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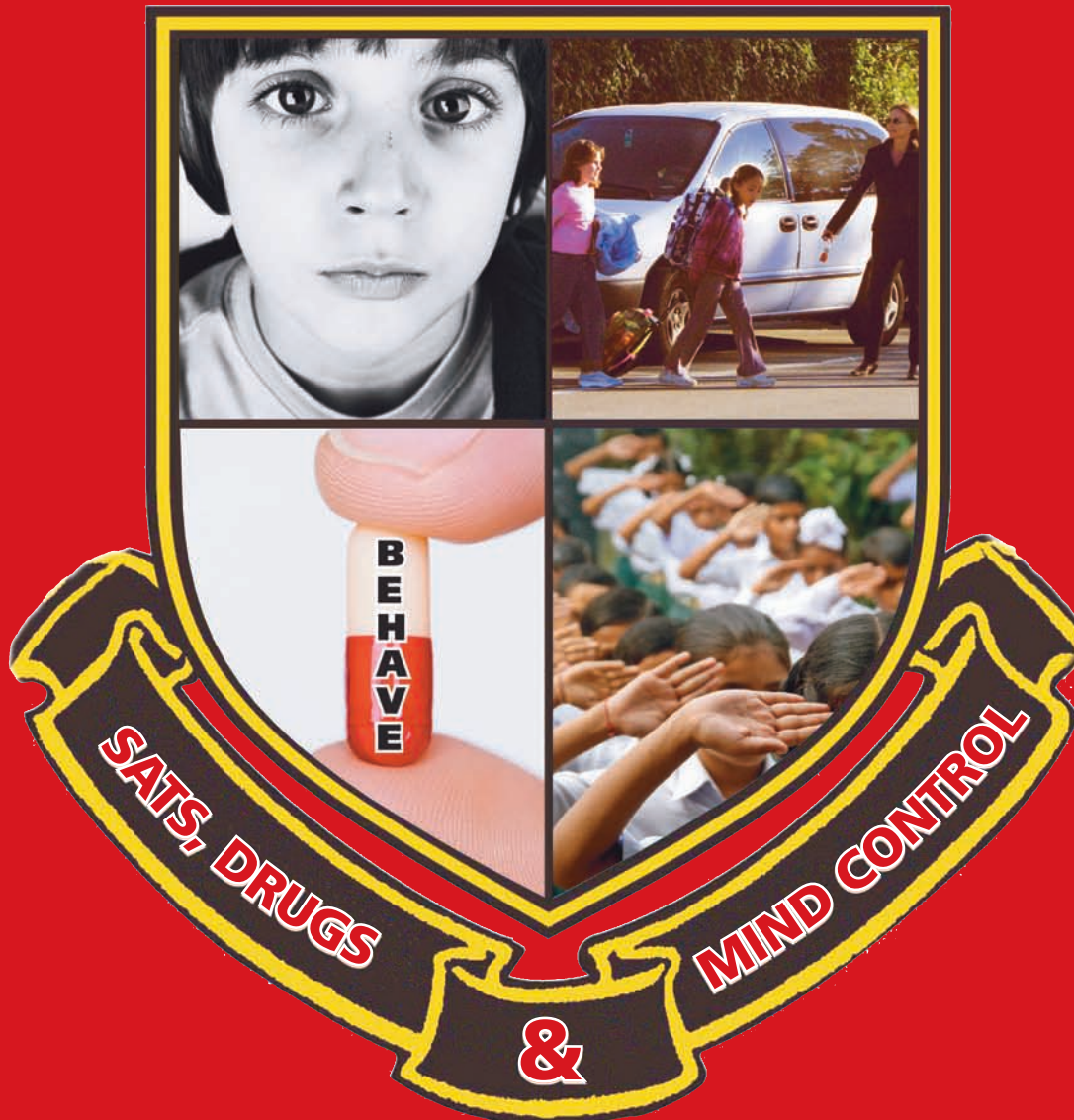
GM potato trial lies exposed

A CALL TO THE ARMS

How to save the local British pub

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It's not just how many; it's how we live that counts



THE LOST GENERATION

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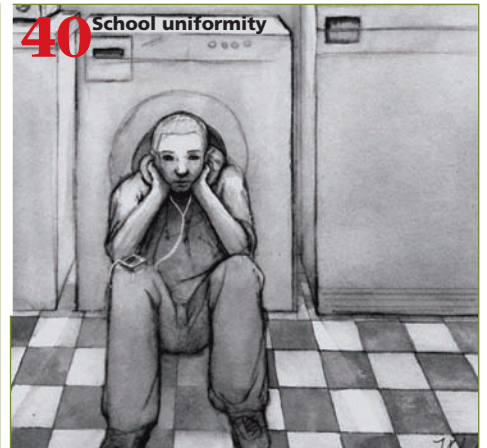
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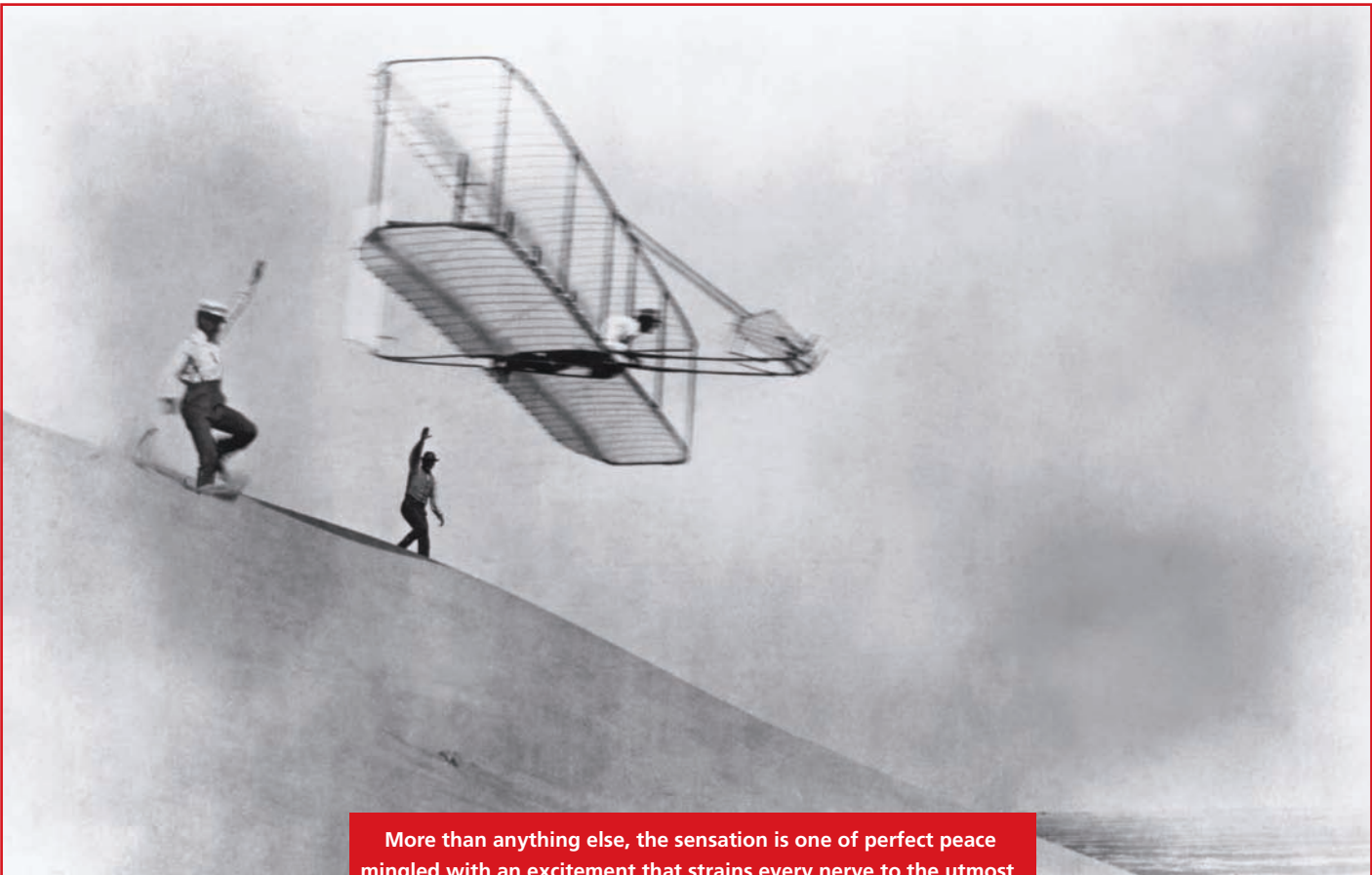
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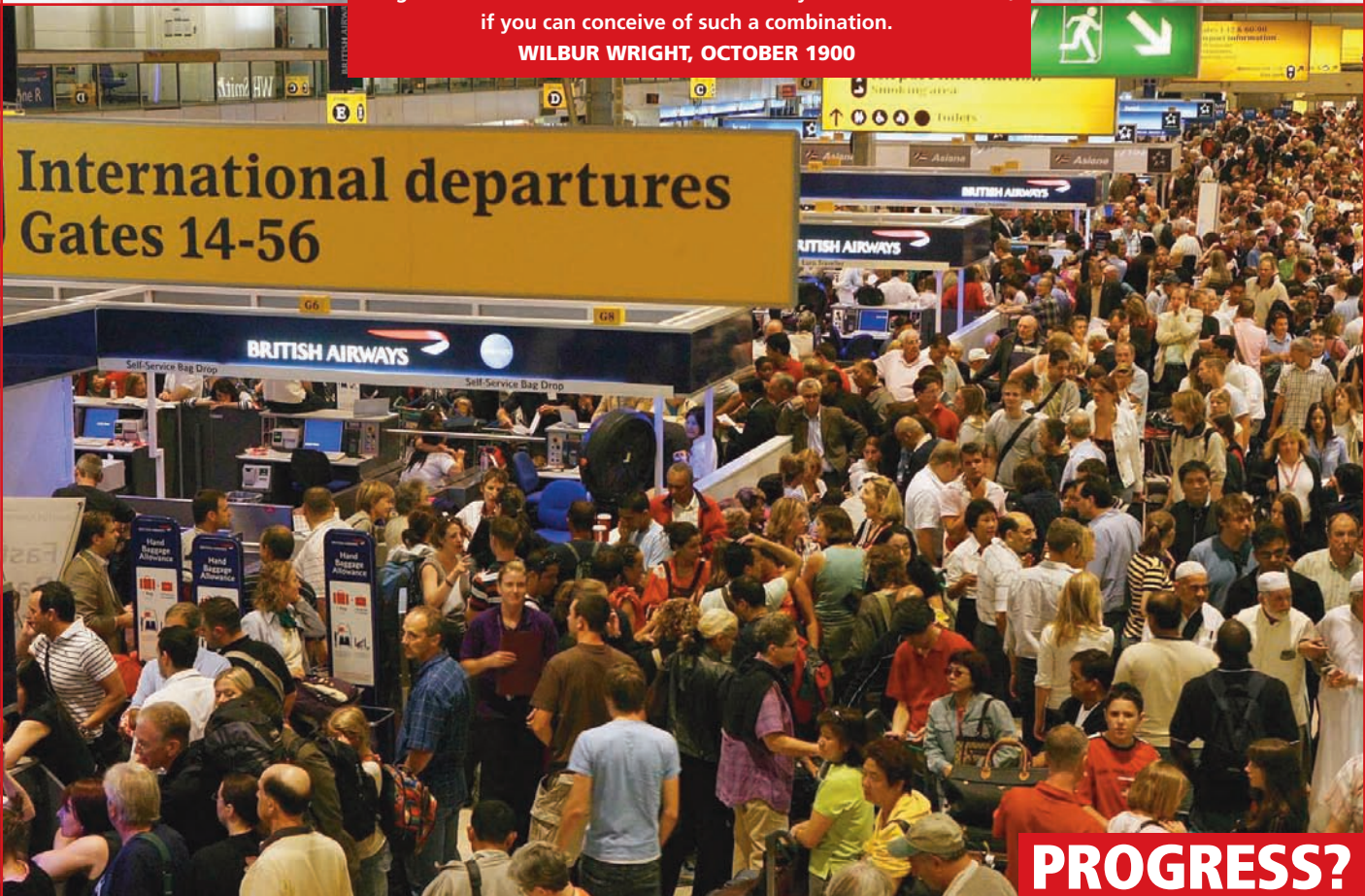
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More than anything else, the sensation is one of perfect peace mingled with an excitement that strains every nerve to the utmost, if you can conceive of such a combination.
WILBUR WRIGHT, OCTOBER 1900



PROGRESS?

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SUBSCRIPTIONS/RENEWALS
www.theecologist.org; 01582 520037

Retail Distribution: Book and food shops, Central Books
Tel +44 (0) 20 8986 4854; sasha@centralbooks.com
Newsstand COMAG Specialist
Tel +44 (0) 1895 433 800; Fax +44 (0) 1895 433 801
North America only: IPA/ Indy Press Newsstand Services
Tel 415-445-0230 ext. 123; Fax 415-445-0237

The Ecologist's international Serial Number is ISSN 0261-3131 North America:
Periodicals Postage Paid at Rahway, NJ. Postmaster: Send address corrections
to: The Ecologist, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Ltd., 365 Blair Road,
Avenel NJ 07001.

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EDITORIAL

According to Rachel Ragg, on page 40, one in ten British children has been diagnosed with a serious mental health problem. Last year alone, more than a third of a million of this country's young were put on Ritalin to treat ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder).



The statistics are hugely worrying. But so too is the response of the medical establishment, which all too often involves reaching for pills without seeking to understand the cause of the problem. There is almost a built-in acceptance of these problems, an assumption that they are inevitable, unavoidable. But if the number of children being diagnosed with behavioural problems is increasing rapidly, something is causing that increase, and surely our first priority should be working out what it is.

The trouble with that approach, however, and no doubt the reason it hasn't been pursued, is that it would throw up a whole range of challenging questions. We'd be forced, by any honest investigation, to question not only the food we feed our children but also the world we've created for them.

We would undoubtedly discover, for instance, that the modern diet is at least partially to blame for increased unruliness. We know that sugar alone can cause all kinds of psychological disorders. That was established decades ago, when an American doctor eliminated sugar and additives from the diet of 8,000 young delinquents in New York remand homes, and recorded an immediate 47 per cent drop in the incidence of anti-social behaviour. Diet is key – and thanks in no small part to celebrity chef Jamie Oliver's hugely successful television campaign to improve the quality of school food, progress is at last being made on the issue.

But more important even than the food they eat, is the environment that we've created for children. A holistic and rigorous investigation into ADHD might well reveal – as Rachel Ragg suggests – that the actual condition, the real problem for so many of those misdiagnosed children, isn't ADHD or any other behavioural irregularity. It is childhood itself.

We've managed to create a society where childhood and all the things that go with it are an inconvenience. Children are naturally inquisitive, impatient, noisy, adventurous, boisterous and so on. They were never designed to be caged, insulated not only from the natural world but even from each other.

Yet in just 20 years, according to the Department of Transport, the number of children allowed by their parents to walk to school has dropped from 80 per cent to nine per cent. When they reach their school, they are likely to find that their playing fields have been replaced by housing developments. And when they return home, they will spend an average of 13.9 hours in front of their televisions, and six in front of their computers, each week.

At the back of the magazine, John Papworth refuses to sanction the phrase 'youth problem', preferring instead to blame adults. He's right. Today's children have more toys and more gimmicks, and enjoy greater material wealth than their predecessors. But they are not thriving. And while it's not hard to understand why the medical establishment has chosen to pursue the path of least resistance – the application of 'miracle' drugs – the real solution involves allowing children simply to be children.

Letters

ANIMAL TESTING

In light of the Northwick Park clinical trial disaster – where six young men were nearly killed by a drug ‘proven safe’ in monkeys – it is clear that we need to review the practice of assessing drug safety in animals. Superior methods are available which could better protect clinical trial volunteers and, ultimately, the public from side-effects of prescription drugs: currently our fourth leading killer. Tests involving human tissue could have predicted the disaster, where monkeys failed so tragically.

Thanks in large part to *Ecologist* readers, 234 MPs have signed Early Day Motion 92, calling for a scientific evaluation of animal testing. This historic EDM closes in November, so if you have not sent a postcard/email/fax/letter to your MP (details at www.curedisease.net <<http://www.curedisease.net>>), please hurry! Now is the last chance to boost parliamentary support for this urgently-needed evaluation – and to show it is not just a minority of extremists who doubt the value of animal testing.

Kathy Archibald
Director of Europeans for Medical Progress, by email

NUCLEAR POWER

There is one flaw in Jon Hughes’ article on nuclear power and climate change. He claims that “[spent fuel rods] should spend between six and 18 months cooling before being removed to a permanent disposal site” (page 55).

As a senior researcher on nuclear energy I have been involved in several Environmental Assessments on nuclear waste management and in the three-year study of the Canadian Nuclear Waste Management Organization.

Those spent fuel bundles have to be in wet storage at least seven to 10 years before they can, even then by remote control, be removed and placed in huge Dry Storage Containers (DSCs) for above-ground containment.

S Kleinau
Ontario, Canada

NUCLEAR POWER 2

Peter Bunyard’s letter (September) contains an outrageous misrepresentation. He claims that on July 11th I wrote an article in the *Guardian* stating that without nuclear power, “we in Britain will fail dismally to curb our greenhouse gas emissions”. In fact my article said the opposite: that although some of our arguments against nuclear power are no longer valid, the case against it is still robust. Even the headline made this clear: “Nuclear power is safer than in the past – but we still don’t need it”.

He goes on to make a number of misleading claims about both the potential of biofuels and the energy and carbon balance of nuclear power, for none of which he provides sources. One of the arguments my article made is that if we are to find the best solutions to climate change, we have to assess each technology as objectively as possible, and not be swayed by prejudice or wishful thinking. Peter’s letter, I am sorry to say, provides a good example of why this approach is necessary.

George Monbiot, by email



NUCLEAR POWER 3

Your September issue reports that “A recent study by the British Geological Survey found that 40% of the country was geologically stable enough to hold a [nuclear waste] repository”. Would this be the same BGS who told the people of Bangladesh in 1995 that water from tube wells would be safe to drink? Bangladesh is now facing the biggest case of mass poisoning in history as a result of using tube well water contaminated with arsenic.

In July this year, the British Law Lords agreed that there had been no obligation on the part of the BGS to test for arsenic, so it was not liable for the current humanitarian disaster in Bangladesh (coincidentally freeing UK taxpayers from potential liabilities for millions of pounds compensation). I wonder what tests the BGS omitted this time, when they produced their 40% figure?

John McCreesh, by email

ECOLOGIST POLL

Should the government approve BASF’s application for GM potato trials in the UK?
Go to www.theecologist.org to cast your vote. The result will be published in next month’s issue.

Send letters for publication to: Letters, *The Ecologist*, Unit 18, Chelsea Wharf, 15 Lots Road, London SW10 0QJ. Email: editorial@theecologist.org. *The Ecologist* reserves the right to edit letters as necessary.

BINNING THE BIN

Great series of articles on 'Binning the bin'. I believe the solution lies NOT in recycling but in RE-USE. In Germany, for example, most drinks are sold in re-usable glass bottles. These are uniform sized, allowing for some marketing (some bottles have patterns in the glass, etc) but universally accepted back by the places that sold them.

Imagine taking this a step further – force the packaging industry to make uniform-sized, re-useable packing for most types of goods. These could be returned, washed to the shop or even have a refund value.

If packaging was re-used and charged to the customer, it could be the basis for phasing out rubbish collection, with councils instead helping each household create compost bins.

**Guy Eames, Oundle
England**

BINNING THE BIN 2

A persuasive case against landfill and incinerators, but sketchy on recycling. E.g: 'If we insist on using a single bin for all our rubbish...' Where I live, everyone has had two bins, green and brown, for ages. The brown bin takes all waste that's biodegradable/compostable.

I've heard that a lot of stuff that people take to recycling

points gets dumped in landfill (e.g. paper collections that are considered uneconomical to recycle). Is this true? My local recycling point has separate bins for different coloured glass, yet the lorry that collects the glass empties all the bins into the same trailer. Is there any point in separating it out, or even recycling it at all?

In particular, I was really annoyed by the glib statement that plastic is not effectively recyclable. This may be true but a little more information would be welcome.

Alastair Whitson

MORAL MAZE

Re: 'Moral Maze' letter (July/August). When I was a child my mother was unable to leave the house; hence I have been doing family shopping for over 50 years! During my childhood I decided that we would not eat South African produce (apartheid), Spanish sardines – tinned or otherwise (Franco's fascist regime), etc. Over the years we have also not eaten fresh produce from countries run by dictators or military juntas, or countries that were boycotting British produce, etc. Certain tinned-food manufacturers have also been 'off the menu' – mainly because they used chemicals on 'foreign' fields which were banned in their own country, and which had a devastating effect on the environment and the health of their workers.

The writer said he felt 'relieved that at least I didn't have to factor in the air miles' – something that we should be doing all the time. I never buy green beans from Africa (wait for the British season), or USA strawberries (on sale at the height of the British season!), or organic produce from Continental Europe. I would rather buy produce from Kent

(the county next to London, where I live), which has had chemicals on it, than organic produce that has been shipped by air (increasing the CO² emissions massively).

I am not a vegetarian, so I also have to decide on meat products. Danish and Dutch bacon and pork have been off the menu for years due to the problems outlined in your September article on pork production. One very large supermarket has also been 'off limits' due to the way it treats animals on farms in the UK.

I note that *The Ecologist's* response was to talk to local shopkeepers. This may work where there are thriving local independent shops but for many of us there is no choice, only supermarkets. Far better then to let these companies know that all their produce will be subjected to an ethical stance when shopping and that if it does not meet the criteria, it will not be bought.

Richard Moss, by email

LIFE CHANGE

I do not regularly buy magazines, only if something catches my eye, which is exactly what your July/August issue did: "37 pages to help you kick your supermarket habit". I feel like I have been released from *The Matrix*...

I read your magazine from cover to cover, and have begun reading back articles online.

Since then, I have been back to my local organic warehouse and looked at all the cleaning products they stock; researched organic companies around on the internet in line with this new-found information; started replacing finished cleaning products with eco-friendly versions. But it is not enough! I have a stockpile of these so-called BOGOFs' face creams,

Comfort fabric conditioner, four bottles of bath foam, three bottles of shampoo for brunettes, Olay regenerative face cream, four bottles of body cream... the list goes on.

So there starts my dilemma: how can I safely dispose of these products when I no longer want them in my home – going down the sink into our waterways, filling up landfill sites, giving them to friends or family when I want to shout from the roof tops about the damage we are doing to not only ourselves but our planet and can so easily prevent...

I would welcome help and advice from yourselves and your readers and look forward to a lifetime association with your magazine and like-minded people.

**Sonja Belchere
Shropshire**

TRANSHUMANISM

Dan Grace in *Beyond Belief* (*Ecologist*, September) equates 'evangelical Christians' with 'fundamentalist Christians' who believe in 'The Rapture'. Mainstream Christians – Catholics, Orthodox and evangelicals – believe in nothing of the sort. The ones Dan Grace refers to are regarded by orthodox Christians as millennialist sectarians. Of course, there may be a large number of them in America, which tells us more about America than about Christianity.

David Taylor, by email

ERRATA

September edition.

On page 44, September issue, we wrote: "As a greenhouse gas, nitrogen is 300 times more potent than CO²." We meant nitrous oxide (N₂O).



“The Camp is for everyone who can see that the endless quest for a bigger and bigger economy is driving us towards catastrophe, who knows how urgently action is needed on climate change, and who wants to be part of a mass movement to turn this situation around.”

Anna Harrison of the Camp for Climate Action, during the protest in August outside Drax power station

MOUNTAIN RESCUE

The mayor of Saint-Gervais near Chamonix, Jean-Marc Peilleux, has launched a campaign to control access to Mont Blanc – a mountain he says is now menaced environmentally by the level of access, with some 30,000 ascents a year.

Speaking at a meeting of the National Mountain Council (CNM), he said that excessively high level of access brought with it problems including litter and issues of mountain safety. He has called for a limit to access through an eco-tax or permit system to ‘avoid a catastrophe’. Philippe Imbert of the mountain ecology association Mountain Wilderness agrees that the Mont Blanc range is threatened by urbanisation and an excessive volume of over-flying by helicopter.



GOOD LUCK'S GRAVE COST

Hunger for an edible good luck ‘charm’ is devastating China’s western provinces as impoverished farmers scramble to make a living, hastening already acute desertification. The blue-green algae is sought after because its name, Facai, sounds almost identical to characters meaning ‘get rich’. The trade in facai is outlawed as it is harvested by raking up all the sparse vegetation it grows among, leaving the sandy soil exposed to the wind. To harvest 21 ounces, an area the size of five football fields has to be stripped of vegetation before the algae is separated out. For that amount, a trader in Ningxia can earn almost as much as the 300 yuan (£20) average monthly income for a Chinese farmer.

CROSS-CONTAMINATED GM FOOD ON SALE

Unauthorised genetically modified (GM) rice grown in China has been found in food for sale in shops in Britain, France and Germany. The Chinese rice, modified to resist certain insects, was found in samples of rice vermicelli in Britain and stick noodles in France and Germany, Greenpeace said, citing the results of two rounds of lab tests. Its report did not indicate the possible quantities involved but said the GM rice had been detected in different product brands found in Asian speciality stores and restaurants.

The Chinese rice contains a protein that might cause allergenic reactions in humans, said Greenpeace International GMO campaigner Jeremy Tager. It was supposed to be used only in

field trials and was not approved for commercial growing because of concerns about its safety.

Meanwhile, Japan has imposed a ban on the import of American long-grain rice after it was revealed to be contaminated with a GM strain from tests carried out between 1998 and 2001. The strain has never undergone food safety trials and is not authorised for use. Finally, an unapproved type of GM grass has been found growing in the wild near the site of field tests that also took place a few years ago. At the time, pollen was found to have travelled 13 miles (far further than expected) and the contaminated grass has been found two to three miles from the original test site.

See *GM trials news focus*, page 14

2011

The year when humans will be having sex with robots, according to the European Robotics Research Network

NUCLEAR MELTDOWN NARROWLY AVERTED

Four of the 10 nuclear reactors in Sweden have been shut down with no date set for re-opening, following a near-catastrophic failure to rival Chernobyl. “It was pure luck there wasn’t a meltdown,” Swedish media reported a former director of the reactor saying. The reactor in the Swedish town of Forsmark was out of control for 22 minutes when back-up generators failed to fire during a power cut.

If the back-up system fails after a blackout, the operator loses instrumentation and control over the reactor, leading to an inability to cool the core. In a report published last year, Greenpeace highlighted the widespread and frequent problems of failing power back-up systems of nuclear reactors, which have also been reported in the US and Germany.

Without power, the temperature of the core reactor would have been critically high after 30 minutes, threatening meltdown. This was only narrowly avoided when an engineer disobeyed rules and overrode safety systems to source power from other parts of the facility. The failure

of two emergency generators after a reactor shut down in July was “the worst incident in the history of Sweden’s nuclear industry,” according to the head of Swedish Nuclear Power Inspectorate (SKI), Bjorn Karlsson.

SKI had four of Sweden’s 10 nuclear reactors shut down after the Forsmark incident, as they share the same back-up technology. A decision on when to permit the reactors to be restarted would only be made after the investigations into the incident were completed.

“The Forsmark incident is just another illustration of the nuclear industry and nuclear regulators gambling with the lives of thousands or even millions of people,” says Jan Vande Putte of Greenpeace International. “It has proved that a simple power blackout – something which has been happening regularly during the recent heatwaves – can very easily lead to a catastrophic reactor meltdown. This is a prime example of why this technology is inherently dangerous, must be phased out worldwide and never allowed to return.”



URANIUM TRADE TO CHINA STARTS TO HEAT UP

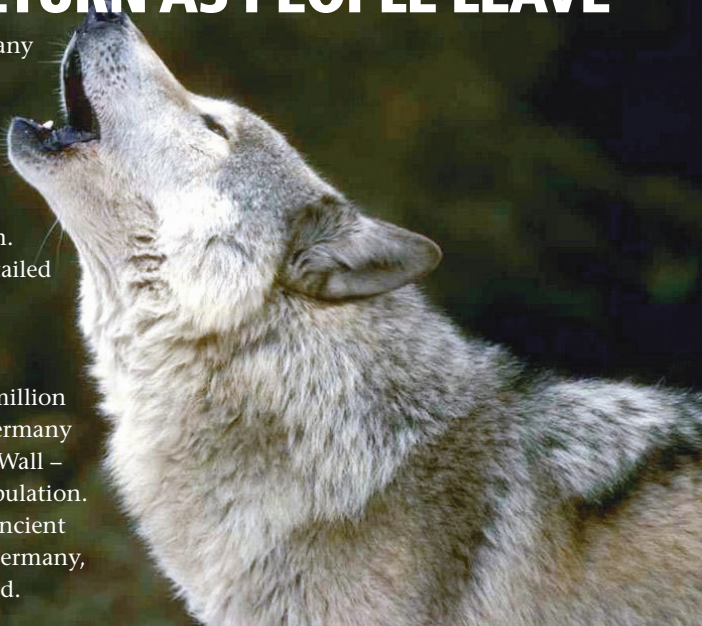
Australia is set to start selling uranium to China next year, to fuel the country’s mighty nuclear expansion plans. Australia could earn some \$AUS250 million (£100 million) a year from the deal once it is ratified, Australia’s ironically titled Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office director-general John Carlson told a Senate committee in August. The committee is looking into treaties covering the export of the nuclear material signed earlier this year after Canberra said it had secured safeguards from Beijing ensuring that the fuel would not be used in weapons.

China has announced plans to build 28 new nuclear reactors and by 2020 the annual uranium requirement would be about 8,000 tonnes a year, almost as big as Australia’s current uranium output, Carlson said at the meeting.

Australia, which has the world’s largest known reserves of the nuclear fuel, could hope to provide about one-third of that, he said. There would be no direct Australian involvement in inspections of China’s nuclear facilities and stores as that was up to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Carlson said.

