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Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has finally 'blossomed as an idea', according to *The Economist*.

'It would be a challenge,' the magazine says, 'to find a recent report of any big international company that justifies the firm's existence merely in terms of profit, rather than "service to the community".'

Great priority, it continues, is given to efforts 'to improve society and safeguard the environment – by restricting emissions of greenhouse gasses from the staff kitchen, say, or recycling office stationary'. All this 'marks a significant victory... for charities, NGOs and other elements of civil society that pushed for CSR in the first place'.

The Economist evidently takes a dim view, but if it is truly the case that these initiatives constitute 'victory', whichever organisations see themselves as victors should also do some serious thinking. For while endless job opportunities have no doubt arisen in firms desperate to be seen to be 'green' (sustainability officers, PR people, and so on), in real terms the energy invested isn't a patch on that invested in creating an *impression* that things have changed.

Meanwhile, the climate continues to be destabilised. Rivers treated like sewers. Forests converted into toilet paper. The biosphere continues to be ruined.

CSR isn't improving the earth's chances, and when even *The Economist* describes CSR as 'little more than a cosmetic treatment' for big business... at best a gloss on capitalism', it should be clear that someone, somewhere, is being conned.

CSR advocates admit the concept is far from perfect, but that it's the best chance we have of getting corporations to behave more responsibly. They say we need to work with, rather than against big business. For others, voluntary CSR is the only alternative to a torrent of regulations so punitive as to deal free-market capitalism itself a fatal blow.

But that's hypocritical nonsense. Governments do not operate from a position of neutrality. On the contrary, decades of very intensive lobbying, of infiltrating the regulatory process, of purchasing policy and supporting compliant politicians have reaped enormous benefits for big business. In the US, according to former president Bill Clinton's labour secretary, 'there's no longer any countervailing power in Washington. Business is in complete control of the machinery of government. It's payback time and every industry and trade association is busily cashing in'.

The regulatory system has been on overdrive for many years. Only it has adopted a dual purpose whereby the operations of big business have been globally *deregulated* and the operations of small businesses have been *regulated* to the point at which many cannot hope to survive. If you're a large GM firm, the world is your laboratory, its inhabitants your guinea pigs. But a small firm selling vitamin supplements is subjected to a regulatory system that demands absolute adherence to the precautionary principle. It's been said many times that you could render the biosphere non-viable without breaking a single law, but woe-betide you if you want to sell unpasteurised cider.

This isn't free-market capitalism. The economy has been rigged. And not just through the regulatory system. Goods whose production may have caused untold ecological damage can be sold cheaply – because the economy fails to recognise the real value of the natural world and its resources. Pollution, illness, local economic collapse... These are merely 'externalities'. But add them to the cost, as would necessarily happen in an unsubsidised economy, and the story is very different.

The economy is shaped and controlled by human decisions. We could just as easily make different decisions. We can demand through effective campaigns an economy in which the 'externalities' are internalised. We can demand fairness in the regulatory system. We can insist that corporate crimes are adequately punished.



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What difference does buying Fairtrade coffee make to the people growing the beans? John Atkins visits Guatemala to find out.

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Today there are only eight cars for every thousand people in China. But by 2025 it will be the largest car market in the world. With the country already suffering from terrible pollution and smog, how will it cope?

and finally... **Reverend Billy**

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Cows out for a morning stroll at Kite's Nest farm. Join them on page 52

Letters

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BEWARE THE CROOKS IN BRUSSELS

Thank you for printing the speech by the Prince of Wales to the Slow Food Movement conference in your December/January issue. The treatment given it by the media generally breathes the spirit of fascism incarnate, a spirit of contempt for people, contempt for truth and of thuggish ignorance of the consequences of current trends.

The Prince's remarks were distorted or altogether bypassed, despite the extent to which the dangers on which he focused are developing at breakneck speed. This treatment, which goes hand in hand with the continuous media denigration of the prince and the Royal Family generally, has to be seen in the context of the determination of the globalisation forces to destroy our sense of nationhood in order that we might more easily accept being merged into some European super state.

The fact remains that when we consider how little control we have over our own government today, the idea that surrendering that power to a bunch of crooks in Brussels is in any way

an advance of democracy is simply surreal.

John Papworth
Editor, *Fourth World Review*
Wiltshire

WHAT CHANCE FOR A NEW ECOLOGY PARTY?

Aidan Rankin ('Time for a new Ecology Party', February 2005) sums up a problem that has more or less destroyed any immediate hope of large-scale 'green' representation in British politics: the fact that traditional green politics is perceived (sometimes correctly) as being part of what used to be known as the 'loony left'. It is tragic that the care of this planet has to be left to these characters.

What the environmental movement needs is more representation by individuals who can relate to the average man or woman on the street. As the business guru Charles Handy remarked, the only way to change things is to wear a dark suit when preaching radical thoughts. Unfortunately, many 'greens' leave Mr and Ms Average with a feeling that the movement is full of 'weirdos'. It is not.

A further note, relating to your recent coverage of fluoride in the water supply and the risks of using conventional toothpastes: it would also be interesting to see *The Ecologist* looking into the insane use of mercury and other metals in dentistry. Having seen a friend of mine go down with mercury poisoning (something which was only properly diagnosed when he deserted the National Health Service and went private), it is clear to me that many people in many countries are having their health slowly destroyed by such heavy metals. When

mercury was first used by dentists, they were denounced as 'quacks'; nowadays, it seems to be the dentists who refuse to use it who are the quacks. What a stupid world we live in.

David Topple
Exeter

Most greens are fundamentally populists, advocates of 'power to the people'. They may not talk the language of class politics like Marxists do, but they share a common faith in the inherent virtues of the 'masses'. So slogans like 'empowerment' now predominate. By contrast, with the limits-to-growth argument the sustainable number of 'stake holders' and the entitlements to which they are due finite.

Greens have chosen to resolve the conflict between the notion of ecological limits and that of open-ended social ambitions by resorting to pie-in-the-sky dreaming. They naively trust that alternative technologies and altered public spending patterns (eg the 'peace dividend') come free of ecological price tags. Witness the enthusiasm for huge infrastructure schemes like renewable energy, public transport, hospitals, schools and housing.

Routinely, greens fail to see the wood for the trees. Thus they attack fox-hunting or vivisection, but do not understand that such practices, though totally abhorrent, are nonetheless trivial when compared to the destruction of the habitats on which foxes and a myriad of other species depend.

However, the biggest flaw in Rankin's perspective concerns what might be called the 'rate and magnitude dilemma'. If one looks at

the sheer range of problems that are beginning to make themselves felt, and the speed with which they would have to be resolved if catastrophe is to be avoided, it can only be concluded that any strategy that is going to take years is simply a matter of 'pissing against the wind'.

The other side of the rate and magnitude dilemma is the fact that many ordinary citizens play a conscious, active, willing, indeed sometimes wilful role in pushing along the juggernaut of destruction. They do so not just at election time, but more significantly in their shopping and leisure habits. Any action to address global warming and so forth has not only to overcome the resistance of vested interests, but also the apathy, ignorance and frequent hostility of all sections of society.

At the same time, the solution Rankin proposes, the formation of a new ecology party, would have little chance of success. Given the studied indifference of people across society to politics, and most forms of citizen involvement, where are the supporters going to come from? Big numbers did turn out for some of the demonstrations against the invasion of Iraq, but few

became involved on a lasting basis. Binge drinking would appear to be the only growing collective activity today.

Rankin understandably eschews the traditional left end of the old political spectrum, but alternative options would appear to provide no firm basis for any political realignment. There may be a good number of small 'c' conservatives out there: not hopelessly bigoted and greedy Tories of the Thatcherite tendency, but people who value stability, continuity and fairness. There are also plenty of people who are prepared to do their 'bit' when it comes to little things like recycling. But there are few signs that they, like most other sections of society, are prepared to go further and embrace the whole ecological critique of 'growthmania'.

An unavoidable conclusion follows: it is unlikely that conventional party politics or pressure group activities are likely to open the door to sustainability in time. Heaven only knows what the answer is, but perhaps it might become clearer if we stop placing faith in what are, in reality, non-options.

Sandy Irvine
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

NEW WINE IN OLD SKINS

Joanna Blythman's review of Jonathan Rossiter's film *Mondovino*, and indeed the film itself, should have examined how the big, blockbuster wines that critic Robert Parker loves are made.

How is it possible that makers of red Bordeaux from vineyards in south west France's relatively cool climate can produce wines tasting as if they came from California? Simple: they blend judicious quantities of wine from warmer climes. Rossiter should ask himself why so many top Bordeaux chateaux buy vines in the Med; or why so many top winemakers in Tuscany know so much about vineyards in Sicily. Is it because they go there to buy bulk wine to 'correct' the famous wine names from further north whose vines can no longer ripen their grapes because the soil is flagging due to poor environmental stewardship?

The other point is: if you make wine from over-ripe grapes (which Parker is on record as saying he likes), which are soaked at higher than normal temperature during and after fermentation, which are aged in new oak barrels for longer than is usual, the text books say you'll usually make an unstable wine: the acid strength is out of kilter with the alcohol. You can correct this imbalance by adding sulphuric acid, which also helps give red wines a bit more colour, if you do it right.

I'd like to see more wine writers putting winemakers and their overpaid consultants on the spot. How is it your vineyard, with its lifeless concrete-like soils (from weedkillers), its flagging vines with palid leaves, weak

shoot growth, and shallow roots (from excess chemical fertilizer), and growing in a temperate climate, how is it they can produce blockbuster wines of opaque colour and unbelievably thick texture?

Monty Waldin
Author *Biodynamic Wines*
By email

BLAIR'S CLIMATE CHANGE HYPOCRISY

When will Tony Blair stand by his statements about climate change and his intended role in charge of the G8? *The Observer* highlighted on January 16 the duality of Blair, revealing how his government attempted to dilute key global warming targets.

Then there was the nauseating glitz and razzmatazz that came with Blair's participation in the launch of the new Airbus A380 airliner. This monstrosity was hailed as environmentally friendly on account of its greater fuel efficiency. What on earth are they doing allowing airlines the choice to cater for their passengers with gymnasiums, gambling areas and luxury double beds?

On a more positive note, however, I would like to draw attention to the work of Woods for All (www.woodsforall.org) and its attempt to preserve Taldrum Wood in Wales through the unique idea of offering shares in it to the public. I hope readers will get involved and that the project can expand to woodlands all across Britain. Hopefully, the public will realise that you don't have to jet off to all corners of the world every single month to see a thing of beauty.

Simon Yau
By email

COMMENTS

Time for a new Ecology party
By Alan Rankin

The modest participation of European Greens in the campaign to elect Nicolas Sarkozy is indicative of the capture of green politics by an unconcerned, uncommitted and unexcitable left.

When the Green movement first emerged in the 1970s, it was a radical, anti-establishment force. It was a movement of the people, not a movement for the people. It was a movement that sought to challenge the status quo, not to reform it. It was a movement that sought to create a new political space, not to occupy an existing one. It was a movement that sought to be a force for change, not a force for continuity.

The arguments against Belligerine's sinisterly mirror the discredited, prejudiced claims of the recent past that homosexuals are 'unsuitable' for certain jobs.

... [The rest of the article text is partially obscured and difficult to read due to the image quality and layout.] ...

Green politics have failed to live up to their promise. They have become an appendage of the left's culture of protest and authoritarian group-think.

THE ECOLOGIST | MARCH 2005 | 007

the month



GREENPEACE CONFRONTS GM SHIP

A Greenpeace ship intercepted a container vessel importing GM soya into Europe at the end of January. The Greenpeace ship *Esperanza* confronted the *Golden Lion* 140 nautical miles off the coast of Portugal, as the bulk carrier was transporting 30,000 tons of genetically engineered soya from Argentina to France. The Monsanto 'Roundup Ready' soya was destined for use in animal feed. Greenpeace was protesting against the fact

that the expansion of the GM soya industry in Argentina has caused the destruction of millions of hectares of rainforest and driven small farmers and indigenous people off their land.

Strong and consistent public opposition to GM in Europe has forced food producers and retailers not to use GM ingredients directly in food, but a loophole in EU labelling legislation means that eggs, meat and dairy products from animals fed

with GMOs do not have to be labelled. 'Cutting down rainforests... only to produce animal feed for European factory farming is down-right crazy,' said Greenpeace's Arnaud Apoteker. 'I don't think any food producer or retailer in Europe can defend forests being destroyed to produce animal feed used to make their food products, and we expect the food industry to move swiftly to protect its reputation among consumers.'

■ www.greenpeace.org

TESCO BOYCOTT CALLED OVER 'SPY CHIPS'

A worldwide boycott of Tesco has been launched in protest against the supermarket chain's planned expansion of its use of RFID monitoring tags. RFID stands for Radio Frequency Identification, a controversial technology that uses miniature antennae and tiny computer chips so as to enable long-distance monitoring of consumer goods. The technology raises serious privacy concerns: RFID-tagged items could include clothing, purses, backpacks and wallets. ■ www.boycottTesco.com



Rats! Our cover is blown!



ONE SMALL STEP FOR CYBORG-KIND

Scientists have created tiny robots by growing rat cells on microscopic silicon chips. Having connected the living cells to silicon chips, they then managed to get the rat-silicon hybrid to move. The scientists commented that this could be the first step towards eventually creating machines that could build themselves: something nanotechnologists dream of achieving, but which many environmentalists view as a nightmare.



WAL-MART LAUNCHES WEBSITE OF 'TRUTH'

The world's biggest retailer, Wal-Mart, is launching a massive PR campaign to try to improve its tarnished image. As well as publishing an open letter advertisement in more than 100

US newspapers, the company has set up a new website (www.walmartfacts.com), which promises the 'unfiltered truth'. However, when CEO Lee Scott was asked why the new site made no mention of a class-action sex discrimination lawsuit currently underway against the company in the US, he replied: 'There are so many things that we deal with, and aspects of society, that you couldn't possibly put them all in.'

CHILDHOOD CANCERS AFFECTED BY WHERE MOTHERS LIVE

Many childhood cancers are caused by the environment, according to a new study from Birmingham University. The study found that women who live within a half-mile radius of areas of high emissions, such as major roads or factories, are two to four times more likely to give birth to children who develop cancer.



Tsunami Relief Effort Great for Brand America

Commenting on the level of US aid to the tsunami relief effort, former US secretary of state Colin Powell said: '[It would] give the Muslim world and the rest of the world an opportunity to see American generosity, American values in action... I hope that as a result of our efforts, as a result of our helicopter pilots being seen by the citizens of Indonesia [to be] helping them, that value system of ours will be reinforced.' The US upped the amount of aid it pledged for the tsunami relief effort from \$35m to \$350m. To put that in context, however, George W Bush's January inauguration cost more than \$40m and featured no less than nine black-tie balls.

BUSHISMS: THE SECOND COMING

To commemorate George W Bush's inauguration earlier this year, here's a rundown of his more recent gaffers.

■ 'I want to appreciate those of you who wear our nation's uniform for your sacrifice.'

Jacksonville, Florida, 14 January 2005

■ 'I speak plainly sometimes, but you've got to be mindful of the consequences of the words. So put that down. I don't know if you'd call that a confession, a regret, something.'

Washington DC, 14 January 2005

■ 'It's a time of sorrow and sadness when we lose a loss of life.'

Washington DC, 21 December 2004

■ Asked in January why his administration had been unable to find Osama Bin Laden, Bush replied, 'Because he's hiding.'

■ 'I always jest to people, the Oval Office is the kind of place where people stand outside, they're getting ready to come in and tell me what for, and they walk in and get overwhelmed in the atmosphere, and they say, "Man, you're looking pretty".'

Washington DC, 4 November 2004

■ 'I think it's very important for the American president to mean what he says. That's why I understand that the enemy could misread what I say. That's why I try to be as clearly I can.'

Washington DC, 23 September 2004

■ 'Free societies are hopeful societies. And free societies will be allies against these hateful few who have no conscience, who kill at the whim of a hat.'

Washington DC, 17 September 2004

(note: George Bush is the most powerful man in the world)

RATS CAN DIFFERENTIATE HUMAN LANGUAGES

Rats are able to distinguish different languages, Spanish researchers claim. The researchers have learnt that rats can differentiate the contrasting rhythms of various languages, suggesting that certain animals, in particular mammals, evolved some of the base skills necessary for the development of language long before humans developed language itself. 'These findings have remarkable parallels with data from human adults, human new-borns and cotton-top tamarin [monkeys],' commented the researchers in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes*. It is the first time an animal other than humans or monkeys has been found to display such skills.

WHAT'S THE GREENEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD?

A collaborative project involving Yale and Columbia universities and the World Economic Forum, the annual Environmental Sustainability Index ranks nations by their success at environmental stewardship. Its criteria include the rate at which children die from respiratory diseases, fertility rates, water quality, fish stocks, the emission of heat-trapping gases and the export of sodium dioxide, a crucial component of acid rain. Here is an edited version of the 2005 index:

- 1 FINLAND
- 2 NORWAY
- 3 URUGUAY
- 4 SWEDEN
- 5 ICELAND
- 6 CANADA
- 7 SWITZERLAND
- 8 GUYANA
- 9 ARGENTINA
- 10 AUSTRIA
- 11 BRAZIL
- 13 AUSTRALIA
- 14 NEW ZEALAND
- 16 PERU

- 21 THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

- 30 JAPAN
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- 33 RUSSIA

- 36 FRANCE

- 43 BHUTAN
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- 45 USA
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- 62 ISRAEL
- 63 TANZANIA

- 66 UK



COCHABAMBA MARK II AS BOLIVIANS REJECT WATER MULTINATIONAL

Just as Cochabamba famously did five years ago, another city in Bolivia is battling to reverse the privatisation of its water services by a foreign multinational. Water prices in El Alto, situated 200 miles north of Cochabamba, have risen by 35 per cent since French water giant Suez took over the city's water services. With Bolivia gripped by economic turmoil, the cost for El Alto households of hooking up to water and sewage services is now equivalent to more than six months' of the national minimum wage. Julian Perez, an adviser to the Federation of El Alto Neighborhoods, said: 'Without water there is no life. So really it is life that the company is [denying] the people of El Alto.'

Bolivia's president Carlos Mesa is sympathetic to the plight of El Alto's residents, and has issued a formal decree that his government is going to take back control of their water services. But Suez is not so keen to go. A company spokesperson said: 'Shareholders will use all the legal recourses at their disposal to protect their rights. Ending a contract that is compliant, and obtaining indisputable results, will not be an easy task for the Bolivian government.'

Meanwhile, one of the corporations involved in the failed partnership that briefly took over Cochabamba's water services continues to demand compensation for lost profits following the privatisation's reversal. Spanish firm Abengoa has not been put off by co-investor Bechtel's having to settle for 30 cents after it originally sued for \$25m in compensation. Water privatisation was a loan condition forced on Bolivia by the World Bank.

■ www.democracyctr.org

Renewably powered human rights abuses

Whoever said torture couldn't be green? The first two of four wind turbines have been completed at Guantánamo Bay; when the other two are up and running between 25 and 30 per cent of the detention centre will be running on wind. The likes of former British detainee Moazzam Begg may be mentally and emotionally scarred for life by their experiences at the base, but at least the US army is doing its bit to look after the environment. Or not. The real reason all this is happening is to do with Guantánamo Bay's Cuban location. The Americans want the base to be entirely self-sufficient, so they do not have to do any deals with the evil Castro.



BEANS MEANS CASH FOR JAMIE OLIVER
Mockney celebrity chef Jamie Oliver has admitted that he accepted £15,000 to promote the products of processed food manufacturer Heinz. The fee was part of a product placement deal whereby Oliver agreed to feature a luxury version of beans on toast on the menu at his restaurant. 'I should have been brighter,' acknowledged Oliver, who last month stuck up for farmed Scottish Salmon and got called a whore by fellow chef Clarissa Dickson-Wright into the bargain.

FOOD GIANTS MAKING POOR POORER

Multinational food companies threaten the fight against poverty in developing countries, a new report says. ActionAid's *Power Hungry: six reasons to regulate global food corporations* says that the activities of multinational food and agribusiness companies, such as Nestlé, Monsanto, Parmalat, Syngenta and Unilever, threaten the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of poor farmers and undermine basic human rights. In Brazil, the report reveals, 50,000 dairy farmers have been forced out of business following a series of corporate takeovers by Nestlé and Parmalat. And last year in India an estimated 12,000 children worked on cotton-seed farms supplying subsidiaries of Bayer, Monsanto, Syngenta and Unilever. 'From our morning tea, to the cotton in our T-shirts or the chocolate bars we eat, a few multinationals are reaping benefits from the products we buy every day,' says ActionAid policy officer Julian Oram. 'Our research shows that the world's poorest farmers are in effect subsidising the world's largest food companies, and in many cases are paying with their health, livelihoods and basic rights.'

■ To download ActionAid's report, visit: www.actionaid.org.uk/wps/content/documents/power_hungry.pdf



smarter than the average politician?

DUMB ANIMALS?

Crows have innate tool-using skills

Scientists at Oxford University have found that birds have natural tool-using skills. They bred four New Caledonian crows in captivity, two of which were taught by human researchers how to use twigs to pry food out of difficult places. The other two were kept in isolation and not shown how to use tools, but began to use twigs for that purpose anyway. The experiment suggests that tool-using skills are inherited rather than learned among New Caledonian crows.



THE SCIENCE OF SEXISM

Lawrence Summers, the president of Harvard University, has put his foot in it again. Summers has suggested that a dearth of elite female scientists may be due in part to women not having the same 'innate' or 'natural' ability as men do in some fields. Back in 1991, when he was chief economist for the World Bank, Summers wrote an internal memo saying that the bank should encourage the migration of 'dirty industries' to the less-developed world. He said: 'The economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest-wage [countries] is impeccable and we should face up to that.'

BALTIC FISH TOO TOXIC TO EAT

Fish from some areas of the Baltic are so contaminated that they may be too toxic for human consumption, says the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The WWF report *Clean Baltic within Reach?* reveals that in the late 1980s and early 1990s a total of 31 kilograms of the banned class of chemicals polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) accumulated in fish caught from the Baltic Sea every year. PCBs act as hormone-disruptors and have been linked to cancer. In addition, some of the fatty fish found in the Baltic, including salmon and sea trout, fail to

comply with EU requirements for dioxins, a type of chemical pollutant emitted by incinerators and which is similar to the substance that was used to poison Ukraine's newly elected president Viktor Yushchenko. The level of brominated flame retardants, another type of hormone-disruptor, found in herring is 50 times higher in the Baltic than in the Atlantic. And the report reveals that as well as fish being contaminated, seals, eagles, porpoises and many other species of animal are also being affected.

■ www.wwf.org



WASHINGTON IN CLIMATE CHANGE DENIALS... AGAIN

The US delegation to a recent global conference on natural disasters pushed to have all references to global warming removed from a UN action plan that was debated there. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had listed global warming as one of several factors that could result in 'a future where disasters could increasingly threaten the world's economy and... population'. But Mark Lagon, the head of the US delegation at January's World Conference on Disaster Reduction, said he didn't want the supposed 'controversy' over global warming to 'distract' people at the meeting.

Separately, US lobbyists have been smearing the British government's chief scientific adviser's position on climate change. According to *The Independent* newspaper, professor Sir David King has been 'aggressively targeted by American lobbyists trying to discredit his view that man-made pollution is behind global warming'. Myron Ebell, of the global warming skeptics the Competitive Enterprise Institute and the Cooler Heads Coalition, called King an 'alarmist with ridiculous views who knows nothing about climate change'. King was equally damning about Ebell, commenting: 'He works for this right-wing, so-called think-tank [but] I don't think there is much thinking going on.'

NEWS: CLIMATE CHANGE

GLOBAL WARNINGS

Blair softens on climate change goals

Senior officials in Tony Blair's government tried to have stringent greenhouse-gas reduction targets removed from the EU's official climate change policy. They requested that language demanding 50 to 80 per cent reductions from 1990 levels by 2050 be removed or replaced with the more woolly call for 'significantly enhanced reduction efforts'.

Other EU member states

over-ruled the British requests as greens accused Blair of once again kowtowing to Washington. The UK prime minister's speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos did nothing to allay the environmentalists' concerns. As Ian Bell wrote in the *Sunday Herald* following Blair's speech, 'Pandering more than somewhat to the American energy lobby, he even said that evidence for climate change is "still disputed".'



CARBON TRADING FOR CAR DRIVERS

Business is increasingly looking at ways to profit from the burgeoning market in carbon emissions quotas. In the US, for example, Benven LLC, a company owned and managed by MBA students at Pennsylvania University's Wharton business school, runs a programme called TerraPass. The scheme allows motorists to make investments that counteract the environmental impact of their automobile use. The money is used to purchase credits at the Chicago Climate Exchange, a newly launched commodities market for trading carbon credits.



THIRD OF PLANET AFFECTED BY DROUGHT

The amount of the planet's land area suffering from drought has more than doubled since the 1970s, according to a recent study by the Colorado-based National Center for Atmospheric Research. And scientists at the federally funded centre say that global warming, rather than any drop in rainfall patterns, is responsible for around half of this growth. Drought now affects 30 per cent of the world's land area. The areas most affected are Europe, Asia, Canada, western and southern Africa, and eastern Australia.



TEN YEARS TO SAVE THE WORLD

An international group of experts has identified what it sees as global warming's 'point of no return', and it's likely to occur within as little as 10 years' time. According to the report *Meeting The Climate Challenge*, the global average temperature may have risen by 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit from its pre-industrial level by the end of the next 10 years. The report, jointly issued by the British think-tank the Institute for Public Policy Research, the Washington-based Center for American Progress and the Australia Institute, says this would make a series of disastrous climate events practically inevitable. To try to avert such a scenario, *Meeting The Climate Challenge* calls on all G8 nations to produce a quarter of their electricity from renewable sources by 2025 and to double their expenditures on low-carbon energy technologies by 2010.



PESTICIDES LOBBY LAUNCHES 'GREEN' PR CAMPAIGN

A new pro-pesticide US lobby group has been formed under the guise of promoting the value of lawns. Project Evergreen, which describes itself as a 'trade association formed by pesticide makers, applicators, garden centres and mower manufacturers', is to launch a PR campaign touting the 'health and lifestyle benefits of thick, green lawns'. Manufacturers have been hit recently by laws passed in 70 US cities restricting the use of pesticides. Hence, one advert for the campaign reads: 'Legislation and regulations have been throwing the green industry [sic] some rough punches... We're about to start fighting back.' And Allen James, the president of the pesticide-industry lobbying group Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, said: 'Local communities generally do not have the expertise on issues about pesticides to make responsible decisions.'

■ www.pan-uk.org



MONSANTO FOUND GUILTY OF BRIBERY

Monsanto has been forced by the US authorities to pay \$1.5m in fines after it admitted spending more than \$700,000 on bribes in Indonesia. The scandal has provoked calls for the resignation of the firm's president and CEO Hugh Grant, who was in charge of its business operations in Southeast Asia when the payments began at the end of the 1990s. The US Department of Justice and Securities and Exchange Commission charged

the biotech giant with violating America's Foreign Corrupt Practices Act by bribing an Indonesian government official to waive a strict environmental requirement needed to plant GM cotton seeds in the country.

The Monsanto president currently acts as an adviser to a committee sponsored by the Scottish Executive, and Green Party Member of the Scottish Parliament Robin Harper has urged that Grant should now be dismissed from the role. He told the Scottish Parliament: 'During 1997-1998, Grant was managing director of Monsanto's Asia Pacific division and was promoted to having global responsibility for agriculture. He was not on holiday with Monsanto; he had overall responsibility during most of that period of corrupt practice.' Harper told the press: 'The big issue this week is... the fact that the CEO of a corporation convicted of systematic bribery in its international dealings is on a government-sponsored advisory committee... Ministers must intervene now and demand the resignation of Hugh Grant... Hugh Grant has got to go.'

Meanwhile, confidence within Monsanto can be assessed by a recent investment report which pointed out that company insiders have dumped a massive 21.9 per cent of their shares in the corporation in the past few months.



ELEPHANTS COMMIT HIGHWAY ROBBERY

Elephants in Thailand's Khao-Ang Rue-Ni wildlife sanctuary have been holding up trucks carrying sugar cane, tapioca and fruit. According to the sanctuary's director You Senatham, incidents of elephantine highway robbery occur with the onset of the dry season, when food supplies diminish. Typically, says Senatham, a herd's leader will step out of the jungle and block the road. When trucks stop other elephants will approach and begin stealing food from their rear. Senatham added that the elephants had never resorted to violence, and that the herd leader would sound a general retreat as soon as reserve wardens arrived at the crime scene.

WILL THE NEXT SCIENCE MINISTER BE ANOTHER OF TONY'S CRONIES?

Science minister Lord Sainsbury is leaving politics at the next general election, to help in the family business. But don't imagine that a re-elected Tony Blair would choose someone less partial to succeed the Labour Party donor and fervently pro-GM Sainsbury. Meet Lord Drayson.

Who is he? Lord

Drayson is the former head of both the pharmaceuticals firm PowderJect and the biotechnology lobby group the BioIndustry Association.

Is he pro-GM, too? Put it this way, the BioIndustry Association's motto is 'promoting UK biotechnology'.

Is he a Labour donor?

Drayson has given money to Labour on more than one occasion. The former admirer of Margaret Thatcher made a £50,000 donation to Labour while the government was deciding what company should be awarded a Ministry of Defence (MoD) smallpox vaccine contract 2001. And he gave a further donation of £500,000 to the party just six weeks after the PM made him a peer.

Tell me more about that smallpox vaccine contract?

The Blair government awarded PowderJect the contract without any competition. It was worth £32m. It later emerged that Drayson had been in a group of businessmen who had breakfasted with the prime minister in Downing Street at about the time the MoD experts was debating what type of vaccine to buy.

■ www.gmwatch.org

'You've felt it your entire life,
that there's something wrong with the world.
You don't know what it is,
but it's there,
like a splinter in your mind,
driving you mad'

...is Morpheus' stark pronouncement in 1999's blockbuster movie, **The Matrix**. He then offers Neo the choice of either the **Blue Pill**, the one that allows him to hold on to his delusions, or the **Red Pill**, a pill that allows him to glimpse the horror underlying the world's economy, what some might argue represents today's neo-liberal, **American Business Model** (aka the Washington Consensus) and the needless ecological devastation it wreaks for short term gains at the expense of long term survival. The following are Blue Pill stories from today's headlines followed by some Red Pill realities.

Which do you swallow?

Max Keiser takes a look behind this month's headlines



Banks report record profits

Record profits of more than £30 billion are expected by the big five high-street banks as their combined profits have soared by 16 per cent. (www.telegraph.co.uk, 26 January)

HSBC top of the heap

Banking giant HSBC, which has global operations in the UK, Europe, Asia and the Americas, has reported a record annual pre-tax profit of £6.86 billion. Its figure for 2003 is the highest recorded by a UK-based bank, and represents a 33 per cent increase on 2002. HSBC's surge in profit came after it saw a 54 per cent rise in turnover to £22 billion, boosted by its takeover of US loan firm Household International. (www.bbc.com, March 2004)



Bradford & Bingley unveils instant negative equity loan

'While it is not part of a bank's job to moralise about its customers' behaviour, you would think that Bradford & Bingley (B&B) could have chosen a better time to come up with its 130 per cent mortgage. B&B not only lends a homebuyer the full price of the property but bungs on another third [for spending] as the borrower likes. The instant negative-equity mortgage, in effect.' (*The Times*, January 24)

UK consumer debt breaks £1 trillion mark

'Having broken the trillion-pound mark, UK consumer debt is at an historical high and now amounts to more than the whole

external debt of Africa and South America combined.' (4ni.co.uk, 12 January)

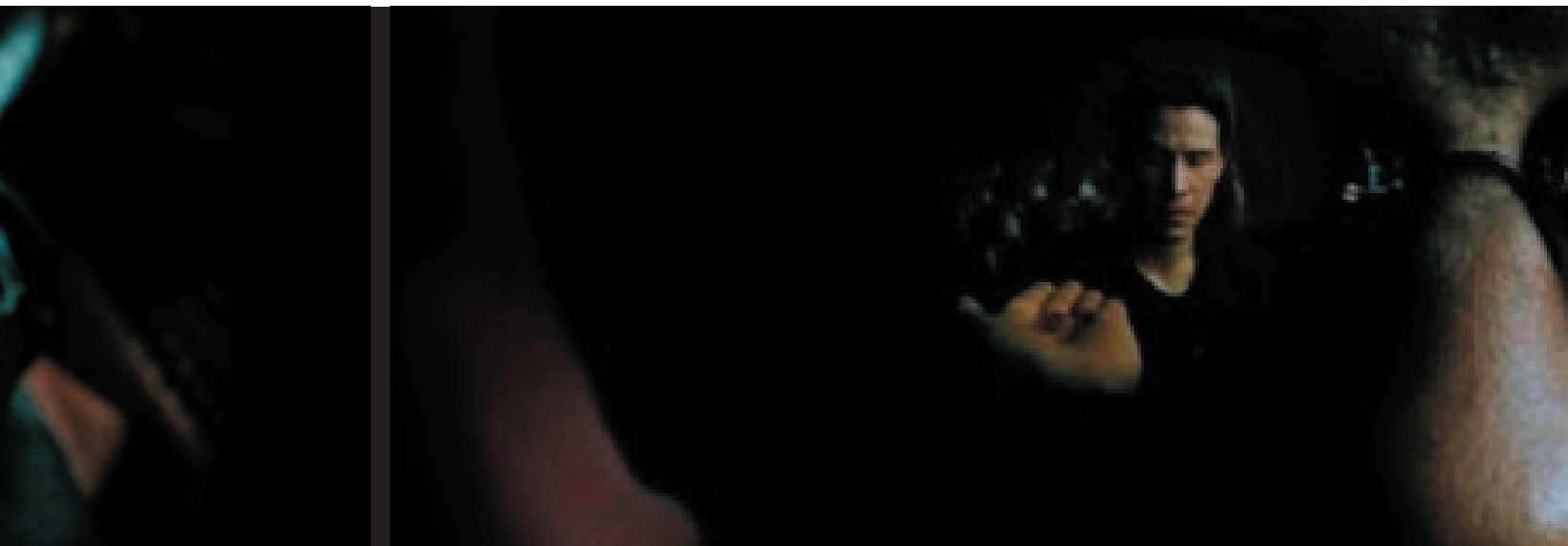
Comment

Banks are the new drug lords, and the drug of choice for millions in Britain and America is debt. It doesn't help that celebrities like Jennifer Aniston are doing TV ads for Barclaycard. (Remember, last year Barclays' former chief executive Matt Barette told the House of Commons select committee he wouldn't want his children using his bank's usurious, predatory credit cards.) More shockingly, Robert De Niro is starring in an ad made by legendary film director Martin Scorsese, which peddles the American Express card. In the ad, De Niro is shown crying over the pit left over from the attacks on the World Trade Centre, mumbling something about 'my heartbreak'. The sequence is followed immediately by the slogan 'my card, American Express'. Shameful.



