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GO TO WORK IN AN EGG

A unique wooden structure floating on the Beaulieu Estuary near Southampton is a live-work space with a difference...

WORDS ANN WALLACE | PHOTOS NIGEL RIGDEN



“My artwork is very much about nature and natural processes and the relationship we have with nature”



LEFT, INSET FROM FAR LEFT The Exbury Egg's journey begins by road from Lymington; Arriving at the medieval harbour on the Beaulieu Estuary, the Egg is winched onto the water; Safely transported, the Egg is guided into position ABOVE The Exbury Egg begins its 12-month residency on the River Beaulieu BOTTOM, LEFT Artist, Stephen Turner's simple sleeping quarters BOTTOM, CENTRE Stephen and architect Wendy Perring admire the view from one of the egg's access points BELOW, CENTRE Living space includes a desk area BOTTOM, RIGHT The compact kitchen and shower

A giant floating egg on the River Beaulieu in Hampshire has to be the quirkiest space ever. The giant wooden pod, called the Exbury Egg, cost £40,000 to build and is the home, workspace and laboratory for artist Stephen Turner until June. The 40-ft structure, which is registered as a boat, floats up and down with the tide and is designed to have minimal environmental impact.

The idea was for Stephen to spend 12 months experiencing nature and highlighting climate change while staying on board and working in the Exbury Egg.

“My artwork is very much about nature and natural processes, and the relationship we have with nature,” he says.

Architect Wendy Perring from Hampshire-based PAD studio and project manager Phil Smith of Space Placemaking and Urban Design (SPUD), were responsible for translating Stephen's values into the practical space. PAD studio have won many awards for bespoke sustainable houses, but this is the smallest



living space that they have created. The Egg has an open-plan living space with kitchen and desk area. It is wider at the rear allowing room for cupboards either side, and a bathroom.

It took boatbuilder Paul Baker six months to build the space from cedar in an old milking shed near Lymington. Every one of the hundreds of planks was fitted by hand, and recycled wood used in the project included a garage door and half a garden shed.

Paul said in terms of boatbuilding there's “difficult, very difficult, and then the Egg”. It was worth it though. The Egg was shortlisted for The Wood Awards and won Best Sustainable Interior Design of the Year 2013 in the LEAF awards.

This project is enabling Stephen Turner to have a space to live in whilst he studies the life of the creek. He is sharing his work on a blog with schoolchildren, and once he has finished his residency, his work will go on display.

To find out more about the Exbury Egg, visit www.exburyegg.org

