear of being shamed for making something deemed low quality and fear of not understanding what art is about or what it is for. For some creativity is accessible via craft or '*Vernacular Art*' (New Ground, Lost Seeds, p.4), the sophisticated creation and decoration of practical items whether professionally or in the home. The luxury of art for art's sake can be confusing. The lack of representation of residents' intersectional identities or experience, especially class, visibly racially minoritised communities, people living with disabilities, single parents etc in the imagery of the art world also communicates exclusivity and 'otherness'.

A bundle of items in the Archive document the 'Cheap Art Stall' which toured towns around Cumbria in 2001 offers an insight into Fox and Gill's engagement experiences - having learnt lessons from Barrow-in-Furness of being '*too arty and too confrontational*' (Fox, *Eyes on Stalks*, p.110). There are photos of a standard stall set up in a working class high street market, alongside sellers of cheap clothes, lighters and dog treats, with John's wood block prints and other artworks under the large banner advertising 'Cheap Art'. The archival notes contain the artists' review of the stall and describe how they adapted it in response to their new setting and audience... and

initially tentative interest from customers. While the title 'Cheap Art' might be funny from an artist perspective it has less impact if you do not perceive art to be for you or ever affordable (even without looking at a price tag).

The notes describe John and Pete Moser, the accordion player, drumming up interest by playing some songs - turning the stall into part performance space, perhaps resorting to the spectacle they were more comfortable with. Through music they start to connect with neighbouring stall holders, giving them artwork and making up songs about them - and importantly making them laugh and smile. They also invited children to create their own artwork, who were less self conscious than the adults, but inevitably brought their parents along to get involved. Soon they were taking commissions for writing songs, often as presents and recording them on to tapes to be taken away: *'the art we made almost always had a purpose and was there to celebrate in some way people's lives'* (Cheap Art notes, 2001, Fox and Gill Archive). They successfully broke down the distance through actively reaching out to people, finding out what was important to them, making fun together and celebrating their lives.



7. Cheap Art Stall photos (circa 2001), Fox and Gill Archive

By the time John and Sue founded Dead Good Guides they had an incredibly well honed approach. Their community art projects involved a great deal of collective design, imagination and making but were framed by an event, a practical task or a research question: *'art met the masses because no one called it art'* (Fox, Eyes on Stalks, p.33).

The 'New Ground, Lost Seeds' project in County Mayo, Ireland, in 2008 demonstrates the sophisticated application of these ideas. Dead Good Guides were invited by Mayo County Council for a 10 day residency developing participatory opportunities for residents and arts groups local to Castlebar to co-design and deliver a traditional style Country Fête. Over 50 people collaborated planning the event together, learning new skills, transforming the site and attracting over 300 visitors to the event.

The project is described as '*a small hands on enquiry into the changing role of Art in an enterprise economy*' (New Ground, Lost Seeds, p.8), inspired by the National Museum of Ireland Country Life and an interest in researching contemporary '*Vernacular Art... the 'beautiful and functional artefacts as part of everyday life*' (p.4). John quotes Soviet film director Andrei Tarkovsky's criticism of Modern Art as narcissistic and instead sets out a different role for the artist as:

*facilitator and fixer, celebrant and stage manager, visionary linking the past and the future, and a shamanic poet, the revelator of layers of perception and the holder of what used to be called spiritual energy* (New Ground, Lost Seeds, p.7).

This role is pivotal to enabling social development '*where regeneration is of the soul and not of economics*' (New Ground, Lost Seeds, p.7) by encouraging, recognising and celebrating residents' contributions within their community. The Vernacular Art of a community is proposed to be how:

*people grow and cook their own food, and maybe build their own houses, name their children, bury their dead, marking anniversaries, creating new spaces for new ceremonies, and producing whatever drama, stories, songs, rituals, images, pageants and jokes* (New Ground, Lost Seeds, p.6).

The political ambition of the residency is clearly outlined as a step towards more empowered, co-designed and satisfying community life

*where more people will actively participate and gain the power to rejoice in moments that are wonderful and significant* (New Ground, Lost Seeds, p.6).

This includes the artist's role to encourage '*artistic imagination in social development*' (p.8) and co-creating aspirational realities to move towards, generating ideas together in a process of mutual '*discovery*' (New Ground, Lost Seeds, p.10). There is hope that '*seeds will fly to fertile ground*' (New Ground, Lost Seeds, p.7) and continue to grow after the project's conclusion.

Again I am feeling energised.

This is all starting to chime with my own practice as well as some of the challenges of the Archives Revealed commission which is also located on community land and the Gardening Group themselves meet weekly as a '*temporary and inclusive community*' (New Ground, Lost Seeds, p.7). From my experience transforming project ideas into reality, it is all very well having aims and ambitions... but how is this *actually* going to happen?

It appears that, whether consciously or not, Fox and Gill's work has developed in parallel to Assets Based Community Development, also a strong influence in my own practise. This methodology, still current but rooted in the 1980s, is a formalised grassroots approach, offering a practical framework for ethical community building which promotes citizen-led initiatives, inclusion, locates individuals' and communities' strengths, relies on relationships and aims to build neighbourhood power. The 'New Ground, Lost Seeds' booklet offers an insight into their collaborative process:

*open discussions very much led by participants. John and Sue responded to this input and let it direct their field of enquiry* (p.10).

This approach enables them to develop a project informed from the outset by local interests and stories, built upon local skills, around meaningful activity which generates ownership and it '*connected their heads and their hands in a collective artwork*' (p. 7). It takes bravery and confidence to open the process up in this way, for the artists to step back from control as well as for participants to trust and step forward. One participant is quoted as commenting on '*the apparent lack of agenda*' which they found '*initially unsettling*' (p.10). My experience as an art therapist as well as working in communities where residents experience significant mental health issues or institutional distrust is that a really open process can feel overwhelming



8. Map of garden and activities, Dead Good Guides, 'New Ground, Lost Seeds' booklet, (2008), Fox and Gill Archive

without a clear framework or lots of time to build relationships and confidence. I am reassured to read John's acknowledgement in 'Eyes on Stalks' of the challenge in '*finding the right balance between leading and facilitating*' (p.120), and entertained by the familiar jeopardy and thrill in the work as