Blair the green visionary

'I believe climate change to be the world's greatest environmental challenge. Our effect on the environment, and in particular on climate change, is large and growing. To summarise my argument at the outset: from the start of the industrial revolution more than 200 years ago, developed nations have achieved ever greater prosperity and higher living standards. But through this period our activities have come to affect our atmosphere, oceans, geology, chemistry and biodiversity. What is now plain



is that the emission of greenhouse gases, associated with industrialisation and strong economic growth... is causing global warming at a rate that began as significant, has become alarming and is simply unsustainable in the long-term. And by long-term, I do not mean centuries ahead; I mean within the lifetime of my children certainly; and possibly within my own. And by unsustainable, I do not mean a phenomenon causing problems of adjustment; I mean a challenge so far-reaching in its impact and irreversible in its destructive power, that it alters radically human existence.' (Tony Blair, www.number10.gov.uk, 14 September)



Blair the green fraud

'Tony Blair's international credibility on climate change was seriously damaged last night as it emerged that the government tried secretly to ditch key global warming targets. Leaked documents reveal that the UK sought to remove targets that would reduce carbon dioxide emissions during high-level meetings to formulate Europe's climate policy.' (*The Observer*, 16 January)



The largesse of Wal-Mart

'"Wal-Mart has always been a part of the community, helping the community any way that it can", says [Wal-Mart] community coordinator Beverly Walker. On Tuesday it helped by giving money to non-profit organisations, some of which

desperately need the money. "It's just a blessing and it will help our ministry. It will help us do some things that we need to do and I'm excited," says Patricia Wells. She knew she was getting a check for Living Water Christian Fellowship, but she didn't know how much it would be. She says: "I was thinking like maybe, \$200 or \$300, but \$1,000? It's a blessing.'" (www.walb-tv.com, 25 January)



Wal-Mart grows rich on government subsidies

'For two years running, *Fortune* [magazine] has named Wal-Mart the most admired company in America. It is arguably the defining company of the present era. A key component (arguably the key component) of the company's business model is undercompensating employees and externalising costs onto society. A February 2004 report issued by [US congressman] George Miller tabulated some of those costs. The report estimated that one Wal-Mart store employing 200 people may result in a cost to federal taxpayers of \$420,750 per year: about \$2,103 per employee. These public costs include free and reduced lunches for Wal-Mart families, housing assistance, federal tax credits and deductions for low-income families, and federal contributions to health insurance programmes for low-income children.' (www.commondreams.org, 24 January)



Fantasy author nails global warming lie

'Neo-cons and multinational corporations enthusiastically embraced Michael Crichton's most recent novel *State of Fear* as their new bible. Crichton believes the greens are "fomenting false fears in order to raise money" through grants and other means, and asserts scientists can't predict what will happen 100 years down the road.' (*Tahlequah Daily Press*, 21 January)



Start saving for very rainy days

Last year the world's second-largest re-insurer, Swiss Re, warned that the costs of global warming threatened to spiral out of control. The economic costs of global warming threatened to double to £81 billion a year in 10 years, hitting insurers with [up to] \$21 billion in claims, or the equivalent of one World Trade Center attack annually. Swiss Re observed: "There is a danger that human intervention will accelerate and intensify natural climate changes to such a point that it will become impossible to adapt our socio-economic systems in time. The human race can lead itself into this climatic catastrophe, or it can avert it.'" (*The Boston Globe*, 11 January).

Max Keiser is the founder of financial activist website www.karmabanque.com

BEHIND THE LABEL

OLAY REGENERIST REPLENISHING CREAM

Dead smooth or alive and wrinkly. The choice is yours

BY PAT THOMAS

'40 is the new 30,' proclaimed a recent 'regenerist survey' conducted on behalf of the UK's number-one skin-care brand, Olay. The statement might have made a good contribution to *Private Eye's* Neophiliacs column had not the implicit message of the survey been so disturbing. Our population is getting older. By the year 2010 around 40 per cent of female Europeans will be aged over 50. Of the more than 2,000 women surveyed by Olay, most spent an average of £200, and some a whopping £500, a year on anti-ageing treatments. Globally, the picture is much the same. The skin-care market is valued as being worth around £21 billion a year and rising, and anti-wrinkle creams make up a sizeable proportion of sales. Panic buying is the only reasonable way to describe it.

Most of today's anti-ageing formulas boast sophisticated technology and unique ingredients. But at the most basic level there is very little difference between them. What is more, many contain ingredients that can accelerate skin damage and which may even have more serious health implications over the longer term.

Regenerist is Olay's top brand. It's costly but claims to 'harness the latest peptide technology in an exclusive amino-peptide complex'. The product needs to be well absorbed, but that's

not much of a challenge as facial skin is thinner than skin elsewhere and Regenerist contains penetration enhancers to help the process along. The effect is superficial and temporary, however, lasting only as long as you keep using the product.

Regenerist contains the usual range of skin irritants, strong perfumes and colours. Full safety data appear to be lacking for some of its ingredients. However, it does contain carcinogenic acrylamide, triethanolamine (which can form cancer-causing oily compounds called nitrosamines) and Teflon (recently dubbed by environmentalists as the 'new DDT'). Regenerist also contains a range of ultraviolet filters, enough to have a potential additive effect in the process of skin damage. Sun-screens have become de rigueur in anti-wrinkle formulas, almost to the point of insanity: scan the label of some night creams, and you will find UV filters in these as well.

The British facial skin-care market generated sales of £478m last year. Olay (owned by household products giant Procter & Gamble) claims nearly 19 per cent of this market, more than double the share of its nearest competitor, L'Oreal. According to Olay's figures, four Regenerist products are sold in the UK every minute.



INGREDIENTS	PURPOSE	ADVERSE EFFECTS
Butyl methoxydibenzoylmethane (B-MDM) (also known as avobenzone)	Sun-screen	Skin rashes, allergic reactions and inflammation: B-MDM is a photo allergen, which means sunlight triggers the response; questionable stability in the sun means B-MDM may break down into chemicals that inhibit the skin's natural defences against sunlight.
Dimethicone	Synthetic silicone-based moisturiser; film former	Skin irritation. Film formers can make skin feel smooth, but. Because they do not allow the skin to breathe, they may exacerbate skin irritation caused by sweat or other substances.
Polyacrylamide	Thickener.	Carcinogenic. Acrylamide can be absorbed through unbroken skin. Animal studies have led to its being categorised as a probable cause of cancer in humans.
Ethylhexyl salicylate (also known as octyl salicylate)	Sun-screen	Skin irritant; penetration enhancer; some salicylates have hormone-disrupting potential; people sensitive to aspirin may find they are also allergic to this.
Triethanolamine	Surfactant; emulsifier; dispersant; pH adjuster	Contact dermatitis; may form carcinogenic nitrosamines during storage, on the skin or in the body after absorption; liver and kidney damage has been observed in animals after chronic exposure.
PTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene) (also known as Teflon)	Film former; skin 'improver'	Carcinogenic; birth defects; weakens the immune system. Perfluorinated chemicals are persistent, and have been found in the blood of some 90 per cent of US citizens, and in some of them at levels as high as those found in factory workers.
Ammonium polyacrylate	Dispersant	May be contaminated with impurities (eg, acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, 2-ethylhexyl acrylate) linked to cancer or other significant health problems.
Disodium EDTA	Preservative; anti-oxidant	Irritating to eyes and skin; penetration enhancer: alters skin structure, allowing harmful chemicals to penetrate deeper into the skin and reach the bloodstream.
PEG-100 Stearate	Emulsifier	May contain impurities linked to breast cancer – eg, 1,4-dioxane, ethylene oxide
Ethylparaben, methylparaben, propylparaben	Preservatives	Skin irritation, contact dermatitis, contact allergies; oestrogen mimics. Environmental oestrogen mimics have been linked to breast cancer.
Parfum	Fragrance	Contact dermatitis; respiratory irritant; asthma; nervous system disruption – eg, headache, mood swings, depression, forgetfulness and irritation; can contain artificial musks, which are hormone-disrupting, liver-toxic and neurotoxic.
CI 16035, CI 19140	Colourant	Have both respectively been associated with lymphatic tumours and allergic reactions in animals.

ALTERNATIVES

No external treatment will be as effective as maintaining a healthy lifestyle. If you are going to use cosmetics, try these:

Barefoot Botanicals

(www.barefoot-botanicals.com)

Essentially Yours (www.essentially-yours.co.uk)

Green People (www.greenpeople.co.uk)

Higher Nature (www.highernature.co.uk)

Weleda (www.weleda.co.uk)

Aubrey Organics (www.aubrey-organics.com):

Available in the UK from Au Naturel (0800 0851 697)

Neal's Yard (www.nealsyardremedies.com)

Jason (www.jason-natural.com)

Rio Health (www.riohealth.co.uk)

Mybeingwell.com www.mybeingwell.com

Earthbound Organics www.earthbound.co.uk

Purenuffstuff www.purenuffstuff.co.uk

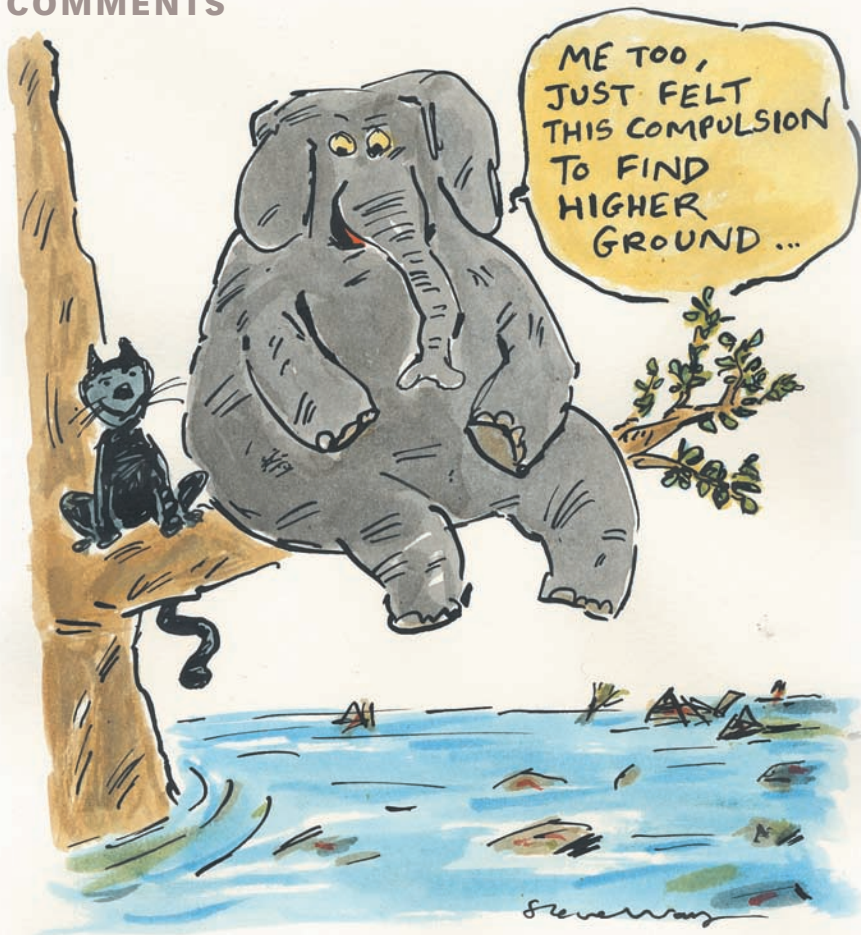
Akamuti www.akamuti.co.uk

Primavera Aromatherapy www.primavera.co.uk



Pat Thomas is the author of several books on the environment and health, including:

Cleaning Yourself to Death: how safe is your home? and Living Dangerously: are everyday toxins making you sick?(both published by Newleaf) and Under the Weather: how the weather and climate affect our health (Fusion Press).



LISTEN TO THE ANIMALS

Why did so many animals escape December's tsunami?

BY RUPERT SHELDRAKE

Elephants in Sri Lanka and Sumatra moved to high ground before the giant waves struck; they did the same in Thailand, trumpeting before they did so. According to a villager in Bang Koe, Thailand, a herd of buffalo was grazing by the beach when the animals 'suddenly lifted their heads and looked out to sea, ears standing upright'; they turned and stampeded up the hill, followed by bewildered villagers, whose lives were thereby saved. At Ao Sane beach, near Phuket, dogs ran up to the hill tops, and at Galle in Sri Lanka dog owners were puzzled by the fact that their animals refused to go for their usual morning walk on the beach. In Cuddalore District in Tamil Nadu, southern India, buffaloes, goats and dogs escaped, as did a nesting colony of flamingos that flew to higher ground. In the Andaman Islands 'stone age' tribal groups moved away from the coast before the disaster, having been alerted by the behaviour of animals.

How did they know? The usual speculation is that the animals picked up tremors caused by the under-sea earthquake. This explanation seems unconvincing to me. There would have been tremors all over Southeast Asia, not just in the afflicted coastal areas. And if animals can predict earthquake-related disasters by sensing slight tremors, why can't seismologists?

Animals also seem to know when other kinds of calamities are about to strike. In my recent book *The Sense of Being Stared At* I summarise a large body of evidence of unusual animal behaviour before earthquakes, including those in Kobe in 1995 and Assisi in 1997 and recent quakes in California. In all cases there were many reports of wild and domesticated animals behaving in fearful, anxious or unusual ways several hours or even days before the earthquakes struck. The same is true of the 1999 earthquake in Turkey, with its epicentre near Izmit:

dogs were howling for hours in advance, and many cats and birds were behaving unusually.

On 28 February 2001, a 6.8-magnitude quake struck the Seattle area, and once again animals behaved unusually beforehand. Some cats were said to be hiding for no apparent reason up to 12 hours in advance of the earthquake; others were behaving in an anxious way or 'freaking out' an hour or two before; some dogs were barking 'frantically'; and goats and other animals were showing obvious signs of fear.

No one knows how some animals sense earthquakes coming. Perhaps they pick up subtle sounds or vibrations in the earth; maybe they respond to subterranean gases released prior to earthquakes, or react to changes in the earth's electrical field. They may also sense in advance what is about to happen in a way that lies beyond current scientific understanding, through some kind of presentiment.

Animals can also anticipate man-made catastrophes such as air raids. During WWII, many families in Britain and Germany relied on their pets' behaviour to warn them of impending air raids, well in advance of official notification. These warnings occurred when enemy planes were still hundreds of miles away, long before the animals could have heard them coming. Some dogs in London even anticipated the explosion of German V-2 rockets. These missiles were supersonic and hence could not have been heard in advance.

Unusual animal behaviour also occurs before avalanches. On 23 February 1999 an avalanche devastated the Austrian village of Galtür in the Tyrol, killing dozens of people. The previous day, the chamois (small goat-like antelopes) came down from the mountains into the valleys: something they never usually do. Through surveys in alpine villages in Austria and Switzerland, I found that the animals most likely to anticipate avalanches are chamois and ibexes, and also dogs. Although it is still unexplained, this ability would obviously be of survival value in mountain animals, and would be favoured by natural selection.

With very few exceptions, the ability of animals to anticipate disasters has

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In intensive farming, animals are viewed as units of production to be ground relentlessly through the system. Nothing could be more different at Kip's farm in the Cotswolds, where the livestock is actively engaged in deciding how the farm is managed.



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been ignored by Western scientists, who dismiss stories of animal anticipations as anecdotal or superstitious. The Chinese, in contrast, have encouraged people in earthquake-prone areas to report unusual animal behaviour since the 1970s; and Chinese scientists have an impressive track record in predicting earthquakes. In several cases they issued warnings that enabled cities to be evacuated hours before devastating earthquakes struck, saving tens of thousands of lives.

By following the lead of the Chinese and paying attention to unusual animal behaviour, earthquake warning systems might be feasible in California, Greece, Turkey, Japan and elsewhere. Millions of pet owners and farmers in earthquake-prone areas could be asked to take part in this project through the media. They could be told what kinds of behaviour their pets and other animals might show if an earthquake were imminent: in general, signs of anxiety or fear. If people noticed these signs, or any other unusual behaviour, they could immediately call a telephone hotline or send a message via the internet.

A computer system could analyse the places of origin of the incoming calls. If there were an unusual number of calls it would sound an alarm, and display on a map the places from which the calls were coming. There would probably be a background of false alarms from people whose pets were sick, for example, and there might also be scattered hoax calls. But if there were a sudden surge of calls from a particular region, it could indicate that an earthquake was imminent. The same principles would apply to tsunamis.

To explore the potential for animal-based warning systems would cost a small fraction of current earthquake and tsunami research. By doing this research we would be sure to learn something, and could probably save many lives.

At present, many millions of pounds are being allocated for setting up tsunami warning systems. I hope that those responsible for spending this money will not ignore what animals can tell us.

■ Dr Rupert Sheldrake is a biologist and author of *The Sense of Being Stared At: and other aspects of the extended mind* (Arrow, £7.99); www.sheldrake.org

ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE TSUNAMI

THE ELEPHANTS AND THE TOURISTS

Thai elephants foresaw the arrival of the giant waves that left a trail of death and destruction throughout Southeast Asia, and their intuition saved the lives of a dozen tourists. The elephants started to cry at dawn, just as an earthquake measuring nine degrees on the Richter Scale devastated the Indonesian island of Sumatra thousands of miles away. 'We have never seen elephants cry before, so it completely amazed me,' explained Dang Salangam, a 36-year-old elephant-keeper on the ultra-touristy beach of Khao Lak. The keepers managed to calm the elephants down. But they started to cry again an hour later, and the keepers, who know the animals well, were unable to comfort them. 'The elephants were inconsolable. They broke their thick chains in order to escape and headed towards a hill behind the resort,' explained keeper Wit Aniwat. At least 3,800 people were soon to die on the beach. 'Not long after, we saw the tsunami in the distance,' Aniwat said. The keepers persuaded a few of the elephants to return to the resort in order to save some of the tourists. The elephants lifted the tourists onto their backs with their trunks, rushed to the top of the hill and stopped. The giant waves had washed a kilometre inland but had not quite reached the area the elephants had chosen to head for.

BATS AND DOGS

Ravi Corea, the president of the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation, knows of two stories of animals seemingly forecasting the disaster. In one instance a friend living in the south of Sri Lanka said he saw bats flying at great speed inland. Yet as it was daytime the nocturnal animals should have been asleep in a cave. Moments later the tsunami struck. Another friend told Corea that he believed his dogs saved his life: every morning he was accustomed to taking his dogs for a run along the beach; but on the day of the tsunami, the dogs would not go, refusing to leave the house.

FLAMINGOS AND ANTELOPE

According to forest officials at Point Calimere wetland sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, birds, in particular flamingos, which nest in low-lying areas, took to the air and flew to high ground long before the tsunami hit. In the same park about 1,700 blackbuck antelope survived because they also ran for higher ground. Forest officer Akash Deep Baruah said: 'On the morning of 26 December our lighthouse watchman saw the blackbucks running away from the seashore. He found it unusual. About five minutes later the first wave hit the coast.'

THE OLD MAN AND THE CROCODILE

An old Sri Lankan man believes that he was saved from the tsunami by the benevolence of a crocodile. The wave swept Upali Gunasekera from his garden and into the water, where, failing to keep afloat, he reached out for a log. Except the log was actually an estuarine crocodile which he says he had regularly seen in his garden. Having already been in the water for seven hours, he feared for his life, but rather than eat him the crocodile used its snout to push him to the shore.

THE HIPPO AND THE TORTOISE

A dehydrated baby hippo was found by Kenyan wildlife rangers after it had been swept out to sea and back to the shore. They took it to the Haller Park animal facility in Mombasa. Having pined for his mother, the 300-kilogram animal made friends with a giant male Aldabran tortoise named Mzee, which is Swahili for 'old man'. The two of them now swim, eat and sleep together, with the hippo trailing behind the lugubrious old tortoise as if it were his mother.

THE LESSONS OF THE TSUNAMI

The Indian Ocean disaster is a wake-up call: we cannot continue to disregard nature the way we do

BY DR VANDANA SHIVA

Nature could not have picked a more appropriate time and place to send us a message of her hidden powers, that we are first and foremost citizens and children of the earth sharing a common fate, and a common desire to help and heal. The Christmas-New Year holidays bring the entire world to Asia's beaches. The earthquake-induced Indian Ocean tsunami on 26 December became a global tragedy because it impacted not just Asians, but visitors from across the world.

As 2004 gave way to 2005, nature's fury in the Indian Ocean filled the minds and hearts of everyone in every corner of the earth. And while the immediate tragedy faced by millions must be our first response, there are long-term lessons the tsunami brings us. We need to listen to the earth.

The first lesson is about development in coastal regions. Over the past few years of market-driven globalisation, respect for the fragility and vulnerability of coastal ecosystems has been sacrificed for hotels and holiday resorts, shrimp farms and refineries. Mangroves and coral reefs, which previously acted as protective barriers in the face of storms, cyclones, hurricanes and tsunamis, have been relentlessly destroyed.

When we carried out a study of the cyclone that killed 30,000 people in the east-coast Indian state of Orissa in 1999 we found that the destruction was much more severe where the mangroves had been cut down. A people's movement against industrial shrimp farming then led to a Supreme Court order to shut down farms within 500 metres of the Indian coast.

Instead of obeying the judges' order, the shrimp industry tried to undo India's environmental laws for protection of coastal zones by influencing the government to exempt the shrimp industry from them. This definitely had a role in increasing the destruction caused by the tsunami. Every acre of shrimp farm has an ecological footprint of 100 acres in terms of destruction of mangroves and land and sea destroyed by pollution. Every dollar generated by exports of shrimp leaves behind \$10 of ecological and economic destruction at the local level.

Nagapattinam, the area worst impacted by the tsunami in India, was also the worst impacted by industrial shrimp farms. By contrast, the indigenous tribes of the Andaman and Nicobar islands (the Onge, the Jarawa, the Sentinelese, the Shompen), who live with a light ecological footprint, had the lowest casualties, even though they were the closest communities in the Indian subcontinent to the epicentre of the earthquake.

TO MEDICAL DOCTORS, SCIENTISTS and STUDENTS

FROM: MONEIM A. FADALI, M.D., M.Ch., F.A.C.S., F.R.C.S. (C.), F.A.C.C., F.A.C.P. PRESIDENT, DOCTORS & LAWYERS FOR RESPONSIBLE MEDICINE*

Stunned and dismayed to learn that Oxford University is building a new biomedical research facility for Animal Experimentation. This misguided, utterly unnecessary undertaking by the venerable Oxford University prompts this response:

As a practising surgeon of long-standing I have no doubt that animal experimentation (vivisection), chiefly because of interspecies differences, misleads research, harms people and justifies human experimentation. Extrapolating from animal to human is a risky venture. Vivisectors may try drugs, procedures and gadgets on animals a thousand and one times, but the moment they move on to the human condition, they will be experimenting on humans. Pseudoscience! No wonder humans pay the price. One of the latest disasters is "Vioxx" of Merck Co. Inc., announced only weeks ago - a grim reminder of the folly and falsehood of animal experimentation "Vioxx", to relieve the pain of arthritis, silenced the hearts of many who used it.

Breakthroughs in medicine did not come out of animal experimentation as its advocates and practitioners claim: momentous discoveries, too numerous to include here, have been made that had nothing to do with animal research.

While reliable methods are available, why opt for the deceptive and tormenting? Cell culture, tissue culture, organ culture, epidemiological studies, clinical research (not experimentation), autopsy, bacterial cultures and DNA studies - all are dependable and worthy of our confidence.

I hope Oxford University will reconsider its decision, in the name of the countless numbers of human beings that have been seriously harmed by animal experimentation. Certainly the toll will keep rising if this misguided practice is allowed to continue.

Moneim A. Fadali, M.D. DLRM: PO Box 302, London N8 9HD

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Observing that the tsunami left less destruction in regions protected by mangroves than was the case at barren and exposed beaches, the government of Kerala has started a 350 million rupee project for insulating the state's coasts against tidal surges with mangroves.

Hopefully, governments will learn one of the lessons that the earth has tried to give: 'development' that ignores ecological limits and the environmental imperative can only lead to unimaginable destruction.

The second lesson that the tsunami teaches us is that a world that puts markets and profits before nature and people is ill-equipped to deal with such disasters. We pride ourselves that we live in an 'information age' and in 'knowledge economies'; yet the knowledge of the 8.9 Richter scale earthquake could not be communicated by the US Geological Survey in time for the countries of the Indian Ocean to take appropriate action to save lives. While the stock markets of the world react instantaneously to the tiniest signals, while the entire outsourcing economy of information technologies is based on instantaneous communication, it has taken the world weeks to count how many died, how many have become homeless. Each day the number rises.

The tsunami tells us we do not live in an information age based on 'connectivity': we live in an age of ignorance, exclusion and disconnection. Animals and indigenous communities had the intelligence to anticipate the tsunami and protect themselves. The IT-embedded 21st century cultures lacked the natural intelligence to connect to the earthquake and tsunami in time to protect themselves.

We need to revisit our dominant concepts of intelligence and information and take lessons from the earth about living intelligently on the planet.

It has taken a tragedy of this scale to remind us that the IT revolution has evolved to serve markets; it has bypassed the needs of people. An article in the Indian media stated that the market will not be affected by the disaster. This, too, only reflects the disconnection between the health of the market and the health of the planet and her people.

A third lesson I draw from the tsunami is a foretaste of other environmental disasters in the making, including climate change. When the rising waters submerged the islands of the Maldives, I felt nature was telling us: 'This is what rising sea levels will look like; this is how entire societies will be robbed of their ecological space to live in peace on the planet.' While the US administration and environmental skeptics like Bjorn Lomborg continue to argue that the rich North cannot afford to

Hopefully, governments will learn the lesson that 'development' that ignores ecological limits and the environmental imperative can only lead to unimaginable destruction

take action to reduce CO2 emissions and work towards reducing the impact of climate change, the tsunami shows us how severe the costs of continuing business as usual can be. The tsunami should wake Lomborg up from his slumbering, and destroy the self-manufactured 'Copenhagen Consensus', which states that the impact of climate change will not be severe enough to call for a shift in economic policy and economic paradigms. Lomborg should ask the people of the Maldives whether they accept the inevitability of irreversibly rising sea levels due to fossil-fuel-induced climate change.

Besides the massive mobilisation of relief for the victims of the tsunami, we need immediate action for future justice for the future victims of climate change. As a leader of the Alliance of Small Island States said during negotiations on the UN climate change treaty, 'the strongest human instinct is not greed... It is survival, and we will not allow some to barter our homelands, our people and our cultures for short-term economic interest'. The incomplete work of climate justice needs to be speeded up in light of the tsunami. The Indian Ocean countries will face the impacts of displacement due to coastal flooding caused by rising sea levels. The tsunami provides a warning for us to prepare for a future based on earth justice, not the narrow, selfish calculus of the market.

The next disaster will not necessarily be a tsunami: it could be a flood caused by a dam-induced earthquake on the Ganges, where the Tehri dam is being built on a seismic fault. Water from the dam will be taken hundreds of miles to Delhi to be privatised by Suez, the world's biggest water profiteer. The 260.5-metre-high dam will impound 3.22 million cubic metres of water, which will extend up to 45 kilometres in the Bhagirathi valley and 25 kilometres up the river Bhilangana. If the dam triggers an earthquake, a 260-metre-high wall of water (that's 20 times higher than the tsunami) would wipe out the holy cities of Rishikesh and Haridwar in less than an hour and a half; in eight hours a 10-metre wall of water would hit Meerut, 214 kilometres downstream; in 12 hours, a 8.56-metre-high surge would reach Bulanshahar, 286 kilometres away.

The lessons about disaster preparedness from the tsunami need to be applied to all the disasters waiting to happen as a consequence of models of development that have brushed ecological costs and vulnerability aside for considerations of short-term growth. The best way to prepare for future disasters

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would be to reduce environmental vulnerability and increase ecological resilience instead of increasing environmental vulnerability and risks by externalising environmental costs from the calculus of economic growth.

The final lesson I draw from the biggest tragedy of modern times is that the public good and the social responsibility of governments cannot be sacrificed for private profit and corporate greed. For the survivors of the tsunami, food, water and medicine are the most urgent needs. At a time when public systems need to be mobilised to deliver these essential needs, corporate globalisation is rushing ahead with corporatisation and privatisation. While India and other countries need low-cost generic drugs to deal with the public health emergency that the tsunami has left behind, the Indian government has just passed a patent

ordinance that prevents the production of low-cost medicine. The incongruity between the world of corporate globalisation and the planet of people has been exposed by the tsunami: India's patent ordinance was passed on the same day as the disaster hit our coasts, showing that corporate globalisation is driven by forces that are unable to respond to what happens to real people and their lives.

For me the tsunami is a wake-up call to humanity: we cannot continue to sleep-walk in the mad rush for privatisation of public goods. If all food and water are reduced to a commodity controlled and freely traded by global corporations for profit, how will society feed the hungry? How will society provide water to the thirsty?

The vulnerability of millions calls for robust public systems for providing food and water, healthcare and medicine. The demand for public goods and services for relief and rehabilitation pull us in a totally different direction than the

demands of privatisation from the WTO and World Bank.

The tsunami reminds us we are not mere consumers in a marketplace driven by profits: we are fragile, interconnected beings inhabiting a fragile planet. The tsunami reminds us that we are all interconnected through the earth. We are earth beings: compassion, not money, is the currency that connects us. Above all, it brings a message of humility: that in

If all food and water are reduced to a commodity controlled and freely traded by global corporations for profit, how will society feed the hungry? How will society provide water to the thirsty?

the face of nature's fury, we are powerless. The tsunami calls on us to give up arrogance and to recognise our fragility. It was not just seawater that collided with the coast: two world views collided: the world view of free markets and corporate globalisation, useless in dealing with environmental disasters; and the world view of earth democracy, whereby people reach across the world as one humanity to rebuild lives and prepare for

an uncertain future on a fragile planet.

While we pour our hearts out to the victims of the disaster, the most important long-term relief we can provide is to reduce our ecological footprint on our fragile planet, and reduce our ecological vulnerability. Ecological resilience, not economic growth, will be the real measure of human survival in these uncertain times.

■ Vandana Shiva runs both the Delhi-based Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology and Navdanya, an Indian national movement dedicated to protecting the diversity and integrity of living resources, especially native seeds. She is the author of numerous books and a winner of the Right Livelihood prize, commonly known as the 'Alternative Nobel peace prize'



AGAINST THE CLOCK

The pace of climate change's effects makes successful intervention almost impossible **BY MALCOLM TAIT**

It was a brisk spring morning early last century, when Lord Lovat attended the annual conference of the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU) at London's Restaurant Frascati, hoping to find an answer to a grave problem. He had been asked to chair the Board of Agriculture's investigation into the red grouse mystery that was threatening to ruin the rural economy. Grouse shooting was an important financial mainstay of the Edwardian countryside, but the birds weren't playing their part. They'd been dying for some years of an unidentified disease, long before the guns could get to them, and Lovat had no answers. Every landlord, sportsman and gillie had his own opinion as to the cause, but none had been proved to be right. What Lovat needed was an enthusiastic field naturalist, someone who could combine knowledge of bacteriology with anatomical understanding, and who had the patience to see through what could be a lengthy scientific investigation. Would he find such a man?

He would. One of the young speakers at the BOU's conference, still only in his early 30s and already an accomplished doctor and ornithologist, not only had all the required skills for the job, but also the

even temperament and quiet dedication of the professional scientist to see his work through and produce thorough answers. Lovat hired him on the spot, and five years later the disease was identified (it was caused by a minute threadworm that affected the birds' digestive process), and the grouse moors could return to normal.

The Grouse Disease Inquiry, which started 100 years ago this month, was truly innovative. It was the first time that anyone had conducted a major study into the fluctuations of wild bird populations, and the young doctor's techniques pioneered many of today's methods and principles of field ornithology.

A full century on, however, and bird-related problems still abound... The trouble is, they're all new problems. Whether it's the disappearance of sparrows, the collapse of seabird breeding in Shetland, or the new species-jumping ability of avian flu, our rapidly changing

environments (the changes most often being caused by humans) are creating ever new patterns in bird population and disease that keep the scientists baffled. You can't tinker with the balance of the planet without throwing life off kilter.

In New Zealand, for example, the rarest penguin in the world has just got a good deal rarer, and climate change is the likely cause. The yellow-eyed penguin, which numbers only a few thousand individuals, had a disastrous breeding season last year, with up to 80 per cent of chicks dying from a form of avian diphtheria. The jury is still out, but it's currently thought that the recent wet springs and summers have provided fertile breeding potential for the bloodsuckers and fleas that carry the virus. By the time the cause of the penguin's decline is proved definitively, it may be too late for the charismatic little bird the Maoris call the Hoiho. Change is happening so fast in the modern world, that the five years it took to isolate that Edwardian grouse disease is too long.

Had he been alive today, that doctor of a century ago would doubtless have rolled up his sleeves nonetheless and taken the mystery on. Despite being an Englishman, he had a great knowledge and love of penguins. In fact, when he completed his grouse work in 1910 he was actually on board ship, heading towards

the Antarctic, where he had been before and where he was to conduct an extraordinary study into emperor penguins.

Like the yellow-eyed penguins, he was also a prime example of the effects on a species of radically

Our rapidly changing environments are creating ever new patterns in bird population and disease that keep the scientists baffled.

altered climate and environment. His name was Edward Wilson, who in 1912 accompanied Captain Scott to the South Pole, and who died with him on the return journey from the effects of a severe winter for which Scott's team was not prepared.

■ Malcolm Tait is the former managing editor of *The Ecologist*

BOYCOTT

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- 1 IF YOU BOYCOTT A COMPANY'S PRODUCTS**
- 2 AND ITS SHARE PRICE WILL FALL**
- 3 AND THE ACTIVISTS' HEDGE FUND WILL MAKE MONEY**
- 4 AND FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE COMPANIES GREED**

1 BOYCOTT COKE...

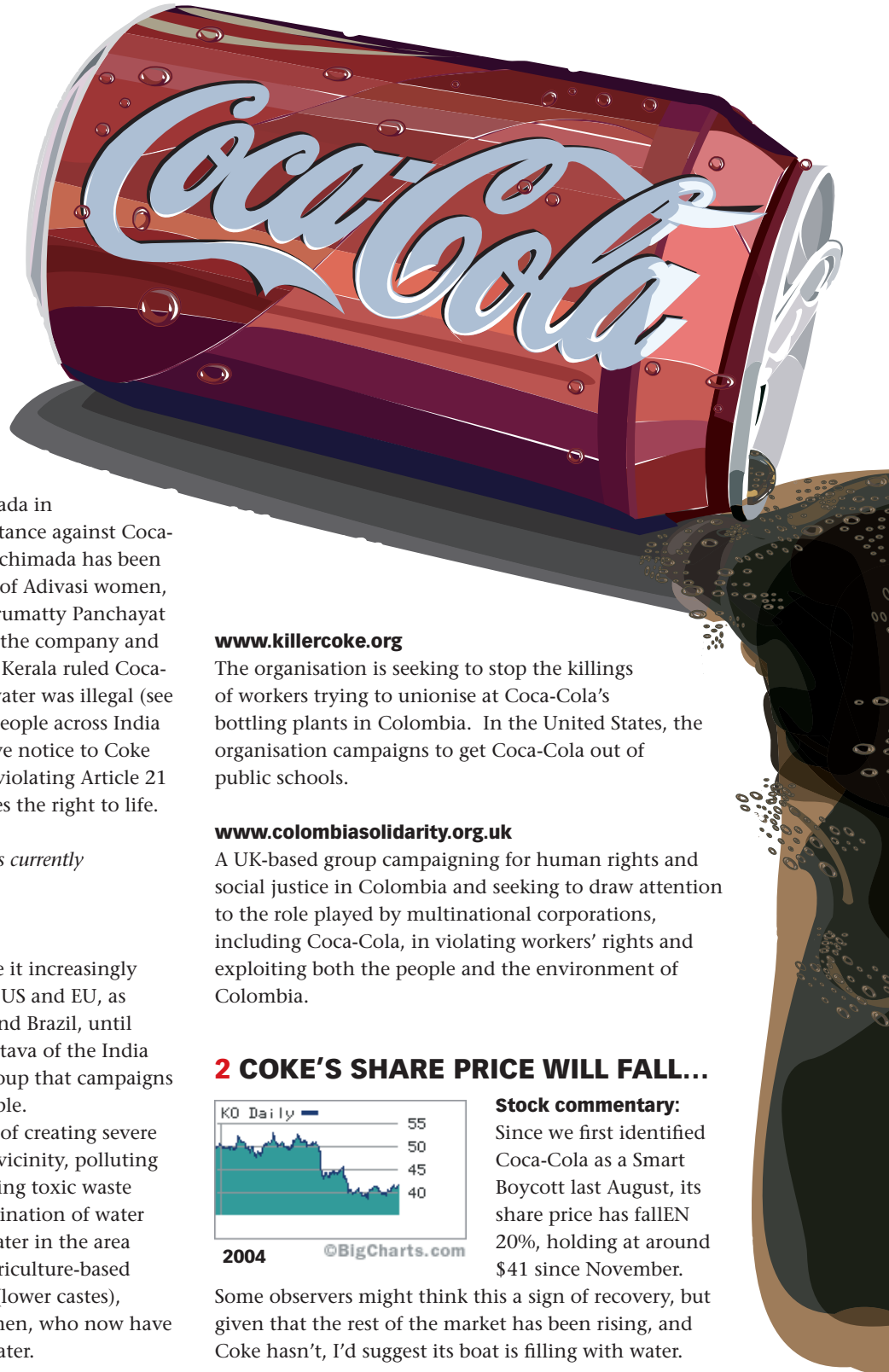
And join a huge and growing movement seeking to punish Coca-Cola for their damaging influence across the world. On 15 January 2005 the community at Plachimada in Southern India celebrated 1000 days of resistance against Coca-Cola. For the past year the Coke plant at Plachimada has been closed because of the determined resistance of Adivasi women, who started anti-Coke agitation, and the Perumatty Panchayat (Local Government) which served notice to the company and went to the High Court. The High Court of Kerala ruled Coca-Cola's mining of the community's ground water was illegal (see below). On 20 January 2005 thousands of people across India surrounded 87 Coke and Pepsi plants to serve notice to Coke and Pepsi to 'Quit India' on the grounds of violating Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees the right to life.

