The Movement for Compassionate Living
~ THE VEGAN WAY ~

New Leaves

No.91 January-February-March 2009

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New Leaves

NEW LEAVES is the quarterly journal of the Movement for Compassionate Living (MCL).

MCL promotes:

• a way of life that is free of the exploitation and slaughter of sentient beings, that is possible for all the world's people and that is sustainable within the resources of the planet.

• lifestyles that depend as much as possible on locally produced goods, thus avoiding the resource wastage and pollution of unnecessary transport and packaging.

• Vegan-organic methods of horticulture and agriculture that use no animals or animal by-products and are free from artificial fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides.

• the planting of trees, especially on the land freed from livestock farming.

Trees absorb CO₂ and store the carbon as wood, thus checking global warming; ruminant livestock (cattle, sheep, goats) emit methane, a far more powerful greenhouse gas than CO₂.

Mature trees of appropriate species produce maximum food per acre.

Wood from trees can be used for many constructive and productive purposes.

Woodland industries can provide livestock farmers with alternative sustainable incomes.

Global warming and nuclear war threaten the survival of all life. Politicians may have the sense to avoid nuclear war but they cannot stop global warming unless people change their lifestyles.

Our herbivorous ancestors turned predators aeons ago when the forests dried up and they lost their food supply. The forests grew again but humans remained victims of their killing habits. Now vegans have proved that we do not need to kill animals for food. Land should go back to the trees.

New Leaves is produced quarterly and distributed in January, April, July and October. The Editors do not necessarily agree with articles published.
Happy New Year to Everyone
from the new editorial collective

The new collective is composed of three regular members: Christina Palfrey, a retired teacher who lives near me and who runs Swansea Vegans; Malcolm Horne, whom many of you know as an organiser of the Vegan Summer Gathering and the person behind the Brynderwen Vegan Community; and me. Four other people will be involved sporadically as and when they can make it. We have decided to keep the collective limited to these at least for the time being.

This issue is a trial run in many ways. I am learning to put New Leaves together in the desktop publishing program while learning to use the program. It has not been easy, but if you are reading this I have managed to do it. Possibly not as well as Elaine and Alan did it. And I must take this opportunity to express our thanks to them for all the hard work they put into editing New Leaves and all the other things they did for MCL.

One of the matters which was usually dealt with by Elaine and Alan was the arrangement of the AGM. Usually the autumn issue stated a provisional date for it. This time I am suggesting that we have it on the 9th of May. The last year’s AGM agreed to meet at Friends House, Euston Road, London if room was available. I have made an initial enquiry. The full details will be in the next issue of New Leaves.

Possibly the most important matter to be discussed at the AGM is the use of the legacy given to MCL back in 2002. In this issue there is an invitation to apply for the grant, and there is an article about a project in Scotland which is a possible recipient for the grant. In the next issue we will publish any other applications. If you cannot make it to the AGM please let me know your thoughts on all the applications and I will put them to the AGM. The contact details are on the front cover of the New Leaves.

Irene-Sointu

Southampton's 4th Seed Swap
Sunday 15th February 2009, 10am - 4pm
Woolston Community Centre, Church Rd/Weston Grove Rd SO19 9EP
Entry still only 50p!!
www.octoberbooks.org/seedswap
A TRIBUTE TO HARRY MATHER

After over 23 years of editing Vegan Views, Harry Mather is retiring. Harry is 84 now, and has had some health problems recently.

It doesn’t seem all that long ago, but in fact it was back in the autumn of 1985 that I travelled down to Bournemouth to hand on Vegan Views to Harry. That was after issue 34 and Harry has taken us all the way to issue 116 which, to me, seems quite a feat of endurance. The magazine was started in 1975 by a group of young people, mostly living together in London, who wanted a less formal alternative to the Vegan Society’s magazine. Many of the same group also ran, for a couple of years, what was probably the first vegan cafe in the UK.

Even in that very first 1975 issue (when it was just a duplicated newsletter with no name) Harry can be found! He wrote an article entitled 'A New Form of Society': "As I see it, each family should acquire the necessary knowledge, and devote enough labour and skill, to provide at least a part of its basic needs for food, housing, fuel and clothing. There should be a basis of self-sufficiency but not necessarily doing it all oneself. We could live in small communities where the sick and aged would be taken care of by their neighbours (not an impersonal State)."

In 1983, a couple of years before he took on Vegan Views, Harry self-published his book 'Looking for a Green World' with chapters on Looking for some land, the Falklands War, Society and the Economy, the Green Gathering, the Vegan Camp, Animal Rights, and Disarmament.

Years later, in 1998, he also self-published 'Sunshine and Shadow', the autobiography of his good friend Wilfred Crone, who had recently died. Wilfred was the first vegan I ever met, and was a talkative and amiable character who in his later years lost no opportunity to proclaim the benefits of a raw food or fruitarian lifestyle. Some people may remember his classified ads in vegan magazines, such as "Have a date with a peach".

Harry ran the Bournemouth vegetarian group for over 25 years, and was also part of the 'New Shoots' land-based vegan community project that came close to buying a large property in West Wales in the mid 1990s but ultimately disbanded. However he then bought a few acres of land of his own near Taunton and, although the travelling from Bournemouth was a problem, he found great joy in planting trees and blackcurrant bushes, and growing some vegetables. .

