

Vegan Views

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£2

Food • Health • Natural gardening • Low impact living • Owner built home



My Vegan Valentine's Day

As I write, Valentine's Day is looming upon us once again and for all my fellow single vegans out there I will salute you on the 14th as we wait in eager anticipation for the forest decimating cascade of cards that will drop through our postboxes on that morning. Although, as we know in reality, we're more likely to be faced with a reminder to pay the gas bill and another exciting chance to commit yourself to a never ending contract for digital TV, broadband and mobile.

Text: Kim W

Let's face it; finding your soul mate is hard enough at the best of times, but how much more difficult is it when you're vegan? I know some vegans who wouldn't even contemplate being with someone who didn't share their views and lifestyle and others who live quite happily with their carnivorous counterparts in harmonious bliss.

I drop into the second category by default really. It's difficult when you would really like everyone who means something to you to share your views but life's just not like that. No-one else in my family is vegan or vegetarian and it's the same with the majority of my friends. Do I think any less of them for eating meat? Well, maybe sometimes, if I'm being brutally honest. Do I love them any less? No I don't. And for that reason I can't have one group of people I excuse for not being vegan because we've got history and another group that I have to turn my back on. I've had two long term relationships with men who weren't vegan and it worked (if can say that, seeing as how I'm not actually with either of them anymore) because we respected each other and could agree to disagree on issues where we didn't see eye to eye.

I have to admit though that it would be nice to meet someone where you don't have to go into great lengthy explanations about what you eat and wear and just get on with enjoying the moment.

Picture this, your new squeeze has asked you round to dinner for the first time. You've already told them you're vegan so no problems right? You've turned up with the vegan wine so at least that's not going to be an issue. The table looks lovely and even though you end up eating peanut butter on toast as the vegan pasta dish was made with Quorn, that's OK. You just



have another glass of wine. And isn't it romantic to lie on the floor together? Yes of course it is, so it doesn't matter that they have a leather sofa. And even though you can't join them in the huge bath full of bubbles as the bubble bath, though very expensive, is not vegan, that's OK too because you can sit on the toilet seat and chat to them while they enjoy it on their own and you have a lot more wine. And finally you get to enjoy that hard floor once again as you can't sleep on the silk sheets they bought specially for the occasion. You finished the wine a long time ago and are now onto double vodkas, straight, no ice.

OK, so maybe I'm exaggerating a little but you see how easily it can go wrong. I suppose what it boils down to, is if the person is worth it then you'll just end up

laughing about it and work together towards getting it right in the future. And if it's not the right person then it wouldn't work regardless of whether they were a vegan or not. I don't think anyone should have to compromise their beliefs but it's a big old world out there and I would hate to think I was missing out because I can't accept anyone in my life who doesn't live life exactly the way I do.

Still I suppose until Cupid sees fit to stab me with one of his arrows I don't really have to worry about any of this love stuff anyway. So on Valentine's Day will I check to see if anyone has sent me a card? You bet. And when I find I haven't got any, will I care? Not really no. I'll just put my vegan feet up on my vegan sofa and please my vegan self.

Editor:
Knut Caspari

Front cover drawing:
Amanda Hawkins

Contributors:
Helen Bevan
Graham Cole
Kiko Denzer
Ava Greenwell
Malcolm Horne
Ann James
Øystein Larsen
Amanda Mather
Harry Mather
Ola Powazynska
Maureen Robertson
Julie Roxburgh
Gina Shaw
Kim W.
Helge Waaler

Cartoons and photos:
George Hughes
Andy Singer
Stian Solheim

Address:
Vegan Views,
Longridge,
Bankend Rd,
Dumfries,
DG1 4TP,
Scotland.

Telephone:
01387 265 348 (10:00-21:00)

Email:
sjolberg@online.no

Website:
www.veganviews.org

Web editor: John Curtis

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Vegan Views is independent of the Vegan Society but shares its aims. It was started in 1975 by a group of vegans who wanted to make contact with others interested in creating a more harmonious way of living based on veganism, and to communicate more informally than could be done in the official journal of the Vegan Society. It realises that many vegans feel isolated from society and appreciate contact with, and news and opinions of, other vegans.

From the editor...

This is my first issue as editor of *Vegan Views*, but I am not new to *Vegan Views*. I did the layout from issue 101 to 107. Although Harry Mather is stepping down, he will continue to write articles.

Text: Knut Caspari

In the last issue the former editor took the trouble to explain that I was Norwegian. If this was wise, only time will tell. As this issue goes to press, around 150 subscribers have not renewed their subscription. The reason is obvious: Greenpeace calls for a boycott of anything remotely Norwegian, because of the whale issue. It does not matter that I have never seen a live whale (or even a polar bear). Nor that I have a British passport...

Vegan Views book

A reader has kindly lent me a complete set of *Vegan Views*. Looking through old issues, I have found a lot of interesting articles. There has been talk of publishing a book before, but this has never been realised because of fear that it would not sell. I have no such fears, and if anyone would like to contribute to this project, feel free to contact me!

Are you missing something?

I have thrown out the regulars (notices, ads, vegan groups, useful websites etc.). The main reason for this is I do not know if the information is relevant anymore. I have phoned some people who seemed surprised to receive a phone call. (One person had not even heard of *Vegan Views*...)

Vegan Views is a printed magazine with a website. (Not the other way round!) Can someone take the web-related info and update it? Then this can be put on the website. (I have noticed there is a vacant spot in the website for this...)

Of course some information should find its way into the printed magazine. But it should be edited by 'someone'.

Forum?

One thing the *Vegan Views* website is lacking is a forum where readers can comment on the magazine, ask for help in writing articles, etc. Is this possible to sort out and does someone have the time to do it?

Write an article!

If you wish to write an article, follow the layout pattern in this issue. As a rough guide one A4 page of text (font: Times, 10pt.), translates to one page in layout with

a photo/drawing. Avoid writing more than 2 pages, unless you wish to send the readers to sleep! It is useful to break up the main text with subheadings. If you wish to include any photos or drawings, then please send these separate from the text.

No article refused!

I have not refused any article written for *Vegan Views* in this issue. I think it is important to print the readers' views and hope to do so in the future.

Deadline explained!

Most of the articles in this issue were sent in *after* the deadline. So for the next issue I have done away with the a deadline. If you want something published, then just send it in when it is written...

Vegan Views needs:

- *Typist*. Some articles/letters are hand-written and they need to be typed.
- *Proofreader*. To avoid printing too many spelling mistakes!
- *Sellers of Vegan Views*. See page 38 for more information.

Journalist needed!

One article in this issue could have been longer. The event in Morpeth (page 34) lacks some vital details. (How to get to the event, how much it costs, who's holding workshops and so on.) When I asked the group for a longer article I was told nobody had the time to write it.

This is where a journalist with a digital camera can help. Maybe someone who does not know what to write about, but given a draft can tidy it up.

Donate money!

If you are reading this on the web, then consider giving a donation. Send a cheque made out to: Knut Caspari or pour some dosh into this bank account:
Bank account: 011186373.
Sort code: 80-46-04.

So where do the subscribers live?

At time of printing, *Vegan Views* has 79 subscribers and they live in:

- England: 58
- Norway: 7
- Wales: 6
- Scotland: 4
- Spain: 2
- Australia: 1
- Ireland: 1

Letters

I was wronged by Vegan Views!

I am pleased to see that Vegan Views is continuing after all. I hope it does well. I had an ad in the previous issue, but a mistake was made with my address. Can you please correct the ad and reprint it?

As I only need my ad. in 2 issues, is it OK to send you just £1? I have only a limited amount of sterling just now. Will send a subscription at a later date (soon!).

Please put the ad in the general section, otherwise the people I seek will not see it!

Jamie

Sorry about the mistake. The best way to avoid mistakes is to send letters/ads via email.

While a pound is not a huge sum, have you thought about writing an article? Then you can present your offer, maybe include some photos of the caravan and the nearby area. Articles are free and many Vegan Views readers would not mind reading about your offer, even if they have no plans to turn up on your doorstep.

The ad is on page 37 for those interested.

Views too dear!

I am sorry to hear that Vegan Views is going to be a dearer fancy one. 'Viva' give a discount card with theirs – it is glossy and £15 for 2 each time they come.

I think Vegan Views is fine as it is, but may appeal to more people with a colour cover. I sent two members your way over the past 2 years, including a shop in Ashbourne.

The article 'Matlock: Green Way Café' on page 7 of the last issue, should be next to mine 'News from Derbyshire' on page 11 as it is called: 'Greenway' Café.

Sue Fox

So Viva has upped the ante by giving away an extra magazine! Well, I will have to follow suit! With this issue subscribers will find a free copy of Self-sufficiency.

Being vegan is (mostly) easy!

It is extremely hard to get any genuine support in everyday life to avoid dairy. I manage to avoid milk in my tea in Cafés, but if I do not have any food it is unappetising and yet generally there is nowhere supplying soya and other plant milks. If you say that you are a vegan, and this is why you do not have milk, they are mystified, and often have a grin which says everything. The actual food menu for vegans (called vegetarians in cafés) is

somewhat sparse, consisting of jacket potatoes and baked beans, if you are lucky! Quite often if you avoid 'cows milk', they assume that you have an allergy, which in that case is legitimate, (you can not help having to avoid cows milk) whereas if you say that you avoid milk deliberately, as part of your vegan diet, they act as if you apparently are from another planet, if not crazy!

If someone is actually slowly dying from a disease such as cancer, even then they continue not to listen to advice about eating foods high in antioxidants, and have a hazzardic attitude. It seems that more publicity may help.

Carol

How can I grow B12?

I am trying to find a bacteria culture that makes B12 that I can grow at home. Either on food like sauerkraut or pickles, or on sugar cane molasses. Mushrooms also have B12, but which, and how to grow them?

Tom

This sounds like an interesting article. Have any Vegan Views readers tried this at home? If so, they should write about it!

A very personal ad!

Good luck with Vegan Views. I hope it works out, an electronic version would have no appeal for me.

I wonder if you could put an ad in the 'Personal' column for me:

'Male, gay, veganish/vegetarian, atheist, environmentalist, 62, looking for similar, younger.' And provide a box number for me.

I wonder if you have any links with Laurieston Hall? They are quite a wholesome organic community.

Name and address supplied

Anyone wishing to answer the ad please use box no '1' and include a first class stamp. (Without a stamp your letter goes nowhere...)

In future ads will cost money. See page 37 for information on the new ad rates.

I have visited the grounds of Laurieston Hall once and the vegetable garden looked good. I did not stay to try the sauna, though. Maybe you could consider writing about them for the next issue? I can nip over and take some photos.

Come rain, come sundance!

I am pleased that you have taken over Vegan Views. Harry always sent me a copy when it came out. Hope that you will

continue to also. Any articles that are of interest I will send them in to you. I do want to see more vegans out there.

Can you put a bit about a workers cooperative project that needs help very urgently called 'Sundance Renewables'? They make biodiesel and are in need of more used cooking oil. I have enclosed a newsletter you can use. By the way, Sundance can deliver in bulk if need be.

I have also enclosed a leaflet from 'Speak' about boycotting the City of Oxford and Oxford University, because of animal testing.

Bob

You can read Vegan Views for free at www.veganviews.org.uk. Either download the magazine as a pdf-file or read it on the screen. It is expensive to send out free copies, so I will not do that.

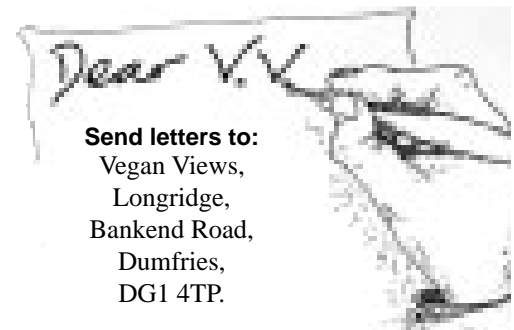
Maybe 'someone' would like to be in charge of sending out free copies. This 'someone' would buy the magazine in bulk and send it to those who would like to receive it. This person's contact details (name, phone no. and/or email) would be published, so people can make direct contact. (Bear in mind that while you may be able to afford a subscription others can not or do not have easy access to the web.)

The newsletter about Sundance was interesting and an article about them would have been a very good idea, but I do not know of anybody who could have written it. (Maybe a reader could do it?) For the time being those willing to switch on their computer can look at this website: www.sundancerenewables.org.uk

The photos in the 'Speak' leaflet put me off reading it, but those with strong tummies can view their website: www.speakcampaigns.org

Another Bob letter!

I hope you can put this in the next Vegan Views. I was arrested at my home on Tuesday 27th. of January and taken to a police station. This is on an animal rights issue. I am now on bail till Tuesday 28th. of April to go to Banbury police station. We might be then charged with conspiracy to blackmail. (Myself and another person.)



This I have not done. Maybe your readers can get a petition going urgently. If I go down I will go on hunger strike till I die. I will lose everything anyway: my home, my dog & cat and any other personal items. I did send you a letter before Christmas. But had no reply off you.

I also want to know about making contact with a 40s female. In the last issue I had an ad, could you please put one in for me? *“Animal rights activist 62 years old, looking for female for friendship and relationship. Bob Lewis, 17 Pheasant Road, Trebanos, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4DN.”*

I do hope to hear from you soon!

Bob

To save money, I do not reply to letters. Anyone wishing a reply must include a UK landline number or SAE. To save time and hassle, why not try email? Even if you do not have an account yourself, you could ask a friend for help. You will then get a prompt reply.

I have printed your ad, but from next issue all ads will cost money. See page 37 for more information.

Letter of token!

We would like to thank Harry Mather and his helpers for all their hard work producing 'Vegan Views', which has been so important to us for many years.

We live in Andalucia, in the south of Spain, in the country, and have no contact with any vegans. Most people here find our ideas extremely strange and very difficult to understand.

We were so sorry when it seemed as though 'Vegan Views' was going to come to an end especially as we do not have the Internet, and we would lose the only contact we have with the vegan world.

When we heard that Tim was taking over we were so delighted and very grateful.

Jenny & Aneolco

Plans are made!

Thank you for keeping Vegan Views going. I plan on sending a few articles your way, as I am a vegan nutritionist. Let me know if you need someone to do any book reviews.

Layla

Letter from VVs longest subscriber!

We are glad Vegan Views will be kept running. We have got the magazine off and on since 1981.

Name and address supplied

Don't let the wild ponies roam!

It might be a step towards ending one of the most neglected and *totally unnecessary* forms of animal abuse in our national

parks, known as commoners' grazing rights, if you publish the enclosed copy from Quaker Concern, and suggest that your readers contact the Environment secretary, Hilary Benn, and any animal charities they have contact with, to press for an end to a practice which was contemporary to cock-fighting and bull-baiting, and incredibly still legal. There is no need to breed and sell ponies for the live export trade, the demand for riding ponies can be supplied from breeders with private pasture.

There is also a hazard to humans from tick bites which cause the devastating lyme disease. In the past some animal groups have tried to help, but made the *big mistake* of aiming for improvements as opposed to *ending* the appalling practice.

Here are some more points:

- There are numerous, natural attractive areas that do *not* have to be grazed.

- Even if cars were banned, it would do nothing for all the other hazards – poisoning, vandals, bogs, rubbish from visitors and residents, and perfunctory or non-existent veterinary attention.

- Speed limits are *not fully effective*, and animals hit at *lower speeds limp away* and are *hardly ever found*.

- It is appalling that rescue charities should have to struggle to remedy the iniquities of commoners' rights.

- The commoner's 'answer' to acorns is more animal exploitation. The pigs are *exposed to the carnage on the roads*. They only consume a part of the crop.

Philip Davis

Thank you for your letter and photo copies of news clippings. I agree 'someone' should write about this, but as I do not know of anyone I have published what you wrote. (I think this letter would have been a very good article if 'someone' had linked the comments together and maybe gone into more detail on some of them.)

Anyway, I have been asked to ask my readers (you) if you could send a letter to Hilary Benn and ask for an end to grazing rights in national parks. (The only exemption I would make is for Belted Galloway, as they are pretty.)

The table fork is a killer!

I have read in the New Scientist a contribution by Jonathan Balcombe of the Physicians Committee for Responsible



I'm sorry son,
there's a pumpkin
shortage this year

Medicine, US. He argues that the table fork is by far the deadliest weapon created by humans. He writes: *“Each year, this humble utensil abets the deaths of millions of people by conveying into their bodies all kinds of fatty foodstuffs known to cause heart attacks, cancers, strokes, diabetes and other diseases.*

According to the World Health Organisation, approximately 17 million people died of cardiovascular disease alone in 2005, making up 30 % of all deaths globally.

As most of these harmful foods are of animal origin ... we might add the number of animals killed to be eaten with forks to the yearly death toll. This amounts to about 56 billion, says the Humane Society of the US.”

Quite a vegan advocate!

Cerys Brangwyn

Who, where, what, why and when!

I believe that you are now taking over as editor of Vegan Views, could you please let me know when the next issue will be published, what the cost will be and if I could pay by sending you stamps to cover the price?

I looking forward to hearing from you eagerly!

New reader

I fear you might not hear from me. You forgot to include a SAE or phone no. (landline). Letters are a very formal way of asking questions these days. I prefer email or telephone. It is quicker and free. The answer to your questions are:

1. Vegan Views is (hopefully) published 4 times a year at various times.
2. See page 37 for details on subscription costs.
3. You can pay with a cheque, Postal Order, cash (UK pounds or NOK) or stamps. If you pay with stamps, I only accept sticky stamps. Please phone/email to ask what I need?

Driving animals to their graves

Each year, hundreds of thousands of animals are being killed on our roads. Deer, hedgehogs, badgers, otters, cats, squirrels, hares, foxes, birds, reptiles, amphibians – all of these beautiful, innocent creatures lose their lives in large numbers, because of our desire for easy and comfortable transportation.

Text: Helge Waaler

Cartoon: © Andy Singer

When these tragedies are mentioned, they are usually linked to costly damage to the vehicle, or human injuries, which of course are regrettable enough. Rarely do we hear about the sufferings of the animals, but with what moral right do we put our quest for comfort ahead of the rights of these animals to live?

No one knows for sure exactly how many animals do get killed on roads all over the world each year. But from research done in some countries, we can see that the numbers are astronomically high. In the USA, a detailed report from as long back as 1968 concluded that around 365 million animals were killed every year. That is one million each day! This number is higher today, considering the larger number of cars and roads. In 1992, in the state of New York alone, 11,822 deer were reported killed. Scientists at Cornell University found that for each reported deer, there were four unreported – so assumed that the number of deer killed could be multiplied by five.

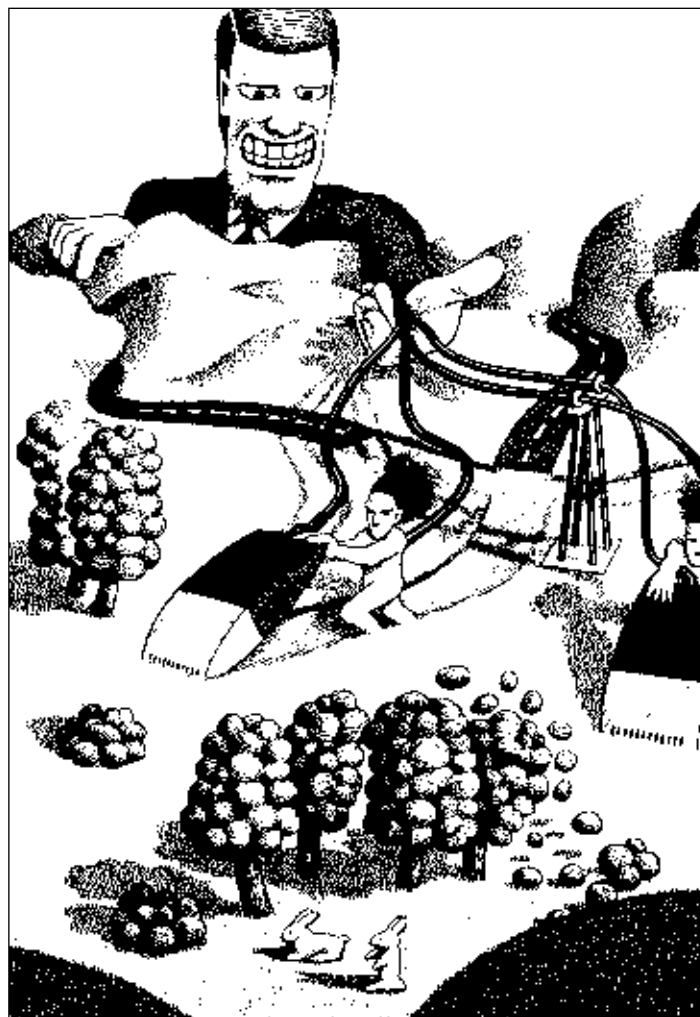
In Norway more than 5000 elk and deer are registered as killed by cars every year. Crashes with smaller animals don't get reported, but the animal welfare organisations estimate that several hundred thousand small animals die every year on Norwegian roads. Reports from Denmark give various estimates – from 177,000 to 1,500,000 mammals killed annually. A later, more cautious report from 1995-97 listed that 2,700 small animals got killed every year on a road network of 1200 km. The most common species found dead were hedgehogs (27 %), birds (19 %), cats (19 %), hares (16 %), foxes (7 %), and badgers (2 %).

