



CONFER

# LANDSCAPES OF THE MIND

Conference 25-27 September 2009

Does our psychological health depend on  
our relationship with nature?

Chaired by Professor David Peters and Nick Totton

## Presenters

Isabel Clarke

Zita Cox

Graham Game

Chris Johnstone

Martin Jordan

Satish Kumar

Joanna Macy

Paul Maiteny

Mary-Jayne Rust

Viola Sampson

Laurie Slade

Nick Totton

Sandra White

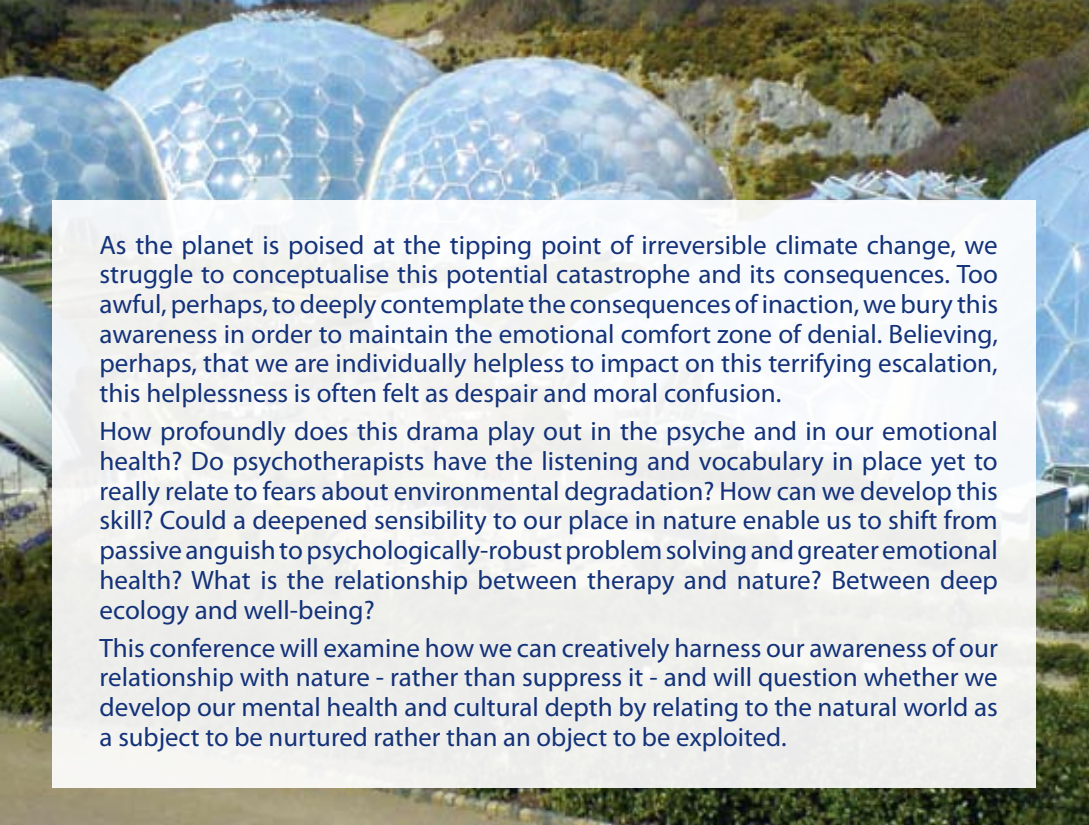
Lectures, workshops and the natural world

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**Venue: The Eden Project, Cornwall**

Sponsored by The British Holistic Medical Association - [www.bhma.org](http://www.bhma.org)





As the planet is poised at the tipping point of irreversible climate change, we struggle to conceptualise this potential catastrophe and its consequences. Too awful, perhaps, to deeply contemplate the consequences of inaction, we bury this awareness in order to maintain the emotional comfort zone of denial. Believing, perhaps, that we are individually helpless to impact on this terrifying escalation, this helplessness is often felt as despair and moral confusion.