WOLVES RETURN AS PEOPLE LEAVE

Brandenburg in East Germany is experiencing a wildlife renaissance as the one time centre of industry and mining has fallen victim to globalisation, resulting in mass migration. Wolves, cranes and white-tailed eagles have also flourished as industry has closed and the human population has decreased. More than 1.5 million people have left eastern Germany since the fall of the Berlin Wall – about one-tenth of the population. The wolves are following ancient migration routes back to Germany, say the World Wildlife Fund.



WHAT WE LEARNT THIS MONTH...

■ **Cleto Diaz, father of 37 children, has gone to court to plead for a vasectomy. The 44-year-old Argentine man from Corrientes, who became sexually active at age nine, believes it is not the State's right to withhold the sought-after snip.**

■ **Phonetics experts back up farmers' claims that cows moo with regional accents. John Wells, Professor of Phonetics at the University of London, said, 'In small populations such as herds you would encounter identifiable dialectal variations which are most affected by the immediate peer group.'**

Farmer Lloyd Green of Glastonbury said, 'I spend a lot of time with my cows and they definitely moo with a Somerset drawl.'

■ **Kangaroos living in Australia's capital, Canberra, are to be put on a contraceptive pill in a bid to humanely curb their numbers.**

■ **To reduce the use of batteries two whizz-kid inventors have designed a yo-yo-powered MP3 player. Just 10 to 12 yo-yo tosses give enough energy to power the player for one hour.**

■ **Meanwhile, biologists at the University of Pennsylvania, have constructed the 'Suspended-load Backpack' which converts mechanical energy from walking into electricity – up to 7.4 Watts – more than enough to power portable electronic devices for people working in areas where electricity is unavailable.**

■ **Vets have been told that they have a responsibility to watch out for evidence of sexual abuse in animals. An article in the *Veterinary Journal* says that by identifying cases, vets could halt other possible abuse against wives or children in the same household.**

■ **Pre-empting peak oil, the US Air Force is holding tests to see if B52 bombers can fly on coal. If they are successful, the hope is to have hundreds of American military aircraft converted to synthetic fuel made from coal by 2010.**

■ **Womb transplants may be possible within two years, says Richard Smith, a consultant gynaecologist at Hammersmith Hospital in west London, who hopes to transplant wombs from deceased donors into women unable to conceive. The transplant would be temporary because of possible harmful effects of long-term anti-rejection immunosuppressant drug usage.**

LIVER RISK FOR USERS OF ACNE TREATMENT

The acne treatment Roaccutane causes liver damage in more nearly half of users, say US scientists. The study, published in the *Archives Of Dermatology*, found that 44 per cent of users, who were healthy before taking the drug, developed abnormal levels of liver enzymes during treatment – a condition that can lead to jaundice, abdominal pain and clinical hepatitis. This level of risk is nearly three times that stated in the drug's information leaflet.

This is not the first adverse effect to be associated with the drug. In 1998 the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) issued a

memorandum to doctors stating that Accutane (the US name for the drug) "may cause depression, psychosis and rarely suicidal ideation, suicide attempts and suicide". The FDA noted that these mood changes would not necessarily disappear once the drug was discontinued.

Other research in the *American Journal of Gastroenterology* in July of this year suggested that the drug could trigger inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Taken during pregnancy, the drug can also cause birth defects.

“Adaptation policies have had far less attention than mitigation, and that is a mistake. We need to think about policies that prepare for a hotter, drier world, especially in poorer countries.”

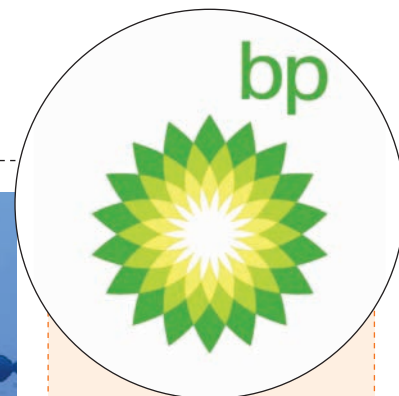
Frances Cairncross, President of The British Association for the Advancement of Science



WORLD BANK BROKERS BIGGEST CARBON DEAL

The World Bank has recently put together the largest ever carbon trading deal. Backed by funds from Danish Carbon Fund, the Italian Carbon Fund, Deutsche Bank, Mitsui & Co and private capital, they have paid two Chinese chemical companies \$US1.2bn (£643 million) to reduce and destroy emissions of HFC23, a heat-trapping gas 11,700 times stronger than carbon dioxide.

The investors will either use the carbon credits to count against their own carbon reduction targets (for example as a country or company), or will trade them on into the global carbon market – essentially betting that in the future the cost of exceeding internationally agreed carbon limits will be greater than that paid for the credits.



OCEAN CONSERVATION TRIUMPH

A strange silence has surrounded the largest act of conservation in America's history. Over recent months, 654,000 square miles of ocean bottom – more than twice the size of Texas – has been closed to commercial bottom trawling.

The area's protected are 135,000 square miles of ocean floor off the West Coast, 140,000 square miles around the northwestern Hawaiian islands, which has also been designated a national monument, and 379,000

square miles around Alaska.

The total area now protected is bigger than that covered by America's national parks, forests and grasslands, which amounts to roughly 420,000 square miles.

The protections were only won after hard fought battles, including legal action against the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

For the full story, visit www.theecologist.org

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The percentage of women who admit to struggling to wear fashion shoes that don't fit properly, so as to be seen to be up with the current style trends

PROTESTS HALT DAM PROJECT AGAIN

Work on the Maheshwar dam over the Narmada River in central India has been halted again in the face of more protests. The central Ministry of Forests and Environment ordered the state government of Madhya Pradesh, where the project is located, to halt work until project authorities have complied with conditions laid down for the rehabilitation of all people who stand to lose their lands, livelihoods or homes. Work on the project, India's first private hydro project, has mostly been on hold since it started in 1997. Only 14 per cent of the construction was completed, said a 2002 report by the forest ministry. A further suspension that lasted to early this year, means that 80 per cent of the work still needs to be done, while costs have risen nearly five times the original 1994 estimate of about \$US1 billion.

BP CORROSION SPREADS BEYOND ALASKA

While BP claims the Alaska corrosion debacle is a one-off, records and whistleblowers' statements indicate that similar failings could soon be repeated elsewhere. Concerns regarding corrosion in some of BP's newest pipelines highlight questions regarding BP's safety management culture. Despite repeated warnings from its own managers and specialist corrosion consultant, BP has brushed aside safety concerns over an experimental anti-corrosion coating being used on its recently opened flagship Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline crossing Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. Performance and safety tests that failed the chosen coating were allegedly covered up. Cracking was subsequently recorded in more than a quarter of the pipeline field joints in Georgia alone. This cracking has continued despite remedial measures. Internal reports reveal that BP limited the scope of follow-up tests out of "the desire to reduce repair frequency". Experienced professionals who examined the coating selection process now believe that the pipeline will rapidly corrode at the field joints. BP claims it should be trusted to manage what in Alaska it called "acceptable levels of corrosion".

BATTLE TO SAVE CONSERVATION AREA

A Special Area of Conservation in Wales, home to a colony of rare pink-crested newts and within metres of a housing estate, is being used to dump thousands of tonnes (150,000 per year) of waste from Liverpool.

The site, in Johnstown, near Wrexham, was acquired by Mersey Waste Holdings in 2005. Planning permission for the disused quarry to be used for landfill had been secured in 1995. However, sustained pressure by a local community organisation, the Hafod Environmental Group, led to the High Court revoking the permit in 2005, when the site was recognised as a Special Area of Conservation. Shortly

before the planning permission was due for review last month (August 31), Mersey Waste Holdings began dumping rubbish at the quarry, having identified a loophole in the High Court ruling. So far, at least 60 lorry loads of waste have been deposited, despite active protest by the local community, four of whom lay in front of the approaching trucks.

Pauline Smout, a local resident and chair of the Hafod Environmental Group, said the site had been ‘completely desecrated’ and a road ploughed through the conservation area. A nearby stream already shows signs of contamination. Hafod is set to mount a further legal challenge.



DEFRA'S REEF DEAL

Lack of effective action by the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has led to continued destruction of a marine reef, the Devon Wildlife Trust has revealed. Dredging for scallops in Lyme Bay, Devon, is causing serious damage to species and habitat alike.

The Trust, in conjunction with English Nature, had been in close negotiations with Defra and several local fishermen, calling for a 60-square mile ‘no dredging’ zone to be created. But before an agreement could be reached, Defra announced that private consultations with the scallop industry had resulted in three ‘voluntary’ exclusion zones within the bay.

A spokesman for the Devon Wildlife Trust said that they were “appalled and deeply saddened by the decision”.



SOLAR HARVEST

In Bittenwiesen, Germany, the fields of Mr Gärtner's 200-acre farm are covered with 10,050 solar panels. Though the electricity is only used to meet demand at peak periods, the farm could supply power to all 7,000 residents of his village. Gärtner makes more than \$600,000 a year in energy sales, enabling him, in 15 to 16 years, to pay off the money he borrowed to turn the 150-year-old family pig farm into a solar plant.

FLAKEY CLAIM

Kellogg's has been rapped for a TV advert that says eating Corn Flakes makes children more alert. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) studied Kellogg's research, which claimed that eating the cereal improved a child's alertness by nine per cent, and said it was “misleading”. “We concluded the study did not support the claim and that the ad was therefore misleading,” the ASA said.

NY WATER LOSES FIZZ

New York City's tap water, held by admirers to be the ‘champagne of drinking waters’, may now have to be filtered to protect its legendary purity. Now, however, the three main aqueduct and reservoir systems are under threat due to land development and the city may be forced to join most other big cities and construct a filtration plant – costing up to \$8 billion (£4.3 billion).

50

Percentage of fish consumed worldwide now produced in industrial fish farms

RADIOACTIVE REAY

A beach, part of the Sandside estate in Reay, Scotland, is the first officially acknowledged radioactive public landscape, after pieces of plutonium fuel rods were found there. Warning signs have been put up on the beach. Last month a potentially cancer-causing 4mm fragment of fuel rod from discharges at Dounreay nuclear power station, was found on the beach – the latest of a series of radioactive pollution findings there. This was a popular beach for locals and visitors but now the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency is advising people not to take children on the sands.

GROWING FEAR OVER LOSS OF COMMUNITY

There is growing unease in the UK over the crumbling of community pillars, such as local shops, post offices, green spaces and social services, a survey commissioned by Community Service Volunteers (CSV) reveals. The survey shows a burgeoning desire for grassroots contact in the face of rampant consumerism and lax governmental environmental concern.

The survey of 1000 people found that local institutions foster a sense of connectedness and belonging which cannot be achieved by using the automated check-out at Tesco, standing in the queue for ages at a massive centralised post office or getting on an airplane in order to find a patch of grass big enough to roll on. The survey found that 41 per cent of people are concerned with the disappearance of local amenities. This feeling is more acute among over-55s, with 53 per cent expressing worry about becoming alienated and isolated. Retail chains and doorstep delivery cannot replace the camaraderie and communication enjoyed

at the local corner shop. But it is not just the over-55s who are concerned: 25 per cent of all respondents expressed concern over older people losing their dignity. Forty per cent of the population feel there is waning support and guidance for young people. While 46 per cent of the population is concerned with losing green spaces and countryside, it is among younger people that this fear is most acute, with over 50 per cent of 25- to 44-year-olds expressing worry. And it is the youngest bracket, 18- to 24-year-olds, that are most vocal about protecting our national heritage, such as castles and historic homes. More than a quarter of the population, 30 per cent, is concerned about not spending enough quality time with their family. Nearly half – 47 per cent – of the 25- to 34-year-old group worries about diminishing family time.

CSV aims to use the findings to gather support for its community activism Make A Difference Day on October 28.

PESTICIDE BANNED ON ANIMALS OK FOR KIDS

The US speciality drug manufacturer Morton Grove Pharmaceuticals has filed a legal suit against the Ecology Center of Ann Arbor in Michigan.

The drug company is upset at the Center's opposition to the continued use of lindane as a fallback treatment for head lice.

The suit accuses the Ecology Center and two pediatricians of "disseminating false, misleading, and libelous statements about the safety profile and effectiveness of Lindane".

In early August, the Environmental Protection Agency announced the withdrawal of all agricultural products in the US containing the pesticide. "It makes no sense that lindane can't be used on pets or plants or persons serving in the military, but it can still be used on children," Mike Garfield, director of the Ecology Center, wrote in a statement. "It's a clear and simple harassment lawsuit intended to silence us."

The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed and thus clamorous to be led to safety, by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.

Political commentator HL Mencken, 1880-1956



ELDERLY AT RISK FROM OVERDOSE

Elderly people living in the UK are seriously at risk of accidentally harming themselves by taking potentially lethal mixtures of medicines, according to research from pharmacists at the Robert Gordon University in Scotland. A survey of 695 people aged between 78 and 86 years old, living in 24 sheltered housing complexes in Aberdeen, answered a questionnaire about the number and nature of the medicines they were taking.

The key findings were:

- 55 per cent of residents were taking five or more different medicines daily.
- 20 per cent were taking at least 12 tablets or capsules a day.
- 14 per cent of people were using medicines that had a high risk of toxic effect (e.g. warfarin, digoxin).
- In addition, they were prescribed medicine with a high risk of side-effects; among these were anti-inflammatory drugs (22 per cent); blood pressure medicines (46 per cent); diuretics (37 per cent); drugs for Parkinson's disease (2 per cent) and hypnotics (13 per cent).
- 63 per cent took their medicines for a specific medical problem.
- 40 per cent received regular prescriptions from their doctor.
- 11 per cent had experienced a change in their medicines, or instructions on how to take them, four times in the past 12 months.

GM POTATOES – FACTS AND FICTIONS:

in August 2006, German chemicals company BASF applied to start GM potato field trials in Cambridge and Derbyshire as early as next spring. The GM industry is making many claims about this product, but are these based on the truth? Andy Rees investigates

ARGUMENT NO. 1: WE NEED THIS PRODUCT

Late blight (*Phytophthora infestans*) costs UK farmers around £50m each year, even with regular application of fungicides. BASF claims that its GM potato would reduce fungicide spraying from around 15 times a year to just two.

This sounds impressive, until you realise that just 1,300 of the 12,000 tonnes of agrochemicals used on UK potatoes are fungicides – meaning that, at most, pesticide usage would be reduced by only 10 per cent.

As far as actually reducing pesticide usage is concerned, Robert Vint of Genetix Food Alert observes that “such claims ... usually [soon] prove to be extreme exaggerations”.

The biotech industry has a long track record of first exaggerating a problem, then offering an unproven and oversold GM solution. A classic example of this was Monsanto's showcase project in Africa, the GM sweet potato. It was claimed that the GM potato would be virus resistant, that it would increase yields from four to 10 tonnes per hectare, and that it would lift the poor of Africa out of poverty. However, this crop not only wasn't virus-resistant, but yielded much less than its non-GM counterpart. Moreover, the virus it targeted was not a major factor affecting yield in Africa. The claims were made without any peer-reviewed data to back them up. And the assertion that yields would increase from four to 10 tonnes per hectare relied upon a lie – according to FAO statistics, non-GM potatoes typically yield not four but 10 tonnes. Furthermore, a poorly resourced Ugandan virus-resistant sweet potato, that really was roughly doubling yields, was studiously ignored by the biotech lobby.

Also conveniently overlooked are any non-GM solutions to blight. Many conventional potato varieties are naturally blight-resistant, some of which the organic sector are currently trialling. Another non-GM control, used by organic farmers against late blight in potatoes, is the use of copper sprays in low doses. This is applied to the foliage of the plant and does not contaminate the tuber.



ARGUMENT NO. 2: MINIMAL CONTAMINATION

An article in *The Guardian*, which reads more like a BASF press release (the corporate takeover of the media is a subject covered in my forthcoming book), reports that “Andy Beadle, an expert in fungal resistance at BASF, said the risks of contamination from GM crops are minimal because potatoes reproduce through the production of tubers, unlike other crops such as oil seed rape [canola], which produces pollen that can be carried for miles on the wind.”

Not only is this remark economical with the facts, it seems a little brazen given the biotech industry's rather prolific history on contamination issues, which has resulted in at least 105 contamination incidents (some of them major), over 10 years, and in as many as 39 countries.

Amongst many other things, Mr Beadle forgot to mention that there is less direct risk of contamination by cross-pollination, not no risk. Furthermore, cross-pollination is much higher when the GM and non-GM potato varieties are different; one study showed that, even at plot-scale, 31 per cent of plants had become hybrids as far as 1km from a GM variety. Cross-pollination also increases greatly when the chief pollinator is the ‘very common’ pollen beetle, which travels considerably further than another potato pollinator, the bumble bee. Years later, cross-pollination is still possible through potato

volunteers (plants from a previous year's dropped tubers or seed); Defra itself has acknowledged this problem. And similarly, ‘relic’ plants can persist in fields or waste ground. What is more, blight-resistant varieties create a far greater risk of GM contamination because the flowering tops are more likely to be left on than with non-blight-resistant varieties. This is because tops are usually removed from non-blight-resistant varieties to reduce disease incidence. Also, a number of modern strains can produce considerable numbers of berries, each producing 400 seeds; these can lay dormant for seven years, before becoming mature tuber-producing plants.

And if all that isn't enough to suggest that ‘minimal’ contamination is the figment of the corporate imagination, then it is well worth checking out the March 2006 GM Contamination Register, set up by Greenpeace and GeneWatch UK, and available at www.gmcontaminationregister.org. This includes some of the worst contamination incidents to date, including the following three.

In October 2000, in the US, GM StarLink corn, approved only as animal feed, ended up in taco shells and other food products. It led to a massive recall of more than 300 food brands and cost Aventis an immense \$1 billion to clear up. StarLink corn was just one per cent of the total crop, but it tainted 50 per cent of the

TRIALS GM TRIALS GM TRIALS GM TRIALS GM TRI

harvest. In March 2005, Syngenta admitted that it had accidentally produced and disseminated – between 2001 and 2004 – ‘several hundred tonnes’ of an unapproved corn called Bt10 and sold the seed as approved corn, Bt11. In the US, 150,000 tonnes of Bt10 were harvested and went into the food chain. And in April 2005, unauthorised GM Bt rice was discovered to have been sold and grown unlawfully for the past two years in the Chinese province of Hubei. An estimated 950 to 1200 tons of the rice entered the food chain after the 2004 harvest, with the risk of up to 13,500 tons entering the food chain in 2005. The rice may also have contaminated China’s rice exports. And now, in 2006, BASF’s application comes amidst the latest biotech scandal, that of US rice contamination by an unauthorised, experimental GM strain, Bayer’s LLRice 601.

ARGUMENT NO. 3: SEPARATION DISTANCES

The GM lobby have proposed a buffer zone of 2-5m of fallow land around the GM potato crop, together with a 20m separation with non-GM potato crops.

The National Pollen Research Unit (NPRU), on the other hand, has recommended separation distances of 500m. Interestingly, pro-industry sources have always claimed that only very small separation distances are necessary, with buffer zones for rape set at a derisory 200m in the UK crop trials. Judith Jordan (later Rylott) of AgrEvo (now Bayer) gave evidence under oath that the chances of cross-pollination beyond 50m were as likely as getting pregnant from a lavatory seat. Well, you have been warned. But oilseed rape pollen has been found to travel 26km, maize pollen 5km, and GM grass pollen 21km.

Meanwhile, good ol’ Defra is once again paving the way for the biotech industry, with its so-called ‘co-existence’ paper of August 2006. This will determine the rules for commercial GM crop growing in England – yet astonishingly, it proposes no separation distances. GM contamination prevention measures will be left in the slippery hands of the GM industry in the form of a voluntary code of practice.

ARGUMENT NO. 4: THIS PRODUCT IS SAFE

The biotech industry has from the very beginning assured us that their products are entirely safe. This is because, they claim, they are so similar to conventional crops as to be ‘Substantially Equivalent’, a discredited concept that led to GM

crop approval in the US (and thence the EU).

The truth is that, as far as human health goes, the biotech industry cannot know that their products are safe, because there has only been one published human health study – the Newcastle Study, which was published in 2004. And although this research project was very limited in scope, studying the effects of just one GM meal taken by seven individuals, it nonetheless found GM DNA transferring to gut bacteria in the human subjects.

As for tests of the effects of GM crops on animals, there are only around 20 published studies that look at the health effects of GM food (not hundreds, as claimed by the biotech lobby), as well as some unpublished ones. The findings of many of these are quite alarming. The unpublished study on the FlavrSavr tomato fed to rats, resulted in lesions and gastritis in these animals. Monsanto’s unpublished 90-day study of rats fed MON863 maize resulted in smaller kidney sizes and a raised white blood cell count. And when it comes to GM potatoes, Dr Ewen and Dr Pusztai’s 1999 10-day study on male rats fed GM potatoes, published in the highly respected medical journal *The Lancet*, showed that feeding GM potatoes to rats led to many abnormalities, including: gut lesions; damaged immune systems; less developed brains, livers, and testicles; enlarged tissues, including the pancreas and intestines; a proliferation of cells in the stomach and intestines, which may have signalled an increased potential for cancer; and the partial atrophy of the liver in some animals. And this is in an animal that is virtually indestructible.

ARGUMENT NO. 5: INCREASING CHOICE

The proposed UK trials would follow those being carried out in Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands. Barry Stickings of BASF explains: “We need to conduct these [in the UK] to see how the crop grows in different conditions. I hope that society, including the NGOs, realise that all we are doing is increasing choice.”

So, how much choice has GM crops given farmers? Well, in Canada, within a few years, the organic canola industry was pretty much wiped out by GM contamination. And in the US, a 2004 study showed that, after just eight years of commercial growing, at least 50 per cent of conventional maize and soy and 83 per cent of conventional canola were GM-contaminated – again dooming non-GM agriculture.

ARGUMENT NO. 6: PUBLIC OPINION

Regarding BASF’s application to trial GM potatoes, the *Financial Times* reported that “Barry Stickings of BASF said he did not expect too much opposition to the application”. What had clearly slipped Stickings’ mind was that BASF had already faced protests with this product in Sweden, where it is in its second year of production.

In Ireland, where one may have expected more enthusiasm for the project, given the history of blight during the 1840s famine, BASF was given the go-ahead earlier this year for trials of its GM blight-resistant potato, only to face stiff public resistance and rigorous conditions enforced by the Irish Environmental Protection Agency. BASF later discontinued the trials.

In the UK and Europe, as Friends of the Earth points out: “Consumers ... have made it clear that they do not want ... GM food.” In fact, the British Retail Consortium, which represents British supermarkets, has already stated that they ‘won’t be stocking GM potatoes for the conceivable future’ because ‘people remain suspicious of GM.’ My forthcoming book goes into the rejection of GM crops in more depth.

And even more surprisingly, in the US, where 55 per cent of the world’s GM crops are grown, GM potatoes were taken off the market back in 2000 when McDonald’s, Burger King, McCain’s and Pringles all refused to use them, for fear of losing customers.

So, having reviewed the claims made about BASF’s GM potatoes, and having found them, well, somewhat lacking, there is only one course of action open to the government, and that is, as Friends of the Earth’s GM Campaigner Liz Wright recently said, to “...reject this application and prevent any GM crops from being grown in the UK until it can guarantee that they won’t contaminate our food, farming and environment.”

Genetically Modified Food – A Short Guide For The Confused

by Andy Rees (Pluto Press, £12.99) will be published on October 20. *Ecologist* readers can purchase copies of the book for only £10 by calling 01264 342932 or emailing your order to tps.pluto@thomson.com and quoting PLUREES1. You can read a fully annotated version of this article at www.theecologist.org. Defra consultation on GM potato trials closes on October 20. To have your say, visit www.defra.gov.uk

Not so 'smart' drugs

Targeted medicines hit wide of the mark. By **Pat Thomas**

Not long ago a group of physicians, bioengineers, drug manufacturers and marketing men met in Atlanta. The occasion was the annual and highly influential American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) conference.

The yearly ASCO conference is an important marketing platform for manufacturers of cancer drugs. If you can sway the minds of the assembled investors and reporters with good news about the latest pharmaceutical miracles, you can guarantee yourself a profit-making drug.

This year the talk was all about 'smart bombs' – targeted drugs, some of which use nanoparticle delivery systems, that promise to kill the cancer and leave the patient standing. Cancer smart bombs are medicine's latest effort towards a more 'personalised medicine'; and yet if this latest evolution of the concept of the body as a battleground is anything to go by, medicine has moved so far away from the personal that it may never find its way back.

Targeted cancer drugs are the result of the combined efforts of geneticists and bioengineers, and according to most pundits they are a sign of progress.

Most prescription medicines are now effective for fewer than half of the people who take them – and the side-effects can be worse than the illnesses. The shift from non-specific systemic drugs that have a broad-brush effect and can be taken by millions of people, to those tailored to a minority with a specific genetic profile, is seen as a way of reducing adverse effects – which hospitalise a quarter of a million people in the UK and more than

two million in the US each year. Fewer adverse effects also means less potential for being sued – a bonus for litigation-weary doctors and insurance companies.

Unfortunately, before most of these smart bombs can get past a full set of clinical trials, the cracks inevitably begin to show. Smart bombs, it appears are not so smart after all.

The breast cancer drug Herceptin, manufactured by Roche, is a good example. From the moment it hit the market it was clear that there were problems. Clinical trials showed that around four per cent of women sustained severe heart damage while taking the drug. A further, but as yet unquantified, number of women were believed to experience mild to moderate heart symptoms. Since there is still no long-term data on Herceptin it is impossible to say if these figures are an under- or over-estimate, but what is clear is that they are not a fluke. Recently another targeted cancer drug, Glivec, manufactured by Novartis, was also found to damage the heart.

When bad news like this hits the press, Big Pharma's spin doctors and the physicians they pay to endorse their products will often feign shock and say that such adverse effects simply could not have been predicted until the drug was being used widely. This is not true and such a disingenuous attitude to human health is simply not acceptable.

Consider just one example of the heart and cancer link. Back in 1999, scientists at Emory University discovered a new family of enzymes that play an important role in generating the abnormal cell growth that occurs both in

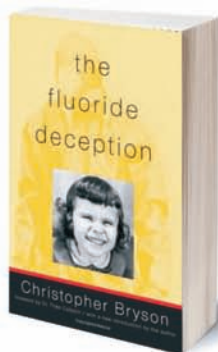
“Until we understand why some cancers progress while others do not all the smart bombs on the planet will not help us cure cancer”

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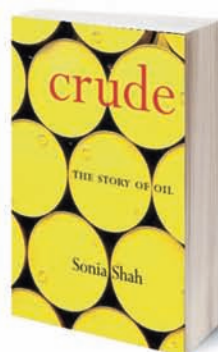
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—*The Guardian*

cancer cells and in some forms of cardiovascular disease. These enzymes produce what are known as reactive oxygen species, which function as potent growth promoters inside cells, instructing cells to divide more rapidly. In the case of cancer, rapid and uncontrolled cell division leads to tumour formation. In cardiovascular disease, abnormal cell growth leads to the formation of plaques, seen in hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis) and in thickening of the blood vessel walls, which causes high blood pressure.

Heart disease and cancer, then, are the results of very similar processes; and targeted cancer therapies are a prescription for problems, because they draw battle lines that the body simply does not, indeed cannot, acknowledge. In the body, as opposed to in the lab, any drug that targets specific enzymes in the tumour cell will most likely target the heart as well.

It is worth remembering that while conventional medicine persists in thinking of tumours as foreign objects of mysterious origins, a cancerous growth is a part of the body and an extension of normal bodily processes.

At a very basic level, cancer – the result of uncontrolled duplication of cells – represents the extreme end of a spectrum of natural physiological functions. It is similar to the process that turns a blastocyst into an embryo and then a foetus and then a child. It is the process that takes place in cells and tissues to help heal cuts and wounds. Seen in this way, what we call ‘cancer’ is really just an arbitrary label given to a normal biological process, taking place at the wrong time and in the wrong place and in a body that has, probably for multiple reasons, failed to keep it in check.

In Europe, where autopsies are still common, it is not unusual for coroners to find people carrying undetected cancers in their bodies. These cancers are generally kept in check by the body, often for years, and have posed no threat to the carrier. Until we understand why some cancers progress while others do not, all the smart bombs on the planet will not help us cure cancer. But we will never gain this level of understanding until we get back to seeing the body as an integrated and holistic system.

At present, most of the pharmaceutical smart bombs are cancer treatments. But already bioengineers are producing similar types of drugs to treat heart disease. Drug manufacturers are salivating at the prospect. It’s worth asking: if cancer drugs can cause heart disease – how far are we from a future where targeted heart disease drugs can also cause cancer?



The European Ecolabel is Europe’s official green label. Run by Defra in the UK, you’ll find its flower logo on a growing range of quality products which are independently certified to meet high environmental standards. To find out more, and to see a full list of ecolabelled products, visit www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/ecolabel



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Making hay while the sun shines

What is the solution to food and farming in a world changed by global warming, asks **Andrew Simms**



“ Tesco conceded that shoppers would be paying more for food because of the extreme global weather conditions ”

In three months from May 2006, something odd happened to the price of food in Tesco, the supermarket so proud of its aggressively low prices. The cost of butter went up 21 per cent, milk 11 per cent, bread seven per cent and instant coffee more than six per cent. Across a huge range of goods, the price of a basket of goods busted the background rate of inflation, which never crawled much over two per cent.

Heavy rains in Vietnam helped push coffee prices to a seven-year high, while poor weather drove wonderfully named ‘orange juice futures’ to a 16-year price high.

Early summer heatwaves led to poor wheat yields and early harvests in Britain. In the Ukraine, Russia, Hungary, Slovakia and North America, crops were hit by bad weather. Poland’s farm minister, Andrez Lepper, feared that up to 20 per cent of the country’s entire harvest would be destroyed by drought if the heatwave continued. According to the European Commission, droughts were driving up both demand and price for cereals.

All this, added to the third consecutive year

of rising fuel costs, led two of Britain’s biggest flour millers, Rank Hovis and ADM Milling, to increase the price of flour by around £29 per ton, meaning knock-on price rises of between 15 and 20 per cent for producers who use a lot of flour. According to the National Association of Master Bakers, small craft bakers stood to be particularly badly hit. As with so much in an age dominated by big phenomena, like the supermarkets and global warming, it’s the little guys who get it.

