

Ocean glories

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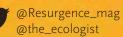
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Sunflower Field by Megan Hall www.flotsamprints.com

Last chance saloon...

he Resurgence Trust, as many of you will know, is based in a tiny and remote coastal village on the dramatic and beautiful Hartland peninsula, which forms part of the wilder and least built-upon section of the North Devon coastline.

As it happens, I grew up a few miles away from Hartland, but what that meant for most families at that time was that our long summer holiday would be spent at the beach and in the sea.

I don't live close to the sea any more, but I think about it a lot and increasingly with overwhelming sadness, not least because, having buffered us from maybe the worst aspects of climate change for decades, it is as if the ocean can take no more.

As I sat down to write this Welcome, I saw a headline appear in my newsfeed telling me the ocean has just endured a year of record-breaking temperatures – and then the online activist group Avaaz sent out a call to action headlined 'Ocean Graveyard'.

I could cry.

When the editorial team sat down to talk about a special Ocean theme for this summer issue, we decided not to bombard you with the dismal facts and figures that tell such a depressing story. Instead, we chose to celebrate why we all love anything to do with the ocean and marine life by exploring just a few of what we are calling 'Ocean Glories'.

From the excerpt from ethologist Jonathan Balcombe's wonderful book *What a Fish Knows* to ocean writer and regular contributor Melissa Hobson talking to marine scientists and discovering just a fraction of what we still don't know about the ocean, this is a theme designed to get us all geared up for action, and the Making Waves feature on page 30 has some suggestions for where to start.

The fact is, we could have filled page after page after page and issue after issue with spectacular ocean-related artwork and story after story about charities and organisations and people who have not been looking the other way, trying to do something – anything – to halt the destruction of our ocean.

So many doing so much, and yet it is still not enough.

It feels as if we are in the last chance saloon, and still most people are not listening. What will it take?

In March 1968, the Senegalese forestry engineer and environmentalist Baba Dioum, who was Senegal's Director General of Water and Forestry at that time, shared the following wisdom in a paper presented at the triennial meeting of the General Assembly of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in New Delhi: "In the end, we will conserve only what we love, [and] we will love only what we understand."

In the summer of that same year, I would for sure have been swimming or bodyboarding in the rolling waves of the Atlantic with my brothers, side-stepping an enormous and venomous dead Portuguese man o' war that had washed up on the sandy beach overnight, or counting blood-red anemones in the rock pools.

If we don't understand anything else, we surely by now understand that our ocean is dying, as are the creatures that live in the sea, that they need our help, and that the time to step up and act is now.

Susan Clark Editor of *Resurgence & Ecologist*

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Ocean glories

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Resurgence Ripples

News from our community celebrating all the ways in which the work of The Resurgence Trust and its members inspires people to take positive action

SLATE POEMS

Resurgence member Clare Hyde writes: "I began placing handwritten poetry slates around the countryside and community during the pandemic, to offer inspiration and to give me a sense of creative purpose. This poem is by John O'Donohue, and was the first one I placed, just down the road from my house at a crossroads in Knowle Green, near Longridge, Lancashire. Due to the positive response, I've continued doing it whenever I find a spare slate and a poem that needs sharing!"

FROM RESURGENCE MEMBER MELISSA YOUNG:

"I absolutely love your events... I recently moved to Scotland and your events have definitely made me feel a 'kin' connection to Gaia and my 'tribe'!!"



GOOD NEWS FOR SMALLHOLDERS

The mission of the Loraine Trust is to help and support growers who are committed to improving methods and practices of horticulture on smallholdings. This support is provided to enhance diversity, alongside the need to maintain adequate production for those trying to live off the land. In particular the Trust supports organic use of the land in keeping with nurturing Nature and soil conservation. The Trust believes in local self-sufficiency and local culture. It offers small grants to individuals and groups, ranging from £3,000 to £5,000.

The Loraine Trust welcomes enquiries from smallholders who need support for projects that benefit their land and its wildlife. info@lorainetrust.org www.lorainetrust.org The Loraine Trust, c/o Rob Usher, Y Fron, Cwmann, Lampeter SA4 8HE

OXFORD STORYTELLING FESTIVAL

Described as "an intimate festival weaving magic with stories, spoken word, poetry and song", the annual Oxford Storytelling Festival runs from 23 to 25 August at the beautiful Waterperry House and Gardens. This is a small and sacred festival for people who love words.

For tickets visit www.oxfordstorytellingfestival.co.uk

If you have been inspired to do something for the good of the planet or the local community, let us know. Email editorial@resurgence.org • Twitter/X @Resurgence_mag • Facebook @Resurgencetrust

Forthcoming events



JUL 1

Monthly Meditation for Members

Join Georgie Gilmore in July for a guided morning meditation that will support you to live in deeper connection with the human and morethan-human worlds and with yourself. Start your day, your week and your month with peace and presence.

Monday 7.30–8am (BST) via Zoom, free for members

JUL 2

How Well Do We Know Water?

The final talk in a trilogy of talks about our relationship with this fundamental presence in our world. 'Drinkable rivers: how the river became my teacher' with Li An Phoa

Is it more accurate to think of water as a being, rather than a

thing? Join Li An Phoa as we explore the new and the ancient depths of our watery world and how they profoundly inform our individual and collective realities. Hosted by Pete Yeo. **Tuesday 7.30–9pm (BST) via Zoom**

Green Meditations: Four stages of plant growth

Mindfulness teacher Rowena Wilson will facilitate an absorbing and contemplative 30 minutes together every Friday morning throughout July. Each plant-focused theme leads us into a unique meditation that will inspire a deeper connection with our green world and ourselves.

Fridays 8-8.30am (BST) via Zoom, free

9 Resurgence Life Drawing Group

Draw, paint or sketch in this friendly, untutored group for all abilities. Tuesday 7–9pm (BST) Hartland and via Zoom JUL 30

Resurgence Earth Festival: Lammas *Guided meditation, Nature connection and self-reflection*

At the beginning of the harvest season, let us celebrate the generosity, abundance and gifts of Nature and reflect on how we can share our gifts with the world.

Tuesday 6.30-7.30pm (BST) via Zoom, free

JUL **31**

Drinkable

Li An Phoa Maarten van der Schaaf

Resurgence Talk: Manchán Magan Listening to the land speak: the wisdom encoded in our lore, language and landscape

Author Manchán Magan explores the knowledge and insights preserved by the ancestors within Irish culture and heritage. In this talk with Q&A, he offers new insights into the mythology, place names, ritual sites, proverbs and language of Ireland. Wednesday 7–8pm (BST) via Zoom, free



Festival of Wellbeing

Join us online for a day of thought-provoking and progressive talks from some of the world's most inspiring



thinkers and activists. Speakers include Robin Wall Kimmerer, Gillian Burke, Satish Kumar, Wanjira Mathai and Daniel Christian Wahl.

Saturday 10am–5pm (BST), via Zoom



Details for all events can be found at www.resurgenceevents.org

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ECOLOGIST

EDITORS' PICKS

We share our top three stories from the news website focused on environmental, social and economic justice.

REFUGEE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND: FIX OR FICTION?

Environmental disasters resulted in the displacement of over 30 million people by 2022, representing more than half of all internal displacements. Despite this crisis, major climate-responsible nations are reluctant to allocate necessary funds for the safety and security of affected populations, placing the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) under significant financial strain. To address this challenge, the UNHCR is exploring financial solutions by utilising refugees as revenue-generating assets. This effort, known as the Refugee Environmental Protection (REP) Fund, encourages corporate partners to invest in reforestation and clean cooking programmes in climate-vulnerable



refugee settings. Critics raise ethical concerns about this scheme, contending that it transforms refugees into a source of carbon credits for global carbon markets and offsetting schemes. Essentially, this approach aims to generate profits for financial markets while enabling the companies responsible for refugee displacement to continue polluting.

tinyurl.com/ecologist-rep-fund

SHIFTING THE BALANCE OF POWER

A hopeful Climate and Nature Bill has been introduced to the UK parliament, following its first reading in the House of Commons on 21 March 2024. Alex Sobel MP stated: "I'm proud to have introduced the Climate and Nature Bill with cross-party support from MPs of all main parties. This joined-up climate and Nature plan is continuing the legacy of the Climate Change Act 2008." The bill, spearheaded by



the campaign Zero Hour, aims to address the climate and biodiversity crisis in a coordinated manner and in line with the latest scientific findings. Unlike the existing Environment Act (2021), which aims only to halt the decline of Nature by 2030, this bill also commits to bending the curve and setting Nature on the pathway to recovery by 2030, aligning with the international agreement reached at the UN Biodiversity Summit COP15 in 2022.

tinyurl.com/ecologist-balance-power

BELÉM: SPOTLIGHT ON COP30 HOST CITY

Belém, the capital of Pará and the gateway to the Amazon in northern Brazil, is grappling with a range of urgent challenges as it prepares to host COP30 in 2025. These include inadequate sanitation, high crime rates, pollution and homelessness, all concerns that cast doubt on the city's readiness to assume a leadership role on the international stage. "Addressing the sanitation demands meticulous planning, significant investment, and the establishment of regulatory and inspection mechanisms for sanitation, areas currently lacking in Belém," said Ivan Costa, president of the Brazilian Social Observatory (OSB), a non-governmental organisation based in Belém.

tinyurl.com/ecologist-belem-cop30

The Ecologist, which is owned by The Resurgence Trust, is updated daily with news and stories about the climate crisis and movement for change. Sign up for weekly newsletters at **www.theecologist.org**

MOVEMENT POWER

Brendan Montague introduces a new *Ecologist* online series exploring a hybrid model of activism and campaigning

he temperature records being set around the world almost every day are nothing short of alarming, yet the amount of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere continues to rise. The world's leaders have proved incapable of acting on the overwhelming evidence from climate scientists.

The need for popular protests to force the rich and powerful to avert climate catastrophe is now obvious. But the means of developing a mass participatory democratic movement for direct action is itself complex and elusive. Extinction Rebellion (XR) erupted in 2018 and took climate protest in Britain to a new level – but has in recent years and months fractured into a thousand smart, but small, grouplets.

Even the limited success of its direct action has been met – predictably – by more draconian suppressive measures by the UK government, including a wide-ranging assault on the right to protest itself. At the same time, the core XR strategy to call out the media – to demand that newspapers and broadcasters tell the truth – and the decision by some to blockade the Murdoch printing press were both met with hostility. The major social media platforms – Twitter/X and Instagram among them – have 'shadow banned' many protest groups.

This therefore seems like an excellent time to examine how XR suddenly exploded onto our screens and our streets. How did a handful of activists deliver a coherent and clear message calling for climate action, galvanise the disparate climate campaigns that already existed, and bring millions of people globally into direct action, many for the first time?

A new series, Movement Power, being published at *The Ecologist* online, revisits a set of training videos that were posted to YouTube a decade ago. The videos did not go viral but did get the attention of many of the founders of XR. Paul Engler and Carlos Saavedra, who presented the training, claimed to have discovered something of a panacea for protest: a hybrid model of organisation that drew on the lessons learned in the



'structure' and the 'momentum' traditions of campaigning.

Gail Bradbrook, a co-founder of XR, described Engler's book *This Is an Uprising: How Nonviolent Revolt Is Shaping the Twenty-First Century*, co-written with Engler's brother Mark, as the bible for the XR protest movement. Bradbrook recalls (in Issue 344 of *Resurgence & Ecologist* magazine) how she drafted the principles for XR – very much a core idea from the Engler and Saavedra playbook.

The momentum tradition draws on the lessons from the nonviolent civil rights movement

The 'magic sauce' that makes the hybrid model so effective is an apparent resolution of the contradiction in the protest movement's need to be single-minded and coherent while allowing for autonomy for its activists. A united campaign needs a single clear aim, an agreed theory of change, a limited set of demands, a pre-planned phasing of campaigns, and a non-negotiable set of rules and principles. But activists need freedom both to express their human creativity and to avoid the capture or corruption of their leadership.

Engler and Saavedra describe being recruited into the 'structure' tradition, the familiar hierarchical and centralised campaigning base such as a trade union that will be familiar to those on the left. But at the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization in 1999 they suddenly discovered the power of the momentum tradition – the ability to reap 'moments of the whirlwind' and absorb thousands of activists into existing institutions. In turn, the momentum tradition draws on the lessons from the nonviolent civil rights movement in the US and internationally, from Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi.

The hybrid model includes a number of important tools. It is an organic whole, a concept taken from systems theory and biology, that is more than the sum of its parts. These tools include frontloading, grand strategies and narratives, cycles of momentum, pillars of support, mass training and trigger events. Not all activists will agree with the historical analysis or the reliance on systems thinking and biomimicry. But as XR set the standard for mass climate action, the Engler and Saavedra model represented a leap forward in campaign strategy.

There is a lot here for climate movements to learn from.

Brendan Montague is the editor of *The Ecologist* online. www.theecologist.org/section/movement-power

The Rights of Nature

The cultural argument to grant Nature protective rights is based on the deeper understanding that what we do to the Earth we do to ourselves, writes campaigner **Becca Blease**

"People feel that they are not being heard and that in turn Nature, and in particular the river, is not being heard"

his is the central argument presented by Lewes town mayor and district councillor Matthew Bird in a motion that sets out his vision of formally recognising the rights of his local river, the Ouse. The motion, submitted last February, was the first of its kind to be passed by a council in England, and thus it sets an impressive precedent. Yet Bird's intention is not unique. In recent years, the UK has seen a proliferation of initiatives aimed at extending legal rights to the natural world: Herefordshire Council's recognition of the importance of the River Wye in its decision-making, the annual Declaration of the Rights of the River Cam, the River Charter for the Dart at Dartington, and a campaign to grant legal personhood for the River Dôn in Yorkshire, to name a few.

The Rights of Nature movement marks a radical departure from an entrenched conceptualisation of Nature either as our property or as a resource that should in some way serve our economy, convenience, or comfort. Such a culture believes, for example, that rivers should serve as extensions of our transport and waste-water systems, and that we have the right to canalise them, control their flow with locks and weirs, and compel them to wash away our untreated sewage during adverse weather. Consistent over-abstraction from and poisoning of entire river catchments are responded to by weak and incremental target-setting decided by the very organisations responsible. Trees, the belief goes, should provide us with commodities or convenient shade, and we can uproot them when they fail to do so or obstruct our urban development. Such a culture enables the felling of historic mature trees - sometimes en masse - to go unmet by any true sense of justice.

In contrast to this prevailing utilitarian view of our environment, the Rights of Nature movement seeks to formally



The Rights of Nature movement seeks to formally acknowledge the rights of rivers, trees and entire ecosystems to exist and flourish simply for the sake of existing and flourishing



River, colour woodcut by Valerie Lueth www.tugboatprintshop.com

acknowledge the rights of rivers, trees and entire ecosystems to exist and flourish simply for the sake of existing and flourishing. It propounds the inherent value of Nature, independent of its extractive value for humans, and seeks to give Nature a voice in decision-making structures.

Curious about the motivations currently driving Rights of Nature in the UK, I interviewed some of the movement's key

advocates, including councillors, campaigners and legal professionals. It soon became apparent to me that, rather than a reactionary policy responding to a singular crisis, the Rights of Nature movement emerges from a complex interplay of dissatisfaction, disenfranchisement and disconnection, all permeated with a hopeful vision of a better relationship with the natural world. Here are some of the voices speaking out for the rights of Nature:

Why are my rivers getting poisoned? What political framework allows this?

At the heart of this dissatisfaction, unsurprisingly, is a collective frustration with existing environmental policy and governance structures. Interviewees spoke of inadequate or misleading policies (such as tree preservation orders being ignored, and bathing water designations not resulting in any improvement in water quality), poor enforcement by regulators, and a pervasive inertia at all levels of government in addressing the ecological crisis.

According to Norwich Green councillor Lucy Galvin this approach seems to "constantly right wrongs rather than actually address the problem at source". Attempts by citizens and councillors to address pollution and tree felling were dismissed or kicked into the long grass. Discussions in Lewes, Bird reveals, "kept going round in circles".

Compounding this frustration is a desire for a more equitable distribution of agency, particularly in response to repeated river pollution incidents. Interviewees identified power imbalances, not only between citizens and government, but between human and non-human Nature too. As Isabel Carlisle, director of the Bioregional Learning Centre behind the River Dart Charter, asks, how does the river itself hold us to account?

Hearing this question took me aback, as it was the very thing that I had asked myself during the Covid-19 pandemic, and that ultimately led me to launch a campaign for the Bristol Avon. For some, the pursuit of Rights of Nature occurs gradually in response to endless cycles of apathy and ineffectiveness of those in power. For others – like me – it's a lightning bolt moment. A sudden realisation of a great wrong that has been allowed to persist.

What I found most interesting in these conversations were some of the cultural, and even spiritual, factors impelling campaigners towards Rights of Nature. In one case, a councillor overcame her scepticism about the movement after realising that she had a spiritual relationship with her local river.

A new system of thinking

According to a 2022 study, UK citizens rank the lowest in Europe for 'Nature connectedness', a cultural wound recognised only too well by those I spoke with. Across the country, there is undoubtedly a yearning to foster a deeper connection, or reconnection, with Nature. The pandemic seems to have acted as a catalyst for this shift: for many of us, mental wellbeing during that time depended on frequent access to Nature.

Such a renewed societal focus on the natural world brought to the fore ecological crises, not just on a national scale, but also, more importantly, on a hyperlocal scale. A singular threatened hedgerow, bird or brook in our immediate surroundings became emblematic of a global Nature-society relationship gone awry. Our daily exposure to these tragedies in miniature forced us to re-evaluate what we once considered a backdrop to our lives.

Galvin observes that this heightened public awareness of Nature is reflected in the growing prominence and fortitude

of Nature writing: "It's moved away from nice books about the countryside to being more than a genre. It's almost a new system of thinking."

Those I spoke with believe that our chronic estrangement from Nature is born not only of processes like industrialisation and urbanisation, but also of a legal system and cultural attitude wedded to the absolute authority of private ownership. Perhaps the Rights of Nature movement lends a route forward for a citizenry whose movements are commanded by a tapestry of impenetrability in a country in which we are restricted to a meagre 8% of the land by barbed wire and threat of prosecution. A country in which entire forests, lakes, and hills can be 'owned', and thus known, by a single person. (It is likely of no coincidence that the Rights of Nature movement emerges contemporaneously with a growing campaign for our Right to Roam.)

For some, the pursuit of Rights of Nature occurs gradually in response to endless cycles of apathy and ineffectiveness of those in power. For others – like me – it's a lightning bolt moment. A sudden realisation of a great wrong that has been allowed to persist

When you consider the state of land access in the UK, it's clear that we too have become canalised, like the rivers we try to control. But if a forest could speak for itself, legally, might we be allowed back in, provided we respected its right to exist and flourish? For many of those I interviewed, Rights of Nature provides a pathway not only to reintegrate Nature into the fabric of society through our legal and moral frameworks, but also to reintegrate us back into Nature.

Rights of Nature represents a bold rethinking of our legal and ethical obligations to the natural world. It demands a reimagining of belonging, not as 'this is mine' versus 'this is yours', but as a duty of reciprocity in which humans are not the masters of the land, but a constituent part.

Explaining what first drew him to the movement, Mike Potter of the Pickering and District Civic Society thoughtfully summarises: "I am a very minor part of a massive ecosystem." Indeed, as Rights of Nature takes hold in the UK, it has the potential not only to redefine our environmental governance, but also to reacquaint people with their own broader ecological identity.

Becca Blease is a research impact specialist, writer, amateur mycologist and environmental campaigner. Originally from the Wye Valley, she lived in France and Sweden before moving to Bristol, where she now campaigns for the rights and health of the River Avon.



"Rivers have empowered me and unlocked a mischievousness that didn't exist in other parts of my life. And swimming in skins through that awful winter of 2021 built up a baseline of confidence that somehow enabled me to chase away other anxieties and to stick my neck out, unqualified as I felt. I'm in a feedback loop where rivers give me the confidence to fight for rivers."