How profoundly does this drama play out in the psyche and in our emotional health? Do psychotherapists have the listening and vocabulary in place yet to really relate to fears about environmental degradation? How can we develop this skill? Could a deepened sensibility to our place in nature enable us to shift from passive anguish to psychologically-robust problem solving and greater emotional health? What is the relationship between therapy and nature? Between deep ecology and well-being?

This conference will examine how we can creatively harness our awareness of our relationship with nature - rather than suppress it - and will question whether we develop our mental health and cultural depth by relating to the natural world as a subject to be nurtured rather than an object to be exploited.

## **Friday 25 Sept 2009 – Chairperson Professor David Peters**

**7.30pm**

**Joanna Macy**

### **The planetary crisis and the arising of the ecological self**

To be conscious in our time involves an almost unbearable awareness of irretrievable losses and accelerating dangers to all life. The feelings aroused are too often reduced to some personal pathology, and people are robbed of ways to see them as wholesome and to channel them into appropriate action. The healing professions have a powerful role to play in countering this reductionism and legitimating people's natural responses to loss and danger. Most successful are moves to enable people to expand their capacity to identify with collective interest. Joanna's work over three decades has been informed by systems theory, Buddhist teachings and a lifelong commitment to social activism.

**9.0pm**

**Drinks reception**

**10.0pm**

**End of day**

## Saturday 26 Sept – Chairperson Professor David Peters

9.0am

Laurie Slade

### Social Dreaming Matrix

By sharing dreams and associations, making connections where possible, we can identify emerging themes of the conference and explore our engagement with them.

10.30am

Martin Jordan

### The Living Mountain: attachment to landscape and its importance in regulating emotions

This paper will explore how our attachment to nature is formed in our early love relationships. I will draw upon ideas from relational theory and research in developmental psychology to explore the role of nature in affect regulation and development, discussing how 'splits' have formed between self and nature as a protection against vulnerability. I will argue that at the heart of our current ecological crisis, are fundamental problems of dependency and vulnerability. I will conclude by exploring the role of psychotherapy in developing an ecological self.

11.45am

Coffee

12.15pm

Mary-Jayne Rust

### Nature as Subject: exploring anthropocentrism

We've had a hundred years of exploring the psychodynamics of human relationships - but what of our relationships with the non-human world? The "natural world" has become a bunch of objects to be used; wild nature is often feared as dark and dangerous, or conversely idealised as all-beautiful. Facing our projections is every bit as (if not more) difficult as the challenge of working through sexism and racism. But this psychological work is essential if we are to relate with the earth as a community of subjects on whom we depend for our physical and mental health. How might these issues enter into our work as therapists?

1.30pm

Lunch break

2.30pm

Small Group Workshops (choose one of 8)

#### INDOOR WORKSHOPS:

1

Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone

#### A taste of *The Work that Reconnects*

*The Work That Reconnects* is a pioneering form of group work that began in the 1970s. It demonstrates our interconnectedness in the web of life and our authority to take action on its behalf. It has helped many thousands around the globe find insight, solidarity, and courage to act when addressing their concerns about our world situation. Drawing on systems theory, spiritual teachings, and deep ecology, this afternoon workshop introduces this approach.



**2** **Mary-Jayne Rust**  
**Ecopsychological Listening**

It is well known in the therapy world that how we listen, what we hear and how we respond may be limited by our own experience as therapists. For example, how might we respond to stories of ecological destruction? What do we know of the importance of attachment and bonding with the non-human world? Through a mix of experiential exercises and discussion we will explore how we listen and respond to ecopsychological material in the therapy room, and its importance to our emotional well-being.

**3** **Sandra White**  
**Towers and Landscapes**

Carl Jung described his experience of himself when living in his tower at Bollingen: "At times I feel as if I am spread out over the landscape and inside things, and am myself living in every tree, in the splashing of the waves, in the clouds and the animals that come and go, in the procession of the seasons." Through story, enactment and artwork, we will examine how we separate ourselves from and connect with our experience of being an integral part of Earth's landscape.