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He lived the first eleven years of his life in France, and is a fluent French
speaker, and later in life learnt Esperanto. He also learnt some Russian
(though never went there), and was delighted to meet two Russian vegans
at the 6th International Vegan Festival in the UK in 1992 when he was able
to help with interpreting.

Harry became vegetarian in 1965 (much influenced by Ruth Harrison's
book 'Animal Machines'), and then turned vegan in 1967. During his years
as Vegan Views editor he wrote extensively, and with a broad sweep, in
the magazine - and it's possible that some of his writings may soon be
collected in book form. This is from a couple of years ago: "We seem to
have wasted so many years before waking up to the potential of
developing alternatives to our present wasteful lifestyles. Going and
staying vegan has never been more important. It is the only way I have
heard of that will have an immediate and direct effect on global warming.
It is also cost free (in fact a saving for the individual and the economy). It
will also be a health benefit and reduce the cost to the Health Service.
Veganism really makes sense in so many ways."

So thank you Harry, and best wishes for a happy retirement. Had the
timing been different it strikes me that Harry could just as easily have
ended up as editor of New Leaves.

Malcolm Home

Knut Caspari, a Norwegian who lives in Scotland, is taking over as editor
of Vegan Views. Subscription £10 for 4 issues from Longridge, Bankend
Road, Dumfries DG1 4TP (email sjolberg@online.no or ring 01387-
265348). Harry's books are still available too. Just like New Leaves,
Vegan Views needs writers and contributors! The magazine is also freely
available online at www.veganviews.org.uk
OPPORTUNISTIC TREE PLANTING

You may have heard of the legendary folk hero Johnny Appleseed who, during the time of the pioneers in North America, was said to have scattered apple pips everywhere as he travelled… and the pips sprouted into fine orchards.

This folk tale and its variations are based on the activities of the nurseryman John Chapman, who was born in Massachusetts in 1774. His nurseries grew apple trees that were sold and given to pioneering families in the mid-west states of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

John Chapman was a kindly eccentric, a humanitarian and a vegetarian, and because of his enthusiasm for growing apple trees he really did become known as Johnny Appleseed during his long lifetime: he spent 50 years sowing seeds and growing trees, and was said to have hoped for “a land where blossoming apple trees were everywhere and no-one was hungry”.

Johnny Appleseed liked to live simply, sleep outdoors and walk barefoot. He was friendly and considerate to everyone – settlers, Indians and animals. He died in 1845 and it was said that, in 70 years, that was the only time he had been ill.

Whilst John Chapman’s vast but benevolent tree growing enterprise would be difficult for any of us to emulate now, perhaps the activities of the folk tale Johnny Appleseed can be an inspiration: to have trees sprouting everywhere we go, and for there to be free-for-the-gathering fruit in abundance for all.

There's a whole science behind propagation that has been intimately researched and written up over the centuries: the right way to prepare seed, the best type of cuttings to take and the ideal methods to ensure rooting – but the anarchist in me doesn’t want to worry about all of that… I love the idea of opportunistic tree planting and I hope you will too!

I find it quite delightful to save pips and stones from the fruit I eat, and to gather seeds and nuts from the hedgerows and woods, so that they can just be pushed into the soil anywhere that they are likely to survive if they sprout.
I also take cuttings and prunings wherever I can – when hedge cutting or maintaining trees, or even when just out walking – and push these into moist ground in appropriate sites, or into pots of soil for later planting. Tidying an overgrown hedge can provide hundreds of wonderful cuttings, each one a potential new tree or shrub.

At our previous home we grew a strong and healthy hedge mostly from Hunza apricot stones (from shop bought dried fruits). Unfortunately we left there when the hedge was just a few years old, so we don’t know if it ever bore fruit.

I am currently developing a completely new hedgerow, about 120 feet in length, at the southern boundary of our garden. This is mostly growing from cuttings and prunings, with a few transplanted self-sown tree seedlings here and there. A large number of pips, seeds and nuts have also been pushed into the soil along the line of the hedge. I can’t wait for the spring to see how many of the autumn and winter additions start to sprout and grow. I’ve included plenty of cuttings from the dense evergreen shrub form of *Lonicera* as these will help to form the body of the hedge and will be attractive to the dormice that we are fortunate to have in residence here. Interspersed throughout the hedge are seeds and cuttings for many fruits and nuts, as well as native species of tree and shrub – apple, plum, hazel, oak, blackcurrant, mulberry, sweet chestnut, willow, hawthorn, blackberry, box, briar, cherry, elder, spindle, pear, holly and more.

The local rabbits have had a bit of a nibble, especially at the cuttings of plum and cherry-plum, but there’s plenty there to share with our furry friends and plenty more cuttings to take and add in should there be any gaps as the hedge develops. There will also be young trees from the cuttings that are being brought on in pots.

We can’t plant too many trees, especially food-bearing varieties and native species. Take every opportunity you can to push in a seed or cutting, to plant a hedge or an orchard or a wood, anywhere you can. Support new woodland planting, community orchards and schemes like Trees for Africa. Plant trees for anniversaries and memorials. Give trees as gifts to your family, to your friends and neighbours, and to the planet.