For more information on the Coca-Cola boycotts currently running visit:

www.indiaresource.org

From their latest press release: 'We will make it increasingly difficult for Coca-Cola to do business in the US and EU, as well as in emerging markets, such as India and Brazil, until it cleans up its act in India,' said Amit Srivastava of the India Resource Centre, a bi-national (US-India) group that campaigns internationally to hold Coca-Cola accountable.

In Plachimada, Coca-Cola is guilty of creating severe water shortages for the communities in the vicinity, polluting the groundwater and soil, and also distributing toxic waste as fertilizer to farmers in the area. The combination of water scarcity and pollution of land and groundwater in the area has had a dramatic impact on the largely agriculture-based community. Particularly hard hit are Dalits (lower castes), Adivasis (Indigenous People), as well as women, who now have to travel longer distances to fetch potable water.



www.killercoke.org

The organisation is seeking to stop the killings of workers trying to unionise at Coca-Cola's bottling plants in Colombia. In the United States, the organisation campaigns to get Coca-Cola out of public schools.

www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk

A UK-based group campaigning for human rights and social justice in Colombia and seeking to draw attention to the role played by multinational corporations, including Coca-Cola, in violating workers' rights and exploiting both the people and the environment of Colombia.

2 COKE'S SHARE PRICE WILL FALL...



Stock commentary:

Since we first identified Coca-Cola as a Smart Boycott last August, its share price has fallen 20%, holding at around \$41 since November.

Some observers might think this a sign of recovery, but given that the rest of the market has been rising, and Coke hasn't, I'd suggest its boat is filling with water.

Future forecasts look joyfully bleak:

The company reports quarterly earnings in February. We expect a downward trend in global sales will be confirmed. The company's stock remains very vulnerable – the window of opportunity for activists to synchronize a global boycott and knock billions off Coke's market cap is NOW.

Despite markets drifting upward, Coke, a Dow Jones Index component, is stuck in neutral. Earnings reported on 16 February should confirm how badly top line growth is deteriorating. James Cramer of thestreet.com has even suggested Coke should be taken out of the Dow Jones Index and replaced with something a little less dodgy.

Bulls Beware: Coca-Cola's Stock Price Not Done Being Mauled
by Brady Willett

There is plenty [of bad news] to go around at Coke these days. During the company's recent conference call new CEO, Neville Isdell, not only warned on the

second half of 2004, but he also highlighted operational woes in Europe (Germany), and offered few details of any turnaround plan.

Coke shares, after all, are already off 25% from their peak this year. Despite a weakening stock price the [shares] do not display any hint of undervaluation yet. Rather, if you back out the mania days (1996-onwards) a legitimate argument could be made that Coke shares are about to collapse, not rebound.

Where is the stock going?

\$30 may be a low target. After all, Warren Buffett is unlikely to stand idly by while one of his darlings tumbles. Nevertheless, Coke has some long-term problems to deal with (Germany and market share/margin issues in developing markets), and, after multiple setbacks shares may not rally until a tangible turnaround in growth is underway. Also, for what it is worth, UBS's Caroline S Levy downgraded her Coke price target from \$60/share to \$34/share last week.

'INVESTMENT ACTIVIST'S' ATTACK ON COCA-COLA COMPANY STOCK MAY LEAVE BITTER AFTERTASTE

Max Keiser, who calls himself an 'investment activist', reportedly wants to punish Coca-Cola Company for, in his view, poisoning the environment and violating human rights. So he plans to form a hedge fund that will 'short' Coke stock and buy the stock back after a boycott has halved its price, and subsequently contribute its profits to Coke's supposed victims.

Defenders of free enterprise might be tempted to decry this attack on an icon of capitalism. But capitalists should welcome Mr Keiser and other activists to their fold. Whatever their aims, at least they recognize the power of markets and appreciate that not all problems require a government solution.

On its face, there is nothing legally wrong with Mr Keiser's plan. If demand for Coke falls, so should its stock, all else being equal. The boycott is simply a way of informing consumers – a sort of reverse advertising. The hedge fund's trades add price information and so contribute to market efficiency and resource allocation. In much the same way, Keiser's earlier project, the Hollywood Stock Exchange, helped filmmakers predict flops and successes.

As Mr Keiser and other activists discover the power of markets, they may simultaneously discover the regulatory burdens businesses must bear. On the other hand, courts might seek to relieve activists of these burdens through rulings that could have implications for businesses in general. In the end, perhaps defenders of capitalism should welcome their newfound friends.

3 THE WORLD'S FIRST ACTIVIST HEDGE FUND WILL MAKE MONEY...

So far, we've got \$10.56 million in indications of interest from investors willing to participate in the 'worlds first activist hedge fund' Our goal is to get this number up to \$100 million by the end of June. To this end, Max Keiser is offering \$1,000 to any person who sets him up with a face-to-face to meeting with any of the following people:

- 1 George Soros
- 2 Ted Turner
- 3 Pierre Omidyar
- 4 JK Rowling
- 5 Mikhail Khodorkovsky
- 6 Gerald Grosvenor, 6th Duke of Westminster
- 7 Peter Lewis
- 8 Ingvar Kamprad
- 9 Kenneth Roy Thomson
- 10 Adolf Merkle

4 ...FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE COMPANY'S GREED

98% of all profits generated from the Activist Hedge Fund will be distributed to groups of people who readers of The Ecologist believe deserve the money. The following are some of the activist groups recently suggested by KarmaBanque users.

Attac, the international movement for democratic control of financial markets and their institutions.

Ajjal, a Lebanese NGO that addresses the problems of unemployment, lack of mental health and social facilities for Palestinian youth in refugee camps.

To suggest a recipient group... send an email to max@karmabanque.com



corporate social responsibility

Does CSR enable business to go beyond mere compliance with the law in discharging its social responsibilities, or is it simply an excuse for deregulating organisations that cannot be trusted? Joel Bakan Vs Tom Burke



Tom Burke is an Environmental Policy Adviser to Rio Tinto plc and a Visiting Professor at Imperial College. He was Special Adviser to three Secretaries of State for the Environment from 1991-97 after serving as Director of the Green Alliance from 1982-91 and of Friends of the Earth from 1975-79.

Joel Bakan is an author and a professor of law at the University of British Columbia. His most recent book, *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power*, forms the basis of the film, *The Corporation*. He is a former Rhodes Scholar with law degrees from Oxford, Dalhousie, and Harvard.



DEAR TOM,

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an oxymoron, at least to the extent it implies that a company's responsibilities to society can take priority over its responsibility to make money for its shareholders.

At the heart of our corporate-law regime lies the imperative that managers and directors of publicly traded companies, in the decisions they make and the actions they take, must always put their shareholders' financial interests above all other interests: above social interests, environmental interests, their employees' interests, consumers' interests and the public interest.

That means that CSR is only tolerated by the law when it can be justified as a strategy for serving shareholders' interests: when it is, as social responsibility advocate and BP chief executive Lord John Browne says, 'not [an] act of charity but what could be called enlightened self-interest'.

I concede that some tangible social and environmental benefits are gained through CSR; and also that the corporate managers who initiate and run CSR programmes are, for the most part, sincere, and sometimes even idealistic in their aims. But CSR's necessarily strategic scope means it has a very limited capacity to protect social and environmental interests from corporate harms.

Despite this, CSR has helped create a benevolent face for business. That I believe – and here is the real problem – has helped soften public opinion to a dubious argument: namely, that because companies are socially responsible now, they can, and should, be trusted to regulate themselves.

CSR encourages belief in the acceptability of rolling back and under-enforcing legal restrictions designed to require companies to respect social and environmental interests: deregulation, in other words. Therein lies its danger.

Yours,
Joel

Despite the popular currency of the idea, there actually is no 'imperative' for companies to put their shareholders' financial interests above all other considerations

Tom Burke

DEAR JOEL,

Publicly traded companies do have conflicting responsibilities. They have legally defined responsibilities not only to their shareholders, but also to their employees, customers and suppliers, to potential investors and to regulators acting on behalf of society as a whole.

Corporate law emphasises the financial interests of shareholders to protect them from abuse by company managements. This has not always been successful. Enron, Worldcom, Paramalat and the rest of the recent corporate mega-scandals have all had shareholders as their primary victims. Those shareholders are predominantly investment and pension funds managing the savings of ordinary people.

Nothing in corporate law permits a company to ignore its other legal responsibilities in discharging those to shareholders. Despite the popular currency of the idea, there actually is no 'imperative' for companies to put their shareholders' financial interests above all other considerations. On the contrary, directors of companies who knowingly or negligently do so, and some do, are breaking company as well as other laws.

These other legal responsibilities define the wider interests of society. I accept that these can be inadequate, incomplete, badly designed and poorly enforced, and that legal frameworks rarely keep up to date with changing expectations. I also accept that there are wider and subtler responsibilities that are not easily codified into law.

You also say that the current interest in CSR masks a campaign for a radical roll-back of all regulation. This parallels the widely held belief in some places that environmentalism is really a disguised attempt by closet socialists to throttle capitalism.

Some at the margins of the business and environmentalist communities do have these fantasies. But many businesses are now looking to go beyond mere compliance with the law in discharging their social responsibilities. Wouldn't we be better off working out how to identify and reward those corporate behaviours that really are more responsible?

Yours,
Tom

DEAR TOM,

While I agree with much of what you say (in particular, the fact, and importance, of legal constraints on corporate behaviour), I believe you move too easily over two issues.

First, you argue that 'there actually is no "imperative" for companies to put their shareholders' interests above all others'. To the contrary, company law requires directors and managers to give primacy to 'the best interests of the company', which means, according to the law, the financial interests of shareholders.

It is true that courts tend to be flexible in how they apply this concept. CSR programmes and corporate philanthropy are generally permitted as investments by companies in their long-term viability and performance, and thus good for shareholders (even if costly in the shorter term), but they must always be justified in such strategic terms, never as ends in themselves. And that makes CSR a quite limited concept.

Second, you say that companies have legally defined responsibilities not only to their shareholders, but also to other stakeholders. True enough. However, those responsibilities are found in regulatory law, not in company law. You neglect this distinction, which is of profound importance. Company law imbues companies with their distinct institutional characters, and is the source of the duty of directors and managers to put the interests of the company and its owners above all others.

Regulatory law, on the other hand, imposes restrictions on companies from the outside. It creates rules of company behaviour designed to protect the interests of employees, consumers, the environment, and so on. Take away regulatory laws, weaken them, fail to enforce them (all tendencies of 'deregulation'), and the naked, corporate self-interest created by company law goes unchecked. That is why CSR can never be a substitute for effective legal regulation. It is always limited, substantially, by the legally created institutional character of the company.

Yes, of course, it is better that companies try, within their institutional limits, to be as socially responsible as they can, and we should encourage them to do so. At the same time, however, we must demand and support a robust and effective public regulatory system, and never succumb to the alluring myth that companies can be trusted, on their own, to deliver the good as well as the goods.

Yours,
Joel

CSR programmes must always be justified by companies in strategic terms, never as ends in themselves. That makes CSR a quite limited concept

Joel Bakan

DEAR JOEL,

There are three quite different lines of thought in your response: one dealing with the relationship between company law and other laws; another concerning the relationship between CSR and corporate philanthropy; and a third to do with the drive for deregulation.

I do not understand your first point. Company law defines the responsibilities of those individuals who hold office in public companies in relation to that company. That company is then bound by all the statutes that apply to its activities.

Directors who permit a company to break an applicable statute on, say, the environment or racial or gender discrimination, are, by definition, not acting in the best interests of the company and thus break company law. The company itself is liable to whatever penalties apply for having broken that law. Furthermore, those executives are rendering themselves personally vulnerable to being barred as company directors.

Corporate philanthropy is not CSR; it is just what it says and is of debatable value. Some companies do confuse the two and cite acts of the former as examples of the latter. I think they are wrong to do so.

I completely agree with you that CSR is no substitute for effective legal regulation. But not all legal regulation is effective. Nor is simply complying with currently applicable laws enough to define a company's behaviour as responsible. Establishing the limits of 'beyond-compliance' behaviours is another dimension to be thought through. We need a constructive debate over the part both can play.

This debate is not advanced by political ideologues who believe that any regulation is an unjustified imposition on a company's freedom to pursue profits. Nor is it advanced by passionate campaigners who believe that only an ever more prescriptive web of regulations can bring about responsible corporate behaviour.

Yours,
Tom

DEAR TOM,

I agree with you that the quality of a regulatory system – its capacity to protect important public interests and reflect the democratic will – is not determined by the quantity of prescriptive regulations. Piling on more and more restrictions is not necessarily the answer.

There is a live debate about how best to regulate companies. There are no simple solutions. We seem to agree in principle, however, that a robust and effective public regulatory system is essential.

We also agree that corporate philanthropy is not the same thing as CSR. I am not clear how you read me as conflating the two. I suggested in my last letter that both CSR and corporate philanthropy might sometimes be justified as serving the longer-term interests of a company. That is not to conflate the two, only to suggest they may share the same rationale in some contexts.

But we still have a substantial disagreement. You say that company directors and officers who permit breaches of regulatory laws are 'by definition not acting in the best interests of the company and thus break company law'. To the contrary, and regrettably, when a company breaks a regulatory law this may be considered to be in its best interests, and thus consistent with company law.

When, as is often the case, the penalty for breaking a law is small and enforcement of the law is ineffective, it may cost the company less to break the law, and suffer the consequences, than to comply with it. Breaking the law, in other words, may be a reasonable, and even legal (from the perspective of company law) business decision.

Thus, within the legally defined corporate form there lies an incentive to break regulatory laws (not to mention to avoid such laws by moving operations to weakly regulated countries or regions, or to seek their removal or dilution through lobbying and other forms of pressure on the political process).

Yours,
Joel

The opposition to CSR is predominantly political: both the far right and the irredentist left continue to fight yesterday's wars

Tom Burke

DEAR JOEL,

We are clearly getting different legal advice or living in different legal regimes.

Companies do break the law, both by accident and, more rarely, intentionally. The penalties for breaches of environmental, labour or anti-discrimination regulations, primarily fines, are often low. Irresponsible companies do sometimes see this as an affordable cost.

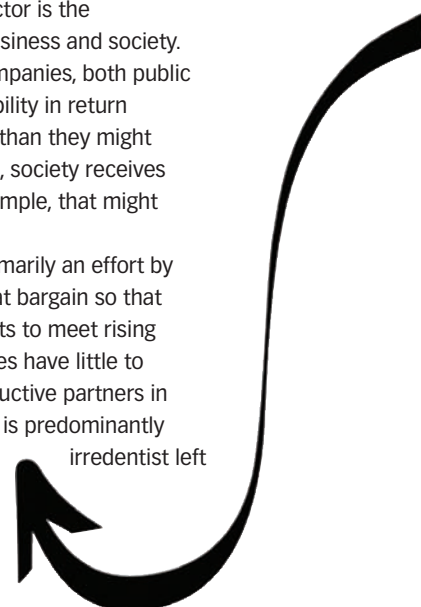
Nevertheless, I have never come across a case in which a company has tried to defend such illegal actions on the grounds that obeying the law would have led it to breach its fiduciary responsibilities. As I have argued, there is, at least in British law, no such defence. Companies are required to obey *all* the laws that apply to them, not just those they choose.

There is clearly a good case for tougher penalties for breaches of what you call regulatory law. Companies that consistently break the law collapse value for all the businesses in their sector. They also compete unfairly with those that observe the law. Responsible companies have no interest in protecting such free riders.

The existence of the corporate sector is the consequence of a bargain between business and society. Society has granted the owners of companies, both public and private, the privilege of limited liability in return for putting their capital at greater risk than they might otherwise be prepared to do. In return, society receives public benefits, jobs and taxes, for example, that might otherwise not be available.

I see the movement for CSR as primarily an effort by society to renegotiate the terms of that bargain so that there is a greater flow of public benefits to meet rising public expectations. Smarter companies have little to lose and much to gain by being constructive partners in this renegotiation. The opposition to it is predominantly political, as both the far right and the irredentist left continue to fight yesterday's wars.

Yours ever,
Tom



DEAR TOM,

No, I don't think we're getting different legal advice, or living in different legal worlds. I agree with you that corporations cannot defend their illegal actions (their breaches of environmental, labour or other regulations) with arguments that their actions served the best interests of the corporation. If a company breaks a regulatory law, and gets caught, it will suffer the consequences.

However, that company will not be in breach of company law. Indeed, the emphasis in company law, and within the culture of companies, on maximising the wealth of shareholders can encourage law-breaking when compliance with a law is more expensive than the consequences of breaking it. One does not have to look far to find examples of corporate law-breakers, often repeat offenders, even among highly reputable companies.

Corporate crime usefully illustrates my point in this debate: that company law – the law that constitutes and empowers companies, and establishes the respective legal rights and duties of shareholders, directors and officers – creates an entity compelled always to act in its own self-interest. Though this can have positive effects, such as jobs and the production of useful goods and services, it can also lead companies to cause serious and widespread harms to individuals, communities and the environment, and even to break the law.

We both want to find ways to mitigate those harms. For reasons I rehearsed in our earlier correspondence, which have to do with the institutional nature of the corporation, I am skeptical of CSR's capacity to go very far in that direction.

What we need, I believe, is a public, democratic and effective regulatory system. We also need full and wide debate about the real limits and possibilities of CSR. Such debate is advanced by taking seriously serious opposition to the concept, not by dismissing such opposition, as you do in your last letter, as mere political posturing.

Yours,
Joel

One does not have to look far to find examples of corporate law-breakers, often repeat offenders, even among highly reputable companies

Joel BAHAN

DEAR JOEL,

We are still not quite on the same legal planet. If the directors of a public company knowingly or negligently allow that company to break applicable laws then they are breaking company law.

This not only renders them vulnerable to possible criminal prosecution under company law and disqualification as directors, it also removes their limited liability protection and makes them personally vulnerable to civil suits for any damage done to others by their company's actions.

This is why public companies have assurance processes. These are internal management systems intended to ensure that a company's directors know what is being done on their shareholders' behalf. Failure to put in place adequate assurance processes is itself a breach of a director's responsibilities under company law.

If a company breaks an environmental law and is found not to have installed an adequate assurance process, the directors are in breach of company law. If there was an appropriate assurance process in place, then the company has broken environmental law but not company law. If the directors of the company issued instructions that the environmental law should be broken then they are in breach of both.

I have spelt this out in some detail because your repeated assertion that there is no connection between company law and other laws is, in my view, simply wrong.

Complying with the law is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for CSR. I agree about the need for a 'public, democratic and effective regulatory system'. But I am puzzled by what you think I am dismissing. I am in favour of companies being asked by society to go beyond compliance. If I am vulnerable to any charge about my responses to your arguments it is that I have taken them overly seriously.

Yours,
Tom

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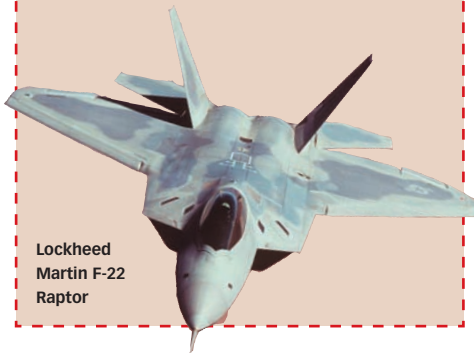
THE TOP 10 WAR PROFITEERS OF 2004

Some went to Iraq and called themselves peacemakers, others said they aimed to build a new country. But in reality the 10 companies listed here are all out to make just one thing: money

1

LOCKHEED MARTIN

Defence giant Lockheed Martin remains the king among war profiteers, raking in \$21.9 billion in Pentagon contracts in 2003 alone. With satellites and planes, missiles and IT systems, the company has profited from just about every phase of the war except for the reconstruction effort. Its share price has tripled since 2000 to just over \$60. Former Lockheed lobbyists and employees include the current secretary of the US Navy Gordon England, US secretary of transportation Norm Mineta and Stephen J Hadley, Bush's proposed successor to Condoleezza Rice as national security advisor. Not only are Lockheed executives commonly represented on the Pentagon's many advisory boards, but the company is also tied into various security think-tanks, including neo-conservative networks. For example, Lockheed vice-president Bruce Jackson (who helped draft the Republican Party foreign policy platform for the 2000 presidential campaign) is a key player at the neo-conservative planning bastion known as the Project for a New American Century.



Lockheed Martin F-22 Raptor

2

QUALCOMM

Two Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) officials resigned this year after claiming they were pressured by John Shaw, the US deputy under-secretary of defence for technology security, to change an Iraqi police radio contract to favour ICT firm Qualcomm's patented cellular technology: a move that critics say was intended to lock the technology in as the standard for the entire country. Iraq's cellular market is potentially worth hundreds of millions of dollars in annual revenues for the company, and much more should it establish a standard for the region. Shaw's efforts to over-ride contracting officials delayed an emergency radio contract, depriving Iraqi police officers, firefighters, ambulance drivers and border guards of a joint communications system for months.

3

LORAL SPACE & COMMUNICATIONS

Industry experts say the war on terror literally saved some satellite operators from bankruptcy. The Pentagon 'is hoovering up all the available capacity' to supplement its three orbiting satellite fleets, Richard DalBello, president of the Satellite Industry Association explained to the *Washington Post*. The industry's other customers - broadcast networks competing for satellite time - were left to scramble for the remaining bandwidth. Loral Space & Communications Chairman Bernard L. Schwartz is very tight with the neoconservative hawks in the Bush administration's foreign policy ranks, and is the principal funder of *Blueprint*, the newsletter of the Democratic Leadership Council. The Pentagon announced in November last year that it intended to create a new global Intranet for the military that would take two decades and hundreds of billions of dollars to build. Satellites, of course, are destined to play a key part in that integrated global weapons system.

4

HALLIBURTON

In December US Congressman Henry Waxman announced that 'a growing list of concern's about Halliburton's performance' on contracts worth a total of \$10.8 billion had led to multiple criminal investigations into overcharging and kickbacks. In nine different reports US government auditors found 'widespread, systemic problems with almost every aspect of Halliburton's work in Iraq, from cost estimation and billing systems to cost control and sub-contract management'. Six former employees of Cheney's old firm have come forward to corroborate the auditors' concerns. Another 'H-bomb' dropped before last year's US election, when a top contracting official responsible for ensuring that the Army Corps of Engineers follows competitive contracting rules accused top Pentagon officials of improperly favouring Halliburton with a pre-occupation contract.

5 CUSTER BATTLES

At the end of September, the US Defense Department suspended 'business risk consultancy' Custer Battles and 13 associated individuals and affiliated corporations from all US federal contracts. The reason? Their use of fraudulent billing practices involving the use of sham corporations set up in Lebanon and the Cayman Islands. The (CPA) discovered the company was fiddling the books after Custer Battles representatives left a spreadsheet behind at a meeting with CPA employees. The spreadsheet revealed that the company had marked up certain expenses associated with a currency exchange contract by 162 per cent.

6 CACI AND TITAN

Although several members of the US's military police have been prosecuted for the horrific treatment of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib jail, the corporate contractors involved have so far avoided any charges.

In an internal US Army report major-general Antonio Taguba reported that two employees of Virginia firm CACI 'were either directly or indirectly responsible' for abuses at the prison, including the use of dogs to threaten detainees, sexual abuse and other threats of violence.

But in August the army gave CACI another \$15m no-bid contract to continue providing interrogation services for intelligence gathering in Iraq; and in September it awarded self-styled 'national security solutions' provider Titan a translation contract worth up to \$400m.

10 AEGIS DEFENCE SERVICES

In June the Pentagon's Program Management Office awarded UK firm Aegis a \$293m contract to coordinate security operations among thousands of private contractors in Iraq. Aegis's founder was once investigated for illegal arms smuggling. A parliamentary inquiry into Sandline, Aegis chief executive Tim Spicer's former firm, determined that in 1998 the company had shipped guns to civil war-torn Sierra Leone in violation of a UN arms embargo. Sandline's position was that it had approval from the government, although ministers were cleared by the inquiry. Spicer resigned from Sandline in 2000 and incorporated Aegis in 2002.

■ This is an edited version of an article that first appeared on the website of the Washington-based business watchdog the Center for Corporate Policy

7 BKSH & ASSOCIATES

BKSH chairman Charlie Black is an old Bush family friend. Black was a key player in the Bush-Cheney 2000 presidential election campaign, and with his wife raised \$100,000 for last year's re-election bid. BKSH clients with contracts in Iraq include engineering, construction and maintenance services provider Fluor International, whose ex-chair Phillip Carroll was tipped to head Iraq's oil ministry after the war, and whose board includes the wife of James Woolsey, the former CIA chief who was sent by US deputy defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz before the invasion to convince Europeans of Saddam Hussein's non-existent ties to al-Qaeda. Most prominent among BKSH's clients, however, is the formerly anti-Saddam opposition group the Iraqi National Congress (INC), whose leader Ahmed Chalabi was called the 'George Washington of Iraq' by neo-cons before his subsequent fall from grace.

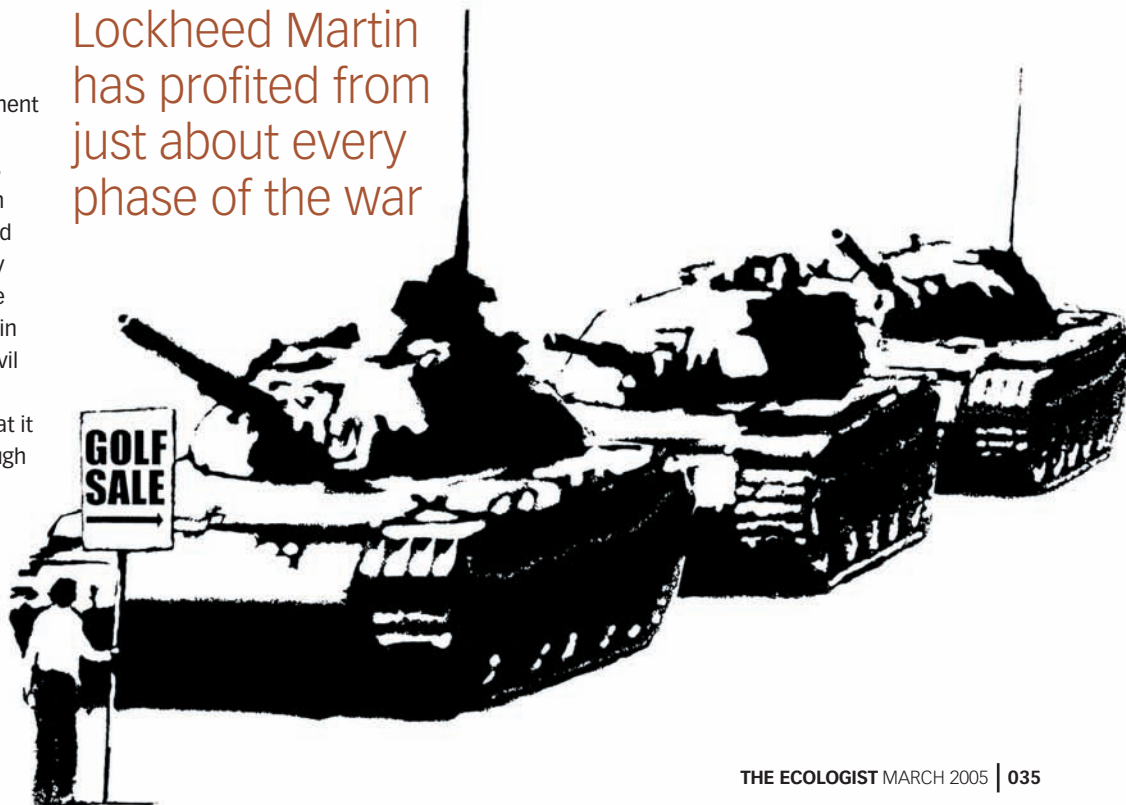
8 BECHTEL

Schools, hospitals, bridges, airports, water-treatment and power plants, railways, irrigation, electricity, etc. Bechtel was tasked with repairing much of Iraq's infrastructure after the war, a job that was critical to winning hearts and minds. But according to a US Government Accountability Office report in June, 'electrical service in the country as a whole has not shown a marked improvement over the immediate post-war levels of May 2003 and has worsened in some governorates'.

9 BEARING POINT

Critics find it ironic that Bearing Point, the former consulting division of accountancy firm KPMG, received a \$240m contract in 2003 to help develop Iraq's 'competitive private sector', since the firm had helped draw up the contract in the first place. Bearing Point spent five months helping the American international development agency USAid write the job specifications, and even sent some employees to Iraq to begin work before the contract was awarded. Its competitors had only a week to read the specifications and submit their own bids *after* final revisions were made.

Lockheed Martin has profited from just about every phase of the war



FROM TINY SEEDS...

Wangari Maathai's Nobel prize-winning activism has thrust the environment to the forefront of the global security agenda

INTERVIEW BY NICOLA GRAYDON

She's been called many things. Among the rural poor of Kenya she's known as the Green Crusader or Green Militant. Former Kenyan president Daniel arap Moi called her 'a mad woman', and declared her a serious threat to the stability of the country. Her husband said she was 'too educated, too strong, too successful, too stubborn and too hard to control'. And now professor Wangari Maathai has been named as a Nobel laureate.

It's an astounding achievement: the first African woman, and only 12th female, to win the Nobel peace prize; she takes her place beside Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King and Mother Theresa. Even more importantly, she's the only environmentalist ever to have received the prize. In one graceful leap she has thrust the environment into the forefront of global security issues.

When I meet her in her room at the Intercontinental Hotel in London, she is fresh from picking up her prize in Oslo, and gives the impression of being someone who's long been waiting for the world to catch up with her. 'Of course peace and the environment are connected,' she shrugs. 'Look at the wars we fight: they are almost always over resources: land, oil, water, grazing ground,



fishing rights.'

Maathai won the peace prize because of her work planting trees and encouraging women throughout Africa to do the same. At the last count her Green Belt Movement is responsible for planting 30 million trees in Kenya alone. Besides stemming profligate deforestation, soil erosion and climate change, the movement promoted women's rights and empowered impoverished communities before joining the pro-democracy movement that eventually dismissed the corrupt, land-grabbing government



of Moi. He was right: she was a serious threat.

At 64, statuesque and elegant in colourful African robes, Maathai carries herself like an elder stateswoman. She's now a member of parliament (voted in with a 98 per cent share of the vote in 2002), and serves as Kenya's deputy minister for the environment, natural resources and wildlife. And she's relishing the international platform the Nobel prize has given her. She's been giving interviews back-to-back since eight this morning, and steps from her final Japanese TV crew

straight into a waiting cab for the airport.

But whenever she smiles, which is often, her face becomes instantly mischievous. And then you are reminded that for half of her 64 years she's been a rebel activist, fighting with those on the wrong side of the fence, a sharp thorn in the side of the establishment.

'I never saw myself as an activist,' she grins. 'When this all began I was a very decent professor at the University of Nairobi. I was a good girl. But once I started I realised activism was a necessity. As we moved further and deeper into it

we kept finding doors closed, so we had to force those doors open.'

For years the Green Belt Movement was hardly noticed by the government, because, as Maathai points out, 'only women' were involved. So by the time the government machinery moved against Maathai she already had widespread grassroots support. People understood that she was on the side of the poor and refused to believe the defamation pedalled via government stooges.

Nonetheless, her activism landed her in jail numerous times, hastened



the end of her marriage, sent her into exile in Tanzania for six months, and, in 1999, resulted in her being knocked unconscious while planting trees in Nairobi's Karura Public Forest. 'I never imagined the police would hurt us,' she says of the Karura Public Forest incident. 'I thought they were there to protect us because the crowd was so large, but then they charged.'

She insisted on signing her police report in blood from her head wound. Her gestures have often been flamboyant, in-your-face protests unthinkable for most women in Kenya's traditional, patriarchal society. She broke taboos, risking ostracism and derision in the process. In 1992 she persuaded other women to strip naked in downtown Nairobi. She said that in taking off their clothes, the women 'resorted to something they knew traditionally would act on the men... They stripped to show their nakedness to their sons. It is a curse to see your mother naked'.

When asked about Moi's claims that she's mad, she thinks for a moment before saying, 'He's probably right. You have to be mad to break from the mainstream. When everybody thinks that this is the path to take and you get an inspiration that tells you that it will lead to destruction and you dare get up and

tell everybody that the king is wrong: that is madness.'

Her inspiration for such madness lies in the land surrounding her childhood home near the central Kenyan town of Nyeri: rich, fertile land where she worked with her mother in the fields planting and harvesting and fetching water from the crystal streams that flow from the slopes of neighbouring Mount Kenya. 'I specifically remember discovering tadpoles in one of those streams, and how fascinated I was by these tiny creatures,' she recalls. 'Many years later when I went back, the clean rivers had been filled with red silt and the tadpoles were no longer there. My own child could not play with them as I had.'

In the last 150 years Kenya has lost nearly 90 per cent of its natural woodland. Clearances began when British colonialists replaced forests with cash crops, mainly tea and coffee, and continued post-independence as political favours were bought with land

bribes: hectares of pristine woodland were promptly cut down.