Tesco conceded that shoppers would be paying more for food because of the extreme global weather conditions: “Obviously, poor harvests and changes in market conditions can have an effect on availability of produce.” Even fruit, which we imagine happily bathing itself to ripeness in any amount of sun, suffered in the heat. Yields were down, and with southern Europe, a ‘default supplier’ when crops fail at home, also in trouble and not able to provide, prices went up.

This, could of course, be dismissed as merely a stumble in the food system, attributable to

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COMMENTS

normal seasonal variation. If only it weren't for some inconvenient voices in the background.

Like, for example, the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Professor John Holdren, who announced in one of his first public statements in his position, that he believed global warming was happening much faster than previously thought. "We are not talking anymore about what climate models say might happen in the future," he said. "We are experiencing dangerous human disruption of the global climate and we're going to experience more,"

Even more worrying was the conclusion of a conference specially convened by the Royal Society in 2005 to look at the impact of climate change on how we grow food.

Results were presented of a series of large-scale field experiments on a range of staple crops including maize, rice, soyabean and wheat. They showed much worse impacts on food production from the pattern of global warming predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Increasing temperatures, drought and ground-level ozone concentrations, "will result in substantial reduction in crop yields".

Several people, if not sceptical about the fact of climate change, have argued that its impacts will not be as bad as many fear; and even that the prospect of growing more tropical plants in British back gardens means that we should welcome it. One key 'benefit' highlighted by such voices is that, with more carbon in the atmosphere, plants will have more of what they need to grow. But the conference was told that negative impacts far outweighed any unintended positive consequences. Professor Steve Long of Illinois University said: "Growing crops much closer to real conditions has shown that increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will have roughly half the

beneficial effects that were previously hoped for in the event of climate change."

This is bad news for everyone. But it is exceptionally bad news for the hundreds of millions of people globally who already do not get enough to eat, and who live in places where it is difficult to guarantee that crops will rise from the soil each year to feed you. Lower crop yields overall, not only mean less food to go around, they also mean higher prices which hurts the poorest first and most. Africa, in particular, is vulnerable to climate change as even the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has pointed out: "The size of its land mass means that in the middle of the continent, overall rises in temperature will be up to double the global rise, with increased risk of extreme droughts, floods and outbreaks of disease."

Such acute awareness of Africa's plight, however, unfortunately failed to stop Britain missing its own greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, or to ensure that two key global funds, set up to help poor countries cope with climate change, contained more than around one tenth of the money pledged by the time it was due in 2005.

And the consequences are only too real. Severe drought hit the Horn and East Africa in 2005–2006, leaving around eight million people across East Africa with a food crisis, even after better rains returned. So many animals died that herders would need years to recover their livestock and livelihoods. Even when the rains did come back they were 'patchy and erratic' in parts of northern Kenya and Somalia that are still recovering from a four-year-long drought. In July 2006, the World Food Programme announced that it was running out of food stocks for millions of people in vulnerable communities in Kenya.

Africa's climate has always been erratic, especially in semi-arid areas. But the continent

“ In this context, all the hype around biofuels seems frankly barmy ”



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is warming. Its six warmest years on record have occurred since 1987. Worldwide, 2005 was the hottest year on record. Further warming, changes in rainfall and disruption to farming are all inevitable if the science is even remotely right.

It's also not just a problem for Africa – which, rightly or wrongly, is already synonymous in the Western imagination with hunger. A recent report from the UK-based Working Group on Climate Change and Development detailed threats to livelihoods across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Farming employs around one-third of the working population of Latin America. And, studies in Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay show falls in yields for a number of key crops such as barley, grapes, maize, potatoes, soybeans, and wheat, potentially linked to global warming. Climate change also threatens more damaging impacts from plant and animal diseases and pests. The IPCC pointed out that: “Large alterations in Latin American ecosystems resulting from climate change impacts would have the potential to endanger the livelihoods of subsistence farmers and pastoral peoples, who make up a large portion of the rural populations of the Andean plateaus and tropical and subtropical forest areas.” Urban populations that depend on food from rural areas are also at risk.

Asia, home to the world's most populous countries and 87 per cent of the world's known 470 million small farms, is also incredibly vulnerable. China alone accounts for almost half of those small farms, with 193 million; followed by India, with nearly one-quarter of the total. Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Vietnam also are home to millions of small-scale farmers.

There are now at least 815 million chronically malnourished people in the world – 95 per cent of them in developing countries. Global warming is set to further undermine

food security, but inequitable access to food is also a major factor fuelling world hunger. Latin America and countries like China have something else in common. Both are targets for huge European and US-owned supermarket expansion. As we've already seen in Britain, the supermarkets' large, highly centralised operations marginalise small-scale farmers. Their impact on an already precarious situation in poorer countries could be appalling.

In this context, all the hype around biofuels as a solution to rising fuel prices, when such crops demand huge swathes of land, seems frankly barmy. But it's all too easy to foresee owners of vast 4WDs, driving with a smugly ethical aura, just because they are powered by biofuels, forgetting that the land to grow them was probably switched from growing food, or created by forest clearance. According to the Department for Transport, Britain has only enough available land to provide one-third of its transport fuel needs from crops by 2050 (a figure many others consider in itself over-optimistic). So, just as Amazonian rainforest has been slashed to grow soya, there will be unavoidable new pressures on forests and farmland, just as they are needed even more for food, and to regulate the atmosphere.

For several years we've probably thought about the link between food and climate change in terms of 'food miles'. It's a measure that shows the crazy inefficiency of a food system that often uses more energy to move food around, than is actually contained in calorific value in the food itself.

There are few better examples of the difference between measures of economic and ecological efficiency. You can grow exotic fruit with cheap labour in a poor country, and then transport it cheaply because fuel has low, or internationally no, environmental taxes. It's

“ the future is much more local, and that the big chain retailers just don't fit ”

Red hot for green funds.



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COMMENTS

economically efficient on daftly limited criteria, but ecological nonsense and, because of rigged international markets, it frequently makes no difference in terms of raising the indigenous people out of poverty.

It is the logic of get-rich-quick for the few, stay-poor-long for the many.

So what does an environmentally sustainable, climate-proof and climate-friendly food system capable of feeding everyone actually look like, and are supermarkets part of it? Colin Tudge, author of *So Shall We Reap*, thinks the future is much more local, and that the big chain retailers don't fit. As long as the global food system is designed primarily to profit multinationals by supplying the whims of wealthy consumers, he says, it will be impossible to design a way of farming that is both resilient to climate change and which feeds people in need. Supermarkets, according to Tudge, "are playing the international trade

game, buying as cheaply as possible, which means that they are buying from the people who are most desperate. If you have an agriculture that is designed to feed people, they [supermarkets] have no role; there is nothing they do that could not be done by smaller companies." In Latin America, many small-scale farmers who underpin countless communities are already losing out to the centralised logistics of the supermarkets.

Climate change, rising fuel prices, the need for hungry people to be able to feed themselves, not to mention a backlash against clone towns, impersonal big businesses, and a new popular desire for real, local food... suddenly, supermarkets are looking very out-of-place in the modern world.

Andrew Simms is the policy director of the New Economics Foundation (www.neweconomics.org)

“ It is the logic of get-rich-quick for the few, stay-poor-long for the many ”

The numbers game

David Nicholson-Lord explains why trying to discuss human population growth these days is like placing your head on a stand at a coconut shy

Not long ago I spent some time on the Indian subcontinent and one of my abiding memories is of travelling from the far-flung Nepali town of Jumla, home to some of the thinnest people on the planet, to the airport lounge at Delhi, where the bulk of passengers were Westerners, notably Americans, and where the human race seemed to have undergone a vast distension in size – an entire evolutionary cycle in the blink of an eye. At the time it struck me as a metaphor for the economic relationship between North and South – one part of the planet growing fat on the food shortages of the other – but I have since realised it's a metaphor with many interpretations.

For the first time in history, it was reported this summer, there are now more overweight people in the world (more than a billion) than malnourished (around 800 million). But there are also many more people, fat and thin alike. Back in August, the Office of National Statistics disclosed that the UK had broken through the 60 million population barrier (in 2005), while the US was due to reach 300 million by October 2006. Both are markers of a process that sees over 70 million people being added to the global population each year, with growth

forecast at 40 per cent by 2050, taking us from 6.5 to 9.1 billion – another 2.6 billion people. But will they be fat people or thin people and does it matter? I think it does.

Trying to discuss human population growth these days is not unlike placing your head on a stand at a coconut shy. The Right will accuse you of authoritarianism and permissiveness, the Left of being racist, fascistic or neo-Malthusian. The recent upsurge in migration as a key factor in population growth in developed countries has added a further inflammatory ingredient. To their eternal discredit, environmental groups, fearful of such a witches' brew, have fled the field, camouflaging their retreat in a blizzard of rationalisations. Yet according to the head of one leading environmental organisation, population is the subject that attracts the most questions at meetings round the country. In fact, if you're looking for issues that best demonstrate the chasm between what ordinary people think – not least because they experience its realities daily – and what civil society leaders deem it politic to mention in public, population would undoubtedly come high up the list.

What explains this? One much-cited factor is political correctness (PC), a phrase

the Right loves, the Left hates and most neutrals acknowledge exists but have trouble defining. In this case, PC may be shorthand for the deliberate substitution of one agenda – reproductive health – for another, more overtly concerned with human numbers. This gathered impetus after the Cairo population conference in 1994 and one result has been the systematic exclusion of the numbers dimension from permissible civil society discourse – and, to a degree, the ostracising and blackballing of its proponents. One of the most vivid expressions of this was the decision by the long-established NGO Population Concern to rebrand itself Interact Worldwide in 2003 – a move which the group saw as its only means of survival but which would have no doubt fascinated 1984 author George Orwell, deviser of Newspeak.

There was a rationale to this, of course. Concern with numbers had become (wrongly) associated with a coercive approach – chiefly Mrs Gandhi’s sterilisation polices in India and China’s (continuing) one-child policy. Too much attention had focused on developing countries as the chief locus of population growth – the ‘teeming millions’ thesis. More significantly, environmentalists in particular had absorbed the message that numbers are not the only factor: how you live is also important. In terms of global environmental impact, one fat person – metaphorically speaking – can do as much damage as many thin ones.

Over the past decade or so, the rapidly developing methodology of ecological footprinting has helped elaborate such calculations. The latest Living Planet report, for example, tells us not only that in 2001 humanity as a whole overshot the Earth’s annual biological capacity by 20 per cent but that one American has 12 times the overall global impact of one Indian. So, although India, with 1.1 billion people, is conventionally

thought of as being ‘overpopulated’ while the US, with 300 million, is not, the reality is very different. On a like-for-like comparison with India, for example, the US population is 12 times 300 million – or 3.6 billion. In other words, the US as a whole does three times more global environmental damage than India as a whole. Do the sums for the two countries’ *per capita* greenhouse gas emissions – and therefore impact on the earth’s atmosphere alone, as opposed to the entirety of the global ecosystem – and the results are even more extreme, since an American emits roughly 20 times more carbon than an Indian.

Environmental groups have grasped this approach but have chosen to interpret it as meaning that numbers no longer matter – that greening our lifestyles and our technologies is the key. For some, this approach is no doubt genuine – in the sense in which Thomas Kuhn talked about paradigm shifts, they no longer ‘see’ the population growth lurking behind virtually every aspect of environmental crisis. For others, I suspect, it is a kind of wilful blindness, born of realpolitik plus a desire not to alienate members, upset fellow progressives and get their heads knocked off the coconut stand. But the verdict of green historians will surely be that it’s a betrayal of future generations. How can groups such as Friends of the Earth and the Campaign to Protect Rural England work to defend green space from development and not recognise the crucial importance of human numbers – the numbers of those wanting housing, offices, shops, schools, leisure facilities?

The truth is that greener lifestyles can make a difference but that zero-impact living, for the foreseeable future, is a chimera and that human numbers do matter – hugely. Footprinting studies by Andrew Ferguson at the Optimum Population Trust suggest that if a world of six billion lived

“ The right will accuse you of authoritarianism, the left of being racist ”

 <p>Local Food at the Cross Roads: Celebration, challenge, opportunity</p> <p>2nd National Food Links UK Conference</p> <p>East of England Showground, Peterborough</p> <p>29th November 2006</p>	<p>Keynote Addresses Include:</p> <p>Sir Don Curry (tbc) Chair, Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy Delivery Group</p> <p>Lawrence Woodward Chief Executive, Elm Farm Research Centre</p> <p>Tully Wakeman Coordinator, East Anglia Food link/Chair, Food Links UK</p> <p>Dan Keech Senior Researcher Food and Farming, New Economics Foundation</p>	<p>Sue Clifford (tbc) Director, Common Ground</p> <p>Conference Rates Small Voluntary Sector: £110 Large Voluntary Sector and Public Sector: £165 Central Government Departments & Agencies, Commercial Sector: £195</p> <p>Register Now Download a booking form at: www.foodlinks-uk.org or email: sarah@foodlinks-uk.org Tel: 01225 787921</p>
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a 'modest' western European lifestyle based entirely on renewable energy, it would still need, to support it, another 1.8 planets – a figure that can only increase as populations rise and their needs, wants and aspirations multiply.

The UK, with a projected increase of 10 million – roughly a sixth – over the next half century, is in the front line of this process – a small, over-urbanised, overcrowded country, its quality of life visibly plummeting, no longer capable of surviving on its own resources yet jamming hundreds of thousands more people in every year. Many of these are 'thin' people – from Eastern Europe, say, or the developing world – whom we turn fairly quickly into fattish ones, as they become Western urban consumers, so the story is a speeded-up version of what's happening on the planet at large. But the lesson in both cases is the same. Fat people, ecologically speaking, may be very bad news, thinnish people are better; but whether we're fat, thin or medium-sized, there's only so many of us the planet can take.

David Nicholson-Lord is a research associate with the Optimum Population Trust (www.optimumpopulation.org) and former environment editor of the *Independent on Sunday*.



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CLIMATE MARCH

SATURDAY 4TH NOVEMBER '06

12 noon:

**Rally at the US Embassy,
 Grosvenor Sq, London
 Cycle Protest assemblies
 Lincoln's Inn Fields, 10.00 am**

Speakers include:
**George Monbiot
 Caroline Lucas MEP
 Norman Baker MP
 Colin Challen MP
 Zac Goldsmith**



**PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION ON
 THE SATURDAY BEFORE THE NAIROBI CLIMATE TALKS.
 See www.globalclimatecampaign.org**



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"The best thing we can do with environmentalists is shoot them." MICHAEL O'LEARY, RYANAIR CHIEF EXECUTIVE⁵

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* Offer valid until it's too late to repair the damage. Book now and leave others to pay. Offer subject to shortsighted profit chasing. References: (1) Derived from: Aviation and Global Warming DFT 2004 (2) Source: UK Parliament Environmental Audit Committee, baseline 1990 (3) World Health Organisation estimates (4) Members of the Sustainable Aviation Group include British Airways, EasyJet, Virgin Atlantic, Flybe and First Choice (5) Source: The Independent, November 3rd 2005.

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GreenSkies Alliance

Apologies to Winston Churchill. This is a parody of Ryanair's ad.

This is the advert the recession-hit newspaper industry found too hot to handle. Despite being offered the full page rate to run the advert (in alphabetical order) *The Express*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Mail*, *The Telegraph*, *The Times* and *The Sun* refused to run it for "commercial reasons", which the group behind Plane Truth took to mean

they didn't want to upset the aviation industry. This advert proved to be so hot that only one national newspaper dared to run it. The ad is a spoof of an advertising campaign launched by Ryanair in the aftermath of the alleged terrorist plot that was foiled on August 10, which pictures Winston Churchill saying, "Let's beat terrorism. Keep Britain Flying"

GOING, GOING, GONE?

It's not enough to be told (again and again) that another species is on the brink of extinction. We need to know what we can do

One hardly ever sees the Eurasian lynx, because few survive. This tuft-eared wildcat is quite shy, living in forests where he can hide himself well. The lynx is mostly active at dusk and hunts small cloven-footed animals which he can sneak up on. His prey in Switzerland are deer and the chamois.

By the end of the 19th century, in most of Europe the lynx vanished from existence. Deforestation, a massive decrease of its natural prey, and hunting were to blame.

For a long time, Pro Natura has struggled to bring back the lynx. In 1971, the first lynx was reintroduced to Switzerland and Pro Natura has vigorously supported the species ever since. But once again, the 'alp tiger' must fight for survival in its original habitat.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- Become a member of the nature conservation organisation Pro Natura, or support its species protection effort by making a donation at www.pronatura.ch or by telephone at +41 (61) 317 9191.
- Information about the Eurasian lynx and the specific needs for its environment can be found at www.pronatura.ch and www.kora.ch.

FACT BOX:

COMMON NAME: Eurasian lynx

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Lynx lynx*

STATUS: Near-threatened

POPULATION: Less than 50,000 worldwide; approximately 100 in Switzerland.

LIFESPAN: Around 16 years.

RANGE: Found in the forests of Europe and Asia (north of the Himalayas).

THREATS: Destruction of its habitat (deforestation), the decrease of its natural prey, hunting, and a change in the natural dynamic between species.

EURASIAN LYNX



SPINY SEAHORSE

Seahorses conjure up images of myth and legend, creatures that are found pulling the chariot of Neptune or on ancient coats of arms and manuscripts. So it comes as a major surprise to many people to find there is not just one, but two species of seahorse in the European waters and around Britain. The spiny seahorse is the larger of the two – about six inches long – and has an impressive mane.

Seahorses are under threat in all the areas where they are found, as they are collected for a variety of curio trades. They are also disappearing from parts of their habitat due to pollution, habitat loss and sedimentation, which smothers the places where they dwell, killing off everything that lives there.

Traditionally, they have been associated with seagrass beds, but research by The Seahorse Trust through The British Seahorse Survey shows that they can occupy quite a wide range of algae-covered areas, and these need to be protected.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- Don't buy dried seahorses, starfish, shells or other marine creatures offered for sale by seaside shops. Also, don't buy wild caught seahorses as pets, as they will not survive without specialist care.
- Find out more about The Seahorse Trust and the work it does through the British Seahorse Survey. Visit www.theseahorsetrust.co.uk and www.britisshorseahorsesurvey.org, email: neil.seahorses@tesco.net or call 01392 875930.

FACT BOX:

COMMON NAME: Spiny seahorse

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Hippocampus guttulatus*

STATUS: Endangered and data-deficient.

POPULATION: Not entirely known, but not considered to be common.

LIFESPAN: In captivity, up to seven years. In the wild, six to seven years.

RANGE: Around Ireland, the south coast of England, and the west coast of Wales up to the Shetland Isles. Coasts of France, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Portugal and the Mediterranean.

THREATS: Over-fishing for the medicinal, pet and curio trades. Also habitat loss, pollution and as a bycatch in the fishing industry.

ON THE BRINK

The woolly monkey is one of the largest and most beautiful of the South American primates. It lives in the middle and upper Amazon basin, to the west of the rivers Negro and Tapajos, but there are four subspecies of woolly monkey recognised and spread all over Central and South America.

The monkeys are arboreal, spending most of their time high in the canopy of the trees, up to 150ft up. The most striking adaptation of a woolly monkey is its incredibly useful prehensile tail, which acts as a powerful fifth limb.

Woolly monkeys need large areas of primary forest to move around in. Sadly, their forest habitat is increasingly fragmented, and their survival is additionally threatened by hunting for bushmeat. Their babies are still sold into the pet trade by unscrupulous hunters. It is not known how many woolly monkeys survive in the wild today but hopefully, with greater awareness and education, these beautiful monkeys and their natural habitat can be saved.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- Adopt a monkey (visit the website www.adoptamonkey.org). The money raised will help this organisation to rescue more monkeys in need in the UK and abroad.
- Only buy wood certified by the Forestry Standards Commission (FSC). That way, you can ensure you are not contributing to the destruction of rainforest.

FACT BOX:

COMMON NAME: Woolly monkey

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Lagothrix lagothericha*

STATUS: From near-threatened to vulnerable, depending on the subspecies

POPULATION: The exact population of woolly monkeys in the wild is unknown.

LIFESPAN: About 25 years in captivity.

RANGE: Woolly monkeys live in isolated areas in the Amazon basin in Central and South America.

THREATS: Woolly monkeys are certainly the most threatened wherever they occur, as they are a frequent target of the bushmeat trade; and the fact that the species is adapted to primary forest. Deforestation, logging, hunting, and the exotic pet trade are all threats to their continued existence.

WOOLLY MONKEY



BUMBLEBEE

'About half Britain's social bumblebee species are in dire straits' **BUGLIFE**

Few invertebrates have the appeal of bumblebees. It is not just their fluffy appearance that charms; their love of flowers and soft, bumbling ways also endear them to us.

While there are 270 species of bee in the UK, it is the bumblebees that are best known; but all is not well. In the past 50 years, 10 of the species have undergone massive declines and one – the short-haired bumblebee (*Bombus subterraneus*) – became extinct around 1990. Around half the social bumblebees are therefore in dire straits.

The economic impact to agriculture from the loss of natural pollinators is well-known in America, and in Europe, where 38 per cent of bees and hoverflies are in decline, the first evidence of suppressed agricultural

productivity due to lack of pollination is coming to light. The decline of bumblebees is marching hand in hand with the loss of wildflowers: we may not find out what is cause and what is effect until it is too late.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- Join Buglife – the only organisation in Europe devoted to the conservation of all invertebrates. It is active in saving Britain's rarest bugs, snails, bees, spiders, beetles and many more invertebrates. Visit www.buglife.org.uk or call 01733 201 210.
- Make your garden a haven for bees by planting a variety of flowers and shrubs to attract them. Also, leave gaps in old walls, and create areas of loose soil and rough vegetation on banks, for them to nest in.

FACT BOX:

COMMON NAME: Bumblebee

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Bombus* species

POPULATION: The Shrill-cardener bee (*Bombus sylvarum*) and the great yellow bumblebee (*Bombus distinguendus*) are among the 10 disappearing species.

LIFESPAN: The nest dies out at the end of summer and the young queen survives to found her colony at the start of the following year. They do not occur in parts of the world with no winter.

RANGE: Throughout the UK, but some species now very restricted.

THREATS: Loss of wildflowers, pesticides, development, and climate change.



PONDS

Ponds are beautiful habitats and great for teaching children about biodiversity. In the UK they are home to around 2,500 animal and 1,000 plant species, many rare and threatened.

In prehistoric times there could have been millions of natural ponds, but the Romans started the process of draining land for agriculture, so most ponds today are man-made. Probably their biggest threat these days is pollution from farms and vehicles, causing ecological change. Ponds in ordinary countryside now contain only half the plant species they should, and they are also threatened by invasive exotic weeds.

It's cheap and easy to create good new ponds if the water quality is right. One new

pond complex in Oxfordshire was found to contained a quarter of the UK freshwater fauna and flora species after only five years. With climate change coming, it's vital to create more good ponds, so that they can be stepping stones to help species adapt their ranges.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- Put in a pond in your garden – or, better still, get together with friends to create a new pond in your community, or protect an existing one. The organisation Pond Conservation can give advice.
- To find out more, call 01865 483249, visit www.pondconservation.org.uk or email: info@pondconservation.org.uk.

FACT BOX:

COMMON NAME: Ponds are often also called pools, tarns or lochans.

STATUS: Ponds have declined greatly in numbers and quality during the 20th century.

SIZE: Ponds are still water bodies less than two hectares in area. They can be permanent, or dry out in the summer.

POPULATION: There are only around 400,000 ponds left in Great Britain, compared with 1.2 million in 1880. This decline is probably true for most industrialised countries.

LIFESPAN: Most ponds today are less than 200 years old, although a few date from the Ice Age some 10,000 years ago. It's natural for new ponds to gradually fill with vegetation, and they are valuable for wildlife in all their stages.

THREATS: Pollution – especially from fertilising nutrients that ruin their ecological balance; over-stocking as fishing ponds; and being filled in by farmers or builders.

LONESOME GEORGE

The loneliest animal on the planet and a tragic story of human impact on a unique ecosystem is that of 'Lonesome George', the last known survivor of the Pinta Island species of the Galapagos giant tortoise.

Giant tortoises once roamed the Galapagos archipelago in their hundreds of thousands. During the 19th century, whalers and sealers heavily depleted their numbers for food.

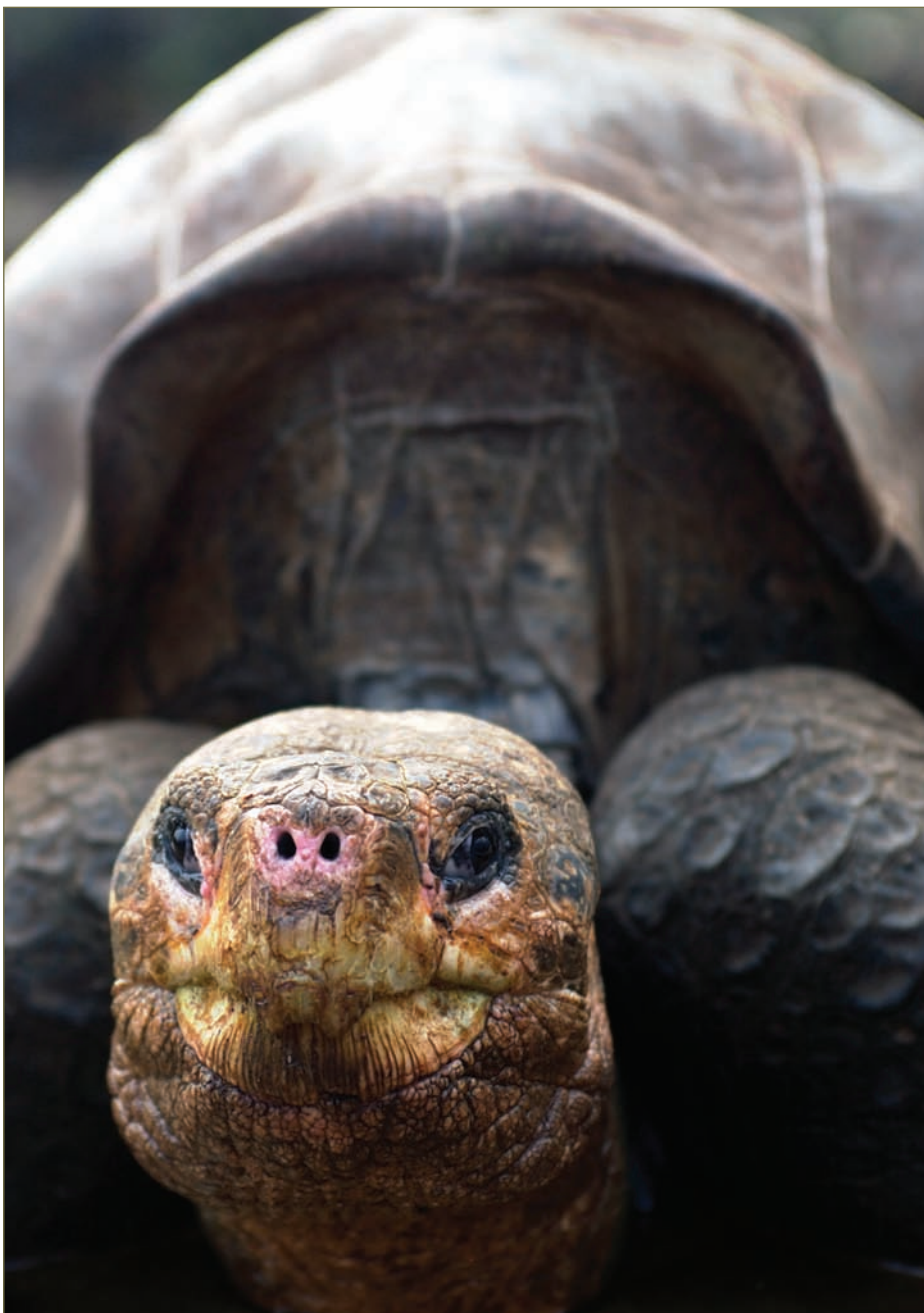
In the 1950s, in the belief that the Pinta Island giant tortoise was already extinct there, fishermen released goats onto the island as an alternative food source. These destroyed the vegetation and directly competed for the food with any remaining Pinta Island tortoises.

In 1971, however, a single male tortoise was found, which now lives at the Charles Darwin Foundation's research station in Galapagos. A worldwide search has failed to find Lonesome George a mate, and thorough searches of Pinta have found no evidence of other living tortoises. For possibly a century to come, he will stand as a living reminder of what has been lost from our planet.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- Your commitment and support will help to secure a sustainable future for the Galapagos ecosystems. There have been some successful conservation projects already: on the island of Española, for example, at one stage only 14 giant tortoises remained, but thanks to a programme of breeding, rearing and repatriation, 1,000 tortoises have been repatriated to the island. To learn about the Charles Darwin Research Station (based at Santa Cruz, Galapagos Islands, Ecuador) and how you can help to protect its unique marine and terrestrial species (via donations, as a visiting scientist, job and volunteering opportunities) visit the website of The Charles Darwin Foundation at www.darwinfoundation.org or email: cdrs@fcdarwin.org.ec

- The Charles Darwin Foundation works with a wide network of partners. To directly support these efforts, visit www.darwinfoundation.org/en/get-involved/fogo to see how you can help.



FACT BOX:

COMMON NAME: Pinta Island Galapagos giant tortoise (aka 'Lonesome George')

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Geochelone elephantopus abingdoni*

STATUS: Extinct in the wild

SIZE: May weigh up to 250kg and measure 150cm over the curve of the carapace.

POPULATION: One surviving individual.

LIFESPAN: Approximately 100–200 years.

RANGE: Pinta Island, located in the north of the Galapagos archipelago.

THREATS: Habitat destruction by introduced goats; predation by man.

These photos and accompanying text are from a series of 100 in Malcolm Tait's new book, *Going, Going, Gone?* (Think Books, £12.99). To order *Going, Going, Gone?*

with 10 per cent discount and free delivery in the UK, call 01256 302699, quoting reference code J55 (9:00am to 5:30pm, Mon–Fri). International postage costs may vary. Offer ends 31/12/06.



BEHIND THE LABEL



ACTIMEL

The human gut is a unique ecosystem and the hallmark of any healthy ecosystem is the presence of a diversity of micro-organisms. If you are a slave to probiotic drinks you could be encouraging an unhealthy imbalance. **Pat Thomas** reports

Almost 70 per cent of the immune system is found in the gut. The gut also has a nervous system – the enteric nervous system – which is every bit as complex as the central nervous system (the brain and spine) and appears to have as much of an influence on mental and emotional health. So keeping your gut healthy is important.