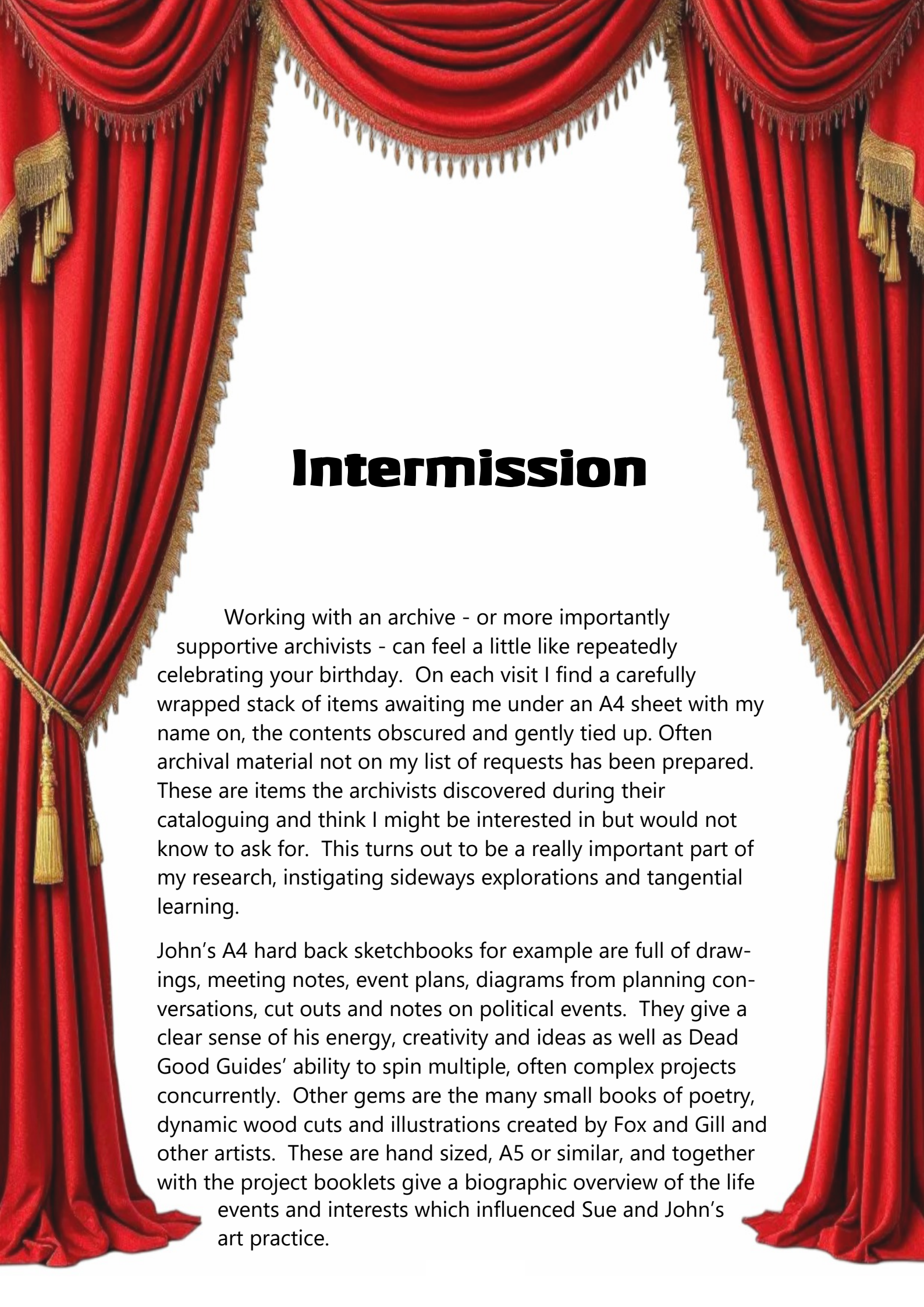
*a combination of instinct, consultation, objective aesthetic assessment, trust and chance (p.120).*

The speed of the ten day residency is also impressive. Collaboration with the council Artsquad team and other local art groups as skilled supporters was no doubt vital to providing a foundation for wider local engagement - one of the biggest challenges before any open discussions. The 'New Ground, Lost Seeds' booklet evidences the success of Dead Good Guide's process, with participants' quotes sprinkled throughout, many stating their sense of 'ownership' and surprise at what was achieved:

*it was delightful to see how much can be done with local materials, an open mind and to have the involvement of such a diverse group of people who were not necessarily arty (p.15).*

Within this framework the group designed, built and decorated the gardens together, and at the event offered music, food and performance tableaux,

creating a welcoming family friendly event with '*a relaxed atmosphere... where people might linger, make connections and hear stories*' ('New Ground, Lost Seeds, p.22). The small holding was equipped for the future with a sculptural kiln and a swan shaped oven. A legacy of the building, weaving, clay work, '*collective singing*' (p.12) and low key performance skills which were shared during the residency also remained. The site was also left saturated with new positive memories of shared achievement and collective enjoyment. From their quotes the participants evidently recognise the powerful sense of what can be achieved together in a short space of time and how '*celebration can join us in a joyful community cohesion*' (Fox, Eyes on Stalks, p.xiv).



# Intermission

Working with an archive - or more importantly supportive archivists - can feel a little like repeatedly celebrating your birthday. On each visit I find a carefully wrapped stack of items awaiting me under an A4 sheet with my name on, the contents obscured and gently tied up. Often archival material not on my list of requests has been prepared. These are items the archivists discovered during their cataloguing and think I might be interested in but would not know to ask for. This turns out to be a really important part of my research, instigating sideways explorations and tangential learning.

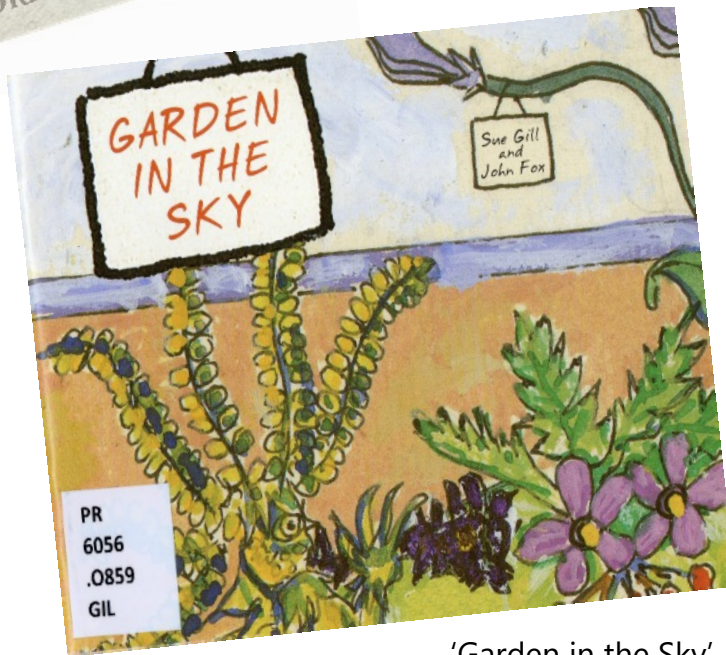
John's A4 hard back sketchbooks for example are full of drawings, meeting notes, event plans, diagrams from planning conversations, cut outs and notes on political events. They give a clear sense of his energy, creativity and ideas as well as Dead Good Guides' ability to spin multiple, often complex projects concurrently. Other gems are the many small books of poetry, dynamic wood cuts and illustrations created by Fox and Gill and other artists. These are hand sized, A5 or similar, and together with the project booklets give a biographic overview of the life events and interests which influenced Sue and John's art practice.