By the early 1970s, when Maathai joined the National Council of Women of Kenya, rural women, many of them from Nyeri, complained bitterly about the lack of clean water, the miles they had to walk to find firewood, and the fact that the rains seemed to fail more often. Maathai's genius lay in her realisation that their problems were linked to the dramatic changes she had witnessed in her childhood landscape and in then doing something practical about it.

'They told me what they needed: firewood, food, water, building materials; and I realised that these needs were not being met because deforestation was leading to soil loss, to springs drying up, rain patterns changing that meant farmers were not able to produce enough food to last until the next season. I realised something had to be done.'

So in 1977 she planted seven seedlings in her back yard and a movement was born.

'Initially, it was simply about women helping themselves: give yourself firewood, give yourself fruits, give yourself fodder and protect your soil.' Maathai cups her hands in front of her as she describes teaching the women to 'hold onto the blessings of rain', to not 'let one

drop leave [their] own land'. It was only later on that her campaign came to be about the common good.

In this way the Green Belt Movement has brought the Kenyan people full circle. Maathai points out that before colonisation ordinary Kenyans had a profound cultural relationship with the land, and she blames Christianisation as the beginning of an attitude that has led to the 'commercialisation

of nature'.

'In my grandparent's time,' she says, 'people believed that Mount Kenya was a holy mountain; they had a reverential attitude to the rivers, the mountains,

When asked about
Moi's claims
that she's mad,
she thinks for a
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saying, 'He's
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to break from the
mainstream'

the trees. Then the missionaries came along and said, 'God doesn't live in the mountains; He lives in heaven'."

The whole process, she says, dramatically altered people's perception. It allowed people to view 'nature as a commodity: something to be exploited, sold for dollars, something that was up for grabs instead of a community resource that needs to be nurtured for future generations'.

'If believing that God is on Mount Kenya is what helps people conserve their mountain,' she says, 'then that is fine with me.' So Maathai has been actively working with local churches to encourage a revival of a spiritual connection with nature. 'They are beginning to understand that they should have been at the forefront of protecting the environment as custodians of God's creation, and have been very supportive.'

Maathai is a rare species in Africa: a woman who is educated, independent and unafraid of putting her head above the parapet. And in contrast to those who make up Africa's male political elite, her rural childhood has made her comfortable in connecting with the poor and illiterate of her country. They speak a language she learnt before her degrees in America and Germany enabled her to talk on their behalf. 'Listening to them I was struck by my privilege,' she says. 'I was living a good life, with water coming from a tap, and in front of me were sisters who had to walk for miles for the same privilege.'

'I thank my mother every day for insisting that I be educated. And I also thank the nuns of the school where I was taught, for instilling in me the notion of service to the community.'

She is deeply critical of the international community's apathy towards Africa, inequitable trade tariffs, the Third World's huge burden of debt. And she is suspicious about Tony Blair's much trumpeted Commission for Africa. But she also puts the onus of

responsibility on Africans themselves. She urges ordinary Africans to insist on good governance in their own countries, so that African leaders raise their political consciences, and the tide turns on the endemic corruption that Western governments use as an excuse for not eliminating debt or lowering tariffs. 'Until we put our own house in order,' she says, 'the international system will continue giving excuses.'

Thanks in large part to Maathai, Kenya's fortunes have turned a corner. The fragile coalition headed by Mwai Kibaki, which ousted Moi in 2002, continues to fight corruption and poverty. And Maathai is enjoying being on the 'right side of the fence' for a change.

'Many people prefer me on the other side of the fence,' she laughs. 'They were [so] used

to me there making noise and creating hell for the government that they cannot accept me sitting here doing nothing in the form of agitation, but this is a government of our own making so it is right to support it.'

Meanwhile, the Green Belt Movement continues to broaden its remit. It also now encourages organic farming and the growing of indigenous plants to supplement the diets of rural people, and is working with women to educate about HIV/Aids.

But more than anything the movement has taught thousands of individuals in hundreds of communities that they can change their lives by tending to their environment; that their own empowerment lies in the land beneath their feet.

At the Johannesburg Earth Summit in 2002 Britain's then international development secretary Clare Short suggested that environmentalism was a comfortable, middle-class concern that in terms of priorities should really come a far second to poverty alleviation. In direct contradiction to Short's remarks, Maathai

'Of course peace and the environment are connected. Look at the wars we fight. They are almost always over resources: land, oil, water, grazing ground, fishing rights'

asserts that poverty and environmental degradation are locked in a vicious cycle that can only be broken when the environment is attended to.

'Poverty leads directly to environmental degradation, because poor people do not think of the future and will cut down the last tree if necessary. But environmental degradation will also lead to poverty, because when you have no soil you have no grasses, no trees and no water: you cannot really help yourself.'

'I used to say to the women, "If we say we are too poor to take care of the environment then it will only get worse. We have to turn it around and push the poverty back. Planting trees breaks the cycle: when we can give ourselves food, firewood, and help to nurture soil for planting and clean water, then we begin to roll poverty back.'

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund may insist that international trade is the exclusive route to prosperity, but Maathai has proven that it's self-sufficiency on a micro level that is more efficient and sustainable.

I suspect that her Nobel laureate status won't change Maathai much. She's already threatened to step down from her government post because her fellow ministers nearly allowed more illegal deforestation near Nairobi. At home she has become an icon of truth and democracy by kicking up merry hell. The only difference is that now her voice can be raised on an international platform, and one hopes that she will be heard by world leaders, development agencies, the World Bank... everyone, in fact, who is looking for solutions to global warming, poverty, problems to do with development, and conflict. ■





THE ROAD TO NOWHERE

RUSSIA'S 10 YEARS OF WAR IN CHECHNYA

WORDS BY **SEBASTIAN SMITH** IN GROZNY PHOTOGRAPHS BY **HEIDI BRADNER**



A tank from the Siberian regiment moves down the streets of Grozny in Feb 1995 just after the Russian forces entered the destroyed city following weeks of air and artillery strikes.

They've a big new sign by the road announcing GROZNY, each man-sized Cyrillic letter fresh and neat. Only the city itself is no longer there.

Grozny has been destroyed. From the outskirts, it is the untouched buildings, rather than the ruins, that stand out. Some buildings are lacerated, others neatly punctured, others torn from the inside. The destruction has many signatures: cannon shells have gouged big, rough-edged holes out of brick and stone; aerial bombs have swallowed enormous, messy chunks; the sharp, flower-petal scars left by mortar shells are almost pretty.

This is not quite a dead city. People still live here, but they are damaged, too, and the quiet, steady existence they knew 15 years ago, before the start of the independence movement and two wars with Russia, is probably gone forever.

At every block, you are reminded only of what was. Our guide, Aslan, points through the car window: there you could buy delicious bread; there lived a rich uncle; there were the university residencies... Present tense is not used much in Grozny – future not at all.

In the centre, at a big loop in the River Sunzha, even the past is gone. This was the epicentre of the two Russian campaigns to storm Grozny – the first 10 years ago under President Boris Yeltsin in the winter of 1994-95, the second under President Vladimir Putin in the winter of 1999-2000.

In Soviet days, all the Communist Party buildings were here and when Chechnya declared itself independent in 1991, they became the presidential palace, parliament, national bank and security ministry. Lenin Square was renamed Freedom Square. Here was one of the main bridges over the Sunzha. Here were the highest and most desirable apartment blocks – nine and 12 storey complexes built in the 1980s, as well as many streets of elegant five-storey buildings from the early 20th century. Here was the Oil Institute, one of the principal such centres in the Soviet Union (Grozny was a major oil refining city). Here too was Tolstoy University, Chekhov Library and Kirov Park. Here were the cafés and restaurants and principal shops. Here were trams and fountains and ice cream sellers. Today there is mud and sky. A square kilometre of nothing.

From here, the devastation radiates through huge, deserted neighbourhoods of what used to be private homes and gardens. Grozny's once great refineries are now reduced to an eerie jungle of antiquated and bombed-out piping and tanks. The Red Hammer machine factory is a cavernous ruin. Telephones, rubbish collection and sewage systems stopped working long ago. Time and poverty are eating away at what's left: plundering the rubble for building materials is one of the only ways to make money (people even rip up old tramlines). In a city once home to almost half a million people, perhaps only 150,000 remain;



my estimate is based on the number of buildings showing lights at night.

No less destruction has been visited upon the people of Chechnya. Out of the million Chechens resident in 1994, perhaps 200,000 – 20 percent – have been killed, says Taus Djabrailov, a top official in the latest local government installed by Moscow. Others estimates go as low as 50,000. Around 100,000 would be a sober reckoning. The US Holocaust Museum has put Chechnya on its Genocide Watch list.

Why was this done? Ten years ago, the Kremlin claimed it simply wanted to disarm bandits. According to official figures, 10,000 Russian soldiers have died in the subsequent bitter warfare; according to conservative unofficial estimates, 20,000 Russian troops have died. Some in Moscow said the wars were about protecting ethnic Russians: they'd left Chechnya in droves after the collapse of the Soviet Union, partly in fear of Chechen criminal gangs. But it was precisely Grozny's ethnic Russians, the least mobile section of Chechnya's population, who were most exposed to Russian carpet-bombing. Putin said the war was about fighting terrorists. The Kremlin compared the situation to Northern Ireland. But there was no aerial bombing, rocketing and annihilation of infrastructure in Ulster. There were no mass disappearances. British soldiers did not burn people in their cellars, rape prisoners or execute men in mud pits. Neither did IRA terrorism, even at its peak, match that emanating from Chechnya: the taking of hostages in huge numbers from hospitals and a Moscow theatre; the massacre of Beslan's schoolchildren; passenger planes blown from the sky;



A Russian special forces soldier stands in the city centre amid destruction after two invasions and almost a decade of war that have transformed the city into a second Stalingrad.

underground and commuter trains shredded...

Yet just 10 years ago all this was unimaginable.

'It's like a dream,' Leila, 51, says as she fills canisters at a broken water pipe. 'I can't believe this has happened to us. This nightmare war.'

There have been many attempts to explain the Kremlin's real motivations in Chechnya. One is that in the early 1990s the Kremlin thought Chechen secession would

ignite a chain reaction throughout the multi-ethnic jigsaw of the Russian Federation. But no other corner of Russia has seen a similar independence movement; not even in the North Caucasus, where there are many other small, Muslim ethnic groups with a similar culture to that of the Chechens and a shared history of persecution under the Russian empire and then Stalin.

Another explanation is that Moscow needs to control the oil in Chechnya and the Baku-Novorossiisk pipeline snaking from Azerbaijan through the republic to the Russian Black Sea. The 1990s were a decade of heady expansion for the Caspian oil industry. But at the same time, Russian influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia faced mounting challenges; and it still does: US troops are now stationed across

the region, from Georgia to Kyrgyzstan, and pro-Western revolutions have begun to transform both Georgia and Ukraine.

However, the role of oil per se was never vital to these wars. There is very little in Chechnya (although what there is of fine quality), and the republic's oil infrastructure has patently not been high on Moscow's list of priorities: witness the demolition of Grozny's refineries. As for the pipeline, it has long been re-routed around Chechnya and is, in any case, of declining importance.

Of the million people living in Chechnya in 1994, perhaps 200,000 (20 per cent) have been killed. Whatever the figure, the US Holocaust Museum has put Chechnya on its Genocide Watch list

Indeed, anyone searching for signs of strategic thinking in Moscow's decision to go to war in Chechnya, or some master plan, will come away empty-handed, for this is a tragedy in which logic played little role.

For the real roots to Moscow's Chechen adventures you would do better to peer into the opaque and capricious workings of Kremlin politics, which in 1994 led to Yeltsin reaching one of his lowest ebbs. He was desperately unpopular. The hopeful, post-Soviet days of democracy and free-market experimentation had given way to an era of discontent. Yeltsin himself was sick. His defence minister Pavel Grachev was accused of massive corruption. The

last liberals were abandoning the president's cabinet, and a team of cynical, often barely competent politicians was in the



A Chechen woman showing the passports of her missing sons during a gathering of women searching for arrested and missing male relatives in central Grozny. Their protest was timed to coincide with International Women's Day, a Soviet-era holiday to honour women of the USSR

ascendancy. Blamed by the public for Russia's feebleness, Yeltsin and his hardline friends invaded Chechnya mostly to show they were still in charge, probably little guessing that their bright idea would end 21 months later, in 1996, in humiliation.

Of course, the Yeltsin campaign not only failed for the politicians; it destroyed Chechnya as well. In the aftermath, central authority collapsed in the republic, and while Russia and the outside world stood by, warlords, kidnappers and bandits took over. By 1999 Chechnya was a legal black hole and undoubtedly a danger to Russian security, albeit a self-inflicted danger.

At the same time, Yeltsin and his clan had once more become dangerously weak and unpopular. The Russian economy was in deep crisis, Yeltsin was again badly ill and his inner circle was increasingly the target of corruption allegations. Defiant and criminalised Chechnya seemed to symbolise his failure.

So it was that the Kremlin began to plan for war. Of course, logic would suggest that another full-scale conflict would make things worse, but, as in 1994, broader interests were of little matter. The way the Kremlin saw it, a patriotic war would reunite the country and suppress an unusually emboldened opposition. Above all, a major national security emergency would help turn Russia over to the FSB security services (the ex-KGB) and their low-profile chief Vladimir Putin. In other words,

what might be called a creeping coup was arranged.

A *casus belli* was not long in coming. In the summer of 1999 the radical Chechen commander Shamil Basayev made a bloody and somewhat bizarre foray into the neighbouring region of Dagestan. Heavy fighting ensued. Then a string of horrific bomb attacks targeted apartment buildings in Moscow, shaking Russians' self-confidence to the core. Guided by Putin (by then prime minister), the military machine, which had long been marshalling its forces, rolled into action.

Even today, troubling questions about these events remain unanswered. The apartment bombings were immediately blamed on Chechens, but the proof was flimsy and many believe that the FSB itself may have been to blame: a terrifying thought, but not unfeasible in Russia. Of the Russians who tried publicly to investigate this theory, one has died of food poisoning, another has been shot dead, another currently faces prison for what his lawyer says is a trumped-up weapons charge, and yet another – a woman who actually survived the apartment bombings – has just been granted political asylum in the US.

To what extent the Kremlin stage-managed the war remains a matter of speculation. The outcome, however, was clear. When Putin promised to 'wipe out the terrorists in the shit-house', Russians were unashamedly thrilled and the army went to war amid waves of anti-Chechen propaganda. Yeltsin resigned,

slipping into discreet and luxurious retirement. There was no further talk of impeachment or lawsuits. Putin became interim leader, and faced no serious challenge when snap presidential elections were held in the spring of 2000.

The 'anti-terrorist operation' was popular at first. The Kremlin promised a limited campaign of what it called surgical strikes and special operations. The military appeared unstoppable.

But while the generals had learned many tactical lessons, strategically speaking the new and improved second war soon quickly began to resemble the first. The vast Russian army was unable to take Grozny from its lightly armed defenders without extraordinarily bitter fighting. Even after the city was taken remnants of Chechen defenders managed to escape into the mountains, where those who did not die of cold or hunger regrouped and fought on in the spring. Five years later, some 80,000 Russian troops remain tied down in an area less than 4 per cent the size of Iraq.

What has changed over time and made the war ever harder to resolve is the fragmentation of both sides. Whereas in the first war the rebels were, broadly speaking, united under the nationalist flag, their forces today comprise everything from independence fighters to Islamic ideologues and freelance groups seeking revenge. The federal side contains a bewildering array of special forces and interior ministry, defence ministry and paramilitary police units, each controlling its own patch of territory and business: smuggling, arms dealing, ransoming prisoners and siphoning off aid money.

Open fighting is currently restricted to the mountains. Long-range artillery salvos are often audible from Grozny during the early hours of the morning. Air strikes also continue, though far from the eyes of most people, who mainly live in the plains. It is in the mountains that Aslan Maskhadov, a former Soviet colonel who was elected president of Chechnya after the first war, is holed up. Shamil Basayev is also believed to be somewhere in the Caucasus's thickly forested foothills. Up there are the die-hard fighters, including some foreigners, who have perfected the techniques enabling them to survive their enemy and the region's long, hard winters.

'It's not easy, year after year running around the mountains in the cold and hunger and heat,' a rebel source told me. 'Russian soldiers are afraid to go eye to eye with the fighters there. They know that the fighters are brave because they have nothing to lose, that they go to death as if to a ball.'

Down in Grozny and in the plains, regular Russian forces man fortified checkpoints at every major road intersection. They make frequent use of Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) to mount impromptu roadblocks. They appear to be in control. However, here too there is war: a campaign of assassinations and terrorist bombings, and a counter-insurgency in which soldiers never show their faces, prisoners are never seen again, and all allegiances are suspect.

This shadowy conflict has brought with it new fear, particularly among families that include young men – whether or not they are rebels. Raisa, a mother of two boys, described how masked soldiers came one night in 2002 for her 23-year-old

son Shamil. Why was Shamil wanted? He was no rebel fighter, but he had tripped a booby trap some months before while scouring ruins for scrap metal. Most likely it was his wounds that got him on the hit list. By luck, he happened to be away with other relatives that night and so escaped capture.

'They came at 3am,' Raisa told me. 'They never said who they were. They broke down the gate, they stole our clothes and our food from the cellar. It was cold outside and they smashed a window.' As soon as the masked men were gone, Raisa told the family: 'I can't live here anymore.' The family loaded a car, left their home, drove to another area of Grozny and settled into one of the many abandoned houses there. Two years later, they're still hiding, refugees within their own city.

Where the Russians take prisoners in their unmarked vans and APCs is rarely revealed. These are not arrests in the sense of warrants, charges, detention centres, lawyers, and official records. The Russians call them 'targeted mop-ups'. Most Chechens can tell the story of a friend or relative being taken in such a mop-up. The stories generally end either with the

CHECHNYA AND RUSSIA: TWO CENTURIES OF CONFLICT

The Chechens are one of more than 40 small ethnic groups inhabiting the Caucasus mountains, said in Greek mythology to be where the gods chained Prometheus after he stole fire from them to give to mankind. Like many of the Caucasus peoples, the Chechens were mostly pagans until the 18th century, when Islam spread rapidly. The Chechens adopted Sufism and integrated mystical beliefs and the veneration of saints with local customs that govern daily life. These customs range from the vendetta to clan rule and the authority of elders.

At the peak of the colonial wars upwards of 400,000 Russian soldiers were deployed across the region, but long after the South Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia and modern Azerbaijan) had been conquered, there were pockets of bitter resistance in the north. One of these was Chechnya, which came under full Russian rule only in 1859.

Since then, there has been a major uprising or a major repression approximately every generation, with particularly bloody fighting in the wake of the Bolshevik revolution and collapse of the Russian empire. Chechens resisted collectivisation. Then, on 23 February 1944, Stalin's NKVD put every single Chechen onto cattle wagons and sent them by train to encampments in central Asia. At least a third of the population is believed to have perished. Chechnya was removed from maps and vanished from the Soviet encyclopaedia.

At the end of the 1950s, the Chechens were allowed to return home. They moved mostly into their ancestral villages. Grozny was essentially a Russian city. Communist Party leadership posts were kept for Russians, as were the best jobs.

In 1991 Dzhokhar Dudayev, the first Chechen to have been made general in the Soviet armed forces, became president and declared independence. This was not recognised by Moscow, but the issue was mostly ignored for another three years, after which Boris Yeltsin sent in the army.

prisoner being released after beatings or torture, or in their being handed back dead or vanishing altogether. Sometimes bodies are found by roads; sometimes just pieces of bodies are found, for prisoners have been blown up, presumably to hide evidence, or perhaps out of sadistic pleasure. Other bodies are sold back to relatives of the deceased.

How many have disappeared? The Russian human rights organisation Memorial attempts to compile accurate lists. But people vanish, then reappear after long periods in secret prisons. Others vanish, but may simply have left Chechnya or gone into the mountains to fight. 'Sometimes a person might be killed in winter,' said Memorial researcher Timur Akiev, 'but it is only with Spring and the melting snow that they are discovered, possibly because a dog has begun tearing at the body.' Memorial's list of the dead and the missing – compiled across only a portion of Chechen territory – is a work in progress. For the period lasting from July 2000 to July 2001, there is now some certainty: 1,304 people killed, mostly in illegal executions. The annual death rate has slowed markedly since this peak, but never dried up. Last year, Memorial documented 148 people missing or dead after being abducted. About 200 others had been snatched, then released.

I caught a glimpse of this hidden war while being driven through Grozny by a guide one night. Near the street in the semi-ruined neighbourhood where we would spend the night, a grey vehicle stood with all its doors open. In the near darkness it was possible to make out that this was a UAZ mini-van: the Russian army's favoured non-armoured vehicle for raids. Also visible was the silhouette of a man with a rifle. Further down the street, on the next corner, was another UAZ. We turned to clear the area. Yet another UAZ passed by. We turned in behind a building, lights off, and waited, feeling a twinge of what so many Chechens had described to me: a creepy, intangible sort of dread. Whom had they come for this time?

Among the main tools in the counter-insurgency are Chechen informers and Chechen men recruited into the ranks of pro-Russian units, which range from traffic police to special forces. Some join out of conviction, persuaded they are fighting the hated foreign Islamic mercenaries. Many join simply because there is no other work. Others are ex-rebels handed amnesties and a chance to lead a new existence. And some who join are rebel infiltrators.

The biggest and most notorious of the Chechen-Russian groupings is the so-called Kadyrovites, formed by Akhmad Kadyrov, the Russian-installed president of Chechnya who was assassinated last summer. With their mishmash of uniforms and habit of driving at high speed in blacked-out cars, the Kadyrovites look unnervingly like the rebel fighters most of them once were. Now that Kadyrov is dead, they answer to his widely detested son. No one is quite sure what their role is and where their loyalties lie. Russian officers have long complained

that the Kadyrovites are a fifth column; human rights groups blame them for many of the disappearances and torture cases; some, including Kadyrovites themselves, say they are a buffer between the Russian military and the Chechen population.

Such blurred lines run right through the Russian forces, and can result in infighting between rival units and even collusion with the rebels. A senior security official told me that the rebels in the mountains cut deals to keep certain areas quiet. So there may be fighting in one district, but a haven for the rebels (and peace for the soldiers stationed there) in another. Likewise, there has long been evidence of weapons sales by federal troops to the rebels. Another senior security source went further, describing the situation as similar to the chaotic years between the first and second wars, when armed men ruled the streets and all

significant economic activity was criminal. 'This is not a war of so-called resistance, but a dividing up of business influence between divisions of the power structures,' he said. 'It's a so-called "manageable small conflict" in which uncontrollable parts of the security forces can sell arms... There is a huge arms trade across the North Caucasus.' In an extraordinary admission, this officer said that the rebels were more principled than many of the federal groupings.

Amid such lawlessness, a man who has lost his family, his friends, his house or sense of honour, cannot find justice. The police and military are unlikely to do more than file his complaint. Only handfuls of such cases have made it into the Russian

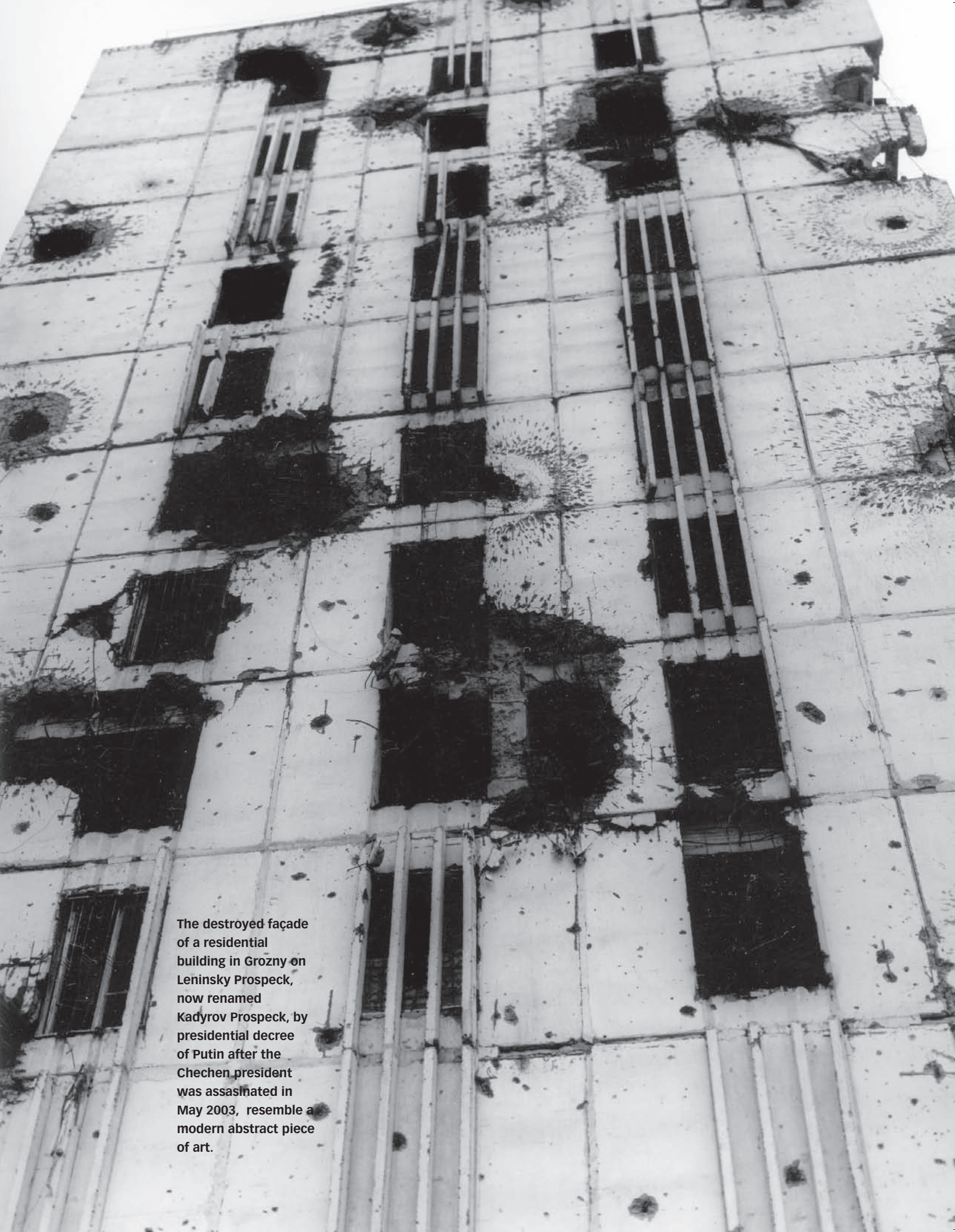
courts over the last decade. He could try filing a case with the European Court of Human Rights, but that might take years. Alternatively, he could take a gun and a bomb and, as they say here, 'go into the forest': that is, become a rebel or terrorist.

In Chechnya today, the forest is the highest court of appeal.

Blamed by the public for Russia's feebleness, Yeltsin invaded Chechnya mostly to show he was still in charge, probably little guessing that his bright idea would end in humiliation

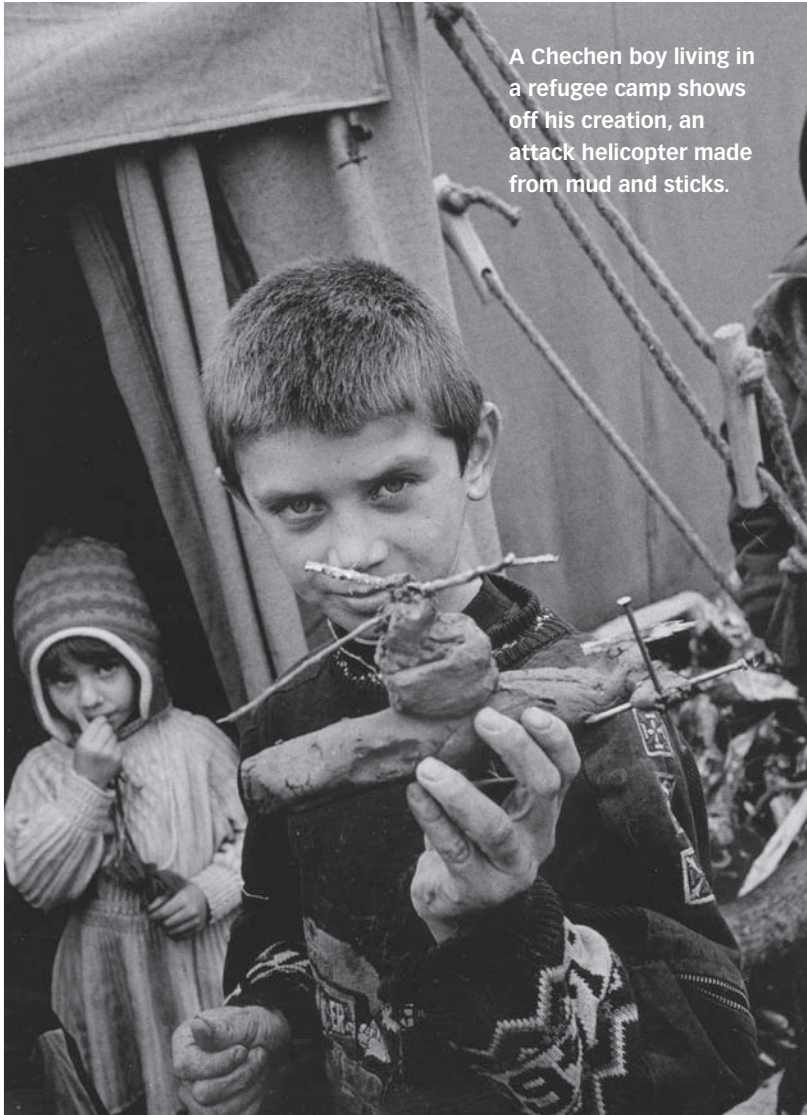
Western leaders have rarely said in open what they think about Chechnya. There's been a good deal of hand wringing, but little else. With its giant gas and oil fields and perennially worrying nuclear arsenal, Russia cannot be pushed around. It is no Yugoslavia or Iraq. If a Serb general lobs 3,000 artillery shells a day into Sarajevo he goes to The Hague; the Russian generals who fired 3,000 artillery shells an *hour* at Grozny got medals, governorships, big dachas and, no doubt, some cushy trips to Brussels for Nato-Russia summits.

After 9/11, this policy of turning a blind eye to Chechnya gathered fresh impetus. Crudely put, Putin gave the US a green light to operate in former Soviet central Asia. In return, the Bush administration increasingly endorsed the Kremlin's view that the Chechen problem was all about Islamic fundamentalism: a Russian version of the fight against al-Qaeda. Moscow could now parrot Bush's crusader speeches, and Washington, London, Paris and Berlin could finally wash their hands of Chechnya. Armies of politicians, journalists and analysts, few, if any, of whom had ever been near the republic, joined the bandwagon, concocting stories about the spread of Chechen terrorism from London to



The destroyed façade of a residential building in Grozny on Leninsky Prospeck, now renamed Kadyrov Prospeck, by presidential decree of Putin after the Chechen president was assassinated in May 2003, resemble a modern abstract piece of art.

A Chechen boy living in a refugee camp shows off his creation, an attack helicopter made from mud and sticks.



Vera, a Chechen woman living with relatives after her home was destroyed, hammers away to loosen bricks from a destroyed old building in central Grozny. She will use them to reconstruct her own home and also to sell on the black market. Bricks from turn of the century buildings, destroyed in the war, are well made and sell rapidly, she says. Grozny is full of residents scavenging good building material from the destruction of the city, in order to rebuild homes with their relatives.

Kabul and Baghdad. A ludicrous article in *The Washington Times* outdid them all with its report about Chechens ‘with backpacks’ sneaking into Arizona.

There *is* a foreign Islamic element in Chechnya. Indeed, the Taliban was the only foreign government (of any sort) to recognise Chechen independence. But the influence of the global jihadists is limited. Raised on a blend of Sufi Islam and indigenous mountain laws, most Chechens regard the puritanical teachings of al-Qaeda with distaste. The feeling is almost certainly mutual. It is also fair to say that some foreign Islamic fighters have gone to Chechnya: the same types who went to Afghanistan in the 1980s and Bosnia in the 1990s. But their numbers are of questionable importance. In military terms, Chechnya is too small a territory and the war is too intimate to absorb many foreigners; Chechnya is not Afghanistan, but a place smaller than Wales.

As for Chechen involvement in various jihads and radical movements around the world, that appears to be grossly exaggerated, if not fantasy. There have been hundreds of reports of Chechens fighting in Afghanistan, but no sighting by any independent journalist. The confusion may stem from the

tendency of people in the region to describe all people from former Soviet central Asia, of whom there are many fighting in Afghanistan, as Chechens. There is even less credible evidence of Chechens being active in Iraq. For the record: eight Russian citizens were among the men detained in Afghanistan and taken to Guantanamo Bay; not one was Chechen.

Inevitably, radicalisation will deepen. A new generation of fighters is appearing. These are too young to remember the original independence movement, let alone a peaceful life with Russia. Let down by the West, they may well look favourably on offers of help from the global jihadists. What can’t be emphasised enough, though, is that the chief recruiter for Chechnya’s insurgents, be they traditional guerrillas, or Islamic radicals, is not al-Qaeda or some nebulous anti-Western movement, but Russia itself. Torture, rape, destruction, looting and the lack of redress in the court system: these are the things that drive Chechens to take up arms and, with still very little frequency, become suicide bombers and terrorists.

Oddly, it may have been the carnage at Beslan that finally helped Western governments to see this. For all the shock at the mass murder of children, there was incredulity over Putin’s wild statements about foreign forces wanting to tear ‘juicy chunks’ out of Russia. Kremlin claims about Arabs and even an African being among the hostage takers were quickly revised. Ultimately, it became clear that nearly all the terrorists had indeed been locals and that Beslan was a home-made disaster: a spillover from the mayhem in Chechnya.

Until then, many in the West treated Chechnya as an isolated problem. The Chechens’ suffering was almost never seen on television. Terrorist attacks were sufficiently far apart to be considered freak events. And unlike the Kremlin’s assault on the Yukos oil company, Chechnya had no impact on oil prices or Western business interests.

Yet far from being a side event, the past 10 years in Chechnya encapsulate everything that has gone wrong with



A plain clothes policeman in central Grozny.

the post-Soviet experiment: Chechnya drove the last reformers from Yeltsin's side; it brought Putin and the former KGB establishment to power; it drove Putin's dismantlement of the free media; Chechnya helped racist politicians to the top ranks of Russia's parliament. And how did Putin react to the tragedy of Beslan? He announced that Russians would no longer be allowed to elect their regional governors. Chechnya, what Yeltsin liked to say was an 'internal affair' and Putin calls 'part of the international war on terrorism', is becoming everybody's business.

I have seen men and women cut in half by shrapnel in Chechnya. I have seen many grey, dead faces staring from pavements, car seats and muddy roads. I have heard planes diving and the screams of people injured by their bombs. I have seen and smelt a 16-year-old boy of whom there remained nothing but roasted sticks collected in a bucket. I have seen heads without bodies and bodies without heads. There are few places in the world where war victims have been chosen so arbitrarily and given so little opportunity to escape.

A recent survey by the aid group Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) found that nine out of 10 Chechens had lost someone close in the war, and that one in six had witnessed the death of a close relative. Eighty per cent had seen people wounded. Almost every single person interviewed in the survey had come under

aerial bombardment or crossfire. Two thirds said they never felt safe. For parallels, MSF suggested Sierra Leone.