To do this requires a balance between the good and bad bacteria native to the

human gut. In a healthy gut, the ‘good’ usually outnumber the bad; and when they flourish they also help to ferment organic acids into glucose, lower blood cholesterol, synthesise vitamins, break down the enzymes, proteins and fibres in food and boost the immune system.

There is plenty of evidence to show that eating plain live yoghurt – which contains beneficial live organisms known as probiotics – is a healthful habit that

can improve immune system function. The evidence for quasi-pharmaceutical products such as Actimel – marketed as ‘functional foods’ – is less clear.

A recent study at Reading University found that half the probiotic drinks, yoghurts and supplements tested did not meet six basic criteria for good quality products: namely that they should be safe for human consumption; alive and able to survive gastric juices in order to reach the



INGREDIENTS
Yoghurt, skimmed milk, liquid sugar (sucrose 11.3 per cent), strawberry (2.1 per cent), dextrose, stabiliser (modified tapioca starch), flavourings, L. casei imunitass® cultures, acidity regulator (sodium citrate).

gut in sufficient numbers to have an effect; have clinically proven health benefits demonstrated by scientific trials; have their contents clearly defined; be clearly labelled; and be 'shelf-stable' – guaranteed to deliver benefits up until expiry date.

Some, including Danone's Actimel, were deemed 'satisfactory' – that is, they contain live organisms that survive to reach the gut. Even so, little is known about the long-term benefits or otherwise of sucking down these sugary drinks every day in the name of health.

One reason is that probiotic drinks are relatively new; 12 years ago the market didn't exist. Today in the UK, what is known as the 'active health drinks' market – which encompasses probiotic and cholesterol-lowering drinks – is now worth £227 million, and has grown by an amazing 65 per cent in the past year. More than 830 million bottles were sold in the past 12 months, equivalent to 14 bottles per member of the UK population.

Of these, more than one million bottles of Danone Actimel are purchased every day. Sales of Actimel account for 49 per cent of all probiotic drinks purchased in the UK, twice as much as any other brand.

POTS OF GOODNESS?

Lax food-labelling laws mean that manufacturers are not obliged to say which 'friendly bacteria' they have used or how many organisms you will receive per serving. To be healthful, a probiotic should contain 10 million – preferably 10 billion – live viable organisms. While Actimel does state which strain it contains – Danone's own patented

L. casei imunitass[®] – no claim is made here for the number of organisms present.

Indeed, the label is more advertising than information, encouraging parents to pop a bottle of Actimel in their children's lunch box to 'protect' them and help to 'support their natural defences'.

While short-term studies have shown that supplements of *L. casei* strains can help to prevent diarrhoea in children in the developing world, and may – at least in mice – give a temporary boost to immunity, there are no studies on this (or any other probiotic drink) to show what happens over the longer term.

Whatever benefit might be derived from Actimel's probiotic content is likely to be offset by the fact that it is also high in sugar. Each 100g pot contains 13g of liquid sugar. To put this in perspective, a recent report by the World Health Organization claims that, for adults, daily consumption of free, or added, sugars should be no more than 12 teaspoons (48g) a day. Nutritionists say this should be lower, around 10 teaspoons (40g). On this basis, one pot of Actimel would give you one-quarter to one-third of the maximum amount of free sugar you should have each day.



While it's clear that probiotic drinks like this don't carry the range of carcinogens, neurotoxins and reproductive toxins that usually feature in the products in this column (unless they are sweetened with artificial sweeteners), neither is there any evidence that they will do any genuine good, especially for those on an already healthy diet.

FEEDING THE GUT

Lack of variety in our diets means lack of variety in our gut bacteria. All the so-called 'good' bacteria in the gut need to be 'fed' each day so that organisms that die off or are excreted are replaced regularly. To do this we ideally need to include around 40g (about 1½oz) of various hard-to-digest carbohydrates, often referred to as 'prebiotics', in our diet each day. Without their preferred food supply, numbers of beneficial gut bacteria can decline rapidly, with a knock-on effect on immunity and other bodily functions.

Prebiotics are found in most unprocessed fruits, vegetables and wholegrains – banana, artichokes, chicory and wheat grains are particularly good sources. The more you include these in your diet, the more you will encourage the healthy diversity of beneficial bacteria that is natural to your gut and the less likely you are to need a special probiotic supplement that supplies you with an over-abundance of one strain of bacteria.

INGREDIENTS

YOGHURT, SKIMMED MILK

Basic ingredients

Both these are pasteurised, which destroys nutrients and changes the structure of the milk proteins (especially casein) into ones your body wasn't designed to digest. It virtually eliminates the good bacteria naturally present in milk and yoghurt.

LIQUID SUGAR

Sweetener

The label doesn't say if it is a high-fructose syrup or high-glucose syrup. The former is devastating for health, elevating cholesterol, making weight regulation more difficult, altering magnesium balance, increasing insulin resistance and promoting high blood pressure.

DEXTROSE

Sweetener

Also called glucose. A simple sugar that causes an instant spike in blood glucose, leading to excessive insulin production, a drop in blood glucose, feelings of fatigue and depression. Dextrose is wheat-derived – a factor if you have a wheat intolerance.

MODIFIED TAPIOCA STARCH

Thickener, stabiliser

Modified food starch is a starch that has been treated physically or chemically. This all-purpose thickener, derived from cassava root or yucca plants, is as at home in yoghurt drinks as in adhesives, explosives, paper manufacture and textile finishings. It is not a substance found in nature, adds no nutritional value and as yet there is no information on its effects on health.

L. CASEI IMUNITASS[®]

Probiotic organism

Studies show that this can help to combat diarrhoea in children, and disease-causing bacteria such as *E. coli* (in mice). In people, unpublished studies show a small boost in immune function.

FLAVOURINGS

Adds taste

Flavourings are perfumes. They will be derived from petrochemicals and contain the same neurotoxins, carcinogens and allergens found in all perfumes.

WHERE DO WE COME FROM, WHAT ARE WE, WHERE ARE WE GOING?

In their answer to our 2006 essay competition question 'What is humanity's worst invention?', **Judy Pratt and Nicky Duenkel** contend that it is not any specific invention. Rather, it is our need to constantly remake and 'improve' our environment instead of seeking closer connection with the world as it already is



Split image of 'Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?' by Paul Gauguin, created in Tahiti in 1897-8, and currently housed in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

'Oh, that was the worst! Totally the worst!' exclaims our young niece, describing the latest embarrassment she has suffered in her teenage life, to several of her bejewelled friends in the mall.

In the boreal forest of Alberta an operator demonstrates the efficiency and delicacy of the work of a feller buncher harvesting trees on a planned site, taking up to 20 trees in one grasp, while leaving a single seed tree standing.

The effects of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound were chronicled night after night on the evening news, showing harbour seals, sea otters, shore birds, and devastated humans trying to save a few individuals while surrounded by the smothering death of thousands upon thousands. This is now considered the most devastating environmental disaster at sea in history and yet Exxon's

responsibility is still being contested in court some 17 years later.

Walking through the holocaust memorial near Faneuil Hall in Boston, Massachusetts, composed of tall glass pillars inscribed with six million tattoo numbers, stark crystalline reminders of those who died in the Nazi death camps, we weep and feel that this is surely one of the worst atrocities of humanity.

And yet, we know that it is only one of too many evidences of centuries of persecution and execution of large groups of people perceived as threats.

We bear witness to the deaths of millions of 'by-catch' species in the massive drift nets of the world's fishing industries that indiscriminately harvested the seas.

Entering the site of ground zero in the desert of Alamogordo, New Mexico,

on the single day that the public is allowed in, we are flooded with images of the consequences of atomic weaponry at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and are overwhelmed with the immense power, fear, and ignorance that this site had its part in engendering (not to mention the effects of this mere 'test' on its witnesses that day).

As we consider, in a superficial scan,

We see this tendency to focus on the problems, rather than upon the grace, as counterproductive

some of humanity's ill-conceived inventions, it truly doesn't seem to matter which is the worst. Just as it has proven to be detrimental to create a hierarchy of oppressions, pitting one inequality against another, we believe that there is little to be gained in arguing



HUMANITY'S WORST INVENTION

which of a plethora of humanity's destructive devices has been most damaging. The comparison over thousands of centuries and across multitudes of cultures, living and dead, merely seems to lead us further astray.

We see this tendency to focus upon the problems, rather than upon the grace, the gifts, and the solutions to the dilemmas that humanity has encountered and produced, as counterproductive.

We suspect that the intention of *The Ecologist* isn't to make such a list, but in naming what we have done as a species, to work to undo it and to come to awareness so that we try never to create such things again.

It may be more useful to consider the parallels and interconnections among these different atrocities – to seek the matrix and patterns that illuminate the common cause for these creations. Is there a root ill out of which

Modernity's lens has led us to focus on the worst – then an aversion to what we see leads to denial and avoidance. The result is ... disconnection

all such invidious inventions grow – the original source from which stems humanity's acts of ignorance? We would boldly suggest that the source of our destructiveness might be better described as a flawed worldview. In considering the relationship between our flawed worldview and our dreadful acts, we reflect on recent words by His Holiness The Dalai Lama that ask questions about the underlying structures guiding our ability to create whatever we will:

“There is almost no area of human life today that is not touched by the effects of science and technology. Yet are we clear about the place of science in the totality of human life – what

exactly it should do and by what should it be governed” This last point is critical because unless the direction of science is guided by a consciously ethical motivation, especially compassion, its effects may fail to bring benefit. They may indeed cause great harm.

Modernity's lens has led us on the one hand to highlighting our habit of focusing on the worst, and then an aversion to what we see through this lens leads to a concomitant habit of denial and avoidance. The result is a worldview that brings into being a lifestyle of disconnection and separation, where we can be disassociated from the consequences and also the true joys of



our actions and existence in the world as communal beings. In our shock and dismay, we've created a belief system that fosters the absurd notion that we can be disconnected. This 'box' that we've created of the individual – isolated and inviolate, each separate in our single skin – is truly harmful; we put ourselves and others in such a state to the detriment of all.

We believe that it is this sense of disconnection and solitariness that allows for many (if not all) of what we'd name modern, highly developed, often profligate, societies' ills – from the creation and unleashing of the atomic bomb, to plastic surgery to increase the size of women's breasts, to the steady decimation of the world's forests, to children who don't know that eggs come from chickens.

As we look across the gulfs of

disassociation, we recall reading Wendell Berry's claims that:

"Our most serious problem, perhaps, is that we have become a nation of fantasists. We believe, apparently, in the infinite availability of finite resources. We persist in land-use methods that reduce the potentially infinite power of soil fertility to a finite quantity, which we then proceed to waste as if it were an infinite quantity. We have an economy

This 'box' we've created of the individual is truly harmful; we put ourselves and others in such a state to the detriment of all

that depends not on the quality and quantity of necessary goods and services, but on the moods of a few stockbrokers. We believe that democratic freedom can be preserved by people ignorant of the

history of democracy and indifferent to the responsibilities of freedom."

It seems that we have to have this fantasy in order not to face what it is that we are allowing ourselves to do through disconnection from the effects of our selfish and escapist behaviours. It may be that North Americans, to whom Berry refers, have heard about how everything is connected, and that some few still know it from experience and tradition,

as do many of earth's people, yet this knowledge is discredited as quaint, simplistic, and obsolete in today's economy.

Standing in contrast to this western fantasy is a large percentage of the human population who still live lives directly connecting them to earth's systems. Yet these people have been largely powerless to advocate for policies against ecological devastation



HUMANITY'S WORST INVENTION

as the global market keeps them subject to the depredations of an extremely powerful minority.

Even for those of us benefiting most from the power elites, things are not so clearly what they seem in the realm of disconnection. Despite our cultures of separation we seem to be frantically seeking connection through relationship, religion, walks in the woods, yoga practice, and chatrooms. We marry and create families, we volunteer, we create communities in person and on the web, we act to benefit our local environs and reach out to others in need across the globe. We often are, and more often wish to be, of service.

We are seekers, trackers, pursuers, and practitioners, but always unsatisfied with the findings. We carry an ideal as a lamp, but what the lamp illuminates never matches the image, and so the best is rejected for the perfected idealised images

of nature in *National Geographic*, of women in fashion magazines and on television, of relationship as described in the self-help books, etc. As we walk on a beach and see a sunset, we are unconsciously measuring it against some standard image. We no longer see and appreciate what surrounds us in the moment – what the world is offering us. We turn away from what is real to the flawless images.

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While we are looking for the connections, we continue to be seduced by our pull towards the edges of human experience. We believe that it may be our tendency to

embrace extremes that has created such a massive gap between our destructive and redemptive actions; our stated values and the evidence of how we fail to come close to our ideals. This chasm fractures our ability to be responsive to, and responsible for, the necessary changes in humanity's direction. The false notion of our separation is not borne out by the evidence of our effects on the systems of this single planet. We don't need any further information from the experts and analysts or chiding from the doomsayers to see the direction our actions need to go. The environmental field has matured over the years and we believe we now understand that the core of our work is as much with economics, culture,

We need time... for remembering who we are, what we value, where we come from and whether we are heading where we want to go

and human-to-human communication as it is with understanding the other biological systems with which we are in relation. As we can readily see, even the smallest children are aware that we live in an interconnected web. E.O. Wilson, in his book *Consilience*, indicates that we already know what we need to know to bring ourselves into balance with the planet's systems. What we don't know is how to get humans to change their behaviour in accordance with what we know.

In his book *Earth in Mind*, David Orr addressed this deadly divide between what we know and what we do by suggesting we reclaim the concept of virtue, defined as "the result of choosing intelligently between extremes." He spoke of the necessity to rehabilitate this word and to begin to apply virtue as an antidote to unsustainable choices and behaviours; that virtue, as conceived by the Greeks and Romans, could never be "separated from politics and from participation in the civic life



of the community".

What is needed is a paradigm shift of global proportion to lift the world's people from the perceived need for such tragic and appalling inventiveness. We are hopefully beginning to turn the

corner from this bout of isolation and privatisation to concern and compassion for others – human and otherwise – and for the public good. Having

followed the path of atomisation – of breaking things down into smaller and smaller parts – we are now called to piece it all back together again in a new way. A new worldview doesn't spring out of a nowhere, it is built upon past learning, previous worldviews. We have the evidence to demonstrate that carrying individualism to an extreme leads to disconnection. What would it look like if each person were encouraged to grow in ways that served themselves and the whole?

We need some time to figure this all out. Time for reflection, for remembering who we are, what we value, where we come from, and for a real consideration of whether we are heading where we want to go. While we wrestle with the wave of extinctions humanity's progress engenders, we are facing the question of our species' extinction brought into light with the splitting of the atom and re-emphasised with effects of global warming and climate change. We may not exist in the future because of our actions.

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SCHOOL UNIFORMITY

The exuberance of childhood celebrated in books such as *Just William* is now frowned upon as inappropriate behaviour, resulting in more and more children being prescribed behavioural drugs. **Rachel Ragg** investigates

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **JOHN BLAKE**



William, 10, has just added smashing his neighbour's greenhouse to his list of crimes. Other recent misdemeanours include breaking into an artist's studio, turning his sister's best hat into a plant-pot, almost blinding his aunts with a catapult, flooding the hall (during a water-fight with his cousin), defacing school text-books, and locking an especially deadly relative in a shed.

This particular William is, of course, Richmal Crompton's fictional *Just William* – back in the days when such behaviour was put down to 'boyish high spirits', and merited a hefty slipper on the backside from Father.

But what would happen to '*Just William: the 2006 re-make*'? That's obvious: he would be diagnosed as suffering from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and given Ritalin until he sat still and reflected on his Personal, Social and Emotional Development, as dictated by the National Curriculum. Never mind plant-pot hats and wild adventures: his fantastic Standard Assessment Test (SAT) scores in Maths, English and Science would be helping his primary school to creep up yet another percentage point in this year's league table, and his head teacher would be counting the extra pennies to spend on yet another white-board.

Drugs for children have become big business. This summer a British Medical

Association (BMA) report concluded that as many in one in 10 children and young people between the ages of one and 16 have been diagnosed as suffering from a serious mental health problem, ranging from sleep and eating disorders through to severe obsessive and depressive conditions. According to government statistics, 345,000 children aged between six and 16 are suffering from ADHD alone. So the boy who can't sit still and careers around the classroom is defined as 'hyperactive', while the reserved one who prefers drawing churches to playing at superheroes is labelled 'possibly autistic'. As for the girl who won't eat her chicken nuggets and smiley potato faces: evidently an anorectic in the making.

COSTLY CHEMICALS

Ritalin (aka the 'chemical cosh') is the great beneficiary of these diagnoses. An amphetamine given in tablet form to deal with a whole collection of behavioural syndromes, Ritalin was virtually unknown at the start of the 1990s. Last year, however, 361,832 prescriptions were written for Ritalin, Concerta and Equasym, the three methylphenidate drugs licensed in the UK.

And the cost is not insignificant: Ritalin alone costs the NHS around £200 a year for a child on an average daily dose of 30mg, but the bill rises to up to £1,000 when assessment and follow-up costs are taken into account. Families of children diagnosed with ADHD are also entitled to a disability living allowance (up to £5,350 per year), a carer's allowance (up to £2,376 per year) and a disabled child tax credit (up to £2,300 per year).

Then there's the possible cost to the child's health: in terms of pharmacological effect, Ritalin is a powerful stimulant in the same class as the street drugs amphetamine ('speed') and cocaine. Because Ritalin is swallowed in tablet form, it works over a much longer period than cocaine – so while it doesn't have the sudden 'hit' of cocaine, its effects are the same.

Never mind that it now carries a 'black box' health warning in the US, having been linked to 51 deaths since 1999 among children and adults taking the drug. And while the UK's National Institute for Clinical

A NEW EC REGULATION COVERING PAEDIATRIC MEDICINES REQUIRES PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES TO TEST DRUGS ON THEIR TARGET MARKET - I.E. CHILDREN

Excellence (NICE) recommends the use of pharmaceuticals only as a last resort, the number of children prescribed drugs from Ritalin to Prozac continues to rise.

Reports are circulating that children as young as 15 months have been prescribed Ritalin in the US – although it is not licensed in any country for use in children under six – and Prozac is now being prescribed to UK children considerably younger than the recommended 16. According to a 2004 study of US prescription purchases conducted by Medco Health Solutions, a US pharmacy benefits management company, around 65 per cent of all children and adolescents taking behavioural medicines are on antidepressants, and many of these take both antidepressant and attention disorder drugs.

Indeed, a ruling by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in June means that now, children as young as eight can be given Prozac. The EMA said that the drug was safe for young people to take, despite concerns that it can trigger suicidal feelings in patients. An earlier study, published in February 2000 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, reported a 200–300 per cent increase in antidepressants and stimulants given to children aged three and under. And that's despite the fact that nobody has yet studied the long-term effects of this policy. Are the drugged-up generation more likely to end up in a lifelong cycle of prescription drug-taking? A disturbing thought indeed.

It's all the more disturbing when you think that very few of the drugs currently prescribed to children have been tested on children: at present, children are taking smaller doses of medicines that have only been tested on adults, and which may in fact be completely unsuitable for them. A House of Lords report earlier this year, based on evidence gathered from doctors, stated that 90 per cent of medicines for new-born babies

and 50 per cent of those aimed at children are untested. The response? A new European regulation covering paediatric medicines, requiring pharmaceutical companies to test drugs on their target market – i.e. children.

Fair enough, you might say. After all, the idea that a child could simply be given a smaller dose of an adult drug on the basis that he or she is simply a shrunken adult is somewhat worrying. But how exactly do they plan to test drugs on children? And why have governments suddenly become interested in this issue?

The pharmaceutical companies may know the answer to this – as they are partly responsible for manufacturing the problem ('selling sickness') as well as the solution. They feign concern that adult drugs are being used on children, employ 'experts' to back them up, and lobby governments across Europe. How can any government resist the argument that they're putting a whole generation of children at risk by prescribing them drugs intended for adults? And how can any government disagree that there's a need for these drugs, given that the pharmaceutical companies can provide any amount of evidence to 'prove' that vast numbers of children are suffering from ADHD or other behavioural syndromes?

PREDICTABLE FINDINGS

The result – the 2006 European Regulation on Paediatric Medicines – is highly satisfying for all concerned. Not only do the drug companies get an extra six months added to the patent protection period: they also create a fund to finance research into the possible adaptation of existing drugs, which are not covered by patents, for use by children. Moreover, the regulation leads to the setting up of a network of researchers and research centres designed to prevent duplication of research and tests on children. What will these researchers and research centres find? Almost certainly: that more drugs need to be provided for children.

US psychologist and lawyer Dr Bob Jacobs is well-known for his research into

'DRUGS HAVE NO THERAPEUTIC OR MEDICAL PURPOSE; THEY SIMPLY TURN CHILDREN INTO ZOMBIES'

ADHD – and for his conclusion that the condition does not exist as an ‘illness’. He believes that the ‘need’ for children’s drugs is entirely manufactured by governments, drug companies, teachers and even the parents. “Drugs ensure the conformism that Western

which sounds suspiciously like something from Soviet Russia). So instead of just letting the children play with sand and water, we have ‘knowledge and understanding of the world’ (where they are officially assessed on their response to planting a sunflower seed),

mind creativity or invention: homogeneity is what matters. And this homogenisation begins at the vast majority of nurseries, regardless of whether they be state-run or private. At even the very nicest and kindest nurseries, children of two are frequently made to sit on a particular square of carpet so they can listen quietly to the teacher. It is bordering on the sinister to think that your child could be offered drugs because he ‘runs or climbs when inappropriate’ – ‘inappropriate’ being one of the most weasel words of the 21st century, almost always meaning ‘when it doesn’t fit the prevailing agenda’.

It’s not unreasonable for teachers or nursery nurses to devise crowd control measures. But when children are being fed Ritalin because their natural exuberance is inconvenient and, ultimately, threatens the school’s position in the league table: that’s a different matter altogether.

BOYS WILL BE BOYS

If there’s no room in the curriculum for boisterous and exuberant behaviour, the obvious losers are boys. One boisterous boy can disrupt a whole class, and this in turn affects the class’s ‘learning outcomes’, which in turn affects the school’s league table position – so it’s in everyone’s interests to drug him into submission. A shy boy, for his part, risks being highlighted as ‘pathologically withdrawn’ when he fails to hit the required target for ‘social interaction’.

In his recent book, *The Minds Of Boys*, Michael Gurian argues that boys’ ‘behavioural problems’ are actually the result of an education that’s out of tune with their ‘impulsive, exploratory, kinaesthetic’ natures. Dr Leonard Sax, psychologist and physician and the author of the controversial book *Why Gender Matters*, agrees. According to him, we have to accept that there are hard-wired differences between the sexes, and our failure to recognise and respect these differences has done substantial educational and developmental harm – particularly to boys, whose achievement levels over the past decade has been a widely publicised increasing cause for concern.

But what exactly are these gender differences? MRI scans have demonstrated that male and female brains have measurably different neurological responses. So, for example, the language area in a five-year-old boy’s brain generally looks like

society demands. They have no therapeutic or medical purpose; they simply turn children into zombies,” says Jacobs. “Public consciousness is offended by seeing a child in physical restraints, but because chemical restraints are internal they are a much less ‘sexy’ issue, even though they are arguably even more destructive.”

For Jacobs, this suppression of children’s nature goes right to the heart of Western society and its ideas about ‘normality’. “Capitalist society is based on people dressing, looking and thinking alike. If a child has high energy levels or is extremely creative, he represents a threat: he has to be groomed, trained – or drugged – to comply and conform.” And while most adults claim to celebrate diversity, he adds, they nearly all hate behavioural diversity. As this diversity constitutes the very essence of children and childhood, they thus want to suppress the very essence of what it is to be a child.

CULTURAL IMPACT

According to Jacobs, then, it isn’t so much our children’s behaviour that has changed, but the way in which it is viewed in our capitalist society. But is that the full story? Perhaps it’s more the case that children’s behaviour has indeed been affected by our culture and environment; which in turn affects the way we view their behaviour, which in turn changes the way we deal with their behaviour, which then further exacerbates these behaviours, and so on. But whatever the reason, something has gone terribly wrong if we are impelled to drug our children for them to learn.

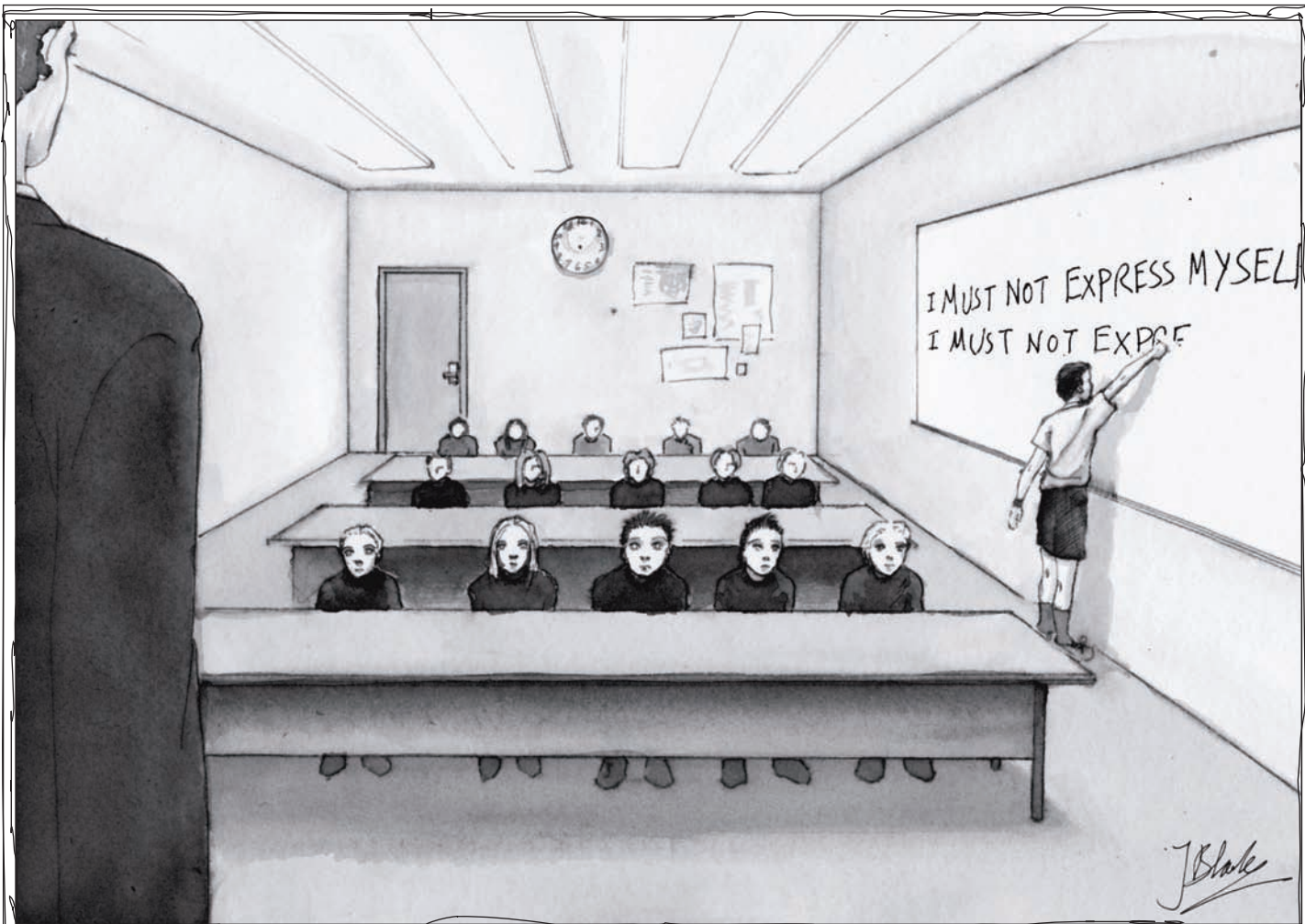
Twenty-five years ago, children starting school were encouraged to play, to skip, and to learn useful life skills like how to carry scissors safely. Now, though, the focus is on reading and writing and the Six Areas of Learning (to quote the Sure Start propaganda,

‘creative development’ (can they colour a ladybird in red rather than purple? If so, tick that box...), and ‘physical development’ (i.e. do they bump into other children? If so, they’re obviously autistic). Then there is the dreaded round of National Curriculum tests and assessments that have all but replaced singing, art and PE – and which have led directly to a rise in behavioural problems. In 2004, the Mental Health Foundation published a report, *Tested To Destruction*. It found that the government-imposed Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) had created a huge rise in anxiety and stress levels, including mental health problems in children as young as four. The most common problems were difficulty in sleeping, being tearful and upset, feeling ill, loss of appetite and difficulty in relaxing. There were clear gender differences, with girls more frequently affected.

Dr Adrian Sutton is a consultant in child and family psychiatry at the Department of Child Psychiatry at the Winnicott Centre, a child and adolescent mental health unit that provides services for the Central Manchester and Manchester Children’s University Hospitals NHS Trusts. He says that school league tables, the National Curriculum and a narrow focus on academic achievement can have ‘severely adverse effects on vulnerable children.’ What’s more, it appears that boys fare worse than girls. Thirty years ago, ADHD was diagnosed in 0.5 per cent of children; now it’s somewhere between three and seven per cent, with boys accounting for three-quarters of these cases. Diagnosis is most commonly made when children start school or nursery, and is made with reference to a checklist of ‘symptoms’: ‘runs or climbs when inappropriate’, ‘fidgets with hands or squirms in seat’, ‘is constantly on the move’. Drugs are the most common treatment.

The National Curriculum suppresses – pathologises – anything that doesn’t fit. Never

A NARROW FOCUS ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT CAN HAVE SEVERELY ADVERSE EFFECTS ON VULNERABLE CHILDREN



that of a three-year old girl's – hence small boys' frequent lack of interest in reading and writing. Then there's hearing. A girl's sense of hearing is substantially more sensitive than a boy's. The result? A boy can't hear the teacher, so loses interest – and is diagnosed with ADHD and prescribed amphetamines. Even the lighting and temperature in schools have been shown to affect girls' and boys' performance: schools tend to be warm, but boys perform better in bright light and at lower temperatures. In addition to that, says Sax, it's a fact that boys have an aggressive drive, and that aggressive play is a vital part of male development. "The aggressive drive needs to be recognised and transformed into something positive. This is how boys learn boundaries and rules." This, of course, flies in the face of current pedagogical thinking,

namely that if boys are prevented from playing aggressive games they will become less aggressive.