> Becca Blease, from Wild Service: Why Nature Needs You, edited by Nick Hayes and Jon Moses, (Bloomsbury, 2024)

The magic of stargazing

Charlotte Ina Sterland interviews Biosphere Dark Sky Ranger Elizabeth Tindal, and in his review of a special camping field in Wales **Mark Gough** finds his own version of stargazing

[Charlotte] So you are a ranger as well as running stargazing expeditions?

[Elizabeth] I'm a freelance ranger and a Dark Sky Ranger. The Galloway Forest Park first supported five of us to be designated Dark Sky Rangers. It's not a paid post. I had to give a presentation and was given some training and equipment. Previously I was a countryside, communities and education ranger for the West Dumfries and Galloway area council. I worked mostly on the coast and in schools. I now also work with Visit Scotland and The Biosphere, which connects local businesses in Galloway and Ayrshire.

Do you use a telescope?

When people talk about buying telescopes, I'm wary. So many people say they have them but they are in the loft because they're not powerful enough for what they wanted to see. They want to see the rings of Saturn, but they have a *f*100 telescope. Getting birdwatching binoculars is a better alternative if you're on a budget. I use astro-binoculars.

To see moons, you need a tracking telescope. They have an in-built computer that can be set to track a certain object. They are more expensive but do give people more back. If not, the best thing is to go to an astronomy club. They will sometimes loan you a really good telescope for nothing.

Going out and looking at the sky is an authentic experience, while staring at a screen maybe isn't.

Where else do you stargaze in the UK?

I was up in Shetland last year, working with Wild Skies Shetland. I was showing people how I do things – the ethos, if you like – including how to look for stars and map out features of the night sky even when there is cloud cover.

How dark does it need to be to stargaze?

A lot of stargazers try to find the darkest of the dark. If they come from London, Singapore or Glasgow they don't need the darkest of the dark. It's better to introduce them to less darkness. Most people want to see the main constellations. I try to get the things people want to see. People approach me because of safety, and the knowledge I have. Maybe they don't want to go off into the dark woods on their own without knowing where to go.

How do you become good at navigating in the woods in the dark?

During Covid, people wanted to get as far away from other people as possible, but you don't know who you'll run into when you're out in the dark, so it's good to know where you're going. If you go somewhere every day, it's not so bad in the dark. I tend to scout out places during the day at first, and then go back in the dark.

Getting to know the stars is good, though. If you're going somewhere and you can see a star you know, it can help you go in the right direction. Or, say, knowing the moon should be on the left, for example. That's the appeal. You can navigate in the dark. In terms of the forest side of things, it's a great way to get people to look after a wooded area, too, wanting to make paths safe even in the dark.



×

"Going out and looking at the sky is an authentic experience, while staring at a screen maybe isn't"

Is the area you use protected forest?

No, it's a public forest. It's commercial. It's the darkness that's protected. The biosphere status helped to protect this. This is another designation, but it is leverage rather than actual legislation. There are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Nature reserves in the area, but this designation has more 'teeth'. Scottish Forestry are the holders of it. They report to the International Dark Sky Association each year on what's going on.

In your stargazing, what have you observed?

The International Space Station is always amazing. I've seen shooting stars and four fireballs. It's a oncein-a-lifetime thing to see even one fireball, and that's if you're trying. I'm always just looking where I'm pointing a laser, and things appear.

Some stars stand out more than others. I can see where Jupiter is, and big stars like Vega. Vega has a character that's nice to see, similar to Betelgeuse, which is a red star. If you can see it, you know what's around it. It's like greeting old friends. I use General Impression of Size and Shape (GISS), so it really is like seeing a friend across the street and recognising them from what they are wearing. If we know a star well and where it should be, we can identify it.

Have you done any urban stargazing?

Yes, for Earth Hour, at Dumfries Museum. It means turning out the lights and persuading the council to turn off floodlights. I've also used the museum's camera obscura, which was used in the past for looking at the moon. Some of the maps they have there were used for the original moon landings. They turned out the lights for me one night and we looked at Dumfries from there too.

Charlotte Ina Sterland is a musician, a journalist and a climber of rocks and trees. She co-founded Shear Rock, a sustainable wool textiles company, and is interested in sustainable technologies.

You can learn more about Elizabeth Tindal's work at www.freelanceranger.com

See Scottish pianist Alexander Chapman Campbell's haunting article on Dark Woods in Art & Culture, page 48.



Slow Down Summer by Gemma Koomen www.gemmakoomen.com

Inner peace at Maggie's Field: a retreat in Nature

Deep in the heart of the Herefordshire countryside, a small, untouched haven awaits. Here a multitude of habitats and wildlife flourish, sheltered by wise oaks, enchanting hawthorns, and a profusion of other native plants. Nature thrives in a symphony of decomposing logs, marshy grasslands and rambling brambles. This idyllic setting is a profound reminder of our interconnectedness with the natural world.

The real delight of being in this intimate sanctuary comes in the early morning concerto. I am here in early spring, so woodpeckers flit amongst the branches, their enthusiastic breakfasting a testament to the thriving ecosystem.

With an exceptional Dark Sky rating of between 0.25 and 0.5 nanowatts, this campsite boasts an inky blackness that unveils a breathtaking vista of stars. Planets and even distant galaxies become visible to the naked eye, and on a clear night you can happily lose hours in the wonders of our celestial neighbourhood. Seen through a telescope, Jupiter's moons become more than just distant specks, transforming into a mesmerising dance.

Here at Maggie's Field Campsite & Cook Hut you can enjoy complete privacy for your group of up to 10 plus one furry friend. Forget crowded campsites – here tranquillity reigns supreme. The electricity-free site boasts an elegantly simple compost toilet, a dedicated washing-up stand, and a fire pit for crackling campfires under the stars. Additionally, a well-equipped cook hut provides shelter for culinary creations, transforming into a cosy recreational room when the weather turns.

It's an ideal escape to reset your mind and wellbeing.

Mark Gough is a musician, a keen camper and the Finance and Operations Manager at The Resurgence Trust.

Maggie's Field Campsite & Cook Hut was named one of 20 great UK camping sites with a difference by *The Guardian* in 2023. www.maggiesfield.camp

"In a world as myriad as ours, the gaze is a singular act: to look at something is to fill your whole life with it, if only briefly."

Ocean Vuong, from On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous *(Jonathan Cape, 2019)*

Sprouting alternatives

Katie Dancey-Downs learns how a trip to France inspired husband and wife Tom Whelan and Leila Francis Colman to launch Naked Sprout, an eco-friendly brown toilet roll crafted without the use of bleach, dyes or harmful chemicals

hen Tom Whelan and Leila Francis Colman were hopping between B&B stays on their way back to the UK from a ski trip in France, it wasn't the scenery or the boulangeries that made the biggest impression on the pair. It was the toilet paper. Every place they stayed in came complete with a baby-pink loo roll, leading them to question why UK toilet paper is always white.

After some research, they found an answer: aesthetics. They even discovered some companies offering a whole palette of toilet roll colours. "We realised that for toilet paper to be white it must be bleached, which made us realise the amount of chemicals that go into the production of loo rolls," Tom tells *Resurgence* & *Ecologist.*

There are often PFAS compounds and complex synthetic chemicals in the tissue, and the industrial chemical BPA in the plastic wrapping, as well as inks and scents, all of which end up polluting waterways. "It's just all these unnecessary chemicals. And we thought, for a daily product that gets flushed away, could we come up with a better solution?" Tom adds.

Spurred by their post-holiday blues and on the hunt for a sustainable product, Tom and Leila started thinking seriously about the business of toilet paper. There wasn't a stripped-back naked toilet roll on the market, and they saw an opportunity.

"Our message is that loo roll doesn't need to be white. There's no need for toilet paper to go through the bleaching process," Tom adds.

Naked Sprout's toilet paper is brown, which family and friends told them was a terrible idea. This was affirmed by market research, which also suggested that the UK market wasn't ready for such a revolution. But, three years down the line, they've sold millions of rolls and are now a certified B Corp, meaning they are rated highly for environmental performance, transparency and accountability. Not only is the natural-coloured paper more sustainable, but it also acts as a conversation starter.

"We'd heard that using bamboo as a material to make loo roll would cut a huge amount of carbon emissions compared to normal production," Tom explains. "Typically, a tree will take 50 years to grow before being cut down to make a new roll, whereas bamboo takes only four years."

Three years down the line, they've sold millions of rolls and are now a certified B Corp, meaning they are rated highly for environmental performance, transparency and accountability

Toilet paper, of course, starts its life in its country of origin. Since bamboo is grown in China, this is where the couple felt they could make the most difference. But in 2021, Naked Sprout moved its manufacturing from China to Spain, to the world's only B Corp-certified tissue factory, which is powered by 8,000 on-site solar panels.

"There are also large volumes of water involved in the production of tissue paper," Tom says. "With our production, the water comes from a local river and is then treated in an on-site water treatment plant and fed back into the river in the same condition as when it was taken."

According to Naked Sprout, their toilet roll product emits 50% less carbon than any other eco toilet roll. And as far as they know, Naked Sprout is the



Bog Standard by James Stewart www.jamesstewartart.co.uk

first toilet roll company in the world to put its carbon footprint on its packaging. They hope others will do the same. This year, Naked Sprout was the toilet roll of choice in the Portaloos of Glastonbury Festival.

Tom says he isn't particularly passionate about toilet paper as a topic in itself, but more about the impact it makes and the charity donations that come alongside it: "We wanted to make it purpose-led as well. We wanted to make sure that with every Naked Sprout purchase, a donation is made to charity."

On top of this, products that have been returned because people are not in or fail to collect their shipment from a nearby delivery point in time cannot be resold and are consequently donated to charitable organisations. This has happened with nearly 100,000 rolls so far, with 20,000 of those that had been returned loaded on a truck for the Trussell Trust network of food banks.

Naked Sprout estimates that so far it has saved 42 million litres of unnecessary chemicals from going into the sea – enough to fill around 17 Olympic swimming pools – and there is now talk of launching the product in other European countries. The couple say they never imagined a holiday to France would end up in the production of 10 million rolls of chemical-free toilet paper, but it did.

Katie Dancey-Downs is a freelance journalist who writes about human rights, the planet and culture. She is also Assistant Editor at *Index on Censorship* magazine.



We Feed The UK

Coordinated by The Gaia Foundation, an innovative nationwide storytelling initiative pairs photographers, poets and food producers to show the potential of food systems to tackle climate breakdown, biodiversity loss and social injustice

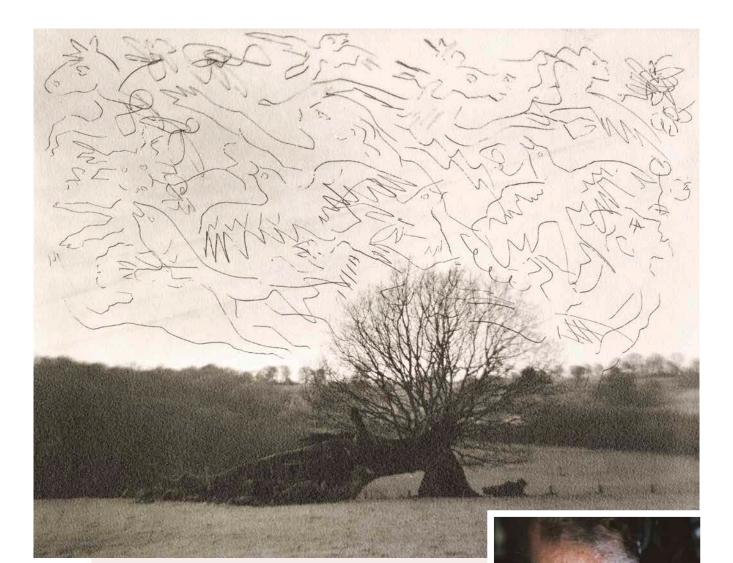
e Feed The UK is a monumental undertaking – with a clever premise – whereby 10 poets and 10 award-winning photographers have been commissioned to tell 10 stories of 'hope' in an otherwise battered and bruised food-producing landscape: one damaged so badly by Brexit, climate chaos, the cost of living crisis and heart-breaking biodiversity loss. The project is coordinated by The Gaia Foundation alongside national exhibiting partners and the Hot Poets, who pair spoken word artists with people and projects working on the frontlines of climate change.

The project was launched in February this year and runs until April 2025. There are now seven remaining exhibits, of which this one, entitled *Custodians of the Land*, is the fourth in the entire series. The exhibition is inspired by the Penpont Project, the UK's largest intergenerational Nature restoration project, which is led by a Youth Leadership Group of 13- to 18-year-olds, the charity Action for Conservation, the Penpont Estate and local farmers, in the Bannau Brycheiniog, Wales. Photographer Andy Pilsbury and poet Ifor Ap Glyn have joined forces to tell Penpont's story. Their words (translated from Welsh) and images are shared here, as is a link for you to hear Ifor's poem in full. Upcoming We Feed The UK exhibits will include *From Crisis to Kinship: Healing People and Place* on England's first community-owned farm, which is inspired by Fordhall Organic Farm in Shropshire and pairs poet Jasmine Gardosi with photographer Aaron Schuman. This will take place in September and the resulting works will be published in an immersive book in collaboration with GRAIN Projects.

their herd of English Longhorn cattle

"At Penpont, viewpoints are exchanged; dynamic dialogue that can re-story the land. Collaborating like this, is the future for our manifold, city-centric tribe who still need their fill from the fields..." – Ifor Ap Glyn, poet

In October, the campaign explores *Food Justice* as inspired by the GoGrowWithLove & Black Rootz Londonbased initiatives. This exhibit pairs photography by Arpita Shah with poetry by Zena Edwards and will be shown as part of Photo Fringe in Brighton and a community street



Andy Pilsbury's photograph shows Penpont's 'phoenix oak', which has re-sprouted from its own shattered trunk. The tree, named *Adfyw* / Renewal by Penpont's Youth Leadership Group, has become a symbol of the project. The etchings of unseen presences, engraved onto the photograph are the work of renowned artist Robert McDonald (insert), who has lived at Penpont for many decades. All photos © Andy Pilsbury

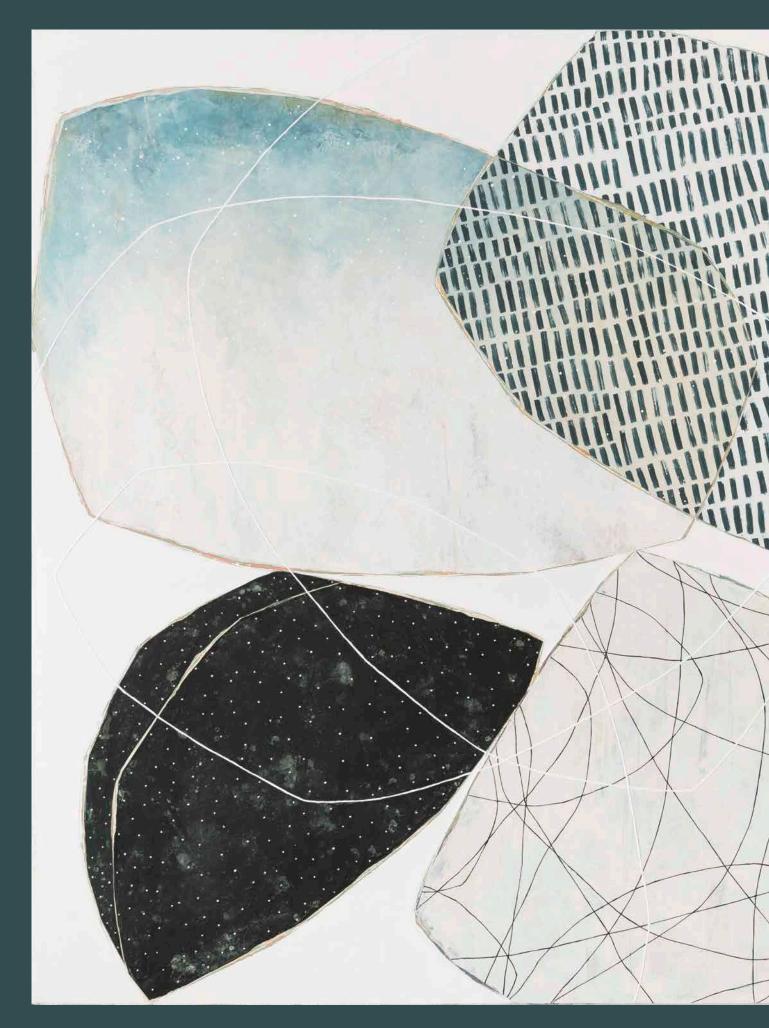
art campaign across North London.

And for the last exhibit of 2024, which runs from November at The Sill in Northumberland's National Park, the campaign offers *Down to Earth: Restoring Our Soils*, inspired by local farm West Wharmley, near Hexham. The story is celebrated by the poetry of Kate Fox and the photography of Johannah Churchill.

Further We Feed The UK exhibitions are planned for 2025 at arts venues including the Martin Parr Foundation and the Royal Photographic Society.

The Gaia Foundation has 40 years of experience accompanying allies, communities and movements around the world to revive biocultural diversity. The organisation takes a holistic approach to regenerate healthy ecosystems and strengthen community self-governance – both critical as we face the grave reality of climate chaos, biodiversity collapse and social injustice. Together with partners from the Atlantic to the Arctic, Africa to the Amazon, Gaia is reweaving the basket of life, revalorising the knowledge systems that enhance it, and restoring a respectful relationship with the Earth. In the UK it leads the Seed Sovereignty Programme UK & Ireland, reviving agri-diversity and our lost connections to the seeds at the very heart of our food system.

To listen to Ifor Ap Glyn's poem 'Land-mending (A stitch in time)' in full, visit tinyurl.com/land-mending www.wefeedtheuk.org #WeFeedTheUK





United, we can thrive

A country without a coherent story about who and what it is can never thrive and prosper, and cannot rise to the existential threats of our time – the climate and Nature emergencies – writes **Caroline Lucas** in this extract from her new book, *Another England*

PAINTINGS BY KARINE LÉGER

ondon at dawn. The Thames is in full flood, its muddy waters turned to a deep blue by the cloudless sky above. The rising sun is picking out every detail of the Palace of Westminster, its honey-coloured limestone now golden, transforming what is too often a museum of pomp and empty circumstance into something startlingly beautiful. I'm standing on Westminster Bridge, looking east, towards the towers of the City of London, to Essex and Kent, and beyond to Europe.

I'm there to film a short message, and now as I watch the recording again, eight years later, I realise I look like someone who has just heard of the death of a friend or a relative. I am profoundly sad, perhaps a little shocked. I am also deeply tired because I have been up all night. I look like I don't quite know what to say.

"I know, like me, you will be feeling pretty devastated this morning..."

Just a few hours earlier, I had watched David Dimbleby report the result of the referendum on the UK's continuing membership of the European Union. After all the millions of words spent during the campaign, the result came at 4.39am on 24 June 2016: "We're out."

Sometimes when you're tired, or in shock, things can gain a strange clarity.

"People have voted the way they did I think partly because they were feeling so angry and alienated, and the divisions in this country run so deep. And if we are ever to have a chance of healing these divisions, the progressives have got to work together."

In one way, that moment on Westminster Bridge feels a lifetime ago. Our country has gone through so much since, and if anything, the alienation and polarisation are much greater today than back in 2016. But the truth was clear even then: Brexit was the result of division, and it would make those divisions worse. The fact that England and Wales voted to leave, and Scotland and Northern Ireland to stay, has put incredible strain on the myth that the United Kingdom is an equal partnership of four nations. The government in London decided what form Brexit would take without any reference to the elected governments in Edinburgh or Belfast or, indeed, in Cardiff. Unsurprisingly, support for the reunification of Ireland has grown. The pressure for a second independence referendum in Scotland cannot be ignored forever. In Wales, a new sense of national identity is on the rise. The future of the United Kingdom itself is now in doubt.