*Alan Garrett, Isle of Wight*
VEGAN-ORGANIC NETWORK LATEST

Climate change – so often we hear of its potentially devastating effects. Going vegan and organic is acknowledged as being a huge part of the solution. But in a vegan-organic world where will the skills come from to grow healthy food on a large scale? The Welsh College of Horticulture in N Wales runs excellent hands-on HNC and HND courses in organic horticulture, based on their stockfree organic farm and in collaboration with Vegan-Organic Network.

VON can help people to acquire the necessary skills by placement on a vegan-organic (stockfree) farm. If you wish to study at the College and need financial help VON can send you details of our Bursary Fund, run with support from MCL. One result of climate change will be fewer imports as countries struggle to feed their own populations – and these imports will invariably be fruit, vegetables, pulses and grains – a pending catastrophe for vegans.

Unless the college and other training opportunities are taken up then vegans will lose out, so consider these opportunities and please pass the word on about them to all your contacts, email groups, etc. VON has produced an introductory video on stockfree organic farming too, free to members.

For information about Welsh College of Horticulture courses see www.wcoh.ac.uk or phone 01352 841000. VON contacts are on the back page of your New Leaves, for information on bursaries contact: david.graham330@googlemail.com or Tel: 0161 860 4869.

Another video, this one all about allotments, is presently in production. VON’s 2009 programme of countrywide visits to stockfree organic farms and allotments will be sent to members in the early spring. At the time New Leaves went to press, VON is investigating a possible site for a Centre in Cheshire.

VON is active in many other ways, encompassing animal rights, sustainability and care for the environment. We must work together to advance our aims of Peace and Compassion. Please become a VON supporter and contribute to our work.
AN OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY FOR FUNDING FOR PROJECTS TO PROMOTE VEGANISM

At the 2008 MCL AGM, it was decided that if the grant of £70,000 made to VON in 2002 for the purpose of establishing an Education and Demonstration Centre for vegan organic horticulture remained unspent at the end of 2008, the next AGM should consider whether the grant should be reallocated to other projects. A proposal for a project approved by VON appears elsewhere in this issue of New Leaves, but in order to be able to judge whether there are other projects that could be considered for possible grant assistance, we are asking for proposals to be submitted. Proposals must be for solely vegan projects which clearly demonstrate that they will contribute to the promotion of MCL’s objectives as stated inside the front cover of this edition. A summary of proposals should be submitted, to be no longer than two sides of A4, and should state:

- The aims of the proposed project
- The planned timescale for delivery of the project
- An explanation of how the project would contribute to the promotion of MCL’s objectives
- The sum requested with a brief breakdown of how any grant would be spent
- What the management arrangements for the project would be and/or who the accountable body would be

Potential projects should be aware that they may be asked to submit more detailed information as required in the light of discussions at the AGM and will be required to submit a 6 monthly progress report on delivery of the project if they are successful in securing grant funding.

Proposals should be sent to MCL, 105 Cyfying Road, Ystalyfera, Swansea SA9 2BT, UK by the end of March 2009.

MCL ENVELOPE STICKERS

Available for £1 per 100
or 1p each from Ireene-Sointu
MCL, 105 Cyfying R., Ystalyfera
Swansea SÄ9 2BT, UK

Please make cheques payable to MCL and send s.a.e.
APPLICATION FOR MCL LEGACY FUNDING FOR "THE ARC PROJECT"

About us

We are a vegan family of five with three life vegan boys aged 11, 8 and 2. My husband Keith and I set up the Educational Charity, The Scottish School of Herbal Medicine, in 1992 with a strong ethos on cruelty free research, environmental awareness in terms of vegan and sustainable horticulture, and the energetic philosophy behind the traditional practice of herbal medicine. Through the school we have been running evening classes and one year home help herbal correspondence courses to BSc and MSc University validated programmes.

Educational Experience at Drimlabarra Herb Farm

We have already run many educational plant and landscape study workshops over the last few years, two open days and five volunteer weeks in 2008 and would be happy to extend these to VON training workshops and VON specific volunteer weeks with other trainers leading, all advertised as VON activities. We have extensive experience in teaching vegan nutrition and plants as medicine from our 16 years leadership of the Scottish School of Herbal Medicine and would be happy to run VON events in training in these areas as well as stockfree. A nominal delegate rate of approx £25 full board to cover costs could be charged and leasing of centre for VON and MCL would be inclusive of any funding.

Resources available (see map of herb farm above)

We own sixteen acres of land. Drimlabarra Herb Farm is sited on eight acres on the southern tip of the Isle of Arran off the west coast of Scotland. It comprises of single storey house, tool storage shed, plant study
workshop, 4-berth caravan, camping field and active stockfree growing area of approximately one acre with diverse habitat on other areas e.g. wetlands and pond, species rich grassland, medicinal trees hedgerow. We have recently installed a ground source heat pump and solar panel and now have geothermal underfloor heating with additional solar heated water. A further eight acres is located a short distance away further up the glen which has agricultural planning restrictions on it and has been planted with approximately 3000 medicinal trees over the last five years. Out of our eight acre site, we can offer 0.5 acres orchard, approx 0.6 acres existing veg beds and herb garden space, and one acre in the species rich grassland field surrounded by shelter belt hedgerow specifically for demonstration and working of stockfree farming.