**4** **Zita Cox**  
**Environmental Constellations – an experiential workshop**

Eco-psychology offers the perspective that humankind suffers the distress of the other-than-human world we so rigorously exclude - as well as our own pain at being separated from the natural world.

This Constellations workshop aims to reconnect us beneficially to the other-than-human world in a different, dynamic and unpredictable way: to rely less on the rational mind and connect through our body, intuition, empathy and unconscious.

**5** **Nick Totton**  
**Wild Mind**

*Wild mind* listens to the intelligence of all our embodied experience. It emerges from accepting identification with the body as an aspect or part of the whole system. Like an ecosystem, like our physiological functions, wild mind happens of its own accord, as the sum product of local reality: we do not have to bring purpose or intention to bear on the situation, as if from the outside - it arises as a spontaneous expression of the situational gestalt. In this workshop we will think about, talk about and experiment with the qualities of wild mind and its potential role in our individual and collective life.

**OUTDOOR WORKSHOPS:**

**6** **Viola Sampson**  
**Staying in touch with our ecological self-sensation, emotional intelligence and resilience**

In a culture where individualism and desensitisation is fostered, how do we connect with the collective and how do we make sense of ourselves? This workshop will explore ways to tap into a deeper intelligence and nurture our relationship with the wider system. It will also offer space to share strategies and skills for emotional resilience.

**7****Martin Jordan****Taking Therapy Outside – deconstructing and reconstructing the frame in psychotherapy**

The main focus of the workshop will be on exploring issues involved in taking counselling and psychotherapy outdoors. The presenter will use case study and supervision material to explore some of the main issues involved in taking therapy outdoors. Issues such as confidentiality, timing, weather, containment and relationship with nature will be explored. Time will be given for small group discussion and focussed activity exploring how participants see issues involved in practising counselling and psychotherapy outdoors.

**8****Graham Game****Will informed awareness save us from climate change?**

Conventional wisdom has often dictated that when a problem or issue occurs, we throw information at people and raise their awareness, they act accordingly and the problem is solved. While that strategy may be relevant for some issues, the BIG Issue - climate change - demands a far more sophisticated approach. Graham Game will explore where we have gone wrong with our approach to tackling climate change, and how we can use Ecopsychology and Ecotherapy to empower people to change their attitudes and behaviour and live more sustainably.

**4.30pm****TEA and time to explore the Eden Project****5.0pm****Other activities**

Wild foods:	Gathering foods in their natural habitats (workshop)
Choral time:	Singing with the Eden Choir (workshop)
Wild walk:	Led by Graham Game (off site)

**6.30pm****Satish Kumar****We will consider how and why our emotional, spiritual and psychological health depends on our relationship with nature****7.30****Barbeque and party****11.0****End of evening**

# Sunday 27 September 2009 – Chairperson: Nick Totton

8.30am

Laurie Slade

## Social Dreaming Matrix

By sharing dreams and associations, making connections where possible, we can identify emerging themes of the conference and explore our engagement with them.

10.0am

Paul Maiteny

## Yearning for our niche: the role of meaningfulness in the ecosystem

As human beings, we mostly use our capacities to invent ever more ingenious, sophisticated and subtle ways to satisfy desires through what can be called a 'consuming orientation'. We know that consuming can never ultimately satisfy, but we continue, drawn by our 'pre-human' instinct, as if there is no other route to satisfaction. Paradoxically, our eco-systemic mess is rooted, at least in part, in an instinct for survival that has become dysfunctional. Our survival depends on shifting this orientation but why is this so difficult, even when we are aware of the problem? This presentation will explore how we can live as part of a bigger context, in which meaningfulness comes from seeking, and perhaps finding, one's niche in the ecosystem?

11.0

Coffee

11.30

Isabel Clarke

## What we do to the earth, we do to ourselves

The ecological crisis is a crisis of relationship. Our abusive relationship with the earth, threatening the future of our species, also distorts us, causing pain, which we dull by addictions that fuel reckless consumption. Accepting and understanding that we are caught between self consciousness and embeddedness in relationship opens our capacity to expand in love, not cut off in addiction.

