



Innovation: designing for a sustainable future

The 'magic' of island life.

Stephen Peake

I wonder if the island metaphor is a bit like policy makers and politicians and communities wanting to sort of do a magic trick in a particular way. They want to show you that there's nothing in their hands, look there's nothing in my hands. It's an island you can see that. We didn't cheat. Honest guy it really works. This is the power station. This is the wood-chipper. This is the turbine. You can see the boats coming in. Somebody could count them going in and out. It's just a very physical metaphor for a community and it's one that has been used a lot in academic texts over the years for exploring all kinds of social and technological change. So it's no surprise that if you're in an island community you'll begin to think that the edge of the island represents a kind of systems boundary and so in systems thinking terms you'll naturally start thinking about your life, your sphere of influence is the shores of the island, so I think it's quite natural that islands, small islands that is, islands moving first in attempts to take quite big steps towards sustainability.