Russians, too, have been terribly wounded. Many tens of thousands of conscripts have been pushed through the Chechen grinder, learning that in some parts of their country human life has no value. The same, with predictable consequences, goes for the huge numbers of police rotating between the war and their far-off home regions. Russian society has experienced every extreme of emotion, from outrage to humiliation, from fear to apathy. Any idealism has been lost in the process. That modest goal Russians have of living in a 'normal' country seems beyond grasp. Normal is hard to define, but a country with the Chechen war will never be normal. And while one day the killing may stop and some of the damage might be repaired, for many peace will come too late.

■ Heidi Bradner's retrospective about the Chechen War shows at the Side Gallery Feb 20-March 30. "A Decade of War" and "The Lost Boys-Portraits of Russian Conscripts" 5-9 Side, Newcastle upon Tyne Tel: 0191 232 2208. More info about exhibit on: www.heidibradner.com

■ Sebastian Smith is the author of *Allah's Mountains: the battle for Chechnya*, published by IB Tauris

QUIZ

HOW WELL CONNECTED ARE YOU... to your food and drink?

- WIN £250 Breville juicer
- Entries in by Friday 18 March
- Email your answers to quiz@theecologist.org

1 Match the photo to the drink.

- a. Vodka
- b. Gin
- c. Beer
- d. Whisky



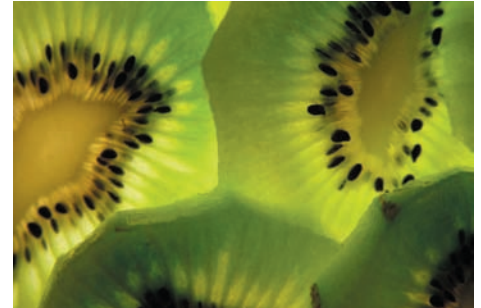
2 Dietary supplement Berocca, 'a must have for anyone wanting to keep on top of his or her hectic and physically demanding lifestyle', contains E110. It can also be found in orange squash, marzipan, apricot jam, lemon curd and packet soups. Which one of the following is NOT a known side effect of E110?

- a. Mild dizziness
- b. Kidney tumours
- c. Chromosomal damage
- d. Abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting

3 What are Marvel Stripe, Sweet 100, Tappy's Finest and Anna Russian varieties of?

4 Of the 30 million chickens kept in this country, approximately 80 per cent are kept in battery farms. EU legislation sets a minimum required standard for floor area per bird. Is this area larger or smaller than this edition of *The Ecologist*?

5 In my juicer I blend two Ecuadorian bananas, half a punnet of Spanish strawberries and four Kiwi fruit from New Zealand. To the nearest thousand miles, how far has my juice travelled?



6 Why are farmed salmon routinely fed the petroleum-based chemical Astaxanthin?

7 Until the early 1800s, for eating what could women in Hawaii be executed?

- 8** Two thirds of the UK's apple orchards have been lost in the last 30 years. Production has fallen from over 350,000 tonnes to just 150,000 tonnes in the same period. Which of these apples are grown in England?
- a. Pink Lady
 - b. Golden Delicious
 - c. Egremont Russet
 - d. Braeburn

9 What maize crop herbicide – banned in Italy, Sweden, Norway, France and Germany but still used widely in the UK – turns frogs into hermaphrodites?

10 You fancy a glass of sloe gin after a tough day at work. To make your own, which of these berries would you pick... and when?



A



B



C



D



question 9

11 Current EU rules allow cattle to be transported for 14 hours without water or rest. They must then be given a rest period after which they may be transported for a further 14 hours. What is the minimum allowable rest period?

12 Why does a cow eat the following?

- a. Nettles
- b. Docks
- c. Willow leaves

13 When buying whole fresh fish, what are the four signs to look for to tell if the fish is fresh?

14 What is the connection between Gioddu, Fidighela and Sagarnoa?

15 What would you make with the following ingredients:

Milk-fat, non-fat milk, sugar, sweet whey, high-fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, guar gum, mono- and diglycerides, cellulose gum, sodium

phosphate, carrageenan, citric acid, sodium benzoate, red colouring #40 and artificial strawberry flavour (amyl acetate, amyl butyrate, amyl valerate, anethol, anisyl formate, benzyl acetate, benzyl isobutyrate, butyric acid, cinnamyl isobutyrate, cinnamyl valerate, cognac essential oil, diacetyl, dipropyl ketone, ethyl acetate, ethyl amylketone, ethyl butyrate, ethyl cinnamate, ethyl heptanoate, ethyl heptylate, ethyl lactate, ethyl methylphenylglycidate, ethyl nitrate, ethyl propionate, ethyl valerate, heliotropin, hydroxyphenyl-2-butanone, x-ionone, isobutyl anthranilate, isobutyl butyrate, lemon essential oil, maltol, 4-methylacetophenone, methyl anthranilate, methyl benzoate, methyl cinnamate, methyl heptene carbonate, methyl naphthyl ketone, methyl salicylate, mint essential oil, neroli essential oil, nerolin, neryl isobutyrate, orris butter, phenethyl alcohol, rose, rum ether, γ-undecalactone, vanillin and solvent?

16 Rennet is often used to curdle milk when making cheese. From which part of the cow does it come?

17 Take the stomach of a large fish, stuff it with chopped fish liver and oatmeal, tie the ends together and then boil it in salted water. What would a Shetland Islander call this dish?

18 In a 30g serving of Quaker Sugar Puffs, how much sugar is there?

19 Identify this cut of meat and the animal it comes from.

20 What was the last food that Elvis ate and where was he at the time?



WIN A BREVILLE COMMERCIAL STYLE JUICER

worth £249.99

Turn your box scheme and farmers market fresh, seasonal fruit and veg into a multitude of great tasting healthy drinks quickly and easily with this high performance Breville Commercial Style Juicer. It's easy to clean - with smooth rounded surfaces, and easily removable parts that can be quickly rinsed in hot soapy water and the motor base wiped clean with a damp cloth.

Key features:

A two-speed control (low for soft fruits; high for harder fruits/vegetables); a Food Pusher; a Juicer Cover; a Stainless Steel Micro Mesh Filter Basket; Filter Bowl Surround; Large Pulp Container with handle; a 1 litre Juice Jug; and a Safety Locking Arm.

■ To enter the competition, simply answer as many of the quiz questions as you can and email your answers to quiz@theecologist.org by midday, **Friday 18 March 2005**.

COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- 1 The winner will be the first correct entry drawn at random from all correct entries received before the closing date of 1200hrs (GMT), March 18th 2005.
- 2 Competition open to UK and ROI residents aged 18 or over except employees of The Ecologist, Breville Ltd and their families, agents or any other person(s) connected with the competition.
- 3 The prize consists of 1 Breville Commercial Style Juicer. The prize will be drawn on Friday, March 25th 2005, and the winner notified that day by e-mail and/or telephone.
- 4 The Ecologist takes no responsibility for any entries, which are lost, delayed, illegible, corrupted, damaged, incomplete or otherwise invalid.
- 5 By entering, entrants agree to be bound by these terms and conditions. Entries, which do not comply with the terms and conditions are invalid.
- 6 Only one entry per person. The prize is non-transferable, and cash alternatives are not available.
- 7 Any breach of these competition rules by an entrant will void their entry. Misrepresentative or fraudulent entries will invalidate an entry.
- 8 The Editors decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- 9 The Ecologist will not be liable for any loss or damage arising out of the winner's enjoyment of the prize.



THE SECRET LIFE OF COWS

In intensive farming animals are viewed as units of production to be ground relentlessly through the system. Nothing could be more different at Kite's Nest in the Cotswolds, where the livestock is actively engaged in deciding how the farm is managed

BY ROBIN MAYNARD



Ever seen a happy farmer? It is rare that a smile cracks the glum mien of most farming pundits and practitioners. And you can hardly blame them, given modern agriculture's perennial crop of bad news stories: BSE; Foot and Mouth; the ongoing exodus of 12 farmers from the land every day... Yet as a city-confined environmentalist, so deprived of direct contact with nature and food production that I call my compost bin worms a 'herd', farming seems an enviable way of life, one that utilises mind and muscles in a variety of tasks and skills, and which offers endless fascination and, yes, fun. Is this just the naivety of a city dreamer romancing the hard business of commercial food production? No, not necessarily, as I recently discovered while on a visit to Kite's Nest farm in the Cotswolds.

Kite's Nest is farmed by the Young family: mother Mary, and her son Richard and daughter Rosamund. Within minutes of arriving, both myself and Jo, the photographer accompanying me, had huge grins on our faces as we were hurtled about the fields in a clapped-out





Mary and Rosamund talking to Ellen

old Range Rover driven by Rosamund. The now frail, but indomitable Mary was wedged with improvised hot-water bottles into the passenger seat. Our mission? Taking perfectly good but supermarket-rejected organic apples out to the Youngs' cattle and sheep for their routine bedtime treat. Meeting the livestock in the fields above the farmhouse, with dusk falling and, as Mary pointed out, the rooks gathering on the ground 'to discuss the day's doings' before swooping off to roost, was certainly a treat for a pair of reluctant urbanites.

But the Youngs' farm has a more significant purpose than merely providing a tonic for jaded, nature-starved city dwellers. The practice and philosophy of farming followed by the family offers lessons and techniques that, if understood and adopted more widely, could revive the general fortunes of agriculture in this country; they might even bring a smile back to farmers' faces. The Youngs are organic farmers and have been since 1953, when Mary and her husband started farming. They hadn't heard the term 'organic' then, but simply made a conscious decision to resist the urgings of the 'men from the ministry' to 'modernise'; they were convinced that traditional techniques offered a better way of life and more secure system for both them and the animals in their care.

The word that best describes what goes on at Kite's Nest is 'husbandry', in the term's original meaning of 'the management and administration of a household'. By 'household' is meant the whole farm and all that live in and on it – including the animals, which at Kite's Nest are actively engaged in deciding and amending the farm's management. The Youngs believe this makes obvious common and commercial sense. 'Making animals happy and allowing them to express their natural behaviour and instincts is not just morally and ethically essential; it also makes sound financial sense. Happy animals grow faster.' Science is playing catch-up. A recent press article reporting a 'new initiative' set up by the Zoology Department at Oxford University talked excitedly about 'a unique farming laboratory [in which] the animals are effectively being asked to design the farm themselves'. Such a system has been running at Kite's Nest for decades.

Despite tracing her farming roots back to 17th century royalists, Mary Young describes herself as a 'communist', and praises Castro's Cuba for its national health service and wholesale adoption of organic farming. (The latter was enforced by the US trade blockade and Cuba's no longer being able to access cheap pesticides and fertilisers following the collapse of the Soviet Union.) Here in the Cotswolds a quieter revolution has been gathering pace over 50 years, its manifesto set out in Rosamund's gently titled book *The Secret Life of Cows*. The book records the Young family's observations and anecdotes about Kite's Nest's other inhabitants: the Hat, Bonnet, Discount and High Noon cattle dynasties; Audrey, 'the helpful and friendly' sheep; Audrey's rather dull and less 'inventive' friend Sybil; and the hens, which 'of all farm animals... are usually, if given freedom and access to a wide variety of food and lots of pure water, the most independent creatures'.

How sentimental and uncommercial! Conventional farmers distance themselves from their livestock, and any nagging doubts as to the systems they put them

Despite tracing her farming roots back to 17th century royalists, Mary Young describes herself as a 'communist', and praises Castro's Cuba for its national health service and wholesale adoption of organic farming

through, by knowing them only by the numbers on their ear-tags and breeding records. Yet the stories and anecdotes in *The Secret Life of Cows* are not mawkish fancy, but serve a real, practical purpose. Close observation of individual animals brings familiarity with their idiosyncrasies. That helps farmers know how animals are likely to react in different circumstances, making *necessary*

adjustments to their routine easier to manage. As Rosamund writes in her book, 'the better you know the animal the more use you can be to it. If you know how it is likely to react in various circumstances you can be prepared... Unusual behaviour needs investigating'. So, when the Youngs' normally self-reliant cow Fat

Hat appeared in the yard while the rest of her group grazed contentedly up the hill, Rosamund knew something was up. It turned out that a length of fencing wire had become tangled about her legs. Once attended to, Fat Hat returned to her solitary ways, but not before looking back in what Rosamund describes as 'grudging admission that humans do occasionally have their uses'.

Mary's remark that 'animals want to be left alone really' does not reflect neglect or laziness on the part of the Youngs. Indeed, they spend a great deal of time paying close attention to what their animals are doing, but only intervene when necessary or they are 'asked'. Constant disruptions to and dictations of animals' lives cause undue labour and stress to both farmer and livestock. Often such interference is driven more by the needs of the pharmaceutical companies', which play on farmers' fears about disease and loss of profit in order to maintain their sales, than any genuine welfare necessity.

The Secret Life of Cows reveals the dignity and delight proper farming accords livestock and farmers alike. But there's a radical conclusion to be drawn from Rosamund's most remarkable observation: that animals 'self-medicate', searching out certain plants, herbs, shrubs and trees to treat specific ailments or nutritional deficiencies. Thus, immediately before and after calving cows seek out nettles as a readily available source of iron; docks, normally ruthlessly sprayed out as a sign of an 'untidy' pasture, are selected by animals needing a boost in minerals or trace elements such as copper, which are brought up from deep underground by the plant's 10- to 30-foot roots; and animals that have bruised or strained muscles in a fall or during horse-play will eat willow leaves: their equivalent of knocking back a couple of aspirin.

The whole edifice and justification of modern livestock farming hangs on denying that animals have intelligence, individuality and sensitivity, and on reducing the independence and self-reliance of farmers and their farms. Conventional modern grassland is species-poor, with only two or three grasses. It is designed to maximise milk

yield, but requires heavy applications of artificial fertiliser. Healing herbs are largely absent from such pasture, their properties supplied at a cost by extra mineral licks, supplements and drugs bought in off-farm from feed and pharmaceutical companies. Forgetting the husbandry of their fields, passed down by their forebears, farmers become ignorant of the instinctive wisdom of their own animals and fall prey to commission-driven salesmen racking up their drug, veterinary and fertiliser bills. It's hard not to conclude that there's been a conscious conspiracy to discredit and undermine the self-confidence of farmers, substituting traditional knowledge of land and livestock with drugs and chemicals, and all to the supplying companies' profit.

Noting the plants, herbs and shrubs chosen at various times in the year by individual animals for different reasons, gives the Youngs detailed information on the health of their livestock and on what mix of sward will maximise general wellbeing; it has also proven the value of their allowing their animals access to additional hedgerow and woodland browsing. But really, such intelligence and resourcefulness in farm animals should not be so remarkable. David Attenborough fans will be familiar with images of elephants trekking miles to tusk out vital salts from caves used by generations of their forebears, and any cat or dog owner will have seen their pets eating grass to cure stomach upsets.

By putting the wellbeing and satisfaction of their animals first, the Youngs are also prioritising the commercial wellbeing of the farm business. 'Satisfied animals are happier, healthier animals'. That means they put on weight and the right balance of muscle to fat. As a consequence, Kite's Nest is producing the best meat for human consumption. The farm's customers clearly believe there's something special about the meat: not just the ethics of its production, but its quality and taste, as well, with some customers travelling from Scotland to stock their freezers.

The Youngs' enthusiastic and loyal customers bring more than just money. Farming is a lonely occupation nowadays, with a minority of farmers selling direct to the public. The only visitors most

THE LOST ART OF HUSBANDRY

Husbandry once applied to all areas of farm practice and learning. It encompasses a wide range of skills and techniques developed and laid down over generations. Today, agricultural colleges substitute the narrower term 'science' to describe their courses, so animal husbandry is reduced to animal science. Indeed, science has been raised from a component to the dominant and only essential part of the knowledge necessary to raise crops or livestock. Consequently, farmers are reduced to the status of serfs, slavishly applying the 'scientific' products of the agrochemical and pharmaceutical industries upon which their systems now depend.

In contrast, husbandry is a noble art, engaging and developing the intelligence, intuition and instinct of those practising it. Subtle understanding of psychology and ecology is brought to bear, and applied in combination with the foundation knowledge of plant and animal biology, along with practical mechanical and engineering skills.

Husbandry expands the brains of both farmer and animals. Studies show that the lack of stimulation for animals confined in intensive systems literally shrinks their brains. One of Kites Nest's customers is an eminent scientist who has been comparing the craniums of dead cattle for 20 years. He found a pattern of shrinking brain size, which he put down to poor conditions and diet. He concluded his study before the first confirmed case of BSE.



'December Bonnet'

would normally see are chemical, drug and machinery company reps seeking to flog them something, or Whitehall officials checking up on the myriad forms farmers have to complete. The Youngs' visitors stay awhile, fascinated by what is going on, enjoying a system that fulfils their aspirations of what proper, ethical farming should be like. Few farmers could reel off such a list of diverse and distinguished visitors as Mary Young can. To name them would be indiscreet, but they range from royalty, rock stars and TV news anchormen, to leading microbiologists. The Youngs also have several customers with severe medical conditions, who have found their systems can only tolerate Kite's Nest produce: something Rosamund describes as 'a humbling responsibility'.

Accepting the lessons Kite's Nest teaches is not always easy, especially for those hardened in their ways. This is well illustrated by a story Rosamund tells about Amelia, a cow and character about whom she says: 'I could write for a thousand pages, listing every detail of Amelia's life and I still would not have presented an even half-accurate picture of her.' The Youngs had hired an elderly farm-worker who, Rosamund says, 'had been taught to talk gruffly to cows, hurry them, let them know who was boss; taught, in actual fact, to be afraid of them while never admitting it'. Coming to help move a group of cows meandering their

way to graze, the farm-worker initially sought to drive them at his pace. On being told that Amelia could find her own way at her own pace, he paused, noting in increasing amazement her interest and investigation of everything en route. Appreciation and friendship began. 'To his immense delight,' Rosamund says, 'Amelia persuaded him to like and enjoy the company of cows.'

Farming journalists and industry pundits complain that young people don't want to work in farming because 'it's boring' or 'not adequately rewarding'. It certainly is boring, after the first macho thrill, to sit detached from the soil aloft a huge tractor driving up and down a featureless field all day. And it is boring if you're told that cows, sheep, pigs and poultry are simply units of production, without character, individual needs or rights, and therefore not worth learning anything about other than how to grind them through the system. Constraining all capacity for learning, factory farms are as soul-destroying for the human cogs serving them as for the incarcerated animals they exploit. Yet there's nothing boring about farming the Kite's Nest way; no shortage of incidents to observe and learn from; indeed, more than enough for any one person to learn in a lifetime. 'something happens every day... But many of the happenings inevitably go unnoticed'.

Kite's Nest is still a commercial farm, however, with the animals ending up on someone's plate. And for vegetarians no degree of care and attention during the animals' lives will make up for their final end. But the Youngs' way of farming is a more effective indictment of intensive livestock systems than most animal rights' campaigns, which conventional farmers dismiss out of hand as totally detached from their working lives and experience. *The Secret Life of Cows* provides scientific evidence (for science is fundamentally

about observation) by working farmers, not just of the sentient nature of farm livestock, but of their individual characters, intelligence, capacity for learning and recognition of their keepers. That evidence condemns the intensive livestock industry's innate cruelty, shaming it for its cowardice and inability to confront its crimes, and proving there is another way.

Rosamund's most remarkable observation is that animals 'self-medicate', searching out certain plants, herbs, shrubs and trees to treat specific ailments or nutritional deficiencies

During our visit to his family's farm, Richard Young was preoccupied assisting at the birth of the latest addition to the Bonnet family: December Bonnet, calf and daughter of January Bonnet. Richard is clearly a hands-on working farmer. But that hasn't stopped him from mounting a prolonged and direct assault against the intensive livestock industry. In particular, he continues to challenge its dependence on antibiotics: the pharmaceutical crutch

propping up the disease-ridden, unethical and dangerous industry. Over the years, working with the Soil Association as an on-farm campaigner, he's succeeded in getting seven antibiotic animal drugs withdrawn from use.

Antibiotics can play two roles in intensive and general livestock farming: added routinely to feed or drinking water, they suppress certain gut flora in animals and act as growth promoters, enabling pigs and poultry to put on weight and be ready for slaughter much faster than is natural; used therapeutically, they curb outbreaks of infection that would regularly occur among the thousands of animals or birds crammed tightly together in intensive systems. Thanks to the efforts of Richard and other campaigners, the use of antibiotics for promoting growth has now been banned in the UK. And the therapeutic application of antibiotics is meant to be administered on prescription in response to a disease outbreak. In practice, however, antibiotics



Lunch in the wood



are routinely administered both to prevent disease and to promote growth. This is borne out by the fact that their therapeutic use has increased by more than 30 per cent. The only possible conclusion is that unscrupulous vets are prescribing them for therapeutic purposes, knowing full well that farmers are administering them as growth promoters.

If keeping animals in unhealthy conditions to produce 'cheap' unhealthy meat weren't bad enough, intensive livestock farming's excessive use of antibiotics, several of which belong to the same 'family' of antibiotics used in human healthcare, has resulted in a surge in multiple-drug-resistant bacteria, including the ubiquitous hospital super-bug MRSA. This threat to human health has prompted a ban on the use of antibiotic growth-promoters across the

EU, which will come into force in 2006. Richard and his fellow campaigners may have succeeded in kicking the crutch from under the legs of the intensive livestock industry. If they were to apply the knowledge of husbandry set down in the book by Richard's sister, knowledge gleaned by the Young family over a period of 50 years, intensive livestock producers might survive the withdrawal of their drugs and relearn how to farm in a way that recognises the limits of nature and respects the individuality and rights of farm animals.

As we bounced across the fields, Mary Young reassured us we were in safe hands as her daughter 'had been a rally driver'. I mused that agriculture needs someone like Rosamund at the wheel. Unfortunately, it's currently being driven straight into a tree by Jeremy Clarkson

types: people with narrow, selfish and destructive views. Diverted from this absurd analogy by an inquisitive head poking through the window, I exclaimed, 'hello sheep!', only to be immediately and rightly rebuked with the words 'that's not a sheep, that's Ellen'.

■ To order a copy of Rosamund Young's book *The Secret Life of Cows* (£14.99, ISBN 0-9542555-5-0), contact Farming Books and Videos on 01772 652693 (www.farmingbooksandvideos.com); Robin Maynard is national coordinator of Farm, the campaigning organisation for independent farmers



FULL OF BEANS

According to a Mori poll in March 2004, the fairtrade mark is now recognised by 39 per cent of the British public, up from 11 per cent five years ago. But what difference does fairtrade actually make to the lives of the producers?

John Atkin looks at the Nicaraguan community of La Pita who sell half of their coffee on the fairtrade market.

La Chureca, Managua's city dump, is a desolate monstrosity - teeming with the putrid stench of rotting goods and industrial waste. Over a thousand people, many of them children, live and work here, fighting with flocks of vultures amongst hypodermic needles as they scavenge for scraps of food and resaleable items. In the midday sun the undulating horizon gains an unnatural white glare and you are left wondering whether or not those are really cows you see making their unsteady way across the rubbish.

As it turns out, they are, as the City Council leases the land out to a dairy farmer who sells their milk, contaminated by heavy metals, to the local community. There are similar scenes of unsustainable desolation across the developing world and while Altamira - a wealthy suburb of repatriated Nicaraguans, returned from Miami - may supply the most obvious contrast, the coffee-producing town of La Pita is more apposite.

Lying in the north of the Central American country, some 100 miles from the capital, La Pita is a co-operative of 16 families that grow coffee in the shade of the forest on the steep slopes of the surrounding mountains. Unlike much of the country, the Howler Monkeys that abound are as unthreatened as the forest - whose wood could provide a potentially lucrative, if non-renewable, building commodity - and remain untouched. There is therefore no soil erosion, and a regular supply of clean water.

Much of this has been enabled by the community selling half their coffee on the Fairtrade market. The fixed rate of \$1.26 (67p) per pound for green coffee beans was instrumental in the co-op's survival during the October 2001 coffee crisis when prices tumbled to an all-time low of 43 cents (23p). This guaranteed income has meant that the producers have been able to protect the environment and, for the first time in their lives, plan for the



From left: Picking coffee, coffee tree nursery, planting coffee.



future. The Fairtrade premium - an extra five cents (3p) that is paid on top of the fixed rate specifically for social investment - has meant that each of the 16 homes now has clean running water after the community completed a channel running from a spring 3km's away in September.

The Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign runs Fairtrade work and study tours to La Pita with the aim of giving people a practical understanding of the daily life of coffee producers in the north of the country and the impact Fairtrade has on their lives. Anna Ridehalgh, a teacher from Southampton was there in September and was heartened, if exhausted, by what she saw.

'Life is hard,' she said. 'Work begins at daybreak following a stiff, muddy climb from the village to the 45-degree slopes of the fields. At the end of the afternoon, we all pick up huge sacks of fruit and begin the 30-minute walk back to the village.' On their return the families sort out any accountancy or administration issues, in which they are largely self-sufficient having received training in this and democratic representation from the Agricultural Co-operative Union (UCA), a vestige of the Sandinistas' agrarian reform

policies of the 1980s.

The UCA also helps find grants for children from La Pita and the 21 other co-ops under their umbrella to travel for study and provides training on social, farming and environmental issues. In addition, La Pita and three other co-ops are now involved in establishing an eco-tourism project, again with the guidance of the UCA. Fairtrade has been a lifeline for the people of these communities. 'On a number of occasions the farmers reflected that without fairtrade they wouldn't have survived,' Ridehalgh recalled.

In 2005 the US-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) is likely to be ratified. Central American producers' organisations are extremely concerned that this could mean the destruction of Central American agriculture because of the dumping of highly subsidised US agricultural products. Fairtrade will therefore become even more important to the survival of thousands of farmers like those in La Pita, and they need the continued support of consumers in the West to carry on their development.

As Fairtrade Fortnight celebrates its tenth birthday this month, sales of products carrying the Fairtrade mark are now worth over £100m a year. But despite the very significant expansion of Fairtrade in the international coffee market, it is important to remember that there is still a long way to go. Half of the world's coffee beans are still controlled by four giant multinational companies: Nestlé, Procter & Gamble, Sara Lee and Kraft, who

produce household names like Kenco, Maxwell House and Nescafe. The quartet have been instrumental in reducing the proportion of retail value of the coffee we buy which goes to the coffee-producing countries from 30 per cent to just ten in the space of ten years.

It will take a major ground shift of political will to reverse such grossly unjust terms of trade to ensure that the La Churecas of this world are eliminated from our landscapes. But there is hope. A few years ago, Cafédirect followed in the footsteps of AMT to sell only fairtrade coffee and they have used the ethical model of success to take their annual sales to £22m, making them the sixth biggest coffee brand in Britain.

There are now over 100 companies making 250 Fairtrade coffee products, a burgeoning niche that accounts for 20 per cent of the UK roast and ground coffee market, and three per cent of total sales and is worth £92m per year. That is up from £18.5m three years ago, an exponential rise that people in communities like La Pita will hope to continue as more and more people take the ethical option.

■ For more information on the Fairtrade Foundation and Fairtrade Fortnight, visit www.fairtrade.org.uk

■ For further information on the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign's fairtrade work and study tours, please contact the NSC at nsc@nicaraguasc.org.uk, or phone 0207 272 9619.

RED road RISING

Can the world survive China's burgeoning love affair with the automobile?

WORDS BY YVES ENGLER AND BIANCA MUGYENYI



Seven of the world's smoggiest cities are in China

In 1990 there were just 1 million cars on Chinese roads. 14 years later that number has rapidly risen to 12 million, and this year alone a further 2.4 million new cars will be added.

In itself, that's a lot of new cars, but the figures take on an altogether greater significance when you realise where this trend might lead.

Currently China still only has eight vehicles per thousand residents, whereas Brazil has 122, countries in western Europe have an average of 584, and in the US there are a massive 940 cars for every thousand residents. As Chinese environmentalist Liang Congjie says: 'If each Chinese family has two cars like US families, then the cars needed by China, something like 600 million vehicles, will exceed all the cars in the world combined. That would be the greatest disaster for mankind.'

But is it realistic to see such a figure being met, or is it just doom-mongering? After all, 85 million Chinese still live on less than 21 cents a day, and a further 500

PICTURES BY CORBIS



China has 200 million bicycles, but, in thrall to the motor car, cities such as Shanghai are banning bicycles from many streets. Traditional ways are being pushed aside to make way for the bright shiny new automotive future.



Cars are the ultimate status symbol in a rapidly changing Chinese economy

million get by on less than \$2 a day; it's going to be a long time before *they* can afford a Hummer.

While these people may not be able to afford cars, however, they are already seeing their lives radically altered by their impact. China has 200 million bicycles, but, in thrall to the motor car, cities such as Shanghai are banning bicycles from many streets. Traditional ways are being pushed aside to make way for the bright shiny new automotive future.

The automobile vanguard has already arrived. At the end of September last year Shanghai hosted China's first-ever Formula One motor-racing event: 150,000 cheering fans packed the city's recently completed \$300m racetrack. The track is part of the new Shanghai International Auto City racing and automotive complex, which is expected to cost \$5 billion to complete.

Magazines such as *Autocar* now have Chinese editions. The country's radio airwaves have become clogged with commercials as advertisers discover a new audience, both captive and wealthy: motorists. And on TV Ford has produced its own programme, which it distributed freely to 18 Chinese stations. Modelled on the endurance game show *Survivor*, *Ford Maverick Beyond Infinity* featured a dozen contestants hunting for treasure on a tropical island in a Ford Maverick SUV.

'If each Chinese family has **two cars** like US families, then the cars needed, something like 600 million vehicles, will exceed all the cars in the world combined. That would be the greatest **disaster** for mankind'

*Chinese environmentalist
Liang Congjie*

The grand prize was, of course, another Maverick.

Such largesse from Ford is hardly surprising. Just like General Motors, the company has stated its belief that by 2025 China will surpass the US (where 17 million vehicles are sold per year) as the largest car market in the world. The government in Beijing agrees: it estimates that by 2020, there will be 140 million vehicles on China's road.

To meet this demand, China has

been feverishly laying asphalt. Once completed, its planned new highways will cover an area equivalent to four equatorial laps around the earth. The consequences of this will be far-reaching. Paving 20,000 hectares of agricultural land (the road area needed for a million cars) reduces grain production by 80,000 tonnes. Yet China's agricultural imports increased by 63 per cent during the first half of 2004 to a record half-year agricultural trade deficit of \$3.73 billion. For a country where arable land is already in short supply, any reduction in agricultural land will have devastating consequences.

All over China, cars are shaping the physical landscape: historic neighbourhoods have been torn to the ground to build new roads; forests of roadside billboards have sprung up; and the sprawling outskirts of major cities are undergoing major makeovers as big-box retailers such as Wal-Mart move in.

Already the country has the highest number of crash deaths in the world, with more than 100,000 people dying last year alone. (And that figure is five times what it was 20 years ago.) In many of China's biggest cities half of all air pollution comes directly from cars, and seven of the world's smoggiest cities are now in China. Despite the fact that Chinese drivers still only generate 3 per cent of the amount of greenhouse gases that US drivers produce, the country's growing thirst for oil is where the real problems of the future lie.

Until the mid-1990s, China was oil self-sufficient, but not any more. The country is now the number-two consumer of oil worldwide (it overtook Japan in 2003). Chinese demand has accounted for 40 per cent of the world's total oil growth since 2000, and by 2020 China is expected to need 8 million more barrels of oil per day. With less than two per cent of the world's oil reserves, most of this will have to be imported. (Even after this huge increase China will still only consume two thirds the amount of oil the US guzzles, despite the fact that it is four times the size of America.)

China's Communist Party rulers are becoming increasingly concerned about the security of the country's oil supply, as was demonstrated by last year's launch of the National Strategic Oil Reserves Office. There is similar anxiety in Washington.

Some commentators go as far as to suggest that the invasion of Iraq was a response to China's rapidly expanding appetite for oil. For certain, the invasion annulled a 26-year oil contract China had with Saddam Hussein's regime. The *Washington Post* reported: 'The US is building a network of military bases and diplomatic missions whose main goal is to protect American access to oilfields in volatile places such as Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and São Tomé and, as important, to deny that access to China.'

Elsewhere, China and Japan have been involved in a bitter competition over rival plans to build a pipeline to export oil from Russia's Siberian terminus of Angarsk, causing relations between Beijing and Tokyo to seriously deteriorate. China has also resorted to using arms or 'dual-use technology' to woo oil-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran. Meanwhile, it has 4,000 troops in Sudan protecting oil interests there, and has also become friendly with the corrupt regime in oil-rich Gabon.

A VORACIOUS APPETITE

Increased resource requirements have led Chinese companies to scour the globe for more commodities than just oil. Car manufacturing is an industry with a voracious and varied appetite, and automobile companies are among the leading consumers of copper, aluminium, plastics, iron, lead, rubber, vinyl, computer chips and steel. Notably, China recently became the world's biggest consumer of steel, iron ore, copper, aluminium and cement, driving commodities prices to record highs.

Companies around the world have begun to respond to China's growing mineral requirements. Reuters has reported that demand from the Chinese automotive sector has prompted Abra Mining to re-open its long dormant and rare lead-only mines in Australia. At the end of last October two additional Australian companies, Mineralogy and International Minerals, signed a £7.8 billion deal to supply China with 12 million tonnes of iron ore a year for the next 25 years. Chinese steel-maker Baosteel has joined forces with Brazil's Companhia Vale do Rio Doce in a \$1.5-billion project to build a steel plant on

Already China has the highest number of crash deaths in the world. In many of its biggest cities half of all air pollution comes directly from cars, and seven of the world's smoggiest cities are now in China

Brazil's northern coast, while Chinese aluminium producer Chalco has a partnership with the same Brazilian company to build a \$1 billion aluminium refinery also in northern Brazil. China also imports growing amounts of rubber from Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as from the brutal regime of Burma.

Does it have to be this way? Optimistic analysts believe China could develop a model hydrogen vehicle-fuelling system. They say, since China's car market is likely to be the largest in the world within a generation this could revolutionise the world car market, and lead to a hydrogen future. And they point to the fact that the Communist Party has pledged to invest \$200m over the next couple of years in hydrogen automotive technologies.

Unfortunately, there is little basis for this optimism. Those who portray China as a blank slate for hydrogen-based technology fail to recognise that oil companies are currently lining the country's highways with traditional petrol stations, that oil refineries are being erected and cars with internal combustion engines built and purchased. In short, fossil fuel interests are quickly becoming entrenched.

And while the government may have invested in hydrogen, it is far from turning away from petrol. In 2000 it ordered cities across the country to abolish 238 different auto-related fees. Likewise, Chinese petrol regulations, while recently strengthened, are still weaker than in Europe and North

America. Cars made in China have a fuel consumption rate 10 to 15 per cent higher than those produced by developed countries. In addition, per-vehicle average annual fuel consumption of 2.28 tonnes is 10 to 20 per cent higher than in the US, and 100 per cent higher than in Japan. One reason for higher fuel consumption levels is that Chinese car buyers prefer large sedans with considerable discharge volumes. From 2001 to 2003, annual SUV sales in China doubled to 200,000 vehicles. And subsidised petrol makes filling up cheaper in China than in almost every other oil-importing nation (Chinese petrol is less than one third the UK price).

A decade ago automobiles in China guzzled about 10 per cent of the country's much smaller total oil usage. Today their proportion of oil consumption is closer to a third, and by the end of the decade cars and light trucks are expected to consume more than 40 per cent of all China's oil. So long as the country continues along this development path, there's no reason to believe that cars won't some day consume as much as half of the country's oil, or more.

