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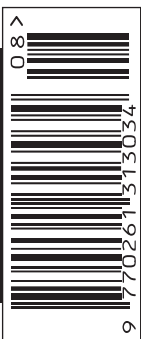


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Twenty years ago commercial whaling was banned. Since then Japan has slaughtered nearly 10,000 whales in the name of scientific research and to supply domestic demand for whale meat. Now with Japanese taste for whale meat falling dramatically, Japan's justification for whaling grows weaker by the day. **Photostory by James Frankham.**

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As space runs out and costs of burying our waste escalate, the government, local authorities and companies are turning to incineration in spite of well organised and vociferous local opposition. **Jon Hughes** looks at a problem of our own making, and suggests a solution that is simple and revolutionary.

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...suggests that the price of oil and the pace of freedom always move in opposite directions. Therefore, according to **Thomas Friedman**, no matter where you are on the foreign-policy spectrum, you have to think like a Geo-Green. You cannot be

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THIS MONTH IN HISTORY: AUGUST 1996

6th August 1996 – construction work begins on the controversial Newbury bypass in Berkshire, England. A year of protests has riven the quiet Home Counties town, with residents talking of a new Civil War, a ‘Third Battle of Newbury’. This time, the protagonists are not Roundheads and Cavaliers, but rather hardhats and eco-warriors.

Since the previous summer, camps have been appearing along the proposed route of the bypass. Treehouses sprout from oaks. Protestors stockpile rations in the treetops, to

make eviction as difficult as possible for when the bailiffs arrive – which they do, ultimately making over a thousand arrests. But it is months before the sites are totally cleared, and in the process Newbury has drawn the attention of the national media. The protestors score a PR coup – their cause is broadcast to the country, and the severe eviction tactics tarnish the constructors’ public image. Though the bypass is eventually built, the Labour government elected the following May shelves the road-building programme.

Yet today, activists are once more having to repeat the basics: that building more roads only encourages greater car-ownership. Ten years on a congestion study shows the futility of the bypass – Newbury’s overall traffic has dramatically risen from 43,900 vehicles a day (1999) to 65,000 (2003), a rise of just under 50% in four years.

Newbury drew up the battle-lines – but the fight isn’t over yet.

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EDITORIAL

I wasn't wildly excited about seeing Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. This is the man, after all, who was said by Ralph Nader to have had an 'anaesthetic' effect on America's environmental movement when he was Vice President.

But the hype surrounding his film proved irresistible, and some two hours or so after taking my seat in a Leicester Square cinema, I understood why. Gore has discovered – or created – a near perfect mechanism for telling the story of climate change. He has found the formula for making an abstract, even boring issue, very very real. So much so, in fact, that at least one Bush-supporting climate-denying viewer who happened to be sitting near me underwent a conversion before my eyes.

An Inconvenient Truth says nothing new to readers of this magazine. But it says it well. Visually compelling - with almost unbearable before-and-after images of shrinking icecaps and fast changing landscapes - the film leaves us in no doubt about the gravity of the threats we face if we continue to fill the atmosphere with global warming gases.

If the film has a flaw – it is that Gore dwells for too long on the problems. For an audience in Britain, where there is a new, but real political consensus on the need to combat climate change – it is the solutions that we desperately need.

But not so in the US, where the debate continues. And one of the reasons for that has been the injection of false doubt into the discussion by a small body of special interest groups whose task has been to create uncertainty where there is no uncertainty, and whose influence, tragically, stretches all the way to the White House.

All this is explained in Gore's film. He calculates that whereas not one of the 928 climate change-related articles published in peer-reviewed journals during the past ten years has doubted the cause of global warming – more than half the climate-change articles published in the popular press have done exactly that.

Climate deniers have had disproportionate influence. But the scientific consensus nevertheless exists. It started with the 2,000 scientists from 100 countries who make up the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and today even the Bush Administration's Climate Change Science Program reports "clear evidence of human influences on the climate system."

Gore's decision to dwell on the problems makes sense in the US context. But he does nevertheless discuss solutions, and crucially he debunks the myth that tackling climate change will cause global economic collapse. That has been the argument of the climate sceptics, and it is untrue. On the contrary – where initiatives have been taken by communities and even large corporations – the effect has been hugely positive.

So when Gore's critics attack him, you have to ask yourself why? What is so frightening to these people that they have gone so far as to compare him to Hitler – as CNN's ludicrous Glenn Beck did recently. "Hitler," he explained, "said a little bit of truth, and then he mixed in 'and it's the Jews' fault.' That's where things get a little troublesome, and that's exactly what's happening." Energy efficiency, a campaign to reduce oil dependency, reducing the distance between consumers and producers – largely through pricing carbon into the market... it's hardly the stuff of nightmares.

There is much speculation that Gore will seek election in 2008 – and it's impossible not to be wildly excited by the possibility. But before we get carried away, he needs to help us understand what went wrong on his watch.



Letters



NUCLEAR REACTION

With the Government hell bent on a new generation of nuclear power stations, how can opponents of nuclear power be effective? As we saw with the Iraq war, you can win all the arguments and mobilise millions of demonstrators, and still make no difference.

This is the reason for Nuclear Pledge, a web-based campaign to allow people to register their commitment to take anti-nuclear action – refusing to pay a “nuclear surcharge” on electricity,

for example, and voting for an anti-nuclear party in the next general election. With enough support we can make new nuclear power as unviable as Mrs Thatcher’s Poll Tax!

Oliver Tickell, Nuclear Pledge (www.nuclearpledge.com)

Thank you for such comprehensive coverage of nuclear power in the June 2006 issue.

Judging from recent statements supportive of nuclear power, made by the Prime Minister and Gordon Brown, it seems safe to assume that the DTI is committed to nuclear new-build as a significant outcome of its forthcoming Energy Review.

Well, who can blame them? After all, the DTI’s role is to represent business interests – and with the spot

market price for uranium rising 600% in the last four years, there are obviously huge profits to be made in nuclear.

I wonder which government department is representing the interests of life on earth in the development of energy strategy?

Sean Reed, Morayshire

RIGHT OF ROBOTIC REPLY

I have to say I was highly pleased that *the Ecologist* had willingly given space to Tate & Lyle to answer the critics of their products Splenda and sucralose.

What immediately hit me was the naive attitude that their Director of Communications demonstrated by suggesting that as long as the regulatory bodies say something is safe then the rest of us must behave ‘sheep-like’ and accept this judgement without question. He obviously doesn’t get out much!

Joe public has had its confidence in these regulatory bodies well and truly shaken by numerous blunders over recent years, many of which have been a direct result of government policies. To suggest that some have been somewhat corrupt is an understatement when you consider aspartame, for

instance. The man responsible for its introduction had much to gain and, as we all know, has gone on to even higher levels of influence, mostly profitable.

If Tate & Lyle are so concerned about obesity then maybe they would be better occupied organising a campaign to outlaw the ‘junk food’ so readily available on every street these days and actively encourage the ‘blame culture/safety-crats’ to stop restricting children’s right to ‘play’. There is no substitute to good, old-fashioned ‘play and exercise’. It stimulates the mind, body and soul, especially if it’s fun!

Instead, children are to be found stuck in front of a television/computer game/indoors and all because it is deemed too dangerous to play in case they get ‘hurt’ or become the victim of some stranger!

Not half as dangerous as consuming dodgy products (subjected to even dodgier scrutiny, as aptly illustrated in your article, ‘Standing up to the cowboys’ in the same issue) that can lead to life-long health problems, further restricting the individual’s freedom and development.

Kevin Coleman, By email

CONVENIENCE BABY SYNDROME

Just to add the voice of a more mild-mannered breastfeeding mum to the argument (re letters, May and June 2006), Emma Christy is indeed giving breastfeeding mums a bad name.

Despite my conviction that breastfeeding is important, I do understand that there are cases where breastfeeding cannot happen, whether they be for medical or psychological reasons, or

a result of lack of support (which I witnessed to a shocking degree in a hospital that is thought of as progressive).

However, I disagree that breastfeeding is a matter of choice. Having a child is a choice, and wanting to breastfeed should be part of that choice. Instead, it now seems a decision on a par with questions such as, 'Shall we have a three- or two-wheeler pram, darling?', and goes along with the 'convenience baby' syndrome that makes my blood boil. Until companies saw the money to be made from it, formula was intended for children who didn't have a choice. It should go back to where it came from, and be looked upon as 'medicine', perhaps even on prescription, for babies who, for whatever reason, cannot be breastfed. As the excellent 'Suck On This' article (April 2006) illustrated, it should not be seen as an adequate substitute, unless there is no other option.

Andrea Link, Totnes, Devon

R WHITES 'R' WRONG

Having read your recent articles on aspartame, I was appalled to find that R Whites have proudly changed their

lemonade recipe to include this sweetener. Hopefully, fellow readers of the Ecologist will already have spotted this and no longer purchase it.

Conrad Hemingway, By email

If any of you are keen R Whites lemonade drinkers, but less keen aspartame consumers, the woman to call is Michelle Stabler, Consumer Care Advisor and her direct number is 08458 505 222

MORAL MAZE

Can you help? After a lifetime of what I know to be misguided consumerism, I am trying to be more ethical. I have subscribed to your magazine, am making a bigger effort to be more considerate towards other people, try to use my bike more and have attempted to crack my local council's recycling procedures. But (and I wonder if other readers have experienced similar problems) I'm getting into a bit of a mess with the grocery shopping.

Take last week, when I popped into my local Sainsbury's to pick up a few items and dithered in front of the bananas. There were Fairtrade ones from the Dominican Republic, organic ones from the same neighbourhood, and the bog standard variety from Costa

Rica. Now, did I go Fairtrade and help the farmers, or buy green and save the soil? But maybe the Costa Rican economy needs my money more to fund schools and hospitals? I went Dominican in the end, feeling relieved that at least I didn't have to factor in the air miles (unless, of course, Costa Rica is much closer than I think it is – and would really have been glad of the cash).

Not quite so easy at the coffee aisle, though. Fairtrade ownbrand Peruvian or organic own-brand Columbian? After further procrastination, I chose the Columbian because I hoped this might somehow undermine the global drugs trade.

I decided not to bother with the chocolate that day. Who knows, I might still have been there now.

How do you recommend I proceed in future? I've wondered about the feasibility of devising an ethical rating system that could be attached to items, along similar lines to the dryness scores for wine or cheesiness scores for cheese – a numerical distillation of all the variables that go into a product's overall social worth. Maybe I could even earn some extra Nectar points if my basket scored enough at the checkout. Or exchange points with other shoppers in a similar fashion to carbon trading. I'd be glad of your opinion.

Andrew Flynn (aka 'Worried of Wimbledon') London

Ecologist response: Ignore the corporate spin of loyalty cards, incentive schemes and ethical ratings. Abandon the passive consumerism encouraged by reassuring labels and supermarkets – find your local shopkeepers and talk to them. Find out where their food comes from and how it was grown – and let them know what you are and are not prepared to buy. Who knows, if we care for and support what remains of our local independent community shops the communities we moan about losing might return.



This is a photo of our three-year-old son, Luigi Hayashida, during a recent family holiday in Italy. We didn't make him do it, he just picked out the Ecologist from a pile of gossip magazines and newspapers and sat on his potty...

Regards, Annalisa Salvi and Ryo Hayashida

Aspartame infographic showing a timeline of its history and health concerns. Key dates include: 1965 (FDA approval), 1967 (FDA withdrawal), 1969 (FDA approval), 1971 (FDA withdrawal), 1972 (FDA approval), 1973 (FDA withdrawal), 1974 (FDA approval), 1975 (FDA withdrawal), 1976 (FDA approval), 1977 (FDA withdrawal), 1978 (FDA approval), 1979 (FDA withdrawal), 1980 (FDA approval), 1981 (FDA withdrawal), 1982 (FDA approval), 1983 (FDA withdrawal), 1984 (FDA approval), 1985 (FDA withdrawal), 1986 (FDA approval), 1987 (FDA withdrawal), 1988 (FDA approval), 1989 (FDA withdrawal), 1990 (FDA approval), 1991 (FDA withdrawal), 1992 (FDA approval), 1993 (FDA withdrawal), 1994 (FDA approval), 1995 (FDA withdrawal), 1996 (FDA approval), 1997 (FDA withdrawal), 1998 (FDA approval), 1999 (FDA withdrawal), 2000 (FDA approval), 2001 (FDA withdrawal), 2002 (FDA approval), 2003 (FDA withdrawal), 2004 (FDA approval), 2005 (FDA withdrawal), 2006 (FDA approval), 2007 (FDA withdrawal), 2008 (FDA approval), 2009 (FDA withdrawal), 2010 (FDA approval), 2011 (FDA withdrawal), 2012 (FDA approval), 2013 (FDA withdrawal), 2014 (FDA approval), 2015 (FDA withdrawal), 2016 (FDA approval), 2017 (FDA withdrawal), 2018 (FDA approval), 2019 (FDA withdrawal), 2020 (FDA approval), 2021 (FDA withdrawal), 2022 (FDA approval), 2023 (FDA withdrawal), 2024 (FDA approval).

JUNE ISSUE CORRECTION In last month's Ecologist, Mike Stones reported that Tom Beaston '...will not stock Ecover washing products because they are owned by the security company Group 4.' Ecover are not owned by Group 4. We apologise to Ecover for this error, and have told Tom.



URBAN MIGRATION HITS TIPPING POINT

Next year, more people will live in cities than in the countryside for the first time in the history of the human race, says a UN report.

Impoverished by a combination of factors related to globalization (industrial farming, climate change desertification and drought, resource wars and so forth), the rural poor are relocating to the city at a rate of 27m annually. According to the State of the World's Cities 2006/7 report, the current urban population is

3.17bn out of 6.45bn, with the number of slum dwellers due to rise to 1bn next year.

While the poor leave rural areas to seek their fortune, most end up living in slums with no or few basic services. In terms of health, education, employment and mortality they are much worse off. In many Sub-Saharan African cities, children living in slums are far more likely to die from water-borne and respiratory illnesses than their rural counterparts.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEREMY HORNER/CORBIS

“There needs to be a much bigger debate around the portrayal and use of alcohol and how it affects youth lifestyles, and to what extent profit is being put before wellbeing.”

Matt Baggott, Leicestershire's chief constable, who is conducting research into alcohol abuse for the Association of Chief Police Officers.

WI REFUSE CAMPAIGN

The influential Women's Institute (WI) has challenged supermarkets to cut down on unnecessary food packaging or face a boycott. The WI, which has 215,000 UK members, is writing to supermarket managers as part of their campaign against excessive and unnecessary packaging. The WI says that, for every £50 spent by a family on food, £8 pays for packaging costs, the disposal of which consumers then have to pay for through council tax.

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HYDE PARKS

is the amount of green space London has lost as a result of people paving over their front gardens, says an investigation by the London Assembly's Environment Committee. This development, normally to create a parking space for a car, is bad for wildlife and causes flooding. When an area is paved or concreted over rain cannot soak into the ground, so washes off and enters London's dilapidated sewage system, which is struggling to cope.

PESTICIDES LINKED TO PARKINSON'S DISEASE

The first large-scale study of its kind has found that chronic, low-dose exposure to pesticides increases the risks of Parkinson's Disease (PD) by 70 percent.

In conducting the study, researchers from Harvard School of Public Health reviewed previous records and surveyed more than 4,000 people.

Among those reporting exposure to pesticides there was a 70 percent higher incidence of PD than among those who reported no exposure. Those who were exposed to pesticides were more likely to be male and to report their occupation as farmer, rancher or fisherman, or to be blue-collar workers. The significant association between pesticide exposure and Parkinson's disease among individuals who are not farmers is most likely explained by use of pesticides at home or in gardening, the study says.

HERO: MARK MCGOWAN

Controversial environmentally-conscientious performance artist Mark McGowan somersaulted 40 miles from London to Knebworth last month in an extraordinary protest against recycling.

Every somersault was made over four household bricks that were attached to a door – a symbol of items that are commonly but unnecessarily recycled.

'Millions of tonnes of materials are being crushed, pulped and smelt down when they should be being re-used,' he told the Ecologist. 'It's an abhorrent Armageddon. We need to start reclaiming and reusing materials, not destroy then reproduce, which is the energy-intensive process recycling causes.'

He said that children innately understand the process of reusing things but that politicians favoured recycling because it's a simple message to sell and easier to manage.

McGowan started his 'performance' at the Gherkin building in London because it stands on the site of the old Baltic Exchange, a grand edifice made out of the finest materials the Victorians could lay their hands on and was destined to become concrete aggregate before being privately salvaged.

Previous McGowan performances have

included a project in which he left a car idling every day of the year, in order to highlight the air pollution caused by cars in congested cities. In a similar exhibit against water waste, he intended to leave a tap running for a year. However, Thames Water intervened and threatened to cease supplying the London Gallery if the exhibit was not turned off – which McGowan found ironic as Thames Water lose nearly 1,000 litres of water a day through leaky pipes.



WAY OFF COURSE ON KYOTO

Despite loudly championing the Kyoto protocol since it was agreed in 2001, there has been a wholesale failure by EU countries to deliver on their pledges, the latest figures reveal.

Instead of falling, EU greenhouse-gas pollution rose in the latest year of monitoring.

The EU-15 has pledged to reduce emissions by eight percent by 2012, as compared with a benchmark of 1990.

But in its annual report the European Environment Agency (EAA) said that, between 2003 and 2004, emissions rose by 0.3 percent, or 11.5 million tonnes. This marks the second annual year of increase. Emissions in 2004 were just 0.6 percent lower than the base year of 1990 – more than four percentage points adrift of where they should have been by that time. For the EU-25, after membership enlargement, 2004's increase was 0.4 percent (18 million tonnes) over 2003.

Road transport contributed most to the increase, accounting for a rise of 12 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂). Iron and steel makers were also culprits, upping their CO₂ pollution by eight million tonnes.

Spain and Italy had the biggest greenhouse gas rise, with 4.8 and 0.9 percent respectively. Spain's increase can be explained by its switch to fossil fuels after the 2003 drought hit power from hydro. Italy's is downed to oil refining and road transport.

'Europe's governments make grand statements about their commitment to reduce greenhouse gas pollution,' said Friends of the Earth. 'Yet economy and industry ministers continue to block or water down policy measures to switch to renewable energies, reduce energy waste or introduce fuel consumption standards for cars.'

FISH THREAT TO HUMAN HEALTH

Far from being brain food, fish is becoming a grave danger to public health, says a report from New York Medical College published in this month's issue of Environmental Microbiology.

It is common practice in the fish industry to use large amounts of antibiotics to prevent infection. Those antibiotics are often non-biodegradable and remain in the water (aquaculture) for long periods of time. This encourages the growth of antibiotic resistant bacteria.

Eventually, this process could lead to increased antibiotic resistance in the 'disease-causing' bacteria (pathogens) of fish. The properties that make bacteria resistant can then be transferred to human and animal pathogens, leading to increased infectious disease in fish, animals and humans alike.

When antibiotics are mixed with fish food, residual antibiotics may be found in fish products and fish flesh. People who eat these products will be inadvertently consuming antibiotics, leading to changes in their normal microbial environment, or 'microflora', and making them more susceptible to bacterial infection.

'If we don't curb the heavy use of antibiotics in aquaculture, we will ultimately see more and more antibiotic resistant pathogens emerging, causing increased disease to fish, animals and humans alike,' the report concludes.

A global effort to curb the over-use of antibiotics is essential in preventing these detrimental effects on fish, animal and human health.



Naked cyclists rode through cities around the world last month to protest about dependence on oil, automotive air pollution and the dangers that cars pose to cyclists, under the banner, 'Stop indecent exposure to vehicle emissions!' Only 30p in every £100 spent on transport in the UK goes toward provision for cyclists. www.worldnakedbikeride.org/seattle

\$7
BILLION DOLLARS

worth of oil deals that Chinese firms have signed in Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Syria and Equatorial Guinea. Now they have ventured into Russia. China's state oil company has just bought a £1.6bn Siberian oil field containing a billion barrels of oil from TNK-BP.

CHURCHES TO BOYCOTT GM

Action by Churches Together (ACT) International, the global alliance of hundreds of churches and related aid agencies working to save lives and support communities in emergencies worldwide, has announced a boycott of GM food.

The organisation's decision is based on their belief that insufficient analysis on the safety of GM food has been carried out – a particularly significant concern given that it might make up 100 percent of aid recipients' diet. They have adopted this precautionary stance because they don't want to wait 'until the damage is done'.

Their second major concern is food security. Genetic modification of food often includes the elimination of its potential to be used as seed. As such, people remain dependent on foreign food aid to the benefit of the world-wide agricultural industry. Visit www.gmwatch.org

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL BROWN REX FEATURES

FLOODS AND FAMINE

Mountain glaciers are melting faster now than at any time in the past 5,000 years because of climate change, a new study has found.

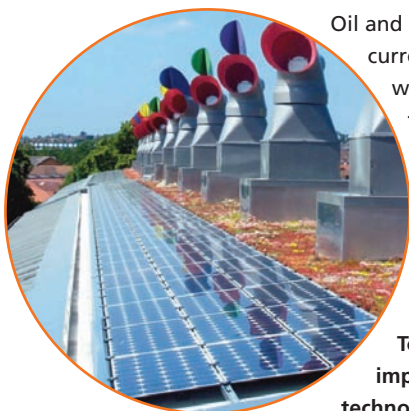
From the Andes to the Himalayas, climate change is leading to a full-scale retreat of the world's tropical glaciers, meaning that we might have passed the critical threshold beyond which nothing can be done to prevent most of the highest ice caps disappearing within the near future.

The millions of people who live in the lowlands that surround South American glaciers rely on them for freshwater - if they melt, it will result in the displacement of those people. Scientists from Ohio State University, cite as proof of progressive glacial melt a change in the chemical isotopes of the ice cores, the widespread retreat of glaciers and the resultant uncovering of frozen plants that had been buried for thousands of years.

“My guess is anything to do with pain, fatigue or feeling stressed. The first two are related to medicalizing the avoidance of ageing and death among baby boomers and the third, stress, is due to very real anxiety people should feel about a host of worldwide and U.S. megatrends that legitimately create anxiety and depression – trends like global warming, wars, economic collapse, political corruption, etc. But the answers are not pills. The answer is to elect sane political leaders.”

Dr Richard Lippin, an occupational-health physician, answering the question, ‘What kinds of medical conditions will expand to embrace millions of newly diagnosed “patients” in the coming months / years?’

EFFICIENCY SAVINGS COULD HALVE ENERGY CONSUMPTION



Oil and electricity consumption across the world could easily be cut by half if currently-available clean energy solutions are pursued, an international watchdog has concluded after a year-long study. **‘A sustainable energy future is possible, but only if we act urgently and decisively to promote, develop and deploy a full mix of energy technologies. We have the means, now we need the will,’** said Claude Mandil, executive director of the International Energy Agency (IEA).

‘Improved energy efficiency is an indispensable component of any policy mix, and it is available immediately,’ said Mandil, presenting the report titled Energy Technology Perspectives: Scenarios and Strategies.

To achieve this, however, ‘governments, must be willing to implement measures that encourage investment in energy-efficient technologies,’ Mandil added.

ASDA SENT PACKING



A unprecedented community campaign to stop Queen’s Market in east London being bulldozed to make way for an Asda superstore has forced its owners, the notoriously hard-headed American retailer Walmart, to pull out of the scheme.

Asda/Walmart announced their decision to throw in the towel last month, to the jubilation of campaigners. Some 12,000 shoppers have signed a petition (the largest in the borough’s history) against the plans, which were instigated and championed by Newham Council.

The campaigners have consistently slammed the proposals as a threat to social cohesion. In addition, as supermarkets tend to take cash out of the local community and put little back, they feared that Asda’s arrival would have a disastrous impact on the area’s economy. In contrast the market generates £13m annually and provides a multi-cultural focus for the community.

However, the fight is not over. The development company, Edgbaston-based St Modwen Properties Plc, say they intend to fight on and are currently talking to two other supermarkets.



PACIFIC KILLING FIELDS

Over 1,000 scientists from nearly 100 countries and over 280 NGOs are calling on the UN to order an immediate moratorium on high seas industrial longline fishing to prevent the extinction of the leatherback turtle.

Once the most abundant sea turtle, the species may now have as few as five years remaining in the Pacific. In addition to the Pacific leatherback population, longline fishing injures or kills approximately 4.4 million sharks, seabirds, billfish, and marine mammals in the Pacific each year. 'We no longer have time to experiment with the few remaining leatherbacks; technological fixes have not proven effective and strong action to stop the impact of longline fishing on the high seas has not been effectively implemented,' said Eli Saddler, a policy analyst for the Sea Turtle Restoration Project. For more information visit www.seaturtles.org

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER JOHNSON/CORBIS

'Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules, and they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify, or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as crazy, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.' **Jack Kerouac**

BIG PHARMA'S

The world's major drug manufacturers are spending more on promoting their drugs than they are on researching them, a damning report from Consumers International (CI), the international federation of consumer groups, has found.

According to its report, Branding The Cure, maximization of profit is being put before health considerations.

There is a shocking lack of publicly available information about the \$60bn (£33bn) spent annually by the industry on drug promotion, the report says of its study of 20 of the world's biggest drug companies.

The report set out to review how self-regulation and corporate social responsibility had fared within the drug industry since Health Action International published Blurring The Boundaries: New Trends in Drug Promotion in 1998.

Blurring the Boundaries found that, 'Globally, there is a huge imbalance in the financial resources available for promotional versus independent information. As a result, consumers and prescribers are generally subject to a positive information bias: the benefits of medicine use tends to be exaggerated and the risks downplayed. And codes of practice [for drug promotion] tend to be largely voluntary and are rarely enforced.

