

VEGAN VIEWS

A forum for vegan opinion
in memory of Harry Mather

No.124 Spring 2012



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www.veganviews.org.uk

VEGAN VIEWS

Website: www.veganviews.org.uk
Email: veganviews@ymail.com

Editor - Sarah Austin

Editorial adviser - Malcolm Horne

Editor in Chief - David Mather

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Vegan Views, which started in 1975, is an informal forum for vegan news and discussion, produced by unpaid volunteers on a non-profit-making basis. Our emphasis is on debating issues amongst vegans and vegan sympathisers. We are independent but support the work of other vegan groups and publications. We expect to publish three times a year - in March, July and November.

We rely on readers' contributions, and try to print all that is relevant and of interest.

We welcome letters, articles, news, events, recipes, reviews, photos, drawings, cartoons, etc - by email if possible, with articles preferably as Word attachments. If you write to us but don't want your letter published please make this clear. Please include email and/or phone number in case we need to contact you - we will not pass on any personal information we receive. More details are on our website.

DISCLAIMER: Contributions may be edited. The views expressed in this issue are not necessarily those of the editors.

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In memory of Harry Mather (1924-2010)



Harry Mather was a compassionate and well-respected person who was a true pioneer of the vegan movement, and an inspiration to many people throughout his lifetime.

He became vegan in 1967 and wrote extensively on the subject. He ran the Bourne-mouth vegetarian/vegan group for many years and attended vegan festivals, events, camps and gatherings all over the UK and abroad.

Harry became editor of Vegan Views in 1985, and produced no less than 82 issues (numbers 35-116) until in 2008 he retired, planning to finish an anthology of his writings. Sadly he passed away two years later, not having concluded this work.

Harry you will be sadly missed ... may you rest in peace.

The deadline for contributions to the next issue (due out in July) is

THURSDAY 31st MAY - but smaller items may be accepted for a few weeks after this date. We would love to hear from you! See panel on the left for more info.

SUBSCRIPTIONS to the printed edition of Vegan Views (now in colour and almost identical to the digital version) - see back page.

The digital pdf version of V. V. is available free at www.veganviews.org.uk

If you'd like to receive the pdf version in your email as soon as it's out (rather than waiting until it's on the website) then please let us know and we will add you to our 'Pdf Mailing List'. The digital version is free, but donations are very welcome if you are a digital reader only. Our recent back issues 121, 122 and 123 are also freely available online (as are many earlier issues in our archive).



EDITORIAL



Welcome! Over the past few months we have been looking at ways to improve Vegan Views, especially the photos in the printed version, and have subsequently managed to buy our own cheap second-hand colour copier which we hope will make the printed mag more visually appealing to our readers. This issue is being printed on 100% recycled paper.

We have also updated our website (see Malcolm's piece below). And for those of you who like Facebook we have re-opened our group where we can share our concerns, see more about this on page 18.

We hope you will enjoy this issue, see the change to all colour as a positive step which we think will improve Vegan Views, and make it the same as our digital pdf version (which is available from our website).

We would like to thank Patrick at Veggies for kindly printing our last three issues and generally supporting us. Our ties will not be broken as hopefully Patrick will continue to sell the mag on his stalls, and we will carry news of Veggies projects (see page 19 of this issue for example).

Sarah Austin

The new version of the **Vegan Views website** www.veganviews.org.uk went online at the end of January. It is simple and basic, and hopefully very easy to navigate. No need for any animated graphics, which is just as well since I'm inexperienced with website design and would struggle to fashion them anyway! Even some of the simple things took more than a good while to comprehend, and many thanks go to Tony Martin for helping and advising me all along the way. Sarah declared she "wouldn't have the patience" to work at it, but still contributed ideas on colours and layout. Sarah, a keen photographer, took this 'leaves and shadows' photo that sits at the top left of every page.



The Home page, as before, has all the issues from 121 onwards available to download in pdf form. It will also be the page for any news or announcements, in particular when the next issue is due out, when the deadline for contributions is, and so on.

We have a Back Issues page where issues 93-117 can be downloaded (as well as our very first issue from 1975), and brief content details of each of those magazines have now been added. There's also a link to an old version of the website which lists many articles of interest from No 10 through to No 100. At some point in the future perhaps we should revive this practice because, as time goes on, interesting and still relevant articles can get rather 'lost' within old issues.

There's a link to our Facebook page which is growing in popularity. The Subscriptions page now enables readers to subscribe to the printed issue, or donate, directly to us using PayPal (rather than going via Veggies as before, with a delay before being forwarded to us).

Lastly we've added memorial pages for our two previous editors, Harry Mather and Valerie Alferoff, with some text and photos you may not have seen before. We hope to add to Harry's page a little later on, while Valerie's page contains a link to a further site created by her long-term partner David Barrett.

Malcolm Horne

The vegan evolution

This inspirational article by **Angel Flinn** is from 2009, but a revised and longer version can be read at <http://gentleworld.org/the-vegan-evolution-2>

Angel is the outreach director of **Gentle World** ('for the vegan in everyone'), a group based in New Zealand and Hawaii. We hope to interview Angel in our next issue, and find out more about Gentle World's work.

The longer version was described by one person as "the most incredibly inspiring speech for veganism I have ever read. I have only been vegan for a short time, after living my entire life as a meat eater, but suddenly a light came on and all the dots connected, and now for me there is no going back."

"It often happens that the universal belief of one age, a belief from which no one was free, or could be free, without an extraordinary effort of genius or courage, becomes to a subsequent age, so palpable an absurdity that the only difficulty is to imagine how such an idea could ever have been deemed credible."

John Stuart Mill

The vegan ideal embodies the highest of ethical aspirations - non-violence, justice and compassion toward the innocent. Yet this deep and powerful value system continues to be marginalised by society. The example set by those who embrace these principles is too often vehemently opposed, trivialised or simply ignored. But the effects of this paradigm shift in perception are far-reaching, and the rewards beyond measure.

And yet, it somehow appears that the light of veganism is so bright that people are afraid to open their eyes to it, even individuals whose eyes are open to the truth behind other social causes. What is it that makes us cling so stubbornly to a practice that is clearly unnecessary, devastatingly cruel, and, if left unchecked, will almost certainly end up destroying us?

More and more people are recognising the prejudice and injustice inherent in enslaving and slaughtering animals, in order to feed our appetite for flesh, eggs, milk, and other products of exploitation. It is no secret that animal concentration camps create breeding grounds for all sorts of infectious diseases. It's also becoming known that animal products are detrimental to human health, and that animal agriculture, including 'free-range' and 'organic', is implicated in some of the worst crimes against the planet. Even the truth about the animal industry's role in world hunger and food shortages is starting to come into the open.

Despite all the advancements of human 'civilisation', our addiction to killing keeps us in the dark ages. It inhibits us from cultivating our capacity for kindness, empathy, and justice; the very qualities we need to develop if we are to move forward into a safe and prosperous future, in which we do not fear one another.

Animals value their lives, and strive to be free from pain. Since the same qualities exist in us, empathising with them comes naturally. When we suppress that empathy, it makes it impossible for us to look more deeply into the true nature of animals, and the rest of the natural world that we all rely on for survival.

Indifference toward the suffering of other creatures is an accepted societal norm that calls out for us to remember what basic human values are: justice, empathy, compassion and respect; for the natural world, for the other animals, and for our fellow humans. By re-evaluating and renewing our commitment to these fundamental values, and by calling attention to the need for an ethical evolution, we can create new standards of behaviour, motivated by our desire to be better people. Only in this way will we become deserving of the position of stewardship that our physical evolution has granted us, but which we have rejected in favour of self-serving domination.

All over the world, animals are imprisoned, enslaved, tortured and violently killed, and all over the world, people who are otherwise kind, gentle and caring, continue to ignore this unspeakable suffering. And yet we wonder why the human race is plagued by violence on a world-wide scale. We go about our business, acting as though this state of violence does not indicate something terribly disturbing about our psychological state, individually and as a whole. Our lack of concern for innocent beings has caused us to de-sensitise ourselves to suffering, which in turn enables us to inflict pain on each other.



Angel Flinn and Poof the magic rabbit

The vegan ideal is at the core of the shift from predation to protection and from prejudice to justice; an essential step into a way of living that is more suited to the nature of people who care about the suffering of others, and who can empathise with another's situation. The vegan solution contains within it the power to solve even the most overwhelming problems we are facing, on every level from personal to planetary.

If we are to have a future, the people who live in that future will not be addicted to products that are a result of exploitation, suffering and environmental devastation. They will not source their food from animal farms or slaughterhouses, but from fertile gardens, vibrant orchards and veganic farms. People will be kind, compassionate, gentle and just.

This quantum leap in perception may seem unlikely from the position we are in today, but it is within this very change that our hope for the future lies.

Wild things

by Katharine A Gilchrist

"But animals eat other animals."

People who feel the need to defend their meat-eating habit are increasingly fond of this phrase. Maybe they have realised that feigning sympathy for carrots is passé, or even that vegans are probably not wearing leather shoes.

I used to fear this question. But you know what they say about fears. And one thing I realised when I looked at this issue was that I was not entirely sure what anti-vegans mean by this. Are they suggesting that (a) animals are so horrible that they deserve to be eaten, (b) that we must unthinkingly obey what nature has 'told' us to do, or (c) that the natural world is such a foul place that anything humans do to animals is benign by comparison?

Explanation (a), the revenge theory, is the least likely. Most farmed animals are herbivores. Indeed, some meat-eaters are fixated with 'grass-fed beef', which ties in with something I wrote for V.V. 115 (*Space Cowboys*, about the impact of ruminants such as cows and sheep being less benign than meat-eaters want us to think).

Theory (b) is more plausible, but only on the surface. I have never encountered a meat-eater who could fully explain why he or she had chosen to imitate a carnivore or omnivore rather than a herbivore. The best they can manage is a reference to canine teeth. Really? They cannot see the differences between a set of human teeth and those of a dog? That is a whole subject in itself, as is the question of why they (almost invariably) argue both that humans are superior to other animals but we should mimic their behaviour.

The big question for vegans is how to respond. Which works better: a witty reply or an in-depth one? Do we seek to highlight the meat-eater's lack of consistency in their enthusiasm for a 'natural' life? They may well be using the internet - something that is at least as much of a human creation as veganism. Are their brains, eyes and fingers 'evolved' to cope with it? (Indeed, veganism has a longer history than the world wide web. Any meat-eaters using websites to promote their 'traditionalism' should be made aware of this!)

Just a few days ago, I came across a brilliant short reply: "Some animals eat their own faeces. We don't usually copy them."

If we look at theory (c), however, we can often detect a genuine feeling that life for non-humans is so completely horrible that we are doing animals a great favour by farming them. I mean, look at those wildlife documentaries. Those beastly beasts are eating other animals!

Of course, a person could also pick out newspaper headlines and conclude that life as a human is utterly vile. If you find this view starting to take over your life, then I really advise you to talk to a doctor, or at least to someone you trust. You could be suffering from depression. This illness can make all the good things in life seem unimportant.

Why big fierce animals are rare

I was intrigued, some years ago, to encounter a book named *Why Big, Fierce Animals are Rare* by an ecologist named Paul Colinvaux. This does exactly what it says on the cover. It is not, as far as I can see, written from a vegan perspective, but it explains the mathematical and biological reasons why 'prey' species (eg deer) outnumber predators (eg wolves) in the wild.

Colinvaux wrote: "Two rather pleasing thoughts come from this discovery. One is that the lives of big game animals are lived in a large measure of freedom from the awful world of tooth and claw that we can conjure up from a careless reading

of Darwin. Not only do these animals live in that peaceful coexistence with their neighbours that the mathematical ecologists discovered, they may also live with far less fear of being killed than we had supposed, except as a sort of euthanasia. The second pleasing thought is that those who like to shoot big game themselves no longer have a pretext for killing off the wolves and cats before they start on the deer."

Hunting wild animals for food is clearly adding to the deaths and anxiety suffered by deer and other species deemed to be 'tasty'. What about animal farming? Meat-eaters often insist that 'free range' animals lead 'better' lives than they would if they had been born in the wild.