The Danish reports can surely be taken as an indication for most North European countries. Almost one third of all hedgehogs end their lives under the wheel

of a motorised vehicle. In Holland the badger is almost extinct because of road traffic. In Denmark 34 % of the total number of otters in the period 1980-90 were killed by cars.

Sitting back and considering these numbers, it is no exaggeration to say that an animal holocaust is taking place on the roads all over the world. Moreover, this silent and underexposed murder of intelligent beings is not being executed by vicious and callous criminals, but by good citizens and family people like you and me. In our society the car holds a place as an almost indispensable part of our lives. They are considered a status symbol, a symbol of wealth, power and freedom. Every teenager looks forward to getting his or her driver's licence. Cars and driving are part of the educational system, as well as a firm part of the whole world economy. Cars hold an almost sacred position for many – in the USA you are politically dead if you try to impose restrictions on driving. But cars and driving are not personal matters or individual rights. On the contrary, it is a public matter, as it affects all aspects of society, with the expensive and unaesthetic building of roads and traffic systems. Add to this pollution, noise, the ruining of nature and cultural landscapes, human injuries, deaths and tragedies – and you wonder why it is at all legal to own a car!

But the real tragedy is being hidden. And that tragedy is connected to the violation against animals' rights. The only reason this crime isn't persecuted is that the animals cannot speak for themselves, and that respect for animals in our society is basically very low. Animal organisations try their best to minimise injuries and killings with various systems for safe passing, sounds and scents to scare animals away, etc. These are fine, important efforts, but still, sadly not nearly



enough to repair the damage. The number of large animals getting killed is still very high, and the number of smaller animals that get killed is probably even higher.

It is important to remember that this problem doesn't necessarily go away with "environmentally friendly" vehicles, such as electric cars. These cars cannot be considered friendly to the environment if they still have a goal of achieving the same speed and basic properties as gasoline driven cars – and this will surely be both a political and economical target, I'm afraid. The animals don't care if the car that kills them runs on electricity or petrol.

There is only one good remedy for this problem. That remedy is using the car *as little as possible*, preferably almost not at all. Of course, it is difficult to manage without a car in our society, as most of the infrastructure is geared to motorised, fast-going traffic. But being aware of the immense suffering car traffic is causing, I'm sure no morally inclined person can keep on using the car in the way that our society does today. So – save an animal's life – let the car stay in the garage today (and tomorrow)! Besides, using your feet leads to better health.

Learning curve on vegan camp

Before the 2007 Vegan Camp, which was in the Brecons, I was in e-mail contact with a woman who wanted to come, but who was profoundly deaf and almost blind. She had a guide dog, but also wanted to bring her 4 rescued rats! The guide dog was welcome, of course, but I managed to talk her out of bringing any rats. She had never camped before and so arranged to hire a tent from our organiser.

Text and photo: Helen Bevan

Keith and I, and our son, Beric, arrived at the site on the afternoon before camp was due to start in order to get ourselves sorted so that we could welcome campers as they arrived. Much to our surprise, we were not the first there – Helene, the deaf/blind lady, had arrived with her father about 5 hours before us. She was in her mid thirties. She had not told him she was camping, and he was, understandably, most concerned – as were we, as the tent she was to hire was not arriving until the next day! However, we managed to get her ensconced in two compartments of Beric's awning (he slept in his van), where she opted to stay for the rest of the fortnight.

I had learnt the visual deaf alphabet when I was a youngster, just out of interest, but had never had to use it, except for back-up at a Vegan Camp in Shropshire two years before when we had a camper who was almost deaf, but could lip-read – now here I was having to adapt it and use it on someone's hand! Someone who at first was almost totally reliant on me! Before he left, her father had taught me a few things, such as you can simply use capital letters in her palm; when you make a mistake you 'rub it out' on her hand; and if you want to say 'no' it's a similar movement, a bit like shaking your head, but with your fingers on her hand; for 'yes' you simply tap her palm twice. She had brought typed pages with the deaf-blind alphabet on it, with other advice. She also had said that she had a card with the letters also in Braille, but I never saw her use that, although she did type out the alphabet in Braille for the children on a quite small machine, which she had earlier used to make notes of the relative positions of the recycling bins the site had provided for us. She also had a powerful zoom tool to inspect things more closely, and a sonic tool that told her how far things were away from her by vibrating in her hand.

On the Saturday a ten year old girl arrived with her parents, and in next to no time was happily talking away to Helene on her hand! It was amazing to see. Later in the week her Dad started to have a go, and then her Mum. They often took her with them on day trips – she especially liked the beach.

After the communal meal on the Tuesday, Helene gave a workshop and showed her gadgets, after which other people began learning how to 'talk' to her.

On our first group trip, on the Sunday after the start of camp, about 20 of us went to a nearby waterfall, that towered above us and which was in full spate following the recent heavy rains. Many of the group had picked their way down over the wet boulders to the shallow pool at the base of the waterfall. Seeing this on her zoom lens Helene decided she would too! And she did! (Which is more than I did!). Afterwards we all went to the Cefn Coed Colliery Museum, outside of which was a full-size old steam railway engine. Again, on her zoom lens she saw people on it so she climbed up too! She was amazing!

After having taught her guide dog Jilli the way to the toilets and the woods, and how to avoid the many guy ropes, she was quite independent, except for her evening meal. She lived on her own and could cook there, but obviously it would have been dangerous whilst camping, therefore I organized a rota of willing helpers for this.

Her father was most concerned for her welfare and rang Keith most evenings. He brought her some more things on the Wednesday, including more Braille books and a lilo, and stayed overnight at the centre in B&B. That evening he joined over 40 of us as we had a delicious meal at Govinda's Restaurant, Swansea. By the time he left the following day his mind was at ease as he saw how well she was getting on with us. He would have liked to have stayed, and he would have been welcome, but he realised that when he was there people talked to him, not to his daughter.

By the end of the fortnight she had made many new friends who would feel confident enough to go up to her if they saw her in the future at other vegan events, and even confident enough to help someone else in her position.

She herself had also been on a sharp learning curve and was determined to come next time, with her father's help, much better prepared for camping.

The next year she did indeed come, but



Helene climbing on the railway engine.

her eyes had developed a problem in the meantime, whereby certain spectrums of light caused her excruciating headaches, and meant that she had to cut out *all* light with a light-proof mask until such time as she could be provided with special glasses. This caused us extra problems, but we managed between us to sort them out in the end. Although I found that this time it was me who had to keep my distance because otherwise the others left it to me to communicate with her, which was not fair to me or her. When her father collected her at the end of the fortnight he said that in those two weeks she had more social interaction than in the whole of the rest of the year put together!

Hopefully, this year, at the camp in Cornwall, she will have some vision again.

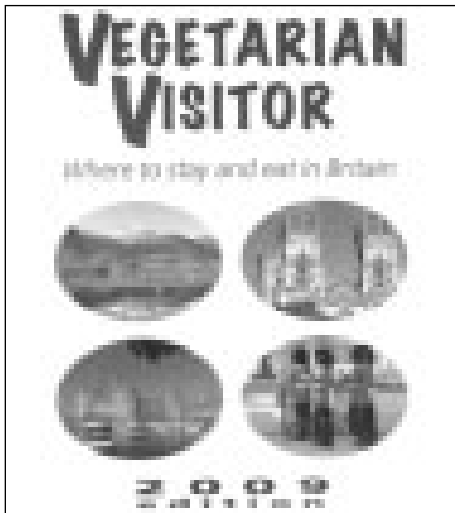
I do hope that anyone who reads this and sees her at some event will feel brave enough, and confident enough, to approach her and introduce themselves.

Incidentally, it was her guide dog that made her vegan – as she loves and helps her so much that Helene felt that she could no longer eat any animal.

This year's vegan camp is being held near Newquay in Cornwall. It is the 29th consecutive annual vegan camp. The dates are August Sat 1st to Sat August 15th 2009. All are expected to be vegan on site during their stay but all are welcome whether vegan or not. Activities and events are organised throughout the fortnight.

Campers are self catering but there are two communal meals per week where we all make or bring something to share. We have our own shop for essentials on site and supplies can be ordered in advance.

Book reviews



Vegetarian Visitor. 2009 edition. Edited by Annemarie Weitzel.

Published by Jon Carpenter £2-50 ISBN: 978-1-906067-045. Available from bookshops or post free (in the UK) from the publisher: Jon Carpenter Publishing, Direct Sales, 2 Home Farm Cottages, Sandy Lane, St. Paul's Cray, Kent BR5 3HZ. Tel. 01689 870437. A5 format. 112 pages.

New updated edition of the only annual guide to private homes, guest houses and hotels in England, Wales and Scotland which offer hospitality to the vegetarian and vegan traveller and holidaymaker.

All establishments have descriptive information, as well as codes indicating whether they are exclusively vegetarian/vegan or also serve traditional food, price range, whether licensed, whether close to public transport.

Plus well over 250 cafés, restaurants and pubs who know how to cater properly for vegetarians and vegans.

Illustrated throughout with photos and drawing. Comprehensive list of Vegetarian Organisations and Local Groups.

Harry Mather

Vegan a Go-Go – A Cookbook & Survival Manual for Vegans on the Road by Sarah Kramer

ISBN 978 1 551522401. Price £11-99. Published by Arsenal Pulp. Distributed by Turnaround, Unit 3, Olympia Trading Estate, Coburg Road, Wood Green, London N22 6TZ. Email: orders@turnaround.uk.com

Sarah Kramer has already produced other cookbooks including *La Dolce Vegan!* and *How It All Vegan*, both popular in North America. This cookbook is

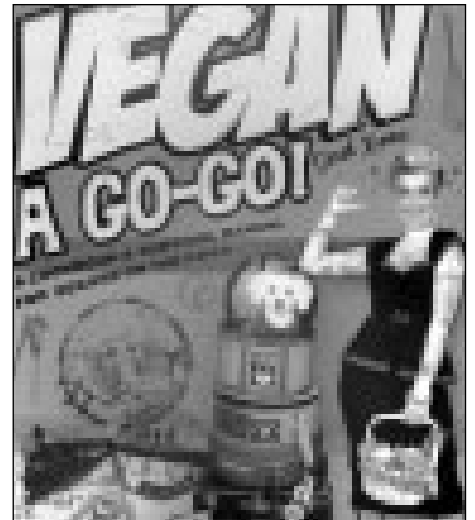
pocket size and therefore handy for travellers. It has some spare pages useful for adding your own notes and your own useful addresses. It has many tips for travellers such as planning beforehand and what to take with you, but all based on North America. The recipes also are based on USA food availability. I find that the trouble with successful cooks is that they use a lot of ingredients. I would have thought that, if having to cater for oneself, one would be looking for greater simplicity. Some recipes are from outside contributors who are obviously also showing off their inventiveness.

Because many cookery books are huge and heavy, this pocket size book is welcome. But I would suggest that you make use of the vacant pages to include your own favourite recipes before you depart.

Harry Mather

Tommy Tofu Saves The Day by Joanne Rose. Self-published.

The story in this children's book is about a bunch of vegetable friends: potato, carrot, zucchini and lettuce. The friends decide to go off on an adventure to find the secret treasure, and along the way they meet various characters with something to



discover from each of them. They finally get to meet Tommy Tofu and learn from him a great lesson.

The book contains some education about tofu and soya milk as well as nutritional facts about the four veggie friends.

Although the moral in the book is good, the book comes across as boring. I would not buy the book for my kids. The book is self-published and I think there may be a reason for this.

Amanda Mather

Events

March: Veggie Month

Organised by Animal Aid, www.animalaid.org.uk. A veggie diet is better for you, animals and the planet. If you are not already vegetarian, Animal Aid challenges you to take the veggie pledge for a week. If you are already veggie... go vegan!

March 24-28: Vegan work week
Vegan volunteer work week on Arran. See page 28 for more information.

March 21: Brighton Vegan Fayre
11am-6pm at the Brighton Centre, Kings Road. There is an admission charge. Organised by Yaoh, so expect it to be far bigger than the average vegan fayre. www.veganfayre.co.uk.

April 3-10: North East Gathering
See page 34 for more details.

April 18: Viva!s Veggie Show
10am-6pm at The Royal Horticultural Halls, Greycoat Street, London. Admission £4 (under 18s free). Pre-book your tickets and save 25%. Talks, cookery demonstrations, free diet and health advice, stalls, competitions,

vegan food products, kids play area, café. www.viva.org.uk/london.

May 16: Veggie Pride
9th French Veggie Pride in Lyon, 2nd Italian Veggie Pride in Milan. It's a festival of Vegetarian and Vegan Pride. All over the world millions of people refuse to condone the killing of animals for food. But when do you hear about it? More details: www.veggiepride.org/en

May 18-24: National Vegetarian Week
Organised by the UK Vegetarian Society. www.vegsoc.org.

May 25: Bournemouth veggie picnic
12.30pm at Shelley Park, Beechwood Avenue, Boscombe, Bournemouth. Bring vegan food/drink to share. If it rains, it will instead be an indoor picnic in Wessex Tales Vegetarian Restaurant. Details: Sarah 01202 824783.

May 30-31: Bristol Vegan Fayre
11am-9pm at the Amphitheatre and Waterfront Square. There is an admission charge. Claims to be the world's largest vegan gathering. www.veganfayre.co.uk.

Interview with a vegan filmmaker

I recently took a chance opportunity to meet the vegan film producer, Ryan Vance. Many of his movies to date have included elements of his passion for promoting the vegan lifestyle. I was able to catch this busy filmmaker for an interview to share a little bit about his approach to promoting the vegan lifestyle through the medium of film.

Text and photo: Ola Powazynska

Mhe first question was when and why he became a vegan.

– I started with a vegetarian diet in 2000 after it was found that I had a severe case of hypoglycemia. My blood-sugar level was 42, which I discovered is a dangerously low level. I was surprised by this revelation because I was active in different sports and maintained an “average” diet. In a desperate search for help to improve my health, I came across vegetarianism. Everything I read about vegetarianism made sense from the beginning. I took up the diet on a trial basis and immediately felt better. After dieting 2 months my blood-sugar levels were back to normal. During that search for answers I had also skimmed over information about veganism, but thought there wasn’t any pressing need to change what was working so well for me at the time.

In 2002, during my first year of university, there was a vegan advocacy booth set up at my school. They were playing some PETA videos of animal abuse of factory farmed dairy cows. The video had an immediate affect that shocked my conscience. From that day, and into the following week, I felt compelled to research information about veganism in relation to animal abuse. I soon found lots of information about the benefit to my personal health and to the general well-being of the planet. There was so much evidence backing the argument for becoming vegan that I couldn’t ignore the obvious any longer. I began the diet soon after and felt better once I had eliminated all the animal by-products from my meals. I continued the vegan diet for the next 6 years until last year when I transitioned to a “raw” vegan diet.

Why did you become a filmmaker?

– I had been involved in fine arts for as long as I can remember. It began with drawing pictures in elementary school and later focused on painting and photography in high school. I had always been a

creative student of the arts. I used my artwork to demonstrate how I felt about my life. Life’s problems could be articulated on paper and then analyzed for a solution or passed to others for their opinions or critiques. By that method, I would challenge myself to find a way to solve those problems.

I also recognized that art, and its media outlets, held a great potential to critique social problems over a wide audience. It wasn’t until my sophomore year of university that I realized the full potential movie makers had to make ‘changes for the better’ to a wide audience. I had always been a cineaste growing up. I love the way movies offer us a way to see life from the perspective of others by being in another person/actor/character’s shoes.

Would you be a filmmaker if you weren’t vegan?

– Yes, I would still be a filmmaker if I weren’t vegan. I dedicated my life to affecting positive change, and film can be a powerful vehicle for positive change in whichever form it takes. I have included vegan themes in my films to date because I have personally benefited so much from sticking to the diet and feel a strong desire and ethical need to let others know the facts pertaining to the benefits of a vegan diet. Raw vegans contribute toward many of the positive changes we need in our ever-changing, and often traumatic world. Having said that, we should agree that there are many other areas of concern that need our attention to make our world a better place to live. Filmmakers will have no problem keeping busy with the messages they are trying to send.

Do you think vegan films are a good way to pass the vegan message?

– I think vegan films are an incredibly valuable and influential tool to promote the message of veganism. In fact, film documentaries like *Earthlings* and *Meet Your Meat* have attracted more people to the vegan lifestyle than any other media I am aware of.

While these films are wonderful in getting out important facts about veganism, I am more interested in making feature films that use an entertaining approach to the vegan experience in a narrative-based film. This is due to the fact that films like *Earthlings* have a very narrow audience appeal. It is not something that people would watch casually with friends or family. I guess what I am doing is more subliminal. That



word sounds a little mystical, doesn’t it?

What do you mean by subliminal?

– Basically, I think that the main reason more people aren’t learning about veganism today in places like the UK and USA is that it is suffering from a huge PR problem. Unfortunately, many people associate vegans with extremists, hippies, etc. My main task with vegan filmmaking is to make films that will offset that negative image of vegans and allow the lifestyle to become mainstream.

What makes a successful vegan film?

– That’s hard to say because veganism can be linked to some very broad topics. I would consider a film like *Walle* to be a vegan film, even though it doesn’t have anything directly to do with a vegan diet. The film still successfully makes a powerful point about personal actualization and the ill affects of environmental abuse.

What are your favourite films and who are the artists that have inspired you?

– I wouldn’t consider most of these films to be vegan films, but I think they are fantastic films nonetheless:

Ross McElwee - *Sherman’s March*, Gillo Pontecorvo - *Battle of Algiers*, Frederick Wiseman - *High School*, Coen Brothers - everything, Alfonzo Curon-*Children of Men*, Darren Aronofsky - *PI*, Edgar Wright - *Shaun of the Dead*, Stanley Kubrick - *2001*, David Lean - *Lawrence of Arabia*

What, in your opinion, is the best way to promote veganism?

Having a positive and patient approach when discussing veganism with others.

Ryan Vance is currently finishing a short film called ‘Vegan Love’ and will be beginning work on his first feature film in the summer. For more info visit Ryan’s website: <http://veganfilmmaker.com>

Another Growing Season!

Now we are into lengthening days and as the sun climbs higher, there's that excitement of the chance to sow seeds of vegetables and flowers and harvest fresh produce from our plots! After the weeks of very hard frosts, snow and much rain that has seen more of a proper winter this year, soon, when the conditions allow, some planting and sowing can take place, especially if you have some protection such as cloches, frames or a greenhouse.

Text and photos: Graham Cole

As we get into spring, that will be the time to start working in the compost that has been over-wintered and covered in the compost area. This is the best time to maximise the nutrients and also over-wintered green manure plants can be cut back and turned under three weeks before sowing or planting takes place.

It is always tempting to be in too much of a hurry as days feel that much warmer so a little patience is necessary, and by April in most parts of the UK, some things can start to go in. Always go by the weather in your locality and after some years, with experience, you can get to judge the best times, hopefully!

After decades of buying shrink-wrapped, air-freighted, chemically grown, commercially produced food, a new generation is discovering the joys of succulent home-grown tomatoes, salads, beans and flavoursome strawberries without plastic packets or an air mile in sight. Several things are driving this now: the rising cost of food, the promotion of "5-a-Day", concerns about food quality and safety, plus a growing awareness that the future of the planet is in our hands. Those who have never done so are trying "growing their own" and organically, so what was once "alternative" is now becoming more mainstream. All the TV gardeners are organic and even some of the vile meat orientated celebrity chefs are extolling the virtues of *fresh* ingredients, so the link between plot and plate is better.

There is much progress still to be made with the adoption of veganism and stockfree farming and horticulture, however...

Allotments

Allotments are being transformed with full take-up, long waiting lists, and what was



February cold frame.

once derelict are now in demand. I have heard of a derelict site in Sheffield where Bert gardened alone for years, an island of food and hope in a sea of weeds. One day, locals decided to resurrect the site, which is now packed with plotholders and is a focal point for community friendship, fresh air and the pleasures of eating real food.

Also the once male bastion, the kitchen garden, is changing with more women getting involved and the average age of allotment growers is getting younger. We see this on the VON stalls with more first-time young growers full of enthusiasm wanting to know more. However, in Hampshire, councils are grabbing long established allotment sites for building on,

so the fight is on to protect existing sites and get more provided because, for example in Southampton, you can now wait up to 5 years for a plot. A local Friends Of The Earth group are getting a site ready for their first growing season with some vegan-organic input!

Vegan-Organic Network

Formed in the UK in the mid-90s, VON promotes organic farming and gardening without chemicals, animal exploitation and animal manures, proving that commercially, and at domestic levels, food and fertility is possible using plant wastes, green manures, soil rotation, less soil tillage and better soil treatment.

The world's first Stockfree-Organic Certification and Inspection Scheme has

Growing trays – a good way to start plants off.



been in place for several years now, with one underway in the USA.

The Welsh College Of Horticulture runs courses for these methods. Several stockfree-organic commercial growers and vegetable box schemes in the UK now exist.

Every summer VON members and the commercial growers have Open Days for people to look round and learn more.

2008 saw the launch of the first VON DVD featuring market/box scheme grower Iain Tolhurst giving an introduction to stockfree organics.

VON needs more members to support its work spreading the message of solutions to many ecological problems, promoting a more compassionate and healthy way of life.

Contact VON for more information: 80 Annable Road, Lower Bredbury, Stockport, SK6 2DF. Email: info@veganorganic.net, web: www.veganorganic.net. Another good website: www.stockfreeorganic.net

Finally, my gardening journey started with joining the HDRA back in the 1970s as they were the only organic gardening



Rocket in greenhouse from a sowing in late January.

group around. Now renamed Garden Organic, they are celebrating their 60th birthday this year. They still provide much good organic gardening info, plus the interesting 20 acre Ryton Gardens near Coventry.