9. Fox and Gill and  
Welfare State International  
booklets:

'Capsule' by  
Tanya Peixoto (1994)



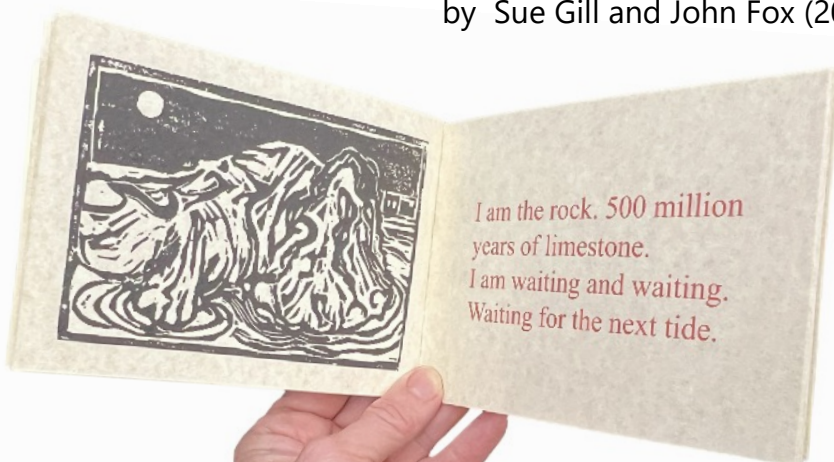
'Weather Station  
Critters 2010', Dead Good Guides



'Garden in the Sky'  
by Sue Gill and John Fox (2011)



'The Rain Days' by  
John Fox (2021)



'Ground' by  
John Fox (1998)



'Rag Tree' written and  
photographed by Sue Gill,  
ed. John Fox (2010)



10. John Fox woodcut prints 'Matey Boy' illustrations for the dramatic poem by Kevin Fegan (c.1990) and 'Punch & Judy' (c.1990), Fox and Gill Archive

My favourite archivist gifts - perhaps unsurprisingly as a print maker myself - were the original woodcuts prints. These gave a direct sense of John's way of working with the materials, his judgement of line, composition and speed in creating. The style is bold, immediate, anarchic and the monochrome images are strong. The evident physicality of the carving process echoes the dynamism of performance, movement and drama.

'The Loves, Lives and Murders of Lancelot Barabbas Quail' (1977) booklet of expressionist style prints by Bob Frith accompanying the Welfare State International performance tour of the South West in the 1970s is also a delight - beautifully composed, energetic and brute images.



11. Illustrations from 'The Loves, Lives and Murders of Lancelot Quail' (1977) booklet by Bob Frith, Welfare State International Archive

## 6. Rites of Passage

In the progression from Welfare State International, John and Sue generate resources as well as courses on how to design and lead Rites of Passage events: personalised, creative and meaningful rituals to honour important life developments. In keeping with their commitment to sharing skills and 'passing it on' they generated a series of books including 'The Dead Good Funerals Book' (1997) and 'The Dead Good Book of Naming and Baby Welcoming Ceremonies' (1999) amongst many others.



12. Order of Service, Decorated Menu and Pie, Jones/Clough Wedding (1985),  
Fox and Gill Archive

These books are highly instructive and encouraging technical 'how-to' manuals with examples: what to consider, approaches to design, useful references and recommendations on how elements of ritual are generated. No doubt reflecting their own personal experiences with family and friends as well as aspiration for '*finding ways of making society more creative and celebratory for more people*' (Fox, *Eyes on Stalks*, p.x). Creativity and collaboration in response to important life events, marking great loss as well as joy, offered another route for encouraging citizens to create their own narratives whilst taking back power from state and religious institutions.

For me an illuminating and heartfelt example is one of their ceremonies from 1985, the wedding of Alison Gordon Jones and David Clough, a musician and the pyrotechnic expert in their team, who were evidently close friends as well as long term collaborators. In the Archive is a collection of materials from the event, including photos of the decorated ritual arch and ceremony space, of the couple and guests processing towards it, of the decorated feast table, cake and special menu, as well as a printed and illustrated 'Wedding Breakfast' leaflet (see previous page). The level of detail in the preparation expresses care, love and celebration of the couple and their commitment. Even a napkin from the wedding table has been preserved - it is hand printed with John's expressionist woodcut design of the happy couple.



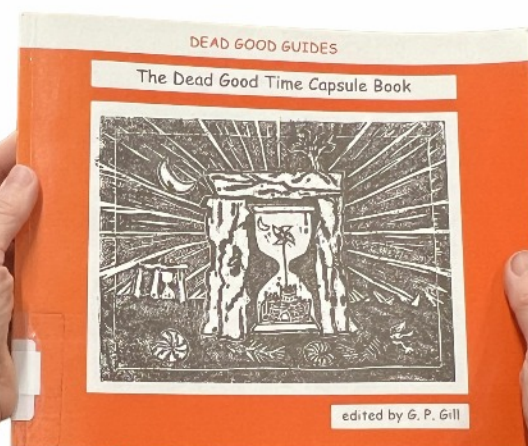
13. Wood block printed napkin, Jones/Clough Wedding (1985), Fox and Gill Archive

## 7. Time Travelling

The last of the series of Dead Good Guide manuals I encounter is 'The Dead Good Time Capsule Book' (1999); something clicks. I have been looking for a practical framework for engaging the Gardening Group in creative activities, locating what '*Vernacular Art*' (New Ground, Lost Seeds, p.4) might be in their setting. The group is motivated by gardening so creative activities need to be related and informed by this. John talks about '*memory and record, time, decay and rejuvenation*' (The Dead Good Time Capsule Book, p.4) related to time capsules; my inner light bulb starts to glow. These are also essential features of horticulture: perennial plants remind us of the previous years' planting, and gardens grow, blossom and die along with the cycles of the year. The programme is due to take place in Spring, a dynamic time when last year's forgotten bulbs are waking, life is unfurling through the beds and plans for summer flowers and harvests are being made.

John described the role of artist in 'New Ground, Lost Seeds' as '*connecting the past and present*' (p.4). I realise I have been time travelling through history via the archives just when the group is looking forwards to the growing season. I also happen to remember when the Gardening Group first started to tend the gardens while I was working at Wellspring Settlement. I

14. 'The Dead Good Time Capsule Book', Dead Good Guides (1999), Fox and Gill Archive



witnessed the transformation of the muddy puddles of the Micro-Settlement construction site and the sorry old car park full of dumped broken furniture. After four years these spaces are now fertile and bio-diverse oases full of fruit, flowers, vegetables and trees. The Dead Good Guide advises that '*Time Capsules are, ultimately, about now. Where we are and how we feel about it*' (p.3). A time capsule could offer an opportunity for a collective appraisal, creatively documenting the gardens and celebrating the group's work and collaboration. They have contributed to their community by caring for these public spaces, tending to nature, creating accessible relaxing spaces, as well as generating produce to share and protecting its ecology and inhabitants. The gardens are also inscribed with the history and friendships they have developed with each other.