12.45pm

Lunch break

1.45pm

Chris Johnstone

## Resilience and recovery in a time of global crisis

As we enter a new era of economic uncertainty and environmental concern, polls show that most people consider the condition of our world to be getting worse. Against this background of anxiety, depression has become the modern epidemic. Yet as well as bringing nightmares and despair, could our current crisis also call forth positive qualities and new strengths? In rising to the challenges of our times, could we discover a positive experience of mental health that includes deepened purpose and greater aliveness? This session explores how crisis can become a turning point in personal and planetary healing, and offers processes to help strengthen our resilience and participation in the recovery of our world.



2.30pm

Joanna Macy

## Practices to support the ecological self

Joanna will draw from her international work with people of all ages, backgrounds, and political persuasions to free their perceptions of current ecological and social conditions and to release their energies to take constructive action.

3.45pm

Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone

## Taking it forward

An opportunity to reflect on the ground covered by the conference, celebrate new or deepened connections, and look at how we take these forward in our personal and professional lives.

4.15pm

End of conference

## Speakers

**Isabel Clarke** is a consultant clinical psychologist, working in acute mental health in the NHS. She publishes and talks on the psychology of spirituality, and has always had a deep interest in ecology. She has been active in Greenspirit for many years. Her recent book, *Madness, Mystery and the Survival of God* (O-Books) brings together these themes in an accessible form. See her website: [www.isabelclarke.org](http://www.isabelclarke.org) for more information on her publications and activities.

**Zita Cox**, with 20 years experience as a psychotherapist and supervisor, Zita trained in Systemic Constellations with Dr Albrecht Mahr. She has applied constellations to environmental issues in Britain, California and New Zealand. She sees her Eco-psychology work as "introducing empathy and love into the mix of fear and guilt". Her article 'A Different Kind of Field Trip' ('The Knowing Field' January 2007) describes how empathy enables unexpected insights and shifts.

**Graham Game** is a coach, facilitator and ecotherapist and has been a professional environmentalist for almost 30 years, working on a wide range of campaigns and projects for organisations such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Green Network and The Wildlife Trusts. He has been an elected councillor, a prolific public speaker, facilitator and lecturer, has written countless articles for a wide variety of publications, and contributed to many broadcasts in the UK and USA. He is currently a member of the All Party Parliamentary Climate Change Group at Westminster, and a trustee of The Wilderness Foundation UK. Graham has been described in the press as "One of Britain's most experienced environmentalists". [www.grahamgame.com](http://www.grahamgame.com)

**Dr Chris Johnstone** is an addictions specialist, teacher of positive psychology and author of the self-help book *Find Your Power*. For over twenty years he has studied, taught and written about the application of psychological insights to global issues. He has worked closely with Joanna Macy in offering empowerment trainings for activists, and with the transition network, from applying

insights from addictions treatment to promoting recovery from oil dependence. He produces the free email newsletter *The Great Turning Times* (see [www.GreatTurningTimes.org](http://www.GreatTurningTimes.org)) and has a website at [www.chrisjohnstone.info](http://www.chrisjohnstone.info)

**Martin Jordan** is a Senior Lecturer in Counselling and Psychotherapy at the University of Brighton, UKCP registered Psychotherapist and Chartered Counselling Psychologist. He has had a long interest in the relationship between nature and self, and the role of natural environments in emotional wellbeing. He is a keen mountain walker and horticulturalist. He has participated in a range of nature based therapeutic experiences and is currently researching the process of psychotherapy in the outdoors.