'It is incredibly disappointing,' says the CI

A 99, WITH FLAKE
AND POUT FISH

Ice cream maker Wall's is set to use a protein taken from fish blood to create the world's first ice creams using GM technology. Its parent company, Unilever, claims the technique will allow it to develop low-calorie, low-fat ice creams. It could be used to create new versions of best-sellers such as Cornetto, Magnum and Carte D'Or. The blood protein is derived from the eel-like ocean pout fish, which uses it to survive extreme cold at the bottom of the seas. The protein has been chemically synthesized and can be grown in vast vats to produce a brownish liquid. This is added to the ice cream and lowers the temperature at which ice crystals form as well as altering the shape they take. A stiff, solid mixture can then be created without the need for so much cream or fat, Unilever claim. An application to use the new technology has been lodged with the Food Standards Agency. Unilever said the process has already been approved in the US and other parts of the world. It stressed that, while the process used to create the protein involves a GM element, no GM material remains in the final product.

DIRTY TRICKS EXPOSED



report, 'That, almost a decade later, the picture of drug promotion and its control regime has hardly changed for the better.'

The abuses detailed in Branding The Cure show that drug companies are creating illnesses and using kickbacks, cartels and chatrooms to make their drugs more profitable.

The drug companies stand accused of:

- promoting their products through patients' groups, students and internet chatrooms to bypass a ban on advertising direct to the public and to 'create a subtle need among consumers to demand drugs for the conditions.'
- A further form of 'nice and friendly' marketing identified involves providing disease information via general health pamphlets and magazine articles on 'modern' lifestyle conditions, such as stress and eating habits, to encourage people to ask their doctors for medicines - corrupting doctors and health professionals. The report states, 'It can be concluded that corrupting healthcare professionals is not an uncommon practice among pharmaceutical companies.'
- The tactics involve 'kickbacks and consulting agreements.'
- The kickbacks involve free samples (that research has shown creates a Pavlovian demand and willingness to supply the branded drug that is usually more expensive) and extravagant trips to exotic

locations for 'conferences' on new drugs and conditions. Most major companies also use specialist PR consultancies to groom health professionals to become 'key opinion leaders' (KOL) and to promote the company's products through their work. 'They may be paid by the company for their promotional efforts via presentations, research papers, conferences and debates,' the report states. Consequently, if there's a conflict of interest or 'profit motive' behind the information on drugs they receive, the public remain unaware of it. 'More than half of all the companies surveyed have been implicated in controversies regarding free samples, kickbacks, and gifts to medical professionals.'

- pursuing 'a variety of anti-competitive strategies, including cartels, fraudulent patent manoeuvres, improper discounts, price hikes,

payments to competitors for not challenging patents and cutting off supplies of drugs and active ingredients,' to keep prices high and secure markets.

As was recently highlighted in *The Ecologist*, the report says studies have shown that the results of drug trials are more likely to be positive where funding is provided by the manufacturer, and that many research articles are ghostwritten in the name of eminent doctors who may or may not have had access to all the trial results.

'All the while, consumers are in the dark about how their medicine consumption choices are the result of veiled relationships between doctors and the pharmaceutical companies,' says the report.

15

TIMES HIGHER

Cancer rates among young women living near a disused nuclear power station than the UK average. The study by Green Audit has led former environment minister Michael Meacher to call for an independent inquiry and for the government to delay future commitments to nuclear power until the health effects of radioactive wastes are known.



FEATURE

Herceptin: CLINICAL



**AMAZING
MIRACLE CURE**

PHOTOGRAPH BY POPPER FOTO/ALAMY

TRIAL BY MEDIA

Given the known side effects and limited effectiveness of Herceptin, how has it become the latest Breast Cancer miracle cure? **Pat Thomas** investigates.

'The history of medicine is littered with wonderful early results which over a period of time turn out to be not so wonderful – or in fact even adverse. If you look at hormone replacement therapy, or Vioxx (rofecoxib)... there are a whole string of recent examples where preliminary data led to a lot of excitement and caused changes in clinical practice and then eventually we realised they had done more harm than good. Why is it we never learn these lessons? We seem condemned to make the same mistakes each time with any new drug.'

These words could have been written by any medical sceptic, and over the years they could have, and probably have been, written in one form or another in this magazine. Yet these words were written by Richard Horton, editor in chief of the long established medical journal *The Lancet*, in November 2005.

Horton was writing about the medical and media hoopla surrounding the latest miracle drug Herceptin and his words, which should have been front page news, disappeared like a whisper in the year-long shouting match that has passed for sensible debate about this controversial drug.

There has been a flurry of media coverage that will have made the folks at Roche, responsible for the international marketing of Herceptin, wet their pants with delight. Headlines screamed 'How many more women must die?', 'Dying nurse sues NHS for denying her cancer drug' and 'Wonder drug "could cure breast cancer"', while desperate punters competed for column inches with statements like 'I have no other option but to sell my home to pay for Herceptin', 'I feel the refusal of Herceptin is as though I have been given a death sentence' and 'It's a basic human right to have the drugs you need to keep you alive'.

In a relatively short time span, Herceptin has been elevated from a promising treatment

for a very specific type of cancer to a wonder drug that will 'cure' breast cancer and save thousands of lives each year.

FROM HYPE TO REALITY

Herceptin is not appropriate for all breast cancers...

It is aimed at the 20 per cent of women whose cancers appear to be linked to the over-production of a protein, called HER-2, which helps regulate cell growth and development.

HER-2 was first identified in the early 1980s and nobody can say for sure what role it plays in a healthy breast cell, though in cancer cells too much of it appears to make tumours more aggressive and it is associated with poor prognosis.

Herceptin is what is known as a monoclonal antibody – a genetically engineered copy of natural antibodies that target HER-2. The fine details of how it works are not entirely clear, but in essence Herceptin attaches itself to HER-2 receptors on the cancer cells and blocks them from receiving growth signals. Herceptin also appears to alert the immune system to attack the cancer cells it attaches to.

Within the select population of women who are eligible and well enough to take Herceptin, only a small percentage will actually respond to it...

According to available data the majority of eligible women, around 70 per cent, fail to respond to the drug. Worse, virtually all those who do respond will eventually develop a resistance to the drug.

For women who do respond to Herceptin, the media perception is that it is a 'life saver'.

Yet the available data does not, indeed cannot, support this conclusion. ▶



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Since it was approved by the FDA in 1998, Herceptin has been the subject of a small number of published, randomised clinical trials. Some of these trials are ongoing and the conclusions drawn from them are based on interim, or incomplete, data. The longest of these trials has only followed women for an average of two years.

Because of this it is impossible to say whether it is actually saving lives. In cases of late stage breast cancer – that is cancer that has failed to respond to any other form of treatment and which has spread to other organs of the body – Herceptin appears to slow down or postpone its progression.

But there is no evidence to suggest that any woman taking Herceptin can go on to live out the natural span of her life cancer-free. On the contrary, the short-term studies published so far show that there is no significant difference in overall survival rates between those women who take Herceptin and those who don't.

What is more, taking Herceptin does not cut your risk of cancer recurring by 50 per cent as alleged in the press...

In fact, the data shows that the difference in recurrence between women on a conventional treatment regime versus those on conventional treatment plus Herceptin was incremental. The Herceptin group were only 5.5 per cent less likely to suffer relapse. And because this data, published in 2005 in *the New England Journal of Medicine*, is interim, it may yet be that cancer will recur in these women over a longer period of time.

In addition, most Herceptin stories either gloss over or completely omit the 'known risks' associated with the drug...

While Herceptin may delay the spread of cancer to some parts of the body, the trade-off is that it appears to hasten its spread to others. In as many as 34 per cent of women with metastatic breast cancer who appear to be responding to

The furore over Herceptin is a textbook example of how manufacturers are turning to sophisticated marketing and PR, which is infinitely cheaper and more effective than medical research.

Herceptin, the cancer will spread to the central nervous system (brain and spine). Around half of all women being treated for early breast cancer with Herceptin may also develop CNS tumours. The manufacturers, keen to put a positive spin on a very negative effect, say this is a consequence of how 'safe' the drug is. They suggest that because it does not penetrate the blood brain barrier – the protective membrane around the brain that prevents drugs and other toxic substances from getting through – it is less able to protect the brain.

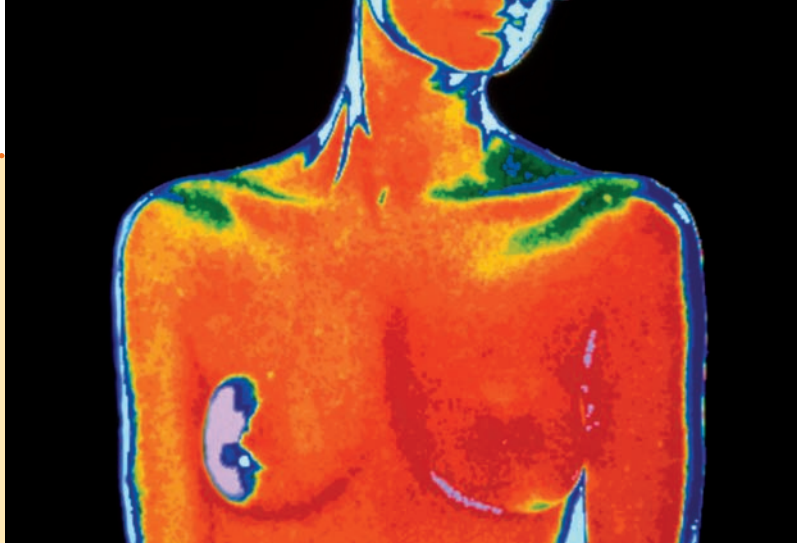
In addition, while Herceptin continues to be widely feted as being 'safe' by the media, early in 2006 the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was moved to warn doctors that in a reanalysis of the largest Herceptin trial to date, around four per cent of women sustained severe heart damage while taking the drug. This was more than double the rate reported in the interim data that was published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. A further, but as yet unquantified, number of women may experience mild to moderate heart symptoms and whether these are transient or progressive and permanent is largely unknown. Without long-term data it is impossible to say if these figures are an under- or over-estimate.

While no one can put a price on a human life, when looked at purely in terms of cost versus benefit Herceptin is a poor investment.

According to a reanalysis of Herceptin survival data undertaken by Peter Littlejohn, the clinical director of the UK's National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), and published earlier this year in the journal *Lancet Oncology*, 18 patients would have to be treated with Herceptin to prolong one life. At around £20,000 per treatment this works out at £400,000 for four months of life. NICE is responsible for recommending drugs for use on the NHS on the basis of evidence that they actually work – it is little wonder then that it was, for so long, reluctant to recommend this particular treatment for more widespread use.

Based on what is known about Herceptin to date, headlines shouting 'Wonder drug "could cure breast cancer"' should be really saying 'Herceptin prolongs a few lives for an average of four months at a cost of around £400,000 per life extended, and for the majority of women for whom it does not work there is an increased risk of severe heart damage and the spread of their cancer to the central nervous system.'

So, how did Herceptin become the latest wonder drug on the block?



HER-2 – WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT?

While all the media attention is focused on the role of HER-2 in breast cancer, this same protein is found in excess in many other types of cancer including lung, prostate, colo-rectal, gastric, oral, bladder, ovarian, cervical and endometrial cancer. Already medical research is suggesting that the widespread distribution of HER-2 may mean that it is little more than a crude marker at best.

At present only 35 per cent of cancer centres in the UK routinely test women diagnosed with breast cancer for HER-2 status. To remedy this Roche has pledged £1.5 million in funding to establish appropriate systems that enable more widespread and routine HER-2 testing to take place on the NHS.

Establishing HER-2 testing protocols may appear to be a good thing, allowing doctors to more quickly and accurately determine which women might benefit from the Herceptin. But it is also a money-spinner. Roche and its subsidiary Genentech (which developed the drug) own the patent on the test kits.

According to a report in the journal *Nature*, Roche has made these HER-2 testing kits available free of charge for laboratories in major markets such as the UK and Germany while the demand for Herceptin is being established. Indeed, in some countries the availability of these kits coincided with, possibly even preceded, the launch of the drug.

Establishing this naturally occurring growth regulator as the main protagonist in this type of breast cancer has a wider, and more profitable, purpose. It is a first step in a campaign intended to broaden the use of Herceptin in other HER-2 mediated cancers. It is already being considered as a potential treatment for prostate and lung cancer.

CLINICAL TRIAL BY MEDIA

It seems incredible that, with so many unanswered questions, such a low response rate and such worrying adverse effects, Herceptin could ever have been hailed as a 'miracle cure'. This accolade came not on the merits of the drug but on a tide of press release journalism, 'creative' PR, an urgent need for the drug's manufacturer to recoup research and development costs and boost its share price, as well as politicians' fear of 'people power'.

There is no cure for cancer. Indeed, the failure to find a cure for cancer is one of medicine's biggest embarrassments. Instead the goal of most modern cancer treatments is to extend the lives of patients with an ongoing regimen of drugs and radiation. In theory newer, more precisely targeted



**Above top: Lisa Jardine
Above: Women Fighting
for Herceptin presenting
signatures to No 10 Downing
Street**

biotech treatments like Herceptin should facilitate this goal and have been hailed in the medical press as holding the key to a future where cancer is a chronic condition that can be 'managed'.

But while biotech drugs may be the future, they are also expensive to produce and tend to be so specialised that they are generally only appropriate for a small subset of patients. This means that the manufacturers will potentially have a hard time recouping their research and development costs and that it will take longer for the drug to show a profit.

To overcome this problem manufacturers are turning to sophisticated marketing and PR, which is infinitely cheaper and more effective than medical research. Increase the potential size of the market by creating a demand for a drug and the profit will be realised more quickly.

The furore over Herceptin is a textbook example of how to apply this technique and although the drug only came into public consciousness about nine months ago, the media campaign in the UK started long before that.

While Herceptin was approved for use in 1998, it wasn't until 2001 that the results of published human trials began to appear. In one small study of just 469 women with late stage breast cancer, Herceptin added to standard treatment delayed the progression of the disease for 7.4 months compared to a 4.6 month delay for those on standard treatment alone.

In 2002 another study with similarly positive results appeared and that same year NICE approved the use of Herceptin on the NHS for women with late stage breast cancer.

Roche hoped that the NICE approval would open the floodgates for the uptake of the drug in the UK – even at £20,000 a year per treatment. But by the following year it was clear that not every potential patient was receiving the drug.

A POLITICAL PRESCRIPTION

Poor uptake prompted Roche to compile an in-house survey comparing its own regional sales of the drug with projections of the number of potential users drawn from the Office of National Statistics and Cancer Research UK figures. It showed evidence of what the company termed 'postcode prescribing': in the Midlands 14 per cent of eligible women were receiving Herceptin. This figure rose to 28 per cent in the north and north-east, 33.5 per cent

in south-east and East Anglia, and 61 per cent in the south-west.

The company passed the survey on to CancerBacup – whose latest financial statement shows that drug companies such as Roche provide around a third of its income. In October 2003 the charity sent out a press release headed 'CancerBacup calls for action over dramatic new evidence of postcode prescribing' – a catchy phrase that implies that where a woman lives dictates whether she will be able to get hold of the latest miracle drug.

From a media point of view the concept of postcode prescribing was a gift of a story. It was so politically correct and appealing that nobody bothered to ask whether the apparently higher uptake of Herceptin in southern counties might have reflected, for instance, the higher population numbers or whether middle class, better educated women in more affluent areas of the country might have been more skilled and confident in demanding the drug from their physicians, or whether the balance sheets of Trusts in these areas might have been better able to absorb the cost of the drug.

At no point did the media question the efficacy of the drug itself. Instead the papers pursued the idea that the National Health Service wasn't national or free to all regardless of means, but was instead skewed to the more affluent areas of the country. It was this lemming-like reportage that helped turn the miracle drug into a political hot potato, as well as a 'must-have' cure.

FINDING 'OUTRAGED OF STOKE'

During this time Roche was already funding further trials of its new drug in women with early stage HER-2 breast cancer. The results of those trials were eventually made available in May 2005 – at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO).

As the media circus was gearing up, early stage cancer patient Lisa Jardine, a writer, TV presenter and professor at the University of London, received a call from an account executive at Ketchum, a PR agency working for Roche. The woman on the other end of the line had read Jardine's story in the paper and picked up on her comment that she thought women who wanted Herceptin should have access to it.

The agency offered Jardine the chance to come and do paid talks at Roche seminars and to help find funding for her own use of Herceptin (though for safety reasons she had, by this stage, decided against the drug).

'There was no mistaking the directness of ►

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the approach,' said Jardine at the time. 'She said she would make it worth my while.'

Roche defended the approach: 'Lisa Jardine, as a public figure who had spoken openly about her own disease, was contacted in the planning stages of activity to raise awareness of the importance of accurate breast cancer diagnosis. This activity was never conducted, as it was superseded by a Department of Health initiative to encourage wide tumour type testing.'

Herceptin was hailed as a 'miracle cure' not on the merits of the drug but on a tide of press release journalism, 'creative' PR, an urgent need for the drug's manufacturer to recoup research and development costs and boost its share price, as well as politicians' fear of 'people power'.

The campaign gained momentum and Roche developed close associations with other patient groups. Records show that in 2002, when cancer charities were lobbying to get Herceptin approved, the UK Breast Cancer Coalition was also receiving funding from the company. And then there is Women Fighting For Herceptin, a very vocal group of Herceptin advocates based in Staffordshire and founded by former magistrate Dorothy Griffiths.

Griffiths has done a presentation for Roche and admits to being supplied by the company with all the facts and figures she needed to make her campaign more effective. 'They're a lovely bunch of people at Roche,' Griffith's opined in the *Guardian* in March this year.

When in 2005 a former employee of Roche, Rebecca Hunt (who was listed as the company's pharma PR manager on CancerBacup's 'postcode prescribing' press release), offered her PR expertise for free to Women Fighting For Herceptin, it must have seemed like a godsend. But it is unlikely that Hunt, who is also UK healthcare director for PR giant Porter Novelli – which lists Roche as one of its clients – offered her services on a whim or a tide of public spirited good will. Even though she said at the time, 'It is really inspiring to the team here to get involved in something that makes so much difference to people', keeping major clients like Roche happy is part of her day-to-day job and the work, though pro bono, will also have been undertaken with an eye on other rewards further down the line.

With a wealth of PR expertise behind them, Women Fighting for Herceptin were able to garner an extraordinary amount of media

interest. They had the continuing support of the local paper, *The Staffordshire Sentinel* and a ready supply of unhappy women who couldn't get their hands on the drug, willing to tell their stories to TV, radio and the newspapers.

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE ELECTORATE?

In October 2005 Secretary of State for Health Patricia Hewitt weighed in to the middle of the debate and announced: 'From today all women diagnosed with early stage breast cancer will be tested for suitability for treatment with Herceptin. As soon as Herceptin receives a licence it will be fast-tracked for use throughout the NHS.'

Officially Hewitt took the decision not because she was bowing to media pressure, but 'because I believe it is the right thing to do'. But in so doing she very effectively undermined the ability of local authorities to make decisions based on the bigger picture of the needs of their local areas.

By October 2006, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) will be obliged to offer Herceptin treatment, at an estimated cost of £20,000 per year, to any qualifying woman who wants it. Around 5,000 women in the UK would be suitable for the drug. To supply each of these women with Herceptin would cost an already cash-strapped NHS in the region of £100 million a year.

Although she had the power to do so, it is worth asking whether Hewitt also had the knowledge to make such an unprecedented intervention.

PATIENT POWER?

In May of this year, when Herceptin was approved for women with early stage breast cancer, Professor John Toy of Cancer Research proclaimed: 'This shows that "patient power" can move governments to take pro-active decisions'.

But the fast-tracking of Herceptin in the UK was not a triumph of patient power. In this country drug manufacturers cannot advertise directly to consumers like they can in the US, so they must find other ways to reach us. The stories you read in the newspapers or watch on breakfast TV about miracle drugs are, in one way or another, being bought by their manufacturers.

Patient power without media power is unlikely to have the same results. In this respect Roche got lucky. Breast cancer is a 'sexy' story that sells newspapers. If the subject matter had not been right, it is doubtful that the campaign would have been as successful.

No doubt there are many people who, for instance, felt equally passionate about the NICE decision to restrict certain Alzheimer's drugs. But Alzheimer's doesn't have the media appeal of breast cancer. Likewise, if Herceptin had been a drug for bowel cancer, which kills about 16,000 in the UK every year (making it the second most common cause of cancer death after lung cancer – breast cancer ranks third), it is unlikely that a patient campaign would have been splashed across the front page of every major newspaper in the country.

While all the parties involved bask in their media triumph, and in spite of the many subjective and anecdotal reports of Herceptin saving lives, perhaps it's worth reviewing what we really know about Herceptin. It's not appropriate for all breast cancers. It isn't a cure for the cancers it is appropriate for. It doesn't significantly prolong life or stop cancer recurring, and while you are taking it you run the risk of seriously damaging your heart and hastening the spread of cancer from your breast to your central nervous system. The majority of women who take it won't respond to it and those who do can become resistant to it over time.

Based on what we know about breast cancer and Herceptin, what can we realistically expect from Herceptin?

- According to Cancer Research UK, 41,000 women a year are diagnosed with breast cancer in the UK. Around 20 per cent (8,200) will have HER-2 mediated cancers and will be eligible for Herceptin.

- Of this 8,200, around 20 per cent will be too ill to take the drug and around 10 per cent will be excluded due to heart problems. This leaves 5,740 women eligible to take the drug.

- At a cost of £21,800 per treatment, and assuming all 5,740 women take Herceptin, this will cost the NHS £125,132,000 per year.

- NICE suggest that only one in 18 of these women, that is 319 women, will respond to Herceptin.

- The other 5,421 will have been exposed to the risk of heart damage and central nervous system metastasis without any actual benefit.

- The actual cost of prolonging these 319 lives for an average of four months is £392,400 per woman.

Is this really what passes for a medical miracle these days?

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY STILL PICTURES

SHRIMP AQUACULTURE, HONDURAS. Gulf of Fonseca, 1987 and 1999. After Ecuador, Honduras is the largest exporter of farmed shrimp in Latin America. The rapid growth of shrimp aquaculture has had serious impacts on the environment and local communities. The farms deprive fishers and farmers of access to the mangroves, estuaries and seasonal lagoons; they destroy the mangrove

ecosystems, thus reducing the biodiversity; they alter the hydrology of the region and contribute to degraded water quality; and they contribute to the decline of the fishing industry through the indiscriminate capture of other species fished with the shrimp post-larvae used to stock ponds. The images show how vast areas of the delta were converted into shrimp farms over a relatively brief period.

The First Law of Petropolitics

BY THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

Iran's president denies the Holocaust, Hugo Chávez tells Western leaders to go to hell, and Vladimir Putin is cracking the whip. Why? They know that the price of oil and the pace of freedom always move in opposite directions. It's the First Law of Petropolitics, and it may be the axiom to explain our age

“Is it an accident that the Arab world's first and only real democracy happens not to have a drop of oil?”

According to the First Law of Petropolitics, the higher the average global crude oil price rises, the more free speech, free press, free and fair elections, an independent judiciary, the rule of law, and independent political parties are eroded. And these negative trends are reinforced by the fact that the higher the price goes, the less petrolist leaders are sensitive to what the world thinks or says about them. Conversely – according to the First Law of Petropolitics – the lower the price of oil, the more petrolist countries are forced to move towards a political system and a society that is more transparent, more sensitive to opposition voices, and more focused on building the legal and educational structures that will maximise their people's ability – both men's and women's – to compete, start new companies, and attract investments from abroad. The lower the price of crude oil falls, the more petrolist leaders are sensitive to what outside forces think of them.

I would define petrolist states as those that are both dependent on oil production for the bulk of their exports or gross domestic product and have weak state institutions or outright authoritarian governments (e.g. Azerbaijan, Angola, Chad, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Uzbekistan, and Venezuela).

One of the most trenchant analyses I have come across into how an abundance of oil wealth, in particular, can reverse or erode democratising trends is the work of UCLA political scientist Michael L. Ross. Using a statistical analysis from 113 states between 1971 and 1997, Ross concluded that a state's 'reliance on either oil or mineral exports tends to make it less democratic; that this effect is not caused by other types of primary exports; that it is not limited to the Arabian Peninsula, to the Middle East, or sub-Saharan Africa; and that it is not limited to small states.'

What I find particularly useful about Ross' analysis is his list of the precise mechanisms by which excessive oil wealth impedes democracy. First, he argues, there is the 'taxation effect'. Oil-rich governments tend to use their revenues to 'relieve social pressures that might otherwise lead to demands for greater accountability' from, or representation in, the governing authority. I like to put it this way: the motto of the American Revolution was 'no taxation

without representation'. The motto of the petrolist authoritarian is 'no representation without taxation'. Oil-backed regimes that do not have to tax their people in order to survive, because they can simply drill an oil well, also do not have to listen to their people or represent their wishes.

The second mechanism through which oil dampens democratisation, argues Ross, is the 'spending effect'. Oil wealth leads to greater patronage spending, which in turn dampens pressures for democratisation. The third mechanism he cites is the 'group formation effect'. When oil revenues provide an authoritarian state with a cash windfall, the government can use its newfound wealth to prevent independent social groups – precisely those most inclined to demand political rights – from forming. In addition, he argues, an overabundance of oil revenues can create a 'repression effect', because it allows governments to spend excessively on police, internal security and intelligence forces that can be used to choke democratic movements. Finally, Ross sees a 'modernisation effect' at work. A massive influx of oil wealth can diminish social pressures for occupational specialisation, urbanisation, and the securing of higher levels of education – trends that normally accompany broad economic development and that also produce a public that is more articulate, better able to organise, bargain and communicate, and one that is endowed with its own economic power centres.

The First Law of Petropolitics tries to build on such arguments, but also takes the link between oil and politics one step further. What I am arguing with the First Law of Petropolitics is not only that an over-dependence on crude oil can be a curse in general, but also that one can actually correlate rises and falls in the price of oil with rises and falls in the pace of freedom in petrolist countries. The connection is very real. As the graphs overleaf demonstrate, the pace of freedom really starts to decline as the price of oil really starts to take off.