## 8. The Time Capsule

On the first occasion of visiting the group they took me on a tour of the gardens they were responsible for on site. I was amazed how much work there was for them - planting and maintaining so many different areas with different climates, from the 'Stumpery' of ferns to the small island fondly named the 'Bloomin' Roundabout'. At our first creative session together I introduced artists John and Sue as self professed '*Pathological Optimists*' and drew parallels between their community engagement work and gardening. The idea of a time capsule as a celebration of everything they had achieved as gardeners, as a group and for the community was received with warm curiosity. I got the impression that as there was so much to do in the garden each week there was rarely time to sit back, take stock and congratulate each other. Half of the group wanted to crack on with watering so I suggested to the others that we start by mapping out the whole area. I had brought with me a graphic map of all the beds based on my initial tour, heat pressed onto fabric so it could be easily folded small to put into a time capsule. I invited people to complete the map, adding names for each bed with letter stamps. They realised that they had no name for the central area by the Micro-Settlement - so agreed on 'The Oasis.' This was the location we had agreed for the time capsule to be buried.

I showed the group how to make prints of samples of foliage found in each bed. They added the bed's name with stamps and took a mini-polaroid photo of each space to flesh out the map. People were very satisfied with their prints which were pleasingly delicate and detailed. Based on this the following week we created Cyanotypes, an early form



15. Botanic prints, '*Pathological Optimists*' booklet (2026), Fox and Gill Archive



16. Gardening Group showing their work after the first session, 'Pathological Optimists' booklet (2026), Fox and Gill Archive

of photography using light sensitive paper, to create white foliage silhouettes and messages on deep blue card as *'Love Letters to the Future'* (Dead Good Time Capsules Book, 1998, p.6) mostly concerning the environment, migration and war - reflecting the main concerns of the group, which also included ex-asylum seekers and migrants.

Over cake and tea we started to talk about the ceremony. Taking me by surprise a group member asked to share a poem they had felt inspired to write after the printing last week - a heartfelt description of their work but also the group's connection:



17. Cyanotypes from Gardening Group 'Pathological Optimists' booklet (2026), Fox and Gill Archive

*Rain or shine whatever the weather, You'll find us here, all together.*  
From 'Emily's Poem', 'Pathological Optimists' booklet (2026), Fox  
and Gill Archive

The group was delighted and agreed for it to be part of the ceremony. 'We need a flag!' to mark the spot was also declared. I promised to bring in the heat press and the following week a group of participants collectively designed and made the two sided flag. Each session the creative activity was displayed for anyone who had not taken part to look at as a way of including them in developments whilst not pressuring them to participate. We talked about the ceremony again over cake and tea. Someone wanted to make mocktails. We agreed what ingredients to bring, including some mint from the garden. Someone suggested music, hats - and that there was watering to do before the ceremony! I had brought and displayed a selection of receptacles for the time capsule and after close inspection the group discussed which might work best and after a quick vote to finalise the decision chose a hand made ceramic lidded pot - stated to be definitely '*not an urn*'.

On the day of the event I neatly laid out all of the items we had made on the table for everyone to see before packing them into the capsule. We also added a list of participant names, some Alive project info, some seeds which were parcelled up in colourful homemade envelopes and someone's lucky 50 pence piece. After checking if anyone had anything more to add to the capsule I sealed it up ready for the ceremony. Once the watering was completed I distributed some kazoos and percussion shakers (lentils in tupperware boxes) unsure if the group was feeling extrovert enough to use - but on rejoining the group I found lots of them were already wearing decorative crowns someone had brought in and shared.

We were ready for the ceremony... and with inspiration from Sue and John, I suggested that the whole group parade around the garden;



18. Gardening Group event photograph, 'Pathological Optimists' booklet (2026), Fox and Gill Archive. Photo credit: Guy Manchester

someone carried the time capsule, another the flag both wearing paper flower button holes and crowns. We agreed on 'Here Comes The Sun' as our parade tune and off we went! We performed a chaotic but joyful figure of eight around The Oasis beds, shaking, singing and humming as we went. Everyone was involved - even those reluctant to do the art making - even the archivists were there. The poet read her poem and I read my own 'Love Letter to the Future' describing who we were, why we were doing the time



19. The event procession, poem reading and time capsule bearer, 'Pathological Optimists' booklet (2026), Fox and Gill Archive. Photo credit: Guy Manchester

capsule and that we hoped for a future where nature flourished and '*love still prevails and neighbours help each other*' (Fox, Capsule poem, Capsule, (1994), p.2). The flag was then planted and turns were taken with a spade to cover the capsule with soil...and then we dug into the picnic.

The event was the culmination of the project, the point we had been working towards, the time capsule was the framework for all of the creative preparation. But actually the project was collective celebration. It was relaxed, inclusive and fun - '*it's great to be silly, together... the parade was really silly and fun*' (participant). I can not over estimate the value of positive shared experience, particularly for anyone isolated, anxious or depressed and struggling in their specific worlds. I felt I had been offered the opportunity to hold a mirror to the group, provide a framework for them to celebrate themselves. I had been surprised that everyone took part in the ceremony, and felt it touched something meaningful for all of them, together and individually.

The group's poet said the project *'inspired us to celebrate the garden by doing arts and crafts and I did it in word form. In the form of a poem.'*

Another person reflected on

*'being part of history, a point in time... You don't know what people will think about when they open a time capsule, what might seem mundane and everyday might be really interesting to people in the future.'* (Participant evaluation)

Sometimes participating is the most important thing, for some people it can be a radical act: showing up, presenting yourself, taking a risk, being included, learning something new, collaborating, being part of something bigger, connecting, contributing, creating, enjoying - together, with others.

When I returned to the gardens a few weeks later I saw that the group had made a beautiful dried flower decoration to go in the shelter, hung over the duplicate heat-pressed map of the gardens I had framed and given to the group. When I asked the staff member about it they reported that the group had also made a procession with it, from where it was made to the shelter, as they had enjoyed the parade so much. They had also asked for another celebration event - this time for Summer.

I was really moved.

It felt like a little bit of John and Sue's magic remained with this group.



20. Flower decoration in the Gardening Group's shelter, Micro-Settlement Garden

## 9. The conversation I would like to have had with John Fox

Sadly John Fox died in March 2025. He will be sorely missed by all who knew and loved him. Along with Sue and the other collaborating artists, he continues to be a shining light in UK theatre history and a significant influence in the evolution of community art.

In his absence I have imagined a short meeting with him in his studio. I confess this is entirely fabricated. I have never met John or Sue, and only very briefly heard how either of them speak on film. However inspired particularly by the sketchbooks and 'Eyes of Stalks' biography, his political ambitions, the community projects and print making, this is how I imagine our conversation might go.



20. John Fox Illustration from 'Lost Ground, New Seeds', p.9 (2008), Fox and Gill Archive

*John has made mugs of steaming tea and sets mine down within reach. We are sitting by a wooden studio table which shows the marks of its trade and is nearly entirely covered with stacks of books, magazines, papers, snippets, art materials and postcards (which I would love to rifle through given the opportunity). John sits opposite me and flips open his A4 sketchbook, smooths the centre flat and starts writing the date, which he underlines, along with my full name. Unusually it is spelt correctly. I am slightly unsettled as he lifts his gaze and directs his full attention on me - and continues to write as we speak.*

**Me:** Umm... It is so great to meet you, thanks for making the time. Don't let me hold you up... I was just hoping to pop in... Umm, I've been reading about your life and work with Sue and the other artists - so many artists! Like a big family? With all the kids involved as well.