The plant study workshop is approximately 36m³, can easily fit up to 20 participants and we already have 20 foldaway chairs. This space has a wood burning stove in it and plenty of natural light as well as mains electricity. Water would need to be piped in or could be accessible from a large container with tap. The workshop could also be used for social activities in evenings and eating.

We are at an elevated position with open aspects to the south of the island experiencing the south westerlies coming off the Atlantic, hence we suffer relatively little from midges compared to more sheltered spots.

We have a rotavator and a compact lawn tractor used for cutting grass as mulch.

We have broadband access and Skype video conferencing facilities using a web cam, and could perhaps use web casts for training and demonstration.

**Aims**

The funding requirement of £69,500 would be solely to finance the Arc building project with the greenhouse being the most important aspect of improving our ability to promote stockfree growing to an eventual level of commercial activity. There is the possibility of match funding from the Scottish Rural Development Fund (SRDP). All applications to SRDP are to be made in conjunction with advisory bodies. We are awaiting our meeting with the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) in Feb 2009 to prepare the application with their assistance. Arran has just been granted
Croft status as an island which means that if we register as a croft instead of a farm, we are freed from planning restrictions re erecting any buildings for accommodation. We will be advised by FWAG whether to remain as a registered farm or convert to croft status in terms of SRDP funding.

**Objectives**

**Mission Statement**

We would like to promote the whole vegan lifestyle. We are interested in building community where folk support each other and social interactions are encouraged eg. music, dance, creative arts and ceremonial observation of the seasonal festivals. We want to attract more volunteers, especially vegans, and in general create a sanctuary where vegans can come and relax in an atmosphere steeped in educational possibilities. **Our vision is for a Centre for Green Living** with availability of learning programmes based on growing, cooking, medicine making and self-help, massage, plant study, nutrition, personal development and personal health consultations.

**Growing local food for Arran’s Farmers Market and other outlets**

The development of our centre to include stockfree growing would create educational and monetary opportunities through the local Farmers Market. We already have good relationships with other growers and farmers, especially through the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), and our membership of this organisation would allow us to host one of the farm visits they organise each summer. This would allow a unique opportunity to demonstrate to other farmers in North Ayrshire as well as Arran what we are doing re stockfree growing and herb farm activities.

There is only one hotel and food outlet in our village, the Kildonan Hotel, and we have good relations with them. Their chef, the owner, is interested in preparing speciality and quality menus, as seen with their ability to prepare vegan food for us on request and use of local food where possible. They would be an ideal first outlet for the first commercial produce.

Any income from supplying the farmers market and the Kildonan Hotel would be used to pay for one person’s consistent labour for the first year of increased growing (such a local, island based employee would have to
demonstrate consistent volunteering initially, and payment in kind with produce, until income is forthcoming, although we might be in a position to contribute to paying a part-time worker).

Our involvement in the initiative Transition Arran will also provide a basis for promoting outlets for local produce (as well as bringing a vegan influence to activities developing through this group).

**Continuation of our Herbal work and plant study courses whilst incorporating new stockfree courses as marketed through VON and our own networking contacts.**

We aim to extend networking particularly with the main agriculture college in Ayr on the Ayrshire mainland to generate interest in students for possible volunteering and attending stockfree courses.

**Networking**

The Transition Arran Initiative we are involved in is currently applying for funding from the Climate Change Fund. We are organising for a Vegan Permaculture course to run for transition members on the farm as well as hosting a transition training day (run by a member who attended a recent workshop run by the wider transition network).

We are actively involved in developing the Forest School aspect of the Community Woodland Trust (Roots of Arran – a registered Charity), to establish an Early Years education provision by registered Forest School members of the charity.

The Arc
Building Specification

The initial proposal is for a 14m x 8.65m structure giving 121sq meters of space. To the south, the glass frontage is a cedar and 4mm toughened safety glass structure provided by Woodpecker joinery http://www.woodpecker-joinery.co.uk . The rear of the building is of timber framed construction from locally sourced sitka spruce and eco beams. As the building is below 280sq m and we are a registered farm unit in Scotland, we are exempt from planning permission as confirmed by Richard Butler, Building Standards, North Ayrshire Council.

COSTINGS  Does not include any internal furnishing or equipment

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<tr>
<td>Architects plans, drawings and procurement of building warrant</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation of site, foundations and dwarf walls</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction of building 121sq m @ £500/sq m*</td>
<td>£60,500</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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*Current price per sq m for building a bungalow on Arran is £800/sq m. The glass house section works out at £350/sq m, therefore, we have a quote for an overall building cost of £500/sq m.

£70k for a building is relatively cheap because we already own the land and it will be a rustic grassroots affair. The match funding would cover all internal furnishings, equipment and alternative energy provision e.g. wind turbine, photovoltaic batteries and inverters to make the Arc self sufficient in power. Plumbing costs for inside the building are included in the above...
construction quote. We will also install a rain water gathering and storage system and a grey water disposal system. We will have one wet and one dry compost toilet inside, and a further one of each outside could be funded by the Scottish Executive (Scottish Rural Development Plan). See www.Scotland.gov.uk/topics/rural/SRDP.