They seem to think that the production of animal food involves rescuing animals from the hazards of the wild and bestowing gifts of food and medical care on them. To them, it only seems fair that animals should give a little in return.

A farm is not a sanctuary

But a farm is not a sanctuary, and being a farmed animal is not like doing a couple of chores in return for board and lodging. The aim of farming is not to give animals a long and happy life. Certainly, there are standards that legally have to be met in terms of comfort. And it is undeniable that some farmers, whether to ease their own consciences or those of their customers, do more than they are legally required to do. (There are others who do less than they are legally required to do, and yet they escape prosecution, but that too is a separate topic.)

However comfortable the animals' conditions, the basic rationale of farming remains the same: to get food animals to 'slaughter weight' as quickly as possible and to kill off unwanted animals. The profit motive dictates that, even if the lives of farm animals are blissfully happy, those lives are abruptly ended as quickly as possible.

(Although I refer to 'the profit motive', I have also encountered socialist meat-eaters who assured me that animal farming would continue if capitalism ended. In their brave new world, however, there would be no 'exploitation'.)

There are those who say that: "But if it hadn't been for animal farming, those animals wouldn't even be alive in the first place!" This makes no sense to me.

Farmers aren't rescuing existing animals from the wild and giving them a better quality of life. They are breeding animals: bringing male and female animals together at a particular time in order that other animals are conceived. Unless one believes that there exists a metaphysical realm that contains unconceived animals which want a chance to exist in our world, bringing these animals into existence is not doing them any favours at all.

Even if this pool of souls existed, it is by no means clear they would choose a life that was destined to be cut short after only a fraction of their potential life span. A wild animal might outrun predators and reach something that could be considered 'old age', but farmed animals are destined to die once they are no longer deemed useful.

Remember: for every picture the advertisers bring us of laying hens wandering around, there is the harsh reality of the brothers of those hens meeting a very early death indeed.

Once upon a time, I dreaded hearing the phrase 'animals eat other animals'. But now when I hear it, I can make mincemeat of my opponents' arguments.

It is a pity this is only metaphorical mincemeat, or I would save money over Xmas.



Sign seen outside Hermans vegetarian restaurant in Stockholm, Sweden, last year. In the garden area the sparrows enjoy their meals too!

Lots of great vegan food here. And there's a superb panoramic view over central Stockholm too, as you can see at <http://gastrogate.com/restaurang/hermans>



News From Nowhere? Utopias and veganism

I have just been reading Fiona MacCarthy's biography of William Morris, the 19th century author, poet, pattern and furniture designer, and socialist (*William Morris: A Life for our Time*). It has made me think about his utopian fantasy novel *News From Nowhere*, and made me wonder about vegan utopias.

The basic storyline of *News From Nowhere* concerns a man called Guest, a sort of approximation of William Morris, who after a hearty discussion with his socialist comrades about what would happen "on the morrow of the revolution", goes to bed. He wakes up sometime in the future after the revolution has happened, in a utopian arts and crafts society. In this post revolution world where men, women and children are equal, and both beautiful and healthy, there are no prisons, central government or pollution. Money has been abolished, and so has formal education. People work because they enjoy it, and make beautiful things (which they give away) because they derive pleasure from creating lovely objects. Even their clothes are works of art.

Guest travels in this new world through a transformed London, where the Houses of Parliament are used as a dung store, and finishes off with a boat ride down the no longer polluted Thames to a beautiful old house, which is based on Kelmscott Manor, Morris's own summer retreat. In perhaps some of the most moving words in English Literature the strange Ellen, half pre-Raphaelite and half feminist socialist, whom the author seems to be in love with, puts her "sun browned hand ... on the lichened wall as if to embrace it" and cries: "Oh me! Oh me! How I love the earth, and the seasons, and weather and all things that deal with it, and all that grows out of it - as this has done."

The story is very beautiful, but there are some obvious omissions. Where are the handicapped people? And although the people eat meat it is hard to imagine these jolly, pretty folk butchering an animal. Morris was not a vegetarian - he once described the world as divided into two types of people: those who fish and those who don't. However, reading this story got me thinking again about veganism and utopias, and the similarities between Morris's vision and how a vegan world might look.

I would guess that most vegans would like to live in a world without slaughterhouses, vivisection, fur coats, etc, etc. But I wonder what kind of a world we would like to live in "on the morrow of the revolution"? I have been looking back at old copies of *The Vegan* magazine from the early 1980s (these are freely available to browse on the Vegan Society website, as mentioned in V.V.123) and it is surprising how utopian veganism seemed then. There are lots of mentions of the 'new age' and 'vegan villages' and articles about 'the vegan way of life'.

In fact Julia (my partner) and I readily embraced this vision. We lived in a caravan back then and dreamt of turning our little patch of earth, surrounded as it was with industrial sprawl, railway lines and major roads, into our own version of Findhorn. We painted rainbows on the walls, baked our own bread, built a compost heap and tried to grow food (without success) in the brick and couch grass that surrounded us. We even invested in a hand grinder so we could grind our own flour - this was not a success, there were no surfaces inside the caravan strong enough to hold it and it was impossible to clean properly. When we did manage to get it to work it turned whole wheat grains into chippings

that were completely inedible when we tried to make bread with them! But in spite of the setbacks we felt part of a movement for change.

All this seems a strange contrast to the veganism of today, which seems to be dominated by vegan 'celebs' and mock meats. While it is easy to see how the veganism of 1980 was part of a vision of a new world of windmills grinding flour, bicycles, back-packing and low-impact living, today's veganism seems to be lacking this essential vision - content with a world of vegan big macs and cheating Kentucky fried chicken. Where celebrities have replaced Tolstoy and Gandhi as vegan icons, and wholefood shops have been replaced by Tesco. Does modern veganism lack vision? Is it too concerned with 'normality'? Can there even be a vegan world that doesn't involve massive fundamental changes to the whole way we live? Would a vegan world really be a consumer one? A sort of veganised version of the self-centred neo-liberalism which is seen by many people as the only workable economic system?

I wonder what other vegans think about this.

Jenny Wood

Corrections to email addresses

In the printed version of V.V. 123 (and in a few early digital pdf versions) we printed a couple of incorrect email addresses.

On p.13 the correct address for David Graham of the Vegan Organic Network is david.graham330@googlemail.com

On p.19 the correct email address for HIPPO (Help International Plant Protein Organisation) is hippocharity@btinternet.com

Perceptions of 'nature'

This article on perceptions of 'nature' in the food industry (slightly adapted for Vegan Views) was written in 2011 by Sarah Baylis as part of her geography degree at Southampton University.

As a vegan the mentality of domination and exclusion seen in the commoditisation of non-human animals, and eating animal products, is of great interest to me. How are animals, intrinsically seen as part of 'nature', as living beings, then commoditised to the extent of becoming a mere source of 'consumable parts'? Does preparation of food transform non-human animals from nature into culture?

One reason may be seen from animals losing their identities and personalities to become all 'the same'. A clear example is livestock auctions, where all animals are grouped together and can only be told apart by a number, illustrating how they have become distanced. An explanation can also be sought from the 'cognitive trio', a series of defences that distance us from our feelings towards the animals we eat. We are taught to view animals as objects, shown by the fact that we believe we are eating *something*, *not someone*; and view them as lacking any individuality or personality, for example a pig is a pig and all pigs are the same. Lastly, we place animals in rigid categories in our minds so that we can hold very different feelings towards different species, for example dogs are for companionship and cows are for food; beef is delicious but dog meat is disgusting.

Additionally, there is an immeasurable mythology surrounding animals used for food, from simple meat products to calf's stomach in your cheese and beaver's anal glands in your sweets. It has been suggested that the Three N's of justification can begin to explain the commoditisation of animals; these are that eating meat is normal, natural, and necessary. But, these are exactly that - myths. We must remember that eating meat is not necessary for our survival, it is a choice and choices always stem from beliefs. Joy [1] suggests that they are a set of widely held opinions presented as universal truths, and unsurprisingly these same arguments have been used to justify violent ideologies throughout the past, from slavery to male dominance. The commoditisation remains largely unchallenged as it is institutionalised and maintained by all main social institutions, from the family to the state. This suggests that we can successfully challenge these myths in time, by arguing that they are just that - beliefs rather than facts (just as feminists have, for example, challenged institutionalised sexism).

It has been suggested that the first step in the deconstruction of the 'code' of meat is to look at the language used to describe it as a commodity. Obscured language is used to provide different terms to differentiate between living animals and their meat. For example, the word 'beef' refers to the commodity we consume, whereas 'cow' is the living animal. This idea can be taken further, by studying the terms for different cuts of beef, with the terms indicating the type of food prepared as well as an area of the animal's body; and it is therefore at this point that meat becomes truly distanced from the once living animal - the cuts still refer to the living animal, but are also intertwined into culinary culture.

Many, including myself, believe the most immediate way to end the commoditisation of animals would be to stop animals being economically viable as foodstuff - their rights will be abused for as long as the industry can make profit from them.

As only the lowest-cost producers survive, they will do almost anything to cut costs, regardless of how cruel it is to the animals involved. By tackling this simple concept, you can begin to tackle the deeply rooted cruelties within agribusiness. Furthermore, negative practical consequences of treating animals as commodities could be avoided, such as diseases like foot and mouth and mad cow disease.

An explanation can also be sought in the concept of nature as socially constructed, and can be supported by this quote, exploring the meaning of nature: "We can never know the world of nature at first hand but must instead always encounter it through the lens of our own ideas and imaginings" (Cronon [2]). The concept of 'nature' has become central to the realm of food provision; with a rapidly increasing market for 'slow foods' and a counter-move to return to localism, regional foods and so-called real cooking, deeming 'natural' foods healthier and more wholesome over the 'artificial'. However, it can be argued that 'nature' is, and always has been, to a large extent socially constructed - "there can be nothing which is absolutely natural, or unnatural, other than what we deem so to be" (Marshall [3]). This view understands that 'nature' is a construction used "to draw a philosophical distinction between 'ourselves' and the non-human sphere and to isolate a resource that can be exploited with moral impunity". The meat-eating culture emphasises 'human' domination over 'nature'. My personal opinion is that current farming methods, and indeed all commoditisation of animals for any purpose, demonstrate a lack of moral regard by objectifying, commodifying, and instrumentalising animals; by disregarding their dignity and failing to treat them with the respect they deserve.

Historically, humans have founded their social relations with nature on the idea of a nature-culture divide, viewing humans as superior to nature, including non-human animals. The exploitation of animals thereby occurs due to speciesism, the idea that other species are inferior to humans and as such are nothing but a 'product'. We see animals as different not because of biology or cognitive ability but because we consider them as part of nature, and humans are outside the 'natural' world. We create and enforce these symbolic boundaries, for example "It is not the family dog who implores his family to eat a pig rather than eating him; humans create and maintain the boundaries between companion and farm animals" (Cherry [4]).

As I continually question how people can continue their current practices, one reason I see responsible is the visual disconnect between supermarket meat and the real living animal it once was - after all most people claim to oppose animal suffering in principle. For example, "It is a widely commented on oddity that people can spend nearly as much money on their pets as on their children, oppose animal cruelty, and yet casually eat meat from slaughtered animals" (William Saletan). The way meat is presented to consumers avoids triggering shock or sympathy as it is sterile - fresh, clean, detached from its source, cut so one often can't even tell which part of the animal it comes from. There is little visual and cognitive connection between the meat product and the animal it used to be.

It has also been suggested that advertising has a strong role in setting and defining 'modes of consumption', for example by showing a photograph of steak in a menu the commodity reveals nothing of its origin, and is instead seen as something unto itself.

