



8th July Sunday.

I probably would have gone back to the pond where I worked in winter. I like to see a place changed by a different season and make work accordingly – going deeply into one place is always interesting to me.

I was asked not to work there again because access is not allowed to the public. My residency here is not publicly advertised but it is important that people can see where works were made even they have long since gone.

I went to the avenue of trees alongside what must have been a previous road to the Hall.

I pulled down a branch from a large Horse Chestnut and hitched it to a lower limb with my belt. Once secure I stitched leaves together with grass stalks before carefully tearing a hole in their middle. I then released the branch which sprung back into the sky - a white hole in the dark foliage – moving in the wind.

Later on I worked on the trunk of nearby sweet chestnut tree. The bark was deeply grooved and spiralled around the tree. The lines of the bark are an indication of the way the tree has grown.

I made lines with rushes on against the bark – held with thorns – drawing the tree.

Became heavily overcast and dark. I began to walk back to Hall where I thought I might make a rain shadow on the dry hard surface of road or courtyard.

I didn't get very far. Began to rain heavily. The only place I could find a suitable surface was the trunk of a fallen beech tree.

I lay down in haste – I would have liked to have made a video of the process of my laying in the rain, getting up, leaving a dry shadow for the rain to obliterate. There was no time to set up a camera. In fact it rained so heavily that I hardly had enough time to take a hand held photograph with my 35mm camera and mobile phone.

It was a pity because the resulting shadow was good. It astonished me to see how different a tree is when wet – especially a beech the pale grey bark of which goes dark when damp.

I know from experience that it will be difficult to repeat this work – I will see.





9th July, Saturday.

Worked on the chestnut tree that I began drawing on yesterday.

I set up my video camera on a tripod at the nearby fallen beech tree - hoping to make another rain shadow.

It suddenly went cold and damp – rain felt imminent and I began to walk over to the tree. I heard rain falling on the trees ahead of me - started to run but got to the tree too late – its trunk was already wet. Very disappointed.

Returned to the chestnut tree and finished the rush line drawing. I liked the way the dark intense light under the tree canopy illuminated the lines but my heart lay with the shadow I had failed to make.

Once finished I went over to the fallen beech tree. The trunk had begun to dry out and it looked as if it could rain again. I didn't want to leave the tree so decided to make a work on it so I would be at hand if it began to rain.

Made a stacked ball of branches at the rotten hollow end of the trunk where the tree had broken. The weather became sunny and dry – looked unlikely that I would be able to make a shadow but towards the end of the afternoon the sky turned dark and felt it might rain again. I lay down on the dry trunk. Lay for about 10 minutes, just as I was about to get up it began to rain – not like the hard rain that fell previously but a more gentle rain which meant I had to lay for quite a long time before the trunk had become wet enough to get up.

I heard shouts from nearby people visiting the Halls gardens – I think they were asking if I was alright.

Eventually I got up –leaving a shadow.

A long but good day.



10th July Tuesday

I felt a little weary after yesterday. Walked further down the avenue of trees intending to work elsewhere but was drawn back to the fallen beech tree.

Gathered a handful of the black earth that can often be found under the beech trees. Smears on to a limb of the fallen beech tree to make a drawing – black lines on the pale grey bark.

Was going to leave but the sky once again turned dark and rain looked imminent. I thought of making another shadow on another part of the trunk. Whilst I was waiting I began another work at the end of one of the broken limbs of the beech tree.

The limb stuck upwards and by chance had the hooked remains of a branch still attached. I began working more branches at the end of the limb with the intention of forming a small ball or cairn.

It was difficult to get the branches to hold together but once started held together well. It became bigger than I intended. I became more confident that the branches would hold together as work progressed but knew I was really pushing the ability of the branch still attached to the tree to hold the entire form.

What began as a work to keep me occupied whilst waiting for rain turned out to be really interesting. It looked so unattached to the limb – it really challenged my perception and I became increasingly excited about the work as it grew. I was desperately disappointed when it fell – suddenly - when the branch snapped.

Nor did it rain.



11th July, Wednesday

Returned to the fallen beech tree. The trunk was wet after overnight rain.

The rain had stopped and I lay down on the damp trunk hoping to leave a dark damp shadow as the trunk dried out.

Lay for over an hour before getting up. A passer by asked if I was making a protest.

The shadow was not well defined but parts of my body could be identified. It would seem that the drying was uneven – dependent upon which parts of the trunk had been most wet.

Not wanting it to rain was a very strange sensation after lying in the same position so wanting it to rain. It may be a passive process about which I can do nothing to change but I find myself willing it to rain as I lay on the ground – wanting rain is deeply engrained in my brain – wanting the opposite was interesting. To add to the confusion, once the trunk had dried, it began to rain so I lay down to make a rain shadow but this time it did not rain enough. It was a 'dry' rain that I find so difficult to deal with and has kept me so many times pinned to the ground in the hope it might strengthen and fall more heavily.

Began to make another work at the rotten end of the trunk. Unfinished.





12th July Thursday

Returned to the tree Stayed for a while. Began to feel that I should try elsewhere to work – I have become too attached to the tree perhaps. Attachment can be interesting if the work digs deeper but the sense of security of going to a place already familiar can be detrimental.

Only got a short distance when I turned back intending to make damp drawings on the dry trunk.

Looked as if it might rain again so worked instead on the branch hole at the trunk end that I began yesterday. The sky cleared and rain looked unlikely when suddenly it began to spit. I lay down at the other end of the trunk amongst the limbs of the tree. It was a difficult place to lie down and was uncertain about what form the shadow might take.

The rain was perfect – not too light or heavy – and left a clear if somewhat distorted, limb distorted shadow.

After the rain stopped I lay down at the other end of the trunk hoping to again make a damp dark shadow. Once again the conceptual shift from light to dark, negative to positive, wet to dry was challenging.

When the trunk dried I finally made damp drawings which were not particularly successful.

Finished the wood work at the trunk end of the fallen tree.