Services – Water and Electricity

Our mains water supply pipe is approximately 12 metres away and possible to tap into for a supply to the Arc. Heating will be by a mixture of passive and active solar with back up from a highly efficient wood burner. There will be a high thermal mass of material within the greenhouse which will help to store solar heat passively. A system of small fans and ducting will channel excess heat from the greenhouse to a heat store underneath the workspace section comprised of boulders and recycled glass. This can then be vented into the workspace as required. Heat can also be vented from the workspace back into the greenhouse at night through the dividing wall, which will have thermostatically controlled vents.

Conclusion

We would very much like to contribute to the vision of MCL by applying the legacy in your care to support a centre aimed at the elimination of animal exploitation and cruelty and for a compassionate, non-violent and just world.

The pictures included here and others can be seen in colour at http://www.flickr.com/photos/34632486@N04/?saved=1

Maureen & Keith Robertson
Drimlabarra Herb Farm, Isle of Arran

Open Days and Vegan Volunteer work weeks at the farm:

**Open Days:** 12-5pm Sat 9th May, Sat 27th June & Sat 22nd August 2009. Guided Herb walk around the farm, free vegan food and herb tea tasting.

**Work weeks:** Tues 24th-Sat 28th Feb, Tues 10th-Sat 14th March, Tues 24th-Sat 28th March, Tues 28th April - Sat 2nd May, Mon 11th - Fri 15th May, Weds 27th-Sun 31st May, Tues 16th- Sat 20th June, Tues 24th- Sat 29th Aug, Tues 22nd - Sat 26th September, Tues 20th- Sat 24th October 2009. Please contact us for possibility of volunteering outside these dates.
TRANSITION TOWNS
From Oil Dependency to Local Resilience

The Transition Towns concept is based on the assumption of increasingly radical changes in the near future. These changes will be brought about by Climate Change and Peak Oil. Transition Towns is a challenge to confront the problems involved and to deal with them at a local level.

Everyone is aware of the changes that Climate Change may bring. Worldwide, scientists are no longer in doubt that the global climate is definitely warming. Records are constantly being broken, both for individual temperatures reached and the timing of seasons, and for the extreme nature of climatic phenomena. Plants, animals and insects are to be seen at hitherto unheard of times. In Britain, primroses may start to bloom in August and bloom throughout the winter till late spring, swallows may arrive up to a month early, bees and butterflies may be seen in winter. Rainfall has been of exceptional intensity in recent years, leading to widespread floods in many parts of the country. In Europe excessive heat has led to destructive forest fires. Tropical storms are increasing in frequency and ferocity. Ice sheets are melting, leading ultimately to a rise in sea levels, with potentially catastrophic effects on low-lying land or even whole countries. The list goes on and on.

While it is conceivable that other factors may also be playing a part, as they have done in previous ages, what is now accepted is that it is our present lifestyles which are causing change at a rate unprecedented in the history of the Earth, and which may ultimately trigger runaway climate change, with results that we can only guess at. Climate Change or 'Global Warming' is caused by the Greenhouse Effect, brought about by a substantial increase in ‘greenhouse’ gases trapping more and more heat in the Earth's atmosphere - largely brought about by human activity.

Peak Oil is the other half of the story of change. It is not the point at which the last drop of oil is used, but rather the point at which the availability of oil peaks, followed by increasing scarcity, and the subsequently increasing costs of production, until extraction is no longer economically viable. For the last 150 years or so, the world has become ever-more reliant on oil and other fossil fuels, in almost every aspect of our lives. It is hard to imagine life without it. Yet the peak of oil production is very near if not actually already past.
So, how did this scenario of radical change bring about Transition Towns? Rob Hopkins, a teacher of Permaculture and natural building, became aware that there was a need to make the transition to a lower-energy future. He found no existing response to the problems from local communities. He put in train a sequence of events that led to an event in the Town Hall of Kinsale, Ireland in February 2005. Called 'Kinsale in 2021: Towards a Prosperous Sustainable Future Together', the event set out to discover the ideas of the community about how Climate Change and Peak Oil would affect them and what might be done to lessen the impact. A year-by-year plan followed of how Kinsale could be in the future and from then onwards more and more Transition Towns developed, until by 2008 thirty four initiatives were in place, largely in Britain, but including some from elsewhere. Many more are now 'Mullers' – towns or districts that are in the process of working towards becoming full Transition Towns, but are still mulling it over.

Transition Towns are based on four key assumptions. These are explained in the following quote from Rob Hopkins' book, 'The Transition Handbook – From Oil Dependency to Local Resilience':

1) That life with dramatically lower energy consumption is inevitable and that it's better to plan for it than to be taken by surprise.
2) That our settlements and communities presently lack the resilience to enable them to weather the severe energy shocks that will accompany peak oil.
3) That we have to act collectively, and we have to act now.
4) That by unleashing the collective genius of those around us to creatively and pro-actively design our energy descent, we can build ways of living that are more connected, more enriching, and that recognise the biological limits of our planet.

Starting from these assumptions, local communities explore ways to work together to ease the transition to a lifestyle less reliant on fossil fuels, and at the same time to lessen their impact on the planet. Different Transition Initiatives have evolved different responses. However, the philosophy underpinning them depends on the ethics of Permaculture – 'a design system for the creation of sustainable human settlements' (ibid). This encompasses all aspects of life – social, economic, cultural and technical. In practical terms this may involve activities such as skill-sharing, LETS schemes, Freecycle, public awareness-raising, liaising with relevant local groups, relearning traditional skills, sharing gardening projects, running
courses and workshops, even large projects such as starting a hydro-electric scheme.