**Satish Kumar** is the guiding spirit behind a number of ecological, spiritual and educational ventures in Britain and is a teacher of reverential ecology, holistic education and voluntary simplicity. When he was nine years old, he renounced the world and joined the wandering brotherhood of Jain monks. As a young man he undertook an 8,000 mile peace pilgrimage, walking from India to America without money. He is Visiting Fellow at Schumacher College, a residential international centre for the study of ecological and spiritual values. He is the Editor of *Resurgence* magazine, and founder of the Small School in Hartland, a pioneering secondary school which brings into its curriculum ecological and spiritual values. He is author of *No Destination* (1978), *You Are, Therefore I Am – A Declaration of Dependence* (2002), and *The Buddha and the Terrorist* (2004).

**Joanna Macy Ph.D.**, Eco-philosopher, is a scholar of Buddhism, general systems theory, and deep ecology. She is also a leading voice in movements for peace, justice, and a safe environment. Interweaving her scholarship and four decades of activism, she has created both a ground-breaking theoretical framework for a new paradigm of personal and social change, and a powerful workshop methodology for its application. Her wide-ranging work addresses psychological and spiritual issues of the nuclear age, the cultivation of ecological awareness, and the fruitful resonance between Buddhist thought and contemporary science. Her books included *Despair and Empowerment in the Nuclear Age* (New Society Publishers, 1983), *Dharma and Development* (Kumarian Press, 1985), *Thinking Like a Mountain* (co-edited with John Seed, Pat Fleming, and Arne Naess; New Society Publishers, 1988), *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory* (SUNY Press, 1991), *Rilke's Book of Hours* (with Anita Barrows, Riverhead, 1996), *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World* (with Molly Young Brown, New Society Publishers, 1998); *Widening Circles: A Memoir* (New Society Publishers, 2000); and *World as Lover, World as Self: Courage for Global Justice and Ecological Renewal* (Parallax Press, 2007).

**Paul Maiteny** is an integrative and transpersonal psychotherapist, anthropologist and ecologist with 25 years working in ecological education, originally as a ranger. Since 1996, he has taught and written courses for the MSc Education for Sustainability, London South Bank University. He has held research posts at Oxford University, the Grubb Institute of Behavioural Studies, the Open University and the University College London. He has been researching psycho-emotional and cultural dimensions of ecological breakdown since 1996. Recent particles on this work are published in *The Psychotherapist* [Winter 2008/9], *Handbook of Sustainability Literacy* [Stibbe, Ed., in press], and UNESCO's Encyclopaedia of Life-Support Systems).



**Professor David Peters** trained as a medical doctor and homoeopath and later as a GP and osteopath. He directed the NHS-based complementary therapies development programme at Marylebone Health Centre, and helped found the School of Integrated Health, University of Westminster, where he is Clinical Director. He established and led the Delivery Advisory Group of the Prince's Foundation for Integrated Health until 2006 and has co-authored or edited five books about integrated healthcare. He chairs the British Holistic Medical Association, and edits its publication, *The Journal of Holistic Healthcare*. [www.bhma.org](http://www.bhma.org)

**Mary-Jayne Rust** is a Jungian analyst and an art therapist. Her many years experience in the field of eating problems has led her to explore the historical roots of consumerism, and our damaged relationship with the body of the earth. She lectures, writes and runs workshops in this field of ecopsychology. She also teaches ecopsychology at masters level, and co-facilitates courses in the wilds of Scotland. [www.mjrust.net](http://www.mjrust.net).

**Viola Sampson** is a craniosacral therapist with an ongoing commitment to social change. Her background is in fifteen years of environmental and human rights work - from rainforest activism to government lobbying - and for the past ten years she has been following her interests in ecopsychology. She is part of the Activist Trauma Support network, offering skill-shares on posttraumatic stress and burnout. Alongside her craniosacral practice, she is a campaigns communications strategist for Greenpeace in the UK.

**Laurie Slade** is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist in private practice in West London. He is a member of the Guild of Psychotherapists, the International Neuro-Psychoanalysis Society and the Confederation for Analytical Psychology. He has been involved in social dreaming since 2001, hosting sessions in a variety of settings, in the UK and internationally. At the IAGP Conference in Rome this summer, he will be giving a presentation on an experimental project at Rose Bruford Drama College which he has been involved with since 2005, using dreams to facilitate creativity for student theatre directors.