An axis of oil?

The reason this connection between the price of oil and the pace of freedom is worth focusing on today is that we appear to be at the onset of a structural rise in global crude oil prices. If that is the case, this higher price level is almost



certain to have a long-term effect on the nature of politics in many weak or authoritarian states. That, in turn, could have a negative global impact on our current post-cold war world. In other words, the price of crude should now be a daily preoccupation of the US secretary of state, not just the treasury secretary.

Since 9/11, oil prices have structurally shifted from the \$20–\$40 range to the \$40–\$60 range. Part of this move has to do with a general sense of insecurity in global oil markets due to violence in Iraq, Nigeria, Indonesia, and Sudan, but mainly appears to be the result of what I call the ‘flattening’ of the world and the rapid influx into the global marketplace of three billion new consumers from China, Brazil, India, and the former Soviet Empire – all dreaming of a house, a car, a microwave, and a refrigerator. Their rising energy appetites are enormous. This already is, and will continue to be, a steady source of pressure on the price of

oil. Without a dramatic move toward conservation in the West, or the discovery of an alternative to fossil fuels, we are going to be in this \$40-to-\$60 range, or higher, for the foreseeable future.

Politically, that will mean that a whole group of petrolist states with weak institutions or outright authoritarian governments will likely experience an erosion of freedoms and an increase in corruption and autocratic, antidemocratic behaviour. Leaders in these countries can expect to have a significant increase in their disposable income to build up security forces, bribe opponents, buy votes or public support, and resist international norms and conventions. One need only pick up a newspaper on any day of the week to see evidence of this trend.

Consider a February 2005 article in *The Wall Street Journal* about how the mullahs in Tehran (who now are flush with cash thanks to high

“The lower the price of crude oil falls, the more petrolist leaders are sensitive to what outside forces think of them”

“The link between oil prices and the pace of freedom is so tight in some countries that even a far-sighted leadership can be diverted from reform by a spike in crude prices”

oil prices) are turning their backs on some foreign investors instead of rolling out the welcome mat. Turkcell, a Turkish mobile phone operator, had signed a deal with Tehran to build the country's first privately owned cellphone network. The deal looked good: Turkcell agreed to pay Iran \$300 million for the licence and invest \$2.25 billion in the venture, which would have created 20,000 Iranian jobs. But the mullahs in the Iranian parliament had the contract frozen, claiming it might help foreigners spy on Iran. Ali Ansari, an Iran expert at the University of St Andrews in Scotland, told *The Wall Street Journal* that Iranian analysts had long been arguing in favour of economic reform. ‘In actual fact, the scenario is worse now,’ said Ansari. ‘They have all this money with the high oil price, and they don’t need to do anything about reforming the economy.’

Or, how about the February 11, 2006, story in *The Economist* about Iran, which stated: ‘Nationalism is easier on a full stomach and Mr Ahmadinejad is the rare and fortunate president who expects to receive, over the coming Iranian year, some \$36 billion in oil export revenues to help buy loyalty. In his first budget bill, now before parliament, the government has promised to build 300,000 housing units, two-thirds of them outside big towns, and to maintain energy subsidies that amount to 10 per cent of [gross domestic product].’

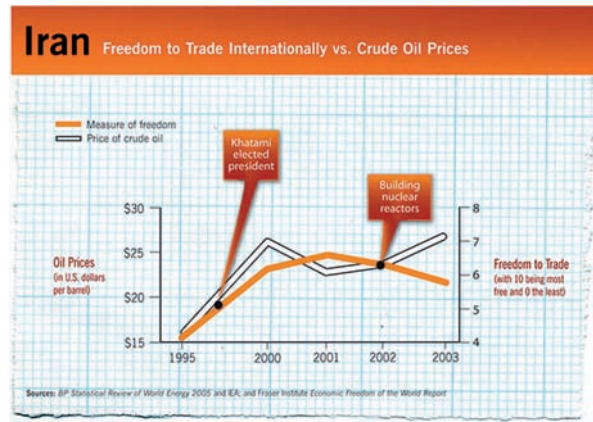
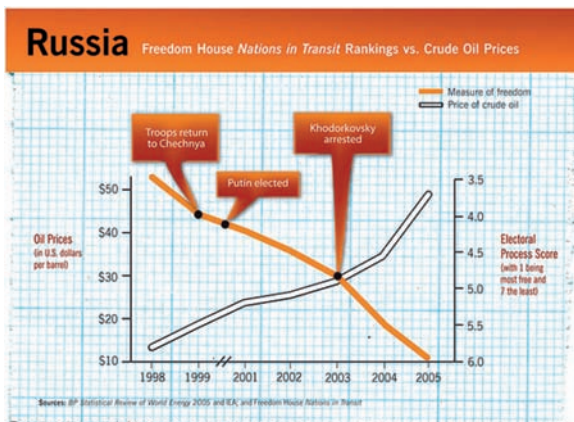
Or consider the drama now unfolding in Nigeria. The country has a term limit for its presidents – two four-year terms. President Olusegun Obasanjo came to office in 1999, after a period of military rule, and was then re-elected by a popular vote in 2003. When he took over from the generals in 1999, Obasanjo made headlines by investigating human rights abuses by the Nigerian military, releasing political prisoners, and even making a real attempt to root out corruption. That was when

oil was around \$25 a barrel. Today, with oil at \$60 a barrel, Obasanjo is trying to have the constitution amended to allow him to serve a third term. A Nigerian opposition leader in the House of Representatives, Wunmi Bewaji, has alleged that bribes of \$1 million were being offered to lawmakers who would vote to extend Obasanjo’s tenure. ‘What they are touting now is \$1 million per vote,’ Bewaji was quoted as saying in a March 11, 2006, article by VOA News. ‘And it has been coordinated by a principal officer in the Senate and a principal officer in the House.’

During a visit to Washington in March, Clement Nwankwo, one of Nigeria’s leading human rights campaigners, told me that, since the price of oil has started to climb, ‘civil liberties [have been] on a huge decline – people have been arbitrarily arrested, political opponents have been killed, and institutions of democracy have been crippled.’ Oil accounts for 90 per cent of Nigeria’s exports, added Nwankwo, and that explains, in part, why there has been a sudden upsurge in the kidnapping of foreign oil workers in Nigeria’s oil-rich Niger Delta. Many Nigerians think they must be stealing oil, because so little of the revenue is trickling down to the Nigerian people.

Very often in petrolist states, not only do all politics revolve around who controls the oil tap, but the public develops a distorted notion of what development is all about. If they are poor and the leaders are rich, it is not because their country has failed to promote education, innovation, rule of law, and entrepreneurship. It is because someone is getting the oil money and they are not. People start to think that to get rich, all they have to do is stop those who are stealing the country’s oil, not build a society that promotes education, innovation, and entrepreneurship. ‘If Nigeria had no oil, then the entire political equation would be

Russia, Iran, Nigeria and Venezuela have displayed a clear inverse correlation between the pace of freedom and the rise in oil prices over recent years



different,' said Nwankwo. 'The income would not be coming from oil and therefore the diversification of the economy and private enterprise would matter more, and people would have to expand their own creativity.'

Indeed, the link between oil prices and the pace of freedom is so tight in some countries that even a far-sighted leadership can be diverted from the path of economic and political reform by a sudden spike in crude prices. Consider Bahrain, which knows it is running out of oil and has been a case study of how falling oil revenues can spur reform – even it has not been able to resist the temporary seduction of higher oil prices. 'We are having good times now because of high oil prices. This may lead officials to be complacent,' Jasim Husain Ali, head of the University of Bahrain's economic research unit, recently told the *Gulf Daily News*. 'This is a very dangerous trend, as oil income is not sustainable. [Bahrain's] diversification may be enough by Gulf standards, but not by international standards.' No wonder an Iranian journalist once remarked to me while we were strolling in Tehran: 'If only we didn't have oil, we could be just like Japan.'

Geology trumps ideology

With all due respect to Ronald Reagan, I do not believe he brought down the Soviet Union. There were obviously many factors, but the collapse in global oil prices around the late 1980s and early 1990s surely played a key role. (When the Soviet Union officially dissolved on Christmas Day 1991, the price of a barrel of oil was hovering around \$17.) And lower oil prices also surely helped tilt the post-communist Boris Yeltsin government toward more rule of law, more openness to the outside world, and more sensitivity to the legal structures demanded by global investors. And then came Russian President Vladimir Putin. Think about the

difference between Putin when oil was in the \$20–\$40 range and now, when it is \$40–\$60. When oil was \$20–\$40, we had what I would call 'Putin I'. After their first meeting in 2001, President Bush said he had looked into Putin's 'soul' and saw in there a man he could trust. If Bush looked into Putin's soul today – Putin II, the Putin of \$60 a barrel – it would look very black down there, black as oil. He would see that Putin has used his oil windfall to swallow (nationalise) the huge Russian oil company, Gazprom, various newspapers and television stations, and all sorts of other Russian businesses and once independent institutions.

When oil prices were at a nadir in the early 1990s, even Arab oil states such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which has substantial gas deposits, were at least talking about economic reform, if not baby-step political reforms. But as prices started to climb, the whole reform process slowed, particularly on the political side.

As more and more oil wealth piles up in petrolist countries, it could really begin to distort the whole international system and the very character of the post-cold war world. When the Berlin Wall fell there was a widespread belief that an unstoppable tide of free markets and democratisation had also been unleashed. The proliferation of free elections around the world for the next decade made that tide very real. But that tide is now running into an unanticipated counter-wave of petro-authoritarianism, made possible by \$60-a-barrel oil. Suddenly regimes such as those in Iran, Nigeria, Russia, and Venezuela are retreating from what once seemed like an unstoppable process of democratisation. Instead, elected autocrats in each country are using their sudden oil windfalls to ensconce themselves in power, buy up opponents and supporters, and extend their state's chokehold into the private

“As more and more oil piles up in petrolist countries, it could begin to distort the very character of the post-cold war world”



“Thinking about how to alter our energy consumption to reduce the price of oil is no longer just a hobby for environmentalists. It is a national security”

sector, after many thought it had permanently receded. The tide of democratisation that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall seems to have met its match in the black tide of petro-authoritarianism.

Although petro-authoritarianism does not represent the sort of broad strategic and ideological threat that communism posed to the West, its long-term impact could still corrode world stability. Not only will some of the worst regimes in the world have extra cash for longer than ever to do the worst things, but decent, democratic countries (India and Japan, for instance) will be forced to kowtow or turn a blind eye to the behaviour of petro-authoritarians (such as Iran or Sudan) because of their heavy dependence on them for oil. That cannot be good for global stability.

Let me stress again that I know that the correlations suggested by the graphs on the previous pages are not perfect and there are, no doubt, exceptions. But I do believe they illustrate a general trend: the rising price of oil clearly has a negative impact on the pace of freedom in many countries, and when you get enough countries with enough negative impacts, you start to poison global politics.

Although we cannot affect any country's supply of oil, we can affect its global price by

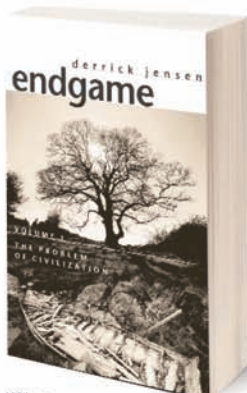
altering the amounts and types of energy we consume. By 'we', I mean the US in particular, which consumes about 25 per cent of the world's energy, and the oil-importing countries in general. Thinking about how to alter our energy consumption to reduce the price of oil is no longer just a hobby for environmentalists. It is a national security imperative.

Therefore, any American democracy-promotion strategy that does not also include a credible and sustainable strategy for finding alternatives to oil and bringing down the price of crude is utterly meaningless and doomed to fail. Today, no matter where you are on the foreign-policy spectrum, you have to think like a Geo-Green. You cannot be either an effective foreign-policy realist or an effective democracy-promoting idealist without also being an effective energy environmentalist.

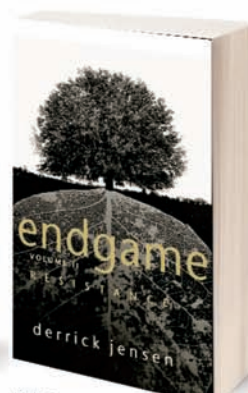
Thomas L. Friedman is a columnist for *The New York Times* and author of, most recently, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005).

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tirelessly ...*



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The Great Milk Challenge

BY ROBIN PAGE

UK dairy farming is in crisis. But, with a benefactor's gift of a Surrey dairy farm, the Countryside Restoration Trust reckons it can buck the trend

“The Government told dairy farmers that there was a milk lake but forgot to tell us that the surplus had been created by French and German over-production”

Out of the blue, the Countryside Restoration Trust (CRT) has been given a farm in Surrey. It has been given lock, stock and hoof by Jo Baker, a remarkable lady who has reached an age when she wants to concentrate on classical music and singing – not on milking her cows and ‘mucking out’ every day. The farm comes with three cottages, over 200 acres, a stretch of crystal clear trout river, woodland where, if the conditions are right we will try to re-introduce red squirrels, various buildings – some of them listed – and 60 beautiful pedigree Jersey cows and their calves. It is an act of great generosity by Jo Baker, who lives in the village of Frensham; generosity is clearly a trait that she inherited from her father, developer and benefactor, Alfred Allnatt, who in an act of astonishing benevolence gave the painting *The Adoration of the Magi*, by Rubens, to Kings College, Cambridge; a masterpiece now worth a fortune.

Pierrepoint Farm lies tucked into gently rolling countryside through which William Cobbett once rode commenting on the state of farming and the health of rural England. The location and the farm are perfect and if it had been put on the market there would have been many likely bidders. Pop stars, celebrities, barristers and stockbrokers would have been queuing, cheque books open, for their small part of the countryside. Then the electronic gates would have been erected, the old barn would have been turned into a ‘superior dwelling’ and the cows would have been sold. Pierrepoint Farm would have ceased to have been a farm and become a giant, manicured garden in which to entertain friends. But this was not for Jo; she wanted the farm to remain a working dairy farm, complete with her beloved Jersey cows, and this was the challenge put to the CRT – in today’s farming climate could we realistically take on a dairy farm, even if it was a gift?

My initial reaction was ‘we must accept’,

but it was based on sentiment, not reality. The farm on which I was born, and still live, had a herd of Dairy Shorthorns when I arrived, with my father and his stockman, Percy, milking by hand twice a day. We enjoyed ‘bisnings’, the ‘curds and whey’ of Little Miss Muffitt, obtained by milking freshly calved cows, now absurdly labelled ‘unfit for human consumption’. Father taught me how to get calves to drink from a bucket, by first sucking my fingers and then lowering their mouths into the milk; my mother sometimes made butter; my father made hay and the winter manure went back on the land to fertilise the fields on a typical East Anglian mixed farm.

Times changed; black and white Friesians replaced the Shorthorns – a refrigerated milk tank replaced the churns and then one day the dairy cows went altogether. The Government told dairy farmers that there was a milk lake, and we believed the tale. They forgot to tell us that the surplus had been created by French and German over-production and that Britain had to accept a 20% production cut as part of its then EEC entry conditions.

In 1994 the organisation that ensured a fair return to the dairy farmer and humanely produced, quality milk for the consumer, the Milk Marketing Board (MMB) was broken up by the then no-hope Tory Government of John Major under EU competition regulations. The Government, the National Farmers Union (NFU) and various “experts” claimed that the change would enable dairy farmers to do well. My old father thought differently; he said “Dairy farming as we know it will never be the same”. The experts were wrong, my father was right.

So the question was simple; should the CRT accept a dairy farm when dairying has become a human, livestock and wildlife disaster area? A disaster area totally ignored by the Government, most farming/wildlife charities and the metropolitan media.



- The facts are stark and hide the suicides, the bankruptcies, the personal calamities and the animal slaughter behind the statistics. In January this year the dairy farmer was getting 18.72 pence per litre for his milk; it was costing him 22.34 p per litre to produce it.
- Because of the lack of a fair market the number of dairy farmers in England and Wales has fallen from 19,200 in April 2002 to 14,200 in October 2005.
- British dairy farmers get the lowest price in old Europe for their milk; the so-called level playing field is far from level. The Italians get 35 Euros per 100 kg of milk – the British at the bottom get only 26.8 – two Euros less than the next lowest – Belgium.
- Absurdly for a country rich in grass there is a

PHOTOGRAPH BY NIGEL HOUSDEN



balance of payments deficit of over £800m per year for milk products.

■ Most dairy farmers are living on the poverty line, while the profits of the supermarkets have never been higher – a fact reflected in the inflated salaries of their directors.

■ In 1995 the price of milk was: the Doorstep pint 37.9p; Supermarket pint 23.9p; the payment to the farmer 14.2p per pint

■ In 2002 the Doorstep pint was 42p. The supermarket pint 25.5p and the farmer received just 9.7p.

■ Calling the 1995 prices 100%, the 2002 doorstep price was 111%; the supermarket pint 107%; the farmer's money was worth just 68%.

Absurdly, too, the price of a bottle of 'natural water' in a supermarket is significantly higher than that for a bottle of milk. Add to this red tape, cattle passports, fallen stock charges, bills for milk collection, new waste regulations (set to cost the average dairy farm at least £600 per year), and the dairy farmers rural dream has become a financial and regulation nightmare.

To become more 'efficient' herd sizes and cows per acre have increased and grass is grown intensively to be mown and grazed heavily all through the growing season, turning dairy farms into wildlife deserts; the eggs of curlews and lapwings are scrambled by forage harvesters, and leverets (the young of the brown hare) minced. In addition, some cows are now kept indoors the whole year and fed on silage for maximum production of both grass and milk. What a life; what a way to keep animals and what a way to create 'efficiency', by turning animals into live milk manufacturing machines.

Interestingly, when the MMB was broken up, David Naish was President of the NFU. On leaving the NFU he became a consultant to Express Dairies – proprietor, Christopher Haskins, a major supplier to the supermarkets and a donor to New Labour. After becoming Lord Haskins the generous peer also became Tony Blair's farming guru. With Arla, the giant Danish dairy taking over Express Dairies, Sir David Naish is now Chairman of Arla Foods UK, for which he gets paid £125,000 for this part-time job. One of his directors is Sir Richard Packer (only £35,000 for this bit part), who as plain 'Mr' was permanent secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture with a special interest in European policy in 1994. Packer is married

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So should the CRT take on a dairy farm at a time when dairy farmers are going out of business and the armlock gets tighter? The Trustees unanimously said, 'Yes', and, of course, 'thankyou' to Jo Baker.

In 1993 the CRT started its Lark Rise cereal farm, bringing wildlife back to cultivated farmland. Other larger charities that should have taken the initiative have since followed our example, as has the Government. We believe that it should again be the large, powerful charities such as the RSPB and the National Trust who should be leading the fight for wildlife friendly, cow friendly, farmer friendly and customer friendly dairy farming, but they have chosen other priorities and

so again the CRT has decided that it must bite the bullet.

It is determined to keep Pierrepont Farm as a dairy farm; it has got an enthusiastic tenant in Michael Clear from Jersey, with his young family, and Jo's stockman Tony knows the farm like the back of his hand. It is going to be a struggle and a risk but we want to keep the Jersey cows, and we want to protect and improve the wildlife. We might be forced to make changes – to make yoghurt, or butter, and we are expecting a bumpy ride. There will be those in the political and farming establishments who will want us to fail – but we are determined to try to restore sanity and humanity to dairy farming, and if we succeed we hope that, once more, others will follow.

■ For those interested in the CRT and its Pierrepont Farm Project, contact the Countryside Restoration Trust, Barton, Cambs. CB3 7AG.

“Some cows are now kept indoors the whole year and fed on silage for maximum production of both grass and milk. What a life; what a way to keep animals”

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SAVING WHALES...

Twenty years ago commercial whaling was banned. Since then Japan has slaughtered nearly 10,000 whales in the name of scientific research and to supply domestic demand for whale meat. Now with Japanese taste for whale meat falling dramatically, Japan's justification for whaling grows weaker by the day. Photostory by **James Frankham**

Over the next 18 years, Japanese whalers plan to take some 17,000 Minke whales, 820 endangered Fin whales and 800

threatened Humpback whales from the Antarctic alone, all in the name of scientific research.

According to the Japanese whaling authorities, whales are impacting on fish stocks and a selective cull of Humpbacks and Fin whales will reduce competition for resources, ultimately benefiting the endangered Blue whale. A peculiar stance to take given that Humpbacks are threatened and Fin whales are registered as an endangered species and on the IUCN Red List.

What's more, Japan's whaling programme is of dubious scientific value. Despite 'sampling' nearly 10,000 whales since the 1986 International Whaling Commission's (IWC) moratorium, the research has resulted in very few published papers. None of them has appeared in the IWC's own journal and only one published paper in the history of the programme has been relevant to the issue of species management.

According to the Australian Minister for the Environment, Senator Ian Campbell, Japan's scientific whale research is 'bogus', claiming that 'countries like Japan cannot credibly argue the information gained from killing whales is even remotely relevant to the stated objectives of their scientific whaling programmes.'

Valuable research data can be obtained through non-lethal means. In March this year the Australian Antarctic Division and the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre completed a 10-week, one-million square kilometre visual and acoustic survey of the distribution and abundance

AND FACE



Tsukiji market: 50,000 people work at Tokyo's Tsukiji fish market in 1,600 stalls peddling some 450 varieties of seafood. Yet there is only one stall selling whale-meat; the so-called integral part of traditional culture that props up Japan's submission to the International Whaling Commission for a resumption of commercial whaling.

of whales, as well as surveying and analysing populations of krill – the main food source for whales. It is the most comprehensive assessment of the marine ecosystem in the whole eastern Antarctic area to date and 'the very data that Japan claims it is seeking to justify their lethal scientific whaling in the Southern Ocean,' says Senator Campbell. This, without killing a single whale. Making the argument for research-based whaling baseless.

Whale meat... no thanks

For the last 20 years, Japan has led the battle to resume commercial whaling and has exhorted smaller whaling nations to stand up for the cultural rights of indigenous nations to hunt and consume their traditional food sources. And yet 86 per cent of Japanese people do not consume whale meat in any form, ever. Not only have the youth of Japan shunned it, but so have many of the older generation, for whom it is a gloomy reminder of post-war poverty rather than an expression of traditional values.

Before the 1986 moratorium on

commercial whaling, the Japanese consumed on average 2.5 kilograms of whale meat annually per person. Twenty years later the figure is just 30 grams, equivalent to a single slice of sashimi. The rapid decline in demand is regarded as a sign of indifference towards the meat and the presence of other cheaper, tastier and more easily procured sources of protein in the modern Japanese diet.

'The Fisheries Agency continues to carry out whaling based on a fictitious public opinion,' says Junko Sakuma, who published a report on the sale of whale meat with Tokyo-based Dolphin & Whale Action Network. She argues that although Japanese people refrain from voicing their disagreement openly, their opinion is manifested in slumping sales and the escalating government inventory of unsold whale meat.

This year Japan's whaling fleet returned from the Antarctic with 860 whales. Meanwhile Japan's Institute for Cetacean Research (ICR), responsible for the scientific whaling activities, has 5,969 tonnes of whale meat cached in cold stores awaiting sale. And in the

2006/7 Antarctic whaling season Japan plans to take more whales and bigger whales – including Humpbacks and Fin whales which yield around 30 tonnes of meat, seven times that of Minke which has dominated catches to date. Sakuma projects that the ICR's inventory of whale meat in cold stores will reach at least 8,600 tonnes by 2008, a frozen testament to the absurd claims that continued whaling is feeding a cultural need for whalemeat.

What's more, Article 8.2 of the International Whaling Convention states that 'any whales taken under these special permits shall so far as practicable be processed'. With nearly 6,000 tonnes of unsold whale meat currently sitting in cold stores, that puts Japan in breach of this provision and its ICR should be called to account for this flagrant abuse of the convention.

Last month the International Whaling Commission (IWC) backed Japan's resolution calling for the eventual return to commercial whaling. Meanwhile the Japanese Fisheries Agency is desperately trying to shift its rapidly increasing

mountain of whale meat.

On May 1st this year the agency established a new company, Gei Shoku Labo, to tap niche markets for the unsold meat. The company has been targeting company cafeterias, hospitals and has even announced a scheme to sell whale meat over the internet. Domestic supplies of meat from coastal whaling are already being introduced as whale-burgers and meatballs in school lunches in Wakayama Prefecture and marketed as a 'healthy and safe natural' pet food by Hakudai Ltd in Chuba. Yet prices remain at record lows. Whale meat now sells for just ¥2,000 per kilogram, half the price of previous years, as popularity plummets and the market is over-supplied by Japan's rapidly increasing whaling activities.

Kyodo Senpaku Inc, the commercial entity that runs the scientific whaling on behalf of ICR, has established a one-of-a-kind store and restaurant specialising in whale meat products in Tokyo's historic centre of Asakusa. It is hoped that the availability of whale meat products – from snack-sized bags of whale jerky to thick red steaks and 10 set-menu options including Minke, Sperm and endangered Sei whales – will entice a new generation of consumers.

'Even if we capture 2,000 whales for 100 years, it's OK because whale numbers are growing' reads a public-relations pamphlet entitled *Delicious Whales*, distributed by the government-affiliated Japan Whaling Association. But the marketing tactics of their government is not drastically changing the purchasing decisions of Japanese consumers.

That Japan continues to escalate its whaling programme – despite the lack of demand and condemnation of the scientific value of the research – reflects the ideological character of their politically-alienating battle.



Beneath a grinning caricature of a happy whale, lumps of dense, red meat are being carved into six-inch-thick blocks.

TOXIC WHALE MEAT

The Japanese Whaling Association insists that whale meat is healthier than beef. But the truth is that it's a cocktail of oceanic contaminants, the toxicity of which far outweighs any nutritional benefits. **Pat Thomas reports**

Whales, being at the top of the oceanic food chain, collect and store a wide range of environmental pollutants, including hormone disrupters such as polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs), dichlorod iphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) and dioxins, as well as neurotoxic heavy metals, such as methylmercury.