Packaging and advertising often feature pictures of happy, healthy animals in wide-green rolling landscapes, not the dirty, cramped production-line homes which are often the only ones they know. Even gentle hues are used to create a sense of total idyll. The food industry goes to increasingly more efforts to project an image of 'naturalness' even when processes are becoming progressively technologically sophisticated, for example: "Technological changes in agri-food production, now enhanced by biotechnology and genetic engineering, have manipulated biological processes, appropriating some and substituting others, redefining and refashioning nature as a source of profit and capital accumulation. As the food we consume has become more processed it has been presented as more 'natural' by the food industry" (Goodman & Redclift [5]).

The possibilities of 'in vitro' meat

One way the horrors of the meat industry could be avoided, or at least decreased, would be through the use of in vitro meat.

'In vitro' means an artificial environment outside the living organism. In vitro meat shows up a number of different issues surrounding the nature-culture divide in food cultivation and consumption. Whilst current advertising, marketing and branding of food suggests that 'nature' still has a large part to play in the food industry, it seems that what we consume is still directly affected by the extent to which we consider our food as natural.

In vitro meat is a rapidly developing biotechnology of tissue culture, originally researched for medical applications, and shows great potential, by promising to eliminate a significant amount of animal suffering with meat being 'grown' in labs with no need to kill animals, reducing the environmental damage associated with meat animal farming, and producing healthier forms of food. Furthermore, consumers could have fewer fears regarding food-borne illnesses such as Salmonella and Campylobacter, often resistant to antibiotics. The public health concerns about how we currently produce meat could be significantly reduced; and in vitro meat has the "capability to challenge the notion of meat as a disembodied material that does not have its source in a killed, feeling, animal" (Hopkins and Dacey [6]). With in vitro meat, this disembodiment is real rather than imagined and is morally relevant. While in vitro meat is still currently in the research stage of development, there are realistic predictions for its commercial production and manufacture in the next 5-10 years.

Despite concerns about health, animal welfare, and the environment, associated with the way meat is currently produced, there is uncertainty over the future level of acceptance surrounding in vitro meat. One of the main arguments against its future widespread commercial use is that eating human-made meat is an unnatural practice that separates us further from nature, to the extent of being labelled as "Frankenfood". The main issue is whether in vitro meat production will be regarded as a phenomenon adding to the concerns about the consequences of industrialisation on the 'natural' world. Whilst in vitro meat can be considered 'unnatural', it can be argued that, for example, cheese (made by combining milk with the enzyme rennet taken from the stomach of a calf) and yogurt (made by combining milk with a bacteria culture) are unnatural too, also made by

More on lab-grown or 'in vitro' meat

In the last few months (after Sarah Baylis had sent us this article) there have been several features in the UK national press on the potential of lab-grown meat.

In January 2012 Hanna Tuomisto and Avijit Roy, in *Could lab-grown meat soon be the solution to the world's food crisis?* (www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jan/22/cultured-meat-environment-diet-nutrition) stated that: "We need huge change and solving the environmental damage due to meat production by adopting vegetarianism is an untenable solution. Global data analysis shows that most people are not keen on a substantial reduction of meat in their diet, so an alternative sustainable way of producing meat is required."

They pointed out all the environmental benefits, but "very few researchers are working on developing the cultured meat technology. How long before the meat is available in supermarkets depends on the investment in research and development. The most optimistic estimates are that the first commercial product could be available in about five years."

In February Dutch scientists declared that they had used stem cells to create strips of muscle tissue with the aim of producing the first lab-grown hamburger later in 2012 (see www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/feb/19/test-tube-burger-meat-eating) - at a cost of £200,000.

And the BBC asked "Would vegetarians eat it?", with mixed responses - see www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17113214 ("for many vegetarians ... the issue is a complicated one.").

biotechnology, as quoted: "It's true that in vitro meat isn't natural. Nor for that matter are hydroponic vegetables, or bread, or cheese, or wine. Raising 10,000 chickens indoors and pumping them full of drugs isn't natural, either, and it isn't healthy or safe. The more we learn about how meat is produced now, the more in vitro meat looks like a better alternative" (Abid, Z. [7]).

Despite this, there is no doubt that food is strongly associated with being 'natural', potentially creating challenges for the widespread use of in vitro meat products. It has been suggested that this is because in vitro meat challenges our norms and boundaries regarding food, nature and kinship, and therefore the extent that it will be accepted remains uncertain - and it asks whether in vitro meat will even be food, or a Frankensteinian scientific misadventure? Some have even gone as far as using the term 'Zombie Meat' to question what effect in vitro meat could have on the human-animal boundary.

In conclusion, meat is stripped of its origin as a once living animal. Reconnecting the boundary between humans and non-humans requires a critical deconstruction, and equally a critical reconstruction of the social practices that alter the relationship between humans and nature. This would also allow us to understand that we can control nature, and should therefore care for it and give it the respect it deserves.

References (fuller set available on request):

- [1] Joy, M., 2009, *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows: An Introduction to Carnism*, Conari Press, California.
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- [3] Marshall, D. W., 1995, *Food Choice and the Consumer*, Blackie Academic and Professional, London.
- [4] Cherry, E., 2010, Shifting Symbolic Boundaries: Cultural Strategies of the Animal Rights Movement, *Sociological Forum*, 25, 3, 450-475.
- [5] Goodman, D., Redclift, M. R., 1991, *Refashioning nature: food, ecology, and culture*, Routledge, London.
- [6] Hopkins, P. D. and Dacey, A., 2008, Vegetarian Meat: Could Technology Save Animals and Satisfy Meat Eaters?, *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 21, 6, 579-596.
- [7] Abid, Z., 2009, *GM Foods and In-Vitro Meat: A Summary* <http://petridishtoplate.wordpress.com> (accessed 2 April 2011).



Following my letter in the Winter issue (V.V. 123) Sarah Austin and I agreed that I would submit an article, the main catalyst for which was Sarah's comments, in her editorial in the previous issue, regarding 'altered consciousness' for vegans. I believe that it often takes a shock (in my case, as a young man, being with my Dad, when he unexpectedly died) to shake one out of a humdrum lifestyle and make one start to become 'aware' of what life is really all about. I was so traumatised by this experience, especially by some strange dreams and subsequent events, that I became very interested in a wide spectrum of spiritual matters, and at the age of 68 I am continuing these studies.

Over the years I became interested in the true nature of alchemy, dealing with how our consciousness can be developed. That is, changing from being locked in the physical body (centred on basic survival and 'entertainment' values), to achieving a level of consciousness concentrated on the higher mind, spirit and soul bodies, ie the immortal bodies that move on with us at death.

This development is really a question of learning how you, as a receiver, can tune yourself to pick up the higher levels of vibrations that are constantly flowing around us. If you wish to attempt achieving this development, I suggest finding some quiet time. I accept that in this modern world of communication and gadgets, it is very difficult, especially if you are involved with 'family life'. However, it is important to try and find time to be alone with your 'self' (soul) in order to help develop a higher vibrational flow. Quiet, appropriate music (I use native American Red Indian), and techniques such as 'affirmations', may help.

Now I come to an essential ingredient in this development - *diet*, and the advantage we vegans hold over the omnivore/carnivore in this area is *we do not absorb blood*.

If you ever study occult physiology, you might discover that within our physical bodies we have certain glands, especially in the skull (eg the pituitary and pineal glands) which form our 'link-up equipment' to spiritual realms/vibrations. These, like our bodies, can only function properly if fed the correct fuel. Flesh foods and the blood residues they contain (as well as all the chemical toxins!) are not the correct fuel. In addition, the blood contains other elements of animals - their emotional and mental bodies, for they also have subtle bodies, very similar (though not an exact match) to we humans. These elements are absorbed by their consumers and will subsequently reflect in their bodies. Particularly characteristic of animals is aggression, and to briefly illustrate this point I mention that the only time meat is allowed, indeed encouraged to be eaten by the Bhagavad Gita (Hinduism's most sacred text), is prior to battle!

Furthermore, the terror and violence of the slaughterhouse is transmitted in a similar fashion, through this most sacred life-giving element. Blood is the "tincture of eternity" in which "the body ascends into the brilliance of the sun" (Jacob Bohme - *De signatura rerum*). Much of humankind lives in, or is controlled by, fear. All of the vegans I know exhibit a tranquillity and peacefulness not easily found in carnivorous/omnivorous man.

Interestingly, some years ago, in a TV documentary, medical

observers of transplant patients (especially of the heart) noted that some characteristics of the donor's personality subsequently emerged in that of the recipient. Indeed, I have a friend who has had a kidney transplant and who, after reading (for feedback) a pre-publication copy of a previous article I had written called *Look To Your Soul, Man **, indicated confirmation of this change in character, with a story of a fellow patient who became an avid tea drinker after his transplant, when previously he had not been an enthusiast!

This is not to say I am necessarily opposed to organ transplants per se. That very difficult choice is up to the individual but I feel they should be supplied with all the relevant information (spiritual as well as medical) in order to make such a decision. I would, however, be opposed to the use of animal organs in human transplants for obvious reasons.

Compassion for other living creatures is yet another major 'awareness' constituent and I am surprised that many non-strict vegetarians do not make the connection between the dairy industry and the slaughterhouse for the worn-out cow, let alone the nightmare conditions in the egg production factories. However, I must admit that I took a couple of years to make this connection and move to veganism. When I did this, I felt a much greater understanding and appreciation of the term *universal* life force, realising it flows through everything. It equates to the vibrational source and the flow therefrom. The higher one's vibrations, the more sensitive or finely tuned one becomes to this life force, and "if an individual cries tears of compassion, his 'animal' nature is, to some extent, transformed" (*Secret History of the World* p.543, Jonathan Black, published 2008 by Quercus Editions in UK and by Peter Mayer in USA - a fascinating read). But so too, through the 'collective consciousness', is the whole world and cosmos.

A problem I found on moving to veganism was a feeling of 'alienation' from long-standing friends in the conventional world. I was in it but I did not feel part of it, nor indeed did I really want to be, in some ways. However, I believe this is all part of the changes we go through when, as we progress, we start to see this world for what it really is, a 'necessary' illusion whereby your God (for me 'The Force') can, through all things - including us - become self-aware, for each of us contains a part of God within.

We are not the egotistic personality of a single life, but we do take from each single life that which is worth keeping, ie adding to our eternal *self*. My early worry upon reaching my 'new level of vegan consciousness' was that I might have to re-learn veganism in a future incarnation but, with further study, that worry has been erased.

Well, before this article gets too long, I must draw back from 'preaching to the (thankfully) converted'. I am just so keen for readers to appreciate the 'spiritual' step forward they have made, which may explain any feelings of altered consciousness.

I would like to end with a humorous story which captures my whole spiritual transformation in this incarnation:

Two members of a golf club were drawn 'out of a bag' to play with each other in a competition. One was a young lad, the other a senior member, but they knew each other slightly.

After a few holes they had become more familiar, and when the elder man lost his ball in some longer grass, the young lad came to help look for it. Upon finding the ball, they also spotted an ugly looking frog next to it which, to their surprise, suddenly said: "In reality, I am a voluptuous, beautiful woman and if you kiss me, I will be transformed back into her and, as a reward, will provide you with constant, fantastic sexual experiences."

Quick as a flash, the mature man delved into his golf bag and produced a box of sweets, emptied the contents into his pocket, bent down, gently put the frog into the box and returned it to his golf bag. He then played his next shot and they continued with their game.

However, after a while, the young lad could not contain his curiosity any longer and said to his companion: "So when are

you going to kiss the frog?" The older man smiled, turned to the lad, looked him in the eyes and replied: "Son, when you reach my stage of life, it's better to have a talking frog!"

I know the truth in this story, for I was that young enthusiastic lad and I am now the experienced older man. However, as Michelangelo said: "Ancora imparo" (Still, I am learning).

* Anyone wishing to read Mike's longer article 'Look to Your Soul, Man' may like to go to the Vedic Cultural Fellowship website www.vedicworld.org - follow the link on the bottom right to the December 2011 Newsletter. Alternatively, for a paper copy, please contact Vegan Views. Another of Mike's articles 'Look to Your Morality, Humankind' is due to go in their March 2012 Newsletter, with others to follow.