In other words, the day their future looks like our present, we're done for.

■ Yves Engler is a freelance journalist.

CHINA'S CAR-CULTURE REVOLUTION: THE STATISTICS

- China has eight vehicles per thousand residents, Brazil has 122, western Europe 584, and the US 940.
- The amount of cars on Chinese roads has increased from 1 million to 12 million since 1990.
- This year analysts expect 2.4 million cars to be sold in China, and 5 million vehicles altogether.
- Beijing estimates that by 2020 there will be 140 million vehicles on China's roads.
- Ford and GM expect that China will surpass the US (where 17 million vehicles are sold per year) as the largest car market in the world by 2025.
- There are currently 15,000 highway projects planned in China.

REVIEWS

REVIEWS

Global collapse, propaganda, how to cook with trees... All reviewed this month

OUTGROWING THE EARTH: the food scarcity challenge in an age of falling water tables and rising temperatures

Lester R Brown

WW Norton, 2005, \$15.95

The founder and president of the Earth Policy Institute investigates what the continuing population growth will mean for our ability to feed ourselves, and outlines what should be done to avert the coming crisis.

THE BROKEN STRING: the last words of an extinct people

Neil Bennun

Penguin, 2004, £17.99

When six South African bushmen were released from prison into his home in 1869, linguist Wilhelm

Bleek set out to record their songs, myths, art and beliefs. The 12,000 pages he compiled are practically all that is left of the bushmen's culture. A painfully honest book.

CITIES PEOPLE PLANET: liveable cities for a sustainable world

Herbert Girardet

Wiley-Academy, 2004, £19.99

Are cities inherently environmentally unfriendly? Or can they be designed to operate without being a massive drain on resources? These and many other key questions are answered in Girardet's timely textbook.

THE ECO-DESIGN HANDBOOK: a complete sourcebook for home and

office

Alastair Fuad-Luke

Thames & Hudson, 2005, £16.95

In contrast to the TV makeover programmes, this handbook proves that design can be both cool and conscientious. A much needed tonic to *Changing Rooms* et al.

A SHELTERED LIFE: the unexpected history of the giant tortoise

Paul Chambers

John Murray, 2005, £7.99

For an animal renowned for its slowness, the giant tortoise has a remarkably rich and diverse history. From Darwin to the Cold War, Chambers weaves a story mixed with tragedy and intrigue.

THE ELDER: in history, myth and cookery

Ria Loohuizen

Prospect Books, 2003, £9.99

An insightful and practical exploration of the diverse uses that humanity has put the many different parts of the elder tree to use over time. Lots of recipes, too.

PEOPLE POWER: how to make the government listen to you, for a change

Edited by Steve Baron and Jonathan Eisen

Full Court Press, 2005, \$14.95

Targeted at New Zealanders but applicable to us all, this collection of essays lays out many of the ideas and steps towards creating a direct democracy and bringing politicians and people closer together.

PROPAGANDA

Edward Bernays

IG Publishing, 2004, £7.95

The classic 'bible of spin', written

by Sigmund Freud's nephew in the early 1920s, gets a timely re-release. An eerily prescient look at the way governments and corporations control the way we think and act.

THE LITTLE BOOK OF GARDEN HEROES

Allan Shepherd

CAT publications, 2004, £4.99

Do you want to garden organically but don't know where to begin? This wonderful little guide introduces you to the plants and animals that will stop you ever turning to a chemical product for your garden again.

THE KILLING PENS

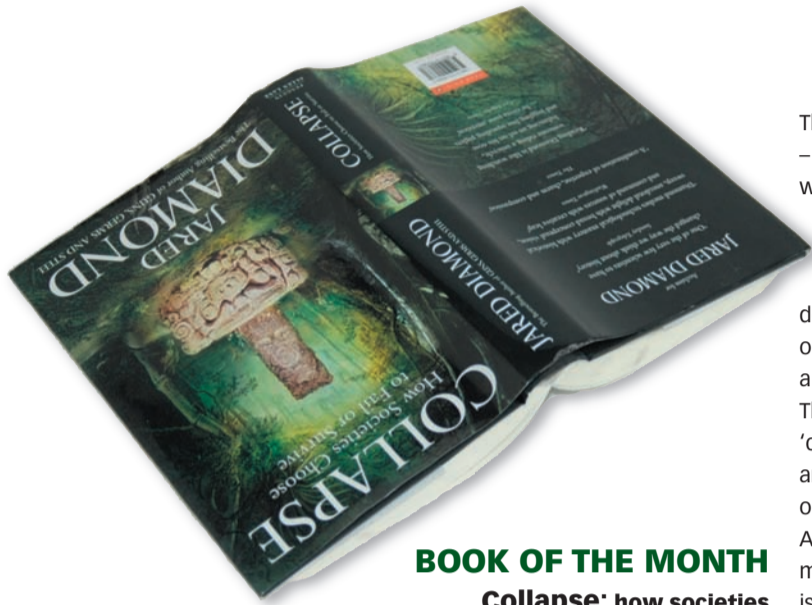
Janet Hughes, with a foreword by Christopher Booker

Laurels Publications, 2004, £12

In July 2001, when the foot and mouth epidemic was past its peak, the Welsh Assembly decided to round up and slaughter 20,000 sheep in the Brecon Beacons. Janet Hughes, a local teacher, then discovered a document that showed the chief vet from the now obsolete MAFF had falsified the evidence in claiming the sheep were diseased. Hughes was prevented from presenting the damning evidence in court, however, and found herself instead facing legal costs of £17,000 and the bailiffs knocking on her door. Thanks to Private Eye [italics] veteran Christopher Booker, her case became a cause célèbre and the world learnt of the government's barbaric and unnecessary pre-emptive culls. Hughes' account of these events makes for a scary reminder of governmental incompetence and maladministration.

Reviewed by Charles Miller





BOOK OF THE MONTH

Collapse: how societies choose to fail or succeed

Jared Diamond

Allen Lane, 2005, £20

Reviewed by Richard Heinberg

Civilisations collapse. Our own civilisation, despite its global extent and unsurpassed technological prowess, is busily severing its ecological underpinnings. Thus we should pay close attention when Jared Diamond, one of the world's most celebrated and honoured science writers and author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Guns, Germs and Steel*, devotes his newest and already best-selling book to the subject of how and why whole societies lose their way and descend into chaos.

Diamond traces the process of collapse in several ancient societies and shows parallels with trends in several modern ones (Rwanda, Haiti and Australia). One theme quickly emerges: the environment. Resource depletion, habitat destruction and population pressure combine in different ways in different circumstances; but when their mutually reinforcing impacts become critical, societies are sometimes challenged beyond their ability to respond and consequently disintegrate.

A second important theme is that human choice can make the difference between prosperity and collapse. While the leaders of the Maya and the Easter Islanders made disastrous decisions that plunged their societies into collapse, others did better. The Inuit in the Arctic and Polynesians on Tikopia managed to create ways of life that were indefinitely sustainable, and the Dominican Republic has had a more peaceful and economically stable history than its neighbour Haiti.

Diamond argues that our modern global industrial society is creating some of the very same sorts of environmental problems that caused ancient societies to fail, plus four new ones: 'human-caused climate change, build-up of toxic chemicals in the environment, energy shortages and full human utilisation of the earth's photosynthetic capacity'. Echoing the conclusions of the *Limits to Growth* study of 1972, Diamond notes that many of these problems are likely to 'become globally critical within the next few decades'.

There is much to admire in this book. However, Diamond avoids a question that appears to be tugging at more minds, and with more urgency, every day: 'What if it's already too late?'

There is much to admire in this book. Diamond's essential message – that our very persistence as a civilised society may depend upon well-led efforts to reduce the negative impact of our economic processes upon nature – is one that more people desperately need to hear. However, when presented with such a sweeping title and subject, readers may need breadth of overview as much as depth of specificity. Why did he not choose to discuss imperial China or Rome, or the ancient Mesopotamians or Egyptians? Why not offer a comprehensive and systematic survey of *all* previous civilisations? This is not as daunting a prospect as it might seem: if we define 'civilisation' as a society with cities, writing, full-time division of labour and relatively high levels of technological complexity, then there have only been about 24 in all of human history.

A second disappointment is Diamond's complacency about the fate of modern industrial civilisation. He offers a familiar message: humanity is undermining its ecological viability, but there are things we can do to turn the tide. Indeed, Diamond predictably devotes the last section of his last chapter to 'reasons for hope', leaving the reader with evidence for thinking that collapse will not occur in our own instance after all. This excuses him from asking a question that appears to be tugging at more minds, and with more urgency, every day: 'What if it's already too late?'

If we simply regard that question as unthinkable, then we foreclose a discussion that could be extremely important. Even if there is only a moderate likelihood that industrial society is headed toward history's

dustbin, shouldn't we be devoting at least some mental effort towards planning for a survivable collapse?

Diamond suggests that success is still an option for modern industrial societies. Yet if 'success' implies the ability to maintain current population levels and per-capita rates of consumption, then we may already have exhausted our choices. We cannot replace dwindling non-renewable resources; we cannot cause industrial wastes to disappear; we cannot quickly restabilise the global climate; and we cannot revive species that have become extinct.

One hesitates to criticise too harshly a book that tries to tell the world a truth that all too many refuse to hear. And yet this isn't the book that it could have been. At this point in time, we could stand a prominent book by an important author that finally announces what so many of us know

all too well: collapse has begun.

Such a message would not constitute fatalism, because that implies absence of choice. Diamond is right: we always have *some* control over events, or at least our response to events. The choice we have now is not as to *whether* our society will collapse, but *how*.

■ Richard Heinberg is the author of *The Party's Over: oil, war and the fate of industrial societies* and *Powerdown: options and actions for a post-carbon world*

REVIEWS

IRAQ, INC: a profitable occupation

Pratap Chatterjee

Seven Stories Press, 2004, £7.99

It's a simple, if stark question: just how many people is America willing to see die to guarantee enough oil for it to carry on operating the way it does? By 2010 it is estimated that the US will be compelled to import around 60 per cent of its oil from states that harbour fervently anti-American sentiments. Chatterjee argues that current US policy rests on the flawed premise that the sources of its energy won't run out or become unimaginably expensive. This will have to change if the country, and by extension the world, is to have any viable future. The US simply has to begin weaning itself off fossil fuels imported from volatile states and shift to the development of renewable energy sources.

Reviewed by Rufus Weston

Just how many people is America willing to see die to guarantee enough oil?

EAT HERE: reclaiming homegrown pleasures in a global supermarket

Brian Halweil

WW Norton, 2004, \$13.95

Eat Here is a timely celebration of local food production. It is filled with inspiring stories of farmers, shopkeepers, businessmen and members of the public who are turning away from the drudgery of supermarket homogeneity and demanding and ensuring that the food they grow, sell and eat is locally produced. Furthermore, as well as celebrating what people are already doing, Halweil's book encourages readers to do the same: it is filled with guidance and ideas for those wanting to make the change.

Reviewed by Sarah McCarthy

AMERICA RIGHT OR WRONG: an anatomy of American nationalism

Anatol Lieven

HarperCollins, 2004, £18.99

DON'T THINK OF AN ELEPHANT: know your values and frame the debate

George Lakoff, with a foreword by Howard Dean

Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004, \$10

Got the post election blues? Bewildered at how Americans could have rewarded a born-again, verbally challenged president with an appalling first-term record with another four years? Two new books provide analysis and guidance on how neo-cons think, how they've secured a stranglehold on political dialogue in the US and what the rest of us can do about it.

In America Right or Wrong

Anatol Lieven picks apart the embittered, defensive and aggressive edge of the US

right, showing how American nationalism, and not the more innocent-sounding patriotism, is influencing US foreign policy and furthering class and race divisions in the States.

George Lakoff's *Don't Think of an Elephant*, meanwhile, is an eye-opening introduction to the use of language in framing political issues, and how the Republicans have brilliantly framed tax, social welfare and foreign policy issues to further their goals. It includes a guide on what progressives can do to win back the debate, and makes it an imperative that they reframe issues using their own language: just having the facts on our side will not set us free.

Reviewed by Matilda Lee

TEN BOOKS ON... US FOREIGN POLICY



William Blum left the US State Department in 1967, abandoning his aspiration of becoming a foreign service officer because of his opposition to what

America was doing in Vietnam. He then became one of the founders and editors of *The Washington Free Press*, the US capital's first 'alternative' newspaper. His book *Killing Hope: US military and CIA interventions since World War II* was called 'far and away the best book on the topic' by Noam Chomsky. Here Blum picks his nine favourite books on US foreign policy, and the one he considers most damaging.

1) *The Cold War and its Origins, 1917-1960* by DF Fleming (Allen & Unwin, 1961) Very useful survey, by a non-radical, of the US role in world affairs from the Russian Revolution to post-WWII.

2) *The Invisible Government* by David Wise and Thomas Ross (Random House, 1964) The first major exposé of the CIA and US secret interventions abroad.

3) *Inside the Company: CIA diary* by Philip Agee (Penguin, 1975)

Groundbreaking revelations of the daily life of a covert CIA officer in Latin America.

4) *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* by Victor Marchetti and John Marks (Alfred A Knopf, 1974) The CIA tried to suppress much of this book. Co-written by former agency officer Victor Marchetti, it is full of very surprising stories.

5) *In Search of Enemies: a CIA story* by John Stockwell (WW Norton, 1978)

The story of a CIA officer working in Angola and elsewhere in Africa.

6) *Endless Enemies: the making of an unfriendly world* by Jonathan Kwitny (St Martins Press, 1984) By a *Wall Street Journal* writer with a political and social conscience.

7) *What Uncle Sam Really Wants* by Noam Chomsky (Odonian Press, 1992)

Concise discussion of the goals and methods of the American empire.

8) *Against Empire* by Michael Parenti (City Light Books, 1995) Highly perceptive account of the myths and realities of US foreign policy.

9) *Cuba and the United States: a chronological history* by Jane Franklin (Ocean Press, 1997) A lengthy and enlightening month-by-month chronology of US attempts to strangle the Cuban revolution.

AND THE BAD ONE IS...

10) *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the new world order* by Robert Kagan (Atlantic Books, 2003)

Influential favourite of the neo-conservatives, Kagan manages to discuss decades of American foreign policy with no more than a hint that the US had ever done anything, anywhere that might make people justifiably very angry.

How to survive without supermarkets

green pages

**ORGANIC
COTTON
BABYCLOTHES:**
THE BEST YOUR
CHILD CAN WEAR

I LOVE SOIL
FALL IN LOVE
WITH YOUR
GARDEN'S
GREATEST
RESOURCE

**FREE:
ORGANIC
TEA FOR
EVERY
READER**

**THE TOP 10
ORGANIC
CEREALS**

MAD MARCH FARE
HUGH FEARNLEY-
WHITTINGSTALL'S
FAVOURITE SEASONAL
RECIPES

**THE FINEST
ALSACE WINE**
DISCOVER THE
ORGANIC CAPITAL
OF THE WORLD

THE FISH LOVER'S GUIDE
MITCHELL TONKS' GUIDE TO FISH

HIGHLIGHTS

70 **March in Season with Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall**

Starting this month, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and River Cottage HQ chef Gill Meller pick their favourite seasonal recipes. For March, there's everything from crispy seaweed greens to chilled radish leaf and mint soup. You need never be lost for ideas for your box scheme vegetables again.

76 Top 10 organic breakfast cereals
Forget Frosties. Shun Shredded Wheat. If you want a truly nourishing start to the day, try one of *The Ecologist's* top 10 organic cereals.

78 Mitchell Tonks' fish guide
March is the month for eating mackerel. Mitchell Tonks, one of the UK's best-loved fish chefs, presents five mouthwatering recipes, including fried mackerel with ginger, garlic and thyme and roast mackerel with North African spices. He also explains how to tell if fish is fresh and how to prepare it.

82 Monty Waldin's dozen from Alsace
The average UK consumer tends to steer clear of Alsace wines. Yet, as Monty Waldin, author of the *Biodynamic Wine Guide*, explains, Alsace is the world's leading organic and biodynamic wine growing region. In his latest column he explains what makes Alsace wines so unique and recommends a mixed case of his favourites.

84 SPECIAL OFFER: Local food heroes
Special free food and drink offers for every reader from two of *The Ecologist's* favourite producers.

88 Soil: A worm's eye view
Moles and worms may love it, but most of us neglect our soil as nothing more than dirt. Yet without it life on earth could not exist, to say nothing of our prize vegetables and blooming summer gardens. Our DIY guide tells you how to get the most from your soil as well as introducing the mysteries of geophages, tardigrades and adipocere.

90 Organic cotton baby clothing
More people buy organic baby food than any other organic product. So why aren't they all wrapping their children in organic cotton baby clothes? Find out why it's so important to switch to organic cotton, and how your baby will feel more comfortable as a result.



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Carpenters

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REFRIGERATORS

SPECS AND SUNGLASSES

TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES

TV MONITORS / MERCURY

LIGHTBULBS

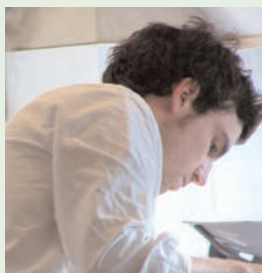
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97 FUNERALS

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FUNERALS

MARCH IN SEASON



Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and River Cottage HQ chef **Gill Meller** pick their favourite in season recipes. All you will need is the best seasonal veg from your local farmers market / box scheme, and a little kitchen courage.

MARCH VEG

Purple sprouting broccoli
Cauliflower
Spring greens
Radishes
Parsley
Leeks
Carrots
Wild garlic
Nettles
Spring onions
Seakale

CRISPY SEAWEED GREENS

The delicious and ubiquitous oriental dish known as crispy seaweed isn't really seaweed at all. Instead it's made with any of a number of leafy greens. I spent an afternoon experimenting with kale, cabbage and spring greens and found that all of them lent themselves to this treatment. You can even use Brussels tops and the leaves of purple sprouting broccoli. But spring and winter greens are probably the best. Traditionally, this dish is an aphrodisiac.

To serve four

Take about **250 grams of spring greens** (or any of the leaves mentioned above). Trim out the coarse central stems, then wash and pat dry the leaves. Tightly roll up a bunch of the leaves like a fat cigar (on your inner thigh, if you like). Then shred the leaves as finely as you possibly can: maximum two millimetres per shred. Heat at least **five centimetres of sunflower or ground-nut oil** in a deep heavy saucepan or deep-fat fryer, until a small piece of bread dropped

into the oil will turn golden brown in about 30 seconds. Take a small handful of shredded greens and drop them in the hot oil. Remove with a draining basket after just 15 to 30 seconds, by which time they should be completely crisp. If they're not, then the oil needs to be hotter. Continue to fry in small batches, draining each quickly on kitchen paper and piling them up like a bird's nest on a warm plate.

Traditionally, crispy seaweed is served with a sprinkling of **grated dried scallop**, which you can find at most

oriental supermarkets. But a scattering of **toasted sesame seeds** and a good shake of soy sauce make excellent alternatives. Eat straight away, with chopsticks.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RIVER COTTAGE ARCHIVE, SIMON WHEELER

GILL'S POACHED LEEK AND DORSET BLUE VINNY TART

This very simple tart is very popular at our seasonal feasts

Ingredients: One eight-inch loose-based tart case.

For the short crust: 150 grams of organic butter, 150 grams of plain flour, a pinch of salt, one egg yolk and about 150 millilitres of cold milk

For the filling: Two leeks, trimmed, cleaned and sliced into one-centimetre rounds, 100 grams of grated Dorset Blue Vinny, 350 millilitres of organic double cream, two whole free-range eggs, two free-range egg yolks, a knob of butter, salt and pepper

To make the short crust: Place the flour, butter and salt in a food processor and pulse until the mix reaches a bread-crumbs consistency. Then add the egg yolk, followed by the milk, which should be added in a gradual stream. Watch carefully and stop adding the milk as soon as the dough comes together. Knead a couple of times before wrapping in clingfilm and chilling in the fridge for half an hour. Roll out thinly to line the tart case (if you leave the edges overhanging you can cut them off later), and prick the base with a fork; you won't need baking beans. Bake at 150° centigrade for about 15 minutes or until the base is dry but not coloured.

To make the filling: Put the leeks in a pan with 100 millilitres of water, the knob of butter and some salt and pepper. Cover and poach gently until tender; then drain, saving the cooking liquor. Place the cooked leeks in the tart case and cover with the grated Blue Vinny.

To make the fantastically rich custard, combine the eggs and egg yolks with the cream and leek liquor, and beat to a smooth consistency. Season to taste, then pour the custard over the cheese and leeks and pop straight in the oven. Bake at 180°C for about half an hour: the custard should be just set when you shake the tin. Delicious; especially when allowed to cool.

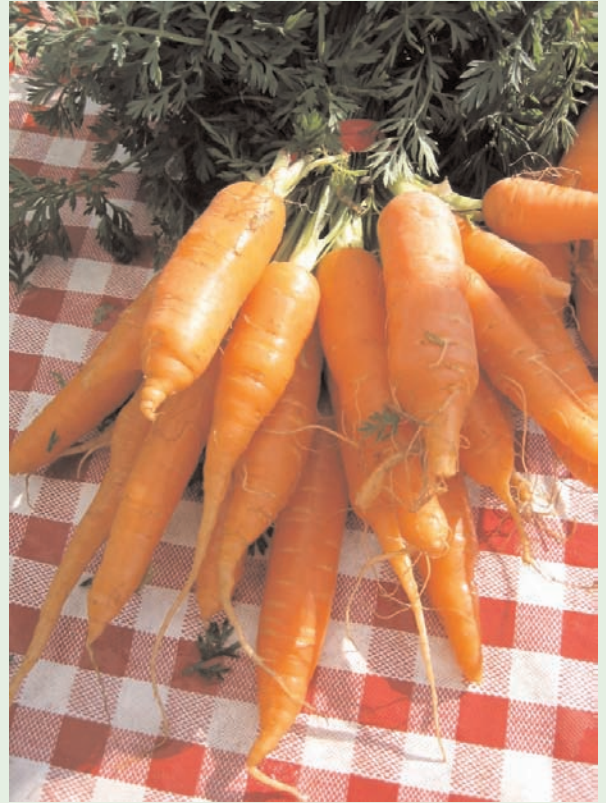
GILL'S HONEY-ROAST CARROTS

A lovely winter side dish that is quick and easy to make.

Serves six to eight

Ingredients: One kilogram of organic carrots, one or two tablespoons of local honey (to taste), a small bunch of flat-leaf parsley, good olive oil or goose fat, salt, pepper and 100 grams of butter

How to make: Pre-heat your oven to 200 degrees centigrade. Peel and slice the carrots (at RCHQ we slice ours chunky and on an angle). In a heavy-based roasting tin, render down the goose fat or get your olive oil nice and hot (sizzling but not smoking). Tip in the carrots, spoon over the honey and then toss them around in the fat until they are all good and covered. Season with salt and pepper and roast for 35 to 40 minutes until well cooked: the edges should begin to crisp. Spoon out into a warmed bowl and finish with chopped parsley and the butter.



buy any with the leaves still on, then use rocket leaves instead.

CHILLED RADISH LEAF AND MINT SOUP

I adapted this recipe from one my wife cut out of a French cookery magazine. I didn't really like the recipe as described, but I liked the idea, because although radishes are something I grow plenty of I hadn't ever thought of using the leaves. So I've played around with it and ended up with something I think is pretty delicious – very clean, green and refreshing – as well as thrifty. If you don't grow radishes, and can't seem to



To serve four as a light starter

Make a light vegetable stock by grating half an onion, a carrot and a stick of celery, putting them in a pan with 250 millilitres of water and simmering gently for half an hour. Then strain and chill. Wash and trim about 20 radishes and their leaves (or use a couple of fistfuls of rocket leaves), reserving two nice radishes for garnish. Blanch the radishes and their leaves, along with about a dozen mint leaves, in boiling salted water for just a minute, then drain and refresh briefly in cold water. Place the radishes, leaves and chilled stock in a blender with a small apple, peeled, cored and diced, two generous tablespoons of crème fraîche, a pinch of salt, a pinch of cayenne pepper and a few twists of black pepper. Blend until smooth, green and creamy. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Chill thoroughly in the fridge, then whisk briskly and pour into four small bowls or large coffee cups. Garnish with a few thin slices of raw radish and a sprinkling of chopped mint.

10 WAYS TO ENJOY PURPLE SPROUTING BROCCOLI

'I dedicate more and more room in my vegetable garden to purple sprouting broccoli each year. I just can't get enough of the stuff. This year I have both early and late varieties and they look all set for a bumper crop. I love it because it is such a generous vegetable: sweet and succulent, bursting with good things like a spring tonic, and it keeps on coming.

The fresher it is, the less cooking it needs. My just-picked stems get no more than three minutes' steam-boiling (ie, in a pan with about a centimetre of lightly salted boiling water). Shop-bought PSB, two or three days old, needs about five to six minutes to help bring out the sweetness, but no longer or it will be too soft. Some grocers now keep it in bundles with the cut stems in a tray of fresh water, which certainly seems to help. If it looks very tired and floppy, I simply wouldn't buy it.

As I'm eating PSB two or three times a week from late March to early May, I have tried a fair number of accompaniments: enough to compile a pretty worthwhile 'top 10'. Unless otherwise specified, the broccoli is simply steamed and piled onto a warm dish, to be eaten by hand, dipped into whatever concoction happens to be the daily special.'



To serve four as a starter. In each case; use about 500 to 600 grams of steamed purple sprouting broccoli

1 WITH PLAIN MELTED BUTTER
Melt 125 grams of **butter** and season with just a few twists of **black pepper**.

2 WITH ANCHOVY AND LEMON BUTTER
Sweat half a dozen **anchovies** in 125 grams of **butter**, stirring well so they more or less dissolve. Add a few twists of **black pepper** and a generous squeeze of **lemon juice**.

3 WITH CHEATY HOLLANDAISE
Melt 150 grams of **butter** and whisk it, a little at a time, into an **egg yolk**; you should get a loose, mayonnaise-type consistency. Whisk in a good squeeze of **lemon juice** and season with **salt and pepper**. This is not a very stable hollandaise, but it will hold long enough for you to munch a pile of broccoli; and even if it starts to split it's still quite palatable. Serve warm.

4 WITH SCRAMBLED EGGS (AND ANCHOVY)
Make scrambled eggs by melting 50 grams of **butter** in a small pan and adding four **eggs** that have been lightly beaten with one tablespoon of **cream** and seasoned with **salt and pepper**. Stir regularly but not constantly over a low heat, until very loosely scrambled. Taste and adjust the seasoning. If you like, stir in a dozen **anchovy fillets**, roughly chopped, before serving.

5 WITH TONNATA
Grate or crush a clove of **garlic** and place in a food processor with the contents of a 200-gram tin of **tuna**, including its oil. Process on pulse, adding the juice of half a **lemon** and a good trickle of best **olive oil** until you have a thick but almost pourable consistency. Stir in one heaped teaspoon of roughly chopped **capers** – if you like capers. Taste and



adjust the seasoning, adding more **lemon juice** if necessary. Serve cold as a dip for the hot broccoli.

6 WITH ANCHOVY AND CAPER MAYONNAISE

Combine 100 millilitres of best **olive oil** with 200 millilitres of lighter oil, such as **sunflower or groundnut**. Put two **egg yolks** in a small mixing bowl (they should be at room temperature before you start). Whisk the yolks, drizzling in the mixed oils just a few drops at a time. Once the mayonnaise has taken, you can increase the flow to a steady trickle. It should be very thick and emulsified by the time you've finished adding the oil. After you have added about half the oil, loosen the mayonnaise with a squeeze of **lemon juice**.

Finely grate or mash a quarter of a clove of **garlic** and beat it into the mayonnaise. Drain and finely chop a small tin of **anchovies**. Squeeze the excess vinegar from a generous tablespoon of **capers** (or soak, rinse and dry the salted variety), then roughly chop them. Beat the anchovies and capers into the mayonnaise, followed by a squeeze of lemon and a few twists of black pepper. Taste and adjust the lemon-pepper combination to your liking. Leave to stand for half an hour for the flavours to mingle and marry; then give it another quick whisk before serving.

7 WITH WARM POTTED SHRIMP BUTTER

Roughly chop a pot of best-quality **shrimps**, then heat them in a small pan with the **seasoned butter** from the pot. Add a little extra butter

(say, 50 grams) and a good pinch of **cayenne pepper**. Cook very gently for a couple of minutes to marry the flavours. Serve warm.

8 WITH CHORIZO

Finely chop about 125 grams of **spicy chorizo** and fry gently in two tablespoons of **olive oil** for four to five minutes. Add a pinch of **cayenne, hot paprika or chilli flakes** if you like the heat. Take off the hob and melt a good (50 grams) knob of **butter** in the pan. Pour the mixture over the PSB in a warmed bowl and toss well. This one may need a knife and fork.

9 WITH WELSH RAREBIT DIP

Melt 50 grams of **butter** in a small saucepan over a low heat, then stir in 50 grams of **plain flour** to make a thick roux. Cook for a couple of minutes, stirring to prevent the roux burning. Stir in 300 millilitres of **hot beer** (bitter or pale ale, not lager) by degrees, until you have a very thick, smooth sauce. Add 150 grams of mature **Cheddar**, grated, and stir until melted. You should now have a thick paste. Season well with a blob of **English mustard**, a good splash of **Worcestershire sauce** and a few twists of **black pepper**. Serve it as a fondue-type dip for PSB. Outstanding.

10 PASTA SUPPER

Chop up about 500 grams of PSB into smaller, forkable pieces. Steam as usual until al dente. Cook 250 grams of **penne** in plenty of boiling salted water until tender. Chop a large clove of **garlic** and fry it gently in three tablespoons of **olive oil** for a couple of minutes, without letting it colour. Add the contents of a tin of **anchovies**, drained and chopped, and a tin of **dolphin friendly tuna**, drained and flaked. Shake together in the pan until well mixed, then toss with the just-cooked PSB and the just-drained pasta. Season with **black pepper** and serve at once.

■ These recipes are from Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's *River Cottage Year* (Hodder & Stoughton) and from River Cottage HQ chef Gill Meller. For more information, or to book to attend a River Cottage seasonal feast, visit www.rivercottage.net





**FRUIT & VEGETABLES
(BOX SCHEMES)**

'I can't sign up to a box scheme because I'm never in to receive it'... have you considered:

- 1 Calling them - many can manage late deliveries
- 2 Getting it delivered to a neighbour
- 3 Having it delivered to your local newsagent / chip shop etc
- 4 Arranging for them to hide it somewhere

BEDFORDSHIRE

Bedford
David Catlin01525 861 452

BERKSHIRE

Reading
Ellis Organics.....0118 9722826

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Wendover
Fieldfare Organic and Natural0845 601 3240

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Cambridge
Waterland Organics01223 812 912
Royston
Guilden Gate Smallholding01763 243 960
Wisbech
Organic Connections International.01945 773 374

CHESHIRE

Chester
Organicfair01244 400 158
Lymm
Cheshire Organics01925 758 575
Malpas
Oakcroft Organic Gardens.....01948 860 213
Northwich
Stockley Farm Organics.....01565 777 492
Sale
O Zone, The0161 291 8862
Warrington
Northern Harvest.....0845 602 3309

CORNWALL

Saltash
A & N Health Foods.....01752 844 926
St Agnes
Tree Of Life Organics01872 552 661
St Austell
Colna Organics01726 844 827

St Martins-by-Looe

Kevalar Farmers01503 250 135
Truro
Hendra Farm Organics.....01872 572 301

CUMBRIA

Brampton
Eva Botanicals.....01697 741 906
Lady Jane's Tea Room07941 731 255
Grange over Sands
Howbarrow Organic Farm.....01539 536330

DERBYSHIRE

Ashborne
Meynell Langley Organic Food01332 824 815
New House Organic Farm.....01335 342 429
Adams, Nick.....01335 360 996
Chester
Organic Stores, the01244 881 209
Derby
Organic Pumpkin.....01332 370 254
Matlock
Beano's Wholefoods01629 57130
New Mills
Organic Shop, the.....01663 747 550

DEVON

Barnstaple
Lugg Smallholding01598 710 558
Beaworthy
Earthstar, Little East Lake Farm.....01409 221 417
Holsworthy Organics01409 221 417
Bideford
Marshford Organic Produce01271 322 855
Bovey Tracey
Yarnet01364 661 503
Buckfastleigh
Riverford Organic Vegetables0845 600 2311
Crediton
Linscombe Farm01363 84291
Exeter
Shillingford Organics.....01392 832 729

RodandBens.....01392 833 833
Elder, D.....01392 860 856
Great Cummins Farm01647 61278
Ifracombe
West Hill Farm01271 815 477
Kingsbridge
Alan's Apple01548 852 308
Newton Abbot
Dartmoor Direct Co-Operative.....01364 631 528
Woodland Organics01803 813 760
Nature's Round.....07810 127 376
Pyworthy
Ceridwen Herbs01409 254 450
Tavistock
Tamar Organics.....01822 834 887
Tiverton
Ms Kate Palmer01884 861 269

DORSET

Bournemouth
Bourne Organic.....01202 778 516
Blandford Forum
Gold Hill Organic Farm.....01258 861 413
Bridport
Bothen Hill Produce.....01308 424 271
Dorchester
Longmeadow Organic Vegetables ..01300 341 779
Ferndown
Sturts Farm Community01202 870 572
Pulham
Cannings Court Organic Farm01258 818 035
Wimborne
Long Crichele Organic
Walled Garden01258 830 295

DURHAM

Darlington
Acorn Dairy.....01325 466 999

ESSEX

Brentwood
Legg, RG01277 211 883
Halstead
Organic Choice.....01787 478 471
Ongar
Ashlyns Organic Farm01277 890 788
Fair Organics.....01277 890188

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Cheltenham
Slipstream Organics01242 227 273
Dursley
Better For Organics01453 545 090
Lydney
La Bodega.....01594 844 841
Newnham on Severn
Campmill Village Trust01594 516 344
Tetbury
Bowldown Farms Ltd.....01666 890 224
Thornbury
Thornbury Organic Co-op01454 415 345
Wotton Under Edge
Whitfield Farm Organics0845 283 0232

GREATER MANCHESTER...

