

Fools On the Hill, see their world burned down....

Just over a month has gone by since being woken by our farmer neighbour with the news that the caravans on our site at the quarry had been burned down, so much is lost, all my past home belongings, our summer home, accommodation for projects etc. etc. too much to assimilate, all burnt and gone to a black cinder... We have been in shock as we come to terms with our loss, it has been difficult to tell people what has happened as our masks have been changing from moment to moment. Below is the news report that tells the story:

Wednesday, January 12, 2011, 09:00

Arsonists ring down curtain on theatre bid

A COUPLE'S dream to build a Minack-style theatre in North Cornwall has been wrecked by arsonists.

Artists Ray Bowler, and Franki Anderson, lost three luxury caravans "full of lovely possessions" in a blaze in part of the remote Trebarwith Road Quarry in the early hours of Boxing Day.

Two fire engines from Delabole attended the blaze which had spread over three static caravans just after 3am.

Crews used two hose reel jets, two breathing apparatus, two main jets and a light portable pump to extinguish the fire. Police are treating the incident as arson.

Mr Bowler, who used to run the Trebarwith Strand Hotel, told the Cornish Guardian that he and Ms Anderson are distraught.

Franki Anderson, a seasoned theatre maker and teacher said that her work archives, specialist books, publicity, music, workshop equipment, costume store, sewing and making room were all lost.

"These were the tools of my trade in our summer retreat, a place of peace and beauty gone in a puff of smoke," she said. Ray Bowler, local artist and beach comber said: "It has been my dream to build my own theatre, a Minack for North Cornwall. For ten years I have worked single-handed to tame redundant quarry tips into a useful landscape. It was our intention to move on to erect earth and cob buildings there."

"The caravans were a lovely space to write and devise, I don't understand who would wish to do this on Christmas night 3am, in freezing conditions," she said.

Popular Cornwall theatre export Wildworks used the space to create A Beautiful Journey at the site in August 2008.

"Perhaps this is a time to move forward to more permanent buildings," said Ray. "But the loss of our base, phone, and power is a sadistic blow to people who work from their hearts."

With public spending cuts for the arts the future is a challenge, but Ray and Franki are determined to continue.

"It is a working quarry on one side, a lunar landscape, and paradise on the other. We will

carry on with our dream."

A police spokesman said investigations are proceeding and they were taking the issue seriously. They ask anyone who can help to contact them on 0845 2777444.

<http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/news/Arsonists-ring-curtain-theatre-bid/article-3086696-detail/article.html>

We have so many masks to play out, sometimes we get into duet as our feelings run riot. We have had days of grief where neither of us can be effective, both of us completely washed out, so that there is nothing to do but feel it. Other days are full rich and productive. Trouble is we never know what tomorrow will bring. We are warmed by the empathy, love and support offered by family and friends, on the whole we feel well supported and accepting of the situation.

We go up to the sooty charred mess of it all whenever the weather allows and that is cathartic. Sorting and clearing the debris, finding symbols hiding in the sea of blackness.

- One of my lizards, (was a broach) pokes his head out, *Lizard medicine is the shadow side of reality reminding us to pay attention to our dreams before deciding to manifest them physically.* All is gone to ash but the dream lives on.

- The mug I bought for Ray, was his favourite, covered in hearts and love, miraculously survives encapsulated by the melted window glass, saved probably by sitting in washing up water. Some-ones soul in so much torment, seeks satisfaction by burning our paradise but they cannot burn away the love that has gone into the place and lives on between the people who play there.

- Remains of a library of books; Grimm's Fairy Tales, a first page entitled "A Time to Dance" fly in the wind along with scraps of posters for my show Luna... At the moment there is nothing to be done, nothing to be replaced, because there is nothing to put anything in!

It's a big black nothingness, full of feelings, memories, inventories, soul searching, and the retelling of the story, again and again until it no longer holds so much energy.

Really unsure of what to do next, what plan to follow which is fine as long as it is just us, but other people are not in the same position, of needing to stop and take stock of where they now are, they need confirmation so they can plan their future in relation to us. Whilst there are negatives and positives, it seems that making plans for how this might unfold has to be tied up with the scale and possibility of our future vision, financial liberations and human power. This crisis may be what is needed to focus energy and unleash resources for the project, on the other hand it may herald a new chapter where what we have been doing is left behind with the warped scrap metal for a completely different life.

We will be letting people know if there is anything they can do to become part of the project when we are clearer.