The gentle slide into quasi-compulsory schooling for four-year-olds doesn't help. The current legal requirement is that children attend school from the start of the term following their fifth birthday – yet the vast majority of education authorities insist that children start full-time school in the September following their fourth birthday if they are to gain a place at their chosen primary school – meaning that many children are herded onto the educational conveyor belt when they are only just four.

Sally Bunday, founder of the Hyperactive Children's Support Group, finds this trend disturbing. "Parents complain that their four-year-old is behaving badly at school –

when in fact their four-year-old is being made to act against his nature and his age by being there at all." Bear in mind that testosterone levels double at around a boy's fourth birthday – hardly the ideal time for him to be sitting still and learning pencil control. Treating their behaviour with medication is, she adds, 'downright wrong'.

PRESSURE ON GIRLS

As a result of this early schooling, boys are prone to being labelled either socially defective or hyperactive. But while the more compliant little girls appear to forge ahead, their mental health may be suffering. Girls are all too often the victims of the high standards expected of them, and more prone than ever to feel like 'failures' as teenagers.

An American study of 615 adolescents found that before the age of 11, girls and boys have more or less equal rates of depressive symptoms – but between 11 and 15, girls' rates of depression rise steeply while those for boys increase only slightly. By the age of 18, the depression rate among females is twice

IT IS BORDERING ON THE SINISTER TO THINK THAT YOUR CHILD COULD BE OFFERED DRUGS BECAUSE HE 'RUNS OR CLIMBS WHEN IT IS DEEMED TO BE INAPPROPRIATE'



as high as that among males. In a second study, researchers found that girls with higher intelligence were more likely to suffer from depression, whereas depression was more common among boys of low intelligence.

For the past decade or more, schools have been operating to repair a more fundamental societal breakdown. Shifting economic structures have led to profound changes in the organisation of family life: 57 per cent of mothers of children under five are now employed outside the home, and the vast majority of parents have to live where their work takes them – thus reducing the opportunity for the extended family to be involved in child-rearing. Both parents are often unavailable for the children – and

when physically present, they are all too often so busy checking their emails, watching TV, texting, or generally multi-tasking that they are to all intents and purposes absent. With potentially dire consequences, says Sue Palmer, literacy consultant and author of *Toxic Childhood*. She believes that children need nurturing more than anything else – and that this nurturing should ideally be the job of a parent. “If babies get that input in the first year or so of life, they will be able to understand, think, communicate, learn. If they do not, their human potential is damaged. Attachment, interaction, communication – this is what teaches souls to fly.” And, Palmer adds, there is a growing body of neuroscientific research connecting

successful early attachment with the development of neural networks in the prefrontal cortex of the brain – the area associated with rational thought, decision-making, social behaviour and self-control. All the things the ADHD child lacks.

Of course, there are also many families in which fathers are entirely absent during the critical formative years. Dr Peter Breggin is a psychiatrist at the US International Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology. He believes that ADHD is in truth DAAD – Dad’s Attention Deficit Disorder. “In my clinical experience, most so-called ADHD children are not receiving sufficient attention from their fathers, who are separated from the family, too preoccupied with work and other things, or otherwise impaired in their ability to parent,” he says. Where the father is physically present, he’s often not doing his parenting job properly. “If a kid is smacking his mother over and over again, who’ll stop the kid? The father is supposed to step in and take charge so the child knows. But fathers aren’t doing this today.”

CHANGING FAMILIES

Time with either parent is, though, the one thing that children are denied. First, the government threw money at parents of three-year-olds to scare them into believing that their child would be socially, emotionally and academically disadvantaged by not attending a childcare institution; now they’re targeting two-year-olds. All the while cajoling/bribing/bullying mothers into going out to work and becoming ‘useful’ – i.e. materially productive – members of society.

In the process, they totally disregard the fact that a 2004 survey carried out in association with the Department for Trade and Industry’s Work-Life Balance Campaign, suggested that three in five mothers would prefer to be at home with their children.

The latest example of this dragooning is ‘wraparound care’. Launched by the government in October 2000 as part of its early years expansion programme, the aim was to raise the quality of early years’ provision for children and attract more parents back into the labour market or into training by providing more flexible care wrapped around a free early-years education place. So instead of simply sending your child to an institution for the traditional school day, you can send them for breakfast

and tea as well. Rather like what used to be called detention. While the government is keen to plug the scheme's social, intellectual and emotional benefits, it's debatable whether there are any such benefits at all. Indeed, a 2005 study headed by psychologist and childcare guru Penelope Leach suggested quite the reverse. The study – one of the longest and most detailed of its kind – said quite unambiguously that children aged 0 to 3 should ideally be at home with their mothers. Children who attended group childcare were, for their part, inclined to become 'withdrawn, compliant and sad'.

Moreover, the academic benefits of starting 'proper' school at four or even five are dubious, to say the least: for all our extended schooling, we seem to struggle even to achieve basic literacy and numeracy in our school-leavers. Only last year, CBI research showed that almost half of employers (42 per cent) say they are unhappy with the basic skill levels of school-leavers and 50 per cent believe teenagers do not have sufficient communication, team-working and problem-solving abilities. In mainland Europe, by contrast, children normally start school at seven, and their 'learning outcomes' (to quote another bit of government Newspeak) are generally regarded as distinctly superior to our fail-proof 'Gold Standard' 'A'- levels.

But so far as the UK is concerned, school has become more akin to a battery farm for children, set up for parental (i.e. economic) convenience. And if a child wants to explore the world in his own way? If he wants to spend a day working out how the loo-flush works, why that gutter is leaking on the far side of the playground, or what happens when you apply felt-tip pens to five-year-old skin? Then the problem is most easily solved by diagnosing a medical condition.

Home life also is all too readily made to dovetail with the increasingly straitjacketed timetable. Gone are the days when children played out on bikes, kicked footballs and built dens in the woods: now they're caged up at home with their TVs, DVDs and PC games. When they are allowed out, it's a case

of being shunted into another box (preferably a black 4WD) and transported to a parent-directed activity. Children don't even walk to school. In 1971, 80 per cent of seven- and eight-year-olds walked – but by 1990, it was only nine per cent.

Priscilla Alderson is Professor of Childhood Studies at London University. She believes that children have always been restless and excitable – and that their problem of excess restlessness could be

deep-rooted problems associated with how our food is produced. Regular use of synthetic fertilisers causes long-term depletion of organic matter, soil compaction and degradation of overall soil quality. Over-fertilisation also causes important minerals such as calcium, magnesium, and potassium to gradually leach out of the soil. So even if we think we're doing our best to provide our children with a healthy diet, we are likely to be feeding them vegetables grown

'CHILDREN NEED FREEDOM TO PLAY, RUN AND CLIMB - WITHOUT THAT THEY COME TO BE SEEN AS "ABNORMALLY" HYPERACTIVE'

solved quite simply by parents engaging more with children and allowing them to let off steam in traditional fashion by playing in parks and climbing trees. "Playgrounds and parks are empty, because of the scare stories about abductions. But children need the space and freedom to play, run and climb – without that, they are restless, and come to be seen as abnormally 'hyperactive'."

Of course, our changing lifestyles go hand-in-hand with dietary changes. No matter what their parents' intentions, children invariably have access to highly sugared foods and drinks, and even the best-behaved child can turn into a sugar-saturated monster. BMA research indicates that children's behaviour can improve on a diet low in sugar, artificial colourings and carbonated drinks. But it's also possible that forces beyond the parents' knowledge are affecting their children. For example, chemicals in the environment such as pesticides, or high levels of lead, mercury or other substances toxic to humans are known to play a role in children's behavioural problems. Research trials have also shown that deficiencies of essential fatty acids in the body correlated with symptoms of ADHD, and similar relationships have been found between iron, zinc and magnesium deficiencies and ADHD symptoms.

This, of course, is a consequence of more

in over-fertilised and nutrient-depleted soil.

Sally Bunday found that her son's horrendous list of symptoms disappeared within four days of starting the Feingold Diet, which excludes all synthetic additives and all foods containing salicylates (an aspirin-like substance found in foods such as oranges, blackcurrants, tomatoes, chocolate, cola, coffee and tea). She is convinced that extra medication is not the solution. "Recent research by the Foods Standards Agency concluded that yet more research into the link between diet and children's behaviour was necessary. But why are we still questioning it?" She believes it's part of the 'rush-rush' nature of modern society. "It's easier to give children a pill than to worry about the underlying causes."

QUICK-FIX AGE

John McLaren-Howard, Laboratory Director of Biolab Medical Unit, a medical referral laboratory specialising in nutritional and environmental medicine, agrees. "This is the quick-fix age. We should be looking at diet, allergies, nutrition deficiencies and direct environmental factors before even thinking about drugs – but people don't want to wait that long. They want a GP to come up with a diagnosis and treatment package within a 15-minute appointment slot, and feel angry if he can't give them an immediate answer. This is no way to practise medicine."

In the circumstances, it's hardly surprising that so many children are feeling 'depressed'. On top of this, they're also subjected to a highly consumer-driven culture which is almost created to produce depression. Elaine Douglas is a childhood psychologist who specialises in children,

'WITH EVERYONE OUT AT WORK AND ALL THE CHILDREN AT SCHOOL OR NURSERY, THE COMMUNITY ASPECT TO CHILDREN'S UPBRINGING HAS DISAPPEARED'

adolescents and families. She finds it very striking that children are generally more depressed and anxious than they were in the 1950s, despite the fact that they have far more by way of material comforts. However, she says, this may be the problem. "We live in a fast-moving society that's entirely consumer-driven: we want everything and we want it now," she says. "Children soak up media images of everything being better, faster, bigger – then feel miserable because they can never have that elusive One Thing that will make them happy." And, she adds, the constant round of expensive after-school activities produces exhausted and miserable children who feel pushed out by their parents. Then the worried parent – who can't understand why little Ella is so miserable when she has everything that money can buy – takes her to the doctor, and comes back clutching salvation in the form of a prescription.

But the real solution to children's mental health problems, says Douglas, is a return to the simple life: walking the dog, day-trips to the seaside and so forth. But here's the uncomfortable truth: giving your children old-fashioned, stress-free lives means in effect that one parent – almost

'ONCE YOU HAVE A DIAGNOSIS YOU BECOME A VICTIM, A MARTYR, STRUGGLING TO COPE WITH A SICK CHILD'

always the mother, as things stand – has to give up work. The phrase 'work/life balance' is all well and good, but it really doesn't apply to most parents: short of cloning yourself, or having such a fabulously well-paid job that you can work for four hours per week and 'delegate' for the other 38, you can't be a productive member of the workforce and give your children the healthy, old-fashioned lifestyle.

ENFORCED 'CHOICES'

Even if you ostensibly work a 9am–5pm day, it soon becomes an 8am–6pm day once you've factored in an hour's commute either way. If you work part-time, you invariably find yourself working full-time for part-time pay, and with a guilty conscience as your colleagues watch you slope off for a long weekend. Work flexi-time, and you might bump into your partner in the bathroom at 3am if you're really lucky. And, of course, for every parent who really has no choice but to work, there is a parent who does in fact have the choice: they could perfectly

well stay at home, but they choose to work in order to buy that new 4WD and matching Boden clothes for their offspring, rather than walking everywhere in their charity shop bargains. And who pays the ultimate price? Emotionally, it's the children; financially, the drug-providing NHS.

Is feminism to blame? You could say it's feminism's 'fault' that women have come to believe that they are defined and fulfilled only by working outside the home, and that full-time parents are somehow deficient human beings. But on another level, economics over-rides feminism, and the whole of society is arranged in such a way that all full-time parents, male and female alike, are viewed as non-contributing members and a drain on resources. The word 'feminism' is bandied around, but as things stand, it's not true feminism: it's women being forced to conform to a male workplace. True feminism would surely value the strengths that women – and particularly mothers – bring to the workplace, and this in turn would mean

SELLING SICKNESS

The major pharmaceutical companies are the big winners in this game. More disturbingly, they are also the ones who market the disorders in the first place, before providing the 'miracle cure'. Few parents realise, when they accept a diagnosis of ADHD, that this is what the drug companies want them to do. The term 'ADHD' is no longer just a useful shorthand to describe a plethora of behavioural problems of varied origin: it has been hijacked into defining a physical problem within the individual child, causing that child to behave badly or perform poorly at school. The stage is thereby set for the pharmaceutical solution.

Long before a drug is launched, disease awareness campaigns are conducted to 'create dissatisfaction in the market', 'establish a need', and 'create a desire', as Ray Moynihan and Alan Cassels succinctly document in their book *Selling Sickness*. 'Product champions' and 'opinion leaders' are recruited from among the academic community to endorse the campaign.

Patient support groups are vitally important to the drug companies. Where a drug

company's own claims about its product would seem self-serving and biased, patient groups carry that all-important credibility and sense of objectivity. Take the case of Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD), the Ritalin support group of America. Founded in 1987, CHADD, which estimates that 10-20 per cent of schoolchildren have ADHD, organises speaking events, publishes a glossy magazine and a monthly newsletter, and runs an impressive website. 'No matter how many sources of information are out there, CHADD is the one you can trust,' trumpets the website.

What it doesn't mention, of course, is that the organisation has long-standing ties with pharmaceutical interests, recruits only pro-drug scientists to their advisory board, and regards ADHD as a genetic condition unaffected by parenting or environment. CHADD has received more than \$1million since 1988 from the makers of Ritalin (then Ciba-Geigy, now Novartis).

CHADD does at least clearly disclose exactly how much it gets from drug companies, namely around \$700,000 annually, just under one fifth

of its total income. No such clarity exists for the main UK support group, the National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service (ADDISS). This is a Department of Health-funded charity set up 'to provide people-friendly information and resources about ADHD', and its website provides a fact-sheet giving details of the drugs that can be supplied to children. It has solicited and received around £20,000 in funding from Janssen-Cilag, UCB Pharma and Eli Lilly, three of the major pharmaceutical companies that make methylphenidate and other ADHD medications. The drug firms' financing is not acknowledged on the site and nor do their names show up on the accounts lodged with the Charity Commission.

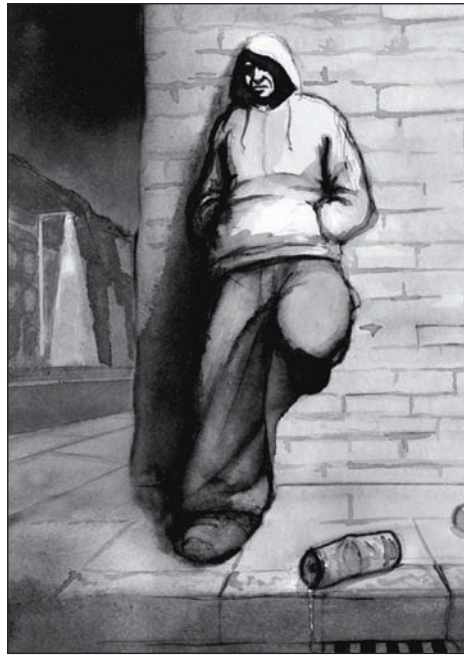
Equally disturbingly, the drug manufacturers have also managed to infiltrate schools as well as medicine and academia. Novartis, who make Ritalin, have a section on their website devoted to teachers who want advice on controlling their pupils' behaviour, gently reminding them of their vital role in their student's treatment programme.

For more on Selling Sickness visit www.thecologist.org

that jobs could be adapted to accommodate parents and children alike. Childless workers may try to say that it's a parent's choice to work and have children – but if children en masse are paying the price for it, then the whole of society will pay the price in the long run. For everyone's sake, we need to facilitate a huge cultural shift whereby parents can take time out, can take refresher courses, and can make job-shares work.

The feminism debate rumbles on. But in the meantime, one solution to the problem would be to pay the parents to stay at home. Having only 26 weeks of statutory paid maternity leave means that the mothers are depositing babies of just six months in some form of childcare if they need to or choose to return to work. As for fathers: they may be entitled to two weeks of paternity leave, but woe betide most if they actually take it (assuming they can even afford to).

Parenting has never been easy. But now children's behaviour is in the public eye more than ever. From *Supernanny* to *Little Angels* everyone is wondering the same thing: how to be a good parent. Over the past 20 years, the task of child-rearing has become loaded with anxiety. Parents are confused about their role: they want their children to be independent, but aren't let them out; they want to be their child's 'best friend' but find that incompatible with discipline. Discipline itself is a minefield, and it's often easier not to venture into it if



can be ruined and careers destroyed should the SS (social services) decide to intervene.

The breakdown in communities is a critical factor. "Once upon a time, all the neighbours would have known all the kids, and they'd all look out for one another," says Dr John McLaren-Howard. "If someone saw a kid causing trouble, they'd be shouting 'Oy, stop that!' But with everyone out at work and all the children at school or nursery, that community aspect to children's upbringing has disappeared." And with it, the belief that children's behaviour is

and learning how you might understand why your child is really miserable or misbehaving or what you could do about it, you can go to support groups and receive tea and sympathy for having been dealt such a cruel biological hand. It is of course equally seductive to teachers, who are relieved of the burden of having to deal with ill-disciplined children – and their parents.

If we're to avoid sliding ever further down the drug route, we have to confront some difficult questions. What exactly are our priorities as a society? Economic growth, and a generation of children on toxic and potentially addictive drugs? Or a generation of healthy, happy, creative children who are nurtured for who they are, and whose individual talents and personalities are allowed to flourish within the boundaries of a communal sense of right and wrong? As Sue Palmer argues so compellingly, it is this nurturing that children need more than anything else. "Switch off the technological wonders and concentrate for a year or so on the ancient virtues of attachment, interaction, communication," she says. "If every parent does that, all but the most unfortunate souls could learn to fly."

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE?

Yes, this challenges all our mantras about work/life balance and work/life rights. It means we have to decide what matters more to us: holidays and new cars or our children's right to a free-range, drug-free childhood in which they can spread their wings and be themselves. Perhaps there is some hope for education in the growing number of parents who are now choosing to home-educate their children and spare them the horrors of SATs: figures released in 2005 showed a large rise in the number of children being educated at home over a five-year period. In 1999 just 12,000 children were being taught at home by their parents. In 2005, more than 21,000 were taught at home – a rise of 42%. But a proper education shouldn't be the preserve of a minority of children with educated, middle-class parents. The government finally has to accept that children simply don't flourish within a battery farm environment, and that they would be better off running, jumping and generally Being Children in all their imperfect, messy, noisy glory.

Rachel Ragg is a freelance journalist

CHILDREN WOULD BE BETTER OFF RUNNING, JUMPING AND GENERALLY BEING CHILDREN IN ALL THEIR IMPERFECT GLORY

your child appears to be out of control. Yet a lack of discipline may be the very problem. Many specialists in children's behavioural problems suggest 'behaviour therapy' as a possible solution – but if you look behind the psycho-babble, it's basically sensible, old-fashioned 'carrot and stick' discipline. Praise the good, introduce clear sanctions for the bad, give clear instructions and reward compliance. Yet – not least because changing children's behaviour often means confronting their own defective behaviour – parents find it easier to seek medical help and advice. Even if parents and/or teachers do want to discipline unruly children, they increasingly feel inhibited from doing so for fear of the consequences, now that families

everyone's responsibility. So instead of whole communities passing on a down-the-generations sense of what's normal behaviour, we have to read books, ask 'experts' and, if all else fails, ask prescription-brandishing doctors with an eye to their next Ciba-Geigy-funded five-star 'conference'.

All this provides the ideal cultural preconditions for a growth of the idea that the real problem lies with a medical condition in the child – thus sparing parents from blame. This, says Bob Jacobs, is very seductive. "Once you have a diagnosis, you become the victim. Instead of being under suspicion of inadequate parenting, you're a martyr, struggling to cope with a sick child."

So instead of going to family therapy

Why we won't starve yet

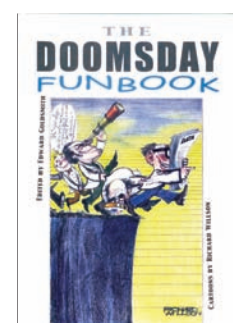
BY PETER BUNYARD

While we in Britain protest bitterly at the inflationary prices we are having to pay for our meat and vegetables, millions of people elsewhere in the world are facing the biggest and most devastating famine of all time. Angry housewives may make for good TV ratings, and they may actually arouse sympathy, but what they are complaining about has absolutely nothing to do with starvation. Indeed they and their families might well be better off for a little less of that high quality protein that we have been led to believe is our essential right. Money speaks louder than suffering and the big food producers of the world, themselves now victims of galloping inflation, are hardly likely to give their food away to those for whom it means life or death but who lack the means to pay the right prices. On the contrary, the producers will continue to sell to the highest bidder as they have always done, even when the buyer is Russia or China and the seller the United States. Last year (1972), when India bought wheat from the US, it had to pay even higher prices than the already high prices paid by the Russians. Last year was a year of reckoning. One harvest failed after another. Drought wiped out harvests in India, Australia, the south-west Sahara and South Africa. For one reason or another the anchovy shoals disappeared off the Peruvian coast, putting paid to one of the largest single sources of cheap, high-quality protein. Russia practically lost its wheat and sugar beet crops, and the US was not able to produce as much soya beans as had been hoped, owing to a bad autumn. Inevitably and predictably, the world now lacks food, but to imagine that we in the West will suffer real shortage is to misunderstand the power of being affluent. What it means, in effect, is that we will have to begin to pay a more realistic price for our food. Before the War the French spent on average 60% of their incomes on food and were apparently happy to do so.

The British are now moaning at having to pay just over 25% of their incomes on food [we now spend around 16 per cent of our household incomes on food and non-alcoholic drinks – ed]. The government's enfeebled attempts to keep prices down by curbing wages and by trying to put ceilings on the cost of consumer goods has been doomed from the start, for the simple reason that Britain has to import most of its raw materials including feedstuffs for livestock. Prices have rocketed and will go on doing so as competition stiffens for the world's raw materials. Modern agriculture is absolutely dependent on cheap inputs of energy, mainly in the form of petroleum and electricity. These cheap inputs have enabled the West to undercut prices of all farm produce so that the consumer has lost sight of what he really should be paying. The undercutting has had other serious consequences, for whenever developing countries have managed to squeeze out surpluses using labour-intensive methods rather than capital, they have found themselves up against give-away prices. As a result they have been virtually unable to make a profit. Without petrol, agriculture would collapse and because of the current fuel crisis it is already in danger of doing so in the US which must begin now to take steps to stabilise an almost impossible situation. In the long term, the only way to stabilise food prices is to make Britain as self-sufficient in food and other raw materials as possible. Labour is one such raw material and it is now recognised that farm productivity measured in yields per acre does not increase with machines. Quite the contrary, the most productive farming in the world is done by hand. Thus, instead of whittling down the number of people working the land to less than 100,000 and increasing the costs of farming, we should be putting policies into practice that have the opposite effect. The government should in fact be taking desperate measures to get people back on

the land. Predictably, it is doing worse than nothing: it is, in fact, offering substantial compensation of up to £1,000 an acre to persuade small farmers to leave the land. Unfortunately Britain is now in the most unenviable position of having largely killed off traditional labour-intensive agricultural practices and of having allowed agricultural accommodation to be sold off to non-farmers. Too often, the farmer's cottage has become a second home to the citydweller. Yet something must be done, and one suggestion would be to subsidise the farmer for every farm labourer he uses over a certain minimum. In addition, crash training programmes would have to be instituted and reasonable wages offered to entice farmers back onto the land. This may well give us a chance to survive, even though we may no longer be able to afford to eat meat twice or even once a day, as some people regard as their right and due.

Ecologist editorial, September 1973



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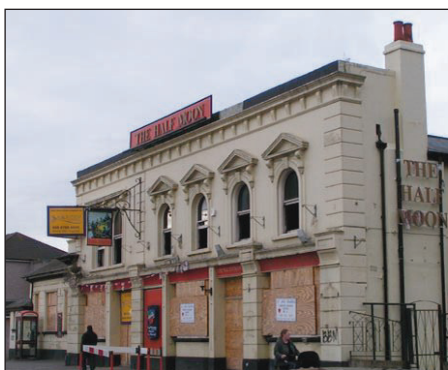
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KEEP IT LOCAL

A CALL TO THE ARMS

Not everyone wants their local pub 'gastro'd' or turned into a block of luxury flats. **Paul Kingsnorth** reports on a unique local campaign that may be the best way for communities to protect their most important assets





Friday night, 10.30pm, and the place is full. I'm leaning on the bar, deep sediment in my refilled jar, listening to the conversation. That's conversation singular. The place isn't big enough for more than one at a time. Tonight it is packed out – perhaps 15-strong, most of them local dairy farmers. They've had a few pints of Otter Head beer and their faces are red and beaming. The room is a rolling sea of Devonian accents. The talk is of fertiliser, somebody called Mr Pissley, the stupidity of the Cornish and a local dog which may or may not be part wolf. Outside, winter rain is battering onto the tin roof of the outhouse that doubles as the toilet.

Fix the words 'traditional pub' in your head. What do you see? A thatched roof, perhaps. Peacocks. A Grade II listed building. Polished horse brasses. A big flagstone fireplace.

Rows of hand pumps. *Inspector Morse*. The Luppitt Inn has none of these, and yet it is more of a traditional pub than any you will find in the tourist guides or coffee-table books about Olde England.

The Luppitt Inn is owned and run by 85-year-old Mary Wright. It has been in her family for more than 100 years. Mary's father ran it before he died, and his father before him. It has long been the only watering hole in this little village in the Blackdown Hills, but these days the village, like the pub, seems to be on its last legs. Now only a few regular customers come to the tap room of the Luppitt. When Mary goes, the pub will probably go too.

You would miss the Luppitt if you weren't looking for it. The pub sign that swings lazily by the roadside is faded and peeling, and the only thing that distinguishes Mary's farmhouse from any

other is a small wooden sign above the front door, which, if you look closely, turns out to be the announcement of a licence. The pub opens only in the evenings. There is no food on sale, apart from the odd packet of peanuts. There are no hand-pumps, no till, no price list, no slot machines, no music, no telephone, no bar staff, no spirits. Only one type of beer is sold; brewed in a small brewery at the other end of the valley, it sells at a rate of about 10 gallons a week.

This is a place like no other. Little more than the front room of Mary's farmhouse, the Luppitt Inn is a telling time capsule. There was a time when every village in England would have had a small, informal alehouse like this. Mary's is the last. Leaning

Rural pubs are disappearing with unprecedented speed, leaving more than half the villages of England 'dry' for the first time since the Norman Conquest

on the bar, listening to, and occasionally being ribbed by, the circle of farmers sitting around the Luppitt's only table, I am suddenly aware that I am bearing witness to something that is soon to be lost: a way of life that was once common everywhere but has now retreated, holed up here. Somehow, the Luppitt Inn has remained unchanged as the rest of England has moved on. It is the last remnant of an older way of life, and when it goes it won't be coming back.

In virtually every way, the Luppitt Inn is exceptional. Yet there is one thing that it has in common with a more typical, more recognisable, average sort of English pub: it may not survive for much longer. You might not know it to look around you, but the pub is in trouble.

According to the Campaign for Real Ale, 26 pubs in the UK go out of business every month – almost one a day. Many are

converted into hip bars or luxury housing by the giant pub corporations that now own more than half of them and are happily squeezing them dry for the benefit of their shareholders. In the countryside, rural pubs are disappearing with unprecedented speed, leaving more than half the villages of England 'dry' – publess – for the first time since the Norman Conquest.

As the pubs disappear, so do the breweries that serve them. A century ago there were more than 6,000 historic breweries in Britain; now there are around 500. The past decade alone has seen the end of, among others, Morrells of Oxford (founded 1782), Brakspear of Henley (1799), Castle Eden of Hartlepool (1826), Morland

of Abingdon (1711), Ruddles of Rutland (1857), Courage of Bristol (1702), Strangeways of Manchester (1778) and Mitchells of

Lancaster (1871) – names that were sources of national heritage, regional pride and local employment sold, shut down or taken over. With them have gone the unique recipes and flavours of what could be said to be the ultimate example of local produce – traditional English ale.

MAIS NON!

To put this in context, imagine that it's happening in France. Imagine that classic grape varieties – Pinot Noir, Riesling, pink Muscat – are no longer being grown; that the chateaux that produced them are being converted into luxury flats for wealthy Parisians. Imagine that you can no longer buy Veuve Clicquot, Mouton Rothschild or Sancerre; that instead, people are drinking a few heavily-marketed varieties of imported Australian or Californian wine distributed by a handful of drinks corporations. Imagine



CORBIS



the riots on the streets of France, and the outrage in the dining rooms of middle-class homes all over England.

Substitute 'beer' for 'wine' and you get some idea of the significance of what is happening here. There was a time, not so long ago, when the country was a tapestry of tastes woven from its national drink: the dark, hoppy beer known originally as 'ale'. Its tastes, flavours, ingredients and history vary as much as the atmosphere and interiors of the pubs that sell it. In English beer and the English pub we have, whether we know it or not, something unique. But the spread of the one-size-fits-all corporate philosophy to the traditional boozer is threatening its very existence.

LAST ORDERS

The pub has an ancient history. The Romans imported its predecessor, the *tabernae*, in the first century AD. By the 10th century, beer-drinking was such a popular national pastime that King Edgar initiated the first government campaign against binge drinking. He issued a law limiting the number of pubs in each village to one, and decreed that all drinking vessels should be a standard size: four pints, divided into eight parts by pegs inside the tankard. Drinkers were officially limited to one pegs'-worth in every visit.

Edgar's attempt to control the appetites of the masses backfired: every self-respecting drinker regarded the new law as a challenge

rather than a limitation, and competed to sup as much as possible at every sitting – hence the phrase ‘take him down a peg or two’.

