

## When we're not rounding up cattle ...

**Jeremy Stacey Architects (left to right: Jane Snape, Jeremy Stacey, Rhona Fleming), Beachamwell, Norfolk**

### **How did you establish the practice?**

We moved from London to set up the practice in 1992. Our studio is a converted barn in a small village in rural west Norfolk. The practice consists of three architects, a part-time secretary and a bookkeeper who comes in once a month.

### **What kind of work do you do?**

Our work ranges from domestic jobs and church repairs to a £2.5m council office in King's Lynn. One of the partners is a member of the Society of Garden Designers, so we also do work on private gardens and recently completed a sensory garden in a Norfolk seaside town. Some of our work, like a pig house for a local farmer, would be hard to find in a city.

### **How far do you travel for work?**

We spend ages and fortunes driving around – the office motorbike is useful for short journeys. We have travelled as far south as London or as far west as Northamptonshire but mostly we cover a radius of 75 miles, which includes Cambridge, Norfolk and part of Suffolk.

### **Has new technology made life easier?**

Computers and dog hairs don't go well together, but email means we can get information quicker and easier than by post – which doesn't arrive until after 11 am – and a scanner saves a 75-mile round trip to get a colour photocopy.

### **Have you been affected by foot and mouth?**

Not much. Norfolk has been thankfully free of it, although there was a problem in moving topsoil on a landscape project. It has



meant we see more of our neighbour, who comes round to photocopy and fax cattle movement orders.

### **How do you get work and how important are relations with local planners and business people?**

We always involve planning officers at the early stages of our projects, but the local business world is a mystery to us. We get new work by recommendation or by freak accident.

### **What are the highs?**

Helping to round up escaped cattle makes a welcome break from sitting at a keyboard. Heading out at the front gate into fields and forests with the dogs makes the move from the city worthwhile.

### **And the lows?**

Feeling a bit isolated and worrying that everyone else is having better parties.

### **Small is beautiful**

Elaine Rigby will speak on rural practice at the RIBA's second Small Practice Conference at the Lowry in Salford on 15 November. Tickets cost £85 plus VAT. For further information, contact Julie McIver at Wentworth Consulting Group on 01257 278277 or email [riba@wentworth-cg.co.uk](mailto:riba@wentworth-cg.co.uk)