Chorlton-cum-Hardy
Chorlton Wholefoods.....0161 881 6399
Mossley
Mossley Organic And Fine Foods.....01457 837 743
Stockport
Limited Resources0161 477 2040
Whalley Range
Glebelands Market Garden Ltd.....0161 718 5328

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT

Andover
Naturally Health Foods01264 332 375
Clanfield
Naturally Organic023 9236 0196
Heckfield
Park Farm Organics0118 932 6650
Lymington
Warborne Organic Farm01590 688 488
Southampton
Sunnyfields Organic023 80871408
Whitchurch
Laverstoke Park Produce.....01256 890 900
Harroway Organic Gardens.....01256 895 346

HEREFORDSHIRE

Bodenham
Butford Organics01568 797195
Hereford
Biosphere Organics01432 820 082
Green Acres Organic Growers01568 797 045

Abundance Produce01981 540 181
Kingstone
Arkstone Mill Produce.....01981 251 135

HERTFORDSHIRE

Potters Bar
Everybody Organic Ltd.01707 651 243
Watford
Farm2door01923 490 526

KENT

Ash
Ivy House Farm.....01304 812 437
Belvedere
Regent Health.....01322 446 244
Canterbury
Brockman, AG & Co01227 732 001
Ripple Farm Organics.....01227 730 898
Cobham
Luddesdown Organic Farms Ltd. ..01474 813 376
Gravesend
Dabbs Place Organic Farm.....01474 815 393
Horsmonden
Simply Wild Food Company08456 586 141
Ightham
Church View Farm.....01732 886 680
Tunbridge Wells
Organic Health Shop, the01892 538 155
Wingham
Wingham Country Market01227 720 567

LANCASHIRE

Lancaster
Growing With Grace01524 251 723
Ormskirk
Gielty, A&D01695 421 712
Preston
Growing with Nature01253 790 046
Flintoff, Libby.....01995 679 728

LEICESTERSHIRE

Barkby Thorpe
Picks Organic Farm Shop.....0116 2693 548
Boston
Woodlands Farm01205 722 491
Countesthorpe
Bambury Organic Farm0116 247 8907
Loughborough
Manor Farm01509 646 413
Lutterworth
Naturally Good Food01455 556 878
Sapcote
Watts, DA01455 272 840
Thurmaston
Corner Plot Vegetables0116 2697 920

LINCOLNSHIRE

Barrow on Humber
Wheelbarrow Foods.....01469 530 721
Grantham
Goodacre, JM & A.....01476 860 228
Spalding
Sadd, BM01945 440 388
Spilsby
Eden Farms.....01790 763 582

LONDON

EC2
Organic Delivery Company, the.....020 7739 8181
E5
UK5 Organics.....020 8806 0721
N4
Just Organic.....020 7704 2566
N7
Bumblebee020 7607 1936
SE10
Greenwich Organics.....020 8488 6764
SE2
Abel & Cole020 7737 3648
SE6
Capricorn Organics.....020 8306 2786
SW3
Here.....020 7351 4321
SW8
Food Ferry Company, the020 7498 0827
W12
Fresh Food Co, the020 8749 8778

MERSEYSIDE

Thurstaston
Church Farm Organics0151 648 7838
Liverpool
Organic Direct.....0151 7076 949
Windmill Wholefood Co-op0151 7341 919

MIDLANDS, WEST

Birmingham
Organic Roots01564 822 294

Coventry
Down to Earth02476 677 500

Solihull
Hopwood Organic Farm0121 711 1187

NORFOLK

Attleborough
Arthur's Organic Deliveries01953 887 582

King's Lynn
Abbey Farm Organics01485 609 094

Norwich
Stable Organics01263 577 468
Barker Organics01263 768 966
Paradise Organics01508 494 260
The Greenhouse01603 631 007
Salle Moor Hall Farm01603 879 046
Eostre01953 789 000

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Daventry
Goodness Direct08718 716 611

Kettering
Arcadia Organics01536 525 298

Milton Keynes
Organic Trail01908 568 952

Northampton
Leafcycles01604 628 956

NORTHUMBERLAND

Alnwick
Rock Midstead Organic Farm01665 579 225

Bedlington
North East Organic Growers01670 821 070

Berwick Upon Tweed
Green Shop, The01289 305566

Corbridge
Cropped Up07947 856 641

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Bingham
Farmshop Home Delivery0800 169 7009

Cossall
Trinity Farm0115 944 2545

Nottingham
Roots Natural Foods0115 960 9014

OXFORDSHIRE

North Aston
North Aston Organics01869 347 702

Chipping Norton
Chipping Norton Organics01608 642 973
Sarsden Organics01608 659 670

Reading
Organico0118 951 0518
Tolhurst Organic Produce0118 9843 428

SHROPSHIRE

Craven Arms
Organic By Order01588 660 747

Dawley
Food For Thought01952 630 145

Oswestry
Doggart, A.01691 652 166

Shrewsbury
Boxfresh Organics Direct01952 770 006

SOMERSET

Bath
Norwood Farm01373 834 856
Truuly Scumtious Organic
Baby Food Ltd01761 239 300

Bridgwater
IYB Partnership01278 733 080

Bristol
Barleywood Walled Garden01179 351 725
Leigh Court Farm01275 375 756

Langport
Park Lane01458 252 901

Lower Claverham
Arcadia Organics01934 838 634

Milverton
Spring Grove Market Garden07956 429 531

South Petherton
Flaxdrayton Farm01460 241 427
Somerset Organic Link01460 241 427

Taunton
Prockters Farm Shop01823 413 427

STAFFORDSHIRE

Stafford
Bella Herbs01785 663 868

Stoke-On-Trent
Real Food Company, The01270 873 322

SUFFOLK

Beccles
Jim Cooper Vegetables07866 960 706

Bury St. Edmunds
Longwood Farm01638 717 120

Eye
Daganya Farm01379 668 060

Ipswich
Hillside Nurseries01473 652 682

Newmarket
DJ Produce Ltd.01638 552 709

Saxmundham
Swallow Organics01728 668 201

SURREY

Cranleigh
Sunshine Organics01483 268 014

Worplesdon
Horti. Halcyon01483 232 095

SUSSEX

Barnham
Willow Nursery01243 552 852

Brighton
Real Food Direct01273 621 222

Chichester
Wayside Organics01243 779 716
The Whole Food Shop01243 790 901

Hartfield
Beans and Things01273 477 774
Harvest Supplies01342 823 392

Lewes
Barcombe Nurseries01273 400 011
Landsdown Health Foods01273 474 681

Mayfield
Herons Folly Garden01435 873 608

Midhurst
Down to Earth01730 815 133

Plumpton
Ashurst Organics01273 891 219

WARWICKSHIRE

Atherstone
Mythe Farm Organic Produce01827 712 367

Leamington Spa
Gala01926 338 805

Long Itchington
Reality Bites Organic
Market Gardens07780 688 271

Rugby
Wild & Free01788 570 400

Warwick
Warwick Health Foods01926 494 311

WILTSHIRE

Charlton
Green Cuisine01666 824 584

Chippenham
Organic Experience, The01249 720 274
Tallywacker Farm01249 750 035

Swindon
Barker, DI & AM01793 770 219
Coleshill Organics01793 861 070

Warminster
Pertwood Organics Ltd01985 840 646

Yatesbury
Yatesbury Organics01672 539 191

WORCESTERSHIRE

Pershore
Oxton Organics01386 860 477

YORKSHIRE, EAST

Driffield
Green Growers01377 255 362

Hull
Arthur Street Trading Co01482 576 374
Slater Organics01964 527 519

North Cave
HNP Direct.com01430 425 531

YORKSHIRE, NORTH

Cowthorpe
Goosemoorganics01423 358 887

Kirkbymoorside
Farndale Free Range Ltd.01751 430 323

Northallerton
Low Leases Organic Farm01609 748 177
Robinson, DS.01609 772 032

Richmon
Hazelbrow Organic Farm01748 886 224
Farm-A-Round020 7627 8066
Bluebell Organics07759 832 234

Tadcaster
Organic Pantry, The01937 531 693

Whitby
First Season01947 601608
Pasture Cottage Organics01947 840 075

York
Yo Aspin Organics01439 771 848

YORKSHIRE, SOUTH

Sheffield
Beansies0114 2681 662
Down To Earth0114 2685 220

YORKSHIRE, WEST

Hebden Bridge
Valley Garden Organics01422 846 651

Huddersfield
Half Moon Healthfoods01484 456 392
Natural Choice01484 513 162

Leeds
Love Organic!01132 663 030

Pontefract
Brickyard Organics01977 617 327

Shipley
Bradford Wholefoods01422 202 648

Wetherby
Goosemoor organic produce01423 358 887

SCOTLAND

Aberdeen
Lembas01569 731746

Ardrossan
Wildly Organic01294 472075

Armadale Pier
Rubha Phoil Forest Garden01471 844700

Birkhill
Bee-Organic01382 581186

Cupar
Bellfield Organic Nursery01337 860764

Dumbarton
Epo Growers01389 875337

Edinburgh
Grow Wild0131 443 7661
Damhead Organic Foods0131 448 2091

Glasgow
Roots & Fruits, Wholefoods
& Organics0141 3393097

Glendale
Glendale Salads01470 511349

Inverness
Tio Ltd01667 462189
Macleod Organics01668 462555

Inverurie
Croft Organics01467 981717

Kirriemuir
Angus Organics Ltd01575 540294

Kyle of Lochalsh
Raasay Walled Garden01378 660345

Newmacher
Ward, Colin, J.01651 862041

Pencaitland
East Coast Organic Boxes01875 340227

Stonehaven
Fraser, J & M01569 730195

Tarbolton
Stair Organic Growers01292 541369

Tarskavaig
Achnacloich01471 855315

Turriff
Greenness Organics01888 544877

WALES

Anglesey
Foreman, Helen01407 742293

Bangor
Dimensions Health Store01248 351562

Brecon
The Ciliau01874 711224

Builth Wells
The Ciliau07887 656887

Caerphilly
Source, the029 2088 3236

Cardiff
Pulse Wholefoods029 2022 5873
Spice of Life029 20487146
Green Cuisine029 2049 8721

Clunderwen
Flynnon Farm01437 532 570

Deeside
Organic Stores01244 881 209

Haverford West
Sarra, Mr & T.01437 762 323

Monmouth
Imma Fingal-Rock01600 712 372
Carrob Growers01600 714 529

Pwllheli
Ty'n Lon Uchaf01766 810 915
Llangybi Organics01766 819 109

Swansea
Jade Gate Organic Produce01792 232 643



TOP 10 ORGANIC BREAKFAST CEREALS

Good cereal is not about free plastic toys and celebrity endorsements. If you want the best breakfast available, ditch the Sugar Puffs and try one of these 10 delicious organic cereals instead.



Alara Fair Trade Muesli: A delightful muesli with plenty of fairly traded fruit and nuts, spiced with cinnamon and honey. A wholesome breakfast that ensures producers in the developing world get a fair price for their goods. See www.alara.co.uk for Alara's extensive range of cereals.



Biona Amaranth Wild Berry Fruit Muesli: Delicious fruit muesli containing crunchy popped amaranth grains. Amaranth is a highly nutritious and versatile seed that is high in protein and essential amino acids, and contains calcium, iron, potassium, phosphorus and vitamins A and C.



Nature's Path Envirokidz Gorilla Munch: Pleasantly light and crunchy corn clusters, with entertaining and informative packaging about gorillas and why they need our help. One per cent of sales go to wildlife conservation groups. (UK distribution by Community Foods: 020 8450 9411)



Doves Farm Chocolate Stars: Another popular cereal from Doves Farm; this time a wheat free chocolaty breakfast treat perfect for those with a sweet tooth. For Doves Farm's complete range, see www.dovesfarm.co.uk.



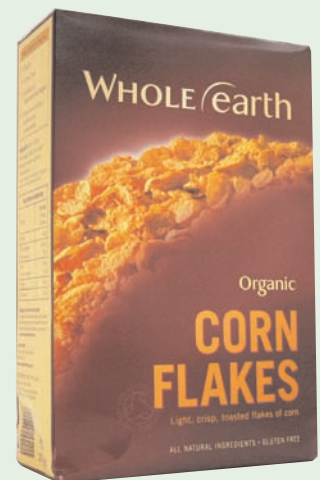
Doves Farm BioBiz: Healthy wholemeal biscuits made without sugar, hydrogenated fat or soya. Doves Farm has been operating for 25 years, dedicated to environmentally sound and sustainable organic food and farming from the start.



Pertwood Organic Muesli with Fruit and Seeds: One of Pertwood's range of excellent mueslis, mixing organic grains with generous amounts of fruit and healthy seeds to make a tasty, nutritious and filling breakfast.



Goodness Foods Oatbran: Want the healthiest porridge? Try Goodness Foods' oatbran, made with only organic UK oats by a company where every member of its 90-strong staff earns the same wage. (www.goodness.co.uk)



Whole Earth Corn Flakes: Excellent organic version of the breakfast staple in 100 per cent recycled packaging. Whole Earth is currently offering tree-planting schemes in partnership with Future Forests; making for a truly green breakfast.



Pertwood Organic Crunchy with Raisins and Almonds: Full-flavoured and satisfying crunchy oat clusters with raisins and almonds that make a fine start to the day. Pertwood is a successful mixed farm based in Wiltshire. (www.pertwood.co.uk)



Biona Wild Berry Crisp: Crisp oat clusters flavoured with wild berries. Due to their high content of complex carbohydrates and soluble fibre, oats release their energy slowly; so a bowl will provide all the energy you need. (Biona: 020 8547 2775)

DAIRY



All these cereals are best enjoyed with organic milk.

WHY ORGANIC MILK?

1 Organic dairy cows have a better life than non-organic dairy cows.

Organically reared cows live on a diet high in natural grass, clover and fresh pasture. Non-organic cows are fed on a cheap, energy-rich diet designed solely to increase milk yields, and which includes food factory by-products and GM cattle-feed.

Organic herds are given more space to roam than herds on conventional farms: stocking rates on organic farms are 36 per cent lower.

2 Organic milk is better for you

In 2004 researchers at the University of Newcastle found that compared to conventionally raised cows organically reared cows produce milk that is on average:

50 per cent higher in vitamin E

Vitamin E acts as an anti-oxidant and protects against damage caused by free radicals, which cause ageing.

75 per cent higher in beta carotene (which our bodies convert to vitamin A)

Beta carotene is another powerful anti-oxidant, which may help reduce the risk of developing cancer.

70 per cent higher in levels of omega 3 essential fatty acids

Omega 3 essential fatty acids provide protection

against coronary heart disease.

Two to three times higher in the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin

Belonging to the vitamin A family, lutein and zeaxanthin are also found in dark leafy green vegetables and eggs. It is thought that they help reduce the likelihood of cataracts, the deterioration of eyesight with age and the blocking of blood vessels.



BUTTER & CREAM

PRODUCER

Yeo Valley	01278 652 243
Rachel's Organic Dairy	01970 625805

CHEESE

MAIL ORDER (ORGANIC)

Bath Soft Cheese	01225 331 906
Birdwood Farmhouse	
Cheesemakers	01452 750248
Caws Cenarth Cheese	0123 971 0432
Godminster Vintage Cheese	0174 981 3733
H.S. Bourne	01948 770214
Llanbooby Cheesemakers	01994 448303
Llangloffan Farmhouse Cheese	01348 891241
Loch Arthur Creamery	01387 760296
Staffordshire Organic Cheese	01782 680366

PRODUCERS (ORGANIC)

Alhamwood Cheeses	01749 880 221
Caerfai Cheeses	01437 720 548

ICE CREAM

MAIL ORDER (ORGANIC)

September Organic Dairy	01544 312 910
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MILK

PRODUCER (ORGANIC)

Classic Organic – flavoured milk	01691 650450
Rachel's Organic Dairy	01970 625805
Yeo Valley	01278 652 243

YOGHURT

Rachel's Organic Dairy	01970 625805
Yeo Valley	01278 652 243

MITCH TONKS' GUIDE

to buying and preparing fresh fish

RECOGNISING FRESH FISH

- Fresh fish shines and has bright, shiny scales: it should look like it has just come out of the sea.
- Fresh fish smells only of the sea.
- The eyes of fresh fish are bright and clear; fish with dull and sunken eyes is the wrong side of fresh.
- It should be firm to the touch: don't be afraid to prod it.
- For whole fish, look at the gills: they should be deep red in colour.
- Because fillets do not have eyes and gills to check, look carefully at the skin and make sure it is bright and shiny.

PREPARING FISH

A good fishmonger will fillet your fish for you. If you do it yourself you'll need a really sharp knife.

- 1 First scale the fish by running the back of your knife along the fish from the tail to the head until all the scales are removed.



- 2 With the belly of the fish towards you, slit the gut cavity by making an incision with the knife and sliding it from tail to head. Gently scoop out the innards, lightly rinse the fish clean and pat dry.



- 3 With the back of the fish facing you, insert a sharp knife just behind the head and slide the knife just above the backbone from head to tail in one movement.



- 4 To skin a fillet, hold the tail and insert a very sharp knife between the skin and flesh and slide it all the way along.



■ Mitchell Tonks is a chef committed to inspiring others to learn about and enjoy seafood. He now has five FishWorks restaurants in Bath, Bristol, Christchurch and west and central London. Each site has a fishmonger, a seafood café and a cookery school. Mitch has also set up FishWorks Direct, a nationwide home-delivery service, offering next-day delivery of fresh fish and shellfish from Newlyn fish market in Cornwall. He is the author of two seafood cookbooks: *Fresh* and the *FishWorks Seafood Café Cookbook*.

MARCH SEASONAL FISH: MACKEREL

Mackerel is not currently considered an endangered fish. We all need to ensure it stays that way. So, only select mature fish, which usually measure no less than 25 centimetres long. And ask your fishmonger whether their mackerel is line-caught: trawlers don't discriminate as to the size and age of fish, and trawling is more likely to damage the soft flesh of mackerel.



FRIED MACKEREL WITH GINGER, GARLIC AND THYME

(serves four)

Ingredients: Five grams of unsalted butter, one chopped clove of garlic, one 25mm piece of root ginger grated, four large fresh mackerel fillets, flour, a few sprigs of thyme and the juice of one lime

How to make: Heat a pan large enough to take the mackerel fillets either all together or in pairs. Add the butter, garlic and the ginger, and stir so the butter becomes well flavoured. Give the mackerel a dusting of flour and lay them skin-side down in the pan. Cook gently for three to four minutes on each side. Remove the mackerel and place on the serving plate. Add the thyme and the juice of the lime to the pan. Allow to bubble for a few seconds, and then spoon over and around the mackerel.

POACHED MACKEREL FILLETS WITH LEEK, SOFT EGG AND ANCHOVY SALAD

(serves two)

Ingredients: Two bunches of baby leeks, freshly squeezed lemon, eight anchovy fillets, a handful of chopped basil, two finely chopped shallots, one soft-boiled egg (about four minutes boiling, then into cold water) cut into chunks, olive oil, sea salt, one teaspoon of mustard seeds, a pinch of sugar, pepper, 275 millilitres of fish stock, one chopped celery stick, one sliced carrot, a glass of white wine, one bay leaf, half a sliced fennel bulb, two filleted mackerel.

How to make: Blanch the leeks for five minutes, then drain and cool by dunking into a pan of cold or iced water. Remove the leeks from the iced water, then squeeze some lemon onto them and place them in a bowl with the anchovies, basil, shallots and egg.

Make the dressing by mixing together the oil, salt, some more lemon, mustard seeds and sugar; then pour it over the leeks and finish with black pepper. Put the stock, celery, carrot, white wine, bay leaf and fennel into a pan, and bring it to the boil; simmer for two to three minutes and then take off the heat. Add the mackerel and poach lightly for six to seven minutes. Lift out and serve on a bed of the leek salad.

ROASTED MACKEREL WITH NORTH AFRICAN SPICES

(serves two)

Ingredients: A tablespoon of ground cumin, a teaspoon of ground coriander, one large bunch of fresh coriander, one large bunch of parsley, six large cloves of garlic, a tablespoon of paprika, a good pinch of cayenne, the juice of two lemons, 300 millilitres of olive oil, two gutted mackerel

How to make: For maximum flavour, roast and grind the cumin and coriander seeds yourself until they produce a fine powder. Place the fresh herbs and the garlic in a food processor, then stir in the ground cumin and coriander, the paprika, cayenne and lemon juice, and beat together with the olive oil. Make two or three slashes down the side of the mackerel and rub the spice mixture in well, making sure it gets right inside the slashes. Leave for an hour or so to marinate, and then roast the fish for eight to 10 minutes in a hot oven. Serve with a good squeeze of lemon and a green salad with plenty of sliced red onion in it.

SOUSED AROMATIC MACKEREL WITH ONIONS, GARLIC AND MINT

(serves two)

Ingredients: Two pieces of star anise, half a teaspoon of coriander seeds, half a teaspoon

of mustard seeds, four to five all-spice berries, half a teaspoon of black peppercorns, six cloves, a pinch of mace, two small dried chillies, 2.5 centimetres of peeled and chopped fresh root ginger, two bay leaves, 150 millilitres of white wine vinegar, 50 millilitres of water, 50 millilitres of dry white wine, four tablespoons of sugar, three cloves of garlic finely sliced, one small onion finely sliced, two filleted mackerel, a pinch of salt and a handful of chopped, fresh mint

How to make: Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees centigrade /350 degrees fahrenheit/ gas mark four. Put all the spices and the ginger (but not the bay leaves) into a pestle and mortar. Give them a quick bash to break the seeds and berries open, then place in a saucepan with the bay leaves, vinegar, water, wine and sugar. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Strain and discard the spices, then add the sliced garlic and onions, cover and cook gently for a further 10 minutes until the onions have softened. Place the fish flesh-side down in a casserole dish, sprinkle with a little salt and pour the spiced liquid over the top. The fish should be just covered; top up with a little water if necessary. Cover the dish and bake in the pre-heated oven for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven, sprinkle with the mint and serve.

SIMPLY GRILLED MACKEREL

(serves two)

Ingredients: Sea salt, olive oil, one teaspoon of lightly crushed fennel seeds, two mackerel, as fresh as you can get them, one lemon

How to make: Simply mix the salt, oil and fennel seeds together, make some slashes in the side of the fish, and rub well in. Grill over a hot grill or in a grill pan for two to three minutes until the skin is blackened and crisp. Finish in a hot oven for four to five minutes. Serve with a squeeze of lemon.

ECOLOGIST READER OFFER:

Readers can order a copy of Mitch Tonks' *FishWorks Seafood Café Cookbook*, for the special price of £12.50, including p&p, (RPP £15) by telephoning 01225 316 013 and quoting 'Ecologist special offer'.



MEAT

Where do you get your meat?

Might there be a different way of buying meat that works well for you, that could guarantee better quality and give you a cleaner conscience? Could you buy locally, buying direct from the people who actually farm the animals that produce the meat? Or could you use a butcher who can tell you where all his or her meat comes from, and get special things for you when you want them?

BOX DELIVERY

BERKSHIRE

Lambourn
Sheepdrove Organic Farm01488 71659

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Ely
Naturally Yours01353 778 723

CORNWALL

Cusgarne
Cusgarne Organics01872 865 922

Penzance
Vivian Olds Ltd01736 788 520

Truro
Carleys of Cornwall01872 277 686

Mewton PG01872 540 343

Nuncarrow organic farm01872 540 343

Tywardreath
Stoneybridge Organics01726 813 858

CUMBRIA

Carlisle
Whiteholme Farm01697 748 058

Grange-over-sands
Howbarrow Organic Farm01539 536 330

DERBYSHIRE

Ashbourne
Nix Organix01335 360 996

DEVON

Exeter
Organic Farmers Market, The01392 875 678

Holsworthy
Providence Farm meats01409 254 421

Kingswear
Fountain Violet Farm01803 752 363

Okehampton
Fishleigh Estate01837 810 124

Umberleigh
Higher Hacknell Meat01769 560 909

DORSET

Beamminster
Childhay Manor Organics01308 868 709

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Berkeley
Adeys Farm Meats01453 511 218

LONDON

Ealing
Thorogoods of Ealing020 8567 0339

Notting Hill
Lidgate020 7727 8243

Notting Hill
Lidgate020 7727 8243

MIDLANDS, WEST

Birmingham
Rossiter, S & A0121 4581 598

NORFOLK

Norwich
Harveys Puremeat01603 621 930

NORTHUMBERLAND

Hexham
Northumbrian Quality Meats01434 270 184

OXFORDSHIRE

Wantage
Real Farm Foods Ltd.01235 762 461

SOMERSET

Exmoor
Brown Cow Organics01749 890 298

Shepton Mallet
Hindon Organic Farm01643 705 244

Bath
Radford Mill Farm01761 479 572

Taunton
Stoneage Organics01823 432 488

SUFFOLK

Woodbridge
Red Poll Meats01728 748 444

SURREY

Shere
Drydown Farm07941 277 545

Wintney
Organically Speaking01483 531 319

Bramley
Wintershall Partnership01483 892167

SUSSEX, WEST

Billingshurst
Steepwood Farm01403 785 434

WARWICKSHIRE

Rugby
Browning, GNF & GA01926 632 246

WILTSHIRE

Swindon
Purton House01793 770 219

YORKSHIRE, EAST

Driffield
Barmston Organics01262 468 128

SCOTLAND

Perth
Hugh Grierson01738 730201

WALES

Clyro
Clyro Hill Farm01497 820520

MAIL ORDER

Graig Farm Organics0159 785 1655
Higher Hacknell Farm0176 956 0909
Meatshop0122 857 7329
Save the Bacon0160 469 6859
Sheepdrove Organic Farm0148 871 659
Swaddles0845 456 1768
The May Highland Beef0157 042 3080
The Organic Beef Company0148 866 8429
The Real Meat Company0198 584 0562
Traditional Norfolk Poultry0195 349 8434

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MAIL ORDER

Too busy to make it to the shops? Then let them come to you. As well as the fruit and vegetable box schemes listed on page 74, there is a wealth of companies who deliver all your weekly needs right to your door.

NATIONWIDE

- Barleywood Walled Garden**.....0117 935 1725
- Duchy Originals.....020 8831 6800
- Eostre Organics Ltd**.....0195 378 9639
- Equal Exchange.....0131 220 3484
- Essential Trading Cooperative**.....0117 958 3550
- Everybody Organic.....0170 765 1243
- Goodness Direct**.....0871 871 6611
- Graig Farm Organics.....0159 785 1655
- Infinity Foods Cooperative Food**...0127 342 4060
- Mother Hemp.....0126 242 1100
- Natural Good Foods**.....01455 5587
- Oil in the Raw.....0157 935 1178
- Suma**.....0845 458 2290
- The Organic Delivery Company.....020 7739 8181
- Traidcraft**.....0870 443 1018
- Westcountry Organics.....0164 724 724
- Wild Oats**.....0117 973 1967

PASSIONATE?

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SUPPORT LOCAL PRODUCERS

Eostre Organics is a co-operative supplying fresh & processed **organic food**

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www.GoodnessDirect.co.uk
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E mail triple8.trading@virgin.net



Alsace is the leading region in the world for organic and biodynamic vineyards



Monty Waldin, author of the world's first biodynamic wine guide, has spent years understanding the complexities

and vagaries of organic/ biodynamic wine production.

Any wine merchant will tell you Alsace wines are the hardest sell. The region lacks the renown of Bordeaux, Burgundy or the Loire. And although Alsace has been part of France for most of the past 350 years, its wines sell in fluted bottles that look German; so people wrongly assume all the wines are sweet.

Also, Alsace makes mainly white wines when red is in fashion for Mediterranean diet fans. And the region

is small: just 10,000 hectares (24,700 acres) of vines: less than a 10th the size of Bordeaux, for example.

But Alsace is the leading region in the world for organic and biodynamic vineyards: around 10 per cent of its wines have official certification, when the world average is around 1.5 per cent.

One reason is that Alsace has been strongly influenced by neighbouring Germany, where the green movement is strong. But it is also because Alsatian wine-makers are the best organised in the world.

Beginning in the mid-1990s, and with local government funding, they set up compost-making clubs that pool resources across several villages and use the compost to bring life (like worms and microbes) back to vineyard soils.

This is crucial to stopping erosion. Most Alsace vineyards are on steepish

slopes. Summer is hot, but when storms come they are torrential. If the topsoil is dead from pesticide and weedkiller use, the soil just washes off the hillside. Living soil can soak up the rain, preventing erosion and giving the vines a drink.

The best biodynamic growers, like the tall but modest Olivier Zind-Humbrecht, the up and coming Zusslin family, and the brilliant, outspoken characters André Ostertag and Jean-Michel Deiss of Domaine Marcel Deiss, are replacing tractors with horses when they plough weeds, again to prevent erosion.

They are producing some of the greatest white wines in France: mainly dry, full-bodied wines with crystal-clear mineral, floral and fruit flavours.

And Deiss is even moving away from the idea that Alsace wines should be bottled with the name of the grape on the label: Muscat, Riesling, Pinot Blanc, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Gris, for example. Instead, it is blending grape varieties together in the vineyard (field blends) or winery to make the point that what you should taste in the glass is not just the fruity flavours of the grapes, but the soil, too. This is entirely understandable when you consider that biodynamic vines are especially deep-rooting. Thus, Deiss labels may carry just the names of vineyards or sites, not those of the grapes.

With such determined growers one wonders for how much longer Alsace will continue to be seen by the wine trade as such a hard sell.



1) Riesling Bollenberg 2003, Domaine Zusslin

Firm, dry white from narrow-spaced vines ploughed by horses from the Vosges mountains. Biodynamic.

Price: £13.50 **Stockist:** Vendemia Wines, Kilkenny, Ireland; email: info@vendemiawines.com; +353 5670 225

2) Pinot Blanc 2003, Stentz

Dry, appley white from vines certified organic since 1984.

Price: £7.50 **Stockist:** Vintage Roots; 0118 9761999; www.vintageroots.co.uk

3) 'Alsace' 2003, Domaine Marcel Deiss

Slightly spicy, dry white blend of biodynamic Riesling, Pinot Blanc and Gewürztraminer grapes.

Price: £10.95

Stockist: Lea and Sandeman; 020 7244 0522; www.londonfinewine.co.uk

4) Muscat d'Alsace Bergheim 2002, Domaine Marcel Deiss

Muscat's obvious grapey flavour becomes subtler, gingerbread-like and very concentrated. From Deiss's low-yielding vines (Alsace is allowed the highest yields of grapes per vine in France).

Price: £14.95

Stockist: Lea and Sandeman

5) Pinot Blanc Bergheim, 2001, Domaine Marcel Deiss

Stone-scented dry biodynamic white from Pinot Blanc: a grape which is very similar to Chardonnay, but arguably more interesting.

Price: £11.95

Stockist: Lea and Sandeman

6) Schoenbourg Grand Cru, 2001, Domaine Marcel Deiss

Mouth-filling biodynamic blend of Riesling and other white Alsace grapes, whose soft sweetness becomes drier-tasting and more mineral with age.

Price: £43.95

Stockist: Lea and Sandeman

7) Sylvaner Cuvée Classique 2001, J-P Frick

Jean-Pierre Frick makes brilliantly understated, earthy whites like this Sylvaner. Biodynamic.

Price: £6.69

Stockist: Vinceremos Wines & Spirits; 0113 2440002; info@vinceremos.co.uk

8) Gewürztraminer Wintzenheim 2002, Domaine Zind-Humbrecht

Dry, spicy example of Alsace's keynote grape: Gewürztraminer. Biodynamic.

Price: £ 182 plus VAT per 12 bottles.

Stockist: Gauntleys of Nottingham; 0115 911 0555; www.gauntleywine.com



Try Alsace whites with fusion food if you want to be trendy, or with dishes typical of Alsace, which rely on vegetable or meat in creamy sauces, if authenticity is your thing.

9) Vin de Table Zind 2002, Domaine Zind-Humbrecht

Dry 'field blend' of various white grapes combining floral and wet-stone flavours. Biodynamic.

Price: £150 plus VAT per 12 bottles.

Stockist: Gauntleys of Nottingham

10) Pinot Gris Clos Windsbuhl 2002, Domaine Zind-Humbrecht

Lots of colour for a dryish white wine, and packed with flavour, too. Biodynamic.

Price: £295 plus VAT per 12 bottles.

Stockist: Gauntleys of Nottingham

11) Fronholz Gewürztraminer VT 2001, Ostertag

André Ostertag says biodynamics has made him a more intuitive, creative wine-maker, and this rich, late-picked (*Vendange Tardive* or VT) white is multi-faceted.

Price: £25.50

Stockist: Fields, Morris & Verdin; 020 7921 5355; orders@m-v.co.uk

12) Pinot Gris Sonnenglanz 2001, Domaine Bott-Geyl

Jean-Christophe Bott-Geyl presses his organic grapes ultra-softly for absolute purity of flavour.

Price: £16.99

Stockist: Majestic Wine Warehouses; 0845 605 6767; www.majestic.co.uk



DRINK

MAIL ORDER

BEER AND CIDER

Beers In A Box	01924 489 222
Black Isle Organic Beers	01463 811 871
Dunkerton's Traditional Cider and Perry	01544 388 653
Freedom Organic Beer	020 8748 0903
Fuller's Vintage Ale	020 8996 2085
Hambleton Ales	01845 567 460
Houston Brewery	01505 614 528
O'Hanlons	01404 822 412
Only Fine Beer	01245 255 579
Organic Brewhouse	01326 241 555
Pennard Organic Wines & Cider	01749 860 393
Smiles Brewing Company	01275 375 878
Skinner's Brewery	01872 271 885
St. Peter's Brewery	01986 782 322
Valhalla Brewery	01957 711 658
Weston's Cider	01531 660 233

COFFEE

Bean Shop, The	01738 449 955
Burgil Coffee	020 8560 0263
Café Direct	020 7490 9520
Equal Exchange	0131 220 3484
Hampstead Tea and Coffee Co., The	020 8731 9833
More Organics	0173 636 6008
The Tea and Coffee Plant	020 7655 4574

SPIRITS

Juniper Green Organic Gin	01483 894 650
The Organic Spirits Company	01483 894 650

ORGANIC SPIRITS

Juniper green gin. UK5 vodka
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or call 01483 894650**

TEA

Clipper Teas	01308 863 344
Eleven O' Clock Tea	01635 278 648
E-Teas	0800 849 4039
Hampstead Tea and Coffee Co., The	020 8731 9833
Nothing But Tea	0123 485 3855
The Tea and Coffee Plant	020 7655 4574

WINE

Pennard Organic Wines & Cider	0174 986 0393
Sedlescombe Organic Vineyard	0800 980 2884
The Organic Wine Company	01494 446 557
Vinceremos	01132 440 002
Vintage Roots	0800 980 4992

PASSIONATE?

If you're passionate about The Ecologist and would like to introduce it into your local area, email Selina at supporters@theecologist.org to find out how you can make a difference

TASTE THE DIFFERENCE

Discover the delicious range of organic and fairly-traded food available in local, organic food shops around the UK with this month's special offer vouchers (see page opposite.) Look out for this section in every issue as we introduce you to the shops and products we love.