Mike Wright

Recipes

Vegan Spanish Tortilla

Cook 500g thin sliced potatoes and 400g sliced onions in 2-3 tbsp oil (olive if possible) in a large non-stick frying pan covered with a lid.

Season with lots of salt and ground black pepper, you can also add a heaped teaspoon of mild paprika if you like.

Cook fairly slowly for about 15 mins until just soft, but try not to let them brown.



While they are cooking, sift 300g chickpea flour (gram flour) into a bowl. Mix to a smooth batter with 2 tbsp tomato purée, 3 tbsp cider vinegar and 300ml water. Carefully fold in the cooked potato and onion mix. Add some more oil to the pan and add the mix.

Cook for about 8-10 minutes, uncovered on a low heat. Using a plate or similar, turn the tortilla over, re-oil the pan and slide the half-cooked tortilla back in.

Cook for another 8-10 min. Then turn out on to a serving dish. Make sure it is cooked through as raw chickpea flour is not good. Serve warm if you like, but it is better cooled.

Dave Martin

Marmite Cheese

1 tablespoon marmite
200g (7oz) dairy free margarine
200g (7oz) soya flour

Melt the marg and marmite in a saucepan until fluid. Add the soya flour and mix well. Transfer to an airtight tub. Allow to cool and keep in fridge.

Cranberry Cheese

Follow the recipe for Marmite Cheese, except when the soya flour is added to the mixture add a handful of dried (sweetened) cranberries. Mix well.

Tim Deamer

Editor's note: I use a yummy 'mite' called AussieMite, less salty, and yummy on toast or bread with salad - sold by Waitrose in the UK, and Selfridges in London.

Vegan shortbread

8 oz vegan margarine
3 oz caster sugar
1 oz icing sugar
11 oz plain flour
1 oz cornflour

Rub margarine into the dry ingredients and work together until a smooth mixture is formed.

Press into a Swiss Roll tin and mark all over with a fork. Bake in a moderate oven, Gas Mark 3, 325F/160C for 30-35 minutes. Cut into fingers immediately. Sprinkle with a little caster sugar.

Jill Martin

4th Worldwide Vegan Bake Sale 21-29 April 2012

Who can participate? Just about anyone! What is it? From April 21 to April 29 (two weekends and the weekdays in between), groups from across the world will hold vegan bake sales.

Each participating group gets to choose its venue, what to sell, and what cause it uses the proceeds for. (You can hold the bake sale on any day during the period - or on more than one day if you like.) You don't have to be a vegan group or an animal group to participate.

Lots more information can be found at www.veganbakesale.org



The photo is from last year's bake sale in Tampa, Florida, when over \$600 was raised to benefit feral cats. In 2010/2011 groups on six continents participated, and so far the Worldwide Vegan Bake Sale has raised over \$100,000 for a variety of causes.



Interview with David Irving



David Gerow Irving is the author of *The Protein Myth* ('significantly reducing the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke and diabetes while saving the animals and building a better world'), which was published by O Books in September 2011 - see www.earth-books.net/books/protein-myth-the

David has also written poetry, fairy tales, plays, short stories, essays, newspaper articles, and magazine articles - and a novel *The Voice in the Stone*, about the 14th century mystic Meister Eckhart. Two other novels are in progress, and one of these, *In the Shadow of the Innocents*, tackles the subject of vivisection. The other, not yet titled, debates various gnostic and Christian themes.

David is a vegan and an animal rights activist. His writings on various animal rights issues have appeared in *Cyrano's Journal*, *Thomas Paine's Corner*, *All-Creatures.org*, *Press Action*, *Radical Noesis*, *Dandelion Salad*, *The Animals Voice*, *New Dawn magazine*, and in other blogs and journals.

An accomplished musician, he is a composer and has played French horn with various ensembles. He was a member of the 7th Army Symphony, the Graz Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra (Austria), and the Oakland Symphony.

David grew up in a small town in Indiana called Bluffton (US), but currently resides in the upper Catskill Mountain region of New York, having previously lived in Boston and San Francisco, and also in Austria. He attends to and is attended by his four cats, Lewie-Lew, Goldie Boy, Looney, and Spatsie.

You can watch a short video of David talking about *The Protein Myth* on YouTube - it's entitled *Who are we?* and can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=fi_hWmCgl-Q He has also made an anti fur video *America, humane or inhumane, our choice* using his music and text: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ffs1uoVOehY Or find both by searching for 'David G Irving'.



What led you to write *The Protein Myth*, and how much research did you have to do?

I started writing *The Protein Myth* in November of 2008. The day before I began I had not the slightest intention of writing a book, and certainly not a book related to nutrition. The next day I was busy making notes and plotting out chapter titles. I was suddenly launched on a book-writing venture that would last close to two years.

Obviously something had taken place the night before. And what happened was that by chance I had tuned into a Public Broadcasting System TV programme where a man by the name of T. Colin Campbell, who I would later learn was one of the top scientists in the world in his field of epidemiology, was talking about his book *The China Study*. This book offers scientific evidence of how we can greatly reduce and in many cases practically eliminate the risk of the major killer diseases that include several forms of cancer, heart disease, heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, and other chronic conditions such as macular degeneration and Alzheimer's Disease. In fact, at the exact moment I tuned in, Campbell was talking about how the risk of breast cancer could be vastly reduced.

Now that really grabbed me and sat me bolt upright because, just two or three days before, a close friend had called me to tell me she had been diagnosed with breast cancer. When something like that happens, you'd love to be able to offer some help, but all you really end up doing is just trying to be supportive. Then from out of the blue here was this person talking about practically eliminating the risk of breast cancer. And furthermore a close friend of mine, who had died of the disease ten years earlier, might have been spared all the suffering she went through, which was intense, had she known this information. So Campbell captured my attention all right, and fast.

So what was this magic elixir that could heal these terrible diseases? It turns out that their primary cause is none other than the consumption of animal protein.

Well, I had been a vegan since about 1985 or 1986. And I was naturally aware of many health benefits associated with a vegan diet. But I had not the slightest idea that eating animal

protein was so directly tied to the major killer diseases. This realisation was a Eureka moment because it fitted so perfectly with my animal rights activism in which I had been engaged for several years. Suddenly I had come face to face with a brand new way to not only help animals - by getting the message out that consuming animals was dangerous to our health which, if listened to, could mean a vast reduction in the number of animals slaughtered for food - but also to help human beings at the same time by trying to get them to recognise the dangers of consuming animal products.

The big question that rose in my mind was why had I not heard about this earlier? Why did none of my friends or anyone I knew know about it either? It was apparent that this information was being ignored by our healthcare organisations and ignored to the detriment of the public health. I resolved to try to find out why.

So *The Protein Myth* evolved out of all of this. Because I am not a nutritionist, I had to become a kind of reporter, and that meant doing fairly extensive research. That was necessary if I hoped to establish any credibility. So I insisted that everything I put down had to be absolutely fact-based in a way that could be checked by anyone.

Just one more thing, incidentally, my friend who was diagnosed with breast cancer has survived and is doing very well.

Your book is a shocking revelation about major organisations hiding the truth from the public about healthcare, disease prevention, and diet. Please tell us a little more about *The China Study*, and why it is so important in revealing the untruths you have written about.

The China Study offers scientific evidence that is absolutely irrefutable, that consuming animals is the major cause of our killer diseases, though I would learn that other scientists try to refute the evidence anyway (unsuccessfully) simply because they are so addicted to eating animal foods. So it is a source of facts which can be used to point out that the way we use and exploit animals is not necessary. For example, factory farms produce food that kills people and makes others very sick. A book like *The China Study* proves that, and shows that

we can stop eating those killer foods and be much healthier. And once we start on this trail it leads into other areas. For example, these factory farms also make people who consume their products complicit in the cruelty that produces them, which is something most people who consume animals would rather not think about. Still, it can hardly be denied.

We can also discern from the evidence in *The China Study* that animal research is really unnecessary because the chief rationale given to the public for experimenting on animals is the idea that animal researchers are just totally engrossed in finding cures for society's killer diseases. Besides the fact that this is a big lie anyway, once we learn that we can eliminate these diseases by eliminating animal protein from our diets, the rationale for animal research disappears fast, as does the need for \$20 billion dollars a year that animal researchers and their sponsoring institutions, mostly universities, get from the National Institutes of Health.

What implications does it hold for us if healthcare organisations continue to discredit and ignore research such as *The China Study*?

I think it's similar to why people resisted accepting that the earth was round. The same for why it was so difficult to accept that the earth rotated around the sun. There are many answers to questions like these that often boil down to issues of money and power. And, of course, it falls to those who are out in front in whatever area it may be, to find a way to communicate what they know to those who would rather tarry behind in the comfortable past. Often the consequences are disastrous when the old insists absolutely it is going to prevent the new from forging ahead, no matter what the consequences may be. Today in America, for example, there is tremendous resistance to the animal rights movement in the halls of government. That's where corporate interests are on patrol, determined to protect the profits they derive from cruelty-based operations like factory farms, fur farms, and animal research laboratories.

Is it as simple as dwindling profits, lack of knowledge, biases, conflict, and poor management, that information concerning health and diet is kept from the public?

All of those, certainly. I found that stubbornness, resistance to change, an 'I'm right, you're wrong' mentality, turf ownership, and politics and money, are the primary factors. Money especially looms large. For example, Bristol-Myers Squibb gave the American Heart Association \$600,000 to use the AHA logo to promote their statin drug Pravachol. Statins, however, a cholesterol-lowering drug, have some very serious side-effects and their effectiveness has also been legitimately called into question. Yet it's the responsibility of our healthcare organisations like the AHA to provide the public with information about the risks of drugs like statins. But how likely is the AHA to say anything negative about statins after getting \$600,000 from Bristol-Myers Squibb? And a visit to the AHA web pages confirms such suspicions. They have nothing really bad to say about statins. So who can trust what the American Heart Association says about statins once we realise that they have essentially been paid off by Bristol-Myers Squibb?

In 2009 Pfizer Pharmaceuticals gave the American Cancer Society an unrestricted grant of \$1.7 million dollars. Pfizer, besides making drugs like Lipitor, also makes cancer drugs and breast cancer drugs. Does anyone think the ACS is going to go out and tell women they can vastly reduce their risk of breast cancer by eliminating animal products from their diets which will lower their estrogen blood levels and thereby significantly reduce the risk of getting breast cancer? Not after getting \$1.7 million from Pfizer, they won't. It's obvious payola.

Is it unethical? Is it immoral? Of course it is.

The only real way to deal with these conflicts of interest is to make rules and laws prohibiting drug companies, or any commercial enterprises, from giving money to healthcare organisations. How can our healthcare organisations function independently if they accept contributions from corporations? Unfortunately, we know that the US Congress is not going to do its job by passing legislation that would prohibit these good-old-boy ways of doing business.

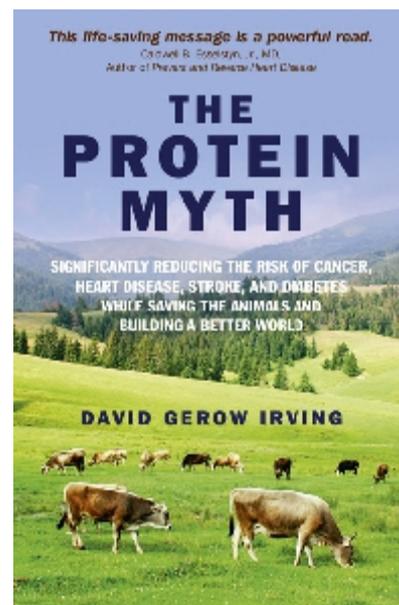
Do you think that in uncovering these untruths our societies will make progress, or will there be increased confusion and/or rejection by people, maybe because certain things are unable to be shown scientifically?

I do believe we will make progress, but the progress is frustratingly slow. Some people talk about violence as a means for coming to the aid of the animal population which is so vulnerable, lacking in protection, bullied, exploited, and killed without mercy by corporate powers. I can't agree with that. That would just be counterproductive. The problem is horrendously large. I mean, we slaughter between 56 and 59 billion animals just for food around the world every year. And people generally are satisfied to go somnambulant along their chicken McNuggets way. That's why I believe the change must come through a shift in consciousness, and that is where I focus my energies. I have seen an actual shift in consciousness in my own lifetime in the 1960s. This is the kind of shift we need, and then things can change rapidly. That should be the focus of the animal rights movement, I believe.