Now, in the 21st Century, the message of vegans and stockfree-organics is to take it

that bit further if we are to have a future...

Seeds

Beans & Herbs, 161 Chapel Street, Horningsham, Warminster, Wilts. BA12 7LU. www.beansandherbs.co.uk

Tamar Organics, www.tamarorganics.co.uk

Pain in invertebrates

It is argued that pain is purely subjective and impossible to prove. However, biologically there are markers which are associated with pain and pain prevention and which can technically prove that something bad is being experienced in adverse conditions. For instance, all invertebrates will move away quickly from anything very hot, or will react when being pricked by a pin.

Text: Julie Roxburgh

To suggest that all reaction is purely mechanical omits the fact that very many invertebrates (including many aquatic creatures) contain:

1. Nociceptors which are sensory receptors that send signals which cause the perception of pain.

2. Enkephalins – pentapeptides involved in the regulation of pain and nocicepton in the body.

3. Opioids – chemical substances that have a morphine-like action for pain relief.

Millions of years ago all the creatures (phyla) branched out to become what we see today with different needs, shapes, feeding habits, exo or endo skeletons etc. But why would they contain these pain receptors unless they were necessary? It is not enough to say that cognizance is

essential for such perception. New-born babies have little cognisance but they can suffer pain.

Another indication is that many invertebrates, including the marine and freshwater variety, contain various types of ganglia. Ganglia are the intermediary connections between different neurological structures in the body and act in a similar way to the brain. Among the larger and more neurologically advanced are:

Decapods crustaceans: Crabs, lobsters and crayfish. (These belong to Arthropoda which includes animals with jointed limbs and an external skeleton)

Cephalopods: Octopus, squid, cuttlefish and nautilus (These belong to Mollusca including snails and clams.)

In decapod crustaceans the central nervous system is generally divided between different ganglia. The lobster has several ganglia at the head and each segment of the body and the crab has two. Both the pain and stress systems of decapod crustaceans show striking similarities to those of vertebrates ... and the 'aversive' stimuli that are used experimentally may in fact be experienced as painful, unpleasant or frightening by the animals.(1)

The same is true of cephalopods; although in many animals such as prey species, pain may be harder to assess because they have evolved to avoid showing pain or injury in their overt behaviour, however experiments can show changes that we recognise as indicating that animals feel pain.(2) This is true in experiments on mammals and birds, and it is very likely that non-mammalian and some invertebrate species have evolved the capacity to experience pain, as an essential survival mechanism. (1)

If none of these arguments *proves* the existence of pain at least in non-vertebrates, there is nevertheless a doubt and, as in a court of law, where there is doubt, then the accused must be found not guilty, so in pain perception, invertebrates must be given the benefit of the doubt and the strong possibility that they do feel pain.

1. *Cephalopods and Decapod Crustaceans: Their capacity to experience pain and suffering: Advocates for animals 2005.*

2. *Can Invertebrates Suffer? Or, How Robust Is Argument – by – Analogy? C. M. Sherwin.*

Vegan pet food: not so fishy

Imagine drifting along in a turquoise sea, lulled by waves gently lapping at the white sands of the exotic location your boss has finally flown you to, in humble appreciation of your years of skilled and valued service. The sun is warm, the sky blue, and the breeze gently flutters the palm leaves shading the cocktail by your deckchair. All is as it should be.

Text: Dr. Andrew Knight

Suddenly, your peace is shattered by an almighty splash! A furry, ginger blur zooms past you, frothy bubbles rising from its wake. Squinting against the bright light, you are just able to make out a pair of soggy ear tips and a keenly quivering tail, rapidly receding towards the deeper blue. “Ah-ha,” you declare, “it is just a local house-cat, seeking to fulfil the natural feline diet of fish!”

Upon settling back to cast your gaze once more into the infinite depths of the azure sky, you reflect that you know a thing or two about cats. The feline predilection for fish, for example, is well established. Particularly tuna. Soon after rising each day, you know that coastal cats naturally swim 10-20 miles out into the ocean, hunting bluefin tuna weighing up to half of a ton, which they engage in underwater battles to the death. You know they garnish their meals with smaller species, such as salmon, prawns and whitebait. Thankfully, attacks on sunburnt floating primates have not yet been recorded...

‘Ridiculous!’ did I hear you scoff? Think again! Millions of cat and dog guardians worldwide consider it entirely natural to feed their feline and canine companions canned fish and prawns, body parts from cows, sheep, pigs, turkeys, ducks, chickens, and milk. Perhaps you might even be one of them. Yet, contrary to sea and sun-induced hallucinations, cats in their natural environments hunt and kill a variety of small mammals, birds, and large insects. They have not yet been recorded pursuing deep sea tuna, nor terrorizing herds of cows, sheep or pigs.

Meat-based pet food

Despite the biological evidence, millions of people cling to the belief that it is somehow natural to feed their feline or canine companions commercial diets comprised of assorted body parts from a

variety of animals they would never naturally eat. To these are added abattoir products condemned as unfit for human consumption, such as ‘4-D’ meat (from animals that are disabled, diseased, dying or dead on arrival at the abattoir), cleverly disguised using names like ‘meat derivatives’ or ‘by-products.’

Brands from countries such as the US also contain rendered dog and cat carcasses sourced from animal shelters. Similarly, toxic flea collars are not always removed. Unsurprisingly, a 1998 US Food and Drug Administration study detected the euthanizing solution sodium pentobarbital, which is specifically designed to kill dogs, cats and other animals, in 43 randomly-selected varieties of dry dog food.

To enhance palatability, dry food is sprayed with a combination of refined animal fat, lard, used restaurant grease, and other oils considered too rancid or inedible for human consumption, containing high levels of unhealthy free radicals and *trans* fatty acids. These oils provide the distinctive smell that wafts from a newly-opened packet of kibble.

Additional hazards include bacterial, protozoal, fungal, viral and prion contaminants, along with their assorted endotoxins and mycotoxins; hormone and antibiotic residues, particularly in brands from countries such as the US, where more of these chemicals are administered to livestock; and potentially dangerous preservatives, some of which have been banned in various countries.

Vegan diets: a healthy alternative

Properly formulated vegan diets can provide a healthy alternative for both cats and dogs, eliminating the numerous hazards inherent to meat-based pet food. Vegan diets supply all required nutrients using only vegetable, mineral and synthetic sources. Each species requires particular dietary *nutrients*, after all, rather than specific ingredients.



Many vegans are reluctant to give their pets a leg to chew on. Other vegans do not keep pets for fear of what would happen if they offered their pets some grains...

A growing number of manufacturers now supply vegan companion animal diets. Both complete diets and dietary supplements are available. The former offer convenience, while the latter provide a cheaper alternative for those wishing to add nutritional supplements to home-made diets. Recipes are available in books such as *Vegetarian Cats & Dogs* (Peden, 1999) and *Obligate Carnivore* (Gillen, 2003), and from suppliers.

Considering the evidence

In 2006 the first study of the health of a population of long-term vegetarian cats (most, in fact, were vegan), was published in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* – one of the world’s leading veterinary journals. Most were clinically healthy, barring minor

Vegan cat biscuits

9 1/2 cups of whole wheat flour

3 cups of water

1 cup Nutri-Yeast

1 1/2 tablespoons salt

1 tablespoon garlic powder

Vegan feline nutritional supplement in amount recommended by manufacturer

Mix all of the ingredients together.

Knead until you create a dough. Roll out to 3mm thickness. You can use dog bone cookie cutters or any shape if you want. Bake for ca. 15 min in a preheated 350°F oven. Once they are ready, leave them either in the oven, or on a rack overnight to ensure they become dry and hard.

Source: Rhoads A. *Vegan Felines*

deficiencies in three cats who were fed partly on table scraps.

Similarly, a 1994 study of a population of vegan (65%) and vegetarian (35%) dogs found the vast majority to be in good to excellent health, particularly in lifetime vegans or vegetarians.

Based on these large-scale studies and numerous additional reported cases, nutritionally-sound vegan or vegetarian companion animal diets appear to be associated with the following health benefits: increased overall health and vitality, decreased incidences of cancer, infections, hypothyroidism (an important hormonal disease), ectoparasites (fleas, ticks, lice and mites), improved coat condition, allergy control, weight control, arthritis regression, diabetes regression and cataract resolution.

Safeguarding health

Correct use of a complete and balanced nutritional supplement or complete diet is essential to prevent the nutritional diseases that will otherwise eventually occur, if certain dietary nutrients are deficient.

Changing to a vegan diet may also result in urinary alkalisation, which can increase the risk of urinary stones and blockages, especially in male cats. These can be life-threatening. Hence, regular monitoring of the urine acidity of both sexes of cats and dogs is essential, perhaps fortnightly during any dietary transition, and at least every three months after stabilisation. Urine can be collected from dogs using containers such as foil baking trays, and from cats using non-absorbent plastic cat litter available from veterinarians. pH (acidity) test strips are also available from veterinarians, although pH metres provide the most accurate results. The pH of cat and dog urine is

normally 6.0-7.5.

Conclusions

Perhaps one day you'll be the first to spot a house-cat chasing tuna whilst floating along in that tropical island vacation your boss surely owes you. Perhaps you'll be the first to acquire hard evidence that it's natural for cats and dogs to eat fish, or any of the other incongruous and potentially hazardous ingredients in meat-based pet foods. Until then, however, you might want to consider a nutritionally-sound vegan alternative. This would maximise the chances of good health and longevity for not only your cat or dog, but also, of course, our frequently mistreated, so-called 'food' animals! Tips on transitioning to vegan diets are available at www.vegepets.info.

Taken from Lifescape 2008, #24, www.lifescapemag.com

Vegetarian homemade catfood?

For meateaters the thought of feeding cats a semi-meat diet is absurd. But shop-bought catfood is not natural. Even so-called 'quality based' dry feed has grains as the main ingredient. (Oddly my cats seem to like it!)

Cats can be fed a vegan, vegetarian or semi-vegetarian diet. Homemade is better than shop-bought and hopefully readers will share their favourite recipes! There are many possibilities as long as the diet is sensible. Boiled rice is suitable to bulk out fish, eggs and leftover meat. (If there is no leftover meat in your household, ask a neighbour!)

I found the text below on the web and it shows how people answer someone who would like to feed their cats homemade food.

Knut Caspari

Question: I have two adult cats. I have recently become a vegetarian and want my cats to do the same. I know cats are naturally carnivores so I'm not taking meat out of their diet totally. I just want them to be vegetarian about halfway. (Dairy and egg is okay.) I was wondering if there was any homemade vegetarian cat treats or food that I could make for them.

Answers:

Cats are 100% carnivore. They would never, ever eat anything but whole prey animals and some grass occasionally as an emetic in the wild.

You can become vegetarian without it

killing you. If you are careful with it, it may not adversely affect your health. HOWEVER, you cannot force your cats to do that and still be a decent, humane pet owner.

How would you react if I told you I made my rabbit live on hamburger? You would freak out because it's not natural for a rabbit to consume anything but vegetation. It is also not natural or healthy at all for a cat to consume what it cannot efficiently use or digest.

What I suggest you do is feed your cats a quality meat based cat food. Keep them for life as that's the responsible thing to do. Then, when your cats pass on after a long healthy life of eating an appropriate diet, THEN get a vegetarian pet like a rabbit.

It is not ethical to force any aspect of your diet restrictions on your pets when it goes against their nature. You had the cats before you decided on this change. Continue to feed them appropriately and just never get another carnivorous pet if you refuse to feed them a species appropriate diet... Making a cat vegetarian is just as cruel as any of the fur farms, lab testing or whatever else you're signing petitions against today...

Nature made cats to be obligate carnivores. They cannot survive on a diet that's not sufficient in meat. We as humans can choose to be vegetarians, but cats cannot. By forcing them to eat even a half-way vegetarian diet, you're risking their health. What is healthy for us humans is not necessarily good for our cats. Cats

thrive on an all-meat diet, they do not need (or can they properly digest) grains.

Nature made both prey and predator, and carnivore, herbivore, and omnivore.

Cats can not go to a vegan or vegetarian diet. They are obligate carnivores, without the meat they get deficiencies and develop disease. Dogs eat far more vegetable matter and can be converted to vegetarian but trying to do that to a cat would only kill it slowly.

Treats are one thing, but a full diet? Not unless you want your cats to die.

Humans can choose to be vegetarian because we are omnivores. It is certainly a humane and healthy choice for you and the planet. Cats have evolved to get their nutrition from meat and you are doing them a disservice to have them follow in your footsteps. They can derive no nutritional benefit from plant material.

Sorry to break it to u but cats can not be vegetarians! It will kill them, no doubt! Many people do not know this but cats are allergic to dairy! When feeding a cat milk it should always be diluted 50/50 with water! Never 100% milk... never!

Humans, and even dogs to some degree, can survive on a vegetarian diet, but there is no way a cat can.

Living the high life!



Talking about living the high life is probably not suitable when a lot of people are losing their jobs and in some cases also their homes...

Text and photos: Øystein Larsen

But I happen to build small bothies as a hobby. They do not cost me much, as I build them on land without the owner's knowledge. So you do not need to be rich to "own" a second home. But you do need to find a secluded spot far from a road!

Whilst one should not build on land belonging to others, the fact that these owners haven't even noticed my bothies shows they have more than they need. Also, since I follow these principles then I believe it is OK:

- I leave the bothies unlocked.
- The bothies are small: from 3 to 6 m².
- I use mostly natural materials that I find on the site. Natural stone and sod roofs.
- They are far from the nearest roads, so materials have to be carried to the building plots.
- The bothies are designed to merge with their surroundings.

I have built the bothies so they are not easy to find. I do not wish to have loads of guests, only those who will treat the bothies with respect. People who do stumble over them, tend to leave them the way they found them. The bothies are equipped with a radio, candlesticks and some food, so guests can feed themselves and check the weather forecast (which is





very important in the Norwegian mountains).

Any materials not available onsite I find in skips or at the local dump. Because I often use small bits I can use what other people throw away. Anything that is saved from landfill, can only be a plus!

Looking at the photos you might think: "This is easy. There are loads of stones here!" But it is not so easy to find suitable stones to build with. They need to be pretty, easy to lift, and have the right shape too!

It is hard work building the bothies, but very satisfying. When you've carried materials on your back for miles uphill, it is nice to arrive at the building site and place them into the structure.

To make a bothy comfortable and wind-tight up in the open surroundings of the mountain is not easy. The walls are thick, but the wind still finds its way in. I have therefore tried to find spots that are sheltered from the prevailing wind.



The photos here show the latest bothy I have built. It is 1300 meters above sea level and made with local stone. Any other material has to be carried the three hours it takes to walk there – which makes it easy to "do without...!"

To create a building on someone else's property is perhaps not to be encouraged, but the bothies I have built are not a problem to the landowners. They have many thousands of acres, far too much to keep an eye on. When these bothies fall out of use, they will simply go back to nature.

Chocolate review

Organica sent two bars of chocolate to Harry Mather to review in Vegan Views. They were mentioned in the 'Chocolate Spot' in Vegan Views 116, but Harry is not a fan of chocolate, so he passed the bars on to John and Ziggy, two vegans who were more than willing to try them out.

Drawing: George Hughes

Both bars were 100g, and were organic, vegan, gluten free, and non-GM. The Swiss Dark



As she tasted the milk chocolate residue on his lips, she knew it was going to be their last kiss. Unless he changed his ways and became a **vegan**.

Chocolate bar with Cranberries was also Fair Trade.

Dark Chocolate bar with Cranberries

There was agreement from both reviewers. "Nice, dark but not too bitter; luxurious chocolate. Nicely balanced flavours. The cranberries were chopped up fairly small, which was considered good. Adding cranberries to chocolate was thought to be a very good idea."

Chocolate with Raisins and Almonds

Very sweet – too sweet for John, who only tried a bit and left the rest to Ziggy. It was well liked by Ziggy who has a sweet tooth. She very much liked the tiny bits of raisins and almonds, which again were chopped up fairly small. Organica make other bars in the 'Couverture' range which she has tried before, and likes a great deal.

Compared to other chocolates?

John and Ziggy no longer eat Green and Blacks chocolate since this brand is now owned by Cadbury. From what they recall, they preferred the Organica chocolate to Green and Blacks since Organica chocolates have nuts and berries that are chopped smaller. Neither are fans of Plamil Chocolates – even though Plamil have the advantage of not containing



Unfortunately, our reviewers were so keen to try the chocolate that they forgot that they were supposed to photograph the bars intact first. Above is what remained of the wrappers post-review.

traces of dairy since no dairy is used in the Plamil factory, they don't like the texture since they find it too grainy. They are both fans of Divine 70% Dark Chocolate and also Divine Mint Dark Chocolate (both fair trade but unfortunately not organic). They thought that the two Organica chocolates were different, but on a par with the Divine bars.

Plant trees in Africa...

... and do not send goats!

When I have been advocating the ecological benefits of a vegetarian diet, I have often come across the comment: Ah, but there are regions in the world where people can only subsist by pasturing animals on vegetation that cannot feed humans.

Text: Harry Mather

There are certain areas, the Arctic Circle comes to mind, where certainly humans cannot survive without exploiting the animals. These cannot be used as models for further development. The Inuits need to fish and the Samis of Lapland live in symbiosis with reindeer. But this can only sustain sparse populations. In fact those populations are declining as young people find better opportunities in more prosperous regions.

Until now, I accepted as fact that in many areas, exploitation of animals was inevitable, but recently facts have impinged on my mind and I now see that not only can these areas provide economical nutrition without relying on animals, but on the contrary, the herds of animals are destructive of the environment and adding to desertification.

In the days of Ancient Rome, the areas of Africa opposite Italy were considered as the breadbasket of Rome, a great provider of grain in areas that are now desert marked only with the ruins of ancient monuments of long forgotten cities. It is reputed that it was the introduction of goats, who will eat up every possible bit of greenery they can get their tongues round, that turned these areas into sandy deserts. It might have been over intensive agriculture either of grains or animals, whatever the cause there is no reason to assume that modern practices cannot help restore fertility to the land.

However, it was hearing about what is being done on the Southern edge of the Sahara that made me rethink the concept of dependence on animals in these areas. Nomads pasture their animals till the vegetation is exhausted and then move on to another area. The vegetation in the abandoned area, if left alone, can eventually regenerate and in due course become available again. It became obvious to me that the more we support

this system by “sending a goat to Africa” and increase the nomadic population, the more we increase the desert area South of the Sahara. We need to stop supporting current practices which may be accepted as traditional, but which harm the global environment and only perpetuate local poverty. Kindness and charity oblige us to consider whether there are not more effective ways of overcoming world poverty and find better ways of helping people to pull themselves out of the present cycles of deprivation.

I then remembered how Richard St. Barbe Baker, ‘The Man of the Trees’, proposed to reclaim the Sahara (book – Sahara Conquest). He told us that planting trees on the edge of the Sahara was necessary to check the encroaching desert and in a broadcast long ago, he had invited people to send him peach stones so that they could be planted on the edge of the desert.

But what drew my attention to a possible solution to this problem was learning about the charity *Tree Aid* that is actually helping to plant trees on the edge of deserts, e.g. in Burkino Faso and Ethiopia, and successfully putting tree planting into practice.

The trees planted are most useful to the local economy. There is a special focus on medicinal trees; often the only form of healthcare available. Trees can provide people with nutrition and also incomes. Among the trees they plant are shea, neem, mango and baobab. Shea nuts, for instance, are highly prized by cosmetic industries in the rich nations of the West. Jojoba nuts have also been used for the same purpose and who knows what other valuable products can be found from trees and bushes once we apply our minds to problems. The spinach-like leaves of the baobab tree contain valuable amounts of beta carotene, zinc and vitamin C. The flowers of the voaga tree are rich in minerals and protein and can be dried for use in poor seasons. The seeds of the dawadawa are also rich in minerals and protein and the seeds can be saved against times of drought. In one project, women planted 24,000 trees. Planting trees empowers women. The income they provide is used to improve the health of their children and to pay for their schooling. Children are conscious of the value of education. They love maths and many aspire to become doctors. They are

sure that education will lead them to good paid jobs that will improve conditions in their villages. Education will make a great change for the future of their societies.

In contrast to the destructive action of animals, trees increase the areas of vegetation. Their roots grow down in search of water, this helps stabilise the ground and brings up water to the surface. The leaves send water vapour into the air, forming clouds that descend as refreshing rain that waters the plants below. Trees also give protection against desert winds that raise sand storms. When their leaves fall, they help fertilise the ground and this promotes the cultivation of vegetables. Planting leguminous pulses (beans and peas) will also help to fix nitrogen in the soil. Some trees, such as the nutritious carob tree are also leguminous. Gradually the desert can become an area of lush vegetation, supporting far more people than can be sustained in a nomadic system. Another cause of desertification is the need for firewood for cooking. More efficient stoves can reduce the need for firewood and eventually maturing trees will provide the firewood. The shrubs and small, struggling trees at present used for firewood will be allowed to grow and help combat desertification.

Africa seems to be the only region of the globe at this latitude that has a desert and it is a huge area. In contrast, other regions at this latitude are very fertile and support dense populations. One is led to think that some catastrophe or over-exploitation by humans created the desert and that human intelligence and diligence, given the will, can gradually restore fertility and provide for an expanding world population as well as combating the Climate Change that is the greatest threat eventually facing the continuation of human life on earth.