BRISTOL

Harvest Natural Foods
11 Gloucester Road
The Better Food Company
Sevier Street
Wild Oats
9-11 Lower Redland Road

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Chesham
Healthright
27 High Street

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Cambridge
Arjana Wholefood
Unit 7 Dales Brewery, Gwydir Street

Barton
The Larder
Burwash Manor Farm

CHESHIRE

Chester
Rainforest
51 Watergate Row

CUMBRIA

Keswick
Sundance Wholefoods
33 Main Street

Penrith
The Village Bakery
Melmerby
Ambleside
Silver Moon
North Road

DERBYSHIRE

Ashbourne
Natural Choice
24 St John Street
High Peak
Organic Shop
3 Sett Close, New Mills

DEVON

Chumleigh
The Dairy

Fore Street
Plymouth
In Other Words
64 Mutley Plain

DORSET

Blanford
Green Hill Organic Farm
Child Okeford

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Bisley
Green Shop
Cheltenham Road

Cirencester
The Organic Farm Shop
Abbey Home Farm, Burford Road

Cheltenham
Rendezvous
16 Portland Street
Natural Grocery Store
142 Bath Road

MANCHESTER

On The 8th Day Co-Op
111 Oxford Rd

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT

Ringwood
Scollocks Health Foods
1 Market Place

HEREFORDSHIRE

Ross On Wye
Field Fayre
18-19 Broad Street

HERTFORDSHIRE

Berkhamsted
Cook's Delight
360-364 High Street
Radlett
Destiny
Batters Green Farm, New Road

KENT

Canterbury

Well House Organics
Perry Court Farm, Garlinge Green

LANCASHIRE

Lancaster
Single Step Co-op
78a Penny Street

LINCOLNSHIRE

Stamford
Silverlane Foods
2 Silver Lane

LIVERPOOL

Windmill
337 Smithdown Road

LONDON

Planet Organic
22 Torrington Place, WC1
Planet Organic
25 Effie Rd, SW6

Nutri Centre
7 Park Crescent,
Natural World
115 Holloway Rd,
The Grain Shop
269a Portobello Road

Brixton
Brixton Wholefoods
59 Atlantic Road, SW9 8PU

Camden
Heartstone
106 Parkway, NW1 7AN

Chelsea
Here
125 Sydney Street

Crouch End
Haelan Clinic
41 The Broadway, N8 8OT
Just Natural...Organic Solutions
304 Park Road, N8 8LA

Ealing
Farm W5
19 The Green, W5 5DA

Halesworth
Focus Organic Foods
14 Thoroughfare

Hammersmith
Bushwacker
132 King Street, W6 0QU

Kensington
Luscious Organic
240-242 Kensington High Street, W8 6NE

Kew Gardens
Oliver's Wholefood Store
5 Station Approach, TW9 3QB

Maida Vale
Organic Grocer
17 Clifton Road, W9

North Finchley
Alternatives Health Store
339 Ballards Lane, N12 8LJ

Notting Hill
Planet Organic
42 Westbourne Grove, W2 5SH

Primrose Hill
Sesame
128 Regents Park Road, NW1 8XL

Shoreditch
Spitalfields Organics
103a Commercial Street, E1 6PG
Stoke Newington

Mother Earth
5 Albion Parade, N16 9LD
Walworth
Baldwins Health Food Centre
171 Walworth Road, SE17
West Hampstead
Peppercorns Natural Foods
193-195 West End Lane, NW6 2LJ

NORFOLK

Norwich
World Shop
38-40 Exchange Street
Green City Central
42-46 Bethnel Street
Natural Food Store
Norfolk House Yard, St Nicholas Street

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Northampton
Cultivate
The Old Laundry, Bedford Road

NORTHUMBERLAND

Newcastle Upon Tyne
Out Of This World
Gosforth Shopping Centre

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Nottingham
Out Of This World
Unit 1 Villa Street, Beeston

OXFORDSHIRE

Charlbury
One Village
27-29 Oxford Street, Woodstock
Oxford
Uhuru
48 Cowley Road

SHROPSHIRE

Ludlow
Myriad Organic Foods
22 Corve Street
Shrewsbury
Wild Thyme
1-2 Castlegates

SOMERSET

Glastonbury
The Wholefood Store
29 High Street
Growing Needs
11 Market Place

Bath
Harvest Wholefoods
37 Walcott Street
Natural GB Ltd
Green Park Station Road
Neal's Yard Remedies
7 Northumberland Place,

STAFFORDSHIRE

Stoke-on-Trent
Real Food Company
50 Sandbach Road South, Alsager

SUFFOLK

Bury St Edmunds
Longwood Farm and Unwins Organic Produce
Tuddenham St Mary

IF YOU'RE A LOCAL, ORGANIC FOOD SHOP THAT WOULD LIKE TO BE INCLUDED IN THESE LISTINGS, PLEASE CONTACT [KIM@THECOLOGIST.ORG](mailto:kim@thecoologist.org)

SURREY

Cranleigh
Natural Life
190 High Street

SUSSEX

Forest Row
Seasons
10-11 Hartfield Road
Brighton
Sunny Health Foods
76, Beaconsfield Road

WARWICKSHIRE

Lemington Spa
Gala
7 Regent Place
Coventry
Organic Enterprises
Ryton Organic Garden, Ryton On Dunsmore

WILTSHIRE

Salisbury
Green House
120 Fisherton Street
Warminster
Purely Organic
Deveril Trout Farm, Longridge Deveril

YORKSHIRE, WEST

Shipley
Helen Kemp
79 Victoria Road
Hebden Bridge
Green Shop
Hebble End Mill

YORKSHIRE, NORTH

Sheffield
In A Nutshell
31 Chesterfield Road
New Roots
347 Glossop Road

SCOTLAND

Berwick
Earth Matters
67 High Street
Edinburgh
Darnhead Organic Foods
32a Darnhead, Old Pentland Road
Fruitmarket Gallery
45 Market Street
One World Shop
St. John's Church, Princes' Street
Glasgow
Grassroots
20-22 Woodlands Road, Charing Cross
Lothianburn
Darnhead Organic Foods
32a Darnhead, Old Pentland Road
Forres
Phoenix Shop
The Park
Perthshire
Southwest Fullerton Organic Farm
Miegle

WALES

Crickhowell
Cheese Press
18 High Street
Aberystwyth
Treehouse Plc
3 Eastgate
Bangor
Dimensions
15 Holyhead Road
Lanberis
Saffron
48 High Street

IRELAND

Co. Wicklow
EcoShop
Unit 1, Glen Of The Downs Garden Centre,
Kilmacanogue
Co. Cork
Quay Co-op
24 Sullivan's Quay

EQUAL EXCHANGE

25 years ago three voluntary workers returned to Edinburgh from aid projects in Africa. They had seen how pitifully low prices paid to small scale farmers drove them into debt. Eager to make a difference they set up Campaign Coffee, which grew into Equal Exchange. Ever since then the company has been at the forefront of the UK organic and Fairtrade markets.

Enviro/Social credentials

Equal Exchange has spearheaded moves to develop sustainable organic agriculture at its tea estates in Assam.

A combination of intercropping, green manures and the growing of nitrogen fixing legumes has helped combat years of neglect and deforestation.

Tea leaves are extremely absorbent, meaning pesticides and insecticides sprayed during growing are easily absorbed into the tea. Unlike conventional teas, however, the only insecticide Equal Exchange uses is naturally occurring Neem.

Part of the money spent on every pack of tea is spent improving life in the communities where Equal Exchange works. In Assam it has already enabled the building of a Further Education College and High School.

80 per cent of the cost of tea is in the packaging. This could provide much needed income for India's poor, yet currently 99 per cent of exported teas are packed in Europe. All Equal Exchange's teas, however, are packed in Calcutta.

ORGANICO

Established in 1992 by Charles Redfern, Organico has always prided itself on working with quality, small producers to get the finest foods available. This commitment meant that for the first five years the business didn't make a profit, but since then it has gone from strength to strength. Organico now represents between 15 and 20 different producers, and in 2004 their products won 9 Golds, 10 Silvers and 6 Bronzes at The Great Taste Awards, the UK fine food business's premier awards.

Enviro/Social credentials

Food transport is currently the fastest growing sector of airfreight. A third of all lorries on UK roads are transporting food. These are both huge contributors to pollution and climate change. Organico does not use (and pledges not to in the future) air freight for any products it imports into the UK (or exports elsewhere) and it employs sub-contracted freight so that its goods are delivered as part of bigger loads and regular routes.

Organico is the only company to sell the Co-Operativa Iris pasta in the UK. The 25 year old co-op has recently been instrumental in supplying Italian schools and institutions with organic pasta. In 2003 it won a prestigious EU environmental award and is considered a model farm, visited by students, researcher and other farmers from all across Europe.

FREE PACKET OF ORGANIC FAIRTRADE ASSAM TEA with every purchase of **equalexchange organic fairtrade coffee****Offer includes all coffee ranges:**

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Its our coffee range – Italian, mocca and mountain

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equalexchange

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OFFER ONLY REDEEMABLE FROM SHOPS LISTED IN THE ECOLOGIST THAT STOCK ORGANICO PRODUCTS.
OFFER NOT REDEEMABLE FOR CASH.

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HOME

ENERGY

ELECTRICITY: suppliers

Ecolricity08000 326 100
Good Energy0845 456 1640
Green Energy	.....0845 456 9550

Generation

Dulas Ltd	.....01654 705 000
Green Dragon Energy	.....01654 761 731
Rainbow Solar Trading	.....01983 533 129
Sustainable Energy Installations	.....01256 392 704
Wind and Sun Ltd	.....01568 760 671

EFFICIENCY: Energy saving

Eco-Exmoor Ltd	.....01598 763 595
Energy and Environment	.....0161 881 1383
ESI	.....01481 722 299
Lumin8	.....01233 666 000
Organic Energy Company, The	.....0845 458 4076

Light bulbs

Lampholder 2000	.....01536 520 101
Lumin8	.....01233 666 000

Insulation

Ecomerchant	.....01795 530 130
SEE ADVERT OPPOSITE	
Products Ltd	.....01484 854 898
Green Building Store	.....01484 854 898
Green Shop, The	.....01452 770 629
Green systems	.....01763 260 719
Heraklith UK Ltd	.....01628 784 330
Klober Ltd	.....01934 853 224
Polarwall Ltd	.....01392 841 777
Thermallece	.....01768 486 285

HEATING

GROUND SOURCE

Dando Geothermal	.....01903 731 312
Earthwise Scotland Ltd	.....01330 833 915
Eco Heat Pumps	.....01142 962 227
Geoscience Ltd	.....01326 211 070
Geothermal Heating International	.....02476 673 131
Groenholland UK Ltd	.....07905 508 726
Ground Source Solutions Ltd	.....01246 822 808
Ice Energy	.....01865 882 202
Kensa Engineering Ltd	.....01326 377 627

SOLAR THERMAL

Future Heating Ltd	.....020 8351 9360
HiTech Energy Ltd	.....0845 601 3540
Organic Energy Company, The	.....0845 458 4076
Radiant Energy	.....01522 525 300
Solar Design Company, The	.....0151 606 0207
Solarsense UK Ltd	.....01275 394 139
Solar Twin	.....0845 130 0137
Sun Harvester	.....01786 822 827
West Wales Solar Heating	.....01994 419 439

WOOD FUEL & STOVES

Able Fuels Ltd	.....01484 515 578
Beacon Stoves	.....01559 371 058
Bio Energy Devices	.....01446 781 415
Bioenergy Technology Ltd	.....01825 890 140
Chilli Penguin Stoves	.....02920 865 536
ebc wood fuels	.....01953 455 854
Rural Energy Ltd	.....01664 454 989
Wood Energy Ltd	.....01398 351 349

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

ARCHITECTS

Chris Morton, Herefordshire	.....01684 541 480
Finch Macintosh Architects, Winchester	.....01962 855 240
Goddard Wybor practice, West Yorkshire	.....01132 666 044
Jon Allen, London	.....020 8961 3279
Neill Lewis, Worcestershire	.....01684 563 356
Quattro Design, Bristol	.....01179 299 672
Quentin Alder, Bristol	.....01179 683 111

BUILDING CONSULTANTS

Cob in Cornwall	.....01326 231 773
Concept Timber	.....01225 792 949
Mike Wye and Associates	.....01409 281 644

CARPENTERS

J.G.Horning, Devon	.....01803 732 135
Richard Arnold, Devon	.....01884 350 51
Tom Straker, Herefordshire01432 853 113

ENERGY CONSULTANT

Encraft08456 022 874
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ROOFING SPECIALIST

Rawnsley Woodland Projects01208 813 490
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WATER

CONSERVATION

Celtic Water Management01239 811 465
Conservation Engineering Ltd01359 269 360
Construction Resources	.....020 7450 2211
Eco Logic	.....01217 663 016
Flow Control Water Conservation Ltd	.....08707 558 811
Flowco Mariflo Ltd	.....020 8330 2487
Green Building Store	.....01484 854 898
Hippo the Water Saver	.....01989 766 667

FILTERS

Aqua Vitae	.....01404 841 841
Aquasaver Ltd	.....01288 354 425
Capital Water Treatment	.....020 8649 9503
Earthly Goods	.....01480 812 004
Eden	.....0800 917 0977
Green-way services	.....01202 874 413
Simply Water	.....00353 149 20414
Tap Magic	.....01473 252 043
The Healthy House	.....01453 752216

RAINWATER HARVESTING

Envireau Rainwater Management	.....01296 633 000
Free Rain	.....01636 894905
Rainharvesting Systems	.....01452 772 000

HOME RENOVATIONS

FLOORING

Ashcroft Reclaimed Timber Flooring	.....01243 554 769
Drummonds Architectural Antiques	.....01428 609 444
Forbo-Nairn Ltd	.....01592 643 777
Rawnsley Woodland Products	.....01208 813 490
Treesave Reclamation Ltd	.....01787 227 272
Treework Flooring	.....01275 464 466
Yorkshire Reclaimed Flooring	.....01937 843 532

PAINTS & PAINT REMOVER

Auro Organic Paints	.....01452 772 020
Earth & Reed Ltd	.....01449 722 255
Earth Born Paints	.....01928 734 171
Eco Solutions Ltd	.....01934 844 484
Environmental Construction Products Ltd01484 854 898
Green Building Store01484 854 898
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Green Paints01507 327 362
LIL01296 714 184
Little Green Paint Company0161 230 0880
Livos UK	.....01795 530 130
Lizzy Induni Traditional Paints	.....01929 423 776
Nutshell Natural Paints	.....0136 473 801
Osmo UK Ltd	.....01296 481 220

RECYCLED MATERIALS (INCL. SALVAGE)

Smile Plastics	.....01743 850 267
Source4U01926 498 444
Toby's Reclamation01392 833 499
Viking Reclamations01302 835 449

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Association for Environment Conscious Building01559 370 908
Association of Self Builders07041 544 126
Ecological Design Association	.....01453 765 575
Insideout Buildings	.....01524 737 999

TILES

Natural Tile	.....01285 642 300
Siesta Cork Tile Co020 8683 4055

TIMBER

Altham Hardwood Centre01282 771 618
Ecomerchant01795 530 130
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Rawnsley Woodland Products01208 813 490
Reclaimed Pine Online01202 789 868
Reclaimed Timber Specialists	.....020 8558 2811
Victorian Wood Works020 8534 1000

WINDOWS AND DOORS

Ecomerchant01795 530 130
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Environmental Construction Products Ltd01484 854 898
Merewood Joinery01614 800 363
Preston Door & Pine Stripping	.....01772 725 943

BEDDING AND LINENS

Green Fibres	.....0845 330 4440
SEE ADVERT OPPOSITE	
Schmidt Natural Clothing	.....0845 3450 498
Texture	.....020 7241 0990
Wiley Winkle	.....01432 268 018

CLEANING

21st Century Health0800 0260 220
Aqua Ball0800 026 0220
Bio-D Company Ltd01482 229 950
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Ecover01635 574 553
Green Fibres01803 868001
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Healthy House, The01453 752 216
Natural Eco Trading Ltd01892 616 871
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Wonderwash Laundry Ball0161 832 7788

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Grand Illusions01747 854 092
Lombok020 7736 0001
Rawnsley Woodland Products01208 813 490
Senior & Carmichael01737 844 316
thingbuilder07779 623 964
Treske Ltd01845 522 770

RECYCLED & SALVAGE

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Architectural Salvage Centre020 8459 2947
Art-eco07792 702 735
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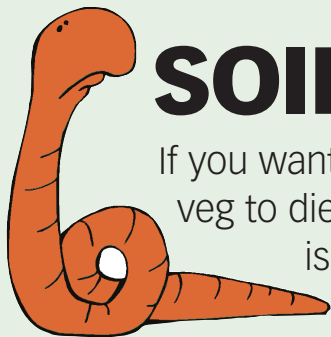
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SOIL: A WORM'S-EYE VIEW

If you want a beautiful garden, a balcony bursting with blooms, or fruit and veg to die for, you need to love your soil. This DIY soil guide and miscellany is designed to help you fall in love with this much neglected but essential resource

DIY SOIL GUIDE

What's your soil type?

There are five major different types of soil. To find out which type you have, follow this simple test.

■ Take a large glass jar and add a tablespoon of soil.

■ Fill the jar with water and seal it with a lid.

■ Shake the jar and then leave the contents to settle for a couple of hours.

■ Analyse the contents using the following very simple method:

■ Is the water fairly clear, with the sediment settled in layers at the bottom of the jar (heaviest particles at the bottom, finer ones at the top)?

If so, you've got: **LOAMY SOIL**

Characteristics: Gardeners love loamy soil as it's high in nutrients, easy to work and retains moisture without becoming waterlogged and most plants will grow well in it.

■ Is the water fairly clear, with most of the particles forming layers on the bottom of the jar?

If so, you've got: **SANDY SOIL**

Characteristics: While it's easy to dig and drains very quickly, sandy soil does need a lot of watering, and its loose structure means a lot of nutrients, including potassium and

nitrogen, can get washed away.

■ Does the water appear cloudy? And is there only a small layer of particles at the bottom of the jar?

If so, you've got: **CLAY SOIL**

Characteristics: High in nutrients, but liable to dry out in hot summers; and in winter it can become waterlogged. Also hard to work with a spade.

■ Is the water quite cloudy with lots of pieces floating on the surface? A small amount of sediment should have also settled on the bottom.

If so, you've got: **PEATY SOIL**

Characteristics: Easy to work and contains a higher proportion of organic matter than other soils. On the downside, unless it is well drained, it will get waterlogged in the winter and dry out in the summer.

■ Is the water a pale grey colour? And is the bottom of the jar covered in a layer of gritty pieces of chalk?

If so, you've got: **CHALKY SOIL**

Characteristics: Plants will need more watering than with other soils, since chalky soil drains very easily and dry out in the summer. And because chalk is alkaline, the number of plants that thrive in it is more limited.

LOOK AFTER YOUR WORMS

■ Worms help to increase the amount of air and water that gets into the soil.

■ They break down organic matter, like leaves and grass, into things that plants can use. When they eat, they leave behind castings, which make an excellent fertiliser. Along with many other trace elements and micro-nutrients, the castings have five to 11 times more nitrogen, potassium, calcium, phosphorus, potash and magnesium than is the case with topsoil.

■ They help to till the soil, bringing down organic matter from the top and mixing it with the soil below. You can add worms to your soil. Just go to www.wigglywormers.co.uk to find out how.

www.wigglywormers.co.uk to find out how.

FIND OUT YOUR SOIL PH

If you want to know what plants will thrive in your soil, find out whether it's acid or alkaline.

Taste it

Farmers and gardeners used to taste their soil to determine its pH. If it had a sweet taste or smell, it was alkaline; a sour taste meant it was acid.

Plant a hydrangea

Or have a look at your neighbours' plants. You can tell the pH of the soil by seeing what colour hydrangeas are. However, while it is true that hydrangeas are pink in alkaline soil and blue in acid soil, the reason is not directly the acid/alkaline balance, but rather the availability of aluminium. In acid soils, the aluminum compounds normally present in soil are converted into a form the hydrangea can absorb, resulting in a blue flower. In alkaline soil, the aluminum remains tied up in insoluble compounds, causing pink flowers.

Use a soil-testing kit

Available from garden centres, these simple kits will tell you exactly what pH your soil is. Alternatively, some garden centres will test your soil for you if you take a sample along.



PROTECT YOUR SOIL... ...AND THE ORGANISMS THAT LIVE IN IT:

■ Digging exposes soil pests to predators, but also speeds up the breakdown of organic matter, and encourages weed seeds to germinate.

■ To protect your soil, dig only where necessary.

■ Don't walk on the soil. Walking on soil compacts it. If it's unavoidable lay a plank or something similar to spread your weight. Never walk on wet and sticky soils.

■ Add compost and strawy animal manures to provide plant foods and improve soil structure.

■ Add leaf mould to improve structure and water retention. Also helps to release plant foods in heavy soils, and to hold on to those present in light soils, improving fertility without directly adding nutrients.

■ Protect bare soils in winter by covering with black plastic, or grow a winter green manure crop such as grazing rye to avoid nutrients being washed out and wasted.

Adapted from HDRA's magazine The Organic Way

A single spade full of rich garden soil contains more species of organisms than can be found above ground in the entire Amazon rainforest. These include:

Bacteria There are 4,000 to 5,000 species of bacteria found in just one gram of soil. Heterotrophic bacteria convert organic matter into the nutrients plants need for photosynthesis. Autotrophic bacteria generate their own organic matter from carbon dioxide. A single cup of soil may hold as many bacteria as there are people on earth.

Actinomycetes These give soil its earthy smell. When they break down organic matter they release a compound called geosmin, which is responsible for the smell of earth. They are also the source of many well-known antibiotics, including actinomycin, tetracycline and neomycin.

Algae Algae photosynthesise energy from the sun and contribute vast amounts of organic matter.

Fungi They recycle nutrients and protect plants by consuming the nematodes and insects that prey on them.

Lichens Fungi and algae combine to form lichens. The algae produce nutrients through photosynthesis, while the fungi absorb the inorganic nutrients from the soil that the algae need for growth.

Protozoa These eat bacteria, keeping their populations under control.

Nematodes Like protozoa they consume bacteria, but also protozoa and other organisms. They are consumed by fungi.

Earthworms Worms improve soil quality by converting organic matter to humus. Their castings are richer and less acidic than the surrounding soil.

Tardigrades Related to insects but distinct enough to have their own phylum, tardigrades are unusual for animals living below ground in that although some are brown or colorless they can also be pink, orange, green or yellow. They consume protozoa, algae, fungi, nematodes and other tardigrades. If the environmental conditions (eg, temperature and moisture levels) are not suitable for their existence, they go into a state of suspended animation to survive.

GARDENS

ALL PURPOSE

British Eco	0191 209 4161
Natural Collection	0870 331 3333
Organic Gardening Catalogue, The	0845 130 1304
Tamar Organics	01822 834 887
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Blackwall	01132 018 000
Dorset Hills Organics	02392 691 913
Enviomulch	01215 254 326
Fertile Fibre	01584 781 575
Globe Organic Services Ltd	0800 018 4120
Humus Wyse	01803 834 687
KPS Composting Services	01444 831 010
Original Organics Ltd	01884 841 515
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The Composting Association	0870 160 3270
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Ryton Organic Gardens	02476 303 517
Walcot Organic Nursery	01386 553 697

PEST CONTROL

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Defenders Ltd	01233 813 121
Scarletts Plant Care	01206 240 466

POTS AND SUPPORTS

Panda Stix	01623 648 200
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SEEDS

Association Kokopelli Organic Seeds	01227 731 815
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WATER TREATMENT

Green Ways	01962 761 600
Raindrain Lt	01924 468 564

SOIL MISCELLANY

Are you a geophage?

- Geophagy is the practice of eating soil.
- In Africa, pregnant and lactating women crave and eat clay.
- The people of the Runjut valley in the Himalayas chew red clay as a cure for goitre.
- The Pomo Indians used to mix clay with acorns: the clay absorbed the poisons and neutralised the bitterness of the acorns.

Best burial soil

Dead bodies exposed to cool, damp soil may develop a waxy substance called adipocere: it's caused by the action of soil

chemicals on the body's proteins and fats. Adipocere slows decomposition by inhibiting the bacteria that cause putrefaction. For a quick rot, choose a dry, sandy soil cemetery.

The smell of rain on dry ground

Otherwise known as 'petrichor'. The word was coined by two Australian researchers in 1964, when they discovered that the smell is an oily essence given off by rocks or soil.

5 things you didn't know about moles

■ There are no moles in Ireland, the Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland.

■ Moles are not blind. Their eyes (and ears) are just very small, which prevents them from being filled with soil when digging.

■ Unlike cat fur, mole fur can be brushed in any direction: it is specially adapted for life in tunnels.

■ There are mole fossils that are 45 million years old, meaning moles have been around longer than humans.

■ Moles can dig 60 feet or more per day: that's equivalent to a five-foot woman burrowing the length of two football fields, while pushing objects weighing two tons out of her way.

ORGANIC COTTON **BABY** CLOTHING

Not only do organic baby-wear ranges now compete with their conventional counterparts in variety, comfort and price, but by buying organic cotton, you won't be contributing to one of the most destructive and inequitable farming systems in the world. **BY MATILDA LEE**

Organic baby clothing suppliers

The UK's organic cotton market is growing at 38 per cent a year. Yet it still accounts for less than 1 per cent of the textiles market. As such, most organic baby clothing companies are small outfits run by people very passionate about the products they sell and willing to talk you through any questions or concerns you may have. Indeed, shopping for organic baby clothing comes with a personalised service that is hard to find elsewhere. The baby-wear lines on offer are extensive, ranging from organic bibs, mittens and booties, to vests, baby-grows, trousers, T-shirts and playsuits. Organic baby bedding materials and towels are also available.

Baby leggings from Greenfibres, £7.50

William and Gabriela Lana started Greenfibres, one of the UK's oldest organic clothing companies, in 1996. They had been buying organic food for many years, but only after having a child did they realise that there was virtually no organic baby-wear available in the UK. Their clothing comes from between 40 and 50 different small-scale suppliers, all of whom have been visited personally by the Lanas or are part of an organic certification scheme which ensures ethical labour standards are met. William is chairman of the Soil Association Textile Standards Committee, which is aiming to create globally recognised standards for organic textiles.



All-season baby sleeping bag from Schmidt Natural Clothing, £27.90-£30.90

Glenn Kositzki-Metzner, owner of Schmidt Natural Clothing, makes the best-selling organic cotton babies' sleeping bag. The inside layer of terry towelling keeps babies warm in winter and cool in summer. Schmidt also sells children's wool vests and long johns made from biodynamically grown merino wool from Australia.

Organic cotton dress from the Natural Nursery, £15.99

Arabella Greatorex gave up being a solicitor to start the Natural Nursery with her mum last September. Before giving birth to her daughter, she hadn't considered how baby clothes were made. After finding out the facts, she concluded that the dangers (to workers' health and the environment) of growing conventional cotton were too high a price to pay to clothe a baby. Most of the Natural Nursery's organic cotton is grown in India and processed in Germany.

Kimono suit for new-borns from Cut4Cloth, £5.99

Frustrated with not being able to find baby clothing that would fit well over their son's cloth nappies, Kurt and Lucy Jewson started Cut4Cloth. The firm provides organic baby clothes specifically designed to be worn with cloth nappies. Their baby-wear has waistbands and fastenings that are soft and non-restrictive. Cut4Cloth is run out of the Jewsons' home in Cornwall.



SOURCES:

Pesticide Action Network: www.pan-uk.org
Organic Exchange: www.organicexchange.org
Soil Association: www.soilassociation.org



WHY IS ORGANIC COTTON SO IMPORTANT?

It is grown and processed without using harmful chemicals or dyes.

■ Conventionally grown cotton uses more insecticides than any other crop in the world, accounting for 22.5 per cent of the world's insecticides and 11 per cent of all pesticides, while only covering 2.5 per cent of the world's agricultural land.

■ Dyes used on conventional cotton may contain AZO, AOX (both highly toxic compounds used in making dyes) formaldehyde and heavy metals, all of which can be severely detrimental to health.

■ Being free of all the above, organic cotton clothes are much less likely to trigger allergies. They also feel softer and breathe better, as the cotton fibres are not broken down by chemicals.

It protects farmers' lives.

■ More than 100 organophosphate compounds are used on conventionally grown cotton, mainly as insecticides. They are nerve poisons, inhibiting the enzyme cholinesterase, which can have severe effects on the central nervous system.

■ The pesticide chlorpyrifos, used in west African cotton, causes brain and foetal damage, impotence and sterility.

■ Cotton insecticide dichlorvos is linked to 18 per cent of all incidences of Wilms' tumours, cancerous growths on the kidney, in Brazilian children.

■ Annually, at least 20,000 people in developing countries die from poisoning caused by agricultural pesticides, many of which are cotton pesticides.

It protects farmers' livelihoods.

■ With cotton prices falling and pesticide costs rising, farmers are pressured to plant as much cotton as possible on limited farmland in order to survive. To do so, they have to sacrifice space that they would use to grow food for their families. In 1990, 90 per cent of cotton farmers in Benin grew enough food to meet their own needs; by 2001 only 3 per cent did.

■ **It is grown in rotation** with other crops, whereas conventional cotton tends to be grown as a **monoculture** (it is the only crop grown on the farm), which leads to:

Soil erosion: high doses of chemical inputs result in breakdown and erosion of soil's organic matter.

Contamination of ground-water supplies through the leaching

out of pesticides or fertilisers.

Eutrophication of surface waters from phosphate fertiliser run-off: algae, which feed on phosphate, consume so much oxygen from the water that fish may die.

Loss of farmland biodiversity: livestock, wild animals, insects and any other living creatures on or around cotton farms are at risk of being poisoned by pesticides.

It is the only way to ensure clothing is GM-free.

GM cotton is now grown on 9 million hectares of land worldwide. In China, the largest producer of GM cotton, 68 per cent of the country's crop is now GM. India has also seen a huge growth in GM cotton farming, with the area dedicated to it increasing by 400 per cent since 2003 to 500,000 hectares. If you buy clothes that aren't organic, it is increasingly likely that your baby is wearing GM.

■ Soil Association standards regulate the processing and manufacturing of all organic textiles in the UK. Other certification labels for organic textiles are KRAV (Sweden), Demeter and IVN (both Germany), SKAL (Holland) and Agrocel (India).

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Ecobaby Basics	01223 811 633
Ecotopia	01453 752 345
Green Baby	0870 240 6894
Little Earthlings	02829 541 214
Little Green Earthlets	08701 624 462
Lollipop	01736 799 512
Muladula	01453 768 549
Natural Collection	0870 331 3333
Natural Nursery, The	0845 890 1665
SoOrganic.com	0800 1692579
Spirit of Nature	0870 725 9885

CLOTHING

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Born	01179 245080
Clothworks	01225 309 218
Cut4Cloth	01326 340 956
Global Kids	01530 457 146

Gossypium	01273 488 721
Greenfibres	0845 330 3440
Greenscene	07813 282 566
Greensleeves Clothing	020 8458 1559
Healthy House, The	01453 752 216
Huggababy	0870 046 4844
Nature's Fibres	01622 853 517
People Tree	020 7739 0660
Schmidt Natural Clothing	0845 345 0498
Su Su Ma Ma World Wear	01273 300 606
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Tiny Sprout	01892 863 646

FOOD

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Naturebotts.....	0845 226 2186
See Saw.....	0131 2281939
The Bottom Line.....	01543 250 810

RE-USABLE

Born.....	01179 245080
Nappy Lady, The.....	0845 456 2441
Nature Botts.....	0845 226 2186
Sam I Am.....	01522 778 926
Smile Child.....	0800 1956 982
Snazypants.....	01522 778 440
Twinkle Twinkle.....	0118 934 2120

NAPPY LAUNDRY SERVICES

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Myriad.....	01725 517 085
Toys for Children.....	01594 824 007
Tulip Toys.....	01709 546 778

ORGANISATIONS

Baby Milk Action.....	01223 464420
Real Nappy Association.....	01983 401959
The Nappy Lady.....	0845 4562441
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Earthbound Organics.....	01597 851157
Lavera.....	01557 870 203
Mybeingwell.com.....	01326 377555
Organica J.....	01330 850257
Primavera Aromatherapy.....	01373 812640
Suvarna Pure and Natural Cosmetics.....	01695 728286

DEODORANT

Anne Elise Natural Skincare.....	01304 374 594
Body Organics.....	0870 870 8586
Dr. Hauschka Natural Skin Care.....	01386 792 622
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Ecotani.....	1-800-625-5240
Neal's Yard.....	020 7498 1686
Yaoh.....	0117 9239053

TOILETRIES

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Ascent.....	01497 847788
Body Organics.....	0870 870 8586
Bio-D Company Ltd.....	01482 229950
Cioccolatina.....	01189473178
Comfort and Joy.....	01367 850278
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Essentially Yours.....	01372 465 414
Earthbound Organics.....	01597 851157
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Farrow and Humphreys Ltd.....	01780 482400
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Honesty Cosmetics.....	01629 814 888
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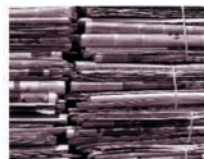
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I'm the Reverend Billy

If a loved one is in danger, we don't hesitate. We act. We don't hesitate. In the Church of Ecology, for which this hymnal in your hands is a friendly extended Revelations of CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING? – we are left in a state of amazement – my god the

APOCALYPSE! IT'S HERE! – and then we don't feel that there's much we can do. We are left sending a small cheque, signing a petition, thinking about ethical shopping. Meanwhile, Antarctica is sailing chunks of ice the size of Uranus, the tectonic plates are writhing...

How do we go on with, say, ORDINARY EVERYDAY LIFE? Let's take it one step at a time. It's 8AM. We get out of bed, we take a shower and go the Shepherd's Bush tube. Then, we remember an apocalyptic news item that was on the table beneath our orange juice. The frogs are gone, hmm. But by now we have put on our headphones and we are running to the train with, say, MONEY BY PINK FLOYD at such volumes that the tawdry world around us is lent a climactic soundtrack while we peruse the secondary erogenous zones suggested by the draping qualities of the cloth around the midsection of a person standing next to us who is listening to MONEY BY PINK FLOYD.

You see, we remove ourselves to the Entertainment Apocalypse. A power anthem from the 70's, about how money is governing the world, would nicely itch our state of disbelief, but it takes us far away from the report of froglessness on our breakfast table, which is a more difficult anthem. The authors in an average *Ecologist* propose 50 ways that the Earth is nearly over, while offering a great spectrum of emergency strategies, from chewing Slow Food to investing against the transnationals through the guidance of Karmabanque. The relief of pounding the echoey chambers of your brain with the Money blast, while duly eyeing someone's butt – ALLELUJAH! – easier.

This is where we must admit that CONSUMERISM IS THE DEVIL! Endangerment of life is ignored when it is real, but

sold in bulk when it's a good enough apocalypse for a movie. Consumerism's rival producer, THE EARTH, brings us life, but also brings us death, and doesn't really explain either one. That's a bit messy, what? The Indian Ocean tsunami made the product line of apocalypses that Hollywood has sold us look like a RUBBER GODZILLA IN A FISHTANK CIRCA 1955. Children, ultimately the death of the Earth is like our personal death, which is less friendly than a product line in which death is featured for consumerising reasons, ie it terrorizes us in a pleasurable *grand mal* sort of way, like the aforementioned money in the song heard by the fine arse.

Right now Consumerism is winning. A key reason? It offers better deaths, and makes real death, whether frogs or Antarctica or ourselves – less real. Farther away. Not quite a loved one at all. We can refuse to take responsibility for real death, the Earth's or ours, because now death is packaged for the sale – and we have as many deaths to choose from on the shelves as we do GENTRIFIED GENE-TWISTED MILK. There's Fat-Free Death, 1% Death, 2% Death...

'Endangerment of life is ignored when it is real, but sold in bulk when it's a good enough apocalypse for a movie'

Outside my window where I'm typing, I've got nothing but pavement. It's New York city. I've been removed. But I've noticed that this

hopelessness itself already seems to search for the Earth beneath. It doesn't take much of a pause for the Earth to reappear faster than a DSL-ed G4. That's because the Earth isn't just under that concrete out there. It's in these eyes searching for it. It IS these eyes. Looking, I'm THE EARTH TRYING TO SEE ITSELF.

Bush and Blair give us so many rousing images of war that we start not registering the real one – we come to believe that the actual war is only a show. The apocalypses rain down on us also, and they create something that is more insidious than the belief that the illness of the Earth is not real. Lately we are circled by apocalypses like fearful medieval city-dwellers who imagined the ravenous wolf-men beyond the gates. The Earth is this misbehaving THING, out there, exciting prurient interest but only at a distance.

But children – APOCALYPSES ARE US. Earth is what we're made of. We can try to separate, but all we get is a bad ugly divorce. We can pour dazzling products into that divide, but it doesn't work. This removal is really the ONLY SIN THERE IS! The Earth is the frogs and the Antarctic ice and it's us; the Earth is our parents and our brothers and sisters and the strangers we suddenly love, too. And – when a loved one is in danger, we act. Amen?



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