A study carried out by Japanese scientists in June 2003 found that every single slice of whale red meat sampled exceeded that country's limits on mercury contamination, with some samples containing almost 200 times the maximum 'safe' level. Similar levels of contamination have been found in whales caught in every ocean in the world.

The effect of eating mercury-tainted meat on people in Japan is not well documented, but a 1997 Faroe Islands survey revealed neurological and developmental problems in children whose mothers ate whale meat frequently. Mercury levels in most of the samples from the 2003 Japanese study were higher than levels found in the pilot whales on which the Faroe Islands report



focused, and so would have the potential to cause even more toxic damage.

The effects of other environmental contaminants found in whales are just as serious. PCBs can cause neurotoxicity (nerve damage), reproductive and developmental disorders, immune system suppression, liver damage and hormone disruption. DDT exposure is associated with certain cancer risks and neurological and reproductive disorders. Dioxins, among the most toxic substances known, can cause cancer, metabolic dysfunction and immune system disorders.

People who consume whale meat in the form of burgers, fritters, sashimi and school dinners are not only legitimising the murder of some of the most magnificent animals on earth, they are also killing themselves.

WHALING

Right: Canned whale meat in store In a bid to sell its increasing stockpile of whale meat, the commercial arm of Japan's Institute for Cetacean Research has opened a one-of-a-kind store and restaurant retailing whale products direct to the consumer. Customers at Yushin in Tokyo's Asakusa district can choose from any of ten set menus including Minke, Sperm and endangered Sei whales or purchase meat by the gram or the kilo; fresh, canned, dried or powdered.

The main proponent of the expanded whaling programme was the ardent and outspoken head of the Fisheries Agency, Masayuki Komatsu, who famously referred to whales as 'cockroaches of the sea'. He called the western condemnation of Japanese whaling 'cultural imperialism' and vigorously promoted whaling with bribes of trade and aid among impoverished Pacific and Caribbean nations who each hold a vote on the IWC. When he was fired from his post in March last year, Japan's pro-whaling community lost its strongest voice.

Japan is committed to whaling for another five years, but may soften its hard-line approach if offered a face-saving solution. The international scientific community must actively involve Japan's Institute of Cetacean Research in the valuable and non-lethal whale research being conducted in the Southern Ocean, in anticipation of an end to whaling activities.

The switch of scientific process may give the Japanese government an opportunity to maintain their rhetoric of research, while ending commercial-scale whaling and quietly distancing themselves from Komatsu's farcical arguments. What's more, they need not stop eating whale meat. Existing coastal whaling activities and by-catch will provide sufficient meat to satiate those intent on preparing and eating their traditional cuisine.

'Bureaucrats never apologise,' says Junko Sakuma, 'but if they find some alternative to whaling, they will probably stop.'

Continued foreign condemnation, while legitimate, may strengthen the resolve of Japanese nationalists and the pro-whaling community. Maybe it's time to change tack and – with a collaborative international gesture – relieve Japan's diplomatic distress and achieve what criticism cannot, an end to whaling forever.



Going to the Dogs

For the first time in over 20 years, Japan has seized control of the International Whaling Commission.

The ban on commercial whaling is now dangerously close to being overturned. But Japan has growing stockpiles of meat that it can't sell. It's even fed to dogs.

Whaling is cruel, uncontrollable and unwanted.

Will you sit back and watch the world's whales decimated again for no reason?



call **0870 870 5001** or
visit **www.wdcs.org/join** today

to join WDCS, or make a donation
and add your voice to our call to
STOP commercial whaling.

WDCS
Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society

WDCS is the global voice for the protection of whales, dolphins and their environment

Company Registration No: 2737421 Reg Charity No: 1014705 Photos: © WDCS

BEHIND THE LABEL

Comfort FABRIC SOFTENER

Soft towels, fluffy fleeces and synthetic fabrics that don't cling. What's not to like? Well, try skin irritation, increased flammability and environmental pollution, for starters. It seems the average bottle of fabric softener has a darker side. BY PAT THOMAS

INGREDIENTS

5% cationic surfactants, perfume, butylphenyl methylpropional, hexyl cinnamal, alpha-isomethyl ionone, benzisothiazolinone, sorbic acid, benzoic acid, benzyl alcohol



By all accounts we love our fabric softeners. In the US, consumers spend around \$700 million a year keeping their fabrics soft. In the UK we spend £200 million a year on them and Comfort, produced by multinational giant Unilever, claims a massive 50 per cent share of this market.

The problem is that fabric softeners can be harmful to both the people who use them and the marine life that ends up swimming in them.

Most fabric softeners are emulsions of water and cationic surfactants, which can cause skin irritation. As the law stands, consumers can never know which surfactant is used because manufacturers are not required to list this. The ingredient label on a bottle of Comfort is particularly galling for what it doesn't say, since it begins with the words, 'Comfort contains amongst other ingredients', and then goes on to list the tiny handful of chemicals that must be listed. But what about the ones that don't make it onto the label?

Fabric softening surfactants can be derived from animals, plants or minerals, as in the case of newer, silicone-based formulations. There is little difference between the chemicals used in fabric softeners and those used in hair conditioners. Whatever they are based on, all fabric softeners work in pretty much the same way, by depositing these surfactants onto the fabric to make it feel softer, reduce static cling, and impart a fresh fragrance.

Liquid formulations added to washing machines during the rinse cycle are by far

the most popular choice, though you can also buy fabric-softening sheets for use in the dryer. The latter release a special resin that deposits a waxy coating on the clothes to make them feel softer.

Because the mechanics of fabric softening don't vary from brand to brand, manufacturers have turned to perfume to distinguish their products from one another – indeed, many believe fragrance is a key factor in increasing sales. These products are often marketed as luxury items, in much the same way as health and beauty products, which customers are encouraged to purchase in a range of scents to suit all their moods. Indeed, Comfort has just launched a new luxury range of fabric 'conditioners' – Comfort Crème – which come in sleeker bottles and cost nearly three times as much as an ordinary bottle of Comfort.

Special fixatives in the mix of both standard and luxury conditioners mean that the fragrance can last for days, permeating wardrobes and drawers. The regular off-gassing of perfume chemicals from fabric softeners can be a significant trigger for asthma and other breathing problems. In the US, chemically sensitive individuals complain that, even after several washes, they cannot get the smell of fabric softeners out of their washing machines and dryers.

Studies have also shown that liquid fabric softener can make fabrics more flammable. The surfactants used in fabric softeners stick to the fibres, separating them from each other in a process not unlike the way the positive end of one

INGREDIENTS	PURPOSE	ADVERSE EFFECTS
Cationic surfactants	Fabric conditioners, antistatic agents	These surfactants belong to a large family of chemicals that include diethyl ester dimethyl ammonium chloride, stealkonium chloride, benzalkonium chloride, cetrimonium chloride, cetalkonium chloride and lauryl dimonium hydrolysed collagen. They can be irritating to the skin, they are slow to biodegrade, and are toxic to both freshwater and marine species of algae, invertebrates and fish. They can also encourage algal blooms.
Butylphenyl methylpropional	Synthetic fragrance	Central nervous system (CNS) disruption. Often found in cosmetics such as moisturisers, deodorants and bubble bath. Has not been fully assessed for safety by the cosmetic industry's Cosmetics Ingredient Review board.
Hexyl cinnamal	Synthetic fragrance	Contact allergen, CNS disruption
Alpha-isomethyl ionone	Synthetic fragrance	Skin sensitisation; CNS disruption
Benzisothiazolinone (BIT)	Biocide	Skin irritation, contact dermatitis. BIT is also found in several water-based paints to protect them from getting damaged by microorganisms. It is a potentially harmful compound and inhaling its vapours may trigger more frequent urination, a potential health problem since it could interfere with the body's balance of water and electrolytes.
Benzyl alcohol	Synthetic fragrance	A respiratory irritant that can cause headaches, nausea, dizziness, blood pressure drops and CNS disruption


magnet repels the negative end of another. Especially vulnerable to fire are fabrics that have a fuzzy surface such as terry cloth, fleece or flannel, particularly if they are made of cotton. This is because their total surface area is much greater than that of flat, woven fabrics.


Combustion requires contact with oxygen, and the super fuzzy surfaces enhanced by fabric softeners provide a more oxygen-rich surface environment that further increases their flammability.


If you are a fabric softener addict there are now a number of companies that produce alternative and 'green' fabric softeners. But, essentially, these are unnecessary products that can trigger health problems and can interfere with the functional aspect of some textiles. For instance, when used on towels and nappies some fabric softeners can reduce absorbency, which is why its generally recommended that reusable nappies aren't washed with them. Once they are washed down the drain they can become highly toxic to aquatic life. Given this, maybe it's worth asking yourself whether the time has come to break the fabric softener habit completely.


WHAT ISN'T ON THE LABEL?


Along with surfactants and resins, fabric softeners also deposit a range of other chemicals onto your clothes. According to a 1991 report by the US Environmental Protection Agency, fabric softeners and dryer sheets can contain (among other ingredients):


 **Alpha-terpineol.** Highly irritating to mucous membranes; CNS disruption


 **Benzyl acetate.** Irritating to eyes and respiratory tract. Can be absorbed through the skin and is a potential carcinogen.


 **Camphor.** Irritating to eyes, nose, and throat. A CNS disrupter associated with dizziness, confusion, nausea and twitching muscles. Readily absorbed through body tissues.

 **Pentane** Skin and eye irritant; vapours may cause headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, drowsiness; CNS disrupter.

 **Chloroform.** A neurotoxin, anaesthetic respiratory irritant and CNS disrupter. Chronic overexposure may damage kidneys and/or liver.

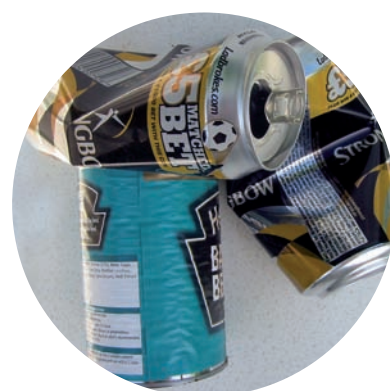
 **Ethyl acetate.** Respiratory and eye irritation; narcotic; damaging to liver and kidneys.

 **Limonene** is an irritant to the skin and eyes and may cause allergic reactions.

 **Linalool** Irritant, CNS disrupter.

MODERN LIFE IS RUBBISH

...and up until now it's been someone else's problem. Now it's ours, unless you are happy to inhale your waste being burnt at a council incinerated near you





As soon as you can walk you are told to 'put it in the bin'. On the street you're encouraged to Keep Britain Tidy and use the bin. Certain products even exhort you to be considerate and place the wrapper in the bin. Accordingly, the bin has this righteous status, all wrapped up in nursery morals and civic pride.

And yet, far from being a benign utility, the bin is a monster: the Jekyll and Hyde of the consumer society. All flip-top smiles in the kitchen disguising a poisonous alter ego, which has led us into the midst of a waste crisis that is threatening to suffocate us.

For most of us putting our waste in the bin is a reflex action (to put this to the test, try relocating your kitchen bin for the day), and one that's unique to humans. Waste, more than anything else, is what differentiates us from the beasts, as no other species creates any.

In the course of living we create 30 million tonnes of waste a year in the UK. Or rather, we put 30 million tonnes of 'stuff' in the bin that is treated as waste.

Such is our unthinking confidence in the bin to perform its function that we have taken to throwing anything and everything in it. It supports our 'have it all' convenience lifestyle with the utmost efficiency.





TOXIC DUST STORMS

Where once you would have put out a single corrugated iron bin, today it is more likely to be a considerably larger plastic wheelie bin or two. Waste lorries roar up to take them away. Hydraulic lifts hoist the bins upside down and empty their contents into the refuse chamber – and all the while the engine is running. Your bin is wheeled back empty. Your waste has vanished, ready for the incessant ritual to start again.

On any given day there are over 10,000 bin rounds taking place across the UK, where lorries costing £160,000 each crawl around the residential streets of Britain collecting our waste. When not moving they idle, reducing fuel efficiency to a staggeringly low 3-5mpg. Forty-gallon tanks generally have to be refilled once a day. With the price of fuel at £1 a litre, with little sign of it going down, the cost of waste collection can only rise in the future.

As bin lorries make their slow progress, exhaust fumes are polluting your streets. These noxious fumes – air cadmium (Cd), carbon dioxide (CO₂), carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), mercury (Hg), oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and thallium (Tl); acid gases hydrogen chloride (HCl) and

hydrogen fluoride (HF); volatile organic compounds (VOCs) dioxins and furans, arsenic (As), antimony (Sb), chromium (Cr), copper (Cu), manganese (Mn), nickel (Ni) and vanadium (V) – have, like those emitted from incinerators, been linked with cancer, birth defects and the increased incidence of asthma.

Mixing with the exhaust fumes are the microparticulates kicked up by the tyres. As they are smaller than those contained in exhaust fumes, they are able to penetrate the very deepest part of the human lung and other vital organs, causing cellular breakdown associated with cancer.

Despite the slow speeds bin lorries generally travel at, the tyres take a hammering and require replacing around once a month. Each bin lorry will require around 100 tyres annually to keep it on the road. As with all waste, we currently have a tyre mountain to dispose of. Add to this the congestion caused as cars queue up behind these lorries, and the pollution caused by refuse collection is magnified exponentially.

And to think that all this pollution is created in order to empty our bins once a week.

ROAD HOGS AND DEADLY FUMES

- 30,000,000 tonnes: the amount of household waste produced a year
- One bin lorry can carry 11 tonnes
- It will travel 250 miles a week / 13,000 miles a year
- It's fuel consumption is 3-5mpg
- It will use 25 gallons a day (average) 6,500 gallons a year
- Nationally there are 720,000 bin rounds annually / 52,500 bin rounds a week
- Using 15.6 million gallons annually or 3 million gallons a week

THE END OF THE ROAD FOR LANDFILL

For the past century the ever-burgeoning fleet of gashbin lorries has been transporting our household waste to huge burial pits, known in the business as landfill. These toxic dumps, numbering over 4,000 in the UK, have been linked to birth defects and conditions such as asthma.

What's more landfill sites simmer with putrifying toxic waste for years, creating slurry and giving off gas. The slurry, which leaches into the groundwater and aquifers and enters into the food chain, contains carbon, nitrogen, chloride, iron, manganese and phenols and other chemicals, including pesticides, solvents and heavy metals.

Meanwhile, methane and CO₂ enter the atmosphere as the waste slowly breaks down.

Methane, which accounts for more than 60% of the

gas released from a landfill site, is a 10 times more potent greenhouse gas than CO₂, and accounts for 3.5 per cent of our annual carbon emissions. It is because of these gases that action is finally being taken to end the practice and landfill is being punitively taxed to make it unaffordable for local authorities.

What's more most of the UK's landfill sites have reached bursting point. This has resulted in a thriving trade in waste, with lorries roaring round the country in search of disposal sites. Climate change considerations apart, the reality is we produce so much waste that we couldn't carry on disposing of it in landfill sites even if we wanted to. With burial out of the question and given that we continue to mix our household waste in a single bin, there is only one solution left open to us, burning it....



THE LETHAL CONSEQUENCES OF BREATHING FIRE

When the Victorians first conceived of incinerators in the late 19th century they called them 'destructor units', as this perfectly describes what they do. In principle little has changed. Despite the best efforts of the industry to rebrand and clean up incineration, the fact remains that 'garbage in' means 'garbage out'. **Pat Thomas** reports.

Roughly 2 ½ million tonnes of municipal waste are incinerated in the UK each year. More efficient filters make emissions look clearer, but just because you don't see the pollution, doesn't mean it isn't there. The same toxic chemicals that were in our plastic, paper, textiles and wood when they went into the fire are still there during and after combustion. And their release into the air is still associated with a range of human health problems including cancer, reproductive problems and learning difficulties in children.

But the intense heat of incineration also helps create a whole range of new compounds with a completely unknown potential for toxicity. Indeed, the way that incineration changes the seen into the unseen and the known into the unknown is one of its most dangerous consequences.

Gas

Modern incinerators have measures in place to control the emissions they release into the atmosphere. These incinerators have to comply with tough standards set by European and UK legislation, which are designed to control acid

emissions (using 'scrubbers', devices that use a high-energy liquid spray to remove acid emissions from the air stream), dust levels (using electrostatic precipitators, essentially dust magnets in the incineration unit) and fine particles (using textile filters).

Even so, a large incinerator produces the equivalent of 300 wheelie bins of exhaust gases from its chimneys every second. These not only pollute the local area, but are also carried on the prevailing winds to neighbouring cities and towns. Human beings are exposed to them by breathing contaminated air, by absorbing them through their skin and by eating contaminated food, such as vegetables, eggs and milk.

Because of their acidic nature incinerator emissions such as nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide and hydrogen chloride contribute to the phenomenon of acid rain, which is destructive to forests and lakes and the animals that inhabit them.

While a few hundred of the gases emitted by incinerators have been identified (see table), the process of heating and releasing emissions into the environment creates the possibility of thousands of new chemical compounds. There are no formal air

quality standards for many of these and many have never been fully studied with regard to their effects on human health.

There is no technology that can remove all the pollutants and there are too many uncertainties and variables to say whether anything that gets released into the air is categorically 'safe'. While the health effects of mixtures of chemicals are largely unknown, the effects of single emissions such as dioxins and heavy metals, and also furans, PCBs, PAHs, numerous VOCs, acid gases and particulates, is better understood.

These substances are persistent – they remain in the environment indefinitely – and bioaccumulative, meaning that even small amounts build up in body tissues over time. Some cause cancer, some are known hormone disrupters, some trigger respiratory problems such as asthma and some are mutagenic – capable of causing genetic damage.

All these substances are legally released into the air. Many are not or cannot be measured or monitored at all and the Environment Agency (EA) has admitted that current emissions standards are based on what is technically achievable rather than what is safe for human health.

Microscopic particles

Newer incinerators appear to burn 'clean'. But while newer filters may keep larger particles from being discharged into the atmosphere, they do little to prevent the release of microscopic particles measuring just 2.5 microns in diameter (PM2.5). These particles are released into the atmosphere when oil and solvent-based mixtures are burnt in incinerators, as well as by industrial processes such as smelting and metal processing. In the last decade or so the amount of PM2.5 in our atmosphere has risen astronomically.

The incineration process liberates a range of heavy metals such as lead, mercury, arsenic, chromium and cadmium from otherwise stable matrices such as plastics into the air. Because they are released as microscopic particles, these metals have the potential to penetrate deep into the lungs where they enter the bloodstream and are deposited in organs and tissues throughout the body.

At the high temperatures used in

incineration, mercury is particularly problematic since it can be turned into a gas that evades the most commonly used filters.

Incineration of municipal waste is a major source of mercury in the environment. Even if filters such as activated carbon are used to absorb mercury before it can be released, the question of what happens to the mercury that is captured by the filtration process and how often the filter is changed remains.

Ash

Around 30 per cent of what is incinerated ends up as bottom ash, which is the ash and non-combustible material left over, and is disposed of in landfill sites. A further five per cent of incinerated waste ends up as fly ash.

Fly ash has a fine consistency and has to be sealed into containers and disposed of as hazardous waste in special landfill sites that are licensed to accept toxic rubbish. Bottom ash has a more gravel-like consistency and is 'recycled' by processing it into a suitable aggregate-type material for use in the construction industry. In the EU bottom ash is considered a toxic residue. However, after 'ageing' (that is washing it, treating it to reduce its acidity and allowing it to stand for a period of one to three months), it is considered suitable for some construction purposes.

In addition to fly and bottom ash, the lime and carbon used to clean the filters are also considered toxic waste. The cleaning and scrubbing substances are highly contaminated with all the same chemicals as fly ash and need to be disposed of carefully.

The ash and cleaning substances generated by incinerators contain toxic chemicals. How these are eventually distributed into the environment and how they affect human health is less well studied than the effects of gases and microscopic particles.

Much depends on where the ash

The Environment Agency has admitted that current emissions standards are based on what is technically achievable rather than what is safe for human health

ends up. Incinerators produce about a million tonnes of contaminated ash each year and this ash is difficult to dispose of. 'Creative' attempts at disposal have included spreading ash on allotments and footpaths, as was the case in the late 1990s when decades of this 'recycling' of mixed fly ash and bottom ash from the Byker incinerator in Newcastle resulted

in the worst dioxin contamination ever seen in a local area. Ash samples were found to contain 1,950 nanograms of carcinogenic dioxins, massively above the five nanograms they would have expected to find in a polluted area.

These days bottom ash cannot be mixed with the much more toxic fly ash. However, this has occurred in the past, as was the case with waste from London's Edmonton incinerator, and used to build roads and car parks. Selling off toxic ash means incinerator operators can avoid expensive disposal costs and generate income. While the ash may be mixed with concrete, erosion takes its toll and some toxins are eventually returned to the environment.

The health fallout

Epidemiological and environmental studies show that certain types of diseases and health problems can and do occur with greater frequency in those who live close to incinerators. Operators often dismiss these health problems as coincidence. Since many incinerators are sited in impoverished areas where the residents are already at a higher risk of every type of illness, it could equally be argued that the strategic citing of incinerators in generally neglected areas is designed to hide human health effects.

Dioxins are arguably the best studied of all incinerator emissions. While operators argue that levels emitted from incinerators are small, this needs to be



WHAT GOES INTO THE ENVIRONMENT?

The table below does not represent the entire scope of possible health effects. Nor does it represent the full range of identified chemicals emitted by incinerators, which number up to 250 individual substances. The effects of mixtures of chemicals, for instance, are largely unknown. There may be more generalised problems that never get studied or reported such as hospital admissions or GP visits for vague complaints such as 'respiratory distress'. In addition, these effects are human effects and do not take into account damage to the ecosystem due to acid emissions.

Substance	Health effects
Antimony	A number of effects, including respiratory
Arsenic	Class 1 carcinogen
Cadmium	Class 1 carcinogen
Carbon monoxide	Reduces oxygen in the blood
Chromium III Chromium VI	Type VI is a Class 1 Carcinogen
Cobalt	Class 2B carcinogen
Dioxins	Class 1 Carcinogen (as TCDD9). Affects development and reproduction. Highly toxic, persistent, bioaccumulative. Can contaminate the food chain
Hydrogen chloride	Acid, irritant to tissue including respiratory tract
Hydrogen fluoride	Irritant, affects bone formation
Lead	Class 2B carcinogen
Manganese	Neurological effects
Mercury	Neurological effects, damages kidneys
Nickel	Class 1 carcinogen (as compounds of nickel)
Nitrogen oxides	Respiratory effects (and is a precursor of ozone, which also contributes to respiratory problems)
PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons)	Some are carcinogens
Particulates/PM10s	Respiratory effects; no known safe threshold
PCBs11	Properties similar to dioxins
Sulphur oxides	Respiratory effects
Thallium	May affect several organs and nervous system
Vanadium	Respiratory effects

weighed against several important factors, not least of which is the unacceptably high background levels of dioxin already in the environment.

Since many dioxins are known hormone disrupters, and since hormone levels are tightly controlled in the body, even small amounts – as little as one part per trillion in the blood – may translate into substantial hormone disruption, a risk factor for cancer, growth retardation and immune system dysfunction.

Dioxins also readily enter the food chain when they are deposited on grass and crops. It is estimated that, in one day, a cow grazing near an incinerator could put as much dioxin into its body as a human being would get if he or she breathed the air next to the cow for 14 years. Likewise, one litre of contaminated milk would deliver as much dioxin to a human being as he or she would get from breathing the air next to the cow for eight months.

Even small daily emissions of dioxins can, over time, build up in the environment and in the bodies of exposed populations, and while European regulators are more laissez faire, the US EPA says there are no safe levels of dioxins.

But dioxins are only one part of the complicated health equation related to incineration. According to Dr Dick van Steenis, a retired GP and anti-incineration campaigner whose research into the toxic effect of incineration fallout has helped stop four incinerators from being built in the UK, the total cost of this virtually unregulated industrial air pollution is nearly £34 billion per annum. That figure takes into account known emissions

and van Steenis notes, there will be cumulative impacts in the body and synergistic effects, for example cadmium and lead in the body will multiply the effects of mercury by 50 times which will

facilitate the development of ADHD and autism.

Once in the lungs, PM2.5s are capable of causing

serious health problems ranging from asthma, allergies, type 2 diabetes, immune system problems and multiple sclerosis. US data links PM2.5s to greatly increased rates of heart disease.

Incinerator emissions are also linked with other diseases such as:

Cancer

Researchers have found significant clusters of cancer, which is thought to be due to exposure to dioxins. In residents living close to an incinerator in France, for instance, there was a 44 per cent increase in soft tissue sarcoma and 27 per cent increase in non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. In Italy and the UK, studies show an increased incidence of cancer of the larynx.

UK data on people living near municipal waste incinerators and hospital waste incinerators show double the risk of dying from childhood cancer. And one of the largest ever studies in the UK, involving 14 million people living within 7.5 kilometres of incinerators, found a 37 per cent increased risk of death from liver cancer.

Hormone disruption

In residents living near an incinerator in Scotland the incidence of twins/multiple pregnancies is double the national average and in residents living near an incinerator in Belgium it

People living near incinerators show double the risk of dying from childhood cancer

is nearly three times as great.

It's not only reproductive hormones that are affected. Lower levels of thyroid hormone have been detected in children living near a German incinerator.

Birth Defects

A report released by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in 2005 examined the rate of birth defects in children living near incinerators over an eight-year period. Compared to the national average for England, 11/1000 children living downwind of incinerators, cement works, oil refineries, power stations and steelworks were significantly likely to be born with birth defects. In rural mid-Devon – where the local incinerator was the most significant source of pollution, the birth defect rates are 62/1000, compared to Bexley in London where, at the time of the survey, traffic, rather than the local incinerator, was the major source of pollution and the rate was 23/1000. The defects are the likely result of maternal exposure to particulates measuring 2.5 microns or less in diameter.