There is good evidence to support this view. Somewhere in the middle of the Sahara there are rocks, where explorers have found caves with paintings similar to those found in France and Spain of animals in prehistoric times. What is most significant is that the animals depicted are not like those of temperate zones but animals adapted to tropical climes, such as the hippopotamus. Whatever caused the disaster that overcame the Sahara, there is every hope that some sort of reclamation should be possible. We have the technical skills and organising ability to do it. All we lack is the will.

You may ask, who will plant all the trees? Firstly, the local people are ready to take up tree planting as they see the beneficial results. Secondly, there are hundreds of migrants from West Africa, paying all their savings and risking their lives to cross the Sahara to reach Libya; further risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean in overloaded boats in the hope of finding a low-paid job in Europe, if they are not turned back when discovered. Most end up in horrible overcrowded conditions in a tiny island between Tunisia and Sicily awaiting deportation. Could they not be satisfied by joining some project funded by Europeans (if only through NGOs) to help plant trees and eventually settle in the newly reclaimed lands in a climate they are more accustomed to. There are other migrants from the West Coast of Africa. They sail in equally precarious overcrowded boats to the Canary Islands, which being part of Spain provide access to Europe. Some have been rescued from drowning by the Canary Island police but are then sent back home. Some say they hope to try again. Thirdly, there could be many Europeans, say those on a gap year or others with a sense of adventure and a desire to see something more of the world. Huge funds are now spent on building armaments and supporting armies. A tiny fraction of these funds could pay for the projects or maybe some soldiers could be spared to help the projects as helping acclimatise them to foreign climates. Failing this, there are usually enough charitable persons to fund and even be enthused by these ideas.

Years ago oil explorers in the North of the Sahara had no problem in finding water to satisfy their needs. People currently erecting huge solar panels to produce energy for exports to Europe are said to be able to be growing plants in the shade provided by their constructions. More importantly, large reservoirs of water have been found in the southern desert of Libya, so large that four meter pipes are used to bring this water to the populous towns on the edge of the Mediterranean. Surely there must be other reservoirs of water elsewhere in the Sahara and searching for these would be of greater benefit to human existence, even more satisfying for human curiosity, than trying to ascertain whether there are any traces of water on Mars.

In 1984, when the media were exploring the famine in Ethiopia, the filming crew crossing desert areas were astonished to come across a luscious valley where sorghum, a grain more nutritious than millet or maize, was sustaining a prosperous community. Is it unlikely that

these sorts of fertile valleys could not be replicated in further regions? Boring wells in search of water might help develop these areas. Sending a cow to Africa would be a disaster, for cattle consume great quantities of water, even if you don't wash them.

But why confine our attention to the Sahara? Is this the only desert that might be reclaimed? The Arabian peninsula derives fabulous wealth from oil deposits. The huge wealth derived merely by claiming ownership of the

land is being used to develop attractions for the jaded playboys from the West. Dubai has spent its wealth by creating islands, opening super shopping malls and luxury hotels. Another small oil-rich state is hoping to open an art museum. Why can they not be using their resources to drill for water in their desert hinterland? They already have desalination plants to provide water. Could this be expanded to help fertilise the hinterland, and provide food for their peoples and the immigrants attracted by the economic expansion. On the contrary, they are reputed to be buying land in Sudan, by the Nile, to grow wheat to satisfy their needs. Could not they at least try to find a way of growing food nearer home?

I accept that there are huge areas of desert in the world and our geography books will illustrate these. But do we have to accept this situation without thinking of ways where these huge areas could be used to create a home for growing populations and to help solve the problem posed by the growth of human population explosion that we are unwilling to face up to. Life, whether of plants or humans, is heavily dependent on water. There are oases in the desert where water is drawn to the surface. We can hope that there is



That the photo shows a tree most readers will see, but what uses does it have for us humans? The tree grows in Africa. If you have the answer, let it be known.

enough water below the Sahara to help support vegetation and human life. I do feel, however, that breeding animals can only be counterproductive to reclaiming the desert. Propagating plant foods, especially on a Permaculture basis where plants react in symbiosis and need a minimum of effort in cultivation is the surest way forward. I would hope that lands reclaimed from the Sahara would not be used to maintain animals for food. Emerging economies such as China and India are turning to flesh foods because they see these as standard food in the rich nations, but the rich nations can only maintain their food culture by importing foodstuffs from poorer nations. So the process is dangerously unsustainable. Most parts of Africa rely on grains such as maize, millet or wheat. These are highly nutritious and health-sustaining.

The Pampas grasslands of South America are used to feed cattle for the steak loving Argentines. Modern strains of barley and wheat were developed at the dawn of civilisation in the Middle East from wild grasses, so there is every reason to suppose that nutritious grains could thrive in the grasslands of the Pampas.

One is led to wonder, whether these regions maintained a human population before the coming of the Spanish Conquistadores. There is still an aboriginal population in the Southern (and coldest) part of Patagonia. It is said that the people there go naked (or semi-naked) despite a temperature low enough to make Europeans shiver. What do they eat? Do they find any animals to eat? It would certainly appear that they cannot be greatly reliant on flesh foods. So what did the original inhabitants of the Pampas eat? Perhaps we will never know.

We could also turn our attention to the great destruction of the Amazon rainforests. This is mainly caused by the insistence of rich nations to breed more cattle and other farm animals than they can feed locally. Huge areas of forest are being cleared for cattle ranching on land which soon becomes infertile and more forest has to be cleared. Some areas are planted with soya beans, mostly used as cattle feed. There is little attempt to replant in the devastated areas, but Brazil Nut trees can be replanted there. In fact, it is said that Brazil Nut trees do not grow anywhere else. The rainforests must draw up large quantities of water through the deep rooted tall trees, so there must be water deep down below. A determined effort to regenerate the forest would seem a successful possibility. Reclaiming the deserts by replanting trees would in a few years be of huge significance in absorbing the Carbon Dioxide so threatening to Climate Change. Individual nations could be granted sections of desert or rainforest in which to plant trees and gain credits in whatever programs they have to reduce carbon emissions.

Nearer home, we are told that the hills of Wales are only suitable for sheep farming, but in the 1970s someone successfully planted nut trees there. Further, sheep were shown to increase the flooding of the river Severn. An area fenced off from sheep was shown to allow plants to grow which improved soil structure and stopped the compacting of the soil by the tramping feet of sheep. Southern Spain now has great areas devoted to supplying vegetables for parts of Europe less favoured by the sun. Unfortunately the region is arid and short of water. But we are told that in the days of Ancient Rome, Spain was densely wooded. There are still wide dried river beds in Southern Spain. Can we not suppose that a concerted tree planting project would not provide more rain in Spain?

A friend who had taken an assisted

passage to Western Australia around 1930, told me how he had been provided with a gun and an axe. I don't whether he ever used the gun, but in the few years he stayed there he was mostly employed felling trees to clear the land for farming. Should we not be trying to restore the balance of woodland in all parts of the world, including the UK?

My attention was at first drawn to the contrast between nomads and their animals that are contributing to desertification and contrasting them to the tree planters who are pushing back the edge of the Sahara. Thinking things over, some other ideas came to mind and I find a constructive picture developing that would lift crowds out of poverty, provide great areas with nutrition and redress the balance of nature which our present way of life has created.

Why has no one mentioned this before? Why are our finest brains and incredible sums we never voted for exercised in finding the particle that existed just after the Big Bang? This experiment failed and it will cost £40 million to get it repaired. I feel like shouting: why don't you put a little effort into looking to our future instead of the incredibly distant past? Others, equally brainy ones, are spending vast sums and their energy in trying to find out whether there is water on Mars. Can not they be persuaded to spend some time surveying the water on earth and benefit humanity?

I am sure they are animated by curiosity – scientific curiosity. Curiosity about the possibility of making this earth suitable for humans. A few years ago, curiosity was centred on how humans might survive on the moon. They constructed a huge bubble in which they recreated the essentials to sustain human life including the necessary atmosphere and plants. What happened? The people who lived in Geosphere II were bored. Their life seemed pointless and they were delighted to get out of this artificial life and return to the real world.

How much more fun; how much more exciting; how much more rewarding, to watch the desert being reclaimed and allowed to blossom. How much more exciting to replant trees in the devastated Amazon regions and see what happens there. Do our scientists have their heads so stuck in the clouds that they cannot be curious and become excited about building a future for the earth they live on and which sustains them?

I think it was Bernard Shaw who said, "You think and you ask why? I dream and I ask why not?" I don't think that my ideas are those of a vain dreamer. I think they are an exciting project. Maybe not every

detail I have mentioned is completely accurate, but I feel certain that the overall picture is correct and should be taken up in practice.

But you may, with me, despair that this plan will ever be taken seriously by those with the power to bring it to reality. Do not despair. You can join me in making a small difference by supporting the charity *Tree aid*. They have already proved that trees will reclaim the desert and improve the lives of the local people. The further this project is developed, the more difficult it will be to ignore it.

A suggestion comes to mind. Why not advertise for people to volunteer for creating a settlement on the moon? About a hundred of the volunteers would be told that they must first be tested by proving how they would fare on a powdery soil short of water as a test their endurance and ability to cooperate with others. They would then be sent to the Sahara to plant trees, with some shelter from the harsh conditions. They might even be provided with some boring equipment to drill for water.

There is another way in which plants considered unsuitable for human consumption can be turned into a nutritious food and a supplement for the poor suffering from poor nutrition.

It was developed by the respected plant breeder N.W. Pirie at Rothamsted Experimental Station. This simple process uses a small centrifuge (such as could be found in many kitchens) to extract a liquid from leaves (or specially grown crops like alfalfa-Lucerne). The juice is then allowed to ferment and forms a paste that can be baked as a cake or used in other forms. This has been introduced to small communities in India and South America where mothers have enthusiastically fed it to their children and seen the great benefit to their children's health. Since food matters are traditionally the concern of women, it also promotes the status of women in the communities by earning them cash. (Men tend to spend their cash on beer.) This system is simple and cheap, but it also lacks the glamour of such ideas as GM crops and there is no profitability in it for Western businessmen, so it goes unsupported and unrecognised; Its importance, however, must not be overlooked and should be made widely available...

But this needs a whole article to itself. For more info, visit: www.treeaid.org.uk. Address: *TreeAid, Brunswick Court, Brunswick Square, Bristol BS2 8PE*.

The Holiday Season?

Well, doesn't just about everybody seem to be talking about holidays at this time of year? But consider this: Just who is it a holiday for? People go on holiday to 'live it up', burning the midnight oil and more; they eat too much; they eat unhealthy foods and in poor combinations; they get less sleep; they burn themselves in the sun; they argue more with their spouses and children and get more angry; they spend more of their hard-earned money than they can afford, etc. Not to mention all the vaccinations they endure beforehand.

*Text: Dr Gina Shaw, MA AIYS (Dip. Irid.)
Drawing: George Hughes*

Of course, there are the positive sides, but often not for our greatest possession – our own wonderful, self-healing organism! And so I bring this article into fruition to remind people to take more care of their bodies. Why not think about giving your body a true holiday? The best holiday for a toxic body is always to fast.

What is a Fast?

Fasting literally means to abstain from. Fasting, in its true sense, means abstaining from food. Water is always a necessity to life and must always be consumed whether fasting or not, in some form or another. We can, of course, secure good quality distilled water from raw, ripe fruits. A true fast is when we take into our bodies only pure water – it means that our bodies can have a complete physiological rest. Away from all the pressures of life, we can rest in bed and allow superior healing to take place on all levels. We rest ourselves mentally, physically, physiologically and emotionally. This can only be obtained in a stress-free and peaceful environment. A place far away from noise, constant traffic, noisy neighbours, relatives or the like, in a pressure-free environment. A competent supervisor must always be obtained for a fast of longer than 1.5 days duration. This is imperative as various bodily activities must be monitored during a fast. (A note of caution: There have been people in the past who have taken it upon themselves to fast on their own and have managed to kill themselves through lack of bodily knowledge! Do not attempt to fast yourself unless you are very skilled and experienced in this process and are properly trained in its supervision, and even then it would be advisable also to

have somebody on hand should any emergencies arise.)

Remember: There is no product out there; no food, drink or remedy, including so-called natural remedies, which can give you a helping hand back to health. It is only your body which knows how to do this and will lead the way forward under favourable conditions.

A proper and worthwhile fast necessitates careful planning of course. A one day fast is never enough for a toxic body, filled up with toxins from years of poor eating habits. Of course, so-called juice fasting and fruit fasting are misnomers, though remaining only on fruits and juices for a short period of time does have some benefits and is sometimes more practical than a complete bed rest and 'water fast'.

Indications for Fasting

The following are a few questions which may indicate your need to fast:

1. Do you wake up feeling tired in the mornings?
2. Do you have problems digesting raw, natural foods?
3. Does eating leave you feeling tired?
4. Is your skin spotty, dry, over-oily or otherwise not in perfect condition?
5. Do you often have a runny nose or a cough?
6. Do you have bad breath?
7. Are your bowel movements often smelling or too runny?
8. Do you feel depressed?
9. Have you been getting a lot of headaches just lately? (This could mean other things, apart from internal toxicity)
10. Do you feel uncomfortable when you miss a meal?
11. Are your bowel movements infrequent or constipated?
12. Do you have acute or chronic disease of any kind?
13. Do you have an important decision to make in your life but feel unable to do so? (Fasting is an amazing way of clearing our heads and allowing us more clarity of thought.)
14. Are you overweight or even underweight?

Answering yes to more than one of these questions does indicate that a fast may be in order.

What does the Body do During a Fast?
During a fast, our body takes the

opportunity to catch up on the elimination of toxic debris which may have accumulated in different parts of our body. It will heal and repair, it will eliminate plaque material from the intestines, rid itself of blood clots, it will heal bodily organs, it will generally catch up on its house-cleaning. In fact, there is no end to what a body can do during a fast! Often, after a fast, a person will feel very invigorated and 'high' – quite euphoric in fact. The body will take every opportunity to gear itself toward health on every level, it just needs the right conditions to do so!

What Does Fasting Help Heal?

Fasting will help to alleviate and heal most diseases and health conditions, but amongst those conditions which are most receptive to fasting are most digestive disorders including colitis, gastritis, ileitis (Crohn's disease), ulcerative colitis, respiratory disorders, skin conditions and diseases, some heart diseases, some cancers, some kidney and liver disorders, etc. In fact, there is hardly a disease which fasting can't help but improve!

Is Fasting a New Thing?

No, absolutely not! Fasting has been going on for many thousands of years. It was reported that Jesus himself believed very much in fasting and aided in the fasting of others. Even those before him were reported to have fasted. Hygienic practitioners have used fasting as a means of aiding the body healing process for hundreds of years. Animals, in nature, will instinctively fast when they are not feeling well.

Medical Disclaimer: Please note that Dr Gina Shaw is not a medical doctor, but is a Doctor of Complementary Medicine, a qualified health and nutrition consultant, and an iridologist and fasting supervisor. And only claims to aid in a client's healing process by teaching them to provide the conditions for health to occur or re-occur. Re-education is often all it takes for our own body to reverse ill-health, be it in the form of obesity, low energy levels, hypertension, depression, skin problems, or any other acute or degenerative disease.



Vegan-organic farming in the Czech Republic

Mrkev is a vegan-organic farm in the Czech Republic. It is run by a group of young farmers who took over the run-down farm in 2002. The farm did not have running water or electricity and still does not have it. Nor do they have a tractor or a car, but that does not stop them from growing fruit, vegetables and herbs.

Text: Steven Logan

Photos: Stian Solheim

They farm by hand and build and make repairs with hand tools, opting for an intimate connection with not just the end product, but the work process itself. For example, they have built a new roof and floor for the attic of their house – 100m², all by hand. They hand planed the floor boards smooth enough so they can walk on them barefoot.

“We use a lot of hand tools and we sharpen them and we break them and then we learn to fix them. We start to understand the essence of the tools,” says Sima, who, along with Katka, started the farm.

“We have to learn a lot of different crafts to be able to do all the simple things. The value of learning all of these things is much greater than the money I save on not using the chainsaw.”

Thus, their desire to be without power tools is not only about saving energy (which they do not have, anyway), but about a connection with and a devotion of one’s energy to processes by which houses get built and plants grow.

“I prefer to spend more of my own energy for the plants,” says Katka. The end result might not be as “big or shiny” as the supermarket variety, but the quality can be tasted.

Sima calls the farm a kind of experimental institute where when something fails it is not thought of as a failure, but something interesting. *“I am not looking for fast results; no one here is.”*

When something takes a lot of one’s

energy, then one is inevitably more deliberate about how that energy is spent. For example, because they must travel to get drinking water they use the water more wisely. This is also the case for the non-potable water from the farm well that must be pumped by hand.

And if someone comes to visit the farm with a machine of some kind, such as a car, the philosophy stays the same. *“[It is] not that we try to use it as much as possible,”* says Katka, *“but we try to use it for more reasons at the same time. So if they come and they want to go to the swimming pool with [a couple of] kids, then we fill up the car with bottles and they get water from the spring, which is not so close [to here] and they can pick up some cherries. The car is not the problem; it is the way that it is used.”*

With the building of the new section of the house and the transporting of large materials, Mrkev tries to be strategic about the most effective means of transportation.

If it is feasible, says Katka, we connect the hand cart with some string to a bike and get small amounts of material from the nearby town.

“We have been taking tubes, cement, hundreds of litres of water, and wooden materials like planks with normal bikes,” says Sima.

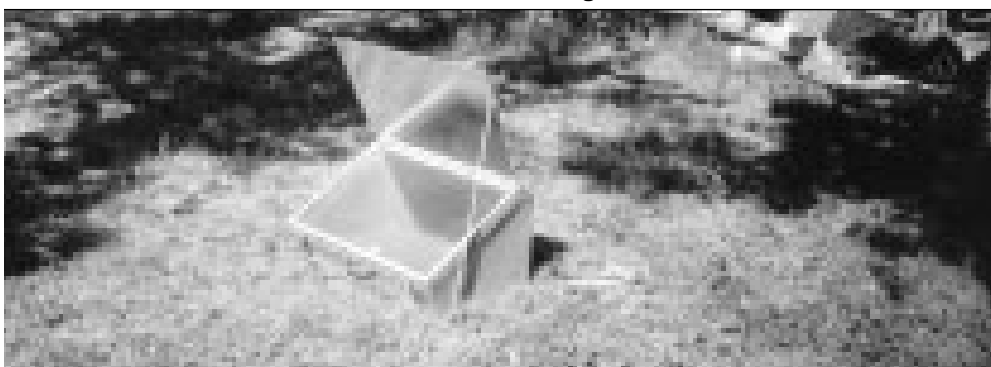
“The normal bicycle with a wagon [tied behind] and which is not meant for bicycles, can take 100 kg without any big problems.”

“I try to go as far as possible,” explains Sima. *“We would never be able to transport [logs] without a tractor, so we use a tractor, but if there was another sensible way, we would use it. And if I need two sacks of cement I go by bike; if I need fifteen I order a truck.”* (Sima later remarks that if we, as a society, did not keep animals, we could put forests on 90% of the farming land and then we would not have to use tractors to get wood because it would grow just behind our yards.)

The sun oven below works by moving it with the sun. On overcast days the food often has to be finished off on the woodburning kitchen stove.



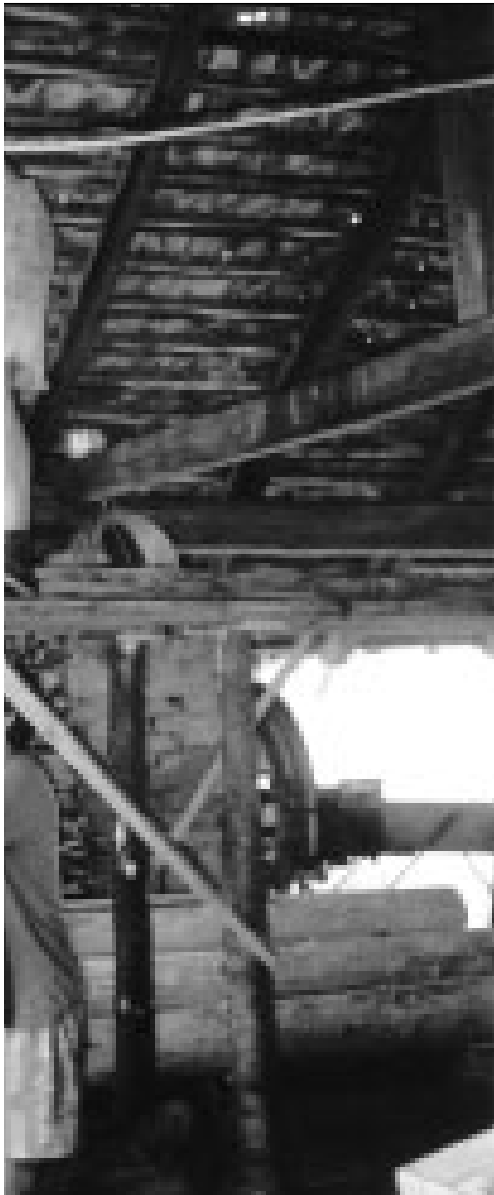
Above: The farm house on Mrkev. The front Under: Two of the residents sawing up logs



ch Republic



and some of the windows are homemade. planks.