**John:** Of course! The children were always there, mostly grown up now though. Some have become artists too, like our kids. So many friends and artists got involved over the years. They went on to form their own companies and are still making excellent professional work to this day. Lots are still in touch, although some died or moved away. And then all the communities we worked with - I don't know how many thousands, I wouldn't like to count.

**Me:** As a younger generation artist I feel like I have inherited a lot of your frameworks for performance and community art, for events and festival activities - the parades, the lanterns, big puppets, rituals and immersive experiences as well as co-designing projects. I maybe just didn't know you and Sue and other Welfare State International artists had been at the forefront of these developments until I worked with your archives.

**John:** Well we started doing it such a long time ago... but we also wanted to share it all, pass it on, give it back. They are ideas, methods, we don't own them, they are for everyone. The most satisfying thing is when communities are involved in projects then just carry on, like they had a taste and then realise they can do it all themselves. And they do! Like the Ulverston Lantern Festival - we first did a parade in 1983 - it was a lot smaller than it is now.

**Jude:** That's amazing. There are lantern parades all over the country now. And you published instructions for how to make lanterns didn't you? So anyone could do it.

**John:** Of course - why not? It's not hard, you just need to know how and get on with it. We didn't invent them - it all came from going to Japan and seeing their processions - they were fantastic. We thought we'd like to do that too. So we did!

**Jude:** As a community or participatory artist myself I was really interested in the transition from the 'spectacle' as you call it, the experimental and immersive performances, the fireworks - and stepping away from being consumed by a capitalist culture as entertainment. I love the idea of the slower pace, the more local and deep engagement, finding out what is meaningful for people and how to draw out their own creativity - 'away from frenetic hype'... just to quote you! (Eyes on Stalks, p.35)

**John:** Slower pace?! You've got to be joking.

**Jude:** ... didn't you call the expectations on performers 'all-dayglo, all-dancing door knobs' somewhere? (Eyes on Stalks, p.7).

**John:** Ha yes!

**Jude:** Love that phrase...

**John:** Harr, from 'Eyes on Stalks' probably, yes I enjoyed writing that... lot of work mind. Well we had been on the road for a while by then and it had been fun. It was very freeing and living outside is a great way to be, you are forced to be creative. We were all together. We still made amazing shows, we still toured and actually spent a lot of time doing things abroad but things had shifted. We started to feel a bit boxed in, with high expectations from audiences who just came to watch then left. We wanted more from the process. We realised it could do more - by bringing people into making, designing, imagining for themselves.

**Jude:** And was it less frenetic?

**John:** Hhmm, maybe not - there was always so much to do, so many great projects, always new things on the horizon, people coming with ideas and asking us to do bonkers things. Always juggling this week's project - making puppets, costumes, fliers, prints alongside planning events, talking to interesting people, always lots of lists, lots of detail, and writing those bloody funding bids for next year's projects...

**Jude:** The events look incredibly well organised, so much thought and planning - I've seen some of the event plans and notes.

**John:** Yes. Mostly. Yes, well it didn't always go quite to plan. But then that was the fun of it. I enjoyed the chaos. It's creative, allows space for things we never thought about to happen. Sometimes amazing surprises. You never quite know how it's actually going to be but have a vision you're working towards. Nothing went really wrong, mostly it went wonderfully right.

We did do some great work, so many adventures with some dear friends and some great artists and our young children. Funding got increasingly hard to access, they started to really make it difficult for us with all the

monitoring and stats... all the tick boxes, risk assessments, fire regs and blah blah blah. We wanted to really work with people - that was the main thing - hear what they had to say about what mattered, make things together, be surprised, experience wonder...

*John writes 'WONDER' in large letters in the sketch book and underlines it heavily*

... except that we didn't have a fixed idea only a framework, we weren't setting the goals of how it needed to look, defining it all for everyone although we always made sure it looked impressive. We had to! But we wanted to connect people to their creativity, work together, fire their imagination - to dream! as much as they could with all their other responsibilities going on. And celebrate. Always worth celebrating. That's what it's all about. It was also great having the kids about, getting involved, they loved it and brought new ways of looking at things, lots of fun. They made sure we stayed a bit silly. And everyone was welcome. I've slowed down a bit now mind... but I've still got plenty of ideas.

*Next to 'WONDER' John writes 'Ideas' and draws sparks flying in all directions. He turns one of the sparks into a heron in flight.*

**Jude:** Yes your sketchbooks are so full, so many projects being turned over at once. Looks exhausting! I wondered if you didn't burn out at some point... as lots of companies and artists do...? By the way I got told off in the archives for writing notes in my own A4 sketchbook whilst looking through piles of your A4 sketchbooks - the librarian thought I was scribbling merrily all over the archival material.

**John:** Ha, adding your own fingerprints! I see! There was a fair stack of those sketchbooks, I kept them, they're good records for work - and I used to get through a few. I always loved starting a new one, with the fresh empty pages then see it get filled with ideas and sticking in things from newspapers, magazines, or postcards from trips we'd made or sent by friends. It was helpful to keep a central place for meeting notes with the big wigs, ideas for the puppets and sketches on how we'd decided to build stuff as the ideas were always changing.

**Jude:** It was oddly intimate being able to look through your notes ... I found notes from a meeting you had in Bristol with my old boss Bim Mason of Fool Time who set up Circomedia circus training in Bristol - I ran their venue for seven years - a church with a flying trapeze rig set in the ceiling.

**John:** Oh right. In a church! Great! We've worked in some amazing buildings too. Yes there was a huge growth in experimental performance, and circus of course in the 1990s. And festivals. More spaces to do fun things.

**Jude:** It's made me reflect on my own sketchbooks - the mix of words, reminders, sketches, meeting notes, project ideas, drawings.. like a diary. I aspire to add in more swear words!

**John:** Ha, yes good for posterity! Hope the archivists have been enjoying mine. Hhhmm funny thinking of people reading those. All sorts of things in them...

**Jude:** I really liked that you would also add in what was going on in world politics - I saw references to the NATO bombing of Kosovo in one.

**John:** Well it was all over the news - NATO bombing a country so close by. We had seen it bomb Serbia and the Bosnian war was just dreadful. The peacekeepers failed abysmally to save lives - what were we thinking? This country has such a dark military history, it's deep in our culture, drenched in blood from colonial times, then the Cold War and nuclear arms race. I was always very aware of it. Scary. These bureaucrats in London making decisions which put us all at risk.

**Jude:** Is that why you chose Barrow-in-Furness with its nuclear submarines? To protest against them?

**John:** Well it was also quite cheap at the time! It was difficult to afford to be an artist - its even worse these days - and we had been mostly on the road. It was all much looser, we travelled as a big touring community, playing music together, having ideas. But things started tightening up and it was harder to live like that. The North was more possible and was familiar. But yes the nuclear submarine industry was the dominant employer around Barrow and also had the biggest, worst impact on people's health in the area. We didn't bang it home when we worked with people, we knew that

wouldn't go down well - of course it wouldn't - but that was always the sub-text. Hard when it's people's only way of making a living but it was also shortening their lives. And we did like making big submarines!