Is it enough for individuals to be aware of the increasing evidence of disease in order to switch to a plant based diet, or do we need additional motivation and encouragement?

There's no question to me that the more we know about disease formation as a product of consuming animals the more people will pay attention. I understand that an article just appeared in *Scientific American* that points out the real dangers of meat consumption, but I haven't read it yet. Here and there signs of change do appear. Even the establishment healthcare organisations have changed. They all used to recommend that the public consume two to three portions of dairy products a day, and the same for animal products, with no prohibitions on any kind of meat. Today, because of greater nutritional awareness, they all recommend that the public consume two to three portions of low-fat or no-fat dairy products and the same for meats, provided that it is lean, while avoiding processed meats. So change has happened. Of course, not even close to enough. With increased evidence and pressure, our healthcare organisations will eventually be forced to admit just how dangerous animal products really are.

Although you've generally quoted American statistics in your book, do you think that these are equally valid in other parts of the world?



No I don't. Unfortunately, the habits of the Western world are spreading to the developing nations so that eventually they will apply. There is already much evidence that the diseases of affluence of the Western world - cancer, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes - are spreading to the developing nations where progress is being equated with the consumption of animals. McDonald's fast food eateries are already everywhere, and the same for the others. And that's bad news for the health of the people living in those countries.



Clip from David Irving's talk on YouTube

From a purely health point of view, and disregarding the ethical aspect, do you think eating only small amounts of animal produce is harmful too? For example, something like the 'Mediterranean diet' where abundant plant foods and fresh fruit are complemented by moderate or low amounts of meat, fish, dairy produce, etc.

The best we can do, I think, is to take the actual evidence seriously. T. Colin Campbell says that "rising plasma cholesterol levels in China were associated with a greater prevalence of stomach, liver, colon, lung, breast, and blood cancers", and that "even small intakes of animal products ... were associated with elevated concentrations of plasma cholesterol and increased prevalence of these cancers".

As for diets like the Mediterranean, besides the dangers of animal protein, according to Caldwell B. Esselstyn Jr (famous because he and Dean Ornish proved that heart disease could be prevented and reversed through nutrition), oils recommended in these type diets are "every bit as aggressive in promoting heart disease as the saturated fat in roast beef. And even though a Mediterranean-style diet that allows such oils may slow the rate of progression of coronary artery disease, when compared with diets even higher in saturated fat, it does not arrest the disease and reverse its effects." (See pp. 69 & 98 in *The Protein Myth*.)

So while surely nobody could specify exactly how much of these 'poisons' (animal protein) the body can tolerate, the evidence does indicate rather clearly that we would be much safer not to consume them in any amount.

To what extent can we learn from the philosophers of the past to further our understandings of animal and environmental ethics in the future?

It's fascinating to learn how some of the great historical figures thought, and we can see how they have often been conduits for the way we look at the present. We can go all the way back to the ancient Greeks where we find vegans living side-by-side with confirmed speciesists. Theophrastus, the vegan, for example, with Aristotle the speciesist. Some of the most

famous philosophers, like Immanuel Kant, were unrepentant speciesists while others like C.W. Hume deplored the mistreatment of animals. Focusing on speciesist philosophers of the past, like Kant, can give us tools for discrediting the doctrines they have passed on to the present. Take poor Descartes. I say poor, because everybody tends to beat up on him these days. Yet he contributed quite a bit to the way in which we view animals today as mere things. In the same way it's helpful to focus on those who tried to keep compassion towards animals alive during their lives, like Michel de Montaigne and Jeremy Bentham. The same applies to literary figures as well, or artists and religious leaders, and really anybody who had something to say about the way animals should be treated.

How do you see the progress of humankind in seeing the interconnectedness of all species on earth, and how can we reconnect ourselves with nature rather than being outside it?

Human beings have set themselves up as the masters of the world and the universe. In the process, we have created a divide between ourselves and nonhuman species. Several things happened along our evolutionary past that have contributed to creating this divide. These include walking more fully upright than other species, the loss of body hair, the possession of a more efficient opposable thumb mechanism, and the biggest divider of them all, the development of speech. That began somewhere in the neighbourhood of 120,000 years or so ago.

Fundamentally, though, the differences between our species and nonhuman species are differences of degree rather than differences of kind. Though we might like to escape the reality, we are as much of an animal as any nonhuman animal. The recognition that life itself is the grand miracle and that a mouse is as much of a miracle as a human being can go a long way towards reconnecting with nature and the earth and the universe. It can help us in giving up some of the arrogance that has become so much a part of human thinking and our way of living that, when we analyse it, is so destructive to ourselves and our planet.

In your book you've mentioned Lao Tse, whose followers wanted to return to simplicity - what relevance do those teachings have for us today? Do you think that there are contemporary spiritual teachings that we as individuals or societies can take as our new values?

I'm not really up on contemporary spiritual teachings. In general, I look more to the past in terms of finding 'something spiritual' for reflection. And that I find in any kind of teaching, religious or philosophical, that teaches compassion, concern for others, love, helpfulness, the desire to do good, and the oneness of life and the universe. These are the kinds of values that make up what might be called spiritual to me, and that's what I feel we should try to be open to - to let it in. Even more, we need to understand that these kinds of values should serve not just as a foundation for the way we relate to other humans, but to the nonhuman population as well. That, I believe, is the biggest change we need to make in terms of what might be called spiritual values or spiritual growth. Our values should encompass and take in all of life, and, for that matter, the universe. Otherwise, our focus is too narrow, too constricted.

We are capable of being so much more than we are allowing ourselves to be. Albert Schweitzer, who I also mention in *The Protein Myth*, wrote about these kinds of values in what he called 'Reverence for Life'. They are also reflected in the lives of people I admire like Margaret Cavendish, Mahatma Gandhi, George Bernard Shaw, and Isaac Bashevis Singer.

In your book you've created *A Road to a Solution* for humanity. How would you see individuals and societies begin to enact this?

First we need to recognise the dangerous path upon which we are travelling, which relates very much to the way we treat animals. Those billions of animals we slaughter every year generate an enormous problem for the environment. Already 18% of greenhouse gases emanate from these vast herds of livestock, while their waste seeps into the earth and gets into our groundwater and pollutes our rivers and streams.

A United Nations report estimates that 38% of the available ice-free land is taken up with livestock already. And, you know, seven billion people now occupy the earth and another two billion will be added in the next 35 years. Meat and dairy production is expected to double during that time frame. So how much of the ice-free land surface is then going to be taken up by livestock just to feed our bodies? And 35 years after that? We're going to start having wars just to kill people off, so that the survivors will have enough land to live on. Of course, we won't admit that's why we're having the wars. They'll be based on some ideological principle.

Today, food industrialists take the land of developing countries to grow coarse grains for livestock that should be going to grow crops for people, and this results in significant poverty in the developing countries. Then there is the tremendous problem of factory farms and the cruelty that goes on there. When we look at ourselves and at our children, we all too often see obese bodies being destroyed before our eyes by consuming animal foods. In the meantime, a drug culture for treating the conditions associated with animal consumption makes us drug dependent. And while all this is going on, our universities are not exactly covering themselves in glory as they ignore the roles that we traditionally ascribe to them of arbiters of ethics and morality. They have become addicted to money as they reach out for these huge research grants to conduct unethical drug testing on innocent animals.

How can they rationalise making innocent animals pay for the drug, alcohol, and tobacco addictions that human beings have created for themselves? This is just so obviously unethical. Yet they deny they are doing anything wrong as they chalk up the dollars stained with the blood and torture of innocent animals.

We grow up in cruelty-based societies in which we are dependent upon animal cruelty to meet our needs. We use animals for food, for clothing, for household products, for hygienic products, for toxicity testing of products, for developing military weapons. We even use animal by-products in the automobile tyres we use to transport us around, in the film that we use for making movies, in the plastic we use to make bags.

What does this dependency on cruelty do to the human character? To answer that question, all we have to do is stop in our tracks and look all around. There we see the kind of world we have built. Violence everywhere, murder and bloodshed and war. There is a better way and it starts, I believe, with how we treat the other species with whom we cohabit our planet.

You've written on animal rights topics for various blogs and journals. What aspects of animal rights (or human rights or environmental issues) have you been most interested and involved in?

Without question vivisection and animal research. This is the key to all animal cruelty and exploitation as I see it, because it has played such a big role in creating our attitudes towards animals. I am making that case in a book I am just finishing titled *The smartest most cruel people the world has ever known: Animal Research from Aristotle to the 21st century*.

World Day for Animals in Laboratories

**National march and rally Saturday 28th April 2012
Meet 12 noon Victoria Square, Birmingham City Centre**
<http://www.wdail.org>

Each year, around the world, millions of animals are killed in animal experiments - animals we call 'companions' and others we barely come into contact with, but still they are sentient and have a right to exist for their own reasons. Scientists tell us we need them to die so we can live and be in better health, taking various medicines to help ease or cure our illnesses and diseases, but at what cost and to whom?

Many of our lifestyle factors contribute to our illnesses and health related problems, it's why many of us go vegan and move to a more ethical way of life that where possible doesn't inflict harm and suffering on others. We look for a balanced and healthy diet that meets our nutritional needs and ethical choice.

Our health does matter and it's an important part of daily life to be in good health, whether mentally or physically. Knowing these animals die in the ways they do, and seeing people affected by prescription medications, has an impact on all of us. While we can't always be sure of the right answers, it's a fact that nearly four million animals die each year in this country alone, and over 100 million worldwide.

All animal exploitation is based on the fact that we can and must use animals for our benefit. We hold their lives in our hands and decide how to use those lives up. We treat the animal as a commodity to be consumed, without a second thought to the pain and suffering inflicted.

The march and rally on Saturday 28th April in Birmingham is a chance to express our need for change and to say it's time we looked for alternatives to animal testing that are based on good science, and an ethical choice that will benefit us all. Being vegan is a personal choice and something we hold close, but it's about care and concern for others, how they are treated and used for the so-called benefit of humanity. For me this march and rally are as important as any other vegan campaigning because when vivisection ends and other methods of scientific research are prevalent, our society will be closer to understanding that each individual has value and it doesn't matter what species they belong to.

Dean Bracher



See also V.V. 122 (p.15) for Jenny Wood's review of the 2011 march, which took place in Manchester. Photo shows the 2010 march which took place in London - taken from Indymedia London <http://london.indymedia.org/articles/4666>

**** The Vegan Press ****

Race and whiteness in the vegan movement / Animal rights manifesto / Vegan diets and deforestation / Veganism in Ethiopia and Iran / Permaculture and domestic animals / Who owns the land? / The three main theorists in animal ethics / Church indifference to animal cruelty / Veganism and perfection / History of veganism

The idea for this regular feature is to draw your attention to some of the more interesting articles with a vegan content that are available in current or recent magazines worldwide, or else online. If you know of anything we haven't mentioned (including online blogs and forums), that you think other readers might like to hear about, then please let us know.

TOFU (www.ilovetofu.ca/store) is an online vegan magazine featuring vegan articles, recipes, and art, from Canada and around the world. You can download issues for free or donate, although you do have to register and give an email address.



Their sixth issue came out recently and its 122 pages cover "the intersection of veganism with forms of oppression such as racism and homophobia, as well as other relatively controversial topics surrounding a plant-based lifestyle". As editor Ryan Patey commendably writes: "Releasing something that causes our readers to question themselves

just as much as others has always been the goal for me."

There are many interesting articles and features in this very impressive issue, including a couple of pieces about being both gay and vegan. Also Silvia Pikal writes about *Vegan Movies and Their Effect on Society* (such as *Babe* from 1995 and *Earthlings* from 2005). And Christa Shelton takes on the subject *Don't be a vegan bully!* ("I find that many of my vegan comrades are quite radical and oftentimes rudely judgemental of those who are not vegan ... If being vegan is about being compassionate to animals, we must also be compassionate to each other as humans.").