The report notes, in particular, that Bexley's birth defect rates are likely to increase following the decision to allow the White Rose incinerator to burn unlimited amounts of radioactive waste, such as that generated by hospitals.

The appearance of birth defects would suggest that the toxins released from incinerators can cause DNA damage. This is worrying enough. But newer evidence in the field of 'epigenetics' suggests that certain defects can be programmed into the body without making obvious damage to the DNA and that these defects are heritable – passed on down the generations.

Commonly defined as the study of heritable changes in gene function that occur without a change in the DNA sequence, epigenetics is reshaping the way scientists look at traditional genetics and their real world influence on health and disease.

The ONS data is consistent with a previous study linking industrial PM2.5 emissions with birth defects, which was carried out at McMaster University, Canada in 2004. The McMaster study, although based on animal data, found that compared to mice breathing clean, filtered air, those exposed to ambient air near highways and steel mills containing PM2.5 developed mutations that were passed down through the generations, even though they showed no detectable signs of DNA damage.

BIN YOUR BIN

IF YOU DON'T WANT AN INCINERATOR NEAR YOU, YOU ARE EITHER GOING TO HAVE TO MOVE TO A RICH NEIGHBOURHOOD OR BIN YOUR BIN....

In 2003, East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council signed what is believed to be a billion pound contract with Onyx to manage waste disposal in the county for the next 25 years.

At the heart of the plan is an incinerator, which will cost around £125m to build. To operate effectively it will need 200,000 tonnes of 'fuel' a year, which accounts for half of all the waste currently produced in East Sussex by a population of little over one million. In return, the company says it will generate enough electricity to power 16,000 homes a year. What's more, the council faces penalties if the level of waste Onyx have contracted to 'deal with' drops below 200,000 tonnes annually.

The incinerator is proposed for the small port town of Newhaven, which has an ageing population and a history of neglect, as resources are directed to the more glamorous coastal locations of Brighton and Lewes. A study by Greenpeace found that incinerators are generally sited in deprived areas, as politically they are considered the point of least resistance.

At 170 metres long and 31 metres tall, the incinerator has two 69 metre high chimneys that will dominate the skyline and be visible for miles around. Only what they spew out will be invisible. The plant will use 50 million litres of mains water annually and an estimated 250 bin lorries a day will drive through Newhaven, to deliver waste to the incinerator.

Opposition to the plan has been fierce. The residents of east Sussex simply don't want to live under a toxic cloud and have fought tooth

and nail for over three years to stop it.

What's remarkable is that this isn't an isolated case. Up and down the country there are campaigns against incinerators, and they all have one thing in common – they are losing.

A government inquiry has just given the go-ahead for an incinerator in east London despite acknowledging 250,000 objections to the development. East Sussex and Brighton Councils have pressed ahead with their plans despite receiving 150,000 objections. In Surrey, more than 80,000 objections to two proposed incinerators have been received. And so the list goes depressingly on.

Why?

Three simple words; business as usual. Our household waste is largely comprised of packaging, processed foods that have edged the other side of their sell by date, fast food pizza boxes, plastic water bottles, tetra-paks... all products of a market built on convenience and disposable lifestyles. A market driven by ever-increasing consumption that has become the critical driver of GDP, the clumsy measure by which our success as a nation is measured. So as far as the government is concerned whatever waste option is pursued, it must not adversely effect GDP, it must not effect growth.

With disposal costs rising due to finite space, tougher emissions controls, and increasingly tougher (and therefore more expensive) European legislation, ►



WASTE

the end of landfill momentarily threatened to put the brakes on consumerism. Until the government performed a volte face and decided that it was acceptable to burn it.

As far as the electorate is concerned burning our waste appears to change nothing – we put our waste in the bin, and a truck takes it away once a week. As far as retailers / the market / packaging companies / marketing departments are concerned nothing changes; as far as local councils are concerned nothing changes; and as far as waste management companies are concerned, incineration means long term guaranteed business and growth in profits.

And yet there is one niggling problem – incinerators are associated with toxic emissions resulting in disfigurement and death and attract fierce opposition wherever they are proposed. To undermine such committed opposition, the government is out to rebrand incineration. From now on incinerators are to be known as ‘Energy from Waste’ (EFW) facilities, using the heat they generate to drive electricity turbines. Who could possibly be against them? Waste is no longer seen as undesirable but as necessary – keep consuming if you want to stay warm this winter. And yet incinerators are extremely inefficient generators of electricity, producing more CO₂ per unit of energy than an old-fashioned coal-fired power station. And at European level discussions are underway to have EFW incineration classified as recycling: the argument being, you take one thing (waste) and create another (electricity). The upshot of both these moves is that waste becomes an absolute requirement of the incinerator. In effect, the servant has become the master.

As incineration is being given such a positive spin, across Britain local authorities are queuing up to get permission to build them. Twenty-five are currently in the planning pipeline. It is

forecast that by 2026, up to 25 per cent of all our household waste will be burnt, a 400 per cent increase requiring in the region of 200 incinerators to be built. The government has handed out millions of pounds in Private Finance Initiative cash to help pay for them.

And yet waste is OUR problem. If we insist on using a single bin for all our rubbish then Local authorities, waste disposal companies and the Government have no option but to take it away and burn it. So we can

campaign against incineration for all we are worth but until we bin our bins, more and more incinerators will be built. What’s more, until we confront our ‘waste’, the market will continue to grow, and with it the continued destruction of the planet.



HOW TO EMPTY YOUR BIN

40-60% of ALL household waste is Biodegradable/organic matter...

e.g. Orange rind; potato peelings; limp lettuce; mouldy bread; cut flowers; dead pot plants; eggshells; teabags; dust from vacuum; hair; meat; bones etc etc etc... **and can be turned into rich compost/soil.** Composting is easy to achieve at home with a wormery or as a community - see this months hero Cam Matheson, and his amazing Hackney composting scheme.

THE REMAINDER OF YOUR WASTE IS NON-BIODEGRADABLE...

and is mostly comprised of packaging. Of this, your TIN cans (aluminium and steel) and GLASS are effectively recyclable. The remainder is true waste. So before you find yourself trying to sort out this packaging at home, be very clear that once you've purchased products covered in the following, there's no where for them to go that doesn't harm you or the environment:

- Juice and milk cartons, tetrapaks
- ALL Plastic: bottles, bags, fruit trays, film, disposable razors etc etc etc
- Foil packets: crisps and nuts
- Polystyrene and expanded polystyrene: trays and cups

WAYS TO STOP THIS WASTE...

- 1 Don't buy products covered in this packaging.
- 2 Leave as much of this packaging in the shop as you can.
- 3 Sign up to the Women's Institute campaign against the unnecessary packaging of products (www.womens-institute.co.uk)



UNLESS WE MAKE IT CLEAR TO RETAILERS AND MANUFACTURERS THAT WE DON'T WANT OR NEED THEIR PACKAGING - OUR COUNCILS WILL CONTINUE TO BURN IT AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO INHALE IT.

POINTLESS PACKAGING COMPETITION

Here's what makes us mad at the Ecologist magazine:

- 1 Individual sachets of sugar / ketchup etc
- 2 Sunday supplements wrapped in cling film
- 3 Plastic domed fake cream cakes
- 4 Packaged apples and bananas etc
- 5 Plastic bags
- 6 Vacuum packaged bacon

- 7 Teabags (worse in separate sachets)

...What packaging makes you mad? If possible could you photograph it and email it to us editorial@theecologist.org Or send it to us (address on page 3), and we'll photograph it. Thank you.



Meet Fergus Drennan. To him, roadkill badger intestine sausages are all in a day's work: not so much Michelin starred chef, as Michelin supplied. No big deal, barely worth remarking upon. Fergus is a professional forager – one of a handful of people in Britain who can literally make themselves a living from the land. **Paul Kingsnorth** spends a day feasting on wild food and flattened animals.

ROADKILL CHEF

OK then,' I say to Fergus, with a challenge in my voice, 'what about badger?' 'Badger?' says Fergus, his eyes on the road as he drives me into the Kent countryside. 'Many times. There's no rhyme or reason to badger. Sometimes it tastes really gamey and uriny, even if it's fresh. It can be excellent though.' I look at him as he drives. He's definitely serious.

'I've got this friend,' Fergus continues, 'who's so straight-laced he barely eats pasta. I made him this badger burger one day, with all sorts of herbs, and he liked it.'

'I used badger intestines once to make some chipolatas,' continues Fergus cheerily. 'They were so difficult. It took me hours just to make nine chipolatas. Then when I put them in the pan they all exploded because I'd forgotten to prick them.'

All in a day's work

Fergus Drennan is a remarkable man. To him, badger intestine sausages are all in a day's work: not a big deal, barely worth remarking upon. Fergus is a professional forager – one of a handful of people in Britain who can literally make themselves a living from the land. Fergus

is an expert in what nature provides. Send him out into an ordinary field, the edge of a railway track, an old quarry or even a beach, and he can rustle you up a square meal in minutes. At any time of the year, Fergus knows what grows where, how to find it and how to cook it. He also eats badger, but only if someone else has run it over first.

'I'm actually a vegetarian,' he says, 'mostly in the sense that I won't kill anything or buy meat myself. But I will eat roadkill if it's fresh. Mainly I'll eat pheasant,



Picking wild rocket growing between roof tiles on top of a local public lavatories

squirrel and rabbit. Squirrel reminds me of lamb. To me, it's common sense. It's been estimated that 10 million birds, 20,000 foxes and 50,000 badgers are killed on the roads every year. I calculated that if you assume that 2,000,000 of those birds will be edible, and that a badger would feed six people, that's about 2,090,000 meals going to waste.'

He pulls up at a red light, puts on the handbrake and grins at me. 'Obviously I'm quite extreme,' he says.

Getting the habit

Fergus' foraging life began early. As a child he would wander the countryside with a copy of naturalist Richard Mabey's classic book *Food For Free*, sampling nature's wares. If in doubt, he says, he would pick something, eat a bit of it and see what it tasted like and what happened as a result. Later, Fergus spent his three years at university living in a tent and eating what he found in the fields. Having graduated, the last thing he wanted to do was get an office job, he wanted to be out foraging. He decided to see if he could make something of it and, together with a business partner, he set up an experimental company that sold his wild foods at farmers markets and began providing them to restaurants.

Now, having struck out on his own, Fergus runs his own business – Wildman Wild Food. As organic food, farmers markets and local produce explode in popularity all over the country, Fergus' hobby seems like a logical next step. You don't, after all, get much more local, organic and fresh than this. Wild food, it seems, is an idea whose time may have come.

I've travelled down to Kent for the day to be shown the ropes. Fergus has promised to take me out into the fields and shores around his home town of Canterbury, where we will gather and then cook our lunch and dinner. I'm not sure quite what to expect, but Fergus turns out to be in his early thirties, affable, understated and brimming with knowledge. I know he's the real thing when he takes me to his car. The passenger seat is strewn with garlic mustard leaves, and an earwig makes a run for it as I go to sit down. The front bumper is held on with bits of string – the inevitable result, Fergus tells me, of scanning the fields for fungi as he drives rather than watching the road. Half a puffball fungus is wedged under the boot, so that it will spread its spores as he drives, hopefully creating more puffballs that Fergus can later find and eat.

A passionate man

It's clear that, for Fergus, this is not so much a hobby, or even a job, as a passion.

'So many of my friends are constantly criticising this country,' he says. 'You know, "I've gotta get out, it's all going to the dogs" and all the rest of it. But for me, this is what I do – I feel such a part of it through this that I could never leave.' Foraging, says Fergus, is not just



From top to bottom:
Jew's Ear mushrooms;
binding up Camomile in
the local farm shop; and
picking Elderflower





People complain all the time about how old traditions are dying out – but where are the new ones coming from? Those old traditions came directly from the land, and from people’s attachment to it. Because we don’t know where we are, or what happens in our landscape, we can’t create new ones

about food – it’s about understanding the landscape and the locality. It’s about belonging.

This is why I wanted to meet Fergus and learn from him. I’ve always been interested in the value of the everyday landscape, and have often wondered why hardly anyone else seems to care about or notice it. Most people these days shop at the supermarket and take weekend breaks in Barcelona. They can’t tell a red campion from a strand of bindweed and they’re not much interested. Why should they be? That stuff’s just, well, *ordinary*. Meanwhile, we environmentalists are often not much better, with our talk of climate change and tropical forests, and the tendency among some of our number to jet off to international conferences, at which we angst over why nobody seems to care about ‘the environment’ any more.

‘The environment’, of course, is and always has been just outside our front door. These days, as we seek out new farmers markets and sign up to organic box schemes, locality seems to be making a comeback – but even then it’s often purchased, packaged: *consumed*. Most of us are still passive observers; we leave it either to Tesco or to the local organic farmer to do the work for us. We just pay for it.

This has long bothered me, as it bothers Fergus. This is why I have an allotment, and bang on about it at every opportunity. This is why I frequently look in supermarket skips on Sunday evenings (you’d be amazed what they throw away). Collecting other peoples’ junk, growing your own food, eating roadkill, knowing what you can collect and cook from the woods – in an age of wall-to-wall consumerism, these are revolutionary acts.

Stopping for lunch

As he stops the car and leads me to our first destination, he’s still talking about what drives him.

‘We’re so cut off, aren’t we?’ he says, as he leads me through a five-bar gate and up a hill at the edge of a wood. ‘Very few people understand the land, or even know what grows in their gardens or on the bit



of wasteland behind their back fence. But once you do know, you start to understand the place you live in and feel part of it – really part of it. It’s about culture as much as anything. People complain all the time about how old traditions are dying out – but where are the new ones coming from? Those old traditions came directly from the land, and from people’s attachment to it. Because we don’t know where we are or what

FERGUS DRENNAN’S FORAGING DO’S AND DON’TS

- Do** collect the mature seed heads from wild plant colonies, proactively germinating and spreading the plants around (not Japanese Knot weed!).
- Don’t** accept the criticism of those who have no connection with the land.
- Do** try to understand the importance of wild plants beyond their mere utility as human food. In particular, become aware of them as players in a more complex ecological web – supporting different food chains. Try to emphasise how sustainability first and foremost begins by taking a close interest in the natural world around you and connecting with it. This, for me, is perhaps the main importance of modern foraging.
- Do** emphasise the fun, sociability and positive mental health aspects of foraging, the slowness of foraging, the nutritional benefits of foraging...



Preparing and stuffing the Sea Bass with wild Chervil on ancient Reculver beach

happens in our landscape, we can't create new ones.'

Up the hill, through another gate, along a path through the woods and we find ourselves in an overgrown field. A collapsed shed and a clutch of overrun apple trees suggest that this might be an abandoned allotment. Whatever it is, sandwiched between the M2 motorway and the back gardens of a housing estate, it is overlooked and apparently unloved – except by Fergus, who is already walking purposefully through the long grass, with his eyes down. He's looking for mushrooms and I join him. Within minutes he's filled a wicker basket with Morel and St George's mushrooms and is rummaging about in the hedgerow, cutting the tops off of nettles and seeking out wild garlic and hogweed. To Fergus, this place is a giant larder.

'At this time of year,' he says as he ferrets around in the undergrowth, 'almost everything you can see can be eaten. Chickweed, nettles, garlic mustard, hogweed, Lords and Ladies, wild garlic – you name it. But you need to be careful to harvest it with respect and understanding. Last year someone wrote an article about me in the press and they mentioned that I had gathered 80 kilos of wild chestnuts in one session. Someone wrote to me and said 'what about the poor squirrels?' And I replied saying, what you've got to realise is that what I took was just about a third of the crop of just one tree! The abundance out here is amazing, if you know what to look for.'

Within 20 minutes, the basket is filled, and we head off back down the path. On the way back to Fergus' house we stop in a lane by a farm owned by a friend of his. Fergus grabs a knife from the car boot and balances precariously on the top wire of a fence, leaning on the bark of a tree. Above him, growing from the tree, is vast yellow bracket fungus.

'Chicken of the woods!' says Fergus. 'It tastes great!'

Back at his place, he cooks up the morning's crop. Lunch is nettle soup with a garnish of wild garlic and cream, followed by wild mushroom omelette – in



FORAGING

which the Chicken of the Woods more than lives up to its name – and a salad of sorrel, hairy bittercress and chickweed. Everything tastes good – but more interestingly, everything tastes different to anything you can get in the shops, however expensive or rare. It's a curious and exciting experience.

Beachcombing

And it's not over yet. Fergus has a plan for the rest of the day as well. We're heading east, to the coast, where we are to spend the evening on ancient Reculver beach, preparing ourselves a feast. Before we've even got near the shore Fergus has spotted a line of Alexanders, the cow parsley-like plant that grows by roadsides all across Britain – and yanked out a handful of them to give me some roots to take home. Boil them up and add butter and lemon, he says, and they make an intriguing

accompaniment to any meal.

Down on the shingly beach it's a blazing sunny day. Families are sunbathing and eating ice creams and kids are building sandcastles. I wouldn't mind an ice cream, but it seems we're here on business. Fergus hands me a sack and directs me towards the lines of dark green leaves growing at the foot of the low chalk cliffs. 'Sea beet,' he says. 'Like spinach, but better.' He gets picking and so do I.

That's the vegetables sorted anyway. Next step, the soup. Fergus has timed our visit to coincide with low tide, so that we can pick seaweed. There are three types growing here, he tells me – all at different levels, and all edible: laver, bladderwrack and dulse. We pick them all. On the way back up to the shoreline, Fergus spots some sea purslane and shoves that in his bag too. Everything, it seems, is coming together.

From left to right: Collecting Jew's Ear mushrooms; binding up Camomile; and sniffing Hemlock



FORAGERS FEAST

STARTER

Chinese-style Seaweed Soup (serves 4)

Ingredients:

3 large handfuls of laver seaweed
2 large onions
100g Wood Ear/Jew's Ear mushrooms
Vegetable stock
A few pints of water
3-4 eggs
Shrimps (optional)
1 tsp of general purpose Chinese herb seasoning if you can get it.

Method

Thoroughly clean the laver to remove any bits of sand. Boil in vegetable stock for two hours. After one and a half hours add the sliced onions. Fifteen minutes before the end of the cooking time, take off the heat and, while still in the pan, roughly snip up the seaweed with a pair of scissors. Return to the boil, add the whole or halved Wood Ear mushrooms (after cleaning and removing

any clinging bits of bark) and shrimps. Finally, crack in three to four eggs, boil for a further 30 seconds and serve.

MAIN COURSE

Pan Braised Squirrels (serves 4)

Ingredients:

4 skinned and gutted squirrels – feet also removed
8ml olive oil
300g dandelion leaves
300g young sow thistles
100g young dock leaves
150g hairy bittercress

150g nettle tops
3 medium sized onions
100g wild chervil or parsley
80g dill
A few lemon balm leaves
Juice of one large orange
Pine nuts
Toasted sesame seeds
A few dried apricots or raisins
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
Half a tsp curry powder
Quarter tsp of turmeric
Eighth tsp cinnamon
1 small chilli
Salt and pepper
Water

Method:

Skin and gut the squirrels -this is easier to do if you remove the head and feet first, unless, of course, you wish to keep them on for presentation purposes. Roughly chop the onions and sweat them in the olive oil for a few minutes. Add the whole squirrels and continue frying for a further 2-3 minutes. Meanwhile, boil a pan of water and add the dock leaves, sow thistle and



'The environment', of course, is and always has been just outside our front door. These days, as we seek out new farmers markets and sign up to organic box schemes, locality seems to be making a comeback – but even then, it's often purchased, packaged: *consumed*. Most of us are still passive observers. We leave it either to Tesco or to the local organic farmer to do the work for us. We just pay for it.'

And later that day, it does. It's gone seven on Reculver beach, and the crowds have gone home. Sand martins buzz around our heads, dipping in and out of holes in the cliffs, as Fergus monitors two driftwood fires at the top of the beach. He produces a couple of sea bass (caught and bought locally) and takes them down to the shore to scale. Then he wraps them in seaweed and places them on the hot embers, which are covered with shingle to make an oven.

Within an hour, the fish are done to a tee. To accompany them we have sea beet, fried with butter and salt, and a delicious dulse soup that beats anything a Japanese miso snob could throw at you in a London restaurant. We sit below the cliffs and eat, watching the sun set over the sea. I could take to this, I tell Fergus. He smiles. 'I can't recommend it enough,' he says.

It turns out that I meant it. When I got back home I followed Fergus' recipe for nettle soup, and it was

fabulous. My nettle beer wasn't quite so successful, but next year I plan to hone the recipe. I gathered myself bunches of ash seeds from the local woods, and made myself some ash key pickle from a 17th century recipe. It still sits in my cupboard, awaiting someone brave enough to try it. On my kitchen worktop is a pan of elderflower champagne, waiting to be bottled.

I have a feeling that this won't be the end of it. Foraging, it seems, is already in my bloodstream.

Why not take part in one of Fergus Drennan's excellent foraging days? For more information visit his website: www.wildmanwildfood.com

Paul Kingsnorth's website is at: www.paulkingsnorth.net

dandelion leaves. Boil for about 30 seconds to one minute. Strain off and discard the water (to remove excess bitterness from leaves). Add these blanched leaves as well as the chopped dill, parsley, nettles, hairy bittercress and all other ingredients to the meat pan. Also add about three cups of water. Simmer for about one hour with a lid on the pan, stirring occasionally to ensure no sticking and add more water if necessary.

PUDDING

Carrageen Wild Cherry Mousse (serves four)

Ingredients:

2kg wild cherries
3 large handfuls of fresh or reconstituted carrageen seaweed
3 pints of milk
Half a pint of cream
2-3oz of sugar
2 egg whites

Method:

Wash and destalk the cherries. Place in a pan and crush with a potato masher to extract enough

juice to stew the fruit in. Stew without sugar for 10-15 minutes. Remove one cup of cherries and set aside in a sieve so that any juice can drip off. Crush the remaining cherries and cook a little longer to extract as much juice as possible. Tip this into an old pillowcase or into another sieve squeezing/pressing out all the juice.

In another pan cover the well-washed seaweed with the milk, cream and sugar. Bring to the boil

and simmer for about 15 minutes. Strain through (yet another) sieve.

Whisk two egg whites until they form peaks. Remove the stones from the first cup of cherries that were set aside and chop them into smaller pieces (making sure they are fairly dry). Mix the pieces of cherry with the now warm seaweed-milk mixture. Fold in the egg whites and pour/spoon the mixture into small wine glasses. Leave a few centimetres clear at the

top of the glass. Boil the remaining cherry juice until it has halved in volume. In a small bowl mix a little of this juice (of which there should be about a pint) with one tablespoon of cornflour. Then gradually mix in the remaining juice. Bring to the boil for about 30 seconds. Pour a little of this onto the mousse in each wineglass. Refrigerate for a few hours then serve.

THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

BY EDWARD GOLDSMITH

We have been taught since childhood to fear anything connected with death and decay. A corpse fills us with horror, while the scavengers that eat it and the bugs and bacteria that decompose it are among the most despised of creatures. Yet death and decay are as essential as life and growth – they are but part of the same process; one would not be possible without the other.

Men and other animals die so that the carbon compounds in their bodies may break down into carbon dioxide that green plants build up into carbohydrates and other organic compounds.

They die so that there should be nitrates in the soil, which the plants take up and combine with carbohydrates and build up into essential proteins.

They die to make way for subsequent generations, which would not otherwise come into being without causing a serious ecological imbalance.

They die, if weak and unadaptive, to prevent their species from becoming weak and unadaptive, too, and it is the grossest possible illusion to suppose that we have obtained divine dispensation from this inexorable law.

They die, too, so that their own species can adapt to rapid environmental changes. Insects, that die on average 1,750 times more rapidly than we do – with new generations every two weeks – are correspondingly more adaptive.

If, then, death is so essential, how can we explain our attitude towards it?

Before we can answer this, we must realise that it is not characteristic of all societies. On the contrary, it appears to be peculiar to atomised societies such as ours, in which we are not only isolated from our neighbours but from our ancestors and our descendants too.

In a normal – by which I mean traditional – society, made up of families and communities imbued with the culture of reciprocity, people regarded life as a long-term process in which the lives of

the ancestors were the previous stages and those of their descendants will be the future ones. When people die they remain members of their families and communities. They have merely graduated to a higher and more prestigious age grade and, in addition, people are seen as living on through their children and through their children's children.

Thus, on the whole, primitive man does not fear death. He regards his life as but a stage in a process in which the lives of his ancestors were previous stages and those of his children and their children will be future ones.

But in the social chaos of our industrial conurbations people are isolated not only in space but also in time.

As temporal and spatial isolates, we regard our ancestors with pity. Old fashioned and barbaric, they lived in an age before the coming of the jet plane and before the electric toothbrush had made life worth living. As for our descendants, let them fend for themselves. If we leave them a moon-like desert for a planet, it is up to them to make it bloom. After all, 'What has posterity done for me?' In such conditions our life is not a sub-process but a complete process in itself. For many of us, when it is over, all is over. Hence its sanctity.

It is worth dwelling on the consequences to man and to our biosphere of belief in this pernicious state of affairs.

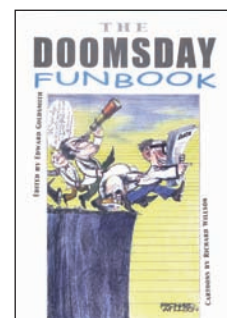
Among them is the population explosion that must inevitably lead to the death by famine or pestilence of hundreds, if not thousands of millions of people.

When there are no longer sufficient mineral and fuel resources to allow us to spray the world with poisons, eroding, desertifying, salinising, compacting and paving over our precious arable lands, when the natural world has become so impoverished that it can no longer support complex forms of life – then

nature will show what little regard it has for the sanctity of human life.