**Nick Totton** is a therapist and trainer with over twenty five years experience. Originally a Reichian body therapist, he has also trained in cranial-sacral therapy and taken an MA in Psychoanalytic Studies. He now practices and teaches Embodied-Relational Therapy. His primary 'way in' to ecopsychology is through our embodied connection with the rest of the universe and with nonhuman beings. He offers workshops and talks on ecopsychology and embodiment, most recently exploring the concept of 'Wild Mind', and sometimes takes therapy sessions out of doors. He has written several books, including *Body Psychotherapy: An Introduction*; *Psychotherapy and Politics*; and *Press When Illuminated: New and Selected Poems*. He has an extensive website: [www.earthworks.co.uk](http://www.earthworks.co.uk).

**Sandra White** is a Jungian counsellor, ecopsychologist and maker of ceremony, with an interest in exploring whether feeding our imaginations and our embodied experience strengthens our sense of inter-connectedness, giving rise to new visions and different energies.

# Booking Form

# Information

You might like to book online?  
Go to [www.confer.uk.com](http://www.confer.uk.com)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

(it is important that we have this so we can inform you of advance reading or changes in the programme)

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred workshop (Small Group Workshops 1-8)

I am self funded     I am organisationally funded

I enclose a total of £ \_\_\_\_\_  
(cheques are made payable to Confer Ltd)

OR please deduct £ \_\_\_\_\_ from my credit/debit card number:

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Master Card     Visa     Switch

Issue no: \_\_\_\_\_

Valid From Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_    Expiry Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

I am organisationally funded by

\_\_\_\_\_ Name of Organisation

I need my place to be invoiced to this organisation

If so, please email the contact details of the person who is handling your payment to [bookings@confer.uk.com](mailto:bookings@confer.uk.com)

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_ 2009

I have read and accept the booking conditions

**Dates**    Friday 25 September (evening)  
                 Saturday 26 September  
                 Sunday 27 September 2009

**Venue:**  
The Core, Eden Project, Boldeva, Cornwall, PL24 2SG

**Fees**    Early bird self-funded & BMHA members: £250  
                 From 1 August 2009: £300  
                 Organisationally funded: £500

**Bike Raffle** If you come by public transport, you will be eligible to enter our raffle to win a bike of your choice worth up to £150.

**Fees include:** conference place, Eden Project pass, workshops, presentations, papers and handouts, refreshments, supper on Saturday (but not lunches).

**Lunches** can be bought at one of the Eden Projects cafes or restaurants.

**CPD - 10 hours:** Certificates of attendance provided.

**Public transport** Train fares of £48.50 return Paddington to St Austell can be booked in advance at [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk). Coaches will be provided to collect and return participants from both St Austell and Fowey 45 minutes before the beginning and end of each day. Details will be provided nearer the time. For taxis, Eden recommends [www.biotravel.co.uk](http://www.biotravel.co.uk) - a Biodiesel taxi fleet.

**Car share** If you are willing to share your journey you might try [www.carsharecornwall.com](http://www.carsharecornwall.com) to look for a suitable match or add your own journey.

**Accommodation** There is plenty of self-catering accommodation in the area. Try and book in Fowey to take advantage of our pick up service. Suggestions will be posted on our website.

**To book:** Go to [www.confer.uk.com](http://www.confer.uk.com) OR detach and return booking form with payment by post

**Booking Conditions:** A 50% refund will be given if you cancel in writing before 10 August 2009. After then, regrettably, no refunds can be given in any circumstances. If you find you cannot attend you may pass on your ticket to another person if you give us 24 hours notice of their name. A place at the conference cannot otherwise be shared. You agree to pay the organisational rate if your place is being funded for you by an organisation. Confer reserves the right to alter the programme if a speaker cancels.

**Project Consultants:** Isabel Clarke, Mary-Jayne Rust and David Peters

**Director of Confer:** Jane Ryan

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