production, were often developed in a spirit of hope: to feed the hungry; to eradicate starvation; to create prosperity.

If farming in this context of science and technology has become a cognitive knowledge, the alternative ‘power’ of Art becomes crucial because it is a different kind of intelligence, not born from logic and rationale. When I am drawing I am experiencing, moving intuitively, sensing. I am in relationship with that which I observe. Art does not primarily operate from the intellect, which can perhaps cause as much damage as the solutions it resolves. Art resolves other dynamics. When I operate from my intellect I am the centre of the world, but as I am making I somehow find a balance between my ego and the rest of the world. And one of the consequences of drawing is that I learn to accept that which I do not understand: the inexplicable and ineffable: horizons, for example.

Rather than a positive symbiosis, the ‘generative moment’ of Art and Farming during the agricultural revolution might be seen instead as complicit in sowing the seeds of global warming. By fuelling the industrial revolution, this moment contributed to ushering in the modern age, an age built upon an insatiable diet of carbon. It may also be seen as a key moment in an unfortunate schism. Only as a professionalised farming class emerges, as the production of food became increasingly the occupation of a few on behalf of the many, can Art and Farming can become entirely unrelated. Prior to the permanent disruption of medieval patterns of life and work during the agricultural revolution, the vast majority of people held a subsistent relationship with the land – in which Art and Farming can

After GB Farming, environmental summits came and went, and I became more and more convinced of art’s impotence in the face of global warming. But it may be just another kind of human arrogance to imagine that we wield power to reverse what we have done as a species – we continue to see ourselves as central to the narrative. I view now the discoveries of the agricultural revolution as a form of early ‘intellectual technology’ in which, before test tubes and laboratories, humankind cultivated to an unprecedented degree, the capability to exert power over nature through knowledge. We could not forecast the consequences of our knowledge however and its greatest limitation is that we do not know what we do not know. There is a cruel irony that so many technologies, now blamed for the worst of over-
arguably be seen as one and husbandry, the care of farm animals in the words of H.J. Massingham “the sum of all craftsmanship”.

The fragility of my installation *John Clare’s Desk*¹⁰, with its dripping sky of blue icing sugar, supported on a spine of biscuits, gives homage to the peasant poet John Clare, with whom I came to identify when I was depressed. Clare, who lamented the loss of local ecology, the disappearance of common land, the disintegration of the medieval peasantry, and who spent the latter part of his life in a lunatic asylum, may be seen as the antithetical figure to Robert Bakewell, representing the suffering flip-side of eighteenth century progress.

His infamous late poem ‘I Am’, written in the Northamptonshire asylum, is a poem of desolation and desertion by his friends “Into the living sea of waking dreams / Where there is neither sense of life or joys”. Clare expresses a desire to be alone with God, “Untroubling and untroubled where I lie / The grass below – above the vaulted sky”. In 2013 with these words circulating in my mind, standing in a field of my relatives’ farm in Wales, turning to see the landscape in every direction, I realised that Clare, lying down on the grass, would experience an endless horizon. The artwork evolved from this image, connecting the writer, dreaming at his desk with an imaginary, endless sky.

Today, we live in a post-modern age and cannot easily reverse the past. Both Art and Farming continue to be necessary for our humanity; in a sense we all must be

¹⁰ Photo, p. 188
artists and we all must be farmers. The difficulty is in prescribing what that might look like when the human experience of food, economic choice and landscape is so varied. I have learned during *GB Farming* that whilst this might be impossible to define, and whilst making art may not resolve the environmental chaos of our global community, it does change me. My sense of wonder, which can sometimes be lost, is restored and I gain a heightened consciousness of my relationship with my environment. Through drawing I am equipped with hope, and these altered viewpoints do matter. I am changed.