Yet we left, primarily, because of what had happened in England. Outside of the capital, every single region voted for Brexit. It is no disrespect to Wales, which voted by a majority of only 80,000 to leave, to say that it was an English vote that drove Brexit. Many reasons have been advanced: it was because of the way communities had been abandoned when so much of our industry collapsed in the 1980s; because of the hollowing out of local democracy, intensified under Margaret Thatcher; because the deregulated City of London had sucked more and more investment out of the regions; because the great institutions that we all shared, like the NHS, were being trashed; because the old elites of Eton and Oxford were not only strengthening their grip on the reins of power, but were now looking increasingly to tax havens and Wall Street to better themselves and their friends; and a hundred other betrayals. And to be honest, because those who benefited economically from all these changes, and from the UK becoming a more open and diverse society, did not do enough to share these gains fairly, and often sneered at those with a more traditional view of England.

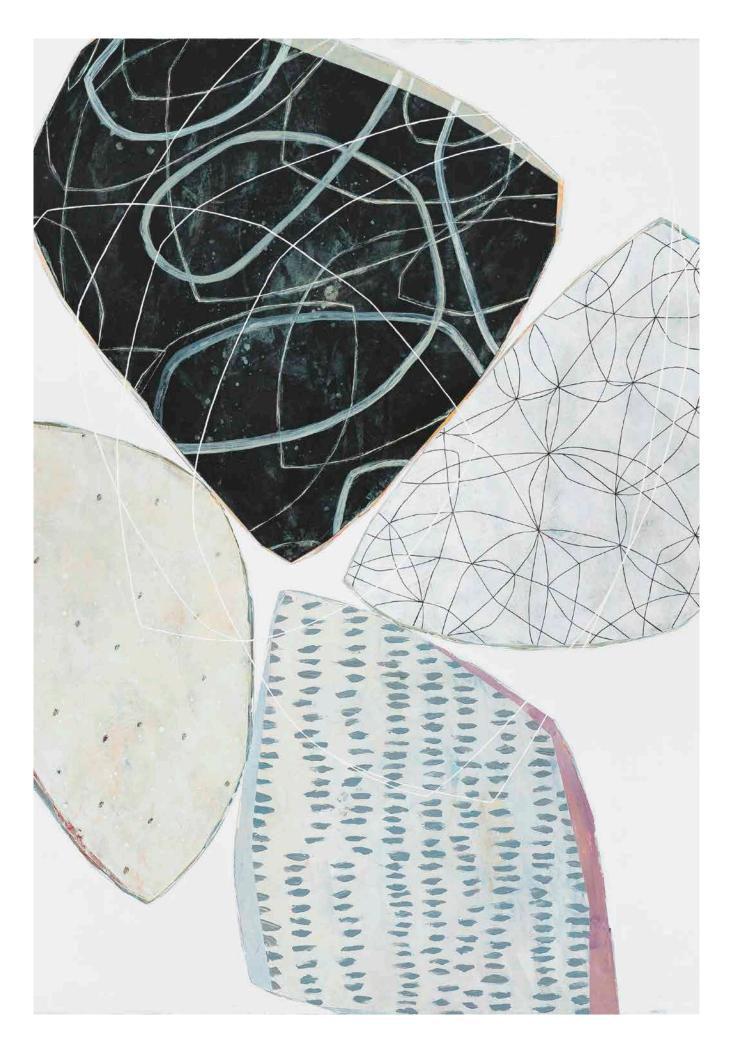
Identity is essentially about storytelling

It was this sense of division that led me to try something new. In the months following the 2016 result, I travelled to as many leave-voting areas in England as I could, to hear from people first-hand and face-to-face why they had supported Brexit. Sometimes this was difficult. More often it was refreshing and reassuring because there was so much more that we agreed on than held us apart. Many people were angry. Of course they were. But if you took the time to go, and paid them the courtesy of listening, then common ground could emerge.

One theme that continually arose throughout this listening exercise (which my small team filmed and shared as best we could, and which came to be known as 'Dear Leavers') was people's sense of pride in the places where they lived, but – simultaneously – their feelings of powerlessness. I was told countless times that London, and the power that was held there, was so far away that it might as well have been on another planet. They felt unheard and ignored.

This was more than an economic complaint, however corrosive this country's inequalities of wealth and opportunity undoubtedly are. It was also about culture and identity. Many resented how some expressions of Englishness were allowed while others were not. It was acceptable to love the English countryside, English humour, English music and English literature, and to see these aspects of Englishness as welcoming, humane, full of energy and creativity. But the moment Englishness took a political form it became anathema. Even mild forms of patriotism were frowned upon. The English flag was acceptable fluttering from a church tower in a picturesque village but was instantly interpreted as a form of racism if hanging from someone's window on a housing estate.

It was these conversations that led me to question what Englishness is, or could or should be, and how all of us could be involved in shaping the answers. Each of us might have a different starting point. For me, it was returning to my love of English literature





Paintings by Karine Léger www.karineleger.ca Represented by www.andgallery.co.uk

and reflecting on the many poets and novelists who have written about the English people and helped to shape the way we think about ourselves and each other. For others, it might be anything from the street where we live to the sports team we follow, from where our parents or grandparents came from to where we go on holiday. (Not everyone sporting the flag of St Piran on the bumper of their car is a Cornish nationalist.) I soon realised that Englishness cannot stand apart: it is wrapped up in the social and political history of the islands of Britain and Ireland and with the many peoples from around the world who have settled here over the centuries. Most of us have a complex and multilayered sense of who we are, with multiple allegiances. And the more we can express the totality of our identities, as individuals and within society, the more we can feel we all belong, and the easier it is to manage the inevitable differences in our views and priorities.

To do this, we have to see Englishness not as something to be scared of, or suppressed within the notion of 'Britain', but to be understood, explored and valued. Yet there are no institutions that represent England equivalent to those in the three other countries of the UK. Nothing to give political expression to our complex, rich and sometimes raucous reality, or where differences can be expressed and, perhaps, resolved. The so-called English problem is not only one of culture and identity, but also one – profoundly – of democracy.

A golden thread of purpose

So, what kind of England do we want now and in the future, either within the United Kingdom or perhaps as an independent state, a reborn Kingdom of England? Will it be a smaller, diminished version of what we have now? Will imperial delusions and exceptionalism continue to shape its sense of itself? Will it be inward-looking, resentful of lost glories, held back by social and economic injustice, and run for the benefit of a narrow elite? Or could it become a genuine democracy, confident, outward-looking and inclusive? Could it include a reckoning with the realities of our past, and a recognition of a future that necessarily involves being part of Europe?

If these questions were urgent on 'Brexit Day', they have taken on an even greater urgency as xenophobic nationalism has continued its rise across Europe, from the success of the Sweden Democrats and the Finns Party to the growth of the far right in Italy, Hungary and the Netherlands. At the same time, propelled by the outcome of the Brexit referendum and the 2019 general election, in the UK the populist right has grown in strength, seizing a powerful influence on an increasingly out-of-touch Conservative Party. If a progressive alternative to this national populist agenda is to be successful, it needs to do more than offer bolder, more ambitious policies, vital though those are: it needs to unify, rather than divide; to offer hope, rather than despair. And one of the most effective ways of doing that is by telling more compelling stories of who we are and who we can be.

On that June morning in 2016, I was looking downstream towards Waterloo Bridge, immortalised by the Kinks in their 1967 release 'Waterloo Sunset'. Ray Davies' lyrics are elusive, deceptively simple, but the song seems to capture something of the quiet optimism of the post-war period: how England could be a place where everyone felt safe and sound and could have a moment in paradise. But this isn't simply misplaced nostalgia. It speaks to something essential. When Davies performed 'Waterloo Sunset' at the 2012 London Olympics, it complemented the vibrancy, confidence and diversity of the extraordinary opening ceremony: maypoles and James Bond, Suffragettes and steelworkers, the NHS and Mr Bean, a celebration of a Britain that was, as the journalist Steve Rose later wrote, a "diverse, multi-cultural, imaginative, inventive nation comfortable with its identity and capable of reconciling its contradictions. We were traditional yet modern. We were powerful yet caring. We were orderly yet anarchic." Looking back over a decade and more of bitter political divisions, such a moment of national pride and unity can seem like a relic from another world.

Yet it's worth recalling that the backdrop to the 2012 Olympics was one of harsh austerity, following the financial crash, and the brutal hollowing out of public services. The ceremony's director, Danny Boyle, wasn't producing a documentary: he was telling a story of how some things are and, crucially, how they could change, something he acknowledged in the programme for the event. "We hope … that through all the noise and excitement you'll glimpse a single golden thread of purpose – the idea of Jerusalem – of a better world, the world of real freedom and true equality... A belief that we can build Jerusalem. And that it will be for everyone."

The more we can express the totality of our identities, as individuals and within society, the more we can feel we all belong

Identity is essentially about storytelling - and Boyle's was an attempt, in Rose's words, "to tell a fresh, inclusive story about what Britain was, is and could be". Over a decade later, we remain in dire need of such a story. All of the nations within the UK are having to reimagine themselves and retell their stories. And the task of reimagining 'other Englands' is the most urgent and acute. I say 'Englands' in the plural, as there is no single national essence to be disinterred and imposed. Rather, there are myriad stories - of an England at ease with itself and with its past, forward-looking, open, more equal, diverse and multi-ethnic - each of which might shed a different light on who we are. Rediscovering those stories - and identifying the policies that can help to realise them - has become a political priority. England may have put Brexit on the agenda, but the UK's political leaders have been too cowardly to return the compliment and put England itself on the agenda.

A country without a coherent story about who and what it is can never thrive and prosper, and it certainly cannot rise to the existential threats of our time – the climate and Nature emergencies. As the writer Ben Okri puts it, "Nations and peoples are largely the stories they feed themselves. If they tell themselves stories that are lies, they will suffer the future consequences of those lies. If they tell themselves stories that face their own truths, they will free their histories for future flowerings." Finding, and telling, stories that speak to the truth of England's past and present and inspire us to imagine and pursue new and better futures might turn out to be one of the most transformative acts we can undertake.

Caroline Lucas is MP for Brighton Pavilion, and the UK's first Green Party MP. She holds a PhD in English Literature.

Another England: How to Reclaim Our National Story is published by Penguin Books.

Ocean glories

"I have had the great fortune to film in all the major habitats of our ocean, from the icy oceans of our poles to remote coral islands. At every stage of my life the ocean has revealed a little more of its wonders. Indeed, even during the writing of this book Colin and I uncovered research neither of us had encountered before. There has never been a more important time for everyone on our planet to understand our ocean, the grave threat it is under and the ways we can bring it back to life. We both hope this book can help towards that goal."

David Attenborough, whose new book, *Ocean*, written with Colin Butfield, will be published by John Murray in May 2025.

Black nudibranch, *Tambja capensis*, in Gordon's Bay, South Africa www.katejonker.com

July/August 2024



Free diver by Kim Vaudin www.deepimpressions.co.uk

Still so much we just don't know...

We have only mapped a small portion of the ocean, which means we still know little about this ecosystem. **Melissa Hobson** reports wasn't supposed to specialise in the ocean. It just kind of happened. Like having a leisurely swim in the shallows, trying to put your feet down and – unable to touch the bottom – realising you've somehow ventured further than you thought.

Writing about the underwater world seems such a specific niche that most people are surprised when I tell them it wasn't an active choice. As a scuba diver, I fell

in love with the ocean the moment I first descended to 18 metres and saw sharks swirling above me, a turtle snoozing under a nearby ledge, and innumerable fish fluttering by.

In that moment I caught the bug, and my career edged closer to the ocean ever afterwards. There was no conscious moment when I decided to niche. I just couldn't help it. By the time I incorporated my business The Ocean Writer Ltd. I was already writing about the ocean whenever I could.

But why? There's no doubt I'm a thalassophile (someone who feels deeply connected to the ocean), but I think it's more than that. There are so many unanswered questions in and about the ocean, and my inner detective wants to get to the bottom of all of them.

According to Seabed 2030, only 24.9% of the ocean floor has been mapped and scientists believe most species in the ocean are yet to be described. (The predicted figure of unknown ocean species in 2011 was as high as 91%.) The vast ocean remains full of mysteries, and I can't help but keep pulling the thread to see what might unravel.

I was recently lucky enough to meet the legendary oceanographer Sylvia Earle, who has spent thousands of hours underwater exploring and conducting research. At 88, she still has questions, such as how migratory species like tuna travel through the vast ocean and find their way home with such precision.

Ask any marine researcher, and they'll likely have a burning ocean mystery they'd love to solve too. For example, Mohamed Fauz Fath-hee, RahVeshi Programme Coordinator at the Manta Trust's Maldives Manta Conservation Programme, is intrigued to learn where the Maldives' oceanic manta ray population come from and travel to, and whether they have a connection with the Sri Lankan population.

The Maldives has the world's third-largest known oceanic manta ray population, says Fath-hee, with more than 950 documented individuals. Over 85% of these congregate around the southern atoll of Fuvahmulah, and there's a two-to-three-week period each year when divers can see five to seven mantas per dive.

"Notably, over 90% of these sightings unveil previously undocumented individuals, underscoring the transient nature of these creatures as they gracefully vanish after just a few hours in the area," Fath-hee says. If they do travel to Sri Lanka, they could be among the thousand-plus mantas hunted for their gill plates each year. To properly protect these enigmatic animals, we need the right knowledge.

Plankton ecologist Kevin Flynn of Plymouth Marine Laboratory has been following up on his deep curiosity too. His work has drawn him into exploring something called the mixoplankton paradigm. It turns out that much of what we thought we knew about plankton was wrong.

"Over the last decade we have realised that many of the photosynthetic plankton (the phytoplankton) are not growing as marine science has thought for the last century," he explains. "They not only fix carbon dioxide like land plants do, but they eat ... bacteria, their competitors, sometimes even their predators." Some of these mixoplankton even steal body parts from other plankton to allow them to obtain nutrients by eating as well as through photosynthesis. This revelation not only gives us a cool new fact about how the ocean ecosystem operates, but also highlights the importance of having an open mind, says Flynn: "Because we were not looking for it; we were making preconceived judgements based on how life on land works."

It turns out that much of what we thought we knew about plankton was wrong. And it seems that the more we learn, the more the plot thickens

This discovery was discombobulating. "If marine science has managed to miss the importance across the oceans of such a fundamental trick of Nature as this, what else is waiting to be discovered?"

It seems that the more we learn, the more the plot thickens. Scientists recently confirmed the first recorded case of a lone orca killing a great white shark, which raised the question, what mechanism does a killer whale use to tear the shark open? Similarly, we recently saw the first documentation of humpback whales having sex, and the realisation that they were two males left researchers asking, are they doing this for social bonding, showing dominance, or something else? Each answer is another cliffhanger, leaving us wanting more.

There are still many things we know we've missed. Experts still have no idea where whale sharks or mantas give birth. Humaam Nihad, an intern at the Maldives Manta Conservation Programme, would love to know the answer to this question, as well as where juvenile whale sharks spend the first years of their lives. Finding the answer is important for conservation, he explains: "As neither of these animals has been seen giving birth in the wild, it would be crucial to protect the areas that these endangered animals use for these life stages."

How can we properly conserve and restore important ecosystems if we don't know which habitats species use, and how? Similarly, how can we protect biodiversity from human activities and the impacts of climate change if we don't know how it's affected by them?

Like me, scientists and conservationists around the world are searching for the answers to the ocean's compelling mysteries. And, as the ocean supports all life on Earth, it's essential that they do.

Melissa Hobson is a freelance writer specialising in marine science, conservation and sustainability. She became fascinated with the ocean when she learned to scuba dive around 15 years ago, and since then she hasn't been able to keep away from the water. www.melissahobson.co.uk

Making waves

From coral bleaching to plastic pollution, melting ice caps to rising sea levels, the ocean acts as a 'buffer', which means that we don't really see the full impact of climate change. Here are some of the organisations you can get involved with to help raise awareness and challenge the ocean-damaging 'business as usual' paradigm. Words: **Susan Clark**

Ocean as buffer

Although the ocean has helped slow climate change by absorbing heat and carbon, these changes are also hurting ocean life. The added heat changes the currents of the ocean and how the surface mixes with deeper water. This in turn affects how well nutrients move, which affects phytoplankton and all the life that depends on it. Since phytoplankton are the base of the marine food web – a crucial food source for animals from shrimp to whales – this is a big change for almost everything that lives in the sea. Heating the ocean also makes the water expand, which is the main cause of sea level rise. Finally, the absorption of CO_2 is making the ocean more acidic, which is especially dangerous to shellfish and corals.

Action: join www.oceanconservancy.org



Plankton by Beatrice Forshall from The Book of Varies Species

Coral bleaching

Heartbroken marine scientists are reporting what is being described as the fourth global mass coral bleaching event. Bleaching is a sign of coral under stress and dying because the water it lives in has become too hot for it to thrive. After weeks of gathering reports from scientists around the globe, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has now confirmed the mass stress in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean basins. The first warning signs were reported in the Caribbean last year when bathers found the water off the coast of Florida as warm as a hot tub.

Action: learn more about what you and your family can do to help prevent the escalation of coral bleaching, at www.coral.org

Ghost Coral Colour Variation, 2020 © Rogan Brown www.roganbrown.com

Wind, Tide & Oar

Filmmaker Huw Wahl's 90-minute film offers engineless sailing as a means to explore our interaction with and responsibility to the environment. It invites deep reflection on our relationship with Nature, our understanding of and commitment to sustainability, and our care for the world around us. Shot on analogue film over three years, it delves into the experiences of those who travel solely by harnessing the natural elements alone and follows a diverse array of traditional boats.

Journeying through rivers, coastlines and open seas, and spanning the UK. the Netherlands and France, Wind, Tide & Oar, which was made in collaboration with Rose Ravetz, creates a contemplative space, addressing themes of ecology, heritage, traditional skills and maritime history.

Action: watch the film – and cancel the vacation cruise. www.windtideandoar.com/screenings



Octopus and me

the octopus is dreaming

twitches and rapid eye movements

what is the octopus dreaming of? crabs and fish

what am I dreaming of?

oceans unharmed

octopus and me

different pillows

same dream

From Nature, My Teacher: How to Be

Alive in a World under Threat, by James

Thornton, founder of ClientEarth

Re-Stor(y)ing Oceania

Running until 13 October at Ocean Space in Venice, this exhibition, curated by the artist Taloi Havini, coincides with the 60th International Art Biennale and features the work of two Indigenous practitioners from the Pacific, Latai Taumoepeau and Elisapeta Hinemoa Heta. Their site-specific installations and performances explore how Indigenous communities in the Pacific Islands are now on the frontline of managing the impacts of climate change. The exhibition is a joint venture between OGR Torino and TBA21-Academy. Ocean Space is located in the Church of San Lorenzo. Rising sea levels are an irreversible impact of climate change.

> Action: get informed. www.indigenousclimatehub.ca www.ocean-space.org

> > Latai Taumoepeau, 'Deep Communion sung in minor (ArchipelaGO, THIS IS NOT A DRILL)'. Photo: Giacomo Cosua



Photos courtesy Pam Longobardi

Ocean gleaning

The book Ocean Gleaning tracks more than 17 years of US conceptual artist, activist and ecofeminist Pam Longobardi's art and research around the world through the Drifters Project, which she founded in 2006 as an ongoing intervention in which she mobilises citizens, students, scientists, filmmakers and Indigenous communities in labour-intensive cleaning of sea caves, beaches and coastlines worldwide. She says: "Travelling on major expeditions or just walking on the beach, I hunt for and remove plastics that have been tossed about on a long journey through ocean ecosystems." Using what she finds, she creates artworks that draw attention to the issue of plastic pollution. Longobardi is a former artist-in-nature with the Oceanic Society.