There's an in-depth interview with Breeze Harper on race, colonialism, and whiteness within the vegan movement. This is from the introduction to the interview: "It's all very well to say that 'veganism is concerned with the well-being of all animals', but does that statement reflect the truth of the matter in regards to the human animal? Racism, classism, whiteness, and colonialism are four of the biggest lacunas in vegan literature, as well as the movement at large."

Critical Society (www.criticalsocietyjournal.org.uk) The Winter 2011/2012 issue (No.8) of this UK-based e-journal calls for more contributions, especially from the younger generation, to create an *Animal Rights Manifesto*. This issue has three:

John Bryant: "Can a manifesto for animal liberation make any impact while millions of our own species are not yet liberated from ignorance, poverty, slavery, starvation, drought, wars and the cruelty of tyrants?"

Dave Wetton: "One thing we're probably all concerned about is the public perception of our message. We want as many of them on board as possible but there's a risk that if what we're demanding at the wider level is seen to be too extreme, and therefore too much for them to get to grips with, we could lose their support for our other 'lower down the scale' demands."

Graham Patch: "What are we for? Is this always spelled out and in detail? ... Do we really know why most people are not yet vegan?"

The Vegan (see back page for Vegan Society info) has an article in its Spring 2012 issue (p.34) by Stephen Walsh on *Vegan diets and deforestation*. The controversies about soya, and about palm oil, are discussed - in the case of soya he sees veganism as "part of the solution rather than part of the problem", but palm oil throws up "a genuine challenge".

Interesting to read too (p.14-15) about vegan activity in countries we might not expect to hear much from. *Vegan Action, Ethiopia* was founded in 2011, and "the founders' aim is to play 'an epic role' in the struggle to rid Ethiopia of hunger ... VA aims to persuade farmers to adopt stock-free agriculture."

In Iran Mohammad Qaempanah runs a small chain of vegan restaurants in Mashhad, and there is a large vegan outreach event each month in Tehran. Mohammad says: "In Iran being vegan ... is like being an extremist. You are in the front line."

All issues of *The Vegan* (except very recent ones) are now online at www.vegansociety.com/resources/magazine/Back-issues.aspx

Growing Green International (the Vegan Organic Network's magazine, see back page for info) focuses on permaculture in its Winter 2011/2012 issue (No 28), and there are examples and thoughts on how it works - without domestic animals - from five different countries. Meghan Kelly, in North America, writes (p.28-29): "The addition of domesticated animals is often mentioned in permaculture literature and included in permaculture designs, but why is this the case? Perhaps it's simply a reflection of the prevalence of meat-centric diets in modern society."

The magazine isn't available online, but there are sample articles from recent issues on VON's website at www.veganorganic.net (to see them click above the *Growing Green* front cover).

New Leaves (quarterly journal of MCL, see back page for info) continues to carry regular news and updates from the various vegan/environmental projects it's helped to fund.

The Jan-March 2012 issue (No 103) also includes a lengthy review of Shirley-Anne Hardy's new book *Stolen Land - Stolen Lives and the great con trick of debt!* If you're interested in the land subject, and why only a few are allowed to profit from the land at the expense of the many, Shirley-Anne's earlier booklet *The Land Question* can be downloaded at www.highlandperthshirenews.co.uk/contributions/public-download-area (click 'The Land Question PDF').

A few back issues of *New Leaves* (all from 2009) are online at www.mclveganway.org.uk/publications.html#newleaves

The Abolitionist is a relatively new online magazine (www.theabolitionist.info) "promoting abolitionism and reason within animal rights".

Its third issue (Winter 2012) includes an article by Professor Gary Steiner in which he examines the significant differences between "the three main theorists in animal ethics", Peter Singer, Tom Regan, and Gary Francione. Among other articles is Jason Wyckoff on *Abolitionist theory in the classroom*: "Being both a teacher and an advocate for animals can be a tricky business ... I have yet to come to a settled view about the degree to which it is appropriate to 'advocate' in the classroom."

The American Vegan (the American Vegan Society's magazine) includes a news release in its Fall 2011 issue (p.5) about Professor Andrew Linzey, a theologian at Oxford University in the UK, and director of the Oxford Centre for Animal Ethics. In this he castigates church indifference to animal cruelty. The churches "... are nowhere in this debate. With a few honourable exceptions - and I mean a very few - English archbishops and bishops haven't even addressed the issue in the past decade or more. Almost all church leaders, who are normally loquacious in lamenting regressive social policies, can't even register cruelty as an issue." The root problem, he says, is a failure of theology, especially the 'idolatry' of thinking that God is only interested in the human species. "Christians haven't got much further than thinking that



the whole world was made for us ... the truth is that we are spiritually blind in our relations to other creatures."

The interview (p.7) with author and educator Colleen Patrick-Goudreau (that's her on the front cover reproduced here) includes this question: "What is most misunderstood about veganism?" Colleen: "That it's about being perfect and pure, and that stops people from even attempting it. That's why people try to 'catch' you. They want to prove that you

can't be a perfect vegan, but what they don't understand is that being vegan is not about being perfect. It's about doing everything we can to prevent violence and suffering. Instead what happens is that they figure since they can't do everything (ie be perfect), they won't do anything. I help guide people out of this when I say, 'Don't do nothing because you can't do

everything. Do something. Anything.' What's remarkable about this is that you'd think it would actually make people complacent to do 'only just enough' - they actually wind up going all the way and becoming vegan."

This Fall 2011 issue of *The American Vegan* is currently available to download from www.americanvegan.org and a number of back issues are also available.

There are a wealth of vegan or vegan-friendly blogs on the internet, but one that is especially interesting, and has been running a couple of years now, is the **History of Veganism** blog by John Davis, the International Vegetarian Union's manager and historian.

At www.ivu.org/history/vegan.html you can see over 60 articles and, at the bottom of that page, most of the articles have been compiled into a free e-book **World Veganism - past, present and future**.

We've reprinted the first of these articles *Were there vegans in the ancient world?* in this issue (see next page), and we hope to run an interview with John later this year. Also see panel below for his thoughts on flexitarians and plantatarians.

There is much more of interest in these blogs - a timeline summary of veganism from 1806, Shelley, Thoreau, Gandhi, Henry Salt, veganism in India and China and Africa etc, vegetarianism re-defined, and the future of the movement, to mention just a few of the topics.

In the article *Why some restaurants don't do vegan food - and why they should* I discovered that: "In 2009, for the first time according to Google Books, there were more books published with the word 'vegan' in the title than 'vegetarian'. In 2011, for the first time, there were more Google searches for 'vegan' than for 'vegetarian'."

Now that's progress ...

Malcolm Horne

How many vegans are there in the UK and USA?

How many vegans are there in the UK? Vanessa Clarke, in her *International News* column in the *The Vegan* (Winter 2011 p.7) stated "about 2.5% of the population are vegetarian, including 0.25% vegan".

I think that translates to about 155,000 vegans in the UK (1 in 400), but is it an accurate figure? It isn't at all easy to collect reliable statistics about minority groups, and then there's the question of how exactly a vegan is defined.

I had a look round the internet and found some rather vague and contradictory statistics. The most helpful I found was on the Imaner website at www.imaner.net/panel/statistics.htm (Imaner have close connections with the excellent Vegan Village site, see our back page). But, even here, the figures cannot be completely trusted. For example, the estimate in 2005 was 279,000, then in 2006 it shot down to 86,000, and in 2007 (latest figures) it was back up to 162,000.

I contacted Andy Watts at Imaner who replied: "I haven't been able to get any more figures for some time ... Measuring such a small population as this is very difficult, let alone seeing any real changes over time! Many of the differences that are seen in both the number of vegetarians and vegans in these surveys are

attributable to the way the data was collected, specifically what questions were asked (questionnaire design), how they were asked (research methodology), as well as the number of people asked (sample size). However it is clear that the majority of UK surveys over the past 20 years have shown that the number is between 0.2% and 0.4% of the population, and that the average is 0.3%. Simply based on this, and even with an increasing population, it is likely that the most optimistic figure for the number of vegans is around 180,000 and your calculation of 155,000 seems most realistic."

In the USA the Vegetarian Resource Group (www.vrg.org) have conducted regular polls - click on the 'Poll Information' link on their site to see the results. Their 2011 survey suggests about 5% of Americans are vegetarian, with around half of these being vegan. Their earlier 2009 survey had vegetarians at 3%, with about a third to a quarter of these being vegan.

Around half of USA vegetarians are vegan?? That did surprise me! These figures may not be entirely reliable but at the very least they suggest that the proportion of vegans amongst vegetarians is rising, and what happens in the USA will

probably be happening in the UK too.

This view is reinforced by John Davis of the IVU (see last section of article above) who believes that, amongst genuine vegetarians, there has been "a dramatic shift towards veganism in recent years".

His blog article *Flexitarian and Plantatarian - 21st century dimensions* is particularly interesting. Basically he argues that genuine ovo-lacto-vegetarians are being squeezed at one end by flexitarians (people who eat vegetarian food at some but not all meals), and at the other end by vegans. "In the UK, some rather basic data suggests an equivalent rise from 20% to 40% dropping eggs and dairy in recent years. This needs verifying but would be entirely consistent with my personal experience of meeting veg*ns all around the UK. The majority of activists I meet are now vegan, and the majority of consistent ovo-lacto-vegetarians seem to be getting noticeably older."

As for the flexitarians, "commercial research shows that in western countries up to 90% of the 'meat-free' food in supermarkets (especially the fake-meat varieties) is bought by flexitarians, not by committed vegetarians, and their numbers are rising dramatically".

MH

Were there vegans in the Ancient World ?

This article is taken from the e-book **World Veganism - past, present and future** by **John Davis** (see details previous page). John is the International Vegetarian Union's manager and historian.

We seem to be getting an increase in those silly lists of 'famous historical vegans', nearly all just nonsense and wishful thinking. I've seen some recently claiming Pythagoras, Plato, and many others from ancient Greece and Rome were vegans, blindly copied around the internet. For those of us who take history seriously it is worth trying to understand what people were really doing, and why they chose their lifestyle, even if it's not what we now see as ideal.

Some biologists say that the human body craves fat and sugar because those things were difficult to obtain in early human times, and small amounts of the right sort are beneficial. Perhaps that's why in the Jewish/Christian Bible (Exodus 3:8) Moses promised a land flowing with (full cream) milk and honey.

Of course that promised land of fat and sugar had to wait until the fast food of cheeseburgers, cheese-stuffed pizzas and sugary cola. It seems that Moses didn't anticipate obesity, diabetes and heart disease ...

It is interesting that Moses did not promise endless quantities of animal flesh, maybe he knew they didn't need that, and we do have a lot of examples of people in the ancient world cutting out the flesh, but keeping milk and honey. That happened in India at around the same time the Pythagoreans and Orphic Communities appeared in ancient Greece, all about 600BCE.

They were all surprisingly similar, suggesting some contact and exchange of ideas, maybe via the Zoroastrians in Persia, but there is no clear evidence of how it came about. The basis was metempsychosis, the transmigration of souls. In simplistic terms, if people can come back as animals in the next life, then you could be eating your grandmother. But that argument didn't apply to milk (goats, sheep or cows were all used) and honey, or wool.

Nothing that Pythagoras wrote or said has survived, so we only have accounts from hundreds of years later. For example the Roman, Ovid (43BCE-17CE) in his *Metamorphoses* said that Pythagoras "... was the first to forbid animals to be served up at the table" but also claimed Pythagoras as saying: "Nor is the milky juice denied you; nor honey ... there is milk; and clover-honey. Earth is generous with her provision, and her sustenance."

Porphyry (234-305CE/AD) wrote of Pythagoras: "As for his own diet, he was satisfied with honey or the honeycomb, or with bread only ... his principal dish was often kitchen herbs, cooked or uncooked. Fish he ate rarely." By that last comment he wasn't even vegetarian, though other accounts vary, but the milk and honey are always there.