*John is vigorously sketching a bulbous submarine with a large unblinking eye in its periscope...*

There wasn't much funding for culture - never mind 'the Arts' - so we had to work hard to get the money. But there was a clear gap we could inhabit, once we'd learned more about the place, about how to reach people, what they were interested in. It was a challenge but that's always good, it forces creativity - brings new thinking, risks and different ways of doing things - new life. We learned a lot, it was busy and we did some amazing work with the communities there. I think they enjoyed having eccentric neighbours, in the Old National School, the Cruck Barn and the place on the beach, hearing what was on next: the parades, the puppets, lanterns, beach combing, environmental monitoring, sculpture trails, even collecting rubbish! and of course the big community parties. It was all free as well and people really appreciated that.

**Jude:** I found your 'Dead Good Time Capsule Book' (1999) - I remember the trend of time capsules in the '90s. People were doing them everywhere - maybe just before the millennium I guess because of the fear that everything might just grind to a halt, the clocks would stop and computers explode?

**John:** Oh Yes! I remember that. Seems so silly now. There was a definite sense of history though which was an opportunity to reflect. Entering a new millennium was also quite hopeful.

**Jude:** And people love to keep things, remind themselves of the past but what a great idea to gift them to the future, hiding them, imagining them being found - I really like the 'love letter to the future' idea (Dead Good Time Capsule Book, p.6).

**John:** It's a great way of bringing people together, to think about their lives, their place, what's important and a practical way to celebrate that. It's also a way to invite creativity, to imagine the future - whilst not being 'high art' that puts everyone off. We had some wonderful projects, always with a

fantastic send off. Food and ceremony is so important for bringing people together, to create 'a moment' - and the music of course.

**Jude:** Sounds like the perfect blend of community art and performance.

**John:** Yes - and the rituals that Sue in particular developed. She made these wonderful personalised events, decorating and making ceremonial spaces, writing special poems, creating these really elaborate themed pies and designing beautiful ceremonies. We ran lots of courses too. We got good at showing people how to create the weight as well as the joy of rituals, how to hold the emotions of a group.

**Jude:** I saw the wood cut design you made for printing napkins for a wedding! Amazing. Amazing that they still have them for the archive!

**John:** Ah do they! That will be for Dave Clough's do - with Alison. That was a cracking party. What a time. Sue was very good at organising, working out the details and how to create a lovely tribute - and holding on to everything. I bet there's photos too.

**Jude:** Yes! So great to see how the full event was designed - and enjoyed. Was that your pyrotechnic specialist who had got married?

**John:** Yes that's right and Alison was also a musician with us, very good. Lovely couple. They were really important moments, times of our lives, memories we were making, together. Everyone got involved and did their bit. I guess as life rolled on we developed those rituals to share with those who were dearest. Some very sad events too, the funerals, the loss of friends, our family really - as well as the naming ceremonies and weddings. I wrote poetry during those times, it helped me - hopefully it helped all of us to really grasp where we were, to hold loved ones close and find our way.

**Jude:** I really liked the little books, the project books and the illustrations and poetry - especially the ones with your woodcut prints.

**John:** Ah yes, good. We made a few. They're for sale you know.

**Jude:** And I heard you were really inspired by the Japanese print maker Munakata Shiko - I don't think I pronounced that right.

**John:** No you didn't! Munakata Shikō - brilliant artist. Such brilliant fast, assertive lines, feeling his way through it, not thinking, great compositions. I liked the speed he worked at, totally immersed. I've got one of his books here somewhere from an exhibition in London.

**Jude:** I read somewhere that he was a 'terrible printer but inspired artist'!

**John:** Hmm well I don't know about that. I thought he was fantastic, amazing prints in this book.

**Jude:** ... great prints anyway.

**John:** Hmm. Where is that book...? *He gets up to rummage in the bookshelf behind him.* It's around here somewhere. I think you'd like it.

**Jude:** Well umm .... maybe that's where umm... we should leave it. Don't worry. Ummm... thanks so much for spending the time.

**John:** Don't fancy another cup of tea? Just a minute... that book can't be far away. Now...

**Jude:** Umm no, that's kind but I probably better go... it's a long way. I've already taken up your time. It was great to meet you.

**John:** I'm sure it was here.... *more rummaging*

**Jude:** Well... thanks... it's been great to meet you and hear more.

Thanks again. I'm going to head off now...

thanks John...

thanks, Bye...

**John:** Oh well, am sure I'll find it just after you've gone. Take care then, drive safe and see you somewhere along the road.



21. Illustration by John Fox in 'New Ground, Lost Seeds', p.7 (2008)

# Illustrations

1. 'Small Hands, Cold Heart' (2017), collograph. Hutchen, J. (2026) Jude Hutchen. Available at <https://judehutchen.co.uk/portfolio/little-book-of-utter-bastards> (Accessed: 9 September 2026). 7
2. World Thumb Wrestling Competition 2016 at SPACE Bristol, photograph. Hutchen, J. (2026) Jude Hutchen. Available at <https://judehutchen.co.uk/portfolio/deep-inside-im-a-wrestler> (Accessed: 9 September 2026). 8
3. Dancer, Freedom Festival Tuzla (1996), artist's private collection. 8
4. 'Blago Ti Pameti/ Smart Thinking' sculpture recycling project, Mostar, Bosnia Herzegovina (2000), procession across the former front line. Available at <https://judehutchen.co.uk/portfolio/young-bridge-mostar-bosnia-herzegovina> (Accessed: 9 September 2026). 9
5. 'Shouldn't Have To Shout To Be Heard' campaign 2021, photographs. Hutchen, J. (2026) Jude Hutchen. Available at <https://judehutchen.co.uk/portfolio/creative-research> (Accessed: 9 September 2026). 10
6. 'The Way It Goes' postcard, 'The Fishing Hut' Set 2 (2008), Fox and Gill Archive. 12
7. 'Cheap Art Stall' photos (circa. 2001), Fox and Gill Archive. 16
8. 'New Ground, Lost Seeds' booklet, Gardens map (2008), Fox and Gill Archive. 19
9. Fox and Gill and Welfare State International booklets (front covers). Clockwise from top left: 22
  - 'Capsule' by Tanya Peixoto (1994), Welfare State International Archive
  - 'Weather Station Critters 2010', Dead Good Guides, Fox and Gill Archive

- 'The Rain Days' by John Fox (2021), Theatre Collection Library
- 'Rag Tree' written by and photographed by Sue Gill, ed. John Fox (2010), Fox and Gill Archive
- 'Ground' by John Fox (1998), Theatre Collection Library
- 'Garden in the Sky' by Sue Gill and John Fox (2011), Theatre Collection Library.
10. Woodcut prints by John Fox 'Matey Boy' illustrations for the dramatic poem by Kevin Fegan (c.1990) and 'Punch & Judy' (c.1990), Fox and Gill Archive. 23
  11. Woodcut print Illustrations from 'The Loves, Lives and Murders of Lancelot Quail' (1977) booklet by Bob Frith, Welfare State International Archive. 23
  12. Printed Order of Service, decorated menu and photo of the Celebration Pie, Jones/Clough Wedding (1985), Fox and Gill Archive. 24
  13. Wood block printed paper napkin, Jones/Clough Wedding (1985), Fox and Gill Archive. 25
  14. 'The Dead Good Time Capsule Book', Dead Good Guides, ed. G. P. Gill, (1999), Theatre Collection Library. 26
  15. Botanic prints, photograph, 'Pathological Optimists' booklet (2026), Fox and Gill Archive. 28
  16. Gardening Group showing their work after the first session, photograph, 'Pathological Optimists' booklet (2026), Fox and Gill Archive. 29
  17. Cyanotypes from Gardening Group, (2026), 'Pathological Optimists' booklet (2026), Fox and Gill Archive. 29
  18. Gardening Group event photograph, 'Pathological Optimists' booklet (2026), Fox and Gill Archive. Photo credit: Guy Manchester. 30
  19. Photographs of the procession, poem reading and time capsule bearer, 'Pathological Optimists' booklet (2026), Photo credits: Guy Manchester, Fox and Gill Archive. 31