Persuading our government to outlaw the cigarette could save the lives of millions of people who die of diseases of the respiratory tract, including lung cancer. By outlawing the car we could also save the lives of countless people who die every year in road accidents. However, in spite of their pious sentiments, I cannot see our political and industrial leaders reducing the sales and profit of the multinational corporations concerned in order to achieve these ends. The sanctity of human life, let us admit it, is a myth only indulged in when it is convenient for us to do so.

ecologist editorial, November 1971



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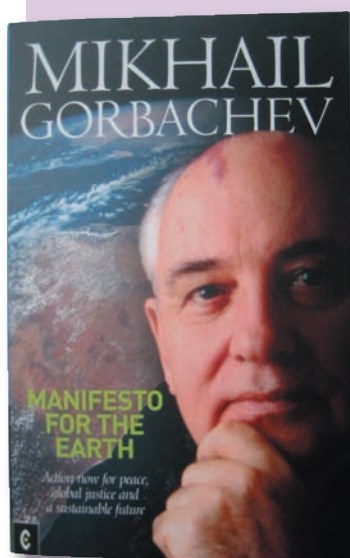
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MANIFESTO FOR THE EARTH

Mikhail Gorbachev
Clairview, 2006, £8.99

Why can't more elder statesmen be like Mikhail Gorbachev? Part political analysis, part personal history, *Manifesto for the Earth* explains why the ex-President turned to green issues after the fall of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's 'almost religious' feelings for nature were compounded by the experience of Chernobyl – a trauma that awakened him to the need for a long-



term perspective and greater international co-operation. Analysing the crises that have arisen since the Cold War ended, Gorbachev argues that peace and social justice will never be achievable in the 21st century without first attending to ecology. A desire to temper the market is balanced with the same concern for liberty that marked his *glasnost* years. Learned, authoritative and impassioned, his propositions offer hope that not *all* politicians are ignoring the things that really matter.



DIET FOR A DEAD PLANET: BIG BUSINESS AND THE COMING FOOD CRISIS

Christopher D. Cook
The New Press, 2006, £8.99

Gobble down this crisply-argued book and savour its varied attacks on the way we eat now. Wide-ranging in its taste, *Diet for a Dead Planet* eschews the bite-size focus of other recent works on (overdone) topics such as fast food and GM crops – skewering, instead, our entire system of food production and consumption. The appositely named Cook serves up a dish of BSE and farming malpractice, the corporate takeover of agriculture, pesticide overuse and WTO policies. His recipe is American, but no less relevant in an age of globalised farming markets. Washed down with verve and humour.



ANIMALS IN ART: TIGER, RHINO

Joanna Skipworth

Silver Jungle, 2006, each £9.99

'If all the beasts were gone, Man would die from great loneliness of spirit.' Nothing could be plainer from browsing these sumptuous collections of artists' depictions down through the ages. Rousseau's tiger slinks alongside Shere Khan; Rudyard Kipling's *Just So* rhino stomps around next to Dali's Freudian reading of the rhino's horn. Although the tiger is more well-known in print and fable, you may end up preferring the rhinoceros – particularly Durer's wonderfully baroque interpretation. High-quality prints are complemented by useful information on artists and creatures in an attractive format. What's more, if bought direct from the charity stockists – Save the Rhino or 21st Century Tiger – half the proceeds go straight to conservation projects. Coffee-table (or childrens) books with a conscience.



BAD FOOD BRITAIN: HOW A NATION RUINED ITS APPETITE

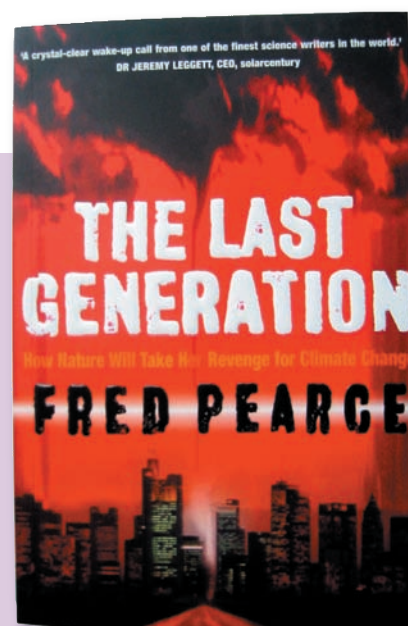
Joanna Blythman

Fourth Estate, 2006, £7.99

Like Christopher Cook's tract, *Bad Food Britain* isn't content with slamming the old targets of junk food and the supermarkets, but correctly sees Britain's food problems as stemming from a broader malaise. Alone in Europe, we seem to take pride

in spending no time and next to no money on what goes into our stomachs. Blythman hits the nail on the head in observing that celebrity chefs are watched mostly for their entertaining gimmicks, while secondary schools' food technology courses have become mired in arcane 'product design' before teaching the basics. A very interesting chapter on the disappearance of the sit-down family meal should provoke questions about the present-day quality of family life.

As for school meals: well, Jamie Oliver has changed all that now, hasn't he? Blythman notes the revolution in one school: 'Turkey Twizzlers have been taken off the menu and replaced by Chicken Teddies.' Please buy this book for all the people you know who still eat ready meals.

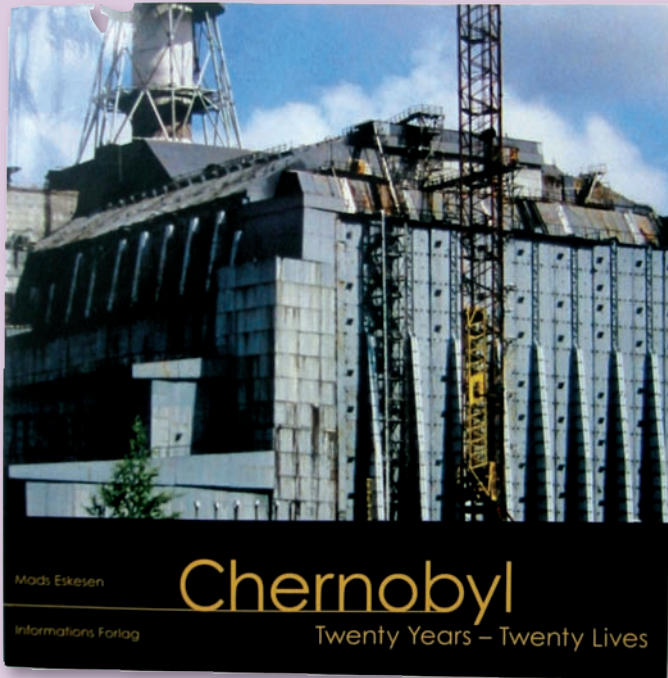


THE LAST GENERATION: HOW NATURE WILL TAKE HER REVENGE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Fred Pearce

Eden Project Books, 2006, £12.99

The trickle of books on climate change is fast becoming a flood. Pearce's contribution has the merit of coming from a respected environmental journalist, and places the up-to-date science in historic context. Short, pithy chapters illustrate the issues from original angles: analysis of recent weather is interspersed with lessons from history, such as the climatic crisis that destroyed the ancient Akkadian empire; and with pointers as to what may lie in store for us, like the less predictable feedback loops. Read it to get a better understanding of climatology, and if you've not followed all the mounting headlines over the past months. Not a book of solutions, Pearce's central message is nevertheless important advice – the climate is a hugely complex system, and we're in for some surprises.



CHERNOBYL: TWENTY YEARS – TWENTY LIVES

Mads Eskesen

Informations Forlag / World Information Service on Energy, 2006

Endless column-inches have been written about the world's worst nuclear accident. Occasionally an author remembers the people who've had to live with the direct consequences for two decades. Eskesen's compelling photos provide hooks into the stories: the son who lost his thyroid gland; the surgeon who describes the Chernobyl region as a 'big laboratory, where people were used as guinea pigs'; the mother-turned-activist; the nuclear physicist who maintains great qualms about cover-ups by the Ukrainian authorities. A moment of levity comes with Eskesen's photo of a flock of Welsh sheep – a trick of the light means they appear to be glowing. But mostly this is a grimly serious book, and timely; a reminder that when such accidents occur, they take generations to erase.

GILBERT WHITE: A BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR OF THE NATURAL HISTORY OF SELBORNE

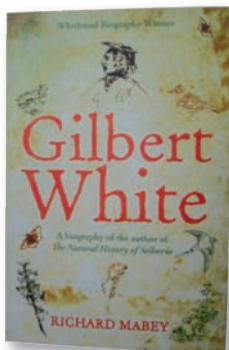
Richard Mabey

Profile Books, 2006, £8.99

White has been called the first ecologist because he perceived the interconnectedness of all life: even the loss of the lowly earthworm, he realised, would upset the 'great chain of being'. Contemporaries relied on stuffed specimens for research, but White studied in the field – a crucial step towards an ecology of habitats. Uniquely attentive among naturalists of the enlightenment, he engaged in detailed descriptions of animal appearance and behaviour. Where Buffon and Linnaeus became renowned for their mastery of the grand scale, devising all-encompassing taxonomies of nature,

White was a master of the particular, coming to know his little parish of Selborne intimately.

Read this in tandem with the original [itals]Natural History[itals] and luxuriate in the gentle pace of life that Gilbert, as a curate, could enjoy – experimental gardener (he was the first in his locality to grow potatoes), and student of the natural world. Britain's greatest living nature writer on the greatest of the 18th century.





green pages

Meet this month's
Ecologist Hero
CAM MATHESON
...the Pied Piper of Hackney

FASOLI GINO
Organic wine wizardry
from the Fasoli family

**CHIC SHEDS
& SHORT CUTS**
Are allotments
becoming too hip?

GREEN SHOPPING GUIDE



READER OFFERS

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23 Wastebusting Worm composter
24 Fair trade, traditional Panama Hats
25 Reusable toothbrush
26 How green are your teeth?
27 Cloth Nappy Trial Pack



PLUS READER OFFERS: Win a magnificent terracotta super sprouter • Wastebusting Worm composter • Fair trade, traditional Panama Hats - perfect for a blistering hot summer • Reusable toothbrush - How green are your teeth? • Cloth Nappy Trial Pack

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Over the next twelve months we're planning to more than double our electricity generation with new wind power projects.

ecotricity

¹Based on BWEA and ASA figures of an emissions factor of 860g CO2/kWh for electricity generated by coal fired power stations, typically displaced by wind power generating capacity.

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...making every £1 count

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Chic sheds AND SHORT CUTS

Could allotments be the latest hipster accessory? Believe it. But **Paul Kingsnorth** doesn't necessarily think that's a good thing

Oh, dear. I've feared this for a long time; seen its inevitable approach, and the dust clouds it generated on the horizon, but had absolutely no idea how to stop it. Now it is upon us: allotments are becoming hip. And this is tremendously bad news.

Don't get me wrong; allotments becoming popular is great. The more of us, the better, and I would encourage anyone to get out there and get digging – that's why I do this every month. But being hip is not the same thing as being popular. Being hip means that precisely

the wrong kind of people are being encouraged to waste our time, and theirs, mucking about on a plot – with potentially disastrous results.

Again, don't misunderstand me. I'm not one of these old hairy-eared allotment snobs who looks down his nose at young 'uns who don't do the things the way they were always done. Bring me diversity, bring me new people and new varieties; just don't bring me anyone hip. Don't bring me any young urban coolsters with David Beckham haircuts and bootcut jeans who moisturise twice daily and

think they can grow radicchio like Jamie Oliver. It's just going to end in tears.

The signs are everywhere. I saw the first last year, when it was reported that pop impresario Tony Wilson had been employed by a company called Elevate East Lancashire to come up with some – wait for it – 'blue sky thinking' about how to 'culturally regenerate' the region. One of their complaints was Lancashire's scruffy allotments. 'The one reason that allotments usually look shabby is the ramshackle shed that is the centrepiece,' they complained. They suggested their replacement with colourful 'chic sheds' created by designer Philippe Starck. Some people laughed, but not nearly enough.

More recently, I was flicking through *The Guardian's* Weekend magazine, bible of the wannabe urban hipster, when I came across an article entitled *The Thirty Minute Vegetable Patch*. Presented as a guide to growing veg for those who live 'on the go', it contained some deeply depressing advice.

'Any other hobby involves spending money, so why not allotmenting?' it twittered. 'It's often easier to buy a smart new cloche than to construct one from old windows out of a skip.' Indeed, it is. And, while you're at it, don't waste your precious time actually planting seeds and trying to make them grow; instead 'buy vegetable plants' that someone else has grown for you. And 'don't have a plot full of onions when you can get a carrier-bagful from the grocer for £1.' Try some 'expensive shallots', instead. That'll impress them the next time you hold one of those "all from the allotment" dinner parties.'

Well, thank God I won't be on the guest list (not much chance of that now, anyway). This is precisely the sort of thing



In season TOMATOES

GREEN TOMATO CHUTNEY

Makes: 2.7kg (6–7lb)

This recipe is a good standby if your tomato plants have a rough ride. It's quite common for them to be hit by blight, which is an airborne fungal disease. If this happens, the stems and leaves go brown and start to wilt. There's no way of saving the plant, but you can pick the green tomatoes before they are hit, too – and make this. Or you can just make it, anyway, because it's nice.

2 tsp Salt

1.8kg (4lb) Green Tomatoes

675g (1lb) Onions

450g (1lb) Cooking Apples

450g (1lb) Soft Brown Sugar

600ml (1 pint) Vinegar

**225g (8oz) Seedless Raisins or
Chopped Dates**

25g (1oz) Root Ginger

8 Red Chillies

- 1 Wash and chop the tomatoes. Peel and chop the onions.
- 2 Place the tomatoes, onions, apple and half of the vinegar into a heavy bottomed saucepan, bring to the boil and cook for about 30 minutes or until tender.
- 3 Place the bruised ginger and chillies into a muslin bag and add to the mixture.
- 4 Add the raisins or dates.
- 5 Continue cooking for 1 hour, until the mixture starts to thicken, stirring occasionally.
- 6 Add the sugar, remaining vinegar and salt, stirring until fully dissolved.
- 7 Continue simmering, stirring occasionally, pressing the muslin bag now and then with a wooden spoon, until the mixture becomes thick.
- 8 Remove the muslin bag before potting.
- 9 Leave for 4–6 weeks to allow the flavour to mature

I go to my allotment to avoid. If I wanted designer buildings, cheap bags of onions and someone else growing my food for me I'd live in Hoxton and shop at Tesco. This is the 24-7-365 mentality of modern consumerism transferred to the bean rows. You don't have to get dirty, you can still be acceptable to your wine bar-dwelling friends and, best of all, you don't have to wait for anything. No more getting dirt under your fingernails. No more patiently tending your plants. No more joyous anticipation as they grow, or incomparable pleasure as you bear them home proudly and eat them. You don't have time for that! And why bother, anyway, when you can get them from the shops for a quid?

No, this will not do. Allotments are part of the slow food movement, and proud of it. If you want good food, you have to work for it. You have to get dirty

knees and backache and you have to learn from your mistakes. Your shed will be a bit wonky and your coldframe will be made of bits of glass nicked out of skips, and all the better for it. Your allotment is not another extension of modern consumer living – it is the antidote to it. It is slow, steady and the returns it gives you on your effort are real and lasting. It costs time, not money, and the best things it gives you can't be bought. If you want to be hip, that's fine with me. But please – do it somewhere else.

Email me: paul@paulkingsnorth.net

July in season

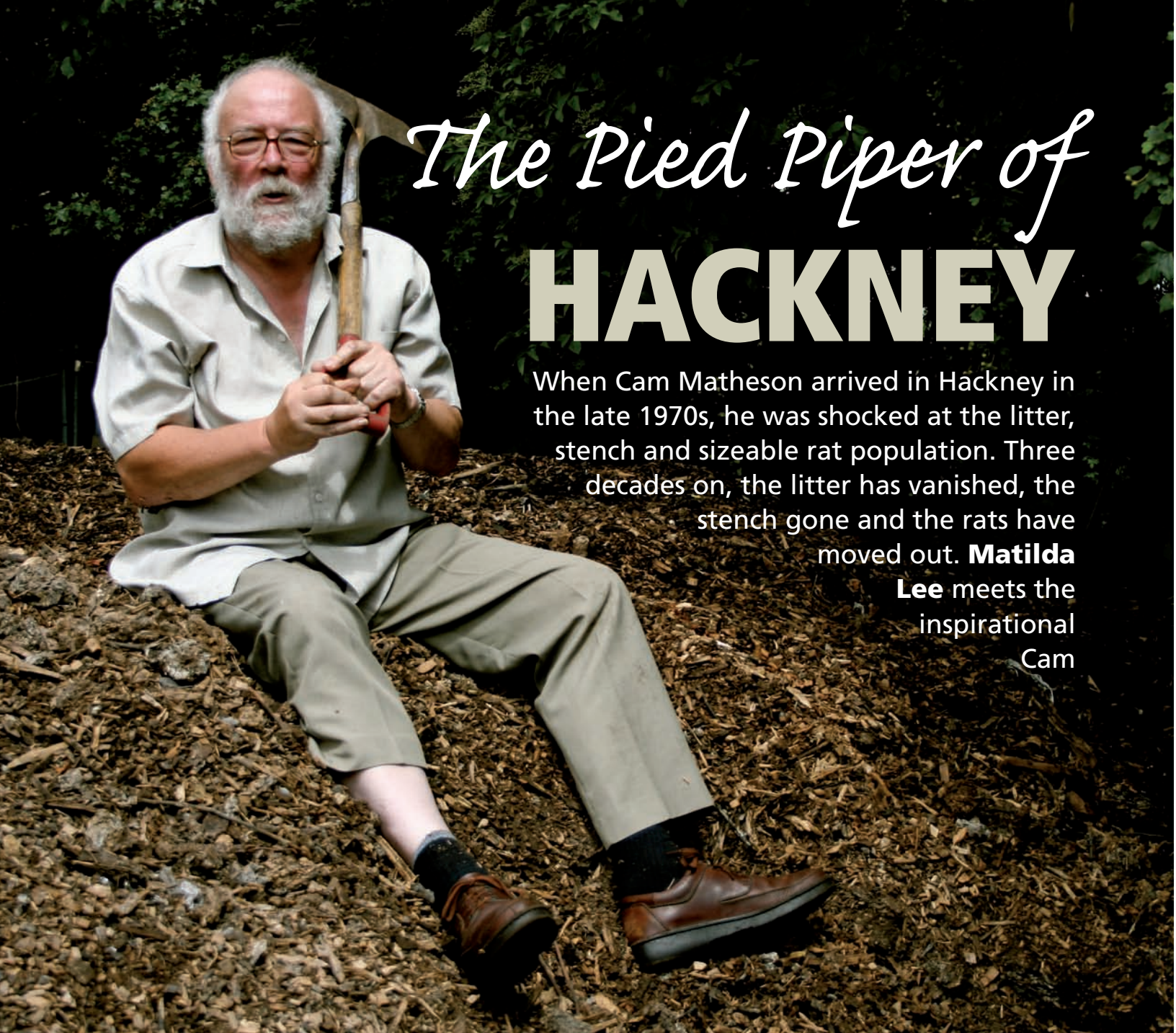
FRUIT:

Blackberries
Blueberries
Cherries
Currants
Gooseberries
Loganberries
Plums
Raspberries
Strawberries
Tomatoes

VEGETABLES:

Aubergines
Beans: Broad, French, runner
Beetroot
Broccoli
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celery
Courgettes
Cucumbers
Fennel
Garlic
Perennial herbs: Such as sage, thyme and rosemary; produce leaves year round
Kohlrabi
Leeks
Lettuce
Mushrooms
Onions
Parsnips
Peas: Shell, mangetout, sugarsnap
Peppers
Radishes
Shallots
Spinach
Spring Onions
Summer squash
Swede
Sweetcorn
Swiss Chard
Turnips
Watercress





The Pied Piper of **HACKNEY**

When Cam Matheson arrived in Hackney in the late 1970s, he was shocked at the litter, stench and sizeable rat population. Three decades on, the litter has vanished, the stench gone and the rats have moved out. **Matilda Lee** meets the inspirational Cam

Sticky wads of gum, greasy fried chicken boxes, beer cans, condoms. Hackney, not so long ago, had some of the dirtiest streets in the country. The bins were overflowing, the walls covered in graffiti and the alleyways were piled with pee-soaked furniture and broken appliances. There was so much dog mess on the street that Cam Matheson got used to walking with his eyes glued to the pavement.

Having grown up in the hardest parts of Glasgow, Cam, a tall, heavily built Scotsman wasn't phased. It was the thought of his two young children growing up amongst so much filth that he couldn't swallow. He determined to clean up the streets. Ten years in the mine

rescue service and as a trade union organiser had taught him to face problems head on not look the other way.

In 1988, Cam ran for office on the "litter" ticket and got elected as a Hackney Borough Councillor. He became vice-chair of 'environmental services', chair of 'cleansing' and vice-chair of 'North London waste'. Litter vanished, the graffiti was washed away and flytipping stopped. Letters flowed in to local newspapers praising the council for Hackney's clean streets. Hackney even picked up its first – and to this day only – 'Tidy Britain' award.

But Cam wasn't satisfied. The council estates – where massive 1100 litre paladin bins held the waste of thousands of residents in

central stores – still reeked. Throughout the summer months the stench from the bins was so pungent that many residents wouldn't let their children play outside and kept their windows firmly shut.

Cam lived near one of them, the Nightingale Estate. Residents complained to him of headaches and nausea, bluebottles and rats, which roamed through the flats like lords of the manor. The reason was all too apparent – the central bin stores that were uniformly located across the borough's sprawling estates were the perfect breeding ground for rats.

Watching the vermin boldly wandering around the flats, it took Cam a moment to come up with a simple common sense solution to the problem: "Rob the little devils of their food – that's what we have to do."

The question was how to get rid of the waste that was attracting the vermin and parasites? Cam knew a little about composting on a small scale, but could it be done on a large scale. Residents would have to separate their waste out and then he could compost it on site. But where could piles of rotting waste be kept in a way that would prevent the rats from getting to it?

There were so many questions that needed answering. He went to his fellow council members for advice. They were useless. Composting is impossible on an estate, they said, and there was nothing they or he could do about it.

Undeterred by this negative response Cam pressed on, calling up composting organisations and asking the experts. At every turn he found the professionals were dumbfounded by the notion of large scale composting. So ingrained were waste management strategies it simply hadn't been considered.

He became a man obsessed and struck up conversations about composting everywhere he went. Which is how he chanced upon a member of the public who had the solution. In Cheshire a compact, enclosed, stainless steel composting machine had been invented by a father and son, the Webbs, to keep the rats away from their back garden composting heap.

Cam got on the first available train to Cheshire. The Webbs were a lovely, eccentric family. They showed him how the 'Rocket' worked: waste is loaded in the front end and, is churned at a consistently high temperature; over about two weeks the waste is transformed into rich soil and crumbles out of an opening at the back. Brilliant! Cam borrowed one of the Webbs' prototypes and headed back to the Nightingale Estate.

Bureaucracy battles

In 2001, the government had a full-blown foot and mouth crisis on its hands and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), in a too-little, too-late attempt at preventing future outbreaks enacted the Animal By-Products Regulation (ABPR), dictating how to collect, transport, handle, store, and dispose of animal by-products and food waste.

Under this new, clumsy piece of legislation, Cam's composting dream needed DEFRA approval. The State Veterinarian paid him a visit and starting reeling off a list of conditions the Rocket had to fulfil.

First he had to prove that no cloven-hoofed animal would be able to access the food waste. Cloven-hoofed animal? In the middle of Hackney? And access a composting machine with a 14-foot high wire fence surrounding it? Cam was dumbfounded, 'A springbok on a trampoline couldn't get over that fence!' he laughed.

DEFRA also needed assurance that no birds could get to the food waste. This seemed bizarre to Cam, considering the number of seagulls he'd seen on landfill sites. Thankfully, the Rocket was an enclosed machine, so neither birds nor any other animal for that matter

'Residents complained to Cam of headaches, nausea, and rats, which roamed through the flats like lords of the manor.'



Cam Matheson sitting on his beloved 'rocket'. The brilliant homegrown invention of the Webbs, a father and son team from Cheshire. Food scraps are dropped in the top, and two weeks later exit the other end as rich soil for the estates flower beds.



Top: Michal, employed full time on the estate - here seen working the compost heap
Middle: Cam, Cam's daughter Clare (an important addition to the team), and Michal
Bottom: 'Compost collection utility vehicles' or shopping trolleys - used to collect residents food scraps each and every week

could get into it.

The list went on, and on, and on.

Late one night at the end of 2001, driven to distraction by the constant inane questions Cam rang up Jane Wilde, a composting guru and friend of a friend. He launched into a 10 minute non-stop rant before Jane managed to interject, 'Sounds like you need help'.

Together, over the next 18 months Jane and Cam jumped through DEFRA's idiotic hoops. Did the Rocket actually produce compost, or was it just cooking food? Was it natural composting or wasn't it? Then there were the meetings - at least half a dozen - to determine whether the Rocket was 'batch' composter, or a 'continuous process' composter.

'There were no composters amongst the officials, and they didn't understand the legislation they were creating,' Jane laughs.

They had to prove that no food waste would 'bypass' in the Rocket - ie. somehow slip through three tons of waste and two weeks of churning and come out the other end half-baked before all the pathogens were destroyed. Cam and Jane wrote the names of racehorses on scraps of paper, stuffed them in little plastic pillboxes, dropped them into the Rocket and waited. Cam told the State Vet that if any one of the pillboxes came out after three days, he'd name it after him. 'Oh, Mike Dennison?', the Vet smiled. 'No, idiot,' Cam grumbled.

Finally, in early 2004, the Rocket received ABPR approval. Their composting system had the backing of DEFRA, the State Vet and the Environment Agency. They toasted the rats away with champagne.

Creating community spirit

Having cut through all the red tape Whitehall could throw at him, Cam knew the hard work was only just beginning. With all systems go and a team on standby to collect the waste, now all Cam had to do was change the habits of a lifetime and persuade the Nightingale estate residents to actually compost.