Transition Towns (or Villages, Districts, Islands...) involves finding out as much as possible about the Initiative, then getting a few people together to act as a Steering Group. Guidance is given by the Transition Network as to the steps to follow. The aims include raising local awareness and motivating others in the local community to set up practical manifestations of the project.


Find out as much as you can about Climate Change and Peak Oil, get to grips with Rob Hopkins' 'Twelve Steps of Transition', gather together your steering group – and you're away! Setting up Transition Towns is supported all the way by the Transition Network, and help and advice can be obtained from other groups further advanced than your own – in fact to help other groups is one of the suggested aspects for every group.

There is no guarantee that Transition Towns will work – but, come on, it's worth the effort! You will learn more, make friends, have enormous fun – and may also save the world!

Christina Palfrey
Permaculturist and Chairperson of the Ystradgynlais (Wales) and District Transition Towns 'Muller'

The Solar Fire Project - Projet du Feu Solaire
www.solarfire.org

is a non-profit association created in Marseille (France) in 2007 to develop and support ecological initiatives, notably in the area of solar energy. We have made this web site to share with anyone our knowledge and expertise, as freely as possible, in the spirit of universal access to information, open source development, and community.

For more information please contact:

info@solarfire.org

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CAPITAL GROWTH CAMPAIGN

The Capital Growth Campaign aims to help people who live in London to transform the capital with 2,012 new food growing spaces by 2012. The Capital Growth campaign will offer practical and financial support to communities around London to help more people grow more food, and to have greater access to land and food growing spaces for community benefit. The campaign website notes that “in recent years there has been a tremendous upsurge of interest in food growing. This is in response to concerns about food prices, food miles and the environment. It is also because people want better access to good, healthy and affordable food, and to enjoy cultivating beautiful green spaces and meeting local people.” Just under a third of London’s total area is either green space or water. There is also a large amount of roof space that can be used to great effect.

The initial phase of Capital Growth will help to establish the first 50 new London food growing spaces and has £50,000 to offer 50 awards to these 50 new spaces to help with set-up costs. In the longer term the campaign aims to help projects with practical support such as advice, training, tools, seeds and equipment. They will also give help to communities in approaching landowners and dealing with planning issues and may also be able to support projects in attracting help from other sources. For example, cash for larger investments in buildings, marketing support and infrastructure development. If you are looking for some help to start food growing at home, in your front garden, back garden, or on your roof or window ledge, this is not part of the Capital Growth campaign, but there are links on their website that may be of help to you.

You can find out more about the history of the project. Capital Growth is coordinated by London Food Link, the rapidly growing network of people and organisations interested in healthy and sustainable food for the capital. For enquiries about Capital Growth, contact London Food Link: capitalgrowth@sustainweb.org. Tel: 020 7837 1228.

www.VegGuide.Org

Started in 2002, VegGuide.Org is a rapidly growing guide to dining and shopping for vegetarians and vegans, with approximately 1,500 unique visitors every day and over 7,000 entries! Our comprehensive guide is unique because it is community-maintained, allowing anyone to add new entries, write reviews, and add ratings. The site is also entirely non-commercial and ad-free (forever).
GLEANINGS

Credit crunch offers some food for thought

The words market garden aren't normally used to describe Walthamstow, but amid the rows of Victorian and Edwardian terraces there's a thriving home-grown food industry. Last year a small group of volunteers picked 12 tonnes of fruit, that would otherwise have rotted, from gardens and street trees across the borough. OrganicLea's scrumping scheme lets householders keep 25% of the fruit collected, while the rest is sold at the co-op's market stall or turned into juice. Clare Joy of OrganicLea estimates that even in such urban areas, one in four detached or semi-detached houses have fruit trees in their garden, yet much of it simply goes to waste. "It ranges from street trees and pub gardens to residents who are housebound and unable to pick themselves, and pear-tree owners who are sadly not that keen on pears. We discovered a beautiful Victorian kitchen garden with orchard and hothouse but lacking the full-time gardener it would once have had." There are some weekly stalls at year-round markets where allotment holders can take their surplus for sale. OrganicLea runs a weekly market stall, primarily supplied by a farmers' co-op in Norfolk, but it also offers surplus produce from local allotments. The stall takes 25% and the allotment holder gets 75% of whatever is made.

The Guardian, Saturday 23 August 2008

Western diets cause a third of all heart attacks

Almost a third of all heart attacks are caused by the typical Western diet of fried food, salty snacks and too much meat, researchers have found.

Scientists identified three global dietary patterns - “oriental”, marked by high consumption of tofu and soy; “prudent”, characterised by a high intake of fruits and vegetables; and “Western”, which included relatively large amounts of fried foods, salty snacks, eggs and meat.

The team from the Population Health Research Institute in Ontario, Canada, found that “prudent” eaters were 30 percent less likely to suffer heart attacks than people who consumed few fruits and vegetables.

Those eating a Western diet had a 35 percent greater risk of heart attack than people who ate little or no fried foods and meat.