Action: visit **tinyurl.com/UNEP-reduce-plastic** for advice on how you can cut down on single-use plastic. **www.drifters project.net**

The End of the Line

Can you imagine a world with no fish? You can still watch a documentary film that was made in 2008 to show the impact of over-fishing on the ocean. George Duffield, a producer on the film, who describes himself as "probably Hollywood's first impact producer", went on to co-found Blue Marine Foundation, a charity dedicated to restoring the ocean to health by addressing the serious environmental impact of overfishing. Filmed over two years by Rupert Murray, *The End of the Line* showed us first-hand the devastating impact of "our global love affair with fish as food". The film concluded that a world without fish would mean mass starvation. And that was the case more than 15 years ago...

Action: watch the film and stop eating fish. tinyurl.com/the-end-of-the-line www.bluemarinefoundation.com



What Remains is Fading Quickly

As an environmental artist and educator, my practice centres on my deep connection with marine environments. Using ceramic sculptures and installations, I dive into the intricate world of coral reefs, addressing their decline due to human stressors. Ceramics play a pivotal role, allowing me to faithfully recreate textures and forms, fostering a tangible connection to these vital marine ecosystems. Inspired by the underlying structures that sustain reefs, I emphasise interdependence, diversity and scale, to cultivate collective empathy. I have a particular fascination for endangered species and I strive to translate scientific studies into powerful visual narratives. Recently my focus has shifted towards creating site-specific projects that fully immerse people in these underwater communities. These experiences serve as platforms to showcase the urgent needs of coral reefs while highlighting their captivating beauty and life-sustaining role in our present and future. My work acts as an open invitation for viewers to engage directly with the sensory richness of marine ecosystems, encouraging them to reflect on their connection to the marine world and take meaningful steps towards its preservation. This allows me to merge art, science and education, to raise awareness about the fragility and importance of the ocean.

Beatriz Chachamovits is an artist based in Miami, US devoted to coral conservation. www.beatrizchachamovits.com

Carcass installation, ceramic sculpture by Beatriz Chachamovits. Photo: Pedro Wazzan



In his bestselling book *What a Fish Knows*, ethologist **Jonathan Balcombe** gives us reason after reason to stop thinking of fish as anything less than extraordinary and conscious

ishes are not just sentient, but aware, communicative, social, tool-using, virtuous, even Machiavellian.

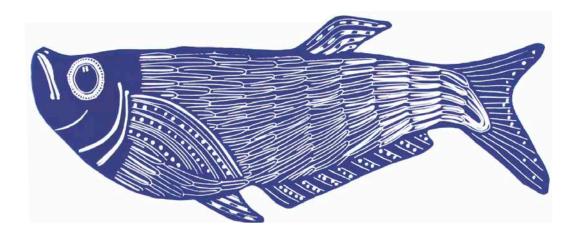
Scarcely a week now passes without a revealing new discovery of fish biology and behaviour. Careful observations on reefs are uncovering nuanced social dynamics of cleaner–client fish mutualisms that defy the human conceit that fishes are dim-witted pea brains and slaves to instinct. And the notorious three-second fish memory has been debunked by simple laboratory investigations.

Among the vertebrate animals – mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fishes – it is the fishes that are the most alien to our sensibilities. Lacking detectable facial expressions and appearing mute, fishes are more easily dismissed than our fellow air breathers. Their place in human culture falls almost universally into two entwined contexts: (I) something to be caught, and (2) something to be eaten. Hooking and yanking them from the water has not just been seen as benign, but as a symbol of all that's good about life. Fishing appears gratuitously in advertising, and the logo of one of America's most beloved film production studios, DreamWorks, features a Tom Sawyeresque boy relaxing with a fishing pole. You may even have met self-professed vegetarians who nonetheless eat fishes, as if there were no moral distinction between a cod and a cucumber.

Why have we tended to relegate fishes beyond the outer orbit of our circle of moral concern? For one thing, they are 'coldblooded', a layman's term that has little credibility in science. I do not see why having a built-in thermostat or not should have anything to do with an organism's moral status. In any event, most fishes' blood does not run cold. Fishes are ectothermic, meaning that their body temperatures are governed by outside factors, notably the water they are living in. If they live in warm tropical waters, their blood runs warm; if they live in the frigid reaches of the ocean depths or the polar regions, as many fishes do, then their body temperatures hover around freezing.

Another prejudice we hold against fishes is that they are 'primitive', which in this context has a host of unflattering connotations: simple, undeveloped, dim, inflexible, and unfeeling. No one is questioning that fishes have been around a long time, but therein lies the fallacy of labelling fishes as primitive. This bias presumes that those that stayed in the water stopped





Linocuts from Four Fish (2021) by Mariann Johansen-Ellis www.mariannjohansen-ellis.com

evolving the moment a few of them went ashore, a notion completely at odds with the tireless process of evolution. The brains and bodies of all extant vertebrates are a mosaic of primitive and advanced characteristics. Given time, and there's been plenty, natural selection keeps what works and winnows the rest, mainly through a process of gradual refinement.

It is a fact of biology that every fish, like the proverbial grain of sand, is one of a kind. But unlike grains of sand, every fish is a living being. There is no trivial distinction. When we come to understand fishes as conscious individuals, we may cultivate a new relationship to them.

Jonathan Balcombe has a PhD in ethology, the study of animal behaviour. His books include *Super Fly* (winner of a National Outdoor Book Award), *Pleasurable Kingdom*, *Second Nature*, and *Jake and Ava: A Boy and a Fish*. He is a founding editor of the journal *Animal Sentience* and he lives in Belleville, Ontario.

www.jonathanbalcombe.com

This is an abridged extract from *What a Fish Knows: The Inner Lives of our Underwater Cousins*, first published in 2016 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Diverse & Versatile

Because their lives are more difficult to observe than those of most terrestrial animals, fishes are not easily fathomed. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, less than 5% of the world's oceans have been explored. The deep sea is the largest habitat on Earth, and most of the animals on this planet live there. A seven-month survey using echo soundings of the mesopelagic zone (between 100 and 1,000 metres – 330 to 3,300 feet – below the ocean surface), published in early 2014, concluded that there are between 10 and 30 times more fishes living there than was previously thought.

Taken from the chapter 'The Misunderstood Fish' (page 15 of *What a Fish Knows*).

Praise Song for Oceania

by Craig Santos Perez for World Oceans Day

"... as if there is a path where beings truly meet, as if I am rounding the human corners."

-Linda Hogan, 'The Turtle Watchers' (2008)

praise your capacity for birth fluid currents and trenchant darkness praise our briny beginning source of every breath

praise your capacity for renewal ascent into clouds and descent into rain praise your underground aquifers rivers and lakes, ice sheets and glaciers praise your watersheds and hydrologic cycles

praise your capacity to endure the violation of those who map you aqua nullius who claim dominion over you who pillage and divide your body into latitudes and longitudes who scar your middle passages

praise your capacity to survive our trawling boats breaching your open wounds and taking from your collapsing

depths

praise your capacity to dilute our heavy metals and greenhouse gases sewage and radioactive waste pollutants and plastics

praise your capacity to bury our shipwrecks and ruined cities praise your watery grave human reef of bones

praise your capacity to remember your library of drowned stories museum of lost treasures your vast archive of desire

praise your tidalectics your migrant routes and submarine roots

praise your capacity to smother whales and fish and wash them ashore to save them from our cruelty to show us what we're no longer allowed to take to starve us like your corals starved and bleached liquid lungs choked of oxygen

praise your capacity to forgive

please forgive our territorial hands and acidic breath please forgive our nuclear arms and naval bodies please forgive our concrete dams and cabling veins

please forgive our deafening sonar and lustful tourisms please forgive our invasive drilling and deep sea mining please forgive our extractions and trespasses

praise your capacity for mercy

please let my grandpa catch just one more fish

please make it stop raining soon please make it rain soon

please spare our fragile farms and fruit trees please spare our low-lying island and atolls please spare our coastal villages and cities please let us cross safely to a land without war

praise your capacity for healing praise your cleansing rituals praise your holy baptisms

please protect our daughter when she swims in your currents

praise your halcyon nests praise your pacific stillness praise your breathless calm praise your capacity for hope

praise your rainbow warrior and peace boat praise your hokule a and sea shepherd praise your arctic sunrise and freedom flotillas

praise your nuclear free and independent pacific movement praise your marine stewardship councils and sustainable fisheries

praise your radical seafarers and native navigators

praise your sacred water walkers praise your activist kayaks and traditional canoes praise your ocean conservancies and surfrider foundations

praise your aquanauts and hydrolabs praise your Ocean Cleanup and Google Oceans praise your whale hunting and shark finning bans

praise your sanctuaries and no take zones praise your pharmacopeia of new antibiotics praise your #oceanoptimism and Ocean Elders praise your wave and tidal energy praise your blue humanities

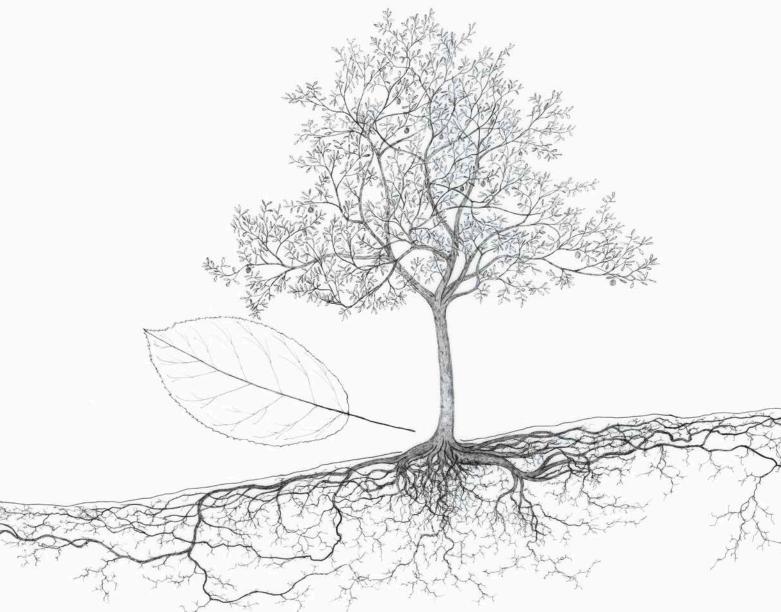
praise your capacity for echolocation praise our names for you that translate into creation stories and song maps tasi : kai : tai : moana nui : vasa : tahi : lik : wai tui : wonsolwara

praise your capacity for communion

praise our common heritage praise our pathway and promise to each other praise our most powerful metaphor praise your vision of belonging

praise our endless saga praise your blue planet one world ocean

praise our trans-oceanic past present future flowing through our blood Craig Santos Perez is an Indigenous CHamoru (Chamorro) from the Pacific island of Guåhan (Guam). He is a poet, scholar, editor, publisher, essayist, critic, book reviewer, artist, environmentalist, and political activist. tinyurl.com/perezpoem



he roots of botany in ancient Greece, from Theophrastus in the 3rd century BCE, and of pharmacology, from Dioscorides in the 1st century CE, grew from philosophical investigations into plant life informed by the rhizotomi – the root gatherers. These were described as uneducated, superstitious people, finders and dealers in the fibrous, tuberous and bulbous roots of plants. They mixed medicine with magic, enacted rituals, spoke or sang prayers and incantations. Their ceremonies involved drawn swords, facing east, eating garlic, drinking wine, anointing with oils, sacrifices. Some roots could be dug in daylight, others only at night. Their practices were as anciently weird and wonderful as the properties they discovered in the earth. And such root-wisdom was a stick to be carried through time, into the origins of western philosophy and science, from the earliest moments of human evolution, and maybe even before that.

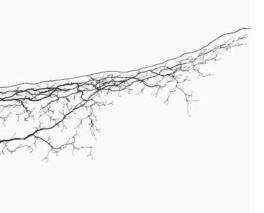
I look at a strew of branches and twigs at the wood's edge, blown down in gales, fallen into the electromagnetic field of the agents of decay – beetles, fungi, slime-mould, moss – to return woody properties into the life of the soil, a return to root origins. I find a stick about four feet long, weather-seasoned, from a crab apple, *Malus sylvestris*. I like the Celtic love lore it travels with. I strip it, smooth down the knobbly bits, sharpen the end into a chisel tip to harden by fire and by rubbing on a rock. The stick fits the grip. It has heft, a presence and intention. Now it's a tool, a forensic probe with innate tree-knowledge; it's a digging stick for roots.

I could add an antler handle, or a peg for the foot to push it deeper into soil, or a holed stone for extra weight, or carve magic symbols to give it special powers. These adaptions to the simple digging stick have been around for millennia, certainly since the European Palaeolithic, and survive in rhizotomic traditions of hunter-gatherer societies around the world.

A digging stick found in Border Cave, South Africa and made by hunter-gatherer occupants of the cave, has been dated to around 39,000 BP (before 1950) from the white-berried shrubby tree *Flueggea virosa*, whose roots are still dug to be used as a contraceptive,

The mysterious root people

Nature writer **Paul Evans** explores the hidden powers and history of the rhizotomi – ancient root-gatherers – and says that whilst we may have to dig deeper for it, their wisdom remains just as meaningful today



Malus sylvestris (Crab apple) by E. Lichtenegger and L. Kutschera from Wurzelatlas mitteleuropäischer Waldbäume und Sträucher (Root atlas of Central European forest trees and shrubs), published by Leopold Stocker Verlag

an aphrodisiac, an elixir for longevity. The Nez Perce people of the Pacific Northwest made $t\acute{u} \cdot kes$ sticks from fire-hardened Pacific yew, *Taxus brevifolia*, itself toxic but used for digging the bulbs of the beautiful blue-flowered camas, *Camassia quamash*, a traditional food that saved them from famine during their forced flight into exile from Montana to Canada in 1877. The Wosera Abelam people of Papua New Guinea have an ancient yam cult. They cultivate and harvest *Dioscorea* (named after Dioscorides) yams using sticks made from black palm, *Rhopaloblaste ledermanniana*. These sticks have a complex classification depending on function and ritual and are decorated with symbols and images such as that of Matboitagwa, the yam goddess.

Dioscorides was particularly interested in the magical plant mandrake, *Mandragora officinarum*, whose roots look like a homunculus, and he speculated on the difference between male and female roots. It seems likely that what he learned from the rhizotomi was that plants had gendered spirits and personalities dwelling within them. Legend had it that the mandrake had – should I use the past tense? – a vengeful spirit whose scream caused death to whoever dug it up from where it grew under the gallows of a hanged man. For protection, the rhizotomi would tie the mandrake's roots to a dog to pull it from the ground, sacrificing the dog for the magical properties of the roots used as talismans, in exorcisms, for delirium, and for the treatment of a host of medical conditions. Those seeking white bryony, *Bryonia dioica*, the English substitute for mandrake, might be intrigued by the homunculus, but disappointed by its notoriously explosive laxative effect.

Medieval illustrations of mandrake rituals show that the revival of ancient Greek botany was also a revival of interest in roots and a subterranean, speculative enquiry into Nature. In the medieval interpretation of classical culture, the magic that came from natural objects was seen as demonic. Intellectuals attributed planetary rather than animistic causes to medicinal qualities. The successors to the rhizotomi supplied magical properties from the underground to 'suspicious practitioners' such as barber surgeons, midwives,

Roots experiment when they come into contact with real things and thus challenge linear hierarchies of power and traditional modes of thinking, encouraging a mindset of unrestricted creative enquiry

folk healers, fortune-tellers, and heretical monks and priests. These people turned the privileged knowledge of narratives beneath the visible world into praxis. The danger was that an unscrupulous ransacking of woods and meadows for root-doctors would cause extinctions.

The economic incentive still exists for big business. The gathering of ginseng root from the Allegheny Mountains of America and the Siberian tiger forests of North Korea shows that the spirit of the rhizotomi is alive in the folk memory of diverse cultures and ethnobotany around the world. Rainforests are being plundered by gene rustlers, who steal intellectual copyright from Indigenous cultures whose root-wisdom goes way back, further than Dioscorides and Theophrastus, further than Stone Age ancestors with digging sticks, further than hominids, to the roots themselves.

If we take our inspiration from roots underground instead of the symmetry of the plants above, we realise that life spreads out and makes connections in creative ways. Rhizomatic thinking, introduced by poststructuralists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), used rhizomes as a metaphor for showing a wandering and community-based way of making sense of the world.

Roots experiment when they come into contact with real things, and thus they challenge linear hierarchies of power and traditional modes of thinking, encouraging a mindset of unrestricted creative enquiry. This ecological approach is not just metaphorical, and thanks to recent books such as Suzanne Simard's *Finding the Mother Tree* and Merlin Sheldrake's *Entangled Life* we have a greater insight into the root-world of plants and fungi and the community of soil life.

New creative enquiries reveal symbiotic relationships between roots and mycorrhizal fungi, nutrient and water transfer for mutual aid in times of stress, carbon sequestration, water conservation, flood prevention, root-zone filtration of toxins, erosion control and communication systems 'the wood-wide web'. Roots answer many questions about the climate and ecological emergencies, but their commodification as environmental services or natural capital reduces them to stuff gained from scrabbling in the dirt of a culture in terminal decline, or the quackery of trying to heal a hollowness of spirit. The rhizotomi knew roots as the source of a speculative realism, a fusion of fact and fiction, dream and desire. Today's philosophers need the rhizotomi to keep roots in the ground.

My crab-apple stick, then, is not for digging. It's for divining. I think of it as a dowsing rod for the transformative becoming of roots, an antenna of the imagination that tunes in to subterranean frequencies, picking up the twitch of realist magic in the dark underground, a creative $\rho_i\zeta_{0\tau}$ (α , rhizotomia, the place of mysterious origins and unknowable futures.

Paul Evans is a Nature writer and broadcaster, and senior lecturer in creative writing at Manchester Metropolitan University. He also has a background in environmental journalism.



Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (Bearberry) by E. Lichtenegger, from the collection Bewurzelung von Pflanzen in verschiedenen Lebensräumen (Rooting of plants in different habitats). Reproductions: Special Collections, Wageningen University & Research – Library: tinyurl.com/root-system-drawing



Illustration © Luba Vega / Shutterstoc



Photos by Sam Green, director of Annea Lockwood: a Film About Listening

River maps

Introducing the Nature-inspired work of composer Annea Lockwood

New Zealand-born American artist and composer Annea Lockwood has spent half a century recording her environment, which means that her chamber music emerges from a deep connection to the natural world.

Her compositions are featured in the Sound Within Sound festival at London's Southbank Centre, which runs from 4 to 7 July 2024.

Among the works being re-imagined and performed by the Apartment House quartet during their performance of Lockwood's key works at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 4 July will be a piece called 'Jitterbug', in which the musicians will respond to images of rocks found in a creek bed in the Montana Rockies.

'River Maps' (to be performed on 7 July) reveals the composer's career-long quest to draw connections between river environments and mental wellbeing. With recordings stretching from the Hudson River to the Atlantic coast, Lockwood presents a sonic map of the waterways gathered by a host of her friends and colleagues since the 1960s.

Inspired by journalist and broadcaster Kate Molleson's book *Sound Within Sound*, the festival will shine a light on the boundary-pushing work of many lesser-known composers of the 20th century. Lockwood's unique and playful soundscapes take centre stage with what Molleson has described as "mischievous and meticulous situational dramas in sound".