The 'washing machine' at Mrkev. An old washing machine was taken apart and everything except for the drum was dismantled. Water and soap is poured in at the top and the water is emptied with a water hose.

Mrkev's farmers not only devote their energy to life on the farm, but also to defending their farming methods and lifestyle to various people, particularly when it comes to pesticide use. Every year locals tell them that they cannot grow garlic without spraying it, but every year they grow it without. "They don't even really believe us... they very often say you have to dip the clove in chemicals before you put it in the ground and then you have to spray it, but [their garlic] still rots," says Sima.

Discussions about difficulties with local acceptance of vegan-organic growing methods quickly turned to problems further off, in cities like Prague. Without a car, transporting fruit and vegetables to markets in nearby cities can be difficult and costly.

In order to sustain themselves financially on the farm, says Katka, they would like to start selling their garlic or fresh fruit in Prague, but the transport factor is a major difficulty: "The price that we would get for it wouldn't cover the transport."

First of all, says Katka, it takes two or three hours to get there by train. Secondly, it needs to be collected at the station. And

if the farmers want to sell something in a shop, they have to go and physically take it there.

Even if there is someone to pick up the vegetables from the train station, it can be quite expensive. "If it's a bag up to 50 kg then it would be more expensive than a ticket to Prague, so it would be easier if I bought the ticket and went with 100 kg with me as luggage, but it is wasting one person who should be on the farm."

Bypassing the shops altogether would eliminate this problem of pick-up. "If we find friends in the town that we want to sell [to] and are interested in the whole idea, [maybe they can] go to the station and take it into the shop. Or better, they don't bring it to the shop [and instead] they distribute it to the other people they know who will like it."

"Or, even sell it on the market," adds Sima. "I don't think it is a problem to fetch shipments with a transport bike from the train station and deliver them; it would be easier and faster than with a car. We were originally interested in finding a person in Prague who is into bicycle transport and who wants to deal with our organic vegetables, and not just ours, but others."

Text from *Carbusters #21* (carbusters.org)

Below you see the path to the toilet. It is not a traditional outhouse, as the users squat over planks that are moved around so the humanure is evenly distributed. (It is better for the body to squat rather than sit, or so residents of Mrkev claim.) Some guests are a little uneasy about the arrangement as the planks are loose, but no one has had an unfortunate accident yet.



Build a Wood-fired Earth Oven

Did you make mud pies when you were a kid? Here's an outdoor oven as easy to make as mud pies, that works as well as a custom-built masonry or ceramic model. Cost? Next to nothing. Material? The earth under your feet – one of the best building materials on the planet. The skills you need are just the ones you were born with.

Text: Kiko Denzer

Photos: Knut Caspari

The oven described here is a simple one, not unlike the first ovens that were built thousands of years ago by our ancestors on many continents. Further on, there's info on how to build an insulated version that will hold heat much longer, and requires less cutting of precious wood fuel.

Why earth oven bread?

A conventional gas or electric oven bakes bread with a lot of hot air, or convection. An earthen oven uses conduction, convection and radiation, providing faster, more thorough baking and better flavour. Plus, building and cooking in a traditional earthen oven builds community in a way that's tried and true: honest labour, real appetites, real fire, and real food – all of which add up to real fellowship and community. If the hearth is the heart of the home, the communal oven is the focus for a whole community (*focus* comes from the Latin word for *fire*).

Here's how it works: Build a fire in the hollow earthen dome. The dense walls soak up heat for two to three hours, after which the oven's interior reaches about 700 degrees. Remove coals, sweep the oven floor, and let the temperature stabilize and even decline a bit. Slide your loaves onto the oven's hot floor.

Heat is conducted immediately from floor to loaf, creating a higher, airier loaf (an effect called "oven spring"). The intense heat drives moisture from the crust, making it crisp and filling the oven with steam.

Convection then disperses that superheated steam, caramelizing sugars in the crust and creating the unique flavor and texture of authentic hearthbaked bread.

The oven walls radiate heat equally throughout the oven – no hot or cold spots – so many loaves bake as thoroughly as one.



Kiko Denzer digging for suitable earth at the back of Melmerby Bakery.

An earthen oven holds heat for hours, so after the bread (or pizza) is done, you can cook anything: vegetables, casseroles, soups, cookies, cakes, pies, or puddings. And when the oven is too cool to cook (usually after several hours – more if you build the insulated version), you can use the remaining heat to dry the wood for your next fire.

Get ready

Collect shovel, wheelbarrow and/or buckets, a tape measure, scraps of lumber, a woven plastic tarp and kitchen utensils for sculpting.

Then, prepare a base. If you're going to use the oven a lot, you'll want the oven floor at waist-height. Use what you have – rocks, broken-up concrete, logs, old metal barrels or even sawhorses. If you don't mind working low, build on the ground.

The floor

A twenty inch wide floor is a good size for a first, small oven: set a floor of standard fire bricks on a smooth, tamped, level bed, 4 to 6 inches deep (sand is easy; better is a mix of sand and clay, as described below). Used bricks should be free of old mortar. Set the first one level and solid. Hold the next brick level and just above the bed; gently kiss its long side to the long side of the previous one. Set it down flat and firm. Don't wiggle it. If one brick stands up a bit proud, tap it down to make it flush with the rest.

Make a form

Shape a pile of moist sand on the floor bricks. (This can be any kind of sand, or even loose topsoil. The form will be covered with your mud mix, then removed

to form the oven's interior.) Make the form 12-16 inches high (higher if you want a high door; lower if you can get by with a lower door). The height of the door will be 63 percent (0.63) of the height of the sand form, so write down the height of your form!

Mix mud

Good oven building soil is usually found below the topsoil. It should contain clay which, like cement, holds things together. Use it straight out of the ground or mix it with sand. If you have nowhere to dig, look for construction sites, road cuts or river banks. Clay subsoil should feel

Building an earth oven in Norway.





3 stages in building an earth-oven. 1. Put newspaper on the sand form. 2. Put earth on the form. 3. Cut out the door.

sticky, slippery and a bit greasy (in contrast, silt and organic matter feel floury and crumbly). Wet, you should be able to roll it into snakelike ropes and bend it without cracking. The mix is usually one part clay subsoil and anywhere from one to three parts sharp sand (also known as builders or masonry sand); pure clay subsoil also works, but tends to shrink and crack more. Make a test brick or two by mixing sand and soil. Dried, the bricks should be dense and hard with few or no cracks.

A tarp makes mixing mud easier on your back (6x8-foot minimum; bigger is easier). To mix, two people should hold opposite corners of the tarp and roll, but not lift, the mix from side to side. You also can stomp the mud while wearing boots but it's best to mix with your bare hands and feet (be sure it's free of sharp debris).

Add water a little at a time, then jump in and do the twist, breaking up the clay and mashing the sand into it. Dance until it starts to clump like dough for piecrust.

Pack a hard ball (50 to 100 pats), and drop it from chest height. It should hold together. If it doesn't, add a little water. If it's too wet, add dry mix. Or you can continue and just allow more drying time, whichever is easier to do.

Build!

Cover your sand form with sheets of wet newspaper to keep the mud walls from sticking to the sand form, smoothing the sheets flat. Next, cover it with a layer of mud 3 to 4 inches thick. To maintain an even thickness, use the width of your hand as a gauge, maintain a clean, square edge on the layer as it arches up and over the form, and angle the top of the mud layer inwards as you go up. Press the mud against itself, not against the sand form,

and don't worry about the doorway, you'll cut that out later.

When it's done, take a flat board and pack the material until it sits solidly against the form. If it sticks to the board, your mix may have been a bit damp and will need more drying time before you pull the sand form. After the first layer dries, you can add more layers and a fine finish plaster if you want.

Remove the form

If your sand dome was 16 inches high, your doorway should be 63 percent of the height, or about 10 inches. The doorway's width should be one-third to one-half of the oven's inner diameter. Scratch a line in the mud where the door will be, cut a hand-sized hole to start and dig a narrow channel into the form.

Before you remove the sand form, the mud walls should be dry enough to resist denting when you poke your finger into them. If your finger easily dents the mud, wait and let the mud get leather-hard. (This can take days or weeks depending on the weather.)

Then, carve out the rest of the door and dig out the rest of the sand form. Remember to stop when you hit the newspaper layer. Refine the doorway so it's smooth and even and so the doorway's inner edge is the right height. Use a spoon, or smooth piece of wood or stone, to rub, integrate and polish the material until it seems right.

Make it beautiful

Basic finishing can be done by rubbing the oven's exterior smooth with a chunk of milled lumber, a metal trowel or spoon, or a polished rock. More complex shapes and finishing require more mud material with additions like straw, manure, lime and

earthen pigments. Make your oven into a sculpture, a hemispherical mural, a bench or a whole building, or keep it simple and abstract.

A rain-soaked oven takes a long time to heat up, so build a roof – as simple or complex as you choose – to protect your oven from the weather. But do not cover the oven with paint or cement! An earthen oven needs to breathe – trapped moisture will destroy it.

Make the door

The door doesn't need to fit perfectly. In the southwest, bakers just lean a big plank against the opening. You might want to make one that fits in the hole, but if the fit is rough, just drape it with a wet cloth, which also keeps the door from charring and adds moisture for baking. (You also can soak the door in water.)

Firing the oven

Build a fire in the oven; the smoke will come out the door opening. When the oven is fully dry and has been fired for two to three hours, you'll notice that the black soot on the inside of the dome has disappeared; that's a sign that the oven is ready to use. Rake out the coals and begin baking, putting the door in place to hold in the heat.

Getting the most out of your oven

Many people build earth ovens for the crisp bread crust and chewy crumb texture that only high-temperature, retained-heat ovens can provide. But wood-fired ovens go far beyond bread, and are capable of roasting, broiling, steaming or braising anything you like to eat.

After one oven-building workshop,

some new owners wrote this note: "Roasted sweet potatoes, zucchini and onions in a cumin-orange juice glaze. Baked apples, then roasted eggplant, squash and leeks, made rosemary polenta and peach pie. This morning: cinnamon rolls."

Bearing in mind the time, effort and firewood you put into your oven, you'll want to get the most out of it. Awareness, attention and experience will be your best teachers.

With practice, you'll get a reliable feel for the right temperatures. For example, I know the oven is ready for sourdough bread baking (400 degrees to 450 degrees) when I can hold a closed fist in the oven for a full eight seconds, or when a handful of flour tossed on the oven's floor takes 10 to 20 seconds to turn dark brown or black. Thermometers are OK too, but a very hot oven will destroy a typical oven thermometer that only goes up to 500 degrees.

Here are specific examples from our own mud-oven feasts, to give you a brief idea and, we hope, inspiration for what a well-fired oven can cook up. They are in roughly the order you'd bake them, though in an average-size oven (plus or minus 27 inches in diameter), you're unlikely to get all this food from one bake. You might need to add a bit more fire, unless your oven is extra-thick and well-insulated:

One to three-minute pizza with oven-roasted vegetables (winter roots or a summer cacophony of tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and zucchini) at 600 to 700 degrees. This is the highest heat of the oven, and will only last long enough for one or two pizzas, unless you keep a small flame in the oven to insure heat for the top of the pizza.

Sourdough bread, croissants, raisin yeast-bread, sticky rolls. Dried apples and Asian pears, roasted in gingerwine sauce. Cake, cookies, braised vegetables, baked parsnips and potatoes with rosemary and garlic. Baked beans or soups, rice pudding (which can be left to cook overnight), steamed whole-grain sprouted rye bread, steamed Christmas pudding or fruitcake, oatmeal for tomorrow's breakfast. If your oven is big enough, you could try cooking a flan on top of a covered tray of steaming water to provide a Bain-Marie (water-bath). And finally, when the oven is too cool to cook, but still warm, you can incubate yogurt, dry herbs or fruit, or dry your next load of firewood, which will help to make your next oven-firing faster and more efficient.

If the oven floor seems too hot



Wood fired oven in a Belgium pizza-restaurant. Made with bricks, but the same principle as for earth-ovens.

compared to the rest of the oven, place an overturned baking tray on the floor to trap a layer of insulating air and keep pan bottoms from burning. Remember, burnt offerings are part of the process. As you experiment, you'll get used to the vagaries of your own oven and timing. Start with less demanding, wet dishes like soups, stews and braised vegetables, which all cook wonderfully in mud ovens. Keep a lid on the pot to keep moisture in. Keep a pan under pies to catch the overflow and keep sticky sugars out of your bricks.

Once you have a sense of how well your oven holds heat with what degree of firing, it's easy to move on to pies and cakes.

Things that take a long time in your regular oven may cook faster in an earth oven. At a restaurant where I built an oven, the chef tested it with a whole eggplant. When he went to turn it after a few minutes, he was surprised to find it completely cooked. ("Faster than a frickin' microwave!" he said.) Bread that takes 35 minutes at 450 degrees also will

cook at 350 degrees, or even 250 degrees, but will take more time to get done. (Bread is considered cooked when the internal temperature reaches 195 degrees to 200 degrees.)

On making the most of wood fuel

I became particularly concerned about this issue after seeing some reports from builders making ovens in Africa, where wood is scarce and the where loss of vegetation is replacing forests and fields with deserts. So I've written up some brief notes about insulation in the hopes that it will make for better ovens and more informed oven-makers – and less demand for precious wood fuels...

All masonry ovens will absorb heat as long as there's heat to absorb, and at the same time, they will lose heat as long as their insides are hotter than their outsides. This radiant property of heat is what makes masonry ovens effective, but it can also make them very inefficient. It takes a lot of wood to heat up that masonry, but if

Vegan Xmas cake

Cake mixture:

Soak the dried fruits of your choice in very little water overnight, but first cut the fruit finely with scissors.

Mix with milled nuts. (Milling by hand is less costly than shop bought.)

Mixed seeds (pumpkin, sesame and sunflower) can be bought ready-roasted. Add these, together with shelled hemp seeds. Add 1 level tbs. cinnamon and finely cut pieces from crystallised ginger cubes. Mix well.

To bind, add 1 heaped teaspoon

peanut butter to every 2 tbs (large) of cake mixture above and form into oblongs or large cubes.

Crushed "Nairns" biscuits to coat.

A quick, no-cook recipe filled with goodness, vitamins and minerals.

If mixture is too moist, a nourishing muesli can be made by adding 'Rice Dream' milk. It contains vitamin D + B12. Otherwise crush Nairns biscuits to make the mixture drier.

Sent in by Ann James

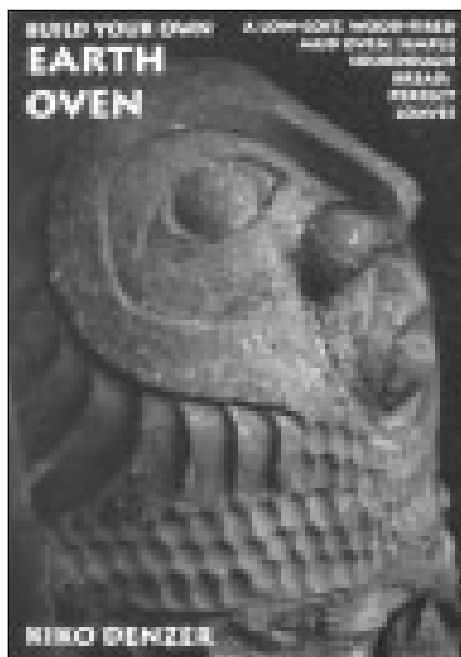


A demonstration oven Kiko Denzer made for CAT in Wales.

you only cook a single loaf of bread, most of the heat will be lost and wasted. So the trick is to take specific steps to maximize your use of the internal heat of the oven, and to minimize external heat losses. If you do take those steps, and if you bake every day, you can bake extremely efficiently. On the other hand, if your oven is only used occasionally, and cools down between bakes, efficiency will diminish significantly. But you can still improve it by the same principles of maximizing use and minimizing loss of heat.

The key is to surround your hot, heavy oven with some kind of barrier or ‘thermal break’, to slow down the rate of conduction and insulate as fully as possible.

Fireproof insulation is easy to make, simply by mixing a ‘slip’ of clay and



The cover of Kiko Denzer’s book. It has been translated into Norwegian and can be bought from Vegan Views for £20 including postage. (Norwegian is easy to learn...)

water, beaten/mixed until smooth, free of lumps, and about the consistency of heavy cream – so your fingers and fingerprints are coated. Then you mix the slip with some kind of coarsely chopped, dry woody material. The easiest, best material I’ve found to work with is sawdust, but woodchips, chopped straw, the chaff from harvesting grain, or perhaps dry leaves all might work – I suspect just the thing is around your building site somewhere.

Add enough slip so that you can pack your ‘dough’ into a firm ball – but remember, the more clay, the more conductivity, and the greater your heat loss. So make a test ball. When it dries, it should be fireproof lightweight, and it should stay stuck together. When it gets hot enough, the woody material will char and eventually burn out, but if you’ve packed it tight enough with the clay slip, it won’t get enough oxygen to burst into flame.

DO TEST your material by firing a small ball of it in a very hot wood-stove, oven, or campfire. You should be left with what is essentially a non-flammable, very lightweight (and fragile) clay ‘foam’. (This is essentially how insulating fire brick is made. If you were so inclined, you could make such bricks and use them for insulation.)

In general, I use the ‘sawdust-slip’ mix to surround the whole oven with a layer at least 3” thick, preferably more, even up to a foot or so of thickness, depending on the situation. It’s also extremely important to insulate under the floor of your oven, but here it’s important to add structural support for the weight of the oven; I typically use empty glass bottles packed in sawdust-clay, or tamped perlite.

Any oven, when insulated around top, bottom, and sides, will hold heat longer and cook more food per pound of wood burnt. But no matter how you use your oven, insulation is important. I strongly recommend it.

Here’s why: a masonry oven bakes so well because hot, dense masonry radiates heat evenly into the small, hollow cook space on the inside. At the same time, however, a masonry oven loses heat in every other direction. A well insulated earthen oven *CAN be extremely efficient, but typically only when used continuously* – as in a commercial bakery, where the oven is kept hot and fired every day. Ovens in such settings often have a foot or more of insulation; some have baked as much as five pounds of bread for a single pound of fuel burned!

It may be common knowledge that ‘heat rises’, but less commonly known is that heat rises only in a gas or liquid – air or

water – where particles can flow around each other because they aren’t rigidly connected in a solid matrix. In brick, stone, or earth, however, when the rigidly connected molecules heat up, they get excited. In a liquid or gaseous state, that excitement would cause them to flow (think volcanoes and lava). But as long as they remain solid, they can’t move.

So what do they do with all that ‘heated excitement’? Well, imagine a room completely filled with beach balls. If you were to reach through a window and start tapping one ball, immediately, you’d see that the energy of tapping would be transferred to every other ball in the room – because all the balls are touching other balls. Almost instantaneously, they’ll all start to quiver. That is, essentially, the principle of conductivity at work, and that is how it moves heat in all directions.

In your oven, conductivity moves heat into every material in contact with it, including the earth under your feet. Theoretically, if you could fire your oven long enough, you’d heat up the whole world! Of course that doesn’t happen – but what does happen is that you may end up burning LOTS of wood in order to get your oven hot enough to bake a little bread. This causes problems, whether you live in a land suffering from over-harvesting, over-grazing, and desertification, or whether you live in a fuel and forest rich area. We all live by the grace of trees.

So I hope you might reflect on your relationship to the forest and make some important strategic decisions about efficiency and fuel consumption – and perhaps move closer to the precious and sacred sources of all life. Of the many groups and individuals working on fuel efficient, low-mass, ovens and stoves for use in fuel-poor countries, you might look up Aprovecho Institute, at www.aprovecho.net, and/or try searching the web for fuel-efficient stoves and ovens.

There are plans for a fully-insulated earth oven, as well as in-depth instruction for ovens, bread, mud, and art, in Kiko Denzer’s classic illustrated manual, ‘Build Your Own Earth Oven’. Hand Print Press publishes this and other titles for “learning by doing,” most of which are available through any bookstore, or directly from the publisher at www.handprintpress.com. Kiko posts new ovens, techniques, and other information to his blog at www.kikodenzer.blogspot.com.

Meat consumption and food policy

The report of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, *Livestock's Long Shadow*, carried a devastating message. It showed that the meat and dairy industries world-wide account for 18 per cent of the greenhouse gases that cause climate change – more than all forms of transport put together.

Text: Ava Greenwell

It demonstrated that 70 per cent of all agricultural land is used directly or indirectly for livestock production and that pressure to accommodate more livestock is a major cause of deforestation and soil degradation. It predicted that if the recent expansion in meat-eating continues, the current 'global herd' of 1.5 billion cattle would double in size by 2050, with potentially calamitous results for both environment and public health.

Other reports and authorities have gone on to consider what should be done to prevent the harm caused by the vastly increasing livestock industry. Many of these have been cited in the Compassion in World Farming report, *Global Warning: Climate Change and Animal Farming*. This cites studies from across the world which demonstrate that the more meat in the diet the greater the global warming potential and the smaller its energy efficiency (the energy provided by the food divided by the amount of energy needed to produce that food). A major report by the Food Climate Research Network based at the University of Surrey presents eating fewer meat and dairy products and consuming more plant foods as the most sensible response. An article from *The Lancet* sums up the issues: "Particular policy attention should be paid to the health risks posed by the rapid world-wide growth in meat consumption, both by exacerbating climate change and by directly contributing to certain diseases. To prevent increased greenhouse-gas emissions from this production sector, both the average world-wide consumption level of animal products and the intensity of emissions from livestock production must be reduced." They go on to discuss a strategy known as 'contraction and convergence' where the richer nations reduce their consumption and those in the poorer nations increase theirs, until a fairer, average consumption

is reached. They suggest a final global allocation of 90g of meat per day per person, far, far less than is currently eaten in the richer countries. In line with this, the German equivalent of our Environment Agency has recently called for a reduction in livestock consumption. Rajendra Pachauri, the head of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has called for everyone to start having one meat free day every week.