'We started by knocking on doors, and asking people if they wanted to compost,' Cam said. This was a mistake. The response was half-hearted, people just didn't care about their waste.

He, Jane and a couple of volunteers from the Tenants Association tried a new tactic. This time they asked, 'Have you seen the rats downstairs?' Of course everyone had. 'Do you want to get rid of them?' Put this way, the response was overwhelmingly positive. Not

surprising given how simple it is to compost.

Food waste goes into a small plastic bin and gets sprinkled with a bit of Bokashi, bran flakes with 'good' bacteria that stops food from smelling.

Out of 700 households - all but two people agreed to give it a go. 'One woman said that she liked rats and that they are entitled to eat too and another man never opened his door for us,' Jane says.

The Nightingale estate's community composting system was born.

Initially, some of the neighbouring tower blocks were reluctant to join the scheme. But then the rats, deprived of their waste scraps and hungry, moved further up the road. Unsurprisingly, Cam and Jane started receiving phone calls.

Today, a steady 65% of the Nightingale Estates' resident are happily using Cam and Jane's composting system. They have a Rocket operating seven days a week and where once there were rats and a lingering acrid smell, there are now flowerbeds supplied by the estate's very own 'waste'. What's more they have a full-time employee, Michal to collect the waste and operate the Rocket. Last year, 160 tonnes of waste were diverted from landfill/incineration.

And the future...

There are now 10 Hackney council estates using Cam and Jane's composting system - 4,000 households in all, with another 1,000 set to join the scheme. They employ 8 full-time waste collectors and have 12 rockets.

They have even rolled out the scheme on council estates of two other boroughs - Waltham Forest and Barking- Dagenham.

May McGee, a member of the Tenants Association who helped introduce composting on Hackney's Landfield Estate, says 'We went door to door knocking. People know me and know that this isn't a government programme imposed on us from outside. It's simple and they realise they are helping improve their own environment. Most people were eager to do it'.

Yet even Cam's community composting group lives a precarious existence - at the mercy of EU and government grants. At the moment, the only remuneration they are guaranteed is a pathetic £68/ton 'diversion rate' for the waste they collect. A successful bid for lottery funding is the only thing that has secured the scheme's future. What an astonishing state of affairs when such a success story is reduced to vying for limited lady luck funds.

After 20 years of battling, Cam has cleaned

up Hackney and firmly established composting as a viable alternative to the poisonous processes of incineration and landfill. The residents are more than happy. Composting has reduced household waste by a third, created local employment and eradicated the rat problem.

Community spirit is evidently high. Throughout the estate flower beds and window boxes proliferate, using the compost created from the residents' waste and freely available to them. The smell on the estate is of roses and no longer the appalling stench of rotting waste.

All this achieved on one of the most notorious estates in one of the most deprived boroughs in the country. Yet Cam and his colleagues have to play the Lottery to survive when the example they have set should be being shouted from the rooftops and adopted across the country.

'where once there were rats and a lingering acrid smell, there are now flowerbeds supplied by the estate's very own 'waste'



CONTACT DETAILS

Cam Matheson and Jane Wilde are part of the **East London Community Recycling Partnership**

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Tel: 020 8986 5608



READ THE LABEL

READ THE LETTERS

Our Read the Label campaign is putting manufacturers under pressure to justify their use of toxic cosmetic ingredients. **Pat Thomas** reviews some of their excuses

Our Read the Label campaign asks readers to write to the manufacturers of their favourite bodycare products and ask why they continue to use potentially toxic ingredients when safer and equally effective alternatives exist... and then send us the replies.


We've been monitoring manufacturers' responses for the last six months and one thing is clear: most of our readers have grasped the simple concept that just because a particular ingredient is widely used or has been approved by regulators, doesn't prove it is safe.

Manufacturers, however, are still

struggling with the idea. Letters from Cussons, Procter and Gamble, Boots, Clinique, Estee Lauder and the Body Shop as well as 'green' brands such as Green People, Beauty Naturals, Earth Friendly Baby, and Essential Care, suggest that many companies are still abdicating responsibility to the regulators and to industry-funded review panels such as the Cosmetics Ingredient Review.

Reformulating products can be expensive and many manufacturers prefer to put their money into spin. Often this spin spills over into communications with consumers who, it is assumed, lack the 'technical expertise' to understand the problems involved. Six months into our campaign and the tone and content of the comments below provide ample insight as to why cosmetic changes are still so slow in coming.

Thank you readers for all your contributions to this campaign. Please keep writing to manufacturers and sending us the replies you receive. We will follow up again in a few months time.



"We are doing everything possible to create the most natural, effective and safe skincare. My mother (who makes the products) has spent the last 20 years researching natural bodycare formulations and her research is ongoing. "

"The inspiration for most of our products comes from traditional beauty practices used around the world... We continue to expand on this legacy, for example by reflecting the change of season in our new seasonal ranges by using cranberry and chocolate for Christmas and pastel shades for spring."

Quotes from some of the replies to your letters..... are they kidding?

CORPORATE SPIN**PAT THOMAS RESPONDS**

1 “Cosmetics and toiletries are among the safest products we use in our daily lives”

“The safety of these products is regulated by the Cosmetic Directive, which is implemented in the UK by the Cosmetics Products (Safety) Regulations”

“Many chemical materials used in cosmetics have their own safety reviewed regularly in light of the latest peer-reviewed scientific studies that are published”

2 “The process by which dihydroxyacetone (DHA) produces melanoidins [the brown coloured substances that give the tanned appearance] is called the Maillard reaction – this also causes the brown colours associated with toasted bread, beer, chocolate, coffee and maple syrup.”

3 “Unlike the women in the Amazon region, most people would not expect to moisturise with pure cocoa butter or olive oil, and providing these ingredients in a fresh form and ensuring consistent, reliable quality is not a practical retail proposition. Products must be formulated with the functionality that sophisticated consumers demand.”

“All shampoo bases come from a similar family of chemicals. Without them it is not possible to clean hair properly in a modern way.”

4 “Prominent public health officials have stated that the current focus on ingredients like parabens (that have already been stringently reviewed and determined safe) as being dangerous to women’s health is a distraction from the real dangers like obesity, smoking, stress and poor nutrition.”

Regulators like the FDA generally defer to the ‘safety’ reports generated by the Cosmetics Ingredient Review (CIR), an industry-funded panel established by the Cosmetics Toiletry and Fragrance Association (CTFA), an organisation representing the interests of manufacturers.

In 30 years the CIR has reviewed just 11 per cent of the 10,500 available cosmetic ingredients – in other words, 89 per cent of the ingredients used in cosmetics remain unevaluated. Current ‘safety’ testing generally looks for short-term, acute reactions such as skin redness, rashes or

The attempt to link a fake tan chemical DHA to food takes greenwash to the extreme. The Maillard reaction is a type of oxidation that occurs between sugars and proteins in food. When it occurs in the body (as opposed to on toast) it results in the formation of what are known as advanced glycation end products (AGEs), which can accumulate inside and outside cells. Over the

Manufacturers often claim that they are responding to consumer demands rather than creating them. But what exactly does it mean to clean hair in a ‘modern’ way? Usually it means lots of foam, which advertising helps equate with luxury and cleaning ability even though lots of foam isn’t necessary to clean hair (or skin). Equally, why shouldn’t ‘modern’ women moisturise with effective essentials such as pure cocoa butter or olive oil? It’s not because they don’t work, but because they have been redefined in our minds as

Bodycare products aren’t just harmless luxuries and their use can no longer be viewed in isolation. For instance, accumulation of estrogen mimics and other toxic ingredients in the body may be linked to weight gain. In essence the body dilutes these lipophilic – fat loving – chemicals in fatty tissue to stop them poisoning the entire system. The presence of chemical toxins in the body also triggers stress reactions. The

stinging. Reduce the risk of these reactions and you reduce the number of complaints you get.

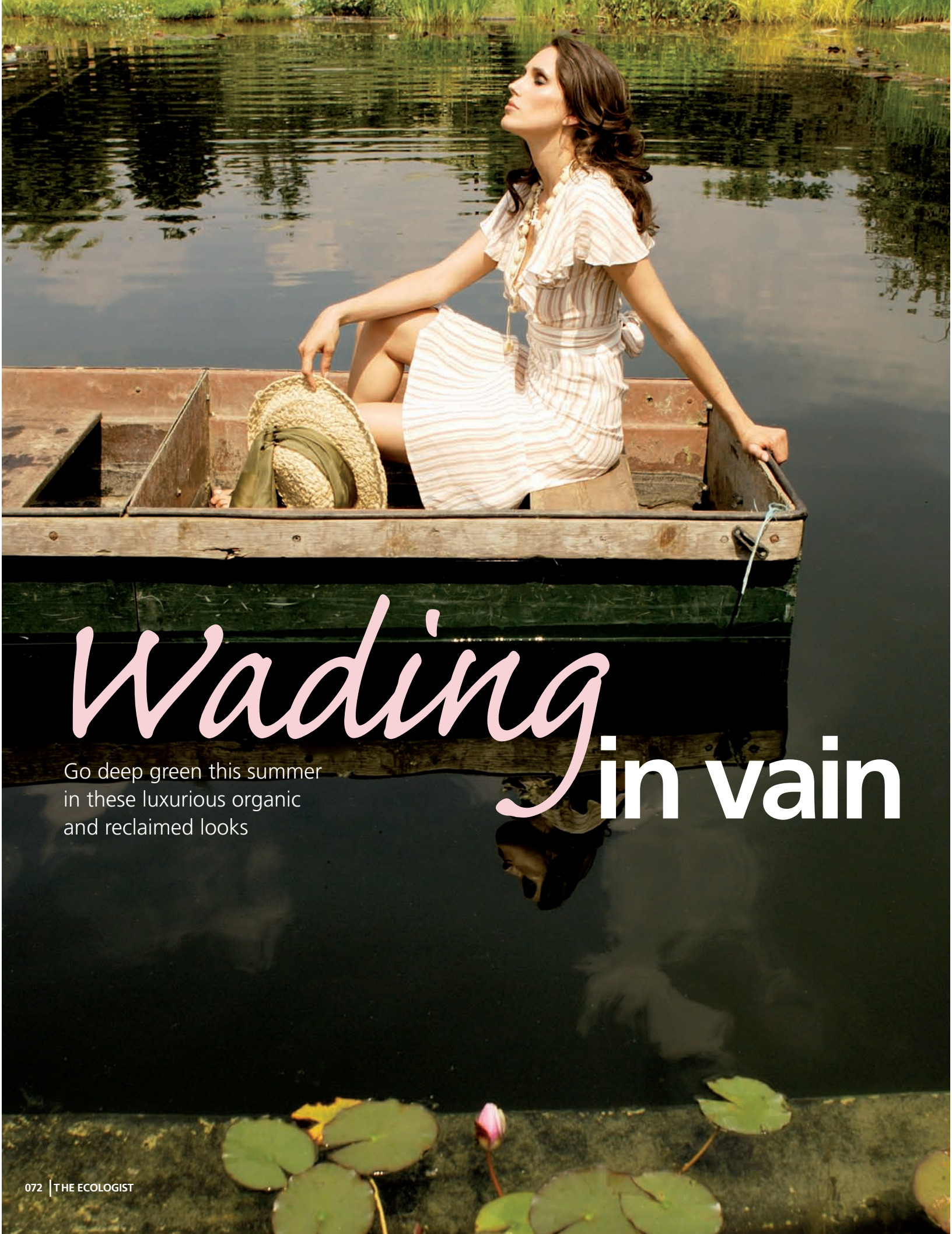
Long-term study is rare. Yet without it no manufacturer can categorically say that the chemicals or chemical combinations in their products are safe. This is why the FDA has, in the last year, signalled its intent to force manufacturers to put basic warnings on their products: *‘Warning: The safety of this product has not been determined.’*

On the basis of what is currently in most bodycare formulations, this warning would apply to 99 per cent of personal care products currently on the shelf.

last 20 years AGEs have been identified as a major factor in premature aging and in a spectrum of human diseases such as diabetic complications, neurodegeneration (including Alzheimer’s), impotence, ischemic heart disease and atherosclerosis. They are also implicated in eye diseases such as diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, cataracts and age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

unsophisticated and inconvenient (pure cocoa butter is a near solid that can’t be put in a pretty bottle and olive oil requires time to soak into the skin). By using synthetic and semi-synthetics such as silicones, manufacturers have similarly redefined our perception of body lotions as ‘dry’ formulations that must evaporate/ be absorbed quickly when these superficial qualities have little to do with the functional ability of the product.

body cannot tell the difference between psychological stress and chemical stress – all it knows is that it is under attack and so it releases a flood of damaging stress hormones. Many toxic chemicals also interfere with the body’s ability to metabolise essential nutrients. Viewed in this way, toxic chemicals in our bodycare products are a vital link to, rather than a distraction from modern health problems.



Wading in vain

Go deep green this summer in these luxurious organic and reclaimed looks



Opposite page: Organic linen striped dress £275 made to order by Ciel. Pendant necklace £10 by People Tree
Above: Green cotton shirt £155 and Magnus waterproof shorts £85 both by Edun **Right:** Angelina Blouse £125 by Edun. Blush pink organic cotton lace shorts £25 by Ciel. Orchid strappy sandals made with recycled silk scarves £80 by Terra Plana
Below: Reclaimed silk chiffon layered ruffle blouse £225 by Ciel





Above: Calliope dress £180 by Edun. Customised bikini from £45 by Ciel

Above right: Customised vintage French lace dress from £120 by Queene and Belle. Black wide ribbon £5 per metre from Harlequin Vintage

Left: Organic cotton Ladder knit sweater in natural undyed colour-grown cotton £225 by Ciel. Edun shorts, as before

Right: Organic cotton Bunker jacket £90 and organic cotton spinner shorts £55 both by Howies. Organic cotton elephant t-shirt £30 by Loomstate

Accessories **AND STOCKISTS**



Above: Organic cotton Ladder knit shrug in undyed colour-grown cotton £124 by Ciel



Above centre: Ciel's silk chiffon blouse and customised bikini, as before



NATURAL SWIMMING POND

Special thanks to David Everett of Anglo Swimming Ponds and Alison Green, earth acupuncturist. Natural swimming ponds are a green, chlorine-free alternative to conventional pools.

Anglo Swimming Ponds

www.anglo-aquarium.co.uk

Alison Green, Landscape and Garden Design

email Alison.g.green@talk21.com

Above right: Mumbai moccasin pumps in coral £65 and Taj natural strappy pumps £65 both by Terra Plana. Elsie coral moccasins £165 and Anna green pistachio glitter pumps £247, both by Beyond Skin



Above: Loomstate t-shirt and Howies spinner shorts, as before

Left: Aston driving shoes in natural and white £70 by Terra Plana



Beyond Skin available by mail order from www.beyondskin.co.uk
Ciel available by mail order from www.ecobtq.com. Retail – Equa Clothing and Kohsanui (London), Foam (Henley on Thames), Gaia Didcot (Manchester). For made to order clothes email info@ciel.ltd.uk.
Edun available at Harrods, Selfridges (London), Harvey Nichols (Leeds and Manchester) and Matches (London, menswear)
Harlequin Vintage Brighton tel: 01273 675222
Howies available by mail order, tel: 01239 61 41 22

Loomstate available at Harvey Nichols (London)
People Tree available by mail order from www.peopletree.co.uk
Queene & Belle available by mail order, tel: 01750 23419
Terra Plana Bermondsey Street, London or by mail order from www.terraplana.com

Creative Director: **Sarah Ratty**. Fashion Assistant: **Ally Burr**. Photography: **Ben Gold**. Hair: **Laurel Staple** using Aveda. Make-up: **Jo Frost** using Dr Hauschka. Models: **Maria Kangarde** at Premier and **Paul Brothers** at Oxygen



THIS MONTH'S VINEYARD:

FASOLI GINO

For this northern Italian winery, it's all about staying close to its roots: the business is family-owned and its organic farming methods make respect for the soil a top priority.

BY MONTY WALDIN

Hired consultants don't have a role to play at the Veronese vineyard of Fasoli Gino. The Fasoli family themselves take all the decisions on how the grapes are grown, and the way in which the wines are fermented and aged, before being sold under their own name.

It was the desire to pass the estate on to future generations of Fasolis that led them to start farming organically, which they've now done for over 20 years. 'We could see the long-term damage modern weedkillers, pesticides and fertilizers could do to the soils and to vine health and decided on another strategy,' says Matteo Fasoli, who represents the third generation of his family to farm here. 'How can you make a living wine if you are killing the vital

organisms in the soil? If you lose the micro-organisms and worms there is nothing to bind the soil, to give it the necessary texture and friability, and pretty soon you get erosion by wind, sun and rain. What am I going to say as an old man when my grandchildren come to ask me, 'Why did you not leave anything for us to farm, Grandpa?'

One key technique used at Fasoli Gino is a special type of pruning, 'pergola corte'. 'Avoiding man-made fungicides because you want to be organic is great,' says Matteo, 'but as an organic farmer it is not simply enough to say, "We won't use this or that spray." You have to go further in your approach.'

Pergola corte

The 'pergola corte' system of pruning allows the grape shoots ►

To order a copy of Monty's new book, *Tuscany*, at the special price of £9.75 (RRP £12.99), including post and packing, please call 01903 828503 and quote the code MB14.



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WINE CLUB CASE 3: SUMMER CHILLERS

June selections:

LA CANNETA

- 1) Vernaccia di San Gimignano (x2)
- 2) Vernaccia di San Gimignano 'La Luna e le Torri'

July selections:

FASOLI GINO

- 3) Bianco di Custoza (x2)
- 4) Soave 'Pieve Vecchia'
- 5) Bardolino 'Corte del Pozzo' (x2)
- 6) Valpolicella 'La Corte del Pozzo' (x2)
- 7) Bardolino Chiaretto (x2)



TERMS & CONDITIONS

*Available in the mainland UK only. Please allow seven working days for delivery. Purchasers must be 18 years or over. Offer open to Ecologist subscribers. One case per subscriber while stocks last. No customer substitutions. Wines supplied and delivered by Vinceremos Wines, 74 Kirkgate, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS2 7DJ.



'We don't want underflavoured grapes with too much sugar [alcohol], or grapes with the right amount of flavour but lacking in sugar. We want balanced wines. And for that, you need balanced vines.'

◀ the best of both worlds. On the one hand, the shoots and leaves that grow upwards shade the grapes from excess overhead sunlight, which would cause sunburn and flabby wines. But the shoots also flop downwards – but only partially. That means there's still plenty of lateral airflow through the vineyard, which keeps diseases and disease-causing pests like the grapevine caterpillar at bay. Also, because the shoots are 'corte' or short, sunlight reflecting off the vineyard's generally bright, sandy clay soils rebounds up onto the grapes.

'We don't want under-flavoured grapes with too much sugar [alcohol], or grapes with the right amount of flavour but lacking in sugar. We want balanced wines. And for that, you need balanced vines.'

Contact Details

Fasoli Gino
Via Cesare Battisti 41, 37030 San Zeno di Colognola ai Colli (VR)
Tel 045.7650741
Email fasoligino@fasoligino.com
Internet www.fasoligino.com

WINE RECOMMENDATIONS

Fasoli Gino began organic farming in 1980, and has been fully certified organic by AIAB since 1987.

Dry White – Bianco di Custoza

The Trebbiano Toscano grape gives it lemony crispness while the Tocai Friuliano adds a exotic flavours of lime.



Dry White – Soave 'Pieve Vecchia'

This wine is fermented in oak casks from 100% Garganega grapes, giving it a soft, peachy texture with a powerful, zesty apple freshness.



Dry Pink – Bardolino Chiaretto

'Chiaretto' is Italian for a 'clear red wine' – a pink wine, in other words. This is a light summer quaffer, with morello cherry fruit.



Dry Red – Bardolino 'La Corte del Pozzo'

This wine has a delicate, crisp cherry and cranberry flavour. It's made to be drunk within a few months of purchase and can be chilled before serving.



Dry Red – Valpolicella 'La Corte del Pozzo'

Valpolicella is Bardolino's 'big brother'. It is made from the same grapes, but the slightly heavier soils make it a more robust wine. Drink it within a year of purchase and serve at room temperature.



GREEN SHOPPING GUIDE

Make every £1 you spend count



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90 25% off Ab Fab panama hats

92 Green your teeth with a reusable toothbrush

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Dear Reader

At the *Ecologist*, we have a vision of vibrant, self-sustaining communities, full of locally owned and supplied independent shops and businesses providing all of a community's diverse needs.

Yet today's reality is something altogether different. Chain stores and supermarkets are choking the life out of communities. Money, which once circulated within communities, now lines the pockets of distant head offices and shareholders. Where once there were towns and villages with unique identities, there are now identikit, one-size-fits-all high streets.

So what can we do?

First off, we all can make a difference by shopping from our local independents whenever we can. For those of us bereft of genuine local shops, use this guide to shop ethically via the web and bring us one step closer to the vibrant real communities we long for.

This guide has been carefully put together to include inspiring and independent producers and retailers who are committed to offering products and services that:

- are non toxic to you and the environment
- ensure highest standards of animal welfare
- support local communities
- offer a fair wage and decent working conditions to all parts of the supply chain
- use minimal packaging
- minimise transport miles.

Finally, if you've already shopped at one of the retailers listed in this guide, tell us (gsg@theecologist.org), and them, what you think. If you're unhappy, don't move on silently. We need all the support we can get!

Matilda Lee
Editor, Green Pages



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'We are a family-run natural health and beauty mail order company. What really surprised us was getting more new customers from the *Ecologist's* 400,000 readers than we did from national newspapers.'

– Damian,
www.beautynaturals.com

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– Jo Ordonez,
www.earthbound.co.uk

ADVERTISING RATES

Lineage	£2 per word
DISPLAY ADVERTISING	
1/16 page	£125 [series of 10, £65 each]
1/8 page	£275 [series of 10, £125 each]
1/4 page	£375 [series of 10, £220 each]
1/2 page	£700 [discounts negotiable]
Full page	£1,200 [discounts negotiable]
Double page spread	£2,200
Inside front cover	£2,500
Inside back cover	£1,500
Outside back cover	£1,750

So if you are a small, independent producer or supplier of ethical products and services and want to reach 400,000 committed readers of the *Ecologist* call Zayda now on 020 7351 3578.

SUPER FOOD

Sprout your way to good health



WHAT ARE SPROUTS?

Sprouts are the young shoots of seeds such as alfalfa, broccoli and sunflower and are packed with proteins, vitamins, minerals, anti-oxidants and enzymes. Eating sprouts regularly can boost immunity and health, improve digestion and combat tiredness and stress.

HOW TO GROW SPROUTS AT HOME

- Soak the seeds overnight then spread them out evenly in sprouter trays.
- Water the seeds from above so that the water rinses and drains through each layer to collect in the reservoir at the bottom.
- Keep out of direct sunlight and water one to three times a day, depending on the variety.
- In a few days they will be ready to enjoy.

The Geo TerradiSiena is a three-tier sprouting system made from terracotta. The natural terracotta trays allow a healthy circulation of air around each layer of sprouts and prevent mould from developing.

The **ecologist**, in association with UK Juicers, is offering 30 lucky readers a free Geo Terradisiena Sprouter, worth £24.95. Simply enter the promotional code EC01 at the checkout page when ordering online at www.ukjuicers.com to receive your 10% discount

UK Juicers are also offering readers 10 per cent off all products until August 31 2006. Simply enter the code 'EC01' in the checkout page to receive your discount.

Based in Elvington near York, UK Juicers supplies high quality juicing machines, blenders, sprouters, water purifiers and other health-related products.



FRESH PRODUCE

Why not free yourself from the overly packaged, non-ripe, out of season and tasteless varieties of supermarket produce and visit one of the excellent online producers below? They will deliver their genuinely fresh, seasonal fruit, veg, fish and meat direct to your door. And you can feel safe in the knowledge that you're buying environmentally sound, locally sourced, delicious produce that meets the highest animal welfare standards.

FRUIT & VEGETABLES

Do you live near a farmers' market? For a list of farmers' markets around the country go to www.theecologist.org/farmersmarket. Along with greengrocers, farmers' markets are a great source for locally produced, fresh, seasonal fruit and veg. If, however, you don't live near a greengrocer or farmers' market, the next best way to get your fruit and veg is to sign up for a local box scheme. For 15 reasons to join one, and a list of suppliers throughout the UK, go to www.theecologist.org/boxscheme

ORGANIC BEEF, LAMB, PORK & POULTRY

No local butcher? Reliant on heavily processed, packaged and factory-reared supermarket meat? Find out what meat should really taste like – order your next steak online . . .

Graig Farm Organics

www.graigfarm.co.uk

Higher Hacknell Farm

www.higherhacknell.co.uk

Sheepdrove Organic Farm

www.sheepdrove.com

The Real Meat Company

www.realmeat.co.uk

Well Hung Meat

www.wellhungmeat.com



How can I be sure my meat will arrive

fresh? Fresh meat and fish is carefully wrapped in insulated boxes with ice packs, ensuring that frozen goods stay frozen and chilled items stay chilled.



What happens if my delivery arrives and I'm not in?

Carriers can be instructed to leave your delivery in a safe place, with a neighbour, or at a local shop. The companies listed in this guide will do their utmost to cater to your specific needs. If you won't be at home please do let them know and alternative arrangements can be made.

FRESH FISH

No local fishmonger? Want your omega-3 fatty acids without further endangering chronically depleted fish stocks? Have your sustainably caught/reared fish delivered to your door.

Inverawe Smokehouses

www.smokedsalmon.co.uk

The Organic Smokehouse

www.organicSmokehouse.com

Deverill Trout Farm

www.purelyorganic.co.uk

Graig Farm Organics

www.graigfarm.co.uk





STORE CUPBOARD ESSENTIALS

What could be more convenient than having all your cooking 'essentials' delivered to your door once a month...