20. Flower decoration in the Gardening Group's shelter at Micro-Settlement, photograph, artist's own 32
21. John Fox illustration in 'New Ground, Lost Seeds', p. 9 (2008), Fox and Gill Archive. 33
22. John Fox illustration in 'New Ground, Lost Seeds', p. 7 (2008), Fox and Gill Archive. 41

## Fox and Gill Archive References

| Title                                                    | Author                                                        | Project info                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Date      | Archive material consulted                                                                        | Reference No                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| After the Storm                                          | Sue Gill                                                      | Memorial sculpture trail at Falkland Estate, Fife. A temporary installation in partnership with the Centre for Stewardship.                                                                                                                                | Aug 2012  | Project photo book - layout & photography by Sue Gill                                             | FG/1/20/1                              |
| Cheap Art stall tour                                     | John Fox                                                      | John Fox and Pete Moser set up stall at various markets and offered improvised songs and artwork for customers.                                                                                                                                            | 2000-2001 | Proposal, photos, press reviews, evaluation and notes                                             | FG/1/10<br>Photographs FG/1/10/7       |
| Documentation related to The Dead Good Time Capsule Book | Dead Good Guides, John Fox, G P Gill, Anne Hooper, Alan Sykes | The book was designed to be, "A practical guide to creating a successful time capsule with accounts of actual projects, capsule planning and creation, school and community projects, artists' visions... plus thoughts on time, destiny and materialism!" | 1999      | Marketing report, review, John Fox notes and correspondence                                       | FG/3/5/2-4                             |
| The Fishing Hut                                          | Hannah Fox, John Fox                                          | A handcrafted travelling shed, decorated with John Fox's illustrations, and Hannah Fox's short animated films appeared at locations around Morecambe Bay. Based on an oral history archive, developed in 2015-2017 by the Morecambe Bay Partnership.       | 2018      | Two sets of postcards of John Fox artwork and text about the project and oral history transcripts | Set One FG/1/26/1<br>Set Two FG/1/26/2 |

|                                                                                              |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                     |                                                                                                                     |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| John Fox Notebook                                                                            | John Fox | The notebooks generally contain handwritten, informal notes and lists in which John reflected on his creative thoughts and administrative matters. Lots of these notes and drawings are rough and seem to be for personal use only.<br><br>In the mid to late 1990s, John pasted and taped | Aug 1991<br>9 Oct 1991<br>26 Oct 1995 - 26 Dec 1995 |                                                                                                                     | FG/5/20/9  |
| John Fox Notebook - Notes before Australia 1991. Continuation in England after Oz April 1992 | John Fox | more items into his notebooks, treating them more like scrapbooks, although the majority of the content is still notes. From the mid to late 1990s to early 2000s, John started using his notebook for more frequent diary entries.                                                        | 26 Oct 1995 - 26 Dec 1995                           | Woodblock printmaker, Shikō Munakata is referenced across John's notebooks including FG/20/10; FG/5/28/1; FG/5/31/1 | FG/5/20/10 |
| John Fox Notebook - Barcelona                                                                | John Fox |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 26 Oct - 26 Dec 1995                                |                                                                                                                     | FG/5/24/4  |
| John Fox Notebook                                                                            | John Fox |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 19 June 1996                                        |                                                                                                                     | FG/5/25/1  |
| John Fox Notebook                                                                            | John Fox |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 2 March 1999 - 13th May                             |                                                                                                                     | FG/5/28/1  |
| John Fox Notebook                                                                            | John Fox |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 7 Aug 2002                                          |                                                                                                                     | FG/5/31/1  |

|                                                                   |                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                    |                                                                             |             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| New Ground, Lost Seeds                                            | Dead Good Guides             | Residency in Castlebar, County Mayo, Ireland, over 10 days, 50 people worked collaboratively on a set of new ideas, skills and discoveries to mount a daytime event in the style of an afternoon Garden Fete. | 2008               | Project photo book                                                          | FG/1/17/1   |
| Obituary of John Fox, The Guardian                                | Dorothy Max Prior            |                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 25 Apr 2025        | Press cutting                                                               | FG/12/7/1   |
| Pathological Optimists: a Guide To A Dead Good Garden             | Jude Hutchen                 | Documentation of the 'Archives Revealed' funded creative programme with an East Bristol Gardening Group inspired by the Fox and Gill Archives.                                                                | 2026               |                                                                             | FG/12/8/1   |
| Rag Tree                                                          | Sue Gill, edited by John Fox | A story of marine litter on the western shoreline of Morecambe Bay for the Weather Station AHRC research project 2010.                                                                                        | 2010               | Project photo book written and photographed by Sue Gill, edited by John Fox | FG/1/18/3   |
| Weather Station / Critters                                        | Sue Gill, edited by John Fox | Part of a research project exploring the links between ecology, perception and performance on the shores of Morecambe Bay 2008-2011.                                                                          | 2010               | Project photo book with photographs by Sue Gill, edited by John Fox         | FG/1/18/2/1 |
| Weather Station at the Beach House                                | Sue Gill                     | Photographic study of the Beach House on the shores of Morecambe Bay and its surroundings.                                                                                                                    | 2008 -2011         | Project photo book                                                          | FG/1/18/1   |
| Wedding of Alison Gordon Jones and David Clough, Cartmel, Cumbria |                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 16 - 19 April 1985 | Photos, printed napkin, order of service                                    | FG/2/5      |

|                                    |                     |                                                                             |               |                       |                        |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Wilderness<br>2014-2015            | Dead Good<br>Guides | The story of four artists'<br>commissions in Wood,<br>Water, Stone and Wind | 2014-<br>2015 | Project photo<br>book | FG/1/22/1              |
| Woodblock<br>prints by John<br>Fox | John Fox            |                                                                             | c.1990        |                       | FG/1/28/3<br>FG/1/28/3 |