Note that one can't argue, from this evidence, that NO meat and dairy consumption would be better for the planet. This article is about arguments for eating *less* meat; it doesn't, for space reasons, pursue either the health reasons for this, or arguments for veganism, vegan agriculture etc.

After reading such reports it seems fairly straightforward to conclude that if people in rich countries consumed much less meat and dairy, it would be better for the planet. Yet there is still a lack of acceptance of this at a high level in the UK. Only very rarely in the media is it taken up as a serious response. Perhaps such a change of diet is too much to swallow for meat-eaters who see their ways of eating as culturally normal?

Need this be so?

British food policy is, in fact, in the process of being reformulated, so this should be a good time for a new way of eating to be considered. Policies which will affect food prices, subsidies, grants, research, etc. over the next decades are being developed. In July 2008 the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit published a major report, *Food Matters, towards a strategy for the 21st century*, which, amongst many recommendations for formulating new policies, suggested that a healthier and less damaging diet for the country would contain fewer meat and dairy products than at present. In response to this strategy document, the departments responsible have been working hard, sometimes creating new committees and working groups, commissioning further reports, etc. aimed at determining the best approaches to secure a 'sustainable food system' and 'low impact diet' (worthy sounding, but vague aims for which the meaning is still being discussed and formulated).

To prepare for this article I contacted a wide range of campaigners and people involved in policy making, to ask them if they agreed that little heed was being paid to the idea of cutting meat consumption in

the discussions that were occurring around providing sustainable food (not one disagreed) and if so, what did they think were the reasons? I also asked if they had personal knowledge of what was happening which might make the issue be taken more (or less) seriously. Many from the public sector asked not to be quoted directly, so I have tried to include the common themes that were mentioned as faithfully as possible whilst not mentioning names. Many, many respondents (from campaigning groups too!), were very coy in avoiding directly talking about reducing meat consumption, and dodged into discussing how the 'impacts' of meat and dairy might be reduced.

Why is reducing meat being avoided?

First we should consider just who is involved, and how ideas are formulated. Responsibilities for food are split, in fairly complex ways, across different government bodies – including the departments of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Health, International Development, and the Food Standards Agency (now with responsibilities for advising on sustainability as well as health). No one body is able to take firm responsibility for effective decision-making and powerful economic interest groups, such as the National Farmers Union, are able to exploit this to their advantage. Very few of the established 'stakeholder' and lobby groups would gain from reducing meat and dairy. And many vegetarian and vegan campaigning groups cannot afford much staff time or fares for such lobbying activities. Matters are complicated by the new teams, responsibilities and targets being set up in response to *Food Matters* and by new agendas such as 'food security'. The need to preserve and benefit existing industries seems a high priority in the discussions. Amanda Baker of the Vegan Society commented that, "*The term 'sustainable agriculture' has already been distorted – it's said with fingers crossed behind their backs. What they mean is economically sustainable – in other words, nothing different from what they were saying all along.*"

Many respondents pointed out the political aspect – the electorate's well-established preferences and the numbers of jobs involved. Food from livestock is central to generally held ideas of eating well, and very large numbers of people work in ways related to meat and milk.

The thousands of workers in the food industry are generally very low paid and vulnerable to the credit crunch. What responsible government could be seen to add to their anxieties at such a time? (Alternative employment for them, as consumption changes, doesn't seem to be discussed.) Besides, the policy emphasis on 'choice' means it is vital that consumers must be seen to be free to choose what they want – they must not have their choices limited (even if those choices are 'shaped' by huge subsidies and advertising campaigns).

As if that were not enough, it is likely that very few of the people involved in the current discussions on new food policy are themselves familiar with eating without meat or dairy. Marina Berati of Nutrition Ecology remarked that they “cannot ever think that meat production can be so huge a problem.” With such a ‘meat is normal’ mindset, a call for reductions in meat and milk easily transmutes into an expectation of fairly trivial changes – close to eating-as-usual. Vegetarianism tends to be seen as

a step too far – none of the highly-advertised campaigns by top chefs against animal cruelty in farming focus on giving up meat-eating as an option. Not even Pachauri advocates giving up meat – just cutting down.

The aim of cutting emissions and water usage from livestock farming is being pursued largely by a technical search for improvements so that the same number of beasts can be kept but produce less pollution. Tim Turner of VegaResearch remarked: “*Defra and the FSA are having a serious look at things, but often they are missing some of the key points – they are talking about food security and almost completely ignoring the relevance of livestock farming – if livestock farming was reduced then so could the threat from Avian Flu and BSE.*”

It seems in the face of these factors that, for the damage caused by livestock farming to be addressed rationally and adequately, we need a culture change – more courageous policy makers who do not shy away from ‘inconvenient truths’.

There is a phrase for failing to see the main issue – ‘the elephant in the room’ – perhaps it should be rechristened – ‘the livestock in the room’?

What should be done?

The Vegetarian and Vegan societies, as you might expect, were frontrunners in campaigning on this issue. Now others, including the Food for Life Partnership, Camden Council, Sustain, and Friends of the Earth, have acted too. (Though several campaigners still seem to be focusing on more organic production, and dodging the ‘eating less meat’ consequence.) However exasperating these ‘fudging’ responses are – remember on the large scale they can prevent suffering by millions of animals

As individuals, we could be doing more – using some of the skills we routinely use to campaign on street stalls, etc. to help influence changes on a societal level. What can we do?

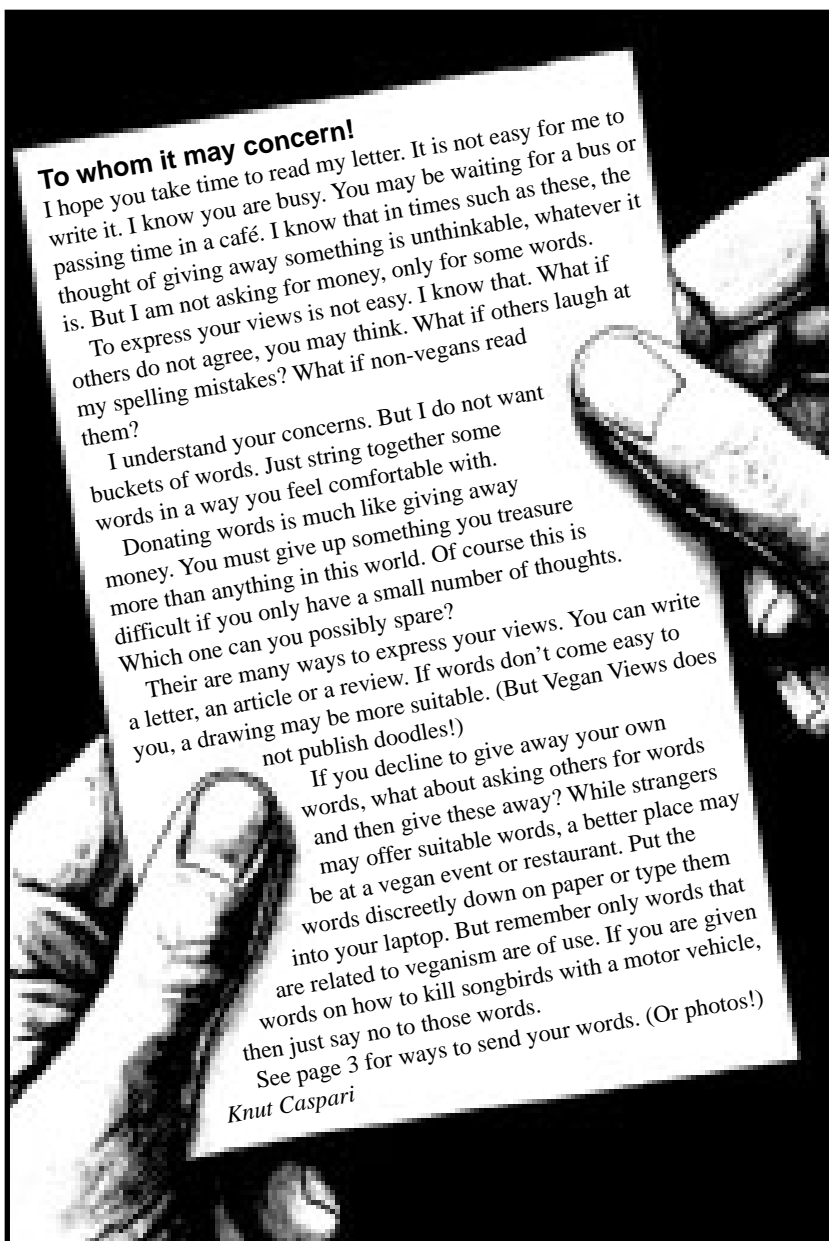
Being knowledgeable on the subject is essential – so please read the research, especially the Surrey paper. If research-papers aren't for you, read the excellent pamphlets “*Eating the Earth*” (Vegan Society) and “*Why it's green to go vegetarian*” (Vegetarian society).

Compassion in World Farming is calling for a Kyoto on Cattle – an international agreement to reduce meat and dairy production and consumption, and this is something we can support and write to our MPs about.

Keep following the Defra, and related websites for new developments, and make maximum use of public consultations. If you live near London, go to meetings open to the public and use open question sessions to get key points across.

If you have a research degree (or know someone who has) – apply for a grant – more targeted research will help.

Help with the “Vegan Catering For All” campaign! The Vegan Society want people to ask their local restaurants, pubs, etc., if they provide vegan food, and if not, to encourage them to do so. Interested restaurants get a free, comprehensive leaflet on vegan catering, if needed, professional advice, and later, a sticker “Vegans Catered for Here”. (Contact Amanda Baker on 0121 523 1735 or info@vegansociety.com) This is something which may have far-reaching effects in enabling meat-eaters to try good vegan food and to start to see it as tasty and *normal*; it can expand our general food culture towards plant-based ways of eating.



Herbal Medicine is Vegan Medicine

For the past seventeen years, I have been involved as a Herbal practitioner in a journey in search of whole mind/body/spirit research practices relevant for Herbal Medicine. Specifically, this has involved developing my practice in a more contemplative way of seeing natural phenomena in plant and person study. I have been heartened and uplifted by witnessing our celebrated miracle of connectivity to the one Source and that we as human beings, are the perfect tool to interpret and celebrate the Divine in Nature and ourselves demonstrating the interrelationships of phenomena.

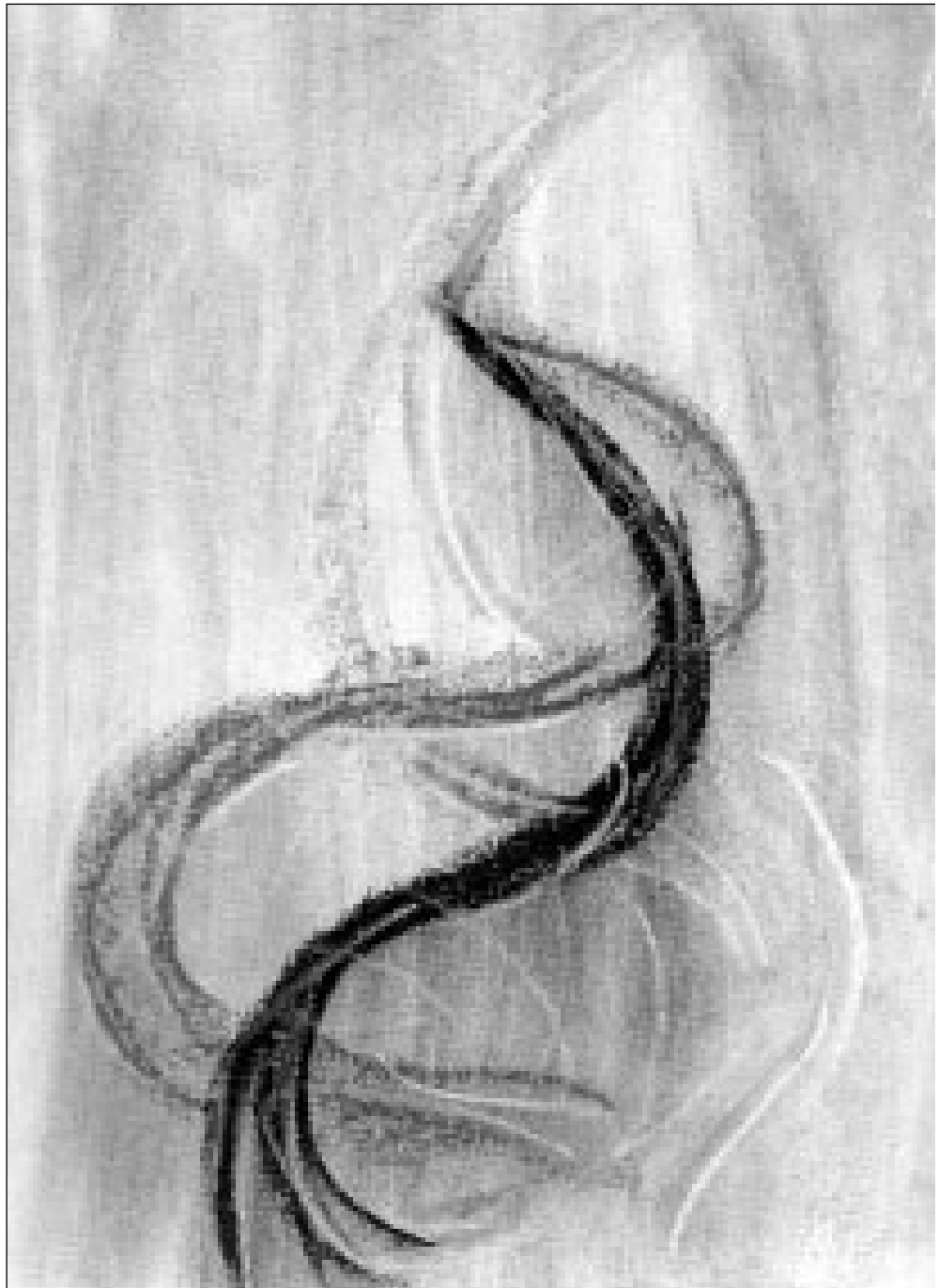
Text and drawings: Maureen Robertson

I feel the reawakening of this realisation in western culture is beautifully vibrant. We receive encouragement in this from our spiritual brothers and sisters, who have held fast to their traditional culture around the world, despite being threatened by political interference and globalisation pressures from the west.

Contemplative vs Modern Biomedical

Modern medicine is based on the brutality and barbarism of vivisection. All modern drugs follow this route of torture and death on animals for the 'benefit' of the human species. It was witnessing the infliction of artificially induced 'diseases' on healthy animals mass produced purely for this purpose that started me on the road to veganism when I was in a student placement for work experience in a Swiss pharmaceutical company during my first degree in Pharmacology over 20 years ago. It was immediately apparent to me that seeking cures for human ailments by creating ill health by abusive and fatal means in animals was going against all laws of Nature. This is when I started to question the philosophical approach of modern scientific medicine and became interested in the more traditional medical systems which still exist today in Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda in India and Humoral medicine on which Culpeper and Gerard based their medical practice in 15th and 16th century Britain, not to mention ancient shamanic practices still held true by indigenous cultures.

These traditional practices keep the cosmic connectedness in context at all times while looking for origins of disease.



We as humans are composed of mind, body and spirit and as such should recognise the same qualities in all sentient beings and the living earth. Modern objective science only considers one out of these three and so, it is not so surprising the problems we have in modern medicine, agriculture and planet management base on this lack of fundamental principals.

Describing a rose with a ruler

In terms of medicinal plant study, objective based science is concerned with botanical description, physical dimensions, colour and the chemical and pharmacological constituents present.

However, such information cannot share with us the sensual feeling of rose's velvety petals on our skin or the uplifting sense of ecstasy and peace of her scent brings to our soul. Thus, subjective and experiential components necessary to complete the whole encounter is missing in a purely objective approach.

Germany's Bard, Goethe, was well known for his poetry and playwriting (Faust) but was less well known for his Nature & Scientific works particularly his Theory of Colour offering an alternative to Newton's Law and his botanical writings where he was more interested in the living principle behind a plant or natural phenomenon that only the facts and

figures associated with it. The application and practice of contemplative science brings a sense of wholeness, a complete picture, a melting together of the objective side and the less tangible spiritual side and is about the capacity to build judgement from within. It is about the coming into consciousness of the recognition of an initiative experience of self evident Truth.

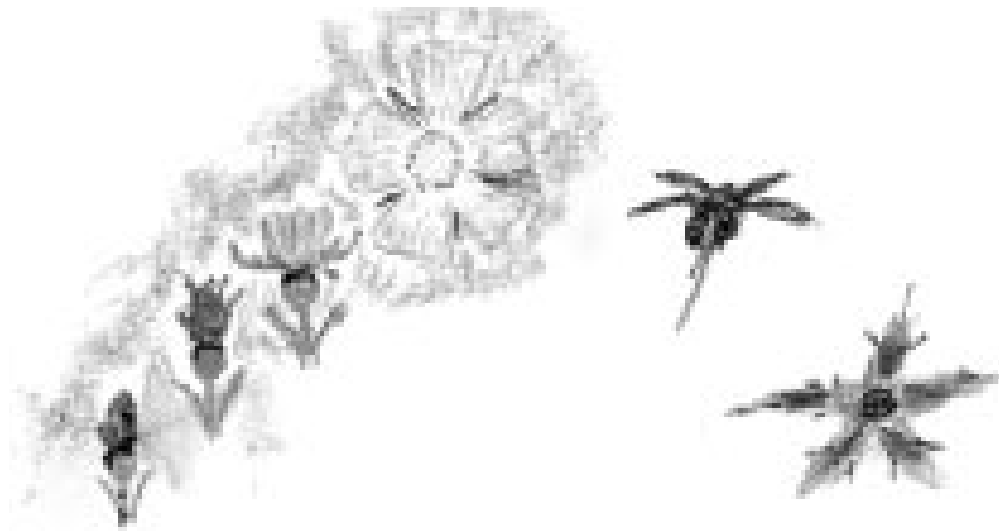
Contemplative science has shades of shamanism, relating to an old tradition. It is not just about a new tool to get information by, it is more about changing your perception of life and mindset and is a two way process so that you are really *seeing* whilst looking back at the roots and understanding how our ancestors would look at plants in the past. It opens up a new world of friends in the plants and an insight into their characters and personalities. It makes us realise how unobservant we are – we have to stop and listen. You can never say you know everything about one thing, you are always learning, opening up to spirit and that part of one's nature. Contemplative science is like acting, you have to practise being the character of the plant. The process is scary because it rocks your foundations. The modern path of Initiation is the journey of self development, it is a process which starts spiritual growth. It involves a type of breathing: going *out* to the plants but by taking a step back and spending time *in*. The whole process can get very emotional.

Philosophical considerations

In a way, the use of Contemplative science provides a structure to give meaning to something you already know in a step-like process. It is about making conscious the obvious and is more than just initiating the dynamics between you and the plant (or whatever you are studying). It's about consciously going through a process so a person finds the answer for themselves – finding the essence of their being, finding new meaning of life and where they are now.

You can use the same methodology to look at things other than plants, landscape, for example, or the relationship between a community or even moving with this work to look at an individual's life.

Goethe advises us that if we have some degree of vital intuition into nature, we should strive to keep as flexible and pliable as the example she provides ie this is present in the living, not in the dead (ie what has already taken shape and rigidified). What we are considering here is that which is forming out of itself – spirit in action or Nature in her lawfulness and how one part follows the other



emerging from an ideal unity.

To do this you have to go out of and beyond the senses. The 'idea' of the plant is beyond the stars. The plant calls the cosmos in as it grows and this pulls the image of the plant out. How could we achieve this? How can we commune with spirit in action (the plant) through our ideal unity and honour its essence within our level of understanding?

Consider the concept 'Ginkgo' (or any other plant/tree being studied). How does the seed/flower/leaf/root get inside this gesture or 'spirit in action' and express it? We are trying to get to the point where when we look at the bark, we can taste the fruit. Any part of the plant contains the whole, so you can *see* or visualise the idea of fruit or flower, even if they are not there in time. One tries to grow a relationship between oneself and the plant to merge with the same dynamic that is the plant itself. Thereby observing how the different parts of the plant reveal the 'idea' of the plant and how that is distilled to full expression.

The Contemplative Method

The whole process is akin to climbing a mountain and being a different person from the experience of the journey when you come down the other side.

Pre-stage *first impressions* – begins even before meeting the plant on the basis that something has attracted us to meet this particular plant or person and is said to result from an openness of 'soul' on first meeting – an 'intuitive precognition'.

Participants are encourage to explore this meeting as subjectively and open-heartedly as possible in order to achieve a deep soul level experience which captures the 'mood' of the plant. After allowing a few minutes to let this experience begin to settle physically and in our inner world, each person is asked to contribute one or two words which captures the mood or first impression for them.