Plato (c.427-c.347BCE) in his *Republic* seemed to point to an ideal future without flesh-eating, but there is no evidence that he made any attempt to put it into practice himself. Several early Christian leaders also abstained from flesh out of desire for simplicity and self-denial. One example was Saint Clement

of Alexandria, who died around 220CE/AD. In his second treatise, the *Instructor* (or *Tutor*), Clement argues against flesh-eating, and adds: "For is there not, within a temperate simplicity a wholesome variety of eatables - vegetables, roots, olives, herbs, milk, cheese, fruits, all kinds of dry food? ... those who feed according to the Word are not debarred from dainties - such as honey combs."

In all these early texts there is no reference to eggs. They just seem to have been included within 'flesh', as in the predominant tradition in India.

We see something different in Porphyry (234-305CE/AD - an anti-Christian Greek philosopher within the Roman Empire) in his three-volume *On Abstinence from Animal Foods* - quoting arguments put to him by others:

"If, however, someone should think it is unjust to destroy brutes, such a one should neither use milk, nor wool, nor sheep, nor honey. For as you injure a man by taking from him his garments, thus also, you injure a sheep by shearing it ... Milk, likewise was not produced for you, but for the young of the animal that has it. The bee also collects honey as food for itself; which you, by taking away, administer to your own pleasure."

But Porphyry then rejected these arguments, stating that the animals and bees benefited from humans caring for them, so it was a fair exchange to use their products, whilst abstaining from their flesh. It is extraordinary to see this level of debate taking place at all, more than 1,700 years ago, and it had moved on to an ethical discussion instead of the earlier purely religious matters.

It may have been just the meat-eaters accusing the 'abstainers from flesh' of hypocrisy by continuing to use other animal products. However, we do know that there were quite a lot of 'abstainers from flesh', and in a big enough group it is always likely that a few would indeed have taken things to the logical conclusion of not using any animal products at all, and it looks like Porphyry might have been debating with them too.

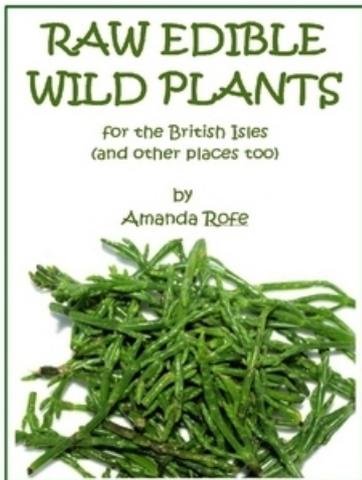
There is no evidence that any of the people we know about took the 'vegan' route of eliminating milk, honey and wool - but we only know about people who wrote books, or were important enough to be written about. All the others just vanish and we will never know who they were.

Those lists of 'famous vegans' from ancient history really are nonsense, they were all what we would now call 'lacto-vegetarians', but that doesn't mean there were no 'vegans' around, just that they weren't famous enough ...



16th century French engraving of Porphyry

** Book reviews **



Raw Edible Wild Plants (for the British Isles, and other places too) by Amanda Rofe, Dandelion Flower Publishing 2011.

E-book from www.amazon.co.uk (Kindle format) and <http://lulu.com> (ePub format) for £2.49 or less.

This useful little e-book starts with a good range of reasons to include wild foraged food into your diet, with a sprinkle of light hearted digs at “supermarkets” and plastic food, which makes it an easy and enjoyable read. Next a short chapter on sensible foraging and etiquette followed by a suggestion of what might be some good plants to try first.

The book is intended to be used in conjunction with plant identification books and stresses the need to use Latin names to ensure plants are identified correctly. There then follows the bulk of the book which comprises common names (followed by the Latin names) with their descriptions, uses, and an occasional illustration or picture.

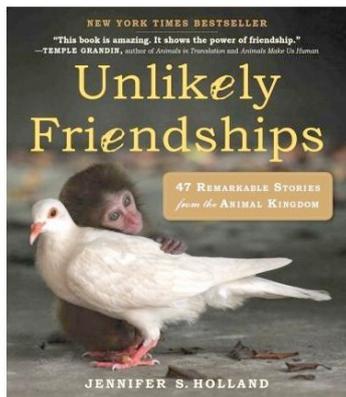
There are over 90 popular wild plants listed here that grow in the UK, and at the end there is a list of some useful websites and books to help extend your knowledge. Amanda is planning on producing more titles to help us make the best of these natural and healthy resources. Next up is *Raw Edible Flowers and Leaves* (due Spring 2012).

Tony Martin

Amanda Rofe lives in Kent in England, and has been a vegan for over 27 years. Her e-book is mainly aimed at those interested in a raw food vegan diet, although of course the plants are suitable for everyone to eat.

See also the 'Raw Edible Plants' blog at <http://rawedibleplants.blogspot.com> Written by vegans, it concentrates on edible plants that can be grown in the

British Isles. Everything is grown using vegan organic (stockfree) growing methods. There will be information on wild plants, growing old favourites like tomatoes, carrots, etc, as well as superfoods like Gojiberries, Chia and Ashitaba. Recent posts have included details of olive growing (and picking!) in Kent, and Nine Star perennial broccoli.



Unlikely Friendships (47 remarkable stories from the animal kingdom) by Jennifer S. Holland, Workman Publishing, New York 2011.

Available from www.amazon.co.uk where you can “look inside” and see some of the photos and stories.

The 47 real life stories in this book (all well illustrated with some very charming photos) cover a multitude of interspecies friendships. A gorilla befriends a kitten at the Gorilla Foundation in California. A greyhound befriends an owl in England. In a South African nature reserve an elephant and sheep bond together. There is even the strange pairing (“almost biblical”) of a lioness and a baby oryx (antelope) in a reserve in Kenya. The cover photo shows a baby macaque monkey and a dove who spent two months together in a reserve in China, but were later returned to the wild.

Are they ‘friendships’ though? The author touches on this question in her thoughtful introduction (“not all scientists are comfortable using a term like friendship when referring to nurturing or protective animal relations”). But the really interesting point she makes is that the phenomenon of interspecies friendships is “most often reported in captive animals, in part because we simply catch them in the act more often. But it’s also because, notes biologist and primate specialist Barbara King of the College of William & Mary, that’s where constraints are relaxed, where the animals aren’t fighting for their basic

needs - which allows their emotional energy to flow elsewhere. Of course, there are cases of cross-species bonds in the wild, as well. ‘Most important’, King says, ‘we know animals, under whatever circumstances, have that capacity’.”

So how then would animals fit into some future vegan utopia? What could or should we do to “allow their emotional energy to flow elsewhere”?

I showed some of the photos in this book to four friends (all vegan). While two of them thought the photos were brilliant, the other two were more dubious and wondered if some were unnatural, or perhaps contrived. The book is widely available, and for me anything which makes the general public more receptive to the idea that animals are sentient beings who exist in their own right is rather a good idea. And the photos really are enchanting ...

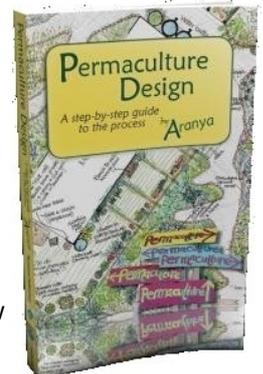
Malcolm Horne

Permaculture Design

A step-by-step guide to the process by Aranya.

Reviewed in our last issue (p.14). Publication was delayed but the book should now be out - or very soon!

www.aranyagardens.co.uk/publications.html



• VEGFAM •

“Feeds the Hungry Without Exploiting Animals”, registered charity no. 232208.

Vegfam has been helping to alleviate hunger, thirst, malnutrition and starvation since 1963, by funding vegan food production projects worldwide.

During 2009 and 2010, Vegfam financed 18 projects (totalling over £261,000) in 12 countries (Bangladesh, Belize, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, DR Congo, India, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Pakistan and Rwanda), which should help more than 200,000 people. Funding the seeds, tools and other supplies facilitated the planting of thousands of acres of land – to provide lifesaving nutritious food. Water resources of 26 different types will provide safe, clean drinking water and much needed irrigation.

More information from Vegfam (VV), c/o Cwm Cottage, Cwmynys, Cilycwm, Llandoverly, Carmarthenshire SA20 0EU (tel: 01550 721197). Website (with link to online giving): www.vegfamcharity.org.uk

... Comments & Letters ...

In the past Vegan Views has always featured a good variety of letters from its readers but for this issue we've hardly received any, so we looked at our Facebook group activity www.facebook.com/groups/275870003100 (there is also a direct link from our website), and have included excerpts - up to early March - from various comments to three questions posed within the group. Some have been slightly edited for spelling and grammar.

We realise letters may not be written these days quite like the old days, but we still very much welcome them. In the panel at the foot of this page we've included some topics you may like to respond to, or you may want to reply to articles in the magazine, or indeed raise your own concerns - perhaps a subject we haven't mentioned.

If you prefer to email us at veganviews@ymail.com then we welcome that too.

Sarah

The PETA debate

In *Vegan Views* 123 Katharine Gilchrist, in her 'Vegans Against Suspenders' article (p.6), criticised PETA's approach to promoting animal rights ("I find their obsession with scantily-clad women baffling and irritating").

Since that article PETA have come up with a 30-second video 'Boyfriend went vegan' which has caused a storm of controversy and made the national press - for example 'Peta's vegan sex ad shows it has tofu for brains' (www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/feb/16/peta-vegan-sex-ad).

You can see the video there, or on YouTube (approaching three million viewings so far!). It suggests that a boyfriend who goes vegan will be dynamite in bed, but his girlfriend looks rather too much like a victim of domestic violence.

Sue Maw (18 Feb 2012): Peta's adverts seem to get plenty of attention but personally I find them in poor taste. What do you think?

Ian Hutson (18 Feb): There are parallels for PETA's tactics ... just look at international politics - yesterday's terrorist is today's freedom-fighter and tomorrow's approved regime.

Neil Milton (19 Feb): I think the message is a little confused, although I appreciate

the refreshingly alternative slant taken (as opposed to meat is bad didacticism).

Personally, I find it quite amusing. Nevertheless, I can see how some might be sensitive to it. It seems to be endorsing abusing the human animal to protect non-human animals. It's a fine line between consensual and non, or sometimes we all like it a bit rough, whether or not we like to admit it.

I can appreciate that if someone had been a victim of actual abuse they might not see the funny side, but that's something different altogether. Although I do believe that's why they were careful to pick an intelligent, sensitive, geeky-looking guy for the boyfriend. It doesn't justify it, but I think the incongruity between the deed and the perpetrator does make it seem as if the voracity of the implied act was unexpected.

Mark Hodgetts (21 Feb): I think a lot of Peta's 'adverts' are sexist and the bottom line is, if we're still treating each other as commodities then what hope do we have for non-human animals!? Even if we were to put sexism aside for a second and just took a look at the ad, which does nothing but trivialise animal exploitation - if they really wanted to show a vegan couple enjoying whichever type of sex they prefer, wouldn't it have been better NOT to portray the main character as a rape victim for the majority of the video?!

Katharine A Gilchrist (24 Feb): This thesis by a woman named Marina Julius outlines some of the issues with PETA. [71-page pdf document]: http://sdsu-dspace.calstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10211.10/1767/Julius_Marina.pdf?sequence=1

Sue Maw (27 Feb): I wonder if there's any evidence that going vegan increases sexual prowess. I don't like seeing compassion for animals advertised via lack of compassion for women.

Katharine A Gilchrist (27 Feb): I think it annoys more people than it helps.

Dogs and veganism

Sarah Austin (22 Jan 2012): What do you like to feed your dog/s - are they vegan? I have recently, and successfully, transferred my labrador's food (she is two and a half, never going to be a proper dog!) to V-Dog vegan complete dog food, UK version, from Burns Dog Food, as I had a big problem with her eating chicken. She enjoys it along with all the extras she's getting (general allsorts) and is doing very well on a second 15kg bag! We would be interested to hear from anyone who has either fed their dog vegan food from birth, or changed their diet to vegan at some time, either complete bought food, homemade food or both.