You can learn more about Annea Lockwood's long career at www.annealockwood.com www.southbankcentre.co.uk

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Prakriti Series (Nature), 2022 (detail) by Shampa Sircar Das 27in x 16in, acrylic on wood

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The meaning of love

To love Nature is to love life, writes **Satish Kumar**, who offers us here a very personal manifesto and promise of love

hat is Nature? Nature is not only out there - the forests, the flowers, the mountains, the lakes and the animals. Humans are Nature too. We are as much Nature as the birds flying in the sky. We are all Nature. We are all made of earth, air, fire and water. So to love Nature is to love all living beings and all things. Love is to accept life as it comes, warts and all, with total equanimity. Love, then, is also letting go of fear. Love is to drop all expectations and just participate in life as it unfolds. We experience transformation through dialogue, compassion and communication. As the poet Rumi said, there is a field out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing - beyond us and them and beyond criticism and complaints. Lovers meet in that field of love. Love makes us magnanimous. We shift from self-interest to mutual and common interests. Love breeds generosity and magnanimity. When we love Nature, we love everyone and everything. We love every moment of our lives. We love dark nights as we love bright sunshine. We love winter as we love spring, summer and autumn. We love the whole of humanity irrespective of religion, nationality, race or political beliefs. We love and so we go beyond judging others. Love transforms divisions into diversity, and we see the unity of life in the diversity of forms.

Because we love Nature and all living beings, we cause no harm to anyone. Judgement and discrimination harm. Hatred hurts. Love heals. Hatred is hell. Love is heaven. These are not physical places somewhere beyond our precious planet Earth. When one is filled with hatred, one is in hell, and when one is filled with love, one is in heaven. It is as simple as that.

There are no causes good enough for which we can be allowed to kill or hate a human being. Love forbids wars. Not in the name of our motherland or fatherland, not in the name of our religion or race, not in the name of our political beliefs are we allowed to kill, if we follow the religion of love. There is only one law in the land of love: do no harm. No harm to yourself, no harm to other people, and no harm to Nature. No harm to Nature means no destruction of rainforests for commercial gain, and no cruelty to animals in factory farms. How can we love Nature and cause climate catastrophe? Mountains of waste in the landfills, piles of plastic in our amazing oceans, and poisonous chemicals in our sacred soil – this is all incompatible with a love of Nature. Nature is not an inanimate object. Nature is sacred. Nature is precious. Nature is not a commodity. Nature is a community of living organisms. Nature is conscious. In the words of William Blake, "To the eyes of the man of imagination Nature is imagination itself."

The ecology of love

All our ecological crises are caused by the lack of love for Nature. The ecology of love is deep ecology. The value of forests, rivers and animals cannot be measured by their usefulness to humans. Nature has intrinsic value. We need to cultivate a deep reverence for Nature and for life. This is reverential ecology, and spiritual ecology.

Indigenous cultures believe in the rights of Nature as they believe in human rights. We need to learn from their wisdom. Indigenous people of North America take into consideration the wellbeing of the seventh generation. They believe we should leave a beautiful planet, a planet that is unpolluted, undepleted and uncontaminated for future generations. Every day they offer a prayer: "May the future generations live a good life."

Love gives meaning to life. Without it, our lives are meaningless. Love transforms. Hatred kills. Hatred is too heavy a burden to bear. Do I want to harbour hatred in my heart, or do I want to harvest harmony in my soul? The choice is mine.

I practise unilateral love. I don't wait for others to love me first. I take the first step. I take the initiative. I am love possessed. I drink the nectar of love! It is good to love someone we like. Loving our friends and family is good. Loving our colleagues and companions is nice. That is moderate love. We need such love every day to sustain ourselves. But to love even people we don't like and we disagree with is radical love. Nothing wrong with disagreeing. It is good to have many views and many thoughts. But radical love is to disagree without being disagreeable.

How can highly educated people calling themselves rational, intelligent and pragmatic wage wars? We have seen the futility and failures of war in Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and many other countries, yet politicians learn nothing. Now in Gaza and Ukraine, the same stupidity is causing immense suffering and environmental degradation.

All our flourishing and thriving is mutual. We are all related. We are made of one another

I ask Mr Biden and Mr Putin, and also Palestinian leaders and the leaders of Israel, what legacy do you wish to leave for future generations? A legacy of war and hatred, or a legacy of love and friendship?

My beloved brothers and sisters in Israel, in Palestine, in Ukraine and in Russia, I urge you, with deep love in my heart, to please sit down together with your neighbours over a cup of tea and talk to one another. A cup of tea is a cup of love, a cup of peace. You have tried tanks and bombs and have failed again and again. Now try tea! You will be surprised to discover the power of drinking a cup of tea together!

Love is the mother of all virtues. Love is the primary principle. Therefore love planet, love people and love yourself. The rest will follow.

Letting go of ego

Those who are fighting in the name of freedom, I have great respect for your courage and commitment. But I urge you to use the power of nonviolence and love in your struggle for freedom. Follow the supreme example of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. The moral power of love is greater than the power of bombs. Freedom gained by guns has to be maintained by guns. But freedom gained by love is maintained by love. Ends cannot justify means. Noble ends need to be obtained by noble means.

As I urge you all to love one another, I urge you to love yourself also, without exception and without expectation. I love myself even when I am less than perfect. Loving myself is the first step in loving others and in loving the world. Self-love is not selfish, not ego. I see the whole world in myself, and myself in the whole world. I am a microcosm of the macrocosm. With deep humility I accept the world as it is and I also accept myself as I am, who I am and what I am.

Every human being is unique. There is no one else like me. When I feed myself, take care of myself and

love myself, I do so so that I can love others, take care of others and feed others. Through self-love and self-knowledge I achieve self-realisation and thus release my true potential. The intimate love of the self and the ultimate love of the universe are two sides of the same coin!

Love is letting go of ego! Ego separates. Love connects. Love leads us from ego to eco. All wars are a consequence of ego. A personal ego or a national ego or an ideological ego can lead to war.

In eco-consciousness we are all connected and united by the cord of belonging. There is no disconnection between I and we or between me and us. All our flourishing and thriving is mutual. We are all related. We are made of one another. The web of life is a web of relationships. Nothing can exist in itself or by itself. Existence happens only through relationships.

We are all connected via the invisible thread of love. Whether we are American, Russian, Chinese, Indian or any other nationality, we all share one common humanity and one common home: our fragile, beautiful and precious planet Earth.

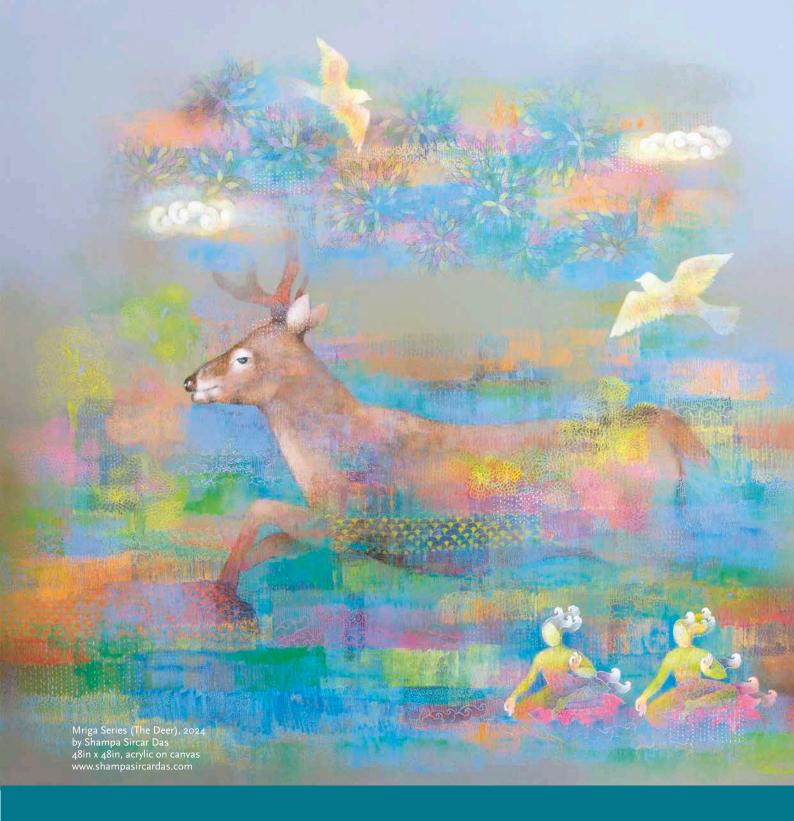
Love is a system of survival. Love and live, or hate and perish! As gravity holds our physical existence together, love holds our human relationships together. Love is the gravitational force behind all relationships.

The cosmos is our country, the planet Earth is our home, Nature is our nationality and love is our religion. This is ego-free mind, a universal mind, a cosmic mind, a magnanimous mind. All the great religions have one thing in common. They all teach the perennial philosophy of love.

When I am in love, I have no enemies. I give no offence. I take no offence. I am a friend of the Earth. All living beings of the Earth are my friends. If anyone has done anything wrong to me, I forgive them unreservedly, and if I have done anything wrong to anyone around me, I beg for their forgiveness. Love and for giveness put me at ease. Hatred is too uncomfortable for me to handle.

Love is the home of happiness. I tell myself, "If you want to be happy, just love! Keep falling in love all the time!" Love is the solution to all our problems. Love is the answer to all our questions. Love will set us free. Love will make us free of poverty and free of injustice. The root cause of injustice, inequality, poverty, misery and despair is the lack of love. The light of love will dispel the darkness of despair.

Satish Kumar is the author of *Radical Love*, published by Parallax Press and available from www.resurgence.org/shop This is an edited excerpt from an article on loving Nature, which is available to read in full at www.resurgence.org To view a trailer of Satish's forthcoming film *Radical Love* by Julio Hey, visit tinyurl.com/film-radical-love The film will premier at Bertha DocHouse in the Curzon Bloomsbury Cinema, London on 5 September. www.dochouse.org



Satish Kumar's Promise of Love

I offer my deepest love to the whole of humanity, to all my beloved brothers and sisters, in all their glorious diversity. I love them whether they are black or white, communist or capitalist; whether they are Muslim, Christian, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist or belong to any other religion; whether they are American, Russian, Chinese, Iranian, Ukrainian, Palestinian, Israeli or of any other nationality. My love for all people is unconditional. I love them as they are. Whether a king or a beggar, a priest or a prisoner, a saint or a sinner, I love them all. Even when they are less than perfect, I love them all. Through love we help one another. Through the alchemy of love we transform each other. Through the alchemy of love turns the ordinary into the extraordinary!

In the dark woods... playing

Scottish pianist **Alexander Chapman Campbell** captures his grief over the monoculture plantation planting of land he remembers from childhood, in a new composition – and then, in a filmed performance, plays out his feelings to those same dark woods

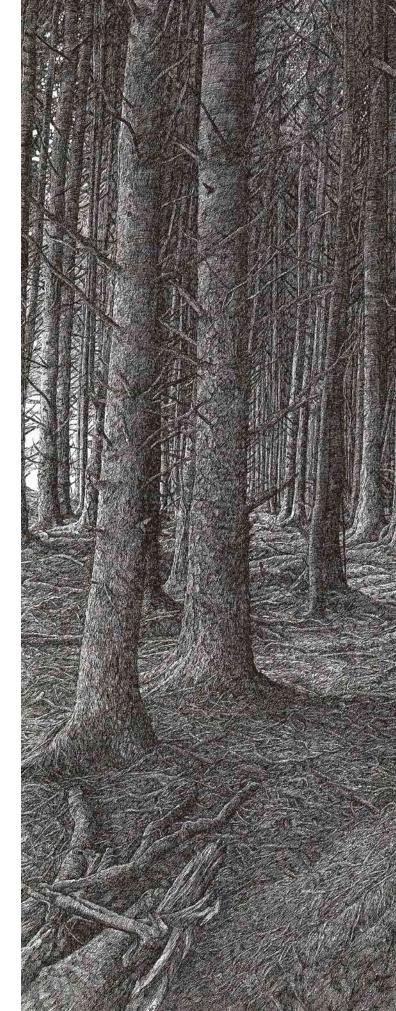
usk had settled upon the land. Above me, the sky was a narrow passageway of light, and on either side was a dense plantation of conifer trees. Between the trunks, twilight had already turned almost to black, and the inner regions of the wood were made invisible from the road. It was quiet, with only occasional birdsong.

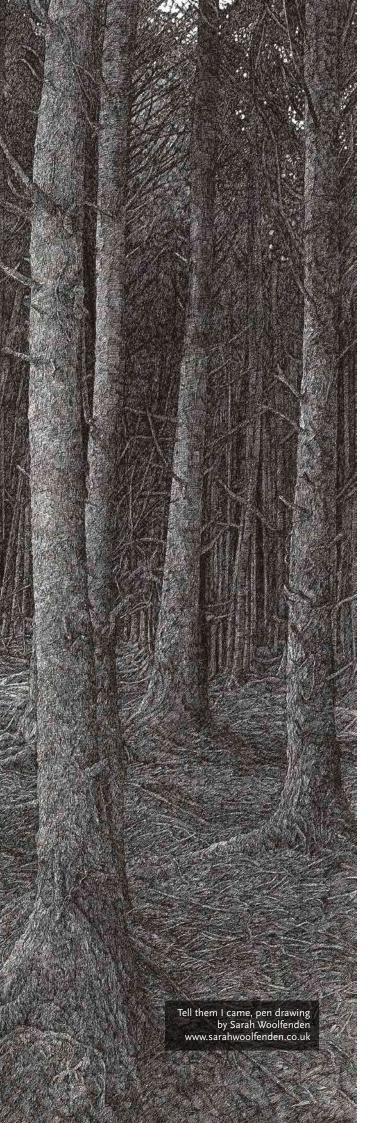
I find these conifer plantations, which cover vast areas of the UK, to be haunted places: haunted by their emptiness, like a house stripped of all its furniture and character. These woods have been created with good intentions. We need timber, and I'm grateful for all the wooden materials in my life. And yet, in them we've reduced the complexity, beauty and diversity of life to a functional, terrifying blandness.

Nature loses out, but so also do humans. These plantations stunt the imagination and limit our experience of the intricate wonders that Nature could offer. If I enter one, I know what I'll find: ranks of bare trunks, mostly the same size and colour, sometimes stretching for miles. I'm unlikely to come across a grove of ancient trees shaped by the weather of centuries, or a rich boggy area full of life where birch and pine are stunted by the water, or an open space in which wild flowers grow. Trees are not allowed to become old in these woods, and within planned rotations huge areas are felled. This clear-cutting can compromise soil health, increases the chance of tree diseases, and scars the landscape.

I feel sad about it, and also very frustrated.

These plantations are still being encouraged because they're technically 'sustainable', insofar as a cut-down tree can be replanted. As a way of responding to the loss of biodiversity, updated requirements have been laid out: new plantations require at least 5% native trees and 10% open land. But this still creates massive dark plantations for our future. It doesn't represent a change in attitude around what a forest is. It still maintains an artificial, human creation.





For me, even where we plan to extract timber, a wood should always have wildness, a wildness that feels greater and broader than any forestry operation that might happen within it. If a forest doesn't inspire the same awe that we might feel before a sunrise, or when watching clouds rolling across a mountain, then I believe we have failed in something.

I've considered doing less music, instead retraining as an ecologist. Or maybe skip the training and start a grassroots organisation encouraging a wilder land in one way or another. But that evening, when the light was fading and the shadows of the plantation seemed particularly depressing, I had another idea. I left the cover of the trees, followed the road downhill and went straight to my piano. Our home is only about three hundred metres from this particular plantation, and my piano sits in a shed, surrounded by rough, former grazing land, one thousand feet above sea level in the north-east Highlands of Scotland.

Music is the thing I know best, and I felt suddenly inspired to use it to talk about these 'dark woods'. I composed some ideas while looking out at the trees that were soon swallowed by the night. What if there was something else I could do, alongside writing music? That was when I was struck by the idea of taking a piano into the middle of the plantation – to enter the wood not just in thought but with the physical presence of the instrument. I liked the idea that the trees themselves would hear the music and that somehow the sounds, passing out into the gloom of the plantation, might in some mysterious way sow a seed of transformation for their future.

I worked on the new composition until long after night had fallen, the keys illuminated by a small lamp that sits on the piano lid. The music had more or less been formed; the spirit of the piece had been summoned and now I'd just have to work on the detail.



The power of music to create change

It was months later that I finally lifted a piano and carried it into the wood. Not by myself of course, but with the help of a friend. It wasn't easy, but I found the sweat on my brow deeply satisfying. I was no longer in my head, tutting and muttering at the edge of the wood. I was now in the centre of the trees, drawing on the power of music to help create change.

A few days later I was joined by Hugh, a filmmaker I'd worked with before; a master of telling stories through his filming work and of reflecting the beauty, and the drama, of the natural world. I also invited the legendary Scottish folk singer Julie Fowlis to join us: I felt the music needed a voice. I wrote a poem for the lyrics, and Julie's friend Raghnaid Sandilands translated it into Gaelic, a language shaped in part by centuries of relationship between people and the land.

We heard a whisper, a rumour While walking through a barren land That one day a place of light and life will be Where now a dark wood stands

Chualas cagair, fathann Is sinn a' gabhail tro thalamh fàs Gun tig solas is beath' am bàrr Far a bheil coille dhorch na seas' an dràst'

All was set, and we began a day of filming in the shadows of the plantation. Julie wandered the long, dark avenues of the spruce trees, while I stayed rooted on my piano stool. The only creature we saw was a robin, its orange breast like gentle flame amongst its colour-drained surroundings.

When the day was nearly done the sun broke through the edge of the wood, offering its own promise of hope. There is a long road ahead, no doubt, as we find healthier ways of living in the world. Perhaps if I did train as an ecologist, I could help create a practical vision of how this might look. But in the meantime, I hope my music touches upon the pain so many of us feel when faced with the damage we've inflicted upon the Earth, while igniting hope that things will change. And that, I'm content to believe, is a valuable contribution to the days in which we live.

A 'musician of the hills', Alexander Chapman Campbell lives and composes in the north-east Highlands of Scotland. His music, often inspired by his love of the natural world, has been aired extensively on TV and radio, including Radio 2, Radio 3 and Radio 4, and has been a regular sound on Classic FM since the station discovered his music in 2013.

The words (above) are from his original poem 'Where Now A Dark Wood Stands', which was translated by Raghnaid Sandilands. It is sung in Scots Gaelic by Scottish folk singer Julie Fowlis. The video was shot/directed/mixed/mastered by Hugh Carswell. You can see it at tinyurl.com/dark-wood-video

Melting Ice | Rising Tides

Anna Souter speaks with artist Emma Stibbon, whose latest show reveals the powerful connection between the fragility of melting polar ice caps and rising tides on the UK's shoreline

Hope Gap, 2022 (Ink and sea salt) by Emma Stibbon



am a witness to something that is happening in my lifetime," says artist Emma Stibbon. For many years, she has been observing and recording the instability of the polar ice sheets and glaciers, joining collaborative art-science expeditions to the Arctic and the Antarctic. Her largescale drawings capture both the wondrous beauty of these increasingly precarious frozen places, and the connections with contemporaneous changes we are seeing in more familiar local landscapes. And her solo exhibition *Melting Ice | Rising Tides* offers a powerful culmination to her project, bringing together prints, drawings and photographs alongside archival materials and a new site-specific installation.

"I think people can read data and scientific reports and not feel an emotional response, whereas I hope drawing can help people to connect to the subject"

> "Issues such as ice sheet melt and glacier retreat in the polar regions can feel very remote," Stibbon explains, "but these events are impacting us and causing sea-level rise on an immediate, local level. I wanted to explore and highlight these connections through this exhibition at Towner Eastbourne, which is located on a coastline of soft-chalk cliffs. These cliffs have a history of retreating, but the rapidity has significantly increased recently. Cliff falls are increasingly common, due to both sea erosion and extreme weather events caused by climate breakdown."

> Across her visits to Eastbourne over the last couple of years to sketch and photograph the local landscape, Stibbon has noticed changes detectable even over such a short time period. She might turn up to find "tape

Emma Stibbon drawing in Svalbard on the deck of the Antigua, 2022. Photo Tristan Duke

across a set of steps, for instance, where the sea has eroded the foundations, or the café at Birling Gap closed for demolition because the cliff-edge has come too close to the building".

The artist says she was particularly struck by parallels between the Sussex coastline erosion and the escalating ice melt she was seeing in the polar regions. "I wanted to convey a sense of how things are changing," she explains.