There are often similarities in these

terms and when we all return from the field site, we continue trying to catch some of the mood by drawing with pastels, allowing more etheric representations to take form. We come together again as a group to explain what qualities we were trying to capture and what colours and textures were part of the image we were trying to recreate.

Stage 1. *Exact sense perception* is familiar to conventional science as factual information gathering i.e. of keenly observing the physical attributes of the plant.

After fully exploring the subjective view of the plant, we turn to the objective observation. It is best if we stick to only factual description, taking it in turns to start with general habitat we find the plant in and its general dimensions before moving to ground level to observe how the plant establishes itself, looking at roots and lower stem/trunk. Only moving on when all minute details of botanical features of each part are described until every detail of stem, leaf, buds, flower and fruits if present have been exhausted.

Stage 2. *Exact sensorial imagination* is analogous with synthesis, the putting together of facts to allow appreciation of the plant as a living growing being. It involves following the growth process of a plant, for example, how it looked this time last year or will look this time next year or identifying a person's core, inherent constitution and how or why the person has deviated from that in the present time.

Stage 3. *Glimpsing the being*. This can be seen as an "Aha!" experience as something about the plant 'clicks' within us and follows a meditative group rebuilding of the plant from memory whilst observing any inner movement within us related to qualities and emotions eg warmth travelling to stomach area and feelings of expansion and freedom.

Stage 4. *Being the being* is that of

attaining conscious intuition or 'becoming one with' or 'co-resonating'. In other words 'being at one' with the 'essence' or 'idea' of the plant or person eg, this plant would be useful for tight cramping in the digestive system and could help a person become open to an issue seeming at first overwhelming and difficult to digest.

Stage 5. *Catching the essence* is concerned with condensing or capturing the idea arrived at in stage 4. This requires a further synthesis of how to best express the intention of the plant: which part could be used (root, stem, leaf, flower or fruit or mixture) to best resonate with aiding a person to reset their healing intention. A rebuilding group meditation of the study experience so far is key at this point to ground the gesture of the plant.

Stage 6. *Incarnating the idea* is growing the idea or remedy into matter involving an 'alchemical' distillation of stages 4 & 5.

When studying plants, once a consensus on the plants' possible medicinal use has been achieved, the decision of how to produce certain extracts or preparations from the plant are made. These are often collected and prepared on site and with active participation of the person encouraged as part of this refinement process. The form of the medicine is experimented with (eg. it could be prepared as a tincture, infusion, massage oil, essential oil, foot and hand bath, herb pillow, talisman to wear, seed to sow and grow etc.) as well as dosage and frequency of administration determined.

Stage 7. *Production of medicine* and is the production of the new medicinal product.

Conclusion

Following this method results in a more



satisfying whole connection to the natural world. Would you care to experience such sharing also?

Maureen and Keith Robertson are Medical Herbalists practising on the Isle of Arran where they live with their 3 life vegan young sons. Co-founders of the Scottish

School of Herbal Medicine, they have dedicated their 16 acre vegan organic herb farm and emergent woodland to contemplative plant study. They can be contacted on tel. 01770 820 338 or via www.veganherbal.com

The Avalach Centre for Plant Study at Drimlabarra Herb Farm, Isle of Arran

Drimlabarra Herb Farm is a vegan-organic project run by Medical Herbalists on Isle of Arran, Scotland. This is our plan for 2009.

Open Days:

Sat 9th May,

Sat 27th June

Sat 22nd August 2009.

Guided Herb walk around the farm, free vegan food and herb tea tasting. Open from 12-5pm.

Vegan Volunteers work weeks:

Tues 24th - Sat 28th March,

Tues 28th April - Sat 2nd May,

Mon 11th - Fri 15th May,

Weds 27th - Sun 31st May,

Tues 16th - Sat 20th June,

Tues 24th - Sat 29th Aug,

Tues 22nd - Sat 26th September,

Tues 20th - Sat 24th October.

All vegan organic food and camping provided in exchange for 6 hours work per day. Please contact us for possibilities of volunteering outside these dates.

Celebrate Nature festivals and Plant Study workshops:

Beltane gathering 4 day intensive 29th April-Sun 3rd May

Whitson gathering Sat 30th-Sun 31st May

Summer Solstice gathering Sat 20th-Sun 21st June

Lammas gathering Sat 29th-Sun 30th Aug

Michelmas/Autumn Equinox gathering Sat 26th-27th September

Winter Solstice firewalk Sat 19th-Sun 20th December 2009.

For more information on the above and other activities contact Maureen on Tel: 01770 820 338, e-mail: keithandmo@tiscali.co.uk and web: www.herbalmedicine.org or www.veganherbal.co.uk

Vegan trademark drama!

As you may be aware one of the biggest vegan talking points is the Vegan Society's adoption of new criteria for the Vegan Trademark.

Text: Adrian Ling

Drawing: George Hughes

I have been trying to think of a way to explain our belief, and why we have shone the light on the *Vegan Trademark* matter, without getting into the jargon (which can get technical). So here are some thoughts...

Defining veganism

'Define veganism'? Well that is easy... or perhaps not! In a global sense perhaps we can define it as our relationship with the fellow creatures that inhabit this planet, and vegans believe that it is all the other creatures that are getting a bad deal at the moment, and vegans want things to change. There, that was easy!

If you want to get a clearer definition, this becomes slightly more problematic as the practicalities of our daily lives produce complications/conflicts and many grey areas.

Vegans tend to be deeper thinkers than perhaps a lot of the population and grey areas are always an issue. These grey areas may change but compromises are not a 'just discovered' modern phenomenon. Thankfully, the founders of the Vegan Society thought about grey areas and at some point in vegan history the mouthful of the phrase 'as far as reasonably practicable' came into being. This kind of covered the grey areas, recognising all the practical difficulties of a world that is not black and white.

'May contain'

Put 'may contain' on the wall of a room full of vegans and, before you know it,



definitions of veganism are being discussed. It's a mightily complicated subject with considerations about what 'may contain' actually means – with many caveats, definitions, philosophical judgements, legal issues and extrapolations to the 'n'th degree to be considered.

This is then followed by a debate about how, or if, this meaning fits into their own shape of 'vehicle' to which their own beliefs can travel, as well as constructing a complex 'vehicle' so that 'veganism' is defined into the future.

The EC wheel labelled 'may contain'

But go on, stand back from the debate a step. OK, go on, stand back another two. And just for good measure step to the left a couple of paces as well. You may see that Plamil are not shining a light on the discussion about defining veganism, but shining a light on an already invented little wheel. It is a wheel (not a perfect one but it's a wheel) and it's already in existence, defined and being used. It has a very specific shape and meaning and is called the EC Food Labelling Regulations.

We consider wheels are quite useful in many different vehicles and it's just a

matter of deciding whether to pick up this already invented wheel and use it – or invent another shape.

So in the end Plamil is not shining the light on the big question 'define veganism', but whether vegans should use a jolly useful, already invented and defined, wheel (i.e. the EC Food Labelling Regulations).

Some deep thinking vegans may think they are unsure of the shape of this wheel and worry that it could get unwieldy, whilst most others recognise that it's a wheel and use it.

And in waddles a duck

A supplier reminded me of a beautiful saying the other day: *'If it walks like a duck, looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, it probably is a duck.'*

We think the Vegan Society should see the duck and pick up the wheel. So you may agree, but what can you do? If you think the Vegan Society should see the duck and pick up the wheel, please sign the petition at www.plamilfoods.co.uk.

Taken from Plamil's website.

The issue:

'Plamil call upon the Vegan Society to ensure the Vegan Trademark be permitted exclusively on products that exclude all animal products 'as far as reasonably practicable', in all ways that is understood. In doing so the Vegan Society prevents the Vegan Trademark being used by a Trademark Licensee if the presence of an animal product is disclosed on a product with a statement such as 'may contain' or similar.'

Veganic compost-making

'Veganic compost' is a complete soil amendment which avoids the use of any animal products, such as manure, bone meal, blood meal, feathers, leather, shell, or other residues of the feedlot and slaughterhouse. It also precludes many BioDynamic preparations which involve the use of animal horns, organs, etc, whether or not these are included in the final product.

Text taken from 'KWP #6'

There are various reasons for choosing to do this; they have largely to do with ethical objections to domesticating animals, and with efficiency of land use. The purpose of this article is to describe how we make large quantities of veganic compost at Khadigar using only materials at hand, such as crop residue, hay, tree leaves, and wood ashes.

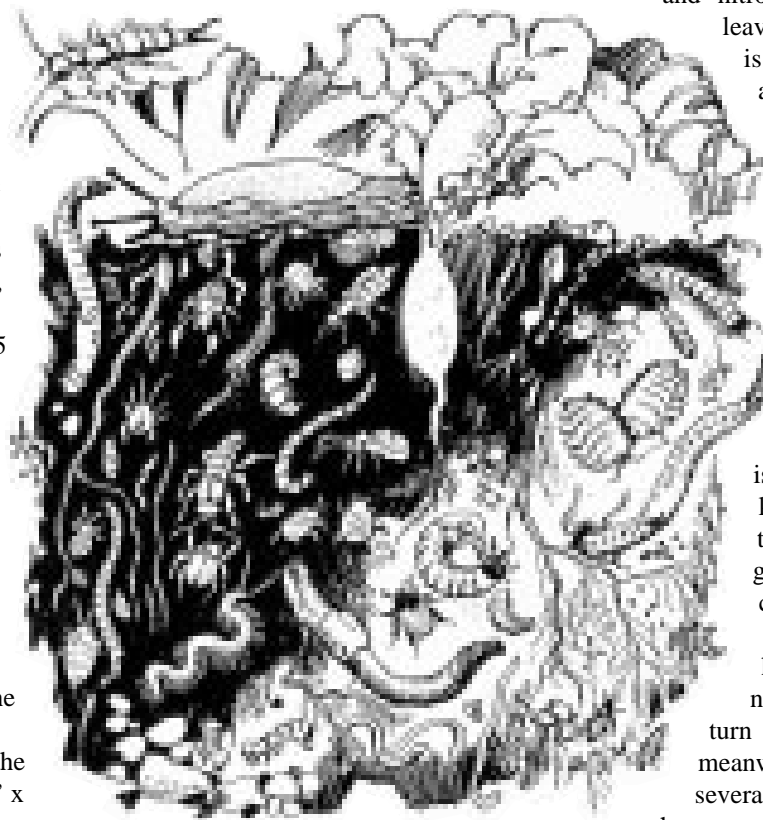
The system consists of 5 tandem bins, made of old planks or split logs, according to what is available at the time. There is no mystical significance in the number 5, this just grew. However; I believe 4 would be a minimum, for practical operation. The bins are separated by removable dividers for ease in turning one bin into the next.

Each bin is 5' x 8'. Again, the size is not very critical, but 4' x 4' is about the minimum mass needed to generate proper compost activity. On the other hand, a pile should not be much wider (or deeper) than 5' for proper aeration. The length is up to you. We chose 8 feet because of some useful statistics. A pile 5 x 8 x 1 foot contains 40 cu. feet of compost. Since finished compost weighs very close to 50 lbs. per cubic foot, that means that we have one ton of compost for every foot of depth. That way, I can tell at a glance what our production is. The sides keep the pile contained, so it does not get lost in the grass.

Near the first bin is a crib of poles 8' x 8'. In the fall we may collect as many as 300 bushels of leaves. Likewise, in

summer, we may haul 8 or 10 tons of hay. Now if we were to use all that stuff as we collected it, some piles would be nearly all leaves, others mostly hay, and at other times of the year we would be out of both. This holding bin allows us to blend ingredients in roughly consistent proportions, so that each batch is fairly uniform.

Now, for the composting process to go as it should, the piles must generate heat. Heat is essential for 4 things – 1. it begins to break down the plant fibers, 2. it destroys insect pest eggs that may be in the crop residues, 3. it pasteurizes most



disease spores, and 4. it sterilizes weed seeds. Let me emphasize this. If you use compost which has not been adequately fermented and cured, you may be strewing your garden with all kinds of pests, diseases, and weeds, which will more than offset the benefits of the fertilization. This is one of the reasons why composting is far better than just tilling in crop residues where they stand, in spite of the increased labor.

Well, how do we get this heat? Simply by assuring that a few key factors are present. One, as I already mentioned, is a critical mass. The pile should be built as quickly as possible – in a few days, rather than over several months. The holding bins full of leaves and hay allow us to do

that at almost any time. In the winter, our kitchen garbage is stored up in barrels and saturated with urine, so that in spring the building of piles can commence as soon as possible.

Another key factor in generating heat is a proper ratio of nitrogen rich materials to coarse carbonaceous trash. Nitrogen gives that spark that sets the whole thing going. Without it, the pile will moulder away coldly. Conversely, without enough high-carbon material to absorb and balance the nitrogen, a lot of nitrogen may be wasted as it forms ammonia and is lost by evaporation. How do we get these carbon and nitrogen rich materials? Well, the

leaves are a good carbon source, so is the hay; however when it's fresh and green it's also a good N source. It seems its nitrogen is about enough to balance its own C, so if leaves are used more N is needed. Human urine is a potent N source, but the quantity generated may not be adequate. For extra nitrogen we rely heavily on soiling crops, especially red clover. Each year a portion of our cropland is seeded down to red clover and kept for 2 years. From 2 to 4 times a year we mow the tender green tops and cart them off for compost. By the end of the 2nd season, the root nodules will have built up a great store of nitrate for the following crop (we turn the clover under by spade); meanwhile the tops have heated up several compost piles. It does not take huge amounts to have a lot of effect. A couple of wheelbarrows full can heat up a ton of other stuff. We also get good effect from green pea vines, comfrey, and alsike, but we consider red clover to be the very finest.

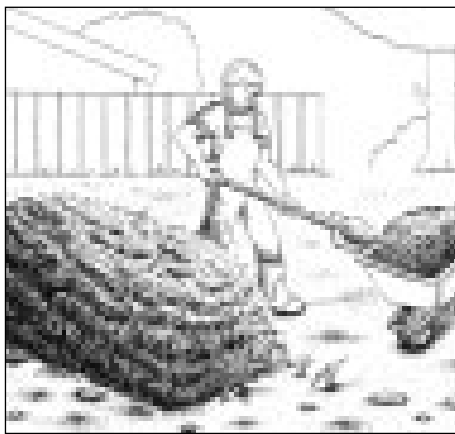
One more thing we add to our piles. Do not underestimate the interaction of vegetative matter with mineral. Lime is good stuff, but it doesn't grow on our farm, so we do without it. That we do have is wood ashes, barrels of them every year. They are better than lime, because rather than just calcium, they balance it with potash, magnesia, and all the other trace elements which trees take up in their lifetime. These minerals are highly soluble. However we have learned to be cautious in using ashes in the compost system. They're quite caustic, and it's not

hard to add too much and raise the pH above where it should be. So we use only a small part of our ash directly in compost. Most of it is used to lime the hayfields which, when sown to clovers and vetches, will produce more and better hay. And we can't get too much hay. Sifted soil is also used as a source of alkaline minerals, preferably subsoil from the bottom of a new well or cellar. Less than 100 lbs. per ton of compost is used, but this really gets things roaring by weighting down the fluffier materials and minimizing evaporation. The soluble minerals in the soil (and ash) are largely alkaline, and these eat at the plant surfaces. This releases a number of plant acids, which in turn work on the undissolved rock particles, helping to release still more minerals.

And lastly, the whole business needs to be turned periodically like every 3 weeks. We use a dung fork to throw the pile into the next bin. This aerates the pile, assuring that aerobic fermentation, rather than anaerobic putrefaction, dominates the process. It also blends the ingredients for more uniform quality, and helps break down the fibrous materials.

Now let me briefly describe how the process takes place. We build the pile in the first bin in alternating layers. No special pattern, except that I try to alternate different types of material: high carbon with high nitrogen, wet with dry, mineral with vegetable, and coarse with fine. I prefer to keep layers fairly thin to avoid wadding up, especially of tree leaves.

A typical pile would start with a half cartload of hay – that is about 2 or 3 bales; then a grain sack full of compressed leaves – that is 2 bushels. Then a wheelbarrow load of garden trash or weeds. Repeat that at least once. Then, and only then, I would add half a barrow load of fresh clover or urine-soaked garbage. This is so if any of the rich nitrogenous stuff leaches downward, it will be absorbed by the bottom layers. From then on I would alternate types of material as much as possible. If lots of pulled weeds are available with their roots and dirt attached, then I do not bother to add much soil. But otherwise I add a wheelbarrow load of soil for about every 4-6 layers of leaves and hay. I have a quarter inch mesh screen frame I lay over the wheelbarrow and hoe the dirt back and forth over the screen until only the stones remain. I almost always add the soil after a hay layer. I usually add garbage or cider pomace after leaves. I can not tell you why – it just feels right to do it in that order. Occasionally we come by a load of fresh seaweed, which can



substitute for part of the clover or garbage. Every so often I climb onto the pile and tread it down a bit, especially at the edges. People sometimes object that this will exclude too much air. That is only a problem in piles containing animal manure or lots of muck or sod, etc, otherwise the opposite concern exists, of keeping the pile from being dry and fluffy.

Then the pile is built to a height of 5 feet, I cap it off with a last layer of hay and a thin layer of soil or muck. Then I haul about 150 gallons of pondwater to soak it down. Believe it or not, this is not enough to saturate it, but I do not want water to soak its way to the bottom. I add 50 or 100 gal, more at a later stage, depending on how it appears when I turn it.

As soon as the pile is capped and watered (if not before), a tremendous amount of heat begins to generate from the center. Within a day's time you cannot poke your hand more than a few inches into the pile without being burned. The temperature should climb to at least 160 degrees F. After about 18 days the pile should have cooled down to a bearable level. It has just completed what we call primary fermentation. Most of the stuff is cooked – literally, except the stuff in the top few inches and sides.

Now we turn the entire pile – 4 to 5 wet steaming tons – into the next bin, one forkful at a time. We have found that it takes about 15 or 20 minutes to turn a ton, so the whole process usually takes an hour to an hour and a half. At this stage you find it hard to believe that this is vegetarian compost, because the smell is identical to fresh cow manure, even though there isn't a cow pie in the heap.

Having turned this once, a second heating takes place, milder and shorter, as the edge material from before gets involved. This is the secondary fermentation. When this ends, after about a week or so, the pile is now relatively stable – it won't heat up again. Now begins the 'curing' process, the main object of which is to reduce the size of particles from coarse trashy garbage to

fine finished compost you can till in with a push cultivator. This may take another 3 or 4 months, but frequent turnings, as often as every 2 weeks, will speed things up a lot.

How much does this process cost me? Of course, the expense is all in labour. We've made reasonably accurate computations of the time involved in scything our hay, raking and carting it, raking and hauling leaves, building, watering, and turning piles, at least 5 times. (Some of our hay comes from outlying fields which we cut with a tractor-powered mower.)

We make 15 or 16 tons each year and use it on less than an acre. Let me emphasize that this is a complete fertilizer; it is not just a soil conditioner, a bacterial starter, or trace mineral supplement, to be augmented by so many tons/acre of hen manure, lime, sul-po-mag, 10-10-10, or whatever. It is the backbone of our soil fertility program, coupled with some use of green manures. It is not a support system. Most of it comes from the farm itself; most of it stays on the farm.

One last point: what if you want to have a more sustainable and self-reliant food production system, but you only have a backyard garden. I say: do what you can anyway. You do not have to own acres of forest and pasture to collect your own leaves and hay. Resourceful suburban gardeners can get leaves easier than I can, and free of twigs and brush. Moreover, there are plenty of vacant lots and waste spaces where weedy hay can be cut for the asking. You can make bins as small as 4' x 4', which will hold over a ton and a half. And you can make several of these a season. That's a lot of compost for a backyard garden.

In short, you can make all your own fertilizer; you do not have to send away for soil amendments. You can make your farmstead, however small or large, into a more integrated production unit.

By making as many of these interconnections as possible, by diversifying our unnatural farm ecosystem, by making things as complex as we can manage, we know that our homestead economy will have greater stability and prosperity.

This article was taken from KWP #6 published by Khadi World Publications. In the sample issue of 'Self-sufficiency' there was a reprint from KWP #5. Vegan Views subscribers get this issue for free, others must include a 'large letter' stamp to cover postage costs.

News and more letters

Hint (or a very good tip!)

I would like to pass on of my favorites hints. Mice hate sheep's wool (fleece). If you surround the bed where pea seed is sown, they leave it alone. (Also sweet peas.) It has saved me a lot of time and money over the years.

Jackie

Previous editors of Vegan Views

Good luck with editing Vegan Views! Harry Mather took over Vegan Views from me in 1985 and edited an amazing 82 issues (No 35 through to 116). The magazine started back in 1975 with an editorial collective headed by Marijke McCartney, although in those early days it was a duplicated newsletter rather than a magazine. I was involved from the start, and edited issues 11-20 and later 33-34, with Valerie Alferoff and David Barrett editing issues 21-32. Maybe you can beat Harry's impressive total at some distant (or not so distant) point in the future?

Malcolm Horne

The latest issue of New Leaves (No 91) includes a tribute to Harry Mather written by Malcolm. Annual subscription (cheques to MCL) is £5 for four issues from Ireene-Sointu, 105 Cyfyng Road, Ystalyfera, Swansea SA9 2BT. (Tel: 01639-841223 or email: mcl.ystalyfera@googlemail.com). MCL has a strong environmental emphasis and was founded in 1985 by Kathleen Jannaway, who had previously been secretary of the Vegan Society.

The big gathering!