Vegan dogs Kisses and Royal

Butterflies Katz (23 Jan) posted a link to her article *Dogs can eat vegan too*: www.veganpoet.com/articles/dogs-can-be-vegan-too.htm

Ian Hutson (23 Jan): ... The universe is not designed around my code of ethics. I could no more expect my (rescue centre) dog to be vegan than I could expect an alien species from another planet to go vegan.

When my dog expresses a preference or ethical need to me, then I'll very cheerfully accommodate her but until then we both live in an odd world, both doing the best we can. I don't force clothes on 'my' dogs, why would I force my other peculiar customs too?

Wendy Jahn (23 Jan): We used to have a dog rescue and decided that it was best to feed the dogs with a good

Topics to write about – we'd love to hear from you!

For a list of possible topics see the document section on our Facebook group page, or email us for a list.

- What is your experience of being vegan amongst non-vegan friends and family? Please share your experiences of living in a non-vegan world.
- Are you an abolitionist vegan? Please share your views.
- Do you think vegans should be called vegetarians - is there a difference?
- What do you think about 'free from' foods found in supermarkets these days?
- Did you feel healthier after going vegan, less healthy, or about the same?

complete dog food as when they moved to a new forever home it could cause a food intolerance problem. Some dogs, usually puppies, would come to us with this condition (diarrhea with small amount of blood) and the vet said the best food to get them well again is chicken and rice, then gradually introduce usual food. For our own dogs vegan is fine.

I'd like to add that we need to deal with the over breeding of dogs/cats by way of neutering, and a permit to breed, in order to reduce needless demand of dog food and slaughter of pets.

Sarah Baylis (2 March): My dog has always been vegan since we adopted him and has no problems on the diet - I have absolutely no issues with making the decision for him as he is not out hunting his own meals. I have the responsibility of caring for him, so I will make the best and most humane choice that I am able to.

Jonathan Smith (2 March): My labrador hated bought dog food - we used to feed her brown rice, mixed grated vegetables and purées of beans. For treats she'd have baked biscuits. Apples and carrots were firm favourites.

Why did you become vegan?

Marianne Squires (8 Jan 2012): I was veggie for over 23 years and had no idea how cruel the dairy and egg industry was until I started investigating the factory farming industry. I was absolutely horrified and gave up dairy and eggs virtually overnight. I didn't find it at all difficult. I have now been vegan for around a year and a half.

Ann (9 Jan): I actually find it quite hard and do slip on occasions. The day to day meals and living is OK, but clothing and upholstery can be a nightmare.

I have dogs who are allowed on the furniture, and leather is by far the easiest material to keep clean whilst being hardwearing. I therefore buy second-hand leather settees and tell myself it's better than buying new, but I'm not really convinced!

It is also difficult feeding dogs and cats vegan food. I know it's available but they just don't like it ...

Sarah Austin (9 Jan): It's a constant battle being vegan - but having said that I find it relatively easy because there is so much we are not in control of so we can only do our best. I have old leather things I still use though, namely my old boots and one belt. I ditched my handbags years ago and only have

Sativa bags ... As for home and clothing then I feel as if I've got the world on my shoulders with decisions, again we have no control!

Ian Hutson (21 Jan): One of the hardest things about being vegan is the animosity and outright aggression of omnivores - and no, I don't shout about being vegan or preach, the mere fact that I am vegan seems to annoy so many people. Maybe veganism touches their guilt buttons?

Michelle Potter (22 Jan): I became vegan after listening to a podcast I thought would help me learn some vegetarian cooking, instead I got a whole lot more and realised being vegetarian would not be helping the animals I thought I was helping, so overnight I switched to vegan and haven't looked back, it's been three and a half years and I'm constantly grateful I had my eyes opened.

I was vegetarian for about ten years before so the switch to vegan was really easy, just needed to learn a little more about getting the right vitamins and the like from purely plant sources, but with the internet these days it isn't hard to find information or the products we need. I now lead a compassionate thoughtful life with my mind fully awake, I wish we could get everyone to this point.

Shari Kraut Yard (24 Jan): Personally I feel there is a lack of will power and self control ... Sure, ice cream tastes great and people love the taste of their burgers on the grill and they know in their hearts and souls it is wrong but will defend their choices to the end - all because they are simply either too weak or just too damn selfish to go without.

Michelle Potter (24 Jan): In any affluent country in the west it is so easy to get all you need including information. The only thing missing is more of us, sadly we live in a time when we are at grassroots level, I really hope there is some big awakening during my lifetime where the majority think treating animals the way we do is completely unacceptable!

Shari Kraut Yard (24 Jan): We all just need to keep spreading the word. There is actually a small group of vegans in my town and we started holding get-togethers where we talk about why we became vegan and how amazing it has been and we actually serve a vegan meal so the sceptics can taste the amazing food. Last weekend we had over 30 people attend!!!! Changing minds - one person at a time.

Michelle Potter (26 Jan): ... I wish I had been vegan all my life, am sure all on here have the same wish. Most of us have grown up thinking it's what we do, eating meat! Eating animals, using them, and never giving it a thought - sadly that is how society is. For the lucky among us something happened to open our eyes and we noticed there was a better way, a way that makes us feel good.

We know this is the right way to live, all we can do to help others to be where we are is be informative and be good examples of how compassionate living is so easily possible ...

THE SUMAC CENTRE PEOPLE'S KITCHEN



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WWW.VEGGIES.ORG.UK/SUMAC 0845 4589595

Veggies news

See also our interview with Patrick of Veggies in V.V. 121

People's Kitchen

A vegan dish is cooked and served at the Sumac Cafe in Nottingham by a different volunteer team each Saturday, with payment by donation (approx £3).

"Cooking and eating together can be a fundamental way that a social centre can bring people together and organise more stuff, collectively. People's Kitchen plays a really important role in this."

More info on this venture at www.veggies.org.uk/2012/01/peoples-kitchen or ring 0845 458-9595.

Burger/Sosage mixes

Veggies have revised their recipes for burger, sosage and hemp mixes, which now contain half the salt they had before. "Unlike many other convenient vegan staples, they still contain no palm oil, a source of major concern for the environment, and for the people and other animals losing their forest homes".

More info and ordering details at www.veggies.org.uk/2012/01/new-recipe-mixes

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V.V.123 (VON interview with David Graham, Vegans against suspenders).

V.V.122 (Lee Hall interview, Vegan and transgendered, Critical Society).

V.V.121 (Veggies interview, Fox Hunting and Eating Meat, etc).

See the V.V. website for an archive of many older issues and articles.

ADVERTS

Small text adverts (preferably not more than 50 words inc contact details) are free to subscribers, although a donation would be very welcome especially if you are a profit-making business. Please contact us if you are interested in placing a large text advert or a box advert.

COMMUNAL LIVING Our group is in the early stages of setting up a vegetarian communal living venture in the Somerset countryside. We two are moving from Bournemouth to Yeovil later this year to help things along by being in the intended area. When the 'group' property and land is purchased, that house will become our 'buy-to-let' and the sale of our Bournemouth property will fund our share, so this is a genuine plan. We are seeking more members, so anyone who is interested do get in touch, we'd love to hear from you. Love & Peace, Roisin & John Tel: 01202-425095 Email: roisingruner@yahoo.co.uk

ACCOMMODATION Self-catering holiday accommodation available in the Burren National Park in Co.Clare, Ireland. The house is situated in its own grounds deep in the countryside and is surrounded by spectacular views. The letting in this very comfortable house consists of a living room with wood burner, sunroom, kitchen, two bedrooms and a bathroom. Tel: 0161-4913027

PERSONAL Vegan female, living in Provence, would like to get in touch with vegans in England. Please write to Janna Van Wijngaarden, 287 Chemin Rural du Plan, 83630 Aups, France.

VEGAN SKINCARE Daily cleansing, exfoliation and acne & pore control. Visit www.skinvac.com and see it work before you buy. Kind to humans & animals! Vegan discount code: *vegan*

APRICOT KERNELS Amygdalin-rich, sun-dried from India. 400 gms £8, or 900 gms £15, post paid. Includes free copy of *The Cancer Business*. Cheques to Nemeses. NEMESIS, 1 Quarry Bank Road, Chesterfield S41 0HH. Email: hera@nemesisawake.com

FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY Fathom the mystery of iniquity - spiritual vision after vegetarian Rev. Todd Ferrier and vegan artist Antony Bates: P.O. Box 39/2 Viva!, 8 York Court, Wilder St, Bristol BS2 8QH (allow 21 days for reply to paper mail).

GROUPS

VEGAN SOCIETY The UK Vegan Society is an educational charity providing information and guidance on various aspects of veganism, for new and potential vegans, caterers, healthcare professionals, educators, the media, etc. Membership £21 a year (with various concessions) includes quarterly magazine *The Vegan* - from Donald Watson House, 21 Hylton Street, Hockley, Birmingham B18 6HJ Tel: 0121 523-1730 Extensive website (with online shop): www.vegansociety.com

VON The Vegan-Organic Network researches and promotes vegan organic methods of agriculture and horticulture. They produce a large informative magazine *Growing Green International* twice a year, with articles and news from vegan-organic growers worldwide. Membership £16 single, £18 family a year. Further info from VON, 504 Manchester Road, Blackrod, Bolton BL6 5SW Tel: 0845 223-5232 Email: info@veganorganic.net Websites: www.veganorganic.net and www.stockfreeorganic.net



VEGGIES are a vegan food catering service, based in Nottingham but operating at events all over the country. Their "vast & extensive" website www.veggies.org.uk includes the UK Animal Rights Calendar and the Vegan Outreach Diary. At 245 Gladstone Rd, Nottingham NG7 6HX (tel: 0115 960-8254).

MCL (Movement for Compassionate Living - the vegan way) promotes "a way of life that is free of the exploitation and slaughter of sentient beings, that is possible for all the world's people and that is sustainable within the resources of the planet". Annual sub £5 includes the quarterly journal *New Leaves*. From 105 Cyfyng Road, Ystalyfera, Swansea SA9 2BT (tel: 01639-841223). Website: www.mclveganway.org.uk

VEGAN VILLAGE (www.veganvillage.co.uk) lists hundreds of UK vegan companies and contacts. Also regularly updated message noticeboard, plus shopping, food, travel, health, and more.



VEGAN FORUM (www.veganforum.com) is a very active online message board for vegans. New posts each day on a wide variety of vegan-related topics.

VEGAN NEWS is a long-running online newsletter (www.tinyurl.com/vegannews) edited by Pauline Lloyd - book and product reviews, recipes, events, vegan directory, gardening tips, and much more.

OVER 2200 LINKS TO VEGAN-RELATED WEBSITES (blogs, recipes, forums, action & campaigns, online shopping, recipes, events & festivals, networking, etc, etc) at www.veganchatroom.co.uk

EVENTS

For loads more events click the Events link on the Veggies website at www.veggies.org.uk

BRISTOL VEGFEST
25-27 May 2012 2-8pm Fri, 11-8 Sat/Sun at the Amphitheatre and Waterfront Square in Bristol. Free entry. Tel: 0117 307-9872 (Mon-Fri 10-6). <http://bristol.vegfest.co.uk>

WORLD DAY FOR ANIMALS IN LABORATORIES
Sat 28th April 2012 Victoria Square, Birmingham City Centre B1 1BD. Meet at 12 midday for march and rally. www.wdail.org [See article page 13]

VEGAN CAMP 4-18 August 2012
The Camp began in 1981 and rotates around campsites in England, Wales and Scotland. This year's 32nd Camp is likely to be held near Rhyl in North Wales. Family-oriented but many single people go too. Focus is mainly on outdoor activities (walks, fun sports, trips out, etc). Friendly atmosphere, and ideal for children. Come for a day or two, or stay the whole two weeks. Website: www.vegancamp.co.uk or SAE to Gordon Forrest, 9 Seymour Street, North Shields, Tyne & Wear NE29 6SN.