The oriental dietary pattern made no difference to heart attack risk, probably because its good foods like tofu were cancelled out by bad ones such as soy sauce, which is high in salt.

Daily Telegraph, Tuesday 21 October 2008
Hospitals will take meat off menus in bid to cut carbon

Meat-free menus are to be promoted in hospitals as part of a strategy to cut global warming emissions across the National Health Service.

[Dr David Pencheon, director of the NHS sustainable development unit, and the NHS chief executive, David Nicholson, are due to publish the strategy – Saving Carbon, Improving Health - on 27th January.] The plans cover all aspects of patients' care, from building design to transport, waste, food, water and energy use.

Among the most talked-about is likely to be the suggestion that hospitals could cut carbon emissions from food and drink by offering fewer meat and dairy products. Last year, the United Nations climate chief, Rajendra Pachauri, provoked a global debate when he said having a meat-free day every week was the biggest single contribution people could make to curbing climate change in their personal lives, because of the chemicals sprayed on feed crops and the methane emitted by cattle and sheep. Last week, the German federal environment agency went further, advising people to eat meat only on special occasions. Pencheon said the move would cut the relatively high carbon emissions from rearing animals and poultry, and improve health. "We should not expect to see meat on every menu," said Pencheon. "We'd like higher levels of fresh food, and probably higher levels of fresh fruit and veg, and more investment in a local economy."

The Guardian, Monday 26 January 2009

Scientists in Australia have tested a process called "phytocapping" which consists of planting various trees and plants on top of landfills in order to capture surface methane emissions.

www.thepetitionsite.com
www.care2.com

Come and Celebrate Nature Festivals and Plant Study Workshops at
THE AVALACH CENTRE FOR PLANT STUDY AT
DRIMLABARRA HERB FARM
Beltane gathering 4 day intensive Thurs 29th April - Sun 3rd May
Whitson gathering Sat 30th - Sun 31st May
Summer Solstice gathering Sat 20th -Sun 21st June
Lammas gathering Sat 29th -Sun 30th Aug
Michelmas/Equinox gathering Sat 26th -Sun 27th September
Winter Solstice sweatlodge and firewalk Sat 19th -Sun 20th December
Trials and Tribulations or Fun and Frolics -
That is the Question.

I have almost finished putting together this issue of New Leaves. Two more pages to fill - hence this. It has been a very stressful couple of weeks, on top of the stresses of the house and its renovation, or the lack of it recently.

I have still not learnt all the intricacies of desk top publishing. It's been adding text and scrapping text over and over again. And little by little I have learnt more. But many more times I have not been quite certain what has gone wrong or indeed often how it happened to go right! I have not taken my frustrations out on the computer - it is still completely intact. However, I have shouted at the program at times, but not so loud as to disturb my neighbours. At least, I have not had any complaints.

My approach to learning to use the desk top publishing program has been the same as my approach to the house renovation: I read a little and then start doing the work before actually learning much. It means having to do many things two or three times or sometimes even more. But when I have got the thing right, I feel really great. In spite of all the stress I have actually enjoyed putting together this New Leaves, even if it is not all quite as good as it could be and will be in future. I live in hope.

In November-December I finally tackled the living room floor. I had been putting it off as I had found the floor in my library really stressful. I never managed to get the floorboards just to click into place as they were supposed to. And the living room was going to be more difficult, being much bigger and having all the furniture in as it was indeed our living room. So little by little I took out the old carpet, the underlay which was grey dust, and the old floorboards, moving furniture from place to place. Then I put in the new floor in three layers: subfloor of 240cm by 60cm boards over the joists, woodfibre underlay, then over that the Finnish engineered oak floorboards. I believe the “engineered” bit means that the floorboards have been made up of different layers of wood, with oak being the top layer.

The first couple of rows of the oak boards were hard like the library floor. Then I got it, and the boards started clicking like they were supposed to. What a relief that was. I cannot say that the rest of the job was a breeze; it was really hard taking up the old boards. And so dusty.

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I still have the finishing touches to do, like skirting boards. I also have a
couple or more sockets to connect in the living room. I put the new wiring
under the floor and took the old one over the floor. We are still using the
old connections as I have not finished the new wiring. We have many
extension leads as the old system has very few sockets. The last two
sockets were much easier to connect than the ones before. Practice does
make things easier, even if I do not manage to become perfect in all the
things I do by the time I have finished the house.

In cold weather our house is still a little cold. The living part of the house is
open to the cellar which has a gap under the door to the garden. So the
cold air gets in that way. However, we do not have wind blowing inside the
house any longer. We got new windows in the summer. I finally had UPVC
windows fitted as I could not afford the wood ones. The difference has
been amazing. And with the problem of the cold air from the cellar sorted
out before the next winter, our house will be really nice and warm.

The problems with the stoves are ongoing and really demoralizing and
depressing. All the stoves work in a fashion. They are not what I had
hoped for and expected from the company who claimed in their literature
that these kinds of stoves are used in Finland. The most serious issue with
these stoves is the safety. The wood burns unevenly in the fireboxes and
burning wood can slide out. In fact I have had some burning wood falling
out. I have never encountered anything like this in Finland. The other
issues are the inferior metal parts. The closing mechanisms of the firebox
doors broke very early on. The metal grate inside one of the stoves is
bending and twisting. One stove has no grate at all and there the fire
burns really unevenly. And that is the stove from where the burning wood
fell to the floor and on me. Then there are the cracks on the brick work,
the wrong water heating element, the wrong kind of hot plate, the ash box
not put in properly, etc. Yet the company does not accept any fault on their
part. Unless I get some money back I cannot afford to correct any of their
mistakes.