The exhibition includes drawings of Hope Gap (a well-known spot for viewing the Seven Sisters cliffs), as well as Beachy Head with its famous chalk cliff. "The landscape is so well-visited and the subject of so many picture postcards, it seemed like the perfect subject for exploring the connections between the seemingly remote and the intimately familiar," says Stibbon. "I'm hoping that visitors will come away with a double sense that polar ice melt is having an impact close to home, and that this polar ice melt is being caused by human actions within that home."

Throughout the exhibition, Stibbon suggests a compelling visual corollary between the white cliffs of East Sussex and the icebergs and glaciers of the Arctic. Through her muted colour palette and delicate treatment, she imbues these natural features with a haunting, dreamlike quality. "I want the exhibition to be beautiful, to pull visitors into the subject matter," she says.

For the artist, much of this beauty comes from the process of drawing, which is the cornerstone of her creative practice. "Drawing has a fragility as well as a relatability because it's fundamentally quite simple, organic and accessible. There's also something very emotive about drawing. I think people can read data and scientific reports and not feel an emotional response, whereas I hope drawing can help people to connect to the subject."

Stibbon always begins by working *en plein air*, making rapid sketches to capture a sense of place. She explains that when she works in this way, the weather itself sometimes becomes intertwined with the drawings: "For instance, I made a series of watercolour sketches on a boat journey into the Arctic. As I got further north and the conditions got colder, ice began to form in the watery ink." Crystalline structures can be seen in the media surface as the series develops, literally inscribing an element of the environment into the artwork.

This intertwining of media and place is further explored in Stibbon's large-scale drawings, the compositions of which are carefully amalgamated from sketches and photographs. To create works depicting the Sussex coast, such as the monumental drawings



Antarctica sketchbook drawing, 2022 (Watercolour, ink) by Emma Stibbon

'Breaker' and 'Hope Gap', the artist diluted her ink with Eastbourne seawater and salt. "If you look closely," she says, "you can see areas where the salt water and ink have reacted in unexpected ways." The surface of each drawing is like a landscape in itself, visually shifting between microcosm and macrocosm, further emphasising the interconnections between global and local.

"Hopefully, seeing the impact of our actions in hyper-local terms is a good starting point to taking responsibility on a more global scale," Stibbon suggests. "In the UK, we live in a fairly temperate and stable climate, compared to other parts of the world. But despite this, issues caused by climate breakdown are already affecting us here, and moreover our actions are damaging people in far more vulnerable situations who have fewer means to mitigate their environments."

Sea level rise caused by melting polar ice will be a major factor affecting how we live in the future, both in the UK and worldwide. Stibbon's discussions with climate scientists in the Arctic and the Antarctic and with the Environment Agency around Eastbourne have brought her to understand that "we're in this situation now. Even if we achieve carbon neutrality, sea level rise is going to continue until the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere starts to come back down. We have to be talking about it, and we have to be doing something to prepare. We need to start these conversations now." "I'm hoping that visitors will come away with a double sense that polar ice melt is having an impact close to home, and that this polar ice melt is being caused by human actions within that home"

She hopes her exhibition can prompt some of those conversations through her exquisite depictions of ocean, ice and chalk. "I want to give viewers something of the visceral experience of being by the sea. I sort of want the viewer to feel as though they're standing on the cliff edge." For those who live on the coast, those cliff edges are creeping closer, while for the rest of us it is a meaningful metaphor for a looming crisis. But Stibbon doesn't wish to make people shut their eyes in fear. Instead, her message is one of beauty, openness, and interconnection.

Emma Stibbon: Melting Ice | Rising Tides is at Towner Eastbourne, East Sussex, 9 May – 15 September 2024. www.townereastbourne.org.uk

Anna Souter is a writer, editor and curator with an interest in contemporary art and ecology.



We're In This Together by Sharon Whitham www.sharon-whitham.com

Celebrating a cultural tipping point

Poet Helen Moore shares how the recently launched ECOPOETIKON online platform is building a network of solidarity, and transcending Eurocentrism and the western literary canon to highlight the less privileged voices of ecopoets from across the globe

t's 22 years since the publication of *Earth Songs:* A *Resurgence Anthology of Contemporary Ecopoetry,* edited by the late Peter Abbs, who served as the long-term curator of the *Resurgence* poetry pages. His anthology, which heralded the wave of new Nature writing that nowadays fills our bookshelves, was intended to direct "our attention to the state of Nature and its place in our lives".

Defying literary fashion of the early 1990s, Abbs's introduction wryly cites a metropolitan critic's

pronouncement that there could be no more Nature poetry. With its focus on Nature's sacred qualities and human interdependence with ecology, *Earth Songs* expresses what the critic Jonathan Bate calls "an experience of dwelling upon the earth". However, what it omits (again drawing on Bate) is: "ecopoetics … pulled from the phenomenological to the political".

Not long after *Earth Songs* was published, writers Bill McKibben and Robert Macfarlane were publicly bemoaning the dearth of cultural responses

to climate change. In an article in *The Guardian* in 2005, Macfarlane indicated that any literary response "would need to find ways of imagining which remained honest to the scientific evidence". In envisioning such art, Macfarlane talked of "forms which are chronic – which unfold within time – and are therefore capable of registering change, and weighing its consequences", and for "literary languages which are attentive to the creep of change". He also perceived the need for "more bumptious vernaculars ... satire ... polemic".

Harold Pinter's 2005 Nobel Lecture, Art, Truth and Politics, additionally raised the issue of the "vast tapestry of lies" that surrounds us, in an age where advertising, corporate media distortions and the short-term ambitions of politicians contribute to a climate of apathy and fear. Discovering my own voice as an ecopoet in those years, I felt the importance of skilful polemical poetry in cutting through the bunkum. However, with literary gatekeepers continuing to make politically oriented poetry somewhat taboo, I regularly bumped up against prohibitions, including censorship. In this my gender was doubtless a contributory factor. Calling out the 'glass ceiling' for women poets in 2010, Fiona Sampson evoked editors' expectations that our subject matter should be primarily confined to our "bodies, and sexuality, and love".

Fortunately, the digital age has provided socially and ecologically engaged artists of all genders, backgrounds and disciplines with opportunities to sidestep these obstacles. Additionally, online platforms mostly transcend political borders and have the potential to include more diverse voices.

ECOPOETIKON – a new web-based showcase of global ecopoetries, which I'm co-curating – is one such example. As a freely accessible resource for ecopoetry, the platform, which launched in the autumn of last year, is already providing a powerful poetic insight into the intersecting crises affecting people worldwide.

Currently featuring poets from Botswana, Colombia, Estonia, India, Italy, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, the Philippines, the UK and the US (each nominated on the basis that they demonstrate commitment and creative innovation in their practice), ECOPOETIKON was originally inspired by a student interview conducted by Kathryn Alderman with Craig Santos Perez, an acclaimed ecopoet from the Pacific Island of Guam.

In late 2022, Perez (whose poem in praise of Oceania is featured on page 36 of this issue) called for poets from the global north to read and support poets from the global south, and to teach their work, and so the idea for a 'world ecopoetry share' was born.

Categorising countries according to their economic and developmental status, as in the 'global north'/'global south' binary, is problematic; however, ECOPOETIKON's ethos is more broadly one of building a network of solidarity, and transcending Eurocentrism and the western literary canon to highlight less privileged voices.

A unique dimension of the project is that featured poets are invited to write a statement about the crises in their region or country, and these make poignant reading alongside their poems. Rina Garcia Chua from the Philippines writes of growing up in Metro Manila, where she experienced a typhoon that forced her to "swim and walk in flooded highways when it dumped a month's worth of rain in just a few hours". And Zheng Xiaoqiong, whose poems 'Time', 'Moth', and 'Lychee Grove' are beautifully translated from the Chinese by Eleanor Goodman, writes of the trees, plants, birds and snakes of Mount Baiyun, and of factory work in Guangdong. From the age of 21, she witnessed how "workers are inflicted with occupational illnesses such as pneumoconiosis, dermatitis, lung cancer ... " and she wants her poetry to raise awareness of "the human damage brought by industry".

Funded by the University of Gloucestershire's School of Creative Arts, and built by a student web designer, ECOPOETIKON features three search tools, one of which is thematic. With poems grouped under themes such as 'oceans', 'soil/agriculture', 'pollution/waste', 'indigeneity/roots', 'ecocide/extinctions', 'regeneration', and 'interspecies communication', this function readily provides material for research or learning across a range of disciplines. The site's bespoke teaching resources, available to subscribers, offer writing prompts too. (And over the coming years, the project team plans to evaluate ECOPOETIKON's impacts, and welcomes feedback from site users.)

When I ask the growing community of featured poets how they feel about the project, Mario Petrucci, a British-Italian poet-scientist pioneer of ecopoetry, whose extraordinary poem 'Heavy Water: A Poem for Chernobyl' I selected for the site, emails me, saying: "In the ten-minutes-to-midnight cacophony of ignored environmental wake-up calls, ECOPOETIKON sings a sweet yet piercingly persistent note. Too often, ecopoetry is met with neglectful silence; it's profoundly encouraging to join this lively conversation."

Caleb Parkin, a younger-generation British ecopoet, explains how poetry is uniquely placed in the public imagination to represent the "massively distributed temporospatial (time/space) violences to the entire biosphere" because of its "scalar shifts and ability to hold multiple perspectives and ambiguities". Hearteningly, he sees the project as part of a cultural tipping point, "which makes conversations about climate change and environmental degradation many, various, and unavoidable".

Helen Moore is a British ecopoet, socially engaged artist and writer. She has published three ecopoetry collections: *Hedge Fund, And Other Living Margins* (Shearsman Books, 2012), *ECOZOA* (Permanent Publications, 2015), acclaimed by John Kinsella as "a milestone in the journey of ecopoetics", and *The Mother Country* (Awen Publications, 2019). www.helenmoorepoet.com www.ecopoetikon.org

Listening to an-other

Poetry editors **Rachel Marsh** and **Briony Hughes** join poet Suzannah V. Evans to listen to the beings under the sea

residency at the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) in Oban opened a new world of sound for poet Suzannah V. Evans. Her conversations with the scientists and listening to the underwater recordings led her to ask, "What can we learn about the sea through sound?" These poems are all about sound, and readers are strongly urged to read them out loud – especially 'Minke Whale Pulse Trains' – as it is so much fun to do, and you'll hear the rhythms and rhymes working tightly together.

'The Ecologist' is a sonnet for two voices: one voice asking an environmental scientist about how they became interested in researching

THE ECOLOGIST

What was it about sound that drew you in? – At first it was the dolphin's clicking grin. Much later on an acoustician came – he'd switched his goal from military fame

to listening to the sea with hydrophones. He told us they chucked sonar buoys like stones from backs of planes to hear the submarines. We rigged some up so we could hear sardines.

- And did you? - Yes, we went to Chanonry Point and lobbed devices in right at the joint of sea and sky. A creepy moonlit night.

The most amazing thing – just all this sound – as if a ship of animals had foundered. We stood there listening till the dark took flight.

– Inverness

click- click-[pause]-click// click- click

MINKE WHALE PULSE TRAINS

It sounds like someone swatting at a fly: A beating through the air, a steady huff. Or knocking dust from carpets hung up high. It sounds like someone swatting at a fly, Or footsteps on a pavement charging by. Perhaps a distance racer's measured puff. It sounds like someone swatting at a fly: A beating through the air, a steady huff.

*

*

Wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub. Pew-pew-pew-pew-pew-pew-pew-pew-pew-It's got a triple beat then one long 'dub'. Wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-It's like a techno beat down at the club. It sounds like bedposts knocking when you screw. Wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub-wub. Pew-pew-pew-pew-pew-pew-pew-pew-pew-pew.

A lightsabre's distinctive hum past stars. Your heartbeat thumping in a monotone. Beethoven's *Fifth*: the opening few bars. A lightsabre's distinctive hum past stars. A traffic jam with all the chugging cars. A milkshake rumbling with the bubbles blown. A lightsabre's distinctive hum past stars. Your heartbeat thumping in a monotone.

Perhaps the techno calls are minimalist. Less complex than the humpbacks' rhyming song. Our human ears might only get the gist. Perhaps the techno calls are minimalist. It might be that the nuances are missed. That human ears in water hear things 'wrong'. Perhaps the techno calls are minimalist. Less complex than the humpbacks' rhyming song. marine sound. The playfulness of the rhymes sets up the still, quiet moment right at the end of the poem. It is the perfect introduction for the two poems that follow.

'Minke Whale Pulse Trains' celebrates the recording of minke whales made by SAMS for the first time off Scotland's east coast. Evans captures the repetitive beat of the pulse trains with four triolets – eight lines with a strict rhyming structure and repeated lines - a surprisingly lighthearted means to question our abilities to really hear the sounds the whales are making, let alone to understand them.

She explores this further in 'A Sperm Whale

Coda', where human language thrums and resonates with multiple meanings before subsiding to sound, claps and clicks as it attempts to capture the whale's song. Understanding is secondary. To listen to an-other being is both a meeting and a recognition. R

Rachel Marsh is an artist, writer and designer who is researching the meeting point of Nature and culture for a PhD at University of the West of England. Briony Hughes teaches poetry at Royal Holloway, University of London, where she has just completed her PhD. She is poet-in-residence at University of Surrey and editor at Osmosis Press.

A SPERM WHALE CODA HEARD AS A SUCCESSION OF HANDS CLAPPING

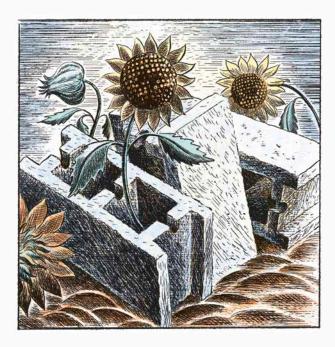
A sound heard as a succession of hands clapping, a three-clapped moment, fingers to palm or fingers to click-11 fingers, and hands clapping out tap-tap-tap. A sound heard over and through static which blares like a running tap, and filigreed through the blare of static the trill of birdsong. Clap-clap-clap. Hands clapping, fingers to palm or fingers to fingers, elegant and brisk and sure, clap-clap-clap. A sound heard as three something rotating, a dial or knob turning, slowly and then quickly, so that an interval is stitched pebbles let loose from a pocket and sounding a gravel between the first and second clicks, so that the interval between the second and third clicks is sliced thinly. A sound heard as marbles clicking across a tarmacked playground, *click*-click-click. Hushed interval as children follow the marbles with their eyes following the sound. A sound heard as leafing through the pages of a heavy book, letting the book fall shut, paf-paf-paf. A sound heard as three quick kisses placed on a neck, kiss-kiss-kiss. A sound heard as |. |. |. A sound heard as '//', '//' or //,, //, //. A sound heard as hands retuning palm to palm, in a loud clap that is a sequenced call, that is a touch, a dick dick dick pauset dick lick dick bause summons

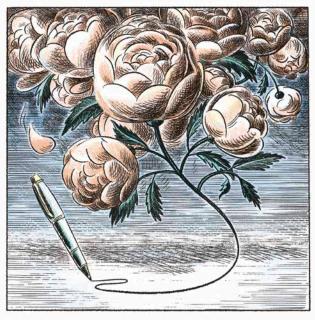
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Suzannah V. Evans's publications include Brightwork and Marine Objects/Some Language, and her debut fulllength collection is forthcoming from Bloomsbury Poetry. You can listen to the recording of minke whales made by SAMS at tinyurl.com/SAMS-minke-whales

*. c#ck- click-[pause]-c







R is for Realism

Adam Weymouth finds a new source of hope in this pragmatic A to Z of the climate crisis

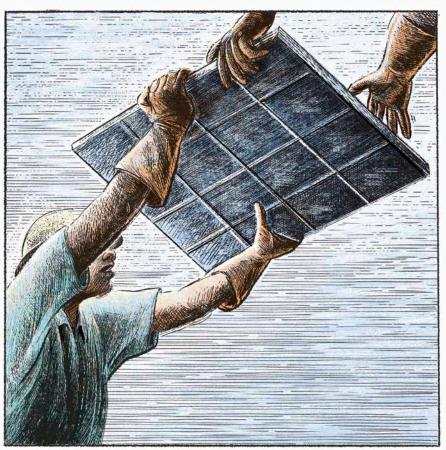
H is for Hope Elizabeth Kolbert Oneworld, 2024 ISBN: 9780861548668

don't know about you, but I've stopped picking up books about the climate crisis. For me, it happened around the time of David Wallace-Wells's *The Uninhabitable Earth*. I had been reading them obsessively for 15 years, and I simply couldn't face it any more. As a writer of a certain stripe, I get sent a lot of them, and there they are, gradually filling my bookshelves with a quiet irony, the shelves collapsing under a weight of stuff that I neither want nor need. The climate crisis demonstrates human failure on almost every level, "the greatest and widest-ranging market failure ever seen", as Elizabeth Kolbert quotes Nicholas Stern as saying, but you can't deny that it has, at least, been scrupulously documented.

Kolbert is one of the documenters. A staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1999, she is best known for her Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Sixth Extinction* (2014). Her more recent book *Under a White Sky* (2022) examines the possibilities and perils of a geo-engineered future. *H is for Hope* takes a different tack, bringing together 26 pieces adapted from previous *New Yorker* essays, each gorgeously illustrated by Wesley Allsbrook. The underlying theme remains the climate and our future, so it was with some trepidation – and a little excitement – that I opened the book. The cover promised hope, and that is something that we could all do with right now.

The book reads alphabetically, starting with A for Arrhenius, the Swedish scientist who in the 1890s predicted that carbon dioxide, the by-product of the ever-expanding Industrial Revolution, would come to alter the climate of the planet. As always, this is exemplary science writing, unpicking complex ideas and inventions with delicate precision. But as the essays build, the picture that develops comes to feel anything but clear. And not all that hopeful, either.

In its early pages, Kolbert describes visiting companies working on renewables and electric aircraft. She sits in flight simulators and takes a boat out to one of the largest wind turbines on the planet. There is hope to cling to here, in the rapid innovation, the inspired individuals and the collapsing price of solar, but these, to some extent, serve to highlight the



Action can build another kind of story – a far more meaningful conception of hope

Illustrations by Wesley Allsbrook Instagram: wesleyallsbrook

gamble of us having left the most existential problem to face humanity to be fixed by the private sector and the free hand of the market. Yes, I is for the Inflation Reduction Act, President Biden's US\$350-billion pledge to stimulate climate initiatives. But the titular *H is for Hope*? An essay about a new type of battery, powered by the rusting action of iron. Everything concrete that Kolbert gives us to cling on to, green concrete included, seems to be driven by a start-up.

When it comes to policy and political will, things are far murkier. Q is for Quagmire, and the legislative nightmare rolling out new transmission lines to move the power generated by renewables across the United States. To give just one example, the proposed 1,160km Plains & Eastern Clean Line, planned to link wind farms in Oklahoma to consumers in Tennessee, was unable to overcome opposition from Arkansas. Such petty wrangling feels like a parable for everything. B is for Blah, Blah, Blah, Greta Thunberg's speech at the Youth4Climate conference in 2021 that mocked world leaders' lip service to tackling the climate crisis.

As I read on, I begin to think that whoever chose *H* is for *Hope* as a title was perhaps more concerned with marketing than an accurate description of the text. It is both a nod to Helen Macdonald's classic *H* is for Hawk, and a promise of something that we all need in spades. U is for Uncertainty and X is for Xenophobia. By the time I finish Z is for Zero and close the book, I am not left with the feeling that everything is going to be OK.

But maybe this is to misread Kolbert's project, and to misunderstand the meaning of hope. Kolbert is a science writer, she trades in facts, and she is not going to do us the favour of letting us disengage. As she reminds us with another Thunberg quote, hope is something you have to earn. Optimism, she writes, has its own inherent dangers. Maybe we have all been too distracted by the idea that someone will get a handle on this eventually, that it's all going to get sorted out. That time has not come, and now the hour is getting late.