Buxton Foods

www.buxtonfoods.com

Graig Farm

www.graigfarm.co.uk

Goodness Direct

www.goodnessdirect.co.uk

Hider

www.hider-foods.co.uk

Naturally Good Food Ltd

www.goodfooddelivery.co.uk

Real Food Direct

www.realfooddirect.co.uk

Traidcraft Plc

www.traidcraft.co.uk

ECOLOGIST ACTION FOOD-BUYING GROUPS

Why not club together with a bunch of friends and buy from the following food wholesalers – and save huge amounts of money on good, local, organic 'essentials'.

Clearspring

www.clearspring.co.uk

Community Foods

www.communityfoods.co.uk

Eostre

www.eostreorganics.co.uk

Essential Trading

www.essential-trading.coop

Organico

www.organico.co.uk

Suma

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www.beersinabox.com
- Black Isle Organic Beers**
www.blackislebrewery.com
- Broughton Ales**
www.broughtonales.co.uk
- Dunkerton's Cider and Perry**
www.orchard-hive-and-vine.co.uk
- Freedom Organic Beer**
www.freedombeer.com

WINE

- Festival Wines**
www.festivalwines.co.uk
- Pure Wine**
www.purewine.co.uk
- Vinceremos**
www.vinceremos.co.uk
- Vintage Roots**
www.vintageroots.co.uk

SPIRITS

- Juniper Green Organic Gin**
www.junipergreen.org
- Stonelink Farm (organic sloe gin)**
www.stonelinkfarm.co.uk

COFFEE

- A Lot of Coffee**
www.alotofcoffee.co.uk
- Café Direct**
www.cafedirect.co.uk
- Equal Exchange**
www.equalexchange.com
- Origin**
www.origincoffee.co.uk
- The Bean Shop**
www.thebeanshop.com

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Construction Resources

www.constructionresources.com

Ecomerchant

www.ecomerchant.co.uk

Green Building Store

www.greenbuildingstore.co.uk

The Green Shop

www.thegreenshop.co.uk

The Healthy House

www.healthy-house.co.uk

Nigel's Eco Store

www.theinsightecostore.com

CONSTRUCTION/RENOVATION

Cob in Cornwall

www.cobincornwall.com

Concept Timber

www.concept-timber.co.uk

Finch Macintosh Architects

www.finchmacintosh.co.uk

Gale and Snowden

www.ecodesign.co.uk

Insideout Buildings

www.iobuild.co.uk

Nicholas Hare

www.nicholashare.co.uk

Mike Wye and Associates

www.mikewye.co.uk

Quattro Design

www.quattrodesign.co.uk

PAINTS

Auro Organic Paints

www.auro.co.uk

Earth Born Paints

www.earthbornpaints.co.uk

Ecomerchant

www.ecomerchant.co.uk

Ecopaints

www.ecopaints.co.uk

Eco Solutions Ltd

www.ecosolutions.co.uk

Nutshell Natural Paints

www.nutshellpaints.com

TILES

Natural Tile

www.naturaltile.co.uk

Siesta Cork Tile Co

www.siestacorktiles.co.uk

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At Green Building Store we only sell building products which promote healthy, environment-friendly homes. Whether you are redecorating, building or refurbishing we can help you do it safely and sustainably.



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- The Natural Paint Collection.* Natural ingredients; healthy, effective paints and woodfinishes.
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* Some products contain some non-natural ingredients.

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ECO POWER CAMPAIGN

AIM To meet the UK's energy needs from local, clean, renewable sources

In the UK we need to move from our dependence on non-renewable, air polluting, climate changing, centrally generated, hugely inefficient and increasingly expensive sources of energy – gas (40%), coal (30%), nuclear (20%), oil (5%) – to non-polluting, small-scale energy sources generated as close to users as possible, eg wind, hydro, tidal, solar, biofuels, ground source heat etc.

HOW? Supplying the current (and expected increased) energy demand in the UK, while keeping prices for energy low is IMPOSSIBLE. We either confront this and start to adapt or we stick our heads in the sand and moan about the inexorable rise in our energy bills. Each one of us, starting at home and then moving out into our local communities and workplaces, needs to:

- 1 SWITCH our energy SUPPLY to ECOTRICITY**
- 2 REDUCE our energy DEMAND**
- 3 LOCALISE our energy SUPPLY... individually, and in our communities.**

We can't wait for politicians to act, and can't rely on an energy market that profits from rising energy prices and increasing demand. This is why the *Ecologist* and Ecotricity have teamed up to ease your transition from expensive centrally supplied energy to clean, locally supplied energy at home (and at work). Our combined research and practical expertise will ensure that the options we recommend for reducing demand and generating your own supply will work without costing you a fortune.

ECO POWER CAMPAIGN STEP 1: SWITCH TO ECOTRICITY

No matter where you live you can switch your electricity supply to Ecotricity.

WHY ECOTRICITY?

■ Since it was founded in 1995, Ecotricity has built 17.5MW of new wind energy, and currently supplies enough electricity to power 12,000 homes.

■ Ecotricity retains ownership of every wind turbine it erects, ensuring:

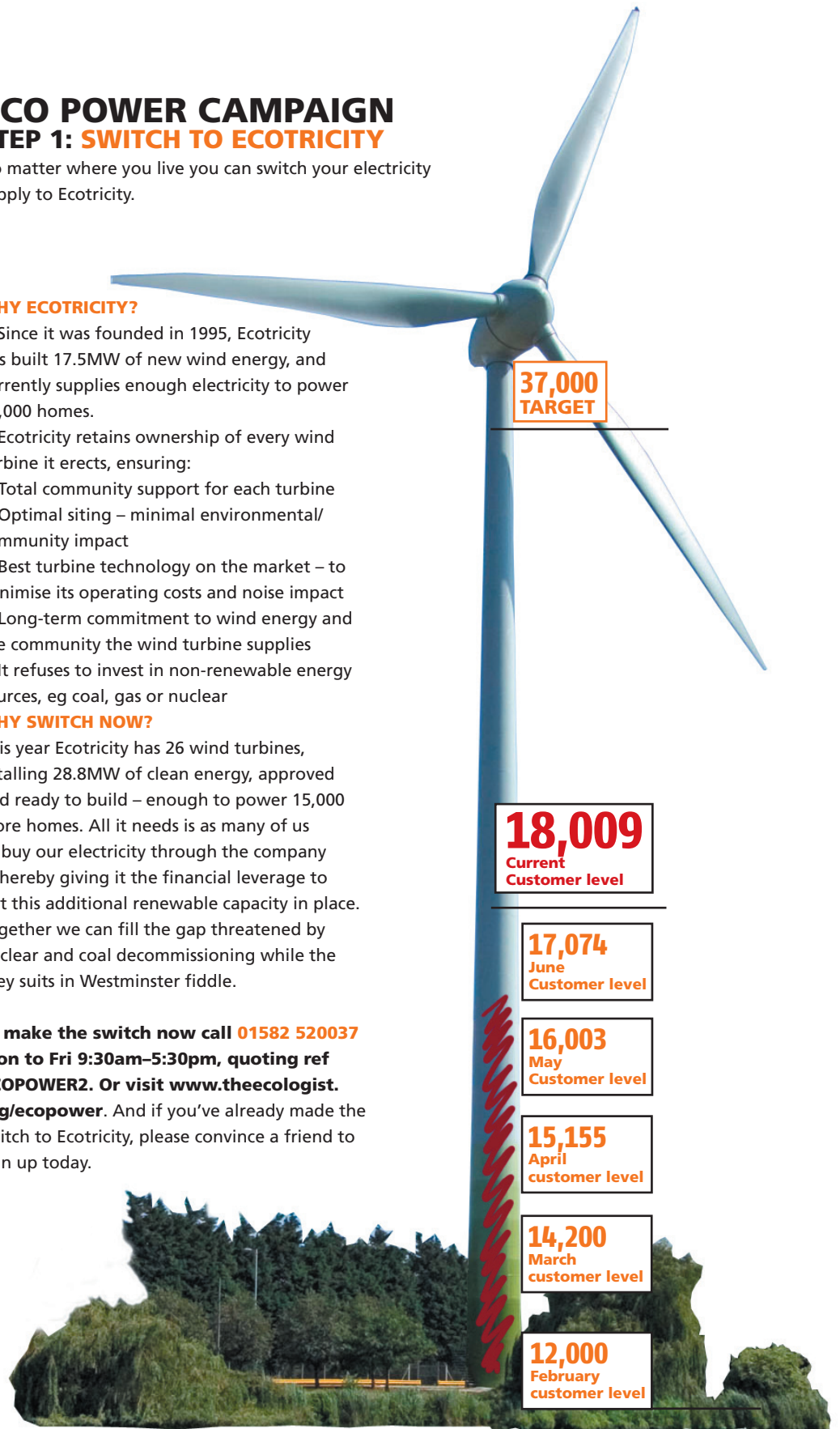
- Total community support for each turbine
- Optimal siting – minimal environmental/ community impact
- Best turbine technology on the market – to minimise its operating costs and noise impact
- Long-term commitment to wind energy and the community the wind turbine supplies

■ It refuses to invest in non-renewable energy sources, eg coal, gas or nuclear

WHY SWITCH NOW?

This year Ecotricity has 26 wind turbines, totalling 28.8MW of clean energy, approved and ready to build – enough to power 15,000 more homes. All it needs is as many of us to buy our electricity through the company – thereby giving it the financial leverage to put this additional renewable capacity in place. Together we can fill the gap threatened by nuclear and coal decommissioning while the grey suits in Westminster fiddle.

To make the switch now call 01582 520037 Mon to Fri 9:30am–5:30pm, quoting ref ECOPOWER2. Or visit www.theecologist.org/ecopower. And if you've already made the switch to Ecotricity, please convince a friend to sign up today.





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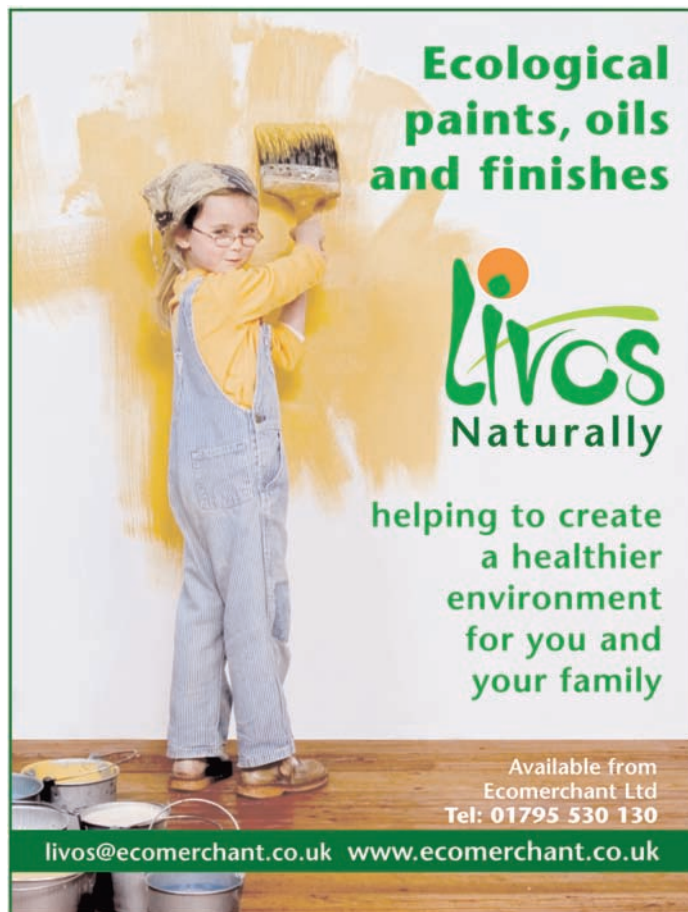
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CLOTHING

ecologist
READER OFFER

AB FAB PANAMA HATS



Fair Trade
summer style

Humphrey Bogart, Winston Churchill, Truman Capote... all have fallen for the allure of the Panama hat. Woven by hand from Paja Toquilla straw, a filament split from the leaves of the Carludovica Palmata plant, Panama hats are actually indigenous to Ecuador, their association with Panama being a historical misnomer.

Pachacuti, a Fair Trade clothing company founded in 1992, source their hats from Ecuador's only women's Panama weavers co-operative. With a Pachacuti Panama hat, you will be directly supporting the 400 traditional Panama weavers in the co-operative, who undertake the entire production process, from weaving to finishing. By cutting out all middlemen, weavers receive double their previous wages and profits are used for health care, community development as well as pensions for elderly weavers.



READER OFFER

The **ecologist**, in association with Pachacuti, are offering readers **25% off** men's and women's exquisite Panama hats. Each hat takes several days to weave. They are a fine grade weave (Grade 8) which means that they are soft and flexible enough to roll up and travel with. Hats are available in size 54-58 for ladies and 56-62 for men. If you are unsure of your hat size visit the 'hat sizing page' on www.panamas.co.uk

Men's Fedora Brisa weave – £30 (RRP £35)

Women's Wide Brim – £30 (RRP £35)

Women's Twisted Weave – £21.50 (RRP £24)

To take advantage of this offer, call 01335 300003, quoting 'Ecologist offer'. Discounted price includes P&P. Offer valid until August 31 2006, while stocks last.

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CLOTHING DESIGNERS

50/50

www.5050clothing.com

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www.ciel.ltd.uk

ClothWORKS

www.clothworks.co.uk

Enamore

www.enamore.co.uk

Junky Styling

www.junkystyling.co.uk

Keep and Share

www.keepandshare.co.uk

Natural Dye Company

www.naturaldyecompany.com

Natural Store

www.thenaturalstore.co.uk

Pachacuti

www.pachacuti.co.uk

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www.pierregarroudi.com

Romp

www.romp.uk.com

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www.saricouture.com

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CAUTION PLASTIC BAGS ARE NOT COOL

DON'T PANIC – IT'S ORGANIC

Natural bodycare and cosmetic products are just as effective as their conventional counterparts but, because they don't rely on plastics, synthetic colours and chemicals preservatives, you will find that their range, application and usage can be different. Here's what to bear in mind when using natural products:

Natural cosmetics

- Lip glosses are safer than lipsticks because they contain less potentially toxic colour, but they won't last as long because they don't contain plastics and film formers
- Mascaras won't dry as quickly, lengthen or be waterproof like conventional mascaras because they don't contain synthetic fibres or ingredients such as plastics
- Eye shadows will come in a more limited range of 'earth' colours because they will be based on a pallet of mineral and plant dyes
- Choose cream blush instead of powders to avoid potentially cancer-causing talc
- Avoid sparkly make-up, which can contain ecologically unsound mica

Natural bodycare products

- Choose moisturisers based on single oils (plant or animal based) rather than complex mixtures of oil, water, preservatives and film forming ingredients. These may feel more oily on your skin at first but will be fully absorbed fairly quickly.
- Natural toothpastes should be fluoride-free and won't foam as much as conventional ones because they won't contain detergents like sodium lauryl sulphate.

BODYCARE & COSMETICS

GREEN YOUR TEETH

Save waste with a reusable toothbrush

ecologist
READER OFFER



Roughly 240 million toothbrushes are thrown away each year in the UK. With an average of four toothbrushes per person per year, this adds up to 4,320 tons of waste.

With a reusable toothbrush only the head is replaced, the handle can be reused ad infinitum. This simple waste saving measure, if used by everyone in the UK, would reduce plastic toothbrush waste by 67 per cent – to 1,426 tons.

The **ecologist**, in association with Natural Collection, are offering readers a free Monte Bianco reusable toothbrush and three spare toothbrush heads (RRP £4.85) with any order placed with Natural Collection by August 31 2006. To take advantage of this offer, please telephone 0870 331 33 33 or order online at www.naturalcollection.com and enter promotional code EC-5050 at the checkout.

Natural Collection is a leading online retailer of sustainable products, stocking a wide range of organic cotton clothing, homewares, garden and eco cleaning products. They recently won *The Observer's* first ever Ethical Retailer of the Year Award

BODYCARE ESSENTIALS

ASPIRE TO LESS – The best way to ensure healthy skin is to maintain a healthy diet, get enough sleep and keep stress levels low. If you do buy products for your face or body, try to make sure they are based on natural ingredients. The companies listed below carry products that have not been tested on animals; they contain no parabens, no petrochemicals and no synthetic ingredients.

Akamuti

www.akamuti.co.uk

Barefoot Botanicals

www.barefoot-botanicals.com

Earthbound Organics

www.earthbound.co.uk

Essential Care

www.essential-care.co.uk

My Being Well

www.mybeingwell.com

The Organic Pharmacy

www.theorganicpharmacy.com

Pure Nuff Stuff

www.purenuffstuff.co.uk

Pure Skin Care

www.pureskincare.co.uk

SANITARY PRODUCTS

Natracare

www.natracare.com

Menses

www.menses.co.uk

The Mooncup

www.mooncup.co.uk



ECOLOGIST ACTION MAKE YOUR OWN

Everyone's skin is different, so why not make your own bodycare products and cosmetics at home to suit your needs? The websites listed below will help guide you through ingredients that work for your skin and hair type, and offer a range of ideas for customising your favourite natural scents.

Aromatic

www.aromatic.co.uk

Bay House Aromatics

www.bay-house.co.uk

Cosmetics at Home

www.cosmeticsathome.co.uk

New Directions

www.newdirectionsuk.com

The Soap Tub

www.meltsandpoursupplies.com

DON'T KNOW YOUR GLYCERYL LAURATE FROM YOUR DECYL GLUCOSE?

Find out what the words in your bodycare products really mean....

THE 'BEHIND THE LABEL' SERIES IS NOW ONLINE!
Go to www.theecologist.org/behind_the_label.asp

Past features by *Ecologist* Health Editor, Pat Thomas, include:
Clearasil deep cleansing 3 in 1 wash
Nivea moisturiser
Clairol Nice 'n Easy Hair Dye
Radox Herbal Bath with Juniper
Oil of Olay

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Aromasciences

www.aromasciences.com

Ascent

www.hayspace.co.uk

Dolma

www.veganvillage.co.uk/dolma

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www.ainsworths.com

Helios Homeopathic Pharmacy

www.helios.co.uk

Optima

www.optimahealthcare.co.uk

Pure Potions

www.purepotions.co.uk

Revital

www.revital.com

The Organic Health Shop

www.baughdell.co.uk



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the mission

The amount of baby gear we purchase in the name of 'good' parenting – nappies, wipes, bottles, car seats, pushchairs, clothes, shoes, toys and other nursery items – is staggering. Given the ongoing expense of raising a child and the heavy competition that exists between different manufacturers for parents' custom, it's little wonder that many of the most common baby and child accessories have been made in sweatshops using chemicals that harm both our children's health and the environment.

THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE

We challenge the **BABY & CHILD** industry to make products with:

- No potential carcinogens, neurotoxins and reproductive toxins
- No artificial additives, colourings or perfumes
- No petrochemicals
- No synthetic fibres
- Minimal packaging
- Organic ingredients
- Stop marketing to children under 16 years old

What we can do as consumers

- Read and understand the label
- Buy fewer products
- Buy reusable products, eg cloth nappies
- Make our own, eg food
- Challenge stockists to sell safer products
- Support the small, independent and ethical producers and retailers in these listings.

BABY & CHILD

Why use disposables when cloth nappies are easy to use, easy to clean and best for your baby?



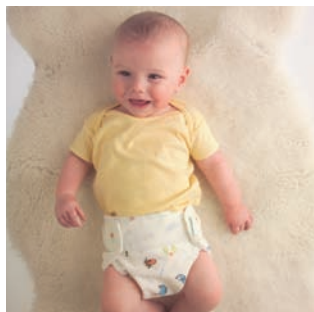
1 Lay open baby-shaped cotton nappy



2 Place flushable liner on top for easy removal of poo



3 Close using adjustable poppers



4 Add the waterproof wrap

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www.borndirect.com

Green Baby

www.greenbaby.co.uk

Greenfibres

www.greenfibres.co.uk

Hejhog

www.hejhog.co.uk

Little Earthlings

www.littleearthlings.com

Natural Collection

www.naturalcollection.com

See Saw

www.seesawnappies.co.uk

Smile Child

www.smilechild.co.uk

CLOTHING

Aravore

www.aravore-babies.co.uk

Baby Organics

www.babyorganics.co.uk

Bishopston Trading Company

www.bishopstontrading.co.uk

Gossypium

www.gossypium.co.uk

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www.huggababy.co.uk

Natural Child

www.naturalchild.com

Schmidt Natural Clothing

www.naturalclothing.co.uk

Tatty Bumpkin

www.tattybumpkin.com

CLOTH NAPPIES

Sam I am

www.nappies.net

Snazzypants

www.snazzypants.co.uk

The Nappy Lady

www.thenappylady.co.uk

TOYS & GAMES

Arujo

www.arujo.co.uk

Escor Toys

www.escortoys.com

Gaia Distribution

www.gaiadistribution.com

Holz Toys

www.holz-toys.co.uk

Lanka Kade

www.lankakade.co.uk

Myriad

www.myriadonline.co.uk

Toyworm

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Tulip Toys

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GIFTS

Tiny Sprout

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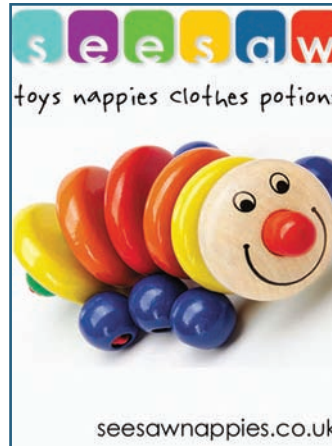
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www.redhens.co.uk
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www.ecofunerals.co.uk
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www.naturalendings.co.uk
Natural Death Centre
www.naturaldeath.org.uk

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www.greenundertakings.co.uk
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Environment Job
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www.sustrans.org.uk

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VOLUNTEERS WANTED

To work as interns at the *Ecologist* in editorial or marketing
 Please email: Intern@theecologist.org

CASSANDRA

Shaw once observed that a wise man is he who seeks to adapt himself to the world, whilst a fool seeks to relate the world to himself. Thus all progress depends on fools. In pursuit of his folly Cassandra has seen the inside of several jails as well as many political parties and movements.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN USBORNE

A visit to the hospital yesterday for attention to a minor ear problem. It is spanking new, the latest state-of-the-art of medical professionalism and enormous beyond belief as it sprawls over hundreds of acres of former agricultural land. I take a half-hour bus ride to Swindon and then another 20-minute bus ride to reach it. The entrance is a huge revolving glass door, designed no doubt for stretchers. And that reminds me – when they carry a stretcher onto the football pitch for an injured player (I am betraying one of my secret addictions of watching the game on TV but never mind), why don't they provide the chap with a pillow for his head? As I was early I went to the all-new restaurant for a coffee, but they only had the instant rubbish so I gave it a miss. Various types of cooked food was on display, all in the latest illuminated cafeteria-style counter, but it is surely remarkable that hospitals, of all places, still seem fast asleep on the question of the relation of wholefoods from organic sources to ordinary health. Come to that, one day a football coach will spot the significance of decent food in relation to team performance. That'll be the day.

Everything in the hospital is built on a grand scale. The lifts could hold two or three tanks and the corridors likewise. They are such an immense length of spotless, shining plastic flooring that it makes it all rather like an airport without any aeroplanes. Why didn't they put in some of those moving floors (are they called walkways?) that are such an airport experience? The sheer size of the place intimidates, with so many direction signs for so many different ills to which the flesh is heir, so that one feels dwarfed and

diminished. It is rather surprising to discover all those appointment staff and the nurses and doctors are actually real human beings who are warm, friendly and helpful. And efficient, too. Yes, my appointment is OK. Please take a seat.

A few minutes later my name is called and a friendly nurse ushers me into a treatment room. A young doctor probes my ear, says all is well, come again when I feel a need. He then begins to tell me what he has done to me, with occasional references to a computer screen. I suddenly realise he is not talking to me but into what I supposed was a cigarette lighter but is really a recording device. He then gives me a handshake, indicating the need to make way for the next patient. As I stood up to go I looked down at the vista of hundreds of cars parked several floors below on groundspace that had once provided food for our forebears. 'What are you going to do when the oil runs out and nobody is able to drive here from the town?' I asked, 'Oh,' said the doctor cheerfully. 'We shall all be dead by then.' For all its proficiency and care, with busy people toing and froing with armfuls of files, somehow the place is all wrong. What, I wonder – aware that three-quarters or more of the global population would be overjoyed to have access to this place – is the medical significance of dealing with doctors and nurses in a cottage hospital who are your neighbours, people you know and who know you, instead of these constant encounters with strangers?

When I arrived back home, Ezra, my Siamese, plonked himself on my writing pad while Tempé, a sort of border terrier, pawed my leg, whimpering. At any rate they did not want any carry on with

strangers. I wasn't entirely unsympathetic.

I went to that conference set up by the Rowntree Trust people who had the nerve to call it 'Power to the People', but it was really solely about power to the people on the platform, rather than anyone else. It included one long-winded bore who, in this day and age, actually believed that if parliament would only enact a law to give fuller recognition to local government (a splendid idea, of course, but so is universal simultaneous praying for peace across the world every midday), that all would be transformed and we would all be able to live happily ever after.

It also included a ponderous bureaucrat from that colossal confidence trick operating from Brussels blowing his particular Euro-trumpet. I became so angry that, in the final session, when some Labour Party hack from the House of Lords – who was actually presiding over all this power to the people taradiddle – began a sugary self-congratulatory oration about what a wonderful conference it had been, I stood up and shouted, 'I think it has been absolutely dreadful'. There was an audible gasp of shock from the hundreds of assembled dupes, but I was interested to note there was also a trickle of handclaps. Unfortunately, at the height of my impassioned one-sentence protest, my upper dentures fell out, and groping on the floor for them did nothing to enhance the dignity of the occasion. But there we are...

Cassandra is an Anglican priest who has been shown the red card three times by his church superiors because he insists on challenging their unorthodox views. He lives in a Wiltshire farmhouse and describes himself as a High Anglican Quaker.

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