

## Wingfield Barns Potato feedback

About 60 people attended the ploughing-day. The opportunity to see two teams of Suffolk Punches at work proved a major attraction. Comments on the Wonderwall included:

*We love the heavy horses.*

*To see horses working as opposed to 'showing': what a day!*

*Brilliant day... a super timeless scene... the horses were beautiful.*

*I've learned loads about Suffolks in just an hour or two. Great to get right up to them.*

A smaller number came out to the (more overcast and chillier) planting-day, but again recorded very positive comments on the Wonderwall:

*I had a good time.*

*It was fun to know how people in the olden days planted potatoes.*

*It was fun but quite cold!*

*Had a lovely time, but wouldn't want to do the whole field.*

Besides enabling people to see how certain kinds of agricultural work used to be done in the days before today's advanced technological methods, both days were notable for generating a wide range of different kinds of talk. There were family reminiscences and anecdotes (one person interviewed came from a family of farm-labourers) and overtly didactic talk during which younger family-members learned about family-history, the ways certain ploughing or planting procedures were carried out, and the terminology associated with the work in hand. There was technical discussion of the soil, of the machinery, and of the intricacies involved in teaching heavy horses how to plough. Individuals talked about their own lives lived largely in this locality, and of some of the changes they had seen. I was offered a definition of what the 'culture of the countryside' might mean by one self-confessed 'townie' who had come to live in the area five or so years before. In his view, the culture of the countryside has to do with *the way people live and used to live, the values they have and the kinds of things they do. It is different from the culture of the town: people seem to work harder* (by which I think he meant that people work physically harder, rather than for longer, though he may have meant that too). Yet they are also *more relaxed. They have a bit more community-spirit as well.* Discussion on the ploughing-day seemed to be stimulated by the activity itself, and to take place around it. On the planting-day, with fewer participants, discussion was helped by the chance to eat together in the middle of the day, and for audience, artists, volunteers and tractor-drivers to mingle informally.