The North East Vegan Gathering is now in it's 2nd year, and is being held in a beautiful scenic part of the world, at Morpeth, Northumberland. It takes place between 3rd-10th April 2009. The accommodation is in lovely self catering holiday homes, located together in a group, set in 75 acres of parkland. Each house sleeps up to 10 people. There is a games room for the children on site, where all the games are free of charge, and a playground outdoors. It is possible to book a whole house, or just a room. Availability is limited, so bookings will be taken on a first come, first served basis.

There will be a lot going on during the week, ranging from walks in the countryside, outings in the local area, talks, food tasting, meals, family fun days etc. There will be some raw food workshops, and the chance to meet many

like-minded interesting people. If you would rather just relax, there is no obligation to join in with the organised activities. The holiday is suitable for families, singles, and couples; basically, there will be something for everyone.

The North East Vegan Gathering is a non-profit making event run by members of VegNE. To find out more, and to access the booking form visit:

www.vegne.co.uk/vegan-gathering

News

The China Study £25 +£5 p&p. Explains about cancer.

Lush do a wonderful range of vegan bath products and a fantastic perfume called "Karma" £5 in a tin, good size for handbag or over £20 a bottle, *gorgeous*. 'Magic' bath bomb full of aromatherapy oils, *gorgeous* smells!!

Sent in by Sue Fox

Mother Earth

You gave us all you had,
A paradise, a garden,
A golden land, an Eden.

We ate your fruit,
We drank your wine.
Now your feast is gone
And the land is dying.

Mother Earth

Don't shed your tears.
You'll dance again some day.
We're leaving for the stars
And a new world far away.
John Sephton

The bears are saved!

Still supporting the bears.

Stella

This was written on a leaflet headed 'Moon bear rescue' published by Animals Asia. For more information: www.animalsasia.org

Veggie restaurant!

Investor/s required for our Veggie/Vegan restaurant business. Be part of a new and rewarding future by doing something for a cause you believe in. For more information please visit our developing website www.veganroutes.com or email james@edenverse.com. No experience necessary – just a desire to take action!

Matt Broomhall

My spicy 'panch phoron'!

4.13 pm

I miss the smell of panch phoron

Sandeepel. Growing up in Orissa, we had neighbours all over who would cook using this spice. I love curries with this, so simple yet so full of flavour.

4:29 pm

'Panch phoron' for you, 'pass puron' for us, an absolute necessity in an Assamese kitchen... although, I am ashamed to say, I hardly use it... I hope no hardcore Assamese reads this, who knows I may be boycotted...

7:14 pm

I blend my own panch phoron, but was stymied on how to use it. Not knowing any better, I fried paneer cubes in it. The flavour was great, but the texture was too gritty. My error, I ate it anyway.

7.21 pm

I have always been fascinated with the name 'panch phoron'... it just sounds so exotic. I do not have any kalonji at home... I just love the combination of potatoes and green beans... It is so earthy!

Spicy

This letter was boring. While the diary style of writing makes the letter stick out, it would have been better to focus more on 'panch phoron'. (What it is, how do you use it and so on.) The thing that surprised me was the mentioning of 'paneer', surely this is a non-vegan cheese? I hope you are not disappointed by this answer and give up writing to Vegan Views, as I see you have potential.

The artwork of Antony Bates

Antony Bates became vegetarian in his late 'teens and went through formal art training.

For a while he worked in a commercial art studio, but did not enjoy it. Antony put his artistic talent to good use and found fulfillment by creating his spiritual and symbolic paintings, in a myriad of themes, e.g. protests against war, traffic jams, corruptions, and the multitude of cruelties imposed on the lower species in the name of sport, medicine and food production. He illustrated stories from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, bringing in the concept of reincarnation, and showing the utmost importance for a sincere and compassionate lifestyle. Many of his pictures were joyful, not all tackled evil and darkness. In addition to the serious spiritual paintings, he did portraits, still life studios and landscapes. Another type were those imaginative picture compositions that he did just for fun. It is important to have a part of our lives that is carefree and playful if we are to stay balanced and

be effective at working to make this world a better place.

Antony John Fison Bates left instructions in his Will to say that his spiritual symbolic paintings should be publicly available.

Sophia P. Howard

Tolstoyans

We are a small group scattered across the UK espousing Tolstoyan values of anarchism, pacifism and veganism. We are actively involved in peace, environment, human and animal rights issues in different parts of the country.

We seek to as someone said, “*be the change you want to see in the world*”. Our anarchist and vegan outlook is all tied up with our commitment to nonviolence. We look to self government of each individual to act compassionately; and not government from without, which is imposed, coercive, self seeking and has its will imposed by force of military, police and courts.

Our vegan lifestyle and values are meant to be some attempt to show our practical demonstration of peace in action toward all living beings. As Tolstoy said “*as long as their are slaughterhouses there will always be wars*”. Eating, wearing, using animals we view as an act of violence against animals, people and planet.

Our Tolstoyan values emanate from a nonresistance Christianity stripped of dogma, ritual, mysticism and mystery, hence are entirely rationalist; and given Tolstoy’s interest in eastern religions we are open to all faith traditions and none, where there is a commitment to nonresistance, pacifism, anarchism and veganism.

Please be nice!

The person who has written the letter below has kindly asked for his words not to be published in Vegan Views. Please respect his genuine wish and do not read them.

An unpublshable letter!

Thanks for taking over Vegan Views. I am really glad that you will keep it going and Harry’s good work will continue.

I will ask my brains and try and come up with some contributions. I have been guilty of failing to do so up to now.

This letter is not for publication, but I will try and email you when my brain delivers the goods.

Ben

We are a loose knit group, we have produced some leaflets on “Tolstoyans” and “A Tolstoyan Response to the War on Terrorism”. We see ourselves in the eco-pacifist, ecological anarchist tradition and like the anarchist pacifist Landauer we know how oppressively society is arranged, but we seek simply to re-arrange and rethink how we live and how we might live.

Gerard Bane

Tolstoyans, 59 Chapel Rd, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 0BS. Tel: 01843 589027.

Timely detoxification

I am aware that my last several articles have mostly highlighted my World Powerlifting Championship successes – and I’m absolutely up for an unclaimed World record during 2009 – which, if I can keep the tumours at bay for another year, will require eleven competitions, beginning on 25th January, and culminate in this ultimate success in November. No, even at my advancing age (which is great!), I do not intend to stop then – it’s just that I have to nurse a torn rotator cuff and an almost severed bicep tear, which, apparently, will not heal without surgery until I have achieved this remarkable achievement. That delayed surgery, sadly, demands several months away from the competitive circuit during 2010 – we shall see!

Many of you will know to stay on top of my own personal genetic situation, especially those who have read my awe-inspiring new book ‘A Living Miracle’ sensitively reviewed in the last issue of Vegan Views, that I devote a considerable amount of my daily energy to detoxification: this is usually for a period of several days using wheatgrass juice orally and topically, coffee enemas, colonic cleansing, intravenous vitamin C/hydrogen peroxide, specific breathing techniques etc.

A great concept for everyone, not just those afflicted by disease, ill-health etc, is to periodically undergo detoxification at cellular level – such as metabolic clearing. Ideally directed by a health practitioner, such detoxification at its most basic can be applied by all. This requires assessing just what exactly you are eating at present – viz – how much cooked food versus living/raw food, etc. This is pretty simple – just note what you eat over a three day period and if you are presently eating 50% or more of your total daily intake from cooked foods – especially non-organic cooked foods – your on-going health will definitely benefit from re-addressing that equation!

Whenever I am speaking at various events – such as the forthcoming vegan

dayre in Brighton on March 21st, I am always amazed, and somewhat saddened, to note how little living and raw food is actually consumed on a daily basis – even by stalwart vegans! Today, 12th January, I am totally humbled to note that I am up for a ‘best vegan celebrity’ award! – information at www.yaoh.co.uk. My life goal is simply to optimise the health of my patients – but anything forthcoming from this to get the message spread worldwide will obviously be FANTASTIC!

I can express nothing better than quoting from my colleague Brian Clements of Hippocrates in USA on living foods – hence ‘*The one distinguishing scientific phenomenon adding years to your life is the consumption of living foods. Allow pure food to fuel you, but most importantly, allow clear and determined thoughts to guide you*’.

On the heading subject of timely detoxification, all of us can begin this by increasing our living and raw food consumption on a daily basis until we hit just over 50% of such prepared foodstuffs. If you are presently enjoying superlative health, this is the percentage to remain within on a general basis. For anyone seeking health improvements – a higher percentage, under the auspices of a health professional, will provide the key to a successful outcome.

Obviously, as living and raw food increases, the body cleanses more than is considered ‘normal’. Colonic hydrotherapy is one such practice that can assist us to clear our system of accumulated wastes and spur us onwards to vibrant health. A simple kit for ‘at-home’ application is readily available. It is certainly not a necessity, but I strongly believe that when one approaches a 90-95% living food target, additional, sporadic hydrotherapy cleanses can be the ‘icing on the cake’ as far as health improvements manifest.

My book ‘A Living Miracle’ also provides a hundred living food recipes via simple, easy to obtain UK ingredients.

A fellow practitioner is working hard to get my book into mainstream publication (a VERY hard task!), meanwhile it resides at the Penny Brohn Cancer centre (formerly Bristol Cancer Centre), many libraries, Nutri Centre, October books, etc – and from my website www.foodalive.org and lots of cancer support centres – this task is currently ongoing by myself.

Pat Reeves, practitioner of Nutritional and Functional Medicine – available at www.foodalive.org. Telephone 01384 270270.

Carnivorous vegetarianism:

The ethics of eating carnivorous plants

I was still a teenager when I last seriously squared off with a carnivorous plant. An avid enthusiast, I convinced my father to help me build a hothouse at the bottom of the back garden, which I filled with Venus fly traps, pitcher plants and sundews. Glued to the television, I watched spellbound as rampaging giant leafy carnivores brought about the end of civilization as we know it in movies like *Day of the Triffids*. Thus inspired, I dreamed of becoming a brilliant genetic engineer and one day creating a hybrid big enough to eat my teachers. The consumption of ants, flies, moths, and rarely, rodents and small birds, by members of the kingdom that had for millennia suffered from the predatory appetites of animals, was a top 10 hit with my sense of poetic justice.

Text: Andrew Knight

Drawing: George Hughes

I nurtured my leafy charges with loving care, resisting the temptation to supplement their natural diets, which I knew would only lead to a premature death from overindulgence. Consequently it was with a certain fondness towards my former friends that I agreed to tackle the ethics of dining upon carnivorous plants, from a vegan perspective.

In order to examine the ethics of carnivorous vegetarianism one must first establish a reasonable definition of ethical conduct. Great philosophers and religious leaders throughout history have provided answers so lengthy and esoteric that it seems simpler to just ignore them. Instead let us examine the following simple “utilitarian” definition: the most ethical choice is that which achieves the greatest good for the greatest number. A commonsense understanding of “good” has always been sufficient for me; for example, the maximization of happiness and the minimization of suffering.

So, does the consumption of carnivorous plants result in greater good than the consumption of the non carnivorous variety? Well, on the face of it, there appears to be no significant difference. All plants lack a central nervous system, and, to the best of our knowledge, consequently possess minimal awareness of what are

termed “noxious stimuli”, such as being garnished with chili sauce and ground up by the teeth of a hungry human.

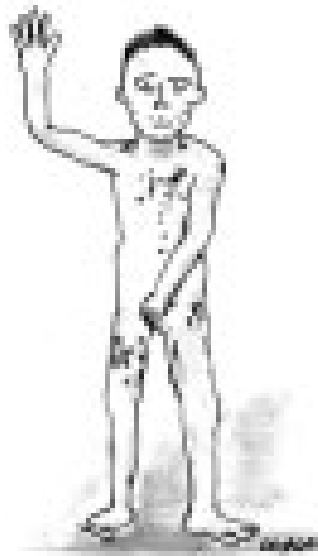
Unless, of course, the plants took their revenge by attempting to consume their consumers. After all, those alluring nectar traps and digestive secretions that prove so effective at ensnaring smaller animals would surely have some impact on larger ones too. Would the pitchers of carnivorous plants, filled with digestive juices, start to consume the stomachs of those dining upon them, followed thereafter by their torsos, legs, arms, necks and heads? Would that be serving the cause of the greater good? Clearly, it depends on the person consumed.

Undoubtedly most vegans would feel uncomfortable about consuming plants containing animal remains. But at least we could console ourselves with the knowledge that the consumption of each leafy carnivore would very likely prevent further deaths of numerous insects and other small animals. These animals do have central nervous systems, which doubtless go into spasms at the very thought of being drowned, digested or crushed by chlorophylled carnivores.

Critics who place cultural considerations above cruelty would defend the right of carnivorous plants to continue to hunt their prey, modern aids such as telescopic rifles and night scopes of course being disallowed.

However, those of us who disagree had best think twice before becoming too smug about our ethical superiority. It cannot be denied that as many sentient lives could be saved by devouring these leafy carnivores, it is but the merest fraction of those we could surely save by eating the most ferocious carnivores of all meaning, of course, the two-legged variety.

If we are honest about saving sentient lives and minimizing suffering we should all grab our knives and forks and head down to the local KFC to dine upon the customers. The nervous systems of those consumed would be minimally developed



in any case, and besides, we vegans could comfort ourselves with the impossibility of perfect vegetarianism in the real world. After all, even the non-carnivorous plants we consume include within them the flesh of decomposing animals hungrily sucked from the earth through their roots.

Nevertheless, on the balance of things, it seems reasonable to conclude that carnivorous vegetarianism constitutes the most ethical choice other than cannibalism. This spares

unknown numbers of small animals from a horrifying variety of gruesome deaths.

Unless, of course, the addition of delicacies such as chili sauce somehow created a combination so gastronomically irresistible, (and consequently profitable), that it resulted in vast, genetically-modified fields of carnivores just waiting to be unleashed in the event of an industrial mishap, to deliver the fall of civilization as we know it... Those species not yet wiped out by humanity would breathe a vast, collective sigh of relief. Unless, of course, the plants were not just partial to humans, and after all, given the choice, who would be?

And of course the method of killing would be crucial to determining the level of suffering involved. Would the plants humanely “euthanize” their victims with a quick shot of digestive sap into a peripheral vein, or would they cut their throats without the benefit of pre-stunning? Would giant Venus fly traps crush all male humans at one day of age, and would super-heated pitcher plants boil women alive once they are too old to breed and produce more “plant food”?

Perhaps the safest course is a pre-emptive strike before they can begin to develop such weapons of mass destruction. Perhaps the secret of Homeland Security lies in carnivorous vegetarianism. Perhaps for the sake of the National Interest we should show strength rather than weakness, fortitude rather than hesitation, and rapidly devour all of those suckers while we still can...

Taken from: American vegan, 3/03

Ads



How is your food grown? Organically, which involves animal manures, a by-product of the slaughterhouse industry? Or with excessive chemicals, fertilisers and pesticides? These contribute to global warming, land devastation, overuse of resources, deforestation.

There is a viable alternative and *Vegan-Organic Network* provides it!

Vegan-Organic Network (VON) promotes truly sustainable ways of growing food: vegan permaculture, animal free home growing and stockfree organic (animal free) farming.

Our magazine *Growing Green International* reports on worldwide ethical farming, home growing and related topics. VON provides support and information, and through our subsidiary *Stockfree Organic Services*, we promote animal free methods to farmers, thus working towards the day when truly ethical food will be available to all.

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Registered charity number 108084

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Non-general ads:

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anticipate the return of the prophets.

Mobile 07742-601166; P.O. Box 3/92, Viva!, 8 York Court, Wilder Street, Bristol, BS2 8QH. (Allow 21 days for reply to paper mail.)

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Male vegan, 54, professional veganic gardener in rural employment, interested in nature, health and fitness, a natural home and environment, and starting a family, seeks compassionate female, any location, for sharing inspiration, knowledge, love and laughter.

Reply to box no. 2. (Include a stamp or your envelope goes nowhere...)

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Are available at 50p each, including postage in UK, or 8 for £3 from:

Harry Mather,
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20 Dean Park Road,
Bournemouth BH1 1JB.

Make cheque or P.O. payable to Harry Mather.

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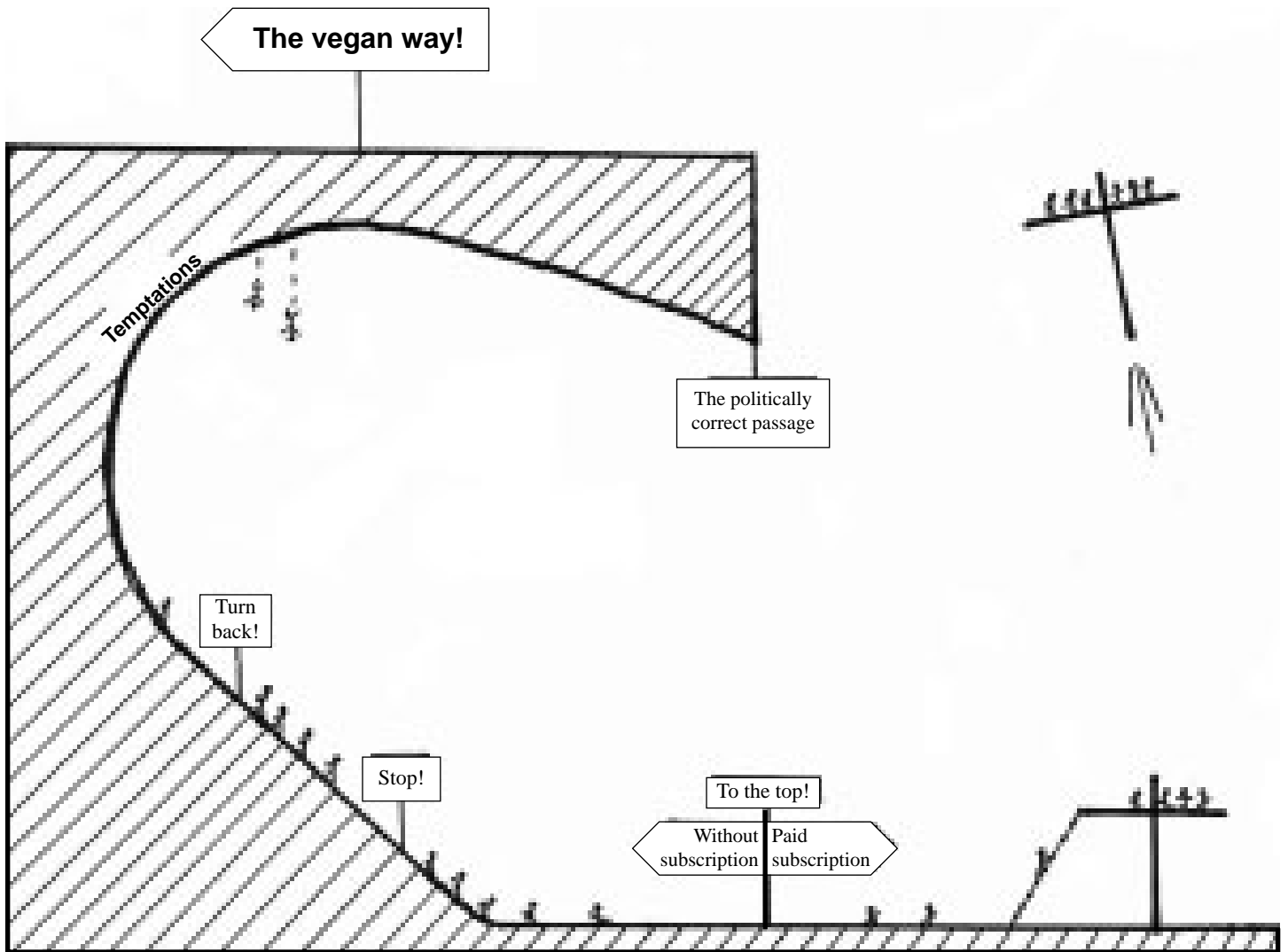
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WHICH?**

Make the right decision while there still is time.

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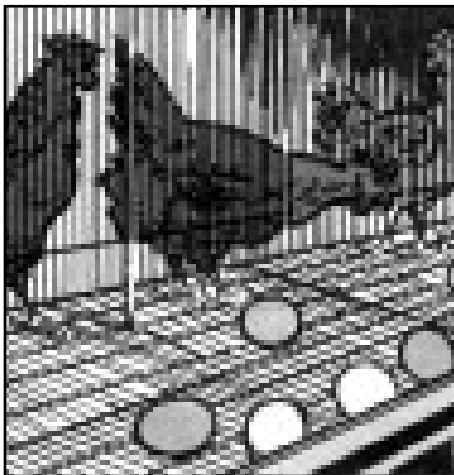
The story about your egg!



In the old days – around 10-15 years ago – the hens wandered around the farm yard.



But the farmers got bored with having to look under bushes for eggs, so they thought of a cunning plan. What if we made small cute cages for the hens?



Now there was order! The eggs the hens laid rolled down to the collection tray.



To work at a poultry farm you need to be able to count. In each box you can only fit 36 eggs. This man is trying to put 2 eggs in an already full box. The result will be omelette and the man must find another job.



Two times a week the man with the hearse drops by to collect eggs and lifeless carcasses that are to be sold as human food.



These women are playing roulette. If they are lucky they can win hundreds of eggs.



The egg you eat for breakfast is washed clean for any scruples of conscience you might have had, and you can safely eat it.