But it is not too late for hope. In a section on narratives, Kolbert explores how stories that "foreground 'doom and gloom'" lead to paralysis. What we need, more than ever, are visions of where we want to get to. Hope is personal, not pragmatic. It is a story, not a rational point of view. As a writer, Kolbert understands that it is stories, in the end, that change the world. The entry for D consists of just eight words: "Despair is unproductive. It is also a sin."

I realise I began this book looking for easy wins. I wanted someone to tell me that everything was going to be OK. I finished it understanding that things are as bad as I knew, but also feeling chided for choosing to look away. In a sense I feel reinvigorated. Wherever we find ourselves, doing something is always better than doing nothing. In doing so we will be in the company of many others. Such action can build another kind of story – and that is a far more meaningful conception of hope.

Adam Weymouth is a writer and journalist. His first book, *Kings of the Yukon* (Particular Books), won the *Sunday Times* Young Writer of the Year Award.

For more, see www.adamweymouth.com

Radical change

Ros Coward discovers that a former leader of the Green Party believes we must now change everything to save ourselves and our planet

Change Everything: How We Can Rethink, Repair and Rebuild Society Natalie Bennett Unbound, 2024 ISBN: 9781800183025

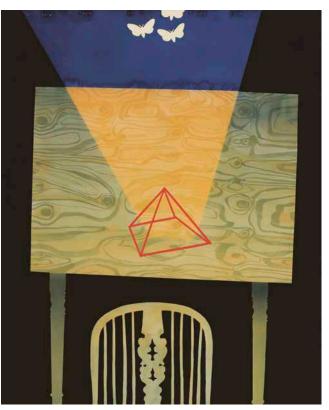
n pursuit of greener lifestyles, many of us have probably already made changes such as giving up air travel or reducing plastic use. Some have gone further, trying to live off-grid and be self-sufficient. But most of us recognise that personal changes, while hugely important, are not enough to tackle the urgent environmental crises we face. We must engage with the broader political process in order to change the wider society. That broader political process is full of dilemmas. What exactly do we want to change, and what is needed to win political support for greener ways of living?

Politician and journalist Natalie Bennett long ago threw in her lot with the Green Party as offering the way forward into the political processes, and her answer to what needs changing is equally unequivocal: the title of her new book says it all. And if charm and enthusiasm were enough to win over more reluctant citizens to a programme of radical change, she would be a strong contender for the challenge. She demonstrated that she had both qualities by the bagful during her leadership of the UK Green Party between 2012 and 2016.

Bennett's enthusiasm has on occasion tripped her up, as happened in what has been described as an 'excruciating' interview with LBC talk radio presenter Nick Ferrari in 2015. Live on air, she miscalculated the cost of the 500,000 new council homes she had just called for. But the lack of preparedness was hardly surprising, because there is no 'ready-made' Green perspective on traditional policy areas. It's still a work in progress.

Change Everything reads a bit like that work in progress. It is essentially a manifesto – delivered with great gusto – of what a green perspective would look like across a wide array of subjects, some rather unexpected: financial services, housing, benefits, education, reparation for slavery, and GDP, to name but a few. It's a dizzying ride at times, but Bennett advises, in her typical relaxed style, that the reader can, and indeed should, dip into the book. "I want readers to go away and act – not be stuck for too long with me."

The formative ideas behind Bennett's manifesto will be familiar to *Resurgence & Ecologist* readers: the idea that the pursuit of economic growth is unsustainable on a planet of finite resources, and that the pursuit of endless growth has unleashed unregulated competition, leading to declining standards of living, poor health and greater unhappiness. The theories of degrowth and overconsumption exert



Artwork by Casey Roberts www.wildernessoverload.com

a strong influence, from her plea for a universal basic income to education for life to replacing GDP with a Happiness Index.

What is perhaps more unexpected is how much of Bennett's frame of reference is that of Westminster political parties, especially surprising given how damning she is of the existing political structures as fundamentally undemocratic. "The UK is not a democracy," she asserts. She favours more referenda, constitutional assemblies and proportional representation. Yet her focus is on Westminster politics, so there's surprisingly little about the climate and biodiversity crises, or the people campaigning more directly on these issues.

Reading this book made me think about why, although supporting the Green Party on many issues and in many elections, I've never joined it. Part of the explanation comes down to finding it too much preoccupied with the usual political subjects, meaning that sometimes its core message of environmental protection isn't always at the foreground. And sometimes the policies advanced on the wider social issues are barely indistinguishable from radical socialist policies, which are very attractive but don't always go down well with the wider populace and are rarely vote winners.

There are too many people for whom the state of Nature and the lack of environmental protection don't matter, and some, even, who have begun to regard 'Nature protection' as disadvantageous to their living standards. Before there's much chance of changing everything with a radical social agenda, those people require more awareness about Nature, our interconnectedness and our deep reliance on those connections. Ros Coward is an author and journalist who has been a columnist on *The Guardian* and *The Observer* as well as a regular contributor to *Resurgence & Ecologist*. She is an Emerita Professor of Journalism at Roehampton University. A collection of her articles on environmental issues is published under the title *Nature Matters* (Desman Books, 2016).

Private sufficiency and public luxury

Russell Warfield is relieved to find a book that offers a new economic and political narrative

The Invisible Doctrine: The Secret History of Neoliberalism George Monbiot and Peter Hutchison Allen Lane, 2024 ISBN: 9780241635902

hen the UK's then chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng stood in the House of Commons to deliver the so-called mini-budget on 23 September 2022, it was in many senses the most unreformed expression of the ideology we call neoliberalism, exposing a system that dressed itself up as an invisible set of natural laws as openly contemptuous class warfare.

Kwarteng's plans contained \pounds_{45} billion of unfunded tax cuts, slashing rates for the highest earners and the wealthiest corporations. The most extreme free-market outriders licked their lips, openly gloating. But almost immediately, the economy went into meltdown, and Liz Truss became the shortestserving prime minister in UK history.

George Monbiot and Peter Hutchison's brilliant little book *The Invisible Doctrine* tells the story of how this disastrous ideology came to dominate economies, societies, politics and even our inner lives. Neoliberalism teaches us to consider all humans as inherently competitive individuals governed by self-interest, an idea that has taken root in almost every area of our lives, from education to employment, and to such a degree that now even clear institutional and societal shortcomings are framed as personal failures.

"The only thing that can replace a story is a story"

The subtitle of the book – *The Secret History of Neoliberalism* – implies an ordered, chronological structure along lines such as the intellectual roots of the ideology being shaped in the post-war period; the first forced implementation into economies through the 1970s; its march through the institutions over the 1980s and 1990s; and then its manifestation in contemporary life.

All of these components of the story are present but

delivered in a slightly scattergun approach, racing from the epidemic of loneliness to the billionaire backers supporting neoliberal ideas. Such breakneck handbrake turns can come within the space of a single chapter, despite each chapter being just a few pithy pages long. A chapter purportedly about shady lobbyists drifts into a commentary on the policy programmes of successive US presidents. The next chapter takes us back to the origins of the Institute of Economic Affairs. At times it's the reading equivalent of listening to an album on shuffle.

Still, the sheer breadth and scope of this book are impressive, especially when even in hardback it can still be slipped into the average trouser pocket. It's an extremely comprehensive and accessible introductory overview to an ideology that has hijacked everything, and to do that so succinctly is no small feat.

The book finds some clearer structure in its closing chapters, concluding with a customary gesture towards how we might get out of this mess. For Monbiot and Hutchison, an economic theory that has taken on the hegemonic quality of total ideology cannot be supplanted merely by an alternative economic theory, but must primarily be displaced by a new narrative. "The only thing that can replace a story is a story," they say.

Undoubtedly, they are right to look at the hegemonic force of neoliberalism, and its power to shape the very stories we tell ourselves about our own lives, and to conclude that it cannot be willed away by simple reason or ordinary counterforce. Happily, they spell out a vision for a new politics, economics and society based on "private sufficiency and public luxury" and a return to the commons. But such is the depth of neoliberalism's foundations in contemporary life that it can be hard to summon or sustain optimism.

Neoliberalism has endured many crises in its time, only to emerge more entrenched, making the rich richer, and the pathway to any alternative narrower. The 2008 financial crisis. Covid. The market meltdown of the 2022 mini-budget. All supposedly heralded the final nail in the coffin of a broken system, its flaws and contradictions finally exposed. Yet still it strides on.

Russell Warfield is Head of Communications at the climate charity Possible and Books Editor for *Resurgence & Ecologist*.

Rebalancing the role of the wolf

This book exposes the brutal history of a near-mythical being, and raises questions of its – and our – future, says **India Bourke**

Hunt for the Shadow Wolf: The Lost History of Wolves in Britain and the Myths and Stories that Surround them Derek Gow *Chelsea Green, 2024 ISBN: 9781645020424*

ast summer, on a blue-sky day in Portugal's Peneda-Gerês National Park, I was lucky enough to sit eating cheese sandwiches on the remains of an old wolf trap. My partner and I had been hiking between two remote villages that seemed to have barely changed for centuries. Wild flowers stretched across the grassy foothills, and a light breeze carried the sound of red kites overhead. And, unless a kind local had told us its origin, we would have had no idea what the towering circular structure we were sitting on was built for.

In times past, a wolf, jumping easily up onto the wall from the outside slope, would have been lured down by a goat left inside as bait. Once at the goat's level, however, the predator's escape would be barred: the wall's top-most slabs overhang just enough to make exit impossible. After that, its fate was sealed. As accounts of the flaying, burning, beating and poisoning of wolves across Europe attest, it wouldn't have ended well for the wolf.

It was an eerie feeling, resting in such an idyllic landscape, knowing that scenes of intense struggle and slaughter had taken place beneath our feet – and, moreover, that the fear that inspired the trap is still far from gone. The few wolves that have clung on in northern Portugal and Spain are now protected by law, but as the continent's wolf population rebounds, tensions in rural communities are stirring. Some farmers have demanded the right to shoot them, and the president of the European Commission has labelled them a danger.

Listening to the stillness of the Peneda-Gerês hills, I could almost hear a plaintive, ghostly howl: will we embrace the wolf's tentative return, or crush it once again? Derek



Gow is particularly alert to this lupine call of the wild. In his latest book, *Hunt for the Shadow Wolf*, the writer and farmer-conservationist explores how much the UK has lost by wiping out this species.

Wolves live on in our place names – from Howl Moor, Scarborough, to Wolfscote Dale, Peak District – in our diseases – lupus – or our sayings – wolf whistle – and our understanding of who we are today, Gow's research highlights. Yet without their physical presence, our landscape is suffering. The balance of Nature is out of whack: "Many have come to realise that the story of the wolf's eradication from Britain was simply a curtain-raiser for the sheep and the deer, which, in ever-rising numbers, have flayed our uplands bare."

Our past cruelties can, with greater self-knowledge, be reversed

A growing number of related books attest to this ecological absence, from Sophie Yeo's *Nature's Ghosts: The World We Lost and How to Bring It Back* to Chantal Lyons' recent *Groundbreakers: The Return of Britain's Wild Boar*, which notes the absence of apex predators to keep productive munching in check.

Gow is a prominent rewilding advocate, and the conservation case for reintroducing wolves to Britain lurks beneath each of his pages. And yet, instead of focusing on science to make the argument, he turns to history. Our culture's instinctive, if unfounded, fear of this creature is inscribed in each of Europe's disused wolf traps, he suggests. So, to overcome it, we first must understand its roots.

This approach is helped by Gow's intimate, hands-on experience. Not only has the former wildlife park manager been attacked twice by wolves, but he has also hand-reared two females – Mishka and Nadia – to adulthood. "Unconvinced that you were ever clean enough," he writes of the latter, "she would stand on her hind legs, place a paw on each of your shoulders and lean down with her great head to ensure your countenance was, by the time she finished licking it, as pristine as possible."

And what this closeness – both to wolves and to the past – invites is reassurance. "With technology on our side, we know very well that less than nothing remains to fear from the wolf," Gow writes in the book's final pages. Few history books I've ever read are as visceral. But like all good ones, this one is stubbornly hopeful that our past cruelties can, with greater self-knowledge, be reversed.

India Bourke is a freelance environment journalist. She writes and edits regularly for *BBC Future Planet*.

Dancing in the rain

Kate Blincoe finds a new appreciation for weather in all its wildness

In All Weathers: A Journey through Rain, Fog, Wind, Ice and Everything in Between Matt Gaw Elliott @ Thompson, 2024 ISBN: 9781783967735

e tend to see the ever-changing British weather through a binary lens. It is 'good' or 'bad'. Matt Gaw's latest book, *In All Weathers*, wants to challenge that. He guides us on an immersive exploration of adverse weather: from rain to fog, wind, ice and snow.

I read this book as my body experiences its own climatic variations. Racked by fever, I swing from desert blaze to arctic chill in minutes. Yet I keep hungrily reading, covers on and covers off, as my weather changes.

That's the thing with Gaw's writing. It's very, very good in such an understated, easy to devour way. The prose is warm and gentle, in turn humorous and serious. Each chapter, dedicated to rain, fog, wind, ice or snow, is rooted in Gaw's charismatically told experiences. Woven through are rich layers of information about meteorology, climatology, geography, history and culture, all presented lightly, in an utterly unstuffy way. It answers many questions I've lazily pondered, like how rain sometimes falls out of a cloudless sky.

Gaw's previous works, *The Pull of the River* and *Under the Stars*, are great reads, but this is his most accomplished yet. The puppyish enthusiasm remains but is held together now with an assured confidence and precision. The subject matter, too, has such universality. We all experience weather, whatever our circumstances, however limited our means, wherever we live, even if just through a window.

I analyse the lyricism to try and pinpoint the way it is so beautiful yet rarely at the cost of the pace and the bounce that keep the pages turning. It's because each description is packed full of life and movement, making it so easy to visualise. Take this passage about the Cuillin mountain range: "It makes me think of barnacle crusts, or old whales that have been scarred white by deep-sea battles with squid or slashed by ship propellers. There is something of the heaved-from-the-sea about this part of Skye. As if it is only a temporary breaching and that one day it will wake and shake and sink again."

Storm Brewing (Scarborough North Bay) Robin Grover-Jacques www.robingj.co.uk

Most of the weather described is close to home for Gaw in East Anglia. We discover the skaters on the frozen Fens, and the skin-drenching torrential rain of his hometown. This brings an intimacy and accessibility to the adventure.

Weather provides an alternative, ever shifting way to view the world – even the parts we know well are redrawn in extreme conditions. Gaw explains, "Once you get your eye in, hoar frost is a map. A chart of temperature and light." It's not just the picture before our eyes, but the global impacts too, as shown with wind, which is described as "the driving force behind weather", that has "created trade routes and moulded landscapes".

Moving beyond the physical and the geographical, there is something more fundamental. Weather has inspired countless poets and artists, and permeates our language, folklore and customs. Gaw writes: "Weather then, is not something that happens to the landscape or something that happens to us; it is a way of experiencing the world... We *are* weather."

Of course, the climate is a highly politicised subject and one that is never far from the topic of weather. The climate crisis could have overshadowed this book, removing the joy and delight. Gaw treads that delicate balance of weaving in those messages without destroying what is ultimately a life-affirming celebration of time spent outdoors.

And so my fever breaks. After two days indoors, I can't wait to get back outside, with a fresh appreciation for the invigorating, soul-soaring wildness of weather – the rain on my skin, the wind on my back, all of it.

Kate Blincoe is a Nature writer, Nature lover and mother. Her award-winning fiction story was published in *The Curae: An Anthology from the Inaugural Curae Prize* (Renard Press).

Rebalancing to reach neutral

What else is also possible if we achieve net zero? asks **JP O'Malley**

Possible: Ways to Net Zero Chris Goodall Profile, 2024 ISBN: 9781800818941

etting to net zero means achieving an overall balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions taken out of the atmosphere. Many companies are aiming to achieve net zero by 2050. It will require switching energy use from fossil fuels to electricity, which will come from renewable sources like solar panels and wind turbines. Hydroelectric power, geothermal energy and nuclear power will also play a role. Separating the theory from practical realities is another matter, though.

Of 38 leaders from 29 energy industries worldwide who were interviewed for Volume 1 of the *Net Zero Jeopardy Report*, published this March by London-based not-forprofit organisation the Energy Industries Council, only 11% believe global targets for achieving net zero will be met. In his book *Possible: Ways to Net Zero*, entrepreneur and climate change expert Chris Goodall claims the route to 80% decarbonisation is relatively easy. The final 20% is more problematic, he argues. "Those remaining difficult parts of the transition are what much of this book is about," he writes.

"The process of getting to zero carbon may not be the struggle that is sometimes assumed"

Thoroughly researched and written in clear prose, the book begins with some good news. "Wind, solar and hydro-electricity are now cheaper in most parts of Settlement III by David Fleck www.davidfleck.co.uk

the world than power generated by fossil fuels," Goodall explains. Those cost advantages are very likely to continue and expand over time, too.

In the transport sector, China is leading the energy transition. Right now it dominates the global sales figures for vehicles powered by electricity, including cars, trucks and urban buses. Still, renewable energy from wind and solar is responsible for only about 12% of world electricity production. Fossil fuels, meanwhile, still provide over 80% of the world's total energy requirements.

The demand for electric cars, however, is bringing down the demand for petrol and diesel, at least in the world's wealthiest nations. But the amount of oil needed to make the plastic in those electric vehicles is increasing. "In 2040 [it] might be almost three times as much as in 2022," Goodall writes.

The global food supply is another worry. Approximately a quarter of global emissions arise from it. "Net zero will be an almost impossible objective unless meat and dairy production is cut sharply," Goodall explains. But that isn't happening. Meat production has risen five-fold, globally, over the last six decades. This makes it more difficult to prevent the deforestation of the Amazon, which is still being cleared for cattle and for soya to feed them.

But there are many steps we can take. Goodall guides us through several ways to reduce atmospheric CO_2 , using processes that mimic or supplement natural routes. Reforestation is one method. This involves taking CO_2 from the air and holding it in above-ground plant matter, such as trees. Restoring depleted animal life that aids carbon sequestration in oceans and on land is another.

Carbon taxes present certain challenges, but they are the cheapest and most efficient way of moving an economy away from high-carbon fuels. The knock-on effect of a carbon-free world should bring drastic changes, with two overriding positive outcomes.

First, it would reduce our costs of living. Energy prices

in an all-electric world would fluctuate less and be much cheaper. Savings would also come from lower transport costs and better insulated homes, which would use heat pumps instead of gas and oil. Second, it would make us happier. All the evidence suggests that the pursuit of a lower greenhouse gas lifestyle leads to higher levels of contentment. "A better world is possible," Goodall concludes. "Although the route may sometimes be arduous over the next couple of decades, the process of getting to zero carbon may not be the struggle that is sometimes assumed."

JP O'Malley is a cultural critic, journalist and writer. He regularly writes book reviews and author profiles for the *Sunday Independent* (Ireland), *New Humanist* (UK), *The New European* (UK), *The Globe and Mail* (Canada), and *The Age* (Australia).

Power to the people

Diyora Shadijanova reviews a podcast that raises the question of who really has the influence to rule, or change, our current system

If I Ruled the World
Podcast
Gillian Burke

hat would you do if you ruled the world for one day? Would you end all wars? Or would you pass crucial laws to stop global heating? This thought experiment is the central premise of *If I Ruled the World*. A bi-weekly podcast, it explores the world's biggest issues with key experts. Hosted by Gillian Burke, a biologist, presenter and voice-over artist, it aims to unlock "the secrets of profound systemic change" to make the world a better place and figure out "how to make it a reality".

"No matter who you are, no matter whether you're left or right, up, down, whatever the politics, I'm willing to stick my neck out and say – I think this is one thing we can all agree on – things could be better," Burke says, introducing the podcast and setting the tone for the series. Episodes explore a wide range of topics: from making ecocide a crime under international law, to the tech industry's exploitative practices, Indigenous farming wisdom, and the impact of solar energy on biodiversity conservation.