Edgar, and the various puritan outfits that came after him, from Cromwell to the 19th century abstinence movement, were always fighting a losing battle. The English have, for centuries, liked nothing more than to go out for a beer, and the pub, as a result, has become an institution that says more about this country and its people, for better or for worse, than the monarchy, the House of Commons or the Church. And, unlike any of those, it’s still popular everywhere.

One reason, perhaps, is that the pub is one of the most definably local institutions there is. You cannot clone a real, local pub, and when you try the results are horrific – all fake signs and corporate conviviality. The atmosphere in a good pub comes from a peculiar and entirely un-reproducible mix of the people who drink there, the décor, the attitude of the landlord and his staff (surly, cheerful, under the table – every pub has its own style) and the general ambience. It also, crucially, comes from the beer.

A real, traditional English beer is one of the ultimate local products. Its taste will depend on the precise blend of ingredients used: the type of hops, the flavour of the malt. The local water will also affect its taste greatly – move the brewery to another county and the taste of the beer will change.

The brewery itself – the equipment it uses, the recipes it has developed over the years – will be the key to its uniqueness, which is why the death of so many traditional brewers is such a cultural tragedy. And because a real ale ‘lives’ and continues to brew in the barrel, it cannot be transported far before it goes off – unlike the dead, gassy, multinational lager brands, which are designed specifically to be air-freighted across continents.

Thus a good local pub, serving good local beer, is an ideal antidote to faceless globalisation. It is the perfect representation of a rooted, human-scale institution serving good quality local produce, resulting in good quality local enjoyment. What more could anyone want?

The answer is depressing and unsurprising: money. For the pub has been sucked into the high-pace, high-pressure world of branding, marketing and



shareholder-value. As a result, it is losing its soul.

The roots of this unwelcome change can be traced back several decades. In the post-war period most pubs were owned by breweries, which had grown in size from regional to national and were becoming more ambitious.

Consolidation and takeovers meant that, by the 1980s, more than half the country’s pubs were owned by just six big brewers, who also produced 75 per cent of the beer sold in them. Over the same period, they began to turn their backs on real ale,

A century ago there were more than 6,000 historic breweries in Britain; now there are around 500

focusing instead on ‘nitro-keg’ beers – pasteurised versions that were cheaper, easier to transport and longer-lasting – and mass-marketed lagers. They also began to brand their pubs, ripping out historic interiors and putting in ‘themed’ replacements.

But they had gone too far and had caught the eye of Margaret Thatcher, who hated both monopolies and brewers (whom she regarded as part of the Old Establishment). In 1989, acting on a recommendation from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, the Tory government introduced sweeping



legislation to end the brewers’ dominance. The 1989 ‘Beer Orders’ decreed that no brewer could own more than 2,000 pubs and obliged them to give their landlords the option of selling at least one ‘guest beer’ produced by a rival brewer.

The theory seemed sensible enough: taking apart the monopoly of the big brewers would lead to a flowering of smaller brewers, free houses, more varied pubs and more choice for drinkers. But the brewers spotted a loophole. While the Beer Orders prohibited them from owning more than 2,000 pubs each, there was nothing to stop a company that didn’t brew beer from owning a limitless number of them. So the biggest brewers set up Pub Companies – or PubCos – to which they sold all their pubs, on the understanding that the new PubCos would stock only their beer. Hey presto: a new monopoly.

Twenty years ago, the six biggest brewers owned around 30,000 pubs. Today, the eight biggest PubCos own around the same number – and they are still consolidating. It is a situation that, according to many landlords and drinkers, is worse than before – for two main reasons.

The first is simple: asset-stripping. The way many landlords and pub campaigners see it, a PubCo is primarily a property company whose properties just happen to sell drinks. Their interest is not in the drinks or the

KEEP IT LOCAL

atmosphere – not really in the pub at all, simply in the profit it can generate. So, if a PubCo can make more money by selling off a pub and turning it into housing – which, with today's madly spiralling property prices, it often can – then it will. Even if the pub is popular and successful it is never going to produce as much profit as quickly as such a sell-off will.

Similarly, if the PubCo has a traditional town centre local on its hands, it is likely to increase the turnover substantially if it tears out the interior, sticks a couple of bouncers on the door, replaces the real ales with bottled lagers and turns it into what the industry calls 'a high-volume vertical drinking establishment', because there are few chairs and everyone gets drunk quickly, standing up, before they stagger on to the clubs. Ever wondered why 'binge drinking'

has become such an issue? Blame the PubCos. It's where the money is.

The second trend concerns something called the 'beer tie'. The landlord of a pub owned by a PubCo has nothing like a free hand. Not only will he have to pay an ever-spiralling annual rent to his PubCo – and pub rents are spiralling fast as the PubCos squeeze landlords' margins to increase their annual profits – but he has to buy all his beer from them, too. He won't be allowed to sell anything that's not on the PubCo's list (often small, unimaginative and stocked with global brands) and he won't be allowed to buy beer from anyone else – despite the fact that this would allow him to buy a wider variety of beers at a much lower cost.

This double whammy – high rents and a beer monopoly – makes it harder to work for a PubCo than it used to be to work for a



big brewer. Many landlords are now complaining that the PubCos are driving them to the wall. Some even suggest it is no accident – a pub that can't make a profit, after all, is ripe for conversion into housing.

DRINKING-UP TIME

It's enough to make you want to give up and drown your sorrows. But perhaps that would be premature. The English pub, after all, has lasted for two millennia. If neither King Edgar nor Oliver Cromwell could extinguish it, the pub should be able to survive contemporary corporatisation. And, down at local level, there are signs of hope.

One of them is to be found in a small village in the shadow of the Lake District's southern fells. Heskett Newmarket is a pleasant little place – neat stone and whitewash houses, an oak tree standing sentinel over the village green, a small shop and post office. In the village centre stands what looks like a pleasant but unremarkable pub. But it has an exciting story to tell.

The Old Crown is a small, two-room affair, with a log fire burning in the stone fireplace, lines of silver tankards hanging from the roofbeams, three old men sitting on barstools discussing the weather and 10 separate beers advertised on a chalkboard behind the bar. So far, so unsurprising.

What is unusual about this place, though, is that it is owned not by a PubCo, not by a brewery, not even by the landlord, but by the community. The Old Crown is Britain's first, and so far only, co-operatively owned pub. It may not be the last.

Sitting by the front window with a pint of Blencathra (all the beers sold here are named after local mountains), Julian Ross explains how it happened. Julian was one of the driving forces behind the Old Crown's transformation from a pub under threat to a pub under community control.

'The previous landlord, Kim, decided to sell up in 2001,' he explains. 'His wife had



CORBIS



died and he didn't want to run the place on his own. The worry was that it would be bought by a PubCo or a big brewer – or that it might even go for housing. Enough people were concerned about it for us to get together and discuss what we could do as a community to safeguard it.' The Old Crown is the only pub in the village. The locals knew that if it went, a key part of their community would go too.

So they did something about it. After much discussion, they came up with a business model that would give control of

In an age of spiralling rents, supermarket pressure and hyper-globalisation, this kind of community ownership points a way forward

the pub to the community and ensure it was safeguarded for the future. They set up a co-operative, and appealed for people to buy shares. Rules were strict – only one share could be bought per person, and no one could sell their share to anyone except the co-op itself. This way, the possibility of any kind of unwanted takeover was avoided, and community control was retained. Initially, 125 people bought shares – some from as far afield as Australia and the US, who had visited it on holiday and wanted to help save it. The share issue was a success, and the co-op bought the pub.

Julian gives me a tour of the place to show me the fruits of their labours. The co-op employs the current landlord and bar staff. Their success at running the pub has also allowed them to build a bright, new dining room extension out the back, which has only just opened.

But the *pièce de résistance* is outside. Julian walks me through a sea of steel barrels and garden furniture into an old barn behind the pub. The smell of malt and steam hangs in the air. This is the Old Crown's



microbrewery, the Hesket Brewery. It, like the pub, is owned by the community. All the beers sold in the pub are from the brewery here – and they're sold in other pubs and shops countrywide, too. The brewer, Mike, who has decades of expertise behind him, shows me the bottling machine they have just bought, with which they intend to step up trade.

The striking thing about the Old Crown is that despite – or probably because of – the fact that it has ignored the PubCo model, it is a roaring success. These days, Julian receives calls from all over the country,

from other people who want to save their community pub in the same way.

Other pub

co-ops are planned elsewhere. In an age of spiralling rents, supermarket pressure and hyper-globalisation, this kind of community ownership points a way forward for the traditional local. It is people power in its purest form. The PubCos may have a fight on their hands.

"To me," says Julian, as we stand looking over the mash tuns and sparging pipes of the brewery, "it was like saying 'thus far, but no further'. You know – so many things are now cloned, McDonaldised, corporatised. We were saying – whatever else you've got, you're not having our pub. And now they can't. It's a step on the road. It's easy to look at the whole advance of homogenisation and corporate control and think 'it's too big, there's nothing we can do'. But you can do it. My wife has a saying – if you want to eat an elephant, you don't try to do it all at once. You do it bite by bite. That's what we're doing at the Old Crown – biting the elephant. If enough of us do it, it's eaten."

Paul Kingsnorth is the author of *One No, Many Yeses*. www.paulkingsnorth.net

FOUR MORE LOCAL CO-OP SUCCESSSES

THE RAILWAY: WENSLEYDALE

Yorkshire

The community-owned



Wensleydale Railway Association was set up in 1960, aiming to restore 40 miles of track torn up in the 1960s. Share sales raised more than £1,000,000, and in 2003 the first 12 miles of track was reopened. www.wensleydaleraillwayassociation.com

THE SHOP: SULGRAVE

Northamptonshire

Sulgrave's village shop



closed five years ago, but villagers banded together to start a new one. They set up a co-operative, sought support and funding, and sold shares to local people. The new shop, in a small, 18th-century building with a bakery in the attic, is an award-winning success story with a national reputation. The Village Retail Services Association (ViRSA) offers advice and funding for community shops: www.virsa.org

THE FARM: FORDHALL

Shropshire

Faced with a possible



hostile buyout, third-generation tenant farmers Charlotte Hollins, her brother Ben, and local supporters set up the Fordhall Community Land Initiative last year to save this pioneering organic farm. A public appeal raised £800,000 by selling shares in the farm. The appeal gained national, then international, prominence – and it worked. www.fordhallfarm.com


THE ISLAND: GIGHA

Hebrides

Scotland's law enabling



communities to buy their own land has proved a boon for Gigha. Locals put their island in community ownership in 2002. They have set up community-owned hotels, a much-needed affordable house-building programme and pioneered Scotland's first community-owned, grid-connected windfarm. www.gigha.org.uk

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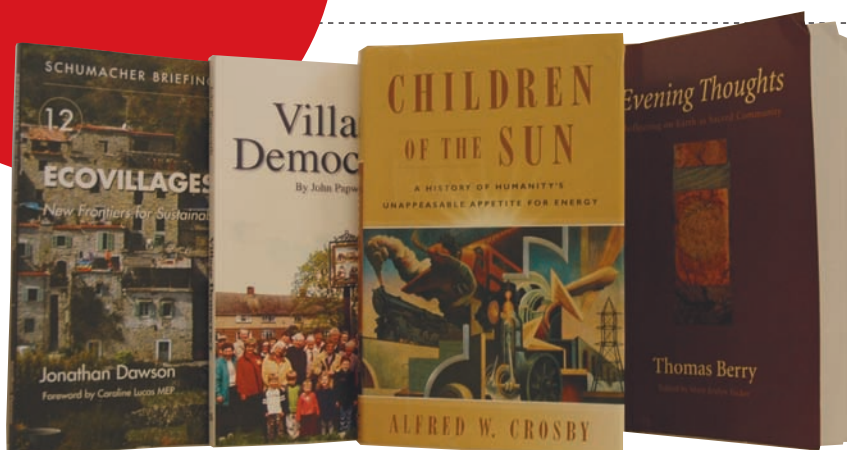
*Based on an average passenger car with average annual mileage

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reviews



Village Democracy

John Papworth

Imprint Academic, 2006, £8.95

"The problem," declares John Papworth, "is not in itself war, or capitalism, or global economics brigandage, or this or that president or prime minister. It is a crisis of power." That crisis of power is also, he believes, a crisis of size. Governments fail us not because of their politics or their policies "but because they are too big". This is hardly a new critique, but it is one that Papworth has spent decades thinking about. The result is this lively, thought-provoking book, which raises as many questions as it suggests answers – but has a good pop at doing the latter too. Everything from local parliaments to community morality to democratic money supplies are considered, as Papworth tries to think his way out of the dire effects of over-centralisation. "Would we, if we were able to choose, find it wise to create a form of government where all the power to govern an entire country is at one centre?" he asks. And now that he puts it like that...

Reviewed by Paul Kingsnorth



An Inconvenient Truth

Director Davis Guggenheim, in collaboration with the man who 'used to be the next president of the United States', Al Gore, has come up with a different kind of disaster film: the disaster is real and the audience are both villains and victims.

An Inconvenient Truth consists mainly of a multimedia presentation on climate change, one that Gore has given a thousand times in a thousand different cities across the globe over the past few years. The

main message is interspersed with interviews and Gore's voice-over reflections on his personal and political life and how they have intersected to raise his consciousness of an environment in crisis.

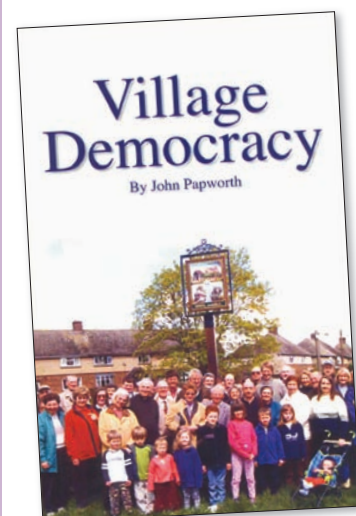
For a night out at the cinema it may sound dull and depressing, but the man once known as Mr Freeze comes across as warm, lucid, passionate and, crucially, believable.

Gore's explanations of complex environmental phenomena with the aid of

charts to show rising rates of carbon-dioxide emissions and the corresponding rise in global temperatures, speculative maps of submerged coastlines and still photos of receding ice fields and glaciers are clear, stark, illuminating and powerful.

This well-made, carefully edited documentary should be on everyone's 'must see' list. In 90 minutes it makes a compelling case about how careless human actions are destroying the only home any of us will ever know.

Reviewed by Pat Thomas



Wild Words

Malcolm Tait launches his new column on nature writing by celebrating a very special publishing milestone

The Second World War was over. It was finally, finally over. It was hard to believe that the island had held firm throughout those years, and by late 1945, a sense of celebration of what had been saved, a desire to cherish once more the hard-won land, was in the air.

In the air, and in the bookshops. As the year drew to its close, two bright new books started to appear on the nation's shelves. Weighty yet readable, informative and instructive, *Butterflies* and *London's Natural History*, with their coloured dustjackets and use of pioneering new photographic techniques, had arrived to remind a rebuilding Britain of the natural heritage that had been saved.

These books were the first in the *New Naturalist* series that had been launched by Collins, and in September this year, more than 60 years later, it has reached an extraordinary landmark – its hundredth title.

Perhaps it was the chosen subjects themselves that helped in that early success. Of all wildlife, there is little that epitomises long, safe, trouble-free summer days as well as butterflies, and at a time when much of London needed to be rebuilt from its rubble-strewn bomb craters and crumbling buildings, a study of that city's natural history provided a subliminal sense of endurance, a reminder that come what

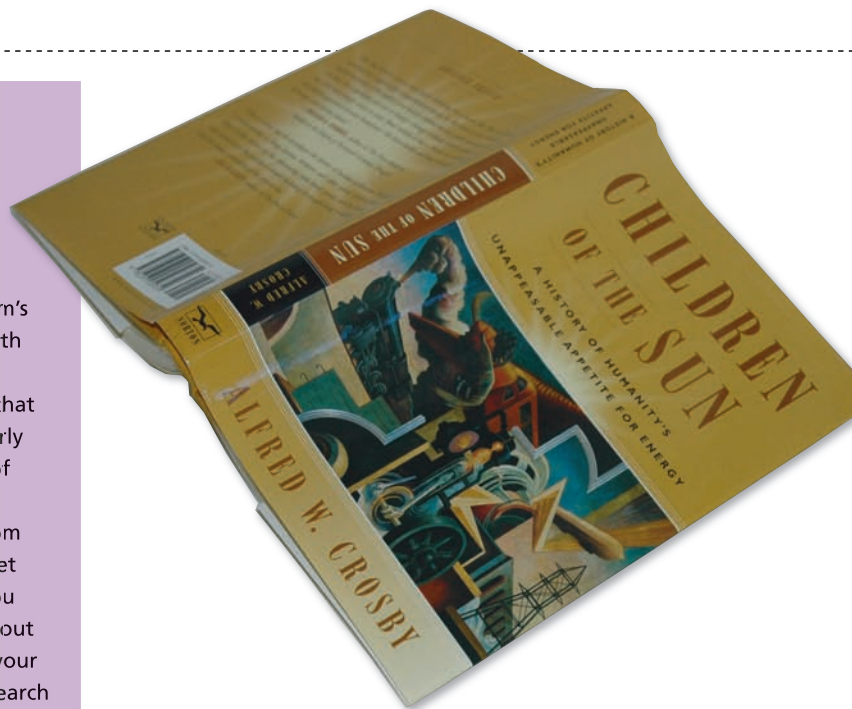
may, life will continue.

But 60 years is still a long time. Oliver Rackham's *Woodlands*, the hundredth title, hits the shelves of a very different Britain to that encountered by those early titles. The vast majority of today's Britons were not even born in the war; from television and the internet you can find out what you want about wildlife without having to dig deep into your pocket; and the pure research into nature exemplified by the 'new' naturalists has been overtaken by the applied research that now drives the mighty conservation industry.

Book sales, accordingly, have dropped. Once published in their tens of thousands, a modern *New Naturalist* barely runs to two or three thousand copies in its first edition. If the series were launched today, it would probably flop.

Yet it does not need to be launched today, because it already exists. The *New Naturalist* series has become like the wildlife it covers - adored by those who know it well, preserved by those who study it, and holding on to its own ecological niche. In 1945 London's *Natural History* gave hope that life will endure through the strife that it faces; today, the series itself is a symbol of that endurance. Long may it continue.

Malcolm Tait's new book, *Animal Tragic*, is published by Think Books, £9.99



Children of the Sun

Alfred W Crosby
Norton & Co, 2006, £14.99

Energy books are fast becoming the new 'whodunnits'. So it's refreshing to find one that takes a different stance. Alfred Crosby charts the social impact of energy upon human beings, from our paleolithic diet through to the fusion reactor. Along the way he emphasises that energy is not simply something that gushed forth from an oil well in the 1860s, but rather a resource that has shaped our very evolution. As our ancestors gathered around fires to cook, the use of energy began to shape us socially, and it has continued to do so. Today, we are addicted to its potential like a drug. Carefully constructed and designed for the layperson, Crosby offers thoughts and solutions without being didactic. Both a potted history of humanity and a road-map to our current crisis, *Children of the Sun* makes for engaging reading.

Reviewed by Mark Anslow



Ad nauseam

Perfumes for dogs... but they're organic, so surely that's all right?

(Advert taken from alitalia inflight magazine)



Kekexili Mountain Patrol

UK Release: September 29, 2006

Length: 85 minutes

Language: Mandarin,
with English subtitles

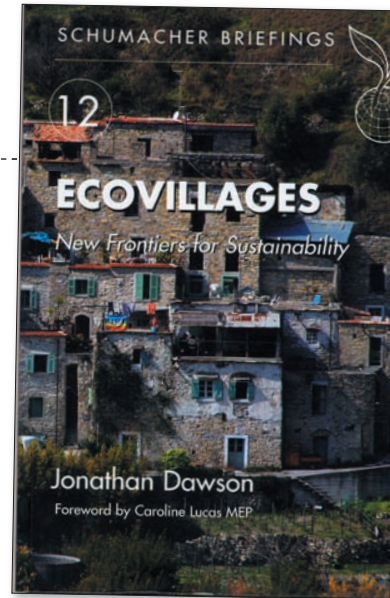
Certificate: 15

Any film that begins in complete silence exists to make a point. Such is the case with *Kekexili Mountain Patrol*, a new release from writer/director Lu Chuan. The film tells the true story of an unpaid civilian patrol formed to combat the illegal poaching of Tibetan antelope for their pelts. Ga Yu, a Beijing journalist, is sent to investigate the death of one of the patrolmen, and accompanies the unlikely band of heroes out into the frozen tundra of the Tibetan steppes. Following a trail of animal carcasses and recovered furs, the enigmatic patrol leader, Ri Tai, begins an Ahab-esque hunt for the gunmen responsible for the slaughter. But as he nears his quarry, the tortuous climate



begins to take a heavy toll on his dedicated band of followers. A combination of unusual camera angles and hand-held shots gives the movie an almost 'docu-drama' feel, which works greatly to its advantage. It is the film's great success to tell a tale of animal cruelty through a story of human courage and suffering.

Reviewed by Mark Anslow



Ecovillages: New Frontiers for Sustainability

Jonathan Dawson

Schumacher Briefings, 2006, £6

Ecovillages, once the enclaves of disaffected radicals, are today centres with their own currencies, cooperatives and consultancies. Jonathan Dawson, himself a resident of the Findhorn community in Scotland, adds to the excellent *Schumacher Briefings* series with a comprehensive look at eco-communities across the globe. Just as important as the solar panels, wind turbines and reed-bed sewage systems are the social and economic make-up of the communities, and all are covered in detail. In particular, he emphasises that the 'politics of protest' have little place in the function of a modern ecovillage – rather than being ideological islands, they should focus on how they can bring the largest possible benefit to the wider environment and community. It is here that they stand to offer us a blueprint to living through what Dawson describes as the coming 'energy famine'. This book offers an excellent introduction to what are, even today, largely misunderstood communities.

Reviewed by Mark Anslow

Evening thoughts: Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community

Thomas Berry

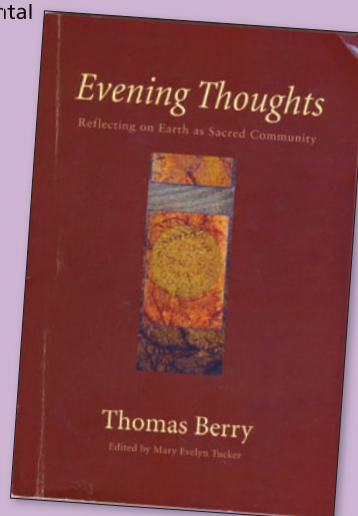
Sierra Club Books, 2006, £12.95

"We perceive the evil of suicide and homicide, and especially the horror of genocide. Yet we have little objection to biocide or geocide."

Thomas Berry wants to change the way we view the world and our place in it. He argues that we should stop seeing humans as the supreme reality, and start to recognise the interdependence of all life forms: "Every mode of

being has rights derived from existence itself." As a leading cultural historian, environmental thinker and cosmologist who has studied the world's religions, Berry's vision is wide, poetic and radical. One minute he is highlighting the cultural pathology of our 'Petrochemical Age', the next inspiring awe and wonder for this 'stupendous universe' and 'glorious planet'. And throughout this diverse and dazzling collection, the call for 'Earth rights' infuses every chapter.

Reviewed by Laura Sevier



EXECUTIVE

John Betjeman

I am a young executive. No cuffs than mine are cleaner;
I have a Slimline brief-case and I use the firm's Cortina,
In every roadside hostelry from here to Burgess Hill
The maîtres d'hôtel all know me well and let me sign the bill.

You ask me what it is I do. Well actually, you know,
I'm partly a liaison man and partly P.R.O.
Essentially I integrate the current export drive
And basically I'm viable from ten o'clock till five.

For vital off-the-record work – that's talking transport-wise –
I've a scarlet Aston-Martin – and does she go? She flies!
Pedestrians and dogs and cats – we mark them down for slaughter.
I also own a speed-boat which has never touched the water.

She's built of fibre-glass, of course. I call her 'Mandy Jane'
After a bird I used to know – No soda, please, just plain –
And how did I acquire her? Well to tell you about that
And to put you in the picture I must wear my other hat.

I do some mild developing. The sort of place I need
Is a quiet country market town that's rather run to seed.
A luncheon and a drink or two, a little savoir faire –
I fix the Planning Officer, the Town Clerk and the Mayor.

And if some preservationist attempts to interfere
A 'dangerous structure' notice from the Borough Engineer
Will settle any buildings that are standing in our way –
The modern style, sir, with respect, has really come to stay.

'Executive' by John Betjeman, © The Estate of John Betjeman. Reproduced by kind permission of John Murray (Publishers).

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green pages green pages



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86 10% off Natural Clothing's duvet covers & sheets

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Editorial



In the Green Pages, we have a vision of vibrant, locally owned independent shops providing for a community's needs. But not if these shops sell mouldy produce, or organic meat that's twice as expensive as at the supermarket. Reader Sylvia Evans' experience is a case in point. Sylvia despairingly wrote in to say that she had given up on her local organic shop, complaining of high prices, lack of freshness and non-seasonal produce.

Sylvia's local shop clearly wasn't providing *her* with a good service. They also provide *us all* with a timely warning. Because 'organic' and 'ethical' sells, there is always the risk that our trust and support may be abused and we'll be sold substandard products.

After such an experience, Sylvia rightly moved on. And before so doing, she told the owner of the shop what she thought. (Lucky for her, she got to voice her complaints straight to the owner, which wouldn't have been the case had she been in Tesco.) Finally her experience is a message to all local, independent shops: the Sylvia Evanses of the world may only give you one chance, so don't blow it.

Sincerely,

Matilda Lee

Green Pages Editor

Email: greenpages@theecologist.org



OCTOBER

Throw a cheese, plant a native tree, search for edible fungi or go to Cheltenham and listen to Jimmy Doherty of *Jimmy's Farm*...



30 SEPT - 1 OCT CHEESE

Where can you ride a rodeo bull, have your dreams analysed and toss a whole 1½lb cheese in the air? You can at the Great British Cheese Festival, a celebration of cheeses from across the UK in Cheltenham. With more than 450 varieties on display, the festival is a showcase of dairy diversity from 50 producers. In addition, the event plays host to wine, beer and cider tasting, with pickles, bread and oysters on the side. For details of a guilt- and supermarket-free cheese experience, log on to www.thecheeseweb.com

10 TREE SEEDS

Tree enthusiasts are invited to get out and collect seeds, nuts and fruits on The Tree Council's Seed Gathering Sunday and start to grow trees. Collect native seeds in local woods or parks, or take part in one of the many events in the country. www.treecouncil.org



13 CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL

12pm
Jimmy Doherty, from BBC2's *Jimmy's Farm*, joins Joanna Blythman, author of *Bad Food Britain*, *The Farm* author Richard Benson, and Graham Harvey, writer of *We Want Real Food*, to discuss British farming and the impact of global shopping on our diet. Visit www.cheltenhamfestivals.com or call 01242 227979 to book tickets.



21 APPLE DAY

As our supermarkets import increasing numbers of foreign, wax-polished apples, it's ever more necessary to support your local growers. For a good, family day out, find your local apple day event on www.commonground.org.uk or phone 01747 850820.



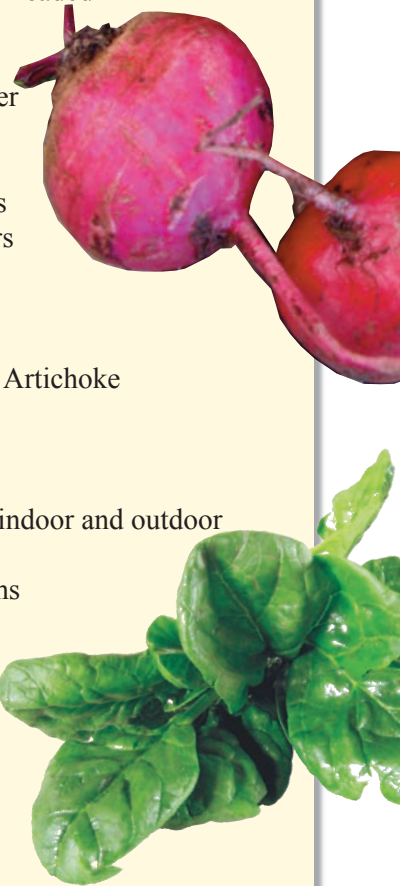
BARBARA HADRILL

How do you get Down Under without going up and over? Barbara Hadrill, a biologist dedicated to low-impact living, is proving that it is possible to get from Wales to a friend's wedding in Australia without flying. Chart her epic journey by logging onto her blog: <http://babs2brisbane.blogspot.com/>



OCTOBER FOOD IN SEASON

- Asian Greens
- Beans – French, runner
- Beetroot
- Broccoli – headed
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celeriac
- Celery
- Courgettes
- Cucumbers
- Currants
- Fennel
- Garlic
- Jerusalem Artichoke
- Kale
- Kohlrabi
- Leeks
- Lettuce – indoor and outdoor
- Marrow
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Parsnips
- Peppers
- Potatoes
- Pumpkins
- Radishes
- Shallots
- Spinach
- Spring Onions
- Summer Squash
- Swede
- Sweetcorn
- Swiss Chard
- Tomatoes



WALK TO SCHOOL

How do you get a 4ft-high orange foot called 'Strider' to visit you? By signing your school up to the International Walk to School Week campaign! During the morning rush, at least 15 per cent of the cars on the road are on the school run. Help solve this problem by leaving the car at home and joining other families across the world as they make their way to the school gates on foot. Visit www.walktoschool.org.uk or phone Andrew Fielding on 020 7820 1010.



FUNGI

Throughout October – Scour for fungi on one of the many 'fungus forays' organised by wildlife trusts. An expert will usually be on hand to tell you which is which, and what's safe to eat. Visit www.wildlifetrusts.org to find the fungus foray nearest to where you live.



31 HALLOWE'EN: PUMPKINS

Using pumpkins as lanterns at Hallowe'en is based on an ancient Celtic custom taken to America by Irish immigrants. All Hallow's Eve marked the end of the old Celtic calendar year. Hollowed-out beets and turnips with a candle inside were used to welcome ancestral spirits and ward off evil ones.



PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

The Mum & Baby Pack (£29.99) from Babaloo, a new company making bamboo products. Includes a hooded baby towel, shea butter and baby balm. Bamboo is naturally anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and anti-static. To buy, go to www.babaloo.co.uk



LOCAL HERO:

Alison Kennedy

The world's endangered forests have got a new champion: a tree-hugging publisher fighting complacency in the book world. **Matilda Lee** reports



Behind the cover of any one of the 1.6 million different book titles sold in the UK, could be the pulp of an endangered tropical hardwood tree from Borneo, or the stolen forest habitat of one of the remaining Siberian tigers. Unlike food, clothes and other consumer goods, whose provenance is a major selling point, books don't come with labels as such.

Which is what makes Alison Kennedy, production director of Egmont UK's book divisions, so remarkable. Conservatively dressed in black pumps and a trouser suit, you won't see her chained to a tree or shouting slogans in a street march. But filed away on the desktop computer in her office overlooking a busy street in central London, is a powerful weapon

fighting the most destructive practices of the publishing industry. With a click of the mouse, Kennedy can trace back the origin – by tree type and country – of every one of Egmont's 1,300-plus new and reprinted titles, a total of 18 million books per year.

Kennedy's mission is clear: "I want to say, hand on heart, that nothing coming out of this publishing house has been made by illegal or irresponsible forestry."

From finished product backwards: a book is produced at a printers, which receives paper from a paper broker, which gets the paper from a paper mill, which buys the pulp from a pulp mill, which in turn buys the logs from someone else – at which point it could have been through various ownerships already, from a logging

company to a forest owner or a wood broker. By laboriously shining a light on each of the parts in this murky chain, Kennedy has created a revolutionary concept in mainstream publishing: a book with an ethical product guarantee.

TRACING THE PAPER

It all started in 2001, when customers – on the back of forestry campaigns by Greenpeace and WWF – started inquiring about the trees that made Egmont's books. Kennedy didn't have the answers. Nor had she thought seriously about the question. But as she started researching, she was shocked at how little information was available. Not one to do things half-heartedly, she made the single-handed decision that Egmont would be proactive on the issue, and not just about a few select titles – she wanted 100 per cent traceability.

Since a grading system for book paper didn't exist at that time, she enlisted the help of Acona, a Norwegian/UK corporate responsibility consultancy, to help her devise one.

"When we first came up with the concept, I don't think either of us realised how difficult it would be," she says. "Book publishing is so elaborate that any one book could be made up of seven or eight different types of paper, which, in turn, could be made of 10 different species of tree, from anywhere around the world."

Kennedy and Simon Thresh, a partner at Acona, thrashed out a grading system that would identify paper from illegal forests (Grade 1); paper whose origin is unknown (Grade 2); paper whose origin is known and legal (Grade 3); paper certified by schemes less rigorous than the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), such as the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC) or the Canadian Standard Association (Grade 4); and FSC-certified and recycled paper (Grade 5).

In October 2003, when the annual Frankfurt Book Fair gathered the movers

and shakers of the publishing world, Kennedy went public. She organised a workshop for all 10 of Egmont's international printers, who are based throughout the UK, Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. At the workshop, she explained her new grading system and told the printers that if they wanted to continue to work with Egmont they would have to provide information about the pulps their paper contained, the species of forest, where they were made, and any certification they have.

As Kennedy relates, there was an immediate enthusiasm, followed by a lot of work – then extreme disillusionment. After some months, she started to receive the printers' responses. While a few had taken the trouble to fully complete data, others were only half-finished (e.g.

"I want to say, hand on heart, that nothing coming out of this publishing house has been made by illegal or irresponsible forestry"

paper comes from the Far East, but not naming the country), while others had information that didn't match up (e.g. mahogany from Finland, when there is no mahogany grown in Finland).

Around May 2004, Kennedy was ready to give up. To add to the endless chasing of the paper and pulp mill companies to get missing information, one of their

printers wouldn't cooperate at all. The gist of their argument was that, as none of their other 30 clients was asking for the same information, why should they bother? The printers claimed it was too difficult. Kennedy replied that in fact, this wasn't a voluntary system; and when they still wouldn't cooperate, she took the risky step of taking away all 16 of their titles. "That focused their minds, and suddenly,

within months, they had found the information about their suppliers that we were looking for," she says.

Once all the data was in, the next step was to get rid of the 'rubbish', as she calls it. Companies like Asian Pulp & Paper



(AP&P), the Indonesian-based company that has been linked to illegal logging in Indonesia and China, were being used by four of her printers, and were dropped.

All in all, Kennedy got rid of between 20 and 25 per cent of

their paper sources, eliminating all of the Grade 1 and 2 papers.

Has going green impacted Egmont's bottom line? Kennedy is adamant that being an ethical business doesn't mean being uneconomic. "Moving away from illegal sources actually saved us money," she says. "There have been no negatives in all this. One of the positive but more intangible advantages is that staff morale has improved. We're doing something different."

Judgment calls are made on their Grade 3 papers, where the source is 'known and legal'. In some countries,

'legal' is a very nebulous concept: evidence can be faked and legal practices still may be environmentally destructive.

Simon Thresh says, "We go as far as we can in understanding that level of risk; any paper from Indonesia or Russia makes us nervous." Certain species (ramin, for example) are CITES-listed, which means they are dropped from use in any of Egmont's titles. And mixed tropical hardwoods are implicated with the clear cutting of rainforests for plantations, so Egmont steers away from those.

THE FUTURE OF FORESTS

Today, Kennedy's system is an integral part of Egmont's ordering process: when a member of staff places an order for any Grade 1 or 2 paper, it is automatically blocked. And there's been a ripple effect throughout Egmont's supply chain. Now almost half of Egmont's printers either have, or are in the process of getting, FSC certification. Jon Parvin, managing director at Friary Press (which also prints *The Ecologist*) says that Kennedy's approach "led us to question mills more thoroughly. We now find ourselves in the





position of ‘pushing’ our clients into a more, shall we say, thoughtful paper selection process.”

Which brings up a sticky point – Kennedy has no means of monitoring her system and has to rely on the word of the printers, which is why she uses only a small number of trusted suppliers. “I’m not saying that this is the perfect system, but it’s something, and we are constantly looking for ways to improve,” she comments.

Egmont’s first FSC-certified book was published last year – Michael Morpurgo’s *Kensuke’s Kingdom* – and Kennedy made sure that not only the text but also the cover was FSC-certified.

“You can have an FSC logo where only the text is FSC, and the cover and any other parts of the book could be made from who knows what. But to me it doesn’t feel right to be doing the right thing, but just in places,” she says.

The other Grade 5 books include *Spot Goes Green* (100 per cent recycled paper) and Alice Hoffman’s *The Foretelling*. Along with these, other titles have Grade 5 papers within them, bringing Egmont’s Grade 5 total to 30 per cent of their

Annually, 788 million books are printed by UK publishers. The mind boggles at what an environmental minefield it is

papers, with 48 per cent at Grade 3 and 22 per cent at Grade 4. “The faraway ideal is for everything to be FSC-certified, but this is virtually impossible at the moment, as there is not enough FSC-certified paper to go around,” says Kennedy.

In the children’s book publishing market, Egmont is in the top two, based on sales. In the wider publishing world, however, they’re a drop in the ocean. Encouragingly, Random House, Harper Collins and BBC all have started to publish titles on FSC-certified and

recycled paper. All of Green Books’ recent titles are printed on recycled paper and Eco-logic is in the process of devising a ‘book miles’ grading system.

However, there is still a long way to go. There are 788 million books printed by UK publishers every year. Assuming that between 15 and 25 per cent of their paper, like Egmont’s used to be, will come from either illegal or untraceable sources, the mind boggles at what an ethical and

environmental minefield book publishing is. And given that book paper accounts for only two per cent of the global paper market – which includes everything from magazines and newspapers to wallpaper, posters, directories and

packaging – it would be easy to believe the problem is too big to tackle.

Alison Kennedy has proved it isn’t.

Matilda Lee is Editor of *The Ecologist’s* Green Pages.

CONTACT DETAILS

Egmont Books

www.egmont.co.uk

Greenpeace Book Campaign

www.greenpeace.org

THIS MONTH'S VINEYARD

Monty Waldin tastes Domaine de La Grande Bellane's Côtes du Rhône Villages Rouge Valréas AC

This is a dry red wine made from two-thirds Syrah and one-third Grenache Noir grapes. The Syrah provides lush red fruit flavours such as raspberry, while



the Grenache gives flavours of black fruits such as peppery blackcurrants. Because no oak aging is used, these flavours are remarkably clear and direct. The wine has nice concentration and is clean, soft and immediately approachable. You can detect a savouriness and minerality to the fruit flavours too, suggesting that the vines are happy with the soil in which they grow because the roots are transferring the essential flavours of the chalky clay into the grapes.

Côtes du Rhône reds can taste a bit jammy, as though the grapes were baked because the vines were stressed during the heat of summer. In other words, the vine roots were unable to find enough moisture in the soil, so the grapes suffered. This wine is not at all jammy, and I think this shows the benefit of a worm-rich soil, in which humus (the building block of healthy soil) is plentiful, allowing the vine roots enough moisture to keep the grapes from dehydrating in the last, torrid, few weeks of ripening.



Monty Walden is the author of *Biodynamic Wines* (Mitchell Beazley Classic Wine Library, £25), the world's first biodynamic and organic wine guide.

CONTACT DETAILS

Domaine de La Grande Bellane is a 40 hectare [100 acre] Biodynamic vineyard in the southern part of France's Rhône valley.

Address: EARL Gaïa, Départementale 191, Saint-Marcellin, 84600 Valréas

Tel 04.90.36.30.11 Email jean.couston@wanadoo.fr

The estate has been certified organic since 1973 (by Nature & Progrès and Ecocert France) and Biodynamic practices have been used since 1991.

ecologist

ORGANIC & BIODYNAMIC WINE CLUB



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Autumn blazers

September selections:	3) Touraine Blanc	'Gamay'
DOMAINE DE LA GARRELIÈRE	AC 'Cendrillon'	October selection:
1) Touraine Blanc	4) Touraine Rosé	DOMAINE DE LA GRANDE BELLANE
AC 'Chenin Blanc' x2	AC X2	1) Côtes du Rhône
2) Touraine Blanc AC	5) Touraine Rouge AC	Villages Rouge
'Sauvignon Blanc' x2	'Cabernet Franc' x2	Valréas AC x2
	6) Touraine Rouge AC	

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GROUND WAR

Paul Kingsnorth launches an organic offensive against the beasts munching his beloved allotment

Organic growing is wonderful, isn't it? Here we are, we happy few, a band of brothers (and sisters, of course) growing our food the natural way. No artificial chemicals, fertilisers or pesticides. Making things grow, using only what nature provides – and knowing, when we eat it, that it's as healthy as can be. We will never poison our soil. We will keep fossil fuel inputs to a minimum. We will live in harmony with the birds and the bees and the cute little ladybirds. We will never get cancer. We will live forever!

Hmmm. Sometimes I wonder. I wonder if I could get away with just a few slug pellets, or a dab of Roundup on that couch grass that just won't bloody go away. I wonder if spraying those cabbage whiteflies with something developed in a laboratory might get rid of them more effectively than ecological washing-up liquid dissolved in tap water. I wonder if any of my more environmentally-minded friends would ever find out about such secret use of toxins, and what plausible excuses I could come up with if they did.

Because growing food organically is tough. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

There are reasons that industrial agriculture has taken over the world, and one is that it's just easier. There's less back-breaking labour, there are more machines, and artificial pesticides and fertilisers are easier and often more reliable, in the short term at least, than their organic equivalents. We know, of

course, that in the longer term the news is bad: soil erosion, loss of fertility, mini wildlife holocausts and dodgy impacts on human health. But all that comes later. As a grower, it's hard not to be tempted by the easy life...

Of course, I haven't been. I promise. For three years I have tended my allotment organically, and the results have been great. So I'm not trying to put you off – I just want you to be fully prepared. In particular, I want you to be prepared for the full-on, day-by-day, never-ending battle that you are going to have to wage on all the other creatures who are dead set on eating your produce before you do.

Picture the scene. You've spent 18

Try fending off a fox peacefully using only the natural rhythms of Mother Earth. It's enough to make you buy a shotgun



months putting together an orchard. This is the first year that you'll be getting any fruit from it. You're excited. One late summer day you wander down there to check on the progress of your apple and pear trees, only to discover that half their leaves have gone brown



and fallen off. You run back home to consult your books and find that the trees have been infected with scab, a fungal disease. What can you do about it? Nothing.

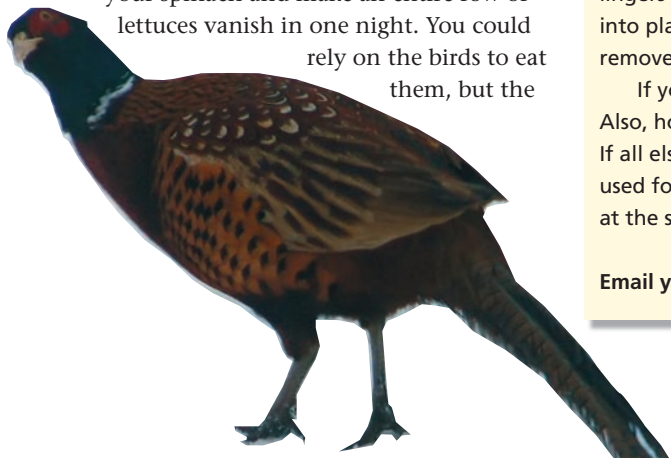
Still, never mind. You also have two plum trees, and their branches are literally touching the ground, so weighed down are they with fruit. By mid-August, the first ones are ripe. You pick one, bite into it... and discover that something else has bitten into it first. Squirming about deep inside, making short work of the fruit, is a small, pink maggot. You try another four or five: all the same. Back you go to



your fruit books: plum moths. They lay their eggs on the ripening fruits in spring, and the caterpillars get to them before you do. The buggers.

Over on your vegetable patch, meanwhile, you have a whole host of other beasties to counter. The worst, the most vicious, the most utterly unsympathetic, is the slug. If you were gardening with chemicals you would simply cover your plot with slug pellets, which would effectively sentence them to death. But you're not going to do that, and rightly so – pellets leach pesticides into the soil, and any wildlife that eats the dead slugs will be dead itself within a matter of hours.

But what will you do instead? A handful of hungry slugs can munch on your lovingly-tended pumpkins, tear into your spinach and make an entire row of lettuces vanish in one night. You could rely on the birds to eat them, but the



birds might be too busy uprooting your newly-planted beans or, in the case of the pair of organically-gourmandising pheasants that have chosen to live on my allotment, feasting at leisure on your burgeoning broccoli. And what is it that turns up at night and digs holes under your sweetcorn plants? A fox? A badger? Try fending that off peacefully using only the natural rhythms of Mother Earth. It's

enough to make you buy a shotgun.

But you know, despite it all, that you won't. For organic growing is not just a technical issue, it's a way of life: a way of attempting, however ham-fistedly, to live within your natural means. Yes, it takes more work, and it takes more imagination too. But it's not impossible – and when you do get it right, you feel miles better than someone who just popped down to the garden centre for a can of yellow stuff marked POISON.

Because, in the end, there are solutions. Those plum moths can be kept at bay with organic pheromone traps. Burn your scabby apple leaves and with any luck it won't recur next year. Stick nets over your broccoli and make yourself a good old-fashioned scarecrow. As for the slugs: after a few seasons of battling them, you will become hardened and ruthless. Your previous equal-rights-for-all-God's-creatures position will go out of the window and you, like me, will stalk your plot, searching under leaves and ruthlessly chopping any slugs you find in two with a pair of secateurs.

Don't think you could go that far? Believe me, you will. It's war out there. Organic war, of course, but war nonetheless. There can be only one winner. Make sure it's you.

USEFUL INFO...

Allotments UK for links and tips from other ploholders. www.allotments-uk.com

READERS' QUESTIONS

Paul replies to your allotment (or general gardening) enquiries

Q: Our plot is covered in horsetail. Can we get rid of it without using glyphosate?
Alice Jelinek, Leeds

A: Horsetail is a perennial weed that won't go away. It's certainly tempting to turn to pesticides, and glyphosate – sold by Monsanto under the trade name Roundup – is the world's best-selling. But it lingers in the soil for up to three years and, because it is absorbed into plants – hence its effectiveness as a weedkiller – it can't be removed from your fruit or veg by washing or peeling.

If you have the time, cover your plot with carpet for a year. Also, horsetail doesn't like shade, so planting trees should help. If all else fails, follow some old examples – traditionally it was used for making tea and scouring pots. Though presumably not at the same time.



Email your tips, questions, suggestions and comments to paul@paulkingsnorth.net



READ THE LABEL

PENETRATION ENHANCERS



Modern bodycare products are designed to go deep into the skin. Every day we absorb any number of harmful chemicals in the name of beauty. **Pat Thomas** reports

Your skin absorbs up to 60 per cent of the chemicals that come into contact with it and sends them directly into the bloodstream. Research suggests it can take as little as 26 seconds for some of these substances to go from the skin to every major organ of the body.

How quickly a bodycare product penetrates the skin and how deeply it is absorbed depends on a number of factors – made yet more complicated by the fact that certain chemicals can speed up the penetration and absorption of others. These chemicals, known as penetration enhancers, are found in all kinds of bodycare products, but are particularly prevalent in body lotions and face creams.

The concern is not so much that they are toxic – many of them are safe used on their own – but that they alter the superficial structure of the skin, thus allowing greater absorption of other harmful chemicals in the product.

How do they work?

Penetration enhancers fall into three main categories: emollients, detergents and solvents. Emollient (i.e. moisturising) ingredients can include any oil or fatty acid. They may also include microscopic liposomes and nanosomes, which are nanoscale emollients designed to drive ingredients deeper into the skin. As they are absorbed into the skin, they can carry fat-soluble toxins with them.

Solvents – such as polyethylene glycol (PEG) compounds and perfumes – and detergents (used in shampoos and shower gels) alter the structure of the skin by dissolving its protective oily barrier. This



PHOTOGRAPH BY CORBIS

allows other chemicals in the product to penetrate deeper. Because the skin is laced with tiny blood vessels, these chemicals eventually find their way into your bloodstream and your internal organs.

Penetration enhancers also usually have more than one function. Major active ingredients such as emollients, detergents and solvents are often added to products because their penetration-enhancing effects can offer visible but temporary 'quick fix' results.

What are the dangers?

It's difficult to say for sure. A child's skin absorbs more than an adult's. How much you absorb from a particular product will also depend on the condition of your skin, which can be influenced by the number and types of products you use every day. For instance, a body wash based on harsh detergents may strip the skin of protective oils. If you then apply a moisturiser containing penetration enhancers to your denuded skin, the ingredients will penetrate much deeper than if you had bathed with a gentler organic soap and used a simpler natural moisturiser.

Because of their ability to get past the protective oily layer of the skin, penetration enhancers are also significant sources of skin irritation. Using several products laced with these types of ingredients is likely to lead to allergic reactions to active ingredients – such as fragrances, surfactants and preservatives – in people with susceptible skins.

The list of ingredients that can act as penetration enhancers is incredibly long but commonly includes:

- ✂ Detergents and surfactants such as sodium lauryl sulphate, sodium carboxylate, sodium hyaluronate and sodium ascorbate.
- ✂ Solvents such as acetone, ethanol, limonene, polyethylene glycol (PEG) compounds, propylene glycol (PPG) compounds, xylene, acetamide and trichloroethanol.
- ✂ Emollients such as butyl acetate, diethyl succinate, ethyl acetate and some isopropyl, methyl and sorbitan, capric acid, lactic acid, oleic acid and palmitic acid, liposomes and nanosomes.

READ THE LETTERS

For the last few months *The Ecologist's* Read the Label campaign has been encouraging 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

Ecologist reader Peter Brenton wrote to Green People with his concerns about the company's use of nano-sized titanium dioxide in their sunscreen. Green People's Information and Technology Officer, Ian Taylor, responded:

"We do use micronised or nano-sized titanium dioxide because it is the only form that offers effective protection against UVA rays... The reason that the titanium dioxide particles have to be so small has to do with the way they scatter invisible UV light. For titanium dioxide to be effective against UVA radiation, the particles must be between 20 and 80 nanometers in diameter... Instead of offering UV protection, lotions containing titanium dioxide particles of much greater than 100 nanometers form a visible white layer on the skin, rather like a layer of paint.

"The concerns over titanium dioxide nanoparticles are two-fold – that they have an increased ability to react with other molecules, particularly oxygen; and that they may enter the body through the skin and thereby reach internal organs where they may cause damage due to their reactivity.

"To counter these two potential problems, the manufacturers of titanium dioxide for use in cosmetics treat the mineral by coating each particle with a very fine layer of silicates – basically they coat it in glass. This ... renders the mineral absolutely inert.

Secondly, when the titanium dioxide is incorporated into a cream or lotion it clumps together, forming aggregations... too large to cross through the skin-blood barrier. Instead, they remain on the surface of the skin where they reflect and scatter UV light."

Pat Thomas replies:

There is no evidence that nano-sized titanium dioxide is the only form that offers effective UV protection. The problem is purely one of aesthetics, since at normal scale titanium dioxide leaves a white film on the skin.

New evidence suggests that when nanoparticles of titanium dioxide come into contact with living tissue they may cause oxidative damage. Earlier this year, researchers at the US Environmental Protection Agency examined the effect of nanoparticles of titania (titanium oxide, similar to titanium dioxide) on cultures of mice brain cells and found that they triggered the release of chemicals that cause oxidative damage to brain cells.

This is the same sort of damage that is thought to be the underlying cause of some neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. Previously research has suggested that nano-sized titanium dioxide is toxic to other types of cell, such as skin, bone and liver cells.

No one knows whether nanoparticles applied on the skin, inhaled or ingested can find their way to the brain, or at what concentrations. But it is wrong to assume that a substance that is inert at normal scale is still inert at the nano scale since nano-sized particles behave in unpredictable ways.

Indeed, at the nano scale a substance must be considered an entirely new chemical substance and must be studied and regulated accordingly.

Where nanoparticles in cosmetics are concerned the precautionary principle should apply. Unfortunately, the commercial lure of nano-technology has meant that manufacturers and the government have been reluctant to put this principle into action.



BY PAT THOMAS

What's in this Stuff?

PAT THOMAS launches an organic offensive against the toxic ingredients in what we buy – including pet products

Pets are exposed to the same chemicals in their diet and grooming supplies that people are. As consumers have become increasingly attracted to, and comfortable with, the use of natural and organic products themselves, they are becoming equally receptive to the use of natural products, including pest control and herbal supplements, for their pets. Indeed, a 1999 study led by one source, US Business Research, found that 22 per cent of pet owners had used some form of alternative therapy on their pet.

The petcare industry is big business. In the US, pet owners spend around \$16 billion (£8.8 billion) a year on pet products. In Europe, they spend \$18 billion (£10 billion). So, we spend a lot of money, but are we really making our pets' lives better?

PETS UNDER ATTACK

Cats and dogs, which make up the majority of companion pets in the world, are now developing a vast list of degenerative diseases, including: autoimmune diseases, allergies, heart disease, diabetes, joint and arthritic problems, and cancer. By the age of three, some three-quarters of dogs will have developed gum disease, eye problems, ear problems, untreatable infestations of fleas and other parasites. Moreover, thyroid imbalances, personality disorders

and birth defects are all becoming commonplace among our pets.

Meanwhile, even pet food itself has quite literally become a dog-eat-dog business – cat-eat-cat, too. According to a startling 2001 report from the US Animal Protection Institute (API), commercial pet foods contain mostly grain wastes and meat by-products, which can include everything from euthanised shelter animals to cancer-ridden livestock, road kill, downer animals (those unable to walk), mouldy grains and rancid restaurant grease. Feeding these low-in-nutrition packaged 'scraps' to pets greatly increases their chances of developing cancer and other degenerative diseases.

Improving your pet's diet

Dogs and cats were designed to handle raw, uncooked foods. Owners can easily mix fresh cuts of meat (not ground) with wholegrains and vegetables for a balanced diet.

FLEA AND TICK CONTROL

Fleas and ticks are a profitable business for the chemical/pesticide industry, responsible for billions in sales every year. Pet owners are seduced into believing that these products are safe and effective, but read the warning label on conventional flea and tick products. Shampoos, dips, foggers (also known as 'bug bombs': pesticide products containing aerosol propellants that release their contents at once

to fumigate an area) and collars – in fact, all conventional flea and tick treatments – caution users to wear gloves, and to keep the product away from skin and mucous membranes. And yet, these chemicals are being applied in some cases all over your pet, where they can be easily absorbed, inhaled or licked off by the pet.

Try these natural alternatives:

■ Cedar shampoo, cedar oil and cedar-filled sleeping mats are available. Cedar repels many insects, including fleas.

■ Make a herbal flea collar. Make up a mixture of ½tsp alcohol with one drop each of these essential oils: cedarwood, lavender, citronella and thyme. Add the contents of four garlic capsules. Buy a soft flea collar (untreated), soak in the mixture until it is thoroughly soaked, then leave it to dry completely. This will be effective for about a month.

■ Add a few drops of tea tree oil to a herbal pet shampoo to repel fleas and help heal flea-bitten skin.

CAT LITTER

For litter-box-trained animals, holistic vets recommend avoiding conventional clay litters as they are laden with silica dust, a known carcinogen. Many 'scoopable' clay litters have also been found to cause intestinal blockages in cats and kittens when inadvertently consumed while grooming.

Try this instead ...

■ A good alternative is wheat-based litter that is scoopable, biodegradable and flushable. ■ Some natural kitty litters make use of recycled, 'pelletised' paper. ■ A third option is litter made from recycled pinewood waste.

Extracted from
What's In This Stuff?
by Pat Thomas
(Rodale Books,
£12.99). Available
to readers for £7.80
plus p+p, call
01256 302 699,
quoting 'L16'



Jean Therapy

Photographs BEN GOLD
Stylist SARAH RATTY



Almost every wardrobe has a pair of jeans. Versatile and timeless, denim – made from indigo-dyed, twill-woven cotton – is a ‘natural’ choice in a market now saturated with synthetic fabrics. Or not. As one of the world’s dirtiest crops, cotton uses 22.5 per cent of the world’s insecticides and 10 per cent of pesticides on 2.5 per cent of agricultural land. But denim is now cleaning up its act. Organic cotton, grown in 22 countries, has increased fivefold in the past four years. Innovative eco designers are discovering new – and reviving old – ways to create an even ‘greener’ denim.

Eschewing the chemical-intensive enzyme wash, Howies use a rubberised ‘eco’ ball. Kuyichi, Bishopston Trading and Howies use natural, instead of synthetic, indigo in some or all of their jeans. Even Levi’s are producing their own eco range (available later this year). Making denim is still a resource-intensive process. Which is why the ultimate green statement is to invest in one well-fitting, sturdy pair that will last for years to come.

From left: ‘Cassia’ boot cut, £134, Delforte; ‘Lisa’ black wash, £85, Kuyichi; ‘Flux’, £90, Loomstate; dark wash cinch-back straight leg, £75, Howies; ‘Genesis’ black overdyed, £100, Loomstate; boot cut medium-blue brushed, £90, Hug



Barukh wears: Natural coloured, striped organic Alpaca rollneck sweater, £250, Ciel; dark wash cinch-back 'Sid' jeans, £100, Kuyichi; hemp canvas lace-up sneakers, £32.95, Komodo at The Natural Shoe Store; herringbone trilby, stylist's own.

Andressa wears: Deep V-neck navy/natural grey chevron organic Alpaca sweater, £220, Ciel; brown natural leather disc belt, £35, Green Shoes; 'Mantra' jeans in distressed redemption dark wash, £90, Loomstate; grey woollen button gaiters, to order from Queene & Belle vintage; brown leather clog-style shoes, £45, Josef Siebel at the Natural Shoe Store



Andressa wears: Alpaca cable-knit jumper, £220, Ciel; straight leg 'Calla' jeans, £134, Delforte; woollen felted alpine clogs, £39.95, Haflinger at The Natural Shoe Store.

Straight-leg jeans also available £38, Bishopston Trading

Barukh wears: Red and white check organic cotton shirt, £70, Howies; olive wood Alpaca cable-knit scarf, £89, Ciel; 'Jeff' black wash jeans, £85, Kuyichi; hemp canvas sneakers, £32.95, The Natural Shoe Store



Barukh wears: Organic, natural colour cotton T-shirt, £18.50, Pakucho; natural colour Alpaca sweater, £125, Edun; relaxed fit, light 'stream wash' 'Mission' jeans, £95, Loomstate; scarf, stylist's own; natural leather mules, £82, Green Shoes.

Andressa wears: Natural indigo organic Alpaca cable-knit cardigan, £240, and white top, £120, both Ciel; gold disc belt, £35, and collar, £25, both Green Shoes; cinch-back 'Sive' dark wash jeans, £90, Kuyichi; woollen felted alpine clogs, £39.95, Haflinger at The Natural Shoe Store

FOR STOCKISTS SEE PAGE 91

Fashion Assistant: Alisa Levina. Hair: Vanessa Andersson using Aveda. Make-up: Jo Frost using Dr. Hauschka. Models: Barukh Abadi at Olyset, and Andressa Marthis at Premier. Special thanks to Stuart & Judith Fisher of Hunswood Stables in Sussex where The Ecologist's shoot took place.

JEAN *Genie*



I have a fabric mission statement: 'Don't throw anything away until you've tried to make something else out of it.' I've transformed a fraying head-scarf into a summer top, made a dress from old Seventies' curtains and turned scraps of material into rosettes: pleat, hold together with a few stitches, add a few sequins and a bit of ribbon saved from a bunch of flowers, and I've got a neat little accessory to grace my jacket lapel. And I can't help but cast my eye over other people's cast-off and wonder what I could make out of them. That shocking-pink cardi that's shrunk? Why not cut it into a delicate flower shape, sew a button to the middle, attach a safety pin and wear it as a corsage. And don't ditch the buttons – snip them off and start a button jar. Just because something looks a little the worse for wear, doesn't mean it has to be consigned to the fashion scrap heap.

This especially applies to the clothes you LOVE. A quick straw poll revealed that my friends' most beloved item was a trusty old pair of jeans. Fashion historians muse on how denim and jeans got their names. It's been suggested that denim is an English translation of serge de Nimes – a fabric produced in that town in southern France; and that jeans were borrowed from Italian sailors from Genoa who dressed in dark blue cotton outfits. But there's no doubt that it was Levi Strauss who started the blue jean (r)evolution. He pitched up in New York in 1847 selling canvas tenting

and dry goods; 20 years later he teamed up with a tailor from Nevada, Jacob Davis, who had the brilliant idea of adding rivets to heavy duty work pants, and panhandlers snapped them up in the Californian gold rush. Then cowboys on dude ranches got in on the act, followed up by rebellious film stars (James Dean, Marlon Brando, Elvis Presley) ... every decade, jeans are redesigned, reinvented. It's an ongoing love affair.

And, like many classic clothes, jeans look better the older they get. A bit of fraying and fading, a dab of bike oil, a biro-ed phone number and a few louchely acquired grass stains and you have denims with a personal history. But then the knees go, the fabric on the butt area thins, and it begins to look like it's all over... but it doesn't have to be!

If the tears are tiny and not too ragged, turn the jeans inside out and hand-sew the two sides of the rip together with small stitches – that should hold things together for a while longer. If the damage is more significant, patching is the answer. You can, of course, patch jeans pretty much invisibly with a spare square of denim, and dark blue thread. But why not be a little creative? I like to make a feature of all that sewing. Thread your needle with some embroidery thread – thicker and more brightly coloured



than everyday sewing thread – to give your patch a nice, bright outline. I wouldn't make the stitches too neat either, I like the shabby chic look. And the fabric doesn't have to be square or even denim – cut a scrap of red velvet into a pair of lips for kissable knees; or snip some nice green stuff into leaf shapes and sew them on with glittery thread. If patching your pants' seat, use material with a bit of strength, such as some nice autumnal cord, or stiff and starchy cotton.

If the weather is still lovely, and the knees are too far-gone to patch, get scissors-happy and turn the jeans into shorts. If you're feeling adventurous, you can transform your raggle-taggle jeans into a skirt: cut across the legs, undo the side seams and sew a triangle of fabric into the front and back into the gaps. Use the cut-off legs, or a contrasting bit of fabric for the triangles. For ideas, inspiration and more detailed instructions, check out Craftster.Org. It's also really easy to make a slouchy denim bag out of old jeans. Snip off the legs, sew the zip up, turn the jeans inside out, sew a seam along the bottom, cut the legs into strips and make 'em into handles. With the leftover bits of denim you can make a snappy square purse, a frayed rosette, or a little wristlet decorated with buttons and sequins. So don't throw your old denims away: be a little creative – be a jean genie.


Creative essentials

Hopefully this has inspired you to recreate your cast-offs. You'll need some basics:

- ⌚ A big pair of scissors. Don't skimp on these – cutting fabric is so much easier with a good blade.
- ⌚ Needles, pins, thread
- ⌚ A seam ripper, aka a Quick Unpick. This little gadget undoes a crooked seam in seconds. Price? Around £1.50
- ⌚ A sewing machine (hand-sewing takes ages to finish anything major). Once upon a time you could pick these up cheaply in charity shops, but it was always a risk: it might not sew or, at worst, you could be calling out the fire brigade to put out an

electrical fire. Buying a machine is a bit of an investment. The most basic model costs about £150; fine to run up a summer wardrobe in light cotton, but if you want to use more robust fabric, expect to pay around £350. So you might want to borrow one first and see how you get on, or go into partnership with friends, share the cost, and start your very own sewing circle.

If you're a total beginner, consider taking a sewing class. Ask if your local adult education college does courses, or visit a local fabric shop and see if they offer tuition. Or head to the library or a bookshop and see what the craft section has to offer...

A pair of bare feet is shown against a clear blue sky. The feet are positioned in the lower half of the frame, with the right foot in the foreground and the left foot slightly behind it. The skin is smooth and appears to be in good health. In the top left corner, there are some autumn leaves in shades of orange and brown. The overall composition is simple and emphasizes the natural state of the feet.

The history of **The Natural Shoe Store** now spans four decades. Much of what we do is based on tradition, tried and tested to offer you good quality footwear using materials and production methods which are least harmful to the environment.

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the natural shoe store

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FOOD & DRINK

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3. Save a British family farm Box-scheme suppliers get at least 40p in every pound. Supermarket suppliers will see as little as 5p.

4. Unadulterated salad leaves Those 'convenient' pre-packed supermarket salads are doused in chlorine then preserved in bags with lowered oxygen levels, depleting vital nutrients.

5. Real value for money A 'value added' £1.99 vegetable and pasta bake would cost you

only 40 pence to make with box-scheme produce – and would be much healthier.

6. Reduce climate change Air-freighted fruit and vegetables contribute 33 times more CO₂ than UK-sourced produce. Box-scheme food is typically grown within 50 miles of your home.

7. Stop the beauty parade Apples that don't fit a supermarket's exact colour specifications are 'graded out'. Box-schemes don't reject food on looks.

8. Maintain food diversity You're unlikely to find black salsify or Lady Godiva squash in Tesco, but you could well do in a box-scheme.

9. Reduce waste

Over 40 per cent of household rubbish that goes to landfill is supermarket packaging. Unpackaged box-scheme food is naked naturally.

10. Reduce traffic congestion Centralised distribution systems mean that up to 40 per cent of HGVs on our road networks are delivering food to supermarkets. Box-schemes gather and distribute food locally.

11. Stop migrant labour exploitation Box-schemes would see an end to the illegal trafficking of migrant workers in the UK, driven by supermarkets' determination to keep prices low.

12. Community, not cash crop farming Box-schemes encourage an ethos of self-sufficiency in their

suppliers. Villagers in Kenya are left hungry in order to supply our supermarkets with mange tout.

13. Stem the 'splurchases' A staggering 60 per cent of a weekly supermarket shop is now bought on impulse. Box-schemes stop you frittering your money away.

14. Support local economies £10 spent on a local organic box scheme can generate £25 for the local economy. Supermarket profits are channelled into the bank balances of distant shareholders.

15. Lighten your shopping load Weekly fruit and veg delivered to your door means the rest of your shopping could be done from local independent shops on foot.

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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

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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 . . .

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www.daylesfordorganic.com

Graig Farm Organics

www.graigfarm.co.uk

Helen Browning Organics

helenbrowningorganics.co.uk

Higher Hacknell Farm

www.higherhacknell.co.uk

Sheepdrove Organic Farm

www.sheepdrove.com

Well Hung Meat

www.wellhungmeat.com



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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.



Experience your food!

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- Cook more
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- Support the small, independent and ethical producers and retailers in these listings.

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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

Loch Fyne

www.lochfyne.com

FISHY BUSINESS

Globally we eat 91 million tonnes of seafood a year and more than 200 million people depend on fishing for their livelihood. But our seas are being over-fished. Of the world's commercial fishing stocks, 16% are over exploited and 8% are either severely depleted or recovering.

Choose your fish carefully....

- When you're eating out, ask where the fish is sourced from.
- Don't buy fish unless it's been caught by environmentally responsible fisheries (see websites below for more information.)
- www.msc.org The Marine Stewardship Council have developed an environmental standard for sustainable and well-managed fisheries. Look for the MSC blue label.
- www.fishonline.org The Marine Conservation Society's on-line guide. Information about which fish are from well managed sources and are caught using methods that minimise damage to marine wildlife.
- www.fish4ever.co.uk Fish4ever is a global internet campaign calling for the urgent implementation of sustainable fisheries and the development of a network of marine protected areas to safeguard the future of our oceans.
- [Organico www.organico.co.uk](http://www.organico.co.uk) do a range of sustainably-fished tinned fish: tuna, mackerel, herring, sardines and anchovies
- Check out the Ecologist's Fresh Fish listings





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

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www.buxtonfoods.com

Community Foods

www.communityfoods.co.uk

Graig Farm

www.graigfarm.co.uk

Goodness Direct

www.goodnessdirect.co.uk

Hider

www.hider-foods.co.uk

Meridian Foods

www.meridianfoods.co.uk

Naturally Good Food Ltd

www.goodfooddelivery.co.uk

Real Food Direct

www.realfooddirect.co.uk

ECOLOGIST ACTION FOOD-BUYING GROUPS

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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

www.suma.co.uk

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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

Pennard Organic Wines & Cider

www.pennardorganicwines.co.uk

Sedlescombe Organic Vineyard

www.englishorganicwine.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

TEA

Clipper Teas

www.clipper-teas.com

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www.hampsteadtea.com

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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

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www.auro.co.uk

Earth Born Paints

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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 SWITCH TO ECOTRICITY

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

WHY ECOTRICITY?

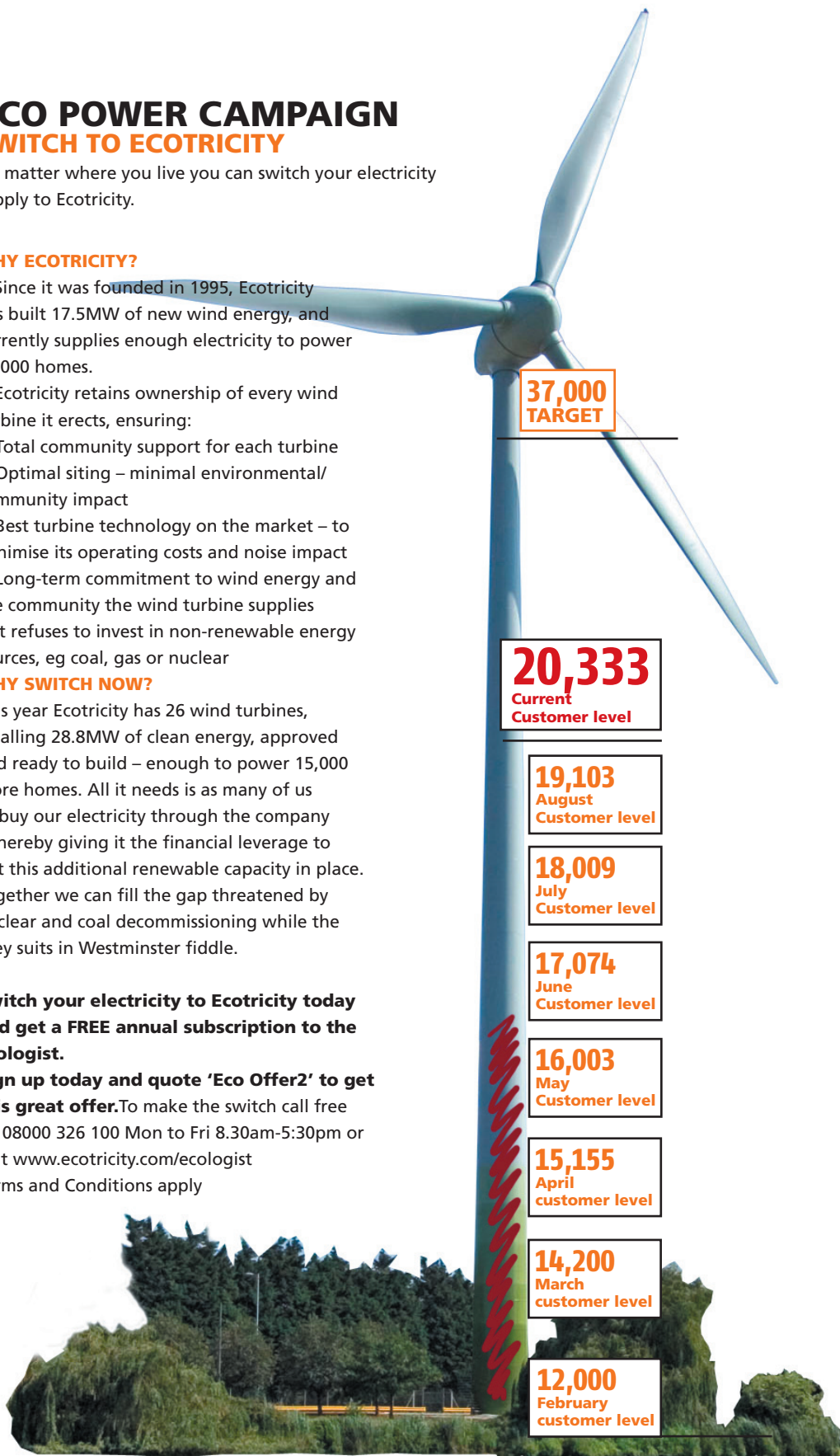
- Since it was founded in 1995, Ecotricity has built 17.5MW of new wind energy, and currently supplies enough electricity to power 12,000 homes.
- Ecotricity retains ownership of every wind turbine it erects, ensuring:
 - Total community support for each turbine
 - Optimal siting – minimal environmental/community 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.

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HOME ENERGY

ELECTRICITY

RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES

(wind, hydro, solar PV)

Dulas Ltd

www.renewable-resources.com

HiTech Energy Ltd

www.hitechenergy.co.uk

Wind and Sun Ltd

www.windandsun.co.uk

LIGHT BULBS

Energy Saving World

www.energysavingworld.co.uk

Energy Savers Direct

www.energysavers-direct.com

Nigel's Eco Store

www.theinsightecostore.com

SUPPLIERS

Ecotricity

www.ecotricity.co.uk

GROUND SOURCE HEAT PUMPS

Conservation

Engineering Ltd

www.heating-designs.co.uk

Eco Heat Pumps

www.ecoheatpumps.co.uk

Geothermal Heating International

www.geoheat.co.uk

Green Systems

www.greensystems.net

Groenholland UK Ltd

www.groenholland.com

Ice energy

www.iceenergy.co.uk

Kensa Engineering Ltd

www.kensaengineering.com

Powertech Solar

www.powertech-solar.com

INSULATION

Second Nature

www.secondnatureuk.com

SOLAR WATER PANELS

Solar Twin

www.solartwin.com

Sustainable Energy

Installations

www.sustainable-energy.org.uk

Power Tech Solar

www.powertech-solar.com

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www.econatural.com
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The information web site that promotes care of the environment

envocare

Would you like to improve the environment without a lot of fuss? Visit the site designed to provide the information.

www.envocare.co.uk

Come and find hundreds of descriptions, tips, suggestions and links on a wide variety of environmental issues.

The site also offers reference articles on a range of selected topics. You can find loads of high-res backgrounds to download and send virtual cards and there's always more.

CLOTHING

Want to look good, but don't want to support sweatshops, pesticide abuse or dull brands? Then these online clothing retailers are for you. All stock a range of well-made, stylish and ethical clothes.

CLOTHING DESIGNERS

50/50

www.5050clothing.com

Ciel

www.ciel.ltd.uk

ClothWORKS

www.clothworks.co.uk

Ecobtq

www.ecobtq.com

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

Pierre Garroudi

www.pierregarroudi.com

Sari

www.saricouture.com

MEN & WOMEN'S CASUALWEAR

Bishopston Trad. Comp

www.bishopstontrading.co.uk

Green apple

www.the-green-apple.co.uk

Green Fibres

www.greenfibres.co.uk

Howies

www.howies.co.uk

Inbi Hemp

www.inbi-hemp.co.uk

Natural Collection

www.naturalcollection.com

Pakucho

www.pakucho.co.uk

People Tree

www.ptree.co.uk

Seasalt

www.seasaltorganic.co.uk

Schmidt Natural Clothing

www.naturalclothing.co.uk

Terramar

www.terramar.co.uk



SHOES

Beyond skin

www.beyondskin.co.uk

Birkenstock

www.birkenstock.com

Black Spot Sneakers

www.adbusters.org

Fair Deal Trading

www.fairdealtrading.co.uk

Freerangers

www.freerangers.co.uk

Green Shoes

www.greenshoes.co.uk

Terraplana

www.terraplana.com

The Natural Shoe Store

www.thenaturalshoestore.com

Vegetarian Shoes

www.vegetarian-shoes.co.uk

ORGANIC JEANS

Bishopston Trading Company

www.bishopstontrading.co.uk

Delforte denim

www.adili.com

Edun

www.edun.ie

Greenfibres

www.greenfibres.co.uk

Howies

www.howies.co.uk

Hug

www.hug.co.uk

Kuyichi

www.kuyichi.com

Loomstate

www.loomstate.org



ECOLOGIST ACTION

DIY STYLE

Get your local tailor working! Buy organic and naturally dyed fabrics from the companies listed below, and have your very own bespoke eco-clothes made in the style you want, with a perfect fit.

COTTON

Aurora Silk

www.aurorasilk.com

Green Fibres

www.greenfibres.co.uk

Peru Naturex

www.perunaturex.com

SPORTSWEAR

Epona

www.eponasport.com

Gossypium

www.gossypium.co.uk

Zoozoo2

www.zoozoo2.com

SLOGAN T-SHIRTS

Equop

www.equop.com

Funky Gandhi

www.funkygandhi.com

Icons Incorporated

www.icons-incorporated.com

Pakucho

www.pakucho.co.uk

Soliloquy Clothing

www.soliloquyclothing.com

THTC

www.thtc.co.uk

Tonic T-Shirts

www.tonictshirts.com

ACCESSORIES

BAGS

Design Africa

www.artworksforafrica.com

Ganesha

www.ganesha.co.uk

Matt and Nat

www.mattandnat.com

LINGERIE

Greenknickers

www.greenknickers.org

Buttress and Snatch

www.buttressandsnatch.co.uk

WOOL

Organic pure wool

www.organicpurewool.co.uk

Organic Wool Company

www.organicwool.co.uk

Isle of Mull Weavers

www.isleofmullweavers.co.uk



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or design your own!



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or email: claire@wetfeltingcompany.co.uk
www.wetfeltingcompany.co.uk

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and FairTrade
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- Organic blankets, bedlinens, towels & soft toys
- Allergy & eczema

STOCKISTS

ECO JEANS SPECIAL PG 75

BISHOPSTON TRADING: by mail order www.bishopstontrading.co.uk

CIEL: by mail order www.ecobtq.com. Retail: Equa Clothing and Koh Samui (London), Gaia (Manchester).

EDUN: available at Harrods, Selfridges and Matches (London), Harvey Nichols (Leeds and Manchester).

DELFORTE DENIM: by mail order www.adili.com

GREENFIBRES by mail order www.greenfibres.co.uk, tel: 0845 3303440

GREEN SHOES by mail order www.greenshoes.co.uk, tel: 01803 864997

HOWIES by mail order www.howies.co.uk, tel: 01239 614122

HUG by mail order www.hug.co.uk, tel: 0845 1301525


LOOMSTATE available at Urban Outfitters, Harvey Nichols, Harrods and Selfridges (London).

QUEENE & BELLE by mail order, tel: 01750 23419

KUYICHI: available at Swank (London) Gaia (Manchester) www.kuyichi.com

PAKUCHO by mail order www.pakucho.co.uk, tel: 01432 271930

THE NATURAL SHOE STORE: available at 6 outlets around the country, and by mail order www.thenaturalshoestore.com



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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.

ecologist
READER OFFER

SIMPLY SOAPS

The Herbal Skincare Delicatessen

50% off

All soaps in the Simply Soaps range:

- Anise Soap
- Banana & Citron Soap
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- Geranium & Rose Petal Soap
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PLUS

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Simply Soaps are handmade in the wild woods of Norfolk.

They are made from natural ingredients and are vegetarian and vegan.

Offer lasts until 27th November

To order:

Phone 01603 720869 or order on-line at www.simplysoaps.com quoting ECO.



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

Jo Wood Organics

www.jowoodorganics.com

Life Giving Organics

www.LifeGivingOrganics.com

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

PERFUME

Aromasciences

www.aromasciences.com

Ascent

www.hayspace.co.uk

Dolma

www.veganvillage.co.uk/dolma

Primavera

www.primavera.co.uk

HEALTH & HOMEOPATHY SPECIALISTS

Ainsworths

www.ainsworths.com

Helios Homeopathic

Pharmacy

www.helios.co.uk

Optima

www.optimahealthcare.co.uk

Pure Potions



ecotip

Use natural fragrances

An extravagant bottle of perfume could contain a mixture of 600 synthetic chemicals. Over 95% of chemicals are made from petroleum and many are designated hazardous. As an alternative use essential oils, plant extracts or aromatherapy oils which can be applied to the skin. Or buy from one of the companies listed in the 'Perfume' section.

ecodiy

GRAPEFRUIT AND SEA SALT SCRUB

Give your body a treat with this invigorating body scrub...

The coarse sea salt exfoliates, the sweet almond oil moisturises and the white grapefruit essential oil enriches.

INGREDIENTS:

Coarse Sea Salt
Sweet Almond Oil
5ml (1tsp) White Grapefruit Oil

METHOD:

Fill an empty glass container or bottle almost to the top with coarse sea salt. Add a tea spoon of grapefruit essential oil.

Top up with sweet almond oil, making sure you re-fill until the level of the oil is maintained just above that of the salt.

For more simple at-home bodycare & cosmetics recipes like this visit www.thesoapkitchen.co.uk

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



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



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contact us: info@ayurve.co.uk

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www.ayurve.co.uk

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Our people & planet friendly range includes: Fair trade Shea Butter & African Black Soap, Mum & Babycare, Face & Body Moisturisers & much more!

- no petroleum bases or parabens
- no artificial or synthetic ingredients
- 100% natural

Shop Online: www.akamuti.co.uk
Mail Order/Trade: 0845 4589242 (lo-call)

onevillage.com One place, many ideas

What's in a bar of soap?

Instead of the latest chemical compounds, choose natural NEEM: 4x125g bars neem soap, only £10 (with free delivery) when you order online from ONEVILLAGE.COM

Or send £10 to ONE VILLAGE CHARLBURY OX7 3SQ 01608 811811

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To be sure a product is certified organic, look for the logo! ACO - BFA - USDA - IFOAM

To view products and order, please visit: www.LifeGivingOrganics.com
Telephone enquiries: FREECALL 0800 074 8703

www.earthbound.co.uk

EARTHBOUND Organics

Suitable for all skin types nourishing, healing moisturising. protecting face, hand and body

Tel: 01597 851157

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

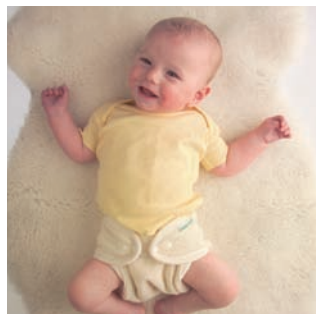
Why use disposables when cloth nappies are easy to use, easy to clean and best for your baby?



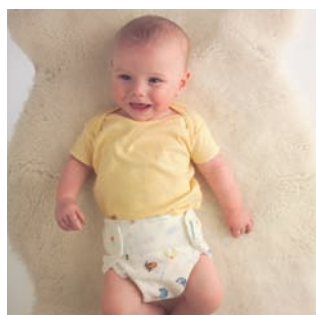
1 Lay open baby-shaped cotton nappy



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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BREATHABLE Keeps bottoms cool & dry

ECONOMICAL Saves you money over your child's lifetime in nappies.....

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DISPOSABLE
NAPPIES GO
TO LANDFILL
EVERY DAY**



BABY ESSENTIALS

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Born

www.borndirect.com

Green Baby

www.greenbaby.co.uk

Greenfibres

www.greenfibres.co.uk

Hejhog

www.hejhog.co.uk

Little Green Earthlets

www.earthlets.co.uk

Natural Collection

www.naturalcollection.com

Natural Nursery

www.naturalnursery.co.uk

See Saw

www.seesawnappies.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

Huggababy

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

Just Bazaar
The Fair Trade Shop
www.justbazaar.co.uk



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SKIN & BODYCARE

Burt's Bees

www.myburtsbees.co.uk

Earth Friendly Baby

www.earth-friendly-baby.co.uk

Earth Mama Angel Baby

www.earthmamaangelbaby.com

Earthbound

www.earthbound.co.uk

Weleda

www.weleda.co.uk

Snazzypants 

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seesaw
toys nappies clothes potions



seesawnappies.co.uk

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www.naturalnursery.co.uk




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www.trellyn.co.uk

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EARTHWISESINGLES.COM

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Penrhos Court
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 **WEDDINGS**

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LISTS
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www.greenfibres.co.uk
RINGS
Cred Jewellery
www.cred.tv
Ethical Wedding Rings

 **FUNERALS**

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Nigel's Eco Store
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The Sawd Partnership
www.bamboocoffins.co.uk
Somerset Willow
www.somersetwillow.co.uk
FLOWERS
Green Fuse
www.greenfuse.co.uk
Red Hen
www.redhens.co.uk
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Evolve
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STATIONARY
Ecotopia
www.ecotopia.co.uk
Remarkable
www.remarkable.co.uk
TELEPHONE & INTERNET
Green Isp
www.greenisp.net
The Phone Co-op
www.thephone.coop
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Aquatic
www.aquaiduk.co.uk

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COURSES

CASE STUDENTSHIP – APPLICATIONS INVITED WAVE POWER ENGINEERING RESEARCH

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Research Centre
School of Architecture,
Planning and Civil
Engineering,
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Queen's University with funding from EPSRC and Aquamarine Power Ltd. is inviting applications for their industrial CASE studentship (3 year PhD).

Wave power is one of the most promising new elements of the renewables sector. Applications are now being invited for a PhD placement in this field, focusing on conceptual engineering research with direct commercial applications. Queen's University Belfast is working with Scottish marine renewables company Aquamarine Power to deliver this PhD course, which is part funded by the EPSRC's CASE programme.

The successful applicant will be based with Queens' University Belfast's internationally recognised wave power team, and will also spend three months gaining practical experience on placement with Aquamarine Power. The course will include integrated studies of wave loading, survival mode testing, and environmental impact on the seabed of future devices designed for deployment in large scale commercial wave farms.

Candidates must have a 2.1 honours degree in Engineering or Physics, and applications will be accepted from UK and EU students.

The studentship will cover tuition fees, research costs and travel expenses plus an index linked stipend of £12,300 per year.

For further information, please contact:
Professor Trevor Whittaker, t.whittaker@qub.ac.uk
before 10th October 2006.



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CASSANDRA

Built-in obsolescence has made this country a throwaway society, and sadly we throw it at people and countries less fortunate than our own. Maybe we should educate our schoolchildren about just what is happening before we turn the entire globe into one large rubbish dump

RECENTLY I VISITED the local 'Household Recycling Centre'. It is really a quite frightening industrial vomit centre. Rows of enormous, red room-sized containers: some for computers; some for monitors; some for cables; some for TVs; for refrigerators; for cookers; for washing machines, and so on. All waiting to be filled with hundreds of discarded wares before being shipped off to some less happy land where underpaid, non-unionised and frequently, alas, under-aged labour strips off what can be recycled, even if, like lead for example, it poisons them as they work – in order to further enrich the rich.

Perhaps school pupils should be given conducted tours of such centres, to see what is involved in the vast barrage of consumerist advertising that daily (often hourly) invades their consciousness with the need to buy, buy, buy. The amount of land needed just to dump this stuff is truly colossal; we are transforming the globe into a gigantic garbage bin. It would be splendid to think there is some benevolent guru out there, taking account of the environmental and other costs of an industrial system, yearly churning out millions and millions of high tech items, from cars to mobiles, that have a life-span of less than a decade. But there is no such statesmanship in sight, so each consumer must become his own guru.

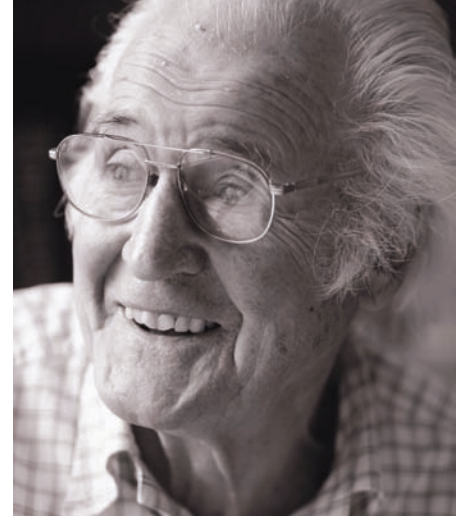
I DON'T SUPPOSE you have ever voted for anyone to represent you on a planning committee, even though such committees are busy making decisions that shape building developments of any neighbourhood for a generation or more ahead. It points to yet another yawning gap in what ought to be the democratic process, and prompts one leading local

environmentalist to say, 'It is no use complaining about the results in 20 years time, let us make our views known now'. So we consult several reports, including 'draft' proposals inviting comment, which may run to 80 or more pages loaded with unfamiliar acronyms, and then proceed to fill in a multi-page questionnaire. Do we agree with this or that? Do we approve one of the following options? And so on.

The trouble is, one becomes fenced in by the assumptions behind the questions: Which way do you want to be executed? Hanging? Drowning? Poisoning? sort of thing. After a lot of report-perusing, I finally binned my questionnaire.

The real trouble is that this whole planning process starts at Westminster, instead of in my village. So we are confronted with a remote exercise that makes any democratic input quite accidental, and dependent on whether local views slot in with what has already been decided. The idea that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of those completed questionnaires, after scrutiny by a man in a suit, are consolidated into a report of the views of the electorate, allowing for his own subjective input of course, is to ignore the reality of yet another example of Fabian fascism on the march. Workers of all lands unite! You have nothing to lose but your compensation claims!

WHAT ARE WE to do with the problem of the peace movement? It absorbs the energies and loyalties of a large number of people who ardently believe in 'peace'. But to what effect? The war danger gets worse and worse, and our 'peace movement' activists, after more than a century of campaigning, are confronted with more and greater dangers of war than when they began. Does this impel



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN USBORNE

them to rethink their tactics or their strategy? Not a bit of it; they have not had a new idea in their beautiful heads since they started. No attempt to question the nature of the forces making for war and how they might be circumvented or otherwise negated.

They carry on with their street demos, their campaigns and their pamphleteering as though one fine day their dearest dream will be realised; that the multitude will at last listen and vote for peace so that we may then all live happily ever after. Wars will cease when men refuse to fight. How true, how very true, but why then do they fight at all? Male aggression? Excessive testosterone? Or is it that in giant states ordinary people have no say at all on war and peace decisions and find themselves fighting each other when not a shred of personal animosity is involved?

Giant states cannot enable to exercise such power; the enormity of scale inevitably disempowers the individual. When will our peace lovers wake up to the fact that a mass democracy is an oxymoron, as the futile massive demonstrations against the invasion of Iraq so amply demonstrated? And that if you are serious about wanting peace, you must help to build the small-scale local government power that is the only way your moral option for peace, or anything else's, can be asserted. All else is words in the wind.

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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