## **Welfare State International Archive References**

| <b>Title/ project</b>                                                                      | <b>Project Information</b>                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Date</b>           | <b>Archive Material Consulted</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Reference No</b>                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Barabbas, which also featured in the film 'The Lives, Loves and Murders of Lancelot Quail' | Six weeks of daily performance. Built total theatrical environment including film, side shows, performances, processions, and 'ritual', disembowelling of The Dead Man (and his culture). | 15 Sept - 15 Oct 1977 | Artist book of lino prints by Bob Frith, words by John Fox.                                                                                                                                                              | Marketing, Publicity & Press<br>WSI/5/2/142/4 |
| Capsule book                                                                               | Produced as part of The Old National School 160th Anniversary Weekend, 18-19 June 1994. The Old National School was the building where WSI based themselves.                              | 1994                  | Printed artist book by Tanya Peixoto that gives a history of the Old National School, includes poems by John Fox, drawings and written pieces by former pupils, as well as reproduction of archive documents and photos. | WSI/5/4/49/71                                 |
| The Cruck Barn Book                                                                        | Construction of timber-framed Cruck Barn at The Ellers, WSI HQ as part of a self-build course 5 Jul-30 Aug 1995.                                                                          | 1995                  | A4 book made from materials from the Cruck Barn, including feedback/ drawings.                                                                                                                                           | WSI/5/4/55/7/1                                |

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |               |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Glasgow All Lit Up               | Giant lantern procession with finale event at Glasgow Green. Culmination of 12 months' work.                                                                                                        | Oct 1990      | 'The Big Big Lantern Book' - Artist's scrapbook on Glasgow All Lit Up by Stuart Mitchell (1991)         | WSI/5/4/16<br><br>Illustrated evaluation report WSI/5/4/16/7/30<br><br>Artist's scrapbook WSI/5/4/16/7/32 |
| Glasgow Time Capsule             | Presentation and burying of a time capsule in the precincts of Glasgow Cathedral.                                                                                                                   | 1988 -89      | Photographic slides by John Fox                                                                         | WSI/5/3/122/5/1                                                                                           |
| Return Ticket - A Sense of Place | A living tapestry of Ulverston, its people and environment. Included Ulverston Town Map Video Project, exhibition, celebration and time capsule burial.                                             | Apr-Sept 1992 | Project description, mapping, public engagement, time capsule event, press cuttings, lantern procession | WSI/5/4/27                                                                                                |
| 'Scarecrow Zoo – A Blueprint'    | Scarecrow Zoo was the climax event of the Doomsday Colouring Book programme, featuring a Scarecrow Competition and the first mobile bonfire at South Hill Park Arts Centre in Bracknell, Berkshire. | 1982          | Report on the work of WSI in 1982 (The Doomsday Colouring Book programme) by Kevin West                 | WSI/5/3/27/7/1                                                                                            |
| Time Capsule projects            |                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 1998 - 1999   | 6 sets of photos and slides, taken by Sue Gill, Sineid Codd & Furness Newspapers                        | WSI/5/4/74/5                                                                                              |

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |               |         |                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Wild Windmill Gala | Processions, Barter Party, Grand Barn Dance, Windmill Fair, Concerts and the Great Fantasy Windmill at Camps Road Recreation Ground in Haverhill, Suffolk. Part of the Domesday Colouring Book programme for 1982. | 2-30 Aug 1982 | Reports | WSI/5/3/37<br><br>Evaluation, responses & reports<br>WSI/5/3/37/7<br><br>John Fox contribution to report<br><br>WSI/5/3/37/7/11 |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Theatre Collection Library References

| Title                                                      | Author                                 | Year | Publication place / publisher                                         | University of Bristol Theatre Collection Reference No |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| The Dead Good Book of Naming and Baby Welcoming Ceremonies | Sue Gill, Jonathan How, John Fox       | 1999 | Ulverston : Engineers of The Imagination                              | GT2435 DEA                                            |
| The Dead Good Funerals Book                                | Sue Gill, John Fox                     | 1997 | Ulverston : Engineers of The Imagination, Welfare State International | GT3190 GIL                                            |
| The Dead Good Time Capsule Book                            | Dead Good Guides, edited by G. P. Gill | 1999 | Ulverston : Engineers of The Imagination                              | CB151 DEA                                             |
| Engineers of the Imagination                               | Tony Coult and Baz Kershaw             | 1990 | London : Methuen                                                      | PN2595.3 ENG                                          |

|                                              |                                         |      |                                                  |                  |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Eyes on Stalks                               | John Fox                                | 2002 | London : Methuen                                 | PN3302.G7 FOX    |
| Foxy's Song Book                             | John Fox                                | 2021 | Ulverston : Dead Good Guides                     | M1738 FOX        |
| Garden in the sky                            | Sue Gill                                | 2011 | Baycliff, Ulverston : Boardwalk Books            | PR6056.O859 GIL  |
| Ground                                       | John Fox                                | 1998 | Ulverston : Engineers of The Imagination (WSI)   | PR 6056.0859 FOX |
| New Ground, Lost Seeds                       | Dead Good Guides                        | 2008 | Ulverston : Dead Good Guides                     | NX180.S6 NEW     |
| Occasional Remedies                          | John Fox                                | 2024 | Cullercoats, England : IRON Press                | PR 6056.0857 FOX |
| Queen of the Sea                             | John Fox                                | 2005 | Ulverston : John Fox                             | PR6056.O859 FOX  |
| The Rain Days                                | John Fox                                | 2021 | Ulverston : Dead Good Guides                     | PR6056.O857 FOX  |
| The Rock in the Sea                          | story by Sue Gill; woodcuts by John Fox | 2009 | Baycliff, Ulverston : Boardwalk Books            | PR6056.O859 FOX  |
| The Tenth Anniversary of Welfare State       | Welfare State International             | 1978 | Burnley : Galactic Small-holdings                | PN3307.G7 TEN    |
| Welfare State International: An Introduction | Welfare State International             | 1972 | Ulverston, Cumbria : Welfare State International | PN3307.G7 WEL    |
| You Never Know                               | John Fox                                | 2022 | Ulverston : Dead Good Guides                     | PR 6056.0857 FOX |

## Non Archive References

| Title                                                                                                                          | Author                                                                            | Year | Publication place / publisher        | Internet Site                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Welfare State International: A case study of participatory art, in, A Restless Art: How participation won, and why it matters. | François Matarasso                                                                | 2018 | Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation       | Available at:<br><a href="https://gulbenkian.pt/en/publications/a-restless-art/">https://gulbenkian.pt/en/publications/a-restless-art/</a><br><br>(Accessed: 10 September 2026)                                                                                                         |
| Do It Yourself: a handbook for changing our world                                                                              | Ed. The Trapeze Collective<br>Chapter. 'Why We Need Cultural Activism', J. Verson | 2007 | London ; Ann Arbor, MI : Pluto Press |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Violence: Six sideways reflections (Big Ideas)                                                                                 | Slavoj Žižek                                                                      | 2008 | Profile Books, London                | Available at:<br><a href="https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;scope=site&amp;db=nlebk&amp;db=nlab&amp;AN=590213">https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;scope=site&amp;db=nlebk&amp;db=nlab&amp;AN=590213</a><br><br>(Accessed: 10 September 2026) |



University of  
**BRISTOL**  
**Theatre Collection**



Made possible with  
**Heritage**  
Fund

Pilgrim  
Trust

The Wolfson\*  
Foundation

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| THE      |  |
| NATIONAL |  |
| ARCHIVES |  |

Jude Hutche © 2026