In each hour-long conversation, knowledgeable guests join Burke to break down complex, and often overwhelming, themes of interconnected global disorder. The conversations are nuanced, historically reflective and relatable, making them accessible to listeners from all backgrounds. A real highlight of the podcast is the show notes, which helpfully list conclusions and action points from each episode. Evidently the producers are invested in solution-oriented storytelling.

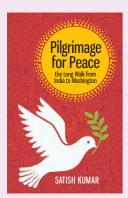
Despite laying out a roadmap to individual issues, the podcast at times misses an opportunity to fully address and centre the crux of most global problems – the distribution of power. How does it flow, and where does it concentrate? Though building our collective knowledge is vital, I believe the biggest obstacle to global justice is that those who have the answers – the activists, experts, scientists and organisations – struggle to access the political power needed to enact meaningful change, locally and internationally.

Those who have the answers struggle to access the political power needed to enact meaningful change

There is, however, a detailed examination of power dynamics in certain episodes. One such instalment delves into the origins of Somali pirates and their resistance to illegal fishing and waste dumping in nearby waters amid civil war. Yet other episodes, such as the conversation about eco-leadership, would benefit from analysis of the immense wealth and power of big polluters and how their lobbies currently affect party politics. This could thus demystify why – as the podcast's name promises – those who do know how to rule the world democratically can't.

Diyora Shadijanova is a journalist and writer based in London.

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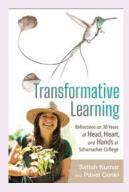


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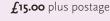
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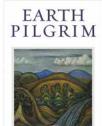
"This walk was his statement of intent, as a determined and dedicated young man. His life would be this walk. This journey for peace would be his life. Here is a book that inspires us to follow in his footsteps, that gives us all hope." – Michael Morpurgo (Paperback, 208 pages)



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Satish Kumar reflects on the legacy of Schumacher College. More than 50 current and former instructors and alumni, including Vandana Shiva, David Orr, Kate Raworth, Fritjof Capra, Bill McKibben, Mary Evelyn Tucker and Jonathon Porritt, paint a rich picture of education for human wellbeing and the ecological health of the planet. This book contains a wealth of ideas and educational methods, with insights and experience for practitioners and activists looking to build a just, ecological society. (Paperback, 265 pages)





SATISH KUMAR

EARTH PILGRIM

Satish Kumar

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our comfort zones, to let go of our prejudices and preconditioning. Being on a pilgrimage doesn't necessarily mean travelling – it means a state of mind, a state of consciousness, a state of fearlessness. (Hardback, 136 pages)



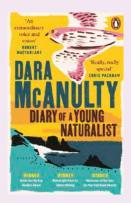
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sees the world are raw in their telling. McAnulty writes: "In sharing this journey my hope is that people of all generations will not only understand autism a little more but also appreciate a child's eye view on our delicate and changing biosphere." (Hardback, 224 pages)



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Letters to the editor

BEYOND SELF-INTEREST

I read with interest and profound admiration the May/June issue (344) Gail Bradbrook's exploration of a new framework of ideas and actions to co-create meaningful and lasting change.

The invitation she issued six years ago to everyone who cared about the destruction of life on Earth to come together and exercise collective power in purposeful collaboration touched a deep nerve in society and galvanised a new global social movement.

The dedication she now makes to hospice the diseased systems of destruction to cultivate the 'collective good mind' contains a second powerful invitation to individuals and communities to 'become the change' through local initiatives and greater collaboration.

The challenge is even greater than that. For lasting systemic change many things need to be brought together. In my book *Notes from Exile*, I suggest the following actions are fundamental to converting such

```
· Tell and retell the STOR ) of the Common good
· Set INCENTIVES for sufficiency, resilience, Fairness and munificence
· Educate for CITIZENSHIP beyond consumerism and LEADERSHIP for
· Institute SAFEGUARDS against demagogic democracy
     - voting systems
- creation of a HOUSE OF MERIT with reserved powers
     -fiscal devolution
 · Institutional (GUARDRAILS) on planetary issues & sustainability
      -reserved environmental representation in electoral assemblies
      - consumption caps
       - co-dominion of natural assets
  · Legal GOVERNANCE REFORM of corporations
       - social purpose
       - engagement of the warkforce
        - duties of the board
  "RESERVED AREAS to House of Mevit/Common good
        -planetary guardrails
        - key treaties and alliances
        -War/aid/co-existence
- Constitutional balance
   · PEACE INSTITUTIONS) For consensus building and pre-conciliation
    · Establishment of KEY MISSION GROUPS to develop the new narrative
and fuctionality of operating systems for a new era powered by
         SOCIAL ORGANISING GROUPS
```

a collective mind into systemic institutional change and enduring relationships. They are in brief (pictured) below.

I offer them here as a possible framework for sustaining the 'nursery' of initiatives that must replace the 'hospice' of destructive systems underpinning our present trauma. The birthing of a new idea of society always involves painful encounters between opposed interests. History tells us though that to avoid violence there is no alternative. The exodus from a long period of excessive individuation and tribal calls to identity will generate resistance from those who thrive on things as they are. And they are legion. However brightly the ideas that sustain the new collective mind shine at the level of individuals and communities, they will still need turning into political and economic action.

And that will require new operating principles of mutuality and common good supported by radically transformed collective institutions and leadership

with imagination beyond the lens of dogma and short-term self-interest.

As Gail concludes, there is much to do. One thing might be the establishment, along the lines of XR, of working parties to frame and facilitate the mission and the negotiating zones for each of the great encounters, once they are agreed, that will have to be undertaken. Leslie Dighton

via email

Author of Notes from Exile and The Little Books of the Common Good

"The birthing of a new idea of society always involves painful encounters between opposed interests"

Illustration - Jennifer Williams



HOPEFUL AND ENCHANTING

It's deeply meaningful for me to engage in hands-on activities to maintain a sense of connection. After taking a moment to delve into the January/February issue (342) of *Resurgence & Ecologist* magazine, titled Hope and Enchantment, I realised the alignment between my philosophy and lifestyle. This particular issue delves into themes of wisdom and wellbeing, which resonate strongly with me. Interestingly, throughout this year, I've been advocating for wellness through my cordage-making workshops, both at @polyfalmouth and in my Weave studio at Upton Towans.

I found it incredibly gratifying to come across 'The Story of the Nettle Dress' by Dylan Howitt and maker Allan Brown in this issue, adding a touch of magic to my reading. Equally enchanting was the article 'Your Wellness is (Literally) in Your Hands', co-authored by Charlotte Abrahams and Katy Bevan, which explores the transformative power of crafting in fostering wellness. I'm truly touched by the thoughtful gesture of my neighbours, who gifted me the opportunity to read *Resurgence* & *Ecologist* magazine, knowing my passion for nettles. **Jane Gray, Nettle Weaver** via email

HIGHLY IMPRESSED

I was highly impressed with XR co-founder Gail Bradbrook's Slow Read article in the latest *Resurgence* & *Ecologist* magazine (Issue 344). Having had dealings several years ago with her colleague Roger Hallam in Carmarthenshire I have been well aware of the brilliant work of XR over many years.

Keep up your great work.

Anson Allen via email

We welcome letters and emails commenting on *Resurgence* & *Ecologist* articles and issues. These should include your postal address. Send your letters to The Editor, *Resurgence* & *Ecologist*, The Resurgence Centre, Fore Street, Hartland, Bideford, Devon EX39 6AB or email editorial@resurgence.org Letters may be edited for reasons of space or clarity.

INSTAGRAM

@serpentandbee

Love your connecting our bodies to the Earth body. It's something I've been thinking about a lot lately. I work in mental health and see how trauma disconnects us and how healing can be found in our connection to Earth and self; they are mirrors. I am also in awe of our ability to heal and Earth's capacity to regenerate. We are one.

In response to Nadia Colburn's article (issue 343) tinyurl.com/resurgence-nadia

@clarecelesteart

I had the humbling and wonderful opportunity to illustrate an interview between Dr Jane Goodall and Mya-Rose Craig for @resurgencetrust magazine. This publication speaks to my heart's work – I highly recommend it to all of you. It is a joy to receive: visually lush and filled with wisdom for these times of ecological crisis. Thank you, @resurgencetrust, for your trust – it was a joy!

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FACEBOOK

Exact Editions

Today is #EarthDay – an annual event on 22 April to demonstrate support for #EnvironmentalProtection

Read our latest blog post where we take a closer look at the trailblazing journey of *Resurgence* α *Ecologist*, one of the most important publications to provide a voice for change driven by a love of the Earth and its life forms:

.....

exacted.me/ResurgenceandEcologistHistory

TWITTER/X

Henriette Howarth @henhowarth

A beautiful combination of well researched content and creativity. For only \pounds_{36} you receive a yearlong membership & receive 6 magazines. I fully recommend! Glad it arrived before we went on holiday. #Planet #Ocean

Editor's note: Happily, we timed this 'Ocean Glories' issue precisely to coincide with people's summer holidays!



Sea Oak

Sea Oak by Paul Morrison www.paul-morrison.com Photo: Jules Lister This sculpture by Paul Morrison, installed in Scarborough Harbour, is the latest artwork to join the Wild Eye coastal art and Nature trail, developed by Invisible Dust and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

Created in the shape of *Fucus vesiculosus* or bladderwrack – an ecologically important seaweed species common to the UK – this highly polished, water-jet-cut stainless steel sculpture reflects both the viewer and the ever-changing coastal conditions.

It celebrates the important role that seaweed plays in contributing to the health of the ocean, whilst inviting audiences to reflect on their own interconnection with the natural world.

For more information on Wild Eye, visit tinyurl.com/wild-eye



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Artists Project Earth Resurgence



Resurgence Festival of Wellbeing

Saturday 5 October 2024

Join this day of thought-provoking and progressive talks from some of the world's most inspiring thinkers and activists. *Speakers include...*



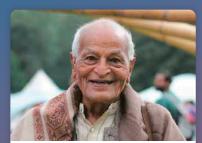
EASKEY BRITTON Surfer, scientist, activist and author



GILLIAN BURKE Biologist, presenter, storyteller



ROBIN WALL KIMMERER Scientist, professor, and author



SATISH KUMAR Peace-pilgrim, activist and author



WANJIRA MATHAI Leader, environmentalist and activist



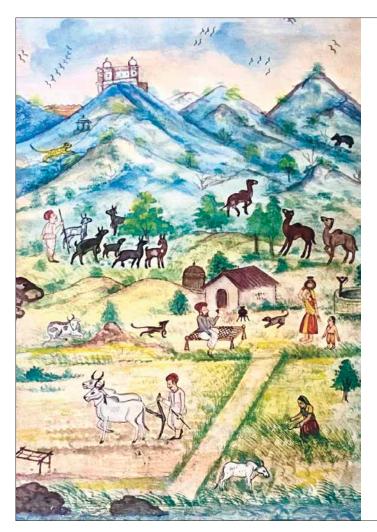
DANIEL CHRISTIAN WAHL Author, consultant, educator and activist

This all-day event will take place online via Zoom Tickets £25.00 (concessions £15)

For programme updates and bookings: www.resurgence.org/wellbeing24

WITH THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS WELEDA • THE NETWORK OF WELLBEING

This event is a fundraiser for The Resurgence Trust, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (5821436) and a charity registered in England and Wales (1120414).



Earth Journey to Rajasthan

Join us for the Earth Journey to the Land of the Camels on this International Year of the Camelids 2024 (UN)

Refining our Commitment to Seed Freedom and Protecting our Rich Biodiversity.

15-16 November 2024

Calebrate Living Democracy with Local Communities of Ghanerao village.

Explore the Unique Desert Biodiversity and Life Beyond Fossil Fuels

Vandana Shiva and Satish Kumar will be speaking at this event.

Email: earthuniversity@navdanya.com



esurgence

Green Meditations: Four Stages of Plant Growth

Every Friday morning throughout July 8-8.30am

Each theme leads us in a uniquely focused meditation to inspire a deeper connection with our green world and ourselves.



Seed 5 July



12 July

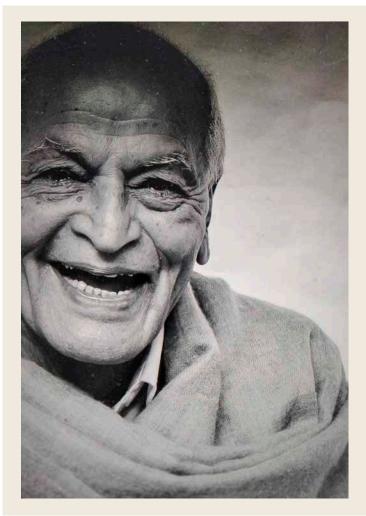


Green Plant 19 July



Pollination 26 July

Book a space: resurgenceevents.org



RADICAL LOVE

To find *peace* in our lives we need to cultivate *love*.

Let's follow the footsteps of the sage and sacred activist Satish Kumar to discover how to love ourselves, one another and all beings on planet Earth, even those we may find unlovable.

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info@espaibuit.com www.espaibuit.com

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Rewild 6-8 September

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AONGHUS GORDON and LAURENCE COX

Place, Craft and Neurodiversity

This accessible and inspiring book exemplifies how an appreciation of place, traditional crafts, farming and transformative education offers a wider route to wellbeing for all.

The authors outline the different fields of the *Practical Skills Therapeutic Education* method, which includes developing practical skills, learning the ecology of the farm and understanding therapeutic education, holistic care, health and self-leadership. Being grounded in work that supports young people with complex additional needs, it provides a rare insight into the work of one of the world's leading charities working with neurodiversity.

Available to download free or read online at **taylorfrancis.com** Print version available to purchase at **routledge.com**





9

Place, Craft and Neurodiversity

Re-imagining Potential through Education at Ruskin Mill

AONGHUS GORDON AND LAURENCE COX Foreward by Stefan Geider MD, chair of Campbill Wellbeime Trust



BIODYNAMIC TRAINING

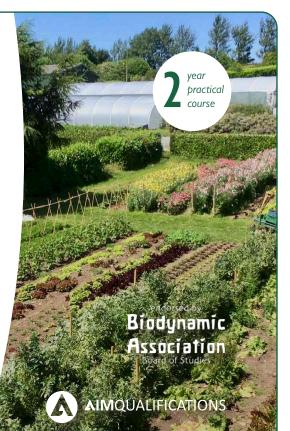
Growing the Land, Growing People

This Level 3 regulated qualification, endorsed by the Biodynamic Association Board of Studies, aims to equip participants with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to become an independent and confident biodynamic practitioner.

The Growing the Land, Growing People course provides participants with the opportunity and competencies to work with people of differing educational and developmental needs in a therapeutic context through biodynamic, ecological activities.

Apply as a charity volunteer

Growing the Land, Growing People can be accessed through our charity volunteer scheme. Charity volunteers undertake this Level 3 qualification, whilst providing full-time, unpaid voluntary work. Charity volunteers receive Ruskin Mill Trust training, accommodation (if required), subsistence and expenses, and undertake the Ruskin Mill Biodynamic Training programme.





thefieldcentre.org.uk | info@rmlt.org.uk





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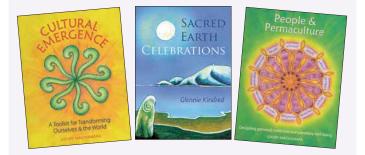
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Books for Changemakers

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Leaving a legacy to The Resurgence Trust is a powerful way to demonstrate your commitment to the planet, people and environmental education.

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For more information on pledging a gift to Resurgence in your Will: www.resurgence.org/legacy

"The Resurgence Trust is dedicated to the wellbeing of the Earth, for now and forever which includes the wellbeing of ourselves, of all people, and of future generations."

> Satish Kumar, Editor Emeritus, Resurgence & Ecologist

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The cottage is part of The Resurgence Centre and is nestled between our Events Centre and Editorial office.

To find out more and book, visit: www.resurgenceevents.org/stay

Photograph: Mark Gough



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These Zoom webinars start at 19.00

Free events - donations welcome

For any enquiries, please email events@resurgence.org

For booking details and further information on the talks, please visit www.resurgenceevents.org/events

The Resurgence Trust is grateful to Fattoria La Vialla for generously sponsoring the monthly 'Resurgence Talks'



Manchán Magan

Listening to the land speak: the wisdom encoded in our lore, language and landscape

A talk and Q&A by author Manchán Magan. Manchán Magan presents the Almanac of Ireland podcast for RTÉ and writes occasionally for The Irish Times. He has made dozens of documentaries on issues of world culture. In this talk, Manchán will explore the knowledge and insights preserved by the ancestors within Irish culture and heritage. He will offer new insights into the mythology, place names, ritual sites, proverbs and language of Ireland.

Resurgence Talks Archive

Online access to previous Resurgence Talks recordings You can revisit all Resurgence Talks on Vimeo. Watch talks by Gail Bradbrook, Satish Kumar, Ann Pettifor, Kate Raworth, and many more. vimeo.com/resurgencetrust







This event is a fundraiser for The Resurgence Trust, an educational charity registered in England and Wales (no. 1120414).

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The Resurgence Trust...more than a magazine

The Resurgence Trust is an educational charity that seeks to inform and inspire change and connection – to each other and to the living Earth. Resurgence promotes planetary and personal wellbeing, social justice and spiritual fulfilment. It strives to contribute to a better world for all through the pages of *Resurgence & Ecologist* magazine, through a broad range of events, and through *The Ecologist* website, which publishes free, daily, online environmental news. Find out more about this movement for change:







www.resurgence.org

www.resurgenceevents.org

www.theecologist.org

Readers' groups

Explore ideas that have the power to create change by meeting with fellow readers to discuss the latest issue of *Resurgence* & *Ecologist*. Join us online via Zoom, or check if there is a group meeting near you at www.resurgence.org/groups or by calling us on 01237 441293



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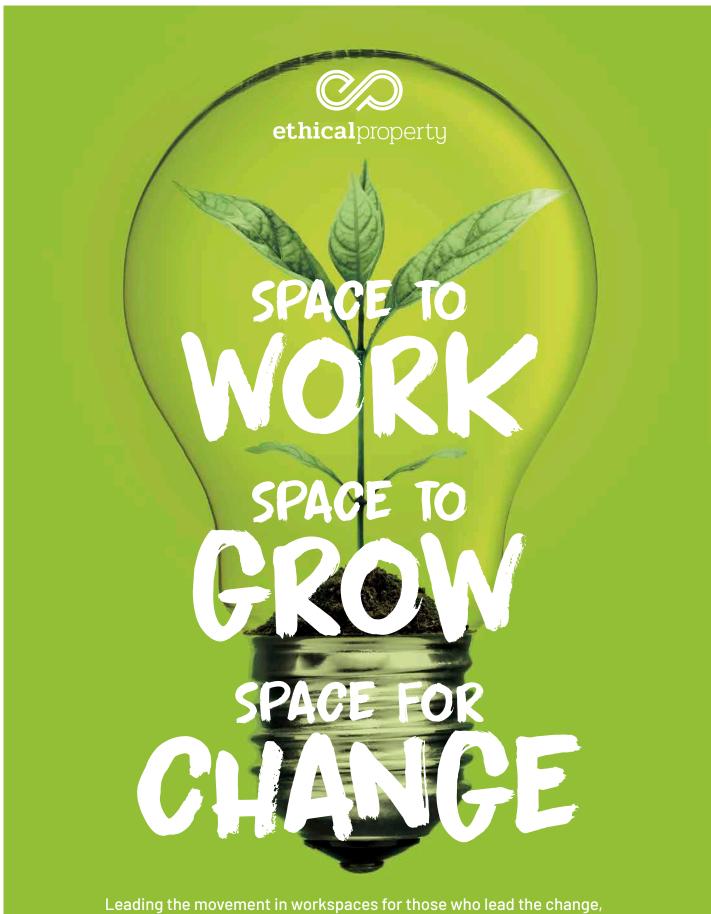
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