I seem to always come back to the stoves. They have been my headache
for the past couple of years. However, in spite of the problems, I have
been managing to do some work on the house. It is beginning to look more
like a home now than a building site. And although I do feel quite
demoralized and depressed whenever the stoves come to mind,
underneath it all I do feel good about this house. And I feel good about
having put together this New Leaves.

Irene-Sointu

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MCL ADDRESSES

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Contact Scheme
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Tel: 0845 345 5314 or 01296 422008, e-mail: bron@places-to-be.com

The Contact Scheme aims to provide opportunities for mutual support, co-
operation and friendship, and/or to further the aims of MCL locally and regionally.

Details of contacts are only provided to those participating in the scheme.

The Contact Scheme offers a great opportunity to get in touch with other MCL
members who are following or working towards compassionate, cruelty-free living.

At present we have contacts in Antrim, Bedfordshire, Belfast, Birmingham,
Buckinghamshire, Cheshire, Clwyd, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Essex, Gwynedd,
Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Leicestershire, London, Middlesex,
Norfolk, North Yorkshire, Northumberland, Nottingham, Powys, Shropshire,
Surrey, Tyne & Wear, West Glamorgan, York, Co. Galway (Eire), Goul (France).

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEXT NEW LEAVES
TO BE RECEIVED BY THE END OF MARCH
should be typed or clearly hand-written and marked 'for New Leaves'.
Any press cuttings/references should be recent and identified with name
and date of the source publication. Food items promoted in articles and
recipes should be appropriate to MCL's policy of encouraging use of
produce that can be grown in the writer's local region, rather than
imported crops.

ADVERTISEMENTS
No responsibility taken by MCL for accuracy or reliability of advertisers.
10 words for 50p then 10p a word.
Copy for the next issue by the end of March please.
Please make cheques payable to MCL.

Wales Vegan/Y Figan Cymreig, bilingual (Welsh-English) magazine, £3
for 3 copies per year. Bron Yr Ysgol, Montpellier Park, Llandrindod, Powys.
Veggies and Sumac Centre: Catering for animal and social justice campaigns. Vegan cafe (Fri, Sat, Sun); vegan-organic demonstration garden; distribution of MCL booklets & leaflets; publishers of the Animal Contacts Directory (£5.80 incl. p&p / £5 unwaged). 245 Gladstone Street, Nottingham NG7 6HX. Tel: 0845 458 9595. www.veggies.org.uk

The Vegan Society, inventors of the word and established since 1944. 'The Animal-Free Shopper', our comprehensive guidebook of vegan products, just £4.99 + £1.50 p&p. See www.vegansociety.com or phone 0845 458 8244. 21 Hylton Street, Hockley, Birmingham B18 6HT.

Vegan Views – a forum for vegan opinion (quarterly). See article about Harry on pp. 2-3.

Sarah Two: well i moved 8 years ago but women still welcome & anyone interested in growing fruit (field turning slowly into orchard) &vegan permaculture i still live at: le village, 09600 Dun,France tel:0033561604688


HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

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Website: http://homepage.eircom.net/~greenlodge

Vegan walking holiday 16 – 23 May on the Isle of Skye offered by Lupine Adventure, a workers’ co-operative.

http://www.lupineadventure.co.uk/walking-holidays/skye.html

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GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Would you like New Leaves sent to someone as a gift? Do you think a friend or family member would enjoy reading about compassionate living? Do you know someone who is thinking about changing to a vegan lifestyle? Just fill in the form below with the person’s details and complete the Gift Subscription line, then send in with the subscription payment and we will provide them with the next 4 issues of New Leaves as your gift to them.

HOW TO JOIN MCL

For those who can afford it, we suggest an annual subscription of £5.00 for UK residents (overseas subscribers – please add a further donation to cover extra postage costs). Less will be accepted, however, and more will be welcomed – this will help us to send New Leaves to those who will read it and hand on the ideas but who cannot themselves afford a subscription. Such donations also help with the costs of stalls and meetings.

Payment by UK postal order or stamps, sterling cheque from a UK bank, or International Money Order. Please make payable to MCL.

Please complete the following (or a copy) in clear writing and send with your subscription payment to the Treasurer:
Irene-Sointu, MCL, 105 Cyfying Rd., Ystalyfera, Swansea SA9 2BT, UK

Name(s):

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E-mail: mcl@veggies.org.uk
VEGA
Vegetarian Economy and Green Agriculture
14 Woodland Rise
Greenford
Middlesex UB6 0RD

VEGA is a scientific, research and information organisation that focuses on the treatment of animals and on human nutrition.

Please see website
www.vegaresearch.org

VEGFAM
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Cwmynys, Cilycwm,
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Carmarthenshire SA20 0EU
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Vegfam is a vegan charity that provides relief to victims of drought, flood, war and other emergencies. Vegfam promotes the advantages of a vegan diet and lifestyle for feeding the world in an environmentally friendly way.

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